



A few TIMELESS THINGS

Text Type: Blog entry
Suggested finishing time: 15 mins



Listen!

Let's Think!

1. Do you like watching musicals?
2. Do you know any famous musicals?

21/12/20XX (MONDAY)

Hey, what's up guys? Christmas is around the corner and what better way to spice it up than with some glorious melodies by Julie Andrews, the legendary actress, dancer and singer known for her crystalline voice? I'm of course talking about her critically acclaimed soundtracks from *The Sound of Music*. Released in 1959 as a Broadway production, *The Sound of Music* was adapted for film in 1965 and has won numerous awards, which include the prestigious Tony Awards and Academy Awards. Soon, the musical film and its soundtracks have become a household staple of Christmas time. Today, musicals based on the screenplay of the film are still being performed at theatres in London and around the world.

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Set in Austria during the horrifying times of World War II in the 1940s, the musical film wasn't dampened by the war's terrors. Instead, it brought forth many remarkable tunes that we still enjoy today, say 'Do-Re-Mi' and 'My Favourite Things'. The latter is actually my all-time favourite! Listening to it for the first time, I was instantly engrossed in its upbeat tempo and captivated by the lyrics of Oscar Hammerstein II, whose use of literary devices including rhymes and alliteration in the list of items is like the icing on the cake, a seamless blend with the melody. Aside from the imagery of the festive setting, the message of discovering beauty in one's surroundings against all odds is also highlighted.

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Andrews sings the song with such a charming accent, her voice so sweet as to have me playing it on repeat:

*Raindrops on roses and whiskers on kittens
Bright copper kettles and warm woollen mittens
Brown paper packages tied up with strings
These are a few of my favourite things'*

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Belting out these lines, I was actuated to jump about the house and list my favourite things like Maria, the main character played by Andrews in the film. Whenever Maria is let down, these listed things, which don't cost much, put a smile on her face again. Songs like this are beyond fantastic, they're therapeutic! We could think about them amid times we're feeling blue.

25

'My Favourite Things' stands out as a timeless classic which people play during Christmas. The tradition traces its root back to 1961, when Andrews first performed the song on a TV show before she starred in the film version of *The Sound of Music*. With sleigh bells, warm mittens and snowflakes, a list of elements closely associated with Christmas, this song has been included in many singers' Christmas albums.

30

35

~420 words

More to Take Away

The Academy Awards (the Oscars) are presented to those with the highest achievements in the film industry. The Tony Award is an equivalent in the world of theatre. *The Sound of Music's* film version won five Academy Awards, just as its Broadway theatre version won five Tony Awards.



Looking into Grammar

In non-defining relative clauses, which give extra information about the subject or object of a sentence, the relative pronouns 'who' and 'which' cannot be replaced by 'that' and must not be left out.

✗ I prefer the film version of *The Sound of Music* which (✓, which) many critics consider better than the musical.

? Underline a non-defining relative clause in paragraph 1.

Part A Multiple Choice Questions

Answer the following questions based on the information provided in the blog entry. Choose the best answer by blackening the appropriate circle.

1. In line 4, 'critically acclaimed' means _____.

- A. strongly criticised
- B. widely praised
- C. seriously notorious
- D. disapprovingly known

1 How was the soundtrack regarded?



2. *The Sound of Music* _____.

- A. is about the brutality of war
- B. is based on European history
- C. was written and filmed in Austria
- D. is set in a non-fictional background

3. Which of the following is TRUE about 'My Favourite Things'?

- A. It was composed at the time of Christmas.
- B. It lists the household items essential for the festive season.
- C. The words of the song are delicately arranged.
- D. It was a beautiful tune despite the odd rhythm.

4. In line 15, 'the icing on the cake' makes the tune even more _____ and _____.

- A. motivating...impressive
- B. meaningful...soothing
- C. expressive...melodic
- D. structural...literary

5. In line 30, the word 'blue' means _____.

- A. absorbed
- B. baffled
- C. low-spirited
- D. unsettled



6. The writer is _____ 'My Favourite Things', which he thinks _____.

- A. fond of...affirms a materialistic way of life
- B. upset with...highlights the dreadful life during World War II
- C. complimentary about...is able to lift a sunken heart
- D. encouraged by...has some healing effect

6 Make sure both parts of the statement are correct and that it makes logical sense.

7. Julie Andrews _____.

- A. sang 'My Favourite Things' in one of her albums
- B. knew about 'My Favourite Things' before playing the role of Maria
- C. still performs *The Sound of Music* in theatres worldwide
- D. sings songs from *The Sound of Music* every Christmas

8. Which of the following is the best alternative title for this blog entry?

- A. Films and Their Music
- B. A Song for War Times
- C. Best Musical of All Time
- D. A Time-transcending Song



Self-evaluation
Checklist

Please scan the QR code on P.6 to access the checklist for evaluating your own reading progress.

Part B Pre-HKDSE Questions

Answer the following questions based on the information provided in the blog entry. For questions 1 and 2, answer in complete sentences.

1. Why does the writer consider 'My Favourite Things' therapeutic?

1 Pay attention to the message conveyed by the song and observe the change in the character's mood.

2. Some people think that the wartime setting contributes a lot to highlighting the message of 'My Favourite Things'? Why?

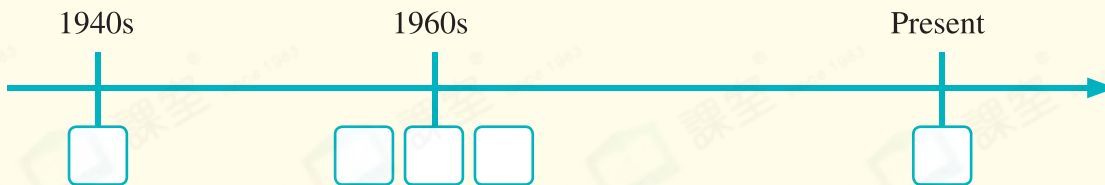
2 What are the lyrics of the song about?

3. Look for words in the blog entry that are opposite in meaning to the following:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------|-----------|
| (i) supplement (<i>n.</i>) | _____ | (para. 1) |
| (ii) gloomy (<i>adj.</i>) | _____ | (para. 2) |
| (iii) repelled (<i>v.</i>) | _____ | (para. 2) |
| (iv) discouraged (<i>v.</i>) | _____ | (para. 3) |



4. What happened in the following years? Write the letters (A-E) in the boxes.



- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| A. <i>The Sound of Music</i> as a film | B. the outbreak of World War II |
| C. <i>The Sound of Music</i> as a musical performed worldwide | D. <i>The Sound of Music</i> as a Broadway musical |
| E. 'My Favourite Things' first performed on TV | |



5. Match each of the following quotes in the left-hand column with the corresponding tone in which it is delivered in the right-hand column.

- | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|----------------|
| (i) 'I couldn't wait to get the remastered anniversary album of <i>The Sound of Music</i> .' | • | • anticipatory |
| (ii) 'With the positive message it brings, it will remain influential.' | • | • boisterous |
| | | • neutral |

Part C Vocabulary Bank

Label the photos in the mind map below with the names of the professions related to music from the word box.

songwriter lyricist composer music producer
conductor vocalist backing vocalists music therapist

sings with a group who plays popular music



1.

sing vocal harmony with the main singers



2.

directs the performance of an orchestra or a choir



3.

manages the sound recording and production of the performer's music



4.

writes both the music and words for songs

5.

writes song melodies and chords



6.

writes words for songs, especially for pop songs

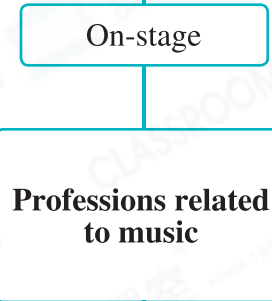


7.

uses music to treat patients' mental problems



8.



Let's Discuss!



1. What makes a song as successful as *My Favourite Things*?
2. How much do you know about music therapy?