



INTERNATIONAL TOUR | CHINA 2014-2015

THE OPPORTUNITY OF A LIFETIME !!

Is your child a “triple-threat” performer? Does he or she show promise in acting, singing and dancing and would you like them to have the chance to appear in a world-class production alongside professional performers in some of the finest theatres in the world? Well then, here’s *a very good place to start!!*

The international tour of *THE SOUND OF MUSIC* is coming to China! This professional production of the much-loved classical musical will be opening in Qingdao in late November and will perform in 6 different cities around China through to the end of January 2015. Other cities on the tour itinerary include Jinan, Beijing, Chongqing, Shanghai and Guangzhou.

The show is produced jointly by Andrew Lloyd Webber’s Really Useful Group (www.reallyuseful.com) and David Ian Productions (www.davidianproductions.com). This highly successful production originally opened at the London Palladium in the West End in 2006 following a TV casting programme on the BBC (remember *How Do You Solve a Problem Like Maria?*) It played in London for 2 years, toured the UK for a further 2 years and ran for a year in Toronto, Canada. In February this year it re-opened in Cape Town, South Africa (currently performing in Johannesburg) and will visit Singapore in July / August and New Zealand in September / October. In each country we recruit teams of Caucasian-looking children to play the iconic roles of Friedrich, Louisa, Kurt, Brigitta, Marta and Gretl (the role of Liesl is played by an adult). We recruit up to 3 different children for each role and rotate their performances.

Detail of the characters (with ideal height ranges):

Friedrich	1.56m – 1.62m, playing a boy aged 14. Voice must be unbroken.
Louisa	1.52m – 1.56m, playing a girl aged 13
Kurt	1.48m – 1.52m, playing a boy aged 11. Voice must be unbroken.
Brigitta	1.42m – 1.48m, playing a girl aged 9
Marta	1.32m – 1.42m, playing a girl aged 7
Gretl	up to 1.32m, played by a young-looking girl aged no less than 7

As with any professional theatre production, there is a rigorous auditioning process to find the most suitable performers for the roles. Of course, not only do the children need to be multi-talented, their height, looks and the “match” with other performers are critical. Although we treat the children as “professionals” (yes, we pay them), we do not necessarily expect them to be experienced theatrical performers. Whilst some performing experience is of course useful, the audition process is as much about finding out where untapped potential lies. Therefore, we would advise children not to prepare anything in terms of material for the audition. Auditions are overseen by our Associate Director who is very experienced in discovering and developing talented youngsters.

We are holding auditions for the Chinese tour in Shanghai on August 29th–31st, 2014. They will take place at the Western International School of Shanghai (WISS, www.wiss.cn), 555 Lian Min Road, Xujing Town, Shanghai. (Parking is available, as well as canteen facilities). Interested children are required to pre-register by filling in the form attached to this e-mail.

Although of course we cannot pick everyone, the audition process in itself can be a very positive experience. As you would expect, we need to thoroughly test all the relevant skills and it is a gradual process of elimination, with the aim of arriving at a final shortlist by the end of the third day. Parents and children need to be prepared to attend for the full 3 days. As an indication of what auditions can be like, here is a video montage from our recent auditions in Singapore: <http://youtu.be/K8H6xuPoGXM>

Rehearsals for the tour itself will take place at WISS commencing on November 3rd and will be an intense 3 week period. A midday meal will be provided on site. Parents will be responsible for delivering and collecting their child. You must be prepared to commit fully to the rehearsals as required.

The tour is currently scheduled to perform in Qingdao (Grand Theatre, November 25th – 30th); Jinan (Grand Theatre, Dec 4th – 6th); Beijing (Exhibition Centre, Dec 10th – 21st); Chongqing (Grand Theatre, Dec 26th – 31st); Shanghai (Grand Theatre, Jan 8th – 18th); Guangzhou (Opera House, Jan 24th – 30th). This is the currently anticipated schedule, but the dates are subject to change.

We are very experienced in the management of children on a theatrical tour and will be applying similar rigorous health and safety procedures and standards of care which are required by law in the UK. These processes include the strict management of working time and the provision of professional chaperones who will be in charge of the children at all times. Additionally the show tours with its own Head Chaperone who will be in overall charge of the children whilst in the theatres. Further, we will provide professional tutors who will continue the children’s education whilst away from home, in close collaboration with the relevant school.

We provide accommodation with the 80-strong company at a hotel of 4 star international standard. Classes will take place in a dedicated conference room at the hotels. Children will share an ensuite room with a child of a similar age and the same sex. All meals will be provided and care will be taken to ensure a balanced and healthy diet. Whilst on tour, all travel will be provided and the children will be supervised at all times. We will take out travel insurance to cover medical expenses. Whenever possible, and when the children are not performing or in class, our chaperones will organise activities and excursions to local places of interest. Chaperones will be expected to keep in close contact with parents.

Parents will be welcome to accompany their children on tour should they so wish, and we would use our best endeavours to secure additional rooms in the relevant hotels at the company rate.

Whilst the overall period of the tour is 10 weeks (not including rehearsals in Shanghai), in fact the child will be able to stay at home and return to his / her own school for the first three weeks of January (following Chongqing / before Guangzhou, whilst the show is performing in Shanghai).

It is important that you and your child understand and accept the commitment that would be required if he or she is selected for the show. Please do not register for the audition unless you accept this condition. Further, it is of course essential that you secure the blessing of your child's school before entering the process. If your school needs further information from us in order to give this approval, please ask them to contact us direct.

Any live performance experience is of course a wonderful opportunity for a child and one which they rarely forget. However, we hope you would agree that performing with a world-class international production of one of the most iconic musicals of all time is truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience. The hundreds of children who have worked with us on this production over the years (and their parents!) have repeatedly told us that performing with *The Sound of Music* has been a completely positive and enriching experience and has changed their lives !

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