

11/11/05

Film

Caught in a Trapp

'The Sound of Music' is 40 years old, yet star Julie Andrews says her prim image refuses to die

By MICHAEL GILTZ

JULIE Andrews is professionally polite and chipper. Even if she hadn't starred in 1965's "The Sound of Music" and 1964's "Mary Poppins" — two of the most delightful and wholesome musicals of all time — it's easy to believe she'd still be seen as proper and very well behaved.

So if you're hoping Oscar-winner Andrews will dish dirt on her co-stars, you hope in vain.

Our image of the 70-year-old Andrews is these roles, even though she's worked consistently ever since. Recent hits include "Shrek 2" and the upcoming "Shrek 3" (she voices a queen), "The Princess Diaries" films (ditto), the TV movies based on the "Eloise" books, and her own line of best-selling children's books.

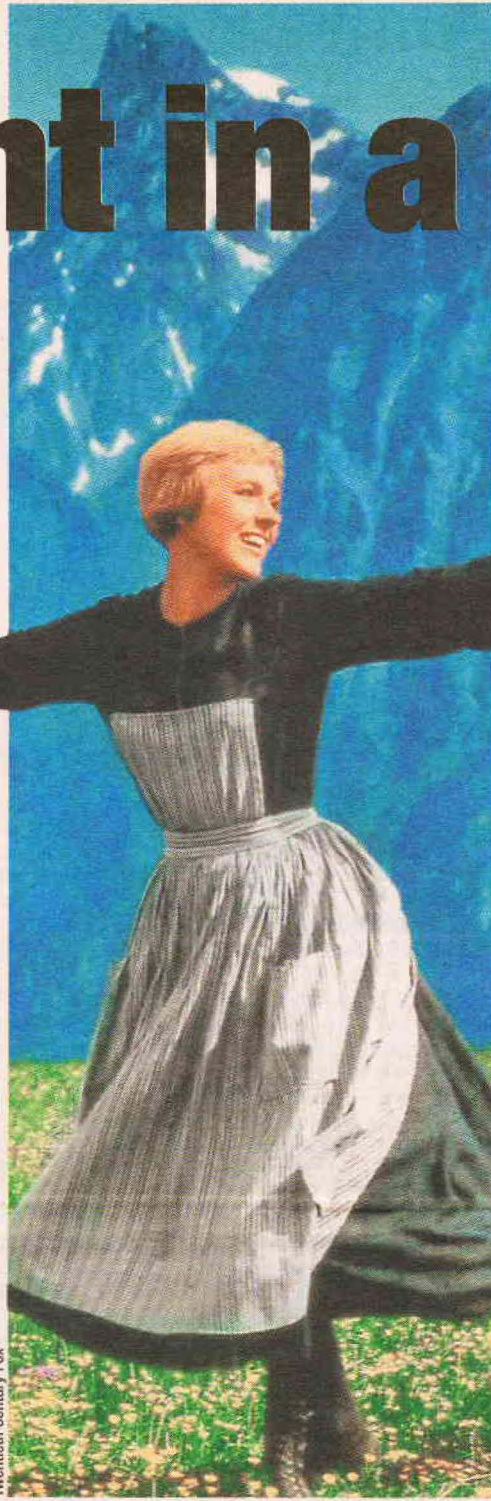
But Mary Poppins and Maria von Trapp keep demanding her attention. "Poppins" has just been turned into a critically acclaimed stage musical in London, which will likely hit New York in 2006. And "The Sound of Music" is out on DVD Nov. 15 in a new deluxe set (Fox; \$26.98) bursting with commentaries, new documentaries and, of course, Andrews.

"The Sound of Music" was an overwhelming hit. Were you bored by the goody-goody image. ?

It ain't true. I knew at the time how lucky I was to get the role. I think the press made a lot about my squeaky-clean image and my wanting to tweak it. I think it bothered the press more.

So 1981's "S.O.B." (your husband Blake Edwards' scabrous Valentine to Hollywood in which you bared your breasts) wasn't meant to shock us ?

Blake wrote "S.O.B.," and he knows me very well. It was a funny idea. There's nothing wrong



Twentieth Century Fox

with tweaking your image every once in a while. It's nothing I get uptight about, I assure you.

I suppose it's only fair people tease you for that wholesome image since you mocked "The Sound of Music" in one of your concerts with Carol Burnett before you'd even been cast in the film. The footage we see on the DVD extras of you performing "From Switzerland: The Prat Family" is funny.

[Laughs] I had no idea I'd be playing the role at that point and was a bit nervous about it when they started to consider me. Carol and I are talking about doing a retrospective on those concerts. Sort of a best-of.

One other big myth surrounding "The Sound of Music" is that you and Christopher Plummer despised each other during the filming. He's very frank in the new documentary on the DVD, admitting he thought at the time the movie was beneath him. He also says he behaved snobbishly and rather poorly on the set. So isn't it true?

No. We were friends even before we went on the set. We'd been friends from the Broadway stage, but it certainly cemented the friendship. We've worked together since, and we send each other notes and go to see each other's shows, and it's a very lovely friendship.

You were confused by the lyrics to "I Have Confidence." Your decision to play it as babbling nonsense — Maria will say anything to convince herself she's not scared — comes across perfectly.

The lyrics were complicated, and I wasn't quite sure what they meant. "Strength lies in nights of peaceful slumber?" I had a real, "Hmm, what am I supposed to be doing" moment. It actually helped the scene. I did the best I could.

Many fans of the movie know the field in that opening shot where you sing the title song isn't really that accessible on foot. Tourists who go there have to take a trolley-car ride. But I had no idea that the helicopters used to capture those sweeping first images came so close that you were getting battered to the ground again and again.

Yes. It was funny and ironic. You see this lovely shot on film, but I'm getting pummeled.