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## Meet the Captain

### Broadway leading man debuts as Toronto's von Trapp.

By Sarah B. Hood

Is there anyone in Canada that doesn't know that Elicia MacKenzie will be playing Maria in the upcoming production of *The Sound of Music* at the Princess of Wales? We all watched the bright-eyed brunette move through the ranks of hopeful contenders this past summer on CBC Television's reality show *How Do You Solve a Problem Like Maria?* Most of us could probably also name Janna Polzin, who will alternate with MacKenzie in the part.

But, ironically, all the attention directed to casting an unknown in the lead role has taken the spotlight off the cast members who would normally have taken centre stage, like Stratford veteran Keith Dinicol as Max, Jeff Irving as Rolf, and Mary-Ellen Mahoney and Jayne Lewis among the denizens of the convent. And few Torontonians might be able to name our Captain von Trapp, although he arrives from Broadway with a impressive array of credits. Burke Moses has starred in New York in *Guys And Dolls*, and created the role of testosterone-driven dimwit Gaston in the stage version of *Beauty And The Beast*. Among his other New York productions are *Kiss Me Kate* and *The Fantasticks*; he also played Heracles in Stephen Sondheim's *Frogs* at Lincoln Center.

Although a number of big stage productions in London have been cast by popular vote, Moses has never appeared in one of them, and says the lengthy process is a world away from the way he got his part. "I went in on a Friday at 11 o'clock, and by 2 o'clock I had the part." But, he reports, he's feeling as lucky to be in this show as someone who's just had their first big break.

"I auditioned for this at the last minute," he explains. "In any production they have a presentation for the cast of the main concepts and the approach, and at this one, my mouth was agape. The only guy I knew in the room was Ted Chapin, the CEO of the Rodgers and Hammerstein Organization. I asked him: 'Is this going to be as fantastic as I think?' And he said 'This is going to be the best production I've ever seen'. And I thought 'What pile of gold have I walked into?'"

Since the movie is so well known, Moses continues, it's hard for a stage show to live up to expectations; at least when it comes to depicting the beauty of the Austrian mountains as they're portrayed in the opening scenes of the movie, with their famous helicopter shot. By comparison, "the beginning of every stage show is such a letdown," he says. "Yet I think we may have eclipsed it with the opening, and the feast for the eyes continues on. If you've only seen the movie, you haven't seen *The Sound of Music*."

Andrew Lloyd Webber, David Ian and David Mirvish present the North American premiere of *The Sound of Music* at the Princess of Wales Theatre from October 3 to January 11. For tickets, call TicketKing at 416-872-1212 or visit [www.mirvish.com](http://www.mirvish.com).