

Television, Twitter Alive With New Version of 'Sound of Music'

U.S. television was alive with *The Sound of Music* on Thursday as country singer Carrie Underwood and *True Blood* actor Stephen Moyer starred in a live version of the classic musical about an aspiring nun who falls in love with an Austrian captain.

Filmed on vast movie sets and with lavish costumes but without an audience, the NBC television broadcast harked back to the traditions of the 1950s and 1960s when live musicals were often shown on American television.

Thursday's three-hour show was based on the 1959 stage version of the Rodgers and Hammerstein show rather than the Oscar-winning 1965 musical starring Julie Andrews.

After heavy promotion for weeks, the live broadcast was the No. 2 topic on Twitter on Thursday, behind the death of South African anti-apartheid hero Nelson Mandela.

But not everyone found the new version one of their favorite things, with many viewers taking to social media to snipe over the quality of Underwood's acting and bemoan a lack of atmosphere and chemistry between some of the key characters.

"Don't get me wrong. I love me some Carrie Underwood but I am not digging this version," tweeted TV viewer Heather Whitford.

"Nothing will beat an original, but doing this live on TV is amazing!" countered Lonz on the micro-blogging website.

Underwood, 30, who has become one of America's biggest country stars since winning *American Idol* in 2005, has scant experience as an actress.

"I just want to say before the craziness am truly honored to be in #TheSoundofMusicLive. This is an exciting/moving moment," Underwood tweeted before the broadcast from New York got under way.

Moyer, 44, is best known as the star of HBO's quirky vampire drama *True Blood*. While not known as a singer, he performed in a musical version of *Chicago* at the Hollywood Bowl earlier this year.

Moyer played the strict widower with seven children who falls in love with aspiring nun Maria, played by Underwood, on the cusp of World War II.

Veteran Broadway stars Audra McDonald (Mother Abbess), Laura Benanti (Elsa Schrader) and Christian Borle (Max Detweiler) rounded out the cast.

More than a year ago, producers Craig Zadan and Neil Meron came up with the idea of doing a live version of *The Sound of Music*—whose hit songs "My Favorite Things" and "Edelweiss" have made it a beloved musical for several generations.

They told Reuters earlier that they hoped it would spark a resumption of the tradition of showing live musicals on U.S. television.

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