

WU?@therep

EVITA

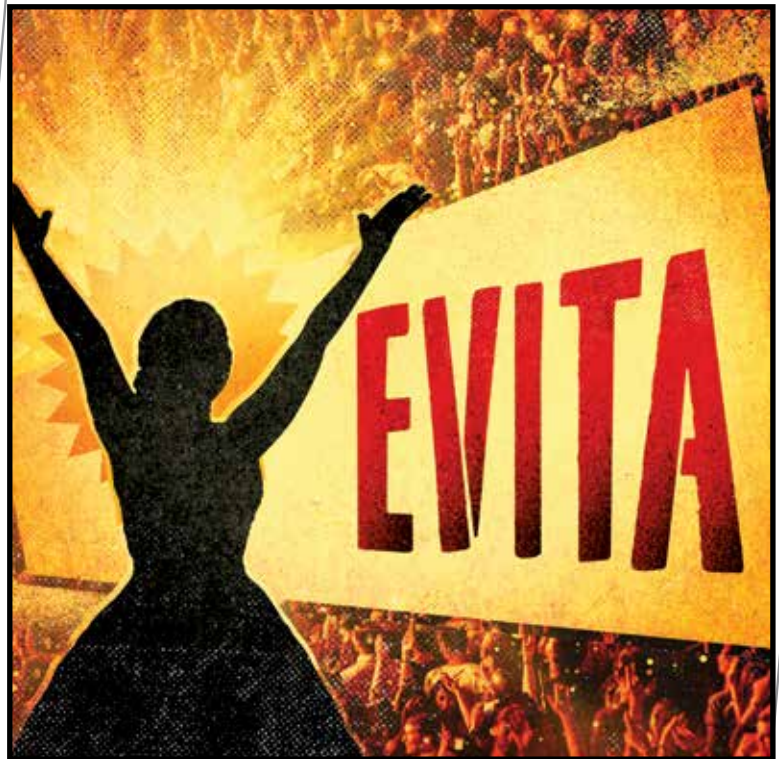
LYRICS BY **TIM RICE**

MUSIC BY **ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER**

DIRECTED BY **ROB RUGGIERO**

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The Rep REPERTORY
THEATRE
ST. LOUIS



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the 11

At The Rep, we know that life moves fast—okay, really fast. But we also know that some things are worth slowing down

for. We believe that live theatre is one of those pit stops worth making and are excited that you are going to stop by for a show. To help you get the most bang for your buck, we have put together WU? @ THE REP—an IM guide that will give you everything you need to know to get at the top of your theatergoing game—fast. You'll find character descriptions (A/S/L), a plot summary (FYI), biographical information (F2F), historical context (B4U), and other bits and pieces (HTH). Most importantly, we'll have some ideas about what this all means IRL, anyway.

CU@therep!



The Teacher's Lounge

In an effort to make our educational materials accessible to students and easy for educators to incorporate into the classroom, our study guide is written in a student-oriented format. We hope that you will circulate this guide among your students in the weeks preceding your visit to The Rep, encouraging them to browse it before and after class and as time allows, using it as a launch point for both pre- and post-performance discussions. You may also want to visit our website, www.repstl.org, for additional information including activity suggestions and behind-the-scenes information. Any materials, either from this guide or from our website may be reproduced for use in the classroom.

NEATO!

As always, we appreciate your making live theatre a part of your classroom experience and welcome your feedback and questions.

HOW TO BE THE BEST AUDIENCE EVER!

TAKE YOUR SEAT

An usher will seat your class as a group, and often we have a full house with no seats to spare, so be sure to stick with your school until you have been shown your section in the theatre.

SILENCE IS GOLDEN

Before the performance begins, be sure to turn off your cell phone and watch alarms. If you need to talk or text during intermission, don't forget to click off before the show resumes.

BREAK TIME

This performance includes an intermission, at which time you can visit the restrooms in the lobby. Intermission is only 15 minutes though, so hurry back to your seat.

SNACK TIME

There is no food or drink permitted inside the theatre, so make sure you finish your snacks in the lobby before you enter the house.

NOW HEAR THIS

Just as you can see and hear the actors, they can see and hear you. Any talking, even whispering, can be heard by those around you and those onstage, so please wait until the show is over to chat.

NO PAPARAZZI PLEASE

The theatre is a camera-free zone. Flash photography interrupts the action onstage and is prohibited by Actors' Equity Association rules. You can sneak a peek at production photos on The Rep's website at repstl.org.

TAKE A BOW

Let the actors know you respect their work by responding to the curtain call at the end of the performance. Show your appreciation for a job well done through applause.

THANKS FOR BEING A GREAT AUDIENCE!

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A/S/L

EVA MARIA DUARTE DE PERÓN leaves her life of poverty in a small town and travels to the big city of Buenos Aires, where she uses her grit, charm and determination to become the beloved but controversial First Lady of Argentina.

Eva's husband, **JUAN PERÓN** is a prominent Argentine military figure who, with immense help from Eva, becomes President of Argentina despite a tumultuous political career.

CHE guides the audience through the story of Evita's life and rise to power. He portrays members of Argentine society from varying classes to offer perspectives through a variety of different lenses.

Upon meeting her, Eva quickly dismisses **PERÓN'S MISTRESS** and turns her out onto the street in order to focus all of Juan's attention on herself.

AGUSTÍN MAGALDI, a tango singer, is Eva's first love who leads her to the "Big Apple"—Buenos Aires—and begins her long journey to fame and stardom as an actress.

THE PEOPLE OF ARGENTINA boldly and loudly make their opinions of the Peróns known. While the political and social elite are repulsed by Eva and Juan, the poorest citizens, or *descamisados*, adore Evita and propel her to new political heights with their support.

H/H

"REQUIEM AETERNAM": a religious service and its accompanying music to celebrate a deceased person

EIDERDOWN: soft feathers from a female northern sea duck used to make bedding

OLIGARCHS: a small group of rulers who control and hold power in a government system

CHRISTIAN DIOR: a famous French fashion designer that styled Eva Perón on several occasions

MACHIAVELLI: an Italian politician and writer during the Renaissance who endorsed the philosophy of "the end justifies the means;" his widespread views prompted manipulation and deceit among politicians

LAUREN BACALL: an American actress and model known for her unique, singular voice and style

MADONNA: in Christian faith, Mary, the mother of Jesus; also a name for a beautiful and idealized woman

MUSSOLINI: the fascist dictator of Italy during World War II

TÓMBOLA: a game that originated in Italy, similar to bingo or a raffle



SPOILER ALERT!

This synopsis contains spoilers about the story of the show. If you wish to be completely surprised by what you see on stage, you may want to wait until after the play to read this article.



Act One begins in a cinema in Buenos Aires, circa 1952, where a film is playing on the big screen. Suddenly, the film is stopped and a voice is heard announcing the death of Eva Perón, the First Lady of Argentina. The people of Argentina cry out in mourning, singing a requiem for their beloved "Evita." In the middle of all of this, Che comes forward to sing directly to the audience, speaking in harsh opposition to the mourners surrounding him. He explains that not only has Eva died, but so has Argentina, and it was Eva herself who killed it. He calls the mourners fools and invites the audience to discover how current events have come to be by transporting the action back to 1934, when Eva was only 15 years old.

In the small town of Junín, young Eva Duarte watches a performance by tango singer, Agustín Magaldi, clearly smitten with him. Magaldi has dreams of going to Buenos Aires, and Eva dreams of going with him, armed with the support of her family. While Magaldi is less than certain of his relationship with Eva, even he cannot escape from her determination. He

tries to explain how hard it is to be in a city like Buenos Aires, but Eva disregards him and spurns the middle class at the same time. Finally, after many fruitless attempts to change her mind, Magaldi takes Eva to Buenos Aires, where she bursts onto the scene and owns the city. She ends her relationship with Magaldi, which Che harshly criticizes as another example of Eva using people to get ahead.

Soon after, Eva lands a spot on a weekly radio show, where she shares her political opinion about the current inactive government as "one of the people." At a concert to aid victims of a recent earthquake in San Juan, Eva meets Colonel Juan Perón. They are very interested in one another, claiming that they are good for each other. Almost immediately, Eva dismisses Perón's mistress, who wonders where she is going next.

Members of the military and aristocracy disregard Eva as Perón's latest flame, but Eva begins to gain political power and influence. As the election nears, Perón leaves the military in order to run for president. With guidance and

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assistance from Eva, who appeals to the lower, working-class people, Perón wins the election. With promises of better conditions for workers, Eva (as one of the people) and Perón pave the way for a new Argentina.

As Act Two begins, Perón is sworn in as President of Argentina. He makes promises to his supporters, the workers of the country, swearing to fight against poverty and social injustice. Eva stands by his side, as they are now married. She is elegantly dressed and dignified. She sings directly to her people, explaining that even though she looks different, she will always be one of them and always feel close to them.

Following her incredibly successful appearance, Che describes how adored Eva is to the people of Argentina, and comments how being at the top must bore her, as she is no longer fighting to gain more power.

As the First Lady of Argentina, Eva demands that her outward appearance always be fantastic, as it is what the people expect from someone in her position. She embarks on a tour of Europe, with mixed degrees of success. Spain welcomes her wholeheartedly, but Rome likens Perón to Mussolini, an unlikeable comparison. Still, Eva meets with the Pope, which helps the relationship between the two countries. When she travels to France, Eva becomes noticeably tired, and it affects her visit to England, especially after she is spurned by the king.



Upon her return to Argentina, Eva continues to defy the expectations of her position. Che notes that the poor have not really benefited from the Peróns' influence, but Eva promises that her foundation will justify all of her actions. Her foundation, which is funded by the people, promises to give back to the people and make their dreams come true. Che makes claims that Eva was using the foundation to take money for herself. However, to the general population of Argentina, Eva is a saint. The children see her as their mother-figure. Che and Eva face off in a waltz, during which they accuse each other of being focused on the wrong things. Che exits and Eva reveals that her body is failing her and she is dying. She begs to be loved, even though she is keeping a secret from those around her.

High-ranking officers are becoming increasingly concerned about Eva's political influence, referring to her as an ornament. Perón argues that Eva is all the people have, and their faith in her makes her invaluable to the government. However, even Perón has noticed that Eva does not have the energy that she once did. Che enters and informs the audience of the current state of Argentina: it is bankrupt, and those that oppose Perón are disappearing. Perón and Eva discuss how they are under attack, but Eva feels the people are still with them. Eva feels that she will gain respect from the generals when she becomes vice-president, but Perón does not feel that she has the strength for it. During their discussion, Eva collapses, and they face an uncertain future.

Eva gives one final broadcast, declining to run for vice-president after all. She reveals her health struggles and tells her people that she will never leave them.

The play ends with a montage of scenes depicting people mourning and moments from Eva's life. Che speaks to the audience, explaining that a monument was planned for Eva, but was never completed.

POLITICS AROUND THE WORLD

Juan and Eva Perón were extremely controversial political leaders while at the height of their power. While this had a lot to do with the aristocracy's opinion of Eva and her humble beginnings (and subsequent rise to power), it also had to do with Juan Perón's practices and ideologies, which became known as Peronism. Let's take a look at Peronism in comparison to other well-known political ideologies from around the world.

PERONISM

Unlike the other political ideologies on this list, this movement is exclusive to the country of Argentina. Based on the legacy of former President Juan Perón, Peronism has three pillars or "flags" that Peronist activity stems from: social justice, economic independence and political sovereignty. It rejects capitalism and communism; in fact, at the height of his power, Perón was considered a fascist by his critics and opponents, and he had a great admiration for Benito Mussolini, a well-known Italian fascist. During his presidency, Perón blurred the separation of the government and corporations by nationalizing businesses.

CAPITALISM

Capitalism, which goes by many names—free market economy, free enterprise, neoliberalism—places ownership in the hands of citizens and allows them to sell and trade goods privately for profit—though modern-day capitalist countries have varying-degrees of government intervention. It is fairly dependent on competition and supply and demand, which helps to regulate capitalist economies. Those who are critical of capitalism note its association with social and economic inequality, as well as unemployment. Capitalist countries include the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Japan and South Korea, among others.

COMMUNISM

Communism focuses primarily on providing economic equality to everyone in a society by eliminating social classes. All property and resources are publicly owned, so profits or wealth gained from these ventures are distributed equally among all members of the community. In a true communist society, each person works and is paid according to his or her abilities and needs. The beliefs of communist were most famously expressed by Karl Marx, and they center on the idea that inequality and suffering result from capitalism. In a communist society, everyone exists on an even playing field, and no one is richer or more successful than any other person. Though popular in countries like Vietnam, Cuba, Russia and many others, no country in the world has been able to establish a true communist society.

FASCISM

Fascism is a form of radical ultranationalism, placing the state of the nation above the people governed within it. This type of government is characterized by dictatorial power, forcible suppression of opposition, and control of industry and commerce. Fascism emerged from Italy during World War II and quickly spread to other countries under the dictatorship of Benito Mussolini. With its ideals based in government having absolute power under one unelected individual, it is a clear adversary to democracy, liberalism and Marxism. Fascism has reduced in popularity since the end of World War II, but continues to be adopted under other ideologies favoring authoritarian states and hostile nationalism.

THE ODD MAN OUT

While much has been written about Eva and Juan Perón, two incredibly prominent political figures in history, it is within the third character of Che that the audience is able to find their footing through the complicated maze of deception and corruption that is presented in *Evita*. Che is introduced as a primarily fictional character, though he has many similarities to real-life figures (most notably, Che Guevara, an Argentine Marxist revolutionary), and he functions as a narrative device from which the audience learns details about the story that they could never get from Eva or Juan Perón. Though a broad character, Che represents an increasingly important idea for present-day audiences: the need to stand up for what you believe in.

Characters in *Evita* find themselves feeling very polarized about Eva Perón. The *descamisados* and working-class people worship the ground she walks on, often referring to her as a “saint,” while the aristocracy and military find her to be a terrible influence on Perón and the Argentine government. Che, while certainly hypercritical of Eva, is motivated by his awareness of the social injustices that the people of Argentina are facing at the hands of the Peróns. He is not just fighting for himself, but for the people who are struggling to recognize that they should also be fighting harder for themselves. While everyone else mourns endlessly for Evita, Che fights to tell the truth, against the popular opinion.

Has there ever been a moment where you have wanted to speak up for yourself or someone else, even when you knew it wasn't what people wanted to hear? If so, how did you deal with that feeling? Have you seen someone else experience that moment? How do Che's actions compare to your own? Is there anything to be learned from Che, or any other characters in *Evita* that you might relate to?



Mandy Patinkin as Che in the original Broadway production of *Evita*

RBTL

AMBITION AND ASCENSION

One of Eva Perón's defining characteristics was her ambition to rise above her station and make something of herself as an individual. Even when she is married and the First Lady of Argentina (i.e. the most powerful woman in the country), she continues to fight to gain further recognition for her own successes. During the song "High Flying Adored," Che expects Eva to become bored with her life at the top, but it is due to her ambition that she does not see herself at the top just yet, and she continues pushing to get there. Characters discuss Eva's ambition throughout the show, with many having different feelings about the woman who didn't want to accept her position in life.

As you watch the show, track how Eva's ambition influences the opportunities she receives. Are there any points where her ambition negatively affects her? Which characters see Eva's ambition in a positive light, and which are opposed to it? Why do these characters react this way?

PERFORMANCE AND REALITY

As an actress, Eva Perón's early career is defined by her performances. However, Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice imply, through the character of Che, that Eva's performance never truly stops, and that her entire political career is also a performance for the people of Argentina. This creates one of the show's strongest themes, which is the juxtaposition of performance and reality. Many times throughout the show, a moment is displayed as if it is based on reality; then, moments later, Che interjects to reveal information that turns the scene around and shows it in a new light. Not

only that, but Webber and Rice frequently reference theatrical roles and devices as a means of highlighting Eva's insincerity.

Listen for these terms and ideas as they are sung in the show and analyze how effective they are in creating a divide between Eva's public performance for the people and the reality of Eva's exploitation of the people.

MUSIC AND DANCE

Music and dance become vitally important tools in telling Eva's story. The musical, often categorized as a rock opera, is entirely sung through, with very few spoken lines of dialogue. Therefore, the music and the lyrics become the language through which the story is told, and different musical themes occur multiple times throughout the show that help to parallel significant emotional moments. Dance is another important storytelling device, with clear moments depicting tango and the waltz.

Focus on the musical themes that happen multiple times in the show; what do the moments have in common emotionally? If these moments were told only through dialogue, would they still work? How would they be different? Now think of the different styles of dance highlighted throughout the show. What story do each of them tell, and how would it be different if this same story was told through dialogue?