

**MUDDY RIVER
OPERA COMPANY**

**QUINCY SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA ASSOCIATION**



EVITA

**Saturday, September 9, 2000
Sunday, September 10, 2000
Quincy Senior High Auditorium**

EVITA

Lyrics by
TIM RICE

Music by
ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER

Produced on Broadway by Robert Stigwood
In association with David Land

Directed on Broadway by Harold Prince

Eva Peron Elizabeth Inghram
Che Mark James Meier
Juan Peron Steven Jepson
Magaldi Bob Swickard
Mistress Gina Swickard

ACT ONE

Requiem for Evita/Oh, What a Circus Che, Chorus
On This Night of a Thousand Stars Eva, Magaldi, Che
Eva Beware of the City Magaldi
Buenos Aires Eva, Magaldi, Chorus
Goodnight and Thank You Che, Eva, Magaldi, Chorus
The Art of the Possible Eva, Chorus
I'd Be Surprisingly Good For You Magaldi, Che, Eva, Peron
Another Suitcase in Another Hall Eva, Mistress, Chorus
Peron's Latest Flame Che, Eva, Chorus
A New Argentina Peron, Eva, Che, Chorus

~INTERMISSION~

ACT TWO

On The Balcony of the Casa Rosada Che, Peron, Chorus
Don't Cry For Me Argentina Che, Peron, Eva, Chorus
High Flying, Adored Che, Eva
Rainbow High Eva, Chorus
Rainbow Tour Peron, Che, Eva, Chorus
The Actress Hasn't Learned Eva, Che, Chorus
And the Money Kept Rolling In (And Out) Che, Chorus
Santa Evita Che, Chorus
Waltz for Eva and Che Eva, Che
She Is a Diamond Peron, Chorus
Dice are Rolling/Eva's Sonnet Peron, Eva
Eva's Final Broadcast Che, Eva
Montage Che, Magaldi, Eva, Peron, Chorus
Lament Eva, Chorus

Stage Personnel

Stage Director Connie Phillips
Artistic Director Mary Jane McCloskey
Music Director/Conductor Fr. Dennis Schafer, O.F.M.
Chorus Master Paul Shelor
Rehearsal Accompanist Bob March
Stage Manager Diana Derhake
Lighting Designer Mark Pripot
Sound Bronson Bybee
Costumes Peggy's Costumes
Props Angie Thompson
Stage Crew Drew Kaiser, Rick Wilson

Orchestra Personnel

Sue Cutrone – Reed I
R. Joseph Dieker – Reed II
Pam Potter – Reed III
Marianne Peters – Reed IV
Jim Williams – Horn I
Dan Gannon – Horn II
Greg Jones – Trumpet I
Debbie Priest – Trumpet II
Tom Polett – Trombone
Donna Bohn – Drum Set
Scott Shappard – Percussion
Joshua Kattelman – Percussion
Kristina Lowe - Violin
Jane Polett - Violin
Vicki Daggett - Violin
Joan Mast - Violin
Douglas Reeve - Cello
Cindy Fessler - Cello
Clyde Bassett - Bass
Gerard Wagner - Guitar
Margo Penrose – Harp
Bob March – Keyboard I
Larry Finley – Keyboard II

Chorus Personnel

Soprano

Jan Bughman
Marion Denckla
Kerstin Keber
Sarah Lewis
Mary Jane McCloskey
Jane Meirose
Gina Swickard
Mary Anne Wilson

Alto

Patrice Corso
Shirley Sawyer
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Tenor

Jim Eberle
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Baritone/Bass

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Nick Kohl
Paul Shelor

Evita is an opera based on the life story of Eva Peron, the second wife of the Argentine president Juan Peron. Eva Duarte was born in 1919, illegitimate, poor, without privilege. She became the most powerful woman her country had ever seen, the First Lady of Argentina, at the age of 27. She died in 1952 of cancer, age 33.

ACT ONE

It is the 26 July 1952. A young Argentine student, Che, is among the audience in a Buenos Aires cinema when the film is stopped by an announcement that Eva Peron, "the spiritual leader of the nation, has entered immortality". Eva's funeral is majestic, a combination of the magnificent excesses of the Vatican and of Hollywood (*Requiem for Evita*). Huge crowds, much pageantry, wailing and lamentation. Che is the only non-participant (*Oh, What a Circus*). Che, in *Evita*, is at times a narrator, at times an observer, at times simply a device that enables the authors to place Eva in a situation where she is confronted with direct personal criticism. There is no evidence whatsoever that Che Guevara ever met Eva Peron or became in any way involved with her, but the character Che, in *Evita*, is based upon this legendary revolutionary. He was, however, an Argentine born in 1928 and would therefore have been 17 when the Perons came to power and 24 when Eva died. He became strongly opposed to the Peronist regime during Eva's lifetime and it is not unreasonable to suppose that his later activity in Cuba and elsewhere was in part a reaction against the government he had known in his youth.

Flashback to 1934. A night club in Junin, Eva's hometown (*On this Night of a Thousand Stars*). Eva Duarte is just 15. She asks the singer appearing in the club, Agustin Magaldi, with whom she has had a brief affair, to take her to the big city - Buenos Aires. He is reluctant (*Eva Beware of the City*) but she gets her way (*Buenos Aires*). Once in Buenos Aires, Eva quickly disposes of Magaldi and works her way through a string of men, each of whom helps her one more rung up the ladder of fame and fortune (*Goodnight and Thank You*). She becomes a successful model, broadcaster and film actress.

1943. Colonel Juan Peron is one of several military leaders close to the presidency of Argentina which in recent years has proved a far from secure job for its tenant (*The Art of the Possible*). At a charity concert (featuring Eva's old friend Magaldi) held to raise money for the victims of an Argentine earthquake, Eva and Peron meet. They both realize that each has something the other wants (*I'd be Surprisingly Good for You*). From now on Eva hitches her ambitions to political stars. She evicts Peron's mistress from his flat (*Another Suitcase in Another Hall*) and moves into Peron's life to such an extent that she excites the extreme wrath of two factions who were to remain her enemies until her death - the Army and the Aristocracy (*Peron's Latest Flame*). As the political situation becomes even more uncertain it is Eva rather than Peron who is more determined that he should try for the highest prize in Argentina - the presidency, supported by the workers whose backing she and Peron have long cultivated (*A New Argentina*).

ACT TWO

Eva's ambition is fulfilled, and from the balcony of the Casa Rosada on the day of Peron's inauguration as president (4 June 1946), the vast crowd gives Evita, now Peron's wife, an even greater reception than that accorded to Peron - thanks to her emotional and brilliant speech and to her striking appearance (*Don't Cry for me Argentina*). Che notes and experiences some of the violence that was never far away from Peron.

Che asks Eva about herself and her success but does not meet with a great response (*High Flying Adored*). Eva's main concern is her forthcoming tour of Europe (Rainbow High) which begins in a blaze of glory in Spain but meets with later setbacks in Italy and France. She never gets to England at all (*Rainbow Tour*). On her return home, Eva resolves to concentrate solely on Argentine affairs, undeterred by continual criticism from the society of Buenos Aires (*The Actress Hasn't Learned the Lines You'd Like to Hear*). Che points out that the regime has to date done little or nothing to improve the lot of those Eva claims to represent - the working classes.

Eva launches the Eva Peron Foundation (*And the Money Kept Rolling In and Out*), a huge concern of shambolic accountancy and of little practical benefit to the nation's economy although it helps to elevate her to near goddess status in the eyes of some of those who benefited from the Fund - including children (*Santa Evita*). Che's disenchantment with Eva is now total. He sneers at those who adore her and for the last time tries to question her about her motivation and the darker side of the Peron administration (*Waltz for Eva and Che*). Eva's response is that of a pragmatist. "There is evil ever around, fundamental". She has realized that she is ill.

Anti-Eva feeling among the military reaches new heights and Che lists several of the major failures and abuses of the Peron administration. Peron attempts to justify her domination of Argentine life. He draws attention to her illness (*She is a Diamond*). Peron and Eva discuss the worsening situation - he is losing his grip on the government, she is losing her strength. Eva refuses to give in to her illness and resolves to become vice-president (*Dice are Rolling*). But the opposition to her from the army is too great; more importantly her body lets her down. She knows that she is dying and makes a broadcast to the nation, rejecting the post of vice-president, a position she knows she could never have won (*Eva's Final Broadcast*).

In her last hours, images, people and events of her life flow through Eva's mind, while the nation's grief knows no bounds - to the mass of people she has become a saint, nothing less. As her life draws to a close she wonders whether she would have been happier as an obscure ordinary person. Maybe then her life would have been longer.... (*Lament*).

But even in death she is denied obscurity. The moment she dies the embalmers move in to preserve her fragile body to be "displayed forever", although this never happened. The story of the escapades of the corpse of Eva Peron during the quarter-century after her death is almost as bizarre as the story of her life.

Elizabeth Inghram

Elizabeth Inghram is a native of Quincy and currently lives in New York City. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Musical Theatre from Oklahoma City University. Elizabeth recently toured nationally with Mainstage Productions as Irene Molloy in *Hello, Dolly!*, with an appearance in October 1999 in Quincy, sponsored by the Quincy Civic Music Association. Regionally, she has worked at the Lyric Theatre of Oklahoma, performing in *Fiddler on the Roof* (understudying Hodel), *Guys and Dolls* (Sarah Brown understudy), *42nd Street*, and *Club Stardust*. Elizabeth was seen performing jazz and big band music this summer at Busch Gardens in Virginia. Some of her favorite roles have been Pam in *Baby*; Casilda in Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Gondoliers*; and Laura in *The Glass Menagerie*. She has many fond memories of frequent performances as a student at Quincy Community Theatre with roles such as Anita in *West Side Story*; Sister Leo in *Nunsense II*; and Anna in *Sunrise at Campobello*.

Mark James Meier

Mark Meier's full-bodied tenor and exuberant stage presence have won him critical praise as a performer who "steals the show" with a warm and powerful voice, clear conviction and intense energy. His recent operatic credits include the role of Pang in *Turandot* with Opera Grand Rapids, Goro in *Madama Butterfly* with the Evansville Philharmonic Orchestra and Nanki-Poo in *The Mikado* with Light Opera Works of Evanston. Mr. Meier has performed extensively in the United States with opera companies, including Central City Opera, portraying the title character in *Faust*, Lord Tolloller in *Iolanthe*, and Captain Tarnitz in *The Student Prince*. This season's engagements include the roles of Basilio in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* with the Evansville Philharmonic Orchestra, Remendado in Bizet's *Carmen* and Njegus in Lehár's *The Merry Widow* both with Opera Grand Rapids, Jacquino in Beethoven's *Fidelio* with the DuPage Theatre, and this production of *Evita*.

Steven Jepson

Music critics have described Steven Jepson as "a cavalier new talent", "strong-voiced with a zestful comedic delivery" and "a diamond mine". An Iowa native, he has become a respected international artist. Mr. Jepson's operatic repertoire includes roles in *Don Pasquale*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *The Merry Widow*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Roméo et Juliette*, *La Bohème*, *Die Zauberflöte* and *Faust*. This season's engagements include Schubert's *Mass in G* with MidAmerica Productions at Carnegie Hall, Vaughan Williams' *Sea Symphony* with the Wheaton Symphony, the role of Escamillo in *Carmen* with the Pine Mountains Music Festival, Billy Bigelow in *Carousel* with the Elgin Community College, Danilo in *The Merry Widow* with DuPage Opera and Bizet's *Carmen* with Madison Opera under the baton of John DeMain.

Bob Swickard

Bob Swickard is currently the Associate Pastor at Vermont Street United Methodist Church in Quincy. He received his undergraduate degree in Music Theory and Composition from Eastern Illinois University and a Master of Divinity degree from University of Dubuque Theological Seminary. Bob has performed as Dr. Craven with the Quincy Community Theatre in *The Secret Garden* and as the Sergeant of Police in *The Pirates of Penzance* with the Muddy River Opera Company. He also sings with a local a cappella quartet called "Good Medicine".

Gina Swickard

Gina Swickard has performed with MROC in *The Tender Land*, *The Merry Widow*, and in an ongoing educational outreach program. She has a vocal studio in Quincy and also enjoys performing with the vocal trio, *The Auburns*. She has spent the last 14 years directing musicals for universities, high schools, grade schools, camps, and churches. She graduated from Eastern Illinois University with a degree in music education with vocal performance. She is happily married to Pastor Bob Swickard at Vermont Street Methodist Church, and is the proud mother of four. Above all else, her favorite use of her voice is when she can sing for the Lord.

Connie Phillips

Connie Phillips is a freelance director in the Quincy area who has been directing and performing with MROC since 1991. *Evita* marks her twelfth production with the company. She also serves on MROC's Board of Directors. In addition to directing opera, Connie enjoys working for Quincy area schools. Her most recent productions have been *The Pirates of Penzance* at Quincy University and *Oklahoma* for Quincy Notre Dame High School. For the past four years, she has written and directed "Mystery Dinner Theatre", an annual fundraiser for Quanaada. This fall Connie will be directing "And Then They Came for Me" at Quincy University.

Mary Jane McCloskey

Mary Jane McCloskey, soprano, received her B.M. in Vocal Performance from Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois and her M.M. in Vocal Performance from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. She has sung leading roles with opera companies in Pennsylvania, Colorado, Michigan, and Illinois. Her solo credits include work for the Chicago Symphonic Pops Orchestra, The Festival of Contemporary Music in Tanglewood, Massachusetts, The Cape May Music Festival in Cape May, New Jersey, and Concerts by Candlelight in Philadelphia. Ms. McCloskey co-founded the Muddy River Opera Company, and has served MROC in many capacities. She is currently the company's Artistic Director, and also directs its Educational Outreach Program.

Fr. Dennis Schafer, O.F.M.

Fr. Dennis Schafer has studied conducting with Robert Page, Vance George, and Paul Vermel. His varied experiences in instrumental and vocal performance, music education and choral music enable him to draw on this strong background in conducting opera. He has performed with major symphonies and under conductors such as Sir George Solti, Loren Maazel, and Robert Shaw. Stage experiences with Cleveland Opera and Illinois Opera Theatre number among his many musical theatre credits. Locally, Fr. Dennis is Associate Professor of Music at Quincy University where he chairs the Division of Fine Arts. He holds the recently established Joe Bonansinga Endowed Chair in Music.

Paul Shelor

Paul Shelor completed his B.A. in vocal performance at Clark College in Dubuque, Iowa, and his Master of Music in choral conducting from the University of Missouri at Kansas City, Conservatory of Music. In addition to directing the Quincy Area Children's Chorus' Concert Choir, Mr. Shelor is currently a choir director with the Quincy Public Schools, where he has directed and taught at Quincy Junior High School for the past eight years. For the past seven years, Mr. Shelor has served as the guest conductor for the Quincy Area Piano Ensemble Festival.

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**Mark your calendar! MROC Guild will present USOpera Ball 2000 on
Saturday, October 7th in the Quincy Regional Airport.
More information to come in the next few weeks!**

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