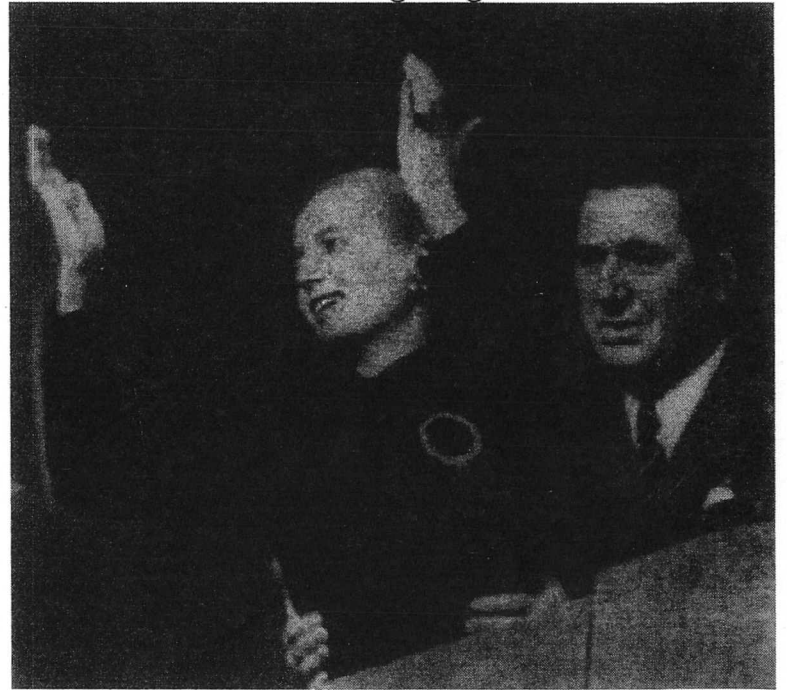


EVITA

a dramaturgical guide



"I have one thing that counts, and that is my heart; it burns in my soul, it aches in my flesh, and it ignites my nerves: that is my love for the people and Peron."

- Eva Peron

ARGENTINEAN TANGO

The exact origins of tango – both the dance and the word itself – are lost in myth and an unrecorded history. The generally accepted theory is that in the mid-1800s, African slaves were brought to Argentina and began to influence the local culture. The word "tango" may be straightforwardly African in origin, meaning "closed place" or "reserved ground." Or it may derive from Portuguese (and from the Latin verb *tanguere*, to touch) and was picked up by Africans on the slave ships. Whatever its origin, the word "tango" acquired the standard meaning of the place where African slaves and free blacks gathered to dance.

Argentina was undergoing a massive immigration during the later part of the 1800s and early 1900s. The intermixing of African, Spanish, Italian, British, Polish, Russian and native-born Argentines resulted in a melting pot of cultures, and each borrowed dance and music from one another. Traditional polkas, waltzes and mazurkas were mixed with the popular habanera from Cuba and the candombe rhythms from Africa. The worldwide spread of the tango came in the early 1900s when wealthy Argentineans made their way to Paris and introduced the tango into a society eager for innovation. By 1913, the tango had become an international phenomenon. The Argentine elite that had shunned the tango was forced into accepting it with national pride.

The tango spread worldwide throughout the 1920s and 1930s. The dance appeared in movies and tango singers traveled the world, and the tango became an essential expression of Argentinean culture.

EVITA IN COSTA RICA

This production of *Evita* is bilingual for a reason – it will be performed in Costa Rica this summer. McCallum Theatre is extremely proud to be taking the entire production of *Evita* to San Jose in July 2010 in partnership with the University of Texas Department of Theatre and Dance and the Institute for the Digital and Performing Arts.

McCallum students and faculty have traveled to Costa Rica for the past two summers with UT, but this will be the first opportunity for students to perform a show in the country.

Students will be performing in the National Theatre in San Jose, Costa Rica. While in the country, the students will live with host families and have the opportunity both to experience a new culture and an entirely new realm of performance!

McCallum hopes that this production of *Evita* in Costa Rica will help to establish a new high school theatre festival at the National Theatre in San Jose.

About 45 students involved with *Evita* are expected to travel to Costa Rica this summer with McCallum Theatre, many of whom require financial assistance to be able to take this trip.

For information about how you can help, please visit www.mactheatrefund.org.

THE HISTORY OF EVITA

Evita was the fourth collaboration between lyricist Tim Rice and composer Andrew Lloyd Webber, and was their final collaboration as well. The show is the follow-up to their smash hit *Jesus Christ Superstar*, and like *Superstar*, *Evita* began as a concept album put together by the pair.

Songs from the show quickly gained popularity, with "Don't Cry for Me Argentina" and "Another Suitcase in Another Hall" becoming major hits on the U.K. music charts. With the music so popular, a West End production was quickly mounted, with a Broadway production following, both of which were hugely successful. Famed director Harold Prince directed both productions, and his influence was felt throughout the show. The frequently-used tradition of having narrator Che represent revolutionary Che Guevara was initiated by Prince.

In 1996, *Evita* was adapted into a movie starring Madonna and Antonio Banderas. There was huge backlash against the casting of Madonna as Eva in Argentina, where many felt her anti-religious behavior was a slap in the face to Eva's reputation.

The effect of the musical on Eva's reputation in general has often been questioned. *Evita* is a largely cynical and critical look at the life of Eva Peron, and has been derided in many places. Many Argentineans were hugely offended by the show's presentation of Eva, and *Evita*, to date, has never been produced in Argentina.

ARGENTINEAN TONGUE TWISTERS

Tres tristes tigres comen trigo en un trigal.
Three trapped tigers eat wheat in a wheat field.

Pancha plancha con cuatro planchas.
Pancha irons with four plates.

Bajo la planta hay una plancha con plata.
Under the floor there is a silver plate.

Pepe pela papas pero pocas porque pisa pocas papas.
Pepe peels potatoes but few because step few potatoes.

MARIA EVA DUARTE DE PERON (1919-1952)

Born out of wedlock, Eva, commonly known as Evita, left school when she was 16 and went to Buenos Aires to pursue her dream of becoming a star. She found a job on one of the radio stations and remained there until, in 1943, she met Juan Peron. Evita began a relationship with Peron and she helped him to win popular support. His popularity led to his arrest in 1945, but Evita helped to organize a mass demonstration that led to his release. On the 21st October 1945 Evita and Juan were married. Peron stood in the presidential elections in 1946 and Evita was an active campaigner by his side. She directly appealed to the worst off groups in Argentina.

Peron was duly elected and Evita continued to play an active role. She kept her promise to the working classes and took such an interest that, in everything but name, she became the Secretary of Labour, supporting higher wages and greater social welfare benefits.

Evita announced that she would be standing for vice-president in the 1951 election, on the same ticket as Peron. Her candidacy was strongly opposed by the military and, while the old Evita might have stood up to this, her bad health, combined with the opposition, caused her to decline the nomination.

She died from cancer on 26th July 1952, aged just 32. Public grief was intense, and unprecedented in Argentina. Her precise role in Argentinian politics is still hotly debated, and her supporters and enemies battle it out to write her legacy. There is no doubt, however, that she was a remarkable woman who made her mark on history.

-thebiographychannel.co.uk

HISTORY OF PERONISM

Holding the twin jobs of Minister of War and Secretary of Labor and Social Welfare, Juan Domingo Peron introduced something new in Argentina politics. He proceeded to build up the labor unions under government tutelage and eventually as semi-government organizations. From a membership of some 260,000 embracing mainly skilled workers, they swelled under his patronage until they finally numbered practically the whole wage-earning force. When the military clique grew panicky at the new empire he was carving out and tried to dump him in 1945, it was already too late: the *descamisados* publicly flexed their muscles and triumphantly restored him to power.

Peronism – essentially a pragmatic maneuvering between social classes at home and between rival powers abroad, concocted into a pseudo-ideology by grandiloquent rhetoric and noisy demagoguery – contained a hard kernel of nationalist achievement, material progress and social reform. Peron managed to split every party and political formation from the extreme Catholic Right to the Communist Left and line up the dissidents behind his banner. As Carleton Beals wrote, his leading opponents had nothing to offer except to complain of the lack of civil liberties. Their cry for freedom was somewhat suspect, however, as they had never respected it when in office.

Under Peron there took place the growth of a variety of nationalized state capitalism, an elimination of foreign investors through staying out of the war and bargaining with both belligerents. Nationalism was used by Mussolini and Hitler as a handmaiden of imperialism. It was used by Peron

as a weapon of anti-imperialism. Fascism could be said to represent the rule of modern *condottieri* who slipped into power with the backing of the big monied interests to safeguard the status quo by the rule of the sword. Peronism was the rule of a Bonapartist dictator imposing his will by manipulating the social classes on behalf of industrializing an underdeveloped country and challenging dominant American imperialism. In a word, there is a substantial difference between the two types of dictatorship, and it muddles our comprehension of important lines of social cleavage to identify the two.

Peronism pretty much exhausted itself by 1953. The country was starved for capital with which to follow through its expansion. Inflation took on runaway proportions, wiped out the gains of the wage earners, and was cutting into living standards. After the war, the United States mounted an implacable offensive which in rapid order swept Argentina out of its economic bases on the South American continent. Pretty well stymied on all fronts, his popularity in heavy decline, Peron, by 1953, was swinging away from the CGT, whose ranks were growing disgruntled, and rested increasingly on the military. His crusade against *el imperialismo yanqui* had also pretty much ground to a halt and he was by this time trying to fix up a new deal with the United States to get much needed capital and loans. When the military cliques moved against him in 1955, Peron tried to overawe them with a repetition of the performance of ten years before. But his deals with the United States had tarnished his reputation as the nationalist Sir Galahad, and the *descamisados* were no longer the enthusiastic supporters of yore.

PALABRAS IMPORTANTES (IMPORTANT WORDS)

tambien also

amor love

descamisados "shirtless ones," working class

quiero I want

llorar to cry

plata money

cuidado care, signifies being careful

maleta suitcase

estar to be

vida life

verdad truth

contigo with you

ahora now