

# Evita

*A musical about the life of  
Eva Peron*

By Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice

## *A Playgoer's Guide*

### Andrew Lloyd Webber

On March 22 of 1942, Jean and William Lloyd Webber brought into this world a baby boy, Andrew Lloyd Webber, in London, England. This baby boy would grown up to be known worldwide. In 1997 he was even knighted Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber.



It is no wonder that he had such a knack for music; his father worked at the Royal College of Music, as a musical scholar; he was also a composer and musician. His mother taught piano and violin, and taught Andrew how to play the piano and the violin starting when he was only three years of age.

He attended the Wetherby School and Westminster Underschool before moving on to Oxford University's Magdalene College where he spent a semester in 1964, and where he would meet Tim Rice.

### Tim Rice

Tim Rice, born 10 November 1944 in Amersham, Buckinghamshire, is a long-time collaborator with Andrew Lloyd Webber. Around the time he was briefly studying law, Rice met the 17-year-old Andrew Lloyd Webber, and in 1965, they collaborated on *The Likes Of Us*, which was never performed.

After a three-year hiatus, in 1968 they came out with *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (later Rice reworked it, lengthened it and recorded an album of the piece).

Having exhausted all the possibilities for stories about shiny overcoats, the two began work on *Jesus Christ Superstar*. That was also a rousing success. Introduced to the public as a concept album in 1970, the opera earned the two much celebrity.

Following *Superstar*, Rice and Webber returned to their previous project and expanded it into (more or less) its finalized form. The concept album for *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* was released in 1974.

In 1973 Rice had the idea of *Evita* after hearing about her life in a 10 minute spot on the radio. He researched Eva Peron, and even visited Argentina in February of 1974. Instead of going to the stage first, Tim and Andrew followed their previous route, and released a double album of the show-to-be in



November of 1976. (Webber and Rice also produced the recording.). Partly because of its success, when *Evita* opened at the Prince Edward Theater on 21 June 1978, the box office advance had exceeded \$500,000.

## The story

The script begins with Evita's death and then flashes back to some of the major events in her life to tell us a little bit of her diverse life story. Eva was born out of wedlock and in poverty within Argentina in 1919. She became a successful actress, which began her career at age 15. He married in 1945 and became second wife to Juan Peron, a colonel, who rose to supreme power the following year. According to the script, their first appearance was at the Casa Rosada where Peron dominates in victory in the Presidential election -- said to be "the best show in town".

Eva's desire is to become vice president but dies before her wishes are carried out. Ironically, Peron's third wife, Isabelita, became vice president and succeeded her husband as president. It was said that Eva's wishes to be vice president were blocked by the military. The military holds an important role in the script, as well as in Argentina's history. However, Eva still became active in politics and in 1949 was at her peak as the second most influential figure in Argentina. She became the co-leader of the *descamisados*, which means "shirtless ones." The script makes mention of this organization when Eva says in the "A New Argentina"



section, "resigned from the army and this we avow, The descamisados are those he is marching with now!"

A character we encounter quite a bit throughout the script is "Che." Che Guevara (later, of course, to become an icon of the counterculture in the sixties because of his support of Fidel Castro in Cuba and other revolutionary causes) was a medical student in Buenos Aires at the time of Eva's death in 1952. They never met.



Eva Peron died at the age of 33 due to cancer. The script doesn't mention this but foreshadows the disease in the "Eva's Final Broadcast" section of the script when it is said she is "sad to be defeated by her own weak body."

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