

Contact Valerie Klawitter, 898-1605
or Patricia Kessler, 898-1600

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GENERAL ENTERTAINMENT

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OTTERBEIN COLLEGE THEATRE PRODUCES *EVITA*

Otterbein College Theatre's upcoming production of *Evita* is literally festooned with extras -- and that stretches beyond the confines of cast numbers-- although the show *is* boasting the largest cast ever (52) of any OCT show.

Extra is the by-word in all areas for this Andrew Lloyd Webber blockbuster -- special touches that range from a quartet of professional guest artists to countless extravagant costumes that are certain to create an unforgettable spectacle. The international musical hit will run **May 2-6** in Cowan Hall.

Preparation for the production began months ago. Director Dennis Romer flew to New York early in the winter to audition guest artists for the weighty role of Juan Peron and chose well-known actor Charles Pistone of New York. "We were fortunate to find him," Romer says. "He's the type of actor we look for when seeking a guest artist. He has a strong desire to work with students, and in *Evita*, will strike a wonderful balance with our two other principals. He played Javert in the first national tour of *Les Miserables*, and has always wanted to play the role of Juan Peron."

Russell Hastings from The Ohio State University theatre department will lend his expertise as guest set designer and Doreen Dunn, executive director of OhioDance, will be guest choreographer. Otterbein faculty crucial to the production include musical director David DeVenney, vocal director Craig Johnson and lighting designer Rob Johnson.

The show presents a technical challenge which OCT is going to great lengths to meet in order to offer a top quality presentation. The department is spending \$2,000 on sound designed by David Mead (who also did sound for OCT's *Chorus Line* and *Sweeney Todd*) from Stage Tech in Columbus.

The set, largely metal scaffold, features a custom-painted drop, and a rear projection screen that will magically "build" a multitude of settings from 150 different slides. Lighting alone is a major undertaking in *Evita*. There will be several spotlight operators on stage and more than 200 light cues.

Lisa Walton, who is playing the lead role of Eva Peron will have an unbelievable 20 costume changes -- and more than 200 total costumes have been assembled for the show. Guest professional Lauren Lambie, resident costume designer with Players Theatre Columbus traveled to New York to purchase approximately \$2,000 worth of special fabric and costumes are being borrowed and rented.

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EVITA GARNERED seven Tony awards, the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award and six Drama Desk Awards during its Broadway run.

Spotlighting the life of Eva Peron, second wife of Argentine dictator Juan Peron, *Evita* meshes gripping, true life drama with a remarkable musical score and zesty dance numbers.

Beginning life as a poor, illegitimate peasant, the determined ambitious Eva displayed a magnetic charisma and inherent savvy that thrust her to the top of the Argentinean political world and made her an international celebrity.

Capturing the hearts of the masses, Eva proved herself both ruthless and irresistible as she stole from the rich to give to the poor and employed guile, exploitation and propaganda in her rise to power.

"*Evita* is a very timely production," Romer remarks. "This is a time when everyone is questioning new governments and we have a healthy skepticism concerning authority. It revives the whole question of leadership and government -- who are we to believe and follow. Also, the Peron government has regained control in Argentina. But what is fascinating about *Evita* is that it deals with the overwhelming popularity of this woman. The key element I'm using in this production is seduction -- she literally seduced a whole nation."

The New York Post called *Evita* "a stunning, exhilarating theatrical experience...and a definite marker-point in the ongoing story of the Broadway musical." A Newhouse News critic said "If you've seen *Evita*, I suggest you go back again for further enjoyment as I did. And if *Evita* is still on your 'to be seen' calendar, make a date now."

All performances will be in Cowan Hall on campus. Opening night will begin at 7:30 p.m., and on Sunday, the matinee performance will be at 2 p.m. All other performances will begin at 8 p.m. Tickets may be obtained beginning April 18 from the Cowan Hall box office, 898-1109.