

THINGS TO DO

'Evita' comes to the Garde stage this weekend

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By TIM MALCOLM

Norwich Bulletin

New London, Conn. -

The sweeping story of the rise of Eva Peron is coming to New London with the Garde Arts Center's production of "Evita" Friday and Saturday.

Peron became Argentina's most celebrated heroine, a woman who rose quickly to prominence alongside husband, Argentinian President Juan Peron. Her story was immortalized in 1977, when Andrew Lloyd Weber, popularly known as the king of the musical, developed a concept album, then a musical, about her life.

"Evita" ranks among Lloyd Weber's most treasured works. He collaborated with lyricist Tim Rice, his most compatible writer, to compose the musical, which contains the well-known "Don't Cry For Me, Argentina."

Here are the other musicals Lloyd Weber and Rice have written together:

- The Likes of Us:

The story of Thomas John Barnardo, an Irish philanthropist who helped more than 60,000 children through his homes. The musical was written in 1965, but didn't see the light of day until 2005.

- Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat:

One of Lloyd Webbers most famed musicals is the story of Joseph taken from the Bible. Joseph's "coat of many colors" made him destined to rule over his brothers, so they cast him away in anger as a slave.

Joseph's journey, however, shows his true spirit and heart, as he ascends to high rank and aids Egypt during a large-scale famine. His brothers, during a time of need, show their mercy to their brother, and all is restored. It gained popularity after "Jesus Christ Superstar," reaching the U.S. album charts in 1970, then reaching Broadway in 1982.

- Jesus Christ Superstar:

The musical that marked Lloyd Webber's star is about the Biblical events leading to Jesus Christ's crucifixion. He casts Judas as someone cautioned by the flocks of people following Jesus; meanwhile, drugs and prostitution are included in the production, offering a remark on society in the late-1960s. The 1970 album and subsequent musicals were huge successes, with their non-traditional rock 'n' roll flourishes and intriguing lyrics. It remains the cornerstone of modern American musicals.

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IF YOU GO

- **What:** "Evita" on stage.
- **When:** 8 p.m. Friday and 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. Saturday.
- **Where:** Garde Arts Center, 325 State St., New London.
- **Price:** Tickets are \$39, \$52 and \$60.
- For more information, visit www.gardearts.org