

Asolo Rep's EVITA

The Josh Rhodes-Helmed Production runs through Dec. 30

Asolo Rep has Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber's Tony Award-winning masterpiece EVITA. Directed and choreographed by Josh Rhodes (Broadway: Bright Star, It Shoulda Been You, Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella, First Date; West End: Carousel, Sweeney Todd; Asolo Rep: Guys and Dolls), the musical and runs through December 30 in the Mertz Theatre, located in the FSU Center for the Performing Arts.

Winner of seven Tony Awards, including best musical and best score, EVITA chronicles the electric rise and fall of Eva Perón, who used her beauty and charisma to climb from her poverty-stricken roots on the outskirts of Buenos Aires to become the powerful and polarizing First Lady of Argentina at the age of 27.

Puerto Rican recording artist and actress Ana Isabelle leads the all-star cast as Eva Perón, Argentina's magnetic and mesmerizing First Lady. Justin Gregory Lopez, who most recently portrayed Usnavi in Lin-Manuel Miranda's In the Heights (Ordway Center), plays Che. Nick Duckart, whose regional credits include Usnavi in In the Heights (Actors Playhouse), and the world premiere of Carmen (Olney Theatre), plays Juan Perón. Gizel Jimenez, who plays Perón's Mistress, recently played Rosalia in the National Tour of West Side Story. Victor Souffrant, who was most recently seen in Orlando Shakespeare Theater's production of Man of La Mancha, plays Agustín Magaldi. Tori Bates (Asolo Rep: Josephine), who recently made history as the first biracial actress to play the lead in Annie, will be a member of the children's choir.

The cast also features Andrés Acosta, Enrique Brown, Juan Caballer, Sophia Cavalluzzi, Junior Cervila, Ben Chavez, Emma Diner, Mica Domínguez-Robinson, Guadalupe Garcia, Gabriela Gomez, Tori Lee Greenlaw, Kourtney Keitt, Caleb Marshall, Trina Mills, Ryan Modjeski, Brandon Michael Nase, Marina Pires, Kyle Ramon, Santana Umbach, Salvatore Vieira, Sharrod Williams, Kristin Yancy, and Alexa Ziff.

Director/choreographer Josh Rhodes received Outer Critics Circle Award, Astaire Award and Drama Desk Award nominations and an LA Critics Circle Award for his choreography of the hit Broadway production of Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella. He also choreographed the Emmy-award winning production of Sweeney Todd. He received Outer Critics Circle and Astaire Award nominations for his choreography of Bright Star on Broadway.

"The most incredible part of this process has been finding the talent," said Director/Choreographer Josh Rhodes. "The score is extremely demanding and the scale of this production needs endless charisma from the actors – and this cast has enough talent and electrifying charisma to set the stage on fire. At its core, EVITA tells the story of high ambition and the price we pay to climb closer to the light. With the musical's design team, we have created a production that heightens the towering myth of an ambitious and passionate woman, while still allowing history and story to shine through."

"With a cast of 29 and an orchestra

of 12, this production will be one of the largest in Asolo Rep's history," said Asolo Rep Producing Artistic Director Michael Donald Edwards. "I could not be prouder of the diverse, talented, world class company of actors and artists we've assembled to bring this musical to life. With a creative team helmed by Broadway's brilliant Josh Rhodes and a cast led by triple threat Ana Isabelle, who fully embodies the passion of Evita on and off stage, we are thrilled to present a brand new production of this profoundly pertinent and moving musical."

Hailed as "An Artist to Watch" by Billboard magazine, Ana Isabelle shot to stardom as the winner of the popular Univision musical reality show Viva el Sueño, when more than 30 million viewers voted to crown her the next Latin music superstar. She has performed to sold-out stadiums throughout the U.S. and Puerto Rico, including Madison Square Garden. Feature film roles include the upcoming Imprisoned, starring Laurence Fishburne, and the remake of Francis Ford Coppola's Dementia 13. Her Off-Broadway credits include the musical I Like it Like That with Tito Nieves.

Cast Bios

★ **NICK DUCKART** (Juan Perón) is thrilled to be making his Asolo Rep debut. Past Regional credits include: Carmen, An Afro-Cuban Jazz Musical (Directed by Moisés Kaufman, Choreographed by Sergio Trujillo), In the Heights, Next to Normal, Man of La Mancha, Zorba!, Company, Carousel, First Date, Assassins, Venus in Fur, A View From the Bridge, among others. TV credits include: Burn Notice and The Arrangement. www.nickduckart.com

★ **ANA ISABELLE** (Eva Perón) is a Puerto Rican actress, singer/songwriter who won Univision's Viva el Sueño with over 30 million votes and was hailed as "An Artist to Watch" by Billboard Magazine. Ana has released three highly successful albums, including "Mi Sueño", which debuted #3 on Billboard Top Latin Chart. Upcoming Films: Imprisoned, Sol De Medianoche, Dementia 13. TV: Big Dogs, Seasons of Love. NY Theatre: Off Broadway: I Like It Like That with Tito Nieves. Duets with Plácido Domingo, José Feliciano, Luis Fonsi, and Gilberto Santa Rosa. Ana has performed to sold-out audiences throughout Puerto Rico and U.S., including Carnegie Hall. As the first Latina artist, she starred with Chazz Palminteri in the TNT opening of NBA All Star Games. Ana was named Best New Artist at Premios Texas and nominated as Best New Artist in Premios Lo Nuestro.

★ **JUSTIN GREGORY LOPEZ** (Che) is proudly making his debut with Asolo Rep, Justin was most recently seen



playing Usnavi in In The Heights at the Ordway Center (MN) and the Victoria Theatre (OH). Regionally, he was also featured in the 5th Avenue Theatre's revival of Paint Your Wagon, originating the role of Armando, which earned him two Seattle-area award nominations for his work in a supporting role. Other notable credits include off-Broadway's Bare, NBC's Law & Order: SVU, developmental work on Hamilton, Frank Wildhorn's The Song of Bernadette, and the new musical Other World.

★ **JOSH RHODES** (Director/Choreographer) Asolo Rep: Barnum, Working, Yentl, My Fair Lady, Guys and Dolls. On Broadway, Josh choreographed Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella (Outer Critics Circle, Astaire Award, Drama Desk Award nominations and LA Critics Circle Award winner), It Shoulda Been You, First Date, and Bright Star (Outer Critics Circle, Astaire Award nominations). On the West End in London, he choreographed the Emmy award-winning production of Sweeney Todd starring Emma Thompson and Carousel at the English National Opera. Other stage credits include Company starring Neil Patrick Harris (Screenvision/PBS), the Emmy winning production of "Sondheim's 80th Birthday Concert" (PBS), Zorba and Big River (Encores), The Landing (Vineyard Theater), "Broadway: Three Generations" (Kennedy Center), A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum (Shakespeare Theatre Company) and the Drama Desk award-winning production of Working (Prospect Theater). Josh directed Ken Ludwig's Baskerville (Old Globe), Spamalot (5th Avenue), Guys and Dolls (Old Globe) and Celestina Warbeck and the Banshees in Diagon Alley at The Wizarding World of Harry Potter.

Public Programming

★ **Family Day at EVITA is on December 3 at 2 p.m.;** pre-show activities at 1 p.m. at Asolo Repertory Theatre. A special matinee performance offers theatre-loving families an affordable way to see this iconic musical, and welcomes you to learn more about how the magic is made at Asolo Rep. With four tickets for the price of one, bring the whole family! EVITA Family Day is made

possible, in part with lead support from Community Foundation of Sarasota County and additional support from Publix Super Markets Charities.

★ **EVITA IllumiNation Event is on December 6 at 6:30 p.m.** Pre-show reception and a post-show community conversation held on the Mezzanine Performance in the Mertz Theatre. A stimulating series of theatre and conversation exploring the topical and social themes threaded throughout our season. IllumiNation events begin one hour prior to curtain with a reception on the mezzanine, continue with the performance, and conclude with a conversation.

★ **Meet the Actors on December 10 at 2 p.m.** in the Asolo Rep's Mertz Theatre immediately following the 2 p.m. matinee. Ask questions and learn more from members of the cast in a facilitated discussion.

★ **OUT@AsoloRep: EVITA is on December 13 at 6:30 p.m.;** show starts at 7:30 p.m. Held in Asolo Rep's Mezzanine. Now in its eighth season, OUT@AsoloRep is Sarasota's premier cultural event connecting local Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender communities. Enjoy a pre-show reception and learn about participating LGBT organizations, and gain personal insight into EVITA from the creative team and cast members.

★ **The Scoop—One hour prior to every performance of EVITA.** Arrive one hour before curtain to hear the ideas and inspirations that contributed to the making of EVITA.

★ **Tuesday Talkbacks—Every Tuesday throughout the run** in Asolo Rep's Mezzanine. Join in for an intimate post-show discussion with featured actors or guests following every Tuesday performance of EVITA. 