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YOU MUST LOVE HER

*Madonna makes good in the screen adaptation of Evita,
an all-singing extravaganza to die for*

by Boy Mike

Having delivered her first bundle of joy this fall, mama Madonna is ready to unleash the biggest and most anticipated delivery of her career.

Madonna and Co. dazzled and delighted audiences in the Portland area on Jan. 10, with the opening of the potent film adaptation of the international hit musical *Evita* by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice.

Acclaimed director Alan Parker (*Mississippi*

to a gig as a radio soap opera star and eventually work as a film actress. (Similar to the way Madonna moved from Detroit to New York City at 19 with nothing but \$30, a winter coat and a dream of becoming a star.)

Eva becomes the mistress of rising political figure and future president Juan Perón (Jonathan Pryce), eventually marrying him. She establishes herself as an ardent supporter of Perónism and promotes her unique blend of style and democracy on her "Rainbow Tour" of Europe. Her mythic stature continues to grow as she forms The Eva Perón Foundation and works to help and protect the country's poor, mesmerizing a nation of 18 million people for seven years. She was thought of as either saint or sinner—some accused her of sleeping her way to the top (a charge also leveled at Madonna). When she died, the people of Argentina did indeed cry for her. Evita urged her husband before her death to make sure she was never forgotten; now she is more famous than ever.

The film is an emotional roller coaster ride from beginning to end. Most moving is the scene

Cinema

Burning, The Commitments) brings to the screen the powerful tale of Eva Perón, Argentina's most controversial and charismatic first lady of the mid-century, who died of cancer at the age of 33.

Madonna won the coveted part after she sent Parker a passionate, handwritten, four-page letter. She told him why she was the only person who could play Eva Perón and that she desperately wanted the part. Madonna promised to give all her time and effort over a long period of time to make the film; she never went back on her word.

An entirely musical film shot in Argentina, Budapest and Britain, *Evita* is told (or rather sung) by storyteller Che, the everyman character played by Antonio Banderas. Not only is Banderas sexy, but he can belt out a tune, cleverly popping in and out of the scenes in different guises as the film's narrator.

The film opens in 1952, at the announcement of Eva Perón's death. Through flashbacks we see the young Eva at her father's funeral, intercut with intensely moving scenes of Evita in a glass



Madonna as the political Eva Perón

in which Madonna delivers the charged anthem "Don't Cry for Me, Argentina" standing on the same balcony where Evita stood nearly a half century before at the Casa Rosada, the official government house where Evita made many appearances and speeches to her followers. It was

re-enacted to perfection by Madonna, with a cast of 4,000 extras. It seemed as though Evita's spirit inhabited Madonna's body. Seeing the huge crowds chanting "Eva! Eva! Eva!" and waving banners below her must have given Madonna the same feelings that Evita felt. Seeing it on the big screen is breathtaking.

Oh, and let's not forget Madonna's singing—her best ever—and those 85 gorgeous costume changes. Simply delicious.

Do yourself a favor and see *Evita* at a theater rather

than waiting for it on home video, to get the full panoramic effect of the cinematography and crisp, clear sound.

So what is the Material Girl's next project after this milestone in her career? One can only hope for "Madonna: The Evita World Tour."



As the social Evita, with Jonathan Pryce (left) and Antonio Banderas

coffin and a country in chaos and mourning for its beloved fallen saint.

Evita, who rose from poverty to become one of the most powerful women of the 20th century, was born Eva Duarte, the illegitimate daughter of a poor farmer in the small Pampas town of Junín, west of Buenos Aires.

When only 15, Eva meets tango singer Agustín Magaldi (Jimmy Nail) and moves to Buenos Aires. She begins a career as a model, which leads

Evita is playing at Lloyd Cinemas (225-5555, ext. 4600), Eastgate (225-5555, ext. 4617) and Tigard Cinemas (225-5555, ext. 4627).