

TODAY'S MUSIC EDUCATION RESOURCE

# MUSIC ALIVE!

## LISTENING GUIDE

"On The Radio"  
by Donna Summer

The Music of  
**EVITA**

LIVE  
SOUND

It's Instrumental:  
**THE FLUTE**

# ALEX WARREN

An orphaned singer/songwriter finds  
his way in the music world

## SAYWHAT?

The meanings and origins  
of musical sayings

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## FROM THE EDITOR

THIS DECEMBER ISSUE of *Music Alive* pulls back the curtain on the rise of young social media content creator turned pop star Alex Warren, who has been channeling his childhood tragedies into hit songs. One of our writers also takes us on stage for an intimate look at "the soundcheck", and what it takes to create a great sounding live performance.

Then there's a profile of the sung-through musical *Evita*, the 1978 Andrew Lloyd Webber/Tim Rice musical theater production about the life of Argentine political leader Eva Perón, and the songs from it that tell the story of *Evita*'s early life, rise to power, charity work, and controversies. Add to that our "It's Instrumental" tell-all, this time about the flute, a piece on Donna Summer's disco classic "On The Radio", the potpourri of news vignettes we call "Music Notes" and the origin story of the phrase "change your tune," and you've got a reading resource for music students like no other.

We hope that this month's collection and the teacher resources supporting it will enrich your program and the music education experience you provide!

## HEAR THE MUSIC

"Eternity" by Alex Warren

"On The Radio" by Donna Summer

"Syrinx" by Claude Debussy

"Chant de Linos" by Jolivet

"Flute Song" by George Benson and Joe Farrell

"Freedom Rider" by Traffic

"Ruby Tuesday" by The Rolling Stones

**From *Evita*:**

"Oh What a Circus"

"Buenos Aires"

"Another Suitcase in Another Hall"

"Goodnight and Thank You"

"I'd Be Surprisingly Good for You"

"Peron's Latest Flame"

"Don't Cry for Me Argentina"

"Rainbow High"

# A Summary of the National Core Arts Standards

As you use this Teacher's Guide, refer to this summary  
of the 11 NCCAS anchor standards

## **Cr1**

Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work

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## **Cr2**

Organize and develop artistic ideas and work

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## **Cr3**

Refine and complete artistic ideas and work

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## **Pr4**

Analyze, interpret, and select artistic work for presentation

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## **Pr5**

Develop and refine artistic work for presentation

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## **Pr6**

Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work

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## **Re7**

Perceive and analyze artistic work

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## **Re8**

Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work

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## **Re9**

Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work

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## **Cn10**

Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal  
experiences to make art

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## **Cn11**

Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical  
context to deepen understanding

## SOUNDCHECK

National Standards: Pr4, Re7-9

While the spectacle of a professional concert can be mesmerizing, the most important element is, of course, sound – and the most important step to getting great sound is the soundcheck prior to the event. Through this process, sound engineers adapt their equipment and mixes to the widely varied acoustic properties of each venue, ensuring an optimum listening experience for fans. Our story on the subject details the ins and outs of this crucial process and should be of value to anyone who participates in live performance.

### Prepare

By a show of hands, ask the class how many of them have participated in a musical performance that required a sound system. If there was even a single microphone involved, it is virtually guaranteed that some kind of soundcheck was required. What was that soundcheck like? What did students have to do in that soundcheck? Did they understand the purpose, or were they simply listening to their director or sound engineer? Next, ask students to recall the biggest concert they have attended. What type of audio equipment is required for a stadium or amphitheater show? What do students think is required to prepare the sound system for such a performance? After discussing, read the article.

### *Key points in the article:*

- Soundchecks are necessary for every single performance. Even if a touring artist uses the same instruments, equipment, and audio engineers for every concert, there are countless other variables that impact the overall sound. Ultimately, the goal of any artist on tour is to sound equally great in every venue, and that takes meticulous attention to detail.
- There are two key sonic environments at every concert: front-of-house (FOH) and stage. The sound experienced by the audience is often vastly different from what performers on stage hear in their monitor mix. While the FOH engineer is concerned with the overall sound of the music, the monitor engineer provides a unique mix, whether through on stage speakers or in-ear devices, to each performer to ensure they can hear exactly what they need for their specific role.
- There are great differences in the acoustic environments of different venues. Whether they are indoors or outdoors, in a carefully designed listening room or worn club room, the sound engineer must deliver a consistent listening experience for the audience. Because of this, FOH engineers use soundchecks to set appropriate volume levels, manage any echoes or resonant frequencies and tailor the sound to each unique listening environment.

### Begin

Review Vocabulary words from the article below:

- **Vagaries:** unexpected and inexplicable changes in a situation
- **Acoustics:** the qualities of a room that determine how sound is transmitted; the branch of physics concerned with the properties of sound
- **Purview:** the limit of someone's responsibility, interest, or activity
- **Inherent:** existing as a natural or basic part of something
- **Resonant Frequencies:** the natural frequency at which a room or object will vibrate with the greatest amplitude

### Discuss

After reading the article, conduct a classroom discussion about the article. Were they surprised by the complexities of the soundcheck process? How is the process described in the article different than the soundchecks they have experienced personally? Were they aware of the daily demands of touring sound engineers and the vast differences between every venue's acoustics? How does this affect their understanding and appreciation of the concert experience?

Next, discuss how this information might inform their next live performance. Do students feel more prepared for their next soundcheck, or at least have a renewed sense of its importance?

### Expand

To assess student understanding, assign the "All About the Article" worksheet located at [www.musicalive.com/worksheets](http://www.musicalive.com/worksheets). Have students watch the video in the "Learn More" section featuring a professional FOH engineer discussing his soundcheck process and take notes on the steps. For an additional assignment, ask students to find another video where a professional discusses their soundcheck process (there are tons on YouTube!) and take notes. Students should write a short report comparing the two processes, noting any differences in the approach. Do the engineers take the same steps but in a different order? Are there conflicting philosophies or ideas? Do their gear choices impact their decisions?

## MUSIC OF MUSICAL THEATER: *EVITA*

National Standards: Pr4, Re7-9, Cn11

Blending sincerity, cynicism, and a show-stopping rock opera score, *Evita* is a nuanced and emotional examination of the life of Eva Perón, First Lady of Argentina from 1946-1952. Following her rise from humble origins to the upper echelons of power, *Evita* highlights the class tensions that shaped her political trajectory, as well as the duality of her public persona and internal motivations. Share this Andrew Lloyd Weber classic with your class today!

### Prepare

By a show of hands, ask if anyone in class has seen *Evita* or heard any songs from the musical. Play a clip of “Don’t Cry for Me Argentina” to see who recognizes it. To lay the groundwork for this lesson, it could be helpful to give a bit of background on Argentina. Have students find it on the map, lay out a few facts about modern-day Argentina, and present a brief historical picture of the country in the 1940s. After covering these basics, read the article as a class.

#### *Key points in the article:*

- *Evita* is narrated by Che, a shrewd observer who is openly skeptical about Eva Perón’s motivations and public image. While the musical demonstrates the saint-like image that many lower-class Argentinians projected onto her, Che provides a critical peek behind the curtain into Perón’s true nature.

- The tension and triumph in the story are born of the underlying dichotomies in Perón’s life: class struggle between the rich and poor, intertwining threads of romance and ambition, and the contrast between public image and personal life.

- *Evita*’s score is an irresistible blend of rock, Latin, and classical influences, creating a grandiose backdrop to match the larger-than-life image of its namesake. Written by Andrew Lloyd Weber and Tim Rice, the score is full of enduring classics like “Don’t Cry for Me Argentina,” “Buenos Aires,” and “High Flying, Adored.”

### Begin

Review Vocabulary words from the article below:

- **Ambition:** desire and determination to achieve success
- **Cynical:** believing that people are motivated purely by self-interest; distrustful of human sincerity or integrity
- **Reveled:** spoken of with contemptuous or abusive language
- **Poignant:** evoking a keenly felt sense of emotion, especially of bittersweet sadness or regret
- **Paramour:** a lover; can refer to a secret romance

### Discuss

Select 2-3 songs from the list of key songs in the article and play them for the class (all are available for streaming via the Hear The Music playlist at [www.musicalive.com](http://www.musicalive.com)). As a critical listening exercise, play each song twice and have students analyze them from the following angles, stopping after each listen to discuss:

#### **1<sup>st</sup> listen-** Character analysis and plot movement

- What do we learn about Eva and the other characters through the lyrics of the song? How does the song move the plot forward? What feelings does the song evoke?

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> listen-** Musical analysis

- What instruments do students hear in the song? Is the tempo fast, slow, or moderate? Is the music loud, soft, or both? How does the music support the lyrics and feelings of the song?

### Expand

After discussing, have students complete the “All About the Article” worksheet located at [www.musicalive.com/worksheets](http://www.musicalive.com/worksheets).

For a class project, form students into groups and assign one of the key songs from *Evita* that were not discussed previously in class. Have each group listen to their assigned song and analyze it through the same framework (character analysis and plot development/musical analysis). At the end of the class period, have each group present their song and analysis. Allow other groups to ask questions or add their own thoughts after each presentation.

## IT'S INSTRUMENTAL: THE FLUTE

National Standards: Re7-9, Cn11

The light and airy sound of the flute has been a staple of virtually every known musical culture in recorded history. One of the oldest known instruments, the flute has gone through countless incarnations, with different materials, construction methods, and intended uses driving its development. Far from a relic of the past, the flute continues to find a home in new genres of music, with modern players pushing the boundaries of the instrument through technique and technology. Share the rich history of the flute with your class today!

### Prepare

To start, ask if anyone in class plays the flute. If not, are they familiar with the sound of the instrument? Ask students if they can describe the sound of a flute. What do they think of when they hear a flute? What role does the flute play in a band or orchestra? Where do you hear them most often? What styles of music use the flute? After this brief introductory discussion, have students read the article.

### *Key points in the article:*

- The earliest known flutes date back to roughly 35,000 years ago, making it one of the oldest known instruments. That earliest example of a flute, discovered in Germany, is made of bone from a bird's wing. Other materials like wood, reed, and bamboo, were used for various incarnations of ancient flutes.
- The most significant evolution of the flute came in the Classical Era (1750-1820) with Theobald Böhm's invention of the metal flute. His innovative design included multiple keys, giving the instrument a wider range of notes and making it easier to play.
- Ancient flutes were primarily used in spiritual or ritualistic practices, but the modern metal flute found its home in bands and orchestras. Its evolution did not stop with classical and marching music, however. The ever-expanding genres of jazz, rock, pop, and experimental music consistently find new uses for the flute, maintaining the instruments' popularity with new generations.

### Begin

*Review Vocabulary words from the article below:*

- **Contemporary:** belonging to or occurring in the present
- **Sophisticated:** developed to a high degree of complexity
- **Prominent:** very noticeable, important, or famous
- **Melancholy:** a feeling of pensive sadness, typically with no obvious cause
- **Captivate:** to attract others, fascinating or enchanting them

### Discuss

After reading the article, listen to the following tracks from the Hear the Music playlist at [www.musicalive.com](http://www.musicalive.com):

- "Syrinx" by Debussy
- "Flute Song" by George Benson and Joe Farrell

After listening to the examples, discuss the flute performances heard in each song. What words would students use to describe the flute performance in each song? What role does the flute play in each piece? Does the flute play a spotlight or background role in these examples? How are the approaches different from song to song?

The "Music Review Journal" found at [www.musicalive.com/worksheets](http://www.musicalive.com/worksheets) can also be used to assess students' understanding of each song.

### Expand

To assess student understanding, assign the "All About the Article" worksheet located at [www.musicalive.com/worksheets](http://www.musicalive.com/worksheets).

As a supplement to the lesson, assign a research project about the flute in modern music. Have students identify a modern artist in any genre that uses the flute in their music. Prominent examples include pop star Lizzo, experimental rockers King Gizzard and the Lizard Wizard, jazz/rock pioneer, Jean Luc Ponty, Jethro Tull's Ian Anderson, and many more. Have students select a contemporary flute song and write a short report on how the instrument is used in the song, using similar analysis to the questions from the 'Discuss' section of this lesson plan.

## LISTENING GUIDE: “ON THE RADIO” by Donna Summer

National Standards: Pr4, Re7-9

All hail The Queen of Disco! Donna Summer is one of the defining voices of the disco era, channeling both power and vulnerability through her unforgettable hooks and vocals. A generational hit was, perhaps, inevitable when she teamed up with legendary producer Giorgio Moroder in the late '70s. Originally written for the soundtrack of the film *Foxes*, “On The Radio” became an international success and stands as a highlight in Summer’s catalogue. Explore the inner workings of this disco smash with your students today!

### Prepare

Before listening to the song, ask the class what they know about disco music. What defines the sound of disco music? What instruments are often heard on disco records? What makes it so danceable? Next, ask if any students in class are familiar with Donna Summer or “On The Radio.” Play the record in its entirety for the class and encourage careful listening. Then, read the article as a class.

### *Key points in the article:*

- “On The Radio” is a perfect encapsulation of the talents of both Donna Summer and her co-writer, Italian producer Giorgio Moroder. Summer’s vocals are transcendent, shifting effortlessly between anthemic power and melancholy introspection. Moroder’s production is a disco masterclass, silky smooth and destined to light up any dance floor.

- The song was a huge commercial success, reaching No. 5 on the *Billboard* Hot 100 chart and No. 9 on the Soul chart in the United States. “On The Radio” also had significant international play, reaching No. 2 in Canada and charting in many other countries.

- Beyond the fabulous vocal performance and outstanding production, the x-factor for “On The Radio” lies in its ability to turn personal introspection into something universal. Its exploration of love’s complexities resonates with listeners to this day, cementing it as a classic of the disco era.

### Begin

*Review Vocabulary words from the article below:*

- **Exuberance:** the quality of being full of energy, excitement, and cheerfulness
- **Encapsulate:** to express or show the most important facts about something
- **Nostalgia:** a sentimental longing or wistful affection for the past, typically for a period or place with happy personal associations
- **Permeate:** to spread through something and be present in every part of it
- **Illustrious:** well known, respected, and admired for past achievements

### Discuss

After reading the article, ask students if they missed anything mentioned in the article on their initial listen to “On The Radio.” Then, play the record for the class again as they read along with the listening guide. Tell the class to listen for the elements described in each timestamp in the guide.

At relevant points, pause the recording and talk to students about what just occurred in the song. Ask questions like “What effect does it have when the tempo increases before the first chorus?” or “How do the horn fills interact with the lead vocal?” or “How does the energy of the second verse compare to the first verse?” After listening to the full song, ask students to identify their favorite part of the song. What instruments are most important in different sections of the song? How does the energy of the song build?

### Expand

To further explore the world of disco and expand on the musical themes of this lesson, have students select another classic disco song (it might be a good idea to assemble a list of 5-10 songs for them to choose from) and write a short analysis. This should include a short summary of the artist’s career and cultural significance, the instruments they hear on the record, lyrical themes, and notes on the overall mood and atmosphere of the song. Next, students will compare their chosen song to “On The Radio.” Do both records use the same instruments? How do their tempos differ? Are the lyrics about a similar topic? How does the lead singer’s voice compare to Donna Summer?

To assess student understanding, assign the “All About the Article” worksheet located at [www.musicalive.com/worksheets](http://www.musicalive.com/worksheets).

## SONG OF THE MONTH: “ETERNITY” by Alex Warren

National Standards: Pr4, Re7-9, Cn11

Sometimes the biggest success stories are built on the backs of unspeakable tragedy. That’s certainly the case for Alex Warren, the pop sensation behind smash hit “Ordinary” and our Song Of The Month “Eternity.” Despite the struggles of his childhood and adolescence, Warren found his route to viral fame and translated his following into a thriving music career. Learn how this breakout star blurred the lines between online content creator and musical artist, choosing a different creative path without rejecting the portals that brought him to prominence.

### Prepare

By a show of hands, ask if anyone in class is familiar with Alex Warren. If so, ask how they know about him and where they first discovered him. The streaming and airplay dominance of his single “Ordinary” is the most likely route at this point, but Warren’s YouTube and TikTok presence as a social media content creator was massive before he ever released a song. Ask students if they can think of any other content creators that have made the transition to a legitimate music career. Next, play a snippet of Warren’s “Eternity” and ask if anyone in class has heard it before. How would they describe the style and genre? Next, read the article as a class.

### *Key points in the article:*

- Warren’s early life was defined by loss and hardship. By the time he reached late adolescence, Warren had experienced the tragic death of both parents, homelessness, and a host of other difficulties. Despite this, he managed to create wildly popular content on YouTube and TikTok, eventually joining the infamous Hype House with other content creators like him.

- After a few years at Hype House, Warren began to long for a more authentic outlet for his creativity. He began to focus on his music, independently releasing a few singles that performed well. This led to a recording contract with Atlantic Records in 2022.

- Warren’s big break came in 2025 in the wake of his debut EP *You’ll Be Alright, Kid* (Chapter 1). The second single, “Ordinary,” caught fire and began charting internationally hitting No. 1 in multiple countries. His fanbase grew rapidly, and his earnest examinations of grief and loss resonated with audiences around the globe. His debut album (which shares the same title as his EP) only increased his profile, and a concurrent international tour has been a huge success.

### Begin

Review Vocabulary words from the article below:

- **Sheen:** a quality of shininess or lustrousness; brightness
- **Churn:** to produce with great effort or violent motion
- **Embody:** to represent a quality or an idea exactly
- **Mystique:** a quality of being special in a mysterious and attractive way
- **Underscore:** to emphasize the importance of something

### Discuss

Play “Eternity” for the class and encourage active listening (or even note-taking!). After listening to the full song, ask the class to identify fundamental elements of the song and use their responses as a gateway to deeper exploration. For instance, ask about instruments they hear, the tempo, and the style/genre of the record.

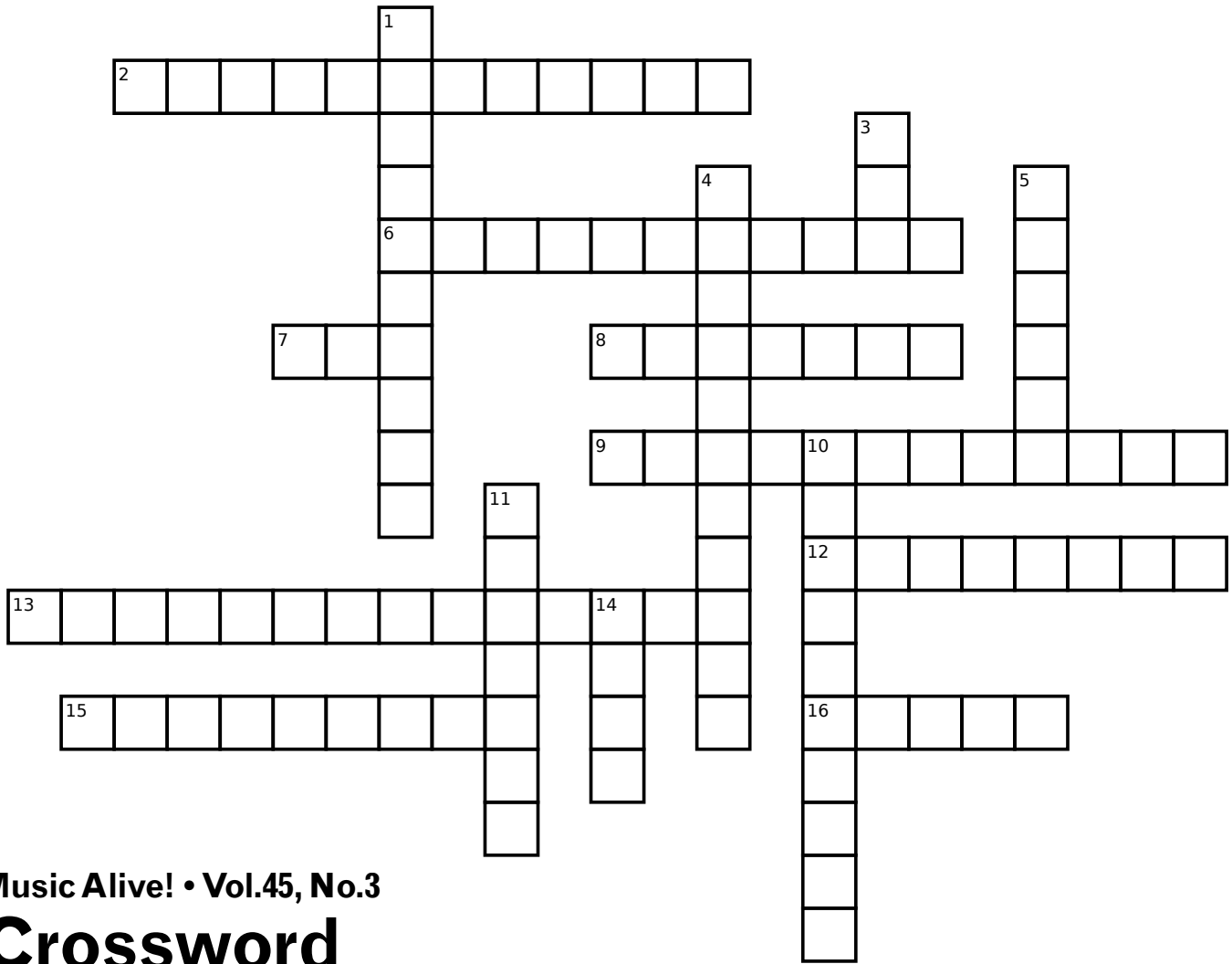
Next, explore the lyrical themes of the song. Do they resonate with the class? Are there any lines that stand out? How does Warren represent the feelings of loss and the slowing of time? Why do students think fans of the song use it for happy occasions like weddings, despite the mournful message of the song?

Next, encourage more abstract analysis. How do the sounds of the instruments fit together? What atmosphere or mood does the music create? How does this complement the vocals? What feelings do they get from the song? How would students describe Warren’s voice and musical style, and why do they think it resonates with so many listeners?

### Expand

After analyzing “Eternity” together, ask the class to think of other songs with a similar lyrical theme. There is no shortage of songs about loss and yearning for something that is gone. At the end of class, have students write down suggestions for another song exploring similar lyrical themes. Select one for analysis. Next class period, follow the same steps outlined in this lesson plan (establish familiarity with the artist, listen to the song and analyze individually, discuss as a class) with the new song. Afterwards, compare and contrast the new song with “Eternity” and discuss the similarities and differences. How do the two artists take unique angles on the same subject matter, both lyrically and musically?

After discussing, have students complete the “All About the Article” worksheet located at [www.musicalive.com/worksheets](http://www.musicalive.com/worksheets).



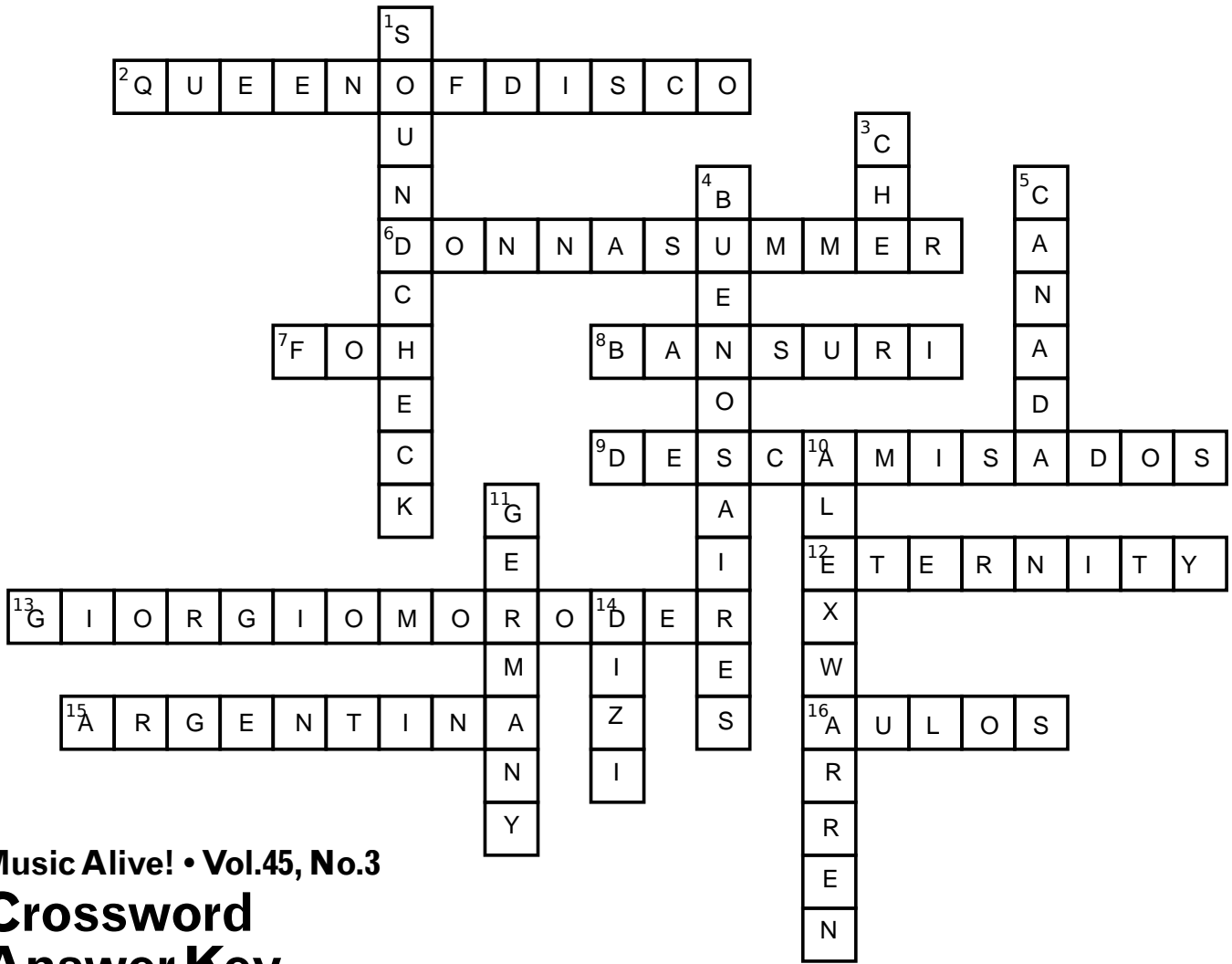
**Music Alive! • Vol.45, No.3**  
**Crossword**

**Down:**

1. The process where sound engineers check equipment and tune the sound system before a concert
3. the cynical narrator of Evita
4. The city Eva Perón moved to as a teenager
5. Country where "On The Radio" hit No. 2 on the charts
10. Former TikTok star and Singer of "Ordinary"
11. Country where the oldest known flute was discovered
14. Chinese bamboo flute used in traditional music and storytelling

**Across:**

2. Donna Summer's nickname
6. Singer of "On The Radio"
7. The abbreviation for "front-of-house"
8. Indian bamboo flute used in classical music and spiritual practices
9. Eva Perón's nickname for the poor
12. Song of the Month, discusses grief in a hymn-like way
13. Producer and co-writer of "On The Radio"
15. The country where Eva Perón served as First Lady from 1946-1952
16. Greek flute made with two pipes



**Music Alive! • Vol.45, No.3**  
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**Answer Key**

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# Word Find

H G I O R G I O M O R O D E R  
E F J T W H M U U I H S T W M  
M E V I T A X T D J M Y D L E  
D I S C O B Y K N E S O O H T  
P G B B J A R G E N T I N A E  
H M A H U S R M C Y P H N W R  
Q K N H J B A N S U R I A P N  
D E S C A M I S A D O S S P I  
A D N C J Y Z D Y Q Z B U X T  
U I B W V D Q S Y S B M M M Y  
L Z S O U N D C H E C K M I O  
O I G W O N R P V S U U E X Z  
S Q U Z T P W J L B K L R E E  
E R A L E X W A R R E N W R J  
B O S I B U E N O S A I R E S

Giorgio Moroder

Buenos Aires

Alex Warren

Eternity

Descamisados

Soundcheck

Argentina

Mixer

Donna Summer

Bansuri

Disco

Aulos

Evita

Dizi

# Word Find Answer Key



Giorgio Moroder	Descamisados	Donna Summer	Evita
Buenos Aires	Soundcheck	Bansuri	Dizi
Alex Warren	Argentina	Disco	
Eternity	Mixer	Aulos	

# LINKS

## Learn More

### *Cover Artist*

Watch Alex Warren discuss fame and grief on *The Jennifer Hudson Show*:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BjtYBy6\\_QcA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BjtYBy6_QcA)

### *Song of the Month*

Watch the official “Eternity” music video:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jXqf3uqLkkU&list=RDjXqf3uqLkkU&start\\_radio=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jXqf3uqLkkU&list=RDjXqf3uqLkkU&start_radio=1)

### *Evita*

Watch Antonio Banderas perform “Oh What a Circus”  
at Andrew Lloyd Webber’s Royal Albert Hall Celebration:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d56xwT8LZ4g&list=RDd56xwT8LZ4g&start\\_radio=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d56xwT8LZ4g&list=RDd56xwT8LZ4g&start_radio=1)

### *It’s Instrumental*

Watch the Burkart Flutes manufacturing process for flute bodies:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2cKU42CYIgU&t=40s>

See Emmanuel Pahud perform a spellbinding rendition of Debussy’s “Syrinx”:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YEyKM13yf\\_4&t=3s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YEyKM13yf_4&t=3s)

### *Listening Guide*

See Donna Summer perform “On The Radio” live from *VH1 Presents Live & More Encore!*:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ICgo-St6IXA&list=RDICgo-St6IXA&start\\_radio=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ICgo-St6IXA&list=RDICgo-St6IXA&start_radio=1)

### *Soundcheck*

How a pro audio engineer runs a soundcheck:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n-4CviCl0Do>