

# Starlight

BROADWAY

## PRESS TALKING POINTS



### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Celebrating its 50th Anniversary, a new mesmerizing production of the iconic musical phenomenon returns to the stage. Originally staged by London’s Regent’s Park Open Air Theatre and helmed by the acclaimed director **Timothy Sheader** (*Crazy for You*, *Into the Woods*) and cutting-edge choreographer **Drew McOnie** (*King Kong*, *Strictly Ballroom*), this production won the 2017 Olivier Award for Best Musical Revival garnering unprecedented reviews and accolades. Appealing to both theater audiences and concert music fans, this production pays tribute to the historic 1971 Billboard Album of the Year while creating a modern, theatrical world that is uniquely fresh and inspiring.

With lyrics and music by Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, and Tony winners **Tim Rice** and **Andrew Lloyd Webber**, *Jesus Christ Superstar* is set against the backdrop of an extraordinary series of events during the final weeks in the life of Jesus Christ as seen through the eyes of Judas. Reflecting the rock roots that defined a generation, the legendary score includes ‘I Don’t Know How to Love Him,’ ‘Gethsemane,’ and ‘Superstar.’

### ABOUT THE STORY

- *Jesus Christ Superstar* tells the story of Jesus Christ’s last seven days on Earth.
- Jesus’ last days are told from the perspective of Judas Iscariot, the well-known “traitor” of Jesus Christ.
- The personal relationship between Jesus and Judas, as well as Jesus and Mary Magdalene, are given special attention in this 1970s-inspired rock opera.

MORE

- Mary Magdalene is shown as a woman who falls in love with Jesus in the musical, a plot point that strays from the story found in the Bible.
- Throughout Jesus' journey in the show, themes of humility, fame, loyalty, and more are communicated through song, telling a story that many are familiar with in an unfamiliar but captivating way.
- Enemies of Jesus like Pontius Pilate and King Herod are featured in the story, but the depiction of these enemies varies on stages across the world.
- King Herod has been portrayed in various ways, from a TV chat show host in the UK Arena Tour to a music video sensation in the Open Air Theatre production.
- *Jesus Christ Superstar's* ending strays from the biblical story found in the New Testament, which many have said is a statement about Jesus' identity and has been a point of curiosity for audiences over the years.

### ABOUT THE MUSIC

- *Jesus Christ Superstar* was first written as an album by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice in 1970, later inspiring the 1971 rock opera that holds the same name.
- Lloyd Webber referred to the show as a "musical radio play," saying it should be listened to for all 90 minutes without break—which is how this production is presented.
- *Jesus Christ Superstar* is one of the few Broadway musicals that does not have an intermission.
- The soundtrack of *Jesus Christ Superstar* pulls from music of the time, interweaving funk, gospel, rock and soul into music that tells the story of Jesus Christ's crucifixion.
- The rock album reached No. 1 on the Billboard charts in February 1971.
- The character of Judas Iscariot in the stage show was inspired by Bob Dylan's lyric, "Did Judas Iscariot have God on his side?" from the song "With God on Our Side."
- Rice wanted to humanize the story's infamous villain through his story and musical journey during the show.

### THE BASICS

- *Jesus Christ Superstar* premiered on Broadway on Oct. 12, 1971.
- The show has had three Broadway revivals in 1977, 2000, and 2012.
- After the 1971 premiere, *Jesus Christ Superstar* was nominated for five Tony Awards.
- In 2018, the televised NBC production starring Jon Legend as Jesus led to Emmy nominations and wins for both Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice.
- This show held the record for longest-running musical in the West-end from 1972 to 1980 until it was eclipsed by *Cats*.

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