

SHOW INTEL

Season 2023–2024 | Issue 5: Jesus Christ Superstar

"A GORGEOUS, THRILLING,
HEAVENLY MUSICAL."
—THE GUARDIAN

"AN ADRENALINE-PUMPING
PRODUCTION."
—THE NEW YORK TIMES

JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR

50TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR

LYRICS BY TIM RICE
MUSIC BY ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER



Watch the trailer for
Jesus Christ Superstar

Photo Credit: Evan Zimmerman for MurphyMade

ABOUT THE SHOW

Based on the Gospels' accounts of the Passion and primarily seen through the eyes of Judas, *Jesus Christ Superstar* is set against the backdrop of an extraordinary series of events during the final weeks in the life of Jesus Christ.

With the iconic lyrics and music by Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, and Tony Award winners Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber, this fresh production is directed by Timothy Sheader and includes such hits as "I Don't Know How to Love Him," "Superstar," "Gethsemane," "Hosanna," and "Everything's Alright."



Photo Credit: Evan Zimmerman for MurphyMade

TIMELINE OF A SUPER-HIT!

Jesus Christ Superstar was originally released as a rock concept album, but quickly became one of the world's most popular shows.

1970: The rock concept album, *Jesus Christ Superstar* is released.

1971: The album tops the Billboard charts, and the musical opens on Broadway.

1972: It opens in London and runs for 8 years, becoming the UK's longest-running musical at the time.

1973: The film adaptation is released, directed by Norman Jewison (*Fiddler on the Roof*, *Moonstruck*).

1977, 2000, 2012: Successful Broadway revivals reach new generations of audiences.

2016: New staging by director Timothy Sheader at the Regent's Park Open Air Theatre in London wins an Olivier Award for Best Musical Revival.

2018: NBC Live production airs on Easter Sunday, starring Sara Bareilles and John Legend.

2021: The Timothy Sheader production begins its US tour.



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FUN FACTS

- Conceived as a rock opera, the show has a dance-concert feel, with very little dialogue.
- The original concept album was so popular that when it became a show, audiences were already familiar with the music and the show had an eager fan base.
- According to theater legend, Andrew Lloyd Webber wrote the main theme of “Superstar” on a restaurant napkin when it first popped into his head.
 - A line from Bob Dylan’s 1964 song, “With God on Our Side” inspired the show’s depiction of Judas.
 - “I Don’t Know How to Love Him” was based on a ballad Lloyd Webber and Rice had written earlier called “Kansas Morning” — they rewrote the lyrics, and the song became one of the most popular numbers in the album and show.

Photo Credit: Evan Zimmerman for MurphyMade

ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER & TIM RICE: A MUSICAL COLLABORATION

Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice first met in 1965, when they were 17 and 20 years old. Rice was a law student, and Webber was a student composer looking for a lyricist. Their first foray into writing together resulted in a musical, *The Likes of Us*, which did not find any backing (and was not performed until 2005).

Despite this setback, the two continued collaborating and wrote the lighthearted *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* for a school choir (1968). The work became popular, and an album was released, followed by West End productions in 1973 and 1974.

Meanwhile, Lloyd Webber and Rice had also been working on their next piece, *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1970). **They took their idea for a rock musical about the last days of Jesus of Nazareth and transformed it into a concept album. Paring their original composition down into an 87-minute recording helped them streamline what would eventually become the musical’s score.**

Their last major collaboration was the Tony Award-winning Best Musical *Evita*, also initially released as a concept album (1976) prior to its London (1978) and Broadway (1979) stage debuts.

Tim Rice went on to write for successful musicals and films such as *Chess*, *Aladdin*, *The Lion King*, and *Beauty and the Beast*.

Andrew Lloyd Webber’s long list of hits includes *Cats*, *Starlight Express*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Sunset Boulevard*, and *School of Rock*.

Both Lloyd Webber and Rice are among the select few to have earned an EGOT (Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, and Tony Awards). They were knighted in 1992 and 1994 respectively.



Photo Credit: Bernard Gotfryd



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