



# Adelaide Theatre Guide

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## **JESUS CHRIST, SUPERSTAR** **The Gilbert & Sullivan Society of SA** **Her Majesty's Theatre**

Until 6 Nov 2010

Review by Maggie Wood

David Lampard and his team have taken "Jesus Christ, Superstar" and restored it to what it should be. It's been treated by local companies for some years as a musical, but it's not, it's a rock opera and the absolute treat of having rock voices sing the three main principal roles was a balm to the ears. Music Director is Ross Curtis.

The set, designed by Lampard, is reminiscent of the urban ghetto, while the highly stylised costumes make clever demarcations between the different strata of society. There does seem to be a sci-fi influence on costuming in some cases, but it's pointless trying to analyse the reasoning when you're constantly captivated by the show. And that's the key to this production.

There are no wasted moments, no spare space. Every moment has something important happening, and Lampard has wrung the very best performances from both his professional principals and largely amateur ensemble.

Set changes are seamless – practically invisible – and this means that great kudos should also go to Stage Manager, Amanda Rowe, ASM Greg Donhart and their crew.

And so to the performances – where does one start at a delectable buffet?

Danny Lopresto as Judas has a voice that will exfoliate your ears in the most delicious ways. His portrayal of Judas, ranging from the concerned, to the desperate, to the sobbingly regretful, is always honest, always true. His voice caters easily to the demands of the role, and he imbues Judas with a redemptive humanity, despite his actions.

Sarah Lloyd is an exquisite Mary Magdalen who carries the dual qualities of vulnerability and brassiness. Her hero-worship love for Jesus explores the confusion of someone who has no problem with sexuality, but this engagement of the heart and mind is quite something else.

Luke Kennedy as Jesus is deceptive. On first glance, one wonders how he could possibly carry the role off, and then he begins to sing and all qualms are settled. His tortuous hours in the Garden of Gethsemane are portrayed so skilfully that a stunned audience had some seconds of silence when the music finished before bursting into wild applause.

Joel Valenti took his place amongst the top performers with a stunning vocal as Pilate, alongside Kent Green's cheeky Herod – a particularly well-balanced and imaginative scene that saw us still hating Herod while laughing all the way.

This production of "Jesus Christ, Superstar" will be spoken about for some time to come in SA theatre circles. In some ways it will be seen as the definitive production and benchmark of what can be achieved locally, and it will have given our local performers and technicians an inkling of what they can produce. For having pushed those boundaries it deserves respect. For the sheer magic of the show, it demands your attendance.