

# THE LAST WORD

**“They should have stuck closer to the script,”** were the words emanating from the gentleman walking behind me as I left the Regent Theatre. ‘Jesus Christ,’ I thought was not a production which could have met this theatergoer’s wishes otherwise the County Theatre Group would have been charged with assault and murder. The ‘script’ can of course be found in the Bible and it makes fascinating reading. You should read it sometime. You’ll find it near the end of the book, and as you read it, remember something which my gentleman had chosen to ignore; the ‘script’ you will find there is ALSO full of poetic license, metaphor and other literary devices which enhance rather than detract from the events it portrays.

So what about the script of Jesus Christ Super Star? There is little that can be said about the music of Andrew Lloyd Webber or the lyrics by Tim Rice that has not already been said about this rock opera by critics in places like New York and London. The production by The County Theatre Group stretched their capabilities to the limit and beyond, and they are to be congratulated for attempting a production of this complexity. The highlights for me were the excellent use of minimalist scenery allowing the production to flow seamlessly from location to location. The lighting was good and the choreography was excellent, even allowing for the minor memory lapses by one or two of the lead dancers; However, the sound was

for me the disappointment of the evening. The lyrics sung by some of the smaller choral groups were not effectively transmitted to the audience and I suspect the reason for this was twofold: Lack of mic pick up, and also lack of vocal power lead to “quiet” sections in an otherwise enthusiastic and lively performance, with music provided by an adequate ensemble led by the talented Greg Garrett. Props to you Greg!

The vocal superstar of the production was obviously Tom Wayne Harris who played ‘Simon,’ and this was echoed by the audience who appreciated his vocal range and power. Kevin Pierson as ‘Jesus’ was good, and Kevin Stonehouse as ‘King Herod’ and John Stainton as ‘Pilate’ excelled themselves with powerful animated performances.

For me at least the production suffered greatly by the performances of two key characters, Jeff Nelson as ‘Judas,’ and Daiva Zalnieriunas as ‘Mary Magdalene.’ Giving Jeff the benefit of the doubt, I suspect that he may have had a throat condition which prevented him from singing in the upper vocal ranges of his part as his crackly and broken rendition detracted greatly from the amazing lyrics. His mid-range was powerful and perhaps the part could have been re-written to satisfy his vocal strength rather than highlight a weakness. Mary, Mary oh Mary, where were you when we needed you? A weak and sometimes ‘flat’ voice left the audience in limbo, and your rendition of the highlight song, “I don’t Know How to Love Him,” left the audience wondering how to love you, and confirmed for me that you were mis-cast.

No review would be complete without a mention about the young people in the cast. They went about their role with enthusiasm, feeling, aplomb, and added the ‘X factor’ in this rock opera which I hope will play to packed houses for its five day run.

On other observations more obtuse, the budget delivered in Queen’s Park last week fizzled. It gave the opposition cause to claim that Ontario’s still-growing deficit, now according to Stats Canada at \$113 Billion, should have been given more consideration in preparing this budget. The bucket is still leaking badly (negative \$4.6 Billion in 2005) and yet we have people and industries clamoring for a greater share of a non-existent pot of gold. What does \$113 Billion mean in REAL money? The interest paid by Ontarians on this debt is so large that alone, it could fund **twice** the number of hospital corporations (169) in current service. The spending HAS to slow down, and those who seek to increase their share of Government hand-outs are doing so at the expense of future generations. Canada, in certain industries, is becoming uncompetitive in World markets as future eco-

## PUZZLE SOLUTION

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

### ACROSS

- 1 UNCLA-(MP - E) -D  
6 ailING OTter  
9 LAPEL (le pal rev.)  
10 TRUMP CAR - D  
11 BISTROS (anag. Rob sits)  
12 FINE - RY  
13 MOOD (doom rev.)  
14 REPLICATE (anag. replace it)

- 18 CONCUBINE (anag. cub no nice)  
19 PA-(I) -R  
21 AFIELD (anag. failed)  
23 T-(AX - F) -REE  
26 INSAT-(I) -ATE (anag. in a state)  
27 A - BEAM  
28 SAT - IN  
29 MOTHEATEN (anag. men hate to)

### DOWN

- 1 UG-(L) -Y (anag. guy)  
2 CAPRI - CORN  
3 AGLETS (anag. Al gets)  
4 POT - POUR - RI  
5 D - RUM  
6 IMP - LICIT  
7 GRAVE  
8 T - EDDY - BEAR  
13 MECHANICS (anag. mischance)  
15 PREV-(AL - (la rev.)) -ENT  
16 A - MAZE - MEN - T  
17 BULLET - IN  
20 A - F - LAME (anag. meal)  
22 IN - SET  
24 H - ARM  
25 O - MEN

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