



NICK BRANNAM
DIRECTOR | CHOREOGRAPHER

PRODUCTION	<i>Jesus Christ Superstar</i>
COMPANY	Basingstoke Amateur Theatrical Society
PUBLISHED BY	Basingstoke Gazette
DATE OF PUBLICATION	18 th May 2014

Talented newcomers mesh brilliantly with established BATS performers in the amateur group's latest production.

Spotting some of the regulars will, however, be a little more difficult in *Jesus Christ Superstar* (JCS), given their unusually hirsute state. There are certainly some excellent 'hippy' wigs on show!

Director and choreographer Ray Jeffery's vision sensibly avoids dressing the limited space of the Haymarket stage with anything other than the supporting cast, fantastic lighting and a bare minimum of props.

In JCS, the followers / mob are essential, supporting, hounding, rejecting and mourning Jesus (Jamie Trick) as events progress towards what's an undeniably moving finale, and they, clad in flower power ensembles and army fatigues, or in various guises, are all the set dressing that's required.

And yet, amongst the chaos of the crowd, there are also wonderful little moments to savour: the young Jesus prays in a spotlight; as an adult, he heals a child; and Judas (an impassioned Stephen Westwood) accepts the blood money from Caiaphas (the spot-on Russell Barrett) and Annas (a wonderfully creepy Shaun Blake).

This 1970 rock opera also relies on its sound and a terrific delivery of its distinctive, funky, score, and musical director Rachel Glover and the team certainly achieve that.

Quieter moments are typically anchored by the perfectly tender Laura Newborough as Mary Magdelene, whilst Paul Morris has a lot of fun tottering on gold platforms in King Herod's Song, which boasts irresistible additional choreography by Nick Brannam.

Also making an impact are a powerful Gavin Brooker as Pontius Pilate, and Joe Humberstone and Ian Moseley, both of whom have terrific voices, as apostles.

Trick's performance has a wonderful power for the duration, escalating in impact as he utterly breaks hearts with the show's standout number Gethsemane.

