



NICK BRANNAM
DIRECTOR | CHOREOGRAPHER

PRODUCTION	<i>Jesus Christ Superstar</i>
COMPANY	Basingstoke Amateur Theatrical Society
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It was more than 40 years ago that I last saw the original London production and I was delighted to attend BATS' production. Setting the action in the hippy, flower power era, the show was full of vibrant set-pieces and terrific vocals.

In the role of Judas, Stephen Westwood sang wonderfully and effectively portrayed the ever-present brooding and conflicted character. Jamie Trick was outstanding as Jesus, handling the vocal acrobatics with skill and style; Gethsemane was brilliant. Laura Newborough as Mary Magdalene sang beautifully, effectively depicting how she was torn between devoted follower and her feelings for Jesus.

Gavin Brooker as the harassed Pontius Pilate was superb – solid and completely believable, while Russell Barratt's powerful Caiaphas was the true éminence grise behind the arrest and trial. Alongside him, Shaun Blake's Annas was remarkable, really nailing the character in every sense, and they were excellently backed up by the other priests. Paul Morris, complete with gold lame suit and teetering on gold platform boots was a delight as Herod and the several smaller roles were all sung well.

A rather sparse but effective set, with its scaffolding upper level was used well and director Ray Jeffery used the chorus to the maximum, with inventive choreography, movement and effects (occasionally distracting from the main action).

Musical director Rachel Glover and her orchestra coped well with the complex and compelling score, but unusually for the Haymarket, on the Thursday night at least, the sound was not well balanced at times.

Excellent though all the individual elements were – all the scenes themselves were done well – when put together it felt a bit disjointed and somewhere along the way for me at least, I felt sometimes the interaction of the characters and the real passion of the piece was lacking at times. That said – a fine piece of theatre and another style conquered by BATS – congratulations.

Trevor Dobson