

Bible Belting: "Jesus Christ Superstar," at the District Theatre through July 31

Written by Thom White
Monday, 11 July 2011 06:00

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Judas is angry. Jesus is angry. Everyone's really angry in the Harrison Hilltop Theatre's *Jesus Christ Superstar*

Okay, maybe not everyone, but there was a *lot* of anger going around during Friday night's performance – and, from some of the cast members, little else. Granted, composer Andrew Lloyd Webber's and lyricist Tim Rice's Biblical characters are rather one-note, due to the pair's failure to flesh out the personalities of Jesus and his disciples and detractors. Yet while most of director David Turley's actors don't do much to improve upon that failing, they do sing the hell out of this rock opera, and that's what really makes the show worth seeing.

Webber's and Rice's musical incites some controversy, due to its creators liberally altering the details of the scriptural story, and ending the account of Jesus' final few days with his crucifixion but without including his resurrection. Unfortunately, Turley's take – with the hippie look of *Hair* and the minimalist feel of

Godspell –

actually takes some of

Superstar

's edge off, despite this show's employment a female Judas. There's little examination of the underlying points of the piece, the psychology of Jesus and his disciples, and the level-headed questioning of Jesus' choices.

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