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## ***Jesus Christ Superstar***

Reviewed by Dan Wolfe

### **'Superstar': top-of-the-line casting from major roles to chorus and bits**

BURLINGTON — Lyric Theatre Company's production of *Jesus Christ Superstar* was an unusually tight production, benefiting from on-the-nose

casting in the major roles, and no weaknesses in the chorus and the minor players.

Don Patrick O'Connell was a top-of-the-line Judas Iscariot, both in his acting and singing. Serena Magnan was a Mary Magdalene of pathos, and she was not a victim of sexploitation here has she has too often been. Billy Hannon, Jr. played Jesus well, and sang the part with ease, which is no mean feat. John Alexander, Brett Thompson and Kathy Richards all handled their parts easily and creatively.

The sets could have easily taken on a life of their own – I have seen shows where the sets were the head protagonist, much to the loss of the show, but even though the sets were changed many times, they were never obtrusive, and they always served to help the show and not to submerge it.

Jeffrey Fox, who directed, and Stan Greenberg, who conducted, as well as choreographer Timna Dulmer all deserve credit for helping to mask the weaknesses in the show. It is no surprise to me that Webber sought in *Evita* to write an "opera" that was front to back music without any speaking, because the major flaw in this work is its jerky movement that desperately needs bridges.

Kudos to Lyric for this success. Next show on the horizon: *The King and I* in the spring.