

## Jesus Christ Superstar — A View From The Pew.

For any amateur company to produce a musical is a major undertaking; to produce one in a church creates added challenges. These challenges were more than met by St Dunstons & Co with their staging of Andrew Lloyd Webber's Jesus Christ Superstar.

Produced by Kathryn Beeken, with a strong team of principals and supporting cast, the audience were treated to a spectacular feast of movement, lights, sound and music. The acting was convincing all round, but special mention must go to Jason Allen (Jesus) and Jimmy Burton-Iles (Judas) whose performances were outstanding.

Using a church rather than a traditional theatre meant extra challenges for the choreographer, but Rachel Elliott used every available part of St Dunstons to great effect with members of the chorus and dancers playing their various parts with conviction.

The eleven piece band lead by musical director, Brian Gipps, captured each moment of drama and filled St Dunstons to the rafters with a wall of Lloyd Webber sound.

The combined use of moving lights, smoke, special effects and back projection is essential for this production and the spectacular lighting rig, which would not have looked out of place at Proms In The Park, more than lived up to expectation — congratulations to all the stage crew.

Overall, St Dunstons & Co's production was memorable but if one had to chose one moment it would have to be the crucifixion and the bearing of Christ's body from the cross. It was both moving and thought provoking.

This was an evening where all the elements came together to make it a success. Kathryn Beeken must be congratulated on a wonderful show and great credit to her for her first production.

Mike Caridia

## Praise for show that dazzled

I AM writing in praise of the Jesus Christ Superstar which we saw recently.

We bought the tickets because we believe in supporting local productions, and because we thought it might brighten up a dull February evening. We were stunned by what we saw.

It was simply the most breathtaking local production I have seen for a long time. The lighting and atmospherics were brilliant, with the thoughtful addition of side-screens for those with a poor view of the stage.

There were of course one or two hiccups with timing and microphone problems, but these were irrelevant and hardly worth a mention.

This was a spellbinding, emotional experience such as is rarely seen, even among the always excellent CODS performances.

We saw the London production a few years ago, and it did not compare with what I saw on Saturday night. Well done CODS, and well done St Dunstons for superb organisation and staging. How lucky we are in Cranbrook to have such talented, innovative entertainment on our own doorstep.

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