

# Jesus Christ Superstar

Midland Center for the Arts

Review by J.I. Martineau

Arts Saginaw

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Whoa! As the old saying goes....Did! Not! See! That! Coming!

Am referring to the gutsy and unsettling ending of the "Jesus Christ Superstar" production at Midland Center for the Arts, directed by Emily Anderson.

And we will leave it at that so as not to ruin it for those with tickets for Aug. 27-29.

There is so much to praise here.

Can't imagine now the 50-year-old show being staged any place but outside. Loved the totally modern interpretation, and particularly its costuming by Courtney Kelly. Interesting historical film projections, although the two screens were hung too low. The multi-level stage designed by Evan Lewis.

Eric Bourne's choreography in "Simon Zealotes," "The Temple" and "Superstar" and throughout actually. The creepy crawling sick in "The Temple." The diction, passion and vocal beauty of Rachel Renee Vos throughout as Mary Magdalene and particularly in her duet with Dalas Armand as Peter in "Could We Start Again Please."

The raging anger of Ray'mond Fields as Jesus in "The Temple," his high/low vocal range in "Poor Jerusalem," his painful sadness and fear in "Gethsemane," his labored breathing at several points. The emotional intensity and vocal prowess of Erica Tatum as the conflicted and edgy Judas. The campy drag queen performance Justin Kilduff as King Herod.

That deep bass of Stephen Fort as Caiaphas throughout and Eric Rohman as Simon in "Simon Zealotes."

The so solid musical direction of Brandon Waddles and the four-piece band playing inside the center, visible through the glass windows. The painted message John 3:16 on the tops of two tables when flipped. Sound engineer Heath Hetherington keeping everything pretty much even. And the frozen tableau scene as the lights slowly fade at the end.

This production shines.