EXTRACT

Judas, the Hero

A play in three acts

By

Alex Broun

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Every time I look at you I don't understand
Why you let the things you did get so out of hand.
You'd have managed better if you'd had it planned.
Why'd you choose such a backward time in such a strange land?
If you'd come today you could have reached a whole nation.
Israel in 4 BC had no mass communication.
Don't you get me wrong.
I only want to know.

Did you mean to die like that? Was that a mistake, or
Did you know your messy death would be a record breaker?
Don't you get me wrong.
I only want to know.

Lyrics from Superstar from "Jesus Christ Superstar"
By Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice

Cast of Characters

JUDAS of Kerioth, called Iscariot — A revolutionary
- ISAIAH, his brother
- ISAAC, his cousin
- ANTHONY, a follower
- Simon called JOSIAS, his father

JESUS of Nazareth — A visionary

Simon, called PETER)
ANDREW, PETER's brother)
JOHN, a fisherman)
JAMES, his brother)
PHILIP)
BARTHOLOMEW) - Disciples and followers
MATTHEW, a publican)
THOMAS)
Judas, called THADEUS)
James, called ALPHAEUS)
SIMON the Canaanite, called Zealots)
MARY Magdalene)
MARTHA)
YOUNG MAN)

Romans

PILATE, Governor of Judea
CAPTAIN

The Church

CAIAPHUS, High Priest of Jerusalem
- MALCHUS, his aide
- ANNAS, his Father-In-Law

JAIRUS, ruler of a Synagogue
- His UNCLE
- His DAUGHTER

Israelites

WOMAN
ZACCHEUS, a house holder
BARRABAS, a prisoner
FATHER
MOTHER
CHILD

Centurions of the Roman Empire, High Priests, Scribes, Pharisees, Soldiers of the Church, citizens of Jerusalem

Part 1

In darkness the cast are scattered throughout the theatre. A humming slowly becomes audible and begins to build.

The lights go up faintly high on the stage, illuminating JESUS on the cross.

His body writhes in pain and blood drips from his wounds. He sweats profusely and his breathing is hoarse.

It is clear he has been on the cross for sometime.

The humming grows into a single note that builds in volume as his body writhes again. The lights build to match the sound.

The note now becomes deafening and the light builds to a blinding intensity.

Suddenly the sound stops and in silence we see a blinding flash of light as JESUS' body writhes in one final violent spasm.

His whole body is suddenly taut as every muscle stretches and then, as if his spirit has departed, the body goes limp, hanging loosely from the cross.

The lights fade and go up on:

A MAN STANDING ALONE IN A SPOTLIGHT.

MAN : I remember when I met him. He was on fire. Liquid energy, glowing bright. Here was our answer. What we'd been searching for. The missing piece. The key. But that was at the start. Before everything ... changed. (PAUSE) There was another start. Before he came. When we struggled alone.

1. Outside a prison. Kerioth. Night.

TWO CENTURIONS ARE ON GUARD.

CENTURION 1: Crap. (BEAT) Crap hole. (BEAT) Dump. (BEAT) Bloody dump. (BEAT) This bloody dump is a crap hole.

CENTURION 2: Your command of the Roman language astounds me.

CENTURION 1: Likewise. We could've got stuck in Nazareth. Or Jerusalem. There's a whore down there who takes on fifty men a night and still comes back for more. Loves every second of it. And the beer. Instead, I get stuck in this dump.

CENTURION 2: Spare me. Do these insights come for free or do I pay by the sentence ?

CENTURION 1: A comedian too. How diverting.

CENTURION 2 TAKES OUT SOME COINS, HE SHOWS THEM TO CENTURION 1.

CENTURION 1: What's that for ?

CENTURION 2: I'll give you five if you shut up.

CENTURION 1: Dick (BEAT) Dick head. (BEAT) That's the problem with Empires. You get stuck in crap holes with dick heads. At least back home there'd be something to eat. And drink.

CENTURION 2: What's the point in whining ? It's not going to change anything. Accepting your lot. That's the answer.

CENTURION 1: Very insightful. Not only are you a dick head, you are an old fashioned one as well. These are modern times, arsehole. All change. All go. You have the power. If you want something, take it. If you see a chance, make it happen.

CENTURION 2: I think a hear a song coming on.

CENTURION 1: Negativity. Destroys all who let it. Positive power. I know this man. Name of Caesar. You should talk to him..

CENTURION 2: I can't wait. We're here to do a job. Let's just do it and go home.

CENTURION 1: Some job. Guarding arseholes in a dump. Two bit revolutionary of some absurd cause.

CENTURION 2: They want to overthrow Rome.

CENTURION 1: That's what I'm saying. Completely absurd. They couldn't overthrow a pile of pigshit. They've got as much chance of overthrowing Rome as I do of getting laid tonight. (HE LAUGHS) That's the real secret - to getting through this crap. Never lose your -

A SHADOW DARTS ACROSS UPSTAGE.

CENTURION 2: Shut it.

CENTURION 1: I can talk if I want to.

CENTURION 2: Something ...

CENTURION 1: Oooh getting jumpy. (FEELING THE BARS) Solid iron. How's he going to get through there ?

CENTURION 2: He has friends.

CENTURION 1: Somewhere. Maybe. I don't know why they bother to keep us up all night. He's not going nowhere.

ANOTHER SHADOW DARTS ACROSS UPSTAGE. CENTURION 2 RAISES HIS LANCE.

CENTURION 2: Halt ! Who goes there ?

CENTURION 1 BURSTS INTO LAUGHTER.

CENTURION 1: (MOCKING HIM) Halt. Who goes there ? You're paranoid. There's nobody there.Listen to me - you're a Centurion. A Centurion of the Roman Empire. The most powerful Empire in the history of the world. We're living Gods. No one's gonna dare to come anywhere near us. We're all seeing. We're all knowing. We're magnificent.

A CLAY JAR ROLLS ACROSS THE STAGE.

CENTURION 2: Who's there ?

CENTURION 1: Calm down. It's probably just an old beggar with one leg.

CENTURION 2: Show yourself. (HE MOVES TOWARDS THE SHADOWS) Stand forward !!!

A BEGGAR COVERED IN OLD RAGS, EMERGES FROM THE SHADOWS.

CENTURION 1: See I was close. Two legs. (HE RAISES HIS LANCE AND MOVES TOWARD THE BEGGAR) Hobo. Now piss off before I shove this up your arse.

THE BEGGAR THROWS OFF HIS RAGS TO REVEAL A YOUNG MAN, BRANDISHING A DAGGER. THIS IS ANTHONY.

ANTHONY: Lay down your weapons and no one will get hurt.

CENTURION 1: (LAUGHS) Yeah, you and what army ?

ANTHONY: I am not alone.

CENTURION 1: And I'm the Queen of Sheba. Put down your knife before we cut your head off.

CENTURION 2: (TO CENTURION 1) Pull back.

CENTURION 1: Pull back ? I'm not scared off this local piece of -

A FIGURE LUNGES FROM THE SHADOWS. CENTURION 1 STAGGERS FORWARD.

CENTURION 1: Arsehole stabbed me.

CENTURION 1 FALLS ON TO HIS KNEES. BLOOD DRIPS FROM HIS CHEST.

CENTURION 1: (SCREAMS) Help me. Don't let me die. Not in this hole.

THE FIGURE COMES FORWARD AND REMOVES HIS HOOD. IT'S THE MAN FROM THE SPOTLIGHT. HE IS KNOWN AS JUDAS OF KERIOTH.

JUDAS: Tell him to be quiet.

CENTURION 2: (TO CENTURION 1) Stay still now. We'll get help.

JUDAS: Give me the keys.

CENTURION 2 HANDS HIM THE KEYS. JUDAS THROWS THEM TO ANTHONY. ANTHONY AND ANOTHER WHO EMERGES FROM THE SHADOWS, KNOWN AS ISAAC, MOVE TOWARDS THE BARS.

CENTURION 1: Screw 'em. Screw 'em all. (HE SWINGS HIS LANCE WILDLY.) (SCREAMING) Sound the alarm ! Sound the alarm !

JUDAS: I will not tell him again.

CENTURION 1: (TO CENTURION 2) Sound the alarm you gutless prick.

JUDAS MOVES FORWARD QUICKLY. HE PULLS THE CENTURION'S HEAD BACK AND PLACES HIS KNIFE AGAINST IT.

JUDAS: Be still now.

CENTURION 2: I'm not scared of you - diseased Jew.

HE SPITS IN JUDAS' FACE. JUDAS IS STILL FOR A MOMENT. HE WIPES IT OFF.

ANTHONY AND ISAAC EMERGE FROM THE SHADOWS SUPPORTING A THIRD MAN, ISAIAH, BETWEEN THEM. ISAIAH BLEEDS DOWN HIS SIDE.

ANTHONY: We have him.

CENTURION 1 TAKES OPPORTUNITY OF THE DISTRACTION. HE PUSHES OFF JUDAS' KNIFE AND GRABS HIS WHISTLE. HE STARTS TO BLOW.

CENTURION 1: Intruders. Intruders.

JUDAS PULLS THE CENTURION'S HEAD BACK AND SLITS HIS THROAT. THE CENTURION IS SILENT. HE FLOPS FORWARD ON TO THE STAGE - DEAD.

CENTURION 2 DRAWS BACK. THE OTHER MEN LOOK ON IN STUNNED SILENCE. JUDAS GESTURES AT CENTURION 2. THE CENTURION DROPS HIS LANCE.

JUDAS: (TO NO ONE IMPARTICULAR) He brought this on himself. (INDICATING CENTURION 2) Lock him up. (TO CENTURION 2) And take your comrade with you.

CENTURION 2 DRAGS CENTURION 1'S BODY OFF. ANTHONY AND ISAAC LOCK THE JAIL DOOR BEHIND HIM.

JUDAS HOLDS ISAIAH UP. ISAAC COMES BACK TO JUDAS. ANTHONY STAYS AT THE JAIL.

ANTHONY: Take Isaiah. I will stay and make sure he does not raise the alarm.

JUDAS DOES NOT MOVE.

ANTHONY: Go. Quickly.

JUDAS AND ISAAC HELP ISAIAH OFFSTAGE. ANTHONY STANDS IN FRONT OF THE JAIL, WATCHING.

2. The House of Judas and his father. A short time later.

JUDAS, ISAAC AND THE INJURED MAN, ISAIAH, ENTER.

JUDAS: Clear the table.

ISAAC WIPES THE TABLE CLEAR. THEY LAY ISAIAH ON TOP.

JUDAS: Hot water and oil. Hurry.

ISAAC EXITS. JUDAS' FATHER, JOSIAS, EMERGES FROM THE SHADOWS UPSTAGE. HE CARRIES A SIMPLE CANE.

JOSIAS: Are you all returned ?

JUDAS: All except Anthony. He remained to make sure we were not followed.

JOSIAS: Was that wise ?

JUDAS: It was his decision.

JOSIAS: Where is Isaiah ?

ISAIAH: Here I am.

JOSIAS: Let me touch you my son.

JOSIAS FEELS HIS WAY TO THE TABLE USING HIS CANE. FOR THE FIRST TIME WE REALISE HE IS BLIND. HE REACHES ISAIAH AND PLACES HIS HANDS ON HIS FACE.

JOSIAS: It is you. Are you well my son ?

ISAIAH: I will live. Just. Thanks to Judas.

JUDAS: Let us not forget Anthony and Isaac.

JOSIAS: They are all brave men. Oil and water.

ISAAC ENTERS CARRYING A BOWL FILLED WITH STEAMING WATER AND SOME WHITE CLOTHS.

JUDAS: It is here.

JUDAS, ASSISTED BY ISAAC, BEGINS TO WASH ISAIAH'S WOUNDS.

JOSIAS: Did all go well ? Was there no trouble ?

ISAAC LOOKS TO JUDAS. HE REMAINS SILENT.

JOSIAS: (TO JUDAS) Speak Judas.

JUDAS: None.

JOSIAS: You can not hide yourself from me my son. Your voice betrays you.

JUDAS: I did what was necessary.

ISAIAH: We spoke of no killing.

JUDAS: Would you have me return you to your cell ?

ISAIAH: A vow was taken.

JUDAS: Many vows were taken brother. Times are different now.

JOSIAS: Times may be different son but we must always remember our goal.

JUDAS: To achieve our goal we have to make sacrifices.

JOSIAS: If you sacrifice who you are then no goal is worth achieving. (PAUSE) We must always remember, we must hold on to this with all our strength, in battling our enemies we must not become those who we despise.

JUDAS LOOK AT HIS FATHER. PAUSE. HE RETURNS TO WASHING ISAIAH'S WOUNDS.

JUDAS: I did what was necessary. Nothing more, nothing less.

JOSIAS: These words are for another time. We are exposed now. We must leave.

JUDAS: Soon father. They know not who we are. Or where we stay. I shall get supplies from Jairus.

JOSIAS: You may endanger him too ?

JUDAS: He is protected by the Synagogue. As soon as Isaiah is well enough to travel we will leave.

ANTHONY: (ENTERING) We may not have that time. We are undone Judas. You were recognised. They are on their way.

JUDAS: How am I recognised ? I did not know the man.

ISAIAH: Your fame outreaches you brother. You make such lofty speeches in the market place and you think no one hears them ? You think you are not watched ?

JUDAS: I should've silenced him too.

ISAIAH: Judas, have you lost all reason.

JOSIAS: Let it pass my sons. It was to be expected. You can not lead a revolution and remain anonymous. Enough now. I have prepared the cart. Carry him out and bring the medicine.

ISAAC HELPS ISAIAH UP. JOSIAS PLACES HIS HAND ON ISAIAH'S SHOULDER AND THEY MOVE OUT.

JOSIAS: Come Judas. We must travel north to Nazareth.

JUDAS: I follow shortly. (THE OTHERS EXIT.) Stupid. Stupid !

ANTHONY: You were not to know.

JUDAS: But to lose everything now.

ANTHONY: Nothing is lost. The time to move would always come. You spoke of that.