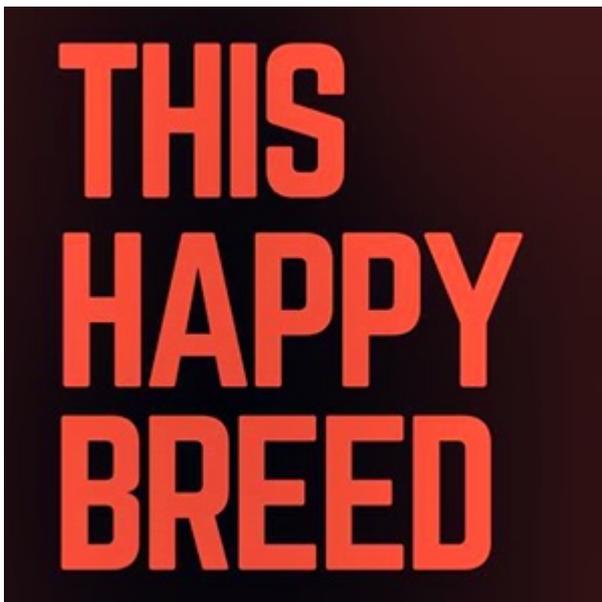




**‘Superstar’ overwhelms with
electricity, charm,
creativity, performances**



This Happy Breed

Passionate, powerful, poignant, phenomenal, professional, polished—all partially define “Jesus Christ Superstar, presented by This Happy Breed at Kansas City’s Arts Asylum.

New in town theatre group, This Happy Breed and The Arts Asylum(co-producers) opened their first Kansas City production, Sept. 21 with a stellar cast, a quality band, outstanding sound, and beautiful lighting, just to name a few. Most importantly, the set design/construction created a workable tableau for the musical passion play to develop. Add to that creative mix, a strong concept from Director Kyle

Hatley and Musical Director, Eryn Bates.



Nicole Bissey/Arts Asylum

“Jesus Christ Superstar,” the Andrew Lloyd Webber/Tim Rice blockbuster Broadway musical, never sounded better or contained more emotional connections until Kansas City local actors stepped onto the Arts Asylum stage. On Broadway for over 700 performances, the Arts Asylum considerably shorter run ends Oct. 12. Hurry to secure tickets. This is a crowd-pleaser.

Like no version you have seen “Jesus Christ, Superstar is out-of-this-world great. Inspired performances by Christopher Barksdale as Jesus, Justin Van Pelt as Judas, and Chioma Anyanwu as Mary Magdalene exude electricity and passion throughout the production. Vocally, one could not ask for stronger, better voices from the entirety of the cast.

Barksdale presents Jesus as a compassionate man who understands his place and his destiny, yet questions the decree. Vocally, Barksdale delivers a crisp, clear performance without flaw. As Judas, Van Pelt shows the range of emotions and torment of the betrayer. His songs are the crux of the show and explain his motives and agony. His final number is astounding. As for Mary

Nicole Bissey/Arts Asylum

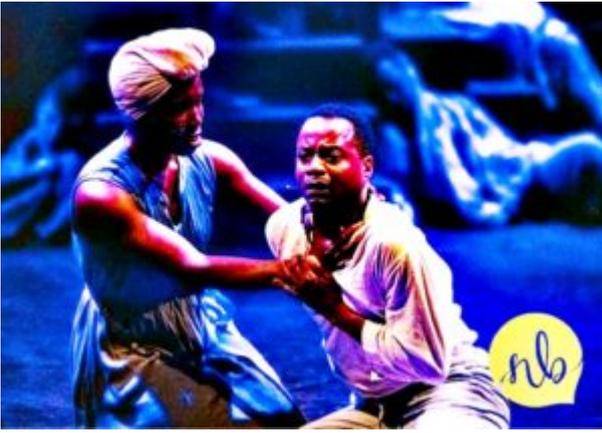


Magdalene, step aside Yvonne Elliman (Broadway Mary Magdalene), Anyanwu performs the most emotional and perfect version of “I Don’t Know How to Love Him” that anyone will ever hear. It’s show-stopping good and deserves a standing ovation.

One of the favorite songs of those familiar with the score, “Herod’s Song” receives a unique treatment from Katie Gilchrist who mocks Jesus with the upbeat song while the cast tortures Jesus in a divisive anti-music/lyric enactment of agony and shock.

Nowhere will one see a better version of Webber’s “Jesus Christ Superstar.” Every aspect of the production excels. From cast, to director, to all technical elements—everything adds to the overall effect of the production.

Nicole Bissey/Arts Asylum



The music direction and piano accompaniment of Eryn Bates leads the band with the rock sound that helped make the story of Jesus Christ a popular theatrical event. Combined with Kyle Hatley's concept and direction, this is the best version of the show to perform in Kansas City.

Especially noteworthy, sound and light challenge companies within the Arts Asylum. With Jeff Eubank designed sound, there are no issues. This is the best sound ever at Arts Asylum. And the light design worked like a charm. Credit Alex Perry for the dramatic lighting.

Nicole Bissey/Arts Asylum



The cast for the co-production of "Jesus Christ Superstar" is" Rachel Adcock, Jessica Alcorn, Chioma Anyanwu, Chris Barksdale, Tori Citro, Katie Gilchrist, Derrick Lindsey, Natalie Liccardello, Matthew McAndrews, Keenan Ramos, Matt Richardson, Callie Rodina, Bradley J. Thomas, Nick Uthoff, Justin Van Pelt, Emily Wirkus.

The band is: Eryn Bates, piano; Sean Hogge, guitar; Iona Dewart, piano II; Michelle McIntire, substitute piano; Claire Adams, bass; Julian Goff, drums; Ben Byard, substitute bass.

The Production team is: MacKenzie Sammons, stage manager; Georgianna Londre, costumes; Maggie Killian, scenic artist; Taylor Sullivan, master electrician;



Nicole Bissey/Arts Asylum

Phyllis Sargeon, mic assistant; Alex Perry, scenic/light design; Jeff Eubank, sound design; Brandon Ketchum, technical expert; MacKenzie Sammons, props master; Abigayle Huggins, assistant lighting director. Crew members are: Imani Berry, Matthew Koehler, Itzel Mendez-Mora, Miles Wirth.

“Jesus Christ Superstar” runs Sept. 22-Oct. 12 at The Arts Asylum in Kansas City, Missouri. For specific dates, times, prices, and tickets, go to [The Arts Asylum website](http://www.theartsasylum.com).

www.theartsasylum.com



Tags: “Jesus Christ Superstar” review, The Arts Asylum, The

Happy Breed, Kansas City Theatre, Kansas City Performing Arts,
Kansas City Arts & Entertainment

Photos: Nicole Bissey/Arts Asylum