

1454. Jesus Christ Superstar

Backgrounds Of S. Radic

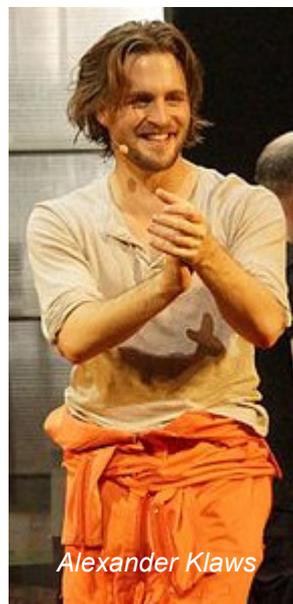
Jesus Christ Superstar is a rock opera that premiered on October 12, 1971 at the Mark Hellinger Theater in New York City. The music was written by the then unknown Andrew Lloyd Webber, Tim Rice wrote the lyrics based on the lyrics of the last seven days of Jesus.

Plot. While people think Jesus is the Son of God, one of Jesus' disciples, now disillusioned with the movement, believes that Jesus is slowly losing control of the situation. He also dislikes Jesus' friendship with the prostitute Mary Magdalene. While Jesus has forgiven the young woman her guilt and enjoys her as a member of his following, she seems to fall timidly in love with him. "How can I love him", she asks herself, fascinated by Jesus' words and deeds, at the same time frightened by her past to trust a man.

Believing that he must stop Jesus in order to save his life and that of his disciples, Judas confides in him. They fear a popular uprising, which they want to prevent by murdering Jesus. Jesus wants to celebrate Pesach with his disciples once again. He breaks the bread and blesses the wine, tells his followers that this will be their last communion together before he is executed. The disciples cannot believe what they are hearing and do not seem to understand the seriousness of the matter. "I have always wanted to become an apostle," they sing and tell each other that they will one day write the gospels. They are obviously only after the glory that comes with friendship with Jesus. Against this backdrop of the simple-minded disciples, Jesus and Judas engage in a fierce battle of words, in which Jesus predicts that Judas will betray him that very evening. Judas, for his part, replies that this was Jesus' will after all. Then he disappears to fetch the high priests and their guards.

The rock opera culminates in the nailing of Jesus' hands and feet to the wooden cross. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," Jesus says before the cross is erected, and in return reaps mockery from the audience. Hanging on the cross, Jesus asks for his mother and finally his trust in his heavenly Father returns: "Father, I commit my spirit into your hands. Jesus is dying. While soft music sounds in the background, Jesus is taken down from the cross and mourned by Mary Magdalene.

Commercial success. Despite the resistance of Christian groups, the rock opera became a great success, with 720 performances in the original production. It was only banned in South Africa and was even played on Vatican Radio. In 1970 a first version on record was released (even before the premiere on stage), with deep-purple singer Ian Gillan as Jesus and Murray Head as Judas. In 1973 the material was filmed by Norman Jewison (*Jesus Christ Superstar*). In Germany, the musical had its world premiere on February 18, 1972 at Halle Münsterland in Münster in German language with Reiner Schöne in the leading role.



A German production was shown at the Theater Dortmund in 2014/15 under the direction of *Gil Mehmert* with *Alexander Klaws* as Jesus. The premiere was so successful that all 17 performances and also the four additional performances were sold out within three days and the production was awarded the "Opernfreunde-Stern". In the elections of the online musical magazine *Musical 1*, the production was voted best musical (short term) with 100,000 votes cast and Klaws was voted best musical actor for his portrayal of Jesus.

Version KLAUS WONDERLICH. When I decided in December 2019 to make the Klaus Wunderlich musical recording of "Jesus Christ Superstar", I had no idea how "difficult" my title research, which then culminates in these "backgrounds" here, would be! How so? Yes, I just couldn't find the right original version, which was available to Klaus Wunderlich at the time of his musical LP creation - and which I would like to use as a point of comparison! Because, in the meantime this musical has been filmed and set to music for the umpteenth time. The only "similar" version resulted from the album "Dier Nacht des Musicals" - from the year 2017.....But Klaus has never heard this version....Anyway, Klaus' version can put some "new" versions in the shade with its sound and the arrangement! He especially liked the "Wah-Guitar" accompaniment - a real sound of the 70s: With this sound a constant frequency change was made with a pedal by the guitarist. The second special feature is the doubling of the bass phrases with a synthetic sound that is higher in octave (I used Synth-Brass (GM63). The two fabulous ending phrases should be played with both hands in the upper and lower manual split! The intro is meant to be an "overture" at tempo 80 - after that, a drum-break disco beat at 120 immediately gets into it! Have fun!

Disco-Beat, T=120

The musical score is written for five instruments: Guitar, Brass, Strings, Bass, and Drums. It is in 4/4 time and has a tempo of 120. The score is divided into two main sections: Main 1 and Main 2. The Guitar part is in the bass clef and uses a Wah-Wah pedal effect. The Brass part is in the treble clef and plays a similar phrase one octave higher with the bass. The Strings part is in the bass clef and is marked 'Adv.'. The Bass part is in the bass clef and plays a simple rhythmic line. The Drums part is in the bass clef and includes a Crash and Small-Crash. The score is in 4/4 time and has a tempo of 120.

Programming instruction

Although the notation informs about two different tempos, there is actually only one style, namely this "disco beat" shown above with tempo 120. The first "style accompaniment" is to be designed as TUTTI-STYLE: To do this, switch the rhythm device to the SYNCHRO setting, which plays the complete accompaniment of all parts with one beat each time you play the sub-manual or UM-split. Attention, don't couple the synchro with the start - no synchro start is intended, but the main theme is accompanied tone-for-tone with one rhythm stroke each. Afterwards the short intro will lead over the drum fill into full style. Here you have the possibility to play directly with the main rhythm Main 2 incl. the guitar accompaniment - or leave it out with Main 1. The strings are intended as Adv. The BRASS-part is a synth-brass sound, which plays a similar phrase one octave higher with the bass. The guitar part is actually to be played with the "Wah-Wah-Guitar" sound, if this is available in the instrument. Here, constantly different sound frequencies are generated during the course of the guitar accompaniment with a so-called "Wah-Wah Pedal"!