INSIDE THE MUSICAL GUIDE



Music by Andrew Lloyd Webber
Lyrics by Tim Rice

Directed by Bill Berry

Choreographed by Jimmy Shields

Music Directed and Conducted by R.J. Tancioco

This Inside the Musical Guide offers supplementary curriculum containing educational content, interactive activities, opportunities for reflection, and resources based on the themes of the show *Jesus Christ Superstar*. This guide can be utilized before or after experiencing the show. Questions? Reach out to educationprograms@5thavenue.org

Graphic Design: Christa Fleming

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Jesus Christ Superstar **is presented through special arrangement with Concord Theatricals.**
All authorized performance materials are also supplied by Concord Theatricals.
www.concordtheatricals.com

SYNOPSIS

Jesus Christ Superstar tells the story of Jesus in the final days leading up to his crucifixion and explores the personal relationships and struggles between Jesus, Judas, Mary Magdalene, Jesus's disciples, his followers, and the Roman Empire. The story is narrated by Jesus's conflicted disciple and ultimate betrayer, Judas.

CONTENT ADVISORY:

Jesus Christ Superstar contains references to death, prop guns onstage, a sound effect of a fired gun, scenes of violence, including, but not limited to, a depiction of suicide and a depiction of whipping, as well as other adult themes and language. This musical also explores themes of faith and religion.

RISING STAR PROJECT: JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR

You're in for a treat! In addition to our professional production of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, The 5th Avenue Theatre is producing Rising Star Project: Jesus Christ Superstar. Since 2011, Rising Star Project has been a tuition-free program that opens the doors of The 5th Avenue Theatre to young people ages 14-19 throughout Washington State. Alongside professional theater artists and mentors, student mentees participate in all aspects of the theatrical process to produce the Rising Star Project version of a mainstage production. Get your tickets for Rising Star Project: Jesus Christ Superstar, performing May 28-30, to see over 70 students replicate *Jesus Christ Superstar* in the following roles:

- Arts Administration
- Artistic Leadership: Choreography, Directing, Music Directing, Stage Management
- Performance: Cast, Orchestra
- Theater Design & Technology: Costume & Wardrobe, Hair & Makeup, Stage Crew

You can learn more about Rising Star Project on our website, https://5thavenue.org/education/theater-careers/rising-star-project/

EXPANDED CONTENT ADVISORY —CONTAINS SPOILERS!

Jesus Christ Superstar is a world wherein several tough subjects are explored, including references to death, depictions of suicide, physical violence, and the use of guns. This production is recommended for those ages 13 years old or older, similar to a PG-13 movie rating. This extended content advisory **contains spoilers** and is intended to support patrons who may wish for a full understanding of the content in the show before attending.

The following is content which will be depicted on stage.

Systems and Structures

- Political systems
- Religion
- Classism
- Conflicts of power connected to religion, faith, and political systems

Violence and Weapons

- Prop guns onstage
- Prop guns pointed at actors
- Moments of revolt
- Repeated talk and mention of death
- Offstage depiction of suicide and the sound effect of a fired gun
- Depiction of torture
- Depiction of whipping/lashing onstage (both the action and the physical wounds)
- Depiction of a crucifixion (death on a cross)

Language

- Verbal harassment and verbal abuse

We encourage individuals to interact with this content with care and compassion and in support of the artists who bring this story to life on the stage.

CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

JESUS
The leader of the Twelve Apostles

JUDAS
One of Jesus's Twelve Apostles

MARY MAGDALENE
One of Jesus's closest disciples

SIMON
One of Jesus's Twelve Apostles

PETER
One of Jesus's Twelve Apostles

CAIAPHAS
A high priest

ANNAS
A priest with Caiaphas

HEROD
The King of Galilee

PILATE
The governor of Judea



HOW MANY PEOPLE DOES IT TAKE TO MAKE A MUSICAL?

Did you know that over **288 people** play an important role in making our production of *Jesus Christ Superstar*?

33
CAST
Principals, Ensemble, External Understudies

21
PROPS
Builders, Load-in, Tech, Run Crew, Overhires

16
COSTUME SHOP
Design assistant, Drapers, Tailor, First Hands, Crafts, Floor Manager, Costume Assistant

7
WARDROBE
Head, Assistant, Dressers

3
HAIR
Head, Assistant, Crew

13
ORCHESTRA

6
STAGE MANAGERS & PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS

2
SCENIC ARTISTS
Staff, Overhires

38
CARPENTRY
Load-in Staff, Tech, Run Crew, Overhires

5
BUILDERS
Staff, Overhires

20
USHERS

15
CREATIVE TEAM
Directors, Choreographers, Set Designer, Sound Designer, Costume Designers, Hair and Makeup Designer

8
AUDITION & CASTING ASSISTANTS

50
ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

8
SOUND
Staff, Overhires

28
ELECTRICS
Load-In, Build, Tech, Run Crew, Overhires

+YOU!

UP TO **1,886** PEOPLE CAN ATTEND EACH PERFORMANCE

Learn about the roles of The 5th's staff and *Jesus Christ Superstar* team members on our website or in the show program.

Sounds of the Show

By Derek Smith

Jesus Christ Superstar is a ground-breaking rock opera from the writing team of Andrew Lloyd Webber (music), and Tim Rice (lyrics). The show is fully sung-through placing the storytelling of the music, lyrics, and orchestration at the forefront of the production. Musically, the show is grounded in the 1970s rock aesthetic complimented by the expanded instrumentation of strings, brass, and winds typically found in an operatic setting.

After the Overture establishes the musical dichotomy of 1970s rock and orchestral acoustic instruments we are led into "Heaven on Their Minds." This is our introduction to Judas and establishes him as a primary lens through which our story unfolds. The song begins with a driving electric guitar riff and propulsive bass line establishing the urgency and agitation of Judas.

"What's the Buzz/Strange Thing, Mystifying" brings us to our first ensemble number. Overlapping vocal lines and a thick orchestration represent the chaos and unrest amongst Jesus's followers. Judas interrupts and the orchestration becomes more focused, reinforcing Judas as a point of clarity for the interpretation of the story.

The setting of Mary Magdalene's songs like "Everything's Alright" and "I Don't Know How to Love Him," provide a stark contrast to the intensity of the electric rock-driven songs of the ensemble and Judas. Mary provides an alternate lens of Jesus, allowing him to be viewed as a human and not just a figure. This nuanced view is supported by the orchestration. The acoustic guitar is introduced as a textural change reflecting the more compassionate view of Mary. The thick texture of the full ensemble is dialed back and used as color on top of the orchestration instead of the driving force.

As our story escalates and tensions increase, music is used as a device to fuel the emotional and societal struggles of our protagonist and antagonist. Harmonic dissonance and rhythmic tension escalate, combining with increasing layers of dense instrumental lines and competing vocals. Everything escalates to the climax in "Gethsemane (I Only Want to Say)." Jesus presents us with a true operatic aria, beginning with a small representation of the instrumental textures and escalating to the full power of the combined rock band and orchestral instruments.

The final sequences of the show bring a decline of the intensity and density of the orchestration. The sparse orchestration aids in the profoundly solemn ending of our story. We are left with transparent moments showcasing the individual voices of the orchestra combined with somber vocals from the ensemble; ultimately ending our story with a thought-provoking instrumental question mark.



Behind the Curtain
with Bill Berry and Katie J. Newbury

By Dena Winegeart





Our Communications Associate, Dena Winegeart, sat down with Bill Berry (Executive & Artistic Director at The 5th, Director of *Jesus Christ Superstar*) and Katie J. Newbury (Director-Choreographer Mentor of Rising Star Project: Jesus Christ Superstar) to discuss the creative process behind our professional production of *Jesus Christ Superstar* and our Rising Star Project production of *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Read the interview below to learn more about both artistic processes and turn to Page 3 to learn more about Rising Star Project!

Bill, drop me into the staging of The 5th Avenue Theatre Company's professional production of *Jesus Christ Superstar*. What is the context in which we meet Jesus and Judas?

Bill: So for this production of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, the designers and I started meeting about a year ago. One of the things we aligned on very early was that it would be a contemporary setting. We didn't want to set it in, sort of, "biblical times." Another element that really spoke to us when setting up the staging was that rock music was really palpable to us. Why did they write this story with rock music? Because they wanted, I think, for it to feel contemporary and feel like "now." The show compels us to think about what it would be like to have Jesus walking amongst us today. So we set it in what we call the near future. It's not exactly today, and it's not necessarily 20 years from now, or 10 years from now. It's something we're calling the near future. That's the grounding, and then we also looked at and got really caught up in Italian fascism and started looking at stuff from that era in Italy, and that became inspiration for us. We definitely didn't set it in that era, but we used visual cues from that era.

Katie, this is a musical that is over 50 years old and we're bringing it to younger audiences. And as Bill was saying, we're working with a contemporary setting. Does that draw students into the story more? How are you otherwise intriguing these students to get them excited for a musical that is over 50 years old?

Katie: What we're finding is actually that the music and the scenes are still so relevant to young audiences. These young artists seem excited about doing *Jesus Christ Superstar* specifically. We really are going to encourage them to make modern and

innovative vocal choices as they move through the score; this innovative, beautiful score, and really taking inspiration from Bill's room with the main stage company and allowing these young artists to dig into that.

Why *Jesus Christ Superstar* now, in 2026? Why does this show feel relevant to produce and bring to audiences now?

Bill: That's such a good question. You know, "why tell this story in this moment" is a question that every time we go to tell a story, we have to contemplate and answer. For me, there's a couple of reasons. I think that it is a timeless story. It's a story that involves redemption and betrayal and passion. And it's ultimately a very human story. The writers wrote a version of this where they did leave the miracle aspect of Jesus off the stage. We, as the audience, don't see those things happen. It centers itself on the relationship between Judas and Jesus, both working towards the same goal, but having different ideas about what it's going to take to get there. That conflict drives the story, and I think that we live in a world that is similarly full of conflicts. Everyone wants the same things, but we have very different ideas about how to get there. It also talks about a country that has been taken over by another country. There's an existing power structure that Jesus, the apostles, and disciples are fighting against. Jesus is a revolutionary, and he wants change. I think we live in a world where we see that happening all the time. I think the story still really resonates in a lot of different ways. For some people, it resonates in Jesus's story, and for others it's the dynamic of these two characters in conflict and that power structure. I think all of those things are relevant and important to contemplate in the world that we live in today.

Katie, what do you feel like draws young artists into *Jesus Christ Superstar*? Is it the critique on power, is it the more contemporary music, or something else?

Katie: I think so much about *Jesus Christ Superstar* draws audiences in. Young people are highly intelligent, and they often aren't seen that way. But when they see these things like power dynamics that they recognize on stage, they know it and they can feel it. And so to be a part of that, I think, draws them in so much more. Just as Bill was saying, about the humanity aspect of *Jesus Christ Superstar*—young audiences are hungry for a return to seeing people as people, seeing each other's humanity. So I think that's also part of what draws in to this musical.

Bill: Yeah, I want to double dip on this question because it also occurs to me that one of the things that really draws me to the show is the messiness of Jesus and Judas's relationship. Both of their viewpoints make sense and within that complication and conflict, you can't just sit and watch it and say that Jesus is right or Judas is right. You're struggling with "I hear his point of view and it makes sense, too." I think it's interesting that you're constantly struggling with the inbetweenness. What's the right answer? It's a complicated question in the show and I think it does such a good job of making us think about that. In asking "why *Jesus Christ Superstar* now," I would also say—the music. I just love this score. I think it is packed with some of the best work that Andrew Lloyd Webber ever put on stage. The score is full of powerhouse ballads, great big rock songs, and the score is tied so well to the story. Tim Rice's lyrics are really fantastic. I think it is such a classic. So it's always a show that I think: its time is now. It just works.

I think that it is a timeless story. It's a story that involves redemption and betrayal and passion. And it's ultimately a very human story.

—Bill Berry

This score is so vocally impressive. How did you go about casting these roles knowing these actors would have some really big shoes to fill?

Bill: I'll speak to the main stage production, and Katie, you can talk about how you manifested this in the Rising Star Project version. First, I immediately identified that both Judas and Jesus are big roles, and they have a lot of vocal pyrotechnics that need to happen. We needed a cast that can really dive into that, and I also think authenticity is needed. Early on, I pitched an idea to our Senior Manager of Artistic Programming, Dedra Woods, that who I really want to see in the show are actual rock n' roll people! Seattle has such a rich rock and music history, I knew we had people here locally who could do that. Simultaneously, we started dreaming about who that would be. I would tell basically anyone I spoke to that I was interested in this idea, and Christopher Frizzelle (local editor and publisher) heard me talking about it and he said, "what about Molly Sides, from Thunderpussy?" He helped me get a meeting with her, and we vibed. I think that's what the kids say. She will be playing our Mary Magdalene. Then, Dedra kept researching online, kept watching all these different rock bands and she would go to The Crocodile to see bands perform. One day, she mentioned Cameron Lavi-Jones from King Youngblood. I started watching his videos and got super excited. We set up a meeting to talk to him, we vibed, and away we went. It was important to me that there's some authenticity to the rock and roll singing. Of course, how can we leave out talking about how we cast Jesus, right? Alexander Kilian, who was in *Spring Awakening* here at The 5th in 2024, is such a dynamic performer. And I just had it in my head that he would be the guy. We brought him in to sing for us and it was love at first sight for him in this part. It just really made sense. Those 3 roles were really central, and then we kept filling that out with Mark Ciano, as Caiaphas, and just an amazing cast of ensemble players, all of which are gonna kill it. They're gonna shred the score.

Katie: For Rising Star Project, we have kind of double shoes to fill because we have, you know, the original and then we also have this main stage cast of literal rock stars. And we really wanted to centralize on replicating the authenticity in the sound and vocal health and rock star nature. However, we didn't want to do a one-for-one where a student looks like or sounds like this person in the mainstage cast, so they get cast. It was more like, "who brings this character into the room, who brings this vocal playfulness, and who brings this specific sound that we need?"

And these young artists really showed up. This was a hard show to cast as they were all incredible, but we now have a team full of student rock stars that we're really excited to bring to the stage.

You're both working with the same text and score, but in two totally different environments. How are you planning to approach this differently, Katie, with a younger audience? Themes in the musical like betrayal, loyalty, power are all very mature and could be hard for some young people to really sit with. Are we adapting the project to suit those younger artists and audiences and encourage them to sit with those difficult subjects more comfortably?

Katie: One of the coolest things about Rising Star Project is that students get to be in a professional group and environment with professional expectations, while also always having the space to ask questions. We want them to ask about the "how" and "why" behind the show and

Young people are highly intelligent, and they often aren't seen that way. But when they see these things like power dynamics that they recognize on stage, they know it and they can feel it.

—Katie J. Newbury

its themes so that they can learn how to approach those subjects in other professional spaces. Our intention is to offer the show as it is, which includes the choreography, intention, and direction created by Bill and his team. We will adapt as we go along, while still honoring the intention of this show. But I would also venture to say that these students can handle a lot more than we think they can. Their emotional intelligence allows them to really dig into these characters and learn about them. So sometimes what adaptability means in a younger space is to be able to tap out a little sooner, if needed, to say, "we're done with this for now. Let's move on." But these young artists are really engaged with the text and like to give their 110%.

Bill: Having done the Rising Star Project several times and watching the production with the student cast, I'm always amazed at the depth that they do bring to it. Sometimes they bring depth in such compelling ways because their point of view and life experience is so different from what we bring as adults. I find that so powerful. When we start the production, there's always some version of a conversation such as "well, I don't think that part's gonna work as well with the students." I'm also always so struck that, flash forward to 6 weeks later, they're doing exactly that thing and more. It's so rewarding to watch that happen.

***Jesus Christ Superstar* as a show was pretty controversial upon its initial release. Webber and Rice had to release it as a concept album before they could even find producers for the show. At one point, Webber recalls someone saying it was the worst idea in history. How do we view it now? Is it just as radical as it was back when it was released in 1971? What still feels radical about it today and what doesn't feel as radical as it did back then?**

Bill: Well, I think it's still radical in that the character of Jesus is portrayed as a rock star. You know like that it's called *Jesus Christ SUPERSTAR* and he's singing rock music! One thing that's interesting to me is the idiom of rock music is the idiom of revolution, of radical culture.

Rock music still had that aura. At the time in the 1970s, rock music would have been rebellion.

What's happened in the meantime is rock music does not feel like rebellion in the same way anymore. Rock music is much more part of our culture in a way that it just is. We don't see it as scary. So, I think that has shifted and that changes how you enter the show. Rock music is still cool as hell. It's still awesome, but it doesn't have that element. The "blasphemous" part is also interesting because I think we lived in a world that was much more "this or this". And there was less inbetweens, and I think we're much more in the inbetween space; which I actually think makes the show more interesting. Going back to something I said earlier, this idea that it's not right or wrong, it's both at the same time. I think it's made the show richer for now and makes it less of a target for someone to say "that's blasphemous," and more of a jumping off point for conversation that can actually take place about these themes.

Katie: I think something that was so controversial at the time is the show viewing these Jesus and Judas characters as human and exploring their humanity. I think right now, we are more inclined to explore that humanity than when it was released. So I think, yes, it's still radical, but I believe our audiences are more in tune to explore it.

One thing that's interesting to me is the idiom of rock music is the idiom of revolution, of radical culture.

—Bill Berry

In the preparation for directing *Jesus Christ Superstar*, were you inspired by any other productions? What else inspired you in your preparation for this?

Bill: I've seen *Jesus Christ Superstar* probably a dozen times and I've definitely watched the movie at least 5 or 6 times in my life. I have seen professional productions, so I didn't go watch anything in particular this time. I did more research into the life of Jesus, the life of Judas, the life of Mary Magdalene, and read about 15 books about these characters and the last week of Jesus's life. A lot of them were scholarly research into the historical truths of what we know about Jesus as a person named Jesus. He existed, and they've got records that can show a lot of these things and how they line up with the biblical retelling of his life. So I just did a lot of reading about that and contemplating. Pontius Pilate was the other character I researched a lot. I was contemplating the reality of that moment in time and how that translates into how we're going to tell that story today.

Katie: Bill passed along the books and the notes of the things he read, so I've also been researching like crazy. Then, our Rising Star Project Music Director and Mentor sent me the all-female soundtrack of *Jesus Christ Superstar* and I've been listening to that. Those women are cool! A lot of these roles are written for masculine voices and high tenors. As we were casting, we wanted to explore what it would be like for a female voice to come in and sing it... It's possible and it is badass.

Bill's Booklist!

Judas: Betrayer or Friend of Jesus?
by William Klassen

The Last Week: A Day-by-Day Account of Jesus's Final Week in Jerusalem
by Marcus J. Borg and John Dominic Crossan

Mary Magdalene Revealed
by Meghan Watterson

Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth
by Reza Aslan

Were there any other pieces of inspiration outside of this research? Maybe another musical, or a piece of art that you saw that inspired a vision?

Bill: Early on I became interested in abandoned churches. I can't explain exactly why that became of interest, but it did. I stumbled upon this book of churches that were abandoned and falling apart and that became really interesting to me. Then, I took a trip to Berlin. In Berlin, there's the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church, which is a bombed-out steeple. Part of the cathedral is still there, and it's all pockmarked with bullets, it went through World War II. Then, there's a new modern cathedral that they built, which is really beautiful. Randomly, my hotel in Berlin was a block from there, I could see this steeple out my window that's broken in half, while I was reading the script for *Jesus Christ Superstar* every day. That's one of the things I do—

I think something that was so controversial at the time is the show viewing these Jesus and Judas characters as human and exploring their humanity.
—Katie J. Newbury

I just keep reading the script over and over. So I came back from that trip and told the designers I have this weird idea. We became really interested in a space that was sort of falling apart, which feels like a metaphor for something in *Jesus Christ Superstar*. It's a place where the power structures are really not working, they're falling apart. We started to apply that metaphor to the physical world of the play. That's where I found that inspiration, by looking at that cathedral.

Last question, and it's a more fun one. What is your personal favorite recording of *Jesus Christ Superstar*? Which one do you keep going back to? For me personally, it's 1996 London cast. I keep going back to it, even though I have the original Broadway cast on vinyl.

Katie: For me, it's the 1973 movie. My roommate and I talk about it all the time. She is obsessed with Yvonne Elliman, the woman who plays Mary. She loves her vocal choices and how authentic she is in the movie. So that's my favorite.

Bill: I go back to the original concept album and listen to the concept album the most. I actually love all of them. On different days. I want different things, but if I have to choose a favorite, I'm going to choose the concept album. I love the movie for the bigness of it. It is so epic, it's like a symphony of a hundred. It's got like all this big feeling in it. But I find the original concept album one interesting in that it feels more authentically rock. It hasn't been polished in ways that I think later versions got cleaner.

Go Behind the Scenes!

Explore the scenic and costume design of *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

Parmida Ziaei, *Jesus Christ Superstar* Scenic Designer: "The scenic design of *Jesus Christ Superstar* draws inspiration from Italian Fascist architecture, Brutalism, and touches of Futurism. The abandoned church inhabited by Jesus and the apostles exists in a near future, where the world we know is beginning to fracture and decay."

Take a look at images from Parmida's mood board below.



Danielle Nieves, *Jesus Christ Superstar* Costume Designer: "The designs for the costumes in *Jesus Christ Superstar*, in tandem with the set, were inspired by 1930s Italian facism and futurism. Taking the 1930s influence we wanted to push our world of JCS into the near future, so we created a "2030 was inspired by 1930" aesthetic."

Take a look at images from Danielle's mood board below.



Setting the Stage

By Beth Pollack

In 1969, Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice began work on a new project. Previous collaborators on *Joseph and The Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat*, the two had set their sights on a biblical story of even greater size and scale: the story of the last week of Jesus's life. Neither Rice nor Lloyd Webber described themselves as particularly religious, so it is not necessarily surprising that they were absorbed by the idea of telling the story of Jesus the human, divorcing him somewhat from any divine or supernatural associations. Their decision certainly led to some big feelings and public outcry, but this angle is not an uncommon way for scholars to study the story of Jesus, nor is it necessarily incompatible with the way that the devout might meditate upon the life of Jesus.

There is a lot that we know about the period during which Jesus lived, independent of the life of Jesus himself. In first century Palestine, the Temple was the central pilar of Jewish life. It was not only the dwelling place of God but also the repository of sacred writings, legal texts, and historical documentation for the Jewish people. The Jews residing in Jerusalem were subjected to the authoritarian government of Rome, which had conquered and colonized Judea. Pontius Pilate, the fifth prefect to oversee Judea, arrived in 26 C.E.; much of the historical documentation about Pilate paints a picture of a vicious and cruel man who not only flagrantly disregarded Jewish laws and traditions but also was quick to sentence Jewish prisoners to death. Still, part of his work as the governor of the province was to maintain a functional relationship with the high priest of the Jewish religion to maintain peace, and therefore a consistent flow of tax revenue back to Rome. Pilate worked with high priest Joseph Caiaphas for about a decade, which was an unusually long tenure for both positions, implying that Caiaphas was able to find common ground and a close relationship with the callous Pilate.

Scholars of the life of Jesus are in a unique position of studying texts that are not only historical documents and works of literature but also fundamental to a system of faith. Whether these scholars are of a religious bent or not, they often find themselves in the position of needing to separate or reconcile multiple versions of the figure we call Jesus: a historical personage, a foundational figure in one of the world's most prominent religious systems, and a character who appears in works of literature where varying opinions exist as to the accuracy or factual nature of the works in question.

Regardless of their angle of approach, scholars often find meaning and make fruitful commentary on the way in which Jesus operated as a revolutionary figure in his community and how he expressed deep concern and care for the people around him, including and especially those who were typically marginalized within society. The radical and disruptive aspects of Jesus' character are certainly emphasized in Lloyd Webber and Rice's storytelling, but they have an established textual basis

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in the Gospels. Christian doctrine also establishes that Jesus was both fully human and fully divine; according to Mark 12:27, Jesus preached a lesson during the last week of his life, or Holy Week, that concluded with the words "God is God not of the dead, but of the living." This implies a belief that the chief concern of God is about those who live in this world and that Jesus' ministry is meant to be of service to humanity. Perhaps it is not surprising that Lloyd Webber and Rice, who localize their focus to the events of Holy Week, landed upon a version of Jesus who was preoccupied with both humanity and mortality, whether his or others'.

Possibly even more controversial than their viewpoint on Jesus was Lloyd Webber and Rice's treatment of Judas in *Jesus Christ Superstar*. As the show was starting to germinate, Lloyd Webber and Rice wrote a song from an "everyman" perspective that asked a series of questions about Jesus, his life, and his ministry. During the evolution of the show, that song became "Superstar" and the team assigned the tune to Judas; Judas then became the lens through which the story of Jesus is told within the musical. Since we see through his eyes, Judas becomes a relatively sympathetic character and gets a fairly compassionate treatment by the authors. Lloyd Webber and Rice knew that they were courting controversy throughout the development of *Jesus Christ Superstar* and that their decision to delve into the psyche of Judas might deepen the animosity of some parts of the public. However, Rice had long been fascinated by Judas Iscariot and felt that he was a rather one-dimensional figure in most accounts of Jesus' life; they decided that fleshing out his needs and motivations would be useful for the structure of their developing musical and produce exciting dramatic possibilities as both a nemesis and narrator.

Jesus and Judas are far from the only characters that sparked debate when *Jesus Christ Superstar* was first released as a concept album, and the controversy surrounding their interpretations of Mary Magdalene, Pontius Pilate, Herod, and others are often central in the narrative surrounding the legend of the show. However, Lloyd Webber and Rice did not set out with a nefarious mission to undermine Christianity or compromise centuries of doctrine. Their reimagining of the prominent people and events of Holy Week was born of genuine curiosity and an attempt to explore a story that was both familiar and opaque to them.

"Lloyd Webber and Rice did not set out with a nefarious mission to undermine Christianity or compromise centuries of doctrine. Their reimagining of the prominent people and events of Holy Week was born of genuine curiosity and an attempt to explore a story that was both familiar and opaque to them."

Seattle Sound

By MOPOP

MUSEUM OF POP CULTURE

Growing up in Washington State has influenced and inspired the musical stylings of many iconic artists. Using artifacts from the Museum of Pop Culture (MOPOP) collection, we'll explore how falling in love with music in high school impacted three young musicians and defined a unique "Seattle Sound." Follow in their footsteps and find spots in Seattle where these legends left their mark!



Pictured above: Courtesy Museum of Pop Culture, Seattle, WA and Quincy Jones

This photograph captures the first performance of the Charlie Taylor Band, including Quincy Jones (1933-2024), a Freshman at Garfield High School in Seattle's Central District, and Charlie Taylor, Jones' friend and fellow high school student. They eventually became known as the Bumps Blackwell Junior Band and played venues around the Seattle area, even backing jazz artists such as Billie Holiday and Nat King Cole.

"The first job we ever played was at the YMCA on 23rd and Madison, in 1947. We got seven dollars apiece."
— Quincy Jones

Across his long career, Jones was nominated for 80 Grammy Awards, winning 28 and worked with artists including Frank Sinatra, Michael Jackson, Dinah Washington, Dizzy Gillespie, and Donna Summer. He also produced film scores and soundtracks, including *The Color Purple* and *The Wiz*, and appeared in films such as *Fantasia 2000* and *Austin Powers*.

VISIT

Meredith Matthews East Madison YMCA: The YMCA where Jones played opened in 1936 and still serves the Central District neighborhood.

Garfield High School: Attended by many Seattle music legends, including Macklemore and Jimi Hendrix.

MUSEUM OF POP CULTURE





Pictured above:
Courtesy Museum of Pop Culture, Seattle, WA

This is Garfield High School's 1960-1961 yearbook. It features the last school photograph of Jimi Hendrix (1942-1970), who enlisted in the Army in 1961 before finishing high school. At the time, Hendrix had already developed a reputation in the Seattle area for his skills on the guitar with his first bands, the Velvetones and the Rocking Kings. Hendrix gained mainstream prominence in the late 1960s with hits such as "Hey Joe," "Purple Haze," "All Along the Watchtower," and "Fire," and is now celebrated as one of the most influential electric guitarists of all time.

During the peak of his career from 1966-1970, Jimi Hendrix only played in his hometown of Seattle four times. His last concert in Seattle was at Sicks' Stadium baseball field. Freezing downpour turned the venue into a vast expanse of soggy grass and mud, and the show was impacted by technical difficulties, pushing Hendrix to play to low morale crowds.

***"You don't sound happy, you don't look very happy, but we'll see if we can paint some faces around here."* — Jimi Hendrix**

VISIT

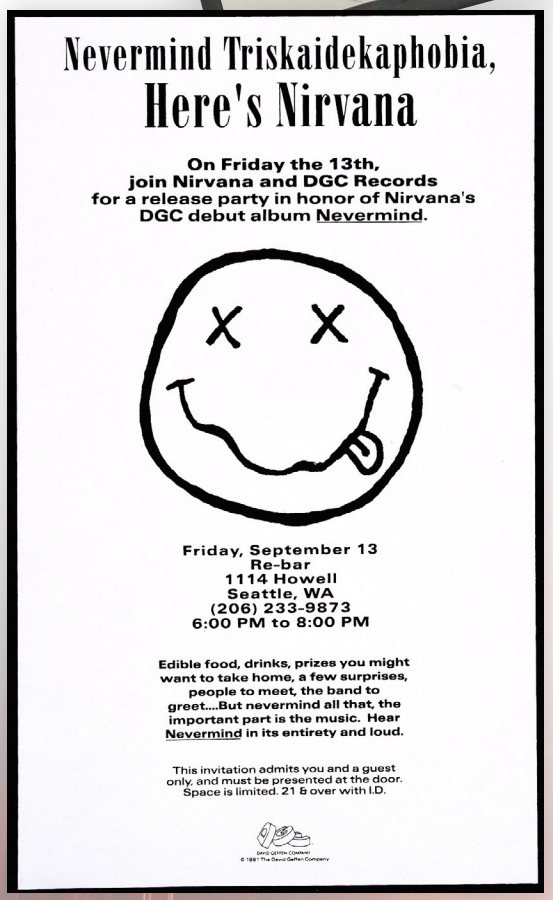
Jimi Hendrix Park: Learn more about Hendrix's life through a timeline walking path and sculptural art inspired by his psychedelic music.

Sicks' Stadium: Home to baseball teams such as the Seattle Rainiers and the short-lived Negro League team, the Seattle Steelheads. The site also hosted musical acts such as Elvis Presley and Janis Joplin. Today, the location is a hardware store — but you can still stand on the former home plate and get a hotdog!

MOPOP
MUSEUM OF POP CULTURE



Pictured left and below: Courtesy Museum of Pop Culture, Seattle, WA



Nevermind Triskaidekaphobia,
Here's Nirvana

On Friday the 13th,
join Nirvana and DGC Records
for a release party in honor of Nirvana's
DGC debut album Nevermind.

Friday, September 13
Re-bar
1114 Howell
Seattle, WA
(206) 233-9873
6:00 PM to 8:00 PM

Edible food, drinks, prizes you might want to take home, a few surprises, people to meet, the band to greet....But nevermind all that, the important part is the music. Hear Nevermind in its entirety and loud.

This invitation admits you and a guest only, and must be presented at the door. Space is limited. 21 & over with I.D.

Nirvana frontman Kurt Cobain (1967-1994) created this illustration in art class during his 1984-1985 senior year at Weatherwax High School in Aberdeen, Washington. He had long exhibited a talent for creating visual art, and as a teenager found new inspiration going to underground punk shows in Seattle. Cobain was best known as the singer, guitarist, and primary songwriter for Nirvana from their formation in 1987 to Cobain's death in 1994. Nirvana was one of the primary bands of the Grunge music scene which led to the rise and prominence of Alternative Rock in the 1990s.

Nirvana hosted their second album release party on Friday, September 13th 1991, at Re-Bar, located in Seattle's Capitol Hill. The band was frustrated by the over representation of corporate music industry types at the party and began a food fight among other disorderly conduct. Their album *Nevermind* would go on to reach number one of Billboard's Top 200 Albums in 1992.

"We were laughing, saying 'Oh my God, we just got kicked out of our own record release party!" **— Krist Novoselic**

VISIT

The Kurt Cobain Memorial Bench: Located in Viretta Park, this is a space where fans gather to remember the legacy of Cobain's impact.

Re-bar: Although the original bar closed its doors in 2020, the musical legacy of the space lives on as the dueling piano bar Keys on Main in the Denny Triangle.

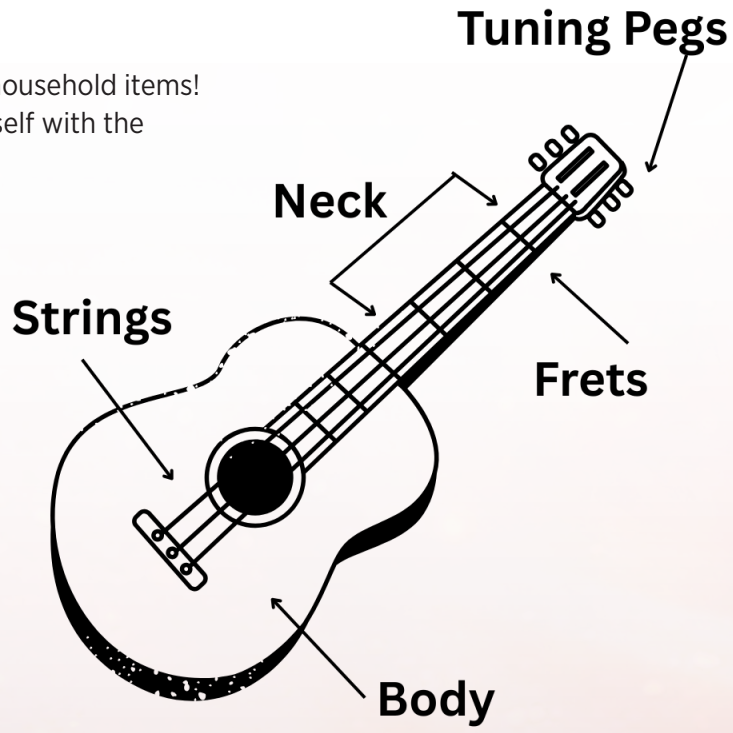
Make Your Own Band

By Jessica Ellison

You can take the music of *Jesus Christ Superstar* home with you by making some of the instruments from the show!

GUITAR

You can make a guitar out of common household items! Before you get started, familiarize yourself with the common parts of a guitar.



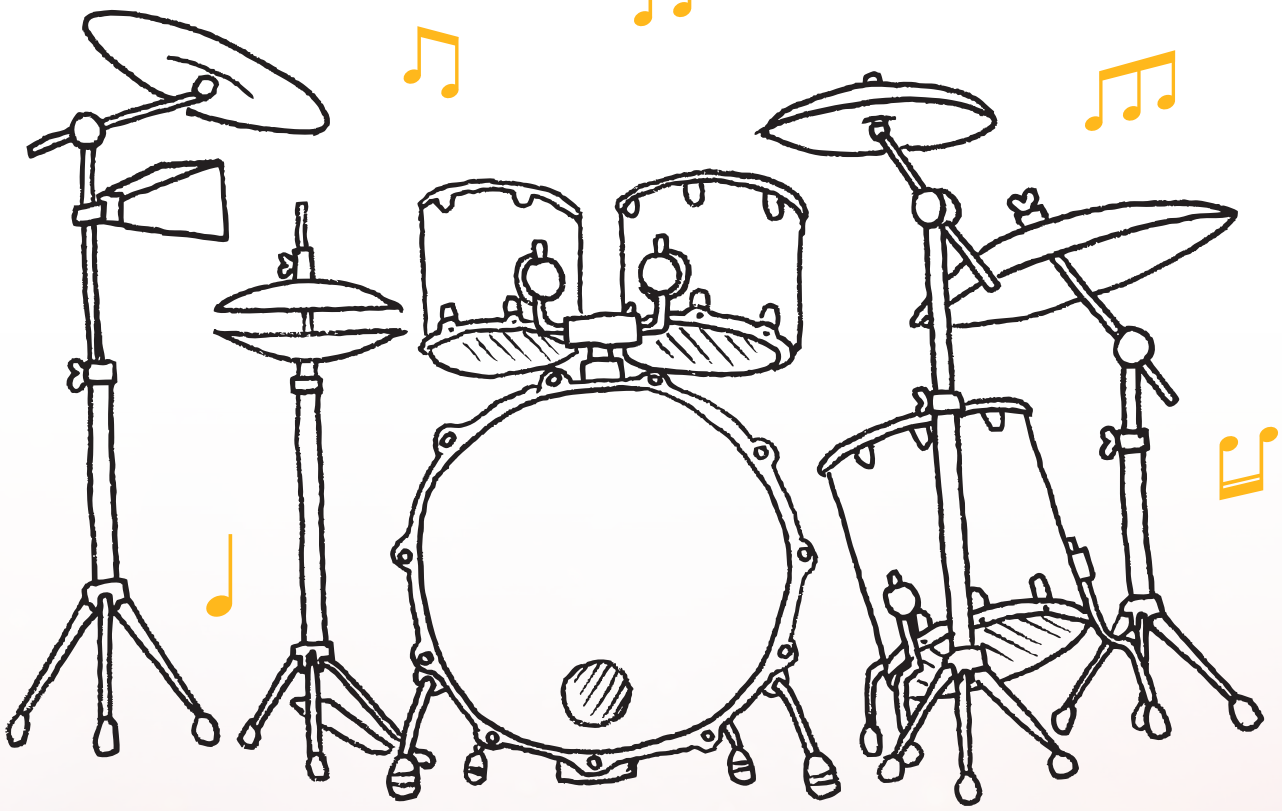
Materials needed:

An empty tissue box
A cardboard paper towel tube
Rubber bands
Scissors or a craft knife
Paint
Paintbrushes
4 popsicle sticks
Glue stick
Pom poms
Stickers
Washi tape

Instructions:

1. Remove any plastic from the tissue box and paint the outside of the box with your favorite color. Give the paint some time to dry. The tissue box will be the body of your guitar.
2. Paint the paper towel tube with your other favorite color, and give the paint time to dry. The paper towel tube will be the neck of your guitar.
3. Pick which side the neck of your guitar will come out of. If you're right-handed, the neck will come out of the right side, and if you're left-handed, the neck will come out of the left side.
4. Take scissors or a craft knife and cut a hole into the top of the tissue box. The hole should be slightly smaller than the paper towel tube. Then, insert the paper towel tube into the hole in the tissue box.
5. Now we're going to make the guitar strings using rubber bands! Take six rubber bands and stretch them around the tissue box. You can use rubber bands of different sizes to create different sounds!
6. Next, get four popsicle sticks. Glue two of the popsicle sticks together to increase their thickness, and do the same for the other two. Once you have a set of thicker popsicle sticks, slide them under the rubber band strings and push them to either side of the tissue box.

Make Your Own Band



DRUMS

Materials needed:
Empty cans
Balloons
Rubber bands
Dowels
Wooden beads
Scissors
Glue

Instructions:

1. Cut the bottom part off of a balloon.
2. Stretch the balloon over the top of the can and secure it with a rubber band.
3. Repeat this process with different can sizes to make a full drum setup.
4. To make a drumstick, glue one of the wooden beads onto a dowel and let it dry.

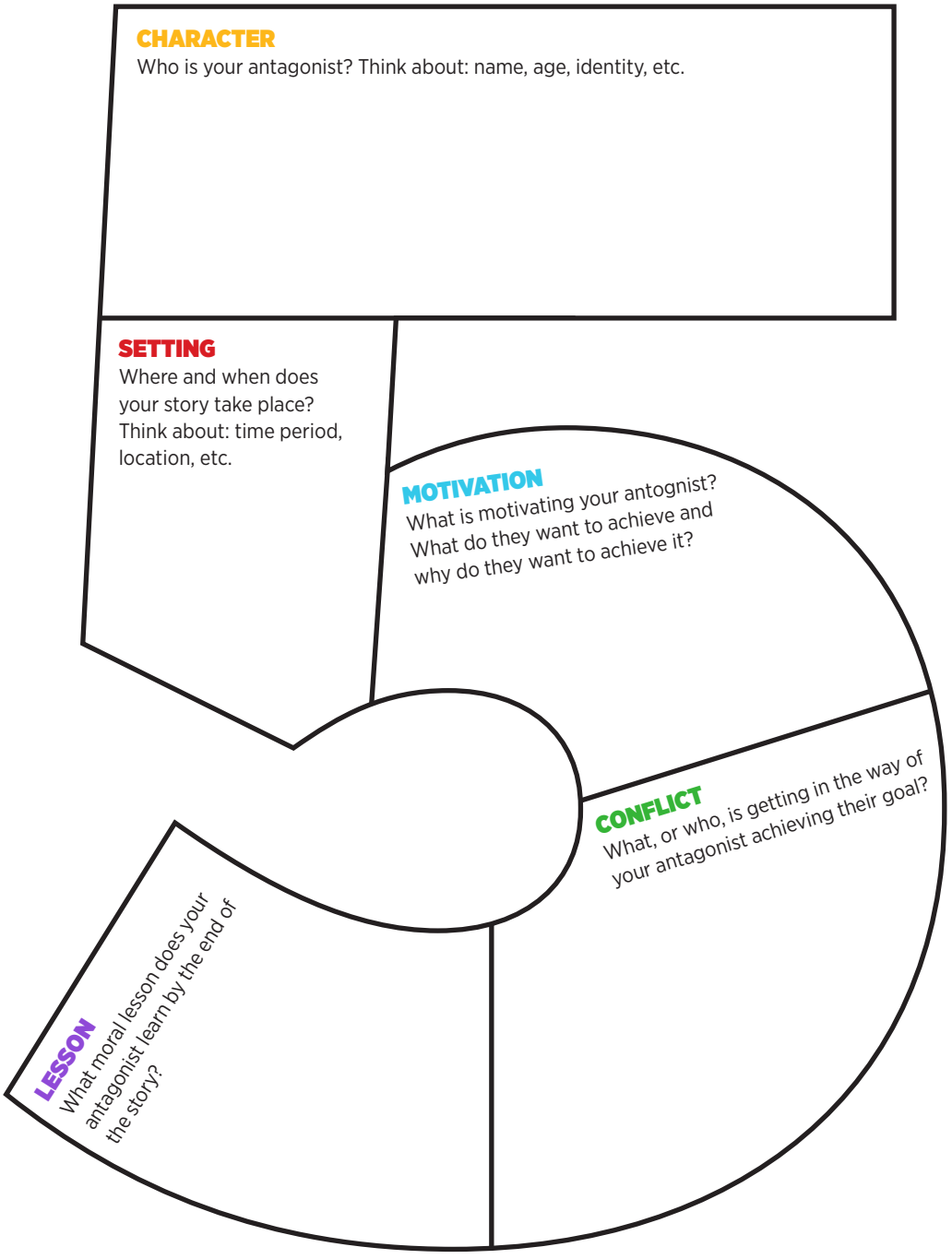
THE ANTAGONIST'S PERSPECTIVE

By Jessica Ellison

Take a moment to think about some of the stories that you know; these could be stories from books, fairytales, folk tales, or even oral family stories. Now, take a moment to think about how many of those stories are told from the protagonist's perspective. Chances are, an overwhelming majority of the stories that you thought of are from that perspective.

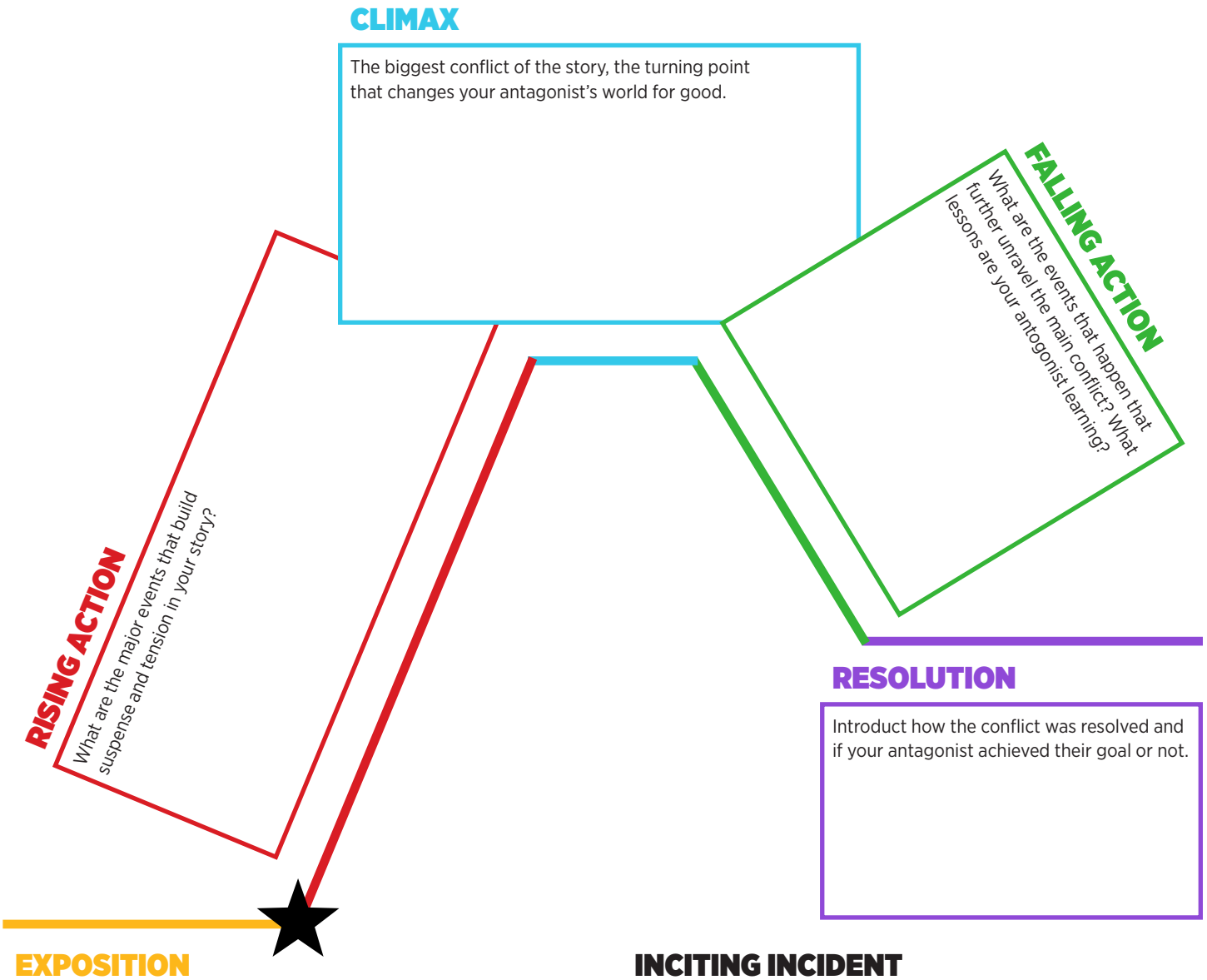
Jesus Christ Superstar is seen as an unconventional musical for many reasons, and one of those reasons is that the show invites the audience to see the story from Judas's perspective, and Judas is generally considered to be the antagonist in most stories In this activity, you can try your hand at writing a short story from the antagonists' perspective using the worksheets below.

STEP 1: SET THE STAGE



THE ANTAGONIST'S PERSPECTIVE

STEP 2: STORY STRUCTURE



EXPOSITION

Introduct the scene, characters, and establish the world of your story.

INCITING INCIDENT

What is the first conflict that disrupts the normal operations of your world?

THE ANTAGONIST'S PERSPECTIVE

STEP 3: WRITE YOUR STORY

Build a Musical Story

By Jessica Ellison

Did you know that *Jesus Christ Superstar* was originally created as a rock-opera concept album? It wasn't until a year later, in 1971, that the show was staged as a full musical. When musical and written elements of a story come together, they can often enhance and deepen the effectiveness of storytelling. Combining those elements can help an audience to experience a story on a more emotional level, and music can be used to expand the narrative of the written material.

Now, you can try your hand at creating a musical piece in this activity! You can utilize the story and musical instruments from the first two activities to help you in this activity. If you have not done the prior activities, you can utilize the sample poem to the right. You can also use common items or your own body as instruments!

Sample Poem — "Jack and Jill" by Mother Goose

Jack and Jill went up the hill
To fetch a pail of water;
Jack fell down and broke his crown,
and Jill came tumbling after.

Up Jack got, and home did trot,
As fast as he could caper,
To old Dame Dob, who patched his nob
With vinegar and brown paper.

No instruments? No problem!

You can make musical noises utilizing the things listed below:

- Pat your hands on your legs to make percussive noises
- Strum extended rubber bands for string-like noises
- Jingle keys for bell-like noises
- Move salt and pepper shakers around for shaking sounds

Build a Musical Story

DIRECTIONS

1. **Taking either your short story or the sample poem, identify moments of the story that may be aided by music. Consider the following, when identifying these moments:**
   a. Is there a moment that feels emotionally intense?
   b. Is there a moment that feels suspenseful?
   c. Is there a moment that feels calming?
   d. Is there a moment that feels confusing?

2. **Begin building your musical elements. Make sure that the music that you create connects and meshes well with the moments in the story that they are paired with.**
   a. Consider the pitch, volume, and speed of the music and sounds that you create. Different elements are often used to portray different feelings.

PITCH	High-pitch (ex: a whistle)	Often used to portray horror or suspense
	Low-pitch (ex: a waterfall)	Often used to portray calmness or relaxation
VOLUME	Loud (ex: a siren)	Often used to portray intensity or shock
	Quiet (ex: a whisper)	Often used to portray stealth or tranquility
TEMPO	Fast (ex: think of running)	Often used to portray a rush or excitement
	Slow (ex: think of walking)	Often used to portray contemplation or introspection

3. **Now that you have the core of your music, think about how you want your music to start and stop. Consider the following:**
   a. Do you want your music to start and/or stop abruptly?
   b. Do you want your music to have a slow build-up and slowly fade in or out?

4. **Next, get a partner and read your story or poem out loud without any music.**

5. **This time, have your partner read your story or poem out loud, and incorporate your musical sounds while they are reading.**

6. **Congratulations! You just built a musical story.**

7. **After completing your musical story consider the following reflective questions:**
   a. How did the musical elements change the story?
   b. Do you think the musical elements added to the story or took away from it?
   c. How might you continue to expand your story?

CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION

After you experience the show, reflect on the following questions:

- Which character did you relate to the most and why? Were there any unexpected characters that you sympathized with?
- The lyrics of "Superstar" list many questions that Judas has about the life and legacy of Jesus. What role, if any, do questions play in a journey of faith? What role do questions play in an investigation of a historical narrative? Do the purposes have any overlap?
- Neither Tim Rice nor Andrew Lloyd Webber professed to being devout Christians (or even particularly religious in general), yet they were inspired to write *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Why might it be useful to revisit or retell the story of Jesus, even if you are not particularly invested in the religious associations of the story?
- Sacred material may not seem like an intuitive match for rock music. Why do you think Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice chose to tell the story of *Jesus Christ Superstar* as a rock opera? Were there ways that this form helped illuminate the story in a new way for you?
- What parts of *Jesus Christ Superstar* matched up with the things you expected from a retelling of the story of Jesus and which parts surprised you? How did it feel when you encountered something unexpected?
- The designers of *Jesus Christ Superstar* chose specific colors for costumes, sets, lights, and other visual elements onstage. Did you notice any meanings attached to the colors you saw onstage? Do they correspond with any meanings you might already be aware of from religious traditions or social connotations?

Glossary

This glossary includes terms to know from the script of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, as well as terms referenced throughout the Inside the Musical Guide.

From the Guide

Accompaniment: an additional musical part (instrumental or vocal) that supports or partners a solo performance

Antagonist: the most prominent opponent of the leading character in a work of art (drama, movie, novel, musical, etc.), often acting as an adversary and is actively hostile to a specific situation

Aria: an often elaborate solo song with instrumental accompaniment, often seen in operas

Concept Album: an album where all musical and lyrical content revolves around a specific theme, story, or idea (rather than a collection of individual, unrelated songs)

Orchestration: the assignment of musical parts (such as melody, harmony, rhythm, etc.) to specific instruments in an ensemble to fully realize the intent of a composer

Perspective: a particular and unique way to regard something; similar to a point of view

Pitch: the quality of a sound that makes it higher or lower in a musical scale

Protagonist: the main figure, or the most prominent figure, in a work of art (drama, movie, novel, musical, etc.)

Tempo: the speed at which a piece of music is played

Volume: the loudness or quietness of a sound; also known as dynamics

From *Jesus Christ Superstar*

Apostle: one who is sent out to act as a messenger or ambassador; in Christianity there are twelve apostles commissioned by Jesus to spread the Gospel

Argentum: Latin for silver

Aurum: Latin for gold

Blasphemy: the act of speaking about God or sacred things in an impure or sinful way

Commercium: Latin for trade

Denarios: Latin for coins

Hosanna: an exclamation translating to "save now" or "save, pray." The phrase is often used as an appeal for deliverance and an acclamation of praise to God.

Lepers: a person who suffers from leprosy (a contagious disease affecting the skin) and/or a person who is rejected in larger society

Manacle: a metal chain or shackle used for restraining someone's hands or ankles

Mandarin: a reference to someone who is considered a high-ranking official or bureaucrat; originates from the political structure of the imperial Chinese civil service

Messiah: the savior or leader of a particular cause

Myrrh: a fragrant gum resin that is used in various perfumes, incenses, and medicines; one of the original three gifts (along with gold and frankincense) gifted to Jesus as a baby. Jesus' gift of myrrh often symbolizes the need to anoint Jesus before his sacrificial death.

Obedientia: Latin for obedience

Pharisees: a prominent religious sect know for strict adherence to religious law; in modern times also used in a derogatory way to describe someone who is hypocritical and self-righteous

Books from an Antagonist's Point of View



By Island Books

Do you want even more stories that are told from an antagonist's point of view? Check out the book recommendations from Island Books below!

FOR KIDS:

The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs by Jon Scieszka
The Grinch Who Stole Christmas by Dr. Seuss
Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak
Artemis Fowl by Eoin Colfer
Frindle by Andrew Clements
Restart by Gordon Korman

FOR YOUNG ADULTS:

Not Even Bones (Market of Monsters Trilogy by Rebecca Schaeffer)
The Ballad Of Songbirds And Snakes by Suzanne Collins
Nimona by Noelle Stevenson
Renegades by Marissa Meyer
The Young Elites by Marie Lu
A Neon Darkness by Lauren Shippen

FOR ADULTS:

American Psycho by Bret Easton Ellis
You by Caroline Kepness (and sequel, ***Hidden Bodies***)
A Clockwork Orange by Anthony Burgess
The Talented Mr. Ripley by Patricia Highsmith
Lolita by Vladimir Nabokov
Vicious by VE Schwab
Hench by Natalie Walschots
Moriarty by Anthony Horowitz
Circe by Madeline Miller
Wicked by Gregory Maguire
Wideacre by Philippa Gregory
The Chronicles of the Black Company by Glen Cook
The Screwtape Letters by CS Lewis
Grendel by John Gardner
Long Live Evil by Sarah Rees Brennan
The Wasp Factory by Iain Banks
Role Model by Rachel Reid

Community Resource List

Curated by The 5th Avenue Theatre Staff

We recognize that the themes and experiences of the characters in *Jesus Christ Superstar* are relevant to the challenges and hardships existing throughout time in society. The list below is curated to contain both local and national resources for individual and community wellness.

KEY

- Local WA Organization
- National Organization
- Youth Focused
- LGBTQIA+ Focused
- Culturally Focused
- Community Partner Organization

King County information hotline for any or all of the below listings,

CALL 2-1-1

BULLYING

AACAP
Committee for Children
No Bullying
Stop Bullying
TeenLink

HOUSING INSECURITIES

Cascade Housing Foundation
Chief Seattle Club
Compassion Housing Alliance
Cocoon Housing
Communities of Belonging
Jubilee Women's Center
POCAAN
Northwest Justice

MENTAL HEALTH ASSISTANCE

Asian Counseling and Referral Service
Crisis Connections — County Based Hotline
Fairfax Behavioral Health
National Alliance of Mental Health Illness (NAMI)
TeenLink
Lambert House
Wa Therapy Fund

PHYSICAL & PERSONAL SAFTEY

Children's Hospital
Coalition ending Gender-Based Violence
Domestic Shelters
Futures Without Violence
Global Network of Women's Shelters
Northwest Family Life
Sexual Assault Hotline
Call 1-800-656-HOPE (4673)

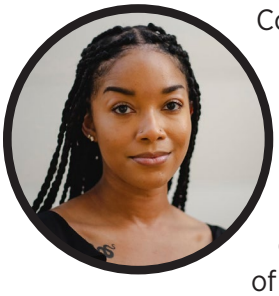
SUICIDAL THOUGHTS AND ACTIONS

Crisis Text Line — Text 741-741
TeenLink
National Suicide Prevention Hotline — Call 9-8-8
Now Matters Now
Suicide Lifeline —Call 1-800-273-8255

SUBSTANCE ABUSE SUPPORT

23rd & Cherry Fellowship
FairFax
Narcotics Anonymous
POCAAN
TeenLink
Washington Recovery Helpline
Call 1-866-789-1511 or Dial 7-1-1

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS



Jessica Ellison (they/them) is the Associate Director of Education at The 5th Avenue Theatre Company, as well as a freelance dramaturg, researcher, and writer. Jess received their Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology from the College of William and Mary and their Master of Arts in Theatre Studies from the University of Houston. In their role at The 5th, Jess is passionate about increasing access to arts education and supporting students, educators, and teaching artists along their creative and educational journeys. Jess is a former adjunct professor of global theater history and African American theater and currently serves as the Vice President of Institutions for Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas and as a Board Member for Washington Thespians.



Christa Fleming is a graphic designer whose experience spans over 25 years. She has worked with a number of Seattle area organizations, including: The 5th Avenue Theatre, ACT Theatre, Town Hall Seattle, National Nordic Museum, The Arboretum Foundation, Associated Recreation Council, Pasado's Safe Haven, Cornish, Book-It Repertory Theatre, Auburn Symphony Orchestra, ArtsWest, many independent schools, and more. She also crochets. A lot. You can check out her design work at **christafleming.com**.



Beth Pollack (she/her) is a Seattle-based performer, dramaturg, and teaching artist. She is the Dramaturg and Curriculum Specialist at The 5th Avenue Theatre. As a dramaturg, Beth has additionally worked with Seattle Shakespeare Company, Noveltease Theatre, and Dacha Theatre, where she is the Associate Producer of Literary Management. As an educator, Beth has worked with Seattle's Young Shakespeare Workshop, Seattle Children's Theatre, Seattle Shakespeare Company, Jet City Improv, Book-It Repertory, ACT Theatre, and Seattle Rep's Public Works Program. As an actor, you may have seen or heard her work with Seattle Rep, Seattle Children's Theatre, Village Theatre, Seattle Shakespeare Company, Book-It, Strawberry Theatre Workshop, or Dacha Theatre. Beth graduated magna cum laude from NYU's Gallatin School of Individualized Study with a degree in Theatre Studies and the Historicization of Dramatic Literature, and would be happy to explain what that means. More at **beth-pollack.com**.



Derek Smith — Saxophonist Derek R. Smith is a versatile and dynamic performer/educator based in the beautiful Puget Sound region. At home in a wide range of musical styles, Derek's musical skills have found him in the recording studios and on stage with artists and organizations such as: Gloria Estefan, Chick Corea, Bobby McFerrin, George Benson, Arturo Sandoval, Maria Schneider, Dave Liebman, Vince Mendoza, Terence Blanchard, Bruce Hornsby, Opera Naples, Michael Feinstein, Take 6, Kirk Whalum, Dave Gruisin, New World Symphony, and Miami City Ballet. Smith is also a trained multiple woodwind specialist performing on flutes, clarinets, and double reeds regularly appearing at The 5th Avenue, Paramount, and Village theaters. Derek currently maintains an active private studio in the Seattle area in addition to serving as a guest clinician and adjudicator in Western Washington. His formal studies include a Doctor of Musical Arts in multiple woodwind performance and Master of Music in Jazz Pedagogy from the Frost School of Music at the University of Miami and a Bachelor of Music in Saxophone and Jazz Performance from California State University-Fresno.

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