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**Three-time GRAMMY Award nominee and artists from bands  
Postmodern Jukebox, tUnE-yArDs and Diane Coffee  
join Broadway and West End talent for  
North American premiere of  
Olivier Award-winning production  
*JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR*  
April 27 – May 20, 2018 at the Lyric Opera House  
New orchestra pit seating offered for all performances**

[Images available for download here](#)

CHICAGO (2/15/2018)—Artists from the bands **Postmodern Jukebox, tUnE-yArDs, and Diane Coffee** join Broadway talent for **Lyric Opera’s** North American premiere of **Timothy Sheader’s** explosive Olivier Award-winning production of **Andrew Lloyd Webber’s** rock opera ***Jesus Christ Superstar***, presented from April 27 to May 20, 2018 at the Lyric Opera House, 20 N. Wacker Drive, Chicago (press opening April 28).

The Lyric cast includes: Broadway artist **Heath Saunders** (Jesus); three-time GRAMMY Award-nominated soul singer **Ryan Shaw** (Judas); tUnE-yArDs tour vocalist **Jo Lampert** (Mary Magdalene); Broadway and Postmodern Jukebox crooners **Michael Cunio** (Pilate) and **Mykal Kilgore** (Simon Zealotes); Diane Coffee frontman **Shaun Fleming** (Herod); Chicago-based Broadway artist **Joseph Anthony Byrd** (Annas); West End favorite **Cavin Cornwall** (Caiaphas), and Chicago-based artist **Andrew Mueller** (Peter).

To guarantee a front row rock concert experience, Lyric will offer

**orchestra pit seating** -- the closest possible position to the stage -- for the first time in the company's Broadway musical history. This new, up-front seating goes on sale today for students through Lyric's **NEXT discount ticket program**, and will be made available to the general public at a later date.

Single tickets for *Jesus Christ Superstar* start at \$44 and are on sale now at [jcsuperstar.org](http://jcsuperstar.org), in person at the Lyric Opera House box office, or by calling [312-827-5600](tel:312-827-5600).

Three-time Olivier Award winner Timothy Sheader directs the North American premiere of his acclaimed 2016 production from Regent's Park Open-Air Theatre in London. Sheader will be joined in Chicago by the original creative team, including music director **Tom Deering**, Olivier Award-winning choreographer **Drew McOnie**, Tony Award-nominated set & costume designer **Tom Scutt**, and Olivier Award-nominated lighting designer **Lee Curran**. The Chicago production will feature members of the **Lyric Opera Orchestra and Chorus**.

***Jesus Christ Superstar*** is an iconic rock opera that reinvented musical theater for the modern age. With music by Andrew Lloyd Webber and lyrics by Tim Rice, this global blockbuster tells the story of the final weeks in the life of Jesus Christ, from the perspective of Judas Iscariot. As Christ's followers grow more fervent, Judas must make his fateful choice between faith and betrayal. Filled with an exciting mix of musical styles that draw upon 1970s rock, gospel, folk and funk themes, this contemporary imagining of the biblical tale features high-energy dance and powerful storytelling.

#### ARTIST BIOS

**HEATH SAUNDERS** (*Jesus*) debuted on Broadway in 2016 in the much-acclaimed musical *Natasha, Pierre, and the Great Comet of 1812*. Previously he was seen in the show in its American Repertory Theatre production. He has appeared Off-Broadway in *Newton's Cradle* (New York Musical Theatre Festival), for which he also wrote the music and lyrics. Other New York appearances include *Lennon* (Union Square Theatre), *I Am Harvey Milk* (Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Center), and *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (New York City Center Encores). Regionally Saunders has been seen in *Twelfth Night* (Shakespeare Theatre Company in Washington, D.C.), *The 12* (Denver Center), *Rent* (Seattle's 5th Avenue Theatre), and *James and the Giant Peach* (Seattle Children's Theatre).

**RYAN SHAW** (*Judas*) is an Atlanta native who made his New York debut in Tyler Perry's play *I Know I've Been Changed*. Shaw subsequently established himself doing Motown covers, joining the group Fabulous Soul Shakers and later opening for Van Halen's 2007/08 North American tour. His first album, *This is Ryan Shaw*, earned him a 2008 Grammy nomination for "I Am Your Man." Shaw again received Grammy nominations in 2011 (for "In Between") and 2014 (for "Yesterday" on his latest CD, *Real Love*). He had the honor of playing Stevie Wonder in the original Broadway cast of *Motown the Musical*. During 2016, he lived in London performing in one of the city's longest-running shows, *Thriller Live*, which honored one of Shaw's all-time favorite artists, Michael Jackson.

**JO LAMPERT** (*Mary Magdalene*) has been seen Off-Broadway in *Hundred Days* (New York Theatre Workshop), *Joan of Arc: Into the Fire* (Public Theater -- Lucille Lortel Award nomination), *you'll still call me by name* (New York Live Arts), *Rimbaud in NY* (Brooklyn Academy of Music), *New York Animals* (New Ohio), *Iphigenia in Aulis* (Classic Stage Company), *Dance, Dance Revolution* (Ohio Theater). Selected regional: *Marie Antoinette* (American Repertory Theatre/Yale REP), *Prometheus Bound* (A.R.T.), and *The Last Goodbye* (Williamstown Theater Festival). Lampert's film and television credits include *The Path* and *Orange is the New Black*. She was seen in Japan in Elizabeth Swados's *The La Mama Cantata* and on a world tour of *Nikki Nack* with tUnE-yArDs.

**MICHAEL CUNIO** (*Pilate*) gained national attention for his performance of Etta James's classic "At Last" in the PBS concert special "Under the Streetlamp Live!" With *Under the Streetlamp*, Cunio filmed two nationally televised PBS specials, released three albums, and toured widely. He is currently on tour in Europe with *Scott Bradlee's Postmodern Jukebox*. Cunio portrayed Drosselmeyer in Company XIV's *Nutcracker Rouge*. In 2015 he recorded and released *Back Alley Soul*, a tribute to the classic soul 45s of the late '60s & '70s. Highlights of his stage roles include *Corny Collins/Hairspray* (Broadway) and *Tommy DeVito/Jersey Boys* (Chicago). Cunio is an Ovation Award winner for *Reefer Madness* (world premiere). Regionally, he has starred at American Repertory Theater, Arkansas Rep, North Shore Music Theatre, and The Kennedy Center.

**MYKAL KILGORE** (*Simon Zealotes*) has appeared in *Motown the Musical* and *Hair* on Broadway, as well as *The Book of Mormon* in its first national tour. He has also been seen on NBC's *The Wiz Live* and in the 2016 feature film *Collateral Beauty*. As a member of Postmodern Jukebox, Kilgore has performed with the popular music collective in venues around the world. A singer/songwriter, he has played to many sold-out audiences, including the world-famous Apollo's Music Café and the historic Joe's Pub.

**SHAUN FLEMING** (*Herod*), a California native, initially attracted attention in his debut with the Walt Disney Corporation as Max Goof/*Mickey's Once Upon a Christmas* in 1999. Highlights of his work as a voice actor include *Kim Possible* and *Lilo & Stitch: The Series*. He played Jimmy Livingston/*Bubble Boy* (2001), Billy/*Jeepers Creepers 2* (2003), and Leonard Amadeus Helperman in the animated feature *Teacher's Pet* (2004). Two years later his solo project, Diane Coffee, released its debut album, *My Friend Fish*. His music with Diane Coffee has been heard on NPR, where he performed a "Tiny Desk" Concert.

**JOSEPH ANTHONY BYRD** (*Annas*) has been seen in numerous roles in the Chicago area and beyond, including *Emcee/Cabaret* (Paramount Theatre), *Sebastian/The Little Mermaid* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater), the title role/*The Ballad of Emmett Till* (Goodman Theatre), and *Jacob/La Cage aux Folles* (Marriott Theatre). Among his Broadway and national tour credits are *Kinky Boots*, *The Lion King*, and *Mamma Mia!*.

**CAVIN CORNWALL** (*Caiaphas*) is reprising a portrayal seen at Regent's Park in London and the World Arena tour of *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Other London musical-theater credits include *John/Lost in*

*the Stars, Crown/Porgy and Bess, Billy Flynn/Chicago* (also on U.K., European, and Far East tours), *John/Miss Saigon*, and the Police Sergeant/*The Full Monty* (the latter at the Prince of Wales Theatre, where he was also featured in *Fosse*). Among his many film credits are *Les Misérables, De-Lovely, Paddington 2, Star Wars VII: The Force Awakens* (as Captain Sidon Ithano, a.k.a. The Crimson Corsair), and *Enter the Preacher* (winner of Best Actor and Best Comedy Short Film, 2009 Fringe Awards). A prolific voice-over artist, Cornwall has been seen and heard frequently on British television.

**ANDREW MUELLER** (*Peter*) has been seen off-Broadway in *Peter and the Starcatcher* and regionally in *Some Lovers* (The Old Globe) and *My Paris* (Long Wharf Theatre). His Chicago credits include *Shakespeare In Love* and *As You Like It* at Chicago Shakespeare Theater, *Rent* at the Paramount Theatre, *Man of La Mancha* and *For The Boys* at Marriott Lincolnshire Theatre, *Merrily We Roll Along* at The Music Theater Co, and *Big River* with the Bohemian Theatre Ensemble (Jeff Award). He is an alumnus of the University of Michigan.

#### About Lyric

Lyric Opera of Chicago's mission is to express and promote the life-changing, transformational, revelatory power of great opera. Lyric exists to provide a broad, deep, and relevant cultural service to Chicago and the nation, and to advance the development of the art form.

Founded in 1954, Lyric is dedicated to producing and performing consistently thrilling, entertaining, and thought-provoking opera with a balanced repertoire of core classics, lesser-known masterpieces, and new works; to creating an innovative and wide-ranging program of community engagement and educational activities; and to developing exceptional emerging operatic talent.

Under the leadership of General Director, President & CEO Anthony Freud, Music Director Sir Andrew Davis, and Creative Consultant Renée Fleming, Lyric strives to become the great North American opera company for the 21st century: a globally significant arts organization embodying the core values of excellence, relevance, and fiscal responsibility.

To learn more about Lyric's current season, go to [lyricopera.org](http://lyricopera.org). You can also join the conversation with @LyricOpera on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. #Lyric1718 #LongLivePassion



Lyric premiere of Lloyd Webber's *Jesus Christ Superstar* generously made possible by Lead Sponsor **The Negaunee Foundation** and cosponsors an **Anonymous Donor** and **Mr. and Mrs. J. Christopher Reyes**. Production by The Regent's Park Theatre London.

Music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. Lyrics by Tim Rice. In Association with The Really Useful Group Limited. Production by The Regent's Park Theatre London.

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