

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

# Jesus Christ Superstar

Questo musical esplose nel 1973 e segnò un'epoca, al punto che molti ricordano ancora le canzoni a memoria. Che ne è del cast? Giuda (Carl Anderson) morì 6 anni fa, Maddalena (Yvonne Elliman) calca ancora le scene e Ted Neeley recita ancora la parte di Gesù! by Mark Worden

**J**esus Christ Superstar is a rock opera. The film version came out in 1973 and it is a "cult movie." Texan actor Ted Neeley played Jesus Christ: 37 years later he is still playing Jesus in the stage version<sup>1</sup>.

### THE ALBUM

The first version of *Jesus Christ Superstar* came out in 1970. It was an album or "LP" (long-playing record). Andrew Lloyd Webber wrote the music and Tim Rice wrote the words, or lyrics<sup>2</sup>. Lloyd Webber has written many popular musicals and today he is one of the richest people in Britain. His official title is "Baron Lloyd Webber": Tim Rice is now "Sir Timothy Rice." Ian Gillan sang the part of Jesus Christ on the album. In 1970 he was the lead singer of the rock group Deep Purple: he still is today.

### THE MUSICAL

In 1971 *Jesus Christ Superstar* became a musical on stage. It was a show on New York's Broadway. Critics were negative and religious groups hated it, but the public liked it. It closed in 1973, after 711 performances. The show also played in London's West End. It opened in 1972 and closed after eight years. This was a record.

### THE MOVIE

Canadian Norman Jewison directed the film. Next month he celebrates his



82nd birthday. Englishman Melvyn Bragg wrote the screenplay<sup>3</sup>. In 1978 Bragg presented *The South Bank Show*, a new TV arts programme. This year it closed after 32 years.



The cast of *Jesus Christ Superstar* included an American singer Carl Anderson, who played Judas Iscariot. Carl Anderson was black and some people didn't like this: a black Judas Iscariot seemed racist. But it wasn't a problem for Anderson: he played Judas in the stage version of *Jesus Christ Superstar* many years later. Unfortunately, he died of leukemia in 2004. Originally, Ted Neeley wanted to play Judas Iscariot, but he played Jesus. Neeley is still playing Jesus in the stage version today. He is 66. He said in a recent interview: "In the show I say, 'My time is nearly through'<sup>4</sup>. That's me in life. I don't know how much time I've got<sup>5</sup>."



LANGUAGE LEVEL  
**A2 (pre-intermediate)**  
TRACK 4  
Speaker: Chuck Rolando  
Standard American accent

Above right: *Jesus Christ Superstar* (by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice) was originally an album and then a musical, but the 1973 movie is the most famous version. Right: Ted Neeley, who played the title role. He is still playing that role in musicals today.



### Glossary

- 1 stage version** - versione teatrale.
- 2 lyrics** - testi.
- 3 screenplay** - sceneggiatura.
- 4 my time is nearly through** - il mio tempo è quasi finito.
- 5 how much time I've got** - quanto tempo mi rimane.