



PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Tony Award, Pulitzer Prize Winner Directs *Jesus Christ Superstar*

International Pop Star and Local Rising Talent Share Jesus/Judas Roles

Issaquah, WA – It is with great excitement that Village Theatre announces the return of Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize-winner Brian Yorkey (*Next To Normal*) to the director's seat for the upcoming production of *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Set to open in Issaquah on May 12, 2011, this incredibly dynamic production features some bold choices by Yorkey including non-traditional casting and shared roles between two of the most legendary musical theatre characters—Jesus of Nazareth and Judas Iscariot.

"When we were looking to cast Jesus and Judas, we realized that both characters are, in many ways, two sides of the same coin," Yorkey comments. "One of the most powerful messages of *Jesus Christ Superstar* is the profound impact of our choices. Keeping this in mind, we've decided to embrace a unique approach and cast both Michael K. Lee and Aaron Finley to share the roles of Jesus and Judas. By alternating performances, both actors will enjoy a great artistic challenge that will serve to bring each audience a unique experience."

International musical theatre icon, **Michael K. Lee** returns to the Mainstage as Jesus and Judas, previously appearing on the Mainstage in *The King and I* (2007-2008), *The Who's TOMMY* (2007), *The Wedding Banquet* (2004), and *Making Tracks* (2002). Of the shared role experience, Lee comments, "I'm absolutely thrilled...and scared to death. What an opportunity and what a challenge on many levels. Brian [Yorkey] is one of the smartest people I know, and one of the few directors I trust implicitly. It should really be an exciting process and journey." Lee has had many turns on Broadway in such productions as Sondheim's *Pacific Overtures*, *Miss Saigon*, and *RENT*—he has also performed around the world: *Miss Saigon* (Korea); *Where Elephants Weep* (Cambodia); *They're Playing Our Song* (Philippines); *A Twist of Fate* (Singapore); *The Last 5 Years* (2009 Los Angeles - Ovation Nomination); and many others.

Local musical theatre rising star **Aaron Finley** shares these legendary roles with Lee. Finley was last seen at Village Theatre in the Mainstage production of *The Gypsy King* (2010), and the Festival readings of *Take Me America* (2009) and *It Shoulda Been You* (2010)—both productions part of Village Theatre's upcoming 2011-2012 Mainstage season. His recent theatre credits include local appearances at The 5th Avenue Theatre, Taproot Theatre, and ArtsWest.

Brian Yorkey credits include: (Director) Mainstage: *Lost in Yonkers*, the Footlight Award-winning *The Who's TOMMY*, and *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *EVITA* and *AIDA* (co-director), *Play It By Heart* (book), *Making Tracks* and *The Wedding Banquet* (book/lyrics), *The Secret Garden* and *To Kill a Mockingbird* (director), and *The Ark* and *Girl of My Dreams* (dramaturg). Village Originals: *Searching for Y* and *Six Wives* (direction). Broadway: *Next to Normal* (2009 Tony Award, Best Score; Pulitzer Prize). Film in development: *Score!* for Warner Brothers and Team Downey; *Love Undercover* for Pandemonium Films and Overture; *Chase* for Rosenzweig Films and Anonymous Content. Village Theatre Associate Artistic Director, 2000-2007.

Additional cast members in JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR include Nicholas Beach, Jordon Anthony Bolden, Elise Lenna Campello, Khanh Doan, Ashley Fitzsimmons, Andrew W. Garrett, Timothy Glynn (Annas), LaVon Hardison, Darrell Hokuf, Eric Polani Jensen (Caiaphas), Timothy M. Keller, Josh Krupke, Matthew S. Lawrence, Jessica Low, Christian Rey Marbella, Henry Nettleton, Michael Nicholas, Jennifer Paz (Mary Magdalene), James Scheider, John David Scott, Adam Somers, Greg Stone (Pontius Pilate), Matthew Wade, Troy L. Wageman, Brandon Whitehead (King Herod), and William A. Williams. Find more information on the full cast page here: http://www.villagetheatre.org/jcs_cast.php

Production team: Directed by Brian Yorkey (*The Who's TOMMY*, 2007; *The Importance of Being Earnest*, 2009; *Lost in Yonkers*, 2010), with choreography by Daniel Cruz (*AIDA*, 2008), music directed by Tim Symons (*The Full Monty*, 2010), scenic design by Matthew Smucker (*Shadowlands*, 2007); lighting design by Alex Berry (*Beauty and the Beast*, 2008-2009; *The Who's TOMMY*, 2007), costume design by Melanie Burgess (*The King and I*, 2007-2008; *Sleuth*, 2011), sound design by Gino Scarpino (*The Full Monty*, 2010; *Iron Curtain*, 2011), associate direction by Brandon Ivie (Asst. Director, *Lost in Yonkers*, 2010), and fight choreography by Geoffrey Alm (*The Gypsy King*, 2010).

Photos: Pre-production photos will be available online after April 28, 2011.

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JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR Synopsis:

Exploding onto the Mainstage is the groundbreaking theatrical masterpiece *Jesus Christ Superstar* by legendary writing team Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice. This extraordinary rock opera highlights the struggles of Jesus of Nazareth and Judas Iscariot during the last week of Jesus's life. With a vibrant score of chart-topping hits like "Superstar" and "I Don't Know How to Love Him," *Superstar* is timeless and tremendously powerful.

What:	<i>Jesus Christ Superstar</i> Music by Andrew Lloyd Webber Lyrics by Tim Rice
Where:	In Issaquah: Francis J. Gaudette Theatre 303 Front Street North Issaquah, WA 98027 In Everett: Everett Performing Arts Center 2710 Wetmore Avenue Everett, WA 98201
When:	Issaquah Dates: May 11 - July 3, 2011 – ON SALE NOW Wednesdays through Saturdays: 8:00 PM Saturdays and Sundays: 2:00 PM Selected Tuesdays: 7:30 PM Selected Sundays: 7:00 PM Everett Dates: July 8 - 31, 2011– ON SALE: 5/4/11 Wednesdays through Saturdays: 8:00 PM Saturdays and Sundays: 2:00 PM Selected Sundays: 7:00 PM
Tickets:	Issaquah:

\$20-\$60, Box Office (425) 392-2202 or (866) 688-8049

Everett:

\$19-\$54, Box Office (425) 257-8600 or (888) 257-3722

www.villagetheatre.org

Student & Military Rush: ½ price 30 minutes prior to curtain for any available seat. Group discounts available for groups of 10 or more

About Village Theatre

Based in Issaquah, WA, with operations in Everett, Village Theatre is a leading producer of musical theatre in the Pacific Northwest. Producing entertaining quality productions for the entire family since 1979, Village Theatre has grown into one of the region's best-attended Equity theatres, with over 18,000 Subscribers and 182,000 projected total attendance each season. Through its Village Originals program, Village Theatre is nationally recognized for its contribution to the development of new musicals, having launched over 90 new works to date. Village Theatre also takes pride in nurturing tomorrow's audiences through its youth education programs, Pied Piper and KIDSTAGE, serving over 54,000 young people, families, and schools annually.

Village Theatre season sponsors are Continental Airlines, Microsoft, and Lombardi's

Village Theatre is also funded in part by 4Culture, ArtsFund, ArtsUnited, Axonus, City of Everett, City of Issaquah /Issaquah Arts Commission, Continental Airlines, Encore Arts Program, The Herald, Issaquah/Sammamish Reporter, KING5.com, Larkspur Landing, Lombardi's Neighborhood Italian, Margaret A. Cargill Foundation, Microsoft, National Endowment for the Arts, Overlake Hospital and Medical Center, Port Blakely Communities/Issaquah Highlands, Rowley Properties, and Washington State Arts Commission. Village Theatre is a member of the National Alliance for Musical Theatre and Theatre Puget Sound.

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