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PRESS RELEASE

From Disability to Deity: Open Circle Theater Announces *Jesus Christ Superstar*

SAVE THE DATE: Press Night - Saturday, September 25, 2004 at 8 pm

For Immediate
Release:
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WASHINGTON -- Open Circle Theatre (OCT) announced today its upcoming production of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Jesus Christ Superstar*, September 25 – October 17, 2004 at the Washington Shakespeare Company's Clark Street Playhouse. This riveting show explores the story of Jesus Christ and his crucifixion in a politicized, modernized world with driving rock rhythms and lyric ballads.

OCT's Artistic Director Suzanne Richard will direct the production, with musical direction by Tracy Olivera and choreography by Fred Beam. The cast will include Helen Hayes nominee Rob McQuay as Jesus, Lindsay Allen as Mary, Mathew Conner as Judas, Helen Hayes winner Rick Foucheux as Pilate, Helen Hayes nominee Steven Carpenter as Caiaphas and Shira Greblensky as Annas, last seen as Helen Keller at The Shakespeare Theatre.

OCT's presentation of *Jesus Christ Superstar* will set the play's main theme in 2004, with Jesus appearing in multi-media settings, including the Internet. What WOULD Jesus do? And more importantly, how would the media – the great demon of the current election – react? It's all there in the Webber libretto!

Part of OCT's founding philosophy is that people with disabilities can do and be anything. In this performance, audiences will see how disability can enhance a character – from a Jesus in a wheelchair asking disciples to, “Heal yourself!” to a sign language interpreter for a deaf Pharisee.

Jesus Christ Superstar will be accessible to all audiences. OCT will be modifying the audience banks at the Clark Street Playhouse to seat patrons in wheelchairs in an integrated and dispersed fashion. Sign language will be incorporated in different parts of the show with ensemble members who will act as shadow interpreters. At other points in the show, the production will incorporate real time captioning. There will also be audio described performances for patrons who are blind or have low vision.