

Christ as a Superstar

By JOHN DASH

"Superstar" by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice is starting the pop music of the 70's off with one whole of a question: Who is Jesus Christ?

The Decca 45, sung by Murray Head with a backup by the Trinidad Singers, is one song from an in-development rock opera titled "Jesus Christ." And it's raising a storm.

Aware that many radio stations are very reluctant to play records in which Christ's name is used, regardless of the context, Decca has launched a campaign of enlisting clergymen to convince dj's and listeners that rock and religion can be just as compatible as rock and roll.

And the clergy responded well.

Father John Owens of Bismark, N.D., who hosts a radio show, circulated a statement that said in part:

"If Jesus Christ means anything at all to a Christian, this record should be the cause of some welcomed introspection. The superficial Christians, when they hear 'Superstar,' will rise up with indignation against the use of the name of Jesus Christ in such a public way. But Andrew Webber and Tim Rice have done Christianity a favor.

"They will have many kids rocking and chanting the name of Someone who never objected or rejected the 'young' that came into his midst. Too bad the same cannot be said of some Christian parents and adults today."

Behind the objection Father Owens answers, however, there is another issue. "Su-

perstar" decidedly blasts icons.

"Don't get me wrong," the singer asks, "I only want to know: Jesus Christ, Superstar, do you think you're what they say you are?"

Such a question is not new. Dostoyevsky is probably the most famous writer to pick at the scab of the official 'image' of Christ over against the reality of the God-Man. He devoted one whole chapter of the Brothers Karamazov to exploring an 'imagined' encounter between a Cardinal Inquisitor and Jesus, whom he had condemned as a heretic. The polity of the churchman came off little better than demonic.

The words of the song are hard, simple and earthy. The melody is light, the beat driving. The opening is an orchestrated piece reminiscent of title music from a Buzby Berkeley extravaganza, replete with a thousand spotlights weaving in the darkling air and a million spangle-covered dancers ascending a bogus Jacob's Ladder.

Yet for all the satire the song contains, the refrain is deadly serious, and asks the question that is more and more springing up in people's minds, "do you think you're what they say you are?"

Dean Martin Sullivan, of St. Paul's Cathedral in London commented:

"There are some people who may be shocked by this record. I ask them to listen to it and think again. It is a desperate cry... an urgent inquiry, and a very proper one at that. The onus is on the listener to come up with his replies. If he is a Christian, let him answer for Christ."



Every time I look at you I don't understand Why you let the things you did get so out of hand You'd have managed better if you'd had it planned Why'd you choose such a backward time and such a strange land? If you'd come today you would have reached a whole nation Israel 4 BC had no mass communication I only want to know Jesus Christ Jesus Christ who are you? What have you sacrificed? Jesus Christ Superstar do you think you're what they say you are?

Tell me what you think about your friends at the top Who d'you think besides yourself's the pick of the crop? Buddha was he where it's at, was he where you are? Could Mahomet move a mountain or was that just PR? Did you mean to die like that? Was that a mistake or a record-breaker? Don't you get me wrong I only want to know Jesus Christ Jesus Christ who are you? What have you sacrificed? Jesus Christ Superstar do you think you're what they say you are?

(Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice)

Kearney Band Headed for Confrontation Dublin Again

The Bishop Kearney High School band and associated marching units will leave for Ireland next Saturday, March 14, to take part again in Dublin's St. Patrick's Day parade.

They were "the sensation" of last year's parade, the Dublin Evening Herald declared, in announcing the second appearance of "these remarkable youngsters."

Brother J.L. Heathwood of Kearney said 103 bands would make the trip, with a color guard of 16 and 13 baton twirlers, plus 109 "boosters." The outfit will give a half-time show at the All-Ireland Hurling Finals, perform at Cork, Blarney Castle, Kilkenny Castle and Kilmoney, and also, as last year, be on national television. They will return to Rochester March 21.



First Eucharist

By JOAN ZUMMO

What are they teaching them in these religion classes? My daughter is going to receive her First Communion soon and she doesn't even know what a rosary is. The mother's voice was hesitant at first, but as a murmur through the group indicated that other parents were asking the same question, she added "and she doesn't know any of the prayers that I had to learn when I received my First Communion."

The scene was a meeting for parents for First Communions held recently in a suburban Rochester parish. The mother's questions pointed out the fact that whatever was being taught in religion classrooms there are still many parents who are confused by new approaches to teaching religion. This difference is especially obvious at a time such as First Communion when traditional ceremonies and preparations have been considered important.

There are many reasons for the difference in preparation for First Eucharist now and the preparation of a generation ago.

One of the most important is the whole shift in attitude from a very legalistic and negative orientation to one that is much more concerned with forming positive Christian attitudes.

In religious education this manifests itself in a number of ways, the most obvious of which is probably the near or complete absence of memorization of theological facts and many of the standard prayers.

This is not to say that the children do not learn facts or will never learn the Our Father or the Creed. It does mean, however, that the child is not expected to mouth religious formulae that he is too young to understand or appreciate.

It is far more important for a 7-year-old to understand that God is a kind and loving Father whose love, concern, and forgiveness is extended to all men, and that we, his children must give our love, concern, and forgiveness to others, than for him to be able to recite words that say those things in a vocabulary that is beyond his comprehension.

Parents who are very concerned that their children do not know prayers by heart may, of course, teach the children these prayers themselves.

Try to give the child a reasonable notion of the meaning of the words they are saying.

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Recollection Service Set in Elmira

Elmira — Father Bertin Roll, OFM, Cap., of Pittsburgh, national director of the Archconfraternity of Christian Mothers, will conduct an afternoon recollection service for Elmira area married couples from 2:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday, March 15, in Our Lady of Lourdes Church hall.

He will be presented by Father Roy Kiggins, assistant pastor of the parish and associate director of the Marriage and Family Apostolate of the diocese.

Father Roll has been director of the Christian Mothers group since 1944. He has lectured throughout the country and has written extensively on marriage. One of his booklets for parents and teenagers has had a more than 20 million distribution through schools and parish groups.

Mr. and Mrs. Hugh J. Reynolds head the parish committee for the program, which will close with celebration of Mass.

Territorial Mass Planned in Greece

Another of the "territorial" ecumenical folk Masses celebrated at Our Mother of Sorrows Church will take place at 7:30 Tuesday evening, March 10.

It is especially for residents of the area between Mt. Read and Long Pond Road, from Maiden Lane to Latta Road. All parishioners are invited.

Father George S. Wood, pastor, will be principal celebrant. The Rev. Ernest Kerrison, pastor of Greece United Methodist, will give the homily and the Rev. Morris Wilson, pastor of the Trinity Church of the Nazarene, will read the epistle. Members of the three congregations will be in the offertory procession.

Irish Author To Speak Here

Author, playwright, director, Michael O'Aodha, will speak at St. John Fisher College on Tuesday, March 10 at 8 p.m. in Basil Auditorium.

O'Aodha will speak on "Does Kathleen Live in a Wasteland?" His presentation will be an assessment of radio and television in modern Ireland which will be illustrated by slides and tapes.

O'Aodha has directed, written and produced plays in English and Irish for BBC and RTE, the Irish national radio and television network. He is also a director of the renowned Abbey Theatre.

A frequent contributor to magazines and journals in Ireland and abroad, O'Aodha has also published three books: "Plays and Places," "Dili na Feirme" and a short history of the Abbey.

War and Peace Jesuit Topic

Father Albert P. Bartlett, S.J., rector of McQuaid Jesuit High School, will attend a "Conference on War and Peace" at Woodstock, Md., on March 6, 7 and 8.

Sponsored by the Society of Jesus, the conference will feature nationally-known speakers who will attempt to "promote the quest for peace in the world." Among them is Father Daniel Berrigan, S.J., a chaplain at Cornell University.

'Roman Festival'

The Mothers' Club of St. Agnes High School is sponsoring a "Roman festival" at the school on Friday, March 13, beginning with a spaghetti supper at 6 p.m. Entertainment will follow.

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Crusade Chairman

Mrs. Leo J. Kesselring, has accepted the position of Residential Chairman for the 1970 Cancer Crusade for the American Cancer Society, Monroe County Unit. Mrs. Kesselring will direct both the city and town house-to-house phases of the crusade scheduled for early April. The crusade is designed to dispense cancer information and to gain funds for the Cancer Society's programs of research, education and service.

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