

MEDIA RELEASE

THE
COURT
THEATRE

31 October 2022

For immediate release

RENT

Book, music and lyrics by Jonathan Larson

Musical arrangements: Steve Skinner

Original concept / additional lyrics: Billy Aronson

Musical supervision and additional arrangements: Tim Weil

Dramaturg: Lynn Thomson

Director: Lara Macgregor

Musical Director: Richard Marrett

Sponsor: Golden Healthcare

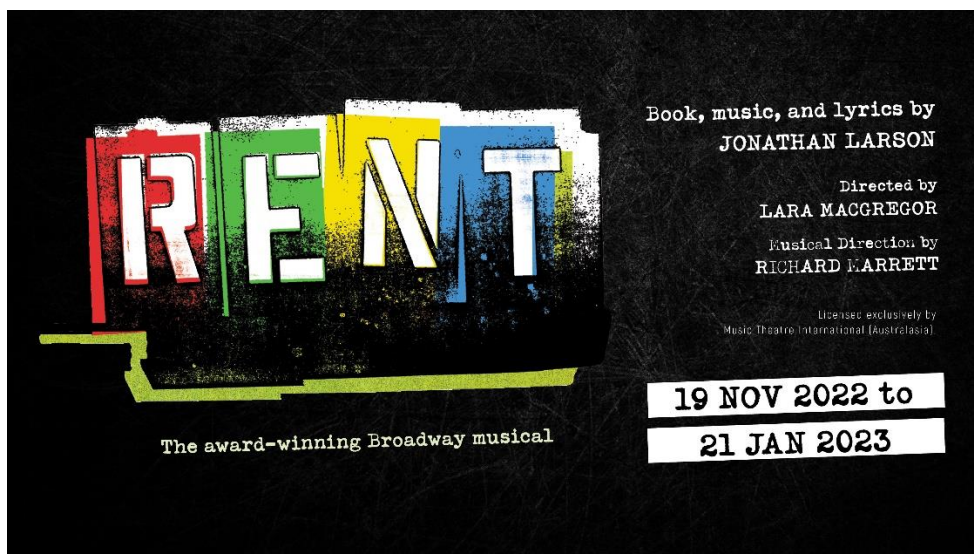
Location: The Court Theatre, Addington, Christchurch

Dates: 19 November – 21 January 2023

SHORT SHOW DESCRIPTION:

Multi-award-winning Broadway rock opera *RENT* is packed with passion, love and high energy musical numbers, including “Seasons of Love”, “Take Me or Leave Me” and “La Vie Bohème”, that have combined to make it one of the most uplifting and beloved musicals ever.

RENT: AN ENDURING CELEBRATION OF LIFE LIVED TO ITS LIMITS



Season Sponsor



Core Funder



The Court Theatre

PO Box 268

Christchurch 8140

New Zealand

Email: boxoffice@courttheatre.org.nz

www.courttheatre.org.nz

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IN BRIEF:

RENT, the musical phenomenon credited with helping to reinvent the American musical genre in the 1990s, will be taking the stage as Christchurch's Court Theatre's summer musical this November.

Described as "the best show in years, if not decades" ([Variety](#)) when it opened in 1996, this ground-breaking production follows a group of artists struggling and striving to follow their dreams in New York City against a backdrop of poverty, looming gentrification and the AIDS crisis of the 1990s.

Celebrating love and friendships that are brave in the face of danger, loving when confronted by hate and hopeful against all odds, *RENT* is a Pulitzer Prize and multiple Tony award winner.

High-energy musical numbers, including revered hits "Seasons of Love", "Take Me or Leave Me" and "La Vie Bohème", help to make *RENT* one of the most uplifting and beloved musicals ever.

"RENT endures in the grand tradition of rock musicals: its heart is bigger than its problems; its music moves under your skin and moves you." [The Guardian, 2021](#)

RENT is on stage at The Court Theatre from 19 November – 21 January 2023.

IN DEPTH

RENT, the musical phenomenon credited with helping to reinvent the American musical genre in the 1990s, is taking the stage as The Court Theatre's summer musical this November.

Described as "the best show in years, if not decades" ([Variety](#)) when it opened in 1996, *RENT* has since garnered legions of avid fans worldwide known as *RENT*-heads. This ground-breaking production follows a group of artists struggling and striving to follow their dreams in New York City against a backdrop of poverty, looming gentrification and the AIDS crisis of the 1990s.

A lot has changed in the world since the play was written - thankfully AIDS is no longer the fearful spectre it was then - but what *RENT* does best is to capture the things that endure, especially the urgency and energy of living life to the fullest, every day, despite (or because of) that life being torn apart at the seams.

Celebrating love and friendship that is brave in the face of danger, loving when confronted by hate and hopeful against all odds, *RENT* is a Pulitzer Prize and multiple Tony award winner. *RENT* was inspired by Puccini's opera *La Bohème* but transplanted to a modern setting with characters whose experiences reflected those of friends of its young writer, Jonathan Larson.

RENT was a late addition to The Court Theatre's Ryman Healthcare 2022 season. As Covid affected the theatre's programming for The Court's third year in a row, The Court decided in May to add *RENT* - itself previously postponed from 2020 due to Covid - as its summer musical. Director Lara Macgregor was thrilled with the decision. "Surely there's no better time in our post-Covid history to celebrate actors, creativity and lifelong friendships" she says.

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There was significant work already done in preparation for this much-anticipated show when it was cancelled in 2020 and returning to deliver on their original vision alongside Macgregor are creatives; Richard Marrett (Musical Director), Mark McEntyre (Set Designer), Tina Hutchison-Thomas (Costume Designer) and Shane Anthony (Movement Director).

Having lived and worked as an actor in New York in the 1990s, Macgregor has experienced first-hand the vitality and vibrancy that made it such a hub of creativity, and New York's East Village itself is almost a living character in this production. This was a place where punk, performance art and drag performance grew and flourished, making it a vital social environment as much as a physical one.

That environment is brought to life in McEntyre's set, inspired in large part by the iconic nightclub CBGBs. Theatre-goers will experience first-hand the multi-layered vibrancy, rawness and emotion of this unique time and place. A world that moves through multiple spaces, as well as a range of seasons, will be created on and around The Court's stage.

RENT features an ensemble cast of both New Zealand and Australian actors, some of whom are making their Court Theatre debut. They will be performing many high-energy musical numbers, including revered hits "Seasons of Love", "Take Me or Leave Me" and "La Vie Bohème", which make *RENT* one of the most uplifting and beloved musicals ever.

Marrett is charged with helping the cast bring that energy to life in song and is delighted that another chance "to perform *RENT*, which has become a modern classic, on The Court stage with a cast of extraordinary vocalists and a band of outstanding rock musicians" was made possible.

The magic of *RENT* is made more poignant in that the life of its young writer, Jonathan Larson, was cut unexpectedly short. "What a privilege to carry the torch for Jonathan Larson who, at 36, after seven hard years of developing *RENT*, passed away the night before it saw an audience" Macgregor says. "He never got to bask in its huge success, its 11-year run on Broadway, his Pulitzer Prize or his Tony Award. We have a remarkable opportunity to continue his legacy and bring the unprecedented energy that is *RENT* to Christchurch."

RENT also introduced the concept of 'RUSH' tickets, which are now a well-known feature of Broadway and The West End. To honour the spirit of *RENT*, The Court Theatre will offer a very limited number of Rush tickets for \$20 - priced as they were in 1996 - for Box Office only sale in advance of each performance.

Tickets for *RENT* are now on sale at www.courttheatre.org.nz

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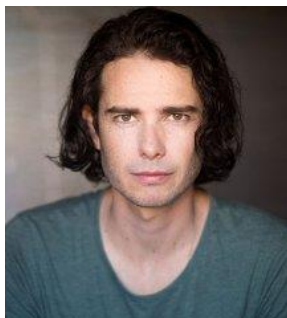
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Cast



Mark Cohen

[Ben Freeth](#)



Roger Davis

[James Bell](#)



Mimi Marquez

[Monique Clementson](#)



Maureen Johnson

[Jane Leonard](#)



Tom Collins

[Cameron Clayton](#)



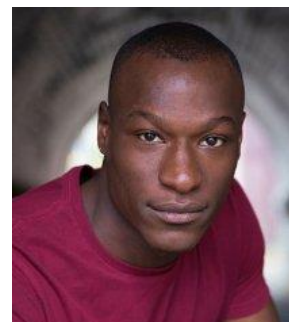
Angel Schunard

[Bailey Dunnage](#)



Joanne Jefferson

[Anna Francesca
Armenia](#)



**Benjamin Coffin III
(Benny)**

[Elijah Williams](#)



**Ensemble /Featured
Vocalist**

[Brady Peeti](#)



**Ensemble / Mark
Understudy**

[James Foster](#)



**Ensemble / Roger
Understudy**

[Cameron Douglas](#)



**Ensemble / Tom Collins
Understudy**

[Lance Ainofo](#)

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Ensemble / Angel
Understudy

[Jared Pallesen](#)



Ensemble / Mimi
Understudy

[Nomi Cohen](#)



Ensemble / Joanne
Understudy

[Kathleen Burns](#)



Ensemble / Maureen
Understudy

[Darlene Mohekey](#)



Ensemble / Benjamin
Coffin III (Benny)
Understudy

[Nic Kyle](#)

Creatives

Director

Musical Director

Movement Director

Set Designer

Costume Designer

Assistant Musical Director / Répétiteur

Intimacy Direction

Lighting Designer

Sound Designer

AV Designer

Props Designer / Co-ordinator

[Lara Macgregor](#)

[Richard Marrett](#)

[Shane Anthony](#)

[Mark McEntyre](#)

[Tina Hutchison-Thomas](#)

[Caelan Thomas](#)

[Jennifer Ward-Lealand](#)

[Grant Robertson](#)

[Glen Ruske](#)

[Andrew Todd](#)

[Julian Southgate](#)

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ARTS COUNCIL OF NEW ZEALAND TOI AOTEAROA

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Band

Keys 1

[Richard Marrett](#)

Guitar

[Michael Ferrar](#)

Bass

[Bradley Grainger](#)

Drums

[Mitchell Thomas](#)

Guitar 2, Keys 2

[Tyler Robbins](#)

Show Times

Monday and Thursday

6:30pm

Tue/Wed/Fri/Sat

7:30pm

Forum (incl. Cast and Crew Q&A)

6:30pm Monday 21 November

Matinees

2:00pm Saturday 17 December (also an Audio Described

performance); 4:00pm 31 December; and 2:00pm 21 January 2023

Bookings: phone 0800 333 100 or visit www.courttheatre.org.nz

Ticket Prices

Adult

\$77 - 86

Senior (65+)

\$70 - \$77

Group (6+)

\$73

Community Services or Hāpai cardholders

\$39

Children (under 18)

\$40 - \$43

30 Below (18 – 30)

\$30

Show image can be found at The Court Theatre's [Media Centre](#)

For more information or to arrange an interview please contact:

Julie McCloy, Communications and Marketing Manager

The Court Theatre, 027 305 7305

Julie.mccloy@courttheatre.org.nz

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