

**RENT** by Jonathan Larson



RENT is a Tony and Pulitzer prize winning modern retelling of La Boheme set among the bohemian inhabitants of New York's Alphabet City during the height of the initial AIDS epidemic that swept the community in the late 1980's and 1990's. In the words of the late Jonathan Larson it is a show about 'a community celebrating life in the face of death and AIDS at the turn of the century'. It has been running on Broadway since opening in 1996, alongside continuous tours in the States and across the world.

**Production Team**

Directors: Chloe Faine  
Dan Chasemore  
Musical Director: Matt Gould  
Producer: Rebecca Smith

**Performance/Rehearsal Details**

Show Dates: Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> November – Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> November  
Venue: The Bridewell Theatre  
Rehearsals: Start Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> September.  
Rehearsal Days: Tuesday, Thursday, all day Saturday.  
Please ensure that you are available Sundays 28<sup>th</sup> Sept and 9<sup>th</sup> Nov

### **Audition / Workshop Dates**

Workshop: Tuesday 9 September 2008

Auditions: Friday 12<sup>th</sup>/Sat 13<sup>th</sup>/Sun 14<sup>th</sup> September 2008

### **Info about the show**

We want to cast a quirky, diverse, interesting, grungy (or 'pass for grungy') looking bunch of people who are nuts about the show.

Rent is sung through. It is a mammoth sing, especially for the leads. You need to have a strong steady voice that is comfortable in the range of the character you are auditioning for, and you need to be able to get through 2 weeks of the show and still do yourself justice on the last night! If you aren't a trained singer, we still want to hear you but you might want to start preparing now to nail your technique and build up enough stamina for the run. Please, if you are auditioning for one of the high parts, think carefully about how to use your technique to cover that high register without going mute after the first matinee. We can't cast you if you don't convince us your stamina is up to it.

We are expecting that audition slots for this show are going to be at a premium, and hence we will have a lot of people to see in a relatively short space of time. For your own sake, please do whatever you have to do to be able to walk in and nail your audition first time, because while we want you to have the chance to show us what we can do and we will all be 'on your side', simple logistics mean we are unlikely to have time for second looks at people.

We have 8 weeks to rehearse the show. Rehearsals will be Tuesday and Thursday evenings and all day Saturdays (and at least two Sundays). This means;

- if you get cast you will need to do your learning outside the rehearsal room.
- Repeat. You Will Have To Do Your Learning Outside The Rehearsal Room. We aim that by the end of the second weekend, you will be able to stagger through the show - you will not be popular if our MD spends that weekend teaching you your vocal line.
- You have to be available for the entire rehearsal period and pretty much kiss everything outside it goodbye for that time! We will try to only call you when needed; but we need you to keep rehearsal days free until the last minute in case we have a change of plans. If you say you will be available you need to be available. Absenteeism will result in bad tempers all round and ultimately in you being replaced.

### ***Extra notes for 'professional' performers, recent graduates, non-sedos members and ex pro's***

We welcome you to audition for us; but we feel it is only fair to point out what you can expect before you do so.

This is a non-professional production. You will have to pay an audition fee of £5 before we will see you; and if you are cast you will have to pay membership (£30) and a participation fee (£20 less the £5 audition fee). This is non-negotiable and you will not be

allowed on stage if you haven't paid it by the first night. No matter what character you are playing! This is mainly due to insurance costs.

You will not be paid travel, expenses, subsistence, performance fees, or any other money for participating. You may be reimbursed for outlay on costume items (this is not the same as usage of things you already have) but this is not guaranteed and you need to agree the expense with the costume designer BEFORE incurring them.

sedos is an amateur theatre company and as such we expect certain things from the people who perform with us. A lot of this comes down to a positive and accommodating attitude - you may be asked to help with things backstage during the get in; you may be asked to do scene changes during the performance; and things may not always run exactly according to plan. This is part of the experience and we ask you to take it all in your stride with good grace.

We are asking you to perform a song from the show to audition at the first audition - this may seem unorthodox to you but it's a chance for us to see that you have the commitment to at least learn a song, and it's a good shorthand way for us to see what you bring to the role. If you bring another song that you nail, we will still ask you to perform the stipulated audition number before putting you through to recalls.

We are happy to provide you with a chance to showcase yourself; we're incredibly excited about the show and we want to open it to as many people as possible; but in doing so we expect you to accept you are part of a team and embrace the experience as one of us.

### **Casting Breakdown**

#### **Roger Davis - High Tenor Rock Belt to A (playing age early-mid 20's)**

Used to be the 'pretty boy front-man' of a rock band. Roger is good looking but dissolute, he has let himself go since discovering he is HIV+. This role is a huge sing and requires a supremely confident performer; a truthful and sympathetic actor who can also hold the stage for sustained and complicated solos and duets. Guitar playing a huge advantage but we will see people without if they fulfil the other criteria.

Audition song - *One Song – Glory* (if a guitarist, also *Tune Up B*)

Recall - please also be familiar with *Light My Candle*, *What You Own* (duet with Mark) (and if a guitarist, also *Your Eyes*)

#### **Mark Cohen - Tenor Rock Belt to G (playing age early-mid 20's)**

Mark is the outside eye - the character who doesn't have HIV and the 'survivor'. He documents the world through his camera. He can be quirkier/geekier looking than Roger. He needs to be able to hold the stage convincingly and take us with him on his journey. Again, a truthful and sympathetic actor who can hold his own vocally in a series of high rock numbers. He also needs to be able to get through a dance routine.

Audition song - *What You Own* (solo)

Recall - please also be familiar with *Opening Recit* (*Tune Up A*), *Tango Maureen* (duet with Joanne) and *What Your Own* (duet with Roger)

#### **Mimi Marquez - Rock mezzo (to E) (playing age 19)**

Mimi is Roger's love interest. A heady mix of vulnerability and attitude, she works as an exotic dancer and lives for hedonistic thrills, yet falls in love with Roger and pays the ultimate price for her pleasure seeking ways. The original Mimi had a quirky, gravelly voice which is something we're not against - but you need to be strong enough to sing the run and need to be able to put across great emotional range in your singing. Of all the characters, Mimi probably needs a slim build to be convincing and also to allow for being carried around the stage by other characters. Mimi will need to be a good & flexible dancer and comfortable not wearing a lot and dancing provocatively. There will be close physical contact with Roger and possibly Benny.

Audition song - *Out Tonight*

Recall - please also be familiar with *Light My Candle* (duet with Roger)

**Tom Collins** - *Soulful/gospelly Bass Baritone* (playing age late 20's - 30's - early 40's)

Collins is the 'daddy' of the group without being a patriarchal figure! Collins has been away and come back and brings a broader experience to bear. He can be played by a big actor but needs to have a gentle quality as well. He gets beaten up at the top of the show and thereafter meets and falls in love with Angel - this will involve some snogging and close physical contact! He is also a bit of a stoner and will probably need to smoke during the production.

Audition song - *I'll Cover You* (reprise)

Recall - please also be familiar with *Santa Fe* and *I'll Cover You* (duet with Angel)

**Benjamin Coffin III** - *high baritone/ mid range tenor*

Benny is the nominal 'bad guy' of the piece - who isn't really a bad guy! The actor playing him needs to sympathise entirely with him! He is upwardly mobile where his contemporaries aren't, but he is genuine and 'means well' and sees his own failing for what they are. We have to believe he has genuine feelings for Mimi.

Audition song - *Seasons of Love* (inc freeform)

Recall - please also be familiar with *You'll See Boys*

**Joanne Jefferson** - *High belt gospel/rock mezzo to G* (Playing age up to 35)

Joanne is a civil rights lawyer - another ostensibly upwardly mobile character, she combines a feisty exterior with a needy interior - her love for Maureen makes her vulnerable but she can give as good as she gets. She needs to be a decent dancer. Joanne will involve some snogging and close physical contact with Maureen.

Audition Song - *Take Me Or Leave Me* (solo)

Recall - please also be familiar with *Tango Maureen* (duet with Mark) and *Take Me or Leave Me* (duet with Maureen)

**Angel** - *High Tenor / falsetto* (Playing age 16+)

Angel is a character we are somewhat open to interpretation on. If you can sell us the Today For You number you'll be halfway there - we also need an engaging and charming actor who can avoid being a camp parody and really make us care about this complex and gorgeous character. Angel will need to be comfortable snogging and being in close physical contact with Collins. And being dragged up.

Audition song - *Today For You*

Recall - please also be familiar with *I'll Cover You* (duet with Collins).

**Maureen Johnson** - *high rock belt mezzo/sop to E (playing age mid 20s)*

Idina Menzel at her sexiest! Maureen is a fantastic part and one of the hardest to nail - that's why we're asking you to do 'Over the moon' - we figure if you've got the b\*lls to do that in an audition and the skill to nail it you're probably on track to be right for the part! We want to hear you sing it and we want you to convince us that you can play this fantastically sexy, self absorbed, kooky diva and make us believe in her and care about her. Maureen will need to be comfortable in close physical contact with Joanne. And possibly others ;-)

Audition song - *Over the Moon*

Recall - please also be familiar with, *Take or Leave Me (duet with Joanne)*

**Ensemble** - *approx 6m 6f, all ages, looks, sizes.*

The ensemble are actually a string of named character parts who provide the fabric of the show. You can expect to be on-stage most of the time as a hobo or a counsellor or a pole dancer or a John - you'll have a lot to do and be expected to work really hard. We'll be looking for attitude (on stage - notsomuch off!), a quirky or interesting look that fits in with our slightly grungy Alphabet City aesthetic, enthusiasm, decent dance, a rock solid voice that can handle the short rehearsal period and a big sing, and most of all just a real love of the show and positive attitude.

If you are only auditioning for ensemble you can bring your choice of song either from the show or of a similar genre that shows you off. If you are singing a song from Rent, we'll have the sheet music, otherwise please ensure that you bring sheet music with you! Please don't bring anything from Les Mis....

**Auditions**

We will be holding auditions on Friday night and all day Saturday in 2 hourly blocks - 10am, 12pm, 2.30pm and 4.30pm.

TO ARRANGE AN AUDITION SLOT, PLEASE CONTACT REBECCA SMITH [rebecca.m.smith@gmail.com](mailto:rebecca.m.smith@gmail.com) AND YOU WILL BE PROVIDED WITH AUDITION MATERIALS

Please be warmed up and ready to start on time, in loose comfortable clothes and shoes you can dance in. You will be taught a routine as a group – which may be to the Tango Maureen, so being familiar with it beforehand might help.

You will then be asked to come in and sing your audition piece one at a time. We may not need to hear the entire song so please don't be offended if we cut you off!

You don't need to bring sheet music if you are singing a number from Rent. At the end of the 2h you will all be asked back in to perform the dance routine and possibly sing a group number depending on time.

Call backs will be on Sunday and will probably take the form of a group workshop where we try out different combinations for duets and group numbers. If you are called back you will get a phone call on Saturday Night to let you know what time we need you back but please assume Sunday Daytime is a write off if you are recalled and don't book

anything else! We hope to cast the show by the end of Sunday and have the first rehearsal on Tuesday but if there is some spill-over we will keep you posted.

We may well start the Call Backs with a stagger through of La Vie Boheme, so do please familiarise yourself with it.

As a rule we call people to let them know that we have or have not cast them as soon as we can; so please bear with us if it takes a few days.

Good Luck, and we hope to see you at the auditions.

If you have any questions, please ask any member of the production team.

*Dan, Chloe, Matt and Rebecca*