

## MEDIA RELEASE

**Fresh off its 25th anniversary, *Rent* takes the stage as the final production in PCS's 2021-2022 Season**



**Previews Begin May 21 | Opening Night is May 27 | Closes July 10**  
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**April 21, 2022 — PORTLAND, OR.** Jonathan Larson's Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning rock musical *Rent* takes over Portland Center Stage hot off its 25th anniversary. *Rent* will be directed by PCS's Associate Artistic Director Chip Miller. It begins previews on May 21, opens on May 27, and runs through July 10 on the U.S. Bank Main Stage. The production, originally slated to run through June 26, has already been extended due to strong ticket sales.

Debuting artists include Johnny Newcomb (*The Last Ship* on Broadway) as Roger Davis, Nyla Sostre (*Hamilton* as Peggy Schuyler and Maria Reynolds, 2nd National Tour) as Mimi Marquez, Jeremiah Alsop (*Beauty & the Beast* at Drury Lane Theatre) as Mark Cohen, and Will Wilhelm

(*As You Like It* at Oregon Shakespeare Festival) as Angel Dumott Schunard. They're joined by local favorites including Delphon "DJ" Curtis Jr. as Tom Collins, Kailey Rhodes as Maureen Johnson, Ashley Song as Joanne Jefferson, and Benjamin Tissell as Benjamin Coffin III.

"*Rent* is a piece of theater that has lived in my heart and mind for as long as I can remember," said Miller. "It is thrilling to be able to cull this material for an urgency that will resonate with today's audiences," they continued. "I am so grateful for the opportunity to make art with this kick-ass team of collaborators."

### **ABOUT THE PLAY**

As a group of young artists fights for justice and visibility during the AIDS crisis, they revel in the beautiful bonds of friendship and chosen family. With its profound message of joy and hope in the face of uncertainty, this timeless musical, based on Puccini's opera *La Bohème*, reminds us to measure our lives with the only thing that truly matters — love.

*Rent* had its world premiere Off-Broadway on February 13, 1996, at New York Theatre Workshop. It moved to Broadway the same year and won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama; the Tony Award for Best Musical, Best Book, and Best Original Score; the Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Book of a Musical, Outstanding Music, and Outstanding Lyrics; and many others. The production ran for 12 consecutive years, becoming one of the longest-running shows on Broadway.

### **JONATHAN LARSON**

Larson's awards include the Richard Rodgers Award, two Gilman & Gonzales-Falla Theatre Foundation's Commendation Awards. He was granted the Stephen Sondheim Award from the American Music Theatre Festival, where he contributed to the musical *Sitting on the Edge of the Future*. He won the Richard Rodgers Development Grant for his rock musical *Superbia*, which was staged at Playwrights Horizon. He composed the score for the musical *J.P. Morgan Saves the Nation*, which was presented by En Garde Arts. Larson performed his rock musical *tick, tick ... BOOM!* at Second Stage Theatre, The Village Gate, and New York Theatre Workshop. In

addition to scoring and songwriting for *Sesame Street*, he created music for a number of children's book cassettes, including Steven Spielberg's *An American Tail* and *Land Before Time*. Other film scores include work for *Rolling Stone's* magazine publisher Jann Wenner. He conceived, directed, and wrote four original songs for "Away We Go!," a musical video for children. Larson died unexpectedly of an aortic aneurysm on January 25, 1996, the day of the first Off-Broadway preview performance of *Rent*. His music (including songs cut from his shows) is archived in the Library of Congress.

## **THE CAST**

Johnny Newcomb (*Sing Street* at New York Theatre Workshop) plays Roger Davis, a formerly successful musician now struggling to make it. Newcomb is joined by Jeremiah Alsop (*Oliver and Madagascar* at The Marriott Theatre) as Roger's roommate and struggling documentary filmmaker, Mark Cohen; Delphon "DJ" Curtis Jr. as Tom Collins; Benjamin Tissell (*Astoria*) as Benjamin Coffin III; Ashley Song (*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*) as Joanne Jefferson; Will Wilhelm (two seasons with Oregon Shakespeare Festival) as Angel Dumott Schunard; Nyla Sostre (2nd National Tour of *Hamilton* as Peggy Schuyler and Maria Reynolds) as Mimi Marquez; and Kailey Rhodes (*Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley*) as Maureen Johnson.

The ensemble includes Caitlin Brooke (*Dogfight* at San Francisco Playhouse); Sandre W. Lee (*Blueprint Specials* at The Public Theater, Under the Radar Festival); Claire Rigsby (*The Bells That Still Can Ring*); Charles Grant (*Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley*); Skyler Verity (James Franco's *Memoria*); Aléa Lorén (*Show Boat* with Portland Opera); and A. D. Weaver (*The Color Purple* at The Phoenix Theatre Company). Austin Comfort (*Elf: The Musical* at Lakewood Theatre Company) and Jessica Tidd (*Leading Ladies* Understudy/Swing at Lakewood Theatre Company) will be the understudies/swings.

## **THE BAND**

Music Director and Conductor Eric Little (*Fun Home*) plays keys, leading a band that includes Cameron Doran (synth, acoustic and electric guitar), Alexandra Geffel (percussion), Zachary

Mason (acoustic and electric guitar), and Sam Mendoza (bass). Jake Siberon is the guitar substitute and Sequoia is the rehearsal accompanist.

### **THE CREATIVE TEAM**

Director Chip Miller (August Wilson's *Gem of the Ocean*) is joined by Scenic Designer Britton Mauk (*Hedwig and the Angry Inch*); Costume Designer Dominique Fawn Hill (*Hedwig and the Angry Inch*); Lighting Designer Jennifer Lin (*Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley*); Sound Designer Sharath Patel (*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*); Video Designer Danny Lawrence (*Hedwig and the Angry Inch*); with Associate Director Phil Johnson, Associate Lighting Designer James Mapes, Stage Manager Janine Vanderhoff, Assistant Stage Manager Amanda Vander Hyde, and Production Assistant Dana Petersen.

### **TICKET AND PERFORMANCE INFORMATION**

**When:** May 21 – July 10, 2022\*

\*Opening Night/Press Night: Friday, May 27, at 7:30 p.m.

Preview Performances: May 21, 22, 25 & 26 at 7:30 p.m.

Pay What You Will Performances: May 22 and June 22 at 7:30 p.m.

**Where:** U.S. Bank Main Stage at The Armory, 128 NW Eleventh Ave, Portland, OR.

**To Purchase Regular Tickets:** Prices range from \$25 to \$97 and tickets may be purchased at [www.pcs.org/rent-musical](http://www.pcs.org/rent-musical), 503.445.3700, or in-person from the box office. *Prices vary by date and time and are subject to change.*

**Ticket Specials:** Visit [pcs.org/deals](http://pcs.org/deals) to view ticket specials, including Rush Tickets, Pay What You Will, Arts for All, Active Duty, Military Veteran, Student, Under 30, The Armory Card, Groups of 10+, and more.

**Please Note:** *Rent* is recommended for ages 13 and up. Contains adult situations and language, and drug use. Learn more by calling 503-445-3700.

**Accessibility:** Learn about accessibility options at [pcs.org/access](http://pcs.org/access).

## **PORTLAND CENTER STAGE**

**Portland Center Stage** was established in 1988 as a branch of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and became independent in 1994. The company produces a mix of classic, contemporary, and world premiere productions, along with a variety of high-quality education and community programs. As part of its dedication to new play development, the company has produced 28 world premieres, many of which were developed at its JAW New Play Festival. Portland Center Stage's home is The Armory, a historic building originally constructed in 1891. After a major renovation, The Armory opened in 2006 as the first building on the National Register of Historic Places, the first performing arts venue in the country, and the first building in Portland to achieve a LEED Platinum rating.

Portland Center Stage is committed to identifying and interrupting instances of racism and all forms of oppression, through the principles of inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA). Learn more at [pcs.org/idea](https://pcs.org/idea).

**Portland Center Stage's 2021-2022 season** is funded in part by Season Superstars the Regional Arts and Culture Council and the James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation; Season Sponsors the Oregon Arts Commission, a state agency funded by the state of Oregon and the National Endowment for the Arts, and US Bank; and Producing Sponsors Ellyn Bye, Ray and Bobbi Davis, Jess Dishman, Ronni Lacroute, Mark Spencer, Argyle Winery, and Deschutes Brewery. Further support for *Rent* comes from Production Sponsors The Harold and Arlene Schnitzer CARE Foundation and Jordan Schnitzer, Brenda Ashworth and Donald Welch, and Curtis T. Thompson, M.D. and CTA Pathology.

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