

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Media Alert for Theatre Editors, Reviewers and Calendar Listings

**Chance Theater is proud to announce the Pulitzer Prize winning...**

# **“RENT”**

**A pop cultural phenomenon, with songs that rock and a story that resonates with audiences of all ages.**

**ANAHEIM, CA:** Chance Theater, Anaheim’s official resident theater company, is pleased to announce the Pulitzer Prize winning musical, “Rent” as the fourth show in our 25th Anniversary Season. With Music, Book, and Lyrics by Jonathan Larson and directed by Matthew McCray, this landmark rock musical will preview from July 21 through July 28, and regular performances will begin July 29 and continue through August 20 on the Cripe Stage at Chance Theater @ Bette Aitken theater arts Center.

Set in the East Village of New York City, “Rent” is about falling in love, finding your voice and living for today. Winner of the Tony Award for Best Musical and the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, “Rent” is a pop cultural phenomenon, with songs that rock and a story that resonates with audiences of all ages. Based loosely on Puccini’s “La Boheme,” the musical follows a year in the life of a group of impoverished young artists and musicians struggling to survive and create in New York’s Lower East Side, under the shadow of HIV/AIDS. This is theater at its best – exuberant, passionate, and joyous.

“The exhilarating, landmark rock opera...a glittering inventive score” – *New York Times*

“Rent will move the culture forward, possibly so far that it’ll be easy to forget the recent era in which it was something so completely shocking” – *Esquire*

“I have a fond place in my heart for RENT,” said director Matthew McCray, who last helmed the acclaimed *Next to Normal* production at the Chance in 2022. “The show was very important to me in college because its

message resonated so loudly to a college kid in the 90s. I'm thrilled to direct RENT this year because the show's themes of love and compassion are needed more than ever, it seems. Our production of RENT will be unique because it will make use of modern video technologies that were not around in the 90s when it opened on Broadway."

The musical was first seen in a workshop production at New York Theatre Workshop in 1993. This same Off-Broadway theater was also the musical's initial home following its official 1996 opening. Tragically, the show's creator, Jonathan Larson, died suddenly, the night before the Off-Broadway premiere, never knowing that his show would go on to change the theatrical landscape.

The musical moved to Broadway's larger Nederlander Theatre on April 29, 1996. On Broadway, "Rent" gained critical acclaim and won several awards, including most notably the Pulitzer Prize for Drama and the Tony Award for Best Musical. The Broadway production closed on September 7, 2008, after 12 years, making it one of the longest-running shows on Broadway. The success of the show led to several national tours and numerous foreign productions. In 2005, it was adapted into a motion picture featuring most of the original cast members.

**Matthew McCray (Director)** has directed productions, workshops and concerts at Center Theatre Group, StudioSCR at South Coast Repertory, the LA Philharmonic @ Disney Concert Hall, Deaf West Theatre, The Chance, Lewis Family Playhouse, Theatre @ Boston Court, Muse/iQue, REDCAT, Son of Semele, Circle X, Moving Arts, Rogue Machine, among others. Awards for directing include LA Drama Critics Circle and the Sage Awards, as well as nominations from the Ovation Awards and *LA Weekly Theatre Awards*. Founding Artistic Director of Son of Semele Ensemble (19 seasons and going). As a performer, credits include REDCAT, Disney, REPRISÉ!, Overtone Industries, Theatre @ Boston Court, Musical Theatre West, Shakespeare Orange County, as well as on the TV shows *Parenthood*, *New Girl*, *Will & Grace*, *Boston Legal*, and the feature *The Commission* (w/ Martin Sheen). President, Theatrical Producers League of Los Angeles. BFA, Chapman University. Member: SDC, AEA & SAG/AFTRA. TWITTER: @matthewmccray WEB: <http://www.matthewmccray.com>

Joining McCray on the design team are music director **Lex Leigh** ("Ride the Cyclone"), choreographer **Mo Goodsell** (Chance Debut), scenic designer **Joe Holbrook** ("Next to Normal"), costume designer **Bradley Allen Lock** ("Ride the Cyclone"), lighting designer **Zach Moore** (Chance Debut), sound designer **Dave Mickey** ("The Big Meal"), projection designer **Nick Santiago** ("Ride the Cyclone"), and stage manager **Cynthia C. Espinoza** ("Green Day's American Idiot").

The cast of “Rent” features a slew of new faces to the Chance. – **Luc Clopton** (Chance Debut) is Mark Cohen, **Gavin Cole** (“Emma, The Musical”) is Roger Davis, **Lena Ceja** (Chance Debut) is Mimi Marquez, **JoeJoe McKinney** (Chance Debut) plays Tom Collins, **Adam Leiva** (Chance Debut) is Angel Dumott Schunard, **Lily Targett** (Chance Debut) will play Maureen Johnson, **Franke Ripley** (Chance Debut) is Joanne Jefferson, and **Christopher D. Baker** (Chance Debut) is Benjamin Coffin III. In the ensemble, we have **Jack Aitken** (“Green Day’s American Idiot”), **Micah K. Blanks** (Chance Debut), **Ayani Dorsey** (Chance Debut), **Autumn Kirkpatrick** (Chance Debut), **Patrick McCormick** (Chance Debut), **Mikey Miro** (Chance Debut), and **Gemma Pedersen** (Chance Debut).

Linda & Tod White are the Executive Producers for this production and the Associate Producers are Rachelle Menaker & Eddie Schuller and Laurie Smits Staude. Bette & Wylie Aitken are producers for the entire 2023 Season and The Family of Mary Kay Fyda-Mar are this season’s associate producers.

To schedule press interviews, arrange for press comps, request press photos, or for any additional information regarding this production, please contact Casey Long, the Chance’s managing director, at (626) 523-7151 or [casey@chancetheater.com](mailto:casey@chancetheater.com).

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## ABOUT CHANCE THEATER

Proud to be one of the leading ensemble-driven theatre companies in Southern California, CHANCE THEATER has received the National Theatre Company grant from American Theatre Wing for “nurturing a community of artists in ways that strengthen and demonstrate the quality, diversity, and dynamism of American theatre.” The Chance recently won 14 OCTG Theatre Awards, including Outstanding Production of a Musical (*Next to Normal*) and Outstanding Production of a Play (*Cry It Out*). Previously, Chance Theater has won eight OCTG Theatre Awards, including Outstanding Production of a Musical (*Fun Home*), eight Ovation Awards, including four for Best Production of a Musical (Intimate Theatre), and four LADCC Awards, including the Polly Warfield Award for Outstanding Season. The Anaheim City Council named Chance Theater “the Official Resident Theater Company of Anaheim” in 2014, and Arts Orange County has twice named the Chance as “Outstanding Arts Organization.” Known for using bold and personal storytelling to promote dialogue and connection within the Southern California theatrical landscape, the Chance is committed to contributing to a more compassionate, connected and creative community. As a constituent member of Theatre Communications Group, The

Theatrical Producers League of Los Angeles, and OC Theatre Guild, Chance Theater continues to bring national attention to the Southern California and Orange County theater scenes.

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## CALENDAR LISTING

**WHAT: Rent**

Set in the East Village of New York City, “Rent” is about falling in love, finding your voice and living for today. Winner of the Tony Award for Best Musical and the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, “Rent” is a pop cultural phenomenon, with songs that rock and a story that resonates with audiences of all ages. Based loosely on Puccini’s “La Boheme,” the musical follows a year in the life of a group of impoverished young artists and musicians struggling to survive and create in New York’s Lower East Side, under the shadow of HIV/AIDS. This is theater at its best – exuberant, passionate and joyous.

**WHEN:**

**Previews:** July 21-28, 2023; Fridays and Saturday at 8 p.m., Sunday at 7 p.m.

**Performances:** July 29 - August 20, 2023; Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 3 p.m. & 8 p.m., Sundays at 3 p.m.

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**REVIEWERS AND OTHER PRESS are encouraged to come to Opening Night on Saturday, July 29 at 8 p.m.**

**RUNNING TIME:** 2 hour, 30 minutes, with intermission

**WHERE:** Chance Theater @ Bette Aitken theater arts Center on the Cripe Stage

5522 E. La Palma Ave., Anaheim, CA 92807

**TICKETS:** \$25-\$49

**MORE INFO:** [www.ChanceTheater.com](http://www.ChanceTheater.com) or call (888) 455-4212

**COVID POLICY:** Masks are strongly recommended while inside our building, but we are no longer requiring mask-wearing or proof of vaccination to attend a general performance.

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