



Youth Musical Theater Company

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YMTC to Present the Rock Musical *Rent*, November 3–10 in El Cerrito

Berkeley, California, September 27, 2019—Youth Musical Theater Company (YMTC) will launch its 15th season of acclaimed regional theater with the rock musical *Rent*. The show opens Sunday, November 3, at the Performing Arts Theater, 540 Ashbury Ave., El Cerrito. Its run consists of a 5:00 p.m. opening (11/3), two 2:00 p.m. matinees (11/9, 11/10), and three 7:30 p.m. performances (11/7, 11/8, 11/9).

Rent is a rock opera loosely based on Puccini's *La Boheme*, with music, lyrics, and book by Jonathan Larson. Set in Lower Manhattan's East Village during the turmoil of the AIDS crisis, this moving story chronicles the lives of a group of struggling artists over a year's time. Its major themes are community, friendship, and survival. In 1996, *Rent* received four Tony Awards, including Best Musical; six Drama Desk Awards; and the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. In 1997, it won the Grammy Award for Best Musical Show Album. Its Broadway run lasted 12 years.

Co-Director Jennifer Boesing comments, "*Rent* is a love story and a bold, brazen manifesto for young artists who are trying not just to stay alive, but to stay connected to each other, when the mainstream culture seems to be ignoring signs of destruction all around them. Although the show today is a period piece about a very specific historical moment—well before the earliest memories of our young performing artists—they relate to it deeply just the same. Perhaps the show's demand to connect and stay awake is more relevant now than ever, in this increasingly digitized and disconnected world."

Rent features a cast and crew of 30 performing arts students from cities throughout the Bay Area. The students, ages 15 to 19, work on stage and off, as actors, musicians, and technical theater apprentices. They are led by a team of professional directors and designers including Co-Directors Boesing and Simone Kertesz, Music Director Diana Lee, and Choreographer Janet Collard.

Tickets are available online at <https://www.ymtcbayarea.org> and at the door one hour before curtain. Ticket prices are \$16–32, with discounts for students, seniors, military, teachers, and groups. YMTC offers one "pay-what-you-will" performance to provide affordable musical theater to everyone in the Bay Area community. This performance will be on Thursday, 11/7, at 7:30 p.m., when seats will be offered for cash-only at the box office. Reserved seats can still be purchased online. An "Audience Talk-Back" with

directors, actors, and invited community panelists will be held after the 2:00 p.m. matinee on Saturday, 11/9.

COMPANY ANNOUNCES 15th ANNIVERSARY SEASON

YMTC's 2019–20 season will feature three full-scale musicals *Rent* (November 2019), *The Music Man* (March 2020), and *A Little Night Music* (July 2020). Season subscriptions can be purchased online at <https://www.ymtcbayarea.org>.

ABOUT YMTC

YMTC is dedicated to providing exceptional training to young theater artists through the production of exceptional musical theater. The organization brings together the Bay Area's most talented and dedicated young singer/actors—as well as technical and orchestral apprentices—with professional directors, actors, designers, choreographers, and musicians. They take on challenging and sophisticated musical and dramatic themes, and productions are always accompanied by a full, live orchestra.

CALENDAR LISTING

YMTC presents Jonathan Larson's rock opera *Rent*, chronicling the lives of a group of artists over the course of a year during the AIDS crisis in New York City.

Show Run: November 3–10, 2019

Opens: Sunday, November 3, 2019, 5:00 p.m.

Performances:

Sunday, 11/3, 5:00 p.m.

Thursday, 11/7, 7:30 p.m. (Pay-What-You-Will Performance)

Friday, 11/8, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, 11/9, 2:00 p.m. (Audience Talk-Back post-show)

Saturday, 11/9, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, 11/10, 2:00 p.m. (Closing Performance)

Where: Performing Arts Theater, 540 Ashbury Avenue, El Cerrito. Near El Cerrito Plaza BART.

Ticket Prices: \$16–32. Student, senior, teacher, military, and group discounts are available. Purchase tickets at <https://www.ymtcbayarea.org> or at the door, which opens one hour prior to performance.