

PLAYBILL



Rent is a rock musical with music, lyrics, and book by Johnathon Larson. The musical is loosely based on the 1896 opera *La Bohème* by Giacomo Puccini, libretto by Luigi Illica, and *Guiseppi Giocosa*, which in turn is based on the 1851 novel *Scenes of Bohemian Life* by Henri Murger.

It tells the story of a group of impoverished young artists struggling to survive and create a life in Lower Manhattan's East Village in the thriving days of bohemian Alphabet Village, under the shadow of HIV/AIDS.

The musical was first seen in a workshop production at New York Theater Workshop in 1993. This same theatre was also the musical's initial home following its official January 26, 1996 opening. The show's creator, Jonathan Larson, died suddenly of an aortic dissection, believed to have been caused by undiagnosed Marfan Syndrome, the night before the off-Broadway premiere. The musical moved to Broadway's larger Nederlander Theater on April 29, 1996.

On Broadway, *Rent* gained critical acclaim and won several awards, including the Pulitzer Prize for Drama and the Tony Award for the Best Musical. The Broadway production closed on September 7, 2008, after 12 years, making it one of the longest running shows on Broadway. The production grossed over \$280 million.

The success of the show led to several national tours and numerous foreign productions. In 2005, it was adapted into a motion picture featuring six of the eight principal cast members from the 1996 stage premiere.