



Top Box Studios Redditch Teen Company Presents

## RENT SCHOOL EDITION AUDITIONS!

**An inspiring musical about friends and artists struggling with addiction, poverty, AIDS and most of all, love.**

Hello and thank you for taking an interest in our production of RENT SCHOOL EDITION to be staged at the Greig Hall in Alcester. We are looking for a large cast of teens to bring this hit musical to life! The show is made up of 8 named roles and we will be looking for a strong company ensemble to join our principal cast.

Set in the East Village of New York City, Rent School Edition 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, it has become 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, Rent School Edition 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. The physical and emotional complications of the disease pervade the lives of Roger, Mimi, Tom, and Angel. Maureen deals with her chronic infidelity through performance art; her partner, Joanne, wonders if their relationship is worth the trouble. Benny has sold out his Bohemian ideals in exchange for a hefty income and is on the outs with his former friends. Mark, an aspiring filmmaker, feels like an outsider to life in general. How these young bohemians negotiate their dreams, loves, and conflicts provides the narrative thread to this groundbreaking musical.

All interested in taking part in our show would need to be comfortable singing, dancing and acting.

**DO YOU LOVE TO SING, DANCE or ACT??**

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Get in touch to apply for a place in our ensemble or book an audition slot for a principal role.

## AUDITIONS

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2024**

(You will be allocated a time slot, please arrive 10 mins before)

**Rehearsal & Audition Venue – Top Box Studios, Second Floor, Canon Newton House, Kingfisher Shopping Centre, Redditch, Worcestershire, B97 4HA.**

**Audition application deadline – Midday Monday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2024**

**Performance Dates – Week commencing 17<sup>th</sup> February 2025.**

**Performance Venue – The Greig Hall, Kinwarton Road, Alcester, B49 6AD.**

**Weekly Rehearsals start Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2024 18:30-20:30 pm!**

**Scheduled principal rehearsals will take place on a Thursday 20:30-21:30 pm!**

Additional Technical/Dress Rehearsals to be scheduled during show week.

### **PLEASE NOTE**

Main communication will be through our WhatsApp group with details of rehearsals and any changes to schedule. Accepting a part is a commitment to attend all rehearsals, we ask you to inform the team via private message of any illness or other reason for non-attendance as early as possible to avoid any delay to the start of rehearsals. Missing continuous rehearsals may result in you losing your part in the show.

### **Audition Form**

[Auditions | Top Box Studios](#)

Please complete the audition form on our website if you would like to apply for a principal role.

### **Audition Fee**

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[Top Box Audition Fee | Top Box Studios](#)

We ask for a £5 audition fee to cover costs. The Payment link is now live on our website. Once we receive your audition application form and payment you will then be allocated a time to arrive on the audition day.

### **Membership Fees**

Membership fees are required to contribute towards rehearsal and production costs, fees are due at the start of every half term block (5-6 weeks) via our website memberships page.

Fees are £50 per half term block, which equates to less than £5 per hour of rehearsal time.

[Redditch | Top Box Studios](#)

PLEASE NOTE: Members will be expected to sign up for 2 rehearsal blocks  
Payment 1 – w/c 04/11/24. Payment 2 – w/c 06/01/25. Our last rehearsal before Christmas is Thursday 5th December.

Please note, to meet our increasing costs, our membership fees are increasing to £55 per half term block from January 2025.

### **Scripts**

Official Scripts will be available to Hire for £25.00 deposit in cash which will be returned to you in exchange for an unmarked script at the end of show week.

You have permission to make notes in light pencil, but all markings must be removed before the script is returned.

### **Costume**

Please note, our Cast will be expected to provide their own costume for this production. More details to follow.

If you have any queries regarding any of the above costs please send us an email or speak to a member of our team.

What to do next?

### **Registration forms:**

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We require all our members to complete a registration form. This can be done digitally on our website at:

[Registration Form | Top Box Studios](#)

If you require a paper copy, please let us know as soon as possible.

If you would like more information on how we process and store your data, please visit the registration form on our website to view all policies and procedures.

### **Uniform**

We politely request our members wear uniform to our classes. Our Teen theatre company members should wear our Top Box t-shirts with the Theatre Company logo. Black trousers or leggings should also be worn with appropriate footwear (trainers or jazz shoes).

We also have a variety of other items of uniform available to purchase, including show uniform.

Uniform can be ordered through our website at:

[Shop | Top Box Studios](#)

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us.

Top Box Studios

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Tracy            07846 116885

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Website: [Top Box Studios](#)

### **PRINCIPAL AUDITION DETAILS**

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No previous performance experience is necessary!

Auditions will consist of a song performance and line reading from the script. Please prepare one song from the show to 'perform' in the audition. You may not be required to sing the whole song. It is recommended that you warm up your voice and sing through your song before arriving at the audition. You can sing with backing track or a cappella.

During singing auditions, the panel will be looking for the following.

- Vocal ability and range.
- Ability to act/perform your song choice.

During your audition you will also be provided with a short one- or two-page script. The lines you read may not always be for the specific character you are auditioning for. This is okay, we are only looking at your acting abilities. Please feel free to try out an accent if you are confident with this. During this process you will be given instructions from the directors. This is to understand your approach, openness and receptiveness to direction and performance. You will be auditioning in front of our creative team, and we aim to make this an enjoyable experience so please do not worry, we all have experience of audition nerves!

## Full Synopsis

### Act One

Mark, a filmmaker and the show's narrator, is spending a cold Christmas Eve in the Lower East Side industrial loft he shares with his roommate Roger, a musician. They receive several phone calls ("Tune Up/ Voice Mail #1"). The first is from Mark's mother consoling him over the loss of his girlfriend Maureen, a performance artist, to JoAnne, a Harvard Law School graduate. The second is from their friend Tom Collins who is detained by muggers. The last is from their landlord Benny demanding the rent. The power blows and so do Roger and Mark's tops ("Rent").

Outside, Collins is reeling from the mugging. He is comforted by Angel, a street musician, who offers him a helping hand ("You Okay Honey?"). Both HIV+, Angel and Collins head out for a night on the town and a life support meeting.

In response to a call for help, Mark sets out for the lot where Maureen is performing a protest against Benny's eviction of the homeless from a nearby lot. He urges Roger to come along but he refuses. As Mark reports, Roger has not left the apartment in

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six months. He is still reeling from the suicide of his girlfriend, who slashed her wrists upon learning that she had AIDS. Roger tries to write a song but the only melody he finds is "Musetta's Waltz" from Puccini's La Boheme ("One Song Glory").

Mimi, an S&M dancer who lives below Mark and Roger, knocks with a request: "Light My Candle." The attraction between she and Roger is immediate, but Roger shies away and shows her the door. Mimi knocks again. She has lost her stash. Roger helps her look, and Mimi eventually finds it- in Roger's back pocket.

As Joanne wrangles with the sound equipment for Maureen's performance, her parents leave her "Voice Mail #2," pleading with her to come to her mother's confirmation hearings in Washington. Collins arrives at the loft with a bag full of goodies. This includes Angel, transvested into Angel Dumott Shunard and gloriously arrayed in his Christmas finest- wig, glitter, and platform pumps. In "Today 4 U," Angel explains how he earned \$1,000: a wealthy woman hired him to play the drums until her neighbor's yappy Akita barked itself to death.

Benny enters with a proposal ("You'll See"): if Mark and Roger stop Maureen's protest, he will forgo the rent. He entices them with plans for Cyber Arts, a state-of-the-art, multimedia studio that will realize all of their dreams. Unsuccessful, Benny leaves. Mark, Collins and Angel try to coax Roger into coming to the life support meeting with them but he refuses.

Mark finally reaches the lot where Maureen will perform her protest. He encounters Joanne, still struggling with the sound equipment and the many demands Maureen makes upon her. Mark offers help. Though they dreaded meeting, they have a lot in common ("Tango: Maureen"). Once he finishes, Mark joins Angel and Collins at the "Life Support" meeting.

In her apartment, Mimi dresses and appeals to an imaginary Roger to take her "Out Tonight." She barges into his apartment and continues her appeal to Roger himself but after a passionate kiss he vehemently rejects her. They fight, her words blending with the affirmation of the support group that emphasizes the importance of living the moment ("Another Day"). A young man from the support group asks quietly "Will I lose my dignity/Will someone care?" ("Will I?"). His thoughts and fears are echoed by each member of the community. The thoughts are Roger's too, and he decides to go outside.

After the meeting, Mark, Angel and Collins roam the lot and rescue a homeless woman from the taunts and nightsticks of the neighbourhood cops ("On the Street"). Discouraged by life in New York, the three dream of opening up a restaurant in "Santa Fe." Alone at last, Angel and Collins finally express their love for each other ("I'll Cover You"). Joanne, meanwhile, has her hands full juggling work, parents, and the ever-demanding Maureen...all over the phone ("We're Okay").

The scene changes to St. Mark's Place where vendors hawk their wares to the bohemians of the East Village ("Christmas Bells"). Angel buys a new coat for Collins.

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Mark finds Roger who spots Mimi looking for drugs. Roger apologizes and asks her to dinner. Just as the snow begins to fall, Maureen finally appears on her motorcycle to perform her protest, "Over the Moon."

Following the protest, all convene at the Life Café, including Benny who announces that Bohemia is dead. Thus ensues a makeshift mock-wake that quickly segues into a celebration of "La Vie Boheme." During the song, Benny confronts Mimi and threatens to reveal their past affair to Roger. Beepers go off to remind the revelers to take their AZT. Roger and Mimi each discover that the other is HIV+. Frightened, excited, they vow to be together ("I Should Tell You").

Joanne has been sent back to the lot by Maureen several times to check on the equipment. She finally rebels, telling Maureen that their relationship is over and announcing a riot in the lot: Benny has padlocked the building and called the cops but the homeless are standing their ground. And mooing. The artists rejoice, the riot continues, and Roger and Mimi share a small, lovely kiss.

## Act Two

The second act begins with the company posing the question, "How do you measure a year in the life?" ("Seasons of Love"). It is one week later, New Year's Eve, and Mark, Roger, Mimi, Maureen, Joanne, Angel and Collins are having a breaking-back-into-the-building party ("Happy New Year"). Once inside, Mark listens to one more phone message from his mother in Scarsdale as well as one from Alexi Darling, a tabloid TV producer salivating over his footage of the riot ("Voice Mail #3"). Benny crashes the party, angering Roger and alienating Roger from Mimi. Dejected, Mimi wanders outside and into the welcoming arms of her drug dealer.

Mark fastforwards to Valentine's Day. Roger and Mimi are still together. Angel and Collins could be anywhere. Maureen and Joanne are still rehearsing another show, but it is not going well ("Take Me or Leave Me").

The company reprises "Seasons of Love" and time marches forward again, to spring. Roger and Mimi have a fight and Roger walks out. Alone, Mimi reflects on what life would be like without Roger ("Without You"). At the same time, Collins nurses a sick Angel; Maureen and Joanne reconcile as do Mimi and Roger.

At the end of the summer, Alexi is still courting Mark for her TV show ("Voice Mail #4"). Roger and Mimi, unsatisfied by love's complications, break up, as do Maureen and Joanne. Angel dies. At a memorial service, his friends remember his spirit. Collins remembers his love ("I'll Cover You: Reprise").

Outside the church, Mark phones Alexi to accept the job. Mark ponders how life has changed since last year as he recalls the joys of that one-night last Christmas ("Halloween"). As the mourners leave the church, Mimi confirms that Roger has sold his guitar and is leaving town. Roger confirms that Mimi is now with Benny. A fight erupts among Roger, Mimi, Maureen, Benny, and Joanne Collins interrupts them

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with the sorrowful reality that the family is breaking up. Joanne and Maureen reunite. Mimi and Benny leave.

Mark tries to convince Roger to stay in New York and face his pain and the fact that Mimi is very sick. Roger attacks Mark, accusing him of hiding from his feelings. Mimi enters, having overheard the entire angry exchange, and bids Roger farewell ("Goodbye, Love"). Roger leaves town. Mimi turns to Mark for help. Benny offers one helping hand to Mimi and extends the other to Collins to help him pay Angel's funeral expenses. Mimi refuses the help and flees. Collins accepts and he and Benny go out for a drink.

Mark considers the events and faces the last year, as does Roger, who is on his way to Santa Fe. Roger begins to discover his own song, and Mark turns down the television job to finish his own film ("What You Own").

Roger's mom, Mark's mom, Mimi's mom, and JoAnne's father all wonder where their children are ("Voice Mail #5"). Back at the loft, Mark tells us again it's Christmas and he now has a rough version of his film, which he's going to show tonight. Roger has returned, has written his song, but cannot find Mimi. Collins enters with money he has gotten from an ATM rewired to give money to anyone with a special code. The password? Angel.

Maureen and Joanne suddenly arrive holding Mimi, whom they found collapsed and near death in the park. Roger begs her not to die and sings for her the song it has taken him all year to write, "Your Eyes". Mimi dies as Roger wails her name over a blast of Puccini's music. Suddenly Mimi awakens, it seems that a guardian Angel was watching over her.

The company joins in a reprise of the affirmation that love is all and that there is "no day but today" ("Finale").

## **Character Breakdown**

### Character Breakdown

#### **Mark Cohen**

Filmmaker and video artist. Knee deep in his own soul-searching, Mark is the typical young artist. He and Roger are roommates in the loft. A bit of a nerd.

Gender: male

Age: 20 to 30

Vocal range top: G#4

Vocal range bottom: C3

#### **Roger Davis**

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A struggling musician and former drug addict. He is reminiscent of Kurt Cobain.  
Roommates with Mark in the loft and battles with being HIV-positive.

Gender: male

Age: 20 to 25

Vocal range top: A4

Vocal range bottom: F#2

### **Tom Collins**

A computer genius and liberal professor. He is a nurturer with a smooth and relaxed disposition. Used to be a roommate in the loft and is HIV-positive.

Gender: male

Age: 25 to 35

Vocal range top: A4

Vocal range bottom: F#2

### **Benjamin Coffin Iii**

The landlord of Mark and Roger's apartment building. A former roommate in the loft, Benny traded in his personal morals for power and wealth.

Gender: male

Age: 25 to 35

Vocal range top: F#4

Vocal range bottom: D3

### **Joanne Jefferson**

A public interest lawyer and headstrong lesbian. She is smart and purposeful in all her decisions. Carries on a tumultuous relationship with Maureen.

Gender: female

Age: 25 to 40

Vocal range top: E5

Vocal range bottom: G3

### **Angel Dumott Schunard**

The eccentric HIV-positive street drummer. A drag queen with an incredible gift of dance and a magnetic personality. He becomes Tom's lover.

Gender: male

Age: 20 to 30

Vocal range top: D5

Vocal range bottom: C3

### **Mimi Marquez**

An HIV-positive stripper with drug addictions. Slender and sickly, she conceals it all at her job in the local strip club. She lives in the same building as the loft.

Gender: female

Age: 18 to 21

Vocal range top: E5

Vocal range bottom: F#3

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## Maureen Johnson

An unpredictably zany performance artist. Maureen oozes sexuality and used to live in the loft. She has recently dumped Mark for Joanne.

Gender: female

Age: 20 to 25

Vocal range top: F5

Vocal range bottom: G3

## Ensemble

Cops; Vendors; Support Group (Paul, Steve, Gordon, Pam, Ali, Sue); Homeless People (Squeegieman, Blanket Person); Junkies; Parents (Mrs. Cohen, Mr. And Mrs. Jefferson, Roger's Mom, Mimi's Mother); "Leap Of Faith" Backups; Bohemians

## Song list

## Song list

- Tune Up A
- Voicemail #1
- Tune Up B
- Rent
- Christmas Bells 1
- You Okay Honey?
- Tune Up (Reprise)
- One Song Glory
- Light My Candle
- Voicemail #2
- Today For You A
- Today For You B
- You'll See
- Tango (Intro)
- Tango: Maureen
- Support Group
- Out Tonight
- Another Day
- Will I?
- On the Street
- Santa Fe
- I'll Cover You
- We're Okay
- Christmas Bells
- Over the Moon
- La Vie Boheme/I Should Tell You

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- Seasons of Love A
- Happy New Year A
- Voice Mail 3
- Voice Mail 4
- Happy New Year B
- Take Me or Leave Me
- Voice Mail 5
- Seasons of Love B
- Without You
- I'll Cover You (Reprise)
- Halloween
- Goodbye Love
- Voice Mail 6
- What You Own
- Finale A
- Your Eyes
- Finale B

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