



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Contact: Sara Radak, Marketing Associate
sradak@nearwesttheatre.org or (216) 961-9750

“No Day But Today” to see *RENT School Edition* at Near West Theatre

Cleveland, OH (June 21, 2010) - Near West Theatre (NWT) announces its upcoming performances of the “School Edition” of Jonathon Larson’s Pulitzer Prize winning Broadway Musical, *RENT*. Opening on July 23 and running through August 8, performances take place on the third floor of St. Patrick’s Club Building at the corner of West 38th Street and Bridge Avenue in Ohio City.

A cast of 37 students, ranging in age from 14 to 19, bring a fresh perspective to the iconic rock musical that celebrates life and the heroic struggle to survive. *RENT School Edition*, based loosely on Puccini’s opera, *La Boheme*, examines the lives and lifestyles of a group of young men and women living in New York’s East Village at the end of the 20th century.

When asked what makes *RENT* so relevant for teenagers, Artistic Director Bob Navis commented, ““The spirit of *RENT* calls all of us to look beyond the judgments and labels we so easily stamp on each other, and see the unique, struggling human expression of eternal light we all are. Each of us has our own history of pain, our own emergent possibilities for creativity and contribution. We are more than our diseases. We are more than our addictions. We are more than our genders, our ages and our genetic codes. We are more than our perceptions of each other. Together we walk this human journey, this privilege of life, this moment in time. We cannot afford to discount each other or write-off any one of us. When we do so, we wound our communities, our planet and ourselves. Time flies, time dies. All we ever have is each new day, fertile with compassionate, healing potential.”

Performances are Fri.-Sat. July 23 & 24, Thurs-Sat., July 29-31, and Fri.-Sun., August 6-8. Curtain times on Thursday, Fridays, and Saturdays are at 7:30 pm and Sundays at 3:00 pm. All offerings are at St. Patrick’s Club Building, located at W.38th and Bridge Avenue* in Ohio City and include free parking. Adult tickets are \$8 and children, 12 & under, are \$6. The Star Seat ticket, which helps NWT fill the gap between the affordable rate it offers its patrons and the actual cost of the production, is \$20 and includes a concession coupon. Tickets are available by calling (216) 961-6391 or can be ordered online at www.nearwesttheatre.org.

RENT School Edition is generously sponsored by McDonald Hopkins LLC and Thompson Hine LLP. NWT proudly recognizes 2009-2010 Season sponsorship provided by Today’s Soft Rock, WDOK 102.1 F.M. The Ohio Arts Council has helped fund this program with state tax dollars to encourage economic growth, educational excellence and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans. NWT is generously funded by Cuyahoga County residents through Cuyahoga Arts and Culture and is a member of Greater Cleveland Community Shares. Community Shares supports local nonprofit organizations working for long-term, sustainable, solutions to build a stronger Cleveland. Learn more about Community Shares and supporting social justice through workplace giving at www.communityshares.org.

*While accessibility is an important part of Near West Theatre’s Mission, our current location at W. 38th & Bridge is on the third floor and is unable to accommodate an elevator or chair lift to make it accessible to individuals in wheelchairs or those who have difficulty with stairs. We are focused on providing an accessible space as we continue our progress on our joint capital campaign to build a new theatre in the Gordon Square Arts District.

Star Seat Packages Available

Star Seat donors help bridge the gap between the true cost of an audience member's experience and the affordable rate we offer our guests. Buy this package to help NWT continue to offer affordable, high-quality theatre on the Near West Side. For \$120, you get 7 tickets for any combination of performances plus concession coupons, playbill recognition and other VIP opportunities and benefits. Star Seat Packages are available online at www.nearwesttheatre.org.

History

Since 1978, Near West Theatre has engaged youth on the Near West Side in a positive activity that taps into their energy, allowing them to discover their creativity and present themselves as contributing members of the community. Through a process that is intense, sometimes rugged and ragged, challenging and transforming, Near West Theatre, now intergenerational, engages participants and audience alike. Individuals from all walks of life come together and share their unique life stories and experiences in order to find their own voices and make personal connections with the production. Near West Theatre's unique blend of performing arts and community-building has played an instrumental role in the theatre's success with its audience, community and participants.

NWT is a partner in the Gordon Square Arts District, a collaboration between NWT, Cleveland Public Theatre, and Detroit Shoreway Community Development Organization, where it will build a new, accessible performance venue. Go to www.gordonsquare.org for more information on Gordon Square Arts District which recently completed a streetscape and the opening of the revitalized Capitol Movie Theatre that features art and independent films.

For more information about the Near West Theatre, our programs, performances or for audition information, please contact the NWT business office at (216) 961-9750.

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