



NEWS RELEASE
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RENT SHOWS WEST MICHIGAN WHAT IT MEANS TO LIVE FOR TODAY

Our Hashtags: #circletheatregr #supportgrtheatre #rentatcircle #circle2022

Twitter Ready Quote: *Circle Theatre presents the cult classic musical RENT, May 5-21, co-directed by Ellie Frances and Marcus Jordan. Follow the lives of 8 artists as they show us what a community of chosen family can do when we speak out about injustice and take care of our own. For show details, tickets, and more visit circletheatre.org.*

GRAND RAPIDS, MICH., April 5, 2021 - Circle Theatre, West Michigan's go-to destination for exceptional theatrical arts in an intimate setting, begins their 2022 Main Stage season with *RENT*, a Pulitzer Prize-winning musical by Jonathan Larson, following a year in the lives of a group of friends, artists, and musicians, as they explore love, happiness, and the struggle to survive. Set in the East Village of New York City during the height of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, *RENT*, Winner of a Tony Award for Best Musical, will have audiences learning to live for today. Circle Theatre's *RENT*, co-directed by Ellie Frances and Marcus Jordan, will be performed inside the Performing Arts Center, located on the campus of Aquinas College, with dates running May 5-7, 11-15, 18-21.

"RENT is a cult classic and theatrical favorite for many reasons. Its stories speak of connection, community, and liberation underscored with musical influences of the early 90's rock genre. Being one of the first shows to ever have queer love at the center, it also tackles conversations about gentrification, capitalism, housing inequity, the over-policing of marginalized communities, addiction and the systemic response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

The 8 artists at the center of the story show us just a fraction of what a community of chosen family members can do when we take care of our own. Their stories remind us of the joy and love that can be found and celebrated; a liberation all on its own."

- Ellie Frances (*they/she*) Co-Director / Choreographer

"RENT is a protest piece. This 1996 cult classic musical encouraged a generation of young people to speak out about the injustices that plagued our country. Police brutality, displacement of the un-homed, and the stigmatization of HIV/AIDS are among the many issues that are authentically raised in this story.

But along side the outcry of injustices highlighted in RENT are the illustrated light and freedom of the Queer Experience. This piece invites folks to just be folks, to shine one's light

unapologetically. And it is this infusion of holistic living and unyielding advocacy that continues to cement RENT as a vital piece in the musical theatre repertoire. Act up AND fight AIDS!"

- Marcus Jordan (He/him) Co-Director/Vocal Director

Circle Theatre's presents RENT, May 5 - 21 at 7pm with a matinee showing on May 15 at 3pm. Tickets and details are available at circletheatre.org.

For more information on Circle Theatre's 2022 season, to purchase tickets, or to find more ways to support Circle Theatre please call the box office at 616.456.6656 or visit circletheatre.org.

About Circle Theatre

For 70 years and counting, Circle Theatre has enriched, entertained and educated the community through exceptional theatrical arts in an intimate setting. Located in the Performing Arts Center on the campus of Aquinas College, Circle Theatre presents innovative and entertaining theatre while fostering an enthusiastic and hard-working corps of individuals who serve as staff, volunteers, and board members. Through the Main Stage season, unique Summer Concert Series, and Magic Circle family productions, Circle Theatre engages close to 30,000 people each season. Circle Theatre also values and creates effective collaborations with various community organizations in and around Grand Rapids.

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