

RENT Cast & Crew Bios

Tyson Dornn, a 21-year-old actor with 13 productions to his name, returns to the stage as Roger in Rent for the second time. He has performed with Mecca Productions since he was 10 and has been a part of Mecca Musicals including Les Miserables, Shrek the Musical, and Newsies. Since 2020, Tyson has expanded his love for acting by getting into film + television. He graduated from Vancouver Acting School in 2021 and landed a recurring role on Disney+'s Goosebumps last year. Tyson is honoured to portray Roger once again in Jonathan Larson's incredible story and hopes that the audience is moved by the show. He'd like to thank Erik and Lisa for pushing him to reach his full potential.

Mitch Wedgewood is a proud graduate of the Randolph College for the Performing Arts and holds Degrees in Instrumental Music and Music Education from Brandon University. Mitch has been establishing himself as an Arts and Music Educator for the past 15 years and is currently a Music/Math teacher at Hartney School. Mitch has had the extreme pleasure of singing alongside such legends as Sarah Brightman and Josh Groban on the Canadian stops of their recent world tours. Portraying Mark in RENT is truly a dream and the opportunity to help bring Jonathan Larson's iconic musical to life has been a joy! Endless thanks to this immensely talented cast, and to Bam for his support and love! "No day but today"

Tyleen Haywood is ecstatic about being in their first Mecca Production as Joanne Jefferson in Rent! Tyleen is completing their final year of university to be a music and theatre educator, and previously played in the pit band for Mecca Productions The Sound of Music in 2023. They hope to explore theatre further through performance and teaching. They are grateful for the unwavering support of their directors, new found friends and cast mates, and their wonderful family.

Shayna Wakefield is very excited to be performing in her 13th musical, as Shayna has been a part of Mecca for over ten years as a member of their APT program and now as a staff member. Some of her favourite musical roles have been Anastasia in Neelin's 2023 production of Anastasia and Leslie Von Trapp in Mecca's production of the Sound of Music in the spring of 2023. Although Mimi's character is very different from herself, Shayna has had the time of her life exploring her portrayal of Mimi and is so incredibly grateful for the amazing cast and production team she gets to do this with. She would like to thank everyone involved in the show for being so accepting, kind, and loving during this process and she hopes everyone enjoys this beautiful show. "No day but today."

Tiana Vasconcelos is no stranger to the WMCA stage but playing the role of Maureen and being part of RENT is a dream come true! She spends her days teaching and creating with amazing students from across Manitoba at Mecca Productions. A certified teacher in the ADAPT Syllabus, and a proud graduate of Steppin' Time Dance Studio Ltd., Tiana is the head instructor of Mecca's one-of-a-kind Performance Troupe (PT) and Auditioned Performance Troupe Program (APT), sharing the joy and magic of musical theatre and performance. She is grateful for this experience with these amazing people and hopes the message of RENT inspires you as it has her. She sends her gratitude and love to the production team, her family and her partner Josh. "Measure Your Life in Love"

Clint McLachlan is glad to be a part of such a poignant show with such an important message of love and acceptance. Clint holds a Masters of Vocal Performance and Literature from the University of Western Ontario and can be found teaching Choir, Drama, and Musical Theatre at Crocus Plains Regional Secondary School, conducting Novos Treble Choir, singing and conducting with Konektis Choir, teaching at Mecca Productions. Clint would like to thank his friends and family for their support and especially his amazing wife Nadine.

Dylan Woodcock has enjoyed a diverse range of theatre roles over the last 20 years, with favourites including Macbeth, Freddy Eynsford-Hill in 'My Fair Lady', and Tinman in 'The Wiz.' He is especially grateful to the production team of RENT for trusting him to play Collins, a character from whom he has learned so much. Offstage, Dylan is Curriculum & Instruction Specialist at the Manitoba Emergency Services College, where he also teaches courses on the fundamentals of Adult Education. His performance in RENT is dedicated to Ash & Jones.

Christian Duboise is so excited to be back in the WMCA for his second adult musical with Mecca and fifth production in total. Christian wants to thank all of the cast and crew for the countless hours and wonderful work they've put in to make this show amazing. He is thrilled to be performing as one of his dream roles... Angel Dumott Schunard! Enjoy the show!

Last seen as Nostradamus in Mecca Productions' 'Something Rotten', Hannah Price is absolutely thrilled to be returning to the stage as part of the ensemble in Rent! Rent was one of the shows that introduced Hannah into the world of musical theatre and she is so excited along with her cast mates to bring it to Westman audiences. Hannah is the new Project Coordinator at Brandon Seniors for Seniors by day and Mecca Instructor by night. Hannah is so grateful to the Mecca Family for the opportunities to bring these stories to life! Viva la vie Boheme!

Jordan Elliot is a newcomer to Mecca Productions, and is thrilled to be a part of his favourite musical! His most recent appearance on stage was in Virden's production of Elf the Musical in 2019. Jordan wants to thank the cast & crew of Rent for being so welcoming and talented, and his amazing aunt Sandy Jasper who has been a huge musical inspiration his whole life & who helped him prepare for auditions!

Michelle Boudreau is honoured to be a part of this important and vibrant musical. Michelle has been involved in the performing arts for many years, touring stages across Canada as a musician, poet & arts facilitator. You can see Michelle play regularly with the Wheat City Jug Band, rockin' that kazoo & washboard. Michelle would like to thank her family, friends & community for their support.

Cameron Tataryn is no stranger to the WMCA or Mecca Musicals. A teacher a Crocus Plains by day, during after-school hours, you can usually find him teaching or in rehearsals at Mecca Productions or coaching the Crocus Plains football team. He was most recently seen as Shakespeare in Mecca's 35th Musical Something Rotten. Avery Praznik: Avery is a recent graduate of Randolph College for the Performing Arts in Toronto where she learned about the professional industry and everything musical theatre! Originally from Brandon, her dance career started at Steppin' Time dance studio where she danced competitively for 8 years and taught for 4. She appeared in many musicals at Crocus Plains and Mecca Productions, including the role of Annie. She took on the roll of stage manager for her past 4 shows, and is very excited to be back on stage!

Having most recently appeared as 'Bea' in Mecca's 35 Musical Something Rotten, Avalon Sawatsky is excited to take to the stage again for RENT and bring this powerful story of love and hope to Westman audiences. Avalon would like to thank her fellow cast and crew for this opportunity, and to our audiences for continuing to support live theatre in our community. We hope you enjoy the show!

Jenna Bertrand is thrilled to return to the stage after a 14-year hiatus. Favourite past shows include Scorched (Janine), A Midsummer Night's Dream (Puck), Beauty and the Beast (Belle) and South Pacific (Nellie). Jenna is grateful to be working with this talented cast and crew. She sends a special thanks to her family for all of their love and support.

Kaley Koroluk is honoured to join the cast of RENT. Kaley has appeared in numerous musicals with Mecca and Vincent Massey, including her favorites Descendants and Beauty and the Beast. A student at Brandon University, Kaley is also an instructor at Mecca Productions.

Eren Olsen: This is Eren's first time in any production. He's excited to be a part of Rent with such a talented and welcoming cast. He works as paramedic for Manitoba's ambulance dispatch service and in his free time you can find him relaxing with his two dogs Huxley and Nori. He'd like to thank all the cast and crew for their dedication to this show and is looking forward to working with Mecca again.

Sarah Meynard: SJ grew up performing musical theatre from the age of 6 in her hometown of Yarmouth NS. Upon graduating,she chose a Brandon contract for the chance to live her dream of performing in Les Mis! This is SJ's 11th Mecca musical with Mecca and Brandon feels like home!

Kiera Bowskill is excited to be back at the WMCA to be part of the cast of RENT! She is so blessed to share the positive message of love and hope that this story tells. She thanks her friends and family for coming to support her in her passion! She is grateful to be part of such a loving and accepting community of humans!

David Adams is delighted to appear in his second musical! Recruited from the karaoke scene, David has enjoyed the transition to live theatre. He has enjoyed making new friends within this talented and kind cast and crew. He hopes you enjoy the performance.

Nicole McNarry is excited to be part of this amazing cast of RENT! She has enjoyed appearing in many productions on the WMCA stage including in Godspell (7 Ages) and Shrek the Musical (Mecca Productions). A huge thank you goes out to her family for putting up with many hours away and listening to lots of practicing!

Nathaniel Korman: This is Nathaniel's first show with Mecca Productions. He is looking forward to his first time back on stage, after many years, as an ensemble member in RENT. Active in theatre in Dauphin during his formative years, favourite shows include The Wiz. He has always had a passion for the stage and putting a smile on those who watch. A self-taught singer, he is very excited and hopes you will enjoy RENT!

Ava Thexton is joyous to return to her home theater, after spending a year studying acting in Toronto at Seneca Polytechnic College. Ava's fondest memories have been at the WMCA, performing as Audrey in Little Shop of Horrors (Crocus Plains) and Clarissa in Little Women (Mecca Productions). Ava has always dreamed about being apart of RENT and she can't wait to share this breathtaking, ageless story with Westman audiences.

Dakota Johnston is proud to be on stage for RENT, a musical filled with queer representation that takes place amidst the AIDS crisis. When not on stage wielding a squeegie, Dakota makes an Honest Living teaching grades 7 & 8 at Erickson Collegiate. This is Dakota's 4th show working with Mecca Productions.

Emilie Cox has been performing on stage since the age of six, in dance, choir and theatre. She is delighted to return to the stage for RENT. Emilie's last performance was in Assiniboine Theatre Company's Amadeus. Her favourite roles have been Leisl (The Sound of Music) and Annie in Annie (Neelin High School). When offstage Emilie teaches at La Source school in Shilo, is a wife, and a mother to two amazing kids! She would like to thank her family for their amazing support!

Jonathan Larson (Music, Lyrics, Book) received the 1996 Pulitzer Prize for Drama for RENT. He also won the 1996 Tony Award for Best Musical and the 1994 Richard Rodgers Award for RENT and twice received The Gilman & Gonzales-Falla Theatre Foundation's Comendation Award. In 1989 he was granted the Stephen Sondheim Award from American Music Theatre Festival, where he contributed to the musical "Sitting on the Edge of the Future". In 1988 he won the Richard Rodgers Development Grant for his rock musical Superbia, which was staged at Playwrights Horizon. He composed the score for the musical J.P. Morgan Saves the Nation, which was presented by En Garde Arts in 1995. Mr. Larson performed his rock monologue tick, tick... BOOM! at Second Stage Theatre, The Village Gate and New York Theatre Workshop. In addition to scoring and song writing for "Sesame Street", he created music for a number fo children's book-cassettes, including Steven Spielberg's "An American Tail" and "Land Before Time". Other film scores include work for Rolling Stones magazine publisher Jann Wenner. He conceived, directed and wrote four original songs for "Away We Go!", a musical video for children. RENT, his rock opera based on "La Boheme", had its world premiere on February 13, 1996 at New York Theatre Workshop. Mr. Larson died unexpectedly of an aortic aneurysm on January 25, 1996, ten days before his 36th birthday. His music (including songs cut from his shows) is archived in the Library of Congress.

Lisa Vasconcelos (Producer): It's a dream come true for Lisa to be part of bringing RENT to westman audiences! The co-owner of Mecca Productions, Lisa now spends her days doing what she loves most: creating musical magic with amazing people from across Manitoba, building a community where all feel welcome, supported and can grow. She sends her love to her family who share this journey (and are here at the WMCA this week... on stage and behind the scenes.)

Erik Fjeldsted (Director): Originally from Brandon, Erik has spent the last twenty-five years working in the Canadian Theatre and Film industries, but he is no stranger to the Mecca family. Some of his previous credits with Mecca include the company's very first production of Footloose, Jesus Christ Superstar, Little Women, The Sound of Music, and Something Rotten. He feels truly honoured to have been given the opportunity to direct Mecca's production of Rent. It is his all-time favourite show and seeing the original production on Broadway in 1996 was one of the main reasons Erik chose the performing arts as a career. Erik hopes you all enjoy Mecca's production of Rent. It is a beautiful show with an incredibly talented group of performers telling its story. Its message of love is something people should hear now more than ever.

Donna Lowe (Music Director) is as surprised as anyone to find herself back behind the keyboard of a musical production after a 15-year hiatus, but she could not resist the pull of this profound and timeless show. Much love to the cast, whose talent made her cry in (almost) every rehearsal, and gratitude to Mecca Productions for the invitation to once again live La Vie Boheme. Thanks also to the fantastic musicians in the band, Brandon University School of Music, and to Scott Howarth and Diogo Peixoto for technical advice and assistance.

Deanna Ginn (Ensemble vocals): Deanna Ginn is the founding conductor of Prairie Blend, a TTBB choral ensemble that just completed its 21st season. Deanna is also proud to conduct Bel Canto, the Brandon Conservatory Chorale program's adult SATB choir. She has worked extensively with choirs throughout the region. Deanna is thrilled to work with the ensemble cast of RENT and has enjoyed every minute of getting to know new & amazing singers!

Naomi Forman (Solo vocal coach)

Miles Crossman (Set Construction)

Susan Brechmann (Stage Manager): Susan is thrilled to be part of the production team for Rent. This show is one of her top two favourite musicals, and the theme about love and acceptance is so right for the time. "Being part of Mecca Musicals is always a highlight and something my husband Klaus and I have had the privilege to enjoy for 20 years. Thank you to Lisa for creating this family".
Rebecca Porteous (Light Cues)

Shannon Button (Costumes): Shannon is excited for her third Mecca show, this time on the production team! She has loved RENT since high school and is so proud to be part of a show with such an important message. She sends her thanks and love to her husband Mark for his support!

Shannon McKenzie (Stage crew)

Jaycee Thexton (Props/Stage Crew)

Shannon Bower (Props/Stage Crew)

David Vasconcelos (Fly Deck/Sets/Crew) Since the very first Mecca show, David has been backstage making the magic happen. A realtor for 27 years with Royal LePage Brandon, David is well-respected as an agent who is patient, calm and client-focused. Together Lisa and David have built a family and a community they are very proud of and grateful for. David is especially happy to share this experience with his children Tiana and Lucas

Karla Johnson (Front of House). Karla has worked at pretty much every Mecca show for the past 20 years! She's appeared on stage most recently in Something Rotten. The Front End Manager at Sobeys Brandon South, Karla loves people! She is also a member of MAP.

Sound Cues: August Miller is a grade 11 student at Crocus Plains and a member of Mecca's Auditioned Performance Troupe. She enjoys all aspects of live theatre.
Sound: Duane Macsymach, Studio Productions
Technical Support/Lights: PJ Clark

Spotlights: Lucas Vasconcelos, Zac McKenzie, John Saville

The Band: Donna Lowe - Keyboard 1, Mike Leech - Guitar, Ryan Felstead - Bass, Wesley Lipischak - Keyboard 2, Guitar 2, Esteban Seunarine - Drums