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## RENT is...

**RENT** is the single greatest thing to ever happen to this world. This show encompasses all of the most important issues of our time. It tells the all-too-familiar story of barely making it in this crazy world. The only things that matter are friendship, honesty, love, and happiness. **RENT** is the story of friends living together in New York City striving to cope with AIDS, drugs, suicide, homosexuality, transvestites, and paying the rent. Nothing is more beautiful than seeing this unfold before your eyes on stage. Jonathan Larson was nothing short of a genius.

**RENT**, the hit Broadway musical, written by Jonathan Larson and directed by Michael Greif, becomes the 15th longest running show in the history of Broadway on Monday, January 7 2002, when it plays its 2,378th performance, passing the legendary musical, *Annie*. **RENT** hits another landmark in the next few months: April 29, 2002, is its sixth anniversary on Broadway.

**RENT** opened at Broadway's Nederlander Theatre, on April 29, 1996 following a history making, sold out, extended, limited engagement at off-Broadway's New York Theatre Workshop. The musical went on to win every major best musical award, including the Tony Award, as well as the Pulitzer Prize for drama.

Inspired by Puccini's classic *La Bohème*, **RENT**-with joyous music and high-spirited dance-celebrates a community of young New Yorkers facing the soaring hopes and painful realities of contemporary life. The New York Times calls **RENT** an "exhilarating landmark musical that rushes forward on an electric current of emotion" and USA Today says "most Broadway mega-musicals seem like emotional counterfeit in comparison. Like most breakthrough pieces, **RENT** makes the rest of its genre seem antiquated."

## THE STORY

### Synopsis:

### Act I

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 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 Bohème* (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 neighborhood 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. 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 II

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 (CONTACT). 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 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).

## THE HISTORY OF RENT

The evolution of *Rent* is not a simple one. It took seven long and difficult years to take the show from its initial concept to its first public performance. The story of *Rent* is filled with highs and lows of the most epic proportions. For every burst of applause and prestigious award, there is the reminder that its creator is not here to share in its glory. In fact, it was only one week before *Rent*'s first preview that Jonathan Larson felt the first thump of the aortic aneurysm that would take him away. Director Michael Greif and the cast were rehearsing "What You Own" - the rousing second act show-stopper about dying at the end of the millennium - when Jonathan collapsed and asked for an ambulance. He later told friends that he couldn't believe that the last burst of music he would hear might be his own song about dying.

An ambulance took Jonathan to the hospital, and he was diagnosed with food poisoning. A few days later, after another incident, doctors at a second hospital said he had the flu. On January 25, 1996, Jonathan - weary but excited - went to the final dress rehearsal of *Rent* at New York Theatre Workshop. By the end of the show, Jonathan was surrounded by friends and supporters shouting in approval and stamping their feet. After the ovations subsided, he was interviewed by a reporter from The New York Times. The reporter told Jonathan off the record that *Rent* was an amazing achievement, destined for success. Then he went home, put on some tea, and died. His roommate found him on the floor of the kitchen, beside his coat. Jonathan Larson was 35 years old.

You know what happened to the play next - the show has become one of the biggest things ever on Broadway. It's become the sort of thing a playwright dreams about in the middle of the night, and in the morning is embarrassed at how wild he's let his fantasies run. *Rent* - Jon's first produced show - is like an athlete who has won the Rookie of the year award, an Olympic gold medal, the World Series, and the Most Valuable Player Award, all in the same season. It has collected the New York Drama Critics Circle Award, the Drama Desk Award, The Obie Award, the Tony Award, and the Pulitzer Prize. *Rent* was on the cover of Newsweek. Time called it a "breakthrough," The New York Times "an exhilarating landmark." At the 1996 Democratic National Convention, the cast of *Rent* sang "Seasons of Love." Movie and television stars have returned again and again, and afterwards, at the Nederlander Theater, they've gone backstage to sign a long brick wall - Mel Gibson and Janet Jackson and Jodie Foster -- forwarding their best wishes and congratulations to Jonathan and the cast. People in the show say they recognize the same audience members coming back to the Nederlander ten, fifteen times. Over the past few years, *Rent* has played to cheering fans throughout North America. In fact, it has become a global phenomenon, packing houses in England, Japan, Australia, Germany and countless other countries. If a young playwright told you this was

a fantasy of his, you'd smile at his ambition, and he'd walk away embarrassed. But here it is true.

There would be no Rent, of course, without Jonathan Larson. However, there are other voices too, artists and producers and actors who helped shape Rent and gave it sets and lights, flesh and bones. If you've ever wanted the inside scoop on Rent, you've come to the right site. Here's how it happened:

In the beginning, there was Billy Aronson, a Yale trained playwright who loved opera and had an idea: Billy wanted to write a musical updating of La Bohème. He wanted the show to be about people like himself - struggling to make art under lousy conditions. Some theatrical acquaintances suggested he work with Jonathan. In 1989, they met and swapped ideas. Jon came up with the title: Rent. He didn't like Billy's proposed Upper West Side setting; Jon lived a bohemian life downtown. He rented a scruffy loft that had a bathtub in the kitchen. For a while, he and his roommates kept an illegal, wood-burning stove. He dated a dancer for four years who sometimes left him for other men and finally left him for another woman. Jon wanted to write about his experience. In 1991, he called Billy and asked if he could make Rent his own, and Billy agreed.

New York Theatre Workshop put on a reading of Rent in the spring of 1993. Some thought it was simply ragged, but others were in love with the material, no matter its flaws. A young producer named Jeffrey Seller, who had met Jonathan several years earlier, felt the time was right to produce a musical. He had stayed in touch with Jon, because he was convinced that one day, "Jon was going to write a brilliant musical." When Jeffrey first saw the show, he felt the play was baggy, a collage with no narrative shape. "There were great songs," Jeffrey remembers, "but there were endless songs." Jeffrey was still interested - as long as Jon found a story as compelling as the music.

Jon sent a letter to Stephen Sondheim, his mentor, asking for advice and assistance. The older composer responded by encouraging Jonathan to apply for a Richard Rodgers foundation grant. Jonathan eventually won \$45,000 to support a workshop production of Rent.

What they needed now was a director. Jim Nicola, artistic director of the New York Theatre Workshop, immediately suggested Michael Greif, a young New York director who had recently become artistic director of the La Jolla Playhouse in San Diego. Greif listened to a tape of Rent on a Walkman flying from California to New York. The script seemed shaggy. "What impressed me," he remembers, "was its youth and enthusiasm, and that it was a musical about contemporary life. Jon was writing about some people I felt I knew, that I sort of loved, or had loved in my life." What Jim wanted in a director was a counterweight to Jon's eternally positive outlook, which had allowed him to treat dark subjects like AIDS, homelessness, and drug addiction with optimism. Michael was hard-nosed and cool-headed. He met with Jim and Jonathan in January of 1994, and the three set to work on bringing the script to the level of the music. "It was very fragile

material at the time," Jim recalls. "And it was so easy for it to become sentimental or hokey. I felt Michael had the right sort of dryness and sharpness to balance Jonathan's writing."

Jim saw that his instincts were right when the three got down to shaping the script in Jon's loft. They met for a week in the middle of the spring, preparing for the workshop scheduled for November. They went over the script scene by scene, moment by moment. Immediately, the dynamic between Jonathan and Michael slipped into a productive yin and yang. Michael was afraid there was something self-congratulatory about the young bohemian heroes of the show; so Jon toned down the lyrics of "La Vie Bohème." Michael fretted about the homeless characters - that they not simply serve as East Village window dressing, as moral scarecrows where Mark and Roger could drape their good social conscience; so Jonathan wrote the new song, "On the Street," where a homeless woman gives Mark a stern telling off. Most importantly, Michael had reservations about the message of the show, the "No Day But Today" cheerfulness of the life support meetings. Michael had friends with HIV, just as Jon did, and they were not cheerful about it. Jon added the scene of Gordon questioning the life support credo, saying he regretted his low T-cell count. And Jon himself kept Michael from becoming too hard-nosed and cool-headed. Anthony Rapp, who originated the role of Mark, remembers, "what Jon gave Michael was some of his hope and heart and generosity of spirit. And what I think Michael gave Jon was some edge and realism and complexity, and making sure things didn't all resolve nicely and prettily. It was a good marriage."

That summer, Michael and Jon talked plot. One large problem, they agreed was the relationship between Maureen and Mark; in these drafts, a major plot point was Mark winning Maureen back. Michael didn't like it. "My position was, if they're gonna be lesbians, let them be lesbians. Don't make them about going-back-to-their-man." In October, Michael worked out the "performance vocabulary" of Rent. For budgetary reasons - and also because it suited the nature of the characters - the NYTW decided to have minimal props. Michael suggested the three "Frankenstein" tables, which could be used to serve multiple functions in the show. He pushed for a multiracial cast. Because it was rock, Michael played around with microphones, with actors singing directly to the seats: "We were very anxious to take advantage of the fact that it would be as much a concert as it was a play."

For all of its flaws, the November workshop was a tremendous success. It ran two weeks with the audience growing larger and more enthusiastic each night; by the last week it was sold out. Anthony Rapp, remembers the excitement: "I kept telling people it was going to be an event. We knew it needed work. But people I trust and respect - friends and collaborators - would come down and be knocked out by it.

Jim Nicola thought it needed work, too. But the responses he was getting from his friends were just what Anthony was hearing. "There was a lot of passion - again, the most striking thing was the

intensity of opinion about it. There was a large segment of people whose tastes I trusted who just loved it, and didn't care what the problems were. I felt even more convinced that there was really something strong here." Jim found himself moving towards an exciting, scary, stirring decision: "Rent was the kind of show to bet the company on."

During the workshop's second week, Jeffrey Seller returned to East Fourth Street. This time, he brought his business partner, Kevin McCollum. Sitting down in the front row, seeing the three tables, remembering the plotless show he'd seen a year earlier, Jeffrey had time for a crisis of confidence. He turned to Kevin before the show and warned him, "this is either gonna be absolutely brilliant or it's going to be a mess." At intermission, Kevin nudged Jeffrey and said, "I'm loving this. Get out the checkbook."

A few nights later, they brought a business associate named Allan S. Gordon to the NYTW. The three had worked together previously on the national tour of "The Real Live Brady Bunch." Allan was equally enthusiastic - like Jeffrey and Kevin, he was overpowered by the music. That night, the three decided to join forces with New York Theater Workshop to bring the show to fruition.

After the holidays, Jim, Michael and Jonathan sat down again in Jim's office. Jim had thought it over, and talked to NYTW's board members. The Workshop decided to stage a full production of Rent the following year with the help of Seller, McCollum and Gordon, who would get the commercial rights in return. The budget would be \$250,000 - twice the cost of anything NYTW had ever mounted.

They spoke about what needed fixing. The show had no single story, no primary narrator - in the November workshop, all the characters told the story; when they had something to say, they turned around and said it right to the audience. And the characters themselves, especially Maureen and Joanne, needed refinement. Jim gave Jon a task: Could he boil the plot down to a single sentence? The sentences Jon first turned in were impossibly long, crammed full of clauses, parentheses and second thoughts. But as Jim anticipated, as the sentences came into focus, so did the play.

Jim decided to hire a dramaturg to work with Jonathan. Dramaturgs work with playwrights as critics, advisers and editors. Jon did a lot of interviews before meeting Lynn Thompson. Lynn seemed to be on Jon's wavelength, and they hit it off right away. She was able to speak in a voice that sparked Jon's enthusiasm. Jim put the two on a schedule; Jon would deliver a revised draft by summer's end. Rent was to begin rehearsals in the fall.

Jon had found another strong collaborator. Lynn suggested he work up biographies of the characters, that he write a version of Rent told through each person's eyes. Her belief was that once Jon understood the story completely, once he really had the characters under his belt, the rewriting of the play would come in a simple burst. They worked through the summer, discovering a structure for Rent.

By October Jon had a new draft; he was confident his six years of work were over. Actors read the script aloud to everyone. Jim and Michael were pleased with many of the changes, but they knew they weren't out of the woods. The characters were sharper, but Jon had done some structural fiddling, turning much of the show into flashback. The first act began with Angel's funeral and Mark wondering, "How did we get here?," with the rest of the story catching up from there. No one was comfortable with this except the playwright himself. The Maureen-Joanne relationship was finally working, but their second act duet was by all accounts miserable. "One of the worst songs ever written," Michael remembers with a laugh. "The song was a straight out cat fight, the lovers sniping at each other, Maureen telling Joanne, 'You're the hepatitis in my clam.'"

Jeffrey was also concerned. The show was supposed to go into rehearsals in six weeks and Rent didn't feel ready to him. "On the one hand, the new script made a huge, wonderful leap from the workshop - a gigantic creative stride - but it wasn't there yet. Now it's late October and we're in casting. And the show starts rehearsing in December." Jeffrey dashed off some quick, blunt notes on what he felt needed to be changed in Rent before the production could move ahead.

Jeffrey's notes were intended for Jim and Michael, but somehow Jon got a hold of them. What the notes called for was another rewrite. Jon didn't want to do

any more writing. "There was real terror the production wouldn't happen," Michael remembers. "It was a tense few days. Jon was very upset and very frustrated. But we all wanted this show to be as strong as it could be." Jon turned to Sondheim one last time, and Sondheim reminded him of a key proposition: theater is collaborative. Part of Jon's job was to take into account what his collaborators felt. So Jon signed on.

Michael wanted a simplified structure, with a clearer emotional division between the two acts: "The first act should be much more the celebration, and the second act should reflect the ramifications and sorrows surrounding these lives." Jon finally quit his job at the Moondance Diner. His friend Eddie Rosenstein remembers, "After he left the diner, and he announced that he was a full-time professional musical playwright, his spirits soared. That's all anybody wants to do in life, isn't it? A chance to do what they do." During Jon's rewrites the show moved into casting. Michael wanted a youthful, sexy cast. He and Jon leaned toward young performers who seemed to have some connection with their characters, whose spirit could add dimensions to the work. The cast seemed to invigorate Jon. "He was really inspired by this company," Michael says. "We still needed the Joanne-Maureen song. And Jon really wisely said, 'let me just sit with these actors, and let me bring you something.' And then what he brings me is 'Take Me or Leave Me,' and I'm totally thrilled out of my mind."

In December, with casting done and rehearsals about to begin, Jon handed in the final version of Rent. Jon had worked a succession of 20 hour days. "He had completely cleaned up the narrative,"

Jeffrey says, remembering everyone's excitement with the last creative step. And Jon finally delivered to Jim his one-sentence summary of what story Rent told: "Rent is about a community celebrating life, in the face of death and AIDS, at the turn of the century."

From December on, it was a quick sprint to the show you've seen. There were a lot of what Jon called "programming changes": shifting songs from one position to another, seeing where they fit best. In January, Jim watched a rehearsal with a group of NYTW board members, and the emotional response to RENT was extraordinary. "It continued to get even tighter and better through rehearsals," Daphne Rubin-Vega, the original Mimi, remembers. The New York Times got wind that a rock musical based on La Bohème was going to premiere on the 100th anniversary of the original La Bohème. No one had known this; it was a fluke. The night of the final dress rehearsal, Jon was sick with a sore chest and a fever. Still, he took a taxi to Fourth Street, watched the show, and sat for his interview with the Times. The last thing Michael and Jim remember saying to him was to take it easy and sleep well. Jon died an hour later.

After Jon's death, there were a few revisions. Lynn, Jim and Michael and musical director/arranger Tim Weil (who would take charge of the show's musical elements after Jonathan died) would meet and attempt to decide what changes Jonathan would have approved. When the show premiered, they knew they had something special on their hands. Jon's death added an explosive, powerful element to the cast's understanding of the play. "The company had already come together so well, but the event of Jon dying just brought us together that much more strongly," Daphne remembers. "It let us remember that the bottom line is really about what you do with this experience, because tomorrow isn't promised you. There was no more powerful way of receiving that message than from someone who was completely healthy and died. Someone whose life was just beginning"

The day of Jon's death, no one at the Workshop was quite sure what to do. The first performance was scheduled for that evening. Jim Nicola's first inclination was to cancel, but he knew they needed to do something for Jonathan's memory. The first act, in particular, involved a lot of tricky dancing and jumping on tables. It hadn't been completely rehearsed, and he was afraid there would be injuries. That evening, New York Theatre workshop was filled to capacity with people Jon had loved - friends, family and colleagues. Jim decided on a sing-through - no movement, just songs. Throughout the first act, the cast was able to hold their seats. But very slowly, they began to rise. They acted, they danced. "It was incredible and terrible," Anthony remembers. "It was like we had to do it. We were all sobbing and crying." The lighting people made their way to the lighting booth; the sound manager began to pick up his cues. "They couldn't contain themselves," Eddie remembers.

"The audience was reaching out to the cast. They were crying and cheering. By the second act, it was no longer contained. It was the

full show run full-out. If emotion could have become a physical force, the roof would have blown off, the weather would have changed." The second act ended. There was a huge ovation, the cast slowly left the stage, and the audience stayed in the theater. No one was sure what to do. The cast returned and sat down in the front row. Finally, a single voice called from the audience, "Thank you, Jonathan Larson," which brought the evening's loudest, final burst of applause.

## Characters

### In order of appearance

**Roger Davis**, a struggling musician who's HIV+. Roger hopes to write one last meaningful song before he dies.

**Mark Cohen**, a filmmaker and video artist, and Roger's roommate.

**Tom Collins**, an HIV+ computer genius who's back in New York after being away.

**Benjamin Coffin III**, landlord of Mark and Roger's building. Benny wants to start a multimedia studio.

**Joanne Jefferson**, a public interest lawyer, and Maureen's lover.

**Angel Shunard**, a transvestite street drummer also infected with HIV.

**Mimi Marquez**, a dancer with AIDS and a drug problem.

**Maureen Johnson**, a performance artist and Mark's ex-girlfriend.

Mark's mom, Roger's mom, Mr. and Mrs. Jefferson, Mr. Grey, Alexi Darling, Steve, Paul, a Christmas caroler, a woman with bags, a pastor, man with squeegee, a cop, a waiter, and others.

## LIBRETTO

### Act I

**Tune Up #1**  
**Voice Mail #1**  
**Tune Up #2**  
**Rent**  
**You Okay**  
**Tune Up #3**  
**One Song Glory**  
**Light My Candle**  
**Voice Mail #2**  
**Today 4 U**  
**You'll See**  
**Tango: Maureen**  
**Life Support**  
**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**  
**La Vie Boheme B**

Italic type indicates spoken lines.

*(The audience enters in the theatre to discover a stage bare of curtains. At stage left looms a metal sculpture intended to represent: (a) a totem pole/Christmas tree that stands in an abandoned lot, (b) a wood burning stove with a snaky chimney that is at the center of MARK and ROGER's loft apartment, and (c) in Act II, a church steeple. On stage the five-musician band performs under a wooden platform surrounded by railing. The wooden platform has a staircase on the upstage side.*

*Downstage left is a black, waist-high rail fence. Once the audience is in the theatre, CREW and BAND MEMBERS move about informally onstage in preparation for Act I.*

*ROGER DAVIS, carrying an electric guitar, enters upstage left and crosses to a guitar amp sitting on a chair at center stage. He*

*casually plugs his guitar into the amp and adjusts levels, then crosses downstage and sits on the table.*

*After a few chords, the COMPANY, led by MARK COHEN, enters from all directions and fills the stage. MARK sets up a small tripod and a 16mm movie camera downstage center, aimed upstage. He addresses the audience.)*

**MARK**

*We begin on Christmas Eve with me, Mark, and my roommate, Roger. We live in an industrial loft on the corner of 11th street and Avenue B, the top floor of what was once a music publishing factory. Old rock 'n' roll posters hang on the walls. They have Roger's picture advertising gigs at CBGB's and the Pyramid Club. We have an illegal wood burning stove; its exhaust pipe crawls up to a skylight. All of our electrical appliances are plugged into one thick extension cord which snakes its way out a window. Outside, a small tent city has sprung up in the lot next to our building. Inside, we are freezing because we have no heat.*

*(MARK turns the camera to ROGER)*

*Smile!*

### TUNE UP #1

**MARK**

December 24th, Nine PM  
Eastern Standard Time  
From here on in

I shoot without a script  
See if anything comes of it  
Instead of my old shit  
First shot – Roger  
Tuning the Fender guitar  
He hasn't played in a year

**ROGER**

This won't tune

**MARK**

So we hear  
He's just coming back  
From half a year of withdrawal

**ROGER**

Are you talking to me?

**MARK**

Not at all

Are you ready? Hold that focus – steady

Tell the folks at home what you're doing Roger ...

**ROGER**

I'm writing one great song --

**MARK**

*The phone rings.*

**ROGER**

Saved!

**MARK** *(to audience)*

We screen  
Zoom in on the answering machine!  
*(An actor places a telephone on a chair and we see MARK'S MOM in a special light.)*

## VOICE MAIL #1

### ROGER & MARK'S OUTGOING MESSAGE

"Speak" ... ("Beeep!")  
**MOM**  
That was a very loud beep  
I don't even know if this is working  
Mark -- Mark -- are you there  
Are you screening your calls --  
It's mom  
We wanted to call and say we love you  
And we'll miss you tomorrow  
Cindy and the kids are here -- send their love  
Oh, I hope you like the hot plate  
Just don't leave it on, dear  
When you leave the house  
Oh, and Mark  
We're sorry to hear that Maureen dumped you  
I say c'est la vie  
So let her be a lesbian...  
There are other fishies in the sea  
... Love Mom  
*(Lights fade on MOM and answering machine.)*

## TUNE UP #2

**MARK**  
Tell the folks at home what you're doing Roger  
**ROGER**  
I'm writing one great song --  
**MARK (to audience)**  
*The phone rings.*  
**ROGER**  
*Yesss!*  
**MARK (to audience)**  
We screen.  
**ROGER & MARK'S ANSWERING MACHINE**  
"Speak" ... ("Beeep!")  
*(Lights fade up on the street: the front-door area of MARK and ROGER's building. Nearby is a battered public pay phone. TOM COLLINS stands at the phone.)*  
**COLLINS**  
"Chestnuts roasting..."  
**ROGER & MARK**

*(as MARK picks up the phone)*  
Collins!  
**COLLINS**  
I'm downstairs  
**MARK**  
Hey!  
**COLLINS**  
Roger picked up the phone?  
**MARK**  
No, it's me.  
**COLLINS**  
Throw down the key.  
*(MARK pulls out a small leather pouch and drops it off the apron downstage center as if from a window; a weighted leather pouch plops down from "upstairs." COLLINS catches it.)*  
**MARK**  
A wild night is now pre-ordained  
*(Two THUGS appear from above, with clubs. They are obviously close to attacking COLLINS, who says back into the phone...)*  
**COLLINS**  
I may be detained.  
*(THUGS mime beating and kicking COLLINS, who falls to the ground as lights on him fade.)*  
**MARK**  
What does he mean...?  
*(Phone rings again)*  
What do you mean "detained"?  
*(Lights come up on BENNY, who's on a cellular phone.)*  
**BENNY**  
Ho ho ho.  
**MARK & ROGER**  
Benny! (Shit!)  
**BENNY**  
Dudes, I'm on my way  
**MARK & ROGER**  
Great! (Fuck!)  
**BENNY**  
I need the rent  
**MARK**  
What rent?  
**BENNY**  
This past year's rent which I let slide  
**MARK**  
Let slide? You said we were "golden"  
**ROGER**  
When you bought the building  
**MARK**  
When we were roommates  
**ROGER**  
Remember -- you lived here!?  
**BENNY**  
How could I forget?

You, me, Collins and Maureen  
How is the drama queen?  
**MARK**  
She's performing tonight  
**BENNY**  
I know.  
Still her production manager?  
**MARK**  
Two days ago I was bumped  
**BENNY**  
You still dating her?  
**MARK**  
Last month I was dumped  
**ROGER**  
She's in love  
**BENNY**  
She's got a new man?  
**MARK**  
Well -- no  
**BENNY**  
What's his name?  
**MARK & ROGER**  
Joanne  
**BENNY**  
Rent, my amigos, is due  
Or I will have to evict you  
Be there in a few  
*(ROGER defiantly picks out Musetta's theme from Puccini's La Boheme on the electric guitar. The fuse blows on the amp.)*  
**MARK (to audience)**  
*The power blows...*

## RENT

*(The COMPANY bursts into a flurry of movement. Then everyone except MARK and ROGER freezes in a group upstage.)*  
**MARK**  
How do you document real life  
When real life is getting more  
Like fiction each day  
Headlines -- bread-lines  
Blow my mind  
And now this deadline  
"Eviction -- or pay"  
Rent!  
**ROGER**  
How do you write a song  
When the chords sound wrong  
Though they once sounded right and rare  
When the notes are sour  
Where is the power

You once had to ignite the air  
**MARK**  
And we're hungry and frozen  
**ROGER**  
Some life that we've chosen  
**MARK & ROGER**  
How we gonna pay  
How we gonna pay  
How we gonna pay  
Last year's rent  
**MARK**  
We light candles  
**ROGER**  
How do you start a fire  
When there's nothing to burn  
And it feels like something's stuck in your flue  
**MARK**  
How can you generate heat  
When you can't feel your feet  
**MARK & ROGER**  
And they're turning blue!  
**MARK**  
You light up a mean blaze  
*(ROGER grabs one of his own posters.)*  
**ROGER**  
With posters --  
*(MARK grabs old manuscripts.)*  
**MARK**  
And screenplays  
**ROGER & MARK**  
How we gonna pay  
How we gonna pay  
How we gonna pay  
Last year's rent  
*(Lights go down on the loft and go up on JOANNE JEFFERSON, who's at the pay phone.)*  
**JOANNE**  
Don't screen, Maureen  
It's me -- Joanne  
Your substitute production manager  
Hey hey hey! (Did you eat?)  
Don't change the subject Maureen  
But darling -- you haven't eaten all day  
You won't throw up  
You won't throw up  
The digital delay --  
Didn't blow up (exactly)  
There may have been one teeny tiny spark  
You're not calling Mark  
**COLLINS**  
How do you stay on your feet  
When on every street

It's 'trick or treat'  
(And tonight it's 'trick')  
'Welcome back to town'  
Oh, I should lie down  
Everything's brown  
And uh -- oh  
I feel sick  
**MARK** *(At the window)*  
Where is he?  
**COLLINS**  
Getting dizzy  
*(He collapses.)*  
**MARK & ROGER**  
How we gonna pay  
How we gonna pay  
How we gonna pay  
Last year's rent  
*(MARK and ROGER stoke the fire. Crosscut to BENNY's Range Rover.)*  
**BENNY** *(On cellular phone)*  
Alison baby -- you sound sad  
I don't believe those two after everything I've done  
Ever since our wedding I'm dirt -- They'll see  
I can help them all out in the long run  
*(Three locales: JOANNE at the pay phone, MARK and ROGER in their loft, and COLLINS on the ground. The following is sung simultaneously.)*  
**BENNY**  
Forces are gathering  
Forces are gathering  
Can't turn away  
Forces are gathering  
**COLLINS**  
Ughhhhh--  
Ughhhhh--  
Ughhhhh-- I can't think  
Ughhhhh--  
Ughhhhh--  
Ughhhhh-- I need a drink  
**MARK** *(reading from a script page)*  
"The music ignites the night with passionate fire"  
**JOANNE**  
Maureen -- I'm not a theatre person  
**ROGER**  
"The narration crackles and pops with incendiary wit"  
**JOANNE**  
Could never be a theatre person  
**MARK**  
Zoom in as they burn the past to the ground  
**JOANNE** *(realizing she's been cut off)*  
Hello?  
**MARK & ROGER**

And feel the heat of the future's glow  
**JOANNE**  
Hello?  
*(The phone rings in the loft. MARK picks it up.)*  
**MARK** *(On phone)*  
Hello? Maureen?  
Your equipment won't work?  
Okay, all right, I'll go!  
**MARK & HALF THE COMPANY**  
How do you leave the past behind  
When it keeps finding ways to get to your heart  
It reaches way down deep and tears you inside out  
Till you're torn apart  
Rent!  
**ROGER & OTHER HALF OF COMPANY**  
How can you connect in an age  
Where strangers, landlords, lovers  
Your own blood cells betray  
**COMPANY**  
What binds the fabric together  
When the raging, shifting winds of change  
Keep ripping away  
**BENNY**  
Draw a line in the sand  
And then make a stand  
**ROGER**  
Use your camera to spar  
**MARK**  
Use your guitar  
**COMPANY**  
When they act tough - you call their bluff  
**MARK & ROGER**  
We're not gonna pay  
**MARK & ROGER & HALF THE COMPANY**  
We're not gonna pay  
**MARK & ROGER & OTHER HALF OF COMPANY**  
We're not gonna pay  
**COMPANY**  
Last year's rent  
This year's rent  
Next year's rent  
Rent rent rent rent rent  
We're not gonna pay rent  
**ROGER & MARK**  
'Cause everything is rent

**YOU OKAY HONEY?** *(The street)*

*(The street in front of the pay phone. A HOMELESS MAN appears above on the right. Across the stage, ANGEL DUMOTT*

*SCHUNARD is seated on the Christmas tree sculpture, with a plastic pickle tub balanced like a drum between his knees.)*

**A HOMELESS MAN**

Christmas bells are ringing  
Christmas bells are ringing  
Christmas bells are ringing  
Somewhere else!  
Not here

*(The HOMELESS MAN exits. ANGEL gets a good beat going on the tub, but is interrupted by a moan. He starts to drum again and sees COLLINS limp to downstage-left proscenium.)*

**ANGEL**

You okay honey?

**COLLINS**

I'm afraid so

**ANGEL**

They get any money?

**COLLINS**

No, had none to get  
But they purloined my coat  
Well you missed a sleeve! -- thanks

**ANGEL**

Hell, it's Christmas Eve  
I'm Angel

**COLLINS**

Angel? Indeed  
An angel of the first degree  
Friends call me Collins -- Tom Collins  
Nice tree ...

**ANGEL**

Let's get a band-aid for your knee  
I'll change, there's a "Life Support" meeting at nine-thirty  
Yes -- this body provides a comfortable home  
For the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

**COLLINS**

As does mine

**ANGEL**

We'll get along fine  
Get you a coat, have a bite  
Make a night -- I'm flush

**COLLINS**

My friends are waiting --

**ANGEL**

You're cute when you blush  
The more the merry -- ho ho ho  
And I do not take no  
*(ANGEL and COLLINS walk off stage right.)*

**TUNE UP #3** *(The loft)*

*(Lights come up on loft.)*

**ROGER**

*Where are you going?*

**MARK**

*Maureen calls...*

**ROGER**

*You're such a sucker!*

**MARK**

*I don't suppose you'd like to see her show in the lot tonight?*

*(ROGER shrugs.)*

*Or come to dinner?*

**ROGER**

*Zoom in on my empty wallet.*

**MARK**

*Touche. Take your AZT.*

*(To audience) Close on Roger*

*His girlfriend April*

*Left a note saying "We've got AIDS"*

*Before slitting her wrists in the bathroom*

*I'll check up on you later. Change your mind. You have to get out of the house.*

*(He exits.)*

## ONE SONG GLORY

**ROGER**

I'm writing one great song before I...

One song

Glory

One song

Before I go

Glory

One song to leave behind

Find one song

One last refrain

Glory

From the pretty boy front man

Who wasted opportunity

One song

He had the world at his feet

Glory

In the eyes of a young girl

A young girl

Find glory

Beyond the cheap colored lights

One song

Before the sun sets

Glory -- on another empty life

Time flies -- time dies

Glory -- One blaze of glory

One blaze of glory -- glory

Find

Glory

In a song that rings true

Truth like a blazing fire

An eternal flame

Find

One song

A song about love

Glory

From the soul of a young man

A young man

Find

The one song

Before the virus takes hold

Glory

Like a sunset

One song

To redeem this empty life

Time flies

And then - no need to endure anymore

Time dies

*(ROGER is interrupted by a sharp knock on the door. It is MIMI MARQUEZ, a beautiful stranger from downstairs.)*

**ROGER**

*The door.*

*(ROGER crosses to the door.)*

## LIGHT MY CANDLE

**ROGER**

What'd you forget?

*(MIMI enters, holding a candle and looking for a match; her electricity is down, too.)*

**MIMI**

Got a light?

**ROGER**

I know you? -- You're --

You're shivering

**MIMI**

It's nothing

They turned off my heat

And I'm just a little weak on my feet

Would you light my candle?

What are you staring at?

**ROGER**

Nothing

Your hair in the moonlight

You look familiar

*(He lights her candle. MIMI starts to leave, but stumbles.)*

Can you make it?

**MIMI**

Just haven't eaten much today

At least the room stopped spinning.  
Anyway. What?

**ROGER**

Nothing  
Your smile reminded me of –

**MIMI**

I always remind people of -- who is she?

**ROGER**

She died. Her name was April  
*(MIMI discreetly blows out the candle.)*

**MIMI**

It's out again

Sorry about your friend

Would you light my candle?

*(ROGER lights the candle. They linger, awkwardly.)*

**ROGER**

Well –

**MIMI**

Yeah. Ow!

**ROGER**

Oh, the wax -- it's –

**MIMI**

Dripping! I like it -- between my –

**ROGER**

Fingers. I figured...

Oh, well. Goodnight.

*(MIMI exits. ROGER heads back toward his guitar on the table.*

*There is another knock, which he answers.)*

**ROGER**

It blew out again?

**MIMI**

No -- I think that I dropped my stash

**ROGER**

I know I've seen you out and about

When I used to go out

Your candle's out

**MIMI**

I'm illin' –

I had it when I walked in the door

It was pure –

Is it on the floor?

**ROGER**

The floor?

*(MIMI gets down on all fours and starts searching the floor for her stash. She looks back at ROGER, who is staring at her again.)*

**MIMI**

They say I have the best ass below 14th street

Is it true?

**ROGER**

What?

**MIMI**

You're staring again.

**ROGER**

Oh no.

I mean you do -- have a nice –

I mean -- You look familiar

**MIMI**

Like your dead girlfriend?

**ROGER**

Only when you smile

But I'm sure I've seen you somewhere else –

**MIMI**

Do you go to the Cat Scratch Club?

That's where I work - I dance - help me look

**ROGER**

Yes!

They used to tie you up –

**MIMI**

It's a living

*(MIMI douses the flame again.)*

**ROGER**

I didn't recognize you

Without the handcuffs

**MIMI**

We could light the candle

Oh won't you light the candle?

*(ROGER lights it again.)*

**ROGER**

Why don't you forget that stuff

You look like you're sixteen

**MIMI**

I'm nineteen -- but I'm old for my age

I'm just born to be bad

**ROGER**

I once was born to be bad

I used to shiver like that

**MIMI**

I have no heat -- I told you

**ROGER**

I used to sweat

**MIMI**

I got a cold

**ROGER**

Uh huh

I used to be a junkie

**MIMI**

But now and then I like to –

**ROGER**

Uh huh

**MIMI**

Feel good

**ROGER**

Here it -- um –

*(ROGER stoops and picks up a small object: MIMI's stash.)*

**MIMI**

What's that?

**ROGER**

It's a candy bar wrapper

*(ROGER puts it behind his back and into his pocket.)*

**MIMI**

We could light the candle

*(ROGER discreetly blows out the candle.)*

What'd you do with my candle?

**ROGER**

That was my last match

**MIMI**

Our eyes'll adjust, thank God for the moon

**ROGER**

Maybe it's not the moon at all

I hear Spike Lee's shooting down the street

**MIMI**

Bah humbug ... Bah humbug

*(MIMI places her hand under his, pretending to do it by accident.)*

**ROGER**

Cold hands

**MIMI**

Yours too.

Big. Like my father's

You wanna dance?

**ROGER**

With you?

**MIMI**

No -- with my father

**ROGER**

I'm Roger

**MIMI**

They call me

They call me Mimi

*(They come extremely close to a kiss. MIMI reaches into his pocket, nabs the stash, waves it in front of his face, and makes a sexy exit.)*

## VOICE MAIL #2

*(JOANNE's loft. In blackout another phone rings. We see MAUREEN in silhouette.)*

**MAUREEN**

*Hi. You've reached Maureen and Joanne. Leave a message and don't forget Over the Moon -- My performance, protesting the eviction of the Homeless (and artists) from the Eleventh Street Lot. Tonight at midnight in the lot between A and B. Party at Life Cafe to follow. (Beep!)*

**MR. JEFFERSON**

Well, Joanne -- We're off

I tried you at the office

And they said you're stage managing or something  
**MRS. JEFFERSON**  
 Remind her that those unwed mothers in Harlem  
 Need her legal help too  
**MR. JEFFERSON**  
 Call Daisy for our itinerary or Alfred at Pound Ridge  
 Or Eileen at the state department in a pinch  
 We'll be at the spa for new year's  
 Unless the senator changes his mind  
**MRS. JEFFERSON**  
 The hearings  
**MR. JEFFERSON**  
 Oh yes – Kitten  
 Mummy's confirmation hearing begins on the tenth  
 We'll need you -- alone -- by the sixth  
**MRS. JEFFERSON**  
 Harold!  
**MR. JEFFERSON**  
 You hear that?  
 It's three weeks away  
 And she's already nervous  
**MRS. JEFFERSON**  
 I am not!  
**MR. JEFFERSON**  
 For Mummy's sake, Kitten  
 No Doc Martens this time and wear a dress ...  
 Oh, and Kitten -- have a merry  
**MRS. JEFFERSON**  
 And a bra!

## TODAY 4 U *(The loft)*

*(MARK and ROGER's loft.)*

**MARK**  
*Enter Tom Collins, computer genius, teacher, vagabond anarchist,  
 who ran naked through the Parthenon.*  
*(COLLINS carries ANGEL's pickle tub, now filled with  
 provisions.)*  
**MARK & COLLINS**  
 Bustelo – Marlboro  
 Banana by the bunch  
 A box of Captain Crunch will taste so good  
**COLLINS**  
 And firewood  
**MARK**  
 Look -- it's Santa Claus  
**COLLINS**  
 Hold your applause  
**ROGER**  
 Oh hi  
**COLLINS**

"Oh hi" after seven months?  
**ROGER**  
 Sorry  
**COLLINS**  
 This boy could use some Stoli  
**COLLINS, MARK & ROGER**  
 Oh holy night  
**ROGER**  
 You struck gold at MIT?  
**COLLINS**  
 They expelled me for my theory of Actual Reality  
 Which I'll soon impart  
 To the couch potatoes at New York University  
 Still haven't left the house?  
**ROGER**  
 I was waiting for you, don't you know?  
**COLLINS**  
 Well, tonight's the night  
 Come to the Life Cafe after Maureen's show  
**ROGER**  
 No flow  
**COLLINS**  
 Gentlemen, our benefactor on this Christmas Eve  
 Whose charity is only matched by talent, I believe  
 A new member of the Alphabet City avant-garde  
 Angel Dumott Schunard!  
*(ANGEL sashays in. He's gorgeously done up in Santa drag, with  
 a fan of twenty-dollar bills in each hand.)*  
**ANGEL**  
 Today for you -- tomorrow for me  
 Today for you -- tomorrow for me  
**COLLINS**  
 And you should hear her beat!  
**MARK**  
 You earned this on the street?  
**ANGEL**  
 It was my lucky day today on Avenue A  
 When a lady in a limousine drove my way  
 She said, "Dahling -- be a dear -- haven't slept in a year  
 I need your help to make my neighbor's yappy dog disappear"  
 "This Akita-Evita just won't shut up  
 I believe if you play non-stop that pup  
 Will breathe its very last high-strung breath  
 I'm certain that cur will bark itself to death"  
 Today for you -- tomorrow for me  
 Today for you -- tomorrow for me  
 We agreed on a fee -- A thousand dollar guarantee  
 Tax-free -- and a bonus if I trim her tree  
 Now who could foretell that it would go so well  
 But sure as I am here that dog is now in doggy hell  
 After an hour -- Evita -- in all her glory  
 On the window ledge of that 23rd story

Like Thelma & Louise did when they got the blues  
 Swan dove into the courtyard of the Gracie Mews  
 Today for you -- tomorrow for me  
 Today for you -- tomorrow for me  
*(ANGEL does a fabulous drum and dance solo.)*  
 Then back to the street where I met my sweet  
 Where he was moaning and groaning on the cold concrete  
 The nurse took him home for some mercurochrome  
 And I dressed his wounds and got him back on his feet  
 Sing it!  
 Today for you -- tomorrow for me  
 Today for you -- tomorrow for me  
 Today for you -- tomorrow for me  
 Today for you -- tomorrow for me

## YOU'LL SEE

*(BENNY enters.)*  
**BENNY**  
 Joy to the world—  
 Hey, you bum -- yeah, you, move over  
 Get your ass off that range rover  
**MARK**  
*That attitude toward the homeless is exactly what  
 Maureen is protesting tonight.*  
*(to audience, holding camera up to BENNY)*  
*Close up: Benjamin Coffin the third, our ex-roommate who  
 married Alison Grey, of the Westport Greys -- then bought the  
 building and the lot next door from his father-in-law in hopes of  
 starting a cyber-studio.*  
**BENNY**  
 Maureen is protesting  
 Losing her performance space  
 Not my attitude  
**ROGER**  
 What happened to Benny  
 What happened to his heart  
 And the ideals he once pursued?  
**BENNY**  
 The owner of that lot next door  
 Has a right to do with it as he pleases  
**COLLINS**  
 Happy birthday, Jesus!  
**BENNY**  
 The rent  
**MARK**  
 You're wasting your time  
**ROGER**  
 We're broke  
**MARK**  
 And you broke your word -- this is absurd

**BENNY**

There is one way you won't have to pay

**ROGER**

I knew it!

**BENNY**

Next door, the home of Cyberarts, you see

And now that the block is re-zoned

Our dream can become a reality

You'll see boys

You'll see boys

A state of the art, digital, virtual interactive studio

I'll forego your rent and on paper guarantee

That you can stay here for free

If you do me one small favor

**MARK**

What?

**BENNY**

Convince Maureen to cancel her protest

**MARK**

Why not just get an injunction or call the cops

**BENNY**

I did, and they're on stand by

But my investors would rather

I handle this quietly

**ROGER**

You can't quietly wipe out an entire tent city

Then watch 'It's a Wonderful Life' on TV!

**BENNY**

You want to produce films and write songs?

You need somewhere to do it!

It's what we used to dream about

Think twice before you pooh-pooh it

You'll see boys

You'll see boys

You'll see -- the beauty of a studio

That lets us do our work and get paid

With condos on the top

Whose rent keeps open our shop

Just stop the protest

And you'll have it made

You'll see -- or you'll pack

*(BENNY exits.)*

**ANGEL**

That boy could use some prozac

**ROGER**

Or heavy drugs

**MARK**

Or group hugs

**COLLINS**

Which reminds me --

We have a detour to make tonight

Anyone who wants to can come along

**ANGEL**

Life support's a group for people coping with life

You don't have to stay too long

**MARK**

First I've got a protest to save

**ANGEL**

Roger?

**ROGER**

I'm not much company you'll find

**MARK**

Behave!

**ANGEL**

He'll catch up later -- He's just go other things on his mind

You'll see boys

**MARK & COLLINS**

We'll see boys

**ROGER**

Let it be boys!

**COLLINS**

I like boys

**ANGEL**

Boys like me

**ALL**

We'll see.

## TANGO: MAUREEN

*(The lot. JOANNE is reexamining the cable connections for the umpteenth time.)*

**MARK**

And so into the abyss

The lot. Where a small stage is partially set up.

**JOANNE**

*(playing with some wires)*

"Line in"...

I went to Harvard for this?

**MARK**

Close on Mark's nosedive.

**JOANNE**

"Line out"...

**MARK**

Will he get out of here alive...?

*(JOANNE notices MARK approaching.)*

**JOANNE**

Mark?

**MARK**

Hi.

**JOANNE**

I told her not to call you

**MARK**

That's Maureen

But can I help since I'm here

**JOANNE**

I hired an engineer ...

**MARK**

Great!

Well, nice to have met you

**JOANNE**

Wait!

She's three hours late

The samples won't delay

But the cable --

**MARK**

There's another way

Say something -- anything

**JOANNE** *(into the mike)*

Test -- one, two three...

**MARK**

Anything but that

**JOANNE**

This is weird

**MARK**

It's weird

**JOANNE**

Very weird

**MARK**

Fuckin' weird

**JOANNE**

I'm so mad

That I don't know what to do

Fighting with microphones

Freezing down to my bones

And to top it all off

I'm with you

**MARK**

Feel like going insane?

Got a fire in your brain?

And you're thinking of drinking gasoline?

**JOANNE**

As a matter of fact --

**MARK**

Honey, I know this act

It's called the 'Tango Maureen'

The Tango Maureen

It's a dark, dizzy merry-go-round

As she keeps you dangling

**JOANNE**

You're wrong

**MARK**

Your heart she is mangling

**JOANNE**

It's different with me

**MARK**

And you toss and you turn  
'Cause her cold eyes can burn  
Yet you yearn and you churn and rebound

**JOANNE**

I think I know what you mean

**BOTH**

The Tango Maureen

**MARK**

Has she ever pouted her lips

And called you 'Pookie'

**JOANNE**

Never

**MARK**

Have you ever doubted a kiss or two?

**JOANNE**

This is spooky

Did you swoon when she walked through the door?

**MARK**

Every time -- so be cautious

**JOANNE**

Did she moon over other boys --?

**MARK**

More than moon --

**JOANNE**

I'm getting nauseous

*(They begin to dance, with MARK leading.)*

**MARK**

*Where'd you learn to tango?*

**JOANNE**

*With the French Ambassador's daughter in her dorm room at Miss Porter's. And you?*

**MARK**

*With Nanette Himmelfarb, the rabbi's daughter, at the Scarsdale Jewish Community Center.*

*(They switch, and JOANNE leads.)*

**MARK**

*It's hard to do this backwards.*

**JOANNE**

*You should try it in heels!*

She cheated

**MARK**

She cheated

**JOANNE**

Maureen cheated

**MARK**

Fuckin' cheated

**JOANNE**

I'm defeated

I should give up right now

**MARK**

Gotta look on the bright side

With all of your might

**JOANNE**

I'd fall for her still anyhow

**BOTH**

When you're dancing her dance

You don't stand a chance

Her grip of romance

Make you fall

**MARK**

So you think, "Might as well"

**JOANNE**

"Dance a tango to hell"

**BOTH**

"At least I'll have tangoed at all"

The Tango Maureen

Gotta dance till your diva is through

You pretend to believe her

Cause in the end -- you can't leave her

But the end it will come

Still you have to play dumb

Till you're glum and you bum

And turn blue

**MARK**

Why do we love when she's mean?

**JOANNE**

And she can be so obscene

**MARK**

Try the mike

**JOANNE**

My Maureen *(reverb: een, een, een...)*

**MARK**

Patched

**JOANNE**

Thanks

**MARK**

You know -- I feel great now!

**JOANNE**

I feel lousy

*(The pay phone rings. MARK hands it to JOANNE.)*

*Honey, we're... Pookie?*

*You never call me Pookie.*

*Forget it, we're patched.*

*(She hangs up, looks at MARK.)*

**BOTH**

The Tango Maureen!

## LIFE SUPPORT

*(ANGEL and COLLINS attend an AIDS Life Support group. PAUL, the support leader, sits on the downstage railing above. GORDON, one of the members of the group, is standing downstage left, facing the audience. As the members enter, they*

*introduce themselves and form a semicircle. Note: The names of the support group members should change every night and should honor actual friends of the company who have died of AIDS.)*

**STEVE**

*Steve.*

**GORDON**

*Gordon.*

**ALI**

*Ali.*

**PAM**

*Pam.*

**SUE**

*Sue.*

**ANGEL**

*Hi, I'm Angel.*

**COLLINS**

*Tom. Collins.*

**PAUL**

*I'm Paul. Let's begin.*

**ALL**

There's only us

There's only this ...

*(MARK blusters in noisily.)*

**MARK**

Sorry...excuse me...oops

**PAUL**

And you are?

**MARK**

Oh -- I'm not --

I'm just here to --

I don't have --

I'm here with --

Um -- Mark

Mark -- *I'm Mark*

Well -- this is quite an operation

**PAUL**

Sit down Mark

We'll continue the affirmation

**ALL**

Forget regret, or life is yours to miss

**GORDON**

Excuse me Paul -- I'm having a problem with this

This credo -- My T-cells are low --

I regret that news, okay?

**PAUL**

All right

But Gordon - How do you feel today?

**GORDON**

What do you mean?

**PAUL**

How do you feel today?

**GORDON**

Okay

**PAUL**

Is that all?

**GORDON**

Best I've felt all year

**PAUL**

Then why choose fear?

**GORDON**

I'm a New Yorker!

Fear's my life!

Look - I find some of what you teach suspect

Because I'm used to relying on intellect

But I try to open up to what I don't know

**GORDON & ROGER** (*who sings from his loft*)

Because reason says I should have died

Three years ago

**ALL**

No other road

No other way

No day but today

## OUT TONIGHT (*Mimi's apartment*)

**MIMI**

What's the time?

Well it's gotta be close to midnight

My body's talking to me

It says, "Time for danger"

It says "I wanna commit a crime

Wanna be the cause of a fight

Wanna put on a tight skirt and flirt

With a stranger"

I've had a knack from way back

At breaking the rules once I learn the games

Get up - life's too quick

I know someplace sick

Where this chick'll dance in the flames

We don't need any money

I always get in for free

You can get in too

If you get in with me

Let's go out tonight

I have to go out tonight

You wanna play?

Let's run away

We won't be back before it's Christmas day

Take me out tonight (meow)

When I get a wink from the doorman

Do you know how lucky you'll be?

That you're on line with the feline of Avenue B

Let's go out tonight

I have to go out tonight

You wanna prow!

Be my night owl?

Well take my hand we're gonna howl

Out tonight

In the evening I've got to roam

Can't sleep in the city of neon and chrome

Feels too damn much like home

When the Spanish babies cry

So let's find a bar

So dark we forget who we are

And all the scars from the

Nevers and maybes die

Let's go out tonight

Have to go out tonight

You're sweet

Wanna hit the street?

Wanna wail at the moon like a cat in heat?

Just take me out tonight

*(MIMI makes her way to ROGER's door and ends the song in front of him.)*

Please take me out tonight

Don't forsake me -- out tonight

I'll let you make me -- out tonight

Tonight -- tonight -- tonight

## ANOTHER DAY

*(The loft. MIMI plants a huge kiss on ROGER, who recoils.)*

**ROGER**

Who do you think you are?

Barging in on me and my guitar

Little girl -- hey

The door is that way

You better go you know

The fire's out anyway

Take your powder -- take your candle

Your sweet whisper

I just can't handle

Well take your hair in the moonlight

Your brown eyes -- goodbye, goodnight

I should tell you I should tell you

I should tell you I should -- no!

Another time -- another place

Our temperature would climb

There'd be a long embrace

We'd do another dance

It'd be another play

Looking for romance?

Come back another day

Another day

**MIMI**

The heart may freeze or it can burn

The pain will ease if I can learn

There is no future

There is no past

I live this moment as my last

There's only us

There's only this

Forget regret

Or life is yours to miss

No other road

No other way

No day but today

**ROGER**

Excuse me if I'm off track

But if you're so wise

Then tell me -- why do you need smack?

Take your needle

Take your fancy prayer

And don't forget

Get the moonlight out of your hair

Long ago -- you might've lit up my heart

But the fire's dead -- ain't never ever gonna start

Another time -- another place

The words would only rhyme

We'd be in outer space

It'd be another song

We'd sing another way

You wanna prove me wrong?

Come back another day

Another day

**MIMI**

There's only yes

Only tonight

We must let go

To know what's right

No other course

No other way

No day but today

*(Lights slowly fade up on the Life Support group.)*

**MIMI & OTHERS**

I can't control

My destiny

I trust my soul

My only goal

Is just -- to be...

**ROGER**

Control your temper

She doesn't see

Who says that there's a soul?

Just let me be...

**ALL**

There's only now  
There's only here  
Give in to love  
Or live in fear  
No other path  
No other way  
No day but today...

**ROGER**

Who do you think you are?  
Barging in on me and my guitar  
Little girl, hey  
The door is that way  
The fire's out anyway

**ALL**

No day but today  
No day but today  
No day but today  
No day but today

**ROGER**

Take your powder, take your candle  
Take your brown eyes, your pretty smile, your silhouette  
Another time, another place  
Another rhyme, a warm embrace  
Another dance, another way  
Another chance, another day

**ALL**

No day but today  
*(MIMI and the Life Support group members exit. One person, STEVE, remains at stage right, above.)*

## WILL I?

*(Various locations)*

**STEVE**

Will I lose my dignity  
Will someone care  
Will I wake tomorrow  
From this nightmare?

**GROUP #1**

Will I lose my dignity  
Will someone care  
Will I wake tomorrow  
From this nightmare?

**GROUP #2**

Will I lose my dignity  
Will someone care  
Will I wake tomorrow  
From this nightmare?

**GROUP #3**

Will I lose my dignity  
Will someone care

Will I wake tomorrow  
From this nightmare?  
**GROUP #4**  
Will I lose my dignity  
Will someone care  
Will I wake tomorrow  
From this nightmare?

*(ROGER puts on his jacket and exits the loft.)*

## ON THE STREET

**THREE HOMELESS PEOPLE**

Christmas bells are ringing  
Christmas bells are ringing  
Christmas bells are ringing –  
Out of town  
Santa Fe

**SQUEEGEEMAN**

Honest living, man!  
*(He recoils as though he's almost been run over by a car.)*  
Feliz Navidad!  
*(Three POLICE OFFICERS, in full riot gear, enter and approach sleeping BLANKET PERSON. The FIRST OFFICER pokes her with a nightstick.)*

**HOMELESS PERSON**

Evening, officers  
*(Without answering, the FIRST OFFICER raises his nightstick again.)*

**MARK (pointing his camera)**

Smile for Ted Koppel, Officer Martin!  
*(The FIRST OFFICER lowers his stick.)*

**HOMELESS PERSON**

And a Merry Christmas to your family

**POLICE OFFICERS**

Right!  
*(The POLICE OFFICERS stride offstage. MARK continues to film BLANKET PERSON.)*

**BLANKET PERSON (To MARK)**

Who the fuck do you think you are?  
I don't need no goddamn help  
From some bleeding heart cameraman  
My life's not for you to  
Make a name for yourself on!

**ANGEL**

Easy, sugar, easy  
He was just trying to –

**BLANKET PERSON**

Just trying to use me to kill his guilt  
It's not that kind of movie, honey  
Let's go -- this lot is full of  
Motherfucking artists

Hey artist  
You gotta dollar?  
I thought not  
*(BLANKET PERSON crosses to downstage left with another HOMELESS PERSON.)*

## SANTA FE

*(The Street.)*

**ANGEL**

New York City –

**MARK**

Uh huh

**ANGEL**

Center of the universe

**COLLINS**

Sing it girl –

**ANGEL**

Times are shitty

But I'm pretty sure they can't get worse

**MARK**

I hear you

**ANGEL**

It's a comfort to know

When you're singing the hit-the-road blues

That anywhere else you could possibly go

After New York would be a pleasure cruise

**COLLINS**

Now you're talking

Well, I'm thwarted by a metaphysic puzzle

And I'm sick of grading papers -- that I know

And I'm shouting in my sleep, I need a muzzle

All this misery pays no salary, so

Let's open up a restaurant in Santa Fe

Oh sunny Santa Fe would be nice

Let's open up a restaurant in Santa Fe

And leave this to the roaches and mice

**COLLINS**

Oh—oh

**ALL**

Oh—

**ANGEL**

You teach?

**COLLINS**

I teach -- Computer Age Philosophy

But my students would rather watch TV

**ANGEL**

America

**ALL**

America!

**COLLINS**

You're a sensitive aesthete  
Brush the sauce onto the meat  
You could make the menu sparkle with rhyme  
You could drum a gentle drum  
I could seat guests as they come  
Chatting not about Heidegger, but wine!  
**COLLINS** (*with HOMELESS PEOPLE in the shadows*)  
Let's open up a restaurant in Santa Fe  
Our labors would reap financial gains  
**ALL**  
Gains, gains, gains  
**COLLINS**  
We'll open up a restaurant in Santa Fe  
And save from devastation our brains  
**HOMELESS**  
Save our brains  
**ALL**  
We'll pack up all our junk and fly so far away  
Devote ourselves to projects that sell  
We'll open up a restaurant in Santa Fe  
Forget this cold Bohemian hell  
Oh—  
**ALL**  
Oh—  
**COLLINS**  
Do you know the way to Santa Fe?  
You know, tumbleweeds...prairie dogs...  
Yeah

## I'LL COVER YOU

**MARK**  
*I'll meet you at the show.  
I'll try and convince Roger to go.  
(MARK exits)*  
**ANGEL**  
*Alone at last.*  
**COLLINS**  
*He'll be back -- I guarantee.*  
**ANGEL**  
*I've been hearing violins all night.*  
**COLLINS**  
*Anything to do with me? Are we a thing?*  
**ANGEL**  
Darling... we're everything!  
Live in my house  
I'll be your shelter  
Just pay me back  
With one thousand kisses  
Be my lover -- I'll cover you  
**COLLINS**

Open your door  
I'll be your tenant  
Don't got much baggage  
To lay at your feet  
But sweet kisses I've got to spare  
I'll be there -- I'll cover you  
**BOTH**  
I think they meant it  
When they said you can't buy love  
Now I know you can rent it  
A new lease you are, my love,  
On life -- be my life  
*(They do a short dance.)*  
**BOTH**  
Just slip me on  
I'll be your tenant  
Wherever -- whatever -- I'll be your coat  
**ANGEL**  
You'll be my king  
And I'll be your castle  
**COLLINS**  
No you'll be my queen  
And I'll be your moat  
**BOTH**  
I think they meant it  
When they said you can't buy love  
Now I know you can rent it  
A new lease you are, my love,  
On life -- all my life  
I've longed to discover  
Something as true as this is  
**COLLINS**  
So with a thousand sweet kisses  
I'll cover you  
**ANGEL**  
If you're cold  
And you're lonely  
**COLLINS**  
With a thousand sweet kisses  
I'll cover you  
**ANGEL**  
You've got one nickel only  
**COLLINS**  
When you're worn out  
and tired  
**ANGEL**  
With a thousand sweet kisses  
I'll cover you  
**COLLINS**  
When your heart has expired  
**ANGEL**  
With a thousand sweet kisses

I'll cover you  
**BOTH**  
Oh lover I'll cover you  
Oh lover I'll cover you

## WE'RE OKAY

**JOANNE**  
*(on cellular phone)*  
Steve -- Joanne  
The Murget case?  
A dismissal!  
Good work counselor  
*(The pay phone rings. JOANNE answers it and begins a conversation with MAUREEN simultaneously juggling two other calls on her cellular phone.)*  
We're okay  
Honeybear -- wait!  
I'm on the other phone  
Yes, I have the cowbell  
We're okay  
*(into cellular phone)*  
So tell them we'll sue  
But a settlement will do  
Sexual harassment -- and civil rights too  
Steve, you're great  
*(into pay phone)*  
No you cut the paper plate  
Didja cheat on Mark a lot would you say?  
We're okay  
Honey hold on...  
*(into cellular phone)*  
Steve, hold on...  
*(JOANNE presses the call-waiting button on the cellular phone)*  
Hello?  
Dad -- yes  
I beeped you  
Maureen is coming to Mother's hearing  
We're okay  
*(into pay phone)*  
Honeybear - what?  
Newt's lesbian sister  
I'll tell them  
*(into cellular phone)*  
You heard?  
*(into pay phone)*  
They heard  
We're okay  
*(into cellular phone)*  
And to you dad

*(JOANNE presses the call-waiting as she speaks into the pay phone)*

Yes -- Jill is there?

*(into cellular phone)*

Steve gotta --

*(into pay phone)*

Jill with the short black hair?

The Calvin Klein model?

*(into cellular phone)*

Steve, gotta go!

*(into pay phone)*

The model who lives in Penthouse A?

We're

We're okay

I'm on my way

## CHRISTMAS BELLS *(Various locations, St.*

*Marks Place)*

### FIVE HOMELESS PEOPLE

Christmas bells are ringing

Christmas bells are ringing

Christmas bells are singing

On TV - at Saks

### SQUEEGEEMAN

Honest living, honest living

Honest living, honest living

Honest living, honest living

### ALL FIVE HOMELESS

Can't you spare a dime or two

Here but for the grace of God go you

You'll be merry

I'll be merry

Tho merry ain't in my vocabulary

No sleighbells

No Santa Claus

No yule log

No tinsel

No holly

No hearth

No

### SOLOIST

Rudolph the red nosed reindeer

### ALL FIVE

Rudolph the red nosed reindeer

No room at the Holiday Inn -- oh no

*(A few flakes of snow begin to descend.)*

And it's beginning to snow

*(The stage suddenly explodes with life! The scene is St. Mark's Place on Christmas Eve -- an open-air bazaar of color, noise, movement.)*

### VENDORS

Hats, bats, shoes, booze

Mountain bikes, potpourri

Leather bags, girlie mags

Forty-fives, AZT

### VENDOR #1

No one's buying

Feel like crying

### ALL

No room at the Holiday Inn, oh no

And it's beginning to snow

*(Lights up on one woman, who is showing off a collection of stolen coats to COLLINS and ANGEL.)*

### VENDOR #2

How about a fur --

In perfect shape

Owned by an MBA from uptown

I got a tweed

Broken in by a greedy

Broker who went broke

And then broke down

### COLLINS

You don't have to do this

### ANGEL

Hush your mouth, it's Christmas

### COLLINS

I do not deserve you, Angel

### COLLINS

Give—give

All you do

Is give

Give me some way to show

How much you've touched me so

### ANGEL

Wait--what's on the floor?

Let's see some more...

No--no--no...

Kiss me -- it's beginning to snow

*(Lights focus on MARK and ROGER on right above.)*

### MARK

... She said, "Would you light my candle"

And she put on a pout

And she wanted you

To take her out tonight?

### ROGER

Right

### MARK

She got you out!

### ROGER

She was more than okay

But I pushed her away

It was bad -- I got mad

And I had to get her out of my sight

### MARK

Wait, wait, wait -- you said she was sweet

### ROGER

Let's go eat -- I'll just get fat

It's the one vice left when you're dead meat

*(MIMI has entered looking furtively for THE MAN.)*

There -- that's her

### MARK

Maureen?

### ROGER

Mimi!

### MARK

Whoa!

### ROGER

I should go.

### BOTH

Hey -- it's beginning to snow

*(The POLICE OFFICERS, in riot gear, enter above.)*

### POLICE OFFICERS

I'm dreaming of a white, right Christmas

*(POLICE OFFICERS exit.)*

### MIMI & JUNKIES

Follow the man -- follow the man

With his pockets full of the jam

Follow the man -- follow the man

Help me out, daddy

If you can

Got any D man?

### THE MAN

I'm cool

### MIMI & JUNKIES

Got any C man?

### THE MAN

I'm cool

### MIMI & JUNKIES

Got any X?

Any smack?

Any horse?

Any jugie boogie boy?

Any blow?

*(ROGER pulls MIMI aside.)*

### ROGER

Hey

### MIMI

Hey

### ROGER

I just want to say

I'm sorry for the way --

### MIMI

Forget it

### ROGER

I blew up  
 Can I make it up to you?  
**MIMI**  
 How?  
**ROGER**  
 Dinner party?  
**MIMI**  
 That'll do  
**THE MAN**  
 Hey lover boy -- cutie pie  
 You steal my client -- you die  
**ROGER**  
 You didn't miss me -- you won't miss her  
 You'll never lack for customers  
**JUNKIES**  
 I'm willin'  
 I'm illin'  
 I gotta get my sickness off  
 Gotta run, gotta ride  
 Gotta gun, gotta hide -- gotta go  
**THE MAN**  
 And it's beginning to snow  
**BENNY**  
*(entering, talking on his cellular phone)*  
 Wish me luck, Alison  
 The protest is on  
**COAT VENDOR**  
 L.L Bean  
 Geoffrey Beene  
 Burburrry zip out  
 Lining  
**JUNKIES**  
 Got any C man?  
 Got any D man?  
 Got any B man?  
 Got any crack?  
 Got any X?  
**SQUEEGEEMAN**  
 Honest living --  
**ROGER**  
 Mark, this is Mimi --  
**MARK & MIMI**  
 Hi  
**ROGER**  
 She'll be dining -- with us  
**COAT VENDOR**  
 Here's a new arrival  
**THE MAN**  
 That is an ounce  
**VENDORS**  
 Hats, dats, bats  
**COLLINS**

That's my coat!  
**COAT VENDOR**  
 We give discounts  
**MARK**  
 I think we've met  
**ANGEL**  
 Let's get a better one  
**COLLINS**  
 It's a sham  
**MIMI**  
 That's what he said  
**THE MAN**  
 I said it's a gram!  
**COLLINS**  
 But she's a thief!  
**ANGEL**  
 But she brought us together  
**BENNY**  
 Which investor is coming??  
**COLLINS**  
 I'll take the leather  
**BENNY**  
 Your father? -- damn!  
*(The following is sung simultaneously.)*  
**HOMELESS & VENDORS**  
 Christmas bells are swinging  
 Christmas bells are ringing  
 Christmas bells are singing  
 In my dreams -- next year  
 Once you donate you can go  
 Celebrate in Tuckahoe  
 You'll feel cheery  
 I'll feel cheery  
 Tho' I don't really know that theory  
 No bathrobe  
 No steuben glass  
 No cappucino makers  
 No pearls, no diamonds  
 No 'Chestnuts roasting on an open fire'  
 Chestnuts roasting on an open fire  
 No room at the Holiday Inn, oh no --  
**POLICE OFFICERS**  
 I'm dreaming of a white Christmas  
 Just like the ones I used to know  
 Jingle bells -- prison cells  
 Fa la la la -- fa la la la  
 You have the right to remain  
 Silent night holy night  
 Fall on your knees oh night divine  
 You'll do some time  
 Fa la la la la  
 Fa la la la la

**JUNKIES**  
 Got any C man?  
 Got any D man?  
 Got any B man?  
 Got any X? -- Crack?  
 I'm willin' -- I'm illin'  
 Gotta get my sickness off  
 C-D help me  
 Follow the man -- follow the man  
 Follow the man  
 Jugie boogie -- jugie boogie  
 Follow the man -- follow the man  
 Any crack any X any jugie boogie boy  
 Any blow any X any jugie boogie boy  
 Got any D man, got any C man  
 Got any crack -- any X -- any jugie boogie?  
**COAT VENDOR**  
 Twenty-five  
**ANGEL**  
 Fifteen  
**COAT VENDOR**  
 Twenty-five  
**ANGEL**  
 Fifteen  
**COAT VENDOR**  
 No way  
 Twenty-four  
**ANGEL**  
 Fifteen  
**COAT VENDOR**  
 Twenty-four  
**ANGEL**  
 Fifteen  
**COAT VENDOR**  
 Not today  
 Twenty-three  
**ANGEL**  
 Fifteen  
**COAT VENDOR**  
 Twenty-three  
**ANGEL**  
 Fifteen  
 It's old  
**COAT VENDOR**  
 Twenty-two  
**ANGEL**  
 Fifteen  
**COAT VENDOR**  
 Twenty-one  
**ANGEL**  
 Fifteen  
**COAT VENDOR**

Seventeen  
**ANGEL**  
Fifteen  
**COAT VENDOR**  
Fifteen  
**ANGEL & COAT VENDOR**  
Sold!

**MARK & ROGER**  
Let's  
Go to  
The lot -- Maureen's performing

**MIMI**  
Who's Maureen?  
**ROGER**

His ex  
**MARK**  
But I am over her  
**ROGER**  
Let's not hold hands yet

**MIMI**  
Is that a warning?

**ALL THREE**  
He/You/I

Just  
Need(s)  
To take it slow  
I should tell you I should tell you  
I should tell you I should tell you  
I should tell you I ...

**ALL**  
And it's beginning to  
And it's beginning to  
And it's beginning to –  
*(Lights blackout and a blinding headlight comes through the door.  
As it reaches downstage, the lights come up and reveal  
MAUREEN.)*

**MAUREEN**  
*Joanne, which way to the stage?*

**ALL**  
Snow!!!  
*(Blackout.)*

## OVER THE MOON *(The Lot)*

**MARK**  
*Maureen's performance.  
(MAUREEN stands in front of a microphone.)*

**MAUREEN**  
Last night I had a dream. I found myself in a desert called  
Cyberland.  
It was hot. My canteen had sprung a leak and I was thirsty.

Out of the abyss walked a cow -- Elsie.  
I asked if she had anything to drink.  
She said, "I'm forbidden to produce milk.  
In Cyberland, we only drink Diet Coke."  
*(reverb: Coke, Coke, Coke)*  
She said, "Only thing to do is jump over the moon"  
"They've closed everything real down...like barns, troughs,  
performance spaces...  
And replaced it all with lies and rules and virtual life.  
*(reverb: Life, Life, Life)*  
But there is a way out..."

**BACKUPS**  
Leap of faith, leap of faith  
Leap of faith, leap of faith

**MAUREEN**  
Only thing to do is jump over the moon  
I gotta get out of here! It's like I'm being tied  
to the hood of a yellow rental truck, being packed  
in with fertilizer and fuel oil, pushed over a cliff  
by a suicidal Mickey Mouse! -- I've gotta find a way

**BACKUPS**  
Leap of faith, etc.

**MAUREEN**  
To jump over the moon  
Only thing to do is jump over the moon

**MAUREEN**  
Then a little bulldog entered. His name (we have learned) was  
Benny.  
And although he once had principles,  
he abandoned them to live as a lap dog to a wealthy daughter of  
the revolution.  
"That's bull," he said.  
"Ever since the cat took up the fiddle, that cow's been jumpy.  
And the dish and the spoon were evicted from the table -- and  
eloped...  
She's had trouble with that milk and the moon ever since.  
Maybe it's a female thing.  
'Cause who'd want to leave Cyberland anyway?...  
Walls ain't so bad.

The dish and the spoon for instance.  
They were down on their luck - knocked on my doghouse door.  
I said, "Not in my backyard, utensils! Go back to China!"  
"The only way out is up," Elsie whispered to me.  
"A leap of faith. Still thirsty?" she asked.  
Parched. "Have some milk."  
I lowered myself beneath her and held my mouth to her swollen  
udder  
And sucked the sweetest milk I'd ever tasted."  
*(MAUREEN makes a slurping, sucking sound.)*  
"Climb on board," she said.  
And as a harvest moon rose over Cyberland,  
We reared back and sprang into a gallop.

Leaping out of orbit!  
I awoke singing  
**BACKUPS**  
Leap of faith, etc.

**MAUREEN**  
Only thing to do  
Only thing to do is jump  
Only thing to do is jump over the moon  
Only thing to do is jump over the moon  
Over the moon -- over the  
Moouoooooo  
Moouoooooo  
Moouoooooo  
Moouoooooo  
Moo with me.

*(MAUREEN encourages the audience to moo with her. She says,  
"C'mon, sir, moo with me," etc. The audience responds. When the  
"moos" reach a crescendo, she cuts them off with a big sweep of  
her arms.)*  
*Thank you.  
(Blackout.)*

## LA VIE BOHEME *(Life Cafe)*

*(Downstage right, the PRINCIPALS have lined up and are waiting  
to be seated. A large table is situated down center. Down and to  
the right, BENNY and MR. GREY are seated at a smaller table.  
The RESTAURANT MAN tries to shoo our friends out.)*

**RESTAURANT MAN**  
No please no  
Not tonight please no  
Mister -- can't you go –  
Not tonight -- can't have a scene

**ROGER**  
What?

**RESTAURANT MAN**  
Go, please go –  
You -- Hello, sir –

I said no  
Important customer

**MARK**  
What am I -- just a blur?

**RESTAURANT MAN**  
You sit all night -- you never buy!

**MARK**  
That's a lie -- that's a lie  
I had a tea the other day  
**RESTAURANT MAN**  
You couldn't pay

**MARK**  
Oh yeah

**COLLINS**

Benjamin Coffin the third -- here?

**RESTAURANT MAN**

Oh no!

**ALL**

Wine and beer!

**MAUREEN**

The enemy of Avenue A

We'll stay

*(They sit.)*

**RESTAURANT MAN**

Oy vey!

**COLLINS**

What brings the mogul in his own mind to the Life Cafe?

**BENNY**

I would like to propose a toast

To Maureen's noble try

It went well

**MAUREEN**

Go to hell

**BENNY**

Was the yuppie scum stomped

Not counting the homeless

How many tickets weren't comped

**ROGER**

Why did Muffy --

**BENNY**

Alison

**ROGER**

Miss the show?

**BENNY**

There was a death in the family

If you must know

**ANGEL**

Who died?

**BENNY**

Our Akita

**BENNY, MARK, ANGEL, COLLINS**

Evita

**BENNY**

Mimi -- I'm surprised

A bright and charming girl like you

Hangs out with these slackers

*(Who don't adhere to deals)*

They make fun -- yet I'm the one

Attempting to do some good

Or do you really want a neighborhood

Where people piss on your stoop every night?

Bohemia, Bohemia's

A fallacy in your head

This is Calcutta

Bohemia is dead

*(The BOHEMIANS immediately begin to enact a mock funeral, with MARK delivering the "eulogy.")*

**MARK**

Dearly beloved we gather here to say our goodbyes

**COLLINS & ROGER**

Dies irae -- dies illa

Kyrie eleison

Yitgadal v' yitkadash, etc.

**MARK**

Here she lies

No one knew her worth

The late great daughter of mother earth

On this night when we celebrate the birth

In that little town of Bethlehem

We raise our glass -- you bet your ass to --

*(MAUREEN flashes hers.)*

La vie Boheme

**ALL**

La vie Boheme

La vie Boheme

La vie Boheme

La vie Boheme

**MARK**

To days of inspiration

Playing hookie, making something out of nothing

The need to express --

To communicate,

To going against the grain,

Going insane

Going mad

To loving tension, no pension

To more than one dimension,

To starving for attention,

Hating convention, hating pretension

Not to mention of course,

Hating dear old mom and dad

To riding your bike,

Midday past the three piece suits

To fruits -- to no absolutes --

To Absolut -- to choice --

To the Village Voice --

To any passing fad

To being an us for once

Instead of a them

**ALL**

La vie Boheme

La vie Boheme

*(JOANNE enters.)*

**MAUREEN**

Is the equipment in a pyramid?

**JOANNE**

It is, Maureen

**MAUREEN**

The mixer doesn't have a case

Don't give me that face

*(MAUREEN smacks JOANNE's ass as she exits. MR. GREY reacts.)*

**MR. GREY**

Ahemmm!

**MAUREEN**

Hey Mister -- she's my sister

**RESTAURANT MAN**

So that's five miso soup, four seaweed salad

Three soy burger dinner, two tofu dog platter

And one pasta with meatless balls

**A BOY**

Ugh

**COLLINS**

It tastes the same

**MIMI**

If you close your eyes

**RESTAURANT MAN**

And thirteen orders of fries

Is that it here?

**ALL**

Wine and beer!

**MIMI & ANGEL**

To hand-crafted beers made in local breweries

To yoga, to yogurt, to rice and beans and cheese

To leather, to dildos, to curry vindaloo

To huevos rancheros and Maya Angelou

**MAUREEN & COLLINS**

Emotion, devotion, to causing a commotion

Creation, vacation

**MARK**

Mucho masturbation

**MAUREEN & COLLINS**

Compassion, to fashion, to passion when it's new

**COLLINS**

To Sontag

**ANGEL**

To Sondheim

**FOUR PEOPLE**

To anything taboo

**COLLINS & ROGER**

Ginsberg, Dylan, Cunningham and Cage

**COLLINS**

Lenny Bruce

**ROGER**

Langston Hughes

**MAUREEN**

To the stage

**PERSON #1**

To Uta

**PERSON #2**

To Buddha

**PERSON #3**

Pablo Neruda, too

**MARK & MIMI**

Why Dorothy and Toto went over the rainbow

To blow off Auntie Em

**ALL**

La vie Boheme

*(JOANNE returns.)*

**MAUREEN**

And wipe the speakers off before you pack

**JOANNE**

Yes, Maureen

**MAUREEN**

Well -- hurry back

*(MAUREEN and JOANNE kiss.)*

**MR. GREY**

Sisters?

**MAUREEN**

We're close

*(ANGEL jumps on top of COLLINS, who's on the table. They kiss.)*

**ANGEL, COLLINS, MAUREEN, MARK, MR. GREY**

Brothers!

**MARK, ANGEL, MIMI & THREE OTHERS**

Bisexuals, trisexuals, homo sapiens,

Carcinogens, hallucinogens, men, Pee Wee Herman

German wine, turpentine, Gertrude Stein

Antonioni, Bertolucci, Kurosawa

Carmina Burana

**ALL**

To apathy, to entropy, to empathy, ecstasy

Vaclav Havel -- The Sex Pistols, 8BC,

To no shame -- never playing the Fame Game

**COLLINS**

To marijuana

**ALL**

To sodomy,

It's between God and me

To S & M

*(MR. GREY walks out.)*

**BENNY**

Waiter...Waiter...Waiter

**ALL**

La vie Boheme

**COLLINS**

*In honor of the death of Bohemia an impromptu salon will commence immediately following dinner...*

*Mimi Marquez, clad only in bubble wrap, will perform her famous lawn chair-handcuff dance to the sounds of iced tea being stirred.*

**ROGER**

*Mark Cohen will preview his new documentary about his inability to hold an erection on high holy days.*

*(ROGER picks up an electric guitar and starts to tune it.)*

**MARK**

*Maureen Johnson, back from her spectacular one-night engagement at the eleventh street lot,*

*Will sing Native American tribal chants backwards through her vocoder,*

*While accompanying herself on the electric cello --*

*Which she has never studied.*

*(At this point, JOANNE has entered and seen MAUREEN playfully kiss MARK. JOANNE exits. BENNY pulls MIMI aside.)*

**BENNY**

Your new boyfriend doesn't know about us?

**MIMI**

There's nothing to know

**BENNY**

Don't you think that we should discuss --

**MIMI**

It was three months ago

**BENNY**

He doesn't act like he's with you

**MIMI**

We're taking it slow

**BENNY**

Where is he now?

**MIMI**

He's right -- hmm

**BENNY**

Uh huh

**MIMI**

Where'd he go?

**MARK**

*Roger will attempt to write a bittersweet, evocative song.*

*(ROGER picks up a guitar and plays Musetta's Theme.)*

*That doesn't remind us of "Musetta's Waltz"*

**COLLINS**

*Angel Dumott Schunard will now model the latest fall fashions from Paris while accompanying herself on the 10 gallon plastic pickle tub.*

**ANGEL**

*And Collins will recount his exploits as an anarchist -- including the successful reprogramming of the M.I.T. virtual reality equipment*

*To self-destruct, as it broadcast the words:*

**ALL**

"Actual reality -- Act Up -- Fight AIDS"

**BENNY**

Check!

*(BENNY exits. Lights on MIMI and ROGER.)*

**MIMI**

Excuse me -- did I do something wrong?

I get invited -- then ignored -- all night long

**ROGER**

I've been trying -- I'm not lying

No one's perfect. I've got baggage

**MIMI**

Life's too short, babe, time is flying

I'm looking for baggage that goes with mine

**ROGER**

I should tell you --

**MIMI**

I've got baggage too

**ROGER**

I should tell you

**BOTH**

Baggage -- wine --

**OTHERS**

And beer!

*(Several beepers sound. Each turns off his or her beeper.)*

**MIMI**

AZT break

*(MIMI, ROGER, ANGEL, and COLLINS take pills.)*

**ROGER**

You?

**MIMI**

Me. You?

**ROGER**

Mimi

*(They hold hands and stare into each other's eyes lovingly. The rest of the company freezes.)*

## I SHOULD TELL YOU

**ROGER**

I should tell you I'm disaster

I forget how to begin it

**MIMI**

Let's just make this part go faster

I have yet -- to be in it

I should tell you

**ROGER**

I should tell you

**MIMI**

I should tell you

**ROGER**

I should tell you

**MIMI**

I should tell I blew the candle out

Just to get back in

**ROGER**

I'd forgotten how to smile

Until your candle burned my skin

**MIMI**

I should tell you

**ROGER**

I should tell you

**MIMI**

I should tell you

**BOTH**

I should tell

Well, here we go

Now we –

**MIMI**

Oh no

**ROGER**

I know -- this something is

Here goes –

**MIMI**

Here goes

**ROGER**

Guess so

It's starting to

Who knows –

**MIMI**

Who knows

**BOTH**

Who knows where

Who goes there

Who knows

Here goes

Trusting desire -- starting to learn

Walking through fire without a burn

Clinging -- a shoulder, a leap begins

Stinging and older, asleep on pins

So here we go

Now we –

**ROGER**

Oh no

**MIMI**

I know

**ROGER**

Oh no

**BOTH**

Who knows where -- who goes there

Here goes -- here goes

Here goes -- here goes

Here goes -- here goes

## LA VIE BOHEME B

*(ROGER and MIMI exit. JOANNE reenters, obviously steamed.)*

**MAUREEN**

Are we packed?

**JOANNE**

Yes and by next week

I want you to be

**MAUREEN**

Pookie?

**JOANNE**

And you should see

They've padlocked your building

And they're rioting on Avenue B

Benny called the cops

**MAUREEN**

That fuck!

**JOANNE**

They don't know what they're doing

The cops are sweeping the lot

But no one's leaving

They're just sitting there, mooing!

**ALL**

Yea!!!

*(Pandemonium erupts in the restaurant.)*

**ALL**

To dance!

**A GIRL**

No way to make a living, masochism, pain, perfection

Muscle spasms, chiropractors, short careers, eating disorders!

**ALL**

Film!

**MARK**

Adventure, tedium, no family, boring locations,

Dark rooms, perfect faces, egos, money, Hollywood and sleaze!

**ALL**

Music!

**ANGEL**

Food of love, emotion, mathematics, isolation,

Rhythm, feeling, power, harmony, and heavy competition!

**ALL**

Anarchy!

**COLLINS & MAUREEN**

Revolution, justice, screaming for solutions,

Forcing changes, risk, and danger

Making noise and making pleas!

**ALL**

To faggots, lezzies, dykes, cross dressers too

**MAUREEN**

To me

**MARK**

To me

**COLLINS & ANGEL**

To me

**ALL**

To you, and you and you, you and you

To people living with, living with, living with

Not dying from disease

Let he among us without sin

Be the first to condemn

La vie Boheme

La vie Boheme

La vie Boheme

**MARK**

Anyone out of the mainstream

Is anyone in the mainstream?

Anyone alive--with a sex drive

**OTHERS**

La vie boheme

La vie boheme

La vie boheme

**MARK**

Tear down the wall

Aren't we all?

The opposite of war isn't peace...

It's creation!

**ALL**

La vie Boheme

**MARK**

*The riot continues. The Christmas tree goes up in flames. The snow dances. Oblivious, Mimi and Roger share a small, lovely kiss.*

**ALL**

Viva la vie Boheme!

## Act II

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

Italic type indicates spoken lines.

*(The COMPANY enters from all directions and forms a line across the apron of the stage.)*

## SEASONS OF LOVE

### COMPANY

Five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes  
Five hundred twenty-five thousand moments so dear  
Five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes  
How do you measure -- measure a year?  
In daylights -- In sunsets  
In midnights -- In cups of coffee  
In inches -- In miles  
In laughter -- In strife  
In -- Five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes  
How do you measure a year in the life?  
How about love?  
How about love?  
How about love?  
Measure in love  
Seasons of love  
Seasons of love

### SOLOIST #1

Five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes  
Five hundred twenty-five thousand journeys to plan  
Five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes

How do you measure the life  
Of a woman or a man?

### SOLOIST #2

In truths that she learned  
Or in times that he cried  
In bridges he burned  
Or the way that she died

### ALL

It's time now - to sing out  
Tho' the story never ends  
Let's celebrate  
Remember a year in the life of friends  
Remember the love  
Remember the love  
Remember the love  
Measure in love

### SOLOIST #1

Measure, measure your life in love  
Seasons of love  
Seasons of love

## HAPPY NEW YEAR

*(New Year's Eve. The scene opens on the street outside the apartment. One table, lying on its end, serves as the door.)*

### MARK *(carrying mock door)*

*Pan to the padlocked door. New Year's Rocking Eve. The breaking-back-into-the-building party...*

*(ROGER and MIMI try in vain to pry a padlock from the door. They appear to be happy.)*

### MIMI

How long 'til next year?

### ROGER

Three and half minutes...

### MIMI

I'm giving up my vices  
I'm going back -- back to school  
Eviction or not  
This week's been so hot  
That long as I've got you  
I know I'll be cool  
I couldn't crack the love code, dear  
'Til you made the lock on my heart explode  
It's gonna be a happy new year  
A happy new year  
*(MARK enters the scene.)*

### MARK

Coast is clear  
You're supposed to be working  
That's for midnight  
Where are they?

There isn't much time

### MIMI

Maybe they're dressing  
I mean what does one wear that's apropos  
For a party -- that's also a crime  
*(MAUREEN enters wearing a skintight "cat burgular" suit and carrying a bag of potato chips.)*

### MAUREEN

Chips, anyone?

### MARK

You can take the girl out of Hicksville  
But you can't take the Hicksville out of the girl

### MAUREEN

My riot got you on TV  
I deserve a royalty

### MIMI

Be nice you two  
Or no god awful champagne  
*(MAUREEN takes out a cellular phone and dials.)*

### MAUREEN

Don't mind if I do  
No luck?

### ROGER

Bolted plywood, padlocked with a chain  
A total dead end

### MAUREEN

Just like my ex-girlfriend  
*(on cellular phone)*  
Honey...?

I know you're there ...

Please pick up the phone

Are you okay?

It's not funny

It's not fair

How can I atone?

Are you okay?

I lose control

But I can learn to behave

Give me one more chance

Let me be your slave

I'll kiss your Doc Martens

Let me kiss your Doc Martens

Your every wish I will obey

*(JOANNE enters)*

### JOANNE

That might be okay

Down girl

Heel...stay

I did a bit of research

With my friends at legal aid

Technically, you're squatters

There's hope

But just in case  
*(JOANNE whips out...)*  
**MARK & JOANNE**  
 Rope!  
**MARK** *(pointing off)*  
 We can hoist a line –  
**JOANNE**  
 To the fire escape –  
**MARK**  
 And tie off at...  
**MARK & JOANNE**  
 That bench!  
**MAUREEN**  
 I can't take them as chums  
**JOANNE**  
 Start hoisting...wench  
*(All three cross upstage and attempt to throw up the length of rope over a plank. ROGER and MIMI are laughing and holding each other.)*  
**ROGER**  
 I think I should be laughing  
 Yet I forget  
 Forget how to begin  
 I'm feeling something inside  
 And yet I still can't decide  
 If I should hide  
 Or make a wide open grin  
 Last week I wanted just to disappear  
 My life was dust  
 But now it just may be a happy new year  
 A happy new year  
*(COLLINS enters with ANGEL. COLLINS, dressed in black and wearing sunglasses, carries a bottle of champagne. ANGEL wears a plastic dress and blonde wig: a small blowtorch is slung around his shoulder.)*  
**COLLINS**  
 Bond -- James Bond  
**ANGEL**  
 And Pussy Galore -- in person  
**MIMI**  
 Pussy -- you came prepared  
**ANGEL**  
 I was a boy scout once  
 And a brownie  
 'Til some brat got scared  
**COLLINS** *(to MIMI)*  
 Aha! Moneypenny -- my martini!  
**MIMI**  
 Will bad champagne do?  
**ROGER**  
 That's shaken -- not stirred  
**COLLINS**

Pussy -- the bolts  
*(COLLINS takes a swig of champagne as ANGEL grabs the blowtorch.)*  
**ANGEL**  
 Just say the word!  
*(ANGEL turns on the blowtorch.)*  
**MIMI**  
 Two minutes left to execute our plan  
**COLLINS**  
 Where's everyone else?  
**ROGER**  
 Playing Spiderman  
**MARK**  
 Ironic close up: tight  
 On the phone machine's red light  
 Once the Boho boys are gone  
 The power mysteriously comes on

### VOICE MAIL #3

*(Lights up on MRS. COHEN, who's standing on a chair and holding up a phone.)*  
**MRS. COHEN**  
 Mark, it's the wicked witch of the west  
 Your mother  
 Happy new year from Scarsdale  
 We're all impressed that the riot footage  
 Made the nightly news  
 Even your father says Mazeltov  
 Honey -- call him  
 Love, Mom  
*(MRS. COHEN, stepping off the chair, passes the phone to ALEXI DARLING.)*  
**ALEXI DARLING** *(on the chair)*  
 Mark Cohen  
 Alexi Darling from Buzzline  
**MARK**  
*Oh, that show's so sleazy.*  
**ALEXI DARLING**  
 Your footage on the riots: A-one  
 Feature segment -- network -- dealtime  
 I'm sending you a contract  
 Ker-ching ker-ching  
 Marky give us a call 970-4301  
 Or at home try 863-6754  
 Or -- my cell phone at 919-763-0090  
 Or -- you can e-mail me  
 At Darling Alexi Newscom dot net  
 Or -- you can page me at –  
*(Beeep!)*

### HAPPY NEW YEAR B

**MAUREEN**  
 I think we need an agent!  
**MARK**  
 We?  
**JOANNE**  
 That's selling out  
**MARK**  
 But it's nice to dream  
**MAUREEN**  
 Yeah -- it's network TV  
 And it's all thanks to me  
**MARK**  
 Somehow I think I smell  
 The whiff of a scheme  
**JOANNE**  
 Me too  
**MAUREEN**  
 We can plan another protest  
**JOANNE**  
 We?!  
**MAUREEN**  
 This time you can shoot from the start... *(to MARK)*  
 You'll direct *(to JOANNE)*  
 Starring me!  
*(Lights shift back to downstairs.)*  
**ALL**  
 5, 4, 3... Open sesame!!  
*(The door falls away, revealing MARK, JOANNE, and MAUREEN.)*  
 Happy new year  
 Happy new year  
 Happy new...  
*(BENNY enters.)*  
**BENNY**  
 I see that you've beaten me to the punch  
**ROGER**  
 How did you know we'd be here?  
**BENNY**  
 I had a hunch  
**MARK**  
 You're not mad?  
**BENNY**  
 I'm here to end this war  
 It's a shame you went and destroyed the door  
**MIMI**  
 Why all the sudden the big about face  
**BENNY**  
 The credit is yours  
 You made a good case  
**ROGER**

What case?

**BENNY**

Mimi came to see me

And she had much to say

**MIMI**

That's not how you put it at all yesterday

**BENNY**

I couldn't stop thinking about the whole mess

Mark -- you want to get this on film

*(MARK picks up his camera.)*

**MARK**

I guess

**BENNY** *(formally)*

I regret the unlucky circumstances

Of the past seven days

**ROGER**

Circumstance? You padlocked our door

**BENNY**

And it's with great pleasure

On behalf of CyberArts

That I hand you this key

*(BENNY hands him the key.)*

**ANGEL**

Golf claps

*(They oblige.)*

**MARK**

I have no juice in my battery

**BENNY**

Reshoot

**ROGER**

I see -- this is a photo opportunity

**MAUREEN**

The benevolent God

Ushers the poor artists back to their flat

Were you planning on taking down the barbed wire

From the lot, too?

**ROGER**

Anything but that!

**BENNY**

Clearing the lot was a safety concern

We break ground this month

But you can return

**MAUREEN**

That's why you're here with people you hate

Instead of with Muffy at Muffy's estate

**BENNY**

I'd honestly rather be with you tonight than in Westport --

**ROGER**

Spare us old sport, the soundbite

**BENNY**

Mimi -- since your was are so seductive

**MIMI**

You came on to me!

**BENNY**

Persuade him not to be so counterproductive

**ROGER**

Liar!

**BENNY**

Why not tell them what you wore to my place?

**MIMI**

I was on my way to work

**BENNY**

Black leather and lace!

My desk was a mess

I think I'm still sore

**MIMI**

Cause I kicked him and told him I wasn't his whore!

**BENNY**

Does your boyfriend know

Who your last boyfriend was?

**ROGER**

I'm not her boyfriend

I don't care what she does

**ANGEL**

People! Is this any way to start a new year?

Have compassion

Benny just lost his cat

**BENNY**

My dog -- but I appreciate that

**ANGEL**

My cat had a fall

And I went through hell

**BENNY**

It's like losing a --

How did you know that she fell?

**COLLINS** *(Hands BENNY a glass of champagne)*

Champagne?

**BENNY**

Don't mind if I do

To dogs!

**ALL BUT BENNY**

No, Benny -- to you!

**ANGEL**

Let's make a resolution

**MIMI**

I'll drink to that

**COLLINS**

Let's always stay friends

**JOANNE**

Tho' we may have our disputes

**MAUREEN**

This family tree's got deep roots

**MARK**

Friendship is thicker than blood

**ROGER**

That depends

**MIMI**

Depends on trust

**ROGER**

Depends on true devotion

**JOANNE**

Depends on love

**MARK** *(to ROGER)*

Depends on not denying emotion

**ROGER**

Perhaps

**ALL**

It's gonna be a happy new year

**ROGER**

I guess

**ALL**

It's gonna be a happy new year

**ROGER**

You're right

*(ANGEL brings ROGER and MIMI together. ANGEL and others move away from MIMI and ROGER.)*

**ANGEL**

It's gonna be a happy new year

**ROGER & MIMI**

I'm sorry

**ROGER**

Coming?

**MIMI**

In a minute -- I'm fine -- go

*(ROGER kisses MIMI and exits. THE MAN appears.)*

**THE MAN**

Well, well, well. What have we here?

*(He walks over to MIMI and holds out a small plastic bag of white powder.)*

It's gonna be a happy new year

There, there...etc.

*(Fade out.)*

**TAKE ME OR LEAVE ME** *(Any location and Joanne's loft)*

**MARK**

*Valentine's Day...Pan across the empty lot. Roger's down at Mimi's, where he's been for almost two months now -- although he keeps talking about selling his guitar and heading out of town. (Still jealous of Benny)... God knows where Collins and Angel are...Could be that new Shanty Town near the river or a suite at the Plaza...Maureen and Joanne are rehearsing...*

**JOANNE**

*I said once more from the top!*

**MAUREEN**

*I said no!*

**MARK**

*That is, if they're speaking this week... Me? I'm here. Nowhere.  
(Lights up on the scene.)*

**JOANNE**

*And the line is "Cyber Arts and its corporate sponsor, Grey  
Communications, would like to mitigate the Christmas Eve riots..."  
What is so difficult...?*

**MAUREEN**

*It just doesn't roll off my tongue. I like my version.*

**JOANNE**

*You -- dressed as a groundhog -- to protest the groundbreaking...*

**MAUREEN**

*It's a metaphor!*

**JOANNE**

*It's...less than brilliant.*

**MAUREEN**

*That's it, Miss Ivy League!*

**JOANNE**

*What?*

**MAUREEN**

*Ever since New Year's, I haven't said boo. I let you direct, I didn't  
pierce my nipples because it grossed you out. I didn't stay and  
dance at the Clit Club that night, 'cause you wanted to go home...*

**JOANNE**

*You were flirting with the woman in rubber!*

**MAUREEN**

*That's what this is about? There will always be women in rubber  
flirting with me! Give me a break.*

Every single day

I walk down the street

I hear people say,

"Baby's so sweet"

Ever since puberty

Everybody stares at me

Boys – girls

I can't can't help it baby

So be kind

Don't lose your mind

Just remember that I'm your baby

Take me for what I am

Who I was meant to be

And if you give a damn

Take me baby or leave me

Take me baby or leave me

A tiger in a cage

Can never see the sun

This diva needs her stage

Baby - let's have fun!

You are the one I choose

Folks'd kill to fill your shoes

You love the limelight too, baby

So be mine

Or don't waste my time

Cryin' -- "Honeybear -- are you still my baby?"

Take me for what I am

Who I was meant to be

And if you give a damn

Take me baby or leave me

No way -- can I be what I'm not

But hey -- don't you want your girl hot!

Don't fight -- don't lose your head

Cause every night -- who's in your bed?

Who's in your bed, baby?

*(Pouts in JOANNE's direction)*

*Kiss, Pookie.*

**JOANNE**

*It won't work*

I look before I leap

I love margins and discipline

I make lists in my sleep

Baby what's my sin?

Never quit -- I follow through

I hate mess -- but I love you

What to do

With my impromptu baby?

So be wise

This girl satisfies

You've got a prize

But don't compromise

You're one lucky baby

Take me for what I am

**MAUREEN**

A control freak

**JOANNE**

Who I was meant to be

**MAUREEN**

A snob -- yet overattentive

**JOANNE**

And if you give a damn

**MAUREEN**

A lovable, droll geek

**JOANNE**

Take me baby or leave me

**MAUREEN**

And anal retentive!

**BOTH**

That's it!

**JOANNE**

The straw that breaks my back

**BOTH**

I quit

**JOANNE**

Unless you take it back

**BOTH**

Women

**MAUREEN**

What is it about them?

**BOTH**

Can't live –

With them –

Or without them!

Take me for what I am

Who I was meant to be

And if you give a damn

Take me baby or leave me

Take me baby

Or leave me

Guess I'm leavin'

I'm gone!

*(They both sit.)*

## SEASONS OF LOVE B

**COMPANY**

In diapers -- report cards

In spoke wheels -- in speeding tickets

In contracts – dollars

In funerals -- in births

In -- five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes

How do you figure

A last year on earth?

Figure in love

Figure in love

Figure in love

Measure in love

Seasons of love

Seasons of love

## WITHOUT YOU *(Mimi's Apartment)*

*(MIMI's apartment. Three beds appear downstage. One, a hospital  
bed, is occupied by ANGEL. ROGER sits on another, JOANNE on  
the third. MIMI approaches ROGER, and then appears to be in a  
hurry.)*

**ROGER**

*Where were you?*

**MIMI**

*I'm sorry. I'm late...*

**ROGER** *(interrupting)*

*I know. You lost your keys. No, you went for a walk; you had to  
help your mother. (As he picks up the guitar) And how's Benny?*

*I'm gonna work upstairs tonight.*

**MIMI**

Wait...  
I should tell you  
I should ...  
Never mind...

**ROGER**

Happy spring  
*(ROGER exits. MIMI pulls out a just-purchased stash and angrily flings it across the room. As she sings the following, a stylized "musical beds" is choreographed around her; during the bridge of the song, COLLINS carries ANGEL from the hospital bed and ROGER takes his place. By the end of the song, MAUREEN and JOANNE are reunited, as are ROGER and MIMI. COLLINS and ANGEL have lain down together, where ANGEL dies.)*

**MIMI**

Without you  
The ground thaws  
The rain falls  
The grass grows  
Without you  
The seeds root  
The flowers bloom  
The children play  
The stars gleam  
The poets dream  
The eagles fly  
Without you  
The earth turns  
The sun burns  
But I die  
Without you  
Without you  
The breeze warms  
The girl smiles  
The cloud moves  
Without you  
The tides change  
The boys run  
The oceans crash  
The crowds roar  
The days soar  
The babies cry  
Without you  
The moon glows  
The river flows  
But I die  
Without you  
**ROGER**  
The world revives  
**MIMI**  
Colors renew  
**BOTH**

But I know blue  
Only blue  
Lonely blue  
Within me, blue  
Without you

**MIMI**

Without you  
The hand gropes  
The ear hears  
The pulse beats

**ROGER**

Without you  
The eyes gaze  
The legs walk  
The lungs breathe

**BOTH**

The mind churns  
The heart yearns  
The tears dry  
Without you  
Life goes on  
But I'm gone  
Cause I die

**ROGER**

Without you

**MIMI**

Without you

**ROGER**

Without you

**BOTH**

Without you

**VOICE MAIL #4** *(The loft. The phone rings...)***ROGER & MARK'S ANSWERING MACHINE**

"Speak" ... ("Beeep!")

**ALEXI DARLING**

Mark Cohen  
Alexi Darling  
Labor Day weekend  
In East Hampton  
On the beach  
Just saw Alec Baldwin  
Told him you say hi  
Just kidding  
We still need directors  
You still need money  
You know you need money  
Pick up the phone  
Don't be afraid of ker-ching ker-ching  
Marky -- sell us your soul

Just kidding  
We're waiting...

**CONTACT** *(Various fantasy bed locales)*

*(The COMPANY forms two main groups. As the music begins, a group of dancers start a sensual life and death dance, while a group of actors gather around a table centerstage to speak words of passion which punctuate the dancing. Eventually, the actors converge on the table and cover themselves with a white sheet, while moving to the music.)*

**GROUP A (ROGER, MARK, JOANNE, BENNY)**

Hot-hot-hot-sweat-sweat  
Wet-wet-wet-red-heat  
Hot-hot-hot-sweat-sweat  
Wet-wet-wet-red-heat  
Please don't stop please  
Please don't stop stop  
Stop stop stop don't  
Please please please please  
Hot-hot-hot-sweat-sweat  
Wet-wet-wet-red-heat  
Sticky-licky-trickle-tickle  
Steamy-creamy-stroking-soaking

**GROUP B (MIMI, COLLINS, MAUREEN, ANGEL)**

Hot-hot-hot-sweat-sweat  
Wet-wet-wet-red-heat

**COLLINS**

Touch!

**MAUREEN**

Taste!

**MIMI**

Deep!

**COLLINS**

Dark!

**MAUREEN**

Kiss!

**COLLINS**

Beg!

**MIMI**

Slap!

**MIMI, MAUREEN & COLLINS**

Fear!

**COLLINS**

Thick!

**COLLINS, MIMI & MAUREEN**

Red, red

Red, red

Red, red – please

**MAUREEN**

Harder

**ANGEL**

Faster  
**MAUREEN**  
Wetter  
**MIMI**  
Bastard  
**COLLINS**  
You whore  
**MAUREEN**  
You cannibal!  
**MIMI & ANGEL**  
More!  
**MAUREEN**  
You animal!  
**MAUREEN, COLLINS & MIMI**  
Fluid no fluid no contact yes  
No contact  
**ALL**  
Fire fire burn--burn yes!  
No latex rubber rubber  
Fire latex rubber latex bumper  
Lover bumper  
*(The music explodes into a fevered rhythmic heat as ANGEL is revealed in a lone spotlight, dancing wildly.)*  
**ANGEL**  
Take me  
Take me  
Today for you  
Tomorrow for me  
Today me  
Tomorrow you  
Tomorrow you  
Love  
You  
Love you  
I love  
You I love  
You!  
Take me  
Take me  
I love you  
*(The music dies as ANGEL vanishes.)*  
**ROGER'S VOICE**  
Um  
**JOANNE'S VOICE**  
Wait  
**MIMI'S VOICE**  
Slipped  
**COLLINS' VOICE**  
Shit  
**JOANNE'S VOICE**  
Ow!  
**ROGER'S VOICE**

Where'd it go?  
**MIMI'S VOICE**  
Safe  
**COLLINS' VOICE**  
Damn  
**MAUREEN'S VOICE**  
I think I missed  
Don't get pissed  
**ALL**  
It was bad for me -- was it bad for you?  
**JOANNE**  
It's over  
**MAUREEN**  
It's over  
**ROGER**  
It's over  
**MIMI**  
It's over  
**COLLINS**  
It's over

### I'LL COVER YOU (REPRISE) *(In a church. ANGEL's memorial.)*

**MIMI**  
*Angel was one of my closest friends. It's right that it's Halloween, because it was her favorite holiday. I knew we'd hit it off from the moment we met. That skin head was bothering her, and she said she was more of a man than he'd ever be, and more of a woman than he'd ever get...*

**MARK**  
*...and then there was the time that he walked up to this group of tourists -- and they were petrified, because, A -- they were obviously lost, and B -- they had probably never spoken to a drag queen before in their lives...and he...she just offered to escort them out of Alphabet City, and then she let them take a picture with her, and then she said she'd help 'em find the Circle Line...*

**MAUREEN**  
*...so much more original than any of us...you'd find an old table cloth on the street and make a dress...and next year, sure enough - they'd be mass producing them at the Gap! You always said how lucky you were that we were all friends -- but it was us, baby, who were the lucky ones.*

**COLLINS**  
Live in my house  
I'll be your shelter  
Just pay me back  
With one thousand kisses  
Be my lover  
And I'll cover you  
Open your door -- I'll be your tenant

Don't got much baggage to lay at your feet  
But sweet kisses I've got to spare  
I'll be there -- I'll cover you  
I think they meant it  
When they said you can't buy love  
Now I know you can rent it  
A new lease you were, my love, on life  
All my life  
I've longed to discover  
Something as true  
As this is

*(The following is sung simultaneously.)*

### **JOANNE & SOLOIST**

So with a thousand sweet kisses  
I'll cover you with a thousand sweet kisses  
I'll cover you with a thousand sweet kisses  
I'll cover you with a thousand sweet kisses  
I'll cover you

### **COLLINS**

If you're cold and you're lonely  
You've got one nickel only  
When you're worn out and tired  
When your heart has expired

### **COMPANY**

Five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes  
Five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred moments so dear  
Five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes  
Five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred -- measure a year  
Oh lover I'll cover you  
Oh lover I'll cover you

### **COLLINS & COMPANY**

Oh lover  
I'll cover you  
Oh lover

### **COLLINS**

I'll cover you  
**COMPANY**

Five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes  
Five hundred twenty-five thousand seasons of love

### **COLLINS**

I'll cover you

## HALLOWEEN

*(Outside of the church. MARK is speaking on the pay phone)*

### **MARK**

*Hi. It's Mark Cohen. Is Alexi there?...No, don't bother her. Just tell her I'm running a little late for our appointment...Yes, I'm still coming... Yes, I signed the contract... Thanks...*

How did we get here?

How the hell...

Pan left -- close on the steeple of the church  
How did I get here?  
How the hell...  
Christmas  
Christmas Eve -- last year  
How could a night so frozen be so scalding hot?  
How can a morning this mild be so raw?  
Why are entire years strewn  
On the cutting room floor of memory  
When single frames from one magic night  
Forever flicker in close-up  
On the 3D Imax of my mind  
That's poetic  
That's pathetic  
Why did Mimi knock on Roger's door  
And Collins choose that phone booth  
Back where Angel set up his drums  
Why did Maureen's equipment break down  
Why am I the witness  
And when I capture it on film  
Will it mean that it's the end  
And I'm alone

## GOODBYE LOVE

*(The principals emerge from the church.)*

**MIMI** *(to ROGER)*

It's true you sold your guitar and bought a car?

**ROGER**

It's true -- I'm leaving now for Santa Fe

It's true you're with this yuppie scum?

**BENNY**

You said you'd never speak to him again

**MIMI**

Not now

**MAUREEN**

Who said that you have any say

In who she says things to at all?

**ROGER**

Yeah!

**JOANNE**

Who said that you should

Stick your nose in other people's ...

**MAUREEN**

Who said I was talking to you?

**JOANNE**

We used to have this fight each night

**MARK**

Calm down

**JOANNE**

She'd never admit I existed

**MARK**

Everyone please

**MIMI**

He was the same way -- he was always

"Run away -- hit the road

Don't commit" -- you're full of shit

**JOANNE**

She's in denial

**MIMI**

He's in denial

**JOANNE**

Didn't give an inch

When I gave a mile

**MARK**

Come on

**MIMI**

I gave a mile

**ROGER**

Gave a mile to who?

**MARK & BENNY**

Come on guys chill!

**MIMI & JOANNE**

I'd be happy to die for a taste of what Angel had

Someone to live for -- unafraid to say I love you

**ROGER**

All your words are nice Mimi

But love's not a three way street

You'll never share real love

Until you love yourself -- I should know

**COLLINS**

You all said you'd be cool today

So please -- for my sake...

I can't believe he's gone

*(to ROGER)* I can't believe you're going

I can't believe this family must die

Angel helped us believe in love

I can't believe you disagree

**ALL**

I can't believe this is goodbye

*(MAUREEN and JOANNE look at each other.)*

**MAUREEN**

*Pookie*

**JOANNE**

*Honeybear*

**MAUREEN**

*I missed you so much.*

**JOANNE**

*I missed you.*

**MAUREEN**

*I missed your smell.*

**JOANNE**

*I missed your mouth.*

*Your --*

*(JOANNE gives MAUREEN a firm kiss on the lips.)*

**MAUREEN**

*Ow!*

**JOANNE**

*What?*

**MAUREEN**

*Nothing, Pookie.*

**JOANNE**

*No, baby -- you said ow -- What?*

**MAUREEN**

*You bit my tongue.*

**JOANNE**

*No, I didn't.*

**MAUREEN**

*You did -- I'm bleeding.*

**JOANNE**

*No, it isn't.*

**MAUREEN**

*I think I should know...*

**JOANNE**

*Let me see --*

**MAUREEN**

*She doesn't believe me!*

**JOANNE**

*I was only trying to...*

*(They hug & exit. The PASTOR from the church emerges on the above.)*

**PASTOR**

*Thomas B. Collins?*

**COLLINS**

*Coming.*

*(The PASTOR exits above and COLLINS exits into the church. BENNY stands off to the side as MIMI approaches ROGER, who turns away. She hesitates before leaving with BENNY.)*

**MARK**

I hear there are great restaurants out west

**ROGER**

Some of the best. How could she?

**MARK**

How could you let her go?

**ROGER**

You just don't know... How could we lose Angel?

**MARK**

Maybe you'll see why when you stop escaping your pain

At least now if you try -- Angel's death won't be in vain

**ROGER**

His death is in vain

*(MIMI reappears up left, in the shadows. She overhears ROGER and MARK's conversation.)*

**MARK**

Are you insane?

There so much to care about  
 There's me -- there's Mimi  
**ROGER**  
 Mimi's got her baggage, too  
**MARK**  
 So do you  
**ROGER**  
 Who are you to tell me what I know, what to do  
**MARK**  
 A friend  
**ROGER**  
 But who, Mark, are you?  
 "Mark has got his work"  
 They say "Mark lives for his work"  
 And "Mark's in love with his work"  
 Mark hides in his work  
**MARK**  
 From what?  
**ROGER**  
 From facing your failure, facing your loneliness  
 Facing the fact you live a lie  
 Yes, you live a lie -- tell you why  
 You're always preaching not to be numb  
 When that's how you thrive  
 You pretend to create and observe  
 When you really detach from feeling alive  
**MARK**  
 Perhaps it's because I'm the one of us to survive  
**ROGER**  
 Poor baby  
**MARK**  
 Mimi still loves Roger  
 Is Roger really jealous  
 Or afraid that Mimi's weak  
**ROGER**  
 Mimi did look pale  
**MARK**  
 Mimi's gotten thin  
 Mimi's running out of time  
 Roger's running out the door  
**ROGER**  
 No more! Oh no!  
 I've gotta go  
**MARK**  
*Hey, for somebody who's always been let down  
 Who's heading out of town?*  
**ROGER**  
*For someone who longs for a community of his own,  
 Who's with his camera, alone?  
 (ROGER takes a step to go, then stops, turns.)  
 I'll call  
 I hate the fall*

*(ROGER turns to go and sees MIMI.)*  
**ROGER**  
 You heard?  
**MIMI**  
 Every word  
 You don't want baggage without lifetime guarantees  
 You don't want to watch me die  
 I just came to say  
 Goodbye, love  
 Goodbye, love  
 Came to say goodbye, love, goodbye  
**MIMI**  
 Just came to say  
 Goodbye love  
 Goodbye love  
 Goodbye love  
 Goodbye  
**ROGER**  
 Glory  
 One blaze of  
 Glory  
 Have to find  
*(ROGER exits. BENNY returns. MIMI steps away.)*  
**MIMI**  
 Please don't touch me  
 Understand  
 I'm scared  
 I need to go away  
**MARK**  
 I know a place -- a clinic  
**BENNY**  
 A rehab?  
**MIMI**  
 Maybe -- could you?  
**BENNY**  
 I'll pay  
**MIMI**  
 Goodbye love  
 Goodbye love  
 Came to say goodbye, love, goodbye  
 Just came to say  
 Goodbye love  
 Goodbye love  
 Goodbye love  
 Hello -- disease  
*(MIMI runs away. After a moment, COLLINS quickly enters, with  
 the PASTOR trailing behind him.)*  
**PASTOR**  
*Off the premises now  
 We don't give handouts here!*  
**MARK**  
*What happened to "Rest In Peace"?*

**PASTOR**  
*Off the premises, queer!*  
**COLLINS**  
*That's no way to send a boy to meet his maker!  
 They had to know we couldn't pay the undertaker.*  
**BENNY**  
*Don't you worry 'bout him. Hey, I'll take care of it!  
 (The PASTOR acknowledges BENNY and exits.)*  
**MARK**  
*Must be nice to have money.*  
**ALL THREE**  
*No shit!*  
**COLLINS**  
*I think it's only fair to tell you, you just paid for the funeral of the  
 person who killed your dog.*  
**BENNY**  
*I know. I always hated that dog.  
 Let's pay him off, and then get drunk.*  
**MARK**  
*I can't, I have a meeting.*  
**BENNY & COLLINS**  
*Punk! Let's go.  
 (COLLINS and BENNY exit.)*

## WHAT YOU OWN

**MARK** *(imagining)*  
*"Hi. Mark Cohen here for Buzzline. Back to you, Alexi. Coming  
 up next -- vampire welfare queens who are compulsive bowlers."  
 Oh my God, what am I doing?*  
 Don't breathe too deep  
 Don't think all day  
 Dive into work  
 Drive the other way  
 That drip of hurt  
 That pint of shame  
 Goes away  
 Just play the game  
 You're living in America  
 At the end of the millennium  
 You're living in America  
 Leave your conscience at the tone  
 And when you're living in America  
 At the end of the millennium  
 You're what you own  
*(Lights up on ROGER.)*  
**ROGER**  
 The filmmaker cannot see  
**MARK**  
 And the songwriter cannot hear  
**ROGER**

Yet I see Mimi everywhere  
**MARK**  
Angel's voice is in my ear  
**ROGER**  
Just tighten those shoulders  
**MARK**  
Just clench your jaw till you frown  
**ROGER**  
Just don't let go  
**BOTH**  
Or you may drown  
You're living in America  
At the end of the millennium  
You're living in America  
Where it's like the Twilight Zone  
And when you're living in America  
At the end of the millennium  
You're what you own  
So I own not a notion  
I escape and ape content  
I don't own emotion -- I rent  
**MARK**  
What was it about that night  
**ROGER**  
What was it about that night  
**BOTH**  
Connection -- in an isolating age  
**MARK**  
For once the shadows gave way to light  
**ROGER**  
For once the shadows gave way to light  
**BOTH**  
For once I didn't disengage  
*(MARK goes to the pay phone and dials.)*  
**MARK**  
Angel -- I hear you -- I hear it  
I see it -- I see it  
My film!  
**ROGER**  
Mimi I see you -- I see it  
I hear it -- I hear it  
My song!  
**MARK** *(on the phone)*  
Alexi—Mark  
Call me a hypocrite  
I need to finish my own film  
I quit!  
**ROGER**  
One song—glory  
Mimi  
Your eyes...  
**BOTH**

Dying in America  
At the end of the millennium  
We're dying in America  
To come into our own  
And when you're dying in America  
At the end of the millennium  
You're not alone  
I'm not alone  
I'm not alone  
*(Blackout.)*

## VOICE MAIL #5 *(Various locations.)*

*(In blackout, once again the phone rings.)*

### ROGER & MARK'S ANSWERING MACHINE

"Speak..." *(Beep!)*

### ROGER'S MOTHER

Roger, this is your mother  
Roger, honey, I don't get these postcards  
"Moving to Santa Fe"  
"Back in New York  
Starting a rock band"

Roger, where are you? -- Please call  
*(The following is sung simultaneously)*

### MIMI'S MOTHER

Mimi, chica, donde estas?  
Tu mama esta llamando  
Donde estas Mimi -- Call

### MR. JEFFERSON

Kitten -- wherever are you -- Call

### MRS. COHEN

Mark -- are you there -- are you there  
I don't know if he's there  
We're all here wishing you were here too  
Where are you Mark are you there are you where are you  
Mark -- are you there -- are you there  
I don't know if -- Please call your mother

## FINALE *(The lot and the loft)*

### ALL SEVEN HOMELESS

Christmas bells are ringing  
Christmas bells are ringing  
Christmas bells are ringing  
How time flies  
When compassion dies  
No stockings  
No candy canes  
No gingerbread  
No safety net  
No loose change

No change no  
**ONE HOMELESS MAN**

Santy Claus is coming

**ALL**

Cause Santy Claus ain't coming  
No room at the Holiday Inn -- again  
Well, maybe next year  
Or -- when

*(Lights shift back to the loft. A small projector rests on a milk crate, which is on a dolly.)*

**MARK**

December 24th, ten p.m. Eastern standard time

I can't believe a year went by so fast

Time to see what we have time to see

Turn the projector on

*(A rough title credit, "Today 4 U: Proof Positive," appears, followed by a shot from last Christmas of ROGER tuning his guitar.)*

**MARK**

First shot Roger

With the fender guitar he just got out of hock

When he sold the car

That took him away and back

**ROGER**

I found my song

**MARK**

He found his song

If he could just find Mimi

**ROGER**

I tried -- you know I tried

*(MARK's image appears on-screen.)*

**MARK**

Fade in on Mark

Who's still in the dark

**ROGER**

But he's got great footage

**MARK**

Which he's cut together

**ROGER**

To screen tonight

*(BENNY's image appears on screen.)*

**MARK**

In honor of Benny's wife

**ROGER**

Muffy

**MARK**

Alison

Pulling Benny out of the East Village location

*(The projector blows a fuse. Blackout.)*

**ROGER**

*Then again, maybe we won't screen it tonight.*

**MARK**

*I wonder how Alison found out about Mimi?*

**ROGER**

*Maybe a little bird told her.*

*(COLLINS enters in the dark, with several twenty-dollar bills in each hand.)*

**COLLINS**

*Or an angel.*

*(Lights fade up.)*

I had a little hunch that you could use a little flow

**ROGER**

Tutoring again?

**COLLINS**

Negative

**MARK**

Back at N.Y.U.?

**COLLINS**

No, no, no

I rewired the ATM at the food emporium

To provide an honorarium to anyone with the code

**ROGER & MARK**

The code –

Well...?

**COLLINS**

A-N-G-E-L

Yet Robin Hooding isn't the solution

The powers that be must be undermined where they dwell

In a small, exclusive gourmet institution

Where we overcharge the wealthy clientele

**ALL THREE**

Let's open up a restaurant in Santa Fe

With a private corner banquet in the back

**COLLINS**

We'll make it yet, we'll somehow get to Santa Fe

**ROGER**

But you'd miss New York before you could unpack

**ALL**

Ohh –

*(MAUREEN and JOANNE enter, carrying MIMI.)*

**MAUREEN**

Mark! Roger! Anyone -- help!

**MARK**

Maureen?

**MAUREEN**

It's Mimi -- I can't get her up the stairs

**ROGER**

No!

*(They enter the loft.)*

**MAUREEN**

She was huddled in the park in the dark

And she was freezing

And begged to come here

**ROGER**

Over here

Oh, God –

*(They lay her down carefully on the table.)*

**MIMI**

Got a light -- I know you -- you're shivering..

**JOANNE**

She's been living on the street

**ROGER**

We need some heat

**MIMI**

I'm shivering

**MARK**

We can buy some wood and something to eat

**COLLINS**

I'm afraid she needs more than heat

**MIMI**

I heard that

**MAUREEN**

Collins will call for a doctor, honey

**MIMI**

Don't waste your money on Mimi, me, me

**COLLINS**

Hello -- 911?

I'm on hold!

**MIMI**

Cold...cold... would you light my candle?

**ROGER**

Yes -- we'll -- oh God -- find a candle

**MIMI**

I should tell you

I should tell you

**ROGER**

I should tell you

I should tell you

**MIMI**

I should tell you

Benny wasn't any –

**ROGER**

Shhh -- I know

I should tell you why I left

It wasn't cause I didn't –

**MIMI**

I know

I should tell you

**ROGER**

I should tell you

**MIMI** *(whispering)*

I should tell you

I love you –

*(MIMI fades)*

**ROGER**

Who do you think you are?

Leaving me alone with my guitar

Hold on there's something you should hear

It isn't much but it took all year

*(MIMI stirs and ROGER begins playing acoustic guitar at her bedside.)*

## YOUR EYES

**ROGER**

Your eyes

As we said our goodbyes

Can't get them out of my mind

And I find I can't hide

From your eyes

The ones that took me by surprise

The night you came into my life

Where there's moonlight I see your eyes

*(Band takes over)*

How'd I let you slip away

When I'm longing so to hold you

Now I'd die for one more day

'Cause there's something I should have told you

Yes there's something I should have told you

When I looked into your eyes

Why does distance make us wise?

You were the song all along

And before this song dies

I should tell you I should tell you

I have always loved you

You can see it in my eyes

*(We hear Musetta's Theme, played correctly and passionately.*

*MIMI's head falls to the side and her arm drops limply off the edge of the table.)*

Mimi!

## FINALE B

*(Suddenly, MIMI's hand twitches. Incredibly, she is still alive.)*

**MIMI**

*I jumped over the moon!*

**ROGER**

*What?*

**MIMI**

*A leap of moooooooooooooo –*

**JOANNE**

*She's back!*

**MIMI**

*I was in a tunnel. Heading for this warm, white light...*

**MAUREEN**

*Oh my God!*

**MIMI**

*And I swear Angel was there -- and she looked GOOD! And she said, "Turn around, girlfriend, and listen to that boy's song..."*

**COLLINS**

She's drenched

**MAUREEN**

Her fever's breaking

**MARK**

There is no future -- there is no past

**ROGER**

Thank God this moment's not the last

**MIMI & ROGER**

There's only us

There's only this

Forget regret or life is yours to miss

**ALL**

No other road no other way

No day but today

*(As the finale grows, the entire COMPANY makes its way on stage.)*

**WOMEN**

I can't control

My destiny

I trust my soul

My only goal is just to be

**MEN**

Will I lose my dignity?

Will someone care?

Will I wake tomorrow

From this nightmare?

*(MARK's film resumes, along with two more films projecting on the back wall, "Scenes from RENT...")*

**WOMEN**

Without you

The hand gropes

The ear hears

The pulse beats

Life goes on

But I'm gone

'Cause I die

Without you

I die without you

I die without you

I die without you

**MEN**

There's only now

There's only here

Give in to love

Or live in fear

No other path

No other way

No day but today

No day but today

No day but today

No day but today

**ALL**

No day but today

**THE END**