



Broadway star Anthony Rapp reprised his role as filmmaker Mark Cohen in the big-screen version of "Rent."

Classic rock 'n' roll — with lotsa Rapp

Don't expect to hear any old-fashioned show tunes when Broadway star Anthony Rapp performs at Queens Theatre in the Park on Saturday night.

Rapp, who originated the role of filmmaker Mark Cohen in the long-running musical "Rent," will instead be singing with his rock band, Albinokid.

"I personally don't gravitate to more traditional musical theater," says Rapp, 36, a Chicago native who has been living in New York for many years.

"I love theater that is a little more adventurous. I always say getting involved with 'Rent' was the fulfillment of two big fantasies: I got to star in a show on Broadway, but I also got to be in a rock band in a way. And when ['Rent'] was over, I really missed the rock band part. So I made one of my own."

The result? Albinokid, a group of musicians who jam whenever they can — which isn't often enough as far as Rapp is concerned. At Saturday's 8 p.m. concert, expect songs from Jonathan Larson's "Rent," covers from R.E.M. and Radiohead, selections from his solo CD, "Look Around," and at least one original tune written by Rapp.

"My mom died from cancer, and in her idiosyncratic way, she named things in her life," he says. "She named her tumor 'Wild Bill' and envisioned him as a gunman who swept into her life. So I just wrote a country-and-Western, Johnny Cash story song about Wild Bill."

Rapp, who co-starred in the 2005 film version of "Rent," isn't shy about acknowledging how the show boosted his career. While "Rent" is scheduled to close in September after 12 record-breaking years on Broadway, he and Adam Pascal — who originated the role of Roger Davis when the show debuted on Broadway in 1996 — are reprising their characters for a "Rent" tour next year.

Rapp, who's also busy working on a one-man show based on his book, "Without You: A Memoir of Love, Loss and the Musical 'Rent,'" will be involved in some good-natured sibling rivalry this weekend.

His older brother, playwright Adam Rapp ("Red Light Winter"), is performing with his band — the postpunk Less the Band — at Mercury Lounge on Monday.

So which group is better?

"His," says Rapp — while mentioning again how little Albinokid gets to perform together.

"It's been really one of the great joys of the last few years getting to witness how much he's been embraced and celebrated. I've been a fan forever, but there was a part of me that always wondered, 'Am I just loving this because he's my brother?'"

"I knew better; in my core, I knew better," adds Rapp. "But it's always nice when the rest of the world starts to validate it."

Rapp will
be touring
with 'Rent'
next year.

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Michael Giltz