

Various Artists

"Rent"

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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

TOGETHER

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

BOTH
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
(On phone)
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

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

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?

MARK

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

ALL

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

ALL

When they act tough - you call their bluff

MARK & ROGER

We're not gonna pay

MARK & ROGER W/HALF THE COMPANY

We're not gonna pay

MARK & ROGER W/OTHER HALF OF COMPANY

We're not gonna pay

ALL

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

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