Rent Checked

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The rock musical is making a slow but steady comeback as a movie formula, so it's no surprise Hollywood -- in the form of director Spike Lee and Miramax films -- would eventually come calling on *Rent*. In June, Lee announced his interest in filming the Tony Award-winning Broadway hit, with the names of comely crooners Marc Anthony and 'N Sync's Justin Timberlake floated as possible leads. It would have been a tricky translation. With his manipulative, shrewish women characters -- and let's not forget the homophobic frat boys of *School Daze* yelling "Fag! Fag! Fag!" -- the polemical Lee was a less-than-obvious choice to helm a musical celebrating HIV positive women, whites and queers. At any rate, in August, Miramax extinguished this Spike Lee joint, citing budget problems. The director, meanwhile, has turned his attention to a monumental biopic about the boxer Joe Louis. *Rent*'s still due.

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