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## **SUU'S DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE ARTS & DANCE OFFERS THE AWARD-WINNING MUSICAL *NEXT TO NORMAL***

**Southern Utah University, Cedar City, Utah:** A provocative award-winning contemporary musical comes to SUU when the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance offers the regional premiere of the acclaimed Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning musical *Next to Normal*. This provocative contemporary musical centers on a family coping with crisis and mental illness. Directed by theatre major and Utah Shakespeare Festival actor **Joshua Durfey**, the production plays **October 28, 29, 30 31** and **November 2 at 7:30pm** with a matinee on **October 31 at 2pm** in SUU's **Auditorium Theatre**. Content warning: adult situations and language.

With book and lyrics by **Brian Yorkey** and music by **Tom Kitt**, *Next to Normal* won three 2009 Tony Awards including Best Musical Score and the 2010 Pulitzer Prize. The musical was also chosen as "one of the year's ten best shows" by critics around the country, including *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Rolling Stone* and *The New York Times*.

They look like the picture perfect family. Dad's an architect; Mom rushes to pack lunches and pour cereal; their daughter and son are bright, wise-cracking teens, appearing to be a typical American family. And yet their lives are anything but normal, because the mother has been battling manic depression for 16 years. *Next To Normal* takes audiences into the minds and hearts of each character, presenting their family's story with love, sympathy and heart. Please be advised that *Next to Normal* features adult situations and language.

Giving his insight on *Next to Normal*, **Joshua Durfey** explains, "*Next to Normal* is a contemporary musical about *Acceptance*. This story is about a family and how they face the struggles placed before them; the acceptance of the mother's situation, a family tragedy, and a daughter's identity struggle. Are they in denial? Do they fight against each other? I want to press this affliction between the characters to

keep the play moving. 'It is something much more than a feel-good musical: it is a feel-everything musical' is how Ben Brantley of *The New York Times* described this extraordinary work of musical theatre."

**Joshua Durfey**, a Bachelor of Fine Arts at Southern Utah University, has performed as Humphrey of Gloucester in *Henry IV Part II*, Curtis in *Taming of the Shrew*, Curio in *Twelfth Night* and in the ensemble of *South Pacific* at the Utah Shakespeare Festival. Elsewhere Josh appeared in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (Joseph) and in *Cinderella* (Christopher) at Starlight Mountain Theatre and in *Bandito Rides Again* (Rupert) at Pickleville Playhouse. At SUU, he appeared in *Bat Boy the Musical* (Edgar/Bat Boy), *Rabbit Hole* (Howie), *Romeo and Juliet* (Prince), *As You Like It* (William) and the ensemble in *CHICAGO The Musical*.

Aiding Joshua with bring his vision for ***Next to Normal*** to the stage are music director **Shane Sommers**, choreographer **Michaela Kelly**, scenic designer **Emily Smith**, costume designer **Kaitlyn James**, lighting designer **Heather Reynolds** and sound designer **Spencer McFadden**. **Austin Andrews** is the production stage manager.

The cast of ***Next to Normal*** is comprised of **Evangeline Stott** as the mother Diana, **Luke S. Johnston** as her husband Dan, **Keaton Johns** as son Gabe and **Brittany Reed** as daughter Natalie. The rest of the cast includes **Colton Needles** as Henry and **Alec TerBerg** as two distinctively different doctors treating Diana.

Ticket prices for ***Next to Normal*** tickets are **\$15** for Adults, **\$12** for Alumni with card and **\$7** for Youth. **SUU Faculty, Staff** and **students are admitted free with a valid ID**. Faculty and staff are entitled to bring one guest. **The CPVA Flex Pass** offers six admissions to any theatre, dance or music event and can be used for a single entrance to a production or can be used to admit six people to one event. The pass can be used in any multiples for CPVA ticketed events. The cost of the Flex Pass is **\$40** per pass (a \$65 value). For tickets or the Flex Pass, call the SUU Ticket Office at (435) 586-7872, Monday-Friday, 8am-4:30pm, or purchase in person at the Centrum Arena box office. Single tickets may be purchased online at [www.suu.edu/pva/arts](http://www.suu.edu/pva/arts).

The 2015-2016 Theatre Arts & Dance Series includes the delightful ***Toyland: The Holiday Family Musical Treat***, the classic comedy ***You Can't Take It With You***, and Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning musical ***RENT***. The series also includes two dance concerts: ***Creative Variations: the Student-Choreographed Dance Concert*** and ***Elevated Movements: the Faculty-Choreographed Dance Concert***.

## ABOUT THE COLLEGE

The **Southern Utah University College of Performing and Visual Arts** is comprised of nationally accredited departments of Art and Design, Music, Theatre Arts and Dance, as well as a graduate program in Arts Administration and the new Center for Shakespeare Studies. The College offers 16 different degree areas, including liberal arts Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees; professional Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Fine Arts in art and theatre degrees; and a Master of Fine Arts in Arts Administration degree. More than 60 full- and part-time faculty and staff are engaged in teaching and mentoring over 550 majors in the College. Over 1100 students enroll each year in over 195 arts classes on the SUU campus. The College presents 100 performances, lectures, presentations, and exhibitions each year. The College's affiliate organizations include the Braithwaite Fine Arts Gallery, Utah Shakespeare Festival and the SUU Ballroom Dance Company. For more information about the College of Performing and Visual Arts, visit [www.suu.edu/pva/arts](http://www.suu.edu/pva/arts).

## FOR CALENDAR EDITORS: *Next to Normal*

- WHAT:** Theatre Arts presents the southern Utah premiere of the acclaimed Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning musical *Next to Normal*. This provocative contemporary musical centers on a family coping with crisis and mental illness. ***Next to Normal*** content warning: adult situations and language.
- WHO:** Southern Utah University, College of Performing and Visual Arts, Theatre Arts & Dance Series
- WHEN:** Oct. 28, 29, 30 31, Nov. 2, 2015 @ 7:30pm / Oct. 31 @ 2pm
- WHERE:** Auditorium Theatre, Southern Utah University, Cedar City, UT
- TICKETS:** (435) 586-7872, Monday-Friday, 8am-4:30pm or visit: [www.suu.edu/pva/arts](http://www.suu.edu/pva/arts)
- PRICES:** General Adult Admission: \$15; Alumni with card: \$12, Student & Youth: \$7; SUU Faculty, Staff and Students: Free with valid I.D. CPVA Flex Passes \$40 each, good for six admissions