



*A Professional Wing of
Youth Musical Theater Company*

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YMTC+ ANNOUNCES CAST FOR ROCK MUSICAL *NEXT TO NORMAL*, THE COMPANY'S FIRST ALL-PROFESSIONAL PRODUCTION

Berkeley, California, March 20, 2018—YMTC+, a new wing of Youth Musical Theater Company (YMTC), has selected the cast for *Next to Normal*, its first musical with an all-professional line-up of actors. With Susannah Martin as director and David Möschler as musical director, *Next to Normal* will run May 4–13 at El Cerrito High School Performing Arts Theater.

Featured as family members are Danny Cozart, the husband; Jennifer Boesing (YMTC's Producing Artistic Director), the wife; Kevin Singer, the son; and Celeste Kamiya, the daughter. Daniel Barrington Rubio playing the doctors and David Crane, the boyfriend, complete the cast. Kamiya and Crane are both alumni of YMTC's training program for young theater artists.

The production includes a shadow cast of current YMTC students, who auditioned for the opportunity to understudy the roles, and sit in on the rehearsal process. Boesing explains, "Something I've been dreaming about for years is a professional production in which local professional actors—some YMTC teaching artists, some YMTC alumni—would perform in a show and have our current students shadow them. The students would be in on the process of a professional show from the ground up, watching, learning, *understudying* (in the true sense of that word)."

Next to Normal explores how one suburban family copes with mental illness with compassion, depth, and humor. Well-received on Broadway, the show won three Tony awards in 2009 and the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 2010. Its book and lyrics were written by Brian Yorkey, and music by Tom Kitt. A full, live band under Möschler will provide the rock-infused accompaniment.

Award-winning Bay Area director Susannah Martin notes, "This piece premiered 10 years ago. It was the first American musical of its kind, dealing so directly with mental illness. There's still so little our culture understands about mental illness, particularly the idea that taking care of your mental health *is* taking care of your health. *Next to Normal* addresses some of these issues."

Next to Normal opens Friday, May 4, 2018. Eight performances are scheduled over two weeks at El Cerrito High School Performing Arts Theater, 540 Ashbury Avenue, El Cerrito. The run consists of three 2:00 p.m. matinees (5/6, 5/12, 5/13) and five 7:30 p.m. performances (5/4, 5/5, 5/10, 5/11, 5/12). Tickets are available online at <http://www.ymtcbayarea.org> or at the door one hour before curtain. Ticket prices are \$15–\$35, with discounts for students, seniors, military, teachers, and groups. A Pay-What-You-Can-Preview is scheduled for Thursday, 5/3, at 7:30 p.m., cash/credit at the door with open seating. NOTE: *Next to Normal* portrays adult subject matter, contains strong language, and is not recommended for young children.

ABOUT YMTC

YMTC is dedicated to providing exceptional training to young theater artists through the production of exceptional musical theater. The organization brings together the Bay Area's most talented and dedicated young singer/actors—as well as students of technical theater—with professional directors, designers, and musicians. They take on challenging, sophisticated musical and dramatic themes, and productions are always accompanied by a full, live orchestra.

ABOUT YMTC+

YMTC+ is a new professional wing of YMTC focused on providing an artistic home for alumni, teaching artists, and local professionals. Its mission is to deepen training opportunities for current YMTC students, to nurture the life cycle of the artist, and to produce exceptional, relevant musical theater.

CALENDAR LISTING

YMTC+ Presents the Rock Musical *NEXT TO NORMAL*

Ground-breaking Tony Award- and Pulitzer Prize-winning musical explores how one suburban family copes with mental illness. All-professional cast directed by Susannah Martin.

Show Run: May 4-13, 2018

Pay-What-You-Can Preview, Thursday, May 3, 7:30 p.m.

Opens: Friday, May 4, 7:30 p.m.

Performances:

Friday, May 4, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, May 5, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, May 6, 2:00 p.m.

Thursday, May 10, 7:30 p.m.

Friday, May 11, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, May 12, 2:00 p.m. (post-show audience talk-back with cast and local mental health professionals)

Saturday, May 12, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, May 13, 2:00 p.m.

Where: El Cerrito High School Performing Arts Theater, 540 Ashbury Avenue, El Cerrito. Walking distance from El Cerrito Plaza BART station.

Ticket Prices: \$15–35. Student, senior, teacher, military, and group discounts are available. Purchase tickets at <http://www.ymtcbayarea.org> or at the door; box office opens one hour prior to performance.