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**Schenectady Light Opera Company presents**

**Broadway’s Pulitzer Prize winning musical**

***Next to Normal***

**Music by Tom Kitt**

**Book and Lyrics by Brian Yorkey**

**Directed by Michael Mensching**

**(SCHENECTADY, NY)  *Next to Normal*, is the first production of Schenectady Light Opera Company’s (SLOC) 2012-2013 season and will run from October 12-14 and 18-21, 2012. The Capital Region community theatre in downtown Schenectady is celebrating its 86th season under the leadership of John Samatulski, Executive Director, and Robert Harrison, President.  Directed by Michael Mensching (SLOC’s *Aida* & *The Full Monty*), the *Next to Normal* press opening is Friday, October 12th at 8pm.**

This groundbreaking and award-winning musical explores how one suburban family copes with crisis. With powerful lyrics and an electrifying pop-rock score of more than 30 songs, this intense, emotional and ultimately hopeful musical aims right for the heart with its story of a family coming to terms with its past and bravely facing its future. ***Next to Normal*** was nominated for eleven 2009 Tony Awards and won three, Best Original Score, Best Orchestration and Best Performance by a Leading Actress in a Musical for Alice Ripley. **Next to Normal** won the 2010 Pulitzer Prize for Drama, becoming just the eighth musical in history to receive the honor. The previous musical to win the Pulitzer was [*RENT*](http://www.mtishows.com/show_detail.asp?showid=000281), in 1996, which was also originally directed by Michael Greif. In awarding the prize to Tom [Kitt](http://www.mtishows.com/show_detail.asp?showid=000383) and Brian [Yorkey](http://www.mtishows.com/show_detail.asp?showid=000383), the Pulitzer Board called the show "a powerful rock musical that grapples with mental illness in a suburban family and expands the scope of subject matter for musicals."

***Next to Normal*** debuted off-Broadway at Second Stage Theatre from January 16 through March 16, 2008. After the Off-Broadway run, the developing musical was then given a regional theatre production at the Arena Stage from November 21, 2008 through January 18, 2009. ***Next to Normal***began previews on Broadway at the Booth Theatre on March 27 and opened on April 15, 2009.

Schenectady Light Opera Company’s ***Next to Normal*** cast will featureMike Bellotti (SLOC’s *Baby*) as **Dan Goodman**; Lindsay Dashew as **Diana Goodman**; Eliza Figueroa (SLOC’s *Hairspray, Ragtime*) as **Natalie Goodman**; Michael Lotano as **Drs. Fine/Madden**; Nick Cotrupi as **Gabriel “Gabe” Goodman**; and Jacob Shipley as **Henry**.

The Schenectady Light Opera production will also feature a production team that includes Musical Director Jason Dashew, Choreographer Gregory Marsh, Set Designer Doug Peek, Lighting Designer Michael Gatzendorfer, Costume Designer Debbie Lummis and Producers Joanne Peal and Michael McDermott.

Michael Mensching, is a frequent director for SLOC in the past decade.  Michael’s past directing credits for SLOC include *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *Jane Eyre*, *Songs For a New World*, *The Full Monty*, *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, *The Drowsy Chaperone*, and *Aida*.  Many of his productions have been listed in the yearly Top Ten Lists by the Schenectady Gazette and the Troy Record newspapers. Michael has worked for SLOC for the past 15 years as a director, actor, producer, set designer, costume designer and past president.  Michael “is delighted to present *Next to Normal* in the new SLOC season and considers it to be the most powerful piece of musical theater to hit Broadway since Jason Robert Brown’s *Parade*.”

Lindsay Dashew, helming the cast as Diana Goodman, spent most of the past decade working as an actress/singer/dancer in New York City. Lindsay holds a BFA in Musical Theatre from SUNY Fredonia, and a MA in Educational Theatre from New York University. Lindsay has worked in theaters all over the country as a member of regional theatre productions, national touring companies, and Off-Broadway shows. Lindsay Dashew’s favorite credits include: Fanny Brice in *Funny Girl*, Shirley in *The Producers*, and Alice in *The Secret Garden*. Lindsay has also performed as a vocal soloist in concerts with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. Lindsay is the owner of Broadway Bound Performing Arts Academy, located in Delmar, NY which offers classes in Acting, Musical Theater, and Group Voice for students ages 5-18.

***Next to Normal* will be presented at Schenectady Light Opera House, 427 Franklin Street, Schenectady.  Performance dates and times: Thursday-Saturday at 8pm and Sunday at 2pm. Tickets: $18-$28. Tickets may be purchased at the Box Office at Schenectady Light Opera House, on the phone at 877-350-7378, or online at** [**www.sloctheater.org**](http://www.sloctheater.org)**.**

***About Schenectady Light Opera Company***

Schenectady Light Opera Company (SLOC) is a nonprofit community theater organization in Schenectady, New York, established in 1926. The current location of the theater is at the new performing art center at 427 Franklin Street, in downtown Schenectady. The 2012-2013 season includes *Next to Normal, Little Shop of Horrors, Dirty Rotten Scoundrels, The Sound of Music, and Sweet Charity*. The company has presented over 500 shows at various locations for over 85 years. [www.sloctheatre.org](http://www.sloctheatre.org).