



"Next to Normal: Mental Health on the Broadway Stage"

Tuesday, February 6th * 6:30pm
Fairfield Public Library
Memorial Room

2008's *Next to Normal* presented audiences with something wholly unconventional in the Broadway canon: the story of a mother struggling with bipolar disorder and the ensuing impact on her immediate family. With lyrics by Brian Yorkey and an infectious score by Tom Kitt, the musical delves into the challenges facing suburban families in the age of modern psychopharmacology. Pulling no punches, *Next to Normal* invites the audience to examine the morally nebulous territory involved in the treatment of the mentally ill. Join Professor Gil Harel as he goes inside the score of this award-winning musical. Through analysis at the piano, he will attempt to show how catchy melodies and powerful leitmotifs come together to frame an unorthodox and unforgettably moving work.



Dr. Gil Harel (PhD, Brandeis University) is a musicologist and music theorist whose interests include styles ranging from western art music to contemporary musical theater. Previously, he served on the faculty at CUNY Baruch College (where he was awarded the prestigious "Presidential Excellence Award for Distinguished Teaching"). Currently, he is Full Professor of Music at CT State Naugatuck Valley, where he has been presented with the AFT "Merit Award for Exemplary Service to the College" for 6 consecutive years. In 2020, he was honored with the coveted Connecticut Board of Regents (BOR) Teaching Award. At NVCC, Dr. Harel conducts the college chorale, a cappella ensemble, teaches music history and theory, and serves as musical director of theater productions.



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