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Spotlight on: Next to Normal and Vanities

The 5th Avenue Theatre's popular free event returns with a behind-the-scenes preview of upcoming musical dramas

SEATTLE, WA—On Monday January 10, the 5th Avenue Theatre continues its popular Spotlight Night series with a look at two upcoming productions, featuring interviews with the shows' creators and live performances by some of Seattle's premiere talent. *Vanities: A New Musical* is a brand new adaptation of the hit comedy-drama about the friendship of three women spanning the years from high school to middle age, while *Next to Normal* is the Pulitzer-prize-winning story of a family pulling together to support a woman's battle with mental illness.

Hosted by The 5th's Executive Producer and Artistic Director David Armstrong (recently named one of Seattle's "50 Arts Movers and Shakers" by City Arts Magazine), the evening begins with "From Hit Play to New Musical: A Creative Chat with Jack Heifner & David Kirshenbaum, Authors of *Vanities*." Tracing 11 years in the lives of three young women growing up in Texas during the turbulent '60s and '70s, the play *Vanities* was an undisputed hit when it opened off-Broadway in 1976, and it quickly became the most produced play in the U.S. for most of the 1970s. Now this iconic exploration of female friendship has been given new life as a musical. Playwright Jack Heifner and composer-lyricist David Kirshenbaum will tell you more about their journey from spoken word to song, and you'll hear musical performances by Kirshenbaum and the cast of the show.

Then the focus shifts to *Next to Normal* in a section entitled "Local Boy Makes Good!" Armstrong will chat with Brian Yorkey, *Next To Normal's* Pulitzer Prize-winning author and Issaquah native, who developed the show while working at Village Theatre as an associate artistic director. *Rolling Stone* says this emotional story of a bi-polar mother and her stop/start struggle between coping and insanity "pushes Broadway in new directions." *The New York Times* calls *Next to Normal* "brave and breathtaking." Find out how this extraordinary show came to be, directly from the Pulitzer-Prize winning author himself.

Spotlight Night is one night only, 7:00 PM on Monday January 10. The event is free, but seating is limited so attendees must reserve their tickets. They can do so over the phone by calling 206-

625-1900/toll-free 888-5TH-4TIX (584-4849), in person at the box office at 1308 5th Avenue, Seattle, WA 98101, or online at 5thavenue.org.

Special thanks to The 5th's 2010-11 season co-sponsors Safeco Insurance and US Bank.

More about The 5th Avenue Theatre

Winner of two Tonys (for *Hairspray* and *Memphis*), The 5th Avenue Theatre is one of the nation's premier incubators for new musicals. In the past decade it has produced 10 world premiere musicals, six of which have gone on to Broadway productions, as well as producing contemporary and classic musicals lauded by critics and wildly popular with our audiences.

Unique in its Chinese-inspired design, this exquisite theater opened in 1926 as a venue for vaudeville and film. In 1980, the non-profit 5th Avenue Theatre began producing and presenting top-quality live musical theater. Today, under the leadership of Executive Producer and Artistic Director David Armstrong, Managing Director Bernie Griffin and Producing Director Bill Berry, The 5th Avenue Theatre attracts an annual attendance of more than 287,000 and ranks among the nation's largest and most respected musical theater companies.

In addition to its main stage productions, The 5th Avenue Theatre is also committed to encouraging the next generation of theatergoers through its extensive Educational Outreach Program which includes: The Adventure Musical Theatre Touring Company, The 5th Avenue High School Musical Theatre Awards, the Student Matinee Program, and Spotlight Nights. For more information about the Theatre, its season and its programs, please visit 5thavenue.org.

Please contact **John Longenbaugh**, Public Relations Manager, at **(206) 625-1418** with questions.

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