



For Immediate Release

Burnt Thicket Theatre's hit comedy production about depression *Every Brilliant Thing* is back by popular demand, playing at Alberta's Rosebud Theatre July 4 - August 30, 2025

SASKATOON, SK (June 30th, 2025) - Burnt Thicket Theatre is bringing their award-winning hit comedy about mental health ***Every Brilliant Thing*** back to Rosebud, Alberta, presented by Rosebud Theatre, all summer long. Alberta audiences will be captivated by Elizabeth Nepjuk in this astonishingly funny comedy about depression, gratitude, and the lengths we go to for those we love.

You're seven years old. Mum's in hospital. Dad says she's 'done something stupid'. She finds it hard to be happy. You start a list of everything brilliant about the world. Everything worth living for. 1. Ice Cream. 2. Roller Coasters. 3. Peeing in the lake and nobody knows... You leave it on her pillow. You know she's read it because she's corrected your spelling...

Twenty years and thousands of things later, the list takes on a life of its own. 116 audiences across western Canada have been enthralled by Burnt Thicket's rendition of this exhilarating, interactive solo performance that's like no other – a deep dive into emotional well-being through wit, wisdom and hilarity. Theatre's power to bring people together in loving respect is vividly alive in this play, undoing stigma around mental illness.

Elizabeth Nepjuk is an award-winning actor, producer, and emerging director, born and raised in Saskatoon, trained at the University of Saskatchewan and Vancouver Film School. "I'm thrilled to be a part of this iteration of ***Every Brilliant Thing***," says Nepjuk, "proud to be standing on the shoulders of giants, Jenna-Lee Hyde and Sarah Robertson," performers in Burnt Thicket's previous productions of the play.

Nepjuk has had career highlights on the stages of Dancing Sky Theatre, Persephone Theatre, Shakespeare On the Saskatchewan, many of the independent theatre companies in Treaty 6 territory, and as a founder of Saskatoon's women-led Ferre Play Theatre. "It has been deeply meaningful to be able to bring my understanding of the power of love and connection in grief to the rehearsal process of this incredible script," Nepjuk says, who also works as a certified end-of-life doula.

Since 2018 Burnt Thicket's previous productions of ***Every Brilliant Thing*** have sold out runs at Saskatoon's Live Five Theatre, Winterruption Festival, Regina's Globe Theatre, Calgary's Fire Exit Theatre, and Langley's Bez Arts Hub. It toured to 24 communities across Saskatchewan last season with the Organization of SK Arts Councils [OSAC], and over 3800 people experienced the play, including 1550 high school students.

Recipient of 2018 SATAward for Outstanding Leading Performance and nominations for Outstanding Production and Outstanding Direction, the show played in 2022 at Rosebud Theatre, where it returns for 9 weeks beginning July 3, 2025. Rosebud's recently retired Artistic Director Morris Ertman says, "Burnt Thicket's production is one of the most extraordinarily entertaining, funny, interactive, and emotionally uplifting plays I have ever seen."

"In a time when so many face mental health challenges, we're grateful to bring back this perceptive, whimsical narrative that speaks with realism and hope, says director Stephen Waldschmidt. "For seven years we've dreamed of bringing this story to smaller centres across the prairies, with talk-backs after every show. We're delighted to have done that in Saskatchewan with OSAC, and now in southern Alberta with Rosebud Theatre, supporting arts accessibility and mental health awareness for all."

Depression is the most common mental illness in Canada – and the most treatable, according to the Ontario Ministry of Health. Farmers face some of the highest suicide rates in the country and stigma about asking for help, according to the National Farmer Wellness Network, which launched a national farmer's crisis line earlier this year. "The storyteller's list of every brilliant thing touches people around the world with an invitation to cultivate joy," says Waldschmidt. "It shares the conviction that, while things may not always get brilliant, they will get better with one another's support – especially in mental health."

Productions of ***Every Brilliant Thing*** have been performed worldwide, as well as a film version on HBO. *The Guardian* called it, "Heart-wrenching, hilarious... one of the funniest plays you'll ever see, full stop." Here is what past audiences have said about Burnt Thicket's rendition:

"As someone who has been struggling with mental health and have attempted suicide [in the past], I found it amazing. My perspective has been altered." —Assiniboia patron

"I was blown away by the production and the performance. I hope you are selling out, you deserve to."
—Louis B. Hobson, Calgary Herald reviewer

"I was riveted by [Every Brilliant Thing]. The script and the performance were powerful. This experience transformed my understanding of what theatre can accomplish. Bravo and thank you!" —Rosie Perera

"Groundbreaking... it had a profound impact, generously educating about mental health, primarily suicide, and produced healing." —Wanita Bird, mental health & addiction counselor, Ahtahkakoop First Nation

"Do everything you can to see this fabulous play... 'Every Brilliant Thing' allowed us to enter a mystical space... [the performer] made us laugh so hard as she taught us, held us, loved us, encouraged us and gave us courage... I can't say enough about the experience..." —Bev Wilson

"I saw our audiences entertained, challenged and healed... This production was one of my favourite experiences in the theatre. Ever." —Val Lieske, Managing Artistic Director, Fire Exit Theatre, Calgary

Audience Advisory: This play contains discussions about severe depression and self-harm, not suitable for young children. Recommended for ages 14+.

For interviews or photos, please contact:

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Every Brilliant Thing

by Duncan Macmillan, with Johnny Donahoe
a Burnt Thicket Theatre production, presented by Rosebud Theatre

Creative Team:

Starring: Elizabeth Nepjuk
Directed by Stephen Waldschmidt
Sound Design & Music Direction by Tim Bratton
Scenic Design by Tim Bratton and Stephen Waldschmidt
Stage Management by Shelly-Ann Morgan

When & Where: July 4 - August 30, 2025 (Preview July 3)

at Rosebud Theatre in Rosebud, Alberta

Tickets & Venue Details:

Purchase tickets online at <https://www.rosebudtheatre.com/shows/brilliant>.

** All performances will be followed by an optional discussion with the audience and artists; some will include mental health professionals sharing their perspectives after seeing the show.

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About Burnt Thicket Theatre

Burnt Thicket Theatre is an independent company producing live theatre that brings awareness to real issues in the community, planting seeds for positive social change. The Saskatoon-based company tells stories that kindle hopeful change in people's lives, leading artists and audiences to live more intentionally for the common good. In 2012 Burnt Thicket Theatre produced the cross-Canada tour of *She Has a Name* that received critical acclaim and impacted audiences from Halifax to Victoria during its five-month tour. Their 116 performances of *Every Brilliant Thing* inspired honest conversation about suicide and emotional wellness for over 7000 people across western Canada. And *My Little Plastic Jesus* has provoked dialogue about religion, politics and identity in living rooms across the country from Vancouver Island to the shores of Lake Ontario. In 2021-2022 they produced two world premiere fiction podcast series of plays for the ear. The latest is *We Treaty People*, in which forty-nine Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists collaborated on nineteen episodes about truth and reconciliation, for which the company received the 2024 Leading Together Award from the Office of the Treaty Commissioner and the Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan, recognizing work with long-term impact towards reconciliation. They recently presented *New Blood: A Story Of Reconciliation* in partnership with Persephone Theatre and Gordon Tootoosis Nikaniwin Theatre, and just closed the Saskatchewan premiere of *The Unplugging* by Yvette Nolan as part of Live Five's 21st Season. burntthicket.com

Burnt Thicket's Sponsors of this production:



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