

a Presentation of BURNT THICKET THEATRE

Every Brilliant Thing

by Duncan Macmillan
with Jonny Donahoe

ROSEBUD
& THEATRE
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Something
DIFFERENT



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July 4 – August 30, 2025

Rosebud Studio Stage

Thursdays – Saturdays @ 4:30pm

Every Brilliant Thing

by Duncan Macmillan
with Jonny Donahoe

a Presentation of the Burnt Thicket Theatre Production

The show runs approximately 80 minutes with no intermission

Cast

Storyteller **ELIZABETH NEPJUK***

Artistic Personnel

Director/Scenic Co-designer/
Scenic Artist/Lighting Adaptor **STEPHEN WALDSCHMIDT**
Sound Designer/Scenic Co-Designer **TIM BRATTON**
Stage Manager **JULIET ALEXANDER‡**

** The participation of this Artist is arranged by permission of Canadian Actors' Equity Association under the provisions of the Dance·Opera·Theatre Policy.*

‡ Indicates a current student of Rosebud School of the Arts.

Every Brilliant Thing was first produced by Paines Plough and Pentabus Theatre, on 28 June 2013 at Ludlow Fringe Festival. The play had its North American premiere at Barrow Street Theatre, New York, on 6 December 2014, where it was presented by Barrow Street Theatre and Jean Doumanian Productions

Video and/or audio recording of this performance by any means whatsoever are strictly prohibited.

Content Advisory: Every Brilliant Thing contains mature themes, including depression, self-harm, and suicide. Viewer discretion is advised.

About Burnt Thicket Theatre

Burnt Thicket Theatre's mission is to tell stories that kindle hopeful change in people's lives — learn more at burntthicket.com. As of June 2025, their productions of Every Brilliant Thing have been seen by over 7000 people across western Canada, including over 1550 high school students, in:

- 2018 at Saskatoon's Live Five Theatre and Calgary's Fire Exit Theatre;
- 2020 at Regina's Globe Theatre and Saskatoon's Winterruption Festival;
- 2022 for 8 weeks at Rosebud Theatre;
- 2023 at Bez Arts Hub in Langley, BC
- 2024 in Saskatoon and 2-week tour to high schools across Saskatchewan
- 2025 5-week tour to 19 cities and towns across Saskatchewan

Executive Director's Note

Welcome to the Rosebud Studio Stage, where you can often find *something a little different*. *Every Brilliant Thing* is an extraordinary story full of hope and warmth, while dealing with some very difficult things in life that touch so many of us.

We invite you join us as the Storyteller takes us on a journey of one way to overcome some of life's most difficult challenges. Joy and gratitude are powerful allies.

Thank you for being part of the Rosebud Story. The journey means nothing without you. —Paul Muir



Artistic Director's Note

Every Brilliant Thing is a celebration of the little things that make life worth living. It is about the miracles that exist in everyday life, and a reminder that human connection can be an anchor in difficult times. My wish is that each of you walks away from today's performance feeling uplifted and a little more prepared to find light in the darkness. —Craig Hall



Director's Note

Some stories are just so much fun, so meaningful, that you can't help sharing them over and over. We're so grateful to bring *Every Brilliant Thing* back to Rosebud Theatre, after touring it to 24 cities and towns across Saskatchewan in 2024-2025.

Neuropsychologist Rick Hanson says our brains are like velcro for negative thoughts – they stick due to the brain's natural bias—but our brains are like teflon for joyful thoughts, which tend to slide away. We can choose to hold on to a positive thought or experience, and if we savour it consciously for at least fifteen seconds, it will 'imprint' from short-term to long-term memory.



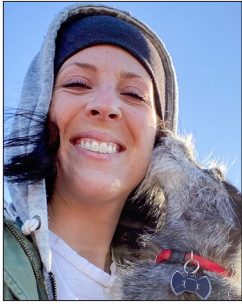
Psychotherapist Hilary Jacobs Hendel teaches a process called The Change Triangle. Instead of avoiding intense emotions (which can leave us stuck, triggered by those blocked feelings), this approach welcomes and fully processes emotions, allowing us to receive the many gifts they offer, like helpful information and even healing from trauma.

Repeating these kinds of mindfulness over time increases the neural pathways connected with positive experiences. And that grows our capacity for emotional well-being, deep connection with others, and resiliency when facing mental health challenges (which 1 in 3 Canadians experience over their lifetime).

This play cultivates joy without ignoring pain. My breathing is often hampered by anxiety about imagined futures and desolation about the past, but the surprising gift of gratitude in the present is like pure oxygen. To me this story is like a guide walking us through the valley of the shadow and into hope, except the path is actually a hilariously wild rollercoaster.

I pray your experience here generates real, healing connections with the people in your community, and contributes to ending stigma about mental illness in Canada. May you be surprised and inspired by *Every Brilliant Thing*. Buckle up!

Thank you for joining us. —Stephen Waldschmidt



ELIZABETH NEPJUK (*Storyteller*) Elizabeth is an award-winning actor, born and raised in Saskatoon. She is a graduate of Vancouver Film School's acting program and holds her BFA from the University of Saskatchewan. Liz has had a number of career highlights on the stages of Dancing Sky Theatre (*With Glowing Hearts*), Persephone Theatre (*The Gravitational Pull of Bernice Trimble*, *WROL*, *The Revolutionists*), and Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan (*Hamlet*, *J. Caesar*). Most recently, they can be seen on Season 2 of *The Feather News* on APTN Lumi. Elizabeth is thrilled to be a part of this iteration of *Every Brilliant Thing*, and proud to be standing on the shoulders of giants (JL+S).

ARTISTIC PERSONNEL



STEPHEN WALDSCHMIDT (*Director/Scenic Co-Designer/Scenic Artist/Lighting Adaptor*) Stephen works as a director, actor and designer on Treaty 6 Territory in Saskatoon. Directing credits with BTT: *Evergreen*, *Tied In Knots*, *My Little Plastic Jesus*, *We Are the Body*, *She Has A Name*; selected scenic design: Rosebud's *The Secret Garden*, *Jake & The Kid*, and *Damien*; selected acting: Persephone's *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*; Rosebud's *The Road to Mecca*; Pacific Theatre's *Chickens*; and Jesus in *The Canadian Badlands Passion Play*. Stephen studied theology and fine arts at Regent College after a BFA in drama at UCalgary. Thanks go to Creator, this show's creative team and those that shaped BTT's production since 2018, the community of artists in Rosebud, Kirsten, Caleb, Asher, Eden, Andy, and Jenell.



TIM BRATTON (*Sound Designer/Scenic Co-Designer/Music Arranger*) Based in Saskatoon, SK, Tim is a theatre professional who works as a sound designer, actor, dramaturge, playwright, and director. Tim also serves as the Artistic Associate for Burnt Thicket Theatre. Tim's sound design credits include *This Is How We Got Here* (Persephone); *The Tragedy of Richard II*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *As You Like It*, *Cymbeline* (Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan); *Lear* (Never Never Shakespeare, GTNT, & La Troupe du Jour); *Every Brilliant Thing*, *Evergreen*, *The Unplugging* and the acclaimed audio drama series *We Treaty People* (Burnt Thicket Theatre). Tim lives in Saskatoon with his lovely wife, Amy, and their two very active kids.



JULIET ALEXANDER (*Stage Manager*) Juliet is pleased to be a member of the crew for this production. She is a third-year student in the Rosebud School of the Arts Mentorship Program in Acting. Juliet enjoys learning new skills in a variety of areas. Design and Props credits: *Proof* (Leonard's Corner Productions), *An Act of Mercy* (A Sheep in Wolfskin Productions), and *Agape* (Incendiary Festival).

Playwright

DUNCAN MACMILLAN (*Playwright*) Plays include *People, Places and Things* (2015-2017, National Theatre/Wyndham's Theatre, West End); 1984, adapted from George Orwell (2013-2017, Headlong/Nottingham Playhouse Theatre Company, West End, Broadway, international tours, co-adapted/co-directed with Rob Icke); *Every Brilliant Thing* (2013-2017, Paines Plough/Pentabus Theatre, Edinburgh Festival, UK and international tours, HBO); *City of Glass*, adapted from Paul Auster (2017, 59 Productions, HOME, and Lyric Hammersmith); *2071*, co-written with Chris Rapley (2014-2015, The Royal Court/Hamburg Schauspielhaus); *The Forbidden Zone* (2014-2016, Salzburg Festival and Schaubühne Berlin); *Wunschloses Unglück*, adapted from Peter Handke (2014, Burgtheater Vienna); *Reise Durich Die Nacht*, adapted from Friederike Mayröcker (2012-2014, Schauspiel Köln, Festival d'Avignon, Theatertreffen); *Lungs* (2011-2016, Paines Plough and Sheffield Theatres/Studio Theatre, Washington, DC); and *Monster* (2006, Royal Exchange Theatre).



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Resources in Our Community

Mental health is more than the absence of a mental health condition or illness: it is a positive sense of well-being, or the capacity to enjoy life and deal with the challenges we face. Below you will find information and resources to help face the challenges to mental health in daily life.

FINDING HELP

Some people worry about asking for help because there can be stigma around mental health problems. They may believe that asking for help means admitting that something is wrong. Some people worry about how others might see them. Asking for help means that you want to make changes or take steps towards your new health goals. We should celebrate the courage it takes to speak up and make changes. Getting help is part of recovery.

BUILDING YOUR TEAM

The first steps may be the toughest, but knowing where to look for help is a good start. Here are good places to begin building your team:

- ◇ Talk with supportive friends and family. Share your feelings with them and let them be part of your team.
- ◇ Talk to your family doctor. They are a great resource and can link you to other professionals, if needed.
- ◇ Connect with community mental health clinics or organizations like the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) for information, support, and services.
- ◇ Call a help line. Some organizations also offer support online or through text messaging.
- ◇ Learn more about mental health. You can find useful books, websites, and other resources through your provincial or territorial government and community agencies.
- ◇ Connect with others who have personal experience with a mental illness and learn more about their recovery journey.
- ◇ Attend workshops and education sessions hosted at community centres, agencies, schools, colleges or universities.
- ◇ Talk with a member or leader you trust from your faith or cultural group.

HELP LINES

988 Suicide Crisis Helpline

(24/7 Canada-wide)
Call or Text 9-8-8 • [TalkSuicide.ca](https://talksuicide.ca) or 988.ca

Healthline 811

(24/7 Canada-wide)
Call 8-1-1 (translation in 100+ languages)

Kids Help Phone

(24/7 Canada-wide)
Call 1-800-668-6868 / Text 68686
[KidsHelpPhone.ca](https://kidshelpphone.ca)

Trans Lifeline

1-877-330-6366 • [TransLifeline.org](https://translifeline.org)

Indigenous Hope for Wellness Helpline

(24/7 Canada-wide) Call 1-855-242-3310
[HopeForWellness.ca](https://hopeforwellness.ca) (with online chat)

National Farmer Crisis Line

(24/7 Canada-wide) Call 1-866-FARMS01

Free Rapid Access Counseling

(AB-wide) 1-877-244-2360 • [racalberta.ca](https://rac.alberta.ca)

Canadian Mental Health Association AB

(780) 482-6576 • alberta.cmha.ca

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