

The hit comedy about depression
on tour across Saskatchewan!

BURNT THICKET THEATRE

EVERY BRILLIANT THING

By Duncan Macmillan, with Johnny Donahoe
Featuring Elizabeth Nepjuk

You're 7 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. A mind-blowingly funny comedy about depression and the lengths we go to for those we love.

"Heart-wrenching, hilarious...one of the funniest plays you'll ever see, full stop. 4 STARS!" -The Guardian

MARCH 17-APRIL 17, 2025 SASK TOUR

BURNTTHICKET.COM

See the *Burnt Thicket* production that's sold out theatres in Saskatoon, Regina, Calgary, Rosebud, and Langley!

Audience Advisory: Contains discussions about severe depression, not suitable for young children. Ages 14+ Photos of Elizabeth Nepjuk and background by David Stobbe.

Biggar Mar 17 / Preeceville Mar 19
Tisdale Mar 20 / Regina Mar 22
Melfort Mar 24 / La Ronge Mar 25
Yorkton Mar 27 / Indian Head Mar 28
Weyburn Mar 31 / Estevan Apr 1
Assiniboia Apr 2 / Shaunavon Apr 4
North Battleford Apr 8 / Prince Albert
Apr 9 / Rosthern Apr 10 / Hudson Bay
Apr 11 / Swift Current Apr 14 /
Macklin Apr 16 / Humboldt Apr 17

Presented by the
Organization of
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BURNT THICKET THEATRE

Burnt Thicket Theatre tells stories that kindle hopeful change in people's lives. We create theatre events that give audiences a visceral immersion in another human being's lived experience – that “walking in someone else's shoes” is a central part of theatre's power. We believe in empowering artists to make new work; most of our productions are the fruit of script development processes.

Created in 2007 in Calgary, we moved to Saskatoon in 2017 and have performed in 56 cities across Canada. Our 2012 *She Has a Name* national tour impacted audiences from Halifax to Victoria with the struggle against human trafficking. Our productions of *My Little Plastic Jesus* have inspired honest conversation about faith and politics in living rooms from Vancouver Island to the shores of Lake Ontario. In 2021-2022 we produced two fiction podcast series of world premiere plays for the ear. The latest is *We Treaty People*, in which 49 Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists collaborated on 18 episodes exploring truth and reconciliation, now playing on our website and podcast platforms. We recently presented two SK premieres: *New Blood*, which blends the music of Peter Gabriel and Blackfoot tradition to tell Chief Vincent Yellow Old Woman's healing journey, in partnership with Persephone Theatre and Gordon Tootoosis Nikaniwin Theatre; and *The Unplugging* by Yvette Nolan, as part of Live Five's 21st Season this winter.

We believe the sharing of stories that bring awareness and plant seeds for positive social change matters greatly. It only happens through the collaborative faith and effort of a host of artists, donors, sponsors, and supporters, beyond those listed here.

BTT Staff: Brooklynn Bitner (Marketing Associate), Tim Bratton (Artistic Associate), Katie Matheson (Bookkeeper), Ed Mendez (General Manager), Rebecca Spilchak (Community Engagement Associate), Stephen Waldschmidt (Artistic Director)



Acknowledging These Lands

The beautiful lands on which we're performing are the traditional meeting grounds and homelands of many First Nations, including the Cree, Saulteaux, Dene, Nakota Sioux, Niitsitapi, Anishinaabeg, Oji-Cree, and Assiniboine, as well as the Homeland of the Métis – lands that are also known as Treaty Six territory, Treaty Four territory, and Treaty Two territory. There are many other First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples that call these lands home today. We are all Treaty People. It's a good habit we have to acknowledge where we are, and to honour the Indigenous spirit of the treaties, where treaty creates ties of kinship, of belonging together on the land, with commitments of reciprocity and mutual cooperation. But let this be more than words, let us invite you to join us as we lean into the work of learning and reconciliation, coming together in a good way with everyone here, especially in our relations with those who have called this place home since time immemorial. We're grateful for the opportunity to create and perform here, understanding that these places have a rich, living history of Indigenous arts and culture.

EVERY BRILLIANT THING

By Duncan Macmillan, with Johnny Donahoe
Featuring Elizabeth Nepjuk

a Burnt Thicket Theatre production

March 17 - April 17, 2025 Saskatchewan tour presented by OSAC

Cast

Elizabeth Nepjuk* - Storyteller

Creative Team

Stephen Waldschmidt - Director, Scenic Co-Designer & Artist, Lighting

Tim Bratton - Sound Designer & Scenic Co-Designer

Sam Fairweather* - Stage Manager

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. EVERY BRILLIANT THING is presented by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc., New York.

Audience Advisory: This play contains discussions about severe depression, not suitable for young children. Recommended for ages 14+. Video and/or audio recording of this performance by any means whatsoever are strictly prohibited.

*The participation of these Artists is arranged by permission of Canadian Actors' Equity Association under the provisions of the Dance Opera Theatre Policy (DOT).

Burnt Thicket sends special thanks to:

Our sponsors: SK Arts, Organization of Saskatchewan Arts Councils (OSAC), Canada Council for the Arts; school tour sponsors Dakota Dunes Community Development Corporation and Élisabeth Foucault Fund for Youth Theatre; Creative Saskatchewan, Stobbe Photo (cover image), Riversdale Neighbours Church, College Park Covenant Church, and Globe Printers;

Skip Taylor, Marianne Woods & OSAC staff; all the local Arts Councils hosting the show (Biggar, Preeceville, Tisdale, Regina, Melfort, La Ronge, Yorkton, Indian Head, Weyburn, Estevan, Assiniboia, Shaunavon, North Battleford, Prince Albert, Rosthern, Hudson Bay, Swift Current, Macklin, & Humboldt); house technicians in every venue; Dave Fairweather, Scott Butler, On the Boards Staging Company, Sum Theatre, Char Adrian, Nathan Siebert, Soren Siebert; previous creative team artists Sarah Robertson, Jenna-Lee Hyde, Charlie Peters, Mackenzie Dason, Alana Freistadt, Elizabeth Schieman; supporters of our past productions of this play, especially Bez Arts Hub, Rosebud Theatre, Live Five Theatre, Fire Exit Theatre, Globe Theatre, Winterruption Saskatoon, Krista Marushy, Val Lieske, Morris Ertman, Ruth Smillie, SHA Mental Health & Addiction Services, and Canadian Mental Health Association; our Board Members: Jessica Isaak, Grant Schroeder, Adam Bourassa, Brendan Andrews, Rod Schellenberg, Arnolda Dufour Bowes, and Marilou Mowchenko; and our generous donors, whose support allows us to create theatre that matters.

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* to 24 communities across Saskatchewan this season through OSAC's partnership.

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 leaves us stuck, triggered by those blocked feelings), Hendel's approach welcomes them, allowing us receive the many gifts emotions 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, artistic director, Burnt Thicket Theatre

Know someone in Saskatchewan or Alberta who'd like to see this show?

***Every Brilliant Thing* - the Saskatchewan tour** - presented by OSAC

SK Tour: Mar 17-Apr 17, 2025 tickets: [BurntThicket.com](https://burntthicket.com)

Performance locations: Assiniboia, Biggar, Estevan, Hudson Bay, Humboldt, Indian Head, La Ronge, Macklin, Melfort, North Battleford, Preeceville, Prince Albert, Regina, Rosthern, Shaunavon, Swift Current, Tisdale, Weyburn, & Yorkton.



Rosebud Theatre (AB): Jul 3-Aug 30, 2025 tickets: [RosebudTheatre.com](https://rosebudtheatre.com)

Burnt Thicket Theatre's productions of *Every Brilliant Thing* received the SATAward for Outstanding Leading Performance (Jenna-Lee Hyde), was nominated for Outstanding Production and Outstanding Direction, played in 2018 and 2020 at Live Five Theatre and Winterruption Festival (Saskatoon), Globe Theatre (Regina), and Fire Exit Theatre (Calgary). This production was also featured at Rosebud Theatre in 2022, where it played all summer, in 2023 at Bez Arts Hub in Langley, BC, and last fall in high schools across SK and Saskatoon.

Artist Bios



Elizabeth Nepjuk - Storyteller

Elizabeth Nepjuk is an award-winning actor and producer, and emerging director, born and raised in Saskatoon. She holds her BFA in Acting from the University of Saskatchewan and is a graduate of Vancouver Film School's Acting for Film & TV Program. Liz has had a number of their career highlights on the stages of Dancing Sky Theatre, Persephone Theatre, and the Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan Festival, as well as with many of the incredible independent theatre companies in Treaty 6 territory. They have been proud to serve on the board of directors for Live Five Independent Theatre, Dancing Sky, and as a founder of Saskatoon's women-led Ferre Play Theatre. After receiving certification from Douglas College in BC in 2022, Elizabeth has embarked upon a concurrent career as a Death Doula and is establishing their practice in their hometown. It has been deeply meaningful to be able to bring her understanding of the power of love and connection in grief to the rehearsal process of this incredible script. 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).



Tim Bratton - Sound Designer, Set Co-designer

Tim is a Saskatoon-based actor, playwright, and sound designer who serves as the Artistic Associate for Burnt Thicket Theatre. With a broad range of training and experience in both theatre and theology, Tim is committed to telling stories that help us make sense of life. You may have seen Tim on stage in productions such as *My Little Plastic Jesus* (which he also wrote), *Evergreen* and *We Are the Body* (BTT), *The Curst and The Fourth Wiseman* (Dancing Sky); *Long Day's Journey Into Night* (Theatre Naught); *Cymbeline* (Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan); *Miss Bennet, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, *Boeing Boeing*, *Pride & Prejudice*, and *Art* (Persephone); or as Jesus in *Godspell* (Pacific Theatre). He is the sound designer and audio editor behind *We Treaty People*, Burnt Thicket's fiction podcast of audio plays, and designed sound for shows like *Romeo & Juliet*, and *As You Like It* (Shakespeare on the SK), and *This Is How We Got Here* (Persephone). Tim lives in Saskatoon with his lovely wife, Amy, and their two very active young children.



Sam Fairweather - Stage Manager

6,213. being able to share this amazing piece of art with people all across your home province
14,997. being able to live your dream as a full time actor, stage manager, educator, and creator
45,952. having Pippa the dog and Enzo the cat and Scoot the human waiting at the door when you come home from tour.
118,745. small town bakeries

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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).



Stephen Waldschmidt - Director, Scenic Co-Designer

Stephen is grateful to work as a theatre artist and A.D. of Burnt Thicket Theatre. Directing credits include BTT's *My Little Plastic Jesus*, *Evergreen*, *We Are the Body*, and the national tour of *She Has a Name*. Acting credits include *The Resistable Rise of Arturo Ui* (Persephone), *Road to Mecca*, *Tent Meeting* (Rosebud Theatre), *Chickens*, *The Clearing*

(Pacific Theatre), and the role of Jesus in *The Canadian Badlands Passion Play*. He recently designed the set for BTT's SK premiere of *The Unplugging* by Yvette Nolan, and wrote *Land*, an audio play for BTT's fiction podcast *We Treaty People*. Stephen has a masters in fine arts and theology from Regent College and a BFA in drama from U. of Calgary. He sends thanks to Kirsten (his wife and best friend), to his three delightful children, to this creative team for their collaboration and beautiful work, and dedicates this play in memory of his dad, David (1949-2025).



Help us create more theatre that kindles hopeful change!



We do our best to keep ticket prices affordable for everyone, but it means ticket revenues only cover up to half our expenses. We're able to tell stories that matter through generous support from private donors like you. Would you play-it-forward?

Donate securely online at: burntthicket.com/get-involved

Or send an e-transfer to donate@burntthicket.com, or a cheque payable to Burnt Thicket Theatre, 50 Neilson Crescent, Saskatoon, SK, S7H 3N5. Our CRA Charitable Registration number is 820034635RR0001. Thank you for your consideration!

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://www.talksuicide.ca) or [988.ca](https://www.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://www.kidshelpphone.ca)

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

MORE SUPPORT

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

Farm Stress Line (SK-wide) 1-800-667-4442

Free Rapid Access Counseling
[counsellingconnectsask.ca](https://www.counsellingconnectsask.ca) (SK-wide)

Canadian Mental Health Association SK
306-525-5601
[sk.cmha.ca](https://www.sk.cmha.ca)

Playwright's Note

Every Brilliant Thing is a collaboration between myself, George Perrin and Jonny Donahoe. It is an adaptation of my short story 'Sleeve Notes', originally written for the Miniaturists and performed by Rosie Thomson at Southwark Playhouse, Theatre503 and the Union Theatre and by myself at Trafalgar Studios, the Old Red Lion and Village Underground, by Gugu Mbatha-Raw at 93 Feet East and by various people at the Latitude Festival. George and I worked for over a decade to turn it into a full-length play. During this time it has been through several incarnations, including an installation created by Paul Burgess and Simon Daw for Scale Project. This particular incarnation was developed with Paines Plough and Pentabus with support from Anne McMeehan and Jim Roberts. The play wouldn't exist were it not for George's persistence, his enthusiasm for the story and his openness to work in an entirely new way.

It also owes a particular debt to Jonny Donahoe who, drawing on his experience as a stand-up comedian, found ways to tell the story and use the audience that George and I couldn't have conceived of. By its nature, the play is different every night and, as such, Jonny essentially co-authored the play while performing it.

This text was published after two years of devising, several trial performances around the UK, runs in Edinburgh and London and a four-month run at the Barrow Street Theatre in NYC. It has been filtered through Jonny's interactions with hundreds of audiences. I've provided footnotes throughout to explain certain aspects of the play in performance and to give examples of some of the things that have happened unexpectedly.

–Duncan Macmillan

From *Duncan Macmillan: Plays One* (anthology), published by Oberon Books (2016), page 283

About OSAC

The Organization of Saskatchewan Arts Councils (OSAC) acts as an umbrella for community arts councils and schools across the province. Across Saskatchewan, we bring people and the arts together. In more than 80 towns and cities, local arts councils and schools are keeping the arts alive. Thanks to their efforts, those communities enjoy live musical and theatre performances, visual art exhibitions, workshops, and special events.

In the 2023/2024 season, OSAC presented 170 performances by 39 different artists in 35 communities. The School Touring Program offered in-person presentations involving the following disciplines: Music with a Science Component, Cultural Diversity and Awareness, Hoop Dance and Storytelling. The total audience numbers were approximately 25,568 students and teachers. There were four tours, involving 74 schools and travelling to 52 communities throughout the province. Lead teachers in each school contributed approximately 107 non-classroom hours to coordinate these presentations. Fifteen visual and media arts exhibitions toured 57 venues throughout the province and were viewed by over 42,000 people, including approximately 590 tours. Out of the total number of viewers, roughly 1710 people participated in exhibition programming, which included artist talks, hands-on or informational workshops, gallery receptions, and events.

OSAC is a member based eligible provincial cultural organization, funded by Saskatchewan Lotteries. Sask Lotteries is celebrating 50 years as the main fundraiser for more than 12,000 sport, culture and recreation groups in communities across the province! Since 1974, through an agreement with the Government of Saskatchewan, lottery sales in SK have been used to provide more than \$1.4 billion to support athletes from the grassroots level to the international stage, connect youth to artistic experiences, help residents experience the beauty of the parks that cover the province and so much more. Learn more about lottery beneficiaries, as well as games, jackpots, winning numbers and more at sasklotteries.ca.

OSAC's work and support reach lands covered by Treaties 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 10, the traditional lands of the Cree, Dakota, Dene, Lakota, Nakota, and Saulteaux peoples, as well as the homeland of the Métis.



WE TREATY PEOPLE

18 episodes of digital audio plays and interviews by a diverse group of 49 artists exploring the question, "What does it mean to embrace all our relations?" **Captivating, unsettling, refreshing.**

Recipient of the 2024 **Leading Together Award** from the Office of the Treaty Commissioner and the Multicultural Council of SK, recognizing work with long-term impact towards reconciliation.

Listen on all podcast apps or at:

[BurntThicket.com](https://www.burntthicket.com)

Gratefully created on Treaty Six territory & the traditional homeland of the Métis

BURNT THICKET THEATRE

THE YARD
WITH THE
OLD PLOW

by Shanda Stefanson

BURNT THICKET THEATRE

FLAG

by Yvette Nolan

BURNT THICKET THEATRE

YOU SAID WE'D BE TOGETHER FOREVER

by Amanda Trapp

BURNT THICKET THEATRE

DO YOU REMEMBER?

by Joelle Peters

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REMNANCE

by Curtis Peeteetuce

BURNT THICKET THEATRE

THE FINAL INQUIRY

by Donna-Michelle St. Bernard

BURNT THICKET THEATRE

TAKEN BEFORE BIRTH

by Jennifer Dawn Bishop

BURNT THICKET THEATRE

COFFEE TALK

by Marcel Petit

BURNT THICKET THEATRE

LAND

by Stephen Waldschmidt