

# EVERY *Brilliant* THING

By **Duncan Macmillan** with **Jonny Donahoe** | Directed by **Terrence J. Nolen**

**April 12 - May 5, 2019 | Stiemke Studio**

## TEACHER GUIDE

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### ACTIVITIES FOR TEACHING & LEARNING

1. Mental Health Awareness
2. Adaptation
3. Immersive Theater

This Teacher's Guide is designed to be used in the classroom along with The Rep's PlayGuide for *Every Brilliant Thing*. These are some suggested activities for your classroom. The PlayGuide is available online at <https://www.milwaukeeep.com/Tickets-Events/201819-Season/Every-Brilliant-Thing/Every-Brilliant-Thing-PlayGuide/>

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Did you think that the style of the play addressed the themes of the play in an appropriate and effective way? Why or why not?
2. How does your family impact the way you see the world? The way you see yourself?
3. How has mental health personally impacted your life? What strategies have you or others used to help cope with mental health issues?
4. How does the music you listen to express who you are, your thoughts, or your emotions? Share examples with your classmates.
5. How did you first learn about death or mortality? How has your understanding of this concept changed as you have grown?
6. What lists do you make or deal with in your life? Has a list ever been helpful? What lists do you ignore? Why?



*Scott Greer in Every Brilliant Thing. Photo: Ashley Smith, Wide Eyed Studios.*

### WHAT'S ON YOUR LIST?

Have students complete the "What's on Your List?" activity in the PlayGuide. After each student has completed their list, have them create an artistic representation of the items on their lists. A collage, painting, interpretive movement piece, or any variety of other options could be a great way to represent their list. Encourage students to share their lists with other classmates or their community through their art.

### MENTAL HEALTH AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Have students read the section in the PlayGuide about mental health statistics or have them look at mental health statistics at [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org). Lead a discussion with students about the impact of mental health on their own lives.

\*Make sure to establish guidelines for the discussion so all students feel safe talking about such sensitive subjects. Enlisting your school counselor, psychologist, or social worker to aid in this discussion and guidelines would be an excellent resource.

After discussion, have students research mental health resources in your community. Students should work in groups to create a campaign to share these resources with other students and community members. Students can create a poster campaign, podcast, social media campaign, daily announcements, or any other ideas they may have to spread the word.

### ADAPTING FOR THE STAGE

Read playwright Duncan Macmillan's short story, "Sleeve Notes," at the following URL: <https://www.atthekitchentable.com/sleeve-notes/> or watch a YouTube video of someone performing it as a monologue.

Create a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting the short story/monologue and the play. Which was more effective for you as an audience member/reader? Why? Discuss as a class.

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## IMMERSIVE THEATER

Read the article in the PlayGuide about immersive theater, or do some additional research on the internet, watch some videos, or attend another immersive theater experience.

In small groups, have students create a plan for their own immersive theater experience. Depending on your class structure and available time, you could develop these plans into a full-scale production for presentation to the community or your school.

Encourage students to think about the following questions as they plan:

1. What is the theme of your performance piece?
2. What technical/space requirements are needed to make it effective?
3. In what ways will your performance be immersive?
4. What do you want the audience to experience/get out of the performance?
5. What elements of *Every Brilliant Thing* and the other shows you have read about/researched could be adapted for your performance piece?

## MUSIC AS A COMMUNICATION TOOL

In the play, the protagonist understands his father's emotional state based on the music he is playing and responds accordingly. Music also serves as a connection between the members of the family in the play.

Have students choose a theme or idea they would like to communicate through music or even a story they would like to tell. Perhaps they could find inspiration in some of the themes in the play.

After students have chosen their theme, they may express their theme in two ways: 1) Create an original song that conveys that idea in a direct or more subtle way or 2) Create a playlist that expresses the idea that they wish to share with their audience. Students may share their songs or playlists with small groups or the entire class.



Scott Greer in performance of *Every Brilliant Thing*. Photo: Ashley Smith, Wide Eyed Studios.



### Contact Us:

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## MILWAUKEE REP EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

The Education Department offers backstage tours, pre- and post-show workshops and classroom residencies.

### For questions or to schedule a workshop, please contact:

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[www.MilwaukeeRep.com](http://www.MilwaukeeRep.com) | 414-224-9490

### Standards

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1** Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.6** Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.9** Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.7** Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment (e.g., Auden's "Musée des Beaux Arts" and Breughel's *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus*).

**NCAS Anchor Standard #7:** Perceive and analyze artistic work.

**NCAS Anchor Standard #1:** Generate and conceptualize artistic work.

**NCAS Anchor Standard #10:** Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experience to make art.

**WI SEL Competency #23.9-10:** Learners will be able to advocate for their needs and the needs of others by utilizing educational and community support networks.

**WI SEL Competency #24.9-10:** Learners will be able to independently create an action plan that addresses real needs in the classroom, school, and community.

## PROGRAMS IN THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT RECEIVE GENEROUS FUNDING FROM:

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