



Adelaide Theatre Guide

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Supporting live theatre in South Australia

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EVERY BRILLIANT THING

Adelaide Festival

Space Theatre

Until 18 March

Review by Maggie Wood

"Every Brilliant Thing" is billed as a play about the lengths you go to for those we love. It is certainly that and a lot more.

It's the story of one boy who deals with his mother's suicide attempts in various ways, with the first time he dealt with it being the most successful. At seven years old he begins to make a list for her of every brilliant thing in the world, in the naïve hope that it will remind her of why she should live rather than die.

Of course ice cream, Kung Fu movies and laughing so hard you shoot milk out of your nose only go so far in tackling clinical depression, but the list begins to take on a life of its own.

It becomes a defiant ode, a shout to childlike joy and playfulness in the face of darkness and in a family context where feeling joyful is much too scary, because what comes after the phase of joy is terrifying.

James Rowland relates his character's tale with the help of, eventually, the entire audience, and you cannot help but be caught up in his story when you are playing a part in it from your chair.

This entrancing piece of theatre is important because in the midst of all the dark and dismal ways of the world we are not only reminded of, but caught up in, the simple childlike states of play and pure joy, existing for its own sake.

It's a place we can always go to, when we remember that it is there.

For the play's character, his list of every brilliant thing became a theme for life, a shield to help push back its messiness and heartbreak, and a beacon to light the way back to the path when lost.

It's a superb show with artistry, skill, heart and bongo drums. What more could you want?