

CENTER REPERTORY COMPANY PRESENTS
HEART-WRENCHING AND HILARIOUS HIT SOLO SHOW

EVERY BRILLIANT THING

By Duncan Macmillan with Jonny Donahoe

Directed by Jeffrey Lo

Starring William Thomas Hodgson

January 6-28, 2024 (*opening night: January 9*)

LESHER CENTER FOR THE ARTS, WALNUT CREEK

WALNUT CREEK, CA (30 November 2023) — **Center Repertory Company** will ring in the new year with the remarkable, resplendent hit solo performance *Every Brilliant Thing*. Making a list of things that make life worth living would get different responses, and what would be at the top? Ice cream? Family? The even-numbered Star Trek films? For the lead character in this uplifting show, it's his mother. This surprising and immersive theatrical experience by **Duncan Macmillan** and **Jonny Donahoe** delves into the human experience with playfulness and love. With poignant humor and joy, *Every Brilliant Thing* takes audiences on a journey through favorite moments such as falling in love, as well as grief, healing, and (re)discovering all that life has to give. Directed by celebrated Bay Area director **Jeffrey Lo** and starring Oakland Theater Project Co-Artistic Director **William Thomas Hodgson**, the story is filled with opportunities for warm, fun audience participation. *Every Brilliant Thing* will perform **January 6-28, 2024** at the Lesher Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Dr, Walnut Creek. For tickets (\$35-\$40) and more information, the public may visit LesherArtsCenter.org or call the box office at **(925) 943-7469** (*open Wed-Sun, 12:00pm-6:00pm*).

Center REP offers Pay What You Can tickets (suggested price of \$25) for the January 6-14 performances of *Every Brilliant Thing*, increasing access to theatre and inviting audiences to see the show at whatever price they can afford. ASL interpretation for deaf and hard of hearing patrons is offered at the 7:30 pm performance on Saturday, January 13, 2023.

Premiering at Ludlow Fringe Festival then performing Off-Broadway at Barrow Street Theatre where it was filmed for HBO, *Every Brilliant Thing* was deemed a “heart-wrenching, hilarious play” by *The Guardian* and *Time Out London* lauded it as “gloriously funny and exceptionally warm.” *The Independent* said the work “finds a perfect balance between conveying the struggles of life, and

celebrating all that is sweet in it.” *The New York Times* called ***Every Brilliant Thing*** “captivating,” while *Theatrely* heralded it as “a theatrical gem that seamlessly blends impactful storytelling with audience interaction, creating an unforgettable and immersive experience.”

Oakland Theater Project Co-Artistic Director and Bay Area theatre veteran **William Thomas Hodgson** makes his Center REP stage debut with this tour de force solo performance. Hodgson served as the movement director for last season’s *Red Bike*. He has appeared onstage at theatres including La Jolla Playhouse, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, Shotgun Players, Oakland Theater Project, Mixed Blood Theatre, and Berkeley Playhouse.

Every Brilliant Thing features sound design by **Gregory Robinson**, lighting design by **Spenser Matubang**, and props design by **Alyssa Tryon**.

Duncan Macmillan’s (Playwright) plays include *People, Places and Things*; *Every Brilliant Thing*; *City of Glass*; *Rosmersholm*; *The Forbidden Zone*; *Wunschloses Unglück*; *Reise Durch Die Nacht*; *Lungs*; and *Monster*. He worked with Robert Icke to co-adapt and co-direct George Orwell’s *1984*, which was seen on Broadway, in the West End, and in international tours. His work has been performed throughout the world, including National Theatre, The Old Vic, The Royal Court Theatre, The Barbican, St. Ann’s Warehouse, Melbourne Theatre Company, Hamburg Schauspielhaus, Schauspiel Köln, Burgtheater Wien, as well as the Edinburgh Festival, the Manchester International Festival, and Salzburg Festival. Both *1984* and *People, Places and Things* were nominated for Best New Play at the Olivier Awards, and *Rosmersholm* was nominated for Best Revival.

Jonny Donahoe (Playwright) is an actor, comedian, playwright, and screenwriter. He co-wrote and originally performed *Every Brilliant Thing*. He was nominated for a Drama Desk Award, Lucille Lortel Award, and an Off-Broadway Alliance Award for his performance. He is the front man of comedy group Jonny & The Baptists and regularly performs stand-up. His play *Thirty Christmases* (starring himself and Rachel Parris) was seen at Old Fire Station and New Diorama Theatre. He has also created a 12-part series on parenthood with real-life partner Josie Long called *Josie & Jonny Are Having a Baby With You!* for the podcast network Midroll, and another podcast with Paddy Gervers called *Making Paddy Happy*. Donahoe wrote the acclaimed new play *Forgiveness*, which toured the UK and internationally in 2022.

Jeffrey Lo (Director) is a Filipino-American playwright and director. Lo returns to Center REP after helming last season's hit production of *Red Bike*. He is the recipient of the Leigh Weimers Emerging Artist Award, the Emerging Artist Laureate by Arts Council Silicon Valley, and Theatre Bay Area Director's TITAN Award. His plays have been produced and workshopped at TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, The BindleStiff Studio, City Lights Theater Company, and Custom Made Theatre Company. Directing credits include *Little Shop of Horrors*, *The Language Archive*, and *The Santaland Diaries* at TheatreWorks Silicon Valley; *Chinglish*, *Hold These Truths*, and *The Paper Dreams of Harry Chin* at San Francisco Playhouse; *Vietgone* and *The Great Leap* at Capital Stage; *Peter and the Starcatcher* and *Noises Off* at Hillbarn Theatre; *The Crucible*, *Yellow Face*, and *The Grapes of Wrath* at Los Altos Stage Company; *Uncle Vanya* at the Pear Theatre (BATCC award for Best Production); and *A Doll's House, Part 2* and *Eurydice* at Palo Alto Players (TBA Awards finalist for Best Direction). Lo has also worked with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, San Jose Repertory Theatre, and is a company member of Ferocious Lotus Theatre Company and San Francisco PlayGround. In addition to his work in theatre he works as an educator and advocate for issues of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion and has served as a grant panelist for the Zellerbach Family Foundation, Silicon Valley Creates, and Theatre Bay Area. He is the Associate Producer of Casting & Literary Management at TheatreWorks Silicon Valley.

About Center Repertory Company

Led by Artistic Director **Matt M. Morrow** and Managing Director **Carolyn Jackson**, Center REP is the award-winning resident theatre company of the Leshner Center for the Arts. Founded in 1968, Center REP is one of the oldest professional theatres in the region, serving the East Bay and beyond with a diverse program of classic and contemporary works and arts education programs. For nearly six decades, Center REP's legacy endures as a vital community hub that fosters creativity and belonging among audiences and artists alike. Center REP's mission is to celebrate the power of the human imagination by producing emotionally engaging, intellectually involving, and visually astonishing live theatre, and through Outreach and Education programs, to enrich and advance the cultural life of the communities it serves.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:

WHAT: **Center Repertory Company** will ring in the new year with the remarkable, resplendent

hit solo performance *Every Brilliant Thing*. Making a list of things that make life worth living would get different responses, and what would be at the top? Ice cream? Family? The even-numbered Star Trek films? For the lead character in this uplifting show, it's his mother. This surprising and immersive theatrical experience by **Duncan Macmillan** and **Jonny Donahoe** delves into the human experience with playfulness and love. With poignant humor and joy, *Every Brilliant Thing* takes audiences on a journey through favorite moments such as falling in love, as well as grief, healing, and (re)discovering all that life has to give. Directed by celebrated Bay Area director **Jeffrey Lo** and starring Oakland Theater Project Co-Artistic Director **William Thomas Hodgson**, the story is filled with opportunities for warm, fun audience participation. Premiering at Ludlow Fringe Festival then Barrow Street Theatre where it was filmed for HBO, *Every Brilliant Thing* was deemed a "heart-wrenching, hilarious play" by *The Guardian* and *Time Out London* lauded it as "gloriously funny and exceptionally warm." *The Independent* said the work "finds a perfect balance between conveying the struggles of life, and celebrating all that is sweet in it."

WHEN: Previews: Saturday, January 6 – Sunday, January 7, 2024
Opening: Tuesday, January 9, 2024
Closing: Saturday, January 28, 2024

ASL interpreted performance: 2:30pm Saturday, January 13, 2024

SHOWS: Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays: 7:30pm
Saturdays: 2:30pm & 7:30pm
Sundays: 2:30pm & 7:00pm

WHERE: Leshner Center for the Arts (1601 Civic Dr, Walnut Creek)

TICKETS: For tickets (\$35-\$40) or more information, the public may visit lesherartscenter.org or call the box office at (925) 943-7469 (*open Wed-Sun, 12:00pm-6:00pm*).

Pay What You Can tickets (suggested price of \$25) are available for performances on January 6-14, 2024.

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PRESS: Contact Lauren Goldfarb, Carla Befera & Co.
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PHOTOS: Downloadable high-res photos are available: <https://cbpr.co/press/everbrilliantthing/>