

**BELVOIR**



# EVERY BRILLIANT THING

By **Duncan Macmillan**  
with **Jonny Donahoe**



Kate Mulvany

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Belvoir presents

# EVERY BRILLIANT THING

By **Duncan Macmillan**  
with **Jonny Donahoe**

Directed by **Kate Champion**  
Co-Directed by **Steve Rodgers**

*This production of Every Brilliant Thing  
opened at Belvoir St Theatre on  
Wednesday 13 March 2019.*

Set and Costume Designer **Isabel Hudson**  
Lighting Designer **Amelia Lever-Davidson**  
Sound Designer **Steve Francis**  
Stage Manager **Isabella Kerdijk**

With  
**Kate Mulvany**

*Every Brilliant Thing*  
is supported by  
**The Nelson Meers  
Foundation**

If *Every Brilliant Thing* has raised any concerns for you following the performance, Lifeline offers a 24 hour counselling service and can be reached at 13 11 14. Additional information can be found on their website, [lifeline.org.au](http://lifeline.org.au). Other services which may be of assistance include mental health advocacy organisation, Beyond Blue ([beyondblue.org.au](http://beyondblue.org.au), 1300 224 636), and youth mental health foundation, Headspace ([headspace.org.au](http://headspace.org.au)). We also advise speaking to a trusted source or engaging your local GP.

We acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora nation who are the traditional custodians of the land on which Belvoir St Theatre is built. We also pay respect to the Elders past and present, and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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**PRODUCTION THANKS**  
Nathan Weyers and NJW Designs

**PHOTOGRAPHY**  
Daniel Boud, Michael Kennedy,  
Jack Saltmiras

**DESIGN**  
Alphabet Studio







Kate Mulvany & Kate Champion

## DIRECTORS' NOTE

KATE CHAMPION & STEVE RODGERS

Almost all of us have had some experience of living with mental health issues, whether it be first hand or through a loved one or friend. It is a recognisable part of being alive and human. Yet we rarely treat it as such a common occurrence. We give our failing bodies far more press than we give our fragile minds.

*Every Brilliant Thing* takes this subject and gently yet firmly, with pathos and humour, guides us to a place where we can see it for what it is - something to be unashamedly spoken about within the communities we live in.

*Every Brilliant Thing* is almost not a play. Its form is stripped down to the essentials which allows the simple act of communion with others to define its nature and ultimate purpose.

It doesn't aim to give simple solutions or feel good remedies but instead suggests we deeply consider how we talk about suicide, how we treat the loved ones of someone who has died by suicide, and how the media reports on it.

The lengthy conversations we've shared in the rehearsal room together have deeply informed our interpretation of the piece. The gift of the show is that it is never the same twice yet at its heart never wavers from its purpose.

Through a personal account we are encouraged to be personally accountable.

The list of every brilliant thing is also certainly not given as a solution yet it stands as a beautiful and heartfelt offering by a seven year old to a situation that can't be easily be remedied.

Sometimes the seven year old in us is surprisingly wise.



# PERFORMER'S NOTE

KATE MULVANY

Ten years ago, I lost my partner to suicide.

His name was Mark. He was my best mate. My soul mate. My ally. My everything.

His death ripped my world apart. Ripped a lot of people's worlds apart.

The maelstrom of emotion, heartache, trauma and grief that came from Mark's suicide was almost unbearable. Almost unlivable. Along with the traumatic self-questioning that comes from losing a loved one to suicide, I had the added prodding and poking from a press, impatient for information. (Mark was a well-known actor, therefore certain journalists deemed his life and death as "public property".) When I refused to comment on his death - I couldn't, even if I wanted to, such was my state - many publications and programs made up their own stories. Cruel, uninformed,

malevolent bullshit. A dangerously one-sided conversation.

The only thing that kept me going, ironically, was Mark. His truth. His legacy. The fact that despite his death at the age of 32, he led a simply remarkable life. He was a beautiful human being - ridiculously funny. Mind-blowingly smart. Caramel-hearted. Wicked in the best of ways. He loved stray cats and singing musical numbers at the top of his lungs and farts and astrophysics and the babies of friends. He was brilliant at his work, generous beyond belief, filled to the brim with love and pride for others. He had the most comical knock-knees and the softest brown hair and blue eyes that couldn't lie. When he laughed, and he laughed a lot, it started with a full-voiced "HA!" - which would be punctuated by a thigh slap and hands

spread wide in glorious mirth. I loved this man.

Mark also had a mental illness. He often lived with the darkest of shadows within. Anxious voices whispered to him constantly. Utter despair often consumed him, made him disappear for days on end. He was a force of nature, but sometimes the force was too great, too powerful. This was part of Mark. This was another element of who he was. This was still the man I loved dearly.

When Mark died, these were the things - the light and the shadows, the opposing forces within - that I wanted to talk about. I wanted more of that human who was no longer in the world. I wanted to hear stories I hadn't been told. I wanted to sit at someone's feet and hear about my beloved best friend, and about others like him. I wanted to talk and talk and talk so that even if I couldn't work out why the world had lost him the way we had, I could at least rejoice and reminisce and reconcile all that he was when he was alive.

But god it was hard to find people to talk to. Paradoxically, while I was shooing away thoughtless "reporters", I couldn't find anyone to actually *talk to*. Suicide makes people shut up. Shut down. Through discomfort. Through shame. Through guilt. Through their own grief. Through not having the words. Through fear of saying the wrong thing. When I tried to talk about Mark, often my attempts were seen as me "not dealing with it", or that I'd somehow "lowered the tone". I ended up in many a quiet corner, crying alone. Or whispering to Mark in the dead of night, under my blankets. But eventually I did find my community - the people who were happy to talk about Mark. Who welcomed the dialogue. Those glorious

friends and loved ones and strangers that listened as I spoke; and shared their own memories, thoughts and experiences with me. These people truly saved me.

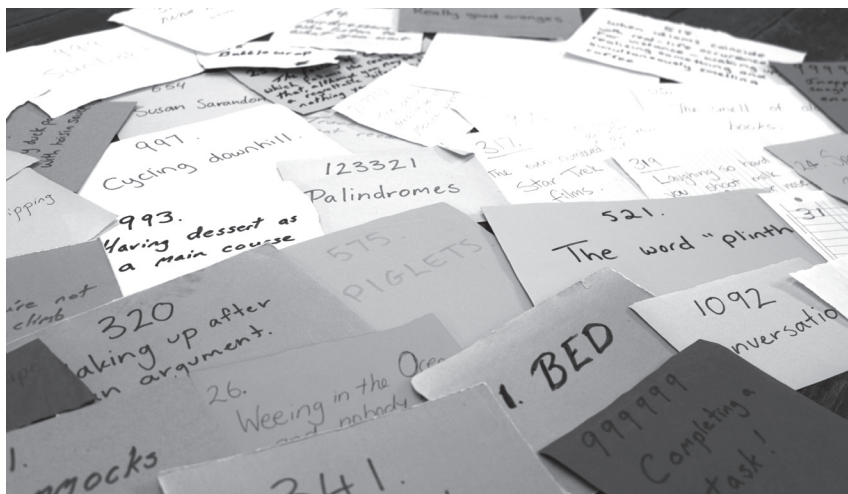
The thing is, talking about suicide; talking about mental illness; checking in on each other; acknowledging the darkness, along with all the light - that's the most important part of understanding our humanity. Of creating a loving community of empathy and compassion. Of taking care of ourselves and each other. Of healing, of asking for help, of offering assistance. It doesn't bring back the person we have lost. But it may help stop losing someone else.

So when this play was put in my hands, it took my breath away. Here was everything I'd ever wanted - an honest, communal conversation between friends and strangers on mental health. With no judgment. No apologies. No demand for answers. No explanations. No speculation. Just a simple exploration of the brilliant things in life, even when there are shadows, even when there is despair. It's a reminder that there are hearts to feel for you, ears to listen to you, minds to assist you, mouths to converse with you, hands to lead you, arms to hold you, and humans - many, many humans - to walk alongside you as your allies.

Thank you for taking part in this conversation, inside a lived experience, inside a theatre, inside a community, inside a city, inside a country, inside a world, inside humanity.

Like Mark, you are a brilliant, brilliant thing.

I'm so glad you are here.





# 1. THE SOUND OF OLD RECORDS



# 5. WATCHING THINGS GROW



# 9. CHOCOLATE



## BIOGRAPHIES



**DUNCAN MACMILLAN** Writer

**Duncan** is a playwright and director from the United Kingdom and former recipient of the Bruntwood Prize. Plays include: *People, Places and Things* (2015-17 - National Theatre/Wyndham's Theatre, West End / St Ann's Warehouse, New York/UK Tour); *1984*, adapt. George Orwell (2013-17 - Headlong / Nottingham

Playhouse / West End / Broadway / international tours, co-adapted / co-directed with Rob Icke); *Every Brilliant Thing* (2013-17 - Paines Plough / Pentabus Theatre / Edinburgh Festival / UK and international tours / HBO); *City Of Glass*, adapt. Paul Auster (2017 - 59 Productions, HOME and Lyric Hammersmith), *2071*, co-written with Chris Rapley (2014-15 - Royal Court Theatre / Hamburg Schauspielhaus); *The Forbidden Zone* (2014-16 - Salzburg Festival and Schaubühne, Berlin); *Wunschloses Unglück*, adapt. Peter Handke (2014 - Burgtheater Vienna); *Reise Durch die Nacht*, adapt. Friederike Mayröcker (2012-14 - Schauspielhaus Köln, Festival d'Avignon, Teatertreffen); *Lungs* (2011-16 Paines Plough and Sheffield Theatres / Studio Theatre, Washington DC) and *Monster* (2006 - Royal Exchange).



**JONNY DONAHOE** Original Performer and Co-Writer

**Jonny** is an actor, comedian, playwright, screenwriter, broadcaster, musician, orthodox off-spinner, decent slip-catcher and frustrating lower-order batsman.

His one-man show *Every Brilliant Thing*, (which he co-wrote and originally performed), has played more than six hundred times over four continents, including five months off-Broadway at The Barrow Street Theatre. The show was filmed by World of Wonder and screened as a special on HBO. He is the frontman of musical-comedy-satirists, Jonny and The Baptists, as well regularly performing stand-up in his own right. His play *30 Christmases*, (starring himself and Rachel Parris), premiered at The Old Fire Station in Oxford, before transferring to the New Diorama Theatre in London. Upcoming is a twelve-part series on parenthood with real-life partner Josie Long called *Josie and Jonny Are Having a Baby (With You)* for American Podcast Network, MidRoll.

He has been nominated for a Drama Desk Award, Lucille Lortel Award and an Off-Broadway Alliance Award for his performance in *Every Brilliant Thing*.



**KATE CHAMPION** Director

**Kate** was the founding Artistic Director of Force Majeure (2002-15), a ground-breaking dance theatre company based in Sydney. She has worked in theatre, dance, film, circus, opera and musical theatre with arts companies and institutes including Belvoir (*Under The Influence*, *Cloudstreet*, *Food*, *My Urrwai*, *A Taste of Honey*), Sydney Theatre Company (*Never Did Me Any Harm*, *Spring Awakening*), STCSA (*That Eye The Sky*, *A View From The Bridge*), The English National Opera (*The Prisoner*, *La Strada*), Opera Australia (*Bliss*, *The Ring Cycle*, *La Boheme*), The Hayes (*Evie May*), NIDA (*Not Who I Was*, *Meat Eaters*), National Theatre of Parramatta (*Swallow*) and DV8 Physical Theatre - London.

She has created and performed two critically acclaimed solo shows, *Face Value* and *About Face*. As Artistic Director of Force Majeure, Kate also directed *Same, Same But Different*, *Tenebrae* - Part 1 and 2, *Already Elsewhere*, *The Age I'm In*, *Not In a Million Years*, and *Nothing to Lose*. Kate has been awarded Helpmann, Green Room and Australian Dance Awards.

**STEVE RODGERS** Co-Director

**Steve** trained at Theatre Nepean at Western Sydney University and has been working as an actor for thirty years. Theatre credits include *Cloudstreet*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Blind Giant Is Dancing*, *Night on Bald Mountain*, *The Pillowman*, *The Kiss*, *A Christmas Carol* and *Jasper Jones* (Belvoir) *Riflewind*, *Three Sisters*, *Dance Better At Parties*, *Democracy*, *As You Like It*, (Sydney Theatre Company), *Dreams in White*, *Eight Gigabytes of Hardcore Pornography* and *Diving for Pearls* (Griffin Theatre Company), *Boys Next Door* and *Street Car Named Desire* (Ensemble Theatre), *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Macbeth*, and *Antony and Cleopatra* (Bell Shakespeare Company). Steve's most recent television credits include *Upright*, *Kikki and Kitty* and *The Code* while film credits include *Goldstone*, *The Daughter*, *The Men's Group* and the short *Snare*, which is off to SXSW film festival in Austin this year.

Steve's writing credits include the plays *Ray's Tempest* (Belvoir; MTC), *Food* (Belvoir/Force Majeure), *Savage River* (Griffin/MTC), and *Jesus Wants Me for a Sunbeam* (National Theatre of Parramatta) and most recently *King of Pigs* at the Old Fitz.

**Kate Mulvany** Narrator

**Kate** has a BA and honorary doctorate from Curtin University, Western Australia. She is an award-winning playwright, screenwriter, librettist, dramaturg and actor. Kate has performed extensively across Australia, in roles including Dr Stockman in *Enemy of the People* (Belvoir), Antigone, Lady Macbeth, Cassius (in *Julius Caesar*), Dorine (*Tartuffe*)

and a highly acclaimed turn as Richard of Gloucester (*Richard III*). As writer her plays include *The Seed* and *Jasper Jones* for Belvoir, as well as *The Danger Age*, *Masquerade*, the musical *Somewhere* with music and lyrics by Tim Minchin, *Medea* - co-written with Anne-Louise Sarkis, and an adaption of Ruth Park's *The Harp in the South* trilogy and *Mary Stuart* for Sydney Theatre Company. Her feature film work includes *The Great Gatsby*, *The Final Winter*, *Griff the Invisible*, *The Turning*, *The Little Death* and *The Merger*, both of which saw her nominated for an Australian Academy of Cinema and Television Arts Award. Kate has appeared on television in *The Chaser's War on Everything*, *Chandon Pictures*, *The Hamster Wheel*, the tele-movie *The Underbelly Files - The Man Who Got Away*, *Winter*, *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries* and the highly acclaimed *Secret City*. Kate also starred in a leading role in the Foxtel series *Fighting Season* and will be seen in the upcoming series *Lambs of God*. Kate is a proud member of Actors Equity.

**STEVE FRANCIS** Sound Designer

**Steve** has worked extensively in theatre, dance and screen. His Belvoir credits include *The Sugar House*, *The Great Fire*, *Angels in America*, *This Heaven*, *Don't Take Your Love To Town*, *Babyteeth*, *The Book of Everything*, *The Power of Yes*, *Ruben Guthrie*, *Baghdad Wedding*, *Keating!*, *Paul*, *Parramatta Girls*, *Capricornia*, *Box the Pony*, *Gulpilil* and *Page 8*. His other theatre credits include *The Children*, *The Weir*, *The Sublime*, *Other Desert Cities* (Melbourne Theatre Company); *Still Point Turning*, *The Father*, *Talk*, *The Hanging*, *Disgraced*, *Orlando*, *Battle of Waterloo*, *Switzerland*, *After Dinner*, *Vere*, *Mojo*, *The Long Way Home*, *The Secret River*, *Machinal*, *Sex with Strangers*, *Travelling North*, *The Splinter*, *Bloodland*, *The White Guard* (Sydney Theatre Company); *Hamlet*, *Henry V* (Bell Shakespeare); and *A Rabbit for Kim Jong-il*, *Between Two Waves*, *This Year's Ashes*, *Speaking in Tongues* (Griffin Theatre Company). For dance, Steve has composed music for *Bennelong*, *Our Land People Stories*, *Lore*, *Belong*, *True Stories*, *Skin*, *Corroboree*, *Walkabout*, *Bush* and *Boomerang* (Bangarra Dance Theatre). Steve has also composed for film and TV. His awards include two Helpmann Awards for Best Original Score in 2012 and 2003 and Best New Australian Work in 2003, as well as Sydney Theatre Awards for Music and Sound in 2011 and 2014.







**ISABEL HUDSON** Set and Costume Designer

**Isabel** was recently the Set and Costume Designer for *The Rise & Fall of Little Voice* at the Darlinghurst Theatre. Her 2018 credits include designing set and costumes for: *The Shifting Heart* (White Box Productions), *The Walworth Farce* (dir. Kim Hardwick), *A Girl Is A Half Formed Thing* (dir. Erin Taylor), *You Got Older* (Kings Cross Theatre dir. by Claudia Barrie) and *King of Pigs* (Red Line productions dir. By Blazey Best). Earlier this year Isabel set designed *Cry Baby* (dir. Alex Berlage), *The View Upstairs* (dir. Shaun Rennie) and *She Loves Me* (dir. Erin James) at the Hayes Theatre Co. In 2018 Isabel was the Winner of Best Independent Scenic Design at the Sydney Theatre Awards. She is graduate of the NIDA Design Course (2015), holds a Bachelor of Arts (Screen and Sound) from the University of New South Wales (2012) and was awarded the William Fletcher Foundation Tertiary Grant for emerging artists in 2015. Isabel is also a lecturer in the Design for Performance program at NIDA.



**ISABELLA KERDIJS** Stage Manager

**Isabella** graduated from the production course at the National Institute of Dramatic Art in 2008. She has worked as Stage Manager and Assistant Stage Manager on many shows. Her work for Belvoir includes *An Enemy Of The People*, *The Sugar House*, *Mother, My Name Is Jimi*, *HIR*, *The Dog / The Cat*, *Girl Asleep*, *The Drover's Wife*, *Jasper Jones*, *Mother Courage and Her Children*, *Kill the Messenger*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *20 Questions*, *Stories I Want to Tell You in Person* (national tour) and *Thyestes* (European tours). Isabella's other credits include *The Smallest Hour*, *Replay*, *And No More Shall We Part*, *This Year's Ashes*, *Ugly Mugs* (Griffin Theatre Company); *Silent Night*, *Ride & Fourplay* (Darlinghurst Theatre Company); *Rainman*, *The Ruby Sunrise* (Ensemble Theatre); *Empire* (Spiegelworld); *Cranked Up* (Circus Oz); *The Mousetrap* (Australia/NZ tour - LWAA); and *Bubble* (Legs On the Wall). Isabella has worked as Production Coordinator on *Carmen* (Opera Australia on Sydney Harbour) and Production Manager/Stage Manager for *Puppetry of the Penis* (A-List Entertainment). She has also worked on various festivals including The Garden of Unearthly Delights, Sydney Festival and the Woodford Folk Festival.



**AMELIA LEVER-DAVIDSON** Lighting Designer

**Amelia** is a lighting designer based in Melbourne, whose practice encompasses theatre, dance, live art, television and events. Design credits include *They Divided The Sky* (Belvoir 25A), *Next Move 11* (Chunky Move), *Trustees*, *Turbine*, *The Listies Ruin Christmas*, *Meta* (Malthouse Theatre), *Moral Panic*, *Contest*, *Niche*, *Conviction*, *Dream Home* (Darebin SpeakEasy), *Hand to God* (Vass Productions), *Looking Glass*, *Triumph* (45 Downstairs), *Desert 6.29pm*, *Jurassica*, *Foxfinder* (Red Stitch Theatre), *MKA Double Feature* (MTC Neon), *Ground Control*, *Camel*, *Hello There We've Been Waiting for You* (Next Wave Festival). As Tour Lighting Associate *Minnie and Liraz* (MTC). Amelia has worked as both Lighting Director and assistant for Channel Nine, ABC, Channel Ten and NEP. Amelia's work has been recognised with two Green Room Awards for *Looking Glass* and her 2015 body of work. Amelia is an Australia Council ArtStart and JUMP Mentorship recipient, and a past participant in The Malthouse Besen Family Artist Program and The Melbourne Theatre Company's inaugural Women in Theatre Program. Amelia was also awarded the Ian Pottter Travel Scholarship and Australia Council Development Grant in 2017 to travel to the UK for professional development and mentorship opportunities.



**BELVOIR**

# BARBARA & THE CAMP DOGS

4 - 28 APRIL

Written by **Ursula Yovich**  
& **Alana Valentine**  
Director **Leticia Cáceres**  
Songs by **Ursula Yovich,**  
**Alana Valentine** & **Adm Ventoura**

Presented in association with  
**Vicki Gordon Music**  
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Indigenous theatre at  
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**BELVOIR**

**THEATRICALITY.  
VARIETY OF LIFE.  
FAITH IN HUMANITY.**

Belvoir is a theatre company on a side street in Surry Hills, Sydney. We share our street with a park and a public housing estate, and our theatre is in an old industrial building. It has been, at various times, a garage, a sauce factory, and the Nimrod Theatre. When the theatre was threatened with redevelopment in 1984, over 600 people formed a syndicate to buy the building and save the theatre. More than thirty years later, Belvoir St Theatre continues to be home to one of Australia's most celebrated theatre companies.

In its early years Belvoir was run cooperatively. It later rose to international prominence under first and longest-serving Artistic Director Neil Armfield and continued to be both wildly successful and controversial under Ralph Myers. Belvoir is a traditional home for the great old crafts of acting and storytelling in Australian theatre. It is a platform for voices that won't otherwise be heard. And it is a gathering of outspoken ideals. In short: theatricality, variety of life, and faith in humanity.

At Belvoir we gather the best theatre artists we can find, emerging and established, to realise an annual season of works – new Australian plays, Indigenous works, re-imagined classics and new international writing. Audiences remember many landmark productions including *The Drover's Wife*,

*Angels in America*, *Brothers Wreck*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Neighbourhood Watch*, *The Wild Duck*, *Medea*, *The Diary of a Madman*, *Death of a Salesman*, *The Blind Giant is Dancing*, *Hamlet*, *Cloudstreet*, *Aliwa*, *The Book of Everything*, *Keating!*, *The Exile Trilogy*, *Exit the King*, *The Sapphires*, *The Rover*, *Faith Healer*, *The Sugar House* and many more.

Today, under Artistic Director Eamon Flack and Executive Director Sue Donnelly, Belvoir tours nationally and internationally, and continues to create its own brand of rough magic for new generations of audiences. We are proud to be creating work that speaks to the fullness of life and experience in Australia and abroad, continuing our commitment to deliver diverse stories to diverse audiences.

Belvoir receives government support for its activities from the federal government through the Australia Council and the state government through Create NSW. We also receive philanthropic and corporate support, which we greatly appreciate and welcome.

**belvoir.com.au**





# BELVOIR



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4 - 26 MAY  
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8 JUN - 21 JUL  
About family.

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3 AUG - 15 SEP  
About truth and politics.

#### FANGIRLS

12 OCT - 10 NOV  
About being young, crazy and glorious.

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About power and Sydney.

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## WANT MORE?

### BELVOIR BRIEFINGS

Belvoir Briefings are your chance to hear directly from the artists about every show before it hits our stage.

For each production, the creative team talks about why they wanted to tackle the story, how it's evolved in the rehearsal room, and what audiences can expect from the show. It's your ticket backstage.

Belvoir Briefings are FREE but we'd like you to book online at [belvoir.com.au/events/belvoir-briefings](http://belvoir.com.au/events/belvoir-briefings) so we can save you a spot.

Our next Belvoir Briefings are...

#### Barbara and the Camp Dogs

6:30 pm, Tuesday 2 April

#### Winyanboga Yurringa

6:30 pm, Friday 26 April

### POST-SHOW Q&A

Have you ever wished you could sit down with the cast and crew after the performance, hang out and ask questions about what you've just seen? Guess what? You can!

Directly following one performance of each production, select cast and crew will return to the stage for an informal chat led by Belvoir Artistic Associate Tom Wright. This is your chance to ask about the show and to delve deeper into the performance.

Just stay in your seat after these performances...

#### Every Brilliant Thing

Tuesday 19 March

#### Barbara and the Camp Dogs

Tuesday 16 April



Kate Mulvany

## 18. LEMONS



## 33. OPENING PRESENTS



## 700. EGGS



## 987. SNEEZING



## 2798. THINGS WITH STRIPES





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We also thank our Life Members, who have made outstanding contributions to Belvoir over more than thirty years. They have changed the course of the company and are now ingrained in its fabric:

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**These people and foundations supported the redevelopment of Belvoir St Theatre and purchase of our warehouse.**

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