



Review: AD Players Brings Hope In EVERY BRILLIANT THING

Starring beloved Houston actor, Orlando Arriaga

by Armando Urdiales Mar. 03, 2023



Scenic Designer, **Kirk Domer**, creates a stunning set in AD Players, Every Brilliant Thing. Photo from AD Players.



Orlanda Arriaga as Narrator in Every Brilliant Thing. Photo from AD Players.

*Every Brilliant Thing at AD Players, a one-man show that finished at the George Theater, can only be summed up in one phrase, freaking brilliant. **Orlando Arriaga**, one of Houston's very own master actors, proves his extraordinary acting prowess in this play and does so with equal parts joy and humility.*

The play, written by **Duncan MacMillan** and **Jonny Donahue**, revolves around a central narrator who makes a list of every brilliant thing. The reason, you may ask? The narrator is the child of a mentally ill mother who has had several suicidal attempts throughout his life. As dark as it is, this subject matter is a complete downer. However, **Orlando Arriaga** creates a performance that is undeniably an exhilarating and unforgettable moment of theater. **Arriaga**, while he always has been a talented virtuoso of the Houston theater scene, does some of his best work in *Every Brilliant Thing*. He does a fantastic job of bringing the audience on an emotional journey of understanding the effects of mental illness, all while infusing some tremendous audience participation. One note: if **Orlando Arriaga** asks you to interact with him, it is imperative you do, for he makes being "onstage" an absolutely fantastic experience.



Kirk Domers magnificent set for AD Players, Every Brilliant Thing. Photo from AD Players.

The design elements of this production are also absolutely fantastic. From this millennial Latinos perspective, the scenic design of **Kirk Domer** mimics what I would love the inside of my mind to look like. The colorful elements of Mexican- American culture and the Chinese lanterns misfiring, at least for me, represent my brain's misfire serotonin synapses, and it was such a sight to behold. The sound design elements of contemporary music mixed with the music of Juan Gabriel represents some of the best **Michael Mullins** has ever done.

I applaud AD Players for putting on this scarce production of such a phenomenal piece of storytelling. While I will admit their programming has only sometimes been for me, I appreciate their ambitious and adventurous artistic vision.

Every Brilliant Thing at AD Players held performances from February 1st thru February 19th. Their next production, the physical comedy, The Play That Goes Wrong, plays from Wednesday, April 19th thru Sunday, May 14th. Tickets can be bought at adplayers.org.



Orlando Arriaga interacts with an audience member in Every Brilliant Thing. Photo from AD Players.



Orlando Arriaga plays guitar and serenades audiences in Every Brilliant Thing. Photo from AD Players.