

British Theatre Guide

News, reviews, features and podcast on theatre across the UK

Every Brilliant Thing (Όλα αυτά τα υπέροχα πράγματα)

Duncan Macmillan with Jonny Donahoe

OliviosK Productions in collaboration with the Hellenic Centre

Hellenic Centre

9–11 November 2018

What is it that makes life worth living? That's the question Macmillan and Danahoe ask in this joyful play about suicide. In this production, performed by Melina Theocharidou and directed by Ioli Andreadi (which after opening in Athens last year has already toured Greece and Cyprus), they ask it in Greek courtesy of translator Adonis Galeos.

The play's narrator, in this case Melina, tells how, when she was seven her mother "did something stupid": she tried to kill herself and Melina started making a list. She lists everything she thinks is brilliant about the world and as she grows up she goes on adding to it.

The play is staged in-the-round, very simply with no set and props provided by the audience (as the script directs) who are also picked on to provide some of the characters. These including a vet, Melina's dad, a schoolteacher and her boyfriend, while many more are called on to name the things on her list when cued to do so.

The Paine's Plough production has [wowed Edinburgh](#), [toured the world](#) and was seen at Richmond's Orange Tree last year and there have numerous other international productions but this is the first time I've seen it. Even in a language with which I have only a faltering acquaintance, it is clear that, though an excellent script, it is one of those pieces that could be embarrassing if not well done but brilliant with the right performer.

With Melina Theocharidou, it is in good hands. She develops an excellent rapport with her audience and subtly suggests the development from seven-year-old through teenage to grown-up. In a venue where audiences can sometimes seem very formal and strait-laced, she creates a relaxed warmth and easy participation.

It's a show that by its nature becomes specific to its audience. Its list of one million items (and no, it doesn't describe all of them) is very specific and adapters Ioli Andreadi and Aris Asproulis obviously altered them to suit a Greek audience. You didn't have to understand Greek to see from reaction that they seem to have chosen appropriately.

Theocharidou plays with feeling but without sentimentality. She has an energy that never flags and, though her cueing of numbered things might be a bit excessive for an English audience, its pointed exaggeration was probably culturally appropriate and helped fire the audience. Without missing the poignancy of its underlying tragedy, she makes this a life-affirming, joyful experience that is very funny.

Reviewer: [Howard Loxton](#)