



Baeksang Arts Award — Best Theatre · Dong-A Theatre Award — Best Production

젤리피쉬

Jellyfish

by Ben Weatherill

| Directed by MIN Saerom

| Produced by Korea Disability Arts & Culture Center (KDAC) · CreativeTable Sukyoung

| Promoted by ARTiGO

62nd Dong-A Theatre Awards

"Audiences were not compelled but naturally drawn in — a fine work that invites reflection on coexistence and the goodness of humanity, with direction and performance in seamless harmony."

62nd Baeksang Arts Awards

"A production that breaks down the boundaries between disability and non-disability, with the creative team's progressive attitude and their connection with the audience making a strong impression. It demonstrates the full potential of performing arts that embraces everyone without barriers, and sets a new theatrical grammar and aesthetic benchmark for disability theatre. It also points to the depth of understanding of disability and the need for Korean original drama, in an environment where inclusive production in theatre continues to expand."

"The casting of Baek Ji-yun in the role of Kelly, reflecting the lived experience of Down syndrome, brings a resonance that is deeply moving — and her depth of performance makes it all the more powerful."

- Hankook Ilbo -

"Jellyfish speaks of disability, yet makes you forget it. In an era where difference is read as fault and division wounds the heart, this is a play that goes far beyond the question of disability — a production that everyone should reflect upon."

- Financial News -

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

Original Work Ben Weatherill (UK)

Director MIN Saerom

Translator LEE Insu

Cast JUNG Sooyoung, BAEK Jiyun, KIM Bada, LEE Hwuijong, KIM Bumjin

Development Showcase 22–28 May 2024 · Modu Art Theater

World Premiere 18 March – 13 April 2025 · Modu Art Theater

Invited Production 12–21 September 2025 · Myeongdong Arts Theater

(National Theater Company of Korea)

Produced by Korea Disability Arts & Culture Center (KDAC) · CreativeTable Sukyoung

Presented by Korea Disability Arts & Culture Center (KDAC)

Supported by Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

Ben Weatherill

Ben Weatherill is a playwright based in the East Midlands, UK. He trained at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, and was part of the Royal Court Theatre's Young Writers' Programme and Invitation Only Group. He served as Literary Manager at the Old Red Lion Theatre and was Playwright-in-Residence at Curve Theatre in his hometown of Leicester.

His debut full-length play *Chicken Dust* premiered at the Finborough Theatre. His second play, *Jellyfish*, was developed with the National Theatre Studio and premiered at the Bush Theatre in 2018, where it was nominated for four Offies including Most Promising New Playwright, and shortlisted for the Writers' Guild Award for Best Play. *The Stage* listed it as one of the best plays of 2018. The play transferred to the National Theatre Dorfman the following summer to a sold-out run.

In 2023, *Frank & Percy* — starring Ian McKellen and Roger Allam — premiered at Theatre Royal Windsor/Bath before transferring to The Other Palace in London, where it enjoyed a sold-out run. Weatherill was nominated for a Sky Arts Award in the Times Breakthrough Artist category. All his plays are published by Methuen Drama.

In his own words, his creative territory is "stories with unforgettable characters that make you laugh before the tears prick at the back of your eyes."

SYNOPSIS

Kelly, a 27-year-old woman with Down syndrome, meets Neil, who works at a seaside arcade, and falls in love. But Kelly's mother Agnes watches her daughter's new romance with unease — it is not easy to accept the love her disabled daughter has chosen, nor the changes it may bring to their lives.

Jellyfish portrays, with warmth and wit, the right to independence and self-determination for a person with a disability, and the pain carried by everyone in that relationship. Kelly is not simply gentle or virtuous; she is a fully rounded character.. She tells jokes, and gives the people around her quite a hard time. This play does not regard disability as something to be overcome or pitied. It is a drama in which every character — including the disabled protagonist — exists with their own story and their own wounds.

Does everyone truly have the right to love as they choose? The play poses this question with both lightness and weight, offering audiences the experience of thinking for themselves through empathy.

Scene by Scene



Scene 1. Beach (March)

Agnes and Kelly walk along the beach. Agnes frets over every small detail of Kelly's life; Kelly insists on handling things herself.



Scene 2. Beach (April)

Kelly and Neil sit together eating fish and chips. Kelly wants to kiss Neil — and he feels the same.



Scene 3. Beach (July)

Kelly's phone rings constantly as she spends a relaxed afternoon at the beach with Agnes. Agnes learns Kelly is seeing a man and fears she is in danger.



Scene 4. Car Park (That night) Agnes meets Neil and warns him never to see Kelly again.



Scene 5. Seal Sanctuary (Next day)
Tension hangs between Neil and Kelly. He is confused about whether to continue their relationship. Kelly tells him it's fine to leave — but only if it's because he doesn't like her, not because of her mother.



Scene 6. Agnes's House (September) Kelly and Neil sneak into the house while Agnes is away. They have sex for the first time.



Scene 7. Agnes's House (October) Agnes introduces Dominic as a potential new boyfriend for Kelly. Kelly confides in Dominic that she is still seeing Neil — and that she is pregnant. She befriends Dominic but fights with Agnes and leaves home.



Scene 8. Beach (One week later) Kelly, Neil and Agnes meet for the first time since Kelly left. Agnes believes Kelly cannot raise a child; Kelly says she will decide for herself.

Scene 9. Agnes's Garden (November)

Agnes hosts a birthday party for Kelly. Kelly doesn't come; Neil arrives alone.
Agnes hands Neil a leaflet about prenatal testing.



Scene 10. Hotel in Whitby (December)

Kelly and Neil are on holiday. Kelly is furious that the hotel won't give them the double room she booked; Neil tries to let it go. The incident leads them to air grievances they've been holding back — and they decide to break up..



Scene 11. Agnes's House (That night)

Kelly returns to Agnes. Agnes holds her.



Scene 12. Beach (January)

Dominic and Kelly comfort each other. Kelly tells Dominic why she has decided to have the prenatal test. He encourages her to talk to Neil.



Scene 13. Seal Sanctuary (A few days later)

Kelly returns to the place she used to visit with Neil. Bereft without him, she finds Neil there waiting. In the place they always avoided crowds, Neil finds the courage to dance with her.



Scene 14. Agnes's House (Two weeks later)

Agnes and Neil drink vodka together. Kelly learns the prenatal test is positive — and decides to keep the baby regardless. Neil asks Agnes to support Kelly.



Scene 15. Beach (May)

Kelly brings Neil to the sea and gives him a piece of amber — a precious stone. Neil and Kelly decide to get married.



Scene 16. Beach (June)

Agnes and Kelly sit on the beach. A large jellyfish has washed ashore. Kelly promises herself she will take her child for walks along the beach — just as Agnes once did with her — and be a good mother. Kelly gazes out at the sea.



CHARACTERS



BAEK Jiyun — Kelly

A 27-year-old woman with Down syndrome. Vibrant and guileless. She falls in love with Neil, a non-disabled man, and becomes pregnant with his child.



JUNG Sooyoung — Agnes

Kelly's mother. She has raised Kelly alone, without a husband. Life has been far from easy, but there is no one who loves Kelly more.



KIM Bada — Neil

Kelly's boyfriend. He works at a seaside arcade. As his relationship with Kelly grows, he encounters the unjust prejudices of the world around them.



LEE Hwuijong — Neil

Kelly's boyfriend. He works at a seaside arcade. As his relationship with Kelly grows, he encounters the unjust prejudices of the world around them.



KIM Bumjin — Dominic

A man with dwarfism, introduced to Kelly as a potential date. He is wise, and self-assured enough to joke about his own disability.

PHOTO



THE NEXT STEPS FOR JELLYFISH — Looking Toward an International Stage

SUK Jaiwon — Representative, CreativeTable Sukyoung

The recognition Jellyfish has received in Korea is only the beginning.

The reason we want to bring this work to audiences abroad is not simply because it is "international." It is because we want more audiences, in more places, to encounter this story.

As the production's founding intention made clear from the start, Jellyfish set out to confront head-on the instincts and honest emotions of people with disabilities that we have too often turned away from — particularly the experience of love — and to help audiences come closer to the lived reality of people with disabilities. That intention does not stop at any border. A story about one disabled person's love and independence is a question that holds true in any society, and the more widely it is shared, the further that question resonates.

What the Baeksang Arts Awards and the Dong-A Theatre Awards demonstrated together is that this work cannot be evaluated solely within the category of "disability arts." It was recognised both for its artistic and aesthetic achievement, and as a work pointing toward where the art form of theatre itself might go next. We do not want that achievement to remain confined to the Korean stage.

Jellyfish was already designed as a barrier-free production. Because audio description, sign language interpretation, and subtitles are built into the very form of the work, providing subtitles and sign interpretation in the local language for international performances allows audiences in any country to engage with the work naturally. This is not simply a matter of translation — it reflects the fact that a structure originally built as "a performance for everyone" remains just as valid on an international stage.

The next step for Jellyfish is toward more audiences, and a wider stage.

PLANNING NOTE

Jellyfish confronts head-on the 'instincts' and honest emotions of people with disabilities that we have too often turned away from — and in particular, the feelings of love that people with disabilities naturally experience, just as anyone would.

The play portrays, with calm and warmth, the process of recognising and accepting that people with disabilities are born, grow, feel the same emotions, and undergo the same changes as everyone else. Through Kelly's forthright love, we hope audiences will find it easier to empathise more deeply with people with disabilities and their lived experiences.

In the original UK production, the role of Kelly was played by Sarah Gordy, an actress with Down syndrome. Playwright Ben Weatherill first saw Gordy perform on stage and went on to write Jellyfish in close collaboration with her. Her lived experience, presence, and distinctive qualities as a performer helped shape the character of Kelly and the play itself.

The Korean production began as a development workshop, progressed to a full premiere, and then to an invited run at Myeongdong Arts Theater. It is now expanding into a national regional tour. The goal was to share with the performing arts community the creative, technical and social challenges encountered in producing this work within a social and institutional environment quite different from the original. We hope that the bold failures and discoveries made along the way become assets for future work.

The jury of the 62nd Dong-A Theatre Awards described it as "a fine work in which audiences were not compelled but naturally drawn in — one that invites reflection on coexistence and the goodness of humanity, with direction and performance in seamless harmony." The fact that a disability arts production has swept both of Korea's most prestigious theatre awards in the same season for the same work is historically unprecedented. The recognition this production has received goes beyond the evaluation of a single work; it is nothing less than an official declaration of new possibilities for disability arts in Korea.

PRODUCTION FEATURES

1. Treating Disability as Life, Not Subject Matter

Jellyfish does not consume disability as a source of inspiration or emotional catharsis. Kelly is a three-dimensional character who falls in love, digs her heels in, and gives the people around her quite a hard time. The courage to resist prejudice is required not only of the disabled protagonist but of all the non-disabled people in her life. This is a drama in which every character exists with their own pain.

2. A Distinctive Korean Production Aesthetic

This production hides nothing. Before each performance, the director steps onto the stage to check on the actors. A prompter stands exposed at the side of the stage like a boxing corner coach. The crew's scene changes are visible to the audience. What might ordinarily be seen as 'limitations' are here transformed into tenderness. The director's philosophy — that pretending nothing is wrong is itself a kind of dishonesty — is woven into the very form of the performance.

3. The Journey with Actress BAEK Jiyun

BAEK Jiyun, playing Kelly, memorised 1,642 lines including the lines of her scene partners. The director and creative team went beyond verbal explanation, using sensory and visual approaches to convey the story, and worked to build psychological and physical closeness so that performer and character could meet naturally. The new creative methodology discovered through this process has become a precious resource that will shape all future productions.

4. Integrated Collaboration Across Disability and Non-Disability

The production was assembled from creative practitioners without prior experience in disability arts, and deliberately designed a safe and inclusive working environment — including sensory workshops, cognitive learning training, and self-care manuals. Check-in/check-out systems, rehearsals that gradually increased audience numbers — the methodology discovered through this production is becoming a new benchmark for disability arts production.

5. Accessibility for All

Audio description, sign language interpretation, Korean subtitles, and touch tours have been incorporated to strengthen audience-friendly accessibility, realising the vision of an arts ecosystem that truly belongs to everyone.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

MIN Saerom — Artistic Director, Theatre Company Cheongnidan

This play does address social prejudice. But it does not portray the disabled protagonist as a hero overcoming adversity. Kelly tells jokes. She gives the people around her quite a hard time. The courage to resist prejudice is demanded not only of the person with a disability but of the non-disabled people in that relationship too. It is a drama in which everyone exists with their own pain.

Throughout the rehearsal process, I worked to ensure no character was flattened and consumed for the sake of a single protagonist's arc. Someone said to me that in this production, the weaknesses are all visible. Jellyfish means 'haepari' in Korean — and people with Down syndrome reveal all their feelings, good and bad, without filter. The performance was the same. What struck me most was being told that what might ordinarily be seen as 'limitations' had been transformed into the production's tenderness. I had always believed that pretending nothing is wrong was itself arrogance and dishonesty.

This was a four-hander in which a performer with Down syndrome had to manage over 600 of more than 1,300 lines. From the outset, I proposed beginning with a showcase rather than a full production. The fact that our producing institution accepted that proposal — in a situation where no one had tried this before and no one knew if it was possible — was itself meaningful. I feel that our audiences, and the juries of both the Dong-A Theatre Awards and the Baeksang Arts Awards, all read what we were doing: the new attempt of a Korean version in which all the crew are visible on stage and a prompter sits exposed at the side to feed lines.

The right attribution is that this production emerged on the foundation of decades of dedication from the disability arts community, who have built their world through their own efforts. I hope it can be read as a signal that diversity in creative teams is beginning — evidenced by a non-disabled playwright writing the story of a disabled person, and that story being performed as a formally produced play.

ABOUT THE PRODUCERS

The Korea Disability Arts & Culture Center (KDAC) was established in 2015 under the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, with a mission to build a sustainable disability arts ecosystem and serve as a platform for the continuous growth of artists with disabilities as creators. Following the enactment of the Act on Support for Cultural and Artistic Activities of Persons with Disabilities in 2020 and its designation as the lead agency in 2021, KDAC has established itself as the central institution for disability arts policy and support in Korea.

KDAC's work spans the full spectrum of disability arts — creation support, education and capacity building, accessibility infrastructure, international exchange, and venue operation. In 2023, it opened Modu Art Theater, Korea's first dedicated performing arts venue for disability arts, which has grown into a key hub connecting programming, production, and distribution. The Theater has introduced internationally renowned disability arts productions to Korean audiences — including work by Back to Back Theatre (Australia), Catalyse x CNCA (France), Chiara Bersani (Italy), and Teatro la Plaza (Peru) — while also demonstrating its own creative capacity through original productions including Jellyfish.

As of 2025, KDAC operates with an annual budget of approximately KRW 33.8 billion (approx. USD 26 million) and a staff of around 40, supporting hundreds of disabled artists and organisations each year across creation, education, employment, and presentation. KDAC continues to serve as the central institution connecting policy, artistic practice, and audiences, expanding the horizons of disability arts in Korea.

Key Facilities

- **IEUM Center** The hub for disability arts policy, administration, and programme development, housing offices and a platform for research, education, and networking.
- **Modu Art Theater** Korea's first dedicated performing arts venue for disability arts (opened 2023). A flexible black box theatre of approximately 508m² with around 200 seats, fully equipped with rehearsal studios, dressing rooms, and accessibility technology systems.
- **Modu Art Space** An exhibition venue dedicated to visual arts by artists with disabilities (opened 2024). Located in central Seoul, operating as a gallery for exhibitions and audience programmes.

Awards

- **62nd Baeksang Arts Award — Best Theatre** (2026) — Jellyfish
- **62nd Dong-A Theatre Award — Best Production** (2026) — Jellyfish

ABOUT THE PRODUCERS

CreativeTable Sukyoung makes performances that communicate deeply with contemporary audiences, guided by the values of comfort and empathy in life. Without being bound to any particular genre or form, the company has continually raised the quality of its work through collaboration with diverse artists, and is recognised as a producer that stimulates audiences with subtlety in both subject matter and form.

Since its founding in 2016, the company has consistently presented works with contemporary relevance and social meaning — including *Bea*, *Every Brilliant Thing*, and *Jellyfish*. Bringing difficult subjects such as the lives of marginalised people and the nature of human relationships to the stage with sensitivity and humour is at the heart of what Creative Table Seokyoung does. The company continues to build a repertoire of work that engages audiences widely across diverse spaces and forms.



Bea



HEISENBERG



Every Brilliant Thing



Soon, A New Leaf
You Could See



Danc ce Jardin
qu'on aimait



La Machin de Turing



Eye Charm



Jellyfish

Selected Works

- **Jellyfish — Co-produced with Korea Disability Arts & Culture Center**

Based on the play by British playwright Ben Weatherill, telling the story of love and independence of Kelly, a 27-year-old woman with Down syndrome. Following a 2024 development showcase, it premiered at Modu Art Theater in March 2025 and was later selected for the National Theater Company of Korea's Pick:nick invited programme, transferring to Myeongdong Arts Theater. Awards: 62nd Dong-A Theatre Award — Best Production · 62nd Baeksang Arts Award — Best Theatre.

- **Every Brilliant Thing**

Based on the work by Duncan Macmillan and Jonny Donahoe. An audience-participation solo show about a person writing down a list of reasons to live. Staged in Korea with alternating mixed-gender casting in keeping with the spirit of the original, it has continued to find audiences at Doosan Art Center and Hongik University Daehakro Art Center, and was invited to the opening festival of LG Arts Center Seoul, confirming both its artistic merit and audience appeal.

- **Bea**

Based on the play by British playwright Mick Gordon. The story of a young woman who chooses assisted dying, and the people around her — handling difficult subjects of death, empathy, and human desire with lightness and wit. Since its 2016 premiere, it has been remounted in 2019 and again at LG Arts Center Seoul in 2024.

Awards

- **62nd Baeksang Arts Award — Best Theatre** (2026) — Jellyfish
- **62nd Dong-A Theatre Award — Best Production** (2026) — Jellyfish



SUK Jaiwon (Rita)

+82)10 7352 7394

rita_ing@naver.com