

# QUEENSLAND THEATRE

## MEDIA RELEASE

### Queensland Theatre brings Nia Vardalos' adaptation of *Tiny Beautiful Things* to Queensland audiences

Queensland Theatre will bring Academy Award nominee Nia Vardalos' (*My Big Fat Greek Wedding*) hit adaptation of Cheryl Strayed's New York Times bestselling book *Tiny Beautiful Things* to Queensland stages for the first time ever opening from Saturday, June 17.

Co-conceived by Vardalos, Marshall Heyman and Tommy Kail, the Director of Off-Broadway and Broadway productions of *Hamilton*, *Tiny Beautiful Things* shares the story of Sugar, an online anonymous advice columnist.

Amid the clutter of family life, Sugar receives emails from strangers urgently needing help navigating the contradictions and complexities of life. Replying with candor and her own tough, sweet brand of unadulterated advice, Sugar offers a path to healing and catharsis for her recipients.

"When I first read *Tiny Beautiful Things*, I was absolutely engulfed by emotion. There was this epistolary exchange of emotions between two people trading confidence and touching each other through typeface. It was just an incredible experience to read," said Vardalos.

"One thing that really surprised me about *Tiny Beautiful Things* is when I realised the letters are real and the author, Cheryl Strayed, is really Sugar. She was opening up and revealing her life. It gives a groundedness to these stories. The details of our lives might be different, but we've all struggled with our identities or our familial ties."

Mandy McElhinney (*The Tempest*, *The Glass Menagerie*), best known for television roles in *Love Child* and *Wakefield*, will make her Queensland Theatre debut in the lead role of Sugar, while Stephen Geronimos (*Boy, Lost*, *Diving for Pearls*) takes on the role of Letter Writer #1.

Sepi Burgiani (*Family Values*, *Money And Friends*) will return to the Bille Brown Theatre stage for the second time this year, following her performance as Saba in *Family Values*, stepping into the role of Letter Writer #2 and Nic Prior (*Oedipus*, *Well That's Oz*) will take on the role of Letter Writer #3.

Directed by Queensland Theatre's Artistic Director Lee Lewis, *Tiny Beautiful Things* is set to offer our creatives the opportunity to tap into a moving work whose soul is universal.

"The heart at the centre of *Tiny Beautiful Things* is that these are real stories from real people, who are struggling through moments in their lives that we can all relate. This production is an opportunity for Australian creatives to make their mark on these universal stories," said Lewis.

Sharing her excitement for *Tiny Beautiful Things* debut in Queensland, Vardalos feels an honest connection to the humour and culture of the sunshine state.

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“I’ve always had such a special connection with Australia and I’m really excited about the play coming to Australia because we have such a kinship with Canada, where I grew up. We share this irony that runs through both Australian and Canadian senses of humour,” said Vardalos.

Tickets are available now for performances from Saturday, June 17 to Saturday, July 8 at <https://queenslandtheatre.com.au/plays/tiny-beautiful-things>.

## ENDS

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### **Tiny Beautiful Things**

*Based on the book by Cheryl Strayed*

*Adapted for the stage by Nia Vardalos*

*Co-Conceived by Marshall Heyman, Thomas Kail, and Nia Vardalos*

*Directed by Lee Lewis*

17 June – 8 July 2022

Bille Brown Theatre

### **Cast**

**Sugar** Mandy McElhinney

**Letter Writer #1** Stephen Geronimos

**Letter Writer #2** Sepi Burgiani

**Letter Writer #3** Nic Prior

### **Creatives**

**Director** Lee Lewis

**Designer** Simone Romaniuk

**Lighting Designer** Bernie Tan-Hayes

**Composer/Sound Designer** Brady Watkins



Queensland Theatre acknowledges the Jagera and Turrbal people who are the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work, and their unique relationship with the lands, seas and waterways. We pay our respects to their Elders both past and present, and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.