

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Media Alert for Theatre Editors, Reviewers, and Calendar Listings

Chance Theater presents...  
**“Tiny Beautiful Things”**

**Based on the best-selling book that also inspired an acclaimed Hulu Series**

**ANAHEIM, CA:** Chance Theater, Anaheim’s official resident theater company, is thrilled to present the tender and moving stage adaptation of the globally beloved **“Tiny Beautiful Things,”** based on the book by Cheryl Strayed and adapted for the stage by Nia Vardalos. Co-conceived by Marshall Heyman, Thomas Kail, and Nia Vardalos. With direction by Katie Chidester (*“Matinicus: The Story of Abigail Burgess”*), **“Tiny Beautiful Things”** will begin previews on April 5, 2024. This inspiring production will officially open on April 13 and captivate audiences until April 28, 2024 at the Bette Aitken Theater Arts Center on the Cripe Stage.

Critic’s Pick! *“Tiny Beautiful Things* turns out to be about the endangered art of listening to — and really hearing and responding to — other people...it works beautifully as a sustained theatrical exercise in empathy.” – *New York Times*

“Should be a sought-after title for other venues looking for a theatrical hug in turbulent times.”  
– *Variety*

“Provocative, poignant and rich.” – *New York Daily News*

Based on the real-life stories that inspired the best-selling book that launched the acclaimed Hulu series, **“Tiny Beautiful Things”** is a play rich with humor, insight, compassion – and absolute honesty. When Cheryl Strayed (author of the memoir *Wild*) agreed to take over an online advice column, she was still putting her life back together. What seemed like a part-time undertaking transformed into an enrapturing, heartbreaking, and ultimately uplifting journey. You will be forever changed after witnessing this unforgettable collection of true tales about reaching out when you’re stuck, recovering when you’re broken, and finding the courage to ask the

questions that are the hardest to answer. Audiences should note that this play contains strong language, adult content, and other potentially triggering content.

The true story behind the book that inspired the play started in 2010. Author Cheryl Strayed was contacted by the advice columnist for *The Rumpus*, Steve Almond, to see if she would like to take over for him. She accepted and spent the next two years offering a wide range of advice under the pseudonym “Sugar” for no pay. Strayed made a commitment to her readers to always answer with complete honesty and would not hold back on sharing her own life experiences in raw detail – the good *and* the bad. Strayed said, “I’ve always written the column as if I were a naked woman standing in a field showing you everything but her face.”

Strayed would compile a collection of essays from her “Sugar” experience into the book, *Tiny Beautiful Things*, which was published in July 2012 and debuted at #5 on the *New York Times* Best Seller List in the “Advice and Self-Help” category.

Then, years later, Tony-winning director **Thomas Kail** (“Hamilton”) gave a copy of the book to Oscar-nominated writer/actress **Nia Vardalos** (“My Big Fat Greek Wedding”) who read the whole book on a flight. Vardalos called Kail from the tarmac after she landed to say she wanted to turn it into a play. Written by Vardalos and directed by Kail, the stage version of “**Tiny Beautiful Things**” premiered at The Public Theater in December 2016. The production, starring Vardalos as Sugar, was a hit with critics and audiences, playing to sold-out audiences for its limited engagement (and brought back for an extended run engagement the following year).

The popularity of Strayed’s “Sugar” persona has persisted over the years and audiences can’t seem to get enough. In 2014, Strayed and original columnist Almond hosted the *New York Times* podcast “Dear Sugars” that would last for 4 years. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Strayed succumbed to reader demand and started a new podcast, “Sugar Calling.” The Hulu series based on Strayed’s novel premiered in April 2023 to acclaim, garnering many nominations for the show and its star, Kathryn Hahn.

Joining director Chidester on the design team are scenic designer **Kristin Campbell Coyne** (“Green Day’s American Idiot”), costume designer **Gwen Sloan** (“The Secret Garden, the Musical”), lighting designer **Jordan “LJ” Curiel** (“The Secret Garden, the Musical”), sound designer **Darryl B. Hovis** (“The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time,” Chance Resident Artist), stage manager **Bebe Herrera** (“Ride the Cyclone,” Chance Resident Artist), and dramaturg **Jocelyn L. Buckner** (“Skylight”, Chance Resident Artist).

The cast of “**Tiny Beautiful Things**” features **Aubrey Saverino** (“Matinicus: The Story of Abigail Burgess” - OCTG Theatre Award nominee for Lead Performance) as Sugar, **Jonathon Lamer** (“The Curious Incident of the Dog in

the Night-Time”) as Letter Writer #1, **Jennifer Richardson** (“Fun Home”) as Letter Writer #2, and **Sam Mistry** (Chance Debut) as Letter Writer #3.

**Laurie Smits Staude** is the Executive Producer for this production. **Bette & Wylie Aitken** are Executive Season Producers for the entire 2024 schedule. **Susan Bowman & Freddie Greenfield and Linda Maggard** are Associate Producers, and **The Family of Mary Kay Fyda-Mar** is this year’s Associate Season Producers. Our community partner is **Radiant Futures, who will be co-hosting a Community Night at Chance Theater on Friday, April 19 starting at 7pm.**

To schedule press interviews, arrange for press comps, request press photos, or any additional information regarding this production, please contact Casey Long, the Chance’s managing director, at (626) 523-7151 or [casey@chancetheater.com](mailto:casey@chancetheater.com).

---

## **ABOUT CHANCE THEATER**

Proud to be one of the leading ensemble-driven theatre companies in Southern California, CHANCE THEATER has received the National Theatre Company grant from American Theatre Wing for “nurturing a community of artists in ways that strengthen and demonstrate the quality, diversity, and dynamism of American theatre.” The Chance won 22 OCTG Theatre Awards, including two for Outstanding Production of a Musical (“Next to Normal” and “Fun Home”) and one for Outstanding Production of a Play (“Cry It Out”). Previously, Chance Theater won eight Ovation Awards, including four for Best Production of a Musical (Intimate Theatre), and four LADCC Awards, including the Polly Warfield Award for Outstanding Season. The Anaheim City Council named Chance Theater “the Official Resident Theater Company of Anaheim” in 2014, and Arts Orange County has twice named the Chance as “Outstanding Arts Organization.” Known for using bold and personal storytelling to promote dialogue and connection within the Southern California theatrical landscape, the Chance is committed to contributing to a more compassionate, connected, and creative community. As a constituent member of Theatre Communications Group, The Theatrical Producers League of Los Angeles, and OC Theatre Guild, Chance Theater continues to bring national attention to the Southern California and Orange County theater scenes.

## CALENDAR LISTING

### WHAT: “Tiny Beautiful Things”

Based on the best-selling book by Cheryl Strayed (now an acclaimed Hulu series starring Kathryn Hahn), “Tiny Beautiful Things” follows the relationships between an anonymous advice columnist named Sugar and the many real-life readers who pour out their hearts to her. Academy Award nominee Nia Vardalos (“My Big Fat Greek Wedding”) adapts Strayed’s book into an enrapturing and uplifting play that surges with emotion and is called by *Variety* “a theatrical hug in turbulent times.” “Tiny Beautiful Things” is about reaching when you’re stuck, recovering when you’re broken, and finding the courage to ask the questions that are hardest to answer.

NOTE: *Contains strong language, adult content, and other potentially triggering content.*

### WHEN:

**Previews:** April 5th to April 12th, 2024; Fridays and Saturday at 8 p.m., Sunday at 7 p.m.

**Performances:** April 13th - 28th, 2024; Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 3 p.m. & 8 p.m., Sundays at 3 p.m.

\*\*\*\*

**REVIEWERS AND OTHER PRESS are encouraged to come to Opening Night on Sat, April 13th at 8 p.m.**

**RUNNING TIME:** 1 hour, 20 minutes, with no intermission

**WHERE:** Chance Theater @ Bette Aitken Theater Arts Center on the Cripe Stage

5522 E. La Palma Ave., Anaheim, CA 92807

**TICKETS:** \$8-\$44

**MORE INFO:** [www.ChanceTheater.com](http://www.ChanceTheater.com) or call (888) 455-4212

# # #