

Portland Center Stage at

THE **ARMORY**

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## M E D I A R E L E A S E

The stage adaptation of Cheryl Strayed's bestselling book *Tiny Beautiful Things* opens at The Armory starring Dana Green as beloved anonymous advice columnist Sugar

***"A heart-tugging, emotionally rewarding evening."* -HuffPost**

**Previews Begin Feb. 23 | Opening Night is March 1 | Closes March 31**

**Tickets start at \$25**



**January 23, 2019 — PORTLAND, OR.** Portland Center Stage at The Armory brings the critically acclaimed adaptation of Cheryl Strayed's *Tiny Beautiful Things* to debut in the author's hometown. Adapted by Nia Vardalos (writer and star of *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*), co-created by Vardalos, Thomas Kail (director of *Hamilton*) and Marshall Heyman, and directed by Rose Riordan, *Tiny Beautiful Things* explores the time Cheryl Strayed spent as the anonymous advice columnist behind "Dear Sugar," and the honest, intimate connection she forged with her readers. Dana Green takes on the role of Sugar, joined by Leif Norby, Lisa Renee Pitts, and Brian Michael

Smith who play the letter writers.

Speaking of the adaptation of the book to the stage, director Riordan said, "It's faithful in text, but dramatized in an ingenious way that allows us to hear from Sugar's readers." She continued, "The letters to Sugar are a glimpse into the soul of America in the middle of the night. Sugar's insightful responses are just the remedy we all need."

Strayed, who was involved in the process to adapt the script for its world premiere in New York, spoke of her excitement to have the show produced in her hometown: “I’m so touched by it. It’s really, really moving to me and I’m deeply grateful. I’m particularly excited that it’s at Portland Center Stage at The Armory, where I have seen so many beautiful, powerful plays.”

## **ABOUT THE PLAY**

A celebration of the simple beauty of being human, this funny and deeply touching exploration of resilience is based on Cheryl Strayed’s journey as the anonymous advice columnist for “Dear Sugar.” Over the years, thousands of people turned to Sugar for words of wisdom, compassion, and hope. At first unsure of herself, Sugar finds a way to weave her own life experiences together with the deep yearning and heartrending questions from her readers.

## **DEVELOPMENT**

Strayed began writing the “Dear Sugar” column anonymously in 2010 for the literary website The Rumpus. In 2012, she revealed herself as the author and a collection of the letters and her responses was published under the title, *Tiny Beautiful Things: Advice on Love and Life from Dear Sugar*. The book became a bestseller and, in 2013, Heyman shared the book with Kail who reached out to Vardalos about its potential for a stage adaptation. They approached Strayed to get the rights and began work on the script, working with Cheryl throughout the process. The play had its world premiere at The Public Theater in New York in 2016, starring Vardalos and directed by Kail, and played to sold-out houses in an extended run. *The New York Times* made it a Critic’s Pick, noting that “*Tiny Beautiful Things* is 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.”

## **CHERYL STRAYED, AUTHOR**

**Cheryl Strayed** is the author of the number one *The New York Times* bestselling memoir *Wild*, *The New York Times* bestsellers *Tiny Beautiful Things* and *Brave Enough*, and the novel *Torch*. Strayed's books have been translated into nearly forty languages around the world and have been adapted for both screen (*Wild*) and stage (*Tiny Beautiful Things*). Strayed's essays have been published in

*The Best American Essays, The New York Times, The Washington Post Magazine, Vogue, Salon, The Sun, Tin House, The New York Times Book Review, and elsewhere. She lives in Portland, Oregon with her husband and their two children.*

## **ADAPTOR & CO-CREATORS**

*Tiny Beautiful Things* is adapted by **Nia Vardalos**, the writer and star of *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* (Academy Award nomination for Best Original Screenplay, a Golden Globe nomination for Best Actress, Independent Spirit and People’s Choice Award). The stage adaptation was co-conceived and created by **Vardalos, Thomas Kail**, and **Marshall Heyman**. Kail is best known as the director of the Off-Broadway and Broadway productions of Lin-Manuel Miranda's *Hamilton*, for which he received the 2018 Tony Award for Best Direction of a Musical, and *In the Heights*; he also directed the Broadway productions of *Lombardi* and *Magic/Bird*. Heyman was the author of the *Wall Street Journal* social column “Heard and Scene” and has also contributed to *The New Yorker, Vanity Fair, Vogue*, and many others.

## **THE CAST**

**Dana Green** returns to The Armory to take on the role of Sugar after recent appearances that include *A Life, Major Barbara, Constellations, and Great Expectations*. The roles of the letter writers will be played by **Leif Norby** (last seen at The Armory in *A Christmas Memory/Winter Song* and *Astoria: Part One and Two*); **Lisa Renee Pitts** (seen at The Armory in *JAW*, 2015 and 2018, and on Broadway in the Tony Award-nominated *Sweat*); and **Brian Michael Smith** (known for his groundbreaking role as transgender police officer Toine Wilkins on the TV show *Queen Sugar*; recently Off-Broadway in *A Real Boy*).

## **THE CREATIVE TEAM**

Associate Artistic Director **Rose Riordan** (*Buyer & Cellar, A Life*) directs a team that includes Scenic Designer **Megan Wilkerson** (making her debut at The Armory; recent credits at Oregon Shakespeare Festival and Artists Repertory Theatre); Costume Designer **Jacqueline Firkins** (*Fences* at The Armory; designs for Court Theatre and Goodman Theatre); Lighting Designer **Kristeen Willis Crosser** (*Buyer & Cellar, Mary’s Wedding*); with Stage Manager **Janine Vanderhoff** and Production Assistant **Sarah Stark**.

## TICKET AND PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

**When:** Feb. 23 – March 31, 2019\*

\*Opening Night/Press Night: Friday, March 1 at 7:30 p.m.

Preview Performances: Feb. 23, 24, 26, 27 and 28 at 7:30 p.m.

**Where:** On the U.S. Bank Main Stage at [The Armory](#)  
128 NW Eleventh Ave., Portland, Ore., 97209

**To Purchase:** Regular tickets range from \$25 to \$82 and are on sale now. Tickets may be purchased at [www.pcs.org](http://www.pcs.org), 503.445.3700, or in-person from the box office (128 NW Eleventh Avenue, Portland, OR). Rush tickets are \$20. Students; patrons who are 30 or younger; and active duty or veteran military personnel and their families get 50% off tickets in seating areas 1-3. \$5 tickets are available for Oregon Trail Card holders through the Arts for All program. *All prices vary by date and time, and are subject to change.*

**Online:** [www.pcs.org](http://www.pcs.org)

**By Phone:** 503.445.3700, 12–6 p.m.

**In Person:** The box office is at 128 NW Eleventh Avenue

12 p.m. to 8 p.m. on performance days

12 p.m. to 6 p.m. on non-performance days

**Groups:** Discounts available for groups of 10+ by calling 503.445.3794.

**More Info:** [www.pcs.org/tiny](http://www.pcs.org/tiny)

**Showtimes:** Tuesday through Sunday evenings at 7:30 p.m. (excluding March 10, 24, and 31); Saturday and Sunday matinees at 2 p.m. (excluding Feb. 23, 24 and March 2, 16); and Thursday matinees at noon (excluding Feb. 28).

**Please Note:** Recommended for ages 16 and up. Contains mature language and adult situations.

**Accessibility:** Learn about our accessibility options at [www.pcs.org/access](http://www.pcs.org/access).

## **PORTLAND CENTER STAGE AT THE ARMORY**

[Portland Center Stage at The Armory](#) is the largest theater company in Portland and among the top 20 regional theaters in the country. Established in 1988 as a branch of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the company became independent in 1994, and is under the leadership of Artistic Director Marissa Wolf and Managing Director Cynthia Fuhrman. Around 150,000 visitors attend The Armory annually to enjoy a mix of classic, contemporary, and world premiere productions, along with a variety of high quality education and community programs. Eleven productions are offered each season, in addition to roughly 400 community events created — in partnership with 170+ local organizations and individuals — to serve the diverse populations in the city. As part of its dedication to new play development, the company has produced 26 world premieres and presents an annual new works festival, JAW: A Playwrights Festival. Home to two theaters, The Armory (originally built in 1891) opened its doors in 2006 as the first building on the National Register of Historic Places, and the first performing arts venue in the country, to achieve a LEED Platinum rating.

## **THE 2018-2019 SEASON**

The [2018-2019 season](#) is funded in part by Season Superstars Tim and Mary Boyle and Lead Corporate Champion Umpqua Bank. Further support comes from Season Sponsors the Regional Arts and Culture Council, and Oregon Arts Commission, a state agency funded by the state of Oregon and the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Wallace Foundation. Further support comes from: Support for *Tiny Beautiful Things* comes from the Finley Family Foundation and the Ritz Family Foundation; and Women's Series Sponsors Ronni Lacroute, Brigid Flanigan, Diana Gerding, and Mary Boyle. Mark Spencer Hotel is the official hotel partner for the company. Portland Center Stage at The Armory was selected as a participant of the Wallace Foundation's [Building Audiences for Sustainability Initiative](#), a four-year effort with a nationwide cohort of 26 performing arts organizations.

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