



**BELVOIR ST
THEATRE**

TINY BEAUTIFUL THINGS

1 Feb – 2 Mar 2024

Based on
the book by
Cheryl Strayed

Adapted for
the stage by
Nia Vardalos

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

A **Queensland Theatre**
production

Presented in Association with
Trish Wadley Productions



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RUN TIME: 1 hour 35 minutes

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CAST

Stephen Geronimos
Letter Writer #1

Mandy McElhinney
Sugar

Nic Prior
Letter Writer #3

Angela Nica Sullen
Letter Writer #2

CREATIVES

Director **Lee Lewis**

Transfer Director

Daniel Evans

Set and
Costume Designer

Simone Romaniuk

Lighting Designer

Bernie Tan-Hayes

Composer and
Sound Designer

Brady Watkins

Stage Manager

Maddison Penglis

Assistant Stage Manager

Christopher Starnawski

"Tiny Beautiful Things"
is presented by
arrangement with
Concord Theatricals
on behalf of
Samuel French, Inc.
concordtheatricals.com

Original New York
Production by
The Public Theater
Oskar Eustis,
Artistic Director
Patrick Willingham,
Executive Director

WARNING

This production contains coarse language, dead blackouts and letters sent by real people seeking advice on all matters of life including complex conversations around life, death, and love.

If you or someone you know needs information or support, these organisations are there to help:

Beyond Blue 1300 224 636

Lifeline 13 11 14

Headspace headspace.org.au

We acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora nation who are the traditional custodians of the land on which we share our stories. We also pay our respect to the Elders past and present, and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Cover and rehearsal photography by **Brett Boardman**



Angela Nica Sullen



Nic Prior, Mandy McElhinney, Stephen Geronimos & Angela Nica Sullen

ADAPTOR'S NOTE

NIA VARDALOS

The letters are real... I thought, as I read Cheryl Strayed's incredibly moving book, *Tiny Beautiful Things*.

People wrote these letters.

A few years ago, author Cheryl Strayed gave advice as Sugar for the literary website, *The Rumpus*, and later collected the letters into a book. Journalist Marshall Heyman gave his friend, director Thomas Kail, the book and Tommy gave it to me suggesting it could become a play. As I read the letters exchanged, I wept, smiled, and was astonished by the raw and extraordinary candor.

Sugar and the writers of the letters reveal themselves and we find ourselves in their conundrums and sorrows, in their lives lived and roads traveled. I yearned to be as bold, audacious and willful. As I adapted the book into a play, I found the words so illuminating that I grieved and moved on from certain events of my own.

Still, if I had one letter to write, it would be:

Dear Sugar, I hope to be as brave as the writers of the letters and as open as Cheryl Strayed.



Lee Lewis

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

LEE LEWIS

I have never read another play like *Tiny Beautiful Things*. It is, I think, part of a new wave of writing that is diving deep into emotion. Emotions that are deeply familiar or strangely disorienting. There is no right way to make or receive plays like this, there is no theatrical guidebook for artists or audience. This is not in the tradition of 'the well-made play'. The story, if there is one for you, rises up through an accumulation of moments... much like life. This is, if you like, a new way of trying to create a portrait of life.

In this play I found an extraordinary tribute to the tradition of 'kitchen table wisdom'...

a willingness to offer up your experiences, as painful as they are, in the hope that the tiny bits of knowledge hived inside will help a friend survive, will help them through the various awfulness and confusions of life. It is a humane repudiation of the idea that there is ever a 'silver bullet' to solve the mystery of personal pain. It is a timely reminder that compassion, radical sincerity, brutal self-honesty and love are our best tools for building connection and community... that we can and must help each other.

I think every person will find something of themselves inside this play. It can be hard to

listen to. It was definitely hard to make. I found huge chunks of myself strangely comforted by Sugar's words. And so, no matter how great the cost I knew I had to try and share this experience with you. For all the darkness of the world it allows in, this play is ultimately hopeful. It believes it is possible to help, it believes in love, it believes in courage, it believes in the power of the right words at the right time, it also believes in our ability to survive the absence of the right words... sometimes the right silence is enough.

There was a kitchen table fourteen years ago where a good friend sat with me and helped me to survive the death of our daughter by offering her own experience of loss. This play is a celebration of that kind of generosity. I'd love to dedicate it to Selena, and to everyone who has ever managed to be a Selena (or Sugar, if you like) for someone in their lives. And to Brett. Always.

Thank you for the leap of theatrical faith that this strange but beautifully recognisable play asks of all of us.

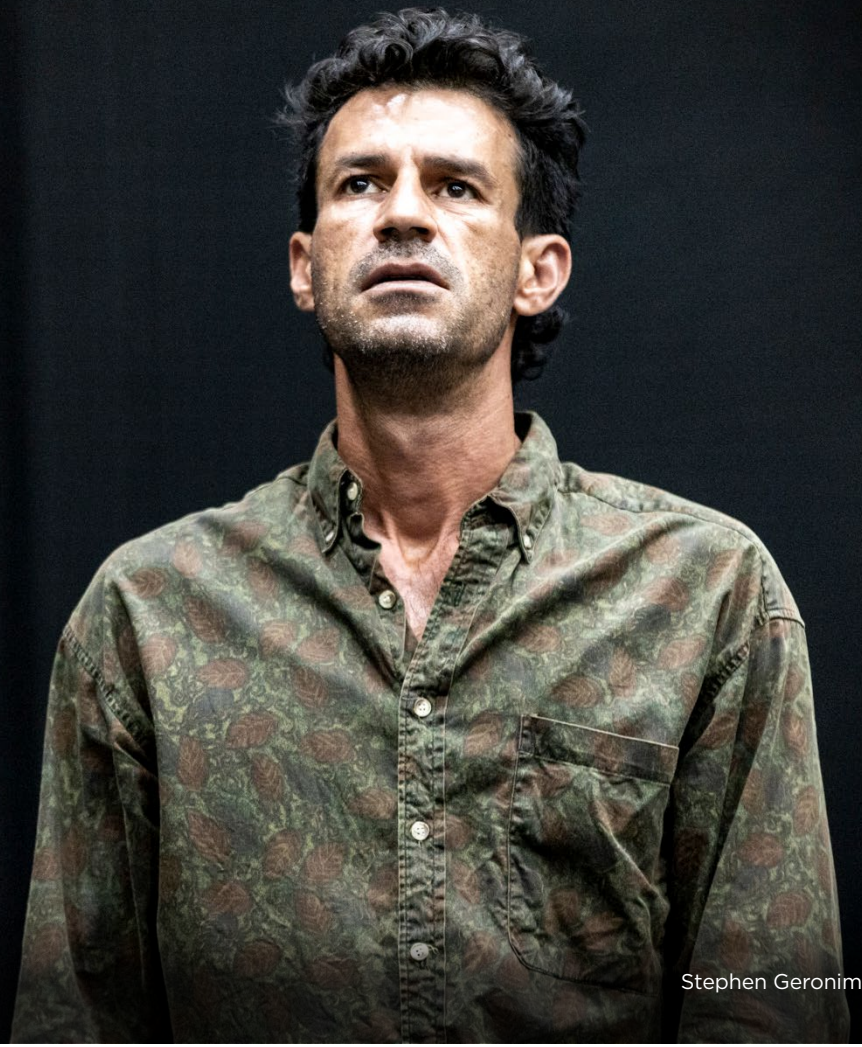




Angela Nica Sullen



Nic Prior



Stephen Geronimos



Mandy McElhinney



Stephen Geronimos & Mandy McElhinney



Angela Nica Sullen & Mandy McElhinney



**BELVOIR ST
THEATRE**

2024 SEASON

TIDDAS

12 – 28 Jan

The comedy smash of the Brisbane Festival, for a three-week Sydney season.

TINY BEAUTIFUL THINGS

1 Feb – 3 Mar

A tiny, beautiful, and life-affirming play based on the book by Cheryl Strayed.

HOLDING THE MAN

9 Mar – 14 Apr

The love story which defined a generation, and a classic of the Australian stage, in a brand new production.

LOSE TO WIN

25 Apr – 19 May

An extraordinary journey from South Sudan to the Belvoir stage.

NAYIKA A DANCING GIRL

30 Apr – 19 May

A virtuosic solo performance mixing storytelling, live music, and Bharatanatyam dance.

NEVER CLOSER

25 May – 16 Jun

An astonishing debut play in a production direct from our Downstairs Theatre.

COUNTING AND CRACKING

28 Jun – 21 Jul

The internationally-acclaimed epic returns to Sydney, this time at Carriageworks.

THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME

17 Aug – 22 Sep

The hit adaptation of the hit book in a brand new, very Belvoir production.

WELL-BEHAVED WOMEN

28 Sep – 3 Nov

A musical feast celebrating the women who refused to behave.

AUGUST: OSAGE COUNTY

9 Nov – 15 Dec

One of the monumental plays of the 21st century, up close and personal.



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Governor of New South Wales

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