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Kory Kelly - Director of Marketing at Pasadena Playhouse:

**Nia Vardalos reprises role in
Tiny Beautiful Things
her *New York Times* Critics' Pick stage adaptation
of Cheryl Strayed's *New York Times* Bestseller**

**Casting completed with Sameerah Luqmann-Harris,
Teddy Cañez, Natalie Woolams-Torres,
Giovanni Adams, Adam J. Smith and Sarah Hollis**

Wednesday, April 10 to Sunday, May 5 (press opening April 14)

PASADENA, CA (March 26, 2019) - Pasadena Playhouse, the State Theater of California, is pleased to announce that casting is complete for The Public Theater production of *Tiny Beautiful Things* starring Academy Award-nominated writer and actress **Nia Vardalos**, who will reprise the role of Sugar for the Playhouse production. **Vardalos** originated the role of Sugar at The Public Theater under the direction of Thomas Kail. She also created the stage adaptation of *Tiny Beautiful Things* based on the *New York Times* Bestseller of the same name by Cheryl Strayed. The project was conceived by Vardalos in conjunction with Thomas Kail and Marshall Hayman.

The casting is completed with Sameerah Luqmaan-Harris who will play the role of Sugar at select performances (Off-Broadway: *The Emperor Jones*, HBO's *Sharp Objects*), Teddy Cañez (Broadway: *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Off-Broadway: The Public Theater's *Tiny Beautiful Things*), Natalie Woolams-Torres (Off-Broadway: The Public Theater's *Tiny Beautiful Things*, The Mobile Unit's *Hamlet*), Giovanni Adams (*Little Black Shadows* at South Coast Repertory Theatre, *The Model Apartment* at Geffen Playhouse), Adam J. Smith (Pasadena Playhouse: *12 Angry Men*, *Intimate Apparel* and *Matter of Honor*) and Sarah Hollis (*A Raisin in the Sun* at A Noise Within, *King Charles III* at Pasadena Playhouse).

The New York Times named *Tiny Beautiful Things* a Critics' Pick, stating Vardalos's performance was "luminous," and that "*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... a deeply reciprocal relationship between a show and its audience." *Time Out New York* said it is "Incredibly moving," and *New York* magazine described it as, "Tiny moments when the world surprises us with care."

Vardalos's stage credits include Jenny in *Company* directed by Gary Griffin (Theater 20) and she is an alumna of The Second City in Chicago and Toronto. Her film writing/

acting credits include *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* and its sequel (Academy Award and Golden Globe Award nominations, Independent Spirit and People's Choice Awards), *Connie and Carla* and *I Hate Valentine's Day*. Her film and television acting credits include *My Life in Ruins*; *For a Good Time, Call...*; *Graves*; and *Jane the Virgin*. Ms. Vardalos's memoir *Instant Mom* is a *New York Times* Bestseller, and all proceeds are donated to adoption groups.

Sherri Eden Barber will restage the Playhouse production based on the original direction by Kail, who directed both of Lin Manuel Miranda's Broadway shows - *In the Heights* and *Hamilton*, for which he won the Tony Award for Direction (2016). Performances run from Wednesday, April 10 to Sunday, May 5; the press opening is Sunday, April 14 at 5:00pm.

Tiny Beautiful Things is about Sugar, an anonymous online advice columnist to whom thousands of people have turned for words of wisdom, honesty and hope. At first unsure of herself, Sugar finds a way to weave her own life experiences together with the deep yearning and real problems of her readers, creating a beloved column about the monstrous beauty, endless dark and glimmering light at the heart of being human.

The stage version of ***Tiny Beautiful Things*** comes to life as a richly funny, uniquely uplifting and moving play. It is about reaching when you're stuck, healing when you're broken and finding the courage to take on the questions, which have no answers

Author Cheryl Strayed also wrote *Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail*, that was the first selection of Oprah's Book Club 2.0; and was adapted to film starring Reese Witherspoon, Laura Dern, and Thomas Sadoski, star of the Pasadena Playhouse production of *Belleville*.

Tickets can be purchased online at PasadenaPlayhouse.org, by phone at 626-356-7529, and in person at the Pasadena Playhouse Box Office, 39 South El Molino Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91101.

Please note that Sameerah Luqmaan-Harris will replace Nia Vardalos in the role of Sugar for the following performances: April 13, 2 p.m.; April 20, 2 p.m., April 21, 2 p.m., April 27, 2 p.m., April 28, 2 p.m., May 4, 2 p.m., and May 5, 2 and 7 p.m.

The design team features scenic design by Rachel Hauck; costume design by Jennifer Moeller; lighting design by Jeff Croiter; and sound design by Jill BC Du Boff.

ABOUT THE PASADENA PLAYHOUSE -- The Pasadena Playhouse is a place where people have gathered for 100 years to experience bold and important theater. It is one of the most prolific theaters in American history with a legacy of profound theatrical impact and courageous new work. In 1937, the Playhouse was officially recognized as the State Theater of California for its contribution and commitment to the dramatic arts. Today it continues that tradition of excellence under the helm of producing artistic director Danny Feldman. Dedicated to enriching lives through theater, community programs and learning initiatives, Pasadena Playhouse is a living force in the community.

Calendar Listing

The Public Theater Production of
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

Venue: The Pasadena Playhouse, 39 South El Molino Avenue, Pasadena, CA
91101

Dates: Wednesday, April 10 to Sunday, May 5
Press opening Sunday, April 14 at 5:00 p.m.

Performance Schedule:

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday evenings at 8:00 p.m.
Saturday at 2:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m; Sunday at 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

Please note that Sameerah Luqmaan-Harris will replace Nia Vardalos in the role of Sugar for the following performances: April 13, 2 p.m.; April 20, 2 p.m., April 21, 2 p.m., April 27, 2 p.m., April 28, 2 p.m., May 4, 2 p.m., and May 5, 2 and 7 p.m.

Tickets Prices start at \$25
Tickets go on sale to the general public on Friday, March 8, 2019.
Online -- PasadenaPlayhouse.org
By phone at 626-356-7529
In person -- Pasadena Playhouse Box Office, located at 39 South El
Molino Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91101

Information: For more information on all productions at Pasadena Playhouse visit
PasadenaPlayhouse.org.

Description: Nia Vardalos (*My Big Fat Greek Wedding*) reprises her role in this uniquely uplifting and moving play based on acclaimed author Cheryl Strayed's *New York Times* bestseller by the same name. Adapted by Vardalos, Thomas Kail (Director of *Hamilton*) and Marshall Heyman (Journalist, *The Wall Street Journal*), *Tiny Beautiful Things* is about reaching when you're stuck, healing when you're broken and finding the courage to take on the questions which have no answers.

BIOGRAPHIES

Cheryl Strayed (Original Book) is the author of *Tiny Beautiful Things*, *Torch*, *Brave Enough*, and the No. 1 *New York Times* Bestseller *Wild*. Her books have been translated into more than 40 languages around the world. The Academy Award-nominated film adaptation of *Wild* was released in 2014. Ms. Strayed's essays and stories have appeared in *The Best American Essays*, *Vogue*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and elsewhere. She is the co-host of *The New York Times's* "Dear Sugar Radio" podcast, which originated with her popular "Dear Sugar" column.

Nia Vardalos (Sugar, Adaptor, Co-Conceiver) is an alumna of Chicago's The Second City and a Joseph Jefferson Award winner whose most recent theatre credits include Sugar

in *Tiny Beautiful Things* directed by Thomas Kail in two consecutive seasons (The Public Theater) and Jennie in *Company* directed by Gary Griffin (Theatre 20). Her writing/acting credits for film include “My Big Fat Greek Wedding” and its sequel (Academy Award and Golden Globe Award nominations, Independent Spirit and People’s Choice Awards), “Connie and Carla,” and “I Hate Valentine’s Day.” Her film and television acting credits include “My Life in Ruins;” “For a Good Time, Call...;” “Graves”; and “Jane the Virgin.” Ms. Vardalos’s memoir *Instant Mom* is a *New York Times* best seller, and all proceeds are donated to adoption groups.

Sameerah Luqmaan-Harris (Sugar) Off-Broadway: *The Emperor Jones* (Irish Repertory Theatre and Soho Playhouse), *No Exit* (The Pearl), Samuel Beckett’s *Play and Act Without Words I* (Irish Repertory Theatre), *Lady Percy in Henry IV, Part I* (The Public Theater), and *ReEntry* (Urban Stages). LA/NYC Credits: *Father Comes Home From the Wars, Parts 1, 2, & 3* (Mark Taper Forum - West Coast Premiere; Ovation Featured Actress Nominee, 2017), *Seven* and *Disgraced* (L.A. Theatre Works) *Sight Unseen* (Lounge Theatre), *Fefu and Her Friends* (Culture Project), *Come Back to Me* (Cherry Lane Theatre), and *Beatrice in Much Ado About Nothing*. Regional: *Mary T. & Lizzy K.* (Arena Stage - World Premiere), *ReEntry* (Actors Theatre of Louisville; Baltimore Centerstage; Two River Theatre - World Premiere), *Doubt* (Asolo Repertory Theatre and Cape May Stage), *Equus* and *The Constant Wife* (Asolo Repertory Theatre). TV/Film: “Sharp Objects” (HBO), “Room 104” (HBO), “The Good Wife”, “Advantageous” (Sundance Film Festival Special Jury Award, 2015), “The Bravest, The Boldest” (Sundance Film Festival, 2014; 6 Film Festival Best Actress Wins), “City”, “Good Funk”, “Reagan”, and “The Outskirts”. www.sameerahluqmaan-harris.com

Teddy Cañez (Letter Writer) Broadway: *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Off-Broadway: *Tiny Beautiful Things*, *ToasT* (The Public Theater), *Chimichangas & Zoloft* (The Atlantic Theater), *Post No Bills* (Rattlestick Playwright’s Theater). Regional: *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (Hartford Stage), *Mister Roberts* (The Kennedy Center), *Our Lady of 121st Street* (Woolly Mammoth Theater). Film: “Ben is Back”, “Shelter”, “A Most Violent Year”, “Now You See Me”, “Frances Ha”, “Tracers”, “Sleepwalk with Me”, “Enduro”. TV: “New Amsterdam” (NBC), “Tales of The City” (Netflix), “Dietland” (AMC; recur), “The Good Fight” (CBS), “Blindspot” (NBC), “The Detour” (TBS; recur), “Elementary” (CBS), “Invisible,” “Person of Interest” (CBS), “Madam Secretary” (NBC; recur), “The Blacklist” (NBC), “Blue Bloods” (CBS), “Bar Karma” (CurrentTV), “Mob Doctor” (FOX), “Law & Order,” “Law & Order: SVU,” “Law & Order: C.I.,” “Conviction,” (NBC); “How to Make it In America” (HBO; recur), “The Wire” (HBO; recur) HERO Company Member.

Natalie Woolams-Torres (Letter Writer) New York: *Tiny Beautiful Things*, *The Mobile Unit’s Hamlet*, and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (The Public Theater); *Julius Caesar*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *The Comedy of Errors* (Shakespeare in the Park). Film: “Farewell” directed by Chris Chalk. TV: “Difficult People”. Natalie attended SUNY Purchase Conservatory of Theater Arts and Film.

Giovanni Adams (Letter Writer) Giovanni Adams is thrilled to be making his Pasadena Playhouse debut. He recently played Waston in Anna Ziegler’s *Photograph 51* and originated the role of Colis in Kemp Powers’ *Little Black Shadows* at South Coast Repertory Theatre. He played Neil in Donald Margulies’ *The Model Apartment* at Geffen Playhouse and was in the world premiere of Kemp Powers’ *One Night in Miami* (Rogue Machine Theatre; LA Drama Critics Circle Award and NAACP Theatre Award for

Best Ensemble, 2013). He has participated in the Pacific Playwrights Festival, Bay Area Playwrights Festival and the Writer's Workshop Retreat at Center Theatre Group to help develop new works. His other stage credits include *Mount Misery* (Cutting Ball Theater), *The Recommendation* and *Bela Lugosi's Dead* (IAMA Theatre Company) and *Miss Julie* and *King Lear* (Yale Repertory Theatre). Recently, his solo show, *Love Is A Dirty Word*, developed in collaboration with Becca Wolff, premiered at VS Theatre and received Ovation and LA Drama Critics Circle awards recognition, 2016. His film and television credits include "Nina", "Criminal Minds", "Zach Stone is Gonna Be Famous", "Grey's Anatomy", and "Gary Unmarried". Adams was born in Jackson, Mississippi and received his BA from Yale University.

Adam J. Smith (Letter Writer Understudy) Pasadena Playhouse: *12 Angry Men*, *Intimate Apparel* and *Matter of Honor*. Elsewhere: *Nightwalk in the Chinese Garden* (Center for New Performance/Huntington Gardens); *As You Like It*, *Cloud 9*, *Henry IV Part 1* and *Curse of Oedipus* (Antaeus Theatre Company, Company Member); *The Heir Apparent*, *Private Lives* and *How the Other Half Loves* (International City Theatre); *Three Sisters* and *Family Planning* (Chalk Rep); *Beauty* (La Jolla Playhouse); *Mozart & Strauss* (Disney Concert Hall with LA Philharmonic); *In the Next Room (or the vibrator play)* (Chautauqua Theater Company, NY); *An Evening of Betrayal: Betrayal/Othello* (6th Act); *Untethered* (Mountain View Mausoleum); Ojai Playwrights Conference, South Coast Rep, Boston Court, East-West Players, Black Dahlia, The Blank, Wilshire Ebell, Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Tennessee Williams Festival and numerous Off- and Off-Off-Broadway. TV: "The Good Doctor," "Jane the Virgin," "The Orville," "Scandal," "Castle," "90210," "Medium," "Without a Trace," "Numb3rs," "Victorious," "Chemistry," "As The World Turns," and "When Things Get Small" (regional Emmy Award Winner) among others. Film: "Taken 3," "Zombie Strippers," and "Deceit." Voiceover: Discovery Channel, Grand Theft Auto V, Final Fantasy XIII, SFMOMA Audio Tour. Faculty member at CalArts School of Theater. MFA: UCSD/La Jolla Playhouse, BA: Duke (magna cum laude).

Sarah Hollis (Letter Writer Understudy) Sarah couldn't be happier to return to her "artistic home" at Pasadena Playhouse! She has previously appeared as Jess in *King Charles III* and Ensemble in *Pygmalion* at Pasadena Playhouse. Other regional theater credits include: Beneatha in *A Raisin In The Sun* (A Noise Within, LADCC Nominated for Best Featured Performance), Zoe in *An Octoroon* (Kinetic Theater Company at New Hazlett Theater), Viola in *Twelfth Night* (PCPA), and Betty 5 (understudy) in *Collective Rage: A Play in Five Boops* (Boston Court). TV: "24" (Fox, recurring), "Lie to Me" (Fox), "The Unit" (CBS). Film: "Kill Your Darlings", "The Russian Doll", "Falling" (Slamdance 2018), "Madness" (Charlie Watchell, dir). Next up: Sarah is playing Viola in *Twelfth Night*, Witch in *Macbeth*, and Elizabeth Condell/ensemble in *The Book of Will* at Utah Shakespeare Festival.

Marshall Heyman (Co-Conceiver) has written for *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *Vanity Fair*, *Vogue*, *InStyle*, *W*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *New York*, and many others. He recently wrote for the AMC show "Dietland."

Thomas Kail (Co-Conceiver, Original Director): Broadway directing credits include *Hamilton* (Tony Award); *In the Heights* (Tony Nomination); *Lombardi* and *Magic/Bird*. Other directing credits include the world premiere of *Hamilton*, *Dry Powder*, *Tiny Beautiful Things*, and *Kings* at the Public Theater; the world premiere of *In the Heights*; *Broke-ology* and the world premiere of *When I Come to Die* at Lincoln Center Theater; the world premiere of *Daphne's Dive* at the Signature Theater. He is the co-creator and director of the hip-hop improv group *Freestyle Love Supreme*. He is

a recipient of a Kennedy Center Honors Award, in addition to the Drama Desk Award, an Obie, a Callaway Award, the Lucille Lortel Award and the Martin E. Segal Award from Lincoln Center. He is a graduate of Wesleyan University.

Sherri Eden Barber (Director) is a New York based theatre director and Artistic Director of Ricochet Collective. Recent: *good friday* (The Flea Theater), *Only You Can Prevent Wildfires* (Ricochet Collective - Teatro Circulo), *Happily After Ever* (Ricochet Collective - 59E59, Edinburgh Fringe), *Gordy Crashes* (Ricochet Collective--IRT), *Mr. Landing Takes A Fall* (The Flea), *Esperanza Spalding's Emily's D+Evolution* (Development on European Tour), *Herman Kline's Midlife Crisis* (The Beckett), *Monstrosity*, *Polaroid Stories*, and *BENT* (The New School for Drama), *The Lightning Thief* (Theatreworks USA), *24 Hour Plays on Broadway* with Pablo Schreiber, Laverne Cox, and Melanie Griffith (American Airlines Theatre), *Latrell: Live Tonight!* (Joe's Pub), *Dance Lessons* (winner of the Samuel French Short Play Festival), *Men On Boats* (Yale Dramat). She has developed new work with Rattlestick, Orchard Project, The Flea, Culture Project, Chautauqua, and The Old Vic. Sherri is a recipient of The Eugene O'Neill Theater Center's National Directors Fellowship, the Core Company Director for The Orchard Project, a Drama League Directing Fellow, and recipient of the US/UK Exchange Award. RicochetCollective.com, SherriEdenBarber.com