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Southland Area Theatre Ensemble
AT GOVERNORS STATE UNIVERSITY

proudly presents:


Governors State
UNIVERSITY



Directed by:
J.R. Rose
Vocal Directed by:
Jennifer Dale
Conducted by:
Aaron Kaplan
Choreography by:
Christopher Kelley



center for
performing arts

February 3 & 4 2017

The Southland Area Theatre Ensemble, in partnership with The Center for the Performing Arts at Governor's State University could not be more thrilled to bring to the stage for 3 performances, the smash musical *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. The *New York Times* called *THE 25th ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE* "l-r-r-e-s-is-t-i-b-l-e!" Featuring witty and endearing music and lyrics by William Finn and a delightful book by Rachel Sheinkin, *THE 25th ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE* became an instant success Off-Broadway and later ran on Broadway for three years. It was nominated for six Tony Awards in 2005, including Best Musical, and won two, including the award for Best Book of a Musical. Thank you for a-u-d-i-t-i-o-n-i-n-g! If you have any questions please email me at jr@jrrose.org or call 708.767.7673.

Always,

J.R. Rose

Artistic Director - SLATE Theatre

Audition Information

- Auditions will be held **Tuesday, November 15th from – 6:30 pm – 9:30 pm** in the Center for Performing Arts at Governors State University.
- Invited callbacks will be **Thursday, November 17th from 6:30 pm–9:30 pm**
- Please download, print, and complete the audition form and conflict sheet found on page 5 and 6 of this packet and bring to your audition.
- Please visit <https://wejoinin.com/sheets/spsrz> to schedule your audition time or scan the QR code to the right.
- Upon completion of your sign-up the website will confirm your sign-up with an email. If you need to cancel or change your slot, there is a link in that email to help. The site will also email you two days prior with a reminder.
- This is a non-paying, non-equity performance. SLATE does not charge a participation fee, but we do ask each cast member to sell a minimum of 10 tickets.



- Please bring picture, resume, and sheet music; prepare two (2) contrasting (one dramatic ballad and one comic/character) musical theatre pieces. Your total audition should not last more than 3 minutes. Please cut appropriately. Your song choices should highlight your ability to create a character, and act through the song as well as execute the musicality presented in the song.
- Please bring music in the proper key, an accompanist will be provided. **Accapella singing is NOT ALLOWED.** It is perfectly acceptable to sing from **Spelling Bee**, but we still recommend bringing your own music. The cut you have may differ (keys, tempos etc) from our piano/vocal score.
- There will NOT be a dance audition.
- Please audition regardless of your conflicts. Rehearsals will be scheduled after the show is cast to accommodate conflicts. Just be honest, and we will work around your schedule the best we can.

For this show we are seeking a diverse multicultural company of performers. We are looking for all races, ages, and all body types. No role must be played by an actor of any specific race, age, gender. We will cast between 4–6 men and 4–6 women.

Show Synopsis and Songs

In a high school gym, long time hostess, Rona Lisa Peretti, finalizes the preparations for the annual county spelling bee, reminiscing about her own spelling bee victory, many years prior. The current crop of spelling contenders arrives ("The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee"). The contestants include last year's champ, Chip (a boy scout), Schwarzy (the youngest and most politically aware contestant), Coneybear (the somewhat wide-eyed offspring of hippie parents), Barfee (an allergy-plagued student), Marcy (an over-achieving Asian-American) and Olive (a tentative newcomer).

Rona also calls on four volunteers from the audience to join the competition (these are real audience members who have been selected through an interview process before the show).

It is revealed that Olive has failed to pay her \$25 entrance fee, but Rona assures her that it will be worked out later. Barfee rudely fends off Olive's attempts to befriend him. Rona introduces Vice Principal Douglas Panch, a last-minute substitute word pronouncer, and Mitch Mahoney, a menacing ex-con who is serving as "Comfort Counselor" as a part of his community service sentence. Panch, Rona and the spellers review the contest's elimination-style rules ("The Rules").

The contest begins. As the students are individually called upon, Rona provides color commentary, revealing background info about each of them. A flashback reveals that Coneybear only made in into this contest because his school's winner and first runner-up were unable to attend due to a Bar Mitzvah. He appears to have no hope of spelling words correctly, but snaps into abrupt trances, during which he performs perfectly.

Olive reflects on a lonely childhood, where her main source of companionship (and spelling excellence) was a dictionary ("My Friend the Dictionary"). The audience volunteers are also called upon to participate. Volunteers who answer incorrectly are eliminated ("Goodbye #1"). Barfee uses a bizarre "magic foot" technique to spell his words.

Rona reveals that Marcy placed high in the ranking for last year's national spelling bee, impressing all of the contestants. One of the audience volunteers is asked to spell "cow," prompting outrage from the contestants. The contest swings into high gear ("Pandemonium") as Panch requests spellings for words that vary enormously in their level of difficulty.

A flashback reveals Schwarzy, drilling for the contest with her two overbearing gay dads. Coneybear, for the second consecutive time, is asked to spell a word related to South American rodents. He confesses that his family does not consider him to be particularly intelligent ("I'm Not That Smart").

Barfee calls upon his magic foot technique to help him spell the word, "hasenpfeffer" ("Magic Foot"). By this point in the contest, all but one of the audience volunteers have probably been eliminated. Chip is eliminated after getting distracted by seeing Coneybear's attractive sister, Marigold, in the audience ("Pandemonium – Reprise"). Mitch escorts him from the stage ("Chip Goodbye").

Rona is excited by the unexpected early elimination of last year's champ ("Rona Moment #2").

The final audience volunteer is eliminated when asked to spell a ridiculously difficult word. Mitch consoles the loser ("Prayer of the Comfort Counselor").

During a snack break, Chip distributes free candy to the audience and laments the fact that his sexual arousal cost him a victory in the spelling bee ("My Unfortunate Erection"). Chip bickers with Barfee and terrorizes him with a packet of peanut M&Ms before being ejected. Olive comforts Barfee.

As the break ends and the bee resumes, Schwarzy reflects on the tremendous pressure placed on her by her dads ("Woe Is Me"). A lighting-fast blaze of spelling ensues, and Coneybear is eliminated when he fails to spell chinchilla correctly ("I'm Not That Smart – Reprise").

Rona reveals that Marcy speaks six languages. Marcy is exasperated at always being thought of as superior in every way ("I Speak Six Languages"). She is asked to spell the word, "camouflage," whereupon she rhetorically exclaims "Dear Jesus, can't you come up with a harder word than that?" Much to her astonishment, Jesus Christ immediately appears and reveals that He doesn't care who wins this contest. Marcy, relieved, deliberately misspells her word, joyfully eliminating herself.

Only Schwarzy, Olive and Barfee remain. Olive receives a phone call from her dad. Taking advantage of the pause, Schwarzy seizes the microphone and makes a political statement. One of Schwarzy's dads attempts to sabotage Barfee by pouring a can of Coke onto the stage, hoping the stickiness will immobilize Barfee's magic foot. It is implied that Olive's father is unwilling to pay her \$25 entrance fee.

Olive is given the word "chimerical," which means "wildly fanciful and highly unrealistic." This prompts her to fantasize about her neglectful parents ("The I Love You Song").

Barfee's magic foot is foiled by the spilled Coke, but he manages to spell "crepuscule" correctly anyway. Schwarzy is eliminated ("Woe is Me – Reprise"). Only two spellers remain, and Rona is breathless with excitement ("Rona Moment #3").

After a volley of correctly spelled words, Olive misspells a word ("Second, Part One") and Barfee hesitates before claiming victory, sensitive to Olive's feelings. Olive reassures him, and he claims the victory. Panch, taking pity on Olive, invents a \$25 prize for "runner up," which he produces out of his own pocket to cover Olive's entrance fee. Rona is moved by Panch's kind gesture. Olive and Barfee warmly congratulate each other. A series of epilogues reveal the future fates of the characters and explains how their experiences during the spelling bee shaped each of their lives ("Finale").

Character Descriptions

Chip Tolentino

An athletic, social, boy scout and champion of the Twenty-Fourth Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee, he returns to defend his title, but he finds puberty hitting at an inopportune moment. C4 - B5

Logainne Schwartzandgrunenierre (Schwarzy)

Logainne is the youngest and most politically aware speller, often making comments about current political figures. She is driven by internal and external pressure, but above all by a desire to win to make her two fathers proud. She is somewhat of a neat freak, speaks with a lisp, and will be back next year. A3 - F5

Leaf Coneybear

The second runner-up in his district, Leaf gets into the competition on a lark and finds everything about the bee incredibly amusing. He is home-schooled and comes from a large family of former hippies. He has severe Attention Deficit Disorder and spells words correctly while in a trance. A3 - A5

William Barfee

A Putnam County Spelling Bee finalist last year, he was eliminated because of an allergic reaction to peanuts and is back for vindication. His famous "Magic Foot" method of spelling has boosted him to spelling glory, even though he only has one working nostril and a touchy, bullying personality. He develops a crush on Olive. E4 - B5

Marcy Park

A recent transfer from Virginia, Marcy placed ninth in last year's nationals. She speaks six languages, is a member of all-American hockey, a championship rugby player, plays Chopin and Mozart on multiple instruments, sleeps only three hours a night, hides in the bathroom cabinet, and is getting very tired of always winning. She is the poster child for the Over-Achieving Student, and attends a Catholic school called "Our Lady of Intermittent Sorrows." She is also not allowed to cry. C4 - E5

Olive Ostrovsky

A young newcomer to competitive spelling. Her mother is in an ashram in India, and her father is working late, as usual, but he is trying to come sometime during the bee. Having found comfort in its words and vastness, Olive made friends with her dictionary at a very young age, helping her to make it to the competition. She starts enormously shy, and shyly blossoms. B3 - F5

Rona Lisa Peretti

The number-one realtor in Putnam County, a former Putnam County Spelling Bee Champion herself, and the returning moderator. She is a sweet woman who loves children, but she can be very stern when it comes to dealing with Vice Principal Panch and his feelings for her. Her interest in the competition is unflagging and drives it forward. B3 - F5

Douglas Panch

The Vice Principal. Frustrated with his life, he finds the drive of the young spellers alien to him. After five years' absence from the Bee, Panch returns as judge. There was an "incident" at the Twentieth Annual Bee, but he claims to be in "a better place" now, thanks to a high-fiber diet and Jungian analysis. He is infatuated with Rona Lisa Peretti, but she does not return his affections. - non-singing but great comic timing needed.

Mitch Mahoney

The Official Comfort Counselor. An ex-convict, Mitch is performing his community service with the Bee, and hands out juice boxes to losing students. He has no idea how to offer comfort, but does find himself wishing he could find a way to make the kids feel better. E4 - A5

Carl Dad

Schwarzy's main trainer, the more intense and competitive of Schwarzy's fathers. Normally played by actor playing Leaf. G3 - D5

Dan Dad

the more laid back and ineffectual of Schwarzy's fathers. Normally played by the actor playing Mitch. G3 - D5

Jesus Christ

Deity invoked by a speller in need. Normally played by the actor playing Chip.

Leaf's Mom, Dad, And Siblings

All more academically gifted than Leaf, they are even more surprised than he is by his success. Normally played by the spellers and audience volunteers as indicated in the script.

Olive's Dad

A fantasy version of Olive's dad coming to the bee from work. Normally played by the actor playing Mitch. E4 - B5

Olive's Mom

A fantasy version of Olive's mom at her Ashram in India. Normally played by the actor playing Rona. D4 - E5



center for performing arts

Audition Form

Please print this form and the conflict calendar on the next page and bring them completed to your audition. Please answer all questions honestly, and be up front about conflicts. We will work around conflicts as much as possible, but need to know about them before casting decisions are made.

If possible, please bring a resume and recent headshot or snapshot.

Name: _____ My real age falls: 14-18 19-23 24-29 30+

Height: _____ E-mail: _____

Address: _____ Home Phone: _____

City _____ Zip _____ Cell Phone: _____

Vocal Range: Soprano Mezzo Alto Tenor Baritone Bass

Audition Song Selection: _____ From: _____

Are you auditioning for a specific role(s)? If so, which one(s): Yes No

If you are cast, will you accept any role you are cast in? If no, please be specific: Yes No

Do you understand that if you are cast you will be required to purchase /sell a minimum of ten (10) tickets for the show? Yes No

Do you understand that the performances are February 3rd, 4th, 2017? Yes No

Do you understand that by signing this form you are committing to ALL rehearsals and performances except those you indicate on your conflict sheet and absences may result in your role being changed or eliminated? Yes No

Do you understand that all cast members may be responsible for supplying/purchasing stage make-up as well as some costumes and shoes for the show? Yes No

Are you available for a callback, if needed this Thursday, Nov. 17th from 6:30-9:30pm? Yes No

Are you available for the first read-through this Mon. Nov 21st from 6:30-10:00? Yes No

By signing this document, I hereby consent to the use, publication, broadcast, telecast, distribution, and circulation of my name, photograph, image, and/or likeness by SLATE at Governors State University in any SLATE-sponsored product and/or publication used for recruiting, promotional, advertising, or commercial purposes. This shall include, but is not limited to, the SLATE website, playbills, ads, and brochures. I further understand and agree that this picture release consent shall remain in full effect unless canceled in writing and in reasonable advance of any said publication.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please list all conflicts from November 20 - February 4. Please list the date and times you are unavailable. Please include weekend events. Rehearsals will be scheduled around conflicts, so please list them now. This includes family obligations, work activities, vacations and appointments. **There will be NO rehearsal on greyed out days.**

Weekday rehearsals will be 6:30-10:00 pm. Weekend rehearsal times will be dependent on cast conflicts
Please note: Major conflicts after Jan. 14 might make it difficult for you to be cast in the show.

NAME: _____

2016/2017	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
November	20	21 Read Through	22	23	24	25	26
December	27	28	29	30	1	2	3
December	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
December	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
December	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
December	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
January	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
January	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
January	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
January	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
February	29	30	31	1	2	3 Performance 8pm	4 Performances 3pm and 8pm