

Auditions for

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee

Book By Rachel Sheinkin, Music by William Finn

[CLICK HERE FOR THE FULL SCHEDULE](#)



The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee has charmed audiences across the country with its effortless wit and humor. Featuring a fast-paced, wildly funny and touching book by Rachel Sheinkin and a truly fresh and vibrant score by William Finn, this bee is one unforgettable experience. An eclectic group of six mid-pubescents vie for the spelling championship of a lifetime. While candidly disclosing hilarious and touching stories from their home lives, the tweens spell their way through a series of (potentially made-up) words, hoping never to hear the soul-crushing, pout-inducing, life unaffirming "ding" of the bell that signals a spelling mistake. Six spellers enter; one speller leaves! At least the losers get a juice box. A riotous ride, complete with audience participation, The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee is a delightful den of comedic genius and is a fast-paced crowd pleaser and an instant theater patron favorite.



The production will be directed by Austin Golinski with Music Direction by Alec Steinhorn.

This Show Will Be Presented By 5280 Theater Company In Accordance With Musical Theater International.

SYNOPSIS: Spelling Bee 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 lightning-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").

ROLES AVAILABLE (9)

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<p>Chip Tolentino : An athletic, social, boy scout and champion of the TwentyFourth Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee, he returns to defend his title, but he finds puberty hitting at an inopportune moment.</p>	<p>Gender: Male (Tenor)</p>
<p>Logainne Schwartzandgrubeniere (Schwartzzy): 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</p>	<p>Gender: Female (Mezzo)</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>Gender: Male (Tenor)</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>Gender: Male (Tenor or Baritone)</p>

Marcy Park:

The ultimate over-achiever, Marcy has never been given another option. She comes from a family where excellence is expected and so simply produced. A parochial school student, she assumes God, too, expects perfection. She sees herself as a mass of problems but she keeps them to herself. Having moved often because of her parents' work, she knows she can beat the local competition. Her many talents include piano, dance, martial arts, baton twirling, etc.

Gender: Female (Mezzo)**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 slowly blossoms

Gender: Female (Mezzo)**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.

Gender: Female (Mezzo)**Douglas Panch:**

The Vice Principle. 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

Gender: Male (Tenor)

<p>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.</p>	<p>Gender: Male (Tenor)</p>
<p>Carl Dad; Dan Dad; Jesus Christ; Leaf's Mom, Dad & Siblings; Olive's Dad & Mom are doubled by the other actors in the show.</p>	
<p>PLEASE REVIEW ALL CHARACTERS BEFORE THE AUDITION!</p>	

AUDITION REQUIREMENTS & WHAT TO PREPARE:

1. **ACTING...** All actors are required to audition with one of the monologues provided. Prepare the one that is closest to the roles you are looking for. You may be asked to improv, read from any of the monologues or with another person.
2. **. SINGING...** Please prepare 16-32 bars of a song in the style of the show. Pick a song that best shows off your voice. Doing a song from the show is preferred. Additional vocalizing may also be a part of your audition to determine vocal range and harmonizing skills. **NO pop songs are allowed. You will be dismissed from your audition if you do not follow all of the requirements.**
3. Please make sure you have registered for an audition slot for **THIS SHOW** on Sign Up Genus. If you don't have a time slot you will **NOT AUDITION!**

4. **Callbacks will be on January 12, 2025. (CALLBACK MATERIAL WILL BE EMAILED THE NIGHT BEFORE).**
5. **Click Here For The Schedule!**

AUDITION MONOLOGUES:

MITCH MAHONEY: You can't comfort these damn kids. They don't yet know that the good don't always win, so there's nothing you can say to cheer them up when they lose. I want to tell them disappointment doesn't last, but from what I've seen disappointment lasts like hell. I want to tell them words don't matter; but from what I've seen words can get you killed. I just want to beat them up a little, so they understand that pain has degrees, and this is nothing, this is nothing, you little freaks. But that would violate my parole. So I do what I can. I give them a hug and a juice box. I'm here to give comfort

VICE PRINCIPLE DOUGLAS PANCH: Thank you Rona, and I would like to say as to the incident 5 years ago, I'm in a much better place now. *[Ad-lib note: Here, the actor reading for Panch has the option to ad lib some reference to "the incident" at his digression. As originally written, the line reads: "It's amazing what a change of diet can do for a man. Thank you." The original line would be a fine choice, but you have the option to change it] And may I add, Ms. Peretti here is not only one of Putnam County's top realtors, she's also a former spelling champion herself. Beautiful. And now for the Pledge of Allegiance led by our comfort counselor, (Checks writing on the palm of his hand) Mr. Mitchell M. Mahoney.

MARCY PARK: Camouflage. (to herself) Dear Jesus, can't you come up with a harder word than that? (responding to JESUS's voice, which she hears clearly in her head) Jesus? Hi! How are you? Jesus ... I was wondering what would happen if I didn't win today. What I mean is, would you be disappointed with me if I lost? You're saying it's up to me then? (she returns to spelling) Camouflage. C-A-M ... O-U (still deciding) F-L. .. A ... J (and as soon as

she dares miss the first letter, she takes more and more joy in getting it wrong) ... Z!! .. H!!!
Camafrajzh!

CHIP TOLENTINO: Tittup. T... I... (reluctantly, but he knows it) T... U – Oh wait. Two t's. You heard both, right? Backing up, T-I-T-T-U-P. Tittup (Ding) No, but, I wasn't sure if you heard both t's. I obviously know how to spell it...That's not fair. I got it right. I can't get out on a word I spelled right. Miss Peretti, can I have one more chance? Please?

Logainne SchwartzandGrubenierr: Doesn't anybody else here care about the rules? This bee is about as well-organized as... Please improvise a short political speech on a current topic or use one of the ones below. You can update or alter if you like. Ad-Libs (examples): "Schwarzys ad libs" are the most topical part of the script and must be rewritten to reference current and/or local news items. As you can see, whatever the topic, she frequently works in her two fathers. These were generally written by Sarah Saltzberg, and added to by subsequent Schwarzys. This bee is as confusing for me as Father's Day! As the daughter of 2 gay dads, I'd like to know who scheduled Father's Day and Gay Pride weekend, within 7 days of each other?! Well anyway, to celebrate Gay Father's Pride week, which is what we call it in my family, we went to go see "Cinderella Man" - but it wasn't exactly what we were expecting. This bee is about as misguided as the current administration! With the Patriot Act about to expire, President Bush was quoted in this week's NY Times as saying "in times of terrorism, some civil liberties must be sacrificed. But I will do my best to protect them." As a progressive, half-Jewish, mixed race child of 2 gay fathers, I really don't think he's got my civil liberties in mind. This bee is as confusing as George Bush seeing Brokeback Mountain. Thursday night is movie night in my house, and this past Thursday my dads and I went to go see a special screening of Brokeback Mountain. My Carl-Dad said he couldn't see cowboys without thinking of George Bush, and then my Dan-Dad said he couldn't see gay cowboys without thinking of Karl Rove and George Bush. And then the man behind us said "yes, and isn't nice to see them screwing each other for a

change!" We laughed... This bee is nose-diving faster than Star Jones' career!! Star Jones' "resignation" from The View sent shockwaves through the Schwartzandgrubenierre household, until we realized - my Dan Dad would be a perfect replacement. They both lost a lot of weight doing Pilates, they both have issues with Rosie O'Donnell, and they both married gay men! So Barbara, consider this - my Dan Dad would be an asset to your show, and as my Karl Dad says, he's more of a big black queen than Star Jones will ever be!! This bee is about as shocking as Lance Bass coming out of the closet! Former N'Sync member Lance Bass literally rocked the nation earlier this week when he proudly came out of the closet though as my dads pointed out, the highlighted hair tips have always been a little bit of a dead giveaway. Anyway, I applaud Lance for taking a stand and essentially bein' the anti-Bush poster boy-he's openly gay~ he's dating someone with a very foreign name and he wrote the song that I want to sing to President Bush when he finally leaves office-(with boy band choreography singing) - I wanna see you out that door - baby, bye bye bye!!!

WILLIAM BARFEE SCENE: (very boastfully)

PANCH: Mr. Barfee.

BARFEE: – It's Barfée – (pronounce this BarFAY) PANCH "Lugubrious."

BARFEE Yes, of course. Lugubrious, meaning extremely sad and droopy?

PANCH More or less, yes.

BARFEE A topic I am all too familiar with. One moment please. (BARFEE should spell out the word on the floor using his foot to create the letters as he spells.)

BARFEE Lugubrious. L-U-G-U- Lugu! B-R-I-O-U-S – Lugubrious.

PANCH That is correct.

BARFEE I know. My fake mom Sheila thinks my hobbies are weird, but my real mom Joan says this science will one day pay off. And also I will grow up to be incredibly handsome.

OLIVE MONOLOGUE: (read this very innocently) I'm thinking about does flagellate have one L or two – and also about how if you take the "w" of answer and the "h" in ghost and the extra "a" in aardvark and the "t" in listen, you could keep saying "what" but nobody would hear, 'cause the whole word would be silent. (A cell phone rings.) Oh – sorry – it's mine – it's my dad – can I answer? I know it's against the rules, but Miss Peretti, maybe you could answer to tell him I made the finals. Oh, and that I need the twenty-five dollar entrance fee! My mom couldn't make it because she's in an ashram in India. But I hope that she'll send for me soon...

LEAF CONEYBEAR MONOLOGUE: (read this like a goofball) (picks up the phone) Hello, Leaf speaking. Uh huh. Uh huh. You're kidding! I'm going to represent the Basin in the Bee? Wow, I can't believe it. (puts down the phone) Mom, Dad, Marigold, Brook, Pinecone, Raisin, Landscape, Paul – you're not going to believe this! I made the county finals in the spelling bee! I know that I came in third in my regional competition, but they just called and said that the person who came in first has to go to their Bat Mitzvah and the person who came in second has to attend the Bat Mitzvah, so they want me to do it! (To audience) I'm not that smart. My siblings have been telling me that for years that I'm not smart. But guess what, you know what? Guess what! I think I could still win this thing!

RONA LISA PERETTI: (Host of the Bee) Ladies and gentlemen, all the children you see on stage are here because of their extraordinary ability and love of language – but only one of them can go on to compete in the National Spelling Bee! And this year, to celebrate our silver anniversary, our local sponsors, the Putnam Optometrists, are offering today's winner a two hundred dollar savings bond toward his or her future education. I'd like to take this moment to ask you to please turn off all cell phones and other distracting devices, and put away cameras – sorry, no photos at the bee. I'm Rona Lisa Peretti, and I'm pleased to be back for my 9th consecutive year as your host.

Unfortunately, our usual word pronouncer, Superintendent Spriggs, has fallen ill, so please join me in welcoming back Vice Principal Douglas Panch from Lake Hemingway Junior High.