

I. Production Policies

- A. Students must be enrolled in a Winter Session class before you can be scheduled for an audition time
 - Once you have auditioned, you will not be eligible for a refund or credit for your class tuition.
- B. You must be age 8-18 on March 15th, 2018 to be eligible audition or crew the show.
- C. You must have an appropriate crew credit.
 - After two shows as a cast member, you must crew a show before you can audition again.
- D. You may not miss any performances or tech week rehearsals.
 - Tech Week: Mar 10th & 11th 5-9p, Mar 12th & 13th 4-8p, Mar 14th 5:30-9p
 - Performances:

Thursday Mar 15 at 7p Friday Mar 16 at 7p Saturday Mar 17 at 2p

Saturday Mar 17 at 7p Sunday Mar 18 at 2p

- E. There is a \$95 Production Fee for cast members and \$50 for Crew Members. This pays for memory books, production and lobby photos, parties and receptions, director's gifts, etc.
- F. There are parent volunteer requirements that are great ways to get involved.

II. Audition Process

- A. Audition workshops are available prior to the week of auditions. Each workshop is a 20 minute, one on one session with a Junior Theatre teaching artist who will listen to your audition piece and offer suggestions for improvement. The cost for this workshop is \$25. Please call the office to schedule a workshop.
- B. Audition Dates
 - Auditions are by appointment only, and are held in one-half hour increments. Please arrive at least 15 minutes early to check in at Room 208.

Tuesday January 9th 4-6p Wednesday January 10th 4-6p

- C. What to prepare for auditions
 - Come to auditions with the audition form filled out completely. Be honest about any conflicts! Include a recent headshot.
 - Students should prepare a 1 minute song cut from a musical comedy for their auditions. Please bring sheet music in the correct key, a pianist will be provided. No acapella singing or singing to tracks will be allowed.
- D. Call Backs Date

Thursday January 11th 4-7p

III. Rehearsals

- A. First rehearsal will be held Monday January 22nd from 6-8p. Everyone is called to the first rehearsal.
- B. Rehearsals will be Monday-Friday from 6-8p. From March 5th till 9th rehearsals run Monday-Friday from 6-9p
- C. All actors will not be called to every rehearsal. A detailed rehearsal schedule will be handed out at first rehearsal

IV. Questions**V. Director's Notes**



FROM THE DIRECTOR: Jenny Gray Connard

Hi! I'm Jennie Gray Connard and as a JT alumna, I'm thrilled to get to direct at SDJT. I currently am the Co-Owner and Artistic Director at OB Playhouse and have directed, choreographed and performed all over San Diego for many years. ...Spelling Bee is definitely one of my favorite musicals. It is funny, the music is fantastic and the audience participation aspect is fun and fresh. I am looking for "Quadruple Threats" for this show, meaning that I'm not just looking for terrific singers, actors, dancers, I'm also looking for cast members who behave professionally, are kind and thoughtful to others and toward their work. For auditions, I would like to hear you sing a musical comedy song. This show is a comedy and I want to see you bring the funny.

I look forward to meeting you all and answering any questions you might have!

SHOW SYNOPSIS

The musical begins with Rona Lisa Peretti entering the gymnasium to set up. The spellers are introduced as they enter, and sing about their anticipation of the bee. Rona then welcomes the audience to the bee, and calls the selected 4 audience spellers to the stage. She also speaks privately to Olive Ostrovsky, who has not yet paid the entrance fee of twenty-five dollars. When asked if she has a parent in the audience who can pay, Olive reveals that she has arrived by herself on the bus. Rona decides to let the fee slide for the moment. She then introduces the official word pronouncer, Douglas Panch, who is returning from a five-year hiatus. Panch alludes to an incident five years ago, but declares that he is in a better place now. Panch introduces the intimidating-looking comfort counselor, Mitch Mahoney, who is helping at the Bee as part of his court-mandated community service. Mahoney leads the spellers in the Pledge of Allegiance. Panch then explains the rules of the spelling bee. The spelling bee begins, and as each speller is called forward, the audience learns about his or her background through flashbacks. Leaf reminisces about how his family repeatedly calls him "dumb", a sentiment that has sunken in and that he has come to believe. He goes in an unexplained trance when he spells his words. Olive is shown to be shy and reserved, a result of her largely absent parents — her mother is in India on a spiritual journey, and her father is missing the bee to work late, as usual. She has come to love spelling by reading the dictionary in her home. William Barfée uses an unusual technique — he spells the word out on the ground with his foot to get a visual before speaking it. When Marcy Parks is called, she correctly spells an extraordinarily difficult word ("qaimaqam"), proving herself to be the best speller. However, she is genuinely surprised and somewhat hurt when Rona claims that she is "all business". Chip Tolentino is called next, the winner of the previous year's Bee, but he is not paying attention. Rather, he is fantasizing about Leaf's attractive sister, Marigold, in the audience. When snapped out of his daze, he is reluctant to take his turn. Under threat of disqualification, he takes his turn, but his thoughts distract him and he begins to misspell the word. He catches himself quickly, and backs up to try to save himself, but the rules of the bee state that "the sequences of letters already spoken may not be changed". He begs for another chance, but Mitch eventually hauls him off. Last to be introduced is Logainne Schwartzandgrubenierre, who describes her two overbearing fathers and the stress that they put on her. In a rapid montage sequence, the bee is shown progressing through many rounds, ending with Leaf's elimination on the word *chinchilla*. He walks away head held high, having proven to himself, despite his elimination, that he is smart.

The remaining spellers and the adults go on break, and Chip passes through the audience selling snacks, the punishment for being the first eliminated. He explains to the audience why he lost. Barfée taunts Chip, who throws a bag of peanuts M&M's at him. Barfée is allergic to peanuts, so Olive picks them up for him. Chip and Barfée continue to fight before Rona escorts the former offstage. Olive and Barfée converse awkwardly before the second half of the bee begins, and Barfée begins to develop a crush on Olive.

With the break over, Rona introduces the finalists as they reenter. Marcy is called to spell and reveals more about her stressful life, where she is pushed to succeed in everything, which she does not enjoy. Resolved to do what she wants rather than what is expected of her, she intentionally misspells the word and exits excitedly. Olive's cellphone rings — it is her father, who she has been anxiously hoping would arrive. Panch attempts to disallow her from answering the phone, but she persuades Rona to take the call for her. Logainne then begins an ad-libbed rant about the bee, her fathers, and current political events. Panch, provoked by the rant and upset that he has lost control over the bee, loses his temper and lashes out at Logainne, who is next up to spell. Panch is then escorted offstage by Rona and Mitch. One of Logainne's fathers jumps onstage to calm Logainne down, and, despite his daughter's protests, pours some of his soda on the floor to make Barfée's foot stick and thus disrupt his technique. With Panch calmed down, Olive is called to spell. She asks what her father had said, and is saddened to learn that he said he is running even later than planned. Her word is *chimerical*, and mirroring the word's definition, she imagines her parents being there and giving her the love that she always has wanted and yearned for, while showing the problems with her own family. Barfée is called to spell next, and when he uses his signature technique, the soda causes his foot to stick. Much to his surprise, he is able to spell his word correctly anyway. Logainne is next, and she overcomplicates her word *vug* and misspells it. The finals are shown quickly through another montage, and Olive and Barfée continue to grow closer. Eventually, Olive misspells a word (*elanguescence*), giving Barfée a chance to win by spelling his next word correctly. He is torn between winning and letting Olive win, but with Olive's encouragement, he spells his word correctly. Panch awards Barfée the trophy and \$200 prize, and in a surprise act of charity, gives Olive a fictitious runner-up prize of twenty-five dollars from his own pocket — exactly the amount needed to cover her entrance fee. Olive congratulates and hugs Barfée, and each character reads their epilogue about what they do in the years and decades after the main action of the play ends.

CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

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.

Logainne Schwartzandgrubenierre (Schwartz)- 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, and speaks with a lisp.

Leaf Coneybear- Leaf 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.

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.

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 Asian.

Olive Ostrovsky- A young newcomer to competitive spelling. Her mother is in an ashram in India, and her father is always working. 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.

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.

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. He is infatuated with Rona Lisa Peretti, but she does not return his affections.

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.

Ensemble- Will also play multiple roles throughout show.