

PITTSBURG THEATRE COMPANY



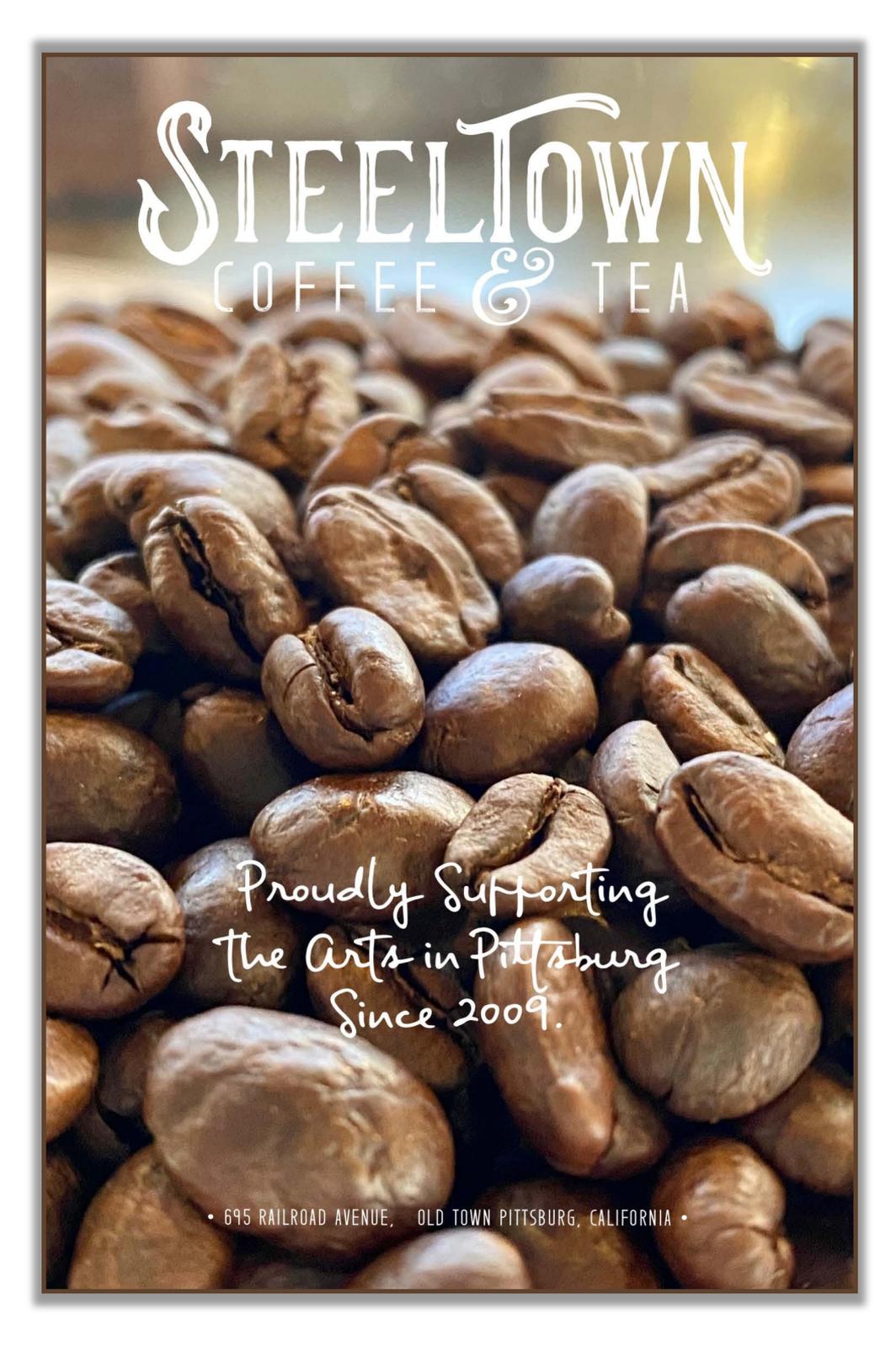
The 25th Annual Putnam County
SPELLING BEE



November 14 - 23, 2025



The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee
Is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI).
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The 25th Annual Putnam County
SPELLING BEE

Music and Lyrics by
WILLIAM FINN

Book by
RACHEL SHEINKIN

Conceived by
REBECCA FELDMAN

Additional Material by
JAY REISS

Originally produced on Broadway by
DAVID STONE, JAMES L. NEDERLANDER, BARBARA WHIT-
MAN, PATRICK CATULLO, BARRINGTON STAGE COMPANY,
SECOND STAGE THEATRE

Directed by
GREGORY BROWN

Choreography by
JOSIE RAPOLAS

Music Direction by
AMY MARK

Assistant Director
AVA DURAN

MEET THE DIRECTOR



It has been a distinct pleasure to direct *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. The show's lyricist and composer, William Finn (who, sadly, died in April of this year) and his writing partner Rachel Sheinkin have created a funny and touching world of wildly talented and socially misfit tweens. The play has something of a cult following, both among audience members who want to see it, and actors who want to perform in it.

Though the play is mostly comic, occasional flashes of poignancy reveal themselves as the students talk, and of course sing, about their lives. Bullied, raised by parents either neglectful or far too present, pressured to achieve, the kids in the show have etched their way into my heart. This is in large part due to the talented cast of performers who not only perfectly embody their characters, but clearly love them as well. That goes not only for the actors playing the Spellers, but for the actors playing the Adults in charge of them.

Thank you to my exceptionally talented sound and lighting technicians, backstage crew, and, to my incredible assistant director Ava Duran. And, as always, thank you for supporting the Arts in Pittsburg. The final collaborator in the art of theatre is the audience, and PTC appreciates your continued support.

Regards,
Gregory Brown Director



About the Director...

Gregory Brown (Director) was last seen on stage in the Martinez Plotline Theatre Company's production of *Blithe Spirit* as Charles Condomine, a role he has now played in three different productions. He has acted in numerous local shows, but considers Pittsburg Theatre Company his true theatre home. Recent directing credits include *Clybourne Park* and *The Real Inspector Hound* for PTC (the latter winning a BroadwaySF award for Best Direction) and *Love and Information* and *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* for Los Medanos College, where he also teaches English and Drama courses. Gregory has been a member of PTC since its inception and he is proud to honor the legacy of its founder, his mother, Betty Brown. He currently serves on the PTC Board as the Historian and Dramaturg.

MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT 1

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee	Company
The Rules	Company
My Friend, the Dictionary	Olive with Company
Pandemonium	Company
I'm Not That Smart	Leaf with Company
Magic Foot	Barfee with Company
Pandemonium (Reprise)	Company
Rona's Moment #2	Rona
Prayer of the Comfort Counselor	Mitch with Company

INTERMISSION—15 MINUTES

ACT 2

Chip's Lament	Chip
Woe Is Me	Logainne, Carl Dad, Dan Dad with Company
Spelling Montage	Panch and Spellers
I'm Not That Smart (Reprise)	Leaf
I Speak Six Languages	Marcy with Logainne, Olive, and Rona
Jesus	Marcy, Jesus with Company
The I Love You Song	Olive, Olive's Mom, Olive's Dad
Woe is Me (Reprise)	Logainne with Mitch
Rona's Moment #3	Rona
Second (Part 1)	Olive, Barfee, Panch, Chip, Mitch, Leaf, Marcy, Rona
Weltenschauung	Barfee, Chip, Mitch, Rona, Leaf, Marcy, Logaine
Olive & Barfee Pas de Deux	Rona, Chip, Marcy, Mitch, Logainne, Leaf
Second (Part 2)	Olive, Barfee with Company
The Champion	Rona with Chip, Mitch, Marcy, Logainne, Leaf
Finale	Company
The Last Goodbye	Company

CAST

Chip Tolentino	Joseph Delatorre
Logainne Schwartzandgrubenniere	Josie Rapolas
Leaf Coneybear	John "Susan" Holst
William Barfee	Joshua Symonds
Marcy Park	Kylee Fernandez
Olive Ostrovsky	Hayley Finetti
Rona Lisa Peretti	Clarisse Nichole
Vice Principal Douglas Panch	Pete Rapolas
Michelle "Mitch" Mahoney	Anna Pan

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DRAMATURG NOTES

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN SPELLING BEE

The American Spelling Bee has a long and distinctive history that reflects the nation's values of education, competition, and linguistic mastery. Its origins trace back to the 19th century, when spelling contests were a common feature of school and community life. These early "spelling matches" became popular social events in rural America, where education and entertainment often overlapped.

The modern National Spelling Bee began in 1925, organized by the Louisville Courier-Journal, a Kentucky newspaper seeking to promote literacy among children. The first competition featured nine finalists, and the winning word was "gladiolus." The success of the event quickly captured national attention. In 1941, sponsorship was taken over by Scripps-Howard Newspapers (now the E.W. Scripps Company), leading to the official name: the Scripps National Spelling Bee.

Held annually in Washington, D.C., the Bee grew to include regional competitions across the United States and abroad. It became a hallmark of American academic culture, celebrating young people's discipline, curiosity, and poise under pressure. Television coverage began in the 1940s and expanded significantly with ESPN broadcasts in the 1990s, turning the Bee into a national spectacle.

Over time, the competition has reflected broader cultural and educational changes—embracing diversity, expanding participation internationally, and even incorporating digital spelling tools. Today, the Scripps National Spelling Bee remains a unique blend of scholarship, performance, and tradition, representing the enduring American belief that words—and the mastery of them—matter deeply.



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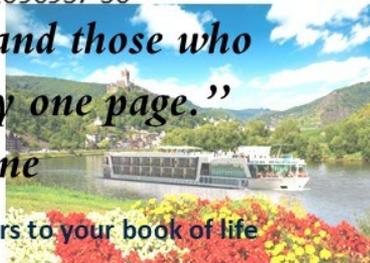
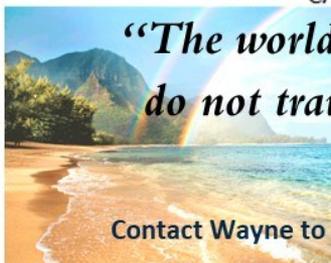
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DRAMATURG NOTES

by *Gregory Brown*

ARE SPELLING BEES UNIQUELY AMERICAN?

While the concept of the Spelling Bee did originate in the United States, other countries have since adopted the competition. It does seem to be a contest uniquely tied (though no longer exclusively) to English-speaking countries. Many world languages are more phonetic than the English language, meaning that the words in those languages are often spelled the way they sound when spoken.

In contrast, English has abundant exceptions and complex rules for pronunciation, making it a difficult language to spell correctly based on sound alone.

This disconnect between spelling and sound leaves English speakers at a disadvantage when guessing how words are spelled; therefore, mastering spelling might feel more compelling for us than it would for countries where speakers are apt to spell words as they sound.



WHO'S WHO



Joseph Delatorre (Chip Tolentino) is hyped to make his PTC debut. Joseph has been seen in many productions with Poison Apple Productions and at Diablo Valley College. Joseph would like to thank his family and every director he has ever worked with for always believing in him and getting him to where he is today.



Kylee Fernandez (Marcy Park) is excited to join the PTC family and debut in such a bittersweet, heartwarming, and silly show. You may have seen her in DVC's production of *Sweet Charity* as ensemble, or in their 2024-2025 season of musical theatre showcases, and *Korsa's Heathers* as Heather McNamara. In high school, Kylee starred in numerous De La Salle theatre shows, and is continuing to pursue her passion as a 2nd year musical theatre major at Diablo Valley College. She would like to thank her mom for being her biggest cheerleader and all her loved ones for their endless enthusiasm and support. Thank you for keeping the arts alive, and please enjoy the show!



Hayley Finetti (Olive Ostrovsky) is thrilled to join Pittsburg Theatre Company's mainstage production of *25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. She has performed in other productions in the Bay Area, including as Regina in Tri-Valley Theatre Company's recent production of *Rock of Ages* and as Sister Mary Irene in Woodminster Summer Musicals' production of *Sister Act*. Favorite roles include her Shellie-nominated performances as Ida (*HONK!*) and Antonia (*Man of La Mancha*), as well as Sarah (*Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*), Winifred Banks (*Mary Poppins*) and Ala Gertner (*Letters to Sala*). Hayley has a strong background in vocal performance, and was a recent member of Afterglow Chorus in Oakland. She also performed with the Chico State Chamber Singers throughout college.

WHO'S WHO



John "Susan" Holst (Leaf Coneybear) is so thankful to return to PTC. You may remember him in the ensemble of *Young Frankenstein* or when he made a brief appearance in *The Sunshine Boys*. Susan wants to thank his family and friends for all their support and most of all his future wife Atessa for literally everything. *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* is his favorite musical in the

universe and he hopes you will love it too. Thanks for coming!



Anna Pan (Michelle "Mitch" Mahoney) is delighted to make her PTC debut! She most recently played Constance Sack in *Rock of Ages*, and her all-time favorite role was Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Offstage, she reads fantasy, throws themed parties, and writes pop music (check out "Guillotine" and "Make Your Move" on Spotify). Anna's comfort counselors are her two dogs, who are licensed

in CBT (canine bellyrub therapy). IG: @annapan7



Josie Rapolas (Logainne Schwartzandgrubenniere) is honored and excited to be part of PTC's *Spelling Bee*! Some of her favorite roles include Sharpay in *High School Musical*, Liz (POP) in *Chicago*, Violet Bouregarde in *Willy Wonka*, Zaneeta Shin in *The Music Man*, Bet in *Oliver!*, and Annie in *Annie*. Josie's most recent choreography credits include *High School Musical*, *The*

Jungle Book, *Honk Jr.*, and *Willy Wonka*. Thank you for supporting local theater and our community!

WHO'S WHO



Pete Rapolas (V.P. Douglas Panch) is happy to be back performing with Pittsburg Theatre Company! Some previous roles include Joey in PTC's *Sister Act*, The Tin Man in *The Wizard of Oz*, Mr. Pinky in *Hairspray*, and Sir Luce in *Once Upon a Mattress*. He also enjoys his time with Partners in Crime Improv at the Campbell Theatre in Martinez. When he's not on stage, Pete loves spending time with his wife and four kids. He is thankful to be a part of this talented cast and hopes you enjoy the show!



Clarisse Nichole (Rona Lisa Perretti) is thrilled to return to the PTC stage in a moment of perfect syzygy: the last time she performed here, she played Jenny in *It Shoulda Been You*, and now steps into the delightfully intense world of Rona Lisa (two roles originated by the same Broadway icon). Other favorite PTC credits include Queen Aggravain, *Once Upon a Mattress*; and Dr. Emma Brookner, *The Normal Heart*. She was most recently seen as Miss Andrews in *Mary Poppins* and will return to TMCA this winter in *Between the Lines*. Offstage, Clarisse delights in her work as a speaking and performance

coach. She extends endless gratitude to her husband Joe, her son Joey, and her village of supporters for always cheering her on. Now sit back, relax, and may you find your own Favorite Moments of the Bee...

IG: @clarissesings



Joshua Symonds (William Barfée) is a character actor and director. Some of his previous credits include: Wadsworth in *CLUE*, Ms. Trunchbull in *Matilda*, Jacob/Pharaoh in *Joseph...Dreamcoat*, Billy Flynn in *Chicago*, and Director for *Aladdin*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Matilda*, and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. His upcoming productions include; Pinole Community Player's *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown* in March as Charlie Brown and directing *Little Shop of Horrors* with Masquers, opening in July. Joshua has worked with theaters all across the East Bay Area and is excited to make his PTC debut! He would like

to thank KS, GK, JG & his family for their unwavering support. He dedicates his performance to ElaGrace. Thank you for supporting live theater!

WHAT'S NEW!



BLACK DIAMOND AWARDS

INAUGURAL SEASON
SEASON 2025-2026

The Contra Costa County Theatre Co-Op is proud to announce the Inaugural Season for the Black Diamond Awards with the first awards program scheduled for January 9, 2027. This program celebrates theatre excellence in Contra Costa County.



SPECIAL THANKS

The production team would like to extend a special thanks to the following for their help in bringing this production to the stage:

The City of Pittsburg, Anthony Lane and the California Theatre
Community Presbyterian Church of Pittsburg

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PRODUCTION TEAM

ProducerKatie Rapolas
DirectorGregory Brown
ChoreographerJosie Rapolas
Musical DirectorAmy Mark
Assistant DirectorAva Duran
Rehearsal AccompanistTekina Tongi
Stage ManagerZoe Lewis
CostumerFlo Buchanan
Set Design / PropertiesKatie Rapolas
Set ConstructionMichael Wilson
Deck ChiefMaya Duran
Stage CrewAnthony Elrod
Light Program/OperatorOwen Loyd
Spotlight OperatorKendra Borja
Sound ConsultantRon Keeler
Sound OperatorJulie Domingo
Sound AssistantMaria Coniglio
Show Graphic DesignSara and Phillip Leyva
Graphics / ProgramsDianna Schepers
VideographyMel Nash
PhotographySara Leyva
HospitalityKatie Rapolas

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee is based upon
C-R-E-P-U-S-C-U-L-E, an original play by The Farm.

The Barrington Stage Company workshop of THE 25TH ANNUAL
PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE was originally co-directed by
Michael Barakiva and Rebecca Feldman.





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PTC 2026 MAINSTAGE

THE COLOR PURPLE

January 30 – February 8

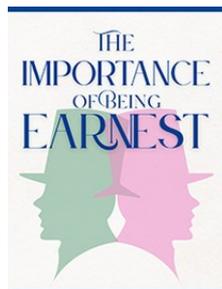
"The Color Purple" is an epic tale that follows Celie, a young woman who endures unimaginable hardship, yet embarks on a profound personal journey over the course of 40 years. Her story of self-discovery, resilience, and empowerment is brought to life through a joyous and dynamic score blending jazz, ragtime, gospel, blues, and African music.



THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST

May 1 – May 10, 2026

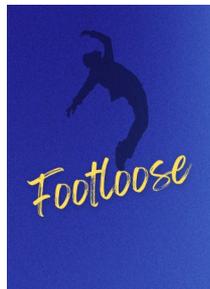
Oscar Wilde's "The Importance of Being Earnest" is a satirical comedy that playfully critiques Victorian societal norms, particularly those surrounding marriage, identity, and the superficiality of the upper class. The play revolves around two gentlemen, Jack Worthing and Algernon Moncrieff, who have both created fictional personas to escape the monotony of their lives.



FOOTLOOSE

September 12 – 21, 2026

When Ren and his mother move from Chicago to a small farming town, he is prepared for the inevitable adjustment period at his new high school. But he's not prepared for the rigorous local edicts, including a ban on dancing instituted by the local preacher, who is determined to exercise control over the town's youth. When the reverend's rebellious daughter sets her sights on Ren, her roughneck boyfriend tries to sabotage Ren's reputation, with many of the locals eager to believe the worst about the new kid. "Footloose" celebrates the wisdom of listening to young people while guiding them with a warm heart and an open mind.



A CHRISTMAS CAROL

December 18-21, 2026

In "A Christmas Carol," miserly Ebenezer Scrooge is visited by the ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Future, who show him the error of his ways, his lonely future, and the joy he is missing. Through these encounters, Scrooge transforms from a bitter, cold-hearted man into a kind, generous one, embracing the Christmas spirit and the importance of compassion.



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SEASON TICKETS

Season tickets for the 2026 season include the four Mainstage Productions. The Youth Theatre Production can be added on to the four show package.

Ticket Type	Reserved	VIP
Adult	\$98	\$138
Seniors (62+)	\$84	\$124
Military	\$84	\$124
Children	\$72	\$112

ORDERING TICKETS

Purchase tickets by visiting the California Theatre Box Office (351 Railroad Ave) or call 925-427-1611. Or, buy ticket online at www.tickets831.com.

When purchasing a season ticket package online, a credit is placed on your account. Log in again and then select the seats you want, adding them to the cart, then when checking out apply the season ticket credit.

ADD-ON YOUTH PROGRAM

THE LIGHTNING THIEF The Percy Jackson Musical

Performances:

Friday July 10 @ 7:30 pm

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Sunday, July 12 @ 2 pm

As the half-blood son of a Greek god, Percy Jackson has newly-discovered powers he can't control, a destiny he doesn't want, and a mythology textbook's worth of monsters on his trail. Percy must travel to the Underworld and back; solve the riddle of the Oracle, which warns him of betrayal by a friend; and come to terms with the father who abandoned him.



YOUTH THEATRE PROGRAM

PTC's Youth Theatre Program is designed for ages 8-18. If you are interested in registering your child for the summer program and for more information, visit www.ptcca.org.

THE LIGHTNING THIEF The Percy Jackson Musical

Program dates:

June 10 – July 12, 2026

Performances: **July 10–12**

Youth meet Monday-Friday (except July 3) from 8:30 am—12:00 pm at the California Theatre.

Tuition:

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THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST—January 5 & 6, 2026

FOOTLOOSE—March 13, 14, 15, 2026

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