

The 25th Annual
PUTNAM COUNTY



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Lights Up!



Music and lyrics by William Finn • Book by Rachel Sheinkin
Directed by Joey Banks

April 23-26

7:30 P.M. Thu., Fri., Sat. • 2 P.M. Sun. matinee

FULKS THEATRE

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transforming artists

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Statement of Misson

The Abilene Christian University Department of Theatre is committed to providing quality training and opportunity for the disciplined theatre artist in a nurturing environment that models Christian values .

Cast

Olive Ostrovsky.....	Megan Sloane (u/s Parker Stiffler)
Chip Tolentino.....	CJ Rosado (u/s Kale Thompson)
Marcy Park.....	Kendall West (u/s Faith Betts)
Leaf Coneybear.....	Riley Wilson (u/s Caleb Van Hook)
William Barfee.....	Matthew Lietz (u/s Mason Cox)
Logainne Schwartzandgrubenierre.....	Kinley Schollenbarger (u/s Rhema Cunningham)
Vice Principal Panch.....	Collin McKean (u/s Leya Applewhite)
Rona Lisa Peretti.....	Aubrey Pearce (u/s Zoe Dobratz)
Mahoney.....	Chaya Powell (u/s Jerell Isaac)

Production Team

Producer/Chair.....	Dawne Swearingen Meeks
Director.....	Joey Banks
Assistant Director.....	Alex Dulske
Musical Director.....	Dr. Chris Hollingsworth
Choreographer.....	Macayla Brown
Dance Captain.....	Parker Stiffler
Costume Designer.....	Amelie Beegle
Scenic Designer.....	Eric Pitney
Technical Director.....	Cody Drennan
Assistant Scenic Designer.....	Rayne Harris
Lighting Designer.....	Collin Mitten
Associate Lighting Designer.....	Alise Tran
Assistant Lighting Designer/Light Board Op.....	Josh Vorel
Spot Op.....	Lois Botelua
Sound/QLab Operator.....	Connor Lamb
Stage Manager.....	Emily Graves
Assistant Stage Manager.....	Reese Tisworth, Reaghan White
Props Master.....	Maya Padilla

Production Team Cont.

Shop Foreman.....	Cayden Taylor, Eva Barnard, Faith Betts, Katie Breedlove, Imogen Long, Jackson Wilder, Maya Padilla, Skyler Kinney, Ty Naicker
Head of Costume.....	Catherine Baumgardner
Head Shop Assistant.....	Rachel McNiece
Dressers.....	Juliana McElwain, Lillia Mack, Kerrigan Wright
Costume Shop Prac.....	Amelie Beegle, Brooke Bott, Katie Breedlove, Lila Griffith, Matthew Lietz, Maya Padilla, Chaya Powell, Bee Peyton
Costume Shop Assistants.....	Grace Alston, Leya Applewhite, Amelie Beegle, Brooke Bott, Lauren Burris, Kendall Ganster, Matthew Lietz, Lilia Mack, Maya Padilla, Chaya Powell, CJ Rosado, Parker Stiffler, Reese Tisworth, Josh Vorel, Karissa Ward, Kylie West, Kerrigan Wright
Glass Case Design.....	Brooke Bott
Box Office/Patron Services Director.....	Devin Braswell
Program Designer.....	Devin Braswell
Program Cover Design	Holly Harrell
Production Photographer.....	Paul White, Caleb Shields
Program / Publicity / Web Design.....	Adam Hester, Devin Braswell
PR / Fundraising / Box Office.....	Erin Brogan, Faith Betts, Alex Dulske, Laci Jackson, Collin Mitten, Aubrey Pearce, Kaitlyn Olson, Evan Owens
House Management.....	Lois Botelua, Erin Brogan, Collin Mitten, Frederick Noe-Tchatat, Evan Owens, Aida Wilkes

Director's Note

At first glance, The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee is a comedy about precocious kids spelling impossibly difficult words. It is silly, surprising, and often delightfully absurd. But beneath that humor is something much more tender: a group of young people who are desperate to be seen.

Each of these spellers arrive with their own insecurities, expectations, loneliness, pressures, or the quiet hope that this might be the place where they finally belong. What makes this musical so special is that it does not ask its characters to hide their eccentricities or “grow out” of them. Instead, it invites us to celebrate them. The lisp, the overachieving perfectionism, the awkward honesty, the imagination that spills out at the wrong moment—these are not flaws to be corrected, but truths to be embraced.

In working on this production, we have been drawn again and again to the idea that adolescence is not just a phase to survive, but a time when identity is formed in bold, vulnerable strokes. These characters remind us of a version of ourselves that we may have outgrown, but never truly leave behind. Their struggles are deeply human.

At Abilene Christian University, where community and belonging are central to our mission, this story resonates in a particularly meaningful way. It asks us to consider how we show up for one another: Do we make space for difference? Do we recognize the courage it takes to be fully, unapologetically oneself? And perhaps most importantly, do we remember what it felt like to want so badly to be understood?

My hope is that you will laugh freely tonight and hope you see a bit of yourself and your childhoods on that stage. I urge you to be reminded that the very things that make us strange, specific, and unique are often the things that make us most worthy of being seen.

- Joey Banks

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Theatre alumni and other friends have created 16 endowed scholarships and underwritten productions, faculty development, and master classes.

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