



Heidelberg Theatre Company

**THE 25th ANNUAL PUTNAM
COUNTY SPELLING BEE**



HEIDELBERG THEATRE COMPANY (HTC)

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HTC acknowledges financial assistance from the City of Banyule.

HTC is a member of the Victorian Drama League [www.vdl.org.au]

HTC Artspace

"Eclectic" - An Art Display

Textile Art Community Art Space (TACAS) in Heidelberg West is a not-for-profit incorporated community membership organisation. Our studio complex is occupied by artists and makers from a range of disciplines who work together to create a community of like-minded creatives. We delight in making things in our hands from reclaimed, reused and discarded textiles, found objects and natural materials.

Everyone is welcome at TACAS where we provide a space to make, mend, upcycle and share skills. We save beautiful textiles from landfill. Through the things we make, we show that discarded materials are precious resources. We participate in local events, exhibit and sell members' work at our monthly market.

This "Eclectic" exhibition has been proudly created by a number of very talented TACAS members.

Louise Millar-Hoffmann - Artspace Curator



HEIDELBERG
THEATRE
COMPANY

THE 25th ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE

directed by
TIM SCOTT



Music & Lyrics by
WILLIAM FINN

Book by
RACHEL SHEINKIN

Conceived by
REBECCA FELDMAN

Additional Material by
JAY REISS

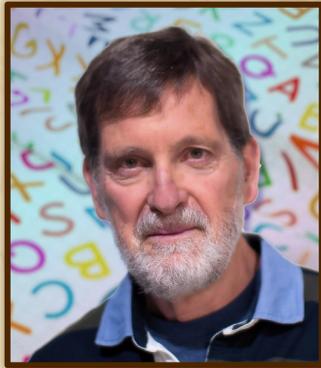
Originally Directed on Broadway by James Lapine

Originally Produced on Broadway by
David Stone, James L. Nederlander, Barbara Whitman, Patrick Catullo
Barrington Stage Company, Second Stage Theatre

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Nov 14 - Nov 29, 2025

TIM SCOTT - Director



The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee is Tim's sixth production and second musical for Heidelberg Theatre Company. He has previously directed, *Pride and Prejudice* (2017), *Inheritance* (2018), *Three Little Words* (2021), *Ladies in Black* (2023) and, most recently, *An Ideal Husband* (2024). He also directed *Away* for Encore Theatre in 2018, and *Round and Round the Garden* for Brighton Theatre Company in 2022. Tim began directing in 1979 at Monash University and has directed almost every year since. His earlier productions ranged from Shakespeare and Oscar Wilde to Arthur Miller,

Tim Winton and Alan Bennett, as well as some popular musicals, among them *Guys and Dolls*, *My Fair Lady* and *West Side Story*. His collaboration with Jenny Vincent-Green began in 2001, and he is delighted to be working with her again on this, their ninth show together.

Tim has loved working with this talented and dedicated cast and crew on this quirky American musical.

About the show

Initially, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* started as a non-musical play, entitled C-R-E-P-U-S-C-U-L-E, done by the improvisational group "The Farm." One of the performers in the play, Sarah Saltzberg, happened to be the nanny of playwright, Wendy Wasserstein. Impressed by what she saw, Wasserstein suggested to friend, William Finn, that he may be able to take the show to the next level. Finn, his former student, Rachel Sheinkin, and C-R-E-P-U-S-C-U-L-E creator, Rebecca Feldman, worked together to turn the piece into a full-length musical.

The January 2005 Off-Broadway production won several awards, including the 2005 Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Musical and 2005 Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Ensemble Performance. The Broadway version opened in April 2005 and won Tony Awards for Best Book (Rachel Sheinkin) and Best Featured Actor (Dan Fogler).

The 2006 Melbourne Theatre Company production, which starred Magda Szubanski as Barfée [see photo] and Marina Prior as Ms. Peretti, won the 2006 Helpmann Award for Best Musical.



Director's Note

I first saw *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* when it was staged by the Melbourne Theatre Company in 2006. At the time, I wrote in my diary that it was "the most entertaining show I had seen for a long time" and I looked forward to staging it sometime. Well, it has taken nearly twenty years but here we are at last. I am very grateful to HTC for agreeing to my suggestion.

The challenge for grown-up actors to channel their inner teenager has ensured some lively rehearsals. As any good piece of theatre should, the story ranges from loneliness and uncertainty to comedy, growth and change, and the music reflects these shifts in mood very effectively. There are surprises, moments of tenderness and, in the end, a triumph for the human spirit. What more could you ask for?

With plenty of generous energy and lots of laughs, it's been a lot of fun to put it all together. We hope you enjoy the result.

JOHN CLANCY - Musical Director



John has been working as a musician since the mid 80's, playing in and conducting orchestras, working with community choirs, and as the musical director with a range of companies. He has been at the helm of a range of diverse productions, including *Les Misérables*, *Chess*, *Brigadoon*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Chicago*, *Cats*, and *Rock of Ages* and HTC's *Ladies in Black* in 2023. He thus brings a wealth of experience to this production. He is delighted to return to Heidelberg and is both flattered and in awe of the talent within the cast, the band, and the rest of the production team. He is mostly known as a viola and violin player when not conducting, but for this season has expanded to include keyboards in his repertoire.

JENNY VINCENT-GREEN - Choreographer



As a former dance teacher, Jenny has been involved in theatre productions since 1976. Beginning as a performer, interspersed with choreography. Memorable roles include Velma in *Chicago*, Joanne in *Company*, and Molly Brown at the Titanic Restaurant in Williamstown. Of late, most choreography has been at either Melbourne Grammar with Tim and Philip Carmody and later Mark Brady or at Firbank Grammar with Merryn Anstee. Memorable shows include *West Side Story*, *The Producers*, *Guys and Dolls* and *The Drowsy Chaperone*. An Educational Psychologist by profession, Jenny is proud to be working with Tim and John again at HTC after the successful *Ladies in Black* in 2023. Delighted with this very strong cast, Jenny looks forward to a successful season of *The Bee*.

CAST

RONA LISA PERRETTI	Rafaela Cleeve Gerkens
CHIP TOLENTINO	Jackson Howe
LOGAINNE SCHWARTZANDGRUBENNIÈRE	Llaaneath Poor
LEAF CONEYBEAR	Tyson Legg
WILLIAM BARFÉE	Wayne Gleeson
MARCY PARK	Hillary Aramze
OLIVE OSTROVSKY	Rachel Rai
VICE PRINCIPAL DOUGLAS PANCH.....	Damien Calvert
MITCH MAHONEY	Tim Murphy
ENSEMBLE	Chris Isaac Matt Todd

Setting: A school gymnasium, Putnam County, USA

Time: The Present

During the 20-minute interval, refreshments are available in the foyer

MUSICIANS

PIANO	John Clancy
SYNTHESISER.....	James Boon
REEDS.....	Emily Fry
CELLO.....	Evelyn Searle
PERCUSSION	Paul Coles

PRODUCTION TEAM

Director	Tim Scott
Musical Director	John Clancy
Choreographer	Jenny Vincent-Green
Set Design	Brenton Staples
Lighting Design	Deryk Hartwick
Sound Design	John Rowe & Jeff Edwards
Production Coordinator	Gayle Poor
Stage Manager	Melanie Belcher
Wardrobe.....	Sally Scott & Marsia Bergh with help from Wendy Drowley
Special Props Maker.....	Warren Lane
Properties.....	Sally Scott
Sound & Lighting Operators	Margaret Hassall, Bruce Moorhouse, Jeff Edwards & John Rowe
Set Construction	Owen Evans, Doug McNaughton, Phil Holmes, Dave Belton, Brett Hunt, Tim Scott, Noel Purdey, Ashley Deans, Alex Deans, Olivia Barling, Nick Bartholomew, Jerome Pollard, Sean Tessari, Ron Thomas, Norm Munks & HTC members
Scenic Artists.....	Brenton Staples, Mal Cother, Pam Neivandt, Anne Woodward
Rehearsal Prompt	Bobbie Parish
Audience Volunteers Coordinator ..	Louise Millar-Hoffmann
Photography	David Belton, Aislinn Ryan
Programme & Poster	Chris McLean
Publicity	Jim Thomson
Box Office	Sally Scott, Carol Farr, Brett Hunt, Jenni Purdey, Fiona Campbell
Front of House	Jenny Gilbert & HTC members



RAFAELA CLEEVE GERKENS (Rona Lisa Perretti). Rafaela is delighted to return to HTC where she cherished playing Lisa Miles in *Ladies in Black* in 2023. She has a passion for the performing arts, especially ballet and musical theatre, and has enjoyed performing roles in numerous musicals. Other favourite roles include Fiona MacLaren in *Brigadoon* (Nova), Cinderella in *Into the Woods* (BottledSnail), Miss Dorothy Brown in *Thoroughly Modern Millie* and Mrs Tottendale in *The Drowsy Chaperone* (UMMTA). Rafaela is so happy to be back working with the welcoming and talented HTC team and hopes you enjoy this hilarious and heartwarming show.



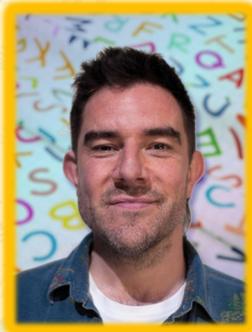
JACKSON HOWE (Chip Tolentino). Jackson's never been a great speller. In year 5, Jackson failed his spelling test, getting a 6 out of 20, but that's not going to stop him from taking home the trophy in *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. Originally from the Sunshine State, Jackson moved to study Music Theatre at the Victorian College of the Arts. He has performed in the ensemble of *Kinky Boots* (James Terry Collective) and as Linus in *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* (Stagebugs Productions). If you can't find Jackson singing on stage, then he's either teaching middle school Drama, hanging out with his friends, watching *Whiplash* for the thousandth time, watching the Lions go for a third premiership, playing a game of rugby, ultimate frisbee or golf.



LLAANEATH POOR (Logainne Schwartzandgrubinnièrè). Llaaneath will be familiar to HTC audiences, having performed in several productions here, including *It's a Wonderful Life*, *Ladies in Black*, *Rumors* and, most recently, *An Ideal Husband*. Other favourites include *We Happy Few* (Eltham Little Theatre), *A Chorus of Disapproval* (Peridot Theatre Company) and *The Philadelphia Story* (Lilydale Athenaeum). More recently, Llaaneath has enjoyed working as a director, bringing to life onstage HTC's *And a Nightingale Sang*, *Crossing Delancey* and *Barefoot in the Park*. Llaaneath is delighted to be treading the boards again in this unique musical venture with such a talented cast and crew!



TYSON LEGG (Leaf Coneybear). Tyson is a musician, stage performer, director and musical director. He has received multiple Green Room, MTGV and Lyrebird nominations and commendations for performance, direction and musical direction. Performance highlights include: Floyd in *Floyd Collins* (MTGV nomination), Leo Frank in *Parade* (MTGV nomination), Mark in *RENT*, Zack in *A Chorus Line*, Pirelli in *Sweeney Todd*, Jimmy Ray in *Bright Star*, The Baker in *Into the Woods*. He previously appeared with HTC in the 2017 production of *Pride and Prejudice*. Tyson was nominated for a Green Room award for his Musical Direction of the cabaret *Showfolk*, which he also performed in.



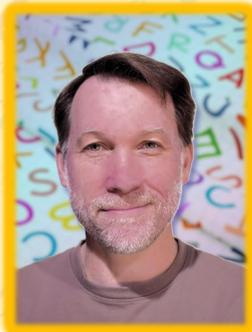
WAYNE GLEESON (William Barfée). Wayne is originally from Liverpool, UK, and has lived in Melbourne for the past 13 years. He studied Performing Arts and Theatre Studies at college in Liverpool and has been part of Melbourne's vibrant Community Theatre scene for the past 8 years. Wayne's most recent productions include *Love, Love, Love*, *An Ideal Husband*, *And A Nightingale Sang*, *Rumors*, *All My Sons*, *Present Laughter*, *Death of A Salesman*, *Dinner With Friends*, *The Exorcism*, *Private Lives*, and *Blood Brothers*. Wayne is delighted to return to the stage at Heidelberg Theatre Company.



HILLARY ARAMZE (Marcy Park). Hillary is thrilled to be stepping onto the HTC stage again, after playing Myra in the 2023 production of *Ladies in Black*. Previous credits include performing as Tweety in the *Looney Tunes* show at the Australian Open, choreographic assistant for *Barnum*, the Circus Musical, which featured Todd McKenney, and a 6-month contract in India where she performed in numerous Bollywood films. Hillary has been blessed with an exciting performing career and is delighted to have found the warmth of the HTC community. This is Hillary's first show since becoming a mother to her 9-month-old daughter, Maeve.



RACHEL RAI (Olive Ostrovsky). Hailing from Adelaide, Rachel began her performing career aged 6 as Little Cosette in *Les Misérables*. While in South Australia, she had roles in *Fiddler on the Roof*, *The Boy From Oz*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, *Fame* and again in *Les Misérables*, this time as Eponine, for which she received the Adelaide Theatre Guild Award for Best Female Performer. Since moving to Melbourne permanently in 2014, her theatre credits include: Sukie in *The Witches of Eastwick*, Brenda in *Catch Me If You Can*, Oolie/Donna in *City of Angels*, Yum Yum in *Hot Mikado*, Sheila in *A Chorus Line*, plus roles in *Sweeney Todd*, *Into The Woods* and *Pippin* with WMTC; *Jekyll & Hyde*, *Kinky Boots* and *Chess* with CLOC; *Chicago* with PLOS and *9 To 5* with ACT .



DAMIEN CALVERT (Vice Principal Douglas Panch). Damien has worked with many theatre companies across Melbourne, both on and off the stage. His most recent credits include Frog in *A Year With Frog and Toad* (Beaumaris Theatre Company), lighting design for *Ladies in Black* and *Knife Edge* (Beaumaris Theatre Company) and lighting, set and audio design for *Holmes and Watson* (Mordialloc Theatre Company). Damien is also the Company Secretary for OSMaD musical theatre, part of the Committee of the Music Theatre Guild of Victoria, and runs MelbourneTheatreCalendar.com.au, a community website listing all the theatre right across Victoria.



TIM MURPHY (Mitch Mahoney). This is Tim's fifth time performing on the Heidelberg stage. Favourite recent stage credits include *Lifespan of a Fact* (Malvern), *Leaving* (Theatre 451), *The Architect* (Brighton), *A Doll's House* (Encore), *Moonlight and Magnolias* and *The Deep Blue Sea* (Lilydale) and the world premiere of the new Australian Play *Penance* at La Mama. Musical credits include *Cabaret*, *Chicago*, *Working*, *A Man of No Importance*, *Singin' in the Rain* and *All Shook Up*. Tim's voice-over work is featured in a variety of short films and documentaries including audiobook podcasts of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and the recently released *Persuasion*.



CHRIS ISAAC (Ensemble). Chris is thrilled to be returning to musical theatre, portraying two of the fathers in this production. This marks his first musical since high school, where he played Danny Zuko in *Grease*, a role that ignited his love for performing. Earlier this year, Chris appeared as Klaus and Rab in *Frankenstein* with Peridot Theatre Company, demonstrating his range in dramatic performance. Outside of theatre, Chris enjoys composing chiptune music using *Gameboys*, blending his passion for retro gaming with creative sound design. He is grateful for the opportunity to work alongside such a talented cast and crew in this show.



MATT TODD (Ensemble). This is Matt's first time working with Heidelberg Theatre Company. He was most recently seen as Bernard in *Yes, Prime Minister!* and as Claudio in *Much Ado About Nothing* at Eltham Little Theatre. Matt has also served as Musical Director for *The Winter's Tale* at STAG and for Eltham Little Theatre's Youth productions of *Into the Woods* and *High School Musical*. This production marks his first musical appearance in nearly a decade, and he has thoroughly enjoyed returning to his performing roots.

Musical Numbers

ACT ONE

1. The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee
2. The Rules
3. My Friend The Dictionary
4. Pandemonium
5. I'm Not That Smart
6. Magic Foot
7. Pandemonium (Reprise)
8. Rona Moment #2
9. Prayer of the Comfort Counsellor

ACT TWO

10. Chip's Lament
11. Woe Is Me
12. Spelling Montage
13. I'm Not That Smart (Reprise)
14. I Speak Six Languages
15. Jesus
16. The I Love You Song
17. Woe Is Me (Reprise)
18. Rona Moment #3
19. Second (Part 1)
20. Weltanschauung
21. Pas De Deux
22. Second (Part 2)
23. The Champion
24. Epilogues
25. Finale



HEIDELBERG
THEATRE
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YOUTH

THE TALE OF

PINOCCHIO

Written By
RYAN PURDEY
ERICH FORDHAM

Directed By
RYAN PURDEY
SEAN TESSARI

5 Dec - 13 Dec 2025

• Evenings Dec 5, 6, 11, 12, 13 at 7pm • Matinees Dec 6, 7, 13 at 2pm

Tickets: \$15

Book at htc.org.au, call 94574117 or buy at the door

36 Turnham Ave Rosanna

Inc no. A008432X



**HEIDELBERG
THEATRE
COMPANY**

by arrangement with Creative Artists Agency

Love, Loss, and What I Wore



by
Nora Ephron & Delia Ephron

from the book by
Ilene Beckerman

directed by Catherine Christensen

*a heartfelt celebration of women's lives
told through the clothes that made them who they are*

Feb 13 - Feb 28, 2026

• Evenings Wed to Sat at 8pm • Matinees Feb 14, 15, 21, 22 at 2pm

Book at htc.org.au or call 945741 17 Tickets \$32 (\$30 Conc, \$26 Groups 10+)

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HEIDELBERG
THEATRE
COMPANY

2026

🕒 FEB 13 TO FEB 28

Love, Loss, and What I Wore

by Nora Ephron & Delia Ephron
from the book by Ilene Beckerman

🕒 APR 24 TO MAY 9

THE GIRL ON THE TRAIN

adapted by Rachel Wagstaff &
Duncan Abel
from the novel by Paula Hawkins

🕒 JUL 3 TO JUL 18

BIRDSONG

adapted by Rachel Wagstaff
from the novel by Sebastian Faulks

🕒 SEP 4 TO SEP 19

Crimes of the Heart

by Beth Henley

🕒 NOV 13 TO NOV 28

CLUE: ON STAGE

adapted from the screenplay by
Jonathan Lynn
additional materials by Hunter Foster,
Eric Price and Sandy Rustin

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THE 25th ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE

Heidelberg Theatre Company ♦ Season 2025 ♦ Play 5