

DEMAND PR

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MEDIA ALERT FOR THEATRE EDITORS AND REVIEWERS
AND CALENDAR LISTINGS

**LA MIRADA THEATRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS &
MC COY RIGBY ENTERTAINMENT**

Present their Third Production of the 2009/2010 Season!

**The 25th Annual Putnam County
Spelling Bee**

Music and Lyrics by William Finn

Book by Rachel Sheinkin * Conceived by Rebecca Feldman

Choreography by DJ Gray * Musical Direction by David O

Directed by Jeff Maynard

*Limited Engagement begins February 5 at
La Mirada Theatre for the Performing Arts!*

(Press Opening Saturday, February 6)

December 20, 2009...La Mirada, Calif...La Mirada Theatre for the Performing Arts and McCoy Rigby Entertainment are t-h-r-i-l-l-e-d to present the third production of La Mirada Theatre's 2009-2010 season of shows, the Tony Award-winning musical **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, choreography by DJ Gray, musical direction by David O and directed by Jeff Maynard. **THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE** will begin performances on Friday, February 5 (with a press opening on Saturday, February 6) and will run through Sunday, February 21 at La Mirada Theatre for the Performing Arts, 14900 La Mirada Boulevard in La Mirada.

F-A-N-T-A-S-T-I-C! - That's the only way to spell this smash-hit musical comedy! *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* is the story of how six young people in the throes of puberty, overseen by grown-ups who barely managed to escape childhood themselves, learn that winning isn't everything and that losing doesn't necessarily make you a loser. This hilarious tale of overachievers' angst chronicles the experience of six adolescent outsiders vying for the spelling championship of a lifetime. The show's Tony Award-winning creative team has created the unlikeliest of heroes: a quirky yet charming cast of outsiders for whom a spelling bee is the one place where they can stand out and fit in at the same time. *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* is a roller coaster of music and fun.

(more)

ABOUT THE CREATIVE TEAM

WILLIAM FINN (Music & Lyrics) Mr. Finn is the writer and composer of *Falsettos*, for which he received two Tony Awards, Best Book of a Musical (with James Lapine) and Best Original Score. He has also written and composed *In Trousers*, *March of the Falsettos* and *Falsettoland* (Outer Critics Circle Award for Best Musical, two Los Angeles Drama Critic's Awards, two Drama Desk Awards, the Lucille Lortel Award, and Guggenheim Fellowship in Musical Composition). Mr. Finn wrote the lyrics to Graciela Daniele's *Tango Apasionado* (music by the great Astor Piazzolla) and, with Michael Starobin, the music to Lapine's version of *The Winter's Tale*. His musical, *Romance in Hard Times*, was presented at the Public Theater. Recently, he wrote *Painting You for Love's Fire*, a piece commissioned and performed by the Acting Company, based on Shakespeare's sonnets. For television, Mr. Finn provided the music and lyrics for the Ace Award-winning HBO cartoon "Ira Sleeps Over," "Tom Thumb and Thumbelina," "Pokey Little Puppy's First Christmas," and, with Ellen Fitzhugh, two "Brave Little Toaster" cartoons. Mr. Finn has written for *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar*, and *The New Yorker*. A graduate of Williams College where he was awarded the Hutchinson Fellowship for Musical Composition, Finn now teaches a weekly master class at the NYU Tisch Graduate Program in Musical Theatre Writing. His most recent projects include *Elegies, A Song Cycle* (Lincoln Center) and *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, which ran on Broadway and has been produced nationally and internationally, as well.

RACHEL SHEINKIN (Book) Broadway: *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (Tony, Drama Desk awards); Off Broadway: *Striking 12* (Lucille Lortel nomination), *Off-Off: Serenade*. Regional: Guthrie, Little House on the Prairie; Center Theater Group, *Sleeping Beauty Wakes* (Los Angeles Ovation Award); London: *Blood Drive*. Residencies, fellowships, commissions include: Eugene O'Neill National Theater Center, Baryshnikov Dance Foundation, MacDowell Colony, Manhattan Theatre Club, Deaf West, McCarter Theatre, Playwrights Horizons. Rachel is a volunteer mentor for TDF's Open Doors program, a visiting instructor at Yale School of Drama, and adjunct faculty member of NYU's Graduate Musical Theater Writing Program.

JEFF MAYNARD (Director) directed last season's Pulitzer Prize winning *Lost In Yonkers* for La Mirada Theatre. This past summer in upstate New York, he collaborated with Jason Robert Brown on a new, revised version of the recent Broadway musical "13". Jeff is proud to be a founding member of Buffalo Nights Theatre Company, having directed, acted or produced over 15 productions including: *The Final Judgment*, *Modigliani*, *Meat*, *Anatol*, *Salome*, *Sophistry* and *The Madman & The Nun*. He won a Drama-Logue Award for Max Frisch's *The Firebugs*, a Backstage West award for *The Apollo of Bellac* and LA Weekly's Revival Production of the Year award for *Modigliani*. Also in Los Angeles, he directed the West Coast Premiere of the Ovation Award nominated *Tales of Tinseltown* by Michael Colby and Paul Katz – at the Actor's Co-op. In upstate New York, Jeff's recent directorial work includes *Nine*, *Seussical*, *Doubt*, *The Laramie Project*, *Mystery of Edwin Drood* and *Aida*.

As an actor Jeff appeared in the first national tour/Los Angeles Premiere of *Lost In Yonkers*, *Biloxi Blues* at the Court/Hudson Theatres, *Enter Laughing & Taking Stock* at the A.J.U.'s– “Let There Be Laughter” series, and TV appearances on "Buffy The Vampire Slayer", "Fresh Prince of Bel Air", "Diagnosis Murder" and the feature film *The Illusion*. Jeff currently runs the theatre program at The Mirman School, teaches private acting classes throughout Los Angeles and is a graduate of UCLA's School of Theater, Film & Television.

DJ GRAY (Choreographer) Returning to the BEE, DJ was the Associate Choreographer with Tony Award winning, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, (On and Off-Broadway, and National Tour). She was the Associate Choreographer with Tony nominated, *Xanadu*, (Broadway and National Tour). DJ has performed on Broadway in *The Producers*. Regional Theatre choreography includes; Barrington Stage and North Shore (...*Spelling Bee*), Associate choreographer, Papermill Playhouse (*Godspell*), Candlelight Pavilion (*42nd Street*, *A Chorus Line*, *Big River*), Musical Theater West (*Little Shop of Horrors*) and PHANTOM (Moonlight). TV credits: The New Electric Company, and Emmy nominated Stephen Colbert's Christmas Special.

DAVID O (Musical Director) is a Los Angeles-based composer, performer, and musical director. Compositions include the choral piece *A Map of Los Angeles* (LA Master Chorale/Walt Disney Concert Hall), and the scores for *The Very Persistent Gappers of Frip* (Kirk Douglas Theatre), *Ubu Roi* (A Noise Within), *Hippolytos* (Getty Villa), *Atalanta* (Powerhouse Theater/Creative Playground), and *The Legend of Alex* (CTG/PLAY). Musical direction credits include world premieres of *13* (Mark Taper Forum) and *Divorce: the Musical* (Hudson Mainstage), and the West Coast premieres of *The Wild Party* (LaChiusa) and *Little Fish* (both at the Blank Theatre). David is the recipient of multiple awards for his musical direction over the years, including Ovation, LADCC, LA Weekly, and Backstage West Garland Awards. Choral compositions and arrangements of David's were featured in the movie “License to Wed.” David is the musical director for the upcoming *Toy Story: The Musical*, opening at Disney California Adventure in January, 2011.

ABOUT THE CAST AND DESIGN TEAM

The cast of **THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE** features: Jason Graae, Melvin Abston, Shanon Mari Mills, Cassie Silva, Laura Griffith, Tom Zohar, Brett Ryback, Daniel Tatar and Lana McKissack.

THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE has assembled an award-winning design team. The set design is by Beowulf Boritt. The lighting design is by Craig Pierce. The costume design is by Jennifer Caprio. The sound design is by Josh Bessom. Hair/Wig/Make-up design is by Judi Lewin. .

THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE will begin performances on Friday, February 5 (with a press opening on Saturday, February 6) and runs for three weeks through Sunday, February 21. Performances will be 7:30pm on Tuesdays through Thursdays; 8pm on Fridays; 2pm and 8pm on Saturdays; and 2pm and 7pm on Sundays. There will be no matinee performance on Saturday, February 6 at 2pm and no evening performance on Sunday, February 7 at 7pm. There will be a talk-back session following the performance on Tuesday, February 9.

Tickets range from \$35 - \$50 and can be purchased at La Mirada Theatre's website, www.lamiradatheatre.com or by calling the La Mirada Theatre Box Office at (562) 944-9801 or (714) 994-6310. Student, Senior, Children and group discounts are available.

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LA MIRADA THEATRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, now in its fourth decade, has been hailed by the Los Angeles Times as "one of the best Broadway-style houses in Southern California." This beautiful state-of-the-art theatre has been producing quality productions for its Southern California audiences since 1977. The theatre has produced several national tours and is the recipient of many accolades including Ovation and Emmy Awards and Tony Award nominations. Brian Kite is the theatre's Producing Artistic Director. The theatre is located at 14900 La Mirada Boulevard in La Mirada, California, near the intersection of Rosecrans Avenue. Parking is theatre-adjacent and free. For further information call 562-944-9801 or visit www.lamiradatheatre.com.

McCOY RIGBY ENTERTAINMENT combines the talents of musical theatre star Cathy Rigby with Tom McCoy's extensive production and theatrical experience and has become one of the nation's premier theatrical production companies. Credits include Tony-nominated Broadway shows, long-running national tours, multiple-award-winning Los Angeles stage productions, and hit TV specials. The number of major theatrical awards garnered by McCoy Rigby Entertainment includes 3 Ovation Awards, 25 Drama-Logue Awards, 3 Backstage Garland Awards and 3 Tony Award nominations, 20 Ovation nominations and 8 NAACP award nominations for the touring production of Jesus Christ Superstar. In addition, the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences awarded McCoy Rigby Entertainment an Emmy for Best Scene Design as part of four nominations for the A&E network production of Peter Pan. www.mccoyrigby.com.