

# 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee



CONEJO PLAYERS  
THEATRE

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



**Jul 8 - 17, 2022**

Fri and Sat at 8:00pm • Sun at 2:00pm

THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE  
Is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI).  
All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI.  
[www.MTIShows.com](http://www.MTIShows.com)

# Welcome to CONEJO PLAYERS THEATRE



I am thrilled to welcome you to the 64th season of the Conejo Players Theatre! As the only 100% volunteer-run community theater in Southern California, you have joined us in a truly special place. Our mission — “to share in providing the community with a year-round schedule of affordable live theatre produced to serve the cultural, educational, and entertainment needs of the community” — is deeply important to the wonderful people who give their time here.

As a lifelong theater lover, I have often felt the excitement of the shared live experience between performers and an audience. I have witnessed the power of great storytelling to touch, inform, (and even change) lives. Whether you are here to laugh, cry, or think (often all in one evening), we hope that this performance entertains as well as enlightens.

The theater is an amazing center of collaboration. Each production relies on directors, producers, performers, choreographers, designers, builders, crew members, ushers, and countless others. Working together creates a family of sorts. **We welcome anyone who would like to join our family of volunteers** - a truly generous and talented bunch. Try something new—we are happy to train! And, as we build back from lockdown, tax deductible donations are gratefully appreciated too. Feel free to contact me for more information and opportunities.

Thank you for joining us tonight, and enjoy the show!



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dana Marley-Koltb".

**Dana Marley-Koltb**  
President

Email: [President@conejoplayers.org](mailto:President@conejoplayers.org)



## Mission Statement

The mission of Conejo Players Theatre is to share in providing the community with a year-round schedule of affordable live theatre produced to serve the cultural, educational, and entertainment needs of the community; and to welcome and provide an avocational opportunity for all volunteers interested in the theatre arts to participate in the many activities of community theatre.

**CONEJO PLAYERS THEATRE**  
presents

**25<sup>th</sup> Annual Putnam  
County Spelling Bee**

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

THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE

Is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI).

All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI.

[www.MTIShows.com](http://www.MTIShows.com)

**Conejo Players Theatre • Thousand Oaks, CA**

**Jul 8 - 17, 2022**

Fri and Sat at 8:00pm • Sun at 2:00pm

**Production STAFF**

Director ..... **Sahai Lara**  
Producer ..... **Dana Marley-Kolb**  
Music Director ..... **Scott Donohue**  
Assistant Music Director ..... **Leviticus Valko**  
Stage Manager ..... **Abigail Reeves**  
Choreography ..... **Wendy Babb**  
Costume Designer ..... **Beth Eslick**  
Set Designer ..... **Rick Steinberg**  
Lighting Designer ..... **Jeremy Zeller**  
Prop Master ..... **John Eslick**  
Sound Designer ..... **Brendan Lynch**  
Light Operator ..... **Eve Kiefer**  
Spot Operator ..... **Rita McCaffrey**  
Sound Operator ..... **Jackie Nat**  
Backstage Crew ..... **Samira Lara**  
Photographer ..... **Aaron Kirsch**  
Construction Crew ..... **Bob Jackson, John Holroyd, Lee Marks,**  
..... **Max Honigsberg, Rick Steinberg**  
Paint Crew ..... **Abigail Reeves, Hannah Saltman, Scott Donohue,**  
..... **Rita McCaffrey, Dana Marley-Kolb**  
Audition Staff ..... **Judy Diderrich, Dona Pugh, Alan Waserman, Rita McCaffrey,**  
..... **Elisabeth Kirkpatrick, Keith Moreton, Sarah Ely, Lilli Babb, Zach Spencer**

# From THE DIRECTOR

The bee starts very normally, with a colorful gang of youngsters ready to compete. The thought of friendships are either out of the question or too good to be true. The main goal is to take it all and move on to national's as the Putnam County champ. But, as our story continues we watch the spellers (some reluctantly) start to develop connections with one another. We watch as each speller introduces themselves and what brought them to the bee. And with every elimination and \*cough cough\* unexpected "visitor", we watch the spellers find the similarities within each other. Looks like maybe they'll be able to "live with second" if their friend gets first?

On the other side of the spectrum we have our three adults. And these people have absolutely NO idea what they signed up for. Ranging from an affluent corporate demeanor to the edginess of ex-con, these three use their personalities and work together to keep some kind of peace amongst the kids. But, is the bee just for the benefit of the spellers? I think that everyone has a reason and a purpose for being there, and that includes the ones who are running the show.

Finn and Sheinkin's work of art does an amazing job of encapsulating not only the parts of adolescence that we'd rather forget about (puberty, bullying, family struggles), but also the moments that we love to remember. Spelling Bee uses humor and improvisation to highlight the awkwardness and heartbreak of growing up. While Sheinkin's orchestrations help to tell the stories of six young spellers and three overwhelmed adults, all of them are on a character-shaping journey in the setting of the 25th annual local spelling bee.

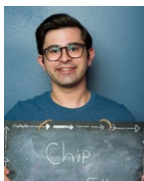
- *Sahai Lara, Director*

# The CAST

<b>Paige Pensivy</b> .....	Marcy Park
<b>Jack Cleary</b> .....	Leaf Coneybear
<b>Hannah Saltman</b> .....	Olive Ostrovsky
<b>Jeremy Matticks</b> .....	Mitch Mahoney
<b>Aaron Ellis</b> .....	Charlito "Chip" Tolentino
<b>Jacob Coners</b> .....	William Morris Barfee
<b>Leilani Toone</b> .....	Vice Principal Douglas Panch
<b>Jenna Lay</b> .....	Logainne "Schwarzy" SchwartzandGrubenierre
<b>Ashley Cherney</b> .....	Rona Lisa Peretti
<b>Lilli Babb, Omari Miller</b> .....	Understudies

**Special Thanks**  
**James Laguna, Dylan Kolb**

## Meet THE CAST



**Aaron Ellis** (Chip) is beyond excited to be back on stage after a brief pandemic. This is his third show at CPT, following *Avenue Q* (Princeton/Rod) and *The Producers* (Leo Bloom). He also appeared in *Little Shop of Horrors* (Seymour) and *Monty Python's Spamalot* (Sir Robin) at Moorpark College. He is currently a Screenwriting major and Theatre Arts minor at CSUN. You can see him in CSUN's upcoming Fall production of *Sweat*. He would like to thank his parents, girlfriend, brothers at AEPi, and the cast and crew for their support throughout this production.



**Ashley Cherney** (Rona Lisa Peretti) is excited to be in her first production with Conejo Players Theatre and honored to be playing Rona with this incredible cast. Past production credits include: *Company* (April), *Mary Poppins* (Mary Poppins) and *Ragtime* (Evelyn Nesbit). She wants to thank her family, friends and her amazing husband, Ben, for all of their love and support towards her musical endeavors.



**Hannah Saltman** (Olive Ostrovsky) would like you to know that her name is a "palindrome", which is her favorite spelling bee-worthy word. She is also beyond thrilled to play this iconic role in one of her all-time favorite shows, returning to the Conejo Players Theatre once again! Previous roles include Ariel in *The Little Mermaid*, Sandy in *Grease*, Ariel Moore in *Footloose*, Yum-Yum in *The Mikado*, Learn Your Lessons Well in *Godspell*, and just previously at Conejo Players, Kim Macafee in *Bye Bye Birdie*. She would like to thank the production team for including her in such a special show and her family for emphatically/egregiously supporting her love for theatre.



**Jack Cleary** (Leaf Coneybear) is so excited to be back performing at Conejo Players! Jack was last seen onstage as Tony in *West Side Story* at High Street Arts Center. Other show credits include Jack in *Into the Woods*, Lefou in *Beauty and the Beast* and Action in the Conejo Players production of *West Side Story*. Jack received his BA in Theatre Arts from California State Northridge. He also has a passion for directing, and will be directing *Legally Blonde* at High Street Arts Center this fall. Jack would like to thank his amazing family, friends, production team, crew, and cast of Spelling Bee!



**Jacob Coners** (William Morris Barfée) Recently graduated from Thousand Oaks High School, Jacob has been performing in musicals since age 7. He gives thanks to his supportive family along with coaches Brent Ramirez and Ryan Lefton. Credits include *Elf*, in *Elf the Musical*, Charlie Brown in *A Charlie Brown Christmas* and Emmitt in *Legally Blonde*. Join him later this summer when he performs as Tom Collins in *Rent* with YAE. Jacob will be attending San Diego State as an honor student in the fall.



**Jenna Lay** (Logainne SchwartzandGrubenierre) is thrilled to be back at the Conejo Players Theatre after an interesting two years. She was most recently seen this past October as Echo in *Eleemosynary* at The Elite, other favorite credits include Jane in *Peter Pan* and Rapunzel in *Into the Woods* both at the High Street Arts Center. She would like to thank the phenomenal cast and production team along with her friends and family for all of their support! Enjoy the Show!!



**Jeremy Matticks** (Mitch Mahoney) is a performer and songwriter based in Los Angeles, and a graduate of the Berklee College of Music. He currently performs with Top Shelf Vocal, PHNX WNG, and Keene Music Services; and is in production for his first album of original music. He has performed in many theatrical productions including *Good News!* (Tome Marlowe), *Hello Dolly!* (Barnaby Tucker), *HAIR* (Ensemble), *High School Musical: Live* (James), and *Gypsy* (Phil/Tucker).



**Paige Pensivy** (Marcy Park) is excited to be back at CPT for her third production. Paige recently completed productions at High Street Arts Center in *West Side Story* and Conejo Players Theatre in *Bye Bye Birdie* this year. Past productions include *Oklahoma*, *Trojan Women*, *Under Fire*, *The Drowsy Chaperone*, and *Anything Goes*. Paige has also enjoyed choreographing and helping out with musical numbers in productions such as *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, *The Drowsy Chaperone*, and *Bye Bye Birdie*. Paige would like to give a special thank you to her cast, crew, and most importantly her production staff for giving her a chance to feel confident in speaking six languages and the opportunity to achieve some goals (literally and figuratively!). Lastly, a special beak a leg to the entire cast!



**Leilani Toone** (Vice Principal Douglas Panch) It's been an awfully long time since they were onstage (2016 if you can believe that), but Leilani is very excited to be back on it! You may already know them from any number of productions at the Hillcrest Center for the Arts - usually wearing black as they perform their ongoing role as Stage Manager there - and the last time they were here at Conejo Players was in 2010. Leilani was eleven. Please enjoy their restraint as they have promised not to spam the bell; and may every word you spell be spelled correctly!



**Lilli Babb** (Understudy) is very excited to practice her spelling again with this wonderful cast! Off-Broadway credits *The Office! A Musical Parody* as Pam Beesly. Other credits include *Daddy Long Legs* (CPT), *Harvey*, *Beauty and the Beast* (Saint Vincent Summer Theatre), *Suds the Rocking 60's Musical Soap Opera* (Cortland Repertory Theatre), *The Little Mermaid*, *James and the Giant Peach*, *Footloose* (Encore at Point), *Hello! My Baby* (Rubicon/Lobero Theatres), *Rubicon Family Christmas*, *A Christmas Carol*, *South Pacific* (Rubicon Theatre), *American Girl Revue* (American Girl Theatre). Film/Television credits include "A Cinderella Story" (Warner Bros Pictures), "Six Feet Under" and "Carnival" (HBO), "Orange is the New Black" (Netflix). Lilli graduated from Rider University with a BFA in Musical Theatre. Thank you to our fabulous Spelling Bee team, Conejo Players Theatre, my incredibly supportive family, and Presley. [lillibabb.com](http://lillibabb.com)

**Omari Miller** (Understudy) A senior at California State University Northridge and double majoring in Biology and Linguistics, Omari (age 23) is excited to not only be making his Conejo Players Theatre debut but also to be part of such an amazing production with a group of such amazing, kind, and talented people. Some of his previous works include Jack in *Into the Woods*, Mary Sunshine in *Chicago*, Black in *Wild Party* as well as participating in the Kennedy Center's 2022 National Memorial Day Choral Festival held in Washington D.C. Omari would like to thank the cast, the production team, and Conejo Players Theatre for giving him the opportunity to take part in bringing this whimsical material to life and he hopes you enjoy the show!



## Meet THE STAFF

**Sahai N. Lara** (Director) is making her musical directorial debut with William Finn and Rachel Sheinkin's 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee! Sahai started at CPT back in 2019, working backstage as well as appearing in their productions of *Avenue Q*, *Sweeney Todd*, and several of CPT's Car Park Concerts. She made her directorial debut with Katori Hall's *The Mountaintop*, also at Conejo Players Theatre. Currently, Sahai is a marketing major at CalState Northridge and is very excited to be graduating next semester! I'd like to take a moment to thank my parents Mark and Davida Lara, my little sister Samira, and my uncle Rob Santiago for all of their love and support. And most importantly I dedicate this show, and every show that I do, to my late uncle Mel.

**Dana Marley-Kolb** (Producer) Dana is excited to be trying her hand at producing (and choreographing) on this wonderful stage. At CPT she has performed as Rose in *Gypsy*, (Four Star Award), Muzzy in *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, Phyllis in *Follies*, Barbara in *Social Security*, Mrs. Lovett in *Sweeney Todd* (Four Star Award), and Arlene in *Baby*. She recently returned to directing with High Street Art Center's production of *The Little Mermaid*. Unusually, she was creatively busy (through CPT) during lockdown. She served as Dramaturg for the streamed *The Complete Works Of William Shakespeare (Abridged) [REVISED]*, staged two Car Park Theaters, and directed the streamed *Daddy Long Legs*. Thank you all, and special thanks to her children Miranda and Dylan, her best buddy co-choreographer Wendy, and her joyful collaborators Sahai & Scott. She is currently serving as Conejo Players Theatre's President.

**Scott Donohue** (Music Director) has been involved with Conejo Players since 2019. Following a short stint on stage in CPT's recent productions of *Pippin* and *Harvey*, Scott served as MD for *Bye Bye Birdie - YPE* (which he has affectionately dubbed "Little Birdie"). Scott would like to thank Sahai and Dana for the opportunity to work with this incredibly talented cast, and for their unyielding faith in his ability. Much love to his wife and infant son, without whom his hair might be far less grey.

**Wendy Babb** (Choreography) is an HR Manager for a software company, so you can imagine what a joy it was to get away from policies, procedures and drama (not the good theatrical kind) to provide a little choreography for this great cast and crew. Wendy previously choreographed *The Little Mermaid* at High Street Arts Center (under the expert direction of 25+-year pal, Dana Kolb), assistant directed *My Fair Lady* at High Street (under the fabulously collaborative John Gaston) and had bawdy fun showing off her gimmick as Tessie Tura in *Gypsy* at Conejo Players Theatre. When you get the chance, dance!

**Leviticus Valko** (Assistant Music Director) is a student who is currently studying classical voice and interning with the choral vocal program at Moorpark College. He plans on transferring to a 4-year university next fall where he will continue his study of opera and classical voice. This is his first time working behind the scenes as assistant music director and would like to thank both the cast and crew for this amazing experience.



**Beth Eslick** (Costume Designer) is a veteran costume designer, having done well over 100 musicals, plays, and movies -- the latest ones being *Bye Bye Birdie - Young Performers Edition* at Conejo Players Theatre, *West Side Waltz* at the Will Geer Theatricum, and *Wake Up*, a full-length feature film by Janet Craig, now in nation-wide previews. In real life, Beth is a Costume Designer and the Wardrobe Supervisor at Will Geer Theatricum Botanicum in Topanga. Kisses to my amazing, ever-so-patient Sunshine, and thank you for your encouragement, love, and support." Bethdressed.com.

**Jeremy Zeller** (Lighting Designer) is the Executive Technical Director for the Conejo Players and the "Drew Carey" of the Conejo Improv Players. He hopes you enjoy this production.

**Rick Steinberg** (Set Designer) has been involved with the Conejo Players Theatre, in one way or another since his first adventure in *Pipe Dream*, way back in 1981. He has been seen on stage in a variety of shows and has won awards in both Directing and Set Design. He is an honorary lifetime member and multiple Harlequin Award recipient. He is also pleased that he is again serving as Executive Director of Conejo Players Theatre.

**Brendan Lynch** (Sound Designer) has typically been onstage acting at Conejo shows in *Baby* and *Bye Bye Birdie*. He is excited to be a part of this production for the first time as a Sound Designer at Conejo. He has previously designed sound and lights for shows such as *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Lion King*, and *Tarzan*.

**John Eslick** (Prop Master) has designed and constructed props for many CPT productions, the last being *Bye Bye Birdie - Young Performers Edition*. John has many years experience as a prop and model maker for special effects and entertainment companies. He is the Props Custodian for the theatre. Keep shining, Sunshine!

**Abigail Reeves** (Stage Manager) is a CPT regular - she loves working at the sound board, behind the scenes, behind the table, and on stage! She's won the youth achievement Harlequin award, and she was mostly recently seen As Ursula In CPT's *Bye Bye Birdie*. Favorite past credits include *Macbeth (Macbeth)*, and *Lucinda (Into The Woods Jr.)* Outside of theatre she loves learning about soil microbiology and regenerative agriculture. Much love to the Broadway dads.

**Eve Kiefer** (Light Operator) Eve is so happy to be back at Conejo Players Theatre, her second home, and to be running lights for *25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. Illuminating the stage for this amazingly talented cast is wonderful. Eve has been seen recently on stage at CPT in *Harvey* and *Bye Bye Birdie* and was last up in the booth running the light board for *Bye Bye Birdie - Young Performers Edition*. Thank you to Sahai, Levi, Dana and the rest of the production team for trusting Eve with this job. She would also like to thank her family, blood related and not, for supporting and encouraging her through her theater journey.

**Jackie Nat** (Sound Operator) is thrilled to join the Conejo Players Theatre once again on the technical side; she previously served as the light operator for *Bye Bye Birdie*. Formerly, she could have been found performing on stage or choreographing productions at community theatres in Northeast Pennsylvania until she moved to Southern California in October 2020. Jackie currently works in the Resilience-Informed Skills Education Program at Pepperdine University. She is glad to have found a new theatre home at Conejo and is so thankful to the cast and crew for welcoming her with open arms.

**Rita McCaffrey** (Spot Operator) has enjoyed her long relationship at Conejo Players Theatre as an usher, assistant stage manager, prop assistant and happy audience member. She has appeared several times on stage in *Follies*, *Young Frankenstein*, *Harvey*, *To Kill a Mockingbird* and the *Backward Broadway Carpark Shows*. Learning lights and sound are her latest endeavors! Happy to be part of this great show.

**Samira Lara** (Stagehand) is very excited to be involved in her first theatrical production. She has seen many shows at the Conejo Players Theatre since 2019, most of which included her older sister Sahai Lara (Director). She is currently a senior at Burbank High School, set to graduate in 2023. She is very excited to embark on this new journey, and hopes that it will be a gateway to projects in the future. Samira would like to thank her Mom, Dad, Uncle Rob and her older sister.



# Board of DIRECTORS and Theatre MANAGEMENT

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President ..... **Dana Marley-Kolb**  
 Vice President ..... **Elena Mills**  
 Secretary ..... **Sarah Ely**  
 Treasurer ..... **Mark Grisez**  
 Business Director ..... **Patrick McMinn**  
 Facilities Director ..... **Mike Mills**  
 Media Director ..... **Robin Russell**

## THEATRE MANAGEMENT

Board Meeting Sponsor... **Beth Dressed**  
 Legal Advisor ..... **Jason Kirkpatrick**  
 Box Office Manager ..... **Sarah Ely**  
 House Mgr. Coordinator ..... **Elena Mills**  
 House Managers ..... **Megan Brister,**  
 .. **Patrick Rogers, Elisabeth Kirkpatrick,**  
 ..... **Dona Pugh, Erin Fagundes,**  
 ..... **Ken Endress, Jess Filippi,**  
 ..... **Danielle Romo**  
 Snack Bar Coordinator ..... **Jim Bukowski**

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Exec. Director ..... **Rick Steinberg**  
 Exec. Producer ..... **Beth Eslick**  
 Exec. Tech. Director ..... **Jeremy Zeller**



Director Emeritus.....**Dick Johnson**

Front-of-House Coordinator. **Eve Kiefer**  
 Front-of-House Coordinator (Thurs.).....  
 ..... **Sharon Caswell**  
 Usher Coordinator (Youth Shows) .....  
 ..... **Nikki Dossman**  
 Archivist.....**Mike Mills**  
 Costume Custodian ..... **Beth Eslick**  
 Furniture Custodian ..... **Rick Steinberg**  
 Props Custodian..... **John Eslick**  
 Graphic Designer ..... **John Eslick**  
 Pre-Show VO..... **John Eslick**  
 Key Master ..... **Jim Diderrich**  
 Theatre Ghost ..... **Albert**

## NEXT ON THE BOARDS

CONEJO PLAYERS  
THEATRE

# The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time

a play by  
SIMON STEPHENS  
based on the novel  
by MARK HADDON

**Sep 2 - 24, 2022**  
 Fri & Sat at 8:00pm • Sun at 2:00pm  
 Thu Sep 8 at 8:00pm

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time is presented by special arrangement with  
Dramatists Play Service, Inc., New York.

CONEJO PLAYERS  
THEATRE

MEREDITH WILLSON'S  
**THE  
MUSIC  
MAN  
JR.**

Music & Lyrics by  
MEREDITH WILLSON  
Book by  
MEREDITH WILLSON & FRANKLIN LACEY

**Oct 14 - 23, 2022**  
 Fri at 7:00pm • Sat & Sun at 1:00pm & 4:00pm  
 Oct 20 at 7:00pm (no 4:00pm on Oct 23)

THE MUSIC MAN JR. is presented through  
special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI).  
All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI. www.mtishows.com