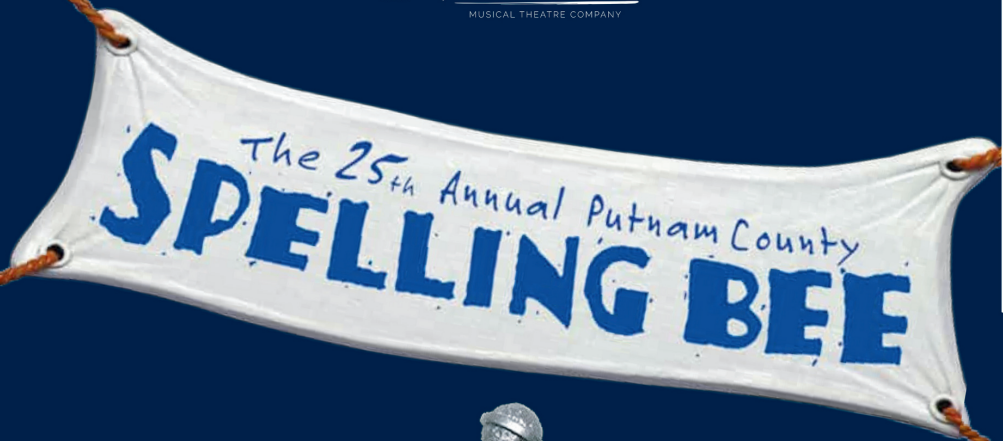




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OCT. 19-29, 2023



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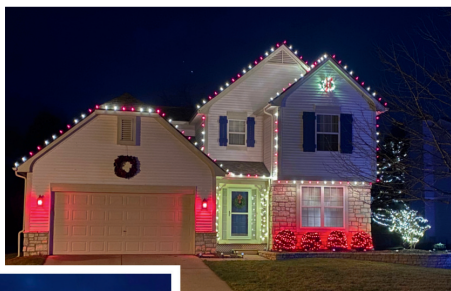
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SCHOOL OF MUSIC, THEATRE & DANCE
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UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

and
The Encore
MUSICAL THEATRE COMPANY

PRESENT

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 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

Directed by
VINCENT J. CARDINAL

Music Direction by
TYLER DRISKILL

Choreographed by
ASHLEY BLANCHET

Sponsored by MAIN STREET OPTOMETRY (DEXTER/PINCKNEY)
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

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

ANY VIDEO AND/OR AUDIO RECORDING OF THIS PRODUCTION IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED.

The Encore

MUSICAL THEATRE COMPANY

The Encore Musical Theatre Company is southeast Michigan's premiere professional non-profit musical theatre, committed to producing high-quality musicals that entertain, inspire, and bring communities together. The Encore is dedicated to fostering the next generation of musical theatre artists, audiences and productions.

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Additional support provided through grants from:



MUSICAL NUMBERS

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee	Company
The Spelling Rules	Panch and Spellers
My Favorite Moment of the Bee	Rona
My Friend, the Dictionary	Olive and Company
Pandemonium	Panch, Chip, Mitch, and Spellers
I'm Not That Smart	Leaf
Magic Foot	Barfée and Company
Pandemonium (Reprise)	Mitch, Chip, and Company
My Favorite Moment of the Bee (Reprise)	Rona
Prayer of the Comfort Counselor	Mitch and Company
My Unfortunate Erection (Chip's Lament)	Chip
Woe is Me	Logainne, Carl, Dan, and Company
Spelling Montage	Panch and Spellers
I'm Not That Smart (Reprise)	Leaf
I Speak Six Languages	Marcy and Company
The I Love You Song	Olive and Olive's Parents
Woe is Me (Reprise)	Loggainne, Mitch, and Company
My Favorite Moment of the Bee (Reprise)	Rona
Second	Barfée, Olive, Rona and Company
Finale	Company

BAND

Piano/Conductor
TYLER DRISKILL

Synthesizer
ETHAN SWANSON

Percussion
GAVIN RYAN

Reeds
DANIEL YOUNGS

Cello
JAMIE GALLUPE

PRODUCTION TEAM

Director
VINCENT J. CARDINAL

Music Director/Conductor
TYLER DRISKILL

Assistant Music Director
ETHAN SWANSON

Choreographer
ASHLEY BLANCHET

Costume Designer
ROSSELLA HUMAN

Intimacy Director
RAJA BENZ

Set Designer
SARAH TANNER

Lighting Designer
NIKKI BELENSKI

Sound Designer
CHRIS GOOSMAN

Sound Engineer
JESSICA GLYNN

Props
ANNE DONEVAN

Scenic Carpenter
BERRY STOVALL

Stage Managers
ALEXANDER KUNITZ
JADA MCCARTHY
SARAH FELICITY ROOT

Cultural Sensitivity Advisor
NICOLE JOHNSON

Dramaturg
SHELBY ALEXANDER

Dance Captain
NICOLA LEIGH TROSCHINETZ

Scenic Painter
KATE VANHORN

Spot Operators
VICTORIA KEETON
AL KEETON
SAMARA SHAW

Costume Assistants
KAYTI SANCHEZ
ELLIE VAN ENGEN

Volunteer Set Builder
DAN EGELER



EXTRAORDINARY EXPERIENCES

The Friends of Musical Theatre supports the Department of Musical Theatre by providing vital discretionary support for scholarship funding, hosting guest directors, the annual Senior Showcase, and more. The Department of Musical Theatre counts on annual gifts from Friends members to maintain the high caliber of educational enrichment each year.

Thank you to our current Friends of Musical Theatre!

See the full list of gifts on our website




Fall Highlights

10/20 | 8:00 PM | HILL AUDITORIUM
University Philharmonia Orchestra **FREE!**

 10/22 | 4:00 PM | HILL AUDITORIUM
Band-0-Rama

10/22 | 7:00 PM | STAMPS AUDITORIUM
Contemporary Directions Ensemble **FREE!**

10/23 | 8:00 PM | HILL AUDITORIUM
University Choir **FREE!**

 10/24 | 7:30 PM | HILL AUDITORIUM
United States Marine Band
SOLD OUT! SPECIAL EVENT

10/26 | 8:00 PM | HILL AUDITORIUM
Symphony Band **FREE!**

 10/29 | 4:00 PM | HILL AUDITORIUM
Halloween Concert

 11/2-11/5 | POWER CENTER
Orpheus in the Underworld (*Orphée aux enfers*)
The Dept. of Voice & University Symphony Orchestra

11/6 | 8:00 PM | HILL AUDITORIUM
University Symphony Orchestra **FREE!**

11/16 | 8:00 PM | HILL AUDITORIUM
Chamber Choir & University Choir **FREE!**


11/17 | 8:00 PM | HILL AUDITORIUM
Symphony Band **FREE!**

11/19 | 7:00 PM | STAMPS AUDITORIUM
Orpheus Singers **FREE!**


11/20 | 8:00 PM | HILL AUDITORIUM
Concert Band **FREE!**



11/30 | 8:00 PM | RACKHAM AUDITORIUM
Jazz Ensemble & Jazz Lab Ensemble **FREE!**

 11/30-12/3 | POWER CENTER
Imogen Says Nothing
The Department of Theatre & Drama

12/5 | 8:00 PM | HILL AUDITORIUM
University Symphony Orchestra **FREE!**

 12/8-12/10 | 4:00 PM | DANCE PERFORMANCE STUDIO THEATRE
Nutcracker-ish
FREE! TICKETS REQUIRED!
The Department of Dance

23/24 Performance Season



ABOUT THE ARTISTS



NILE ANDAH



ABBY AZIZ



IAN COURSEY



BRENDAN DALLAIRE



MICHAEL FABISCH



DREW PEREZ
HARRIS



EVAN HOEFER



AIDAN JONES



SOFIA MALDONADO



CALEB MCARTHUR



ELLA THOMAS-
MONTGOMERY



STEPHANIE REUNING-
SCHERER



LOGAN SAAD



GABRIEL SANCHEZ



ALYSSA SUNEW



NICOLA LEIGH
TROSCHINETZ

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

NILE ANDAH (U/S Chip/Leaf/Mitch) is a junior musical theatre major at the University of Michigan. Some of his favorite credits at UMich thus far have been featured roles in ONCE ON THIS ISLAND, RENT, SONNETS AND SOUL (directed by Dell Howlett), and DUKE ELLINGTON'S SOPHISTICATED LADIES (directed and choreographed by Torya Beard & Ayodele Casel). Select regional credits: THE MAGIC FLUTE (Delaware Valley Opera Company), HAIR (Weston Theater Company), and the world premiere reading of Josh Brewer's FILLING IN THE POOLS with Endstation Theatre Company. Grateful always :)

ABBY AZIZ (Rona Lisa Peretti) is so excited to be at The Encore this year! Her previous credits at Michigan include SOPHISTICATED LADIES (Featured Singer), A CHORUS LINE (Sheila), and ONCE ON THIS ISLAND (Erzulie). She wants to thank her family and friends for all their support and love. She hopes you have so much fun at the bee! @abigail_aziz

IAN COURSEY (William Barfee) is thrilled to be making his Encore Theatre debut with this very special crew of middle schoolers. Ian is returning to Umich for his senior year after spending a year on the road with The First National Tour of DEAR EVAN HANSEN, where he was a member of the final cast. Previous credits at the UofM include Eddie Birdlace in DOGFIGHT and George Berger in HAIR. He would like to thank his family, Danmian and his professors for all of their constant support and guidance.

BRENDAN DALLAIRE (Chip Tolentino) is a junior studying for a BFA in musical theatre at the University of Michigan. He couldn't be more excited to be performing at The Encore Theatre. His previous roles include Pippin in PIPPIN (North Coast Repertory) Dean Hyde in ALL SHOOK UP (SDMT), James in AN AMERICAN CHRISTMAS (Lambs Players), Soloist in PAINLESS THE OPIOID MUSICAL (University of Michigan). Brendan is especially grateful for his friends and family for helping support him in his stage and music career.

MICHAEL FABISCH (Leaf Coneybear) is a senior at the University of Michigan. He is very excited to be working with The Encore Theatre for the first time. You might have seen him last semester as Jack Worthing in THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST. Other past credits include Seymour in MUSKET's production of LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS, Claude in Exit Left Theatre Company's production of HAIR, and Bernstein in a student production of DOGFIGHT. Michael would like to extend immense thanks to his family for their continued support during his college years.

DREW PEREZ HARRIS (Bee Staff, Ensemble) is a junior in the musical theater department at the University of Michigan, and he is so excited to be a member of the Bee Staff in this production of SPELLING BEE! Some of his favorite roles in the past include Paul in A CHORUS LINE, Peter in JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR, and John Jasper in THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD. This is his first show with the University as well as his first show with The Encore Musical Theatre Company, and he is so excited to be a part of this collaboration. He wants to thank his amazing cast, crew, and production team for their work in putting this show together, and he hopes you enjoy it! @drew._harris

EVAN HOFER [he/him] (Bee Staff, Carl, Dad) is a junior at the University of Michigan for his BFA in Musical Theatre. At school, Evan has been in LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS (U/S Seymour), and DOGFIGHT (Lounge Singer/ Marine/ Swing). Regional credits include JERSEY BOYS (Tommy DeVito) and GODSPELL ("We Beseech Thee") at Thingamajig Theatre Company. He would like to thank The Encore Theatre for this opportunity!

AIDAN JONES (Mitch Mahoney) is a current senior in the University of Michigan's Musical Theatre program. He is ecstatic to be returning to The Encore Musical Theatre Company after previously portraying Young John/Ensemble in A THOUSAND FACES: THE LON CHANEY MUSICAL during The Encore's 13th season and as a member of the adult ensemble of A CHRISTMAS STORY: THE MUSICAL last December. Some of Aidan's other previous work includes Eddie Souther in SISTER ACT (Sonoma Summer Repertory Theatre Festival), Romeo in ROMEO & JULIET (London Academy of Music & Dramatic Art), Joseph in JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAMCOAT (FSCJ SMTE), AJ in CHOIR BOY (Players by the Sea Theatre), and Kevin Walsh in JUNK: THE GOLDEN AGE OF DEBT (UMich Department of Theatre & Drama). Aidan would like to thank his friends and family for their constant support over the course of his career, and the faculty at the University of Michigan for continuing to foster his theatrical skills in a safe and welcoming environment.

SOFIA MALDONADO (U/S Olive/Rona) is a sophomore Musical Theatre major at U-Michigan and is thrilled to be part of her first Musical Theatre production in the US! She is an international student from Monterrey, Mexico, and became interested in Theatre at 13. Sofia has 15 years of training and performance experience, but her only theatre credit before this production has been GREASE (Sandy) in her high school, Prepa Tec Monterrey. IG & TikTok: @sofiamaldo

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

CALEB MCARTHUR (Vice Principal Panch) is so grateful to be a part of this show with such a hilarious cast! Caleb was last seen on The Encore stage in 2022 as Eddie in MAMMA MIA! Originally from Athens, Georgia, Caleb is a Senior at the University of Michigan. Some of his favorite collegiate roles include Algernon Moncrieff in THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST and Orin Scrivello in LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS. Caleb spent this past summer at the Wagon Wheel Center of The Arts, performing as Scuttle in THE LITTLE MERMAID and dancing in the ensemble of ESCAPE TO MARGARITAVILLE and JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR. Thank you to all his loving friends and family and to every arts educator who has supported him on his journey. Instagram: @calebbmcarthur

ELLA THOMAS-MONTGOMERY [she/her] (Bee Staff, Ensemble) is a sophomore Musical Theatre Major at the University of Michigan. At School, Ella has been in THE BUBBLY BLACK GIRL SHEDS HER CHAMELEON SKIN (Yolanda/Ensemble), XANADU (Terpsichore), and THE ORESTEIA (Athena). Regional credits include CANDIDE (Soloist) at Palm Beach Opera. She is excited about making her debut at The Encore Musical Theatre Company! Ella would like to thank her friends and family for their endless love and support.

STEPHANIE REUNING-SCHERER (Logainne "Schwartz" SchwartzandGrubenierre) is a Junior BFA musical theatre major and is delighted to be performing for her first time at The Encore Theatre! Some of her recent credits include Maureen in RENT (Farmers Alley Theatre), Marcy in DOGFIGHT and Ensemble in BERNARDA ALBA (University of Michigan), Ensemble and U/S Catherine in PIPPIN (Playhouse on Park), and Cathy in THE LAST FIVE YEARS (West Hartford Summer Arts Festival). Stephanie wants to thank everyone at The Encore for welcoming her and her classmates! She also dedicates her performance to Hillary Ekwall who she saw play Logainne in 2014 and first inspired her to professionally pursue musical theatre. @Stephreunsch

LOGAN SAAD (Olive Ostrovsky) is a senior pursuing a BFA in Musical Theatre at the University of Michigan. She is thrilled to be making her Encore Theatre debut! Previous credits at UofM include Magdalena in BERNARDA ALBA and Alexi Darling in RENT. REGIONAL CREDITS: Broadway Sacramento, Theatre Aspen, Forestburgh Playhouse. Much love and gratitude to her family, the UMICH Musical Theatre faculty, and MT 24 for their constant support. As always, GO BLUE! @logangraysaad

GABRIEL SANCHEZ (U/S William Barfee and Douglas Panch) is a current sophomore Musical Theatre Major at the University of Michigan. He is thrilled to be stepping back into his middle school shoes once again! Gabriel has played roles such as Gabe Goodman and Danny Zuko and has recorded at Abbey Roads Studios and Capital Records Inc. He is excited about making his debut at The Encore Musical Theatre Company! He'd love to thank the entire cast and creatives for their kindness and amazing work. Lastly, Gabriel would like to thank his family for their endless love and support.

ALYSSA SUNEW (Marcy Park), unlike her character, is thrilled to participate in the Bee this fall! She is a junior (MT '25) and her previous UMich credits include FIDDLER ON THE ROOF (Shprintze/Grandma Tzeitel), SOPHISTICATED LADIES (Featured Singer), and the ensemble of RENT. Many thanks to Vince, Tyler, Ashley, family and friends, and especially The Encore for making this happen!! @alysassunew

NICOLA LEIGH TROSHINETZ (Dance Captain, U/S Marcy/Schwartz) is a junior musical theatre major at the University of Michigan. She is from Grosse Pointe, Michigan, where she grew up a contemporary dancer, and, eventually, developed a deep love for musical theatre. Her recent credits at the University of Michigan include RENT (swing), SOPHISTICATED LADIES (ensemble) and here at The Encore, 42ND STREET (Lorraine/DC). She would like to thank her family, friends and teachers for all their love and support.



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ABOUT THE ARTISTS

SHELBY ALEXANDER (Dramaturg) is very excited to be collaborating with The Encore Theatre and the Musical Theatre Department on this wonderful production of SPELLING BEE. Shelby is a student at the University of Michigan studying theatre arts concentrating in playwriting and dramaturgy, and with minors in music and user experience design. Past dramaturgy credits include: CAN I HELP YOU, THE HUMANS, BONNETS: HOW LADIES OF GOOD BREEDING ARE INDUCED TO MURDER, and LEMONS LEMONS LEMONS LEMONS LEMONS. @shelby_theatre

NIKKI BELENSKI (Lighting Designer) is a Theatrical Lighting and Sound Designer with a BFA from Montclair State University. Their Previous work at The Encore includes STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN: A TRIBUTE TO CLASSIC ROCK; RAINY DAYS & MONDAYS: TRIBUTE CARPENTERS, MUSIC OF THE NIGHT: A CELEBRATION OF ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER, the hit show MAMMA MIA!, ONCE ON THIS ISLAND, 42ND STREET and the recent NEW YEARS EVE concert (Lighting Design); and AINT MISBEHAVIN' (Sound Design). Other Past credits include: Lighting Designer for LOST GIRL (IHA), LEGALLY BLONDE (IHA), BERTA BERTA (MST), INTO THE WOODS (BMA), ALL SHOOK UP (IHA), and also the Assistant Lighting Designer for JERSEY BOYS (2nd National Broadway Tour), HAIR (BTG), WRECKED (CATF), ELF ON THE SHELF (2nd National Tour) and many other shows. She has also had the privilege of being on the sound team of many productions including: MELISSA ETHERIDGE - MY WINDOW (CIRCLE IN THE SQUARE BROADWAY), HAIRSPRAY (NATIONAL TOUR 2023), ELF (National Tour 2022), SOFT (MCC), CLYDE (NJPAC), BÁIPAS (NJPAC), THE HOMBRES (Two River Theatre), SUEÑO (Trinity Rep), THE COMPLETE WORKS (MST), THE BURDENS (MST), JOURNEY (Royal Family) and many more.

RAJA BENZ [she/her] (Intimacy Director) is a distinguished theatre-maker, cultural consultant, and intimacy professional. A proud Filipina-American Trans woman, Raja has established herself as a transformative voice in theatre through her advocacy and pedagogy which centers on highlighting the rich histories of queer of color praxis as the foundation for inclusive, authentic, consent-based approaches to intimacy for stage and screen. Raja's career has spanned a number of milestone projects, including serving as the cultural consultant for Pride as part of Tectonic Theatre Project's Seven Deadly Sins under the direction of Moisés Kaufman. Raja's work has been featured in collaborations with many other prominent theatre companies including Signature Theatre, Studio Theatre, Live & In Color, IRT NYC, and Virginia Repertory Theatre. Raja's work was also featured on Swagger (AppleTV), where she was an intimacy coordinator for the second season.

ASHLEY BLANCHET (Choreographer) As an actress, Ashley's credits include - Broadway: WAITRESS (Dawn), FROZEN (U/S Elsa), BEAUTIFUL (Little Eva), ANNIE (Star To Be), MEMPHIS. Recent select Regional productions include THE SOUND OF MUSIC (Maria, Paper Mill Playhouse) and OKLAHOMA! (Ado Annie, Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera). Recently, she was Miss New Hampshire in the world premiere of the new musical THE BEDWETTER, written by Josh Harmon, Adam Schlesinger and Sarah Silverman and played Belle in BEAUTY AND THE BEAST at the MUNY In St. Louis. Film/TV: The Equalizer, The Good Fight, Better Nate Than Ever (Disney+) and the voice of Raquelle in the award-winning animated short film Are You Okay? Proud alumna of University of Michigan and The Walnut Hill School in Natick, MA.

VINCENT J. CARDINAL (Director) served as the Artistic Director of Connecticut Repertory Theatre. He was also an Associate Artist with the Circle Repertory Company off-Broadway and Director of the Circle Rep School of Theatre. Cardinal has directed over 90 productions across the country, including KING LEAR starring Anthony Heald at the Tony Award-winning Utah Shakespeare Festival as well as numerous other productions and notable actors, such as Terrence Mann in MY FAIR LADY and MAN OF LA MANCHA, Pat Sajak in THE ODD COUPLE and THE DROWSY CHAPERONE, Steve Hayes in A FUNNY THING HAPPENED..., Jerry Adler and Richard Kline in THE SUNSHINE BOYS, and Leslie Uggams in GYPSY. His production and tour of EVERY BRILLIANT THING was recognized as "Production of the Decade" by Broadway World. Cardinal holds an MFA in Playwriting from the Yale School of Drama. His plays have been produced and performed internationally. He is currently a professor in the School of Music, Theatre, and Dance at the University of Michigan, where he previously served as the Arthur and Martha Hearron endowed professor of musical theatre and chairman of the Department of Musical Theatre. He serves on the Board of Directors for The Encore Musical Theatre Company where he directed FUN HOME and will be directing, I'M NOT RAPPAPORT in April 2024. www.vincentjcardinal.com.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

DANIEL C. COONEY (Producer) is a graduate of the Yale School of Drama and former head of the Musical Theatre Program at the Chicago College of Performing Arts (CCPA). His Broadway credits include MAMMA MIA (Bill), BONNIE AND CLYDE, 9 TO 5 (Dick) and LES MISÉRABLES. Off-Broadway: HEATHERS, THE THING ABOUT MEN, ONCE AROUND THE SUN, and UNDER THE BRIDGE. National Tours: EVITA (Che), FIDDLER ON THE ROOF (Perchik), LES MISÉRABLES (Joly), THE CIVIL WAR and HAIR (European tour). Dan has also performed regionally at the Kennedy Center, Signature Theatre, Paper Mill Playhouse, Ahmanson Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse and others. His Television credits include: Chicago Med, Chicago PD, Kevin Can Wait, The Americans, Elementary, The Following and Encores!: The Sound of Music (Disney Plus). Dan has directed numerous productions at The Encore, including the recent LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS (Co-Director), last season's CHRISTMAS STORY, THE MUSICAL, and performed the role of Bruce Bechdel in FUN HOME (Dir. Vince Cardinal). He is a Co-Founder and the Producing Artistic Director of The Encore.

ANNE DONEVAN (Props) From staging a crumbling resort on a Greek Isle to a storm-tossed island in the Caribbean; from a 1940s kitchen to a 50s skid row flower shop, Anne has been “propping up” The Encore for the past 14 seasons. She has scoured the country for unusual and often seemingly impossible items like an early Hollywood makeup kit, an antique dental chair, classic signage and vintage luggage, bagpipes to beer barrels and more. If she can't find it, you will often find her in the shop building it herself! Anne has provided props for more than 60 Encore productions and counting. She says the Rockette/Vienna Choir Boy prop from PLAID TIDINGS still holds the record for the most hours spent on a prop that was needed on stage for mere seconds. “As always, a pleasure to work with such a talented creative team and cast.”

TYLER DRISKILL (Music Director) is an assistant professor of music in the Department of Musical Theatre at the University of Michigan's SMTD. Having served nearly 20 years as a collaborative pianist for the U-M Departments of Musical Theatre and Dance, Tyler has enjoyed an extensive career as a music director, conductor, arranger, vocal coach, and educator. Recent music direction credits include SOPHISTICATED LADIES (assoc. MD) and HAIR for the University of Michigan (Linda Goodrich and Justin Keyes, directors) and SMOKEY JOE'S CAFE, ALWAYS PATSY CLINE, and MAMMA MIA! for The Encore Musical Theatre Company. Tyler performs regularly at Kerrytown Concert House in Ann Arbor where he most recently appeared with harpist, Maurice Draughn, in addition to presenting tribute concerts to Barbra Streisand and Peggy Lee with Broadway artist and fellow U-M MT faculty member, Chelsea Packard. Additional music direction credits include SWEET CHARITY (Mark Madama, dir.) for the University of Michigan, and, for The Encore Musical Theatre Company, FUN HOME (Vincent J. Cardinal, dir.), BRIGADOON (Wilde Award nomination for Best Music Direction), WEST SIDE STORY, SWEENEY TODD, ASSASSINS (Wilde Award for Best Music Direction), INTO THE WOODS (Wilde Award for Best Music Direction), MY FAIR LADY (Tony Walton, dir.), INTO THE WILD (Developmental Premiere, Mia Walker, dir.), SONDHEIM ON SONDHEIM, and AN EVENING WITH JEREMY JORDAN. Tyler has performed with jazz vocalist Brad McNett at the Metropolitan Room in New York City.

JESSICA GLYNN (Sound Engineer) is a Michigan-based sound engineer and The Encore's sound and house tech. Previous Encore credits include the tributes to: FRANKIE VALLI AND THE FOUR SEASONS, DIVAS: WOMEN IN SONG, JAMES TAYLOR, and STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN: A TRIBUTE TO CLASSIC ROCK. Main stage productions include LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS, 42nd STREET, and ONCE ON THIS ISLAND, and the Cabaret at The Encore series featuring JEREMY JORDAN, JOHN MCDANIEL/JESSICA GROVÉ and JOHN MCDANIEL/HUGH PANARO. Turn around and give her a wave!

CHRIS GOOSMAN (Sound Designer), a veteran of audio for thirty-some years, fell in love with musical theatre thanks to his daughter, Olivia. He runs an audio mastering studio, holds an audio-video engineering position at University of Michigan, and does theatre sound design whenever and wherever he can! A huge thanks to the amazing staff, crew, artists, and donors to The Encore for supporting us and helping to create a beautiful new home for musical theatre in Dexter.

ROSELLA HUMAN (Costume Designer) is thrilled to be working with The Encore again after serving as Wardrobe Supervisor on this summer's hit 42ND STREET. During the school year, she is the Wardrobe Supervisor for University Productions at University of Michigan. Past experience includes Wardrobe Manager for Work Light Productions. Shows include SOMETHING ROTTEN!, RODGERS & HAMMERSTEIN'S CINDERELLA, RENT, BANDSTAND, MOTOWN, and JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR. She has toured internationally with BEAUTY & THE BEAST and also MAMMA MIA!

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

NICOLE JOHNSON (Cultural Sensitivity Advisor) As a DEI & Cultural Sensitivity Director credits include – Broadway: SWEENEY TODD, INTO THE WOODS, FREESTYLE LOVE SUPREME, DANA H., IS THIS A ROOM, and PASS OVER. Creative Director at Harriet Tubman Effect, a human resource center and participatory action research institute for strategy and justice advocacy, dismantling systemic oppression through resisting white supremacy culture, organizational theory consultation and third-party HR support. Learn more at: www.harriettubmaneffect.com Founder of M.O.V.E. (Motivation Opportunity Vision Entertainment): Youth-led, collaborative events that creatively raise awareness and mobilize action around social justice issues. Learn more at: www.Proudtobeamover.com.

AL KEETON (Spot Operator) is a Howell High School student involved in the theatre department and many productions both at Howell High School and at The Encore Theatre. They are very happy to help out with spotlight this season and wish you all an amazing show!

VICTORIA KEETON (Spot Operator) is currently attending Eastern Michigan University where she is pursuing a degree in Music Education. She has run a spot at The Encore for several shows, including the recent LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS, 42ND STREET, and JEREMY JORDAN IN CONCERT, and is excited to join the new season as a spotlight operator as well!

ALEXANDER KUNITZ (Production Stage Manager) Based in the Ann Arbor area, Alexander has been an active theatre professional since 2009, serving as Stage Manager in over 50 professional productions in southeast Michigan. Recent credits include CHRISTMAS STORY, AIN'T MISBEHAVIN', and MAMMA MIA! with The Encore Musical Theatre Company. Special thanks to The Encore and University of Michigan for welcoming me into the process, and to Taylor for her love and support. For my mother.

JADA MCCARTHY (Assistant Stage Manager) has worked as both Stage Manager and Assistant Stage Manager at Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti Youth Theater, and Michigan Shakespeare Festival 2022, and as Stagehand for Buffy LIVE! at the Redford Theatre. Some of her most recent work has been as a light board operator (DON'T LET THE PIGEON DRIVE THE BUS) and spotlight operator (THANK YOU FOR THE MUSIC, An ABBA Tribute Concert) for The Crosswell Opera House. She has served as Assistant Stage Manager for The Encore on the recent LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS, 42nd STREET, ONCE ON THIS ISLAND, CHRISTMAS STORY, THE MUSICAL and AIN'T MISBEHAVIN'. She is happy to be doing another show with The Encore!

SARAH FELICITY ROOT (Assistant Stage Manager) is excited to return to the Encore. She is a graduate of Wayne State University where she earned a BFA in film with a focus on directing and script supervising. She's had the pleasure of working with the stage management teams for Williamston Theatre and Penny Seats. Her recent theatre credits include: THE COMPLETE WORKS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE ABRIDGED, RETURN TO THE FORBIDDEN PLANET, ON THE MARKET and LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS. Sarah would like to thank her parents and her roommate for their support and encouragement. She would also like to thank Tony Caselli and Stefanie Din for their guidance through her career.

KAYTLIN (KAYTI) SANCHEZ (Costume Assistant) is a proud latina from south Florida. She is a student at the University of Michigan, pursuing a BFA in Theatre Design and Production, with a concentration in Costume Design, and a Minor in Latino/a Studies. With her mother working in the bridal industry, she grew up around rolls of fabric, industrial sewing machines, and dress forms. The seamstresses taught her to sew, helped her create her Halloween costumes, and fostered her love as a maker. After attending her first New York Fashion Week with the designers, and seeing the process of initial design to final runway, she left inspired and developed a passion to pursue the arts as a career. From then on, she moved from the runway to the stage and started costume designing. Her work has been displayed at the Norton Museum of Art, Kravis Center, and theaters both in Florida and the University of Michigan. Kayti is passionate about uplifting BIPOC voices not only onstage, but backstage as well. She uses the world around her, as well as her own culture and experiences, to influence her work.

SAMARA SHAW (Spot Operator) has been working stage crew for four years is very excited to be working with The Encore! Her recent theatre credits include THE PRODUCERS at Inspire Theatre.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

ARIEL SHEETS (Resident Stage Manager) graduated from Siena Heights University in 2019 and double majored in Theatre/Speech Communications and Art. She focused on stage management, but also explored set design and lighting design while in school. Ariel has gotten the chance to work at The Crosswell Opera House, Williamston Theatre, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Tibbits Opera House, and Meadow Brook Theatre. Some of Ariel's favorite shows that she worked on are STEEL MAGNOLIAS, GODSPELL and LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS. She is very excited and honored to be part of The Encore Musical Theatre Company. Some of her hobbies include photography, antique shopping, and baking. Ariel would like to thank her friends and family, especially her mom and grandma, for their undying support and encouragement.

ETHAN SWANSON (Assistant Music Director) is thrilled to be making his Encore debut with this production. He is currently a sophomore in the School of Music, Theater & Dance at U of M. Previous credits include: Wagon Wheel Center for the Arts 2023 Summer Season (Assistant Music Director/Keyboard 2) and A CHORUS LINE (Associate Music Director/Keyboard 1).

SARAH TANNER (Technical Director, Set Designer) is a scenic, prop, exhibit and puppet designer and artist. Among her many designs and projects are LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS, 42ND STREET, ONCE ON THIS ISLAND, MAMMA MIA!, ALWAYS...PATSY CLINE, SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ, FUN HOME, CRAZY FOR YOU, WEST SIDE STORY, CAMELOT, 9 TO 5, INTO THE WOODS and ASSASSINS, as well as concerts and special events including at The Encore; Realm of the Dead, Complex Rhythms and Sun and Shadows at the University of Michigan, and the traveling exhibit "Diabetes: A Deeper Look" for the Detroit Science Center, a 2500-square-foot traveling exhibit housed in a giant blood vessel.

KATE VANHORN (Scenic Painter) is a local scenic artist and eclectic entrepreneur. She has been enjoying painting at The Encore since 2020. She attended the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre, and Dance to study Scenic and Costume Design and recently was elected to the board of the Guild of Scenic Artists where she supports a network of aspiring and professional Scenics. She loves bringing the joys of live performance and fine arts to children and has been involved in making arts and crafts with children of all ages throughout her career. She especially enjoys working with teenagers and has been involved in Pioneer Theatre Guild at Pioneer High School since 2010. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her teenaged children, her dogs and cat, visiting museums, attempting to be an urban sketcher, and voraciously reading non-fiction books.



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ABOUT THE CREATORS

WILLIAM FINN (Music and Lyrics) 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.

REBECCA FELDMAN (Concept) is the conceiver of *THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE* for which she won a Lucille Lortel Award, Drama Desk and Tony Nomination for Best Musical. She directed its world premiere at Barrington Stage Company in the summer of 2004. Rebecca is Associate Producer on *TRANSPARENT*, *THE MUSICALE FINALE* and served as Staff Writer on the finale as well. She is currently developing an episodic drama with Big Kid Pictures, called *LA COYOTE*, which has been selected to the WeForShe's 2019 Writeher List. She is an alumna of the Lincoln Center Director's Lab as well as the AFI Directing Workshop for Women where she won the Jean Firstenberg Award for Best Short. Her short films include, *MY FIRST TIME DRIVING* (AFI Jean Firstenberg Award, Best Short at Lake Arrowhead Film Fest, Best of Shorts at Outfest), *A/V CLUB* (TV Pilot, NYTVF), *UBER ALICE* (Woodstock Film Fest), *DEAD CAT* (Producer, Tribeca Film Fest) and *IRVING* (Official Selection Rhode Island Film Fest, Official Selection USA Film Fest, Ft. Lauderdale Film Fest, Atlanta Jewish Film Fest).

JAY REISS (Additional Material) is a playwright. He is a Julliard graduate and provided additional material to the book for *THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE*. Reiss appeared in the original workshops, Off-Broadway cast, and Broadway cast of the musical as Vice Principal Douglas Panch.

JAMES LAPINE (Original Director) is a playwright and director. On Broadway he has worked with Stephen Sondheim on *SUNDAY IN THE PARK WITH GEORGE*, *INTO THE WOODS*, and *PASSION*. He also conceived and directed the musical review *SONDHEIM ON SONDHEIM*. With William Finn he created *FALSETTOS* recently revived by Lincoln Center Theater; *LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE*, *MUSCLE*, and directed Finn's *THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE*. Other Broadway credits include his play based on Moss Hart's memoir *ACT ONE* (also LCT), *AMOUR*, *THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK*, *GOLDEN CHILD*, and *DIRTY BLONDE*. He has written the plays *TABLE SETTINGS*, *TWELVE DREAMS*, *THE MOMENT WHEN*, *FRAN'S BED*, and *MRS. MILLER DOES HER THING*. Lapine has been nominated for eleven Tony Awards, winning on three occasions. He has also been the recipient of the Pulitzer Prize, SDC's Mr. Abbott Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Theater, and inducted into the Theater Hall of Fame.

THE FARM was founded in 2000 by Rebecca Feldman, Artistic Director. It is a collective of writers and performers, including Jay Reiss, Dan Fogler, and Sarah Saltzberg. The Farm's interest is in the role of improvisation in creating new work for the theatre. The Farm initially designates a two-week intensive period in which to discover, develop, and rehearse a play from the impulses borne mainly out of the pressure of a deadline. Previous projects include *SUPER* (at Atlantic Theatre Studios), *WHY I HATE FLORIDA* (workshop at White Wave in *DUMBO*) and *C-R-E-P-U-S-C-U-L-E* (at the Present Company Theatorium in October 2002), on which *THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE* is based. The characters and original dialogue of "Beth Marguiles," "Vice President Douglas Panch," "Mr. Barfee," and "Logan Schwarzengrubenierre" were created by Rebecca Feldman, Jay Reiss, Dan Fogler, and Sarah Saltzberg, respectively.

DRAMATURG'S NOTE

I want to tell them words don't matter, but from what I've seen words can get you killed.
~ Mitch Mahoney

How do we use language to express the inexpressible? We sing and dance in musical theatre to move the story forward, but oftentimes we do it to connect with more than just words: music too. It's often the rule in musical theatre that when it's too emotional to speak, you sing; and when it's too emotional to sing, you dance. Our characters transcend the spoken nature of a spelling bee and give us hilariously insightful lyrics, militant dances, and beautiful music.

At first glance, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* is a lighthearted musical comedy simply about a spelling bee with a quirky cast of characters. At second, or third glance, this musical takes us deeper into the throes of childhood and what it means to grow up. It asks us, as the audience, how we grow up in unexpected ways, and now in 2023, how we grow up during unprecedented times.

Each kid in this show has something with which they are trying to wrestle: whether it's their parents, themselves, or something else entirely. They know so many different words: their languages of origin, pronunciations, and spellings. Yet, they struggle most to articulate their feelings, which reveals that in a world reliant on words, we often find them insufficient. What do we use when language isn't enough? I invite you to think in what ways do you express yourself beyond the confines of language? In song, dance, or maybe a home-cooked meal?

No matter how well we learn to express ourselves through unseemly means, we must return to the normalcy of conversation. Everyday we must find the words to communicate. The use of language is a courageous act. It takes patience and care because like Mitch says, "words can get you killed." Words matter.

~ Shelby Alexander, Dramaturg

For more information and resources, please visit our virtual lobby display at spelling-bee.carrd.co or through the QR Code below:



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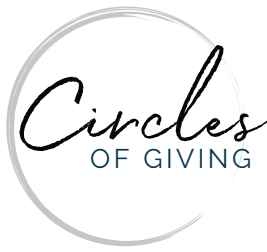
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Then and Now: The Wonderful Life of Dexter's Historic Copeland Building

By Doug Marrin with the Dexter Historical Society 9-03-2021

Dexter's historic Copeland Building has been a cornerstone of the community since it was built. The beloved structure has been used for many events and services over the decades and has recently received a facelift as it enters the next phase of its illustrious life—home to The Encore Musical Theatre Company.

The Copeland Building was constructed in 1936 as an addition to the Dexter Union School.

The first Dexter Union School was constructed in 1857, on Piety Hill at the corner of Hudson and Ann Arbor streets. Unfortunately, a large crack in the structure brought an early end to its service. The school was torn down, and the second Dexter Union School was constructed in 1887.



The first Dexter Union School. Photo: DAHS



The second Dexter Union School as viewed from H Street (now Hudson Street). This is the side of the building to which the Copeland addition would be constructed. Photo: DAHS

In the early 1930s, the school was overcrowded. In 1935, Senator Royal S. Copeland visited Dexter and was appalled at the conditions he found in his alma mater. The Senator began an initiative to build an addition that would remedy the overcrowding and provide a gymnasium. The cost for the expansion was \$94,000, of which \$50,000 came by way of a grant from the Public Works Administration.



The Copeland addition under construction in 1936. The Union School is visible behind the new structure. Photo: DAHS

The Copeland addition was completed in late 1936 and included a new gymnasium/auditorium, home economics classroom, office, additional classrooms, and a new ventilation system. The new building was named for Senator Copeland's father, Roscoe Copeland, who served as Village President for 35 years, as well as a number of terms on the school board.



The Copeland Building in the 1940s. Photo: DAHS

The school experienced an influx of students in the early 1950s when the surrounding country schools closed. Space was again an issue. In 1957, a new high school was built on Baker Road, and the second Dexter Union School was closed. In 1961, the old structure was torn down, but the Copeland Building was renovated into an early elementary school.

More renovations occurred in the late 1970s, and in 1980, the building was named the "Copeland Primary Center," designed for kindergarten and first-grade students. As Dexter's school district expanded with more construction, the Copeland Building was converted into administrative offices and the Dexter Senior Center. The auditorium continued to be used by school and community groups.

As Dexter's schools continued to centralize in one area, by 2019, the administrative offices were moved to the Bates Building in the heart of the campus. Having moved on from the Copeland Building, the school district made plans to sell the building.

Meanwhile, one of Dexter's many crown jewels, The Encore Musical Theatre Company, had outgrown its building behind Hackney Hardware. The Encore secured the necessary financing and purchased the Copeland Building early in 2020 with plans to turn the structure into an entertainment destination and educational center for the performing arts. Renovations began in September that year.

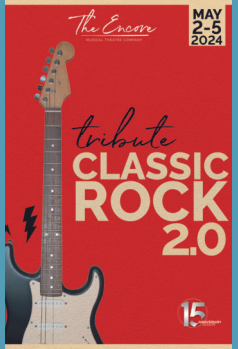
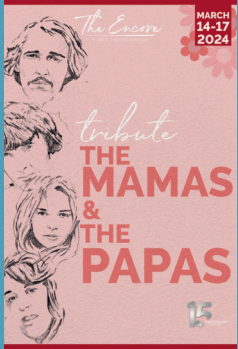
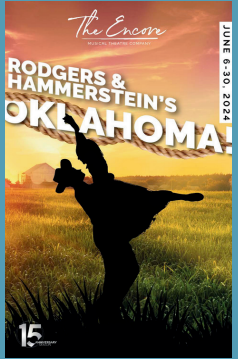
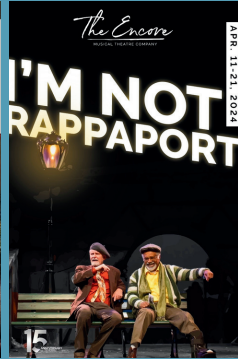
The Encore has retained the building's endearing, historical character, giving it a much-needed facelift to the interior. A large lobby (with a full bar for pre-glow, intermission, and after-glow times - coming in the near future) is one of the most notable changes. The auditorium has also been reinvented with new sound, lighting, and flexible seating.

Historic buildings often serve as touchstones to our past, reminding us of the character and values of prior generations who passed through the same doorways and walked the same hallways. And as the world continues changing and moving on, something is soothing in the idea that we can adapt but still take the past with us and build upon it, literally and metaphorically.

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