



## AUDITION PACK



### **ABOUT SALTPILLAR**

Saltpillar Theatre was founded in 1986. Five members of the cast and production team of the first AUJS-Victoria (Australasian Union of Jewish Students) Comedy Revue resolved that the time for the establishment of a Jewish based theatre group was long overdue.

The original five, Ernie Schwartz, Steven Curtis, Eugene Berkovic, David Beresh and Ian Rubinstein soon converted ideas into action. In order to establish a true “community” group, they sought to involve a wide variety of people. By April 1987, a nine-person committee, representing a cross-section of the Melbourne Jewish Community, was already planning its first production. In March 1988, Saltpillar staged its first production, the Australian premiere of *On Edge*, by local playwright, Yvonne Fein.

Since then, Saltpillar has staged many productions, fostered Jewish writing through the Samuel Weisberg Playwriting Award and given many people the opportunity to be part of a Jewish theatre group. Saltpillar has built a strong reputation on the quality of its productions and the high level of professionalism brought to them by all involved.

## Purposes

- Saltpillar Theatre aims to foster Jewish creative talent in all spheres of the performing arts.
- Saltpillar Theatre will stage a variety of theatrical events appealing to all tastes and age groups of interest to the Jewish and broader communities.
- Saltpillar Theatre will maintain the highest standard in the art of theatre and its administration.
- Saltpillar Theatre aims to be the performing arts resource centre for the Jewish community.
- Saltpillar Theatre aims to be a self-funding body, ensuring funds are raised from donations, returns from theatre activities and all other appropriate means.

## Lots in a Name – why “Saltpillar”?

It took about 12 months before we settled on a name for the company. Minutes of committee meetings were headed “The As Yet Unnamed Theatre Company”. A number were considered and rejected. At one meeting, someone offered “The New Habimah Players” – a reference to one of Melbourne’s earlier Jewish theatre companies. This was also rejected when another person said, “We don’t look back”. “That’s right”, responded another, “we’re like Lot”. (The character in the bible whose wife turned into a pillar of salt when she looked back as they were fleeing Sodom and Gomorrah. Lot didn’t look back and lived).

## INTRODUCTION & BOOKINGS

**Saltpillar Theatre** is looking to assemble a cast of diverse and enthusiastic young adults who are passionate about theatre for our upcoming musical, **The 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee**.

While we are a Jewish organisation, we absolutely encourage anyone from any cultural background to audition. We are an inclusive and equal opportunity organisation, and we aim to create a framework in which people who love the theatre can come together to have fun, learn some new skills and create a piece of theatre that they are truly excited about, regardless of previous theatrical experience.

Once you have read this information pack, go to our Saltpillar website at:

<https://www.saltpillar.org.au/auditions-spellingbee2023> to fill out the audition form

and forward it together with a current headshot to: [info@saltpillar.org.au](mailto:info@saltpillar.org.au) by

**Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> April.**

To prepare for your audition, please then choose the downloadable script excerpt for the character you would like to audition for.

## **ABOUT THIS SHOW**

Set in a school gymnasium, Spelling Bee takes a hilarious and heart-warming look at the pressures of growing up through the eyes of six quirky yet lovable characters competing for the title of spelling bee champ. These young people in the throes of puberty, who are overseen by grown-ups who barely managed to escape childhood themselves, learn that W-I-N-N-I-N-G isn't everything and that losing doesn't necessarily make you a loser. At each performance, four audience volunteers are selected and invited on stage to participate in the Bee, making each performance unique.

## **MAIN CHARACTERS**

### **Chip Tolentino**

- Tenor C4-B5
- Male presenting
- Playing age 18-25
- Middle school aged character
- Excellent actor, strong mover, skilled singer

An athletic, social, boy scout and champion of the Twenty-Fourth Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee, he returns to defend his title, but he finds puberty hitting at an inopportune moment and things are slipping out of his control.

### **Logainne Schwartzandgrubeniére (Schwartzzy)**

- Mezzo Soprano A3-F5
- Female presenting
- Playing age 18-25
- Middle school aged character
- Excellent actor, strong mover

Younger than most bee participants, she is driven by a desire to win to make her two fathers (from whom she takes her combined last name) proud. She lisps and is a little uncomfortable in her body, but still manages to strike a strong presence with her political awareness and keen sense of justice.

### **Leaf Coneybear**

- Tenor A3-A5

- Male presenting
- Playing age 18-25
- Middle school aged character
- Excellent actor, strong mover

The second runner-up in the district, Leaf gets into the competition on a lark and finds everything about the bee incredibly amusing. Leaf is home-schooled and comes from a large family of former hippies. Neurodivergent with ADHD, Leaf's special brain goes into a trance in order to spell words correctly. He doesn't expect to win, so everything about the spelling bee is an adventure for him, from meeting the other kids to showing off his homemade clothing and the protective helmet his mother has made him wear.

### **William Barfee**

- Tenor E4-B5
- Male presenting
- Playing age 18-25
- Middle school aged character
- Excellent actor, very strong mover, tap/dance skills a plus

Loud and combative as a defensive posture, William becomes a bully to avoid being picked on. He's noticed on the spelling circuit for his remarkable technique: spelling words out on the floor with his foot. After being removed from the competition last year because an allergic reaction to peanuts, he's at the bee for vindication. He develops a crush on Olive.

### **Marcy Park**

- Mezzo Soprano C4-E5
- Female presenting
- Playing age 18-25
- Middle school aged character
- Excellent actor, strong mover, dance, tumbling, piano, violin, and any other special skills a plus.

The ultimate over-achiever, Marcy has never been given another option. She comes from a family where excellence is expected and so simply produced. A parochial school student, she assumes God, too, expects perfection. She sees herself as a mass of problems, but she keeps them to herself. Having moved often because of her parents' work, she knows she can beat the local competition. Marcy's many talents might include playing a musical instrument, dance, martial arts, baton twirling, and/or other special gifts the actor might bring to the show.

### **Olive Ostrovsky**

- Mezzo Soprano C4-E5
- Female presenting
- Playing age 18-25

- Middle school aged character
- Excellent actor, strong mover, skilled singer

A young newcomer to competitive spelling. Her mother is in an ashram in India, and her father is working late, as usual, but he is trying to come sometime during the bee. Having found comfort in its words and vastness, Olive made friends with her dictionary at a very young age, helping her to make it to the competition. She starts enormously shy, and slowly blossoms.

### **Rona Lisa Peretti**

- Mezzo-Soprano B3-F5
- Female presenting
- Playing age 18-65
- Excellent actor, skilled singer, strong improvisation skills and comedic timing

The #1 realtor in Putnam County, a former Putnam County Spelling Bee Champion, and the returning moderator. Rona Lisa is a sweet woman who loves children, but she can be very stern when it comes to dealing with Vice Principal Panch and his feelings for her. Her interest in the competition is unflagging and drives it forward. Rona thinks of the spelling bee as a complex cerebral sporting event, conveying to the audience every twist and turn but she is a little embarrassed that her own championship moment remains such a highlight.

### **Vice Principal Douglas Panch**

- Non-singing role
- Male presenting
- Playing age 18-65
- Excellent actor, strong improvisation and comedic timing

The Vice Principal. Frustrated with life, Panch finds the drive of the young spellers alien to him. After five years' absence from the Bee, Panch returns as judge. There was an "incident" at the Twentieth Annual Bee, but he claims to be in "a better place" now, thanks to a high-fibre diet and Jungian analysis. He is infatuated with Rona Lisa Peretti, but she does not return his affections.

### **Mitch Mahoney**

- Tenor E4-A5
- Male or Female presenting
- Playing age 18-25
- Strong singer

The Official Comfort Counsellor. Ex-convict Mitch is performing community service with the Bee, by handing out juice boxes to losing students. At first, Mitch has no

idea how to offer comfort but ends up having a real knack at making the kids feel better. Vocals require a strong belt. With a bouncer's demeanour, Mitch appears an odd choice to be the bee's "comfort counsellor," but it adds to the colourful mix of characters on stage.

### **CAMEO ROLES (often played by lead actors but not exclusively)**

### **Olive's Mum**

- Mezzo Soprano C4-E5
- Female presenting
- Stronger singer

Sing "The I Love You Song' with Olive

### **Olive's Dad**

- Tenor C4-B5
- Male presenting
- Strong singer

Sing "The I Love You Song' with Olive

### **Carl Dad**

- Male identifying
- Comedic actor, confident singer

Logan's main spelling trainer, the more intense and competitive of her two fathers

### **Dan Dad**

- Male identifying
- Comedic actor, confident singer

The more laid back and ineffectual of Logan's two fathers

### **Jesus**

- Strong actor

A vision evoked by a speller in need.

## **IMPORTANT DATES 2023**

Auditions:	<b>Sun 30<sup>th</sup> April</b>	<b>10am - 6.00pm</b>
	<b>Mon 1<sup>st</sup> May</b>	<b>7.30pm - 10.00pm</b>
	<b>Tues 2<sup>nd</sup> May</b>	<b>7.30pm - 10.00pm</b>
Call-backs:	<b>Thurs 11<sup>th</sup> May</b>	<b>7.30pm - 10.00pm</b>
Audition Venue:	King David School	517 Orrong Road, Armadale.
Rehearsal Period:	Commencing:	<b>6th August - 8th October 2023</b>
	<b>Sundays</b>	<b>10am - 6.00pm</b>

