



EASTER WEEKENDER!

SATURDAY APRIL 11 HEY JUDE! BORACAY

FRIDAY APRIL 17 HEY JUDE! BORACAY

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- > **6:36 PM** | RP gov't troops partially give in to abductors' demand
- > **6:17 PM** | Fiji switches off light as part of Earth Hour
- > **6:01 PM** | Australian government buildings to join Earth Hour campaign
- > **5:39 PM** | Troops near Abu Sayyaf base to withdraw
- > **5:06 PM** | ICRC head calls for release of colleagues kidnapped in Sulu
- > **4:40 PM** | (UPDATE) 13 killed in highway collision in Cebu

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ENTERTAINMENT

Celebrities at the Bee

By Bettina Aspillaga Updated March 28, 2009 12:00 AM



MANILA, Philippines - It was yet another star-studded preview and opening night for Atlantis Productions. Its first musical for the productions' 10th anniversary, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, brought out many celebrities who have appeared in Atlantis shows, or who have been in the audience supporting its shows time and again.

And *Spelling Bee* was the perfect tonic to launch its 10th year and make us forget about our problems during these hard times, even if just for a few hours. Performed by a ridiculously talented ensemble of actors, *Spelling Bee* is well on its way to having a long life and many possible repeat runs.

One of *Spelling Bee's* novelties and great charms is that it includes audience volunteers and celebrity guest spellers who go on stage to compete for the trophy. It almost always guarantees that no two shows will ever be the same. Preview night brought celebrity guests Agot Isidro-Sandejas and Sam Concepcion to the stage, while opening night audiences caught Lea Salonga and Jett Pangan. Other celebrity guests who surprised first weekend audiences included Pinky Marquez, Cheska Ortega, Jon Santos, Leo Rialp, Rachel Alejandro, Frenchie Dy, Sen. Chiz Escudero, Cherie Gil, Gabe Mercado and Noel Trinidad.

Seen in the audience laughing their hearts out were Michael de Mesa, Christian Bautista, Tessie Tomas, Rajo Laurel, Verni Varga, Raymund Isaac, JC Buendia, Girlie Rodis, Shirley Kuan, Tessa Prieto-Valdes, Maria Ressa, Myrza Sison, Leo Valdez and *Hairspray* heartthrob Tim Espinosa.

Jett, who was given I-D-E-A to spell, in reference to his immortal classic *Envelope Ideas*, said, "*Spelling*

Bee is one of the funniest. No make that the funniest musical I have ever seen. And you can kwote me on that. Yes, K-W-O-T-E-I!"

Designer Rajo Laurel, who is slated to guest spell later in the run, gushed, "It's an evening filled with absolute hilarity! It's one of those musicals that you wish would never end. The show was two hours long, but it felt like 20 minutes. It is one of the best shows I have seen in a long time! I loved every minute of it!"

Spelling Bee continues to run until April 4 at the Carlos P. Romulo Auditorium, RCBC Plaza, Makati. For details, call 892-7078 or 840-1187.

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