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PLAYTIME

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PHOTO BY BARBARA ALPER

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calendarboy

Neil Sedaka's singing and song-writing career spans an impressive 55 years. He's coming to NYCB Theatre at Westbury at 8 p.m. Saturday, \$49.50-\$59.50, 800-745-3000, livenation.com.



ispy

Who doesn't love a good scavenger hunt? Head to Sunken Meadow State Park in Kings Park at 1:30 p.m. Sunday for an adventure to find items that nature hides in plain sight. Geared for ages 5 and up, reservations at 631-581-1072. It's \$3 per child ages 4-17, plus \$10 parking, nysparks.com.



NEWSDAY FILE PHOTO

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PHOTOS BY BARBARA ALPER

All the world's a stage, including the Vanderbilt Mansion's courtyard, where "Taming of the Shrew" is being performed.

nature sets the stage

At Vanderbilt, it's cloudy with a chance of Shakespeare

BY STEVE PARKS
steve.parks@newsday.com

'The Taming of the Shrew'

WHEN | WHERE

8 p.m. Wednesdays and Fridays,
7 p.m. Sundays through Aug. 25,
Vanderbilt Mansion,
180 Little Neck Rd., Centerport
INFO 516-293-0674,
arenaplayers.org
TICKETS \$15



ON THE COVER Keith Cornelius is Petruchio and Cassandra Dupler is Kate in "The Taming of the Shrew."

"And will you, nill you, I will marry you."

— PETRUCHIO TO KATHERINE IN WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S "THE TAMING OF THE SHREW"

On opening night of Arena Players' Shakespeare Festival in the cobblestone Vanderbilt Mansion courtyard, we never got to see whether the irrepressible Petruchio gained his way with the implacable Kate. But if you don't mind spoiler alerts, I can tell you how it turns out — even though Act II was rained out on July Fourth eve.

Such are the vagaries — and adventures — of theater under the stars on Long Island and anywhere else in the world. On some nights, the stars are obscured by rain clouds. And although the show went on without weather disruptions two nights later, Keith Cornelius, as Petruchio, found

his projection technique — sans microphone — tested by patriotic pyrotechnics above nearby Huntington Bay that carried over the water as if exploded next door. "You get used to it," he says, "overcoming airplanes in the midst of a soliloquy." Not to mention wild animals. "We



The audience seems to enjoy the Arena Players' production of "The Taming of the Shrew."

once had a raccoon walk into the middle of a scene," recalls Cornelius, a rambunctiously robust Petruchio.

For Kate, played with pouting petulance by Cassandra Dupler, the challenges were more architectural. "It must be 30 steps up and down," she recounts. Dupler runs it at least five times — screaming and throwing fits as demanded by Shakespeare and director Frederic De Feis. "I keep a couple of bottles of water up there in the clock tower," she says, referring to the mansion accoutrement that serves as a built-in set for Arena's Shakespeare Festival.

Enjoying the performance — before the rain — and especially the scenic grounds, were Mike and Tara Uhrin of East Northport, who packed a picnic supper they shared on the grassy slope overlooking Northport Bay. Roasted chicken with tomatoes and basil and vintage balsamic vinegar, accompanied by olives, provolone and cabernet.

In his 25 years of presenting Shakespeare at the Vanderbilt, plus another quarter century of summers in various parks, from Pittsburgh to Brooklyn to Orient, De Feis has seen it all. Lightning strikes are a definite punctuation to any outdoor performance. But persistent rain, however light, endangers the actors, particularly in "Taming," where Cornelius and Dupler are in frequent combat in which he tosses her over his head into hoped-for but never quite achieved submission. (That's Kate/Dupler's interpretation.)

"We don't want anybody to get hurt," says De Feis, who called a pause during the rain before curtailing the show after Act I.

formore

NUN'S SENSE "THE SOUND OF MUSIC"

WHEN | WHERE 7 p.m. Friday, Eisenhower Park, East Meadow, and 7:30 p.m. Sunday, Morgan Park, Glen Cove

INFO 516-599-6870,

plazatheatrical.com

ADMISSION Free

Plaza Theatrical Productions, Long Island's longest-running presenter of outdoor theater, brings "The Sound of Music" to two more major venues, after its opener at Huntington's Summer Arts Festival. Starring Diana Wangerin as Maria, the novice with doubts about her vows, Denis Murphy as Capt. Von Trapp, her eventual husband (oops, spoiler), and Barbara Kirby as Mother Abbess ("Climb Ev'ry Mountain"), the Rodgers and Hammerstein classic is a summer musical favorite. Maybe because those "hills" (the Alps) seem to come alive with cooling breezes. Don't be shocked if you see young men in the audience dressed as nuns. It's part of the new "Sound of Music" tradition.

STARRY KNIGHTS "MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT"

WHEN | WHERE 8:30 p.m. Aug. 3, Heckscher Park, Huntington

INFO 631-581-2700,

broadhollow.org

ADMISSION Free

And now for something completely different. OK, so we borrowed that line. But forgive us. It's "Monty Python's Spamalot." King Arthur's court predates even Shakespeare's historical plays. But, hey, none of the Bard's Henrys were nearly this much fun. And Lear? What a downer. If it's silly you crave, spam it a lot, or at least for one night on the Chapin Rainbow Stage at Huntington's Heckscher Park. "Spamalot" stars one of Long Island's favorite husband-and-wife stage duos, Chris (King Arthur) and Kim (Lady of the Lake) Duffrenoy in a BroadHollow show. Meanwhile, "Spamalot" continues indoors, BroadHollow Theatre at Elmont, through July 28.



It's good to be King Arthur, as Chris Duffrenoy is in "Spamalot."

BROADHOLLOW THEATRE PHOTO

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