

SATURDAY, JUNE 12

Antique Show, Historic Smithville, Rte. 9 & Moss Mill Rd. (748-6160) More than 40 dealers will be at this outdoor show. rain date, June 13.

Barnegat Bay Ball, Wanamaker Field, Island Heights. The evening features dinner, dancing, and both live and silent auctions. Proceeds benefit the Ocean County College Sailing Team. Ticket, \$150; call Bob O'Brien at 732-295-2072.

Beach Haven Flea Market, Veterans Bicentennial Park, Beach Ave. between Engleside Ave. & Amber St., Beach Haven. More than 100 dealers offer new merchandise, antiques and crafts. 9 am-4 pm.

Consignment Sale, Holy Innocents' Episcopal Church, Parish Hall, Pearl St. & Beach Ave., Beach Haven. 9 am-2 pm; lunch served, 11:30 am-1:30 pm. Those interested in consigning items may call Carol Hammond at 492-3265 or Jean Muller at 492-1146.

White Elephant & Bake Sale, First Presbyterian Church of Tuckerton, 210 East Main St. (296-8894) 9 am-3 pm.

SUNDAY, JUNE 13

Blessing of the Fleet, Barnegat Light, 5:30 pm.

Southern Sailing Banquet, Brant Beach Yacht Club, 59th St. & Bayview Ave. John Brady, director of Philadelphia's Independence Sea-Port Museum's Workshop on the Water, presents "History of Catboats on Barnegat Bay." Dress is casual with sport coat. 6-9 pm. Ticket, \$35, includes wine, beer and food by Stefano's; call Joan Ryerson at 361-8854, Jay Friedland at 4947614, Rich Warren at 597-4436 or Mike Spark at 494-6679. Donations are welcome.

Spring Fling Chevy Thing, Historic Smithville, Rte. 9 & Moss Mill Rd. To register a car, call Eddie at 965-7817, evenings.

TUESDAY, JUNE 15

Fun Auction & SOCH Auxiliary Meeting, Mill Creek Community Center, 1199 Mill Creek Rd., Manahawkin (597-3470) All are welcome. Donation, \$4 or gift valued at \$5. Noon.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 16

Southern Ocean County Chamber of Commerce Kickoff Party, Bistro 14, Bay Village, 9th St. & Bay Ave., Beach Haven (494-7211, ext. 100) There is live entertainment scheduled, plus delectable food and cash bar. Ticket, \$40. 6-9 pm.

THURSDAY, JUNE 17

St. Francis Center Fashion Show, Bonnet Island Estate, Bonnet Island (494-8861) Sink 'r Swim presents fashions for the whole family. All are welcome. 7-9:30 pm. Ticket, \$10.

SATURDAY, JUNE 19

80th Anniversary Celebration, Beach Haven Library, Third St. & Beach Ave. (492-7081) The John Bailey Lloyd Historical Collection will be dedicated. All are welcome. 2-4 pm.

Richard West 5-Mile Wheelchair Race, Salem Ave., Harvey Cedars to 7th St., Barnegat Light. Everyone is welcome to walk or roll the course in support of accessible recreation. Registration, \$10. Sign in, 8-9 am; race begins, 9 am. Parking available at Sunset Park in Harvey Cedars or Barnegat Lighthouse State Park in Barnegat Light. Accessible shuttle bus is provided. To register, call Richard W. West at 296-1043, e-mail rwest72@comcast.net or visit www.beachwheels.com.

Summer Craft Show, St. Francis Center, gymnasium, 47th St. & Long Beach Blvd., Brant Beach (494-8861)

'Funny Girl' Is a Funny, Touching Story

By TOM WRONA

Before we talk about *Funny Girl*, how about that revue at the Opening Gala? Did you see it? It was quite a change from the prior two years. Andrew Foote didn't give us the strong storyline he managed to weave between the season's songs as he had in his previous outings. Without a story, it seemed more like a recital at first and it was definitely the weakest opener I'd seen so far. Or so I thought.

In the second act, something happened and even without a plot, it was obvious the audience was hooked. By the time the show ended with a rousing climax from *State Fair*, the audience was on its feet, offering the first standing ovation I've seen at an opening gala show.

For me, *Funny Girl* echoed the revue's weak opening and rousing finish. It's the (heavily fictionalized) story of Fanny Brice (1891-1951), a much-beloved Broadway star of the first half of the 20th century. Although Brice also had a long run in radio and even made a few forgettable movies, the play features only her stage career. And boy does it feature. The opening quarter hour or so is a rapid-fire series of songs and production numbers that leave no time for characterization. So again I had that feeling of being in a recital (of good material, mind you), this time starring a character and supporting cast who were strangers to me.

Eventually, however, the show does settle down to catch its breath and allows us to learn more about Brice, her humble roots on Henry Street on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, and the denizens of the theater who are her comrades in arms. They're a likable and amusing bunch and I warmed to them immediately.

Brice is portrayed by Surflight newcomer Melanie Kann who, to put it in the vernacular, kicks ass. All over the place. This is a long play; the first act alone is a solid 90 minutes. And Brice is in almost every scene, dramatizing, gesticulating and belting out tunes from the depths of her lungs. Kann's energy never flags. Yet when a scene calls for a quieter, even



Fanny Brice, played by Melanie Kann, takes the stage with the Ziegfeld Girls as a pregnant bride in this scene from 'Funny Girl,' now playing at the Surflight.

SURFLIGHT REVIEW

contemplative, Brice, Kann switches gears seamlessly (and back again), even up to the last moments of the show. She's perfect for the role.

As Fanny's husband Nick Arnstein, Richard Rice Alan also achieves a kind of perfection. Although the real life Arnstein was an unsavory petty crook, the play portrays him as a dashing and handsome bon vivant, sportsman (in the gambling sense) and speculator. (The whitewashing and other fictionalizing, courtesy of the show's original producer, Brice's son-in-law.)

I liked Alan last year when he walked the tightrope between creepiness and caricature as Dracula in Surflight's October production of that play. After seeing his Nick Arnstein, I can understand how he pulled off Dracula. The guy is actually suave. Or he can act suave. Even debonair. And he can do it with a straight face. That's no mean feat in this age of T-shirts and backwards baseball caps. And Alan, too, can navigate the curves his part demands. When he appears on stage after doing an 18-month prison sentence for

fraud, Alan's Arnstein looks convincingly diminished, his swag stilled, his features drained. It was uncanny to see.

The supporting players are on the top of their game, too. Mark Donaldson acquires himself admirably as Brice's unrequited friend and admirer, Eddie Ryan. Ditto Jessie Galvan as Flo Ziegfeld. But my favorites were a gaggle of cackling, card-playing yentas portrayed by Suzette Whiting, Erin Esposito and Carolyn Popp. As Fanny's mom, Popp has the Jewish mother persona down cold. I've been a fan of Whiting's since I first saw her in 2002's *Mame*, and in the interest of full disclosure I should tell you I like her so much I cast her in a short film I shot this spring. She's just great. But Esposito continues to surprise me. It's one thing for a pretty young actress to do a good job as an ingénue, which Esposito has done more than once. But when she gets away playing a meddling matron who incessantly brags about "my married daughter," well, that's real acting.

Funny Girl overflows with real acting, real singing and real

dancing. You really shouldn't miss it.

Evening performances run through June 12 at 8 p.m., with matinees at 2 p.m. on June 3, 6, 8 and 13.

And speaking of things you shouldn't miss, you can still get tickets for legendary guitarist Tommy Emmanuel's shows at 4 and 8 p.m. on Monday, June 7. Everybody raved about him last year and I missed him. This year I'm going.

Bonus Broadway Buff Trivia Question:

Let's start the season with another Broadway-Hollywood connection question. Fanny Brice's son-in-law was the well-known film producer Ray Stark. Stark produced more than 30 films in his career, including many based on the works of a great American playwright. Can you name the playwright? I'll give you the answer when I review *State Fair*, the Surflight's next production, in our June 18 issue.

Tom Wrona is a writer and independent filmmaker based in Barnegat. This is his third season as The Beachcomber's theater critic.

Professional and amateur crafters present their work. Admission, \$1. 9:30 am-4 pm.

ART

Art Classes & Activities Offered, LBI Foundation of the Arts & Sciences, 120 Long Beach Blvd., Loveladies (494-1241, ext. 300) **June classes:** Assisted ceramics studio, June 7-18; painting with acrylics, June 11-Oct. 29; writing your life story, June 12-19.

SUNDAY, JUNE 6
Opening Reception, Watermark Gallery, 115 Water St., Tuckerton. 1-4 pm.

JUNE 8-JULY 8
Juried Competition of Photography & Digital Photography, LBI Foundation of the Arts & Sciences, 120 Long Beach Blvd., Loveladies (494-1241, ext. 300) **Opening reception**, June 26, 5-7 pm. Gallery hours: Mon-Fri, 9 am-4 pm; Sat, 9 am-3 pm.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23
Trip to Grounds for Sculpture,

Friends of the Island Library host the trip. Leaves St. Thomas of Villanova Church, north parking area, 14th St. & Long Beach Blvd., Surf City, 8 am; Bay Ave. Mall near Reynolds Dept. Store, Manahawkin, 8:20 am. Cost, \$45, includes box lunch. Reservation deadline, June 8; call 494-1358.

FUN ED

SATURDAY, JUNE 5
Herb & Annual Live Wreath-making Workshop, Living Landscapes

Garden Center, 229 Rte. 9, Barnegat (698-1199) Free of charge. Call for time and registration.

SATURDAY & SUNDAY, JUNE 12 & 13
Boating Safety Course, Ocean Acres Community Center, 489 Nautilus Drive, Manahawkin. U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 7-4 presents the course, required by New Jersey for those 16 and older to operate a power boat or personal watercraft. 9 am-1 pm. Call Richard Alderiso at 698-6314.