

KIDS

EDITED BY SUSAN AVERY

EVENTS

FOR CHILDREN

ABRACADABRA

Not your preschooler's birthday party, *Monday Night Magic* is a family show that will leave all generations wondering, "How'd he do that?" Recommended for kids who can sit nicely at a performance that goes until about 10 P.M. • Every Monday at 8 p.m.: Soho Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. (212-615-6432 or mondaynightmagic.com); \$29.50 in advance, \$32.50 at the door.

CLASSIC FREE-FOR-ALL

If you're heading out east for the weekend and looking for a dose of family-style high culture, check out the free classical music concerts at Itzhak Perlman's sleepaway camp. The 40 kids in attendance at the Perlman Music Program on Shelter Island in July perform nearly every Friday and Saturday night a variety of pieces they're learning from the master virtuoso himself. In August, it's adult students onstage. • Every Friday and Saturday night through 8/21 (no shows on 7/24, 8/6, 8/7) at 7:30 p.m.: Perlman Music Program, 73 Shore Rd., Shelter Island (631-749-0740 or perlmanmusiccamp.org); free. Week-day evening concerts as well; call for schedule.

STEP UP

Whether your child wants to show off her tap-dancing talents or just watch those who have their own brand of hoofin', make an appointment to be a part of the Youth Showcase at this year's New York City Tap Festival. From solos to group performances, all form of tap is on display. Master tappers and talent scouts have been known to show up as well. For kids 5 to 19. • 7/7 from 3:30 to 6:30 p.m.; The Duke on 42nd St. Theater, 229 W. 42nd St. (646-230-9564 or 212-239-6200); \$5.

PRESIDENTIAL MATERIAL

Every kid knows the presidential basics: George Washington is the father of the country, Lincoln freed the slaves, and FDR was the WWII leader. But in Hanoch Piven's new picture book, *What Presidents Are Made Of*, there's a more human-

size anecdote for every occupant of the Oval Office. Did you know that Thomas Jefferson was a slob who let his pet mockingbird fly around the White House? How about the fact that William Taft was so fat he got stuck in the bathtub? Or better, Bill Clinton got a C in grade school for raising his hand too often? Bipartisan kids will approve. • Available at bookstores; Simon & Schuster's Atheneum; \$15.95.

SOGGY SOCK HOP

Take the kids, and the grandparents for that matter, to the New York Aquarium for a fifties-style party. Rock band the Renditions entertain the crowds, as visitors wander the exhibits looking for playful walruses, scary sharks, and fun-loving sea lions. Kids can also make sea-life crafts and hear marine storytelling. Later, hit the beach and Astroland for the perfect New York experience. • 7/10-7/11 from noon to 5 p.m.; New York Aquarium, W. 8th St. and Surf Ave., Coney Island (718-265-FISH or nyaquarium.com); \$11 grown-ups, \$7 kids, free for infants.

IT'S IN MY NATURE

Let the kids become one with nature. The Alley Pond Environmental Centers kicks off its summer programming this week with lots of classes for kids from 18 months to sixth grade. Younger ones pet the animals on premises and take mini nature walks while the older kids conduct sophisticated explorations of area wetlands, learn about animal habitats, and care for the four-legged residents.

• Classes begin 7/12 and run through 8/19; Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-06 Northern Blvd., Douglaston (718-229-4000 or alleypond.com); prices vary depending on class.

A HEAD OF THE CLASS

Once upon a time, it was unusual to see city-dwellers in headwraps. Now it's unusual not to see them. At the Brooklyn Children's Museum, kids discover the history of the head covering and the ancient meanings behind it. Preregistration required.

• 7/11 at 3 p.m.; Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. (718-735-4400, ext. 144, or brooklynkids.org); free with \$4 admission.

ONSTAGE

TRICKS ARE FOR KIDS

TOP HATS AND RABBITS FIGHT OFF BLUE MONDAYS.

No matter that it doesn't begin till 8 p.m. At *Monday Night Magic*, our young trio remained yawnless, fidgetless, and mesmerized. As was Grandpa, who was just as curious about the tricks, particularly when magician John Graham tore a \$5 bill in half, then restored it. While the grown-ups in the audience have probably seen most of these sleights of hand before, it's always a treat to watch a kid's open-mouthed reaction the first time. The 10-year-old boys in the audience were giddily grossed out when professional freak



Monday Night Magic heats up the Soho Playhouse.

Todd Robbins hammered an enormous iron nail into his nose. During intermission, three more magicians worked their way up into the aisles of the Soho Playhouse, performing further hocus-pocus. One poor gentleman was utterly stupefied when Michael Chaut handed him his own Rolex, somehow stolen moments earlier. "When kids ask me how it's done, I tell them it's a secret," laughs Chaut, who also produces the show. "Heck, I practiced that watch trick for ten years on a chair before I performed it." Since the lineup changes weekly, it'd be wise to check who's performing on a given night, as some performers are more child-appropriate than others. (For example, Chaut says, though adults love mind-readers, kids tend to find them boring.) It's one place where the trick and the treat are the same thing. (See "Children's Events.")

S.A.



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So What?
Is New York Making
You Deaf?