



EastLine's "King Lear" has some gender-bending casting with Amy Benjamin, center, as Lear. Performances run Aug. 2 to Aug. 14 at various locations around Long Island.

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All the Island's **A STAGE**

Watch 'King Lear' and more works of the Bard outdoors on midsummer nights

Shakespeare's influence spans centuries, and this summer, it spans Long Island. From comedies and romance, to intense tragedies and violent battles, local theaters are reviving the Bard's stories with a mix of traditional and new interpretations.

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'KING LEAR'

Aging, power and pride collide in EastLine Theatre's production of the tragedy "King Lear," which follows the titular monarch's decision to divide his kingdom among his daughters, a choice that spirals into betrayal, madness and war.

"It's a story about family, power and loss," said Amy Benjamin, who plays the title role.

A 73-year-old retired English teacher who lives in Coram, Benjamin is making her stage debut in the role of the aging ruler. Though Lear is written as a man, she said, "there's nothing that King Lear feels and experiences that I cannot easily imagine."

The production embraces Shakespearean tradition by traveling light with no set, minimal props and a rotating list of venues. "We're doing what Shakespeare's players once did," Benjamin said. "Just us, the language and the story."

WHEN | WHERE 3 p.m. Aug. 2, Port Jefferson Free Library, 100 Thompson St.; 2 p.m. Aug. 9, Mastics-Moriches-Shirley Community Library, 407 William Floyd Pkwy., Shirley; 3 p.m. Aug. 10, Plainview-Old Bethpage Public Library, 999 Old Country Rd., Plainview; 6 p.m. Aug. 14, Elmont Memorial Library, 700 Hempstead Tpke.

COST Free

MORE INFO eastlinetheatre.org