



Hip to Hip Theatre Company to Present 'MERCHANT' & 'MERRY WIVES' this Summer

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by BWW News Desk

Hip to Hip Theatre Company celebrates its ninth season of Free Shakespeare in the Park with the dark comedy *The Merchant of Venice* and the farce *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, expanding their reach from Queens to also include the Bronx. The plays will tour in repertory to 11 New York City area parks, with special gala performances in Southampton and [Jersey City](#). 32 theatre artists. 2 exciting plays, 11 diverse parks: July 22-August 16.



"Spanning small-town Windsor and sophisticated Venice, our 2015 season incorporates romance, wit, suspense and even finance. Join us as we explore both the outrageously funny and the sadistically dark sides of revenge and justice, commerce, courtship, and the social order," said [Jason Marr](#), Artistic Director of Hip to Hip.

These family-friendly productions are for lovers of Shakespeare and for those experiencing Shakespeare for the first time. All performances are free and open to the public. Bring blankets, low chairs and picnic fare. No lines. No tickets. Seating is first come, first served.

Plus, Hip to Hip's free children's program "Kids & the Classics" will be offered 30 minutes before each performance. This theatrical experience will enrich, empower and entertain kids of all ages through a series of fun theatre games, teaching the tenets of ensemble playing, and introducing kids to the style and language of [William Shakespeare's](#) plays.

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Shakespeare's dark comedy *The Merchant of Venice* will be directed by HTH Assoc. Artistic Director David Mold (*Hamlet*, *Love's Labor's Lost* and *Cymbeline*), and the zany *The Merry Wives of Windsor* will be directed by multi-award-winning director Murray McGibbon, whose international accomplishments include six years as Artistic Director of Drama for the Playhouse Company in Durban, South Africa, a Fulbright Scholarship and a long career of excellence in teaching at Indiana University.

The cast includes [Evangelia Kingsley*](#) (Broadway: [Baz Luhrmann's](#) *La Bohème* and *Coram Boy*; First national tour: *Light in the Piazza*; Encores! at [City Center](#): *Zorba* starring [John Turturro](#)), [William Oliver Watkins*](#) (Denver Center Theatre Co, [Cleveland Playhouse](#); Television: *Law & Order SVU*, *Rescue Me*), [Doug Hendel](#) (Milwaukee Rep, Chicago's *Remy Bumppo Theatre*, Ohio Shakespeare Festival), [James](#)

Harter* (Pasadena Playhouse), Chaunice Chapman* (Theatreworks USA, TADA! Youth Theatre, Bronx Repertory Theatre), and Hip to Hip company members Kurt Kingsley*, Lawryn LaCroix, Jason Marr*, Joy Marr* and Guy Ventolieri*. The cast also features Nestor Garland, Katie Kerr and Erica Nichole Walker. *denotes members of Actors' Equity Association

The production team includes Nancy Nichols (Costume Design), Miguel Christopher Urbino (Set Design), Katie Horwitz (Asst. Director), Ron Carlos (Voice Director), Adriana Alter (Dramaturg), Caitlin Cassidy (Director of "Kids & the Classics"), Erin Gilbreth (Teaching Artist), Charles Dellebovi (Technical Director), Kaity MacCalla (Sound Design), Heather Frew (Stage Management), Julian Voloj (Photographer), Courtney Newman, Sarah Marie Dixey and Sadye Naizer (Costume Assistants), and Joshua Bose, Felicia Castaldo, Laura Clinton, and Katie Holden (Production Assistants).

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

Shakespeare's darkest comedy explores bigotry, justice, and the limitations of the law. The young Venetian gentleman Bassanio has squandered all his money, but he needs 3,000 ducats so that he can travel to Belmont and woo the beautiful heiress Portia. His devoted friend Antonio helps him by borrowing the cash from the moneylender Shylock. But when Antonio is forced to default on the loan, Shylock seeks a gruesome revenge, and Portia and Bassanio find themselves in a desperate struggle to save Antonio's life.

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

Shakespeare's farce about courtship, jealousy, and friendship features one of the most beloved comedic characters of all time. Sir John Falstaff, banished to Windsor and running out of money, devises what he thinks is a fool-proof plan: seduce the wives of the two richest men in town. Unfortunately for him, the women immediately see through his scheme, and proceed to turn the tables on him. Meanwhile, mayhem ensues as three suitors vie to marry the local heiress.

Founded in 2007, Hip to Hip Theatre Company is a non-profit 501(c)(3) arts organization serving New York City and the surrounding areas, providing "Free Shakespeare in the Park" and children's programs. Hip to Hip operates on the core beliefs that theatre is a celebration of community spirit, great plays and performances have the power to change lives, theatre should be accessible to the widest possible audience, and the values of theatre contribute to the cultural, ethical and moral life of the community. Hip to Hip receives public funding from New York City's Department of Cultural Affairs and the New York State Council on the Arts, administered by Queens Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature. <http://www.hiptohip.org/>.