



Hip to Hip Theatre brings Shakespeare out east

August 12, 2009 by STEVE PARKS / steve.parks@newsday.com



What's in a name? Ask Jason Marr, co-founder of the Hip to Hip Theatre Company, which brings Shakespeare in the park back to the Hamptons.

"Hip to hip is right out of Shakespeare, but it also evokes the image of standing side by side, collaborating. That's what we do in theater."

Here's the "Comedy of Errors" passage for which Marr and his wife named their company.

ANTIPHOLUS: What is her name?

DROMIO: Nell, sir; but her name and three quarters . . . will not measure her from hip to hip.

ANTIPHOLUS: Then she bears some breadth?

DROMIO: No longer from head to foot than from hip to hip: she is spherical, like a globe; I could find out countries in her.

Quite an image. But you don't need pi to measure the actors - most of them Equity union professionals - who play both halves of the Shakespeare double bill in Southampton. In "A Midsummer Night's Dream," set in [Athens](#), the leggy cast is costumed in togas and

tunics. "Romeo and Juliet," set in Renaissance Italy, features - besides young lovers - lithe and nimble lancemen in life-and-death sword fights.

"Shakespeare wrote for the masses, not just aristocracy," Jason Marr says. "He liked to give his audience a bit of spectacle - and so do we."

HIP TO HIP HISTORY Jason met Joy onstage in "Twelfth Night" at Ohio's Porthouse Theatre and returned six of the last eight years to perform with the Ohio Shakespeare Festival. Three years ago they formed their own company. In 2007, they produced "As You Like It" in a park bandshell in their Sunnyside neighborhood. While directing "Moon Over Buffalo" for Quogue's Hampton Theatre Company, Jason Marr heard about the Hamptons Shakespeare Company that used to perform outdoors each summer for 10 years in Montauk and Southampton. Last summer, the Marrs brought "Twelfth Night" to Queens and Southampton. After applying for and receiving a grant through the Queens Council on the Arts, Hip to Hip expanded to a repertoire of two this summer.

MARR, MARR & MARR No, it's not a law firm. Jason directs. Joy plays Juliet for the fourth time, if you count understudying the role in grad school. In "A Midsummer Night's Dream," she's Helena. With no hint of irony, she calls it her "dream" role: "It's all about falling in love." Returning earlier this summer to the Ohio festival, they tried to give their daughter, Sabrina, 11/2, her stage debut. "But," Joy says, "she doesn't know that she can't come on and say, 'Mommy.' "

Forsooth.

WHAT Hip to Hip Theatre Company performs "A Midsummer Night's Dream," "Romeo and Juliet"

WHEN | WHERE 5 and 7:30 p.m. Aug. 20, Agawam Park, Southampton. Or you can catch "Dream" Friday at 7, Sunnyside Gardens Park; 5 p.m. Saturday at Socrates Sculpture Park, Long Island City; 5 p.m. Sunday in [Forest Park](#), Union Turnpike. "Romeo and Juliet" opens 6:30 p.m. Aug. 19 at Crocheron Park, Bayside, and at the above Queens parks Aug. 21-23