



Hip to Hip Theatre Company celebrates its tenth season of Free Shakespeare in the Parks

By: [Meagan Meehan](#) AXS Contributor Jul 29, 2016

Hip to Hip Theatre Company is an organization that is dedicated to producing free plays throughout the NYC and the tri-state areas, especially during the summer months. Most of the performances take place in parks and feature a full cast, costumes, and even sets. This year, this hard-working theater company is celebrating its tenth season and the staff is celebrating the occasion by performing two Shakespearean plays, "As You Like It" and "Julius Caesar." Both plays will be performed in eleven parks in or around New York City. Additionally, there will be performances in Jersey City and Southampton. The season began on July 27 and will run through August 28.



Jason Marr as Brutus in *Julius Caesar*. Photo by Julian Voloj

Hip-to-Hip productions pride themselves on being family-friendly and enjoyable and understandable even to people who have never seen a play by Shakespeare before. While the language might be difficult to work out (the plays are properly performed in Old English jargon), programs are handed out that explain--in simple English--exactly what the plots are about and who the characters are. Seasoned fans of Shakespeare will be impressed by the quality of these events too, even though they are marketed for a "general audience," that in no way detracts from the performances which stick to the original plots and scripts (with occasional scene cuts for time purposes).

All plays by Hip-to-Hip are free but attendees are strongly encouraged to bring blankets and lawn chairs. Food is also welcome, although noise from crisp bags and other food-related items must be kept to a minimum during the actual play. There are no lines or tickets but if you want a good seat, come early. Moreover, Hip-to-Hip offers a free children's program called "Kids & the Classics" which is initiated one hour before each performance. "Kids & the Classics" is essentially a free interactive workshop that lasts for 45 minutes and is designed for children ages 4 to 14. This playful program gives its young participants a chance to interact with the text via previewing the characters and situations and then making connections between the situations and people in the script and their own lives.

To date, Hip-to-Hip has featured over 237 performing artists and produced eighteen major plays. The company has also toured more than twenty parks and neighborhoods in Queens, The Bronx, Manhattan, Jersey City, and Southampton. It is estimated that they have entertained more than 38,582 individuals of all ages and backgrounds and this number increases every year. In honor of their ten-year anniversary in 2016, the company is adding parks in Brooklyn and East Harlem to their list of venues.

To learn more about the comedy "As You Like It," the drama "Julius Caesar," and Hip-to-Hip, visit the company's official [website](#).