

Marlo Thomas Says She's a Terrible Liar

STAGE

bridget shirvell | JULY 8, 2014



Kate Wetherhead and Marlo Thomas in *Clever Little Lies*. Photo: T. Charles Erickson.

Actress Marlo Thomas stars in the comedy *Clever Little Lies* opening July 16 at Guild Hall and running through August 3. The dark comedy by Joe DiPietro explores the lies couples tell, the relationship between parents and their adult children and the disappointments we all face. Pulse Insider caught up with Thomas as she prepares to come out to Long Island for the play and the actress shared what we can expect of the play, why she isn't a clever liar and her non-typical days.

Pulse Insider: You're coming out to Long Island soon to appear in *Clever Little Lies*, the new dark comedy by Joe DiPietro. What do you like about performing on Long Island?

Marlo Thomas: I've done plays at regional theatres in Hartford, Berkshire Theatre Festival, Pittsburgh Public, but I've never done a play on Long Island and I'm really looking forward to it. The island has a great sense of community. The last time I was there for a show, it was a young comedians festival, hosted by David Brenner. Everyone in the audience seemed to know each other, which made the laughter even

better. There was a personal, homey kind of feel to the evening — like a family reunion. I'm looking forward to experiencing that feeling when we perform in *Clever Little Lies*.

PI: Tell me about *Clever Little Lies*. What can we expect at the play?

MT: You never know what to expect in a Joe DiPietro play, but you can be sure it will be funny and have a complicated twist on the human animal and our relationships — or, more specifically, those subterranean feelings in human relationships that make us do irrational things.

In our case, the story is about a married couple, their son, and his wife and new baby. I won't tell you about a sixth character in the play, because that would spoil the surprise. But what I can say is that every character is trying to solve a huge family crisis and, despite their best attempts, manages to make things worse. By the end of the play, you're not sure who's telling the truth and who isn't.

PI: I have to ask, are you a clever liar?

MT: I'm a terrible liar because, when I was little, my mom told me that when I wasn't telling her the truth my eyes got very wide. So since I knew she could always tell, what was the point? She saved me from that vice.

PI: What are you looking forward to about *Clever Little Lies*?

MT: When you're performing in a comedy, you can always tell by the laughter how personally the audience is relating to the material. If the laughter is hard and fast, that means they're just laughing at the joke. But when it's that kind of sustained, full-throated laughter, it's a pretty good indication that they're completely identifying with the characters — which in this play, builds carefully and is very revealing, because the characters don't always behave so predictably or properly. So in the end, the laughter is kind of...I don't know...confessional. And it's very rewarding for an actor to experience that kind of connection with the audience.

PI: The basis of the play is: two parents trying to help their adult child, even if their efforts are a bit misguided. What advice would you have for parents wanting to “help” their adult children?

MT: I don't like to give parental advice — the job is hard enough without my two cents being thrown in. But I will say this: All families tell white lies — to be protective and out of love, and sometimes because we are not proud of our behavior.

In *Clever Little Lies*, we watch the swift and funny unraveling of a tight-knit family, caught in a web of clever untruths — some to hide, some to protect, but all of them hurtful just the same.

PI: What's your creative process like? What inspires you as an actress, author and activist?

MT: Well, all three passions are completely different. Taking a stand on an important social issue — [like bullying](#) — requires an entirely different skill-set from appearing in a play or writing a book. But the one requisite they all have in common is a kind of single-minded focus — and a bone-deep determination never to let the so-called “facts” stand in the way. One of my favorite sayings comes from the actress and writer Ruth Gordon — and I have these words hanging over my desk: “Never fact the facts, or you'll never get out of the bed in the morning.” And I truly believe that. The facts — polls, statistics, conventional wisdoms — can keep anyone from ever starting anything. Better to create your own facts.

That's how I always move from step A to B to C: I never face the facts. And that's no lie.

PI: What's a typical day like for you?

MT: There is no typical day for me, unless you consider a three-ring circus typical! It's been a very busy spring. I've either been on the road, promoting my new book, *It Ain't Over Till It's Over*, a collection of stories about 60 amazing women who completely reinvented themselves at midlife. Or I've been in my living room, interviewing guests for my weekly web series "Mondays With Marlo." Or I've been flying city to city, raising funds and awareness for [St. Jude Children's Research Hospital](#), which my dad founded 52 years ago.

And now I'm doing what I love best: preparing for a role in a play with fellow actors — the best community of all.

Clever Little Lies by Joe DiPietro

At Guild Hall

158 Main Street, East Hampton, New York 11937

July 16 – August 3

Tuesdays – Sundays at 8 p.m. plus matinees at 3 p.m. on Sunday, July 27 and Sunday, August 3

No 8 p.m. show on Friday, July 25 or Sunday, August 3

Directed by David Saint

with Greg Mullavey, Jim Stanek, Marlo Thomas, Kate Wetherhead

A mother always knows when something's up. Bill Jr. is distracted, under pressure and off his game. Will a surprising evening with his parents send him further off-kilter? Secrets are exposed and clever little lies are crafted when a confidence shared between father and son escalates into an unexpected revelation that could change everything...

Tickets: Prime Orchestra \$75/\$70 members; Orchestra \$55/\$53 members; Balcony \$40/\$38 members, Free Student Rush tickets are available. Purchase tickets online [GuildHall.org](#) or at Box Office 631-324-4050; [theatermania.com](#); or 1.866.811.4111

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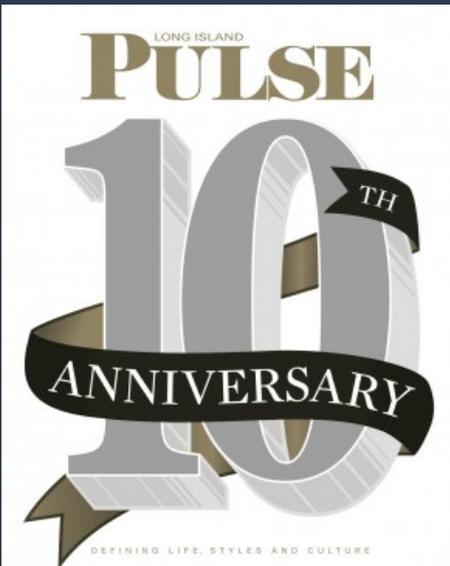
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