

The Bradenton Times

Theater Review: The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity

Dennis Maley
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SARASOTA — Kristoffer Diaz's 2010 Pulitzer Prize Finalist, *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity*, is one of the most unique pieces of theater one is likely to come across. However, this play, which somewhat unthinkably centers on the world of professional wrestling, is much more than just an elaborately-staged spectacle. Indeed, it is high drama personified by brilliant theatrical innovation.

Macedonio "Mace" Guerra is what's known in the business as a *jobber*, a fall guy whose skills are trained toward helping other more marketable wrestlers get over with the fans. When his brothers introduce him the Vigneshwar "VP" Paduar, a charismatic, smack talking Indian-American from Brooklyn, Mace recognizes him as a potential wrestling superstar.

Mace pitches the newcomer to Everett K. Olson, a Vince McMahon-styled promoter who runs the biggest promotion in the business. "EKO" doesn't quite see VP through the same lens that Mace does, but recognizes the opportunity to exploit age-old stereotypes and xenophobic attitudes in matching him up as a Middle Eastern terrorist foil for the promotion's top draw and current world champion, Chad Deity.

Mace narrates the story, frequently breaking the 4th wall to self-consciously acknowledge all of the absurdity that is forever perpetuated by his beloved profession. For the production, Asolo's Cook Theatre is completely transformed into a functioning wrestling arena—ring and all! The drama is hardly confined to the stage, as actual (not to mention quite credible) wrestling scenes are interwoven with the dialog and Mace's soliloquies.



Garrett Turner. Photo by Cliff Roles

Theater Review: Lively wrestling drama 'Chad Deity' gets hearts racing at Asolo Rep



Pierre Jean Gonzalez, right, plays a professional wrestler who discovers a potential superstar competitor, played by Raji Ahsan, in Kristoffer Diaz's "The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity." Cliff Roles photo/Asolo Rep

By Jay Handelman

Arts editor



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The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity

Asolo Repertory Theatre

Review by [William S. Oser](#) | [Season Schedule](#)

Also see Bill's reviews of [A Midsummer Night's Dream](#) and [Peter and the Starcatcher](#)

Asolo Rep is presenting Kristoffer Diaz's *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity* in the Cook Theatre. Every season at this time Asolo Rep presents a play, not in repertory, usually because it requires casting that does not align with the plays that are rotating in the larger Mertz Theatre or because of more limited audience appeal. In the past the Historic Asolo Theater has been the location of choice, but this year, because of building at Ringling Museum, that theater is unavailable. The Cook Theatre turns out to be a complete blessing as this play explodes in this even more intimate setting.



Garrett Turner, Pierre Jean Gonzalez and Raji Ahsan

Photo by Cliff Roles

The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity is a testosterone-laden comedy/drama set in the world of professional wrestling. The themes examined include racism, the world of professional sports, and how the promoters sell their product to audiences. I also found a parallel connection to the world of talk radio which sells a "truth" that few of the participants really believe, but when called on it often take the "I'm an entertainer, not a journalist" road. A play that I was not expecting to find to my tastes has not been off my mind since seeing it, and I am hoping to make a return visit to pick up details I missed.

The production values are flat out phenomenal, putting the audience right down into the world of high dollar professional sports: video screens everywhere of varying quality and size, direct video



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