

Kicking ass and making entrances

The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity

By [Kel Munger](#)

You can't kick a pro wrestler's ass without his help.

This, we are informed by Macedonia “The Mace” Guerra (the incredible Andrew Joseph Perez), is the basic principle of professional wrestling. And even a true artist of the ring—as Mace most assuredly is—will help kick his own ass to keep the show going smoothly.

The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity, Kristoffer Diaz’s incredible story of the intersection of art, power, wrestling and politics deserves the bells, whistles and action-packed moves it gets in this production by Capital Stage. In addition to Perez—whose performance is mind-bogglingly good—it has an all-star cast in Randall King (promoter Everett K. Olson); Donald Paul (the charismatic champion Chad Deity); Rushi Kota (the smooth-talking, code-switching Vigneshwar Paduar); and James Long as three different pro wrestlers, starting with The Bad Guy.

Long stepped in to replace local actor Rob August, who was injured during a preview. That’s right: It’s real wrestling with real injuries.

Directed by Jonathan Williams, the show feels like a sporting event. Steve Decker’s lighting highlights the elaborate entrances for which pro wrestling is known. Scene designer Ian Wallace is also responsible for a number of video pieces that add to the story and provide the TV-ready feel to match the actual wrestling ring he’s created as the stage.

All of these elements combine to make the play a realistic examination of professional wrestling as



“Need me to point you to the gun show?”
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The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity, 7 p.m. Wednesday; 8 p.m. Thursday, Friday, Saturday; 2 p.m. Sunday; \$22-\$35. Capital Stage, 2215 J Street; (916) 995-5464; www.capstage.org. Through August 11.

pop culture, critiquing our cultural fascination with stereotypes and stock characters to keep the story simple, while simultaneously demanding flash and glitter. But *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity* is also about American politics; it's no stretch from the "axis of evil" to the Fundamentalist, the character created to turn Paduar into a wrestling bad guy.

It's all in presentation—whether we're being sold an elaborate entrance to the wrestling ring or an elaborate entrance to a war. And even the artists will help get their own asses kicked.