

Chad Deity At Second Stage

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Brian Sidney Bembridge redesigned the set for Off Broadway

The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity, an offbeat comedy about television wrestling, transferred for a short run (April 26-June 20), from the [Victory Gardens Theatre](#) in Chicago to [Second Stage](#), Off Broadway, bringing with it new scenery designed by Brian Sidney Bembridge, who collaborated with Peter Nigrini (video), Christine Pascual (costumes), Jesse Klug (lighting), and Mikhail Fiksel (sound). The set was described in the *New York Times* as "a big-boy playroom... which reminds us of the mystical transformative powers of a television frame."

The set was also noticed by *That Sounds Cool blogspot.com*, which said in effect that the show was well served by "Brian Sidney Bembridge's pop-cultural explosion of a set (larger-than-life images from iconic movies are recessed into the back wall; an neon orange and purple wrestling ring takes up center-stage)... and on *CurtainUP.com*: "Director Edward Torres and set designer Brian Sidney Bembridge have turned the stage into a dizzying circus scene. It's dominated by a functioning wrestling ring that's framed by frequently and brilliantly used giant video screens and garish images of aggressive animals (a rooster primed for a cock fight, a shark, a lion, etc)."

"It was a new set based on the same concept," says Bembridge of the New York production, in which two 12' x 10' rear video screens with forced perspective flanked a boxing ring. The ring itself was one of the changes: in Chicago it had been built in-house, while in New York, a real wrestling company was given the task. A lighting grid the same size as the ring was placed overhead with a mix of strip lights, PARs, and Philips Color Kinetics ColorBlasts, which were added in New York, providing a lot more flexibility in the color palette.



Chad Deity, photo by Joan Marcus

design painted in orange and purple to mimic the back wall. Another change in the set design was the lack of a stage elevator next to the ring that was possible in Chicago but not in New York: "Second Stage has a poured concrete floor," explains Bembridge.



There were also three portals of truss that framed the boxing ring, dividing the floor into two areas (right and left of the ring). "The stage in New York was smaller and shallower," says Bembridge. "There was a larger apron in Chicago, although we could only afford one portal there. The truss portals gave the set a rock'n roll feel," he continues.

The other major set piece at Second Stage was what Bembridge calls "the fan," a fan-shaped wall made of steel and hardwall (in Chicago it was simply a painted design). The Masonite deck also has a fan

"The imagery in the video is cartoony and reflects masculine pop culture," Bembridge adds. "It makes for fun theatre and we want everybody to take what they want out of it." For the next iteration of the show, wherever it pops up next, the designer has even more changes up his sleeve.

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