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Stageworks Theatre's Production of "The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity" Presents a 'Life Imitates Art' Moment for Cast Member

Leigh Simons, combat sports documentarian for Golden Boy Promotions and the SPIKE TV Network's Bellator franchise turns the tables and steps into the role of THE Wrestling Owner and Announcer, "EKO" at Tampa's longest running professional theatre, the Stageworks' production of "The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity."

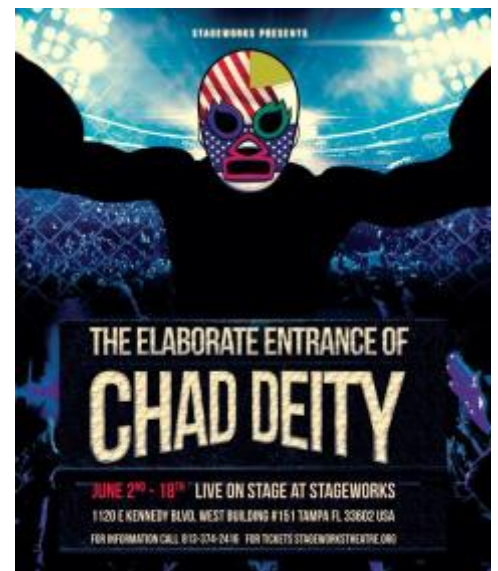
Tampa, Fla. (May 2017) – When Tampa's longest running professional theatre, Stageworks, opens the award winning production of "The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity" on June 1, 2017, one cast member is having the opportunity of a lifetime by playing a role that epitomizes all the negative personality traits of a position in a business he knows too well. In a "life imitates art" moment, Leigh Simons, a prolific and successful Boxing and MMA documentary producer, will step on center-stage as the character of Everett K. Olson, "EKO", the evil owner and promoter of "THE Wrestling."

During his 15-year career in combat sports Simons has been behind the camera writing, directing and producing boxing and MMA combat sports TV commercials, Pay-Per-View spots and sports documentaries. Simons has worked with some of the greatest fighters and promoters in the sport.

"From working behind the camera in the combat sports world to playing this iconic anti-hero of the sport, brings me full circle, is one of the most fulfilling acting jobs I've ever had," Simons added.

Simons, fresh off the incredible success of the Canelo Alvarez vs Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. Pay-Per-View Event, is in the midst of preparing for two giant combat sports events. The Bellator NYC PPV event on June 24 at Madison Square Garden for SPIKE and the Golden Boy Promotions HBO PPV September 16 event for Canelo Alvarez vs Triple G. Simultaneously, he will be stepping on the stage at Stageworks Theatre bringing the sum of his real-world experiences to this play.

"The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity" written by Kristoffer Diaz has received excellent reviews across the country and garnered many awards. The play premiered in September of 2009 but not before winning the 2008 National Latino Playwriting Award. It quickly drew more than rave reviews when it was





a finalist in the 2010 Pulitzer Prize for Drama award and received numerous other awards including the 2011 Obie Award for Best New American Play, the New York Times Outstanding Playwright Award (Kristoffer Diaz) in 2011 and the Henry Hewes Design Awards for Best Scenic Design and Best Production Design.

The array of characters and attitudes is deftly managed by Stageworks' own veritably talented producing artistic director, Karla Hartley. "I hear a lot of talk, both politically and personally about so-called 'red lines', those boundaries that should never be crossed. I am also fascinated by a notion that is fundamental to professional wrestling; The Good Guys vs. The Bad Guys. 'The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity' takes a look at both of those things while super-kicking someone into the mat. It's a perfect blend of action, fun, intellect and humor. This play really is like nothing I have directed before and is a challenge I look forward to tackling."

The play runs from June 1 – 18, 2017 at Stageworks, 1120 E. Kennedy Blvd, in Tampa, Florida and stars Zander Morales as Mace, Brice Bateman as Chad Deity, Afsheen Misaghi as VP and Cornelio Aguilera as Bad Guy. Simons wraps up his EKO character only to, again, dive back behind the camera for the epic Bellator 180 MMA star-studded fight card featuring on the main card a fight between Chael Sonnen and Wanderlei Silva held June 24, 2017 in Madison Square Garden, New York City and brought to you by Spike TV.

See more of Leigh Simons work at www.leighsimonsproductions.com

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About Leigh Simons:

Actor, Writer, Director and Producer Leigh Simons made his freeFall debut in "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest," but is not new to the freeFall family. Leigh has produced behind the scenes documentaries on recent hits "The Burnt Part Boys," "The Normal Heart," "Fiddler on the Roof" and "The House of Bernarda Alba". A veteran filmmaker and celebrated sports documentary producer, Simons regularly produces programming for HBO, SHOWTIME and FOX networks. His acting credits include America's Most Wanted and numerous high profile TV host appearances on the "Cinemax Free Preview Weekend," "Secrets of Superstar Fitness," Tom Hanks' HBO miniseries "From The Earth To The Moon," and as an HBO Entertainment News host. He is most grateful for his loving wife Debbie and beautiful daughter and actress Sydnie Jasmine for their love and support. www.leighsimons.com

About Karla Hartley:

Karla Hartley is currently the Producing Artistic Director for Stageworks Theatre in the Channel District of Tampa, Florida. She received a BFA in Theater Studies from Boston University in 1992 and is the owner of three Theatre Tampa Bay awards for Best Director. She was named Best Director 2009, 2012, 2014 and 2015 in the Creative Loafing Best of the Bay Awards as well as The Artist Most Likely to Have Been Born On the Planet Krypton.

Directing credits include: *Greetings, Ladies at the Alamo* (Boston), *The Seahorse*, *Christmas With Elvis*, *Girl Detective*, *Cut the Ribbons* (Florida tour), *I Love You*, *You're Perfect*, *Now Change*, *Always*, *Patsy Cline*, *The Goat or Who is Sylvia?*, *The Mystery of Irma Vep*, *Jewtopia*, *Hats! The Musical* (Florida tour), *Boston Marriage*, *The Rocky Horror Show* (2008 and 2012), *Waistwatchers*, the world premiere of *Party Animals* by Kathie Lee Gifford and David Friedman, *Respect*, *Little Dog Laughed*, *And Baby Makes Seven*, *Holiday Party of One*, *Sylvia*, *Company*, *Seven Homeless Mammoths Wander New England*, *The Wiz*, *A Few Good Men*, *The Sugarbean Sisters*, *God of Carnage*, *Moon Over Buffalo*, *Antigone* and the international tour of *Listen To My Heart*, *In The Heights* and *Red* at American Stage, *The Motherf**ker With the Hat*, *Lights Rise On Grace*, *This Wonderful Life*, *Psycho Beach Party*, *Broadway Bound*, *Beehive* and the upcoming *8 Track*.