

British Theatre Guide

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Big Daddy vs Giant Haystacks

Brian Mitchell and Joseph Nixon

The Foundry Group

Assembly George Square

1–26 August 2013



I must admit that I was an avid fan of television wrestling when I was a youngster. At 4PM on a Saturday, along with millions of others, it was time to tune in for another bout of wrestling.

In Brian Mitchell and Joseph Nixon's excellent new play *Big Daddy versus Giant Haystacks*, the history behind these two giants of the ring is enthusiastically created.

The intimate atmosphere of The Box at the Assembly provides a perfect venue for Big Daddy, real name Shirley Crabtree, and Giant Haystacks, Martin Ruanne, to battle it out.

The question on everyone's mind was "is it fixed?" and the answer? "It's a business."

David Mountfield and Ross Gurney-Randall portray these two giants with gusto and spirit and quickly get the audience chanting "easy easy", Big Daddy's theme, and soon we were all cheering and booing.

They also play myriad other characters including such fans as Princess Margaret, who let it slip that her sister was also a big fan. Even Margaret Thatcher and Frank Sinatra were enthusiasts.

The big fight scene between Big Daddy in his gold top hat and Haystacks with his long unruly black hair and beard is magnificently done and very funny.

But all goes awry when Greg Dyke takes over London Weekend Television and axes the wrestling, much to the angst of millions of viewers.

This is a wonderful nostalgic trip back to the heady days of professional wrestling performed with energy and panache.

Reviewer: [Robin Strapp](#)