

Two-Bit Review: “Sax and Dixon: This Plane is Definitely Crashing”

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by Katie Riegel

It was a family affair just before the first performance of [Sax & Dixon: This Plane is Definitely Crashing](#), as Saxes and Dixons of all ages mixed and mingled and fresh-faced college grads dressed in their finest vintage tees scrambled for seats in the sold-out Gene Frankel Theatre. On stage for the following 85 minutes, recent Northwestern grads Matt Sax and John Dixon were the epitome of the Sunday afternoon’s brotherly vibe in the New York premiere of their two-man tour-de-force comedic extravaganza.

With the help of director and co-writer Peter McNerney, the perfectly matched Sax and Dixon give vibrant life to over 20 characters; but rather than giving in to easy stereotypes, they have summoned up a gang of kooky caricatures with impressively detailed backgrounds, voices, mannerisms and personalities. There’s Jay and Ben, a pair of high school students on the run from a home video gone wrong; a British boy choir, featuring knickerbockered schoolboys like Lumpy, Prince and Spoonerism; a pair of eerily similar metal-working siblings meeting for the first time on the eve of their father’s death; and odd couple Sharif and Katika: He needed a green card and she’s nicknamed him Jihad. The scenes seem to be unrelated for a bit, until the wild, twisting plot begins to reveal itself and the inhabitants of Sax & Dixon land are drawn like magnets to the play’s final scenes in the belly of a doomed transatlantic flight from JFK to London’s Heathrow airport.

Sax, Dixon and McNerney are a seamless team, bringing the fast-paced thrills of improv together with the practiced vocal and physical nuances of a traditional play. Transitions between characters are crystal clear, thanks to the undeniable talents of our two endlessly energetic performers and McNerney’s ingenious eye for staging, which lets them turn a quick shoulder-bump or spin into yet another envelope-pushing encounter between oddball characters. Oh, and the ending? Chat up as many Saxes and Dixons as you want to. You’ll still never see it coming.