

Welcome to this audio described introduction to Eve Stainton's new choreographic commission, Impact Driver. Your audio describers today are Elaine Lillian Joseph and Shivaangee Agrawal from SoundScribe. This introduction lasts 6 minutes.

Impact Driver takes place in a black box theatre, at the centre of which is a large container. It is inside and around this container that 6 performers engage in welding, sound-making and dancing, using the welding as a metaphor for queer sexuality – specifically, the celebration of the gender-non-conforming lesbian and trans-masc experience.

The show is a sensorially rich and sometimes overpowering experience. There are moments of bright, blazing light throughout the show and some nudity. For those with sensitive hearing, ear defenders can be borrowed from the access team.

As we enter the theatre from the North entrance, there is a viewing platform directly to our right and to our left is a wheelchair lift. Down the steps onto the wooden-floored theatre, chairs line the periphery of the space. The left-hand wall, which we are calling the East side, has three alcoves which provide informal seating and the opposite West side has a larger alcove, featuring two small fire exits and a railing to separate it from the main space. On the far south end of the theatre, behind the container, is a concrete platform raised up by one step.

The welding container is a rectangular frame assembled from steel bars and is elevated half a metre off the ground. It is wrapped in an orange semi-transparent plastic, which has been clipped taut to the frame using small clamps. This wrap is a safety precaution to protect our eyes from the UV and InfraRed radiation emitted by welding sparks, which the performers buffer against by wearing welding helmets. These helmets have chunky opaque shields that obscure the performers' faces and with a backdrop of welding smoke, the helmets serve to give our performers a distinct mystery that one could describe as... extremely sexy.

The container is lit internally by three floodlights and externally by stage lights and a flashing light underneath the structure. When the container is in darkness it's impossible to know what's inside, but we've had a good rummage and found:

- **Two welding benches either side of a work table.**
- **Two work desks holding clamps, angle grinders and bits of steel in all shapes and sizes**
- **two gleaming extractor tubes that suck away fumes**
- **and of course, 2 mig welders with nozzle guns.**

Eve began welding during the pandemic. They enjoy the live negotiation and decision-making involved in the welding process, making visible how scenes and objects take their shape. Eve explains that this commission has come from a desire to connect with those who have shared lived experiences, and who aren't represented in the dance space.

All the performers in this work are queer, and have masc-presenting identities:

- **Eve is tall, slim and white British from a working class background. They're a non-binary artist from Manchester in their thirties with a shaved head and ear piercings. The sleeves of their denim black jacket are embellished with blue welding gloves that poke out. Their cowboy boots are the pointiest of the cast.**
- **Imani Mason Jordan is our tallest performer with light brown skin and a close cropped auburn haircut. They're a non-binary curator, artist and writer. They are wearing calf length black boots over black jeans and an icy grey suede jacket with a hood.**
- **Romeo Roman Gatt is a white Maltese multidisciplinary trans-masc artist with tattooed ears. Their short dark hair transitions**

into a skin fade at the sides and a loose mullet at the back. Romeo wears an oversized suede jacket that glows amber like our container with long sleeves that reach his fingers. They wear an apron of the same fabric, also with pointed cowboy shoes.

- Tink Flaherty (Tink – Fla-Her-Tee) is a non-binary performance maker in their forties creating work from a working class and autistic perspective. They're white with short, slicked-back brown hair that becomes a quiff when pushed off their face. They wear burnt-orange suede trousers that strap together a front and back panel, and this is paired with a pale grey jacket. Their cowboy boots are snakeskin and heeled.

Once our performers spill out of the container, they dunk newly fused hooks into a small cooling trough that lies on the floor between the entrance stairs and the container. The hooks are then attached onto one of two sets of heavy-duty tow ropes suspended from the 6m ceiling. One set hangs near the stairs, and the other set hangs on the far end of the room, over the concrete platform.

Eve uses the drama of welding to disrupt linear narratives of climax and asks how suspense can be sustained and heightened. Musicians Mica Levi and Leisha Thomas support the creation of tantalising suspense with a live score on red, scratched electric guitars. They're positioned diagonally across from each other, Leisha in the north-west corner and Mica in the south-east corner near the concrete platform.

- Leisha is a Black masc lesbian musician who has a short cropped haircut. They're wearing a bright orange suede jacket and dark jeans.
- Mica is a musician in their early 30s with a punk aesthetic. They're white and have short, dark-brown curly hair. They're dressed in dark blue denim.

This is a highly immersive work, with audience members invited to roam freely through the space. Eve acknowledges that different audience members will feel differently and are keen to invite honesty into these encounters, leaning into the messiness of these negotiations. Elaine and I, Shivaangee have designed the audio description as an immersive encounter in itself - we will both be voicing during the performance, sometimes in dialogue with each other, sometimes welding together our separate perceptions. Elaine is positioned at the north side of the theatre, near the entrance, and I will be positioned at the opposite end, on the concrete platform at the south end of the theatre. You might hear us audio-describing audience members meandering through the space as they angle for a better view.

Make yourself comfortable and feel free to ask for support from the team of ushers. Impact Driver lasts about 60 minutes and has no interval.