



Audio Description Pre-Show Notes: Multiple Bad Things

The Venue

The Drama Theatre is one of the Sydney Opera House's smaller theatres, located in the Western Foyer. The theatre is entered from the back and has 540 seats, arranged in 19 straight rows sloping down toward the stage. The concrete walls are painted black, the floor is carpeted in a deep blue, and the chairs are made of a white birch wood with orange upholstery.

The Set

According to the creators of the play, 'Multiple Bad Things' takes place "in a time like ours, in a warehouse that could be anywhere", a place also described as "the workplace at the end of the world".

The black, dimly lit stage is an abstract and unsettling version of this non-descript workplace. The space somehow appears both sparse and cluttered all at once. A weak, sickly light washes over everything. The edges of the stage are swallowed up into blackness, like the deep, dark woods lurking just outside the edges of a campfire's safe glow.

Stretched out over the central part of the stage is a jumble of shiny golden pipes, chaotically jointed together to form an angular pile with three pyramid-shaped peaks rising up above the rest. A handful of shorter lengths of pipe bent into different shapes are scattered about on the ground amidst this industrial and enigmatic structure. Beneath the jumble of pipes, the black floor of the stage is a polished oval like a dark puddle of oil, glowing softly under the weak light of the stage. The golden pipes are reflected in this oval surface, so it appears that they are multiplied and continue deeper into the stage floor.

Sitting above this angular metallic jumble, on the centre of the stage's back wall, is a large, oval-shaped screen, a similar shape and size to the reflective black oval in the centre of the floor, as though one might be a mirror of the other. As if a window to the apocalyptic world outside, the screen shows a dark and ominous stormy sky, full of thick, rolling grey clouds that are occasionally lit up from within by the white glow of an electric storm. Throughout the play, lines of text relaying the actors' dialogue are superimposed over the storm.

At the front of the stage to the left of the tangled gold pipes is a cluttered black office desk and simple black chair, sitting inside the circular boundary of a bright white spotlight cast onto the floor from above. In the middle of the desktop is a computer monitor, keyboard, and mouse. To the left of this is a red desk lamp with bending neck, and to the right are other office paraphernalia including a pen holder and a clipboard. Scattered all over the desktop are plastic animal figurines: little lions, tigers, giraffes, zebras, rabbits, cows, sheep, bears, and others. On the floor just to the left of the desk sits a black wire wastepaper basket, almost full to the brim with colourful junk food wrappers.

At the front of the stage to the right of the gold pipes, sitting in its own circle of spotlight, is a large, light pink flamingo-shaped pool float. Its body is a round inflated disk, with two short, plump wings tucked in close on either side. It has a tall, slender neck curving into a small head with a white pointed beak, and a short, pointed stump of a tail. The flamingo is set on an angle with its head is pointed outward toward the back right corner of the stage and its tail pointed inward toward the front centre of the stage.

The Cast and Characters

An ensemble cast of four actors, representing a mixture of disabled and non-disabled identities, form part of the team who devised this play as well as portraying its four characters. The characters are a motley crew of three warehouse workers toiling in and around the tangled pile of golden pipes, as well as a fourth, more mysterious figure working from home, whose presence looms ominously at the edges of everything. Whilst all four characters have been given names, these are never spoken out loud during the play, leaving each person to a nameless existence on the stage. (Character names will be used for the purpose of this audio description).

The Warehouse Workers

Sarah Mainwaring, Scott Price, and Bron Batten play the three warehouse workers at the centre of the play, struggling to work together on the seemingly pointless task of assembling a jumbled structure out of golden pipes. As they interact with each other, they move carefully around the edges of the structure and weave themselves over and under the pipes in its middle, picking up loose sections of pipe and connecting them to the structure at random looking but carefully considered places.

Sarah Mainwaring/Vic

Sarah Mainwaring is an actor with a disability, in her early 40s with an average height and build, and pale skin. She plays Vic. Her short brown hair is worn slicked back from her face

with a slight undercut at the back. She is dressed in a full-body boiler suit which is dyed a washed-out, light orange-pink or salmon colour with smudges of faded blue, purple, and yellow, and wears a pair of matching salmon-coloured sandshoes.

There is an asymmetry to Sarah's posture and gait, the right side of her body noticeably more dominant than the left. She moves slowly and intentionally about the stage with a slight lilt toward the right side of her body. When not using her left arm, she tends to hold it bent with elbow tucked in close to her chest, whilst her right arm is extended down at her side. She has a gentle tremor in her arms that becomes more apparent with exertion.

Scott Price/Matt

Scott Price is an autistic actor in his late 30s, with pale skin, short, curly red-brown hair, and a long, bushy ginger beard. He is tall, with long arms and legs and a pot belly. He plays Matt, wearing a matching tracksuit set in the same washed-out colour scheme as Vic's boiler suit, and light greyish-blue sandshoes.

He ambles with a relaxed, unhurried gait about the stage, shoulders slightly hunched, resting his hands on his hips or letting his arms drop at his sides. When standing, he is never completely still – sometimes his fingers fidget, sometimes he sways lightly or adjusts his feet with little shuffles. However, his preferred position onstage is lounging in the inflated flamingo pool float, his long legs stretched out either side of the flamingo's little tail and his head resting against its tall neck.

Bron Batten/Faye

Bron Batten is an Australian actor of Scottish and English white settler heritage, who does not identify as disabled. She is in her early 40s, with an average build, pale skin that reddens easily, and blonde hair in thick, tight curls that frame her face and fall below her shoulders. She is taller than Sarah Mainwaring and a little shorter than Scott Price. She plays Faye, who is dressed differently to the other two workers in a very short, light pink polo shirt dress with half-unbuttoned collar, matching light pink lipstick, and hot pink sandshoes.

Her movements onstage are casual with an air of brashness: walking with hips swaying and arms swinging at her sides or leaning in a laid-back pose against the golden pipes of the structure. Sometimes, her movements become calculated and slinking, like an animal stalking their prey: slow, careful steps, leaning forward with head slightly tilted.

Simon Laherty/Deathweather

Separate to the group of warehouse workers is a mysterious, solitary figure called Deathweather, who is working from home at the desk of an isolated home office.

This character is played by Simon Laherty, an actor with a disability who is about the same height as fellow actor Sarah Mainwaring, with a slight build, pale white skin, and short, thin brown hair with a receding hairline. Simon is middle-aged, but Deathweather might be as old as the Earth.

He wears a blazer, waistcoat, and knee-length kilt all in the same patchy, washed-up colours as Vic and Matt's work uniforms. He also wears light orange knee-high socks with lace-up brown leather shoes, and has a round, dark leather pouch or "sporrán", with three tassels on the front, hanging on a chain around his waist to decorate the front of his kilt.

When he occasionally moves across the front of the stage, he walks with an upright posture and a stiff, almost march-like gait. However, he spends most of the play on the computer, seated at the desk to the left of the pipe structure with his back to the audience, wearing a pair of black headphones. He plays online solitaire, cards stacked in ordered rows on a green background filling the computer screen. He also plays pixelated retro video games, browses and scrolls websites, and watches videos of nature documentaries.

The warehouse workers do not seem to be aware of Deathweather's existence on the stage. If Deathweather is aware of the other workers, he does not appear to take an interest in them.