

Audio Introduction - RO-TES 119: by Stopgap Dance Company

Hello there! Welcome to this audio introduction to RO-TES 119: by Stopgap Dance Company.

I'm Lily, I'm here to tell you a bit about the show. I'm Access Artist with Stopgap and also the audio describer for Ro-Tes.

This introduction lasts for around 10 minutes. It will share more information about Ro-Tes including what to expect, the integrated accessibility in the work, the choreography, and it also features introductions to each performer.

There is also a word document version of this introduction, available on Stopgap's Ro-Tes webpage at stopgapdance.com/ro-tes.

Before we dive in, here are some useful things to know:

- Ro-Tes is a 30-minute outdoor performance that tours festivals and outdoor arts events across the UK and internationally.
- Because we work within each event's programme, show timings are managed by the organisers, so scheduling can vary.
- As an outdoor work, audiences naturally come and go, and the show actively encourages a relaxed environment where you're welcome to make noise, respond vocally, and engage however feels right for you. We also hope to provide a dedicated accessible viewing area at each event.
- Before each performance, there will be a Touch Tour where you can meet the performers and explore the set up close. This usually takes place around 15 minutes before the advertised start time.

- Ro-Tes features embedded audio description, integrated directly into the soundtrack, so there's no headset required.
- Booking for performances and Touch Tours is handled on an event-by-event basis.
- An access guide tours with Stopgap and the work and will be on hand to tell you more about Ro-Tes and to help with any seating requirements.

About Ro-Tes

RO-TES រ៉េតេ: is choreographed by Disabled artist and renowned wheelchair dancer Nadenh Poan, in his choreographic debut for Stopgap. The title takes its name from the Khmer word for wagon - a symbol rooted in Nadenh's own personal story.

Growing up on a boat in the jungles of Cambodia, he swam before he could wheel, and the first time he encountered a wagon, he discovered a new way of moving with the land beneath him. That moment of possibility sits at the heart of this work.

Inspired by his Cambodian heritage, Nadenh reimagines his wheelchair as something that can carry far more than just his body, expanding the potential to carry community, memory, joy, and belonging.

Taking place outdoors, the work roots itself in the spaces we share and move through every day, asking us to think about our relationship to the ground beneath us and to each other.

Ro-Tes is an invitation from the five Deaf, Disabled and non-disabled performers to follow and celebrate, to revel in the joy of dancing together.

The Costume and Set

Keen to make sustainable choices with this work, costume designer Ryan Marlon-Monroe repurposed old clothes otherwise destined for landfill, creating vibrant patchwork jackets and baggy cropped trousers which feature brightly coloured squares of pattern, mixed with denim offcuts. The dancers accessorise with white vests underneath, headbands and scarves, trainers, and fingerless gloves which also protect their hands when dancing outdoors.

In keeping with the work's themes of regeneration, Nadenh has also repurposed his old dance wheelchair, making it central to the show. It has been adapted with an additional metal frame forming a bumper around the wheels, two small platforms near his feet, and a heavy metal tail extending from the back of his chair; curving upward a little like a scorpion's. Rather than solid metal, the tail is an open, scaffolding-like structure of long stems and crossbars, giving the other dancers plenty of surfaces to grip. The adapted chair weighs 40kg in total; a significant contrast to the 8kg of his regular dance wheelchair! This adapted chair is available to explore on the touch tour, where you'll be able to feel the structure of the tail and experience how Nadenh moves with it.

The Choreography

Ro-Tes is an athletic and physically challenging work to perform, the dancers are constantly in motion and working hard together, especially during the high-energy middle section of the work. Choreographically there are moments of daring strength and agility - and quieter, more tender passages that speak to collective effort, the weight of long journeys, and a ceremonial connection to the performers' heritage.

The movement grew from an exploration of new ways to dance with Nadenh and his ro-tes. Never focussed on moving Nadenh passively, but instead on innovative ways of dancing together.

The additions to his adapted chair open up many possibilities: the metal frame around his wheels becomes a surface to balance on, push from, and pull against, while the two small platforms near his front castor wheels can be stood on, launched from, or used to balance various body parts. The heavy metal tail expands these possibilities further. It acts as a counterweight, allowing two dancers to leverage Nadenh into the air, crucially its fitted with small wheels on its underside allowing them to move whilst he's elevated. This gives Nadenh access to a new dimension of height and space, without leaving his wheelchair.

It's a powerful expression of what he set out to explore: how the equipment that gives him freedom to move can be shared, so that trusted others can move with him.

The Story

The work begins as Nadenh introduces himself and his journey from Cambodia. He welcomes his friends and they introduce themselves one by one. Everyone playfully circles Nadenh, jumping and tumbling over the tail as he spins. The energy settles, and the tail detaches from Nadenh's chair. A series of solos unfurl each dancer tracing threads of their own background. Then a journey begins: they fall into line behind Nadenh and follow his lead. Arriving somewhere new, the mood lifts as the dancers explore duets and trios, before coming together in a song. It comes time to rebuild the Ro-Tes. Nadenh performs a solo, before the group return and work together with the focused momentum of a machine. Until finally they load up and set off, for new places.

Meet the performers

Hi, my name's Chris. I'm a tall white man with broad shoulders and a big smile. I like to move with power, different dynamics, and textures. I have short dark hair, little bit of stubble, and hazel-coloured eyes. My favourite part of Ro-Tes is the journey we go on together through the work.

Hello I'm Emily. A petite, East Asian, non-disabled woman. With light brown skin, dark hair and eyes, and freckles across my cheeks. I like to move across the space with zipping energy, with movements of lift and grounding. My favourite part of Ro-tes is connecting with the other dancers and the audience.

Hello everyone, my name is Nadenh. I am a British Cambodian male wheelchair dancer. With light brown skin, not much hair, and tattoo on one of my scumungus (big) arms. I am currently sat on my Ro-Tes. My ro-tes is adapted wheelchair. I'm really love working with ro-tes, and also exploring and working with a lot of different people and with other collaborators.

Hi! My name is Jannick. I'm a standing, white male dancer with a brain injury. I've normally got short hair, and I've always got bright blue eyes. I really like to move with different qualities and textures, and change my movement story within phrases quite suddenly. In Ro-Tes, I like to move with everyone, working as a team and spotlighting different people.

Hi my name is Lili. I'm a deaf standing dancer, with brown hair, brown eyes and brown hearing aids. I like to be upside down and play with acrobatic movement. Overall, I love being a part of Ro-Tes, following and showcasing the journey we take.

Credits

Ro-Tes is devised by Nadenh Poan, Christian Brinklow, Emily Lue-Fong, Lili Monediere-Carter, Jannick Moth.

Concept by Nadenh Poan.

Audio description - Lily Norton

Set Design - XKX

Costume Design - Ryan Marlon-Munroe

Composer - Vincent Dankelman

Access Consultants - Lesta Woo, Michelle Felix

Co-Artistic Director's Lucy Bennett and Laura Jones

Executive Producer - Lucy Glover

Production Manager - Rachel Shipp

Project Manager - James Greenhalgh

Access Artist - Lily Norton

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