

*"A performance of rare perfection"*  
Gazzette of Parma ★★★★★

# Made in **ILVA**

## The Contemporary Hermit

*"A work of huge mastery. Instabili Vaganti leaves the body speak and body language is universal"*  
Halland Posten - Göteborg ★★★★★



 Instabili  
Vaganti  
Theatre Company  
[www.instabilivaganti.com](http://www.instabilivaganti.com)

EDINBURGH FESTIVAL FRINGE 2014  
PRESS REVIEWS

# The Flaneur

Being the present undertakings, studies and labours of the ingenious in London and many considerable parts of the world

## **POLITICS, THEATRE IN BURGHESS FRINGE: MADE IN ILVA – ITALIAN SCANDAL AND EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE ★ ★ ★ ★ ★**

AUGUST 2, 2014 FLANEUR

An intense performance by Nicola Pianzola is the basis of **Made in ILVA – The Contemporary Hermit** from experimental theatre group Instabili Vaganti. Directed by Anna Dora Adorno with original music by Riccardo Nanni it is a direct response to an Italian industrial controversy. Pianzola is on stage alone for the entire performance and it is his movement and words which aim to comment on the effects of the IVLA steelworks scandal.

The southern Italian town of Taranto is where Adorno was born. It is also home to IVLA. This huge steel plant employs thousands of people, but is also implicated in health issues and deaths amongst workers and nearby residents. It produces 30% of Italian steel, too much for the government to allow it to close. But environmental and health concerns are huge. Local cancer rates are 30% higher than the Italian average.

Made in ILVA has been inspired by the testimony of workers at the factory. The performance has developed into a combination of repetitive physical actions, like factory workers at their daily work. Sounds become obsessive rhythms that combine into dance music as the solitary worker tries to break the monotony of his life – but there is no escape.

As the audience files into the darkened main hall at Summerhall Pianzola sits facing the back wall on top of a 150cm high metal four-legged frame. For most of the powerful performance this will be his only prop. Later a welding mask will be introduced, taking on almost iconic status in an atmosphere where workers must work, knowing there is no alternative employment. *Work! Brutalisation!* Pianzola chants as he pushes himself along the stage, hands squeaking on the floor, boots getting scuffed. His body contorts between the bars of the frame, it becomes the factory, a pedestal, the worker standing mighty, a bird's nest looking to the future, a shadowy shopping basket.

He talks of his mutilated body, of work starting early. He wades up the stage to the factory, falls back, again and again. Something powerful and unpleasant is being described and the audience is kept engrossed for the full length of the production. Pianzola is a visceral presence on stage. With the floor projections and music he creates an environment where his body and voice convey an abstracted version of a life that both supports and kills. It is especially emersive for those sitting on cushions on the stage. (*Psst, would you mind sitting on a cushion?* an usher whispered to me as I went in, as though I'd been selected for the KGB. I agreed and spent the performance centimetres from the trapped, alienated factory worker).

But you have to return to words to discover the whole story. It is claimed that IVLA has disabled 8000 people and caused 20,000 deaths from cancer and leukaemia. In 2012 a magistrate ordered the shutdown of the most polluting furnaces. But economics talks and still the ILVA steelworks is active.

Made in ILVA was a positive Italian advertising slogan, but now its meaning has changed. This challenging production focuses attention on an Italian disaster, showing pain and confusion without any attempt at easy answer.

# The Herald

## Made in Ilva

Summerhall

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THE title of this solo show used to be the proud slogan for a huge steel plant in Southern Italy. But as Nicola Pianzola puts his own body through the mill of an unrelentingly physical performance, he voices the appalling human cost of production there: injuries, illnesses, even deaths. Victims' testimonies filter through his anguished descent into a near-hallucinatory despair as he flagellates the air with repeated cries of "work" or "brutalisation".

But it's the intensity of what matches this rhythmic litany that creates a sense of machines devouring men. A metal frame which started off as a high stool is toppled into becoming both cage and workplace where Pianzola is no better than a slave, pounding his palms against the steel, battering the floor with it, drumming and percussing in sweat-drenched misery.

Projections on the floor, dramatic lighting, music – they all add to the sense of a particular, gut-wrenching situation in Ilva.

But when Pianzola elevates a welding mask, creating a shrine to industry, this blistering, savage tour-de-force could be about any community where the environment and ordinary lives are polluted by government hypocrisy and economic forces.

THE



Thursday August 14 2014 | thetimes.co.uk | No 71275

TIMES

## Dance

### La Loba Zoo Southside

★★★★☆

**D**ance and drama come in many forms on the Fringe, and from various countries. Tucked into Summerhall are two strong physical theatre soloists, whose shows incorporate spoken text.

*Made in ILVA* comes laden with prizes and anchored by a performance of punitive intensity by Nicola Pianzola. Subtitled *The Contemporary Hermit*, the piece was inspired by truly scandalous conditions at an Italian steelworks. The impressively wiry Pianzola is both the embodiment of these real-life horrors and their brutally poetic mouthpiece. Instabili Vaganti's production perhaps wallows in its subject matter, but it's intelligently assembled and put across with undeniable commitment.

Alexandra Kazazou, the Greek-Polish creator of *Charmolypi*, plainly

has presence to spare. But as this black-clad dancer and actress stretches across and around a sleek white sofa, the streak of self-indulgence in her study of existential despair likewise becomes apparent. Kazazou, however, remains watchable.

*La Loba*, by Czech choreographer Lenka Vagnerová, arrives on the heels of her award-winning ensemble work *Riders*. I prefer this two-hander; a mysterious, vivid and sometimes stunning blend of movement and voice. A river of wool and straw is strewn across the floor. From out of the wings there regularly emerges a skinny, bent figure in black skirt, scarf and old-fashioned blouse. There are, in fact, two women identically dressed.

Both the dancer Andrea Opavská and the singer Jana Věbová play, often thrillingly, the same ageless, archetypal character whose strange and feral powers are only hinted at. Ivan Acher's battering recorded score adds to the force of Vagnerová's production, which draws on folk myths without needing to tell a tale.

**Donald Hutera**

Box office: 0131 662 6892, to Aug 25

# The Student Newspaper

## Tuesday, August 12

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### Theatre & Dance

## Made in ILVA - The Contemporary Hermit

Summerhall  
Until 24th August



By Rachael Murray  
@culture\_student

**I**nspired by the controversial ILVA steelworks in Taranto, Italy, *Made in ILVA - The Contemporary Hermit*, is more than a simple lesson in politics.

In fact, it spins a wider tale of a dystopian present where the man-made is replacing nature; as we are told in the disembodied opening monologue, clouds are being created and the industry is being worshipped in place of the Gods.

This allegory of a factory of creation is neatly used to introduce the human element of the story, namely Nicola Pianzola's devastating portrayal of

a man trying to "resist brutalisation" and stay human when forced to become a machine in the factory in which he works.

The production is very consciously not beautiful; it is ugly and it is stark, and the whole of the audience recoils at the sound of the performer's nails scratching against the metal floor. He is harshly lit by projected factory images, clearly showing how the industrial culture is inescapable for the residents of his town.

For some of the audience, sadly, these powerful images are largely lost, due to being seated on the floor. It is worth, however, forgoing the finer details of the photos and videos in favour of being inches away from Pianzola as he writhes down the aisle as a human conveyor belt, his painful expression showing the losing battle of man against machine. The simple set, a single metal stool, is intelligently used; acting as a ladder at one point, then becoming a cage later on in the story.

*Made in ILVA - The Contemporary Hermit* is an incredibly strong piece of theatre which, being performed in English for the first time, makes a lasting impression.



As a one-man show, at the same time to make a societal criticism and tell a powerful story of an individual is impressive; and Pianzola's movement on stage alone makes this a show worth seeing.

# Made in ILVA - The Contemporary Hermit, Summerhall, Review



By *Irene Brown* - Posted on *19 August 2014*



Show details

**Venue:** [Summerhall](#)

**Company:** Instabili Vaganti Experimental Theatre

**Running time:** 50mins

**Production:** Anna Dora Dorno (director), Riccardo Nanni (composer), Patrick Tully (photo)

**Performers:** Nicola Pianzola

ILVA of Taranto is the biggest steelworks in Europe. The company has been accused of its factory emitting 90% of the total dioxins released into the Italian air and of causing 180 workplace deaths, the disablement of 8,000 and in 20,000 further deaths from cancer and leukemia.

Bologna based experimental theatre group Instabili Vaganti has created a powerful piece of poetic and physical theatre inspired by the steelworks' scandal and based on the testimony of Italian steelworkers.

The stark black and white image of a bleak and empty factory space is projected on to a square on the stage with the metal pillars that hold the stage lighting managing to look part of the scene. When lights dimly appear,

performer Nicola Pianzola emerges from the dark as a faceless hooded figure whose only prop is a steel frame. This serves as a multitude of platforms for Pianzola's intense and muscular performance throughout.

His impassioned demonstration of fierce physicality is the embodiment of harsh dehumanising toil and the repetitive dragging of time involved in the workers' necessity to work to live. But what kind of life is it? A glorious glimpse of sun shows the simple joy this man is capable of enjoying in his brief escape from brutality.

The original score from Riccardo Nanni, one of the composers of the soundtrack of the Oscar-winning film *The Great Beauty*, adds to the rawness to this piece of street dance theatre. With narration provided dually in Italian and English, this is stunning and memorable work from a deservedly award winning company in which Pianzola gives his all.

# Made in ILVA: The Contemporary Hermit – Summerhall, Edinburgh

Posted by: TPR Scotland in Edinburgh Fringe 2014 13 hours ago 0



**Director: Anna Dora Dorno**

**Reviewer: Katie Mitchell**

Many words have been spoken about the steelwork crisis in Taranto, Italy but Nicola Piazola lets his body do the talking in Instabili Vaganti – Experimental Theatre Company's performance of Made in ILVA: The Contemporary Hermit.

Now dubbed as the 'ILVA Tragedy', Anna Dora Dorno directs the piece and brings true eye-witness accounts from Italy to an Edinburgh audience. There is a sense of a need for escape throughout the performance, highlighting the scandal of ILVA further as the factory killed and is continuing to kill many locals in the surrounding area due to pollution. In the Taranto 30% of the population have lung tumors while the factory is still thriving financially. Therefore the piece voices anti-capitalist views highlighting how society accepts to sweep issues like these under the carpet or under a pile of ever-growing dead bodies.

Through repetitive mechanical movements Piazola puts his body through pure exhaustion and pain to display the factory's brutality towards its workers where 'work', 'produce' and money are more important than the well-being of its employees. Piazola represents the alienated hermit in this one-man-performance showing the difference between himself, the slave and his prospering billionaire boss. The corruption and capitalist nature of society is displayed through voiceovers throughout and how in this case; money is worth more than life itself. The video projections on the floor emphasise a technological society and overwhelming destruction of humanity.

The performance voices many important issues that are all too easily forgotten about, and does so in a thought provoking and innovative way.

**Runs until 24th August**

# Made in ILVA – The Contemporary Hermit



Showing @ Summerhall, Edinburgh until Sun 24 Aug (not 15) @ 16:20



**Nicola Pianzola** is the solo physical performer of *Made in ILVA – The Contemporary Hermit* and his exuberant and contorted display is as breath taking as it is passionate. The performer begins with his back to audience, sat on a large metal stool and then the explosive performance begins. The stool elevates Pianzola physically but also acts as a claustrophobic steel cage, a levitation device and a means to convey the heavy iron industry that is being depicted on stage.

Video projections are displayed on the floor, showcasing the industry and graft that is the backdrop for the show. ILVA is a steel works in Taranto Italy, where the employees and surrounding environment were seriously effected by dangerous factory emissions. The monologue of the sole performer and an accompanying audio narration, stems from testimonies and poems from workers at the plant. This gives *Made in IVLA* an added degree of authenticity and poignancy when dealing with this raw and emotional subject matter.

The soundtrack by Riccardo Nanni moves the performance forward by creating pulsating rhythms that are augmented by Pianzola's physicality on stage. This production presents the tragedy of IVLA and shows the pain, frustration and raw emotion of the horrendous injustice that has affected the people of Taranto.

# Made in Ilva : The Contemporary Hermit



When one man can command the intensity of the theatrical experience just by flexing his sinewy muscles, we must find ourselves at the Parnassian peak of physical theater. Nicola Pianzola, of the experimental Instabili Vaganti company of Bologna, is just that man, & his hour of incantation-like speech & gymnastic movements is nothing but a piece of perfect drama.



The Ilva works - Taranto

The story he tells is that of the poisonous effects of the ever-pollutant-belching Ilva steel works in Taranto, southernmost Italy, whose dioxin emittants have simply murdered many locals. Layers of black & red powder covers every pavement in the town, glittering in the gutters, & it is in such a sandy bedsoil that 'Made in Ilva' has its roots. Cue a desperate & work-addicted Pianzola watching his friends die around him, & delivering the translated script with a stylish panache which belies his non-English nationality. A mini-modern classic that drives a needle into the nerves. **FOUR STARS**

Reviewer : Damo Bullen

## Instabili Vaganti: Made in ILVA

in Reviews | by Dorothy Max Prior | No Comments

Tags: Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2014

Work, work, work. Never stopping, fighting to meet the productivity deadlines... That's all there is – that and a fitful night's sleep, dreaming terrible dreams, until it is time to get up and get back on the treadmill. That is the sum of a working man's life.

Surrounded on three sides by audience, a lone male performer jogs and climbs and runs, his skin dripping with sweat, finally collapsing breathless, forcing himself to his feet despite exhaustion, battling on. Lying prone on the floor, his heels hammer the floor as his voice chants in time to the tattoo: 'lavora, sogna, lavora, sogna'. Work, dream, work, dream. This isn't mere acting – this body is being pushed; being worked and worked and worked.

Subtitled, for reasons I don't fully understand, 'the contemporary hermit', Made In ILVA explores 'the impact of the biggest steelworks of Europe, on the environment and surrounding population'. At least, that is what it claims to do – the reality is a riveting solo performance that seems to be less specific and more universal – a reflection on the oppression of capitalism, and the subjugation of the working-class male body to the harsh injustices of manual labour.

It's a beautifully staged and performed piece, directed with precision by Anna Dora Dorno, informed in its making by Meyerhold's biomechanics (a system of intense physical performance practice that seems to have dropped off the radar somewhat in recent times). A modest-sized steel structure morphs from chair to ladder to cage – rocked, tipped, swung from, climbed on and under. A square on the floor acts as a canvas for painting in light: sepia and blackberry coloured projections of industrial buildings; or at other times harsh unforgiving blocks of intense colour, scarlet or canary yellow. A rubber mat running from the square into the audience's spaces is a runway for tortuous and tortured journeys – walking, crawling, running.

The lone man on stage, Nicola Pianzola, gives an earth-shaking performance. There is no physical let-up, and as he moves, he speaks – a poetic, percussive text that echoes the pre-recorded soundtrack. I witness the piece without knowing anything of its provenance. I'm interested to learn afterwards that verbatim texts by steelworkers from the fated plant (which has seen 180 deaths and thousands of injuries over the decades). Little of this is evident in what we see and hear – although a wonderful last ten minutes of soundscape mixing a multitude of voices leads me to wonder if perhaps Ricardo Nanni's sound composition (which is overdubbed in English) has lost some of its content and power in the rejigging for an English-speaking audience.

That aside, and focusing on what was presented rather than what is claimed in programme notes, this is a rare and wondrous piece of physical performance, a privilege to experience.

## Made in ILVA - The Contemporary Hermit (Edinburgh Fringe)

This dance show takes aim at the controversial ILVA factory in Italy

By [Michael Coveney](#) • 12 Aug 2014 • [Edinburgh](#)

WOS Rating:



All theatre is physical, but some theatre is more physical than most, and this writhing, sweaty, angry solo performance by [Nicola Pianzola](#) of the Instabili Vaganti theatre company of Italy makes a tough work-out in the gym or on the dance floor look like a stroll in the park.

Pianzola's all pumped up about a steel works in Taranto, an important coastal city in Apulia, which is creating industrial hazards and emitting deadly dioxins (ten percent of Europe's total), allegedly causing runaway numbers of deaths from cancer.

I have to spell this out because the performance deals less in facts and figures than in imagery and gesture. On a carefully lit, very small acting area, Pianzola rocks back and forth in a tiny steel cage, conveying the brutalisation of the work, its monotony and endless repetition.

He's like [Mark Thomas](#) sounding off about the arms industry reprocessed by Karel Capek and Kafka, a sort of glistening, bug-eyed beetle who represents a legion of low-paid workers with no recourse to justice and a death sentence instead of a retirement pension.

The situation is like that in Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People*, where the polluted spa is kept open to maintain the town's economy. The ILVA factory still prospers, employing 12,000 local people.

Pianzola is their spokesman, a sinuous and indefatigable one-man band, Ibsen's Dr Stockmann in liquid, molten form, a serpent of death, a canker in the system, a spanner in the works.

*Made in ILVA* runs at [Summerhall](#) until 24 August

**FOR MORE ON EDINBURGH 2014 VISIT**

**[WHATSONSTAGE.COM/EDINBURGH-FESTIVAL](http://WHATSONSTAGE.COM/EDINBURGH-FESTIVAL)**

## Made in ILVA - The Contemporary Hermit



by Diana Scarborough on 6th August 2014

In a fusion of intense physicality, vocalisation and performance, we open to a backlit monk-like figure chanting in Italian. A religious introduction to the story of a manual worker labouring in factory hell. Here, we learn that economical necessity keeps him there though he yearns to leave.

The intention of the piece was confusing at times, drifting between being a protest commentary at the IVLA tragedy at the Italian steelworks and everyman's plight. In a taut solo performance, Nicola Pianzola takes us on a dramatic journey. The harshness of the daily grind is juxtaposed with nightmares, deaths of fellow workers and dreams of sunlit air. Pianzola's performance is mesmerizing as he writhes, twists and drapes himself through a steel cage creating forms and rhythms reminiscent of the dehumanising influence and hopelessness of production work.

While he moves and stamps, he calls out, creating new repetitive beats which remind us of the universal plight of a 'sweatshop' economy. The intention of the piece was confusing at times, drifting between being a protest commentary at the IVLA tragedy at the Italian steelworks and everyman's plight. Shifting projections on the floor provided clues but not always enough to keep us engaged throughout the performance when the repetitions and simplified vocals were overlong. However, it is an exciting production and to watch the performance of Pianzola combining physical strength, flexibility with emotional vocalisation in an intimate setting is a compelling experience.

Made in ILVA - The Contemporary Hermit  
By **Lucy Ribchester**



Recreating the horror and dehumanisation of the Italian ILVA steelworkers

There comes a point in the middle of *Made in ILVA* where you feel as if you might be going mad yourself. Hallucinating the fact that performer Nicola Pianzola keeps repeating over and over "the brutalisation" while hammering the steel set with his palms (which are surely by now raw). Delirious with the metal rhythms he beats, and the sight of him twitching and fitting under a blood-red and white strobe light.

It's likely this is the desired effect, because the solo show aims to pay homage to the community around Italy's ILVA plant who were affected by workplace fumes, brutal treatment and inhumane conditions. Incorporating victim testimonies, Pianzola goes about recreating with forensic precision the destruction of both mind and body; by the end of the show he is rinsed in sweat, ecstatic with exhaustion, glowing and talking about angels and the shine of his skin.

It's a double-edged sword presenting verbatim suffering like this, and it does occasionally backfire. His repetition of the soul-crushing mundanity of going to work every day outstays its welcome—granted far less than for the people he is depicting—and we don't ever really get a sense of the humans behind the shells before their everyman descent into hell. Consequently there isn't enough for us to empathise with. Pianzola honours the horror of people dehumanised by factory life with every fibre of his body, but the piece doesn't necessarily do justice to their individual stories.

Thursday, July 31



## FRINGE DANCE MADE IN ILVA – THE CONTEMPORARY HERMIT

The story of the ILVA steelworks in Italy sounds like the plot of a Hollywood movie – possibly one with a role for Julia Roberts as a crusading legal assistant with a penchant for mini-skirts.

But The Contemporary Hermit saw that it also had the potential to inspire a multi-award-winning piece of physical theatre. For anyone who doesn't keep up with developments in Italian heavy industry, the ILVA plant in Taranto had been accused of producing dangerous emissions, with some activists linking it to the above average cancer death-rates in the area.

In 2012, a magistrate ordered that certain sections should be closed down, but not everyone believed the steelworks, which employs 12,000

people, was bad for Taranto. Unions protested against the decision, arguing that it was possible to cut emissions without stopping production.

They eventually won the backing of the Italian government, with one minister suggesting that the potential loss of jobs could also prove detrimental to the locals' health.

But how best to dramatise a case that divided a community, pitted the government against the judiciary, and symbolised the clash between environmental and economic concerns?

Well, this unique performance uses dance, action, music, rhythms, voices and video projections to look at how industry impacts on the environment and the way the human body can be reduced to the



Picture: ©Nicola Pianzola

status of a machine. It may sound heavy going, especially given the weighty subject matter, but it's also poetic.

In fact, all it's lacking is Julia Roberts in Erin Brokovich-mode. **Rachael Popow**

Tomorrow until Aug 24, Summerhall, Edinburgh. [www.summerhall.co.uk](http://www.summerhall.co.uk)