

Transcription from participant feedback below

Roxanne: So can anyone start. Yes Hannah.

Hannah: I really enjoyed it, it was cool.

Roxanne: Ah thanks.

Hannah: Yeah, I think I didn't really understand much of the subject matter but now I've figured out the characters and the story I think it's really interesting. And I think it is for an exceptionally important thing that I don't think many people are aware of. It never really . . . palm oil plantations never really clicked with me as to why they were a problem, but now I sort of know why. And umm, no I think just as far as the piece goes, I think it's complicated and it's tricky, but that doesn't bother me because I think once we get enough time to nail it it should be absolutely fine.

Kaethe: Cool, totally agree. I thought that they way that you used the visuals and the multi, whats it called, like with dancers, music -

Roxanne: Oh multimedia

Kaethe: Yeah multimedia was so so clever. And the way the set was designed as well. I think maybe in terms of scene changes there are maybe ways that we can make it quicker, like maybe have things on strings already so that all we have to do is literally just pull and then go, rather than having to retie maybe. I don't know. Ummm that was one of the main things. It was absolutely brilliant. I thought it was so eye catching and like actually playing, I was just enjoying being surrounded by what was going on on stage as well, so, it was really nice.

Roxanne: Oh thanks

Dan: With the set design I think it's best reflected in scenes 2 and 4, where its kind of more, in the plantation basically, those are the two scenes in the plantation. And I think that umm particularly scene 2, I think the general colour theme, and also the darkness with the fluorescent stuff going on, it feels very neony in a way. Yeah, and I don't know I think that just for some reason, I think Bjork also comes to mind, in terms of, especially hearing the demos where it's super electronic, and just kind of weird and really, I think that's really reflected well in the kind of general theme of the set you know.

Kaethe: I think in a way the music where it has the beats and it is more groovy, that's a lot more accessible to the audience as well, and a lot sort of like, you can really really get into it. I found it hard as a player as well to really get into what, maybe it's just because of a familiarisation thing with the other musicians, but I think that playing the other movements when it wasn't quite clear as to where we were going. But I think that was just being familiar with the music rather than . . . yeah.

Katherine: When I was learning, or trying to learn, the scene 2. No I was really, I really started reading the text and I kind of thought wow this is really cool. But then I thought it is really essential the audience get how cool this is, so I don't know what you've got but would you be giving them, would they have the text and would they have the context so they don't

miss out on what we the singers are getting. Wow yeah, I'm a plant, yeah this is really, I'm a singing palm oil plant you know. This is really interesting. And so much effort has gone into the text and the context and the story, so yea I wouldn't want the audience to miss that. So honestly I don't know I missed that today. But yeah just to think about how we can convey – because that's always a challenge with opera isn't it. Can the audience hear what you're saying because it's so crucial. And especially with this it would just be such a shame if they didn't get wow singing plants.

Dominika: Actually I would like to read it because I can't really hear the singers that much. I mean I'm focusing on my part.

Hannah: That's because we're not singing words.

(laughter)

Dominika: Umm yeah so it would be nice if we did something like what we did with the other operas.

Roxanne: Oh yeah read the story.

Katherine: We could amplify the narrator too.

Roxanne: Oh yeah we can amplify the narrator. Ummm what are we on? Oh yeah we've done 5 minutes of good feedback so no more. That's how we're supposed to do so if you want so say something that's nice then . . .

Dalma: It's really nice that we are part of a creative project like this. It's nice to see how it evolves. I like these ideas and sort of quirky things. But again I think, I don't know if it goes with the positive, but I think it would be really useful for us as players and singers to go into rehearsal already understanding the story. Because sometimes I go, oh that's what we're talking about, maybe second day in. And I think that, I don't know if that's my lack of understanding or we just didn't really talk about it, but I think that would be really helpful if we had an understanding of the story from the get go. Maybe as the first thing – here's the story lets act it out for 10 min and then what are we trying to achieve. Because now I do know and it's just so much more exciting than just reading the page.

Katherine: I think it's really easy when you've made something isn't it that you take it for granted and you forget that you have to explain. It's such a difficult thing to come out and say this is what it's about really.

Dan: One thing that I kind of observed over the whole span of the piece and it's kind of a personal opinion, but I feel like maybe there could be more stark contrast between inside and outside the plantation, but in the scenery. Even something, I don't know, maybe just like a difference in the flood lighting. So maybe purple hue and then darkness, and the fluorescents really coming through from the plantation. Ummm and I think maybe that could be reflected in the music as well where, like the first movement feels very more operatic compared to the second where it almost becomes like a contemporary electronic tune. And maybe that could be reflected in instrumentation and maybe more integration with our electronic side of the ensemble. Which will obviously come when we're in a proper space with a proper sound

system and stuff like that but maybe even also the style of singing for instance. Like closed mic instead.

Roxanne: Yean that was part of the plan, but we didn't umm have time to get to that.

Dan: Then it's cool if that's gonna be the case.

Hannah: The plantation could have like a glitter ball if you're going for that electronic vibe.

Kaethe: I do wonder maybe if the plantation, maybe if you're trying to get the message across that the plantation is obviously negative, is the evil in a way. Think about the characteristics of a plantation is literally just straight lines, monotonous, and I suppose that goes with the music. I've realised that goes with the beat. And it's just not creative. And I wonder if in the set we can make that much clearer to the audience. Whereas the rainforest, everything is you know swirling, you've got nature doing its own thing. And I think a lot could be done maybe with shapes or something, and I think even in the choreography I don't know. Something in there.

Roxanne: That was something we were thinking about initially. We did make a big chunk of scenery that was a massive 3D grid but then we decided not to do it because we thought it was more interesting just to focus on the actual objects. So yeah. It's interesting.

Wanshu: We are collaborative, so we are thinking both sides. So, my research and Roxanne's research. For my side I'm focusing on using the materials from small piece of jewellery. Actually, it all came from the same idea from under the water because the jewellery is all inspired by the sea creatures and now I'm applying the materials to the whole stage so it's quite a new experience for me.

Roxanne: I thought it would be really cool if we could get laser pointers and smoke and make a laser grid or something.

Hannah: I'm thinking about that video you made and I'm not a massive fan of projections but if you made another one that was all full of grids it could really bring something.

Kaethe: I also had an idea, I don't know if I mentioned it to you Roxanne, but maybe in the future, just because I do a lot of stuff with extinction rebellion, I think they'd be really interested in this. Just as a potential performance place we could do it as part of an event, or just a performance in town. We could do it as loads of outreach stuff. I'll put it forward them if you'd be interested.

Roxanne. Yeah definitely. Try and get some funding to do it.

Kaethe: Yeah, they've got some funding.

Roxanne: Oh cool.

Kaethe: So, I can ask about that. It might not be a lot, but they've got a little money pot.

Oliver: There may be ways of distributing. So, if we made a video do they have channels to release it through?

Kaethe: Yup.

Roxanne: Yeah so we could do it both as a video. Because we wanted to make a recording of everything as well.

Kaethe: Ok. Yeah definitely social media can get a big one.

Oliver: Yes there's a big following.

Dan: Would it be a dark space though?

Kaethe: That's a good point. We'd have to think about that.

Roxanne: Have to think about it. We can do it at night time.

Hannah: Find a really dark club or something.

Oliver: I always wanted it to be outdoors.

Kaethe: It could be outdoors and we could project something as well.

Oliver: Yeah that would be really cool.

Wanshu: I have a question for the musicians and the singers. Would you like to do something – be part of the scenery. Like make up or things on the body. Do you think it would be nice to be part of the scenery like this.

Hannah: It would be nice but I'd have to know it inside out upside down. It would be nice but it's a question of whether or not we'll have time for that because at the moment I'm very focused on what I'm trying to do. If you brought in anymore movement or something like that I would probably struggle. But we've got, I'm not sure of the timeframes. How long we are expecting to work on this for,

Roxanne: Oh we are probably not going to perform it properly until the end of the year or even the start of next year. And we haven't finished it yet. There's only 2 scenes yet.