

Transcript

00:00:00 Speaker 1

Hello and welcome to this torch post show conversation. I'm Kirsten Shepherd Bar and it's Saturday, March 12th, 2022 and we're in London at the Coronet Theatre. Before today's matinee performance of Henrik Ibsen play when we dead awaken. It's a new production.

00:00:21 Speaker 1

Adapted and directed by shifted von Henson and produced by the Coronet Theatre and the Norwegian Ibsen Company, featuring a Norwegian and British cast performing in a mixture of Norwegian and English with Surtitles.

00:00:34 Speaker 1

If you're not familiar with the play, here's a quick rundown from the marketing copy.

00:00:39 Speaker 1

It is a rare it is rare that anyone gets the chance to discover a lost a love.

00:00:45 Speaker 1

In the depths of winter rubeck, once a celebrated sculptor returns to Norway with his estranged young wife, Maya, only to bump into his great lost love and muse, Irene, is this their opportunity to return to a world where there is meaning, hope and happiness. To awaken from the dead.

00:01:06 Speaker 1

When we dead awaken, was Ibsen last play, written in 1899, and the director of this production describes it as quote a strange, beautiful and bitter play about art, love, ambition, and freedom like a musical quartet. 4 people, four elements, four voices for instruments, play different songs in a complicated melody.

00:01:27 Speaker 1

It is a play for our time as they find themselves.

00:01:30 Speaker 1

Living in a changed.

00:01:31 Speaker 1

World bewildered, how do they move forward?

00:01:36 Speaker 1

These are some.

00:01:37 Speaker 1

Of the themes that I'm exploring with breach Theatre company in our project to develop a new piece of theatre based on the life of Laura Kieler, one of Ibsen real life models for his own work.

00:01:48 Speaker 1

She was the inspiration for the character of Nora Helmer in his play at Dollhouse. Our plan progress is being supported by the knowledge exchange.

00:01:56 Speaker 1

Innovation Fund at the University of Oxford. We're interested in this play. When we dead awaken because it is one of the most eloquent expressions of Ibsen regret over the way he used Laura's life and character, and especially her private misfortunes, which he so publicly exposed in a dolls house.

00:02:16 Speaker 1

For the podcast, I'll be in conversation about the show with Billy Barrett from Breach Theatre Company and send some our research assistant on the project, who is a doctoral student at the.

00:02:25 Speaker 1

University of Oxford.

00:02:27 Speaker 1

We'll talk about our takes on the production. For now, it's time to take our seats and wait for the curtain to go up on when we dead awaken.

00:02:39 Speaker 1

Yeah, so here we are.

00:02:41 Speaker 1

After the show Billy and son.

00:02:44 Speaker 1

What did you make of it and where are we? Maybe we should start with that.

00:02:49 Speaker 1

We are in the bar of the.

00:02:51 Speaker 1

Coronet Theatre and it's an extraordinary space.

00:02:55 Speaker 1

How do you describe this surrounded by?

00:02:58 Speaker 3

Low hanging lamps handles very uneven floor. It's very atmospheric in here and it's.

00:03:04 Speaker 1

Victorian kind of plush furniture and very dark, yeah.

00:03:09 Speaker 3

Right in C.

00:03:09 Speaker 1

Yeah, very cheesy.

00:03:12 Speaker 1

Yes, yeah.

00:03:13 Speaker 3

And the theatre is almost preserved in a state of crumbling in a way that is very aesthetically pleasing, yeah, and which I think the set of the play we've just seen married very well with because we had a kind of mountain made of rubble and furniture.

00:03:31 Speaker 3

And it's sort of blended with this auditorium that itself almost feels like it's falling down.

00:03:36 Speaker 1

Yeah, it was very atmospheric and and there was a dimness to the whole all the lighting.

00:03:44 Speaker 1

And it's difficult to tell about that.

00:03:47 Speaker 1

Pile of furniture.

00:03:48 Speaker 1

With the water coming out of it there was there was a stream of water coming out of this kind of mound of rubble and furniture, and it felt like it was very symbolic.

00:03:59 Speaker 1

Yeah, and.

00:04:01 Speaker 1

The play does talk about.

00:04:04 Speaker 1

Things being sort of wasted, you know. Relationships lives being wasted and kind of.

00:04:12 Speaker 1

Resurrecting right so.

00:04:13 Speaker 3

Umm, well, I was thinking 'cause the play?

00:04:17 Speaker 3

Is is his final play? Am I right in saying no? This is the absence final play and in a way.

00:04:22 Speaker 3

It's sort of reflecting on.

00:04:24 Speaker 3

How he has used various people in his in his shows and I guess what I saw that mountain of rubble as is almost like the accumulating rubble of his career up to that.

00:04:35 Speaker 3

Point or of rubble?

00:04:36 Speaker 3

Has kind of fictionalised avatar within the show. Was like this. Lifetime's worth of furniture and these domestic items.

00:04:44 Speaker 3

Movie from his play. It's kind of gathered to make this massive mountain of like a junkyard, right? Yeah.

00:04:48 Speaker 4

Yeah yeah, yeah.

00:04:51 Speaker 1

We didn't think of it that that's great. I didn't think of it about the no, I love what you said about it being domestic items. So you're right, there were chairs.

00:04:52 Speaker 3

And how did you read it?

00:04:58 Speaker 1

And there.

00:04:58 Speaker 1

Were there were all kinds of things from a house, he felt like there's a lot of discussion of that house and home.

00:05:05 Speaker 1

And what's the difference and and what it feels like that's eluded the artist? You know, having a proper home?

00:05:12 Speaker 3

Well, and we've talked a lot about how often people think of it, since plays as taking place in these very stuffy domestic.

00:05:18 Speaker 3

Faces sort of 19th century drawing rooms.

00:05:22 Speaker 3

Uhm, but that this play all takes place outside and so it was interesting that we had.

00:05:26 Speaker 3

This home furniture.

00:05:29 Speaker 3

Creating this outside landscape which when you read on the page, you kind of think how would you ever realise that onstage, yeah and I thought it was done really brilliantly in a way that felt like almost had been made of stuff from this theatre.

00:05:43 Speaker 1

Yeah, actually sitting in the bar, kind of. There's a seamless continuity between this stage and the.

00:05:49 Speaker 1

And the space here.

00:05:50 Speaker 1

Yeah, it's interesting there was a. I was certainly hearing wind. Yeah, the sound of wind. That was kind of signifying that it was the mountain, the mountains, but it was all very subtle.

00:06:02 Speaker 1

You know in that little stream.

00:06:05 Speaker 1

Yeah, it's funny that we're talking so much about the atmosphere in the staging in this space, and you're not even really talking about the text what?

00:06:12 Speaker 1

Did you make?

00:06:12 Speaker 1

Of the fact that it was in.

00:06:14 Speaker 1

It was a bilingual production.

00:06:17 Speaker 2

I think it's quite frustrating that the the subtitles weren't keeping pace with the with the speaker.

00:06:22 Speaker 2

And I thought that could have.

00:06:23 Speaker 2

Been handled better and.

00:06:25 Speaker 1

I'm not sure every audience member would have necessarily got that because you have, yeah.

00:06:28 Speaker 2

My thinking in the Minutes we know when.

00:06:30 Speaker 2

Sometimes we burst out into, you know.

00:06:30 Speaker 3

I definitely notice the lag, yeah?

00:06:32 Speaker 2

To something that's obviously very emotive and obviously the the the the speech wasn't keeping up with it and you could see people going on what's going on.

00:06:36 Speaker 1

Yeah, yeah.

00:06:39 Speaker 2

What's going on? I'm not sure. Well, I wondered.

00:06:41 Speaker 3

If both of you were.

00:06:42 Speaker 3

Just ignoring the subtitles, but obviously.

00:06:44 Speaker 3

You you noticed there was that lag?

00:06:44 Speaker 2

So all those regions, yeah?

00:06:46 Speaker 1

I always I always.

00:06:48 Speaker 1

Read search titles.

00:06:48 Speaker 1

Or subtitles, even if I know the.

00:06:50 Speaker 1

Language because I'm fascinated by translation.

00:06:52 Speaker 1

And what are the choices they make? And it was it was a wonderful translation I.

00:06:56 Speaker 1

Thought and I think.

00:06:57 Speaker 1

It's just fascinating how you can you make those comparisons.

00:07:03 Speaker 1

I didn't have obviously didn't have the original text in in my head, but it was. I thought it.

00:07:09 Speaker 1

Was it worked very well?

00:07:10 Speaker 3

Were there any particular linguistic choices or turns of phrase you notice in this translation?

00:07:15 Speaker 2

I thought the the.

00:07:16 Speaker 2

The bit that really stood out for me was when she said to her husband we're going to go into the forest tomorrow to catch a teddy bear. I don't know whether there was a.

00:07:22 Speaker 1

Yes, I'm saying yeah, yeah.

00:07:24 Speaker 1

I thought about that as well because it.

00:07:26 Speaker 1

It isn't. It's a wonderful.

00:07:28 Speaker 1

Word that's usually used about a child. Yes, it was a literal translation, yeah, but it's also what you might playfully call a bear.

00:07:36 Speaker 3

OK.

00:07:37 Speaker 1

You know, oh, there's a sleeping fancy if you.

00:07:40 Speaker 1

I mean, it was very literal. I think that's the one thing, but then it could work, you know?

00:07:46 Speaker 2

Yeah I yeah.

00:07:47 Speaker 2

Now I enjoy that whole linguistic aspect. Yeah, I mean, I obviously I'm very interested in the way new region and English are interacting in phase. So it was quite fascinating for the.

00:07:56 Speaker 2

Just a.

00:07:57 Speaker 2

Bit about the setting as it was.

00:07:57 Speaker 3

She left this piece of it.

00:08:02 Speaker 2

I I guess.

00:08:04 Speaker 2

The lot of the play is about people who are trapped within their own world and it did feel like there was a it's in setting up this contrast between their feeling of entrapment and the landscape being wide and free like something in this production. It felt like the setting was bringing in that sense of entrapment.

00:08:15 Speaker 4

Yeah, yeah.

00:08:21 Speaker 2

We're all you know, feeling quite claustrophobically trapped within their lives as opposed to feeling the contrast between the open space and how.

00:08:30 Speaker 1

They were feeling yeah.

00:08:32 Speaker 2

So the only.

00:08:33 Speaker 2

Bit of despite the the the the.

00:08:36 Speaker 2

Bitter D and when Maya is singing.

00:08:37 Speaker 2

I'm free, I'm free, I just never really.

00:08:39 Speaker 2

Felt a sense of.

00:08:41 Speaker 2

Escape from the place that we've been written.

00:08:44 Speaker 3

I felt the same. I thought it was quite a restrained production in a lot of ways. I think the staging itself was often quite static, which is I'm sure was a deliberate choice, but I didn't necessarily get a sense of that wild landscape that they were often in and when.

00:08:44 Speaker 1

No Christmas tree.

00:09:00 Speaker 3

Yeah, exactly exactly all right. Once you're saying I'm free, I'm free. I don't know that I necessarily felt that either even at the end.

00:09:07 Speaker 1

Yeah yeah, and it was funny because I mean, I was I kind of playfully wanted to start the podcast by saying so. Billy, how do you stage an avalanche?

00:09:15 Speaker 1

Because here we have like.

00:09:17 Speaker 1

Partially a symbolic stage, but partially a realistic.

00:09:21 Speaker 1

One with the.

00:09:21 Speaker 1

Actual stream they had, they had a real stream with real water.

00:09:24 Speaker 1

I'm not a real stream, but you know there was actual water and there was a moment when that one of my favourite moments was when they started bubbling and it was right.

00:09:30 Speaker 5

It's also going.

00:09:32 Speaker 5

Presentation again.

00:09:34 Speaker 1

When there was this big.

00:09:35 Speaker 1

Shift in a tone where they became more lighthearted when they.

00:09:39 Speaker 1

They suddenly just got.

00:09:41 Speaker 1

Out of that heavy mode of agonisingly talking about their past and then suddenly it was playful and kind of splashing water each other in the the bubbling brook.

00:09:50 Speaker 1

And it really worked.

00:09:51 Speaker 1

I thought that was lovely, but I'm curious how you experienced that. Did you? Did you both have the same feeling that something had shifted?

00:10:00 Speaker 2

Yeah, I registered a shift, but I wasn't quite sure the logic for. I thought it was quite.

00:10:03 Speaker 2

Sudden how it happened.

00:10:04 Speaker 2

That they they didn't really lead us into it.

00:10:06 Speaker 2

That you know, as you say, function was very very heavy and that was so just how it was. Then suddenly he splashed some water and battled atmosphere changes. I just felt like.

00:10:15 Speaker 1

Yeah, I see.

00:10:16 Speaker 2

Two to quick three.

00:10:18 Speaker 1

It was, uh, yeah, night and day.

00:10:20 Speaker 3

That was the only moment, wasn't it?

00:10:21 Speaker 3

Where we had water coming out but.

00:10:22 Speaker 1

Yeah, yeah that.

00:10:24 Speaker 3

Because it was taking us back to their summers in this cottage.

00:10:26 Speaker 2

Yeah, and the music came on again and it was, yeah.

00:10:30 Speaker 3

I agree it was a little bit sudden.

00:10:32 Speaker 1

I welcomed the the sound of the stream. I really I'd loved hearing that and I felt like this is a play that can do with a lot of like a soundscape.

00:10:42 Speaker 1

You know with the wind and the and I guess that the director had talked about there being these four elements, so it's been looking out for that. You know, I guess they had Earth.

00:10:51 Speaker 1

You had.

00:10:52 Speaker 1

One of the characters talking about fire burning inside her, and this awful thing of the fire having been quenched by the artist, who kind of used her.

00:11:03 Speaker 1

Which brings us onto the. The reason we came to this, which I mentioned in the introduction which is.

00:11:09 Speaker 1

That we have.

00:11:09 Speaker 1

A project and.

00:11:11 Speaker 1

I sat the whole time listening, listening for overtones.

00:11:16 Speaker 1

Of you know.

00:11:17 Speaker 1

The Laura Keeler story I. I was fascinated by how my whole experience of the play was completely about that, and seeing the play in that light. But I'm not sure the production at all was interested in that. So it's an interesting.

00:11:31 Speaker 1

Yeah, it's how you come to it with different.

00:11:34 Speaker 1

Perspectives, I guess but.

00:11:36 Speaker 1

Did you think that it did?

00:11:38 Speaker 1

Work in light of the kinds of things.

00:11:40 Speaker 1

We're thinking about with our.

00:11:42 Speaker 2

It's strange actually, because when I when we re read the play a few weeks ago just after having talked about Laura Kieler for me, every line of the play jumped out at me as being relevant to Lukela was there were moments in their production when I was forgotten about Laura Kieler and I was just watching in production for the production and I and you know, even when Irene came on I I didn't really.

00:12:02 Speaker 2

It yeah it took me a while to remember that I'm here because you know this, which I don't.

00:12:06 Speaker 2

Think about is rather Mr yeah.

00:12:07 Speaker 2

I didn't really think it picked.

00:12:09 Speaker 2

Up and then I just.

00:12:12 Speaker 2

Yeah, I I, I suppose, thematically, there was a strong.

00:12:15 Speaker 2

Sense of hurt in her.

00:12:17 Speaker 2

You know the damage he had caused her by using her as a model for for his artwork.

00:12:23 Speaker 2

But in terms of what we are trying to say about whether Epson really registered the hurt that he had caused her, I don't know how much the the Act the sculptor in in the play Brubeck really.

00:12:24 Speaker 5

Right?

00:12:36 Speaker 2

Takes that on board, you know, like I was like we're saying there's a section which is quite heavy. He's talking that they were talking about how much he has hurt her.

00:12:45 Speaker 2

He and Irene, and and then and then, just before we. Then he says this thing. And then she says at last at last and then before we know it. We're kind of in playful nostalgic.

00:12:46

There we go.

00:12:56 Speaker 2

Morgan and I wonder whether.

00:13:00 Speaker 2

I wonder whether it really you know it was really that much of a the way we've been thinking about.

00:13:06 Speaker 2

The play as his.

00:13:09 Speaker 2

Is is is him accepting the harder he is. Large Laura Keeler. How much of that is in our minds? But rather than in this production?

00:13:15 Speaker 1

That is really interesting. Yeah, yeah.

00:13:20 Speaker 3

Yeah, I was definitely watching it through the lens of partly for practical reasons, 'cause I think there's there's sections of this play that we might want to drop into our show that we're creating and to set.

00:13:32 Speaker 3

Up that parallel of.

00:13:34 Speaker 3

The the real meeting between Emerson and Laura Keeler, later in life, and then this kind of imagined 1.

00:13:39 Speaker 3

So I was.

00:13:40 Speaker 3

Obviously, watching it with an eye to that, what are the moments that really, really speak to that relationship in that situation?

00:13:46 Speaker 3

But it didn't feel like the production was necessarily interested in that which is.

00:13:50 Speaker 3

Completely understandable 'cause it's not a context that most audiences will be bringing to it.

00:13:51 Speaker 1

Yeah, yeah.

00:13:55 Speaker 3

I mean just hearing you, I read out the marketing copy. Yeah, it feels a bit more interested in this rekindling of the relationship later on from a romantic perspective, which there may have been an element with orchila. But it it's not the principle. Anything that we think that.

00:14:11 Speaker 1

Yeah well, the interesting thing is with Laura Keeler. She had her own career. She was a writer. She was inspired by his plays when she was like 18 to write a sequel to his famous play brand.

00:14:12

Is it?

00:14:24 Speaker 1

And there she is, publishing this book at 8:18 and 1:00 at whatever she was. And so right from the beginning, her interest in him is as a kind of I mean in the way she sees him as the model writer.

00:14:37 Speaker 1

I mean, the story is very much about how he uses her as a model, but actually right all the way through he's she's looked up to him as he says.

00:14:44 Speaker 1

Really devastating to be sort of betrayed by her mentor, you know, but that element of the play we just saw when we dead awaken. That's all about the rekindling of love.

00:14:56 Speaker 1

Of it felt like.

00:14:57

Right?

00:14:58 Speaker 1

Come to me that there isn't that additional element you get with the lower chela story, which is that she has her own career.

00:15:06 Speaker 1

She has her.

00:15:06 Speaker 1

Own calling and in in this condition does this again and again in place. He kind of thinks through motherhood and and he has speeches where he talks about how.

00:15:17 Speaker 1

Women are mothers and it's as mothers that they will kind of rescue the human race and be our saviours.

00:15:22 Speaker 1

But it's limiting in a way, isn't it that that he doesn't think about women having other other callings? A lot of his plays keep talking about motherhood as they're calling, and that they've missed out on it. And so it seemed interesting to kind of get that even in his last place.

00:15:37 Speaker 1

Still kind of talking about.

00:15:38 Speaker 3

That, and he's still not recognising her as an artist herself. She's still the user model, and that's interesting. You talk about the motherhood you know. Within this play, Irene talks about their child and the statue.

00:15:50 Speaker 3

Which I don't, I don't feel is a way that Laura Kieler might have talked about adults house for text as their shared child.

00:15:54 Speaker 1

No no no.

00:15:57 Speaker 1

No, no. Well, she might have said my child.

00:16:00 Speaker 3

Yeah, something I really, I'm sorry. Something I really thought actually watching it this time. Just as the lights were going down. Kirsten, you mentioned that you're in the process of translating this letter.

00:16:02 Speaker 1

Well, this is yeah go ahead God.

00:16:12 Speaker 1

Yes, that's then found in Afghan Koski, yeah.

00:16:15 Speaker 3

In which.

00:16:17 Speaker 3

And Laura Kieler sort of expresses that the her issue isn't just that her story was sort of taken without her consent, and she was represented, but that actually her character was misrepresented.

00:16:28 Speaker 3

And the moment in this play that I was thinking about that is.

00:16:31 Speaker 3

When she says there are other people in the.

00:16:34 Speaker 3

Steps are now.

00:16:34 Speaker 2

Yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah.

00:16:34 Speaker 3

Not prepared.

00:16:36 Speaker 3

Or does the lights still shine radiantly on my face, and you see the panic in her? I I really felt that's not a lot of people laughing in the audience as she realises that the version of herself within the statue that she signed off on.

00:16:39 Speaker 1

Yeah yeah yeah yeah.

00:16:47 Speaker 3

Or that they Co created.

00:16:48 Speaker 3

Is becoming further and further.

00:16:50 Speaker 3

Away from herself. Yeah, that made me think about working.

00:16:53 Speaker 2

Yes, I said.

00:16:54 Speaker 2

Great did when she said once he moved me into the background he says no into the middle ground.

00:16:59 Speaker 1

Yeah, that's right, but it's it's so jarring for her because all that time, the one thing that's kept her going seems to have been, well, at least she's the key point of the, you know, it's just her she's.

00:17:10 Speaker 4

I mean you can.

00:17:11 Speaker 1

Call it egotistical.

00:17:12 Speaker 1

But it's the thing that has she's given her life. She sees herself as having given her life right?

00:17:17 Speaker 3

Well, apparently it took weeks and weeks when she says, oh, we take a weekend break from our work together. So obviously she was modelling for a long time for this statue.

00:17:27 Speaker 1

Yeah, it's really interesting 'cause one of the things that that. He also seems to have struggled with a lot is this not just the guilt over the way the artist is torn between family and the.

00:17:41 Speaker 1

Art the calling.

00:17:44 Speaker 1

But also there's kind.

00:17:45 Speaker 1

Of a gesturing towards male impotence and sexual impotence isn't.

00:17:49 Speaker 1

Issue in this work it really.

00:17:52 Speaker 1

Comes out when she's kind of.

00:17:53 Speaker 1

Saying there I was standing.

00:17:55 Speaker 1

In front of you naked.

00:17:56 Speaker 1

And lots of men threw themselves at me, but.

00:17:58 Speaker 2

You just so self controlled.

00:18:00 Speaker 1

Yeah, you were so self controlled.

00:18:03 Speaker 1

And I wondered how that comes into play in in your.

00:18:05 Speaker 1

Mind with this piece is it.

00:18:07 Speaker 1

Does it have to be, you know, is that?

00:18:10 Speaker 1

It's interesting that he includes that.

00:18:12 Speaker 3

Well, it's yeah. I mean, if this is this kind of reckoning, reckoning with his past, it's very it's bold to sort of present himself as totally sexually dysfunctional, along with the other whole litany of.

00:18:15 Speaker 1

Yeah, yeah.

00:18:18

It's fun.

00:18:23 Speaker 3

Things he's done, yeah.

00:18:25 Speaker 1

Yeah it is interesting and then.

00:18:26 Speaker 1

That link to, well, they're literally childless.

00:18:31 Speaker 1

But they had this.

00:18:33 Speaker 1

Art that was their child. So all the kind of idea of surrogate children, dead children, and murdered children. It's very.

00:18:41 Speaker 1

It's very strong motif, but can't help but think about children in Laura Keeler life as well. 'cause she.

00:18:49 Speaker 1

I think.

00:18:49

There was a.

00:18:50 Speaker 1

Bit of a mention in this play, did you catch that there?

00:18:53 Speaker 1

Was something about.

00:18:56

Right?

00:18:56 Speaker 1

But she did, she say, I mean, did she say something about feeling mad or or trapped in a literal sense, or actually having been put into a kind?

00:19:02 Speaker 2

Second, yeah, she does talk about that. Yeah, she says she was going crazy and that's when she was buried alive and he put me into a padded cell and.

00:19:04 Speaker 1

Of asylum, he does talk about that, doesn't she?

00:19:13 Speaker 2

No one could hear her screaming, oh.

00:19:13 Speaker 1

Yeah, yeah, and so you're never really sure, is that literal or is that just you know she's saying that's how he felt we?

00:19:16 Speaker 2

Yeah yeah, yeah.

00:19:19 Speaker 2

Yeah, so there was this one.

00:19:19 Speaker 1

Know from Laura.

00:19:20 Speaker 1

Keelers story that she.

00:19:22 Speaker 1

I mean, it wasn't it that she.

00:19:23 Speaker 1

Was actually.

00:19:25 Speaker 1

Nursing her risk born child and then she was she. Her husband had.

00:19:26

Yeah, yeah.

00:19:27 Speaker 2

I need version.

00:19:30 Speaker 1

Her put into.

00:19:31 Speaker 1

An asylum is.

00:19:32 Speaker 2

Yeah, I think so. I mean, I think at two different stories. One is that she was still nursing her baby and has been removed her from her unweaned baby and we heard a mental asylum.

00:19:32 Speaker 1

That this story.

00:19:41 Speaker 2

The other one is that she had had her baby, but she was pregnant again when she was instrumental asylum and her baby was quite young, I'm.

00:19:48 Speaker 2

Not sure which one of those times, yeah?

00:19:49 Speaker 1

Something for us to work on.

00:19:52 Speaker 1

It's pretty bad either way.

00:19:53 Speaker 3

Yeah, when you get the sense of the nun, obviously she's kind of a symbolic figure. But also, is she a literal figure?

00:20:00 Speaker 3

Kind of keeping tabs on this woman who.

00:20:02 Speaker 1

Yeah, what did you make of her? Because I've never figured her out in the play.

00:20:05 Speaker 5

Yeah, yeah.

00:20:06 Speaker 1

Or in the this production?

00:20:07 Speaker 3

And she's yeah, she wasn't in this as much as she was in my mind. A lot when we read it. And so she was less.

00:20:09 Speaker 5

Yeah yeah she was. Yeah yeah.

00:20:12 Speaker 3

Present than I was.

00:20:13 Speaker 2

I think there's a yeah in the play. I think there's a lot more of her walking around shaking her keys and I don't. I don't think she did.

00:20:19 Speaker 1

Yeah, yeah.

00:20:19 Speaker 2

That as much in a production that she's meant to.

00:20:22

That's true.

00:20:23 Speaker 1

Well, one of the things we we like to ask in these podcasts is well.

00:20:28 Speaker 1

If we had been involved 'cause here we are, we're doing a project from the ground up. We're devising a piece of theatre, but for this production, what if we had been brought on to advise what would we have done? What would we have said?

00:20:41 Speaker 1

Just what might your thoughts be on on that?

00:20:45 Speaker 3

I think the water.

00:20:50 Speaker 3

And I think I would have made more of the water.

00:20:54 Speaker 3

I think what is difficult on stage for practical logistical reasons. Stage managers must hate it, and I saw Portia Coughlan Marina car play at the Abbey in Dublin a couple of weeks ago, which again very

prominently figures a stream which the main character drowns herself in and so throughout the place times rolling in it and just getting soaking and.

00:21:14 Speaker 3

It's very present and I think.

00:21:17 Speaker 3

You know we've talked about.

00:21:18 Speaker 3

The wildness of the landscape and.

00:21:20 Speaker 3

The setting in this play.

00:21:22 Speaker 3

And I kind of feel like there was certain set elements that I wanted to be interacted with more or more physically. It almost felt like, you know.

00:21:23

Right?

00:21:32 Speaker 3

As you do with the play, you rehearse it in a rehearsal room then.

00:21:35 Speaker 3

The set kind of arrives.

00:21:36 Speaker 3

And then it be all there.

00:21:37 Speaker 3

And I I didn't ever feel that the action.

00:21:39 Speaker 3

Of the play married that well with.

00:21:41 Speaker 3

The physical set pieces, so I wanted them to.

00:21:41

Yeah, yeah.

00:21:43 Speaker 3

Swim in the stream basically, yes.

00:21:44 Speaker 1

Yeah, yeah stream and so.

00:21:47 Speaker 1

So you want it.

00:21:48 Speaker 1

You would have.

00:21:48 Speaker 1

So just I'm sure I get it so you would.

00:21:50 Speaker 1

Have kept the water but made more of the one you looking at.

00:21:53 Speaker 2

Biggest tree.

00:21:53 Speaker 1

More water.

00:21:54

Yeah, I think.

00:21:54 Speaker 3

The biggest reason why the stream I mean they did a bit. It was obviously like.

00:21:54 Speaker 1

The tree yeah yeah.

00:21:57 Speaker 3

I'm saying it's a logistical challenge, but there was a little bit of kind.

00:22:00 Speaker 3

Of putting their hands.

00:22:01 Speaker 3

In the water, but I think if you're gonna do it, you.

00:22:02 Speaker 1

Yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah.

00:22:02 Speaker 3

Gotta do it and I.

00:22:04 Speaker 3

Think rather than one moment where we get this kind of water feature coming down.

00:22:06 Speaker 1

Yeah yeah, yeah.

00:22:08 Speaker 3

I wanted a a cascading.

00:22:10 Speaker 2

Yeah, yeah, absolutely did you?

00:22:11 Speaker 1

See that did you see the roster is?

00:22:12

Right?

00:22:12 Speaker 1

Wrong with when you see that one.

00:22:13 Speaker 2

No, I did. Yes I did. Yeah yeah yeah.

00:22:15 Speaker 1

Where the end at the end the whole stage.

00:22:16 Speaker 2

Poured all over the.

00:22:18

It was amazing.

00:22:19 Speaker 1

It was really exciting.

00:22:20 Speaker 1

It was just inundated with water.

00:22:21 Speaker 3

Yeah, it can be done, yeah.

00:22:22 Speaker 1

And then there was also a lady from the sea. I think at the Donmar or the Almeida.

00:22:25 Speaker 2

Our major we had the big pool rockpool on the side and she goes into.

00:22:28 Speaker 1

Yeah, yeah.

00:22:29 Speaker 2

It comes out of it. All the.

00:22:30 Speaker 1

Exactly, and there was even a moment, I think, where she was kind of sitting almost looking like the The Little Mermaid statue.

00:22:30 Speaker 2

Time yeah, yeah.

00:22:34 Speaker 2

In a white dress.

00:22:35 Speaker 5

Yeah, yeah.

00:22:38 Speaker 1

It was. It was a nice use of water and given the limitations of size on that stage, I think they did make the most most of it. But yeah, they did have more space here.

00:22:46 Speaker 1

Where they could.

00:22:46 Speaker 1

Have probably done more with water.

00:22:47 Speaker 3

Yeah, yeah.

00:22:49 Speaker 3

Remind me, do you remember in the turbine hall in.

00:22:51 Speaker 3

The tape there.

00:22:51 Speaker 3

Was that crack with the Chevrolet? I think that.

00:22:52 Speaker 1

Yeah Oh yeah.

00:22:54 Speaker 1

Yeah, yeah.

00:22:55 Speaker 3

You know, I kind of just wanted I wanted something wide and wider indeed.

00:22:58 Speaker 1

Yeah, yeah.

00:22:59 Speaker 2

I agree, I think they have.

00:23:00 Speaker 2

Done what they said and.

00:23:01 Speaker 2

They could have done more.

00:23:02 Speaker 2

To marry the production website said.

00:23:04 Speaker 2

So there's a lot of talk about verticality and.

00:23:07 Speaker 2

It's in this place.

00:23:07 Speaker 2

I think Vitality is obviously very important specifically in this blue, which you know ends up as avalanche and stuff. So I mean, even if working within the current set, I mean that that that.

00:23:17 Speaker 2

Mountain of rubble I feel could have been maybe even just higher, taller.

00:23:21 Speaker 2

Yeah yeah yeah. Like like in the three sisters production when you keep adding more stuff to it. But also I think you know, especially at the end when you're walking up the mountain.

00:23:28 Speaker 2

More could have been done to maybe make.

00:23:29 Speaker 2

Use of it as a.

00:23:30 Speaker 2

Place that could be climbing, you know, and or you know, just give us a sense of them actually ascending from the stage, 'cause I think otherwise the play was very horizontal, all kind of stage one playing there wasn't much.

00:23:38 Speaker 1

Well, yeah.

00:23:41 Speaker 2

You know, like you say, you have sort of swam in the water a bit more.

00:23:44 Speaker 2

Or, you know.

00:23:44 Speaker 2

Going out climb the mountain of rubble or something, but more to give us a sense of the different, you know.

00:23:49 Speaker 2

Planes on which.

00:23:50 Speaker 2

The play was.

00:23:50 Speaker 5

Trying then.

00:23:50 Speaker 2

Working on yeah.

00:23:52 Speaker 3

That's true, particularly as well because we've talked about how the ending.

00:23:56 Speaker 3

And the Avalanche was done by basically narrating the stage directions, which I I liked as a as a technique and as a way of solving that big theatrical problem.

00:24:04 Speaker 3

But I thought because the rest of the play had also been quite.

00:24:07 Speaker 3

Restrained it almost.

00:24:08 Speaker 3

Didn't feel like a huge contrast, whereas if we'd.

00:24:11 Speaker 3

Had you know?

00:24:12 Speaker 3

Uhm, send points.

00:24:14 Speaker 3

Like that whole scene with and that I struggle with a knife.

00:24:16 Speaker 3

Was car and I think if we'd.

00:24:18 Speaker 3

Had a lot more of that and physical.

00:24:19 Speaker 3

Drama than that more cold, new delivered ending would have landed.

00:24:24 Speaker 3

A bit better for me.

00:24:24 Speaker 1

I think, yeah, that's really interesting. I mean I.

00:24:27 Speaker 1

Was I'm, you know, the wonderful privilege to be able to sit next to an actual theatre maker who's?

00:24:31

It's not.

00:24:32 Speaker 1

Really knows what to do.

00:24:34 Speaker 1

With with stage.

00:24:35 Speaker 1

And I was thinking all the time I want to ask you, would you 'cause this production hovered between realism and symbolism in a way?

00:24:37 Speaker 5

And I do not like that.

00:24:39 Speaker 4

That most people.

00:24:43 Speaker 1

I mean it was.

00:24:43 Speaker 1

Kind of trying to be both props would.

00:24:46 Speaker 1

You have gone completely.

00:24:47 Speaker 1

In into the kind of more in the way that when you.

00:24:50 Speaker 1

With your production, it's true it's.

00:24:52 Speaker 1

True, it's true where you can indicate things.

00:24:55 Speaker 1

Through, let's say, a bucket of gold paint really powerfully becomes something else and would you have gone completely in that direction with?

00:25:04 Speaker 1

This production, would you have said?

00:25:06 Speaker 1

Let's let's not even show the the woman.

00:25:09 Speaker 1

Clad in black, you know.

00:25:11 Speaker 1

There there's a way.

00:25:12 Speaker 1

That you can do this, you can.

00:25:13 Speaker 1

Do it suggestively or I don't.

00:25:15 Speaker 1

Know I just throw that out there.

00:25:17 Speaker 3

Yeah, I'm not sure.

00:25:19 Speaker 3

I think I definitely would have tried to find 'cause within the players. Well, there's this struggle between the kind of civilised like high art world and then this very elemental.

00:25:29 Speaker 3

Rough bear hunter. Yeah, and I think I would try to make more.

00:25:34 Speaker 3

That struggle between kind of nature and culture.

00:25:37

Oh no.

00:25:38 Speaker 3

So I guess it's like me again saying I'm swimming in the.

00:25:40 Speaker 3

River I think I.

00:25:41 Speaker 3

Would have wanted something a bit rougher to contrast with what was very and kind of pristine otherwise.

00:25:49 Speaker 2

Yeah, maybe even bring a dogs on for the.

00:25:50 Speaker 3

Bring your dogs.

00:25:52 Speaker 1

Let's talk about how you do that.

00:25:55 Speaker 3

I said, do you think going back to your earlier point so it's a different question about you. Had one English speaking actor and it was interesting that it was all time. Who was, I guess the kind of outside.

00:26:08 Speaker 3

I wondered whether because we had talked on our reading as well, how Irene's character is something of a foreigner as well.

00:26:18 Speaker 2

Yeah, right?

00:26:18 Speaker 3

I think that might have been an interesting choice if they've done that. I was thinking she'd be English speaking.

00:26:21 Speaker 1

Yeah, yeah.

00:26:24 Speaker 1

Yeah, it's true.

00:26:26 Speaker 1

Can I ask you about the knife she keeps talking about? 'cause I didn't see a knife but she said I have a knife.

00:26:33 Speaker 1

I had this knife and sort of indicating that she's bumped off her husband. Her husband either committed to his after she's.

00:26:35 Speaker 5

Right?

00:26:38 Speaker 1

Killed one of.

00:26:39 Speaker 1

Them or something, but it's there's a murderous kind.

00:26:42 Speaker 1

You know angle to this. This woman slightly unhinged.

00:26:44 Speaker 3

The whole situation.

00:26:46 Speaker 1

And did you did?

00:26:47 Speaker 1

You want to.

00:26:48 Speaker 1

See a.

00:26:48 Speaker 3

Knife I'd like to see him now.

00:26:49 Speaker 4

'cause I I would have liked.

00:26:50 Speaker 3

Again, or at least have so then pointed out that quite a lot of that scene is cut where you kind of thing.

00:26:50 Speaker 1

To have seen a knife.

00:26:55 Speaker 2

Yeah, I think we meant to.

00:26:57 Speaker 2

See a knife you.

00:26:57 Speaker 1

Yeah, isn't it in there, yeah.

00:27:00 Speaker 1

Doesn't she's kind of brandish it?

00:27:02 Speaker 3

She's coming for her, coming for her revenge.

00:27:02 Speaker 2

Yeah, she throws the knife and then she she throws the knife and and then and then Rubeck grabs.

00:27:05 Speaker 3

Isn't something so taking, yeah?

00:27:09 Speaker 2

It as he says, give.

00:27:10 Speaker 2

Me that knife and he says no, you're.

00:27:11 Speaker 2

Not having it and then you have a bit of a.

00:27:14 Speaker 2

Fight over it.

00:27:14 Speaker 2

Before they have their semi reconciliation.

00:27:17 Speaker 2

And then it.

00:27:18 Speaker 2

Right, but avalanche all of that was touched. I think. I think that's important. I'm not, I don't, I don't. I'm not sure why.

00:27:19 Speaker 3

Yeah, I miss feeling.

00:27:24 Speaker 3

I guess because, well, maybe you know we talked about how the production is interested in this rekindling, and maybe that's a bit of a problem when you go with with that idea.

00:27:26 Speaker 4

Right?

00:27:30 Speaker 2

I've lost my yeah.

00:27:32 Speaker 2

Yeah yeah, yeah.

00:27:34 Speaker 2

Because there was a strange sweetness to the conclusion, wasn't there when he stood there holding hands, and his music came out and he looked at each other and they said, is there any chance I really can recover our love?

00:27:44 Speaker 2

No, I don't think so. But you know everything the music, the setting, the holding hands or they were pushing towards them.

00:27:51 Speaker 2

Wanting them to get back together almost even if the strip was saying no but had they had that fight with the then I had a possibility of death, but maybe it wouldn't have been.

00:28:00 Speaker 2

We'd be more ambiguous as to whether they would say you should make that decision.

00:28:03 Speaker 5

Or not, yeah.

00:28:05 Speaker 3

And whether that was a good idea?

00:28:08 Speaker 1

That could be signalling or.

00:28:12 Speaker 1

The end of our podcast, should we draw draw a line under it and a bubbling stream across it?

00:28:19 Speaker 1

Thank you both and and this was a great occasion to have a chat about this when we dead awaken.