

*Extract from Act One Scene One of 'Slowly Going Under...' by David Weedall*

**The action of the play takes place some time later this century.**

*(KAZZIE (F) commences playing her Kazoo, YERVAN (M) looks on)*

YERVAN: Oh no.... not that din again! Why can't I be allowed to live in peace? Just a little tranquillity is all that's required! But no! I have been permitted to live on the upper floor of a building where the simple pleasures of silence cannot be imbued! No, here it seems, we have noise polluters of every kind. Shouters, callers, kazoo players and even more besides!

KAZZIE: It's a new composition, Yervan! Do you like it?

YERVAN: Oh, preserve me!!

KAZZIE: Well, aren't you interested to know what it's called?

YERVAN: But of course! My interest shows no bounds!

KAZZIE: Well, come on then... ask me!

YERVAN: Ask you what?

KAZZIE: Ask me the title of my new composition!

YERVAN: *Kazzie?*

KAZZIE: Yeah?

YERVAN: *What is the title of your new composition?*

KAZZIE: My new composition is entitled, 'What would have happened to the world, if past generations had taken heed to the warnings that CO2 emissions would lead to global warming and the subsequent melting of the polar icecaps?'

YERVAN: Umm. Well... that's.... catchy!

KAZZIE: You mean, you like it?

YERVAN: It certainly is.... snappy.... and to the point!

KAZZIE: It's in four movements.

YERVAN: Four eh? Disappointing! I thought you usually went for five?

KAZZIE: The first movement reminds us how the vast majority of the world's great cities were built on or near to the coast. Located originally by the sea to utilise fishing and trading abroad, which helped them grow to the size they became.

YERVAN: Yes, I think I sensed that theme coming through the composition, even in that... that short time of 'kazooing'!

KAZZIE: You did? Excellent! The second is even more dramatic...

YERVAN: Oh no! I mean...*really?* More dramatic?

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KAZZIE: ....underlining how these cities became vulnerable to a rise in sea levels. Just a metre or so rise meant that the ocean flowed into city streets at high tide.

YERVAN: Yes, I suppose you could call that the er... the 'damp feet movement'... that is, if you haven't already given it a name?

KAZZIE: Some fifty years later and a rise of a further ten meters meant holding water back by the hugely expensive Flood Defence Programmes, became virtually impossible. New York, Miami, Bombay, Sydney, and Tokyo were just a few of the cities submerged, giving us the unrecognisable world that we know today!!

YERVAN: Yeah... it certainly is unrecognisable! I mean, who would believe this is all that is left of a place once called London?

KAZZIE: Now you need to ask me about the third movement.

YERVAN: And the third movement?

KAZZIE: Ah, now I'm pleased you asked me that! The third speaks to us of an invasion of water into most cities that now had to be evacuated. Listen! *(She commences a dramatic burst on the kazoo that lasts about thirty seconds. YERVAN looks to the heavens for mercy, but eventually can stand it no longer)*

YERVAN: And I'm grasping all of this by merely listening to you playing?

KAZZIE: You are? Oh, excellent! *(She continues)*

YERVAN: Oh yes! I mean, if you hadn't told me the theme, it was obvious by the err... the rhythm... the err... the cadenzas!

KAZZIE: You really think so? Oh, Yervan, you understand my music more than anyone! Now you have to ask me about the fourth...

YERVAN: I do?

KAZZIE: Yes. You do want to ask me don't you?

YERVAN: Oh... I do!

KAZZIE: Well the fourth is a lament....

YERVAN: Oh, cheerful!

KAZZIE: .... taking a retrospective look at how this atrocious mess all came about. That at the turn of the century, if only people had taken notice of the warning signs like the Arctic ice sheet being forty percent thinner during the summers etc.....

YERVAN: But instead they listened to scientists aligned to big business who claimed it was nothing more than a hoax?

KAZZIE: Exactly! That if only they had listened to the conservationists who were warning that arctic temperatures were at their warmest for four hundred years and that within sixty, the melting process of the polar ice caps would become irreversible!

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YERVAN: Irreversible!

KAZZIE: But that man was blinded by his own short term interests of profit and personal comforts. Later, parts of Britain commenced sinking as the north and west of Iceland rose through loss of the weight of the glaciers from the last Ice Age. Global sea levels rose, largely due to thermal expansion... and the flooding commenced! Like this!! (*She commences another frantic kazoo playing period of about twenty seconds*) And there we have it! Shall I play you that last bit of the forth movement, now?

YERVAN: No... really... not just now. Whilst I like your theme, I'm very... err...very busy, just at the moment!

KAZZIE: Busy?

YERVAN: Busy... on the look out for the Float Kitchen!

KAZZIE: Oh, Yervan. You've not let your rations run out again?

YERVAN: Only a day sooner than they should have! But we're given such measly portions, to last such a very long time! Anyway dried rations never really were my thing, and cause me such considerable constipation!

KAZZIE: That's true for us all...

YERVAN: I still get hungry... very hungry indeed! And what with so little food to last such a very long time, well, it's a wonder I'm not even more depressed, than I already am!

KAZZIE: You seemed happy enough at last night's 'Joke Time Out!'

YERVAN: But that was last night... when everything was so much fun! But during the day, with so little left to occupy one's mind, it's no wonder one's thoughts inevitably turn to... well.... food! Or, in my case, the lack of it!

KAZZIE: Oh, I'm alright! My music takes up so much of my time!

YERVAN: Yes.... yes.... I've been meaning to ask you about that.

KAZZIE: About what?

YERVAN: About where you obtain the paper to write down your compositions?

KAZZIE: Paper! Oh, come on Yervan, that paper's impossible to obtain!

YERVAN: That's exactly my point! So I can only assume that you must have a secret source? A clandestine Undergrou... err... Underwater arrangement... like I wish that I had for... well.... food!

KAZZIE: It's all up there!

YERVAN: Where?

KAZZIE: Up there, in my head! That's where I compose it and that's where it's stored! The fact that I can't write it down is of little importance!

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YERVAN: I see.

KAZZIE: You really think, that after all the time you've known me, I am the sort to conspire with the Underwater?

YERVAN: Well, anyone can be pushed to the point of....

KAZZIE: Of what?

YERVAN: Under enough pressure.... anyone could always resort to....

KAZZIE: Well.... thank you very much! That's the last time I ever share music with you! And to think that you thought that I would stoop to the level of.... the Underwater!!

YERVAN: O.K. I was wrong!

KAZZIE: I'll say you were wrong!!

YERVAN: I was wrong.... wrong to think that of you!!

KAZZIE: Yes, you bloody were! *(Pause)* Anyway.... thanks!

YERVAN: Don't mention it!

KAZZIE: I won't! *(Pause)* So you'll listen to my forth movement then?

YERVAN: Er.... yeah! I guess....

KAZZIE: That's great! The fourth movement, then! *(She commences kazooing again)*

YERVAN: Yeah...it's great.... the fourth bloody movement! *(A further pained expression comes upon YERVAN'S face as KAZZIE continues to play merrily)* Some breakfast, and some peace and quiet! Anything for some breakfast... and some bleedin' peace and quiet!

***(The Lights Fade)***

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'Slowly Going Under...' is a slightly absurd play for six actors (3f 3m) that deals with the problem of global warming. It has a running time of approx 80 mins. It was written to be easily produced with very few props and minimal furniture on a low budget.

The play was first performed at the Brighton Fringe Festival 2006 and at The White Bear, London.

'...the talented actors created a claustrophobia and dread that negated any need for environmental lectures. More powerful was the dystopian vision of the future that lingered afterwards in the mind' Three Weeks

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