

MOTORIZED DELUSION - Libretto

Opera Forward Festival 2025

SCENE 1

A car crash has happened.

Alicia steps with much struggle out of the car.

She limps around the wreck and ends up stumbling in front of the head of the cow. At that moment a light shines out of the eyes, into the eyes of Alicia, followed by the music starting to play.

Her imagination starts beings builded up and she imagines that she hit a cow.

ALICIA

I see a beast; its head is resting near me.
I see flies, so many flies, swarming endlessly.

I grab its head,
I shake it, I try,
but those damn flies,
just won't fly by.

So, I start waving,
waving them away,
trying to clear the air,
around it's face.

It just keeps on crying,
and crying,
and I keep on waving,
and waving,
but the flies keep on swarming.

It's never enough,
it's never,
never enough.

I take its face,
and hold it in my hands,
watch as the flies,
crawl over its glands.

Light: at the first sentence, while she holds the head of the cow, there is only a certain part of the cow that gives a little light. That light spreads through the body.

*Into its eye sockets,
into its mind –
I try to save it,
but I'm falling behind.*

The couple enters the stage, with their bikes and torches.

*Its legs are stiff,
as if it's already gone,
but in that broken body,
the blood flows strong.*

*I feel its heart,
beating under my skin,
its breathing steady,
its cries within.*

*This beast,
this beast,
it's covered in craters and scars.
Hollow spaces never filled,
tight skin stretched too far.*

*If I could just strike –
just press my hand flat –
and free the beast,
free the beast,
at last.*

SCENE 2

They walk over to the crime scene with the lights, and notice Alicia. Their intent is to focus on her and to make sure she's okay, but they end up focusing more on each other. Alicia keeps on hugging to the head of the cow. Not noticing that their there. The couple watches from a distance. They eventually slowly go ahead to touch her by her shoulder

HENK

You wave and you fight,
but the air stays thick—

INGRID (onderbreekt hem, met een zucht)

No matter your effort, Henk, it won't let her fix.

HENK (stil even, kijkt naar Alicia, twijfelend)

You clutch its face, you beg, and you try —

INGRID (schudt haar hoofd, sneller en harder sprekend)

But even her hands, Henk, can't hold back goodbye.

HENK (proberend wat in te brengen)

It's legs —

INGRID (snijdt hem af, met een gebaar naar Alicia)

Its legs don't move, its cries grow faint.

What she's holding onto is slipping away!

HENK (op zachtere toon, naar Alicia)

Some wounds can't be mended...

INGRID (vult aan, dwingend maar niet onvriendelijk)

No matter your plea, not every pain can be set free.

HENK (fluisterend, bijna tegen zichzelf)

Maybe... maybe the answer is not to repair...

INGRID (rustiger, bijna zacht nu, naar Alicia)
But to release the weight you bear.

BEIDEN (naar Alicia, in koor)
Let it go.
Let it rest.

SCENE 3

Alicia's best friend, Anna comes running on the stage because of the emergency. Maybe not running, but with a lot of urgency, wondering what the noise was that she heard.

ANNA (to the couple)
I live on the hills and heard a loud bang.
What's going on?

INGRID & HENK
(to Anna, moving their heads and body at the same time)
There has been a crash.

ANNA
Is there anyone hurt?

INGRID
There's one girl, she is not badly hurt.

ANNA
Where is she?

INGRID
By the car, over there... she's acting strange.

ANNA

Strange? How?

At that moment, Alicia walks around the car and appears in front them three. Anna's eyes are getting big as she realizes that it is her friend. She runs towards her.

ANNA

Alicia?

(beneath her breath) Oh my God, that is my friend.

(to the couple, while she is running to Alicia)
Have you called an ambulance? Call an ambulance!

The couple goes out of the picture to call an ambulance. Alicia remains silent, her gaze fixed on the animal, her body tense, resisting, not noticing what's happening around her.

ANNA

Are you okay? I need you to sit down. They are calling an ambulance.

Melody of the song that is keeping her in a trance. Alicia is still ignoring Anna and everything that is happening around her. She is still singing the melody of the song that is keeping her in her trance, but she is slowly getting out of it.

ANNA

(keeps saying things to check on Alicia. She eventually fades to the background. She opens the emergency kits and gets stuff out of it) Are you okay?

Alicia is starting to doubt her imagination. In that moment, the top layer of the cow's skin levitates. She watches it in awe, even takes some step back.

ANNA

(yells at Alicia) Hey!

*She enters the car and plugs the cable out of her phone.
It's a direct action, with no intent behind it.*

ALICIA

*(snaps her head a second after the cable has been plugged
out) Huh?*