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Breakdown

Opera in Three Acts

Libretto by John Breen

CHARACTERS

Landy Worker 1..............................................(Tenor)
Landy Worker 2:.............................................(Tenor)
Landy Worker 3:.............................................(Baritone)
Marina Abramović.....................................(Soprano)
Marina Assistant.......................................(Contralto)
Michael Landy..........................................(Tenor)
Marina Female Punter 1...............................(Soprano)
Marina Male Punter 1.................................(Tenor)
Marina Male Punter 2.................................(Baritone)
Landy Punter 1.........................................(Mezzo Soprano)
Landy Punter 2.........................................(Soprano)
Marina Male Punter 4.................................(Tenor)
Marina Female Punter 2..............................(Mezzo Soprano)
Marina Male Punter 3.................................(Baritone)
Joseph Beuys..........................................(Baritone)
A Journalist.............................................(Soprano)
Michael Landy’s Mother............................(Soprano)
Barry le Va.............................................(Baritone)
INSTRUMENTS

Flutes/Piccolo
Flute
2 Oboes
Clarinet in B flat
Clarinet in B flat/Bass Clarinet
2 Bassoons

2 Horns in F
2 Trumpets
2 Trombones

Timpani
Side Drum
Bass Drum
Triangle
Cymbals
Glockenspiel
Xylophone
Metal Agogo
Maracas
Ratchet

Harp

Violins I&II
Violas
Cellos
Basses
ACT 1

The stage is divided into three spaces; two clearly defined spaces down stage that look like an empty shop space and a gallery space respectively. The gallery has a table in it on which is placed a large amount of seemingly unrelated objects. In the shop space there is a large machine for grinding. Upstage there is an empty gallery space that takes up the entire width of the stage. There is nothing in it. A man enters this upstage gallery. He busies himself setting up a video camera. When he is happy with its position he turns it on. At this point he walks to one side of the gallery. He waits for a few moments and then he starts to run. He runs without slowing down until he hits the wall on the other side of the gallery. As he hits the wall the music for scene 1 begins.
What's wrong with you, look at him, this is hard for him.

He can't do anything illegal.

Din-kytoy red bread-ven
spec-ial?

These are just things that I bought. They have no mean ing. It's a thron.

You want them? Hun... you.
I want you to record what happens.
just don't in ter - plate Your
Ma.
someone rang her at home
said I was hanging
naked from the ceiling
at the galaxy.
she threw a heavy crystal ash tray at my head. (curved to me I could just let it)

smash my skull. to see what it's like. but how to come back? so I moved my head.
they won't use the gun
What use is a gun without a bullet
and the bullet
I will stand in your umbrella if you want me to
I will protect you, do you want me to? If you want me to, do you want me to? She has
I could make her scream. I could make her scream.
this will make her scream nice for her pub lic nice for her pub lic

rit. mano mosso
MMP1 draws smile on marina's face with lipstick
Barry Le Va runs and hits a wall
ACT 1 SCENE 2

Oboe

Clarinet in Bb

Clarinet in Bb

Bassoon

Horn in F

Snare Drum

Landy Punter 1

Landy Punter 2

Worker 3

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabass

Moderato – 100

lento

a tempo

It’s a gesture

It’s a sin

Spit-ting in the face of the poor

It’s a waste

It’s a work of art
Fl.

Fl.

Cl.

Cl.

Bsn.

Hn.

Hn.

B. Tbn.

S. D.

LP1

fa - ther's coat

Peo - ple don't think. No - body cares

W3

if will make peo-ple think. It will make peo-ple think.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Ch.
Why are you here if you be-love that

One- ool paint-ting by

the moomay
Somebody painted that, Took time to make it beautiful.
poco a poco accelerando

f slightly detached

He would wrap me in it as a

van-ished then the vault fell in.
Act 1 Finale
Fl.

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Cl.

Bsn.

Bsn.

Hn.

Hn.

Thn.

Vib.

Hp.

MFP1

MMP1

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.
getting faster and more frustrated until shouting

a tempo

Don't cut her leave her alone

feed you, dress you, tick-le you bash you slash you hold you paint you wash you kush you

Look at me
acc., poco a poco


Sweets for thesweet We are being nice to you.

Smile for us! Smile for us! No? Then cut her! Make her smile!
The police might not think so.

I am the blade but she is guiding me She is fulfilling possible for anything that happens.
Ring them, they'll think it's a joke. I read she took pills be-fore may-be they made her cra...
Heavy and sustained \( \approx 100 \)

accel poco a poco

\( \text{pp} \)

\( \text{MMP} \)

\( \text{MFP} \)

\( \text{Vla. I} \)

\( \text{Vln. II} \)

\( \text{Vla.} \)

\( \text{Vc.} \)

\( \text{Cb.} \)
Joseph Beuys whose head is covered in gold leaf enters with a dead hare. He uncovers a picture and starts explaining it to the dead animal. After each picture is explained he uncovers another, again explaining it to the dead hare. This all happens downstage in front of the other action.
Act 2 Scene 1
How To Explain Pictures To A Dead Hare

A picture represents something in the world. We see something in this world and we try to re-create it within a frame.

This frame is a rectangle. It has sure eight feet by four feet. These are axes manifest. Your feet are smaller so it would appear larger to you.
This is a picture of an im-a-gin-ar-y wo-man
She is float-ing in a stream
She holds flo-wers in her hand
When I look at the paint-ing I feel she is bramble-fud for a hu-man
She will float in her madness.
the man, floats above her and she kisses him.
They have to kill the other humans. They won't even eat them.
rallentando

You are sorry that you can no longer see it. My love.
My mother was right, my mother was right the world is full of monsters. My mother was right, my mother was right.
Picc.

Fl.1

Ob.1

Cl.1

B. Cl.

Bsn.1

Bsn.2

Hn.1

Hn.2

Tbn.1

Tbn.2

Timp.

MMP2

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Ch.
mothers won't cry mothers won't cry the world is full of monsters the world is full of monsters

there is no meaning no one will revive her
Barry Le Va runs and hits a wall
I come here every day and shred my stuff.

Destroy my his...
Fl.

Fl. 2

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

Cl. 1

Cl. 2

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

Hn. 1

Hn. 2

S. D.

Tamb.

Journ.

Lan.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla

Ve.

Ch.

cat called into how to do - fail!

What will happen to rats?

And your girl-friend?

yes

I'll grind him up with every other else. That's just a little joke.
Journ

Lan

pet or a girl-friend aren't real-ly po
essions are they? They can leave when u-ve they want.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla

Vc

Ch

So you'll still have a girl-friend?

May-be she won't want a man who has no-thing
what's wrong with orning some-thing you can

You think your bet-ter than us.
it all been done:

What's wrong with pain-ting
What's wrong with pain-ting
What's wrong with pain-ting
What's wrong with pain-ting

stop the king whin-ning
stop the king while-ning
Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

Cl. 1

Cl. 2

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

Hn. 1

Hn. 2

Tpt. 1

Tpt. 2

Tbn. 1

B. Tbn. 2

B. Dr.

Cym.

S. D.

Lan.

Vla. 1

Vla. 2

Vla. 3

Vc.

Ch.

Slower \( \frac{d}{2} \)
My hus-bond died, that was his coat.

Why do you want it?

cousin gave it to me.
It was his father's coat he loved it. Saved up ev'ry week for months then bought it.
Mother: smell of it. The smell of it. Before

Wks: then's coat Look at her this isn't right

Lan: won't get paid get back to work have to destroy the coat
Mothers

He was ever thought of he loved that coat
He was told his little boy to have it when he grew up

Vln. I

Fl.

Cl.

Bus. I

Hn.

He would be quarrel it to him
A metaphor for my husband's tongue
We worked like galley slaves to give him a better life
and this is
There’s a right way of doing this. A right way of sweeping the floor. A right way of cooking the breakfast.
Act 2 Finale

Allegro \( \approx 135 \)  
Slightly held back  
A tempo \( \approx 135 \)
My mo-thar was right, my mo-thar was right

de-stroy the coat de-stroy the coat de-stroy the coat

stop this, some-one should stop this

in mind is-at it!
My mother was right my mother was right

stop him he's mad stop him he's mad stop him he's mad

I'm just following or... does she take full responsibility don't you?
ACT 3

As the music plays, all of the spaces dissolve into a single space. Helpers put Barry le Va on a stretcher. All eyes are on the artists as the scene mutates into something with the feel of a court room.
ACT 3
my head hurts

what do you ex-pect?

what do you ex-pect?
Marina: did you see that did you? did you see that? the gun? He load-ed the gun. He did did-it he he load-ed it
Chorus: he did he load-ed it

Vln. 1
Vc.
Ch.
saw him. saw him
you said this would happen this
this would happen
now it has now it has now it has

this would happen
I nearly died He could have done it. Could have done it He_

You said that this would happen You said that this would happen You said that this would happen You said that this would happen...
I had a crown of thorns
I was bathed in oils
Some-one prayed I heard praying.
did you get paid for this
will you buy more stuff
no-one will say your name
So what does it mean?
Getting angry

Marina

juice.

Chorus

You fame your new rosie on the world for what? for what?
molto cres.

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

Tbn. 1

B. Tbn.

S. D.

B. D.

Cym.

Marina

car-ping cease this car-ping cease this car-ping cease this car-ping cease this...

"quiet! stop, stop everything"

Le Va

Chorus


for what? for what for what for what for what

molto cres.
Le Va struggles slowly to his knees watched by everyone present

Can we just
Le Va

watch this They will watch this But there is no thing to see.

The tenders continue to care for Le Va.
Let him look to his own care
He did this to him-
They all start to help the three performers.
Gently moving \( \div 80 \)

Be-ing or not be-ing

One is part of the other

One is

Gently moving \( \div 80 \)
even toned and sustained (no bulges!)
that, more than that!

It's what is be tween us

That's where we are.

I am no thing here

Out there, waves of i -
de - as - ri - a - ting
I am rea - ching out, rea - ching out
Marina: I'm reaching for reaching

Landy: I have family, I have love.

Beys: it cannot rest it cannot rest

Le Va: let it rest let it rest

Vla. I: slower
They were only things

marina's assistant & female part 1

It's time to go

It's time to go

It's time to go
mamma exits slowly taking in the room one more time as she leaves

landly and le va leave

chorus start to leave

go time to go time to go it's time to go it's time