

The Story of Wu Wei Libretto

Single Act

Scene 1

The Womb

Electronic fixed-media introduction—*begin at blackout, blue side-trees slowly fade-in*

This introduction symbolizes the safety and peace of being in the womb. This peace is soon transformed as Wu Wei realizes her family is no longer safe and will soon lose everything to the People's Liberation Army under the Mao Regime.

Scene 2

Prologue

Live Performance—*begin when stage lights fade-in*

Wu Wei and her family sing text from a Buddhist chant embracing their familial union. The introduction chanting of the People's Liberation Army chorus drastically changes the trajectory of the piece as the soldiers' chant passages from The Little Red Book, and some of my own text.

Wu Wei, Mei, Huang, and Yao Lan

(Buddhist prayer- from Shasta Abbey)

We pray for peace in all the world;
We pray that evil may be overcome by good;
We pray for harmony in the Sangha,
and for the cessation of all disaster.

Soldier Chorus

Down! Down!
Down with traitors!

Fire burns in our veins
Winds howl in our lungs
We will fight with all our might
To keep our country straight!

We are the sons of Chairman Mao
We are the sons of Chairman Mao
Ahh!

Scene 3

Red Skeletons

Electronic fixed-media introduction—*begin after scream is cut off, then slowly fade in orange side-trees*

This interlude depicts the uncertainty that Wu Wei and her family face being targeted by the Peoples Liberation Army. The harsh reality that they could lose everything has become almost certain.

Scene 4

The Sound of Death

Live Performance—*begin when stage lights fade-in*

This is the climactic moment when Huang, the father, is murdered by the soldier who no longer will tolerate his lifestyle under the orders of Mao.

Soldier Chorus

Forward!

Forward!

Forward!

Forward!

Marching on the ground of the Motherland
Carry our hope of our people
We will fight!
With all our might.
We are an invincible power!
We are the sons and brothers of the workers and farmers
We are the arms of the People!
Fearless to fight bravely
Abolish the foes of revolution

The banner of Mao Zedong soars high!
Hear our thunderous rallying song!

Soldier

Comrades, march forth united to the battlefields of liberation
Forth to the frontiers of Motherland.

Soldier Chorus

Forward!

Forward!

Our army faces the sun
Marching towards the final victory
And the liberation of all our land!

Soldier
Open up!

Huang
Who's there?

Soldier Solo
Open up or we'll break down the door!

Huang
What?
What's going on here?

Soldier
You have five minutes to get out!
This fine house, is property...
Property of the state now!

Huang
This can't be right
I have done no harm
There must be a mistake

Soldier
Quiet!

Huang
But...

Soldier
Do not interrupt me!

Huang
I am a professor
I have a family

Yao Lan
(Out of sight; in prayer position)

Help!
Help us merciful Heavens!
We are in trouble

Please help us, are in trouble
Please keep Huang safe
He's a good man

He's done good for lots of people
His students,
His family needs him
Please! Save him!
Don't let them hurt him!
He's been nothing but peaceful

Huang

I cannot let you take our home
Where will my family live?
We have lived here over twenty-five years
My daughter grew up here

Soldier

You are coming with us!

Huang

I can't!

Soldier

You are coming with us!

Huang

My family
My students
They all need me!

Soldier

You are a teacher?
And a landlord?

Huang

Please sir! I cannot go!
I have done no harm!
(Kneels in prayer position)

Soldier

My orders come from Mao
According to the Land Reform Movement
You are the enemy!
(Sees Buddhist statue)
And a Buddhist? *(pauses)*

You despicable counterrevolutionary!
Living with so much food, land, and wealth!
You are the enemy!

Huang

Please!

I am begging you

I am a fair landlord

I just lowered rent last month!

Soldier

The problem can only be solved

By eradicating people like you!

Huang

Please! I cannot go!

I will submit to condemnation

Please don't hurt me!

Soldier

Let's go!

Huang

I can't!

Soldier

Let's go!

Move it!

You are coming with us

(Soldiers grab Huang Lee and begin to drag him out of his home)

Huang

My family!

My students!

They all need me!

Soldier

He has disobeyed Mao Zedong on multiple counts

He doesn't deserve to live

Soldier Chorus

Down with traitors!

Huang

(Soldiers forcefully drag him down aisle of audience)

Let me go!

Let me go!
Let me go you bastards!
(Forcibly bites the arm of the Soldier)

Soldier

That son of a bitch!
He bit me
That's it!
Kill him

(Soldiers put a black bag over Huang's face and drag him behind audience where he continues to struggle and scream for his life. Struggle ends when gunshot is heard)

Soldier Chorus

(From behind audience marching further away)

Down with traitors!
Down with traitors!
Down with the enemy!

Scene 5

The Aftermath

Electronic fixed-media introduction—*begin during the fade-out of the Soldiers Chorus, then slowly fade in red and orange side-trees*

This interlude represents the fatal aftermath of the incident when Wu Wei's father was killed by the soldier.

Scene 6

Mother's Death

Live Performance—*begin when stage lights fade-in*

This movement depicts the death of the mother from being heartbroken after the loss of her husband.

Mei

These sobs and tears come from an unhappy heart
Huang's absence leaves me bare and brittle
Life is short, and little is left of mine

Wu Wei

I am here, by your side

Each step of the way

Mei

I lay here fading
I've lost everything
I have nothing to live for anymore

Wu Wei

Everything will be okay

Mei

Huang was my life!
My best friend!
My husband!
Without him, I have nothing

Mei and Wu Wei

There's nothing,
There's nothing like family

Wu Wei

I know
I know

Mei

Now we are alone
No family
No home
We have nothing
Why did this ever happen?

Wu Wei

Don't let what happened
Harden your heart
We cannot change the past
Only see the scars that it left

Mei

I hope you can forgive me
I didn't have much to give you

Wu Wei

You did everything you could

Mei Lee

Sweet daughter,

I will miss you

Wu Wei

I'm here, mama

I'm won't go anywhere

I will always, be by your side

Mei

If it weren't for you,

I wouldn't be alive

Wu Wei

You will live on in me

Rest now

Mei

Be brave my child...

Wu Wei

Don't speak...

Mei

(Dying)

I'll live on in you...

Wu Wei

Mama

Mama don't leave me

Mama?

(Lights fade while Wu Wei holds Mei in bed while she dies)

Scene 7

Angelic Conversations

Electronic fixed-media coda—*begin during the fade-out of Mother's Death Aria, then slowly fade in pink side-trees and ceiling light*

This coda depicts the end of the story where Wu Wei is left on her own and struggles to accept her fate. This piece is about letting go.

(Lights fade then stage lights fade-in)