

Tales of Liberation Libretto by Rebecca Simpson, music by Andy Pape

Extract 1

Situation: Denmark during the last year of World War II. In the Vesterlund household, Vesterlund has reluctantly accepted the presence in hiding of Hannah, a refugee Polish Jew. His two children Karin and Jannick are unaware she is in the house, though Karin has met her once before.

Dawn. Library and Staircase. Late August. VESTERLUND is attending HANNAH; bringing food, removing slops. KARIN comes down the stairs, almost sleep-walking.

KARIN:

...beats, it beats, it beats, it beats, it...
blood in my head
blood in my ears

...birds, no birds, no trains, no birds, no...
why do I wake
just before dawn?

...beats, it beats, it beats, it beats, it...
night after night
creak on the stair

...trains, no trains, no birds, no trains, no...
blood in my head
blood in my ears

...beats, it beats, it beats, it beats, it...
is there a noise?
is it my head?

...beats, it beats, it beats, it beats, it...

(VESTERLUND hands HANNAH wrapped food. They communicate quietly.)

VESTERLUND:

Here, Hannah.

Extract 2

JANNICK executes a dream-state, (anti-) war dance.

JANNICK:

Division, division.

Tanks and armoured cars,
planes and falling bombs.
Skulls under faces,
limbs changing places.

Division, division.
Life's just a prison.

Who let this happen?
Where did it all begin?
Who takes decisions
that lead to war?