

The Butterfly's Spell

Chamber Opera by Edward Lambert

after the play *El maleficio de la mariposa* by Federico Garcia Lorca

"When the caterpillar is fully grown, it spins a button of silk which it uses to fasten its body to a leaf or a twig. However, if the chrysalis was near the ground (such as if it fell off from its silk pad), the butterfly would find another vertical surface to rest upon and harden its wings..." (Wikipedia)

Overview

The Butterfly's Spell is a chamber opera based on an early play by Federico Garcia Lorca (1898-1936). An expressionist or symbolist drama arising from the writer's identity issues, it depicts the world of insects - giving fine opportunities for exotic costumes and staging.

It tells how a Poet Beetle rejects the love of the devoted Sylvia in favour of an impossible infatuation with a fragile Butterfly whose destiny it is to fly away, leaving the Poet to die of a broken heart. A sad tale, but a comic opera which also features a drunken Scorpion, an overbearing Mother and Two Fireflies which glow in the dark.

Suitable for all ages.

Duration: 70 minutes - Act One 40 minutes, Act Two 30 minutes (interval optional)

Characters

Two Young Fireflies , <i>girl & boy</i>	soprano & mezzo-soprano
Sylvia , <i>a young lady beetle</i> &	soprano (& dancer)
The Butterfly	
Mother Beetle , <i>an elderly lady</i>	contralto
The Poet Beetle , <i>Mother Beetle's son</i>	tenor
Doctor Cockroach , <i>healer and teacher</i>	baritone
The Old Scorpion , <i>a forester</i>	bass

Instruments

Violin, viola, cello, flute (+ piccolo, alto flute), bassoon, marimba, harp

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Synopsis

The philosophising Doctor tells the audience that it will hear a tale about a young Poet Beetle who fell in love with a Butterfly and came to a sorry end. As the stage is transformed into the insects' village and the sun rises in a brilliant dawn, he meets the Poet's Mother to whom he expresses some foreboding at the signs he has seen. He makes his way home and the Mother goes about her chores, while Two Young Fireflies introduce Sylvia, a wealthy young lady who is threatening to drown herself for love. The Mother knows full well that the object of her infatuation is her son, the Poet, and when he enters she resolves to see the couple married. He, however, is pre-occupied with writing a masterpiece and there follows a lively trio. When the young pair is finally left alone, he cannot bring himself to propose and Sylvia departs broken-hearted.

In the heat of the day, the Old Scorpion enters the scene. He is rough and rude and constantly drunk. He teases and chases the young Fireflies, who are rescued when the Mother rushes in, brandishing her broom. Just at that moment, an injured Butterfly is brought in (played by the same singer as Sylvia). Everyone gathers round, concerned for her fate and awe-struck by her beauty. Her wounds are tended to, and she sings of strange things in far-off places. It quickly becomes obvious that the Poet has fallen deeply in love with her. The act ends in fear and sorrow as the sun sets.

By way of an interlude, in the cool of the evening the insects sing a ballad about the moon who, disguised as a lady, came to the gypsy's forge and abducted a young lad.

The Doctor resumes the story. The Butterfly is brought to a forest clearing bathed in the moonlight which will help cure her wounds. Her song becomes more melodious as she recovers and the glowing Fireflies - who drink sweet dew-drops and sing of love - appear in her dreams. The Poet enters, filled with longing for the beautiful Butterfly and for a few moments their voices intertwine. They know, however, that her destiny is to fly away.

The Scorpion is now hungry and, coming across the Butterfly, decides to make her into a meal. The Poet protects her, but the Scorpion's tail lashes out at him and he is stung by its deadly venom. Once again, the Mother's broom prevents further catastrophe, but she is too late to save her son who dies as the dawn breaks and the Butterfly takes flight. As the Fireflies cover the Poet in rose petals, the cast reminds us that the Poet's songs will live forever.

The Butterfly's Spell

Prologue

DOCTOR COCKROACH

(to the AUDIENCE)

My friends, we will perform for you now
a sad tale of a creature who reached for the stars
and discovered only a broken heart.

Once upon a time, when life was peaceful and serene,
there was a distant meadow where insects lived
beneath the shade of a great cypress-tree.

They were happy; they drank dewdrops,
 instilled in their children a fear of their gods
 and gave themselves to the pleasures of love in the lush, green grass.
 But one day there was a young beetle
 who longed to go beyond such love;
 who reached for a thing that could not be grasped.
 This lovelorn creature perished in poetry
 when Love came disguised as Death.
 An old wood-nymph from a play by Shakespeare
 told me this tale one autumn evening, saying:
 "We must remember that the rhythm of a leaf
 stirred by the wind is the same as that of a distant star;
 that the words which the shady fountain speaks
 are heard in the waves which cry them again.
 We have no right to scorn the lowliest creatures.
 We must all be humble: in Nature all things are equal."
 The old wood nymph said nothing more.
 So now the play: when it is over, go to the forest
 and give your thanks to the old wood-nymph,
 some quiet evening when the flocks have been gathered in.

Act One

The sun rises on the insects' village.

DOCTOR

Look! the stage is that distant meadow where the insects lived
 beneath the shade of the great cypress tree.
 See the tiny path that weaves an arabesque across the grass
 and the insects' burrows clustered along it!
 Beyond is a pond surrounded by lilies;
 it is a brilliant dawn and the meadow is covered in dew.

MOTHER comes from her house with a handful of grass that serves as a broom. She is very old with one leg missing.

MOTHER (*looking out*)

What a fine morning! The dawn of a new day.

DOCTOR (*donning a cone-shaped hat embroidered with stars and a robe of dry moss*)

God's blessings on you too!

MOTHER

Now where are you off to?

DOCTOR

Into a dream that I, a flower in the grass,

am kissed by the lips of the dew-drops
which sprinkle my robe with stars.

MOTHER (*grumbling*)
Ah, writing poetry...

DOCTOR
Indeed!

MOTHER
... can easily make you ill.

DOCTOR
My heart is sorrowful. Yesterday a swallow told me
the stars would soon grow dim. And in the wood I saw a star,
pale and trembling, its petals falling like rain;
I watched it fade. Inside my heart a shadow fell.
'My friend', I cried, 'Where are the stars?'
'A fairy has died,' the swallow replied.
And, sure enough, by the trunk of the great oak,
the fairy of land and sea lay dead.

MOTHER
Who killed her?

DOCTOR
Love, for sure. And what about your son?
I thought he looked sad yesterday.

MOTHER
Madly in love.

DOCTOR
With Sylvia?

MOTHER
It is all a mystery to him.

DOCTOR
Well, he is a poet, just like his father: and charming, too.

MOTHER
Good friend, may the Good Lord Cockroach bless you
and make your dream of the flower come true.
Forget sadness and melancholy!
Life is too pleasant and its days too few:
this is the only time we have to enjoy it.

DOCTOR (*as though dreaming*)
The stars are fading...the fairy by the oak...

(He leaves; he is heard singing in the distance)

El prado está silencioso.
Ya parte el rocío a su cielo ignorado,
El viento rumoroso
Hasta nosotros llega perfumado.¹

MOTHER (*sweeping*)

I have enough to do! May the light guide you!

Un gusanito me dijo
Ayer tarde su querer;
No lo quiero hasta que tanga
Dos alas y cuatro pies.²

YOUNG FIREFLIES (*entering, to the AUDIENCE*)

Sylvia is enchanting. She gleams like jet
and her slender legs are nimble.
Graceful and pert, she is the best match in town.
But though she has risen early, she seems downcast...

*SYLVIA enters. She carries a parasol.
On her head she wears the golden shell of a ladybug.*

SYLVIA (*anguished*)

¿Dónde está el agua
Tranquila y fresca
Para que calme
Mi sed inquieta?

¿Por qué sendero
De la pradera
Me iré a otro mundo
Donde me quieran? ³

¹(*The fields are silent.
The dew departs to heavens unknown.
The murmuring breeze
brings us perfume.*)

²(*Last night a little worm
to me of love did sing.
I shan't love him until
he has four feet and tiny wings.*)

³(*Where are the waters
tranquil and serene
where I can quench
my restless thirst?
Which path can I take
from this meadow
that leads to another world
where I shall love?*)

MOTHER (*looking up from her chores*)

So young and yet so sad?

SYLVIA

My troubles are as deep as the lake.

MOTHER

Don't be silly! You're just deep in love...

When I was young we were innocent,
we didn't give in to lovers - (*wiping away a tear*)
there is a cure for lovesickness.

SYLVIA (*intrigued*)

What is it?

MOTHER

Clout the lovers twice a day
and keep them out of the grass!

SYLVIA

You're mocking me!

(*aside*) If only she knew it's her son I'm in love with.

MOTHER

(*aside*) I know it's my son she's in love with.

(*to Sylvia*) Tell me who he is!

SYLVIA (*swooning as she sees POET BEETLE approaching*)

Ah!

The Poet Beetle enters. In one of his feet – hands – he carries a piece of bark on which he has been writing a poem. SYLVIA sighs longingly.

YOUNG FIREFLIES (*to the AUDIENCE*)

Sylvia swoons: for she is in season and her love has approached.

Seeing her, the Young Poet is inspired to finish his new poem:

POET BEETLE (*singing his new poem, and completing it as he goes*)

Oh, poppy so red, standing tall in the meadow,

Would I were lovely like you!

You paint the heavens with your rosy tears

Wept at dawn in the dew.

You are the star that shines on this village,

The warmth to the glow worms at night.

I want you always to be by my side

To guide my way as I write.

May I not see these petals fade;

I kiss them with passion's burning.

And when at the end I am sent to my grave

For you my heart will be yearning.

SYLVIA

Ah! I feel his breath upon the breeze.
His body thrills me, his poet's dreamy eyes,
and heavenly golden whiskers...

MOTHER

(aside) She's rich and crazy too.
I'll force my son to woo her.
(pretending) Poor child, how you must suffer!
(aside) She is a splendiferous heiress!
(aloud) Child of my own flesh and blood,
you shall marry my son!
Wait here under the lilies; I'll talk some sense into him
and he'll do what he's told!

SYLIA

I shall be queen of this green meadow,
and love and happiness will be mine!

*(MOTHER BEETLE storms to the other side of the stage and jostles her son.
During the FIREFLIES' narration MOTHER & POET argue demonstratively)*

YOUNG FIREFLIES *(to the AUDIENCE)*

Mother Beetle praises Sylvia's beauty, charm and fortune,
while Sylvia herself sighs in rapture.
As you see, our young poet is a trim and refined youth,
distinguished by his golden antennae.
A visionary, a pupil of the famous Doctor,
he awaits a revelation which will change his life.
The sun is warm already...

POET BEETLE

I've told you, mother, I shan't get married.

MOTHER

Listen to me. Show some sense for once!
She has a priceless jewel, a piece of the sky;
a spacious house and all you could wish for.
She's a beauty, a rose! Tell her you love
her starry face, that you spend all hours
thinking only of her.

POET BEETLE

I've told you a thousand times, I shan't marry!

MOTHER *(raising her voice)*

You must! Do it for me - now!
I'll go and cook; you get engaged!

She leaves.

During the following SYLVIA & POET move slowly and tantalisingly closer together

SYLVIA

My heart needs kisses.

POET BEETLE

My dream shines in the star
that looks like a flower.

SYLVIA

Won't it wither in sunlight?

POET BEETLE

Clear water will quench its ardour.

SYLVIA

Where is your star?

POET BEETLE

In my dreams.

SYLVIA (*sadly*)

One day they will come true.

POET BEETLE

Then I will sing and recite madrigals
to the sweet sound of the breeze.

SYLVIA (*aside*)

My heart aches.
He doesn't love me.

POET BEETLE (*consoling*)

Please don't cry!

SYLVIA & POET (*to the AUDIENCE*)

For some moments, and piteously, we stand so close...

YOUNG FIREFLIES (*to the AUDIENCE*)

Then we, the Fireflies, come along the path
which weaves an arabesque across the grass,
playing ping-pong with balls of straw...

YOUNG FIREFLIES (*running up to SYLVIA*)

El novio y la novia,⁴
¡Eo! ¡eo! ¡oh!...

⁴ A boy and a girl!...

SYLVIA

If only we were wed!

POET BEETLE

Don't cry, Sylvia!

SYLVIA

My heart hurts so.

YOUNG FIREFLIES

El novio y la novia,
¡Eo! ¡eo! ¡oh!...

SYLVIA

¡Ay de mí, desdichada! I'm so miserable!

POET BEETLE

¡Qué triste situación! What a sorry affair!

SYLVIA and POET go their separate ways.

The FIREFLIES take cover as they hear the OLD SCORPION approach.

SCORPION (*drunk and singing*)

A little cocoon, so tasty and sweet to eat,
will nicely garnish a joint of meat to eat!
Tatará, tatará, tatará.

*(The SCORPION enters and sniffs around. He is a rough character:
besides enjoying the sound of his own voice, he also belches and farts noisily)*

Smells like a pig sty here! There must be livestock!

YOUNG FIREFLIES (*to the AUDIENCE, from their hiding place*)

This is the terrifying Mr Scorpion, an old woodcutter living in the forest;
he comes to the village, in the heat of the day, to get drunk...
A glutton, a scumbag, a gangster, a thug, he's drugged by booze and smoke.

SCORPION (*seeing the FIREFLIES*)

Am I in the way? Nudge, nudge...
you two, in this fine meadow, making a love-nest...
(Winks maliciously and pokes one of the fireflies in the stomach with his pincer)
nudge, nudge...wink, wink...

YOUNG FIREFLIES (*indignant*)

The cheek of the fellow!

SCORPION

Love's the thing in the spring, they say.
You, my dears, will know a thing or two about spring,
nudge, nudge... wink, wink...

YOUNG FIREFLIES

Be quiet! You're a rogue and a villain! A greedy glutton!

SCORPION

Partial to food, indeed! But fear not, I've just had dinner:
a juicy worm, so tender and sweet. Ah, the taste of succulent worms!

YOUNG FIREFLIES (*horrified*)

Holy Saint Cockroach! You horrid monster! You nasty creature!

SCORPION

Shut up or I'll eat you too! You'd better watch out!
My philosophy's simple: to grasp life as it comes!
Nothing escapes me: I've eyes all around.
I'll poke fun - with my pincers; but - there's a sting in my tail!
nudge, nudge...wink, wink...

(he chases them)

YOUNG FIREFLIES

Help!

MOTHER emerges from her little cave, angry and limping

MOTHER (*brandishing her broom*)

You scoundrel! You wretch! You brute!

SCORPION

Ow! Ow!

Suddenly, distant voices expressing concern and sympathy which grow quickly nearer

MOTHER

What's going on?

*Enter POET & DOCTOR carrying a white BUTTERFLY with a broken wing. She is unconscious.
All gather round. SCORPION is flat out on the ground, dizzy, drunk and sore.
The scene is full of light in the heat of the afternoon.*

DOCTOR

Nice and slowly... careful with those wings!
She's hurt, the poor little creature.

YOUNG FIREFLIES

What's happened? Do you think she'll die?

MOTHER (*examining the butterfly*)

There's no sign of life.

POET BEETLE

Oh, where do you come from in your white dress?

DOCTOR

She comes from the dawn, a flower that flies.
She fell from the great oak and broke her wing.
But there's life left in her, and she'll soon fly again.

MOTHER fetches some long and delicate leaves which are used by the DOCTOR to clean the BUTTERFLY's wounds.

MOTHER

Such a creature knows the secrets of flowers and water.

YOUNG FIREFLIES

Look! she gave a sigh... she's opening her eyes.

BUTTERFLY (*quietly, half-awake*)

I want to fly, so far spins the silk thread...

YOUNG FIREFLIES

We are blessed to breathe the perfume of her soul.

BUTTERFLY (*coming round*)

...It reaches to the stars
where they keep my treasure.
My wings are of silver
my heart is of gold,
the thread is dreaming
with the sound of its spinning!

POET BEETLE

This fallen star has tasted the bitterness of dawn;
the nightingale wept as she laid still on the ground.

DOCTOR (*to MOTHER*)

Treat her with care. Wash the wound with dew,
then apply pollen of lily.

POET BEETLE

What mystery are you?
The image of a fairy, or a flower from another world?
Are you a messenger from the world of dreams
where love never ends; or an envoy from him
who created us, a song of the stars?
Whose are those wings trembling with whiteness?
My heart has come alive, it burns so fiercely with love!
What were once pure, are now the entangled threads of my thoughts.
Oh, if only I were as the poppies of the meadow,
then dawn and dew would cool and calm this tender love I feel.
(he runs off)

MOTHER

She's a delicate creature, and she's beautiful too!
 I can see my son's smitten with love,
 his fragile heart sings of her with passion.
 I fear no good will come of it,
 and my house shall soon be witness to pain and death,
 since his love is all anguish and yearning:
 darkness lies in store, endless starless night.

BUTTERFLY

Volaré por el hilo de plata.
 Yo soy el espíritu
 De la seda.
 Vengo de un arca misteriosa
 Y voy hacia la niebla.
 Hilé mi corazón sobre mi carne
 Para rezar en las tinieblas,
 Y la Muerte me dio dos alas blancas,
 Pero cegó la fuente de mi seda.⁵

DOCTOR (to POET)

My boy, take care.
 Don't pine for the wings of a butterfly
 or else will all hope be lost; a caring friend tells you this.
 Love for her is fatal.
 Darkness lies in store, endless starless night.
 The light will soon fade: so be on your guard!

SCORPION (*drunk*)

Tut, tut! The poets are dreaming again!
 No thought of work:
 a vagrant who can't earn his keep!
 If he doesn't apply himself to work, he'll die of hunger,
 no matter how good and famous he is: a great, dead poet!
 This plague of idle folk! Tut, tut - in love with a butterfly?
 Doesn't he know they can never marry? He's crazy!

YOUNG FIREFLIES (*to the audience*)

As the meadow glows crimson in the setting sun,
 the Butterfly finds shelter with kind folk.
 Our Poet weeps; what has happened to him so suddenly?
 Does he now know what love can be?
 The beautiful butterfly is beyond his reach,

⁵ *I shall fly by this thread of silver.
 I am the spirit of silk.
 I come from a strange home, born of the mist.
 My heart was spun from my flesh
 While praying alone in darkness;
 Death bequeathed these wings of whiteness,
 Yet destroyed the source of my silk.*

and, oh, the desire is hard to bear!

DOCTOR

(to MOTHER) It is the end of the day.

Let's take her to bathe in the moonlight in the cool of the forest.

(aside) I can still hear that voice that spoke so sadly:

'She has died - the fairy of land and sea.'

(They carefully carry the BUTTERFLY as the sun sets and the scene fades)

SCORPION *(in the distance, yawning)*

Tatará, tatará, tatará.

Interlude

It is the evening of the same day. There is a bright moon.

The villagers sing and dance.

FIREFLIES, MOTHER, DOCTOR and SCORPION *(singing The Ballad of the Moon)*

The moon came to the forge

dressed in her bustle gown.

The boy looks and he stares.

The boy keeps staring hard.

The moon moves her arms in the breeze

revealing her breasts of bright bronze,

which entrance and entice him.

"Run, oh moon, moon, moon.

If the gypsies come

they will turn your heart

into shining trinkets."

"Boy, let me dance.

When the gypsies come

they will find you on the anvil

with your little eyes closed."

"Run, oh moon, moon, moon,

for I hear their horses now."

"Boy, let me be,

don't trample my gaudy garments".

The riders come closer,

they hear their drum on the plain.

Inside the forge the boy's eyes shut tight.

Through the grove come the gypsies,

brazen or dreamy, heads high or eyes sleepy.

How the owl cries,

yea, how it cries in the tree!

The moon crosses the sky

leading a boy by the hand.

Inside the forge the gypsies weep and they wail.

The breeze keeps watch.

The breeze is keeping watch.

(They disperse, except for the DOCTOR)

Act Two

DOCTOR (*to the AUDIENCE*)

Where were we? And where is our love-struck poet?
 He knows the beautiful butterfly is beyond his reach.
 For sure, he has travelled the path
 that weaves an arabesque across the meadow,
 beyond the shade of the great cypress tree,
 to the lake surrounded by lilies,
 and there to taste the secrets of flowers and water....
 But here, within this cool forest clearing, is a garden
 whose walls are a cascade of ivy,
 whose floor is covered in daisies;
 the glint of spring water trickles by,
 and there is the scent of night-time...

The scene is a forest clearing. It is now night.

The YOUNG FIREFLIES and MOTHER carry in THE BUTTERFLY

MOTHER

This meadow is perfect for her moonlight bath.

FIREFLIES

Her little wings will be as good as new,
 just as they were when she first flew in the sunlight.

MOTHER

There's no sign of life yet.
 With damaged wings and broken heart
 she comes to the place where love dies.
 The light of the stars will soon fade.
 I'm going to find my son:
 I'll pray that his soul will find peace.
 Oh, to be a poet is such a misfortune!

She leaves with THE DOCTOR.

The BUTTERFLY bathes in the glow of moonlight.

She moves her wings slowly, and through the course of this scene becomes more animated.

BUTTERFLY (*waking*)

Ahora comprendo el lamentar del agua, ⁶

⁶ *I have understood the cry of the water,
 and the lament of the stars,
 and the moan of the wind over the mountain,
 and the angry buzzing of the bee.
 For I am death and beauty too.*

Y el lamentar de las estrellas,
Y el lamentar del viento en la montaña,
Y el zumbido punzante
De la abeja.
Porque soy la muerte
Y la belleza.

It is now the dead of night. The FIREFLIES are glowing brightly

FIREFLIES *(to each other)*

The lilies in the lake quiver with dew, pure and clear.
Soon it will bathe the grass and we can drink it.
A wise old man once said: 'Enjoy the sweet dewdrops
but never ask from whence they come.'
For moments, they glisten in the grass and then are gone.'
Dew drops make love sweeter, and in search of love
we are come to this place.

The BUTTERFLY hears them and speaks, as though dreaming.

BUTTERFLY

I hear the dewdrops speak to me
Of distant fields and far-off mysteries.

FIREFLIES *(turning sharply)*

Dewdrops don't speak, they never say a word!

BUTTERFLY *(with vision)*

The grain of sand can speak,
so can a leaf, each in its own way.
But all the voices in the world
combine to sing a single song.
Who are you? Tiny stars?

FIREFLIES

No, travellers in search of love.

BUTTERFLY

I know not what love is, nor shall I ever know.

FIREFLIES

Why, it's a gentle kiss like the trembling leaves.

BUTTERFLY

I do not understand.

(she sleeps)

The FIREFLIES leave, still chatting

FIREFLIES

So pretty yet so lonely...
Why did she say dewdrops speak?

She's certainly a mystery!
Let's return to our meadow - and passion's pleasure!

The POET appears. His expression is one of pain and anguish.

POET BEETLE

What thoughts inside my head!
It was a time of poetry until she stole my soul.
As if the breeze scattered the seeds of love which,
by pure chance, landed in my imagination.

(The BUTTERFLY stirs)

Is the chaste queen of this meadow awake?
She whom the dew settles on?
She who knows the secrets of the grass
and the song of the waters?

BUTTERFLY

I shall fly by this thread of silver
on the sounds of the morning mist.
Listen! The spider chants in its cave,
the nightingale sings his story,
and trickling raindrops are dazzled by my wings of death.

(The BUTTERFLY attempts to fly)

POET BEETLE

You wish to fly? I can cure your wounds with kisses
if you stay with me, and a great nightingale will help you fly.
Let our souls enjoy the light of love
and share the dewdrops on the lilies!

(The BUTTERFLY falls to the ground)

Feel how darkness fills the branches
and the night envelopes our sleep.
Who is she who brings me sadness
with these trembling wings of white?

(The POET embraces the BUTTERFLY who unconsciously surrenders to him)

SCORPION *(entering, more slowly and menacing than before)*

Tatará, tatará, tatará.

In the cool of the night the forest is enticing
and everything seems still.
But, beneath the daisies, the ground bristles with life
and, while the world sleeps, I reap a harvest by the light of the moon.

My thirst has been quenched with liquor but the stomach cries out for flesh!

(seeing the BUTTERFLY)

Wait! Is this a ready-made meal I see laid out for me?
I've had flies, lizards, bees and worms but I've never had a butterfly!
Ah! what a feast for my senses!

(to the AUDIENCE)

I pounce, intending to eat her.

He moves quickly towards the BUTTERFLY, threatening her

POET BEETLE

(to the BUTTERFLY, protecting her)

Awake, there's danger!
The scorpion's hungry, he wants to eat you!
I'll protect you, you're safe with me!
(to the AUDIENCE)
I stand my guard.

SCORPION

(to the AUDIENCE)

She's almost too nice to eat... a very tasty morsel, for sure!
(To POET BEETLE, who's in his way)
You'll do for starters! Out of my way, poet!

They fight

BUTTERFLY

(to the AUDIENCE, as she moves her wings)

I will fly on the sounds of the misty dawn...
(to POET BEETLE)
Run away! Beware of the scorpion! Poet, escape!

POET BEETLE

(to BUTTERFLY)

Shadows surround me when you move your wings.
(to the AUDIENCE)
Without her, life is ended.

SCORPION's deadly tail lashes out at POET BEETLE who stands in his way

SCORPION

(to the AUDIENCE)

I attack him with my tail...
... soon the venom will do its worst.

POET BEETLE is mortally injured

(to the POET)

Off with you to the land of dreams!

MOTHER BEETLE hobbles in with the DOCTOR, as the SCORPION grabs the BUTTERFLY

MOTHER

(to the AUDIENCE)

I charge in and attack with my stick...

(to SCORPION)

Stop, you monster... you beast!

She deals SCORPION a blow which renders him unconscious

SCORPION

(to the AUDIENCE, losing consciousness)

I'm thwarted! Deprived of a meal!

MOTHER *(weeping)*

Oh, my poor boy! I was too late to save him.

BUTTERFLY, MOTHER & DOCTOR

He dies for the sake of his butterfly.

As dawn breaks, POET BEETLE dies. The FIREFLIES enter.

Slowly, and with great ceremony and solemnity, they shower the POET in flower petals.

ALL

(addressing the AUDIENCE, as the stage is lit by the rosy hues of dawn)

A new day dawns in sadness:

the light of the stars will soon be gone.

The butterfly has bathed in the moonlight and flies away

on the sounds of the mist in the morning breeze.

Our wingless poet could not enjoy the flight of love;

he clings to his dreams, where flowers and the dew

are more distant than any star,

more sorrowful than the gentle rain.

But his songs live on for another day:

this kingdom's for those who sing and play.

Earth and water, land and sea,

Petals on roses, bark on the tree.

(The BUTTERFLY flies away and the cast leave the stage)

Farewell!

The End