The puppet Olimpia’s virtuoso coloratura aria is performed by a giant electro mechanically choreographed marionette built from highly patinated scrap machine parts. The music is ‘coloratura’ in its original sense – coloured or embellished – and implies a re-colouring of Offenbach’s aria from “The tales of Hoffmann”. The choreography is both a response to Heinrich Kleist’s homage to the marionette (1810), ‘the most graceful of all dancers whose non self conscious movements simply obey the realm of purely mechanical forces’, and yet at the same time it is a staging of an anorexic yearning for a body without skin, flesh or psyche.

The marionette consists of nine body parts connected – via a string system – to 15 computer directed servo engines, attached to an aluminium frame in the ceiling. Marionette height 300 cm. Frame 240x240 cm².

Concept, choreography and movement programming: Åsa Unander-Scharin
Puppet maker, electronics and software: Magnus Lundin
Aria: Jaques Offenbach (from Les racontes d’Hoffmann, 1881)
Singer: Jeanette Bjurling (recording: Lars-Göran Ehn)
Music: Carl Unander-Scharin
Light design: Anders Larsson

First performance in the Reactor hall at The Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm, 2010
Produced by Scen- och Sinnesproduktion, financial support by Långmanska kulturfonden and the Swedish Arts Grants Committee.