
Nicky Shaw

Selected Reviews

La Cenerentola, Irish National Opera (November 2019)

"The overture comes with reminders of half a dozen fairy tales, and Nicky Shaw's inventive set is full of such books, both large and small. The storybook backdrop works well, but the revelation of a complete library is a coup de theatre."

- David Byers, *The Irish Times******

"Phelan's *La Cenerentola*, with clever, witty and sometimes spectacular designs by Nicky Shaw, is steeped in the world of fairy tales."

- Michael Dervan, *The Irish Times*

"Excellent as the cast were, the wow factor was the staging that drew the audience into a fantasy world of books... In the princes' palace, Nicky Shaw's set creates the illusion of giant floor to ceiling books in vintage book bindings, the titles of classic children's literature legible from a seat in the stalls."

- Cathy Desmond, *The Irish Examiner*

"... a fine production by Orpha Phelan, in delightful children's-book settings from Nicky Shaw..."

- Ian Fox, *Opera Magazine*

Madama Butterfly, Glyndebourne Festival and Tour (May 2018)

"Butterfly isn't the first abandoned child bride in Japan. When the curtain goes up on Annilese Miskimmon's new Puccini production for Glyndebourne's touring wing, we're not in Pinkerton's flat-pack house, but Goro's marriage bureau, where drunk American sailors pay up, grab a geisha and head off to the hotel next door... It's a jolting beginning and — if it takes some liberties with the libretto — the scene, brilliantly designed by Nicky Shaw and atmospherically lit by Mark Jonathan, establishes the tenor of Miskimmon's production immediately: no queasy sentimentality, no room for cherry-blossom Japan."

- Neil Fisher, *The Times******

"She [Annilese Miskimmon] updates the action to the 1950s, also taking the controversial decision to set the first act in Goro's Marriage Bureau in downtown Nagasaki, a location which in Nicky Shaw's designs suggests absolute efficiency and an air of sleaziness simultaneously ... Elsewhere, one can have few reservations about a production that explores text and music both seriously and sensitively. Puccini and his skilful librettists may do much of the work for you, but Miskimmon and an excellent cast ensure that the emotional impact of the piece is devastating."

- George Hall, *The Stage******

"On August 9, 1945, an atomic bomb dropped by America on Nagasaki killed 35,000 people and left the Japanese city devastated. The flavour of the era is conveyed by designer Nicky Shaw's setting the first scene, not in a traditional paper-screened house with cherry blossom, but in marriage-broker Goro's sleazy downtown office where a conveyor belt of instant hook-ups between Japanese girls and American servicemen provides a profitable income... The humming song as Butterfly and her maid Suzuki await news

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of Pinkerton's return is exquisitely realised in shadow silhouettes against an ethereal blue background."
- **Claire Colvin, *Sunday Express********

Semele, Garsington Opera (June 2017)

"Comical and clever ... With visuals entrusted to director Annilese Miskimmon and designer Nicky Shaw, Garsington's jokey, modern-dress approach feels apposite: the piece contains ironic and even blatantly comic episodes in its retelling of a cautionary tale on the eternally fresh theme of Be Careful What You Wish For."
- **George Hall, *Financial Times********

"Annilese Miskimmon's wittily imaginative production ... Nicky Shaw's enchanting designs – Jupiter's realm is evoked with celestial blues, reflective surfaces, even glowing orbs – provide some ravishing stage pictures ... There are magical moments in this staging of one of Handel's most richly inventive scores."
- **Barry Millington, *Evening Standard********

"A magical new production. ... Miskimmon's take on the piece, stunningly designed by Nicky Shaw in rich tones of blue and white, fleshes out all the characters, even the gods, and for the most part she maintains a light comic touch."
- **Mark Valencia, *WhatsOnStage********

"Garsington's new production of Handel's *Semele*, directed by Annilese Miskimmon, is something of a triumph ... Nicky Shaw's designs include fitted bright-blue flight crew uniforms for the heavenly attendants and an evocative moonlit backdrop. As the sun sets outside Garsington's airy pavilion theatre, the stage responds with illuminated moons and a candlelit memorial to *Semele*."
- **Edward Bhesania, *The Stage********

"The most imaginative production of utter delight..."
- **London Theatreviews*******

"Annilese Miskimmon's larky take on the piece, which possesses a rich seam of levity, not least in the pouty posturings of self-loving *Semele* in her rock-star assortment of glittering outfits ... That it looks wonderful, too, is all thanks to designer Nicky Shaw ... Garsington's fabulous production of *Semele*."
- **Christopher Gray, *Oxford Times********

"A witty, winning production..."
- **Claire Seymour, *Opera Today***

"First-rate musical performance and production that's hard to fault."
- **Michael Tanner, *The Spectator***

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Dead Man Walking, Royal Danish Opera (January 2017)

"No imperfections in this production ... Orpha Phelan's staging and Nicky Shaw's scenography are at once moderate, expansive and flexible."

- Peter Dürrfeld, *Kristeligt Dagblad******

"Staged with great understanding by Irish director, Orpha Phelan. ... Nicky Shaw has created a great frame and got church and prison to work in one modern elementary building, just like the costumes is remarkable."

- Knud Cornelius, *Frederiksborg Amts Avis******

"The audience is saved no details. Experiencing this production of Dead Man Walking is like watching a film immersed in a large musical aquarium of emotions. Depicted vividly with cinematic accuracy....this is a sharply staged production."

- *Politiken******