
Barbe & Doucet

Dramaturgy, Stage Direction, Choreography, Sets & Costumes Design

***La Boheme*, Scottish Opera, Theatre Royal (October 2025)**

Five Stars: "In small-scale touring versions and Covid-era outdoor incarnations, Puccini's tragedy of impoverished artists has proved infinitely adaptable, but it is a joy to see a gloriously-realised sumptuous staging of *La Boheme*, like this one by Andre Barbe and Renaud Doucet, created for Scottish Opera in 2017." – **Keith Bruce, The Herald**

***Die Zauberflöte*, Glyndebourne Festival (2019, 2024)**

"A visual feast of eccentricity Glyndebourne's irreverent, entertaining, sometimes magical new production, the UK debut from the design and direction team of Barbe & Doucet, follows its own fairytale logic. (...) Visually, it's a theatrical feast of eccentricity. Every room, from the conservatory to the wine cellar to the all-important kitchen, is created from André Barbe's pen-and-ink flats. Things light up magically; the dumb waiter "speaks"; a pile of vegetables stands up, stretches and becomes the vegetable man in the famous Arcimboldo painting. The Armed Men are giant puppets made from bits of the hotel heating system, and we know the Queen of the Night is coming because of the whirr and clank of ancient machinery – nothing good ever came out of an onstage lift" – **Erica Jeal, The Guardian**

"André Barbe and Renaud Doucet, whose new production of *Die Zauberflöte* has opened at Glyndebourne, avow a real sympathy for the Queen of the Night whose story they connect to the broader theme of women's rights. (...) Barbe's beautiful pen-and-ink cloth-drops create a singular locale (...) the designs produce neat trompe l'œil effects and evoke at times a picture-book fairy tale, as cardboard cut-out figures arrive in the lobby or canoodle in the corners of the conservatory." – **Claire Seymore, Opera Today**

"Glyndebourne show spikes sexist perceptions: Countless modern directors have subverted the stereotypical views of an earlier age, and Barbe & Doucet find their own ingenious solutions. The oracular pronouncements about women needing a wise man's guidance are held up for ridicule, while the face of the villain Monostatos is blackened by soot from a furnace rather than by race. (...) Acknowledging the tradition of the original production at the suburban Freihaus-Theater auf der Wieden, the sets are painted drops, all meticulously hand-drawn by Barbe." – **Barry Millington, The Standard**

***Turandot*, Volksoper Wien (2006, 2011, 2014, 2022)**

"André Barbe and Renaud Doucet have come up with a wholly original, wildly inventive approach: their triumphant production at Vienna's Volksoper is set in a phantasmagoric insect world. Barbe and Doucet are credited, respectively, for design and direction/choreography, but trying to pigeonhole these collaborators would be senseless. Their production has a cohesion and unity of vision that make for a spellbinding, eye-popping evening of music theater. The theme was established from the rise of the curtain, when a battery of dancers clad as drones executed tightly formed militaristic drills to beats from Asian percussion instruments. On the downbeat, we were plunged into a gorgeous nightmare of demonic, clawed beetles, metallic ants, fireflies that light up from within and pirouetting dragonflies with glow-in-the-dark antennae. The hierarchy of an ancient Chinese dynasty was echoed in a caste system, with royalty, ministers, soldiers and commoners clearly defined. Emperor Altoum was a giant gold moth hovering at the top of the stage against a starry eternity; his daughter was a white butterfly with feathery antennae. Ping, Pang and Pong, while displaying bug-like attributes, also had a bit of vaudeville in them: Ping's headdress utilized a bowler hat as its base. Despite the constant atmospheric swirl of dancers, supers and chorus members, the conflict among the principals remained the focal point, and the cast was given room to breathe – and to sing." – **L.L. Lash, Opera News**

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"Often, I find that musical virtues tend to compensate for the production. Tonight was the opposite. I found it a superb show and by far the best Turandot I've seen. Just like Doris Dörrie's production at the Staatsoper Berlin, it was inspired by the manga aesthetic. Although where I found Dörrie's to be a bit gimmicky, this production I found to really encapsulate the idea of the work. Doucet managed to bring it to the realm of fairy tales but still maintaining a sense of the individual personalities that made up the stories. Costumes were incredibly detailed and I also got the sense of a totalitarian state. This was achieved by having a ballet corps perform dances inspired by the Arirang massed games of North Korea. The Executioner was an Edward Scissorhands type whose arms were used by Liù at the moment of her suicide. Everything was inspired by the libretto and the text was used as the foundation for the concept" –**Opera Traveller**

Don Pasquale, Scottish Opera (2014, 2024)

"This new production of director-designer team Renaud Doucet and André Barbe is giving us so much more than surface buffoonery to feast our eyes and ears on. This is realism or is it? Detail count at every level, whether in the sharp definition of the cluttered backstreets that engulf Pasquale's cat infested madcap guesthouse, or in a dramaturgy that mirrors – through the characters' actions a tat startling micro level – the musical clues. As such, this production grabs you from the word go to the final ensemble resolution." – **K. Walton, Opera Now**

"This new Donizetti staging — by the seasoned director/designer team of Renaud Doucet and André Barbe — is a giggle as well as a nibble. I won't give away what happens at the final curtain but it sends audiences out laughing into the damp night. In Glasgow, in January, that's no bad thing. Doucet and Barbe update the comedy to 1960s Rome, but if that suggests the dolce vita glamour of Fellini's movies, forget it. With staff as old and seedy as himself, Pasquale runs a decrepit hotel — a kind of Fawlty Pensione, catering for dodgy liaisons between improbable couples. Clouds of hung-out washing descend to cover the roof terrace, and the decor comprises ghastly pink walls and statues of cats (Pasquale's obsession, though he is also allergic to them). What chiefly makes the show fizz is some really sharp comedy from the four principals." – **Richard Morrison, The Times**

La Fille du Regiment, Teatro la Fenice (October 2022)

"La Fenice closes season with a lively Fille du regiment. (...) a new production from the directorial double act André Barbe and Renaud Doucet, who move the action from the Napoleonic Wars to World War 2. (...) The concept is charming. The staging is colourful and enchanting and it frames the story with a sort of magical, fairy-tale feeling, fairly suited to the silly plot." – **Laura Sanger, Bachtrack**

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Turandot, North America (2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2017)

"A miracle occurred in Seattle Opera's summer 2012 Turandot (seen Aug. 4). The team of André Barbe and Renaud Doucet — plus their fellow Montrealer, lighting designer Guy Simard — managed to combine the worlds of verismo Liù, fairy tale Prince and mythic Ice Princess into an exciting and moving whole. The miraculous Seattle production is shared with Minnesota Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, Utah Opera and Cincinnati Opera. Barbe's set worked wonderfully on all levels: beyond the arc of an elaborately decorated moon gate hung a huge moon-like globe, which changed color and became as ominous as the gong Calaf strikes at the end of Act I. Doucet's brilliant choreography kept the large cast of characters — the Opera Chorus, in outstanding form, as well as dancers and supernumeraries — moving in gorgeous figures appropriate to both music and drama. Simard's lighting was equally arresting, and Barbe's flamboyantly colorful costumes repeatedly fell into their patterned places like a king-size kaleidoscope. Barbe's costumes had some adroit subtleties, such as Turandot's cape opening up to show the heads of her beheaded former suitors. Barbe and Doucet have come up with viable solutions to the many problems in this difficult opera, and the total effect is quite gorgeous." — **Opera News**

"'Turandot': an impressive and moving triumph. Seattle Opera's 'Turandot' production by Renaud Doucet and André Barbe, unveiled over the weekend, did more than ample justice to the spectacular side of Puccini's last opera. But it also made the most possible of the work's relatively minor human interest, so that by the end we were not merely impressed but moved. All the characters in this production are portrayed — and sung — with absolute conviction and high artistry by both casts." — **The Seattle Times**

"Seattle Opera's Spectacular, Splendiferous 'Turandot' You like spectacle? Go see Turandot. Interested in fashion design? Take your binoculars. Love superb singing? Go and enjoy this grand, elaborate spectacle of an opera with wonderful music - Seattle's production has been created by two men who always work together, Renaud Doucet, stage director and choreographer, and Andre Barbe, imaginative set and costume designer, and lit by another close colleague, Guy Simard. From the outset, it's shocking, bombastic in the scenic splendors, barbarically lit in red, which unfold accompanied by the full-throated sound of the huge chorus." — **City Arts**

"Pittsburgh Opera's 'Turandot' is a stunning, balanced production. Seen for the first time last Saturday, this creation by the French Canadian team of Andre Barbe and Renaud Doucet balanced extravagance with symbolism and practicality. Ingeniously constructed horizontal and vertical rings dominated the Benedum Center stage. Metaphorically, they symbolized life's circle, the moon and sun, a giant eye and layers of importance in the rigidly hierarchical society (with the Emperor seated in the innermost circle above the cast). But they also offered multiple entrance points that allowed the huge, vibrantly decorated cast to swarm the stage with astonishing quickness. Just as astonishing were a few key changes in the traditional staging of the opera: instead of steadfastly resisting being "conquered," a more human Turandot fell ahead of schedule for Prince Calaf and she kissed him. Likewise, Turandot's hatred for men was extended to the executioner, who in Barbe and Doucet's version was an imposing woman instead of a man." — **Pittsburg Post Gazette**

"Vancouver Opera's Turandot is triumphant. (...) but the real stars of the production are the designer/director team of André Barbe and Renaud Doucet, also making their Vancouver Opera debut." — **Vancouver Sun**

"I absolutely love director-choreographer Renaud Doucet's visually spectacular, highly imaginative solution, a shared production now onstage at the Academy of Music. There's some China here, seen through Western eyes; also some Kabuki, Balinese dance, and in the comic Ping-Pang-Pong scenes even a bit of Gilbert and Sullivan. It's a highly entertaining ride, but Doucet also knows how to touch an audience — the long, silent exit of the chorus following Liù's death makes a profound impact." — **David Fox, Philly Mag**

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"Utah Opera delivers superb 'Turandot': 'Turandot' is one of Utah Opera's most highly anticipated productions in recent memory. The opening performance Saturday lived up to the show's buzz. The production, created by set-costume designer André Barbe and director-choreographer Renaud Doucet, is a known quantity. It has received highly favorable reviews in Pittsburgh, Seattle and Minneapolis." – **Catherine Reese Newton, Salt Lake Tribune**

"Cincinnati Opera's 'Turandot' a dazzling spectacle. The audience roared its approval at the conclusion of Cincinnati Opera's 'Turandot' in Music Hall Saturday night – and for good reason. It was, without a doubt, the most dazzling production of Puccini's 'Turandot' this city has ever seen. Created by the French Canadian team of director/choreographer Renaud Doucet and André Barbe, who designed the costumes and scenery, it was unforgettable for its splendor, which layered symbol upon symbol. Yet remarkably, despite the dazzle, the drama, the dancing and the scores of performers onstage in each scene, the eye somehow was drawn to the core of each moment. And in Doucet's staging, Turandot was also seen as being a bit more human." – **Janelle Gelfand, Cincinnati Enquirer**