

"On les aura !" (Line Of Fire) is the onstage adaptation of a graphic novel based on the diary of a WWI French soldier.

An exciting performance including music, speech, and live drawing projected on a screen.

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THE PERFORMERS

Barroux is a writer and an illustrator.

Barroux studied photography, art, sculpture, and architecture in France at the famous École Estienne and École Boule. He went on to work as an art director in Paris, Montreal and New York. While in Montreal, Barroux began illustrating by creating linocut images, and he is now well known for his children's book illustrations. He also worked with many magazines (*New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Forbes*).

He has written more than a hundred books to date, among which:

Alpha (Gallimard); *Le Piano Rouge* (éd. du Sorbier); the *Arthur* series (Seuil); *Ahmed sans abri, Tuvalu* (éd. Mango); *La Fabrique* (éd. Autrement); *Le Paris de Léon* (Actes Sud); *Kako Le Terrible* (éd. La Joie De Lire); *La cerise géante de Mr Jean* (prix Fantaisie 2005); *Super Bricoleur, le roi de la clef à molette* (finaliste Prix Du Gouverneur 2007, Canada); *Extraordinary Pets* (Blue Apple Books - New York Book Fair 2011 Golden Award).



www.barroux.info

Julien Joubert is a musician.

Initially a self-taught guitarist, Julien has since embraced a variety of other instruments (clarinet, bass, drums, harmonica, keyboard, duduk, oud...). Pushing the electric guitar off its traditional rock context, he loves to experiment and use it with different Arts: painting, dance, puppets, theatre, sound installations. This crossing of inspirations allows him to improvise, to mix and shape sounds; to use lots of effects, hacked instruments, electronics, loops; even to play or stomp several instruments at a time...

He now has fifteen years of experience both on stage and in studio, has performed over 1000 shows and recorded 20 albums. He has already been on tour three times in India with the French rock band *Kwak*, with whom he also experienced fusion with Indian music and Kathak dance.

He cultivates a passion for creating soundscapes, and explores many disciplines to craft them: recording and music production, song arrangements, foley engineering, instrument building and hacking, electronic music...



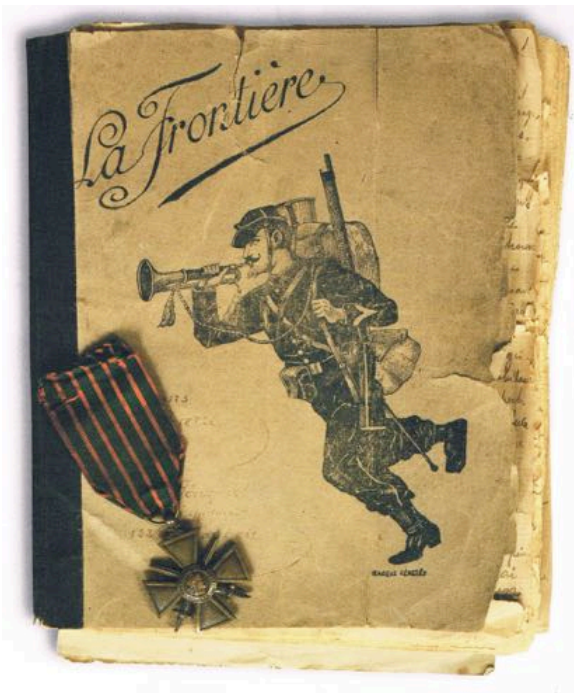
www.julienjoubert.fr

Barroux and Julien met back in 2009, in the creative centre for performing arts they share with other artists in Paris: le Jardin d'Alice.

THE GRAPHIC NOVEL

This is the story of a happy coincidence: Barroux's unexpected discovery of a notebook, hidden in a pile of old things destined for garbage, on a winter day he was walking down the streets of Paris.

"Two men covered in grime were emptying out a basement", the illustrator recalls. "They tipped damp papers, mouldy books, black lumps of coal and weary furniture onto the pavement. In the middle of dusty words and smiles turned yellow with time, a cardboard box caught my eye. It contained this school book and a War Cross."



One man's trash is another man's treasure. This notebook contains an incredibly rich human and historical testimony: the diary of a soldier during the very first months of the war in 1914.

It begins with these words: "August 3rd, 1914: Today we're off. Mobilization has been declared, and it's time to go, leaving behind wife, children and family. My morale is good, it has to be."

The anonymous private who wrote this diary describes the beginning of the war, when all were still convinced they would be soon victorious, until his return in September after getting wounded.

This text relates the mostly rural everyday life of the soldier, far less horrible than the usual accounts of life in the trenches.

C'est le jour du départ. La mobilisation
fait l'effet, quitter femme, enfant, faire
le départ. ~~Il faut~~ que j. 9 heures, c'est
moi, au repos, car j les recevrai. Le
compagnon jusqu'à la gare de Bercy
Le temps est superbe, un peu chaud
sera bien d'autre - 10 heures, nous
un vigoureux échauffé par la
bon les camarade d'autrefois. Nous
nous dirigeons sur le quai de départ
le territorial que j'ai connu nous
le wagon de 1^{er} classé avec officiers
installés comme de femme. En route
Le boni marche à l'abri d'un



Barroux saw the discovery of this diary as a calling: he, who normally draws for children, will use his lead pencils to sketch and describe the War. To be more specific, the petty moments of the war - those which are usually left aside.

MERCREDI 12 AOÛT



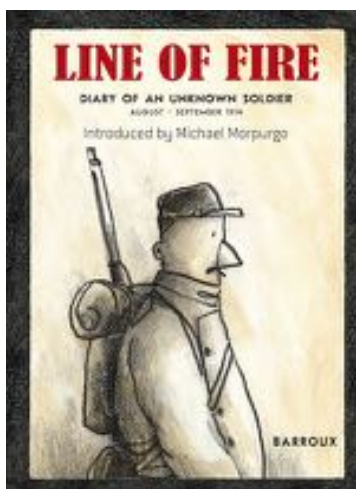
Rassemblement à 5 heures, mais toujours pas d'ordre de départ. Je m'occupe de la popote, j'ai trouvé un superbe lapin que je fais assaisonner avec des pommes de terre. Nous en avons pour la journée.



Le soir, après la soupe, nous fumons des cigarettes dans le jardin et un homme de la section, Simon de Rebbars, ancien artiste de café-concert, nous chante des chansonnettes. On ne se dirait vraiment pas en guerre.

Barroux's drawings in black lines, in the form of a graphic novel, support the narration of these events and emotions of the past: the pain of separation, the train journeys towards the unknown, the wait for a letter from a beloved relative, the nights spent in barns, but also the harrowing and persistent fear...

The result fills an eighty-six pages graphic novel published by Editions Du Seuil in autumn 2011. The first edition was successful, and the circulation of the book now approaches 10 000 hard copies.



The English version of the book.

"Line Of Fire", has been written by **Sarah Ardizzone** and features an introduction by **Michael Morpurgo** (author of the best-seller *War Horse*).

"Line Of Fire" is edited by Phoenix Yard Books, (IPG Awards 2013: Best New Publisher) and will be out in UK stores on February 16th, 2014.

STAGE SET AND PERFORMANCE

The idea of an onstage adaptation of the novel emerges in 2012, driven by the demand of the Museum of the Chemin des Dames / Caverne du Dragon, an institution which supported Barroux in his historical and iconography research, and a museum where the original book pages are currently on display.



Storytelling

This precious historical testimony is the backbone of the adaptation. The oral transmission, without artifice or overload, makes it accessible to all. This diary reports the daily life of a man like any other, who suddenly finds himself transported to the line of fire. We are not being told unbelievable adventures, nor heroic actions; but rather the days that go by, sometimes hectic, sometimes endless, the long walks, the wait for the mail, the restless sleep, the din of the bombing, the coping, the boredom.

Alongside the forthcoming release of the English version of the book, tours are scheduled in the United Kingdom (February, May, September, October and November 2014) and in India (March 2014). The performers are thus preparing both a subtitled and an English-speaking version of the performance.

Musical soundscape



The original notebook is filled with musical references, old songs and sound images, which quickly led to the conclusion that the storytelling should be accompanied by music.

It is therefore an electric guitar that follows the course of the story, evoking, suggesting - without ever telling.

Julien builds a music full of nuances, between atmospheres and melodies. He crafts musical loops, melodic or noisy, light or distressing, aerial or unstructured. He beats his guitar, distorts the sound to paint the deafening noise of the exploding shells... Waves of sound are coming back and forth, creating a deep soundscape. A few muted notes and you can imagine the marching soldiers. A rhythm full of tension highlights the mad rush of the train carrying back wounded soldiers.



Live drawings



The storytelling put to music is punctuated by Barroux's drawings. The illustrator paints on stage, accompanied by the sound of the guitar. A video camera hangs above the drawing table, and the image is projected on a screen behind the performers. The images come to life brush stroke after brush stroke, right under the eyes of the audience, the paintings evolving and taking shape.

The illustrations give rise to a new reading of the story. They emerge from Barroux's graphic novel, then acquire an extra dimension on stage, rushing spontaneously and simply. The images are continuously evolving, the drawings growing and adapting to follow the story. The illustrator weaves a web of strokes, plays with textures and nuances. He blackens the page, pours his ink, then wipes it...

Barroux's stroke, plain and simple, brings something very universal to our minds. We think about the Unknown Soldier, about all our wars, all our dead.



THE PHILOSOPHY BEHIND THE PROJECT

To bring back to life, orally and visually, a story which could have been forgotten. To convey a shard of collective memory. A rare witness which tells the everyday life of a simple man, with whom anyone can identify. He is not a hero.

In this performance, electric guitar sounds and brush strokes intertwine and answer one another, forming a surprising alchemy. This modern storytelling uses today's media, and thus allows everyone to re-appropriate History. Music and drawings only suggest, leaving the spectator enough freedom to let his imagination wander, to build his own journey throughout this story, so distant but nevertheless so close.



APPENDED DOCUMENTS

Technical rider

Press review (in French)

**Online video : <https://vimeo.com/75281034>
(English subtitles available : "CC")**