

THE AUSTRALIAN
OPERA
1993



Salome
Richard Strauss

THE AUSTRALIAN OPERA

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The Australian Opera receives funding from the Commonwealth Government through the Department of the Arts and Administrative Services; and from the New South Wales State Government through its Ministry for the Arts.



THE AUSTRALIAN OPERA

A.C.N. 000 755 153

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Registered Office: The Opera Centre, 480 Elizabeth Street, Surry Hills, NSW 2010

Postal Address: PO Box 291, Strawberry Hills, NSW 2012. Telephone: (02) 699 1099 Telex: AA74676 Fax: (02) 699 3184

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The Australian Opera

State Theatre, Victorian Arts Centre

May 5, 8, 12, 15, 18, 21 1993

Salome

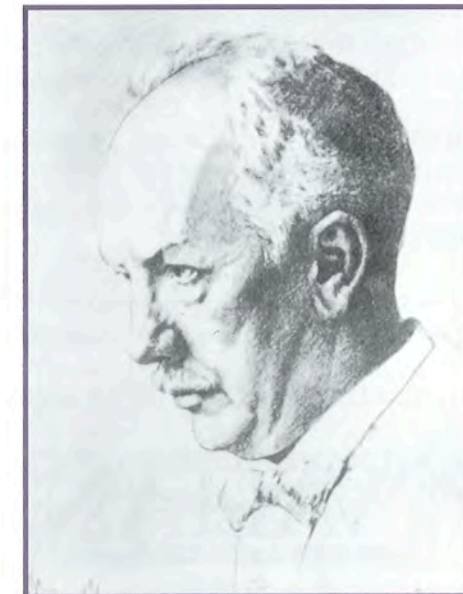
Opera in One Act by Richard Strauss

Text after the tragedy by Oscar Wilde in the German translation by Hedwig Lachmann

These performances of *Salome* by Richard Strauss are given by permission of Boosey & Hawkes (Australia) Pty Ltd

Salome was first performed at the *Königliches Opernhaus, Dresden*, on 9 December 1905

This production was first performed in the State Theatre, Victorian Arts Centre on 5 May 1993



RICHARD STRAUSS

Cover: Costume design by Kristian Fredrikson

Sponsored by  VALIANT

FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF VALIANT COMMERCIAL FURNITURE

Valiant is proud to be a sponsor for the third successive year, with this year's program of *Salome*.

It has become more and more evident that private sponsorship is required to supplement the Government funding of the Arts. To help maintain the very high standard of opera, Valiant is pleased with its continuing sponsorship of the opera notwithstanding the difficulties of the economy.

It is our sincere hope that you enjoy this new production of *Salome*.



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Salome

Conductor GABOR ÖTVÖS
Director GRAEME MURPHY
Designer KRISTIAN FREDRIKSON
Lighting Designer JOHN DRUMMOND MONTGOMERY
Choreographer GRAEME MURPHY
Assistant Directors LUISE NAPIER
KIM WALKER

Characters, in order of singing

Narraboth, a young Syrian Captain of the Guard DAVID COLLINS-WHITE
Herodias' Page KIRSTI HARMS
First Soldier STEVEN GALLOP
Second Soldier GREG SCOTT
Jokanaan, a Prophet (John the Baptist) MICHAEL GLUECKSMANN (May 5, 8, 15, 18)
ROBERT ALLMAN (May 12, 21)
PAUL THOMSON
A Cappadocian
Salome, daughter of Herodias and step-daughter to Herod CYNTHIA MAKRIS
A Slave KATHLEEN CONNELL
Herod Antipas, Tetrach of Judea CHRISTOPHER DOIG
Herodias, his wife ROSEMARY GUNN
First Jew MICHAEL TERRY
Second Jew GRAEME MACFARLANE
Third Jew DOMINIC NATOLI
Fourth Jew PATRICK TOGHER
Fifth Jew RICHARD ALEXANDER
First Nazarene AREND BAUMANN
Second Nazarene KERRY HENDERSON

Musical Preparation JILLIANNE BARTSCH, ANDREA KATZ,
ROBERT MORRISON, STEPHEN WALTER
German Language Coach ELISABETH HENDERSON-PILLGRAB
Surtitles BRIAN FITZGERALD

Stage Manager PHILIP MACDONALD
Deputy Stage Manager MARGARET BREEN

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STATE ORCHESTRA OF VICTORIA
Concertmaster ROBERT JOHN

*The performance lasts approximately one hour and forty-five minutes
Casting correct at time of publication but subject to amendment
Surtitles sponsored by Westpac Banking Corporation*

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GABOR ÖTVÖS *Background:* Born, Budapest. Began his musical studies in Hungary before continuing in Italy. In 1961 was appointed Chief Conductor of the Hamburg Symphony and became a German citizen. In 1967 he was given the post of First Conductor with the Frankfurt Opera. Made his American debut in 1969 with the New York City Opera and two years later, at the invitation of the late Rudolph Bing, at the Metropolitan Opera, New York. In 1972 joined the Augsburg Opera as General Music Director and Opera Director; in 1981 was appointed Music Director of the Copenhagen Opera with the title of Royal Conductor; in 1990, following guest appearances in Cape Town and Pretoria, he was appointed Music Director of the State Theatre in Pretoria and Principal Conductor of South Africa's National Orchestra in Johannesburg. First AO engagement: Conducted *Salome*, 1986

A. O. Repertoire: *La Fanciulla del West*

Other Companies: Has conducted many major orchestras, including the Berlin Philharmonic, the Vienna Symphony Orchestra, National Philharmonic Orchestra of Budapest, Santa Cecilia Orchestra of Rome, the Orchestre Philharmonique in Paris, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in London, the Toronto Symphony and the Sydney Symphony Orchestras. Operatic engagements have been in leading opera houses of the world including the Metropolitan Opera New York, the State Operas of Berlin and Hamburg, in Venice, Naples, Toronto, Melbourne and the Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires.



GRAEME MURPHY *Background:* Born, Australia. Studied classical ballet with Kenneth Gillespie, Launceston and at The Australian Ballet School. Accepted into The Australian Ballet. Awarded an Australia Council Grant, 1970 and studied in New York. Joined Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet (now known Birmingham Royal Ballet). Joined Ballets Felix Blaska, Grenoble, France. Returned to Australia as a freelance choreographer, 1975 and rejoined The Australian Ballet, 1976 as dancer and resident choreographer. Appointed Artistic Director of the Sydney Dance Company, 1976. Awarded an AM, 1982; named Australian of the Year, 1987. First AO engagement: Directed Brian Howard's *Metamorphosis*, 1985.

A. O. Repertoire: Directed *Turandot*

Other Companies: Includes *Poppy*, *Daphnis and Chloe*, *Nearly Beloved*, *Shining*, *After Venice*, *soft bruising*, *King Roger*, *Piano Sonata*, *Synergy with Synergy* and *Beauty and the Beast* (Sydney Dance Company); led his company on 12 international tours and performed at many international arts festivals; *Tekton*, *Beyond Twelve*, *Meander*, *Gallery* and *Nutcracker* (The Australian Ballet); choreography for *Death in Venice* (Canadian Opera); choreographer and director- *Torvill and Dean World Tour Company* and *Fire and Ice* (London Weekend Television); *Song of the Night* (Netherlands Dans Theater); *Vast* (Australian Bicentennial Authority) created for the four main state dance companies

Recordings/Videos: Videos- *Turandot* (AO); *Rumours*, *Poppy*, *Boxes*, *Daphnis and Chloe*, *Piano Sonata*, *Synergy with Synergy* (Sydney Dance Company)



KRISTIAN FREDRIKSON *Background:* Born, New Zealand. Recipient of four Erik design awards. Won Green Room Awards for *After Venice*, 1985, *King Roger*, 1991, and the AO's production *Turandot*, 1991; and an AFI Award for *Undercover*. Received a Penguin Award for *The Shiralee*, 1988. First AO engagement: *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, 1976.

A.O. Repertoire: *Lucrezia Borgia*, *Don Giovanni*, *Falstaff*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Otello*, *Manon*, *Turandot*, *The Merry Widow*
Other Companies: Includes designs for *War and Peace*, *Three Sisters*, *The Royal Hunt of the Sun*, *Major Barbara*, *The Servant of Two Masters*, *Galileo*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Equus*, *The Merchant of Venice* (MTC); *Amahl and the Night Visitors* (New Zealand Opera); *Albert Herring* (West Australian Opera); *Don Carlos* and *Carmen* (VSO); *The Magic Flute* and *Faust* (Wellington City Opera); *Aurora's Wedding*, *Swan Lake*, *Cinderella*, *Night Encounter*, *Coppelia*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *Gallery*, *The Nutcracker*, *Of Blessed Memory* (The Australian Ballet); *Daphnis and Chloe*, *Poppy*, *The Selfish Giant*, *After Venice*, *An Evening*, *Late Afternoon of a Faun*, *King Roger* (Sydney Dance Company); *Orpheus*, *Swan Lake*, *The Firebird*, *Tell Me a Tale*, *Winter Garden*, *A Servant of Two Masters*, *Jean Batten*, *Cinderella* (Royal New Zealand Ballet); films and TV include costumes for *Undercover*, *Vietnam*, *Dirtwater Dynasty*, production designs for *Sky Pirates*, *Short Changed* and *The Shiralee*

Future Plans: *Macbeth* (State Opera of South Australia); *Carmen* (VSO/ State Opera of South Australia)

Recordings/Videos: Videos of *The Merry Widow* and *Turandot* (AO)



JOHN DRUMMOND MONTGOMERY *Background:* Born, Australia. Designed lighting for the Australian Dance Theatre in the late seventies. Established his own production company in Europe, 1981. Designed lighting for numerous productions in Amsterdam, 1982. Joined the Bat Dor Dance Company of Israel as Lighting Designer and Production Manager in residence where he remounted works by Alvin Alley, John Butler, Jiri Kylan and Paul Taylor, designed new company repertoires and toured with Bat Dor to Zaire, Kenya, New York and Los Angeles. Theatre Services Manager of the Victorian Arts Centre, 1989-1992, after spending 5 years as the Sydney Dance Company's Production Manager and Lighting Designer. Currently a Principal of Bytecraft set up to undertake lighting design projects of all kinds. First AO engagement: *Metamorphosis*, 1985.

A. O. Repertoire: *Aida*, *Romeo et Juliette*, *The Gondoliers*, *Die Walküre* and *Turandot*

Other Companies: Lighting designs include an International Ballet Gala for Queen Beatrix of Holland, The One Act Festival, *Electric* for Arts Theatre *Salome* and *The Winner* for Animate Theatre (Amsterdam); *Boxes*, *Shining*, *Nearly Beloved*, *Poppy*, *Heaven*, *Hell and Purgatory*, *Late Afternoon of a Faun*, *Daphnis and Chloe* (Sydney Dance Company); two works by Ohad Tabularasa (Australia, China and the West Coast, USA); *Gallery* and *The Nutcracker* (The Australian Ballet); *Bliss*, *Portrait of Desire* and *An Evening to Remember* (Royal New Zealand Ballet)

Future Plans: Major lighting projects overseas including Japan

Recordings/Videos: Videos of *The Gondoliers* and *Turandot*



CYNTHIA MAKRIS *Background:* Born, U.S.A. Studied at Adams State College graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in vocal music and history; and at the University of Colorado in vocal music. First AO engagement: The title role in *Salome*, 1993 Melbourne Season

Other Companies: Principal artist with opera houses in Freiburg, Bielefeld and Dortmund, Germany and has guested at opera houses in Nuremberg, Bremen, Kassel, Hanover, Karlsruhe, Düsseldorf, the Staatsoper Berlin and Tokyo. Repertoire includes the title role in *Lulu*, Marie in *Wozzeck*, Marie in Korngold's *Die tote Stadt*, Mimi in Leoncavallo's *La Bohème*, the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*, Olympia, Giulietta and Antonia in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, the title role in *Manon Lescaut*, Eva in Schreker's *Irrelohe*, Marie in Smetana's *Verkaufte Braut*, the title roles in *Salome* and *Arabella*, Kaiserin in *Frau ohne Schatten*, Violetta in *La traviata*, the title role in *Luisa Miller*, Desdemona in *Otello*, Leonora in *Il trovatore*, Freia in *Das Rheingold*, Eva in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Agathe in *Der Freischütz* and Jenny in *Mahagonny*; concert repertoire includes Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, Berg's *Lulu Suite*, Brahms', Mozart's and Verdi's *Requiem*, *Messiah*, Haydn's *Nelson Mass*, Mahler's *Second* and *Fourth Symphonies*, Mozart's *Exsultate Jubilate* and Orff's *Carmina Burana*



KATHLEEN CONNELL

Background: Born, Australia. Studied singing with Bettine McCaughan, Melbourne and David Harper, London. Winner of the Sun Aria, Melbourne, 1986. Obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Diploma of Education. Member of the Victoria State Opera Young Artists' Development Program, 1987. Finalist in the San Francisco Opera Pacific Voices Competition, 1992. First AO engagement: Member of the Chorus, 1989

A.O. Repertoire: Fruma-Sarah in *Fiddler on the Roof*

Other Companies: Barbarina in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, First Handmaiden in *Turandot*, Second Boy in *The Magic Flute* (Victoria State Opera); Opening and closing ceremonies of the World Rowing Championships, Tasmania; concerts at Lillianfels (Blue Mountains); Schubert recitals (Geelong)

Future Plans: Further study in Europe

Recordings/Videos: A children's opera *The Snow Queen* (M. Easton) ABC



ROSEMARY GUNN *Background:* Born, Scotland. Studied at the Melba Memorial Conservatorium, Melbourne. Won the Pan-Pacific Final of the Metropolitan Opera Auditions and the Sydney Sun Aria, 1977 and continued her studies in Salzburg and Vancouver. Awarded the Bayreuth Scholarship, 1989. First AO engagement: *Iolanthe*, 1972

A.O. Repertoire: Includes Ruggiero in *Alcina*, Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*, Third Lady in *The Magic Flute*, Marcellina in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Flora in *La traviata*, Amneris in *Aida*, Meg Page in *Falstaff*, Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus*, Marina in *Boris Godounov*, Bianca in *Rape of Lucretia*, Mrs Sedley in *Peter Grimes*, Adalgisa in *Norma*, Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Fricka in *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, Brangäne in *Tristan und Isolde*, Magdalena in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* and Gertrude in *Romeo et Juliette*

Other Companies: Title role in *Carmen* (Canberra Opera); concerts include Mozart's *Requiem* and Bruckner's *Te Deum* (Vienna Singverein, Sydney, Perth and the Adelaide Festival); Verdi's *Requiem* (Sydney Philharmonia Society); *Messiah* (Melbourne Symphony Orchestra); Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly* (Darwin Bicentennial Concert)

Future Plans: Magdalena in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (AO)

Recordings/Videos: Voss and the AO's Mozart Bicentennial Celebration; videos- *The Magic Flute*, *La traviata*, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* and Voss



KIRSTI HARMS *Background:* Born, Australia. Graduated from the University of Adelaide with a Bachelor of Law degree. Member of The Australian Opera's Esso Young Artists' Program, 1990. Winner- Remy Martin Australian Opera Award, 1993. First AO engagement: Lola in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, 1989

A.O. Repertoire: Annina and Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Preziosilla in *La forza del destino*, Flora in *La traviata*, Maddalena in *Rigoletto*, Stephano in *Romeo et Juliette*, Tessa in *The Gondoliers*, Leonard in *Les Huguenots*, Valetto in *L'incoronazione di Poppea* and Hansel in *Hansel and Gretel*

Other Companies: Isabella in *L'Italiana in Algeri*, Mercédès and the title role in *Carmen* and Maddalena in *Rigoletto* (State Opera of South Australia); Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly* and Flora in *La traviata* (West Australian Opera); Flora (Victoria State Opera); concert engagements include The Angel in Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius*, Handel's *Dixit Dominus*, Scarlatti's *Saint Cecilia's Mass* and Mozart's *Coronation Mass*, *Messiah* and excerpts from *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (ABC Perth, Adelaide and Tasmania); Theatre Dresser, Student and Groom in *Lulu* and, for the 1991 Festival of Sydney, the White Cat and Herdsman in Ravel's *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* (Sydney Symphony Orchestra), *Stars of the Australian Opera*, a Gala AIDS Benefit Concert in Brisbane and Verdi's *Requiem* (Victorian Arts Centre)

Future Plans: Hermia in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (AO); Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* (Lyric Opera of Queensland)

Recordings/Videos: Video recording of *Les Huguenots*



DAVID COLLINS-WHITE *Background:* Born, Australia. Sang in St Andrews Choir as a chorister for six years. Attended the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and graduated with a Bachelor of Music Education, 1985. Studied singing with Raymond Myers, 1978-1988. Member of the Esso Young Artists' Development Program, 1989. Joined The Australian Opera as a resident principal, 1990. First AO engagement: Ernest in *Whitsunday*, 1988
A.O. Repertoire: Marco in *The Gondoliers*, Don Curzio in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, several roles in *Death in Venice*, De Tavannes in *Les Huguenots*, Harry in *La Fanciulla del West*, Pong in *Turandot*, Borsa in *Rigoletto*, Jacquino in *Fidelio*, Tybalt in *Roméo et Juliette*, Tom Radelyffe in *Voss*, Shelley/Frankenstein in *Mer de Glace* and Sailor/Shepherd in *Tristan und Isolde*
Other Companies: Appeared in *My Fair Lady* (Victorian Arts Centre and Victorian State Opera production); concert repertoire includes several appearances for the National Lieder Society, tenor soloist in Bach's *St Matthew Passion* (Newcastle University), and a direct broadcast of Malcolm Williamson's songcycle *A Vision of Beasts and Gods* (ABC)
Recordings/Videos: Recorded several works by Michael Whittaker (ABC); *Les Huguenots* (AO)



CHRISTOPHER DOIG *Background:* Born, New Zealand. Awards: Mobil Song Quest, 1972; a Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council grant, 1974. Graduated from the Vienna Music Academy, 1976. Director- 1990 and 1992 NZ International Festival of the Arts. Awarded the OBE, 1992. First AO engagement: Nerone in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, 1988
A. O. Repertoire: David in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Le Mesurier in *Voss*, Titus in *La Clemenza di Tito*, Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto*, Laca in *Jenufa*, Maurizio in *Adriana Lecouvreur*
Other Companies: Appeared in Vienna, Linz, Hamburg, Cologne, Stuttgart, Barcelona and the Vienna and Salzburg Festivals. Roles include David in *Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Jacquino in *Fidelio*, The Steersman and Erik in *The Flying Dutchman*, Dr Caius in *Falstaff*, Remendado and Don Jose in *Carmen*, Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni*, Tamino in *The Magic Flute*, Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Graf Elemer in *Arabella*, Jenik in *The Bartered Bride* and the Tambourmajor in *Wozzeck*. Concerts with the ABC, NZ Symphony Orchestra, Sydney Opera House, Festival of Sydney, Sydney Philharmonia, Melbourne Chorale and Christchurch City Choir. Concerts include Mozart's *Requiem*, Beethoven's *9th Symphony* and *Missa Solemnis*, Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, Puccini's *Messa di Gloria*, Verdi's *Requiem*, Mahler's *Das Klagende Lied* and *Elijah*
Future Plans: Thaddeus in *The Golem* for the AO
Recordings/Videos: Recordings include Wagner excerpts (New Zealand Symphony Orchestra); Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* (ABC Classics) and *New Zealand at Covent Garden* (Kiwi Pacific)



GRAEME MACFARLANE *Background:* Born, Australia. Graduate of Sydney Conservatorium of Music in Operatic Art. Won the Sydney Sun Aria, 1979 and travelled to the U.K. to study at the Royal Northern College of Music. Performed major roles with Scottish, Welsh and North Ireland Opera Companies. Performed with the State Opera of South Australia, West Australian Opera Company and Canberra Opera. First AO engagement: Member of Chorus, 1977
A.O. Repertoire: The Emperor in *Turandot* and Struhan in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Mr Belville in *Rosina*, Arnfelt in *Un ballo in maschera*, Giuseppe in *La traviata*, Parpignol in *La Bohème*, The Pony Express Rider in *The Girl of the Golden West*, Leonard Meryll in *The Women of the Guard*, Leicester in *Maria Stuarda*, Armidoro in *La buona figliuola* and First Prisoner in *Fidelio*
Other Companies: Performed leading roles in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Così fan tutte*, *Falstaff* and *Don Giovanni* (West Australian Opera); Oratorios include *Messiah* and *Childhood of Christ*
Future Plans: A Ruffian in *The Golem* for the AO
Recordings/Videos: Has made several broadcast recordings for the ABC



DOMINIC NATOLI *Background:* Born, Australia. Holds degrees in Law and Economics from Monash University. Studied with Carol Blackner-Mayo and completed a Diploma of Opera at Vienna Conservatorium of Music. Winner of the Heinz Youth Aria, 1981 and was a finalist in the Melbourne Sun Aria and the National Finals of the Metropolitan Opera Auditions. Awarded the Dame Joan Sutherland Scholarship, 1991 and 1992. Recipient of an Arts Fellowship, 1992, from the Queensland Government. Awarded first prize in the Lied and Oratorio section of the Alfredo Kraus International Singing Competition, 1992. Recently undertaken further study in London. First AO engagement: Zurga in *Les pêcheurs de perles*, 1989
A.O. Repertoire: Ping in *Turandot*, in the ensemble in *Death in Venice*, Polidori/Tourist Guide in *Mer de Glace* and Melot in *Tristan und Isolde*
Other Companies: Performed with Wiener Kammeroper and Lyric Opera of Queensland; Count Ceprano in *Rigoletto* (Victoria State Opera); performed throughout Austria as Figaro in Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and Paisiello's opera of the same name, Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly*, Zurga in *Les pêcheurs de perles*, Ping in *Turandot*, Dr Falke in *Die Fledermaus* and Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*; and in many recitals of oratorio and lieder; performed in the Festival of Modern Opera, Vienna
Future Plans: Performing in the Canary Islands Festival
Recordings/Videos: Recording for the CD label 'Vienna Modern Masters'; number of recordings for the ABC



MICHAEL TERRY *Background:* Born, Australia. A graduate of the University of Melbourne and the Victorian College of the Arts where he completed a BA in Music, 1986. Full-time member of the VSO's Schools' Company in 1987 and took part in the 1988 tour of *My Fair Lady*. Awarded an Australia Council Grant, 1989, the Liederfest Scholarship (Lieder Society of Victoria), 1989 and the 1990 American Institute of Musical Studies Award (Opera Foundation Australia). Member of the VSO's Young Artists' Program. First AO engagement: The Animal Seller in *Der Rosenkavalier*, 1992
A. O. Repertoire: Poisson in *Adriana Lecouvreur*, Nutrice in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, St Briche in *The Merry Widow* and the Servant in *Un ballo in maschera*
Other Companies: Don Basilio and Don Curzio in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Count Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, First Prisoner in *Fidelio*, Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*, First Priest and Monostatos in *The Magic Flute*, Dr Blind in *Die Fledermaus*, Frederic in *The Pirates of Penzance*, Nathanael and Frantz in *The Tales of Hoffmann* (Victoria State Opera); Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* and Pang in *Turandot* (Mercury Theatre, New Zealand); Weil's *The Seven Deadly Sins*, Haydn's *Nelson Mass* and *St Matthew Passion* (Melbourne Chorale), *Messiah* (Adelaide and Melbourne Symphony Orchestras)
Future Plans: *Messiah* (Adelaide Symphony Orchestra); First Notary in *Pericole* and a Ruffian in *The Golem* (AO)
Recordings/Videos: Wolf's *Italienisches Liederbuch* for the ABC



PATRICK TOCHER *Background:* Born, Australia. A law and economics graduate of Sydney University. First AO engagement: The Young Sailor/ Shepherd in *Tristan und Isolde*, 1990
A.O. Repertoire: Include The Prince and the Marquis in a concert performance of *Lulu*, Monostatos in *The Magic Flute*, Mendel in *Fiddler on the Roof*, Spoletta in *Tosca*, Valzacchi in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Trabuco in *La forza del destino* and Lucano in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*
Other Companies: *Pirates of Penzance* and Ralph Rackstraw in *HMS Pinafore* (Victoria State Opera); Pedrillo in *Il Seraglio* and Remendado in *Carmen* (Lyric Opera of Queensland); Doctor Zuppamarron in *The Remedy* (Sydney Metropolitan Opera); Pang in *Turandot* (Warringah Symphony Society); Boni in *The Gipsy Princess* (Dunedin Opera, New Zealand); concerts include *Messiah*, *Acis and Galatea*, Haydn's *Creation* and *Nelson Mass*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Bach's *St John Passion* and Orff's *Catulli Carmina*; performed Rachmaninov's *The Bells* (Sydney Youth Orchestra) and Mozart's *Requiem* (Sydney Philharmonia)
Future Plans: Zorn in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Isaac/Offstage Tenor in *The Golem* and Flute in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for the AO



ROBERT ALLMAN *Background:* Born, Australia. Former principal baritone with the National Opera, Melbourne. Studied in Paris 1954/56. Was engaged by the Royal Opera, Covent Garden and also appeared in Darmstadt, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Berlin, New Orleans, Houston, Munich, Stuttgart, Vienna, Cologne, Strasbourg, Sadler's Wells and at Glyndebourne Festival in many leading roles. Awarded the OBE, 1980 and the AM, 1992. First AO engagement: Jokanaan in *Salome*, 1960
A. O. Repertoire: Title roles in *Rigoletto*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Macbeth*, *Nabucco*, *The Flying Dutchman*, *The Mikado* and *Simon Boccanegra*, Trimity Moses in *Mahagonny*, Don Fernando and Pizarro in *Fidelio*, Rangoni in *Boris Godounov*, Valentine in *Faust*, Wolfram in *Tannhäuser*, Donner in *Das Rheingold*, Telramund in *Lohengrin*, Fritz Kothner in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Alfonso D'Este in *Lucrezia Borgia*, the four 'villain' roles in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, Anckarstroem in *Un ballo in maschera*, Ford in *Falstaff*, Amonasro in *Aida*, Francesco in *I Masnadieri*, Iago in *Otello*, Germont in *La traviata*, Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly*, Tonio in *Pagliacci*, Michele in *Il Tabarro*, Marcello in *La Bohème*, Scarpia in *Tosca* and Capulet in *Roméo et Juliette*
Future Plans: Kothner in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* and Peter in *Hansel and Gretel* (AO)
Recordings/Videos: Videos- *Lucrezia Borgia*, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (AO); *Fidelio* (Glyndebourne)



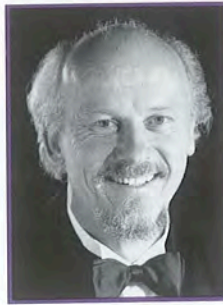
MICHAEL GLUECKSMANN *Background:* Born, Australia. First engagements were in Melbourne at the Australian National Theatre and with the Victorian Opera Company (now the Victoria State Opera). Performed with the Israel National Opera, Tel Aviv, 1973-75 and the Pfalz Theater in Kaiserlautern, Germany, 1976-1980. Became a member of the Staatstheater, Darmstadt, 1980. Joined Frankfurt Opera, 1984. First AO engagement: Kurwenal in the concert performance of *Tristan und Isolde*, Perth, 1991
A. O. Repertoire: Peter in *Hansel and Gretel*
Other Companies: Has guested at the Opera Houses of Düsseldorf, Leipzig, Stuttgart, Cologne, Bremen, Freiburg, Hanover and Kassel. Has appeared in St Gallen, Switzerland; in Enschede, Holland with Opera Forum; with the Volksoper in Vienna, Austria; and at the Salzburg Festival. Performed in concert in Valencia, Spain. Roles include Escamillo in *Carmen*, Scarpia in *Tosca*, the title roles in *Gianni Schicchi*, *Der Fliegende Holländer*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte*, Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, Donner in *Das Rheingold*, Amfortas in *Parsifal*, Father in *Hansel and Gretel*, the Villains in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* and Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof*
Future Plans: Hans Sachs in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (AO); Escamillo in *Carmen* (State Opera of South Australia); Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof* (Deutsche Oper am Rhein, Düsseldorf)



KERRY HENDERSON *Background:* Born, New Zealand. Graduated from the Victorian College of the Arts, 1989. National Finalist in the NZ Caltex Aria Scholarship, 1988 and received the Mabel Kent Singing Scholarship, 1989. Member of the Victoria State Opera's Young Artists' Program, 1990 and member of The Australian Opera's Young Artists' Program, 1991. First AO engagement: De Thoré in *Les Huguenots*, 1990
A.O. Repertoire: Liberto in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, Figaro in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Gregorio in *Roméo et Juliette*, Marullo in *Rigoletto*, the Second Prisoner in *Fidelio* and Perchik in *Fiddler on the Roof*
Other Companies: Toured NZ in the Broadway production of *The Pirates of Penzance*; Mel in *The Knot Garden* (Spoleto Festival, Melbourne); title role in *Don Giovanni* and Axel in *The Growing Castle*; *Treason of Images*; the Lawyer in *The Heiress* (Chamber Made Opera); Fiorello in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (Victoria State Opera's 1990 country tour); Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte* (Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts)
Future Plans: The title role in *The Golem* for the AO



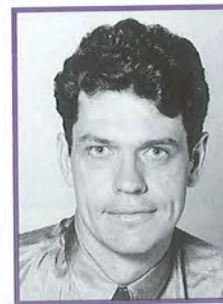
RICHARD ALEXANDER *Background:* Born, England. Studied the piano, clarinet and violin. Student at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music, 1986-1990, graduating with a Bachelor of Music. Member of the Lyric Opera of Queensland's Young Artists' Program, 1991. Semi-finalist in the ABC Young Performers Award and a finalist in the Marianne Mathy Award where he received the Raymond Weill Award for the most outstanding new talent. Member of The Australian Opera's Young Artists' Program for 1993. First AO engagement: Customs Officer in *La Bohème*, 1993
A. O. Repertoire: Masetto in *Don Giovanni*
Other Companies: Marchese d'Obigny in *La traviata*, the Narrator in the Schools' production of *The Lives of Penny Paper*, the Second Armed Man in *The Magic Flute*, Leporello in concert performances of *Don Giovanni* and Basilio in *The Barber of Seville* (Lyric Opera of Queensland); performed in Mozart's *Requiem* and Handel's *Messiah*
Future Plans: The Night Watchman in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* and Snug in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (AO)



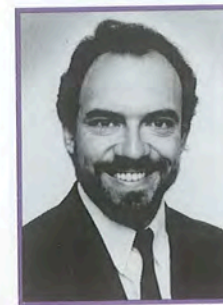
AREND BAUMANN *Background:* Born, Germany. First AO engagement: Ribbing in *Un ballo in maschera*, 1985
A. O. Repertoire: Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*, The Speaker in *The Magic Flute*, Prince Gremin in *Eugene Onegin*, Le Bailli in *Werther*, King Marke in *Tristan and Isolde*, Hans Schwartz in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Timur in *Turandot*, the King of Egypt in *Aida*, Marchese di Calatrava in *La forza del destino*, Fiesco in *Simon Boccanegra*, Sparafucile in *Rigoletto*, Lodovico in *Otello*, Police Commissioner in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Marcel in *Les Huguenots*, Rocco and Don Fernando in *Fidelio*, Friar Lawrence in *Roméo et Juliette* and Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*
Other Companies: Raimondo, Ferrando in *Il Trovatore*, Philip the Second in *Don Carlos*, King Henry in *Lohengrin*, Daland in *The Flying Dutchman* and the title role in *The Barber of Baghdad* (As a principal with the Mainz, Nuremberg and Stuttgart opera companies); appeared throughout Germany, Spain, Holland and Austria, and at the Hong Kong Festival; performed with all the state opera companies in Australia including Philip the Second, Osmin in *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, Daland in *The Flying Dutchman*, Colline in *La Bohème*, and Mustafa in *L'italiana in Algeri* (Victoria State Opera); concerts include Janacek's *Glagolitic Mass* (1990 Adelaide Festival), *Petite Messe Solennelle* (VSO- 1992 Ballarat Opera Festival)
Future Plans: Schwartz in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* for the AO



STEVEN GALLOP *Background:* Born, Australia. Educated in Brisbane and graduated with the degree of Bachelor of Education, 1985. Graduated from the Queensland Conservatorium of Music, 1987. Performed with the Queensland Light Opera then joined the Lyric Opera of Queensland Young Artists' Program. Member of the Esso Young Artists' Development Program, 1991. Awarded the Elizabeth Muir Scholarship, 1987, won the Ellen Marton Award, 1988; a finalist in the Dame Mabel Brookes Scholarship; won the Sydney McDonald's Aria, 1992. First AO engagement: Old Gipsy in *Il Trovatore*, 1990
A. O. Repertoire: Trifon Petrovich in *Eugene Onegin*, Ivan in *Die Fledermaus*, Zuniga in *Carmen*, Ceprano in *Rigoletto*, Montana in *Otello*, Masetto in *Don Giovanni*, the Mayor in *Jenufa*, Don Fernando in *Fidelio* and Sciarrone in *Tosca*, Alcide in *La forza del destino* and Pietro in *Simon Boccanegra*
Other Companies: Sciarrone in *Tosca* and the Second Soldier in *Salome* (Lyric Opera of Queensland); concerts include Mozart's *Requiem* and, for the Queensland Conservatorium, a Verdi Gala concert
Future Plans: Ortel in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Bonze in *Madama Butterfly*, Theseus in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Sciarrone in *Tosca* for the AO



GREG SCOTT *Background:* Born, Australia. Has studied singing since 1976 with Ronal Jackson, Max Speed and Robert Bickerstaff. Was a finalist in the Covent Garden Scholarship in 1988. Was a member of the Company's Esso Young Artists' Development Program in 1990. First AO engagement: Giorgio in *The Gondoliers*, 1990
A.O. Repertoire: Littore in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, The Second Armed Man in *The Magic Flute*, Gubetta in *Lucrezia Borgia*, Zaretsky in *Eugene Onegin*, The Mandarin in *Turandot*, Angelotti in *Tosca*, Larkens in *La Fanciulla del West*, the Third Monk in *Les Huguenots*, The Priest and The Russian Father in *Death in Venice*, Duke of Verona in *Roméo et Juliette*, Sparafucile in *Rigoletto*, Chirurgo in *La forza del destino*, Horn in *Un ballo in maschera* and The Fourth Knight in *Lohengrin*
Other Companies: Colline in *La Bohème* (Sydney Conservatorium of Music and Canberra), Don Basilio in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*.



PAUL THOMSON *Background:* Born, Australia. Graduated from Sydney University with a degree in Agricultural Science. Undertook the Opera and Musical Theatre Diploma at the Sydney Conservatorium. Won the Sun Aria Competition, 1981. Studied with the music staff at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden. Spent two years as a chorister (Glyndebourne). First AO engagement: Cappadocian in *Salome*, 1993
Other Companies: Brander in *Damnation of Faust* (Sydney Opera House); Popoff in *The Chocolate Soldier* and Marcello in *La Bohème* (Lyric Opera of Queensland); Old Adam in *Ruddigore* and Dick Deadeye in *HMS Pinafore* (New Sadler's Wells Opera); title role in *Lawrence Hargrave Flying Alone* (Sydney Conservatorium)
Recordings/Videos: Recordings- *HMS Pinafore* (New Sadler's Wells Opera) and *Lawrence Hargrave Flying Alone* (ABC)

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FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

An audience member coming to a performance of *Salome* has many expectations - an opulent and exotic stage atmosphere, a voluptuous orchestral score swelling up from the pit, a scent of decadence in the air and a soprano looking convincingly young and innocent with a voice of seemingly endless reserves. Another expectation is that the famous Dance of the Seven Veils will be brilliantly choreographed and danced, to be the highlight, or at least one of the highlights, of the performance. When the name of the director is Graeme Murphy expectations in this last particular are especially high.

We hope that those with these expectations will not be disappointed with our new production of this important work. We especially anticipate that the Dance will be found not only to be a memorable moment of the performance, but also a clear affirmation to the audience of the importance that dance now has in the work of The Australian Opera.

In the early days of our company history dance was low on the list of performance priorities. Economic circumstances did not encourage the engagement of dancers who might not be required in every opera presented in a season and "clever" directors could very often think of something else to stage when the score revealed a ballet or dance sequence. When dance was found to be essential it was usually left to a pair of dancers, rehearsed separately, often with uninspired choreography and rarely integrated into the production as a whole.

In 1964 all this suddenly changed, as for a single season we performed jointly in four capital cities with The Australian Ballet. This was an initiative of The Elizabethan Theatre Trust which at that time controlled both companies. It was based on the model of The Royal Opera House Covent Garden, in London, when opera and ballet shared the stage and facilities and alternated performances. In Australia this did not work so well - the public tended to misunderstand the advertising and thought that dancers would sing and singers would dance and there were some very poorly attended evenings when both companies performed a one act opera and a short ballet. The companies did however work together within each others normal repertoire, the dancers in our productions of *Carmen*, *Macbeth* and *Catulli Carmina*, and our chorus sang in the ballet's *Prince Igor*. This was certainly the beginning of a better understanding of each others art form. In 1967 and 1968 for our Melbourne seasons students of The Australian Ballet School danced and appeared as extras in our performances. This was in fact our first collaboration with Graeme Murphy, when he was cast as an executioner's assistant in our 1967 *Turandot*.

That remarkable man of Australian dance, Keith Bain, was the next important figure in making us more dance aware. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, he worked with us often, particularly in Gilbert and Sullivan productions in which the singers did indeed dance, or attempt to dance. More recently the involvement of ballerina Lois Strike and the late Kelvin Coe as dancers in several productions inspired and encouraged us to raise the dance profile of our work. Productions such as *The Merry Widow*, *Alcina*, *The Gondoliers*, *Turandot*, *Aida*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Death in Venice* and many more, together with contact with choreographers such as Graeme Murphy, the late Sir Robert Helpmann, Robert Ray, Brian MacDonald, Garth Welch, Mary Duchesne, Meryl Tankard and Tom Abbott have delighted audiences and created an expectation of increasingly high standards in our dance work.

The dancers' group working with us this year is of a very high standard, including a number of graduates of The Australian Ballet School and other leading schools and academies. Jak Callick, himself a former Australian Ballet soloist, has been our dance Captain since 1986 and is principally responsible for the selection of dancers and the maintenance of standards. He and his dancers are excited at the prospect of *Salome*, our latest Graeme Murphy collaboration. We hope that the Dance of the Seven Veils, involving our dancers with the protagonist, will prove to be the highlight that the production warrants.

MOFFATT OXENBOULD

The Story

Place: *A great Terrace at the palace of Herod.*

Time: *About 30 A.D.*

On the moonlit terrace, Narraboth, a captain of the Guard, gazes at Princess Salome, who feasts with her step-father, Herod, and his court in the banquet hall. A young page warns Narraboth against the Princess.

A quarrel among the Jews is heard from inside the hall, when suddenly the voice of the prophet Jokanaan rises from a deep cistern where he has been imprisoned by Herod. Jokanaan proclaims the coming of the Messiah and the soldiers tell an inquiring Cappadocian that Herod has forbidden anyone to see the Prophet.

Salome, driven out of Herod's presence by his lustful obsession with her, seeks a breath of air in the cool moonlight. The voice of Jokanaan sounds again, cursing the sinful Herodias. Salome's curiosity is aroused, but the soldiers refuse her request to open the cistern and allow her to speak with the Prophet. She turns to Narraboth, who, unable to resist her, disregards Herod's orders and the Prophet is brought forth.

First terrified by the sight of the Prophet, who denounces her mother anew, Salome grows fascinated by the deathly pallor of his body. Despite the protests of Narraboth, the Princess pours forth her desire to touch the hair, skin and lips of the Prophet. Jokanaan rejects each of her passionate outbursts.

In horror and despair Narraboth stabs himself. Jokanaan urges Salome to save herself by seeking Christ. When she repeats her plea for his kiss, Jokanaan curses her and returns to his prison.

Looking for Salome, Herod comes out on the terrace, followed by Herodias and their guests. He slips in the blood of Narraboth and is overcome with deep foreboding and

hallucinations. Herodias scornfully dismisses his fantasies and wants him to return to the hall, but Herod orders that the feast be continued outside. Seeing Salome, he invites her to share his wine and fruit. She refuses coldly.

They are interrupted by the voice of Jokanaan. The harassed Herodias demands that Herod turn the Prophet over to the Jews. Herod refuses, maintaining that Jokanaan is a holy man and has seen God. This provokes a religious dispute among the Jews present as to the true nature and significance of Jokanaan. When the latter is again heard proclaiming the Messiah two Nazarenes speak of the wonders performed by Jesus, telling Herod that he has awakened the dead. To distract himself from such disturbing thoughts, Herod begs Salome to dance for him. As with his previous requests she at first refuses, but as Herod grows more and more excited with the idea he promises to grant her any wish if she will agree. She makes him swear an oath on this and then announces that she will dance for him.

Salome then performs the dance. He asks what she wishes as a reward, and she demands the head of Jokanaan on a silver platter. Horrified, Herod refuses, while Herodias laughs approval at Salome's choice. Afraid to harm the holy man, Herod in desperation offers her instead all his most costly treasures, even the sacred veil of the Temple of the Jews. Salome insists on her demand and reminds him of his oath.

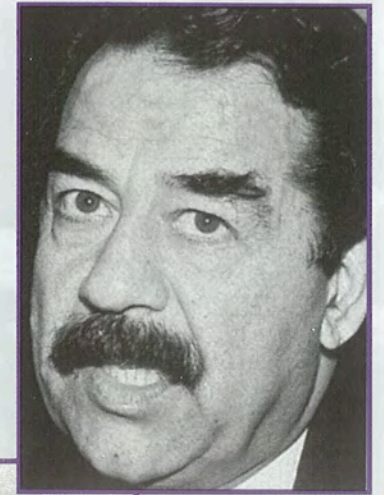
Finally Herod gives in. Herodias, triumphant at seeing the Prophet destroyed, removes the Ring of Death from the finger of her husband and hands it to the executioner. Salome listens anxiously until at last the executioner brings up her prize.

With the head of Jokanaan in her hands she at last kisses his dead lips. "You have seen your God, Jokanaan, but me you never did see. If you had looked at me, you would have loved me. The secret of love is greater than the secret of death!"

Horrified, Herod orders his soldiers to kill the Princess.



Portrait of Herod, in the style of Arcimboldo, 16th C.



Herod King of Judea under the Romans. In his later years, suffering from arterio-sclerosis and intense jealousies due to the intrigue and deception taking place within his family, he became increasingly brutal and murderously cruel. He ordered the 'Massacre of the Innocents' in Bethlehem.

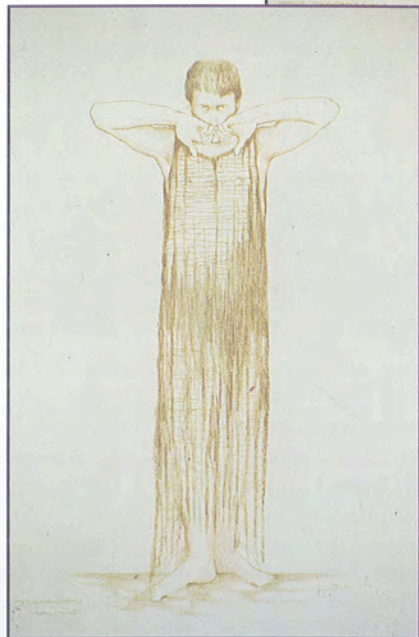
Joseph Stalin Forcibly introduced the intensely hated collectivisation of agriculture and ruled as a ruthless dictator, backing his wishes with a reign of terror by secret police. As many as 20 million people are believed to have died as a direct result of his policies.

Adolf Hitler German dictator who reorganised German society and politics. His expansionist policies caused the outbreak of World War II. Responsible for the *Holocaust* and for the policies of racial 'cleansing' which saw the slaughter of more than 10 million people.

Mao Ze Dong Chinese communist leader who swept away the traditions and conflicts of old China and introduced a revolutionary, centralised communist state of an extreme kind. We still do not know the extent of his excesses although Tibet bears the most obvious witness to them.

Pol Pot Leader of the Khmer Rouge of Kampuchea, infamous for his brutality and severity. Responsible for the oppression and slaughter of millions of intellectuals, academics, skilled workers, traders and manufacturers. Still unpunished for his crimes and poised to regain control of Cambodia and continue his reign of terror. Photographs of Pol Pot are rare.

With body counts still rising as they punish citizens and neighbours, Saddam Hussein and the various Serbian faction leaders are among those world leaders vying for big league membership as they pursue their policies of 'ethnic cleansing' and other euphemisms for genocide. And this is before we even start to look at Africa and South America!



Costume Designs by
Kristian Fredrikson



The Beheading of Saint John the Baptist
Spanish, Catalan, mid 15th C.(detail)

Salome Lovis Corinth, 1899



Salome presents to Herod the head of John the Baptist and Herodias prepares to cut his eye with a knife, French school of the North, 15th C.

SALOME UNVEILED



Salome Olivier Merson

L'Apparition Gustave Moreau (detail)



Dance of Salome and beheading of Saint John
miniature in an English psalter, early 13th C.



Salome Cesare da Sesto (1477-1523)

Salome in the Garden Gustave Moreau, 1878



SALOME ON DISC

An American musicologist once described Puccini's *Tosca* as a 'little shocker' — an epithet perhaps misplaced, for what opera heroine could deserve that tag better than our barbarous little headhunter Salome?

The Compact Disc catalog has several Salomes of note, from Behrens to Caballe and Karen Huffstodt. But of modern recordings, the award-winning recording by Cheryl Studer on Deutsche Grammophon with Giuseppe Sinopoli conducting is the clear leader of the field, and many critics have hailed this as the best recording of the work yet made (DG 431 810-2).

Studer, who has most recently turned to recording dying heroines of a far more sympathetic kind (the deranged Lucia di Lammermoor, and consumptive Violetta Valéry), here sings the mad Princess Salome with a frenetic intensity matched only by Sinopoli's pulsating handling of the Berlin Opera Orchestra — perhaps his best recording yet. The other cast members — including Horst Hestermann as Herod, Leonie Rysanek as Herodias and Bryn Terfel as Jokanaan — are also very fine, but on record our attention becomes focused on Salome and her passionate affair with the orchestra; other participants serve to simply advance the drama.

The Studer/Sinopoli duo is impressive and compelling from start to finish of this intense, concentrated work. But it does not quite displace what is, for me, still the greatest recording of *Salome*.

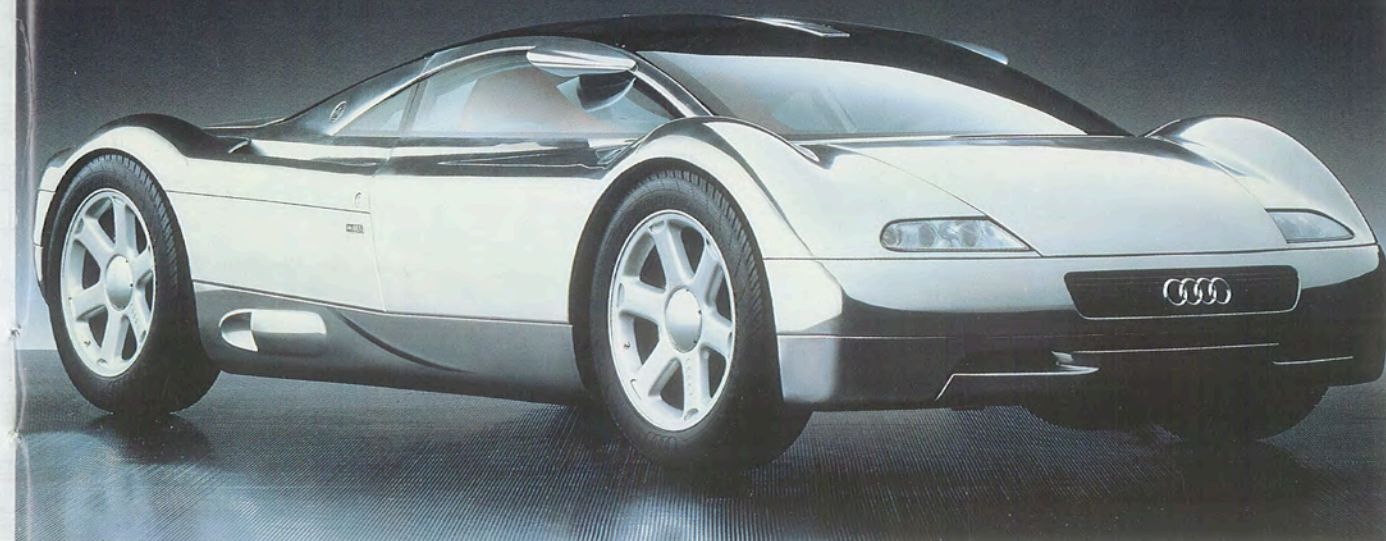
This comes from the 1960s, with Birgit Nilsson and Sir Georg Solti with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra (Decca 414 414-2). Most other cast members, Grace Hoffman as Herodias and Eberhard Wächter as Jokanaan, are for the most part fully equal to the Sinopoli team, while Gerhard Stolze as Solti's Herod is exceptional; a beautiful voice that paints for us the colours of depravity. The stereo placement and sheer quality of sound is remarkable, with a feeling of recorded strength and depth not present even in the most modern recording.

Birgit herself is awesome; it is simply one of the finest recordings of her great career, and my only regret is that this CD does not have the lurid cover of the original LP box set; a stunning photograph of Birgit as Salome, all hideous reds and greens, aqua tints in her hair, and with her mad leer summing up so well the essential vulgarity of Strauss.

Whichever complete set you choose, there is one other recording that must be listened to. It is an EMI Reference series Compact Disc of selected arias sung by soprano Ljuba Welitsch (CDH 761 0072).

The last selection on this disc is a recording taken from a 1944 Viennese radio broadcast of the final 17 minutes of *Salome*. There is a special madness in this recording, an unleashing of unearthly passion. It carries a tangible sense of the power Welitsch must have had on stage, a surprising power from such a slight figure. Her voice insinuates through our skin; her whispers of sensual madness stroke our very nerves.

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SOUTHGATE. ON THE RIVER, NEXT TO THE ARTS CENTRE, OVERLOOKING THE CITY.

(THE SCENE IS SET
INSIDE A THEATRE
WHERE A NIHILISTIC
PLAY IS IN PROGRESS.
IN THE AUDIENCE, WE
SEE A YOUNG COUPLE
WHO ARE OBVIOUSLY
LESS THAN IMPRESSED
WITH THE THESPIANS'
EFFORTS...)

YOUNG MAN
(WHISPERING):
I haven't seen this
much ham since
Christmas dinner.

YOUNG WOMAN
(WHISPERING):
Dinner! Don't talk about
dinner. I'm starving!

MATRON OF THE ARTS
NEXT TO HER:
Ssssh!

YOUNG MAN:
I could murder a
Macchiato...

YOUNG WOMAN:
Mmm... a Big Macchiato
and fries.

MATRON OF THE ARTS
(INDIGNANTLY):
Ssssssh!

YOUNG MAN:
Or yum cha...

YOUNG WOMAN:
Yum yum!

MAN IN ROW BEHIND:
Crusty foccacia...

WOMAN IN ROW IN
FRONT:
A shockingly chilled
chardonnay...

WOMAN THREE SEATS
AWAY:
Or sushi...

(QUICKLY, THE
AUDIENCE COMES TO
LIFE AS AN EAGERLY
CHATTERING MASS
INTENT ON ESCAPE.
BUT WHITHER SHALL
THEY GO?)

YOUNG MAN:
Southgate?

AUDIENCE CHORUSES:
Southgate!

ACTOR (CRANING INTO
THE SPOTLIGHTS):
Oy! This is the final act!

YOUNG MAN:
No, mate, it's the final
straw!

(AUDIENCE EXEUNT
HUNGRILY AND
THIRSTILY TO
SOUTHGATE.)

The horror! The horror!
Michael Shmith on the changing nature of *Salome*

It is easy, in the closing years of this century, to see Richard Strauss's *Salome* as being a harmless work, whose once-offensive nature has been superceded by things far more controversial in art and music. To hold this view is to admit defeat in the face of what was the first masterpiece of twentieth-century opera and what might have been, had not Strauss turned his mind to an adaptation of Oscar Wilde's original 1893 play, merely a perfumed relic of the *fin-de-siècle*. The opera, although it follows Wilde's text (with cuts and changes), is vastly different from the play in terms of its dramatic emphasis and tautness of structure. It still surprises and entralls almost 90 years after its première.

Salome was Strauss's third opera and his first success. Its predecessors, *Guntram* and *Feuersnot*, languish in the composer's canon and are not revived or recorded except as curiosities. Even Strauss's wife, the fearsome Pauline, said of *Feuersnot*: "Nobody could possibly like that shoddy work...there wasn't an original note in it, all stolen from Wagner and many others." It is not on record what Frau Strauss thought of *Salome* in either Oscar Wilde's play or her husband's operatic adaptation; but there were plenty of others only too happy to supply opinions.

In 1904, when Strauss's father, Franz (a composer himself, and horn player), heard his son play some of the score on piano, he said: "Oh God, what nervous music. It is exactly as if one had one's trousers full of maybugs." Cosima Wagner, then the indomitable chatelaine of Bayreuth, told Strauss after he played her the final scene: "This is absolute madness. You are for the exotic, Siegfried Wagner for the popular!" Even the first *Salome*, soprano Frau Wittich ("entrusted with the part of the 16-year-old princess with the voice of an Isolde," wrote Strauss), protested to the composer at the first read-through: "I won't do it, I'm a decent woman." She did it, and Strauss had a hit on his hands. Frau Wittich, one presumes, had a head on hers.

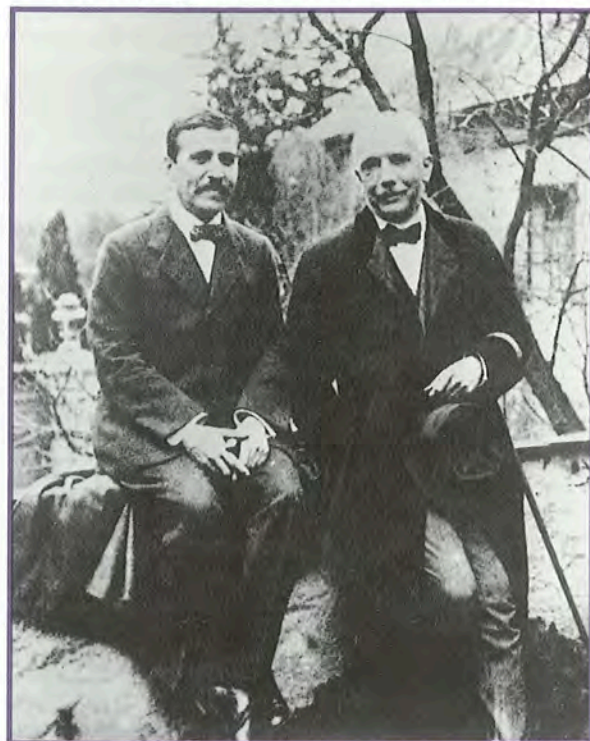
The opera had its première in Dresden on 9 December 1905, three weeks before the première, in Vienna, of Lehar's *The Merry Widow*. While Hanna Glawari had the freedom of the city, the Princess of Judea had to wait nearly thirteen years before she could dance for Herod in Vienna. Thanks to a restraining action taken out by the accurately named Archbishop Piffel, *Salome* had been *Verboten*. Even Kaiser Wilhelm, who liked to see Biblical subjects on stage (and allowed it finally to be performed) was reported to have said after the performance: "I am sorry Strauss composed this *Salome*. It will do him a great deal of danger." To which Strauss wrote laconically; "The danger allowed me to build my villa at Garmisch."

Salome had its champions, too. Mahler, who so desperately wanted the première of *Salome* for Vienna and of course pre-deceased its actual performance there by seven years, saw the opera at least three times. He wrote: "It is emphatically a work of genius, very powerful, and decidedly one of the most important works of our day. A vulcan lives and labours under a heap of slag, a subterranean fire- not merely a firework! It is exactly the same with Strauss's personality..." Sir Thomas Beecham, who conducted the work's British première at Covent Garden in 1910, writes in his autobiography, *A Mingled Chime*, of the Lord Chamberlain's ludicrous conditions which had to be accepted before the opera could be performed; these included referring to John the Baptist only as "The Prophet", bowdlerising the text to take out all blasphemous and offensive references (this then had to be re-translated back into German for the singers, who proceeded to ignore it), and no head- just a silver platter covered with a cloth. The result was full houses for the run.

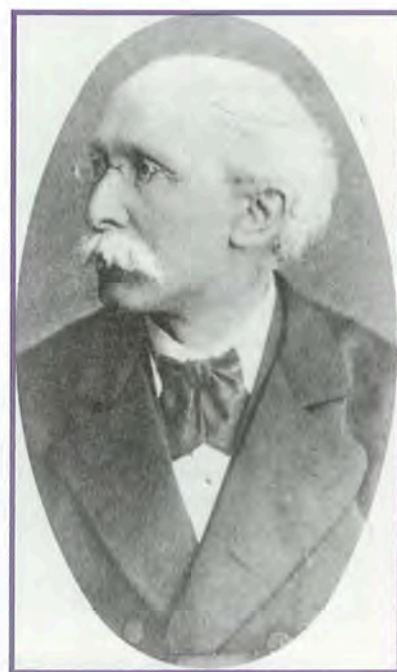


Oscar Wilde

Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Richard Strauss, 1912



Cosima Wagner and Richard Wagner



Franz Strauss

I feel it curious that *Salome* has been called violent. Yes, there is a suicide early on (when Narraboth stabs himself), Jokanaan is executed offstage, and Salome is crushed under Herod's soldiers' shields (a direction seldom followed on stage). But is this any worse than the slayings in *Elektra* or, to look back a few years, a suffocation (*Otello*), or death by firing squad (*Tosca*)? Some might still see blasphemy or racism at work; but essentially *Salome*'s shocks come not exclusively from the drama but through its astonishing music.

Of all Strauss's operas only *Elektra* possesses the same concentrated intensity and dramatic drive. Indeed, it is tempting to bracket the two operas as a sort of more psychological *Cav* and *Pag*. Hugo von Hoffmannsthal (whose libretto of *Elektra* was the first of six such collaborations with Strauss) pointed out in a letter to the composer that the similarities are purely superficial: both are in one-act, take place in Antiquity and have a woman's name for the title. Hoffmannsthal, that master of imagery, saw the two operas as different colours: "*Salome*... purple and violet, the atmosphere is torrid; in *Elektra*... it is a mixture of night and light, or black and bright." It could also be said that *Salome*, which is predicated on unfulfilled desires, is sexier than *Elektra*, whose plot turns on revenge. Another similarity is that both heroines dance; but Salome does it for perverse self-fulfilling reasons, Elektra to exercise the frustrations of a steadily diminishing mind.

Salome also contains the more extraordinary musical effects. The score swirls with ingenuity, its exotic harmonies (to quote the composer) sparkle like taffeta. Strauss added, slightly immodestly, "it is easy to say that the play was 'simply calling out for music'. Yes, indeed, but that had to be discovered."

And discover it he did. Think of the pinched strings of those four double basses at the beginning of the execution scene; Salome crouches over the cistern, listening intently, as the short sharp jabs reflect (Strauss insisted) not the victim's cries of pain but "sighs of anguish from the heart of an impatiently expectant Salome".

Strauss went further than he would ever do again in the field of atonality. In the opera's final scene he pits A major 'cellos against F sharp major violins (an indication of the state of Salome's mind, caught between love and victory). Then he goes further. When Salome sings, "I have kissed your mouth, Jokanaan", the orchestra plays C sharp major and the chord of the alternative tonality. The effect, writes Norman Del Mar, is "a shattering dissonance over which the music world continues to dispute and comment".

Perhaps the major difference between Oscar Wilde's and Richard Strauss's *Salome* lies in whom each saw as the central character. Wilde made Herod the main figure in the drama on the grounds that in spite of his repulsive character he remains as he is. Strauss (rightly, I think) concentrates the opera on Salome, seeing the action virtually through her eyes and mind and consigning Herod (nevertheless a fine character role for a tenor) to second place, with Herodias a close third.

Salome has seldom been out of the repertoire. It might be early operatic Strauss, but remember he had already composed some of his greatest orchestral tone poems, including *Don Juan*, *Macbeth*, *Till Eulenspiegel*, *Also sprach Zarathustra* and *Ein Heldenleben*. Gabriel Fauré described *Salome* as "a symphonic poem with vocal parts added"; and it is exactly that: Strauss's greatest operatic tone poem. It is the work of a master musician and shrewd psychologist who, although he didn't fully work out such characters as Jokanaan, had caught the emotions and persuasive nature of his teenage Isolde in a way that still provokes, fascinates and entrances audiences. Other, later, operas may be more challenging in their plots or music, but *Salome* still has the power to transfix and to say, in one long act, what other works take a whole evening to convey. *Salome* has now, I suspect, more admirers than enemies.

* In *Richard Strauss*, Vol 2 (Barrie & Jenkins, 1952)



Costume Designs by
Kristian Fredrikson

Salome- An attitude to an enigma

Salome is the mysterious, if not mythical, stepdaughter of the Judean Tetrarch, Herod. Jokanaan is the reputed prophet cousin of Yeshua Ben Yosef, the believed Christ/ Saviour and source of the christian religion.

Oscar Wilde wrote a sensational play about the unbalanced passion of a childish princess for a fundamentalist preacher, concluding with a pathological orgasm involving a severed head. It is a monstrous fiction which plays on the heated imagination of adolescence with a soupcon of biblical reference to give it moral justification - it is also a great entertainment.

Richard Strauss seized this material and created possibly the most explicitly erotic music ever written for an opera. It is not the epic passion of *Tristan*, nor the teasing love enigma of Strauss's own *Capriccio*, but the almost palpable sound sensation of quivering erogenous zones. The exquisite ache of Salome's 'desire' motif weaves itself into the nerve ends of the hearer. It seeks to creep into the most human part of the audience. To be repelled or excited depends entirely on the listener's power of sensitivity or prejudice - especially as even Jokanaan's raging invective has a kind of brutal phallic thrust.

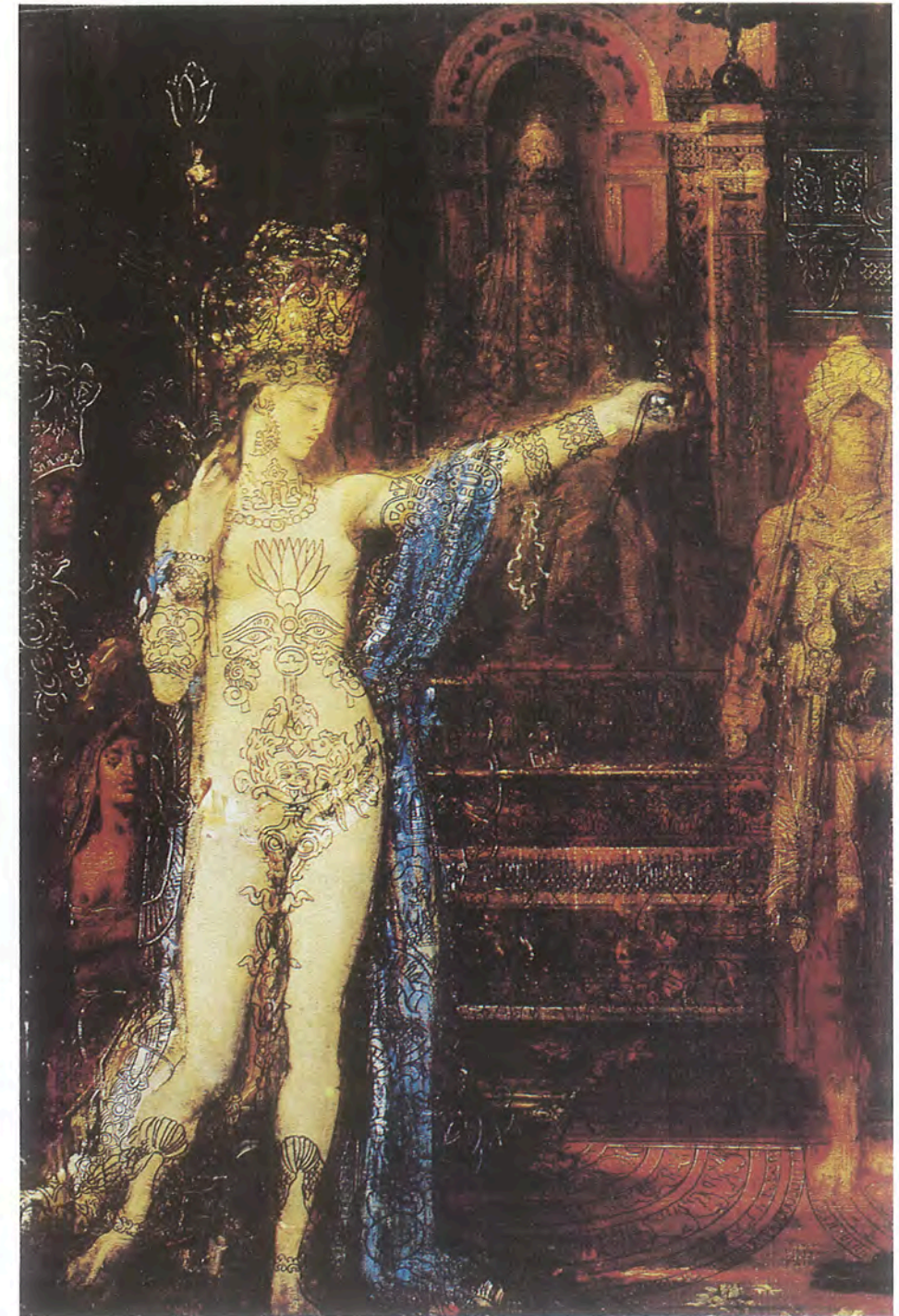
Strauss relentlessly plays out of his own psyche, presenting an almost naked revelation of his own desires and prejudices.

There is no delicacy, in his basic dislike of Jokanaan, a hell-raising evangelist at his worst, or the extraordinary sympathy for spoilt, amoral Salome. Herod and Herodias are your basic couple near homicidal with fear and their mutual hatred; and the quarrelsome Jews are a caricature that pre-dates the neo-christian enthusiasm for persecution soon to be furiously unleashed in Strauss' own time by *Krystallnacht*.

The Nazarenes are the almost banal link crossing the barrier from despised Jew into the acceptable Aryan face of christianity. The only near normal person in this neurasthenic work is the young soldier, Narraboth, who is foolish enough to fall in love with Salome - and he is driven to suicide. Herodias' Page is too embedded in the court's morbidity and fear to be considered balanced.

It is interesting to note that Strauss cut Wilde's lines concerning the Page's passion for Narraboth, probably so as not to distract from the central drama. The musical implication is, however, still there for those who so wish. It should also be pointed out that in Wilde's play, Narraboth is singled out for his singular beauty and that he is a princely hostage in Herod's court. An *übermensch* too fine to live?

Much is made of moon imagery in the opera - the moon is described as a corpse, a dancing princess, a crazy woman, also, in inference, a source of light that witnesses crimes against God.



Salome by Gustave Moreau; from the Paris exhibition which inspired Oscar Wilde

Salome and The Australian Opera

Salome was first presented by The Australian Opera (then the Elizabethan Trust Opera Company) in 1960. The conductor was Karl Rankl, the director Stefan Haag and the designer Raymond Boyce. Joan Hammond sang Salome, and the costumes were designed by Peter Rice. At one performance the title role was sung by Maria Wolkowsky.

In 1976 a new production was staged in the Concert Hall of the Sydney Opera House, conducted by Edward Downes and directed and designed by Tom Lingwood.

In 1979 this production was adapted to work as a "proscenium arch" presentation for the Opera Theatre of the Sydney Opera House, again directed by Tom Lingwood.

In 1982 the production was re-studied and directed by Elke Neidhardt. This production was revived in 1986 in Melbourne, conducted by Gabor Ötvös and in Sydney in 1988 conducted by Stuart Challender.

Yet the moon is not necessarily a reality; it is more a symbol invoked to reflect various character's perception of reality - Herodias, for example, reveals her bestial nature quite simply - 'the moon is like the moon, nothing else' she says. But to Salome it is a source of chastity, which indicates her instinctive knowledge of the erotic power of virginity. Jokanaan, on the other hand, sees the moon as the hammer of God and threatens that it will become like blood on the day of apocalypse.

Another continuous thread which express the character's perceptions is the constant reference to the dangers of looking, particularly at Salome. To look upon Salome is to look upon the basilisk - it promises destruction.

Even Jokanaan attempts to resist looking at her - but he still notes her golden eyes. His almost hysterical anger at her presence appears to be more that of a man struggling against mortal desires for a sensual goddess than that of a man truly redeemed. Indeed he sinks into pious cant at her most lascivious demand - 'let me kiss thy mouth' - and is finally left with no defence but screaming curses.

There is also something repellent in his conviction that all the evil of the world is caused by the very existence of women - a belief that demonises women to this day.

However it is woman, in the form of Salome, who ultimately wins the duel, for although Jokanaan's severed head cannot look upon her, his mouth is powerless to reject her kiss. And there is a cynicism in her final statement that he has looked upon his god - for, as she whispers, if he had looked upon her, he would have known that 'the secret of love is greater than the secret of death'.

Is Princess Salome a 'monster', as Herod describes her, or is she the natural result of a corrupt household? Or is she the basic human instinct unfettered by learnt morality?

The darkest secret of Strauss's opera is for the individual to solve.

Here we give you a cage and its fear-ridden inhabitants - hear Wilde's words and Strauss's shattering orchestral commentary. Seek after clues and decide as you will

Kristian Fredrikson



*Ronald Stevens as Herod,
Lone Koppel as Salome
and Angela Giblin
as the Page, 1976*

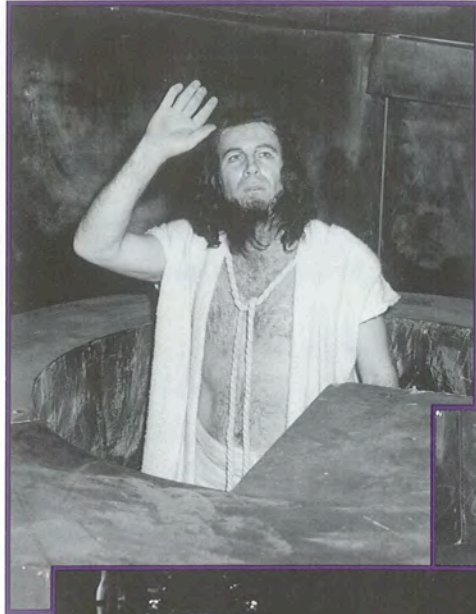


*Margreta Elkins as Herodias and
Marilyn Richardson as Salome, 1979*

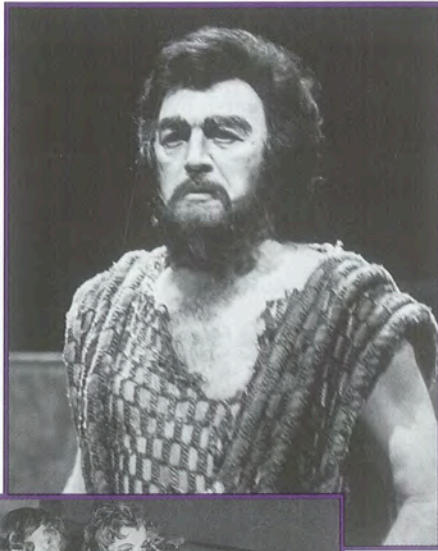


*Marilyn Zschau as Salome and
Anson Austin as Narraboth, Melbourne, 1986*

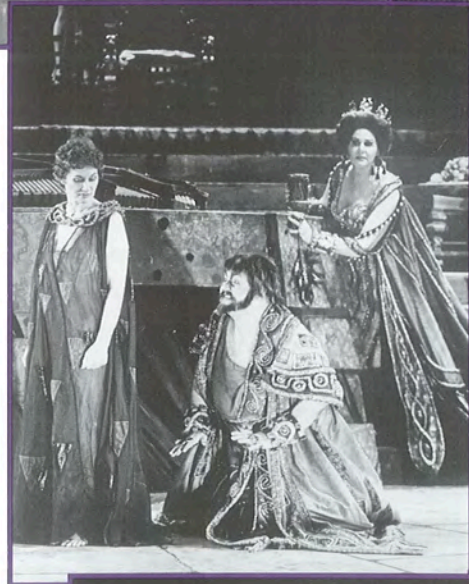
Neil Euston as Jokanaan, 1960



Robert Allman as Jokanaan, 1988



Allan Ferris as Herod and Joan Hammond as Salome, 1960



Marilyn Richardson as Salome, Gordon Wilcock as Herod and Margreta Elkins as Herodias, 1982



Marilyn Zschau as Salome, Sydney, 1988



Ronald Dowd as Herod with Marilyn Richardson as Salome, 1976

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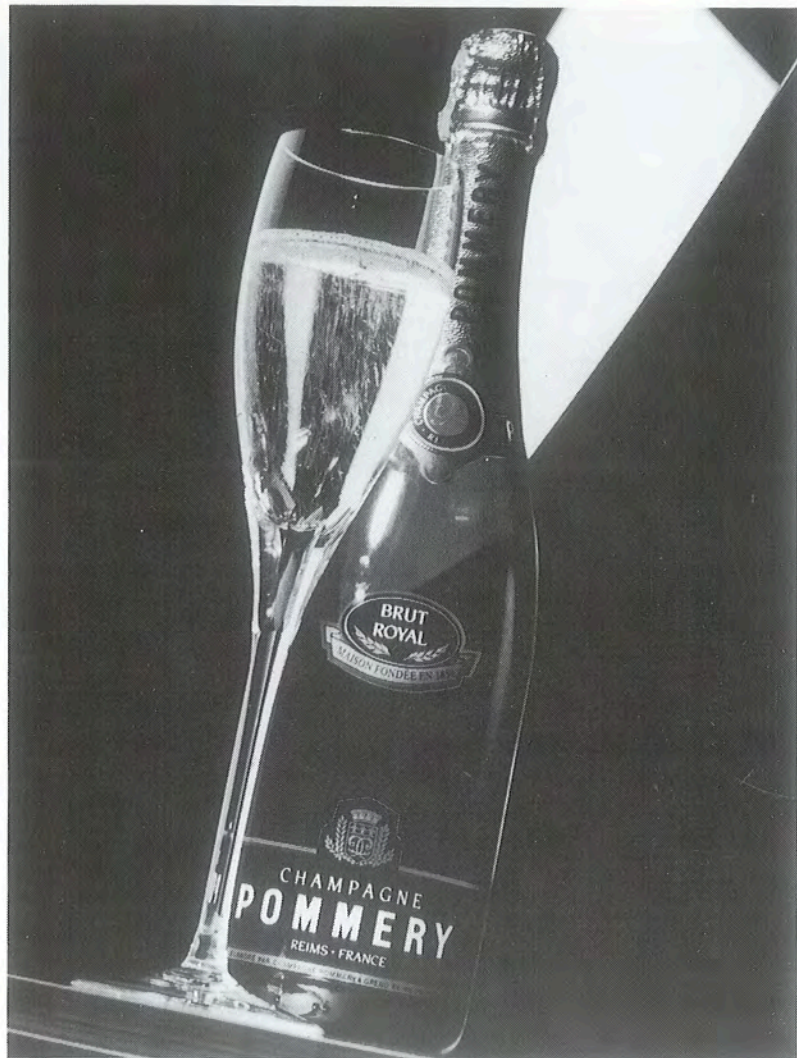
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The Australian Opera

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PUBLISHER Playbill Proprietary Limited

1017 Pacific Highway, Pymble 2073. Telephone: (02) 449 6433. Fax: (02) 449 6053

Managing Director and Advertisement Director Brian Nebenzahl

Editorial Director Jocelyn Nebenzahl

Director—Production Chris Breeze / **Director—Merchandising** Michael Nebenzahl

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