

Season 2013-2014

Thursday, May 8, at 8:00
Saturday, May 10, at 8:00

The Philadelphia Orchestra and
Opera Philadelphia

Richard Strauss's *Salome*, Op. 54

Conducted by Yannick Nézet-Séguin

Libretto by Hedwig Lachmann after Oscar Wilde

Performed in German with English supertitles

This program runs approximately 1 hour, 45 minutes,
and will be performed without an intermission.

These performances are made possible in part by generous support of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Wyncote Foundation, and the Presser Foundation. Additional support has been provided by the William Penn Foundation and the Pew Center for Arts & Heritage.

Designed in collaboration with Utah Opera

Camilla Nylund Soprano (Salome)
Alan Held Bass-baritone (Jochanaan)
John Mac Master Tenor (Herod)
Birgit Remmert Mezzo-soprano (Herodias)
Andrew Staples Tenor (Narraboth)
Cecelia Hall Mezzo-soprano (Herodias's Page)
Dominic Armstrong Tenor (First Jew)
Roy Hage Tenor (Second Jew)
Joseph Gaines Tenor (Third Jew)
Corey Bix Tenor (Fourth Jew)
Nicholas Masters Bass (Fifth Jew)
Wayne Tigges Bass-baritone (First Nazarene)
Eric Dubin Baritone (Second Nazarene and Cappodocian)
Keith Miller Bass-baritone (First Soldier)
Donovan Singletary Bass-baritone (Second Soldier)
Allison Sanders Soprano (A Slave)

Kevin Newbury Director
Vita Tzykun Production Designer
D.M. Wood Lighting Designer

Seán Curren Choreographer
Chris Hanes Technical Director
Millie Hiibel Costume Director
Jennifer Harber Stage Manager
Becki Smith Assistant Stage Manager
John Bryant Properties Coordinator
Lauren Palmer Wigs and Make-Up
Chris Frey Assistant Lighting Designer
Lisa Keller Principal Pianist
Christopher Bergen Supertitles
Tony Solitto Supertitle Operator



David B. Devan General Director and President
Corrado Rovaris Jack Mulroney Music Director
David S. Levy Senior Vice President, Artistic Operations
Michael Eberhard Artistic Administrator

Director's Note

Strauss's *Salome* is one of the most thrilling musical and theatrical experiences in the operatic repertoire. Based on Oscar Wilde's provocative re-telling of the biblical story, the opera features a magnificent and groundbreaking score, rich characters, and a potent story about sex, greed, and morality. As Salome says in Wilde's play, "The mystery of love is greater than the mystery of death." In my view, *Salome* lends itself perfectly to a theatrical symphonic staging. Opera audiences are usually denied the opportunity to actually see the orchestra playing a score. A staging in a symphonic setting allows us to feature the music front and center; the orchestra itself plays a major character both musically and theatrically.

In the play, Herod says, "It is not wise to find symbols in everything that one sees. It makes life too full of terrors." My production designer, Vita Tzykun, and I drew on the "symbols of terror" in the opera: the mysterious cistern, Salome's virginal veils, and, most importantly, the moon. All of the characters in *Salome* have a different vision of the moon and its symbolism. We have transformed Verizon Hall into a night sky of seven moons, which shift in color and elevation throughout the evening, reflecting the many textures and dynamics in the score. The entire cast observes the action like a Greek Chorus, participating and responding to the macabre tale as it unfolds. Our staging of *Salome* will allow you, the audience, to hear Strauss's music in a different way while following this thought-provoking story in an immersive new setting.

—Kevin Newbury

A Collaboration

For these performances of Richard Strauss's *Salome*, The Philadelphia Orchestra and Opera Philadelphia, the city's two largest musical institutions, join together in a first-time co-production that combines the distinctive sound of the Orchestra and Opera Philadelphia's dynamic theatrical presentation.

The Orchestra and Opera Philadelphia played an active and collaborative role in all aspects of tonight's production, from scenic, costume, and lighting design to casting and staging. Philadelphia Orchestra Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin has also been an integral part of the process, involved in every step along the way.

This co-production speaks to shared artistic goals between the two organizations—artistic growth, innovation, and reinvigorated concert experiences. Together we have created something that is distinctive and a moment of civic pride for Philadelphia.

"*Salome* is to me one of the greatest masterpieces written in the 20th century, and bringing this great operatic score to Philadelphia Orchestra audiences is special on its own," says Yannick. "To now work closely with Opera Philadelphia to create a theatrical environment around the music makes this project even more exceptional. This will be a unique and dramatic telling of the story of *Salome* that will mesmerize both Orchestra and Opera audiences. I am thrilled to begin my journey with the Orchestra into the world of opera by working together with our friends and partners at Opera Philadelphia."

Music Director

Nigel Pany/CPI



Yannick Nézet-Séguin continues his inspired leadership as the eighth music director of The Philadelphia Orchestra, which began in the fall of 2012. His highly collaborative style, deeply-rooted musical curiosity, and boundless enthusiasm, paired with a fresh approach to orchestral programming, have been heralded by critics and audiences alike. The *New York Times* has called Yannick “phenomenal,” adding that under his baton “the ensemble ... has never sounded better.” He has taken the Orchestra to new musical heights. His second season builds on the momentum of the first with highlights that included a Philadelphia Commissions Micro-Festival, for which three leading composers were commissioned to write solo works for three of the Orchestra’s principal players. The season ends with a unique, theatrically-staged presentation of Strauss’s revolutionary opera *Salome*, a first-ever co-production with Opera Philadelphia.

Yannick has established himself as a musical leader of the highest caliber and one of the most exciting talents of his generation. Since 2008 he has been music director of the Rotterdam Philharmonic and principal guest conductor of the London Philharmonic, and since 2000 artistic director and principal conductor of Montreal’s Orchestre Métropolitain. In addition he becomes the first ever mentor conductor of the Curtis Institute of Music’s conducting fellows program in the fall of 2013. He has made wildly successful appearances with the world’s most revered ensembles, and has conducted critically acclaimed performances at many of the leading opera houses.

Yannick Nézet-Séguin and Deutsche Grammophon (DG) enjoy a long-term collaboration. Under his leadership the Orchestra returns to recording with a newly-released CD on that label of Stravinsky’s *Rite of Spring* and Leopold Stokowski transcriptions. Yannick continues a fruitful recording relationship with the Rotterdam Philharmonic for DG, BIS, and EMI/Virgin; the London Philharmonic for the LPO label; and the Orchestre Métropolitain for ATMA Classique.

A native of Montreal, Yannick Nézet-Séguin studied at that city’s Conservatory of Music and continued lessons with renowned conductor Carlo Maria Giulini and with Joseph Flummerfelt at Westminster Choir College. Among Yannick’s honors are an appointment as Companion of the Order of Canada, one of the country’s highest civilian honors; a Royal Philharmonic Society Award; Canada’s National Arts Centre Award; the Prix Denise-Pelletier, the highest distinction for the arts in Quebec, awarded by the Quebec government; and an honorary doctorate by the University of Quebec in Montreal.

To read Yannick’s full bio, please visit www.philorch.org/conductor.

Cast

Heikki Tuuli



Finnish soprano **Camilla Nylund** is making her Philadelphia Orchestra debut with these performances. She appears regularly with world-renowned orchestras and conductors and has sung leading roles in opera houses in Zurich, Vienna, Paris, Berlin, Dresden, Cologne, Hamburg, Tokyo, Helsinki, Barcelona, Amsterdam, London, Milan, and San Francisco. Her international breakthrough was in the 2004-05 season with various role debuts: as the title role in Strauss's *Salome* in Cologne, as Elisabeth in Wagner's *Tannhäuser* at the Bavarian State Opera, and as Leonore in Beethoven's *Fidelio* at the Zurich Opera House. All three have become signature roles and she has performed the title role in *Salome* at the Vienna State Opera, Opera Toulouse, Opera Valencia, in her 2009 debut at the Bastille in Paris, and at the Dresden Semperoper, including a tour to Japan. Ms. Nylund's discography includes more than 30 CD and DVD recordings, available from Sony Classical, Ondine, Hänssler Classic, ArtHaus Musik, and other labels. She recently recorded the CD *Wagner* with tenor Klaus Florian Vogt, released in 2013 by Sony Classical. Her solo album, *Transfiguration*, was released in 2011 on Ondine.

Christian Steiner



American bass-baritone **Alan Held** has appeared at the world's finest opera houses, in such roles as Wotan in Wagner's *Ring Cycle*, the title roles in Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman* and Berg's *Wozzeck*, Hans Sachs in Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Scarpia in Puccini's *Tosca*, Leporello in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, Don Pizzaro in Beethoven's *Fidelio*, Orest in Strauss's *Elektra*, Balstrode in Britten's *Peter Grimes*, and Jochanaan in Strauss's *Salome*. Equally at home on the concert stage, Mr. Held has performed with the Chicago, San Francisco, Pittsburgh, National, Montreal, and BBC symphonies; the Cleveland, Metropolitan Opera, and Kirov Opera orchestras; the Los Angeles and Berlin philharmonics; and the Orchestre de Paris. He has also appeared at the Salzburg, Tanglewood, and Saiton Kinen festivals and at the BBC Proms. Mr. Held recently appeared as the Four Villains in the Metropolitan Opera's HD broadcast of Offenbach's *The Tales of Hoffmann* and also performed the role of Jochanaan at the Bavarian State Opera. He made his Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 2006 and is making his second appearance with the ensemble. A native of Washburn, IL, he currently resides with his family in Bucks County.

Cast



Heleen Tansey

Canadian tenor **John Mac Master** made his Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 2013 at the Bravo! Vail festival and is making his subscription debut with these performances. He has appeared with Yannick Nézet-Séguin on multiple occasions. He debuted at the Frankfurt and Stuttgart operas as Herod in Strauss's *Salome*, a role he has also sung in Montreal, Vancouver, and New Orleans. He made his Metropolitan Opera debut as Canio in Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*. Other performances and recording projects include Florestan in Beethoven's *Fidelio* with Colin Davis and Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with Bernard Haitink, both with the London Symphony; his debut at Dresden's Semperoper as Calaf in Puccini's *Turandot* conducted by Fabio Luisi; Tristan in Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* for Welsh National Opera conducted by Mark Wigglesworth and at the Met with James Levine; Verdi's Requiem at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa with Pinchas Zukerman; and Aegisth in Strauss's *Elektra* for Canadian Opera Company. Mr. Mac Master also created the role of Casey in the world premiere of Richard Danielpour and Toni Morrison's *Margaret Garner*, co-commissioned by the Opera Company of Philadelphia (now Opera Philadelphia).



Franck FitzGerald

German mezzo-soprano **Birgit Remmert**'s roles on the opera stage include Fricka in Wagner's *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*; the title role of Othmar Schoeck's *Penthesilea*; Ortrud in Wagner's *Lohengrin*; Neris in Cherubini's *Medea*; Mrs. Quickly in Verdi's *Falstaff*; Jezibaba in Dvořák's *Rusalka*; the Nurse in Strauss's *Die Frau ohne Schatten*; and Mother Goose in Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*. She appears regularly in recitals across Europe with the most renowned orchestras. She sang Beethoven's *Missa solemnis* at the consecration of the newly restored Frauenkirche in Dresden. She has given concerts in Vienna, Berlin, Milan, Lisbon, Madrid, Rome, Munich, Brussels, Monte Carlo, Tokyo, Sapporo, Sydney, Pittsburgh, Chicago, and New York, among others. Ms. Remmert appears on numerous DVDs, including performances of Purcell's *King Arthur* at the Salzburg Festival, Strauss's *Daphne* at Teatro La Fenice in Venice, and Handel's *Semele* with Zurich Opera. Her discography also includes more than 30 CDs, among them Liszt's *Christus*, which received a 2007 Echo Award. Ms. Remmert made her Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 2000 and is making her third subscription appearance.

Cast/Creative Team



British tenor **Andrew Staples** made his Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 2013 as the Evangelist in Bach's St. Matthew Passion. He made his Royal Opera House debut as Jacquino in Beethoven's *Fidelio* and is a regular guest at Covent Garden, where he has sung the roles of Tamino in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, Artabanus in Arne's *Artaxerxes*, and Narraboth in Strauss's *Salome*. He has also sung Belfiore in Mozart's *La finta giardiniera* at the National Theatre in Prague, a role he repeated for La Monnaie in Brussels, and Don Ottavio in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* for the Salzburg Festival. On the concert stage he has appeared with the Bavarian Radio Symphony and Daniel Harding, the BBC Symphony and Semyon Bychkov, and the Vienna Philharmonic and Simon Rattle. Mr. Staples's work as a director includes productions of Mozart's *Così fan tutte* and Puccini's *La bohème* in London and for the Menton Festival, and a semi-staging of *The Magic Flute* for the Lucerne Festival. In 2013 his new venture, Opera for Change, took a production of *The Magic Flute* on a 10-country tour through Africa. Mr. Staples returns to The Philadelphia Orchestra next season to reprise his role in the St. Matthew Passion.



Kevin Newbury is a theater and opera director based in New York City whose work has been produced throughout North America and Europe. His production of Mercadante's *Virginia* for the Wexford Opera Festival won the 2010 *Irish Times* Theatre Award for Best Opera Production. His work has also been nominated for a Grammy Award (Bernstein's *MASS* with Marin Alsop), a Drama Desk Award (Best Actor in David Johnston's *Candy and Dorothy*), and the GLAAD Media Award (Winner: *Candy and Dorothy*; Nominated: Tom Rowan's *Kiss and Cry*). Upcoming engagements include new productions at Bard SummerScape, the Wexford Festival, the Minnesota and San Francisco operas, the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona, the Canadian Opera Company, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and the Baltimore Symphony. He has directed a dozen world premiere operas and collaborated with many top American composers, including Ricky Ian Gordon and Pulitzer Prize-winners John Adams and Lewis Spratlan. Mr. Newbury returns to Philadelphia next season for Theodore Morrison's *Oscar* at Opera Philadelphia and Bernstein's *MASS* with The Philadelphia Orchestra and Yannick Nézet-Séguin.

Creative Team



Production designer **Victoria "Vita" Tzykun** has designed sets and costumes for companies including Norwegian Opera, the Kennedy Center, Kristiansund Opera in Norway, Boston Lyric Opera, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Utah Opera, Gotham Chamber Opera, Juilliard Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, Teatro Imeras in Athens, 3LD Art & Media Center in New York, New York Classical Theatre, the Cherry Lane Theatre, and the 92nd Street Y, among others. Her numerous film and television credits include art direction for Lady Gaga's ABC Thanksgiving special, production design for several features and shorts, and commercials for leading companies such as PBS, DirectTV, Axe, Bulova, Qualcomm, and the U.S. Army. Her work has been featured in exhibitions at the Entertainment Industry Expo in New York, Habima National Theater in Tel-Aviv, the World Stage Design Exhibition in Toronto, and in *Entertainment Design* magazine. From Odessa, Ukraine, and Tel Aviv, Israel, Ms. Tzykun holds an M.F.A. from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts and a B.F.A. from Tel Aviv University. She currently lives and works in New York City and is a member of IATSE Local 829.



D.M. Wood is a lighting designer for opera and theater. Born in Toronto, she moved to the U.S. in 1992 and has design credits in the U.S., Canada, the U.K., Russia, Finland, Denmark, France, Austria, Peru, Ireland, and Israel. Her design work will be featured this summer in Weber's *Euryanthe* at Bard SummerScape and in the 2014-15 season in Bellini's *Norma* at San Francisco Opera, in Donizetti's *Anna Bolena* at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, and in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* at the Bergen National Opera in Norway. Recent designs include Donizetti's *La favorita* at Graz Opera; Bernstein's *Candide* and the world premiere of Gerald Barry's *The Importance of Being Earnest* at the Opéra National de Lorraine; *The Importance of Being Earnest* at Northern Ireland Opera; Puccini's *Il trittico* and the co-design of Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Anna Nicole* at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; Ravel's *L'Enfant et les sortilèges* at the Bolshoi; Puccini's *Tosca* at the Canadian Opera Company; and Mozart's *The Magic Flute* at Houston Grand Opera. Ms. Wood's design for Puccini's *Suor Angelica*, part of the triptych *Il trittico* at the Royal Opera House, won the U.K.'s 2012 Knight of Illumination Opera Award.

Cast

Pat Arrow



Mezzo-soprano **Cecelia Hall** debuted this season as Dorabella in Mozart's *Così fan tutte* with North Carolina Opera and as Zerlina in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* with Opera Philadelphia. Other season highlights included a recital at Carnegie Hall with the Song Continues, a series showcasing emerging young talent, and a return to the Lyric Opera of Chicago to sing Annio in Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito*. This summer Ms. Hall makes her Aix-en-Provence Festival debut as Zaida in Rossini's *The Turk in Italy*. Future engagements include a return to the Metropolitan Opera as Javotte in Massenet's *Manon* and her debut at the Canadian Opera Company as Rosina in Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*. She also returns to Seattle Opera as Zerlina.



Tenor **Dominic Armstrong** is a winner of the 2013 George London Foundation Vocal Competition. This season he debuted with the New York Philharmonic in Britten's *Spring Symphony* conducted by Alan Gilbert; gave his first performance of Cavaradossi in Puccini's *Tosca* with the Northwest Indiana Symphony; and sang the role of Third Jew in Strauss's *Salome* with the Boston Symphony. He has performed with the Oregon Symphony; with Symphony in C and Princeton Symphony for Britten's *Serenade*; and in recital with the Brooklyn Art Song Society. In June at the Ojai Music Festival he sings the roles of Haydn and the Bartender in the world premiere of *The Classical Style*, a comic opera by Steven Stucky and Jeremy Denk.



Lebanese-American tenor **Roy Hage** hails from Springfield, VA, but calls Beirut home. He began the current season performing the world premiere of Pulitzer Prize-winner Steven Stucky's *The Stars and the Roses*, a chamber work commissioned by the Curtis Institute of Music, where Mr. Hage is currently pursuing his master's degree in opera. This season he has also appeared as Chevalier de la Force in Curtis Opera Theatre's Aurora Series for Chamber Opera production of Poulenc's *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, and as Nemorino in Donizetti's *The Elixir of Love* and a Soldier in Viktor Ullmann's *The Emperor of Atlantis* with Curtis Opera Theatre. He appears as a guest soloist with the New Jersey Symphony in the 2014-15 season.

Cast

Claire McAdams



Tenor **Joseph Gaines** performed last spring with Opera Philadelphia as Monastatos in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. He has appeared with Pittsburgh Opera as Pedrillo in Mozart's *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, Dr. Caius in Verdi's *Falstaff*, and Basilio in *The Marriage of Figaro*; and with Central City Opera as Goro in Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*. On the concert stage Mr. Gaines has performed Sellem in Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra; as tenor soloist in Handel's *Messiah* at St. Thomas Church in New York; and with Teatro Grattacielo in its production of Wolf-Ferrari's *The Jewels of the Madonna*. Future engagements include his return to Opera Philadelphia as the Inspector in Theodore Morrison's *Oscar*.



This season tenor **Corey Bix** sang Edgar Aubry in Marschner's *The Vampire* with New Orleans Opera, Erik in Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman* with Arizona Opera, and Alfred in Strauss's *Die Fledermaus* with Anchorage Opera. He also joined the roster of the Lyric Opera of Chicago for Dvořák's *Rusalka*. Later this month he joins the American Symphony Orchestra for Szymanowski's Symphony No. 3 at Carnegie Hall and this summer returns to the Glimmerglass Festival as Bacchus in Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos*. Future engagements include a return to the Lyric Opera for Heinrich in Wagner's *Tannhäuser* as well as leading roles with the Austin Lyric and Tulsa operas. He earned a Master of Music degree from New England Conservatory.



Bass **Nicholas Masters** is a graduate of the Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia and the Houston Grand Opera Studio, where he won First Prize in the 2013 Dallas Opera Guild Vocal Competition. He recently sang the role of the Commendatore in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* with Opera Philadelphia and made his debut with English National Opera as Parsi Rustomji/Lord Krishna in Philip Glass's *Satyagraha*. With Houston Grand Opera he has appeared as Colline in Puccini's *La bohème* and the Old Gypsy in Verdi's *Il trovatore*. Future seasons include Ashby in Puccini's *The Girl of the Golden West* with English National Opera, and Gremin in Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* and Sarastro in Mozart's *The Magic Flute* with Arizona Opera.

Cast



Bass-baritone **Wayne Tigges** began the season creating the role of Joe St. George in the world premiere of Tobias Picker's *Dolores Claiborne* with San Francisco Opera. Other season highlights include his debut with Seiji Ozawa's Ongaku-juku Festival as Figaro in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*; a return to Austin Lyric Opera for his first performances of Scarpia in Puccini's *Tosca*; and an appearance with Palm Beach Opera as Basilio in Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*. This summer Mr. Tigges returns to his home state of Iowa to sing the Tutor in Rossini's *Le Comte Ory* and Owen Hart in Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* with Des Moines Metro Opera. Future engagements include his debuts with Opera Philadelphia and Opera Theatre of Saint Louis.



A graduate of the Academy of Vocal Arts, baritone **Eric Dubin** recently debuted at Fresno Grand Opera as Marullo in Verdi's *Rigoletto* and Opera Cleveland as Silvio in Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*; returned to Nashville Opera as Roucher/Fléville in Giordano's *Andrea Chénier*; and returned to Opera New Jersey as Valentin in Gounod's *Faust*. He made his Opera Philadelphia debut in 2008 in David DiChiera's *Cyrano*, returning in subsequent years as Junius in Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*, the Baron in Verdi's *La traviata*, and Morales/Le Dancaire in Bizet's *Carmen*. Past engagements include the title role in *Cyrano* in concert at the Orange County Arts Conservatory and his role debut as Enrico in Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* with Opera New Jersey.



This season bass-baritone **Keith Miller** returned to the Metropolitan Opera in Nico Muhly's *Two Boys* and in Strauss's *Arabella*. Over the past several seasons he has appeared in Met productions of Verdi's *A Masked Ball* and *Macbeth*, Donizetti's *Anna Bolena*, Bizet's *Carmen*, Rossini's *Armida*, Puccini's *Tosca* and *Madame Butterfly*, and Strauss's *Salome*, all of which were featured in Live in HD broadcasts. He was also a featured soloist in the Met's inaugural Summer Recital Series in New York and appeared in the recent revival of Britten's *Billy Budd*. Before studying voice at the Academy of Vocal Arts, Mr. Miller played professional football for five years and had the honor of being an Olympic torchbearer for the 1996 games in Atlanta.

Cast



Bass-baritone **Donovan Singletary** recently finished the Lindemann Young Artist Development Program at the Metropolitan Opera. Highlights of his 2013-14 season include the role of Angelotti in the Met's production of Puccini's *Tosca*; Monterone in Seattle Opera's production of Verdi's *Rigoletto*; and a performance of Handel's *Messiah* with the Lexington Philharmonic. He made his professional debut in 2008 as Hermann in Offenbach's *The Tales of Hoffmann* with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. He has performed as Pinellino in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* at the Met, and sung Haydn's "Lord Nelson Mass" and Mozart's Solemn Vespers at Carnegie Hall. Mr. Singletary is also a certified personal trainer and a recently signed fitness model.



Soprano **Allison Sanders** is a recent graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music. While studying she performed such roles as Dido in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, Marchesa Melibea in Rossini's *Il viaggio a Reims*, Lišak in Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen*, Elettra in Mozart's *Idomeneo*, Marguerite in Gounod's *Faust*, and Cleopatra in Barber's *Antony and Cleopatra*. She has appeared with Opera Philadelphia as Giovanna in Verdi's *Rigoletto*, Clotilde in Bellini's *Norma*, Bianca in Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*, and Flora in Verdi's *La traviata*. Ms. Sanders recently sang the title role in Joplin's *Treemonisha* with New York City Opera. She has also performed in the female chorus in *The Rape of Lucretia* with Opera Memphis, in her hometown.

Framing the Program

Parallel Events

1904
Strauss
Salome

Music
Fallá
La vida breve

Literature
Chekov
The Cherry Orchard

Art
Rousseau
The Wedding

History
Russo-Japanese War

The Philadelphia Orchestra concludes its 114th season in a first-time collaboration with Opera Philadelphia for a presentation of Richard Strauss's magnificent opera *Salome*, one of the landmark works of the 20th century and a dazzling score for singers and orchestra alike. Throughout this season (and to be continued in the next) the Philadelphians have celebrated Strauss's 150th birthday, which falls on June 11. The Orchestra has a long association with his music, including multiple appearances by the composer himself conducting the ensemble on both of his trips to America, in 1904 and 1921.

Strauss based his third opera on Oscar Wilde's recent French play about the beautiful princess Salome, who desires the imprisoned John the Baptist. Her stepfather, King Herod, lusts after her and offers to grant any wish if she will dance for him, leading to her famous striptease, the "Dance of the Seven Veils." After this great orchestral section (which Strauss himself conducted with the Philadelphians in 1921), Salome demands the severed head of John, which she kisses. In disgust, Herod orders her killed.

Although this is hardly conventional family entertainment, *Salome* premiered triumphantly in Dresden in 1905. Some cities, however, shunned the controversial work entirely on account of its decadent subject matter and it was pulled from the Metropolitan Opera after just one performance in 1907. More than a century later, the shocking drama, brilliant music, and awesome vocal demands continue to make an experience of searing intensity.

The Music

Salome



Richard Strauss
Born in Munich,
June 11, 1864
Died in Garmisch-
Partenkirchen,
September 8, 1949

Strauss by his late 30s was a thoroughly established master of orchestral music (*Also sprach Zarathustra*, *Ein Heldenleben*) and song. However, the genre that combined these two, opera, remained a prize to be won. His first attempt, *Guntram*, had lain too deep under Wagner's shadow; his second, *Feuersnot*, failed to catch fire. Then in 1902 he saw Oscar Wilde's French play *Salomé*, in the German translation by Hedwig Lachmann (whose grandson, coincidentally, was to change his name to Mike Nichols), and recognized the opportunity he had before him. Laden with symbolism and eros, the play was ripe for music, and for Strauss's music in particular, with its brilliant colors, its oily harmonic unease, its intensity of character, its shock, and its drive.

Rejecting a versified adaptation of the play that was offered him, Strauss worked directly with Lachmann's version, of which he cut around a third. He set most of the text in the summer of 1904, and completed the score the following June—except for the climactic dance, which he added during the next two months. What he created was a score heavy with decadent splendor even as it hurtles through a hundred minutes.

The first performance took place in Dresden, on December 9, 1905. Then the storm began. Loaded with the double allure of magnificence and transgression—presenting on stage a major biblical figure, John the Baptist, and sustaining an unconcealed erotic charge through and beyond a 10-minute striptease—the piece met with acclaim and indignation. It was banned in Vienna, as it was in London, but staged in the provincial Austrian city of Graz, in May 1906, with Mahler, Puccini, Schoenberg, and Berg all in the theater. At the Metropolitan Opera, the following January, it was taken off after a single performance, under pressure from patrons. Even today, when blasphemy and female sexuality turn hardly a hair, the parade of luxurious evil dressed in superb musical fabric packs a mighty punch.

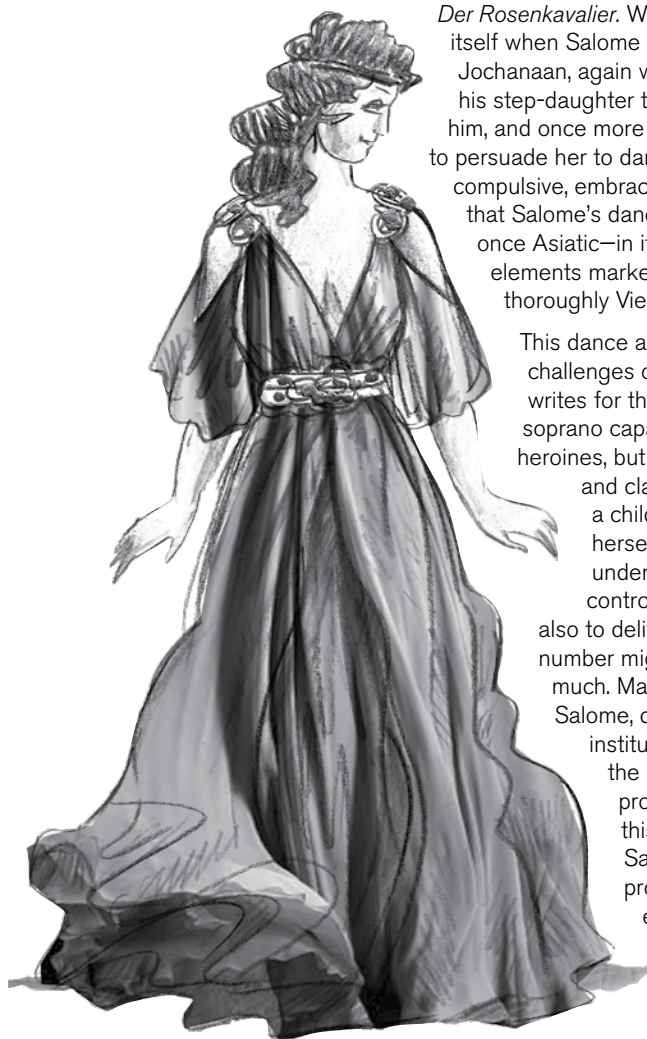
The Play Wilde wrote *Salomé* in November–December 1891, during a stay in Paris, where Salome and her unlovely but fascinating family, including her mother,

Herodias, and her stepfather, Herod Antipas, had for some years been a hot topic among artists. Salome was depicted quasi-nude except for lavish jewelry in a painting by Gustave Moreau, and the story of her calamitous encounter with John the Baptist had been elaborated, from a brief Gospel narrative in which she goes unnamed, by Gustave Flaubert in a tale, Jules Massenet in an opera, and Stéphane Mallarmé in an unfinished verse drama. Wilde joined Mallarmé's circle in Paris, and it was talk of Salome, at a time when the Irish author was discovering his own "illicit" desires, that provided the impetus for the play's rapid composition. The following year, a production was planned in London with Sarah Bernhardt, but had to be abandoned when official approval was not forthcoming. Publication of the text followed in 1893, with an English translation by Wilde the next year. At last, in 1896, the work reached the stage, in Paris. Wilde, by then in prison, died four years later.

The Music Strauss composed *Salome* for the enlarged orchestra of the time, which gave him the means to produce a score of extraordinary variety in color, harmony, and motif. We are to be bewildered, placed in contact with a strange and unsettling world, and set in a state of constant anticipation. In this gorgeous and disturbing confusion, however, stands a certainty: Jochanaan (Strauss takes over Wilde's name for John the Baptist), whose music is emphatically sure. Where elsewhere the score has the misty luster of moonlight, the unrelievability of yearning, the delirium of desire, or the complexity of corruption, Jochanaan keeps hold of firm key centers. This bold straightforwardness appears early, at the first mention of him. It comes under threat in the long seduction scene with Salome, for Jochanaan must comprehend sensuality in order to shun it, which he does in regaining his resolute harmonic ground.

Jochanaan and Salome in this crucial scene both express, or are orchestrally supported by, characteristic themes, which recur more or less transformed throughout the opera, in the manner of Wagnerian leitmotifs. One worth noting arrives after Jochanaan has gone back down to the cistern, where he is imprisoned, when, in a passage of sinister murkiness, the orchestra foretells what Salome will demand after her dance.

In addition to harmonic conflict and thematic working, rhythm is an important signifier in the score, and especially the rhythm of the waltz, which Strauss uses here as anachronistically—and as effectively—as later in



Costume sketch for Salome

Der Rosenkavalier. Waltz rhythm insinuates itself when Salome attempts to seduce Jochanaan, again when Herod invites his step-daughter to drink and eat with him, and once more when he is trying to persuade her to dance. It is then to the compulsive, embracing swerve of the waltz that Salome's dance is set, a dance at once Asiatic—in its adoption of harmonic elements marked as oriental—and thoroughly Viennese.

This dance adds, of course, to the challenges of the title role. Strauss writes for the kind of dramatic soprano capable of singing Wagner's heroines, but requires also innocence and clarity, for Salome is still a child, discovering within herself a power she cannot understand and cannot control. To ask the performer also to deliver a big solo dance number might seem just too much. Marie Wittich, the first Salome, declined, and thereby instituted a tradition of having the role taken over by a professional dancer at this point. Subsequent Salomes, however, have proudly and supremely exerted themselves in choreographic spectacle, and some have gone the whole way to end the dance totally divested.

Whatever resources, physical and psychological, have to be summoned for the dance, however, the singer of Salome still has a huge mountain to climb in the work's last 20 minutes, when she holds the stage almost alone. Strauss evidently wanted to exceed even what Wagner asked of singers of his Brünnhilde and Isolde at the equivalent points in those characters' operatic lives. It was an outrageous demand. But then, this is in every way an outrageous opera.



Costume sketch for Jochanaan

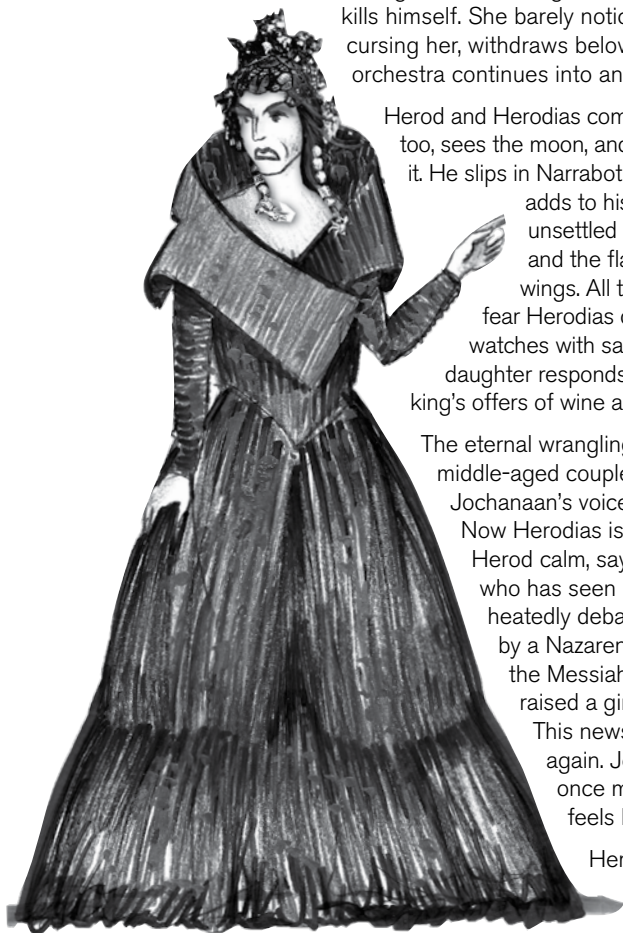
The Story It is night on a palace terrace. With almost no preparation, Narraboth, the young Syrian head of the palace guard, declares his infatuation with the princess Salome, and the opera is set on its course of forbidden desire. Other palace retainers, there on the terrace while Herod and his family feast within, point out the danger of Narraboth's presumption and the distant chill of Salome's beauty, like that of the moon. From below, shut in a cistern, Jochanaan prophesies the coming of Christ.



Costume sketch for Herod

Salome, bored with the company inside, comes out. She hears Jochanaan's voice and wants to see him, but nobody will take responsibility for releasing the prisoner, and so, recognizing the power she holds over Narraboth, she cajoles him into doing so. Jochanaan duly appears, and, beginning a long dialogue of rising passion and

fortitude, rails against Herodias and Herod. This only increases Salome's carnal interest in him, which he finds repellent. Where she advances, he rejects. Narraboth, witnessing his ideal in flagrant self-degradation, kills himself. She barely notices, and Jochanaan, cursing her, withdraws below again. The orchestra continues into an interlude.



Costume sketch for Herodias

Herod and Herodias come out. Herod, too, sees the moon, and is troubled by it. He slips in Narraboth's blood, which adds to his disquiet, and is unsettled further by the wind and the flapping of great wings. All these signs of guilty fear Herodias dismisses, and she watches with satisfaction as her daughter responds to this shuddering king's offers of wine and food with disdain.

The eternal wrangling of a bored middle-aged couple is interrupted by Jochanaan's voice from his cistern. Now Herodias is disturbed and Herod calm, saying this is a man who has seen God. Five Jews heatedly debate the issue, joined by a Nazarene who affirms that the Messiah has come, and has raised a girl from the dead. This news agitates Herod again. Jochanaan is heard once more, and Herodias feels herself accused.

Herod turns from his vituperative wife to his step-daughter and asks

her to dance for him. She refuses, and is backed by her mother. However, when

Herod becomes more pressing, Salome extracts an oath from him: If she dances, he will give her whatever she wants, even half his kingdom.

Herod hears the wing-beats again; he feels cold and then hot. Jochanaan from the depths announces the coming of the Lord. Herodias wants to go back inside.

Strauss composed Salome between 1904 and 1905.

These are the first Philadelphia Orchestra performances of the complete opera. The "Dance of the Seven Veils" was first performed with Leopold Stokowski on the podium in March 1913. Most recently on subscription Wolfgang Sawallisch led the piece in April/May 1999. Soprano Marcella Craft was the soloist in the Orchestra's first performances of the Final Scene from the opera, in April 1916, again with Stokowski. Other sopranos who have performed that scene with the Orchestra include Ljuba Welitsch, Phyllis Curtain, Roberta Knie, Leontyne Price, Montserrat Caballe, and, most recently, Birgit Nilsson, in June 1984 at the Mann Center with James Levine conducting.

Opera Philadelphia (then known as the Opera Company of Philadelphia) last staged Salome at the Academy of Music in April/May 2000, with tenor Jay Hunter Morris making his company debut as Narraboth. The company previously staged the opera at the Academy in March 1995. The Philadelphia Lyric Opera Company, a precursor to Opera Philadelphia, staged Salome at the Academy of Music on February 2, 1965.



*Costume sketch for
Narraboth*

To an opulent and ravishing, but also dynamic and brutal orchestral solo, Salome dances her "Dance of the Seven Veils," removing these one by one until she stands naked.

Herod is ecstatic. Then Salome names what she wants: It is, in a silver bowl, Jochanaan's head. Now Herod is appalled, and Herodias triumphant. Herod offers Salome anything else—the most beautiful emerald in the world, a hundred peacocks, a cascade of gemstones, even the veil of the temple sanctuary—but, immovable, she goes on repeating her demand. Finally, Herod yields.

Salome listens to what is happening below; there is no sound, until something falls. She sends for her prize, and it is brought to her. In an extended solo she sings to the

The Orchestra has recorded the "Dance of the Seven Veils" five times: in 1921, 1929, and 1937 with Stokowski for RCA; and in 1947 and 1962 with Eugene Ormandy for CBS.

Strauss scored the opera for piccolo, three flutes, two oboes, English horn, heckelphone, two B-flat clarinets, two alto clarinets, E-flat clarinet, bass clarinet, three bassoons, contrabassoon, six horns, four trumpets, four trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, castanets, cymbals, glockenspiel, snare drum, tam-tam, tambourine, triangle, xylophone), two harps, offstage harmonium, celesta, offstage organ, strings, five main vocal soloists, and 11 smaller vocal roles, and one non-singing role.

Performance time is approximately one hour, 45 minutes, without intermission.

saint's severed head, in praise of every part of it and every aspect, including its silence, which she interprets as that of love.

Herod is filled with disgust, Herodias with satisfaction. He has their direful child killed on the spot.

—Paul Griffiths



Costume sketch for Greek Chorus

The Philadelphia Orchestra Yannick Nézet-Séguin

Music Director



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