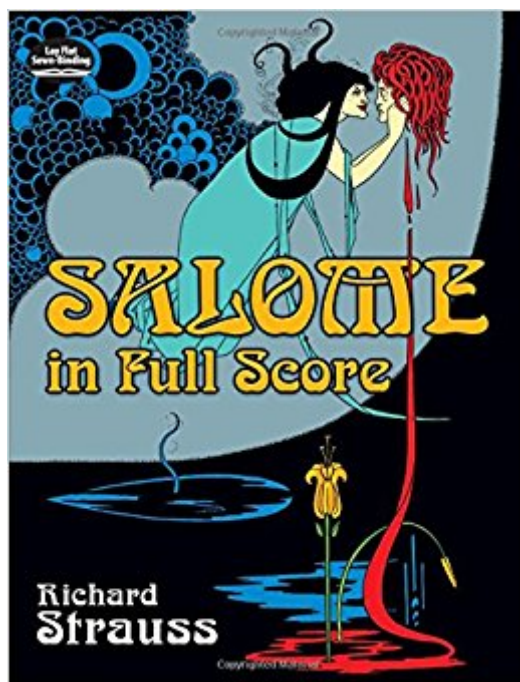


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# Salome In Full Score (Dover Music Scores)



## Synopsis

The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians (1980) offers ample reason why the complete score to Strauss's *Salome* is worthy of study. "It is virtuoso display of the creation of atmospheric colour by instrumental means." There are, of course, other reasons – it is enough to say that since opening night (December 9, 1905) it has ranked among the basic works of 20th-century music. *Salome* (after the Oscar Wilde play) was Richard Strauss's first great operatic success, and like many of his works, caused controversy. The problem was that Strauss succeeded too well in capturing what fin-de-siècle decadence was seen in Wilde – succeeded via an "instrumental inventiveness that is breathtaking" (Grove). The orchestral virtuosity is vividly apparent in the parts for percussion and for certain less commonly used instruments – heckelphone (here first introduced), xylophone, contrabassoon – which found their *raison d'être* in *Salome*. There can be no question that this edition presents the definitive score. It reprints Strauss's own copy, obtained on loan from the vaults of the Eastman School of Music in Rochester – a large-sized, limited, numbered edition signed by the publisher and very likely the one Strauss used on the conducting podium. For this edition the cast and instrumentation information has been translated into English; with clear notes, wide margins, and durable binding, this inexpensive reprint will serve many years on the podium, music stand, or library shelf, enabling musicians and listeners to discover its beauties (including *Salome*'s famous "Dance of the Seven Veils") for themselves. It is the authoritative way to experience, in the words of one critic, "the most febrile opera or music-drama ever written."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A leading composer of the late Romantic and early modern eras, Richard

StraussÃ Â (1864Ã¢â œ1949) is known for his operas (Der Rosenkavalier and Salome), Lieder, tone poems, and orchestral works.

Good, gently used copy of Salome. Just what I needed. Fast response. Thanks

This is a full orchestral score of this innovative opera, with which Richard Strauss shocked the opera world and surprised the avantgarde music scene in 1905. Even after almost a century, the provocative and wildly exciting music sounds as voluptuous, as colourful and as ruthless as hardly any other opera written since. Like with other publications by Dover, the printing is excellent. This is a copy of the first edition from 1905, which explains why it is so cheap. Other available editions of this score are either at a smaller size, or four times more expensive.

It would seem, from all I've read and heard, that Richard Strauss seldom edited those of his works that had successful premiÃfÂres; consequently one can't then go wrong with these Dover reprints of the first-edition scores of his best operas and symphonic poems. Certainly this score (especially in this beautiful reprint on fine paper, well-bound, good-sized such as to allow its ready use on the conductor's podium - which I've personally witnessed as happening - as well as on the table or in the lap of somebody merely listening to a recording!) has most richly earned its mandatory place in ANY music-library of substance as well as being most worthy of possession by all musicians and Straussians! One of the other reviewers of this edition (which indeed costs about a fifth or less of what the official FÃfÂ rstner / Boosey & Hawkes score goes for - at one point it was a tenth!) mentioned its moral aspects. Suffice it to say that those who see it as a terrible, sacrilegious monstrosity (and that included principal prelates in ALL of the branches of Christianity at the time of its premiÃfÂre and for some time since - even 30 years afterwards, the Serbian Orthodox church tried to block its Belgrade premiÃfÂre!) fail to realise that it (and the Wilde play) DOES have a moral message: it's Salome who's the real loser even before Herod orders her execution (which didn't happen in real-life anymore than the sordid parts added by Wilde as fiction to the barebones Biblical account). She doesn't realise what she's tinkering with as far as any other world other than

the present is concerned! THAT in itself, coupled with the isolation in which she finds herself during the whole last scene, is of not a little significance, to be pondered by all (especially by those of us who're believing Christians)...

Upon seeing a performance of Oscar Wilde's play "Salome" in 1902, Richard Strauss began work on an opera based on the author's randy and decadent reworking of the Biblical tale. Strauss composed in his inimitable style, an alchemical blending of his talent for orchestration with a quasi-Wagnerian scope. He also stretched the limits of tonality, paving the way for compositions that would make "Salome" itself seem quaint within less than a decade. After the opera's premier in Dresden on 9 December 1905, "Salome" became Strauss' *succes de scandale*. Although opera goers clamored to see the strange new work by Strauss, its controversial themes offended those with more delicate sensibilities, and probably contributed to its success. The opera's heady blending of sex and religion, the characters' unhealthy psychological states, the perceived level of violence, recent memories of the infamous trial of Oscar Wilde, and possibly the revolutionary nature of Strauss' composition, caused puritanical politicians and captains of industry to call for cleaned-up versions of the opera. Within a generation, "Salome" no longer seemed a revolutionary work. Composers such as Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Webern, and Berg had become the arbiters of modernism in the concert hall and opera house. In the meantime, "Salome" had entered opera's standard repertoire, appearing unaltered in places that had once looked askance at it. Even though subsequent compositions by more "modern" composers have surpassed "Salome" in dissonance, the opera still lends itself to more daring productions. Strauss himself considered his music sufficiently erotic and violent for portraying the title character's insatiable lust for the holy man Jochanaan (John the Baptist). Still, the ubiquity of nudity in movies over the past 30 years has helped prepare contemporary audiences (at least in "artier" places) for the prospect of seeing Salome remove all seven veils at the end of the dance she does for Herod, her lecherous stepfather and uncle. Although sex is certainly an essential component of "Salome," so too is violence. However, like the films "Taxi Driver" and "Do the Right Thing," which some simplistically perceive as little more than violent movies, "Salome" is very spare with acts of violence. Still, the atmosphere of mounting tension prior to the climactic act of violence pervades "Salome," as it does in the aforementioned films, as well as Strauss' next opera "Elektra." Furthermore, the prevalence of gratuitous violence in arch-reactionary slasher flicks and action hero spectacles makes the opera's level of violence seem tame. Nevertheless, "Salome" retains its reputation as a violent opera, even though it has two onstage acts of violence: the suicide of Narraboth, the palace guard captain who

is infatuated with Salome, as well as the execution of Salome herself, abruptly ordered by Herod at the very end of the opera. The climactic act of violence, the execution of Jochanaan, occurs offstage around the beginning of the opera's "final scene." Salome's monologue to his severed head begins as an extended act of verbal violence as she spews vitriol at it, and then changes into an oddly beautiful rhapsody that belies its necrophilic undercurrent. Beyond the sensationalistic aspects of "Salome," the opera poses a number of questions about its "meaning" to listeners, whether Strauss (and perhaps Wilde) intended them or not. Does Salome only have a primal lust for Jochanaan, or does she also perceive his religious worldview as a viable alternative to life in the palace? Does Salome see no incompatibility between her sexual desires and Jochanaan's spiritual vision, a feeling that seems implied by the extended orchestral paroxysm as the final scene reaches its conclusion? Does the cacophonous debate among the five Jewish scholars, as well as certain other aspects of the opera, reflect anti-Semitic undertones (as explored by scholars such as Sander Gilman and Anne Seshadri), or is it just an extension of Strauss' general antipathy towards organized religion? Despite Strauss' relatively mundane personal life and detached public persona, is "Salome" one of the standard repertoire's "queerest" operas? Some gay fans and scholars, such as James Jordan, have ruminated on possible reasons beyond the obvious fact that Wilde wrote the original play. Whatever opinions one has of "Salome," it remains fascinating for the way Strauss deftly combines horror and beauty. Perhaps "Salome" (as well as other works that appear to glorify the unrestrained pursuit of desires) simply gives us an outlet for our ids, even if the desires of the protagonists do not exactly match our own. One could see similarities between those who almost forget the shocking elements in "Salome" while taking in the strange beauty (and perhaps even beatitude) of Strauss' composition, and those who squirm and laugh while watching the violent and darkly humorous film "Pulp Fiction." Speaking specifically about "Salome," priest and opera scholar Owen Lee offers an alternative explanation for the fascination with works that can appall audiences while simultaneously appealing to them. Strauss cared little for conveying morals or finding redemption in his works, but Lee still finds moral aspects hidden under the decadent veils of "Salome": "Decadence in life we decry, but decadence in art has its positive aspects. By showing us the terrible depths of evil, art can give us moral vision... the moral vision of the human being made suddenly conscious of the potential for evil as well as for good in his (or her) nature." As Strauss' masterful orchestration seduces listeners, his opera poses to them compelling riddles with layers of potential meaning, as well as a disturbing blend of the horrible and the beautiful, the erotic and the holy. A century has already passed since Strauss unleashed "Salome" on the world, and it would not be surprising if its mysteries continue to haunt us for centuries to come.

Handy and complete, solidly bound: a great bargain. The work itself is important.

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