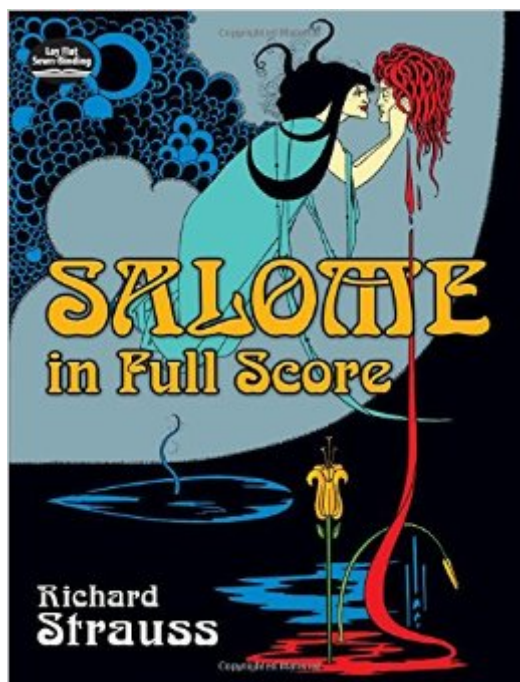


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Salome In Full Score (Dover Music Scores)



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."

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Customer Reviews

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).

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