



SAN FRANCISCO
OPERA

PRESENTS

Salome

(Sung in German with English supertitles)

Opera in one act by **Richard Strauss**
Based on the play by **Oscar Wilde**
German translation by **Hedwig Lachmann**

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Conductor
Nicola Luisotti

Director
Seán Curran

Consulting Director
James Robinson

Production Designer
Bruno Schwengl

Lighting Designer
Christopher Maravich

Chorus Director
Ian Robertson

Supertitles
Christopher Bergen

Assistant Stage Director
Rory Collins

Co-production with
Opera Theatre of Saint Louis and
Opéra de Montréal

Narraboth

A page

First soldier

Second soldier

A Cappadocian

Jokanaan

Salome

A slave

Herod

Herodias

Five Jews

First Nazarene

Second Nazarene

Executioner

Garrett Sorenson

Elizabeth DeShong

Andrew Funk

Bojan Knežević

Kenneth Kellogg

Greer Grimsley

Nadja Michael

Renée Tatum

Kim Begley

Irina Mishura

Beau Gibson

Robert MacNeil

Matthew O'Neill

Corey Bix

Jeremy Milner

Julien Robbins

Austin Kness

Broc Johnson

Servants, soldiers, guests, handmaidens

*This production was made possible,
in part, by*
John A. and Cynthia Fry Gunn
and San Francisco Opera Guild

TIME AND PLACE: Herod's palace in Judea

Salome SYNOPSIS

On a moonlit terrace in Herod's palace in Judea, Narraboth, captain of the guard, rhapsodizes on the beauty of the princess Salome. A page warns him that he stares too intently at the princess and that evil will come of it. The voice of the prophet Jokanaan (John the Baptist) is heard from an old cistern, where the holy man has been kept prisoner by Herod. He foretells the coming of the Messiah and the soldiers argue about him, disputing his saintliness. They are interrupted by the appearance of Salome, who, disgusted with her stepfather Herod's lecherous glances and with his guests, has left the banqueting hall and come out to the terrace. Jokanaan's voice rings through the night, and Salome, fascinated, decides she must speak with him. She asks the soldiers to bring the prisoner to her. When they say they cannot disobey Herod's orders, she coaxes Narraboth into agreeing.

Jokanaan is presented to Salome. Instead of being disgusted by him, Salome is attracted to his voice, his deathly pallor and ascetic looks. He tells her to repent. She claims that she must touch the prophet's white flesh, feel his shining black hair, and kiss his scarlet lips. Jokanaan denounces her, but Salome's desire for him becomes uncontrollable. Narraboth, frightened by the confrontation that he has allowed, stabs himself and dies, as Salome continues to beg Jokanaan to be allowed to kiss him. "Daughter of adultery," the prophet cries, "go seek repentance!" Salome repeats her demands. Jokanaan pronounces her cursed and goes back into the cistern.

Herod enters—followed by his guests—looking for Salome, obsessed by her. Herodias, his wife and Salome's mother, jealously tells Herod that he looks too much at her daughter. Herod offers the princess food and wine, but she rejects him. Jokanaan's admonitions again arise from the cistern, and Herodias asks Herod to get rid of him by turning him over to the Hebrews. Herod refuses, thinking Jokanaan is a holy man. At this, a theological argument breaks out among the Hebrew guests about the presence of good and evil in the world. Two Nazarenes then report the miracles of Jesus, claiming that the Messiah has arrived. Jokanaan again curses the wickedness of Herodias, who screams for him to be silenced.

Herod suddenly asks Salome to dance. Salome, supported by her mother, refuses. Not until Herod swears to give her whatever she desires does Salome agree. Ignoring her mother's pleas, Salome performs the Dance of the Seven Veils. Herod now asks her to name her request. She would like, she says, the head of Jokanaan on a silver tray. Herod is horrified, but Herodias approves, thinking Salome has done this to avenge her. Herod offers Salome precious jewels, rare white peacocks, even the holy veil of the temple—anything to dissuade her—but Salome is adamant. Finally, Herod agrees.

Eagerly, Salome hangs over the edge of the cistern, anticipating the sounds of the execution. No sound comes. She is about to send more soldiers down when the arm of the executioner rises up out of the darkness bearing the head of Jokanaan. Salome grabs her reward and passionately sings to Jokanaan as if he could still hear her. "The mystery of love," she sings, "is greater than the mystery of death." Salome ecstatically kisses the severed head. Herod orders her to be killed.