



RICHARD  
STRAUSS

*SALOME*

LAILA ANDERSSON-  
PALME

RAGNAR ULFUNG  
BARBRO ERICSON  
CURT APPELGREN  
ROYAL SWEDISH OPERA  
ORCHESTRA & CHORUS  
BERISLAV KLOBUCAR



*Laila Andersson-Palme.*  
*Photo: Elon Lindberg*

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*Richard Strauss.*  
*Cartoon by Oscar Garvens, 1905.*

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# Richard Strauss (1864–1949)

**Salome**, Op. 54

Opera in one act

Libretto: Hedwig Lachmann after the play *Salomé* by Oscar Wilde.

Composed 1905. Premiered December 9<sup>th</sup>, 1905, in Dresden.

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## The Cast

**Herodes**, Tetrarch of Judæa and Perea (*tenor*)

**Herodias**, his wife (and sister-in-law) (*mezzo-soprano*)

**Salome**, his stepdaughter (and niece) (*soprano*)

**Jochanaan** (John the Baptist) (*baritone*)

**Narraboth**, (Captain of the Guard) (*tenor*)

The Page of Herodias (*contralto*)

First, Second, Third and Fourth Jew (*tenor*), Fifth Jew (*bass*)

First Nazarene (*bass*), Second Nazarene (*tenor*)

First Soldier, Second Soldier (*bass*)

A Cappadocian (*bass*)

A Slave (*soprano*)

Members from the Royal Swedish Opera Chorus

**Conductor**

Ragnar Ulfung

Barbro Ericson

Laila Andersson-Palme

Curt Appelgren

John-Eric Jacobsson

Eva Pilat

Lars Cleveman, Göran Eliasson, Mikko

Pulkkinen, Roland Häggström, Peter Kadiev

Jerker Arvidson, Lars Kullenbo

Gunnar Lundberg Jr, Anders Lorentzson

Ragne Wahlroth

Ingela Malmsjö-Inge

**Berislav Klobučar**

Stage recording from Kungliga Teatern / Royal Swedish Opera, Stockholm,

October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1990, in remembrance of Göran Järvefelt

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<b>CD 1</b>		<b>77'21</b>
	<b>Erste Szene / First Scene</b>	<b>5'03</b>
<b>1</b>	Wie schön ist die Prinzessin Salome heute Nacht!	2'36
<b>2</b>	Nach mir wird Einer kommen	2'25
	<b>Zweite Szene / Second Scene</b>	<b>9'24</b>
<b>3</b>	Ich will nicht bleiben	1'43
<b>4</b>	Siehe, der Herr ist gekommen,	1'33
<b>5</b>	Jauchze nicht, du Land Palästina	2'13
<b>6</b>	Du wirst das für mich tun	3'54
	<b>Dritte Szene / Third Scene</b>	<b>23'52</b>
<b>7</b>	Wo ist er, dessen Sündenbecher	3'52
<b>8</b>	Er ist schrecklich	0'49
<b>9</b>	Wie abgezehrt er ist!	3'35
<b>10</b>	Jochanaan!	7'10
<b>11</b>	Niemals, Tochter Babylons	4'41
<b>12</b>	<i>Intermezzo</i>	3'40
	<b>Vierte Szene / Fourth Scene</b>	<b>59'47</b>
<b>13</b>	Wo ist Salome?	4'24
<b>14</b>	Salome, komm, trink Wein mit mir	3'21
<b>15</b>	Wahrhaftig, Herr, es wäre besser	2'50

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<b>16</b>	Siehe, der Tag ist nahe	2'36
<b>17</b>	Eine Menge Menschen wird sich	2'10
<b>18</b>	Tanz für mich, Salome.	4'02
<b>19</b>	<i>Salomes Tanz</i>	9'12
<b>20</b>	Ah! Herrlich!	1'38
<b>21</b>	Nein, nein!	2'05
<b>22</b>	Salome, ich beschwöre dich:	6'39

**CD 2**

**20'45**

<b>1</b>	Wer hat meinen Ring genommen?	1'35
<b>2</b>	Es ist kein Laut zu vernehmen.	2'08
<b>3</b>	Ah! Du wolltest mich nicht dein Mund geben	3'45
<b>4</b>	Sie ist ein Ungeheuer, deine Tochter.	1'29
<b>5</b>	Ah! Ich habe deinen Mund geküßt, Jochanaan	4'13

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## SYNOPSIS

Kung Herodes palats i Judéen år 30. På en månbelyst terrass står Narraboth, kapten i kungens vaktstyrka och betraktar förälskat Prinsessan Salome när hon äter med sin styvfar och hans hov. En page varnar honom för att titta för intensivt på prinsessan. Rösten från profeten Jochanaan (Johannes döparen) hörs från en gammal cistern, där han hålls fången av Herodes. Herodes fruktar honom och hans profetior, och har gett order om att ingen någonsin får ta kontakt med honom.

Uttråkad och trött på gästbudet och på Herodes och hans gäster, flyr Salome ut på terrassen. Därifrån kan hon höra Jochanaan när han fördömer hennes mor, Herodias. Fascinerad bestämmer sig Salome för att få tala med honom. När soldaterna vägrar att hämta fången så försöker hon charma Narraboth, som till slut ger med sig, trots sina order från Herodes. Jochanaan släpps ut ur cisternen, ropande profetior över Herodes och Herodias. Ingen förstår vad han menar, utom Salome. När hon får syn på hans vita hud fylls hon av en överväldigande lust att vidröra huden. Han avvisar henne dock. Hon prisar hans svarta hår och hans scharlakansröda läppar. Hon vädjar om en kyss, men avvisas återigen. Hennes känslor tycks otyglade inför åsynen av honom. Narraboth står inte ut med att åse detta. Även medveten om att det är han som har möjliggjort detta möte och i fruktan för efterföljderna, hugger han sig till döds med sitt svärd. Jochanaan förs tillbaka till cisternen uppmanande Salome att finna sin frälsning från Messias.

Kung Herodes träder ut på terrassen, följd av hov och gäster, letande efter Salome. Herodias, hans fru, har lagt märke till hans besatthet av styvdottern. När han kommer ut på terrassen, så halkar han på Narraboths blod och börjar se syner. Han stirrar lystet på Salome, trots Herodias protester. Salome avvisar honom. Jochanaans förmaningar ljuder från cisternen; kallar Herodias äktenskap med Herodes för incestuöst och syndigt. Herodias uppmanar sin man att få tyst på profeten, men han är rädd för den helige

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mannen. Bland gästerna har nu utbrutit en diskussion om Guds natur och mirakler som skall ha inträffat. Kung Herodes blir ännu räddare när han hör diskussionen.

Herodes ber Salome att äta och dricka med honom, men understödd av sin mor avvisar hon honom. Herodes ber henne istället att dansa för honom. Hon tvekar och inte förrän Herodes lovar att ge henne vadhelst hon önskar, överväger hon att dansa för honom. Salome försäkrar sig dock om att han verkligen kommer att hålla sitt löfte, och får honom att svära på det.

Trots Herodias vädjan börjar Salome *De sju slöjornas dans*. Under denna orientaliska dans, lättar Salome långsamt slöjorna, som omsluter henne, tills hon ligger naken för hans fötter. Efter dansen frågar Kung Herodes om hennes önskan. Hon säger att hon önskar Jochanaans huvud på ett silverfat. Herodes blir förskräckt, men hennes mor skrockar nöjt. Herodes försöker istället att locka henne med juveler, påfåglar, sällsynta djur – vad som helst, men inte profetens huvud. Salome står fast med sitt krav. Bedrövad och uppgiven ger så småningom Herodes med sig.

Salome lyssnar ivrigt efter ljud från avrättningen. Inget ljud hörs. Strax dyker dock rättaren upp med Jochanaans huvud i sin hand. Salome är överlycklig och förklarar sin kärlek till huvudet. Passionerat kysser hon läpparna, som om Jochanaan fortfarande levde.

Förfärad och äcklad av det han bevittnar, beordrar Kung Herodes sina vakter att döda henne. Soldaterna krossar henne under sina sköldar.

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## SYNOPSIS

King Herod's palace in Judea in 30 A.D. On a moonlit terrace, Narraboth, captain of the guard is watching Princess Salome as she dines with her stepfather and his court. A page warns him about staring at the princess. The voice of the prophet Jokanaan (John the Baptist) is heard from an old cistern, where he is kept prisoner by Herod. Herod is fearing him and his prophesis, and has ordered that no one ever must make contact with him.

Bored and tired of the feast and Herod and his guests, Salome flees to the terrace. From the terrace she hears Jokananan cursing her mother, Herodias. Fascinated, Salome decides she must speak to him. Since the soldiers refuse to bring the prisoner to her, she tries to charm Narraboth, who finally gives in, despite the orders from Herod. Jokanaan emerges from the cistern, calling out prophecies over Herod and Herodias. Only Salome is able to understand him. When her eyes set on Jokanaan's white skin, she is filled with an overwhelming desire and wants to touch his skin. He rejects. She praises his black hair and his scarlet lips. She begs for a kiss, but is rejected again. Her feelings seem uncontrollable. Narraboth cannot bear to watch this and as he also is frightened by the confrontation, that he has realized, he fatally stabs himself. Jokanaan returns to the cistern telling her to find salvation from the Messiah.

King Herod enters, followed by his wife and court, looking for Salome. Herodias, his wife, has noticed that he is obsessed by his stepdaughter. When he enters, he slips in Narraboth's blood on terrass and begins hallucinating. He stares lustfully at Salome, despite Herodias' objections. Salome turns him away. Jokanaan's admonitions again rise from the cistern; calling her marriage to Herod incestous and sinful. Herodias demands her husband to keep the prophet quiet, but he is afraid of the holy man. Now an argument about the nature of God is breaking out among the guests, and miracles claimed to have occured. King Herod becomes even more frightened when overhearing this.

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Herod urges Salome to eat and drink with him, but she refuses, supported by her mother. Herod then begs Salome to dance for him. She is reluctant. Not until Herod tells that he will reward her with her heart's desire, she considers to agree. Salome makes sure that he will uphold his bargain, and swear to it.

Ignoring Herodias' pleas, Salome begins the *Dance of Seven Veils*. During this oriental dance Salome slowly removes each of the seven veils adorning her, until she lies naked at his feet. After the dance, King Herod asks her to state her request. She wishes the head of Jokanaan on a silver platter. Herod is horrified, but Salome's mother is pleased. Herod tries to offer her jewels, peacocks, rare animals – anything but the prophet's head. Salome remains firm in her demand. Desolated, Herod agrees at last.

Salome eagerly listens, anticipating the sounds of the execution. However, no sounds come. A moment later the executioner emerges with the head of Jokanaan. Salome is overjoyed and declares her love for the head. Passionately she kisses the lips, as if Jokanaan was still alive.

Horrified and disgusted, King Herod orders his guards to execute her. The soldiers crush her under their shields.



*Laila Andersson-Palme and Ragnar Ulfung*  
*Photo: Enar Merkel Rydberg*

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*”Man kan nästan säga att jag var resande i Salome”.*

**Hovsångerskan Laila Andersson-Palme om sina många Salome hemma och utomlands.**

**Laila, du har ju sjungit rollen som Salome många gånger, på Kungliga Teatern 23 gånger, men också 55 gånger utomlands. Vad är Salome för en kvinna egentligen?**

Salome är ett barn av sin tid. Hon är strängt hållen och satt under förmyndarskap. Det finns också inslag av incest med styvpappan i bakgrunden. Hon sitter fastbunden i sina känslor, hör Johannes Döparens röst och blir nyfiken. När han avvisar henne vill hon ha hans huvud, men hon förstår inte konsekvenserna av denna bisarra begäran. Efter att hon fått huvudet hamnar hon i något som kan liknas vid ett chocktillstånd.

Jag tycker man kan säga att det finns en viss släktskap med Lulu i Alban Bergs opera, som jag sjöng på Stockholmsoperan 1977. Hon är också ett barn som inte till fullo förstår konsekvensen av sina handlingar. Varför blev hon som hon blev? Hur ser hennes själsliga inre ut? Jag tror att hon är medveten om vad hon gör, men hon kan inte förstå vilka följder det får eftersom hon bara är ett barn. På slutet sjunger hon ”Warum siehst du mich nicht an?” och blir frustrerad av att han inte ens tittar på henne fast hon står där med hans avhuggna huvud. Samtidigt börjar hon bli en kvinna som tar kommandot, men vid det laget drabbar henne också sorgen och hon börjar inse sitt misstag. Det handlar helt enkelt om en bristande verklighetsuppfattning som hänger ihop med flickebarnets omognad. Till slut får hon hela smärtan över sig.

**Hur är Salome vokalt jämfört med andra roller?**

Salome har fler lyriska partier än till exempel Elektra som jag sjöng senare på Stockholmsoperan. Det är två helt olika psyken. Elektra är högdramatisk redan från början och Salomes

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parti är lyriskt ganska länge. Först i slutmonologen kommer en dramatisk stegring. När jag sjöng rollen var jag väldigt mån om att följa angivelserna i partituret och var mycket noga med att till exempel göra de *pianissimi* som Strauss skrivit ut i noterna. Det är viktigt att försöka hitta nyanserna och till det behövs en bra dirigent som förstår när man ska dra ner på volymen eftersom orkestern är så stor. Berislav Klobučar som dirigerar på den här inspelningen var en bra dirigent som förstod detta. Han drämde inte bara på som så många andra dirigenter gör.

Oscar Wildes text till operan är fantastisk, så poetisk. Jag önskar att jag hade fått träffa honom. Texten är som en blomsteräng. Jag tyckte att det var det vackraste i librettoväg jag läst och låg ofta och läste texten på mornarna medan jag studerade in rollen.

### **Du dansade också själv Salomes dans i föreställningen?**

Ja, jag hade varit tvungen att lära mig dansa för att framträda som Lulu i Alban Bergs opera 1977. Då gick jag till Ivo Cramér som var chef för baletten och sa att regissören ville att jag skulle dansa på tå i en scen. Jag hade aldrig tränat dans innan och Ivo hänvisade mig till Elise Englund som var repetitör för operabaletten. När jag sedan skulle göra Salome tyckte jag att jag kunde ha användning av min dansanta erfarenhet och kroppen var ju redan tränad. Koreografin till *De sju slöjornas dans* gjordes av Elise. Jag använde mig av hennes koreografi på alla scener jag sjöng, utom i Gelsenkirchen.

**Du sjöng Salome första gången i Graz där du fick fin press i de österrikiska tidningarna: ”Laila Andersson agerar imponerande som Salome, hon var aftonens upplevelse. Gestaltade sitt parti med en aldrig svikande säkerhet och mobiliserade i finalen vitala höjdtoner med stor volym. Men också sångerskans pianotoner hade en annorlunda speciell sötma...”**

De ville ha mig som Salome, efter att jag hade sjungit rollen som Abigaille i *Nabucco* ett par år tidigare, och frågade om jag hade studerat in rollen. ”Ja”, sa jag och ljög faktiskt och sa att jag hade sjungit den, så gärna ville jag göra rollen. Sen kastade jag mig på telefonen till Kurt

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Bendix på Operan i Stockholm: ”Har du tid att repetera Salome med mig?” ”Det hinner vi, inga problem”, svarade han. Det blev fullt ös och Kurt gestikulerade vilt och ålade sig nästan ner under flygeln när han sjöng Herodes repliker. Jag hade väl en tre veckor nånting på mig. Jag var övertygad om att rollen passade mig, så jag jobbade bara på och kände att rösten verkligen bar för detta parti.

För regin i Graz svarade Regina Resnik, och hennes man Arbit Blatas gjorde scenografin. Regina hade varit firad mezzo på Metropolitan i New York i många år. Hon bodde mest i New York och i Venedig och Arbit hade bland annat ritat teckningarna till tv-serien *Holocaust* 1979. När jag kom till Graz hade jag alltså redan studerat in Salomes slöjdans för Elise i Stockholm. Det var roligt att jobba med Regina, men hon ville hela tiden ändra i Elises koreografi, men jag var envis och stod på mig. Jag kunde inte göra en ny koreografi på så kort tid. Var skulle man hitta en koreograf? På det sättet var Regina inte professionell.

Innan föreställningen brukar man få olika typer av ”lycka till” av sina kollegor och det kan man få på olika märkliga sätt. I Tyskland säger man ofta ”Hals- und Beinbruch”. Precis innan jag skulle in på scenen kom Regina in i logen och sa: ”Darling, don’t move your arms”. Det var ju roligt att höra när man hade jobbat tre veckor med regin, men vid såna tillfällen måste man bara vara disciplinerad och skaka av sig allt som stör fokuseringen.

I Arbits scenografi som var väldigt genomarbetad ingick två lejon som stod på scenen och som jag kom inspringande baklänges emellan. Då tappade jag plötsligt skon och fick inte tag i den. Jag tänkte att jag skulle passera det andra lejonet utan att publiken såg att jag tog den på mig. Det var en balettsko och inte helt lätt att ta på sig. Här hade man jobbat i tre veckor utan att skon hade krånglat och så hände detta precis under föreställningen. Den hade naturligtvis blivit sliten under repetitionsarbetet.

Jag träffade Regina och Arbit senare i New York när jag skulle vara *cover* i *Die Frau ohne Schatten* på Metropolitan. De bjöd mig på middag i sin ateljé, men måltiden var inte särskilt smaklig. Den bestod bland annat av kyckling som var varken kryddad eller saltad. ”Don’t

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eat salt!”, skrek de båda två, för det hade stått i tidningarna att salt var livsfarligt. Detta var nog den värsta måltiden i mitt liv.

Jag hade precis sjungit Salome i Montréal och berättade att jag hade svabbat golvet på scenen där, varpå Regina inflikade: ”Darling, I have cleaned the floor all over the world!”

**Sedan sjöng du Salome på Metropolitan i New York våren 1981. Tidningen Daily News hade som rubrik ”A supreme soprano in ’Salome’”...**

Ja, agenturen Vladarski ringde från Wien och sa att de behövde en ”cover” för Salome på Met. Jag åkte fram och tillbaka till New York och skulle vara ersättare för Gwyneth Jones. Det var jobbigt med tidsomställningen, men jag hade inte samma press på Met som *cover*, men så fort de gav *Salome* där måste jag vara på plats. Det var Wieland Wagners gamla uppsättning som var lik den som jag sedan sjöng i Berlin

Jag skulle fylla 40 den 30 mars och de ville ge mig en egen föreställning. Jag skulle sjunga den 3 april. Den tyske barytonen Siegmund Nimsgern skulle sjunga Johannes Döparen. Han var väldigt bra. ”Det går inte för då har jag kalas i Stockholm”, sa jag, men ångrade mig naturligtvis genast så fort jag sagt det. ”Men om vi bakar en sockerkaka kan du inte stanna då?”, sa man på Met.

Jag repeterade med dirigenten Julius Rudel i sångrummet och när vi kom till ställen där man måste sjunga *pianissimo* på höjden bröt jag av och sa att jag behövde lite mer tid för att preparera höjntonerna. Men han hade ingen lust att gå mig till mötes och sa bara: ”Om ni inte vore så egensinnig” (”Wenn Sie nicht so eigensinnig wäre”).

Jag tycker att det ska vara ett samarbete mellan sångare och dirigent. De flesta sångare sjunger bara starkt hela tiden. Jag har alltid eftersträvat att göra som kompositören har föreskrivit och försökt bemästra sången därefter. En bra dirigent ska vara kapabel att förenkla svårigheterna för sångaren, men Rudel förmådde inte få ner orkestern. Scenen på Metropolitan är väldigt stor och min entré var långt bort. Det måste en dirigent kunna anpassa

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sig till. Varje sångare gör sitt yttersta, vet hur det egna instrumentet fungerar och inhämtar kraften på sitt eget sätt. Därför är det viktigt att dirigenten har förmåga att lyssna in sig på varje enskild sångare. Agenten Bob Lombardo, som sedan ordnade Salome för mig i Montréal, tyckte inte att någon av oss egentligen hade gjort fel.

Det ligger nära till hands att jämföra med en dirigent som Sixten Ehrling som var genuint intresserad av vad som hände på scenen. Han svek aldrig sångarna när det gällde deras insatser.

Det var också alldeles för lite plats att dansa på i slutet, så där hade Wieland gjort en miss. Efter debuten med Salome på Metropolitan haglade anbuden tätt, men jag fick av tidsskäl tacka nej till flera. Jag fick också tillfälle att vara *cover* för Eva Marton som Kejsarinnan i Strauss *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. Det var ett givande samarbete med dirigenten Erich Leinsdorf och jag minns att orkestern tyckte om mig.

En liten kul episod hände när Birgit Nilsson och jag möttes på Metropolitan. Birgit skulle sjunga Färgerskan i *Die Frau*. I pausen satte Birgit och jag oss i salongen och småpratade på engelska. Plötsligt sa Birgit: "I don't know the word in English, but in Swedish". "If you don't mind we can talk Swedish!" blev min replik. Två sopraner skrattade i *fortissimo*, det blev en skrattfest utan dess like.

### **Sommaren samma år som Met, 1981, sjöng du också Salome i tyska Gelsenkirchen...**

Ja, det var i regi av Thomas Rübenacker som kom från Östberlin. Jag åkte till Gelsenkirchen för att förhandla om villkoren för rollen. Men istället ville de att jag skulle provsjunga den, fast jag vid det laget redan hade sjungit Salome i flera operahus innan. Jag vägrade och då jag tyckte att det var under min värdighet tog jag på mig mina ytterkläder och lämnade teatern. Jag sjappade helt enkelt och tog mig till hotellet. Jag kände mig helt lurad. Det var naturligtvis inte roligt. Man vädjade att jag skulle komma tillbaka. Det enda som var positivt var sångerskan som sjöng Herodias. Hon sa: "Frau Andersson, ni är alldeles för bra för att vara här."

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Operachefen grep i alla fall in och jag kunde börja förhandla.

Innan föreställningen blev jag bjuden hem till dirigenten och hans fru som en slags försoning. Jag har sjappat sammanlagt två gånger under min karriär så det är inte någonting som jag gjort till en vana (*skratt*).

Så småningom började arbetet med regissören. Jag ryser bara jag tänker på det. Min entré gjordes högt uppe i en spiraltrappa och i händerna hade jag en slags karameller i plast. Salomes dans fick jag inte dansa. Det gjorde Herodes! Jag hade synpunkter på att jag kanske skulle kunna få göra den, men regissören var onåbar. En dansare var instängd som i ett embryo. Självt blev jag anmodad att sitta på golvet mot en pelare och beskåda eländet, men galenskapen blev ännu värre. Vid slutet skulle jag få Johannes Döparens huvud på ett fat. Vad fick jag? Ett huvud utan fat, ett huvud i massivt gummi, fruktansvärt tungt, inlindat i en handduk med "blod". Jag tappade huvudet rakt in i brunnen på statisten som svimmade. Det var för tungt. Någon sångare sa att jag hade gjort det medvetet. Jag gick till chefen som faktiskt tog tag i saken på ett bra sätt. Det här var under genrepet med publik. Statisten kvicknade till och jag kunde ropa: "Bitte schön!" Kunde han möjligen komma upp med huvudet en gång till? Jag fick tag i huvudet, men repetitionen fick avbrytas och ridån gick ned. Jag bad om repetitions-huvudet som nu låg på ett silverfat, som det bör vara. Efter mycket helvete kunde ridån gå upp så att vi kunde fortsätta. Publiken var mycket upprörd, så även recensenterna fast de egentligen inte ska recensera en generalrepetition. Till råga på allt satt sufflösen och målade naglarna under föreställningen. Gör man det kan man inte sitt yrke, menar jag. Det hade faktiskt varit bättre att inte ha någon sufflös alls.

Göran Järvefelt hade arbetat som regissör i Gelsenkirchen några år tidigare. Han frågade mig ironiskt: "Hur har du haft det med herr Mund?" Det var den österrikiske dirigenten Uwe Mund, som var känd för att vara besvärlig. Han var en humorlös översittare som inte accepterade att man kunde något själv. Men i tidningen *Ruhr-Nachrichten* tyckte recensenten i alla fall att jag var "*en lyckobesättning av festspelsformat*" ("*eine Glücksbesetzung von Festspielformat*") och det var ju roligt.

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**Sedan var det dags för Kungliga Teatern i Stockholm och Göran Järvefelts uppsättning av Salome. I den sjöng du 23 föreställningar från 1982 fram till 1990?**

Ja, Folke Abenius hade precis blivit operachef och anlidade Göran för *Salome*. Göran hade tidigare regisserat *Barberaren i Sevilla* och *Karmelitsystrarna* på Operan. Neeme Järvi skulle dirigera. Han var egentligen inte någon operadirigent, men det gick bra i alla fall. Järvefelt var en lågmäld och till synes timid person som spred harmoni omkring sig, men han var också perfektionist och hade en analytisk förmåga. Barbro Ericson, som skulle sjunga Herodias, och han var goda vänner. Jag var bjuden hem till Barbro tillsammans med Göran för han ville först träffa mig personligen innan vi satte igång med instuderingsarbetet.

Det var stora nivåskillnader i scenografin som var gjord av Carl Friedrich Oberle. Efter Salomes dans skulle jag upp och lägga mig nedanför Herodes. Dansen började däruppe och skulle sedan ner på det ordinarie scengolv. Det var så Göran ville ha det. Men hur skulle jag komma upp igen? Göran och jag funderade på en möjlig scenlösning, men det var Elise som löste det hela. Idén var att komma upp igen genom att klättra på dansarnas hukade ryggar. Det fungerade faktiskt bra. Efter premiären blev det champagne bland fans och gratulerande kollegor i logen på Operan.

Den här inspelningen av *Salome* är ju från en föreställning till Görans minne åtta år senare, den 3 oktober 1990. Göran hade ju så tragiskt gått bort den 30 november 1989, bara 42 år gammal. Den försynte, men mycket lyhörde Berislav Klobučar dirigerade.

**1984 sjöng du Salome både i Wien och i Rio de Janeiro. I Wien skrev en recensent att du var en sensation som inte lät dig dubbleras av någon dansare och ändå hade kraft för intensiva stegringar i slutscenen...**

Jag sjöng *Salome* på Staatsoper i Wien maj det året medan vi höll på med instuderingen av *Wozzeck* i Hasse Alfredsons regi här hemma i Stockholm. Theo Adam sjöng Johannes Döparen. Jag hade ju vid det laget sjungit rollen många gånger och kände mig säker för det fanns ingen tid för någon musikalisk instudering i Wien där jag skulle hoppa in för

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Karan Armstrong. Jag gick bara igenom scenerierna tillsammans med regissören. Dirigenten Heinrich Hollreiser kände jag sedan tidigare från Berlin. Det blev tre föreställningar där och som alltid (förutom i Gelsenkirchen) använde jag mig av Elise Englunds koreografi för *De sju slöjornas dans*.

I augusti var det dags för operan i Rio de Janeiro där jag alltså skulle sjunga min åttonde Salome. Efter arton timmars flygresa landade jag i Rio och möttes av en person som hade amerikanska dollar i handen. Han bad mig att gå in i taxfreebutiken för att köpa alkohol. Som väluppfostrad svensk undrade jag om detta verkligen var korrekt. Jag blev inte stoppad i passkontrollen i alla fall och kunde andas ut.

Mycket trött anlände jag till hotellet och fick en chock när jag kom in i rummet. Det var avflagnade väggar, fult och allmänt hemskt. Jag ringde hem till min make Ulf och grät hejdlöst. Efter en välbehövlig sömn kom jag till det vackra operahuset Theatro Municipal som var en kopia av operan i Paris. Jag mötte dirigenten, Mário Tavares, som var mycket vänlig och bra att ha att göra med och vi började repetera med pianisten. Tavares hade inte dirigerat Salome tidigare så han ville ha lite hjälp ibland. Han var en mjuk person och det blev både ett givande och tagande. Om alla dirigenter vore som denne maestro i Rio de Janeiro tror jag det skulle bära god frukt för många sångare.

Som Johannes Döparen sjöng den amerikanske barytonen Arthur Thompson. Han hade sjungit en liten roll i uppsättningen på Met med mig.

Innan jag åkte till Rio hade jag fått telefonnumret till en svensk kvinna där som hette Gun Andersson. Hon var designer och hade även arbetat på SAS som flygvärdinna. Har man tur kan man i sitt kringflackande liv som sångerska också träffa intressanta och spännande människor. Gun tog med mig till sitt sommarhus i Pétropolis några mil utanför Rio. Det var skönt med lite avkoppling mellan föreställningarna som jag tror var sammanlagt fem stycken.

*Salome* blev i alla fall en succé. Det var intervjuer i mängd och man tyckte mycket om min ”persikohy” (*skratt*). Efter den sista föreställningen blev jag stormad av publiken som ville

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ha min autograf. Jag skrev och skrev. Långt borta såg jag Gun. ”Vad gjorde du där borta?”, frågade jag. ”Jag skrev dina autografer!” svarade hon. ”Andersson som Andersson”.

**Du hade stor framgång med Salome i Montréal av kritiken i de kanadensiska tidningarna att döma. Tidskriften Opera Canada skrev att du både var en ”*marvelous actress and a phenomenal singer*”...**

Ja, jag kom dit hösten 1985. Staden hade ett mycket fint operahus med vänliga och synnerligen professionella människor. Mina kollegor kom från olika länder som Österrike, Tyskland, USA och Kanada. Både regissören, Václav Kašlík, och scenografen, Josef Svoboda, kom från Prag. Kostymören hette Richard Lorain.

Repetitionerna förlöpte utan konflikter tills jag skulle slita ned ett mycket långt draperi. Det var så tungt, materialet var av tjock sammet så jag orkade inte dra ned det. Jag bad om ett lättare draperi. Jag skulle också dra sönder draperiet. Det var svårt och det lossnade och scenografen blev ilsknare och ilsknare. Men det skulle bli ännu värre. Utan förvarning var hela golvet täckt av söndermalen kork som flög omkring i luften vid minsta rörelse. Hur skulle jag kunna genomföra Salomes dans i detta? Jag lämnade scenen för att lugna ned mig. Sen gick jag till scenen igen och bad om en borste med långt skaft. Jag sopade golvet rent på ytan där jag skulle dansa, bad om en vattenspruta och placerade korken runt cisternen och på olika ställen på golvet. Slutligen blev det bra. ”Sanddynerna” såg äkta ut. Ingen kunde ana vilka svårigheter jag ställdes inför. Svoboda var ursinnig. Hans läppar blev smalare och smalare och smockan hängde i luften. När jag kom tillbaka till hotellet hade personalen från operan skickat en magnifik blombukett till mig. Vilken tröst!

Det blev i alla fall stor succé. 4 000 personer kom till föreställningen varje kväll och den sändes även i tv. I tidningen The Gazette skrev kritikern under rubriken ”*This ‘Salome’ is opera masterpiece*”: ”*The Swedish soprano Laila Andersson, not only has the flexibility of voice and the carrying power need for the role of Herodias’ perverted daughter, but she looks as though she was designed, personally, by Aubrey Beardsley. She even dances well*”.

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De hade en mycket fin dirigent i huset, tysken Franz-Paul Decker som var lätt att samarbeta med.

### **I april 1987 var du även nere i Catania på Sicilien och sjöng Salome?**

Ja, jag kom till Catania som ju var operakompositören Vincenzo Bellinis födelsestad. Från flygplatsen åkte jag med en taxi på en grusväg med ständiga gupp. Att komma till ett nytt operahus innebär att man måste försöka hitta sceningången. Oftast ligger den undanskynd och är svår att hitta.

Så småningom träffade jag mina kollegor och vi kunde börja repetera med dirigenten och regiassistenten. Dirigenten, en ungrare, var tyvärr mycket osympatisk. Hans metod var att sjunga två sidor och bläddra tillbaka. Repetitionerna var mördande. Regiassistenten var däremot mycket bra och sufflösen superb. I sufflörluckan fanns det ingen monitor för att se dirigenten. När ridån gick upp satte hon upp en spegel med fot på golvet för att kunna se honom. Ett problem som hon löste elegant.

En vecka innan premiären kom regissören från Bonn. Att börja om med repetitioner en vecka före premiären är det värsta en sångare kan vara med om.

Oftast brukar det vara en dags vila före en föreställning. Det är viktigt för stämbanden som också måste få tillfälle att svälla av. Jag minns också att det var för lite plats på scenen. Man använde inte scengolvet utan jag skulle hålla mig på tre plattor i olika nivåer och det kändes väldigt begränsande.

På Sicilien var det inte en enda lugn dag. Jag blev ofta förföljd av olika män, dag- som kvällstid. Om jag hade haft en svart peruk på mig hade det kanske hjälpt. Men det värsta var nog ändå att mina kostymer kom från Rom först dagen innan premiären. Det var gräsligt, eftersom dagen innan en föreställning behövs för vila. Jag blev mer och mer utmattad.

När ridån hade gått ner efter sista föreställningen kom dirigenten till fram och bad mig ordna så att han skulle få dirigera i Stockholm. ”No way, maestro!”, sa jag. Så kan det också gå till på ”jobbet”.

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### **Du sjöng även Salome i Berlin och Oslo...**

Ja, jag sjöng Salome flera gånger på Deutsche Oper i Berlin under Hollreiser. Det var i princip samma scenografi av Wieland Wagner som på Metropolitan, men där hade jag i alla fall betydligt mer plats på scenen, nästan för mycket.

I Oslo sjöng jag Salome fem gånger våren 1984. Knut Hendriksen var chef där då. På Oslo-operan, det var i det gamla huset, minns jag att det luktade intensivt av gräddade våfflor när jag skulle titta ner i hålet där Johannes Döparen satt. Sångaren som sjöng gjorde också entré från sin håla i den här lukten.

### **Du har ju ett väldigt bra lag omkring dig i den här föreställningen från Stockholmsoperan som nu kommer ut på cd ...**

Ja, verkligen, Curt Appelgren som Johannes Döparen var en fantastiskt bra sångare. Curt var ju altviolinist från början och även medlem i Freskkvartetten när jag lärde känna honom på 60-talet och vi studerade ihop. Vi sjöng även tillsammans i *Wozzeck* där Curt gjorde titelrollen och jag Marie.

Nej, det finns ingen miss någonstans i rollbesättningen. Även John-Eric Jacobsson som Narraboth och Eva Pilat som Pagen gör minnesvärda prestationer.

Barbro Ericson var strålande som Herodias, hon var en riktig mezzo. Alla tolkade sina roller så bra. Ragnar Ulfung var också lysande, det är fantastiska sånglinjer med honom och han tolkade rollen perfekt.

Och som sagt var; Klobučar kunde konsten att finkänsligt förhålla sig till alla mina *pianissimi*. Salome är ju också ett parti där det gäller att kunna spinna sina vokallinjer som silvertrådar.

*Intervju: Henry Larsson*



*Salome's dance, Stockholm. Laila Andersson-Palme.  
Photo: Enar Merkel Rydberg*

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## A NOTE ON “SALOME”

*Salome* has made the author's name a house-hold word wherever the English language is not spoken. Few plays have such a peculiar history. Before tracing briefly the vicissitudes of a work that has been more execrated than even its author, I venture to repeat the corrections which I communicated to the Mornmo Post when the opera of Dr. Strauss was produced in a mutilated version at Covent Garden in December, 1910. That such reiteration is necessary is illustrated by the circumstance that a musical critic in the Academy of December 17<sup>th</sup>, 1910, wrote of Wilde's "imaginative verses" apropos of *Salome* a strange comment on the honesty of musical criticism. *Salome* is in prose, not in verse. *Salome* was not written for Madame Sarah Bernhardt. It was not written with any idea of stage representation. Wilde did not write the play in English, nor afterwards re-write it in French, because he "could not get it acted in English" as stated by Mr. G. K. Chesterton on the authority, presumably, of Chambers's *Encyclopædia* or some other such source of that writer's culture. It was not offered to any English manager. In no scene of Wilde's play does *Salome* dance round the head of the Baptist, as she is represented in music-hall turns. The name "John" does not occur either in the French or German text. Critics speak contemptuously of "Wilde's libretto adapted for the opera." Except for the performance at Covent Garden which was permitted only on conditions of mutilation, there has been no adaptation. Certain passages were omitted by Dr. Strauss because the play (which is in one act) would be too long without these cuts. Wilde's actual words in Madame Hedwig Lachmann's admirable translation

are sung. The words have not been transfigured into ordinary operatic nonsense to suit the score. When the opera is given in French, however, the text used is not Wilde's French original, but a French translation fitted to the score from the German.

*Salome* was written by Oscar Wilde at Torquay in the winter of 1891-92. The initial idea of treating the subject came to him some time previously, after seeing in Paris a well-known series of Gustave Moreau's pictures inspired by the same theme. A good deal has been made of his debt to Flaubert's tale of Herodias. Apart from the Hebrew name of "Iokanaan" for the Baptist the debt is slight, when we consider what both writers owe to Scripture. On Flaubert's *Tentation de Saint Antoine* Wilde has indeed drawn considerably for his Oriental motives; not more, in justice it must be added, than another well-known dramatist drew on Plutarch, Bandello, and other predecessors. The simple syntax was, of course, imitated directly from Maeterlinck, who has returned the compliment by adapting to some extent other features from *Salome* in his recent play *Mary Magdalene*, a point observed by the continental critics. Our old friend Ollendorff, too, is irresistibly recalled by reading Wilde's French; as he is indeed by all of M. Maeterlinck's early plays. A famous sentence in one of John Bright's speeches Wilde bodily transferred when he makes Iokanaan say, "J'entends dans le palais le battement des ailes de l'ange de la mort." Large portions of Holy Writ, too, are in-corporated. One of the musical critics is particularly severe on some of the Biblical quotations from Ezekiel (spoken by Iokanaan). He finds them "typical of Wilde's perverted imagination and tedious employment

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*of metaphor.*” To the more scholarly and truffled industry of Mr. C. L. Graves I am indebted for the discovery that Wilde probably got the idea of Salome’s passion for Iokanaan from Heine’s *Atta Troll*, though it is Herodias, not her daughter, who evinces it. Before this discovery was announced in the *Spectator*, that too was merely a disgusting invention of Wilde, who is, of course, anathema to “*the journal of blameless antecedents and growing infirmities,*” as a well-known statesman said so wittily.

So much for the origins or plagiarisms of *Salome*. It is well to remember also the many dramas and ballets composed by various French writers, including Massenet’s well-known opera *Herodiade*, composed in 1881, and performed in 1904 at Covent Garden with the title *Salome*. All of these were taken directly from the story told by St. Mark or Flaubert; nearly all of them are now forgotten. Wilde would certainly have seen one by Armand Sylvestre. Sudermann’s *Johannes*, from which Wilde is also accused of lifting, did not appear until 1898, several years later. Needless to say, there is no resemblance beyond that which must exist between any two plays in which John the Baptist and Herod are characters. Wilde’s confusion of Herod Antipas (Matt. xiv:1) with Herod the Great (Matt. ii:1) and Herod Agrippa the First (Acts xii:23) is intentional. He follows a mediæval convention of the mystery plays. There is no attempt at accurate historical reconstruction.

Madame Bernhardt, who in 1892 leased the Palace Theatre for a not very successful London season, had known Wilde from his earliest days. She has recorded her first meeting with him at Dover. He was constantly at the theatres where she was acting in London. She

happened one day to say that she wished Wilde would write a play for her. One of his dramas had already appeared with success. He replied in jest that he had done so. Ignorant, or forgetful, of the English law prohibiting the introduction of Scriptural characters on the stage, she insisted on seeing the manuscript, decided on immediate production, and started rehearsals. On the usual application being made to the Censor for a licence it was refused. This is the only accurate information about the play ever vouchsafed in the Press when the subject of the opera is under discussion. Wilde immediately announced that he would change his nationality and become a Frenchman, a threat which inspired Mr. Bernard Partridge with a delightful caricature of the author as a conscript in the French Army (*Punch*, July 9<sup>th</sup>, 1892).

The following year, 1893, the text was passed for press, the late M. Marcel Schwob told me, by himself. He made only two corrections, he informed me, because he was afraid of spoiling the individuality of Wilde’s manner and style by transmuting them into more academic forms and phrases. I have learned since, however, that Mr. Stuart Merrill, the well-known French-American writer, a great friend of Wilde, was also consulted, and that M. Adolph Rette and M. Pierre Louys (to whom the play is dedicated) claim to have made revisions. But no one who knew Oscar Wilde with any degree of intimacy would admit that *Salome*, whatever its faults or merits or derivations, owed anything considerable to the invention or talents of others. Emerson said that “*no great men are original.*” However this may be, *Salome* is more characteristic and typical of Wilde’s imperfect genius, with the

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possible exception of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, than anything else he ever wrote. The sculptor must get his clay or bronze, his marble and his motives from somewhere, just as the painter his pigment and models. How much more does this apply to the dramatist? The play was published in French simultaneously by Messrs. Elkin Mathews and John Lane in London and by the Librairie de l'Art Independant in Paris in 1893. It was assailed by nearly the whole Press. But there was one exception: that of Mr. William Archer in Black and White. Now that *Salome* has become part of the European dramatic repertoire, though so often consigned to oblivion by two generations of dramatic critics and though the fungoid musical critics have spawned all over it, Mr. Archer's words have a special and peculiar interest:

*"There is at least as much musical as pictorial quality in Salome. It is by methods borrowed from music that Mr. Wilde, without sacrificing its suppleness, imparts to his prose the firm texture, so to speak, of verse. Borrowed from music may I conjecture through the mediation of Maeterlinck. ... There is far more depth and body in Mr. Wilde's work than in Maeterlinck's. His characters are men and women, not filmy shapes of mist and moonshine. His properties are far more various and less conventional. His ... palette is infinitely richer. Maeterlinck paints in washes of water-colour. Mr. Wilde attains to depth and brilliancy of oils. Salome has all the qualities of a great historical picture, pedantry and conventionality excepted."*

Black and White, March 11th, 1893.

I do not know that Mr. Archer liked the play particularly or that he likes it now, but at all events he had the foresight and the knowledge to realise that here was no piece of trifling to be dismissed with contempt or assailed with obloquy. Mr. Archer has fortunately lived to see a good many of his judgments justified, and beyond emphasising his interesting anticipation of the eventual place *Salome* was to occupy in musical composition, I need pay no further tribute to the brilliant perception of an honoured contemporary. The Times, while depreciating the drama, gave its author credit for a *tour de force* in being capable of writing a French play for Madame Bernhardt, and this drew from Wilde the following letter, which appeared in the Times on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1893:

*"SIR, My attention has been drawn to a review of Salome which was published in your columns last week. The opinions of English critics on a French work of mine have, of course little, if any, interest for me. I write simply to ask you to allow me to correct a misstatement that appears in the review in question."*

*The fact that the greatest tragic actress of any stage now living saw in my play such beauty that she was anxious to produce it, to take herself the part of the heroine, to lend to the entire poem the glamour of her personality and to my prose the music of her flute-like voice this was naturally, and always will be, a source of pride and pleasure to me, and I look forward with delight to seeing Mme. Bernhardt present my play in Paris, that vivid centre of art, where religious dramas are often performed. But my play was in no sense of the words written for*

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*this great actress. I have never written a play for any actor or actress, nor shall I ever do so. Such work is for the artisan in literature not for the artist.*

*I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,*

OSCAR WILDE.”

The Censor was commended by all the other reviewers and dramatic critics. Never has that official been so popular. In 1894 Messrs. Mathews and Lane issued an English translation of *Salome* by Lord Alfred Douglas. The illustrations of Aubrey Beardsley which it contained were received with even greater disfavour by reviewers and art critics. A few of the latter, the late P. G. Hamerton and Mr. Joseph Pennell among others, realised, however, that a new artistic personality had asserted itself, and that the draughtsman was, if anything, hostile to the work he professed to embellish. Her Miergraeffe [Julius Meier-Graefe], the German critic, has fallen into the error of supposing that Beardsley's designs were the typical pictorial expression of widespread admiration for Wilde's writings. They are, of course, a mordant, though decorative, satire on the play. Excellent caricatures of Wilde may be seen in the frontispiece entitled "*The Woman in the Moon*" (Plate 1) and in "*Enter Herodias*" (Plate 9). The colophon is a real masterpiece and a witty criticism of the play as well. The impression the drawings have produced, not so much in England but in Europe, may be gauged by reference to the work of the same German critic, who in his universal survey of modern art allows only three artists of the English School separate chapters to themselves the three being William Morris, Whistler, and Beardsley.

By connoisseurs of Beardsley's work the *Salome* set of drawings is regarded as the highest achievement of a peculiar talent. In England, from constant reproductions and exhibition, they were more familiar to the public than the text of the play, until the revived interest in Wilde's writings. And here I may warn collectors against the numerous forgeries of the originals which are continually offered in the English and American markets. Of the sixteen drawings fourteen are still in the possession of Mr. John Lane. One ("*Toilette*", Plate No. 12) is in the possession of the present writer, and "*Enter Herodias*" has recently passed from the collection of Mr. Herbert Pollit to that of Mr. W. D. Hutchinson. There is a coloured design of *Salome*, one of Beardsley's very few coloured drawings, belonging to Miss Doulton. This was never intended as an illustration for the play in published form, but on being shown to Mr. Lane suggested to him the idea of commissioning Beardsley to illustrate the English version of the play (Marillier, "*Early Work of Aubrey Beardsley*", page 23). All others are spurious. In 1896, when Wilde was still incarcerated at Reading, M. Lugne-Poe, the poet and actor, produced *Salome* at the Théâtre de l'Œuvre in Paris. It was coldly received. But the author, who heard of its production, refers pathetically to the incident in one of his letters to me from prison:

*"Please say how gratified I am at the performance of my play, and have my thanks conveyed to Lugne-Poe. It is something that at a time of disgrace and shame I should still be regarded as an artist. I wish I could feel more pleasure, but I seem dead to all emotions except those of anguish and despair. However, please let Lugne-Poe know that I am*

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*sensible of the honour he has done me. He is a poet himself. Write to me in answer to this, and try and see what Lemattre, Bauer, and Sarcey said of Salome”*

Within two years of Wilde's death, *Salome* was first produced in Berlin on November 15<sup>th</sup>, 1902, at the Kleiner Theater, where it played for two hundred nights, an unprecedented run for the Prussian capital. From that moment it became part of the repertoire of the German stage, and draws crowded, enthusiastic houses whenever it is revived. At Munich particular attention is given to the staging and *mise-en-scène*. The late Professor Furtwangler was said to have personally supervised the “*Dance of the Seven Veils*,” which is rendered with scrupulous regard to archaic conventions. (In the opera the dance is except in the case of Madame Ackt seldom more than a commonplace ballet performance, and is usually executed by a super.) Technically the interlude of the dance interferes with the tense dramatic unity of the play (though this is less noticeable in the opera), and is one of many indications that *Salome* was not originally composed for the stage.

In May, 1905, the New Stage Club gave two private performances (the first in this country) at the Bijou Theatre, Archer Street. A new generation of dramatic critics was more severe than its predecessor, but displayed less acquaintance with Scripture; objection was again raised by one of them to certain phraseology, quoted from Holy Writ, “*as the diseased language of decadence*.” In June, 1906, the Literary Theatre Society gave further performances. This last production was distinguished by the exquisite mounting and dresses of Mr. Charles Ricketts. The role of Herod was marvel-

lously rendered by Mr. Robert Farquharson; that of Herodias by Miss Florence Farr. The National Sporting Club, Covent Garden, was the odd locality chosen for an illicit entertainment, on which the critics again fell with exacerbated violence. Another and very inadequate production occurred at the Court Theatre in February, 1911. Such is the remarkable history of a drama that shares the distinction or notoriety of Beckford's *Vathek*, in being one of the only two considerable works written by an English author in French. Mr. Walter Ledger, the bibliographer, records, exclusive of the authorised French texts, over forty different translations and versions. These include German (seven), Czech, Dutch, Greek, Italian, Magyar, Polish, Russian, Spanish, Catalan, Swedish, and Yiddish translations, in all of which languages it is performed. The play is often performed at the American Yiddish theatres. There is a popular Yiddish text sold for five-pence in London, where it is whispered that, unknown to the Censor, the play can also be seen in the Yiddish tongue. The authorised original French text is included in the uniform Methuen editions of Wilde's works. According to an interview with Dr. Strauss in December, 1905, when his opera was first produced in Dresden, the composer's attention was first drawn to the possibilities of *Salome* by a Viennese who had prepared a libretto based on Wilde's work. This seemed to him unsatisfactory, and he turned to the original, or (to be precise) to Madame Lachmann's German translation.

A young French naval officer, Lieutenant Mariotte, a native of Lyons, unaware that a distinguished competitor was in the field before him, composed an opera

round *Salome*, for which he used the original French text. It was produced in 1911 in Paris, and ran concurrently with the work of Dr. Strauss. Mr. Henry Hadley, an American composer, has composed a “symphonic poem” round Wilde’s motive. This was performed at Queen’s Hall in August, 1909. The burlesque dances of Miss Maud Allan and her rivals are also well known. It is noteworthy that the former appeared first at the Palace Theatre where, sixteen years earlier, the play was prohibited. It would be idle to deny that the origin of the dance was the extraordinary popularity of Wilde’s play on the Continent a popularity that existed at least four years before the production of Dr. Strauss’s opera.

With reference to the charge of plagiarism brought against *Salome* and its author, I venture to mention a personal recollection. Wilde complained to me one day that someone in a wellknown novel had stolen an idea of his. I pleaded in defence of the culprit that Wilde himself was a fearless literary thief. “*My dear Robbie,*” he said, with his usual drawling emphasis, “*when I see a monstrous tulip with four wonderful petals in someone else’s garden, I am impelled to grow a monstrous tulip with five wonderful petals, but that is no reason why someone should grow a tulip with only three petals.*” That was Oscar Wilde.

*Robert Ross, 1916.*

*After the death of Oscar Wilde in 1900, Robert Ross, one of Wilde’s closest friends, became the literatur executor. One of his tasks was to publish the ultimate editions of all Wilde’s works. Robert Ross wrote this foreword for the edition of Salome, printed in 1916.*



### *The Climax*

*Drawing by Aubrey Beardsley (1893) for the first edition of the play Salomé.*



*Laila Andersson-Palme in Salome*  
*Photo: Enar Merkel Rydberg*

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***“One might almost say I was travelling in Salome.”***

**Court singer Laila Andersson-Palme about her many Salomes at home and abroad.**

**Laila, you have sung the role of Salome many times; at the Royal Opera in Stockholm 23 times, but also 55 times abroad. What kind of woman is Salome actually?**

Salome is a child of her time. She was brought up strictly and is under guardianship. There are also elements of incest with the stepfather. She is bound to her emotions, hears the voice of John the Baptist and becomes curious. When he rejects her, she wants his head, but she doesn't understand the consequences of this bizarre desire. After she got the head, she gets into something like a state of shock.

I think there is some kinship with Lulu in Alban Berg's opera, which I sang at the Stockholm Opera in 1977. She is also just a child who does not fully understand the consequences of her actions. Why did she become who she became? What does her mind look like? I think she is aware of what she is doing, but she cannot foresee the consequences because she is only a child. At the end, she sings *“Warum siehst du mich nicht an?”* and gets frustrated when he doesn't even look at her even though she's standing there with his severed head. At the same time, she begins to become a woman who takes command, but by then she is also affected by grief and she begins to realize her mistake. It is simply a lack of perception of reality, owing to the fact of immaturity of the young girl. In the end, the pain is overwhelming her.

**How is Salome vocally compared to other roles?**

The role of Salome has more lyrical parts than Elektra for example, which I sang later at the Stockholm Opera. Their psyche are completely different to each other. Elektra is highly dramatic from start and Salome's part is lyrical for quite a long time. It is not until the final monologue, that there is a dramatic increase. When I sang the role, I was very anxious to

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follow the marks in the score and very careful to, for instance, make the *pianissimo* that Strauss had written in the score. It is important to endeavour the shades, and you also need a good conductor, who understands to lower the volume since the orchestra is so large. The conductor on this recording, Berislav Klobučar, was a fine conductor who understood this. He didn't just exaggerate as so many other conductors do.

Oscar Wilde's lyrics in the opera are fantastic, so poetic. I wish I had met him. The text is like a meadow full of flowers. I regarded it as the most beautiful libretto I had come across, and often read it in bed, during the studying of the part.

**You also did Salome's dance in the performance?**

Yes, I previously had to learn dancing to perform as Lulu in Alban Berg's opera in 1977. So I went to Ivo Cramér, who was the director of the opera ballet, and told him that the director wanted me to make a toe dance in a scene. I had never practiced dancing before and Ivo directed me to Elise Englund who was a rehearser for the opera ballet. Later, when I was about to do Salome, I thought I could use my experience of dancing, and my body was already trained. The choreography for *The Seven Veils Dance* was made by Elise. I used her choreography on all stages I performed, apart from Gelsenkirchen.

**You did Salome for the first time in Graz where you had good reviews in the Austrian newspapers: *"Laila Andersson acts impressively as Salome; she was the event of the evening. She shaped her part with a never-failing poise and in the finale she mobilized vigorous high notes with great range. But also the singer's tones in piano had a different special sweetness"*...**

After I had sung the role of Abigaille in *Nabucco* a couple of years earlier, they wanted me to do Salome, and was asked if I had studied the role. "Yes" I said, and actually lied, and also stated I'd sung it; so badly I wanted to do the part. After that I rushed to the phone and called Kurt Bendix at the Opera in Stockholm: "Have you got time to rehearse Salome with me?" "We have plenty of time, no problem," he replied. I got in full gear and Kurt

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gesticulated wildly and wormed his way almost under the grand piano, when singing Herod's lines. I recall we got something like three weeks. I was convinced that the role suited me, so I just worked on and felt that my voice really carried for this part.

Regina Resnik and her husband Arbit Blatas made the set design for the production in Graz. Regina had been a celebrated mezzo at the Metropolitan in New York for many years. She lived mostly in New York and Venice, and Arbit had among other things, made the drawings for the television series *Holocaust* in 1979. When I arrived in Graz, I had already studied Salome's veil dance for *Elise* in Stockholm.

It was fun to work with Regina, but she always wanted to make alterations in *Elise's* choreography, but I was stubborn and firm. I wasn't able to learn a new choreography in such a short time. Where could you find a choreographer? In that way, Regina wasn't professional.

Before the performance, you usually get different kinds of "good luck" from your colleagues and you can get it in different odd ways. In Germany, they often say "Hals- und Beinbruch" ("break a leg"). Just before my entrance, Regina came in to the dressing room and said: "Darling, don't move your arms." It was really funny to hear this after three weeks of rehearsals, but at such occasions you just have to be disciplined and shake off everything disturbing the focus.

In Arbit's very elaborated set design, two lions were included standing on stage, and I entranced running backwards between them. Then I suddenly dropped my shoe and couldn't seize it. I thought I could pass the other lion without the audience seeing I was putting the shoe on. It was a ballet shoe and not very easy to put on, It is so typical; during three weeks of work without any trouble with the shoes, this happened during the performance. It had, of course, been worn out during the rehearsals.

Later on I met Regina and Arbit in New York when I was to be a substitute in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* at the Metropolitan. They invited me to dinner in their studio, but the meal was not very tasty. It consisted of, among other things, chicken that was neither seasoned

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nor salted. “Don’t eat salt!”, they both shouted, because it had been in the newspapers that salt was lethal. This was probably the worst meal of my life.

I had just done *Salome* in Montréal and mentioned that I had swabbed down the floor on the stage there, whereupon Regina interposed: “Darling, I have cleaned the floor all over the world!”

**Then you did *Salome* at the Metropolitan in New York in the spring of 1981. Daily News headlined “A supreme soprano in ‘*Salome*’”...**

Yes, the Vladarski agency called from Vienna and said they needed a reserve for *Salome* at the Met. I went back and forth to New York to stand-in for Gwyneth Jones. The difference in time was trying, but as a reserve it was not the same pressure, but as soon as they performed *Salome*, I had to be there. It was Wieland Wagner’s old set that was similar to the one I later sang in Berlin. I was turning forty on March 30<sup>th</sup> and they wished to give a performance of my own. It was supposed to be on April 3<sup>rd</sup>. The German baritone Siegmund Nimsgern would sing John the Baptist. He was very good. “It’s not possible because I will give a birthday party in Stockholm by that time”. “But if we bake a sponge cake, can’t you stay then?” they asked me at the Met.

I worked with the conductor Julius Rudel in the rehearsal room and when we got to passages where I have to sing high notes in *pianissimo*, I broke off and said I was in need of a little more time for preparation. But he had no intention to meet my wishes and just said: “If you weren’t so obstinate” (“Wenn Sie nicht so eigensinnig wäre”).

I think it should be a collaboration between singer and conductor. Most singers just sing loudly all the time. I have always sought to sing the way the composer has instructed, and try to master the song in accordance. A good conductor should be able to ease the difficulties for the singer, but Rudel was unable to bring down the orchestra volume. The stage at the Metropolitan is very large and my entrance was far away. A conductor must be able to adapt to that. Each singer does his utmost, knows how his own instrument works and

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obtains the strength in his own way. Therefore, it is important that the conductor has the ability to listen to each individual singer. The agent Bob Lombardo, who later arranged my engagement in *Salome* in Montréal, did not think that neither of us really had done anything wrong.

It is natural to compare with a conductor like Sixten Ehrling, who was genuinely interested in what was happening on stage. He never let the singers down regarding their entrances. There was also far too little space for the dance at the end, a blunder by Wieland.

After my debut with *Salome* at the Metropolitan, I got many offers, but I had to decline several, due to lack of time. I also had the opportunity to be stand-in for Eva Marton as the Empress in Strauss' *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. It was a fruitful collaboration with the conductor Erich Leinsdorf, and I recall that the orchestra liked me.

A funny episode happened when Birgit Nilsson and I met at the Metropolitan. Birgit was to sing *Die Färberin* (The Dyer's Wife) in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. During the break Birgit and I sat down in the auditorium and chatted in English. Suddenly Birgit said: "I don't know the word in English, but in Swedish". "If you don't mind we can talk Swedish!" I replied. There was a matchless laughter with two sopranos laughing in *fortissimo*.

**In the summer the same year as the Met, 1981, you also sang *Salome* in German Gelsenkirchen...**

Yes, it was directed by Thomas Rübenacker who came from East Berlin. I went to Gelsenkirchen to negotiate the terms for the role. But instead they wanted me to make an audition, although I by then already had sung *Salome* in several opera houses. I refused and since I thought it was beneath my dignity, I put on my coats and left the theatre. I simply scarpered and went to the hotel. I felt totally deceived. Of course, it wasn't pleasant. They appealed to me to come back. The only positive thing was the singer who sang Herodias. She said, "Frau Andersson, you're way too good to be here."

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However the opera director intervened and I was able to start the negotiation.

Before the performance, I was invited home to the conductor and his wife, as a kind of reconciliation. In total I've scarpered twice in my career, so it's not a habit (*laughter*)..

Eventually, the rehearsals started with the director. The mere thought now, makes me shudder. My entrance was made high up in a spiral staircase and in my hands I had a kind of plastic candies. Salome's dance, I was not to dance. Herod did! I had an idea that I might be allowed to do it, but the director didn't listen. One dancer was confined like in an embryo. I myself was instructed to sit on the floor against a pillar and watch the misery, but this was not the end of the madness. At the end, I would receive John the Baptist's head on a platter. What did I get? A head, but no platter, a head in solid rubber, terribly heavy, wrapped in a towel with "blood". I happened to drop the head right into the well, on the walker-on, who fainted. It was too heavy. Some singer said I did it deliberately. I went to the manager who actually took action in a good way. This happened during the public dress rehearsal. The walker-on revived and I shouted: "Bitte schön!" ("Be my guest!"). Could he possibly come up with the head once more? I got the head, but the rehearsal had to be interrupted and the curtain fell. I asked for the head we had used during the rehearsals, now lying on a silver platter, as it should be. After much hullabaloo, the curtain was raised and we could continue. The audience was very upset, so even the reviewers, though they really are not to review a dress rehearsal. On top of that, the female prompter was painting her finger-nails during the performance. If you do that, I think you are not professional. In fact, it would have been better not to have any prompter at all.

Göran Järvefelt had worked as a director in Gelsenkirchen a few years earlier. He asked me ironically: "How was your time with Mr. Mund?". It was the Austrian conductor Uwe Mund, reputed for being troublesome. He was a bully with no sense of humour, who didn't accept that you knew anything yourself. But in the newspaper *Ruhr-Nachrichten*, the reviewer thought I was "a successful cast of festival rate" ("*eine Glücksbesetzung von Festspiel-format*") and I was glad to hear it.

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**Then it was time for the Royal Opera in Stockholm and Göran Järvefelt's production of *Salome*. You performed this 23 times from 1982 until 1990?**

Yes, Folke Abenius had just become opera director and engaged Göran for *Salome*. Göran had previously directed *The Barber of Seville* and the *Dialogues of the Carmelites* at the Opera. Neeme Järvi was conducting. He wasn't actually an opera conductor, but it went well anyway. Järvefelt was an unobtrusive and apparently timid person who radiated harmony around him, but he was also a perfectionist and had an analytical ability. He and Barbro Ericson, who would sing Herodias, were close friends. I was invited to Barbro's home together with Göran, because he wanted to meet me before we started the studying of the play.

There were large differences in levels in the set design, which was made by Carl Friedrich Oberle. After *Salome's* dance, I would go up and lie down underneath Herod. The dance started up there and continued down onto the regular stage floor. That's how Göran wanted it. But how would I get up there again? Göran and I were thinking about a possible solution, but it was Elise who solved it. Her idea was to get back up by climbing the dancers' crouched backs. It actually worked well. After the premiere, champagne was served among fans and congratulating colleagues, in the dressing room at the Opera.

This recording of *Salome* is from a performance in remembrance of Göran, eight years later, on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1990. Göran had sadly passed away on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 1989, just 42 years old. The timid, but very sensitive Berislav Klobučar was conducting.

**In 1984, you made *Salome* both in Vienna and in Rio de Janeiro. In Vienna, a reviewer wrote that you were a sensation who did not need a dancing stand-in, and still had the force for the intensification in the final scene...**

I did *Salome* at the Staatsoper in Vienna in May the year we were rehearsing *Wozzeck* under the direction of Hasse Alfredson here in Stockholm. Theo Adam sang John the Baptist. By then I had done the role many times and felt confident, besides there was no time for any musical rehearsals in Vienna where I would step in for Karan Armstrong. I was just

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going through the scenes with the director. The conductor Heinrich Hollreiser I already knew from my time in Berlin. There were three performances and as always (except for Gelsenkirchen) I used Elise Englund's choreography for *The Dance of the Seven Veils*.

In August I went to the opera in Rio de Janeiro and consequently my eighth *Salome*. After eighteen hours of air travel, I arrived in Rio and was met by a person who had US dollars in his hand. He asked me to go into the duty-free shop to buy some alcohol. As a well-behaved Swede, I was not certain this was really correct. I wasn't stopped in the passport control anyway, and could breathe freely.

I arrived very tired in the hotel and got a shock when I entered the room. There were flaked off walls; ugly and awful on the whole. I called my husband Ulf and cried uncontrollably. After a much needed sleep, I came to the beautiful Theatro Municipal opera house, which was a replica of the opera house in Paris. I met the conductor, Mário Tavares, who was very friendly and easy to get on with, and we started the rehearsal with the pianist. Tavares hadn't directed *Salome* before, so occasionally he wanted some assistance. He was a gentle person and it was a matter of give-and-take.

If all conductors were like this maestro in Rio de Janeiro, I believe it would be a benefit for many singers. The American baritone Arthur Thompson sang the role of John the Baptist. He had done a small role in the set at the Met with me.

Before I went to Rio, I had received the phone number of a Swedish woman there, named Gun Andersson. She was a designer and had also worked at SAS as a flight attendant. If you are lucky it happens in your wandering life as a singer, that you meet interesting and exciting people. Gun brought me to her summer house in Pétropolis, 10-15 miles outside Rio. It was nice to get some relaxation between the performances, which I think was a total of five.

In any case *Salome* was a success. There were many interviews and my "peaches and cream complexion" was much liked (*laughter*). After the last performance the audience stormed,

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wanting my autograph. I wrote and wrote. Far away I saw Gun. “What were you doing over there?”, I asked. “I wrote your autographs!” she replied. “Andersson like Andersson, same same..”

**According to the reviewers in the Canadian newspapers you had great success with Salome in Montréal. The magazine Opera Canada wrote that you were both a “*marvelous actress and a phenomenal singer*” ...**

Yes, I got there in the fall of 1985. The city had a very nice opera house with friendly and extremely professional people. My colleagues came from different countries, such as Austria, Germany, the US and Canada. Both the director, Václav Kašík, and the set designer, Josef Svoboda, were from Prague. The costume designer’s name was Richard Lorain.

The rehearsals went on smoothly until I was to tear down a very long drapery. It was so heavy, the fabric was made of thick velvet so I couldn’t pull it down. I asked for a lighter drapery. I was also instructed to draw the drapery apart. It was difficult and it came loose and the set designer became more and more frantic. But this was not the end of it. Without any previous warning, the entire floor had been covered with pulverized cork that flew around even at the slightest movement. How would it be possible for me to perform Salome’s dance in this? I left the stage to calm down. Then I returned to the stage and asked for a broom. I swept the floor clear in the space where I was to dance, asked for a water sprayer and put the cork around the cistern and on various places on the floor. Finally, it was alright. The “sand dunes” looked real.

No one could have imagined the difficulties I was facing. Svoboda was furious. His lips became thinner and thinner and a fight was in the offing. When I got back to the hotel, the staff from the opera had sent me a magnificent bouquet of flowers. What a consolation!

At least it was a huge success. 4 000 people attended the performance every night and it was also televised. In The Gazette, the reviewer wrote, under the headline “*This ‘Salome’ opera masterpiece: The Swedish soprano Laila Andersson, not only has the flexibility of voice*”

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*and the carrying power need for the role of Herodias' perverted daughter, but she looks as though she was designed, personally, by Aubrey Beardsley. She even dances well".*

The opera had a very fine regular conductor, the German Franz-Paul Decker with whom it was easy to collaborate.

**In April 1987, you also went to Catania in Sicily to sing Salome?**

Yes, I came to Catania, the birthplace of the opera composer Vincenzo Bellini. From the airport I went by taxi on a gravelled road with lots of bumps. When arriving to a new opera house you have to try to find the stage entrance. Most often it is hidden away and is difficult to find.

Eventually I met my colleagues and could start rehearsing with the conductor and the assistant director. The conductor, a Hungarian, was unfortunately very unpleasant. His method was to let us sing two pages and then turn back. The rehearsals were murderous. The assistant director, however, was very good and the female prompter was superb. In the prompt box there was no monitor to see the conductor. When the curtain raised, she put up a mirror with a foot, on the floor to see him. A problem she solved elegantly.

A week before the premiere, the director arrived from Bonn. To start the rehearsals all over again a week before the premiere, is the worst thing a singer can go through.

Usually there is a day's rest before a performance. It is important for the vocal cords, since they must get a chance to swell off. I also remember that there was too little space on the stage. The stage floor was not used, but I would stay on three platforms in different levels and it felt very limiting.

In Sicily, I hadn't a single quiet day. I was often followed by different men, day as well as night. If I had worn a black wig, it might have helped. But the worst thing was probably that it was not until the day before the premiere, that my costumes arrived from Rome. It was terrible, because it is necessary to get one day rest before a performance. I became more and more exhausted.

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When the curtain had fallen after the last performance, the conductor came up and asked me to arrange for him to conduct in Stockholm. “No way, maestro!”, I said. That’s what could happen at the “job”.

**You also sang Salome in Berlin and Oslo...**

Yes, I did Salome several times at the Deutsche Oper in Berlin under Hollreiser. It was basically the same set design by Wieland Wagner, as at the Metropolitan, but there I had at least far more space on the stage, almost too much.

In the spring of 1984 I sang Salome five times in Oslo. At the time Knut Hendriksen was the manager. At the Oslo Opera – it was in the former building – I remember the intense smell of fried waffles when I looked down into the hole, where John the Baptist was sitting. The singer who sang also made his entrance from this smelling hole.

**There is a very good team around you, in this performance from the Stockholm Opera, now released on CD ...**

Yes, really, Curt Appelgren as John the Baptist was a fantastic singer. Initially Curt was an alto violinist and also a member of the Fresk Quartet, when I got to know him in the 60’s and we studied together. We also sang together in *Wozzeck* where Curt did the title role and I did Marie.

No, there are no flaws anywhere in the cast. Also John-Eric Jacobsson as Narraboth and Eva Pilat as the Page make memorable performances.

Barbro Ericson was brilliant as Herodias, she was a true mezzo. Everyone interpreted their roles so good. Ragnar Ulfung was also brilliant, he made fantastic song lines and he interpreted the role perfectly.

And as I said before; Klobučar knew how to relate to all my *pianissimi*, with delicacy. Salome is also a part where it is important to be able to spin the vowel lines like silver threads.

*Interview: Henry Larsson*



*Laila Andersson-Palme as Salome in Montréal*

*Photo: Photographex Montréal*

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**Laila Andersson-Palme**, sopran (född 1941)

Föddes i byn Lösen i Blekinge, for till Stockholm 1960 och antogs genast till solosångklassen på Musikhögskolan och började sjunga småroller på Operan. Efter en elevuppvisning 1963 där hon sjöng Violettas aria i *La Traviata* anställdes hon omgående på Operan som stipendiat. Här sjöng hon många roller i det lyriska och lyrisk-dramatiska facket som i *Carmen*, *Hoffmanns äventyr*, *Läderlappen*, *Rigoletto*, *La traviata*, *Trubaduren*, *Madame Butterfly* och *Tosca*, men även i koloraturroller som Konstanze i *Enleveringen ur Seraljen* och Nattens drottning i *Trollflöjten*. Så småningom utvecklades rösten alltmer i dramatisk riktning. Hon hade stor framgång i titelrollen i Alban Bergs *Lulu* 1977 och senare som Marie i *Wozzeck*. På 80-talet sjöng hon mycket Richard Strauss och Richard Wagner, i roller som Salome, Elektra, Fältmarskalkinnan och Brünnhilde. Under flera år på 1980-talet medverkade hon i Aarhus i de uppmärksammade sommarföreställningarna av Wagners *Nibelungens Ring*. (*Ragnarök* finns utgiven på Sterling CDA 1813/1816-2).

Hon har förutom Aarhus också gästspelat bland annat på Metropolitan i New York, Deutsche Oper i Berlin, i Bern, Washington, Rio de Janeiro och Wien.

Laila Andersson-Palme utnämndes till Hovsångerska 1985 och invaldes som ledamot 913 i Kungliga Musikaliska Akademien 1997.

**Ragnar Ulfung**, född i Norge 1927. Han räknas som en av Norges internationellt mest kända tenorer, även om han mestadels har bott och verkat i Sverige. Vid 10 års ålder började han sjunga i den kända gosskören Olavsguttene och prövade som solist som 15-åring. Körledaren Ragnvald Bjarne blev hans första sånglärare och inspirationskälla, och han bedrev studier i franska, italienska och tyska, piano och harmonilära.

Ulfung höll sin debutkonsert i Oslo den 21 april 1950. Efter fortsatta studier i Milano 1950-54 blev han fast engagerad i Bergen 1954-55 och vid Stora Teatern i Göteborg 1955-58. Under åren 1977-78 var han även konstnärlig ledare där. 1958-83 tillhörde han den fasta ensemblen vid Kungliga Operan i Stockholm. Som ledande tenor gjorde han ett trettiotal huvudroller av

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vilka rollen som Gustaf III i den nu legendariska svenska bearbetningen av Verdis *Maskeradbalen* kanske är den mest kända, och som han gjorde cirka 160 gånger.

Ulfung har också gjort många gästspel, bland annat i Glyndebourne, Covent Garden i London, Milano, Berlin, Paris och även i Nord- och Sydamerika: Santa Fe, Buenos Aires och Metropolitan i New York, där han debuterade 1972 som Mime i *Siegfried*. På Met gjorde han denna roll vid 93 föreställningar fram till 1993. Han sista framträdande vid Stockholmsoperan var vid ett gästspel i Smetanas *Brudköpet* 2003.

Då Ulfung även äger en påfallande skådespelarbegåvning har han också anlitats till svenska spelfilmer och tv-produktioner. Han har även varit verksam som konsertsångare och som romanssångare. Ulfung debuterade som regissör 1973 och hans arbete inkluderar uppsättningar av *La bohème*, *Lulu*, Nino Rotas *Den italienska halmhatten (Il capello di paglia di Firenze)* och Wagners *Nibelungens ring*.

Ragnar Ulfung utnämndes till svensk Hovsångare 1976 och till *Ridder av 1. Klasse av St. Olavs Orden* i Norge 1976.

**Barbro Ericson**, mezzosopran och alt, föddes i Halmstad 1930 och fick sin sångutbildning av bland andra Arne Sunnegårdh vid Musikaliska Akademien i Stockholm, från 1950 till 1956. Samma år gjorde hon sin debut som Eboli i *Don Carlos*. Från 1958 tillhörde hon den fasta ensemblen vid Stockholmsoperan, där hon snabbt blev en av de ledande sångerskorna i sitt fack.

Även om Ericson hade en bred repertoar var hon med sin kraftfulla och omfångsrika röst idealisk för dramatiska roller. Genom gästspel i Berlin, Hamburg, Helsingfors, Köpenhamn och Oslo, och på scener i Frankrike, Italien och Nederländerna blev hon också internationellt välkänd. 1967 medverkade hon i *Die Walkyrie* under Herbert von Karajan i Salzburg. Sin debut som Fricka i *Die Walkyrie* gjorde hon på Metropolitan 1968.

Ericson hade också en framgångsrik karriär som konsert- och oratoriesångerska och utnämndes till Hovsångerska 1968.

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**Curt Appलगren**, basbaryton, föddes i Stockholm 1943. Han studerade först violin i solistklassen vid Musikaliska Akademien 1960-65 och avlade en musikkonstutbildningsexamen. Därefter spelade han en tid viola i Freskkvartetten. I början av 1970-talet gick han solosångklassen för bland andra Erik Sædén. Sin debut gjorde han i rollen som Dulcamara i Donizettis *Kärleksdrycken* 1975. Under åren 1976-78 och 1983-97 tillhörde han den fasta ensemblen vid Kungliga Teatern i Stockholm. Bland rollerna kan nämnas Pogner i *Mästersångarna i Nürnberg*, Basilio i *Barberaren i Sevilla*, Leporello i *Don Giovanni*, Scarpia i *Tosca*, Jochanaan i *Salome* och Golaud i *Pelléas och Mélisande*.

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**Berislav Klobučar** föddes i Zagreb 1924 och studerade dirigering med Clemens Krauss och Lovro von Matačić. Mellan 1943 och 1951 arbetade han vid Zagreboperan och 1960 till 1971 var han chefsdirigent i Graz. Från 1953 dirigerade han 133 föreställningar av mer än 50 operor vid Staatsoper i Wien. Han var högt skattad av många sångare, bland annat av Birgit Nilsson som sjöng med honom i Wien, och hon skriver uppskattande om honom i sina memoarer ”*en underbar sångardirigent med en enorm repertoar och ett solitt kunnande*”.

Klobučar var också gästdirigent vid festspelen i Salzburg och Bayreuth (*Der Ring des Nibelungen* 1964, *Tannhäuser* 1967, *Lohengrin* 1967, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* 1968-69).

1968 dirigerade han *Fliegende Holländer* och *Die Walkyrie* på Metropolitan. Mellan 1973 och 1977 var Klobučar engagerad som förstedirigent vid Kungliga Operan i Stockholm, där han framförde *Der Ring des Nibelungen* och ledde gästspel med Stockholmsoperan i Moskva och Köpenhamn 1975. Klobučars repertoar omfattade mer än 115 operor och han gjorde sig särskild känd som en framstående dirigent av Beethoven, Wagner och Strauss.

Berislav Klobučar avled i juni 2014.



*Berislav Klobučar*

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**Laila Andersson-Palme**, soprano (b. 1941)

Born in the village of Lösen in Blekinge, in 1960 she moved to Stockholm. There she was immediately accepted in the solo class at the Royal College of Music and began to perform in small roles at the Opera. After a student concert in 1963 where she sang Violetta's aria in *La Traviata* at the Royal Opera House, she was directly engaged on a scholarship. Here she sang numerous roles in the lyric and lyric-dramatic field as in *Carmen*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Rigoletto*, *La traviata*, *Il Trovatore*, *Madama Butterfly* and *Tosca*, but also in coloraturas as Konstanze in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* and the Queen of the night in *The Magic Flute*. Eventually her voice developed in a dramatic direction. She had great success in the title role of Alban Berg's *Lulu* in 1977 and later as Marie in *Wozzeck*. In the 80s she often sang Richard Strauss and Richard Wagner, in roles as Salome, Elektra, Marschallin and Brünnhilde. During several summers she participated in Aarhus in the much acclaimed performances of Wagner's *The Ring of the Nibelung*. (The performance of *Götterdämmerung* is issued on Sterling CDA 1813/1816-2).

Beyond the appearances in Aarhus she has also made guest appearances at, among other places, the Metropolitan Opera in New York, the Deutsche Oper in Berlin, in Washington, Bern, Rio de Janeiro and Vienna.

Laila Andersson-Palme was appointed Court singer in 1985 and was elected in 1997 as member no. 913 of the Royal Swedish Academy of Music.

**Ragnar Ulfung**, born in Norway in 1927. He is considered as one of Norway's internationally most celebrated tenors, although most of his career was in Sweden. At the age of 10 he joined the well known boy's choir Olavsguttene and tried as a soloist 15 years old. The choir leader Ragnvald Bjarne was his first teacher and source of inspiration, and he made studies in French, Italian and German, and piano and harmony.

Ulfung made his debut in Oslo April 21<sup>st</sup>, 1950. After further studies in Milan 1950-54 he was engaged in Bergen 1954-55 and at Stora Teatern i Göteborg 1955-58. During 1977-78 he was also artistic leader there. 1958-83 he was a regular member of the ensemble at the Royal

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Opera in Stockholm. As the principal tenor he did some 30 leading roles, whereas the role as king Gustaf III in the legendary Swedish adaption of Verdi's *Un ballo in maschera* perhaps is the most well known; a role he performed about 160 times.

Ulfung also made many guest performances, among others at Glyndebourne, Covent Garden in London, in Milano, Berlin, Paris and also in North- and South America: Santa Fe, Buenos Aires and at Metropolitan in New York, where he made his debut in 1972 as Mime in *Siegfried*. This role he created 93 times until 1993. His last performance at the Royal Opera in Stockholm was in a guest performance of Smetana's *The Bartered Bride* in 2003.

Since Ulfung was a gifted actor he also participated in Swedish movies and tv-productions. He has also performed as a concert singer and singer of romances.

Ulfung made his debut as a director in 1973 with productions such as *La bohème*, *Lulu*, Nino Rota's *The Florentine Straw Hat (Il capello di paglia di Firenze)* and Wagner's Ring.

Ragnar Ulfung was appointed Swedish Court singer in 1976 and *ridder av 1. Klasse av St. Olavs Orden* in Norway the same year.

**Barbro Ericson**, mezzo-soprano and contralto, was born in Halmstad in 1930 and had her singing education from, among others, Arne Sunnegårdh at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm 1950 to 1956. The same year she made her debut as Eboli in *Don Carlos*. From 1958 she was a regular member of the ensemble at the Stockholm Opera, where she quickly became one of the leading singers in her roles.

Although Ericson had a broad repertoire, her forceful and wide ranged voice was ideal for more dramatic parts. Through international appearances in Berlin, Hamburg, Helsinki, Copenhagen and Oslo, and on scenes in France, Italy and the Netherlands she also became internationally well known. In 1967 she participated in *Die Walkyrie* under Herbert von Karajan in Salzburg. She made her first performance as Fricka in *Die Walkyrie* at the Metropolitan in 1968.

Ericson also had a successful career as concert- and oratorium singer and was appointed court singer in 1968.

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**Curt Applegren**, bass-baritone, was born in Stockholm in 1943. He studied violin in the solo class at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm 1960-65 and graduated as music director. After that he was for some time viola player in Fresk String Quartet. In the beginning of the 1970s he was in the solo singing class and studied for Erik Sædén, among others. He made his debut as Dulcamara in Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore* in 1975. In 1976-78 and 1983-97 he was a member of the regular ensemble of the Royal Opera in Stockholm. Among other roles, he sang the part as Pogner in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Basilio in *The Barber of Seville*, Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, Scarpia in *Tosca*, Jochanaan in *Salome* and Golaud in *Pelléas et Mélisande*.

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**Berislav Klobučar** was born in Zagreb in 1924 and studied conducting with Clemens Krauss and Lovro von Matačić. Between 1943 and 1951 he worked at the Opera in Zagreb and between 1960 and 1971 he was music director in Graz. From 1953 he conducted 113 performances of more than 50 operas at Staatsoper in Vienna. He was greatly admired by many singers, and Birgit Nilsson who sang under him in Vienna, writes about him in her memoirs in appreciating terms as a “*wonderful singer conductor with an enormous repertoire and a solid knowledge*”.

Klobučar was also guest conductor at the Festspiele in Salzburg and Bayreuth (*The Ring of the Nibelung* 1964, *Tannhäuser* 1967, *Lohengrin* 1967, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* 1968-69).

In 1968 he conducted *Der Fliegende Holländer* and *Die Walküre* at the Metropolitan. Between 1973 and 1977 Klobučar was engaged as principal conductor at the Royal Opera in Stockholm where he performed *The Ring of the Nibelung*, a work he also conducted during the Royal Opera's guest tours to Moscow and Copenhagen in 1975. Klobučar's repertoire consisted of more than 115 operas and he became especially known as a prominent Beethoven, Wagner and Strauss conductor.

Berislav Klobučar passed away in June, 2014.

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# Salome



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Scene 1	5'03	Scene 4 (cont.)	20'45
Scene 2	9'24		
Scene 3	23'52		
Scene 4 (beginning)	39'02		

## LAILA ANDERSSON-PALME

Ragnar Ulfung, Barbro Ericson, Curt Appelgren, John-Erik Jacobsson, Eva Pilat

Kungliga Hovkapellet Stockholm

Berislav Klobučar, conductor

**Stage recording from Kungliga Teatern / Royal Swedish Opera, Stockholm,  
October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1990, in remembrance of Göran Järvefelt.**

Mastering & Editing: Curt Carlsson. Executive Producer: Bo Hyttner. Graphic design: Staffan Ericson.

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