

Pittsburg State University

## Pittsburg State University Digital Commons

---

Communication and Theater Programs

Communication

---

4-28-1994

### Salome

Pittsburg State University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.pittstate.edu/theater-programs>

---

#### Recommended Citation

Pittsburg State University, "Salome" (1994). *Communication and Theater Programs*. 169.  
<https://digitalcommons.pittstate.edu/theater-programs/169>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Communication at Pittsburg State University Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Communication and Theater Programs by an authorized administrator of Pittsburg State University Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@pittstate.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@pittstate.edu).

[1994]

P.S.U. Theatre Company  
presents  
**SALOME**

by  
Oscar Wilde



April 28, 29, 30—8:00 p.m.

May 1st—2:00 p.m.

PITTSBURG MEMORIAL AUDITORIUM

**Resources  
for real life.™**

**BANK IV**

3rd & Broadway / 2805 N. Broadway  
Pittsburg, Kansas 66762 / (316) 231-0600

© 1994 BANK IV Kansas, N.A. Member FDIC

The better way  
to sell your home

**Two  
Names  
You  
Can  
Trust**



915 North Broadway

231-8390

**GOODYEAR**

**Goodyear tires for your  
car or farm equipment.  
Nobody fits you like  
Goodyear.**

- TUNE-UP
- BRAKES
- MUFFLERS
- SHOCKS
- FRONT END ALIGNMENT  
AND BALANCING



**BUD'S PITTSBURG TIRE INC**  
**231-7210**  
901 N. BROADWAY  
HOURS 8:00-5:30 MON-SAT

Proud to support

PSU Theatre



Locally owned and operated  
since 1903

4th & Broadway  
Pittsburg, Kansas

231-2000

**first State Bank and Trust Co.**



## OSCAR WILDE

Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) was the son of an eccentric Irish Nationalist mother who called herself Speranza, and a surgeon father honored by Queen Victoria. Wilde would later say the two most important events of his life were when his father sent him to Oxford and when society sent him to prison. Without question he was the most brilliant conversationalist and wit of his day or any day. He was also a youthful exhibitionist who went about London in shoulder-length hair and outrageously overdressed, the very epitome of a wave of languorous aestheticism sweeping England. He was a poet, but by 1888 he began to publish children's fairy tales and stories, followed by his one novel. But it is his four comedies, all written between 1891 and 1894, culminating in the deliciously witty **The Importance of Being Earnest** upon which his real fame rests. Of his four serious dramas, only **Salome** is significant. He married an Irish girl named Constance Lloyd by whom he had two sons, but at the height of his fame and success (1895) he was sentenced to two years at hard labour for his homosexual practices. In prison he wrote a long letter (**De Profundis**) analyzing his fate, and upon his release he left England to live the remaining three years of his life as an exile in Europe, where he wrote **The Ballad of Reading Gaol**, a stark poem about prison life. As an essayist, Wilde displayed through wit and satire a remarkable awareness of the social hypocrisy of the Victorian Age. He believed his tragedy was not in going to prison, but in not having been more productive as an artist. "I have put my genius into living," he once said, "but only my talent into writing." He died of cerebral meningitis in Paris.

Charles Cagle

## THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW ( 14 : 1 - 12 )

At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus,  
And said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is  
risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do shew  
themselves in him.

For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put  
*him* in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife.  
For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her.  
And when he would have put him to death, he feared the  
multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.

But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias  
danced before them, and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised  
with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask.

And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here  
John Baptist's head in a charger.

And the king was sorry: nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them  
which sat with him at meat, he commanded *it* to be given *her*. And  
he sent, and beheaded John in the prison. And his head was brought  
in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought *it* to her  
mother.

And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went  
and told Jesus.



## A PRINCESS MOVING SLOWLY

**Salome** is a companion piece to our recent production of **The Fall of the House of Usher** based on the story by Edgar Allan Poe. Both productions were specifically chosen for the 1994 Spring season because they offer the opportunity for students to experiment with an Expressionist acting style, in which their bodies and gestures become language itself. In **Usher** the actors played the house and its contents and conjured up the elements of a storm as well as physically conveying extreme emotional states. In **Salome** the weight of Wilde's language has to be carried slowly as if it is a fragile and precious cargo capable of being shattered by anything less than the most careful handling. So much is the perfume and tapestry in the language that we decided that the stage setting should evoke a dreamscape denuded of everything but what was most vital, and so no 'carpets and ivory tables and the tables of jasper,' no wine bottles or glasses, nor cigarettes and weapons, nothing that the performers cannot control or change, nothing whose physical laws are subject to gravity, accident or wilfulness.

The English writer and actor Neil Bartlett suggested in his recent book on Oscar Wilde that, for all its eastern fragrance, the setting of **Salome** is really the city of London at night after the theatres have closed:

'We should imagine that Herod's palace is in Belgrave Square. The Baptist's cistern is somewhere in the London underworld, anywhere where a Princess may flee late at night from a crowded bar or party, and find a dark street hiding the blossom of a beautiful and sexually available male body.'

Who Was That Man? (1988)

It felt right to set the play in a period close to Wilde's own time, since though the theme is biblical its wit is contemporary. No dialogue need be changed to accommodate this, and the soldiers, Nazarenes, Cappadocians and Syrians, become in this production a party of bright young things, a chorus, a malevolent and amiable chorus, who are Herod's guests of honor and accomplices.

John Green

## CAST

HEROD ANTIPAS, Tetrarch of Judea	Wes Warlop
IOKANAAN, The Prophet	Jas Abramowitz
THE YOUNG SYRIAN	Ian Yanez
TIGELLINUS	John Couper
THE CAPPADOCIAN	Jenny Krainz
THE NUBIAN	Da'Lene De Priest
THE PAGE OF HERODIAS	Paula Bryan
THE SOLDIER	Clint Dillow
THE NAZARENE	Muriel Green
HERODIAS, Wife of the Tetrarch	Lael Meats
SALOME, Daughter of Herodias	Annette Bryan
PIANIST	Megumi Ubukata
DIRECTOR	John Green
DESIGNER	Barry Bengtsen
MUSICAL DIRECTOR	Susan Laushman
MOVEMENT	Tess Green
STAGE MANAGEMENT	Lisa Dickey
	Becca Madrid
COSTUME DESIGN	Darlene Brown
	Scott Simpson
LIGHTING DESIGN	Shawn Bowman
PRODUCTION CONSULTANTS	Charles Cagle
	Sandra Ranney
PUBLICITY	John Couper
	Mike Smith



## PRODUCTION CREW

SOUND OPERATOR

MAKE UP

ADMINISTRATION

HOUSE MANAGER

SOUND ENGINEER

SOUND RECORDING

Shawn Bowman

Trey Bruce

Jim Clarke

Glen Ort

Chris Shreiner

Bill Vickery

Aimee Kennedy

Shirley Purdy

Shawna Sanny

Dana Riffel

Terri Falis-Cochran

KRPS Studios

## MUSIC

The piano pieces played in this production are the *Trois Gymnopedies* (1888) and the *Trois Gnossiennes* (1890) by the French composer **Erik Satie**; and *Metamorphosis Two & Five* (1988) by the contemporary American composer **Philip Glass**. The recorded selections are taken from the religious works of the contemporary Estonian composer **Arvo Part**: *Passio* (1982), *Arbos* (1977), *Miserere* (1989) and *Sarah was Ninety Years Old* (1976).

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

for their practical support: Dr. Gene Vollen, Roger O'Connor, Virginia Brown, Kathryn Parke, Linda Grilz & PSU Printing Services, Bob Larson & student advertizers, the staff of Memorial Auditorium, and House ushers.

**THERE WILL BE ONE INTERMISSION OF 15 MINUTES**

A Department of Communication production  
for the School of Arts & Sciences



## THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO OSCAR

by

Charles Cagle

It was left to that Victorian paradox, Oscar Wilde, to combine in one work all the elements of the Aesthetic/Decadent/Symbolist movements in art. And Oscar was elaborately qualified. In the 1880s he had lectured all over America (including Kansas) wearing kneepants and long hair, a living embodiment of the Aesthetes, those precious worshippers of teacups and lilies; and with his novel, **The Picture of Dorian Gray**, he joined such French Decadents as Baudelaire and Huysmans in glorifying the perverse, the exotic, and the downright bizarre. From the Symbolists--Maeterlinck, Mallarme, Moreau--he borrowed the dreamscape, the tricks of poetic evocation, and the extravagance of visual detail. It all came together in **Salome**, the literary history of which reads more like one of Oscar's drawing room comedies than the lush tragedy the author intended.

Although the origin of **Salome** is a New Testament story (Matthew and Mark) about the daughter of Herodias dancing for her stepfather, Herod, then on the urging of her mother demanding the head of John the Baptist on a silver platter, nowhere in the scriptures is she called Salome, nor is she a sexual sadist. But that is only the beginning of the gospel-according-to-Oscar and others, particularly Flaubert, who embroidered the original story with ornately sensuous stitches of incest, debauchery, suicide, and murder. So aroused was Oscar's fertile mind with the possibilities of Salome that he talked of little else in Paris in the autumn of 1891 - talked, but did not write, since he was exquisitely lazy. In fact, he always insisted he began writing the play because he saw a blank notebook in his hotel room; otherwise, he said, he would never have sent out for one ! It is clear that Oscar wrote his play (in imperfect French) with one sly eye on a woman at whose feet he had literally thrown lilies a decade before, the actress he called a serpent of the old Nile, "the divine" Sarah Bernhardt.

Some thought Bernhardt, at forty-eight, a bit over-ripe to play a half-naked young Jewish dancing girl, but the great tragedienne's vanity more than rose to the occasion. She even offered to finance the 1892 London premier with a damn-the - expense indulgence in costumes and sets--a theatrical gesture she would live to regret. Oscar and his two stage designers, Ricketts and Robertson, spent hours



outdoing each other in aesthetic ideas: the costumes were to be a shocking canary - yellow against a violet sky, with Sarah - Salome in golden green, like "a curious and poisonous lizard," as Oscar put it. Oscar also wanted, in the orchestra pit, great bronze braziers sending up scented clouds of perfume, the scents to change with the emotions on stage. Robertson sensibly noted the impracticality of that idea, since the theatre would have to be aired out between emotions. Oscar wanted the hair of Herodias a powdered blue, but Sarah said *she* wanted the blue hair --and that, no matter what anybody thought, she and not a younger stand-in would dance the erotic seven-veils number. To Oscar's delight, she also promised Salome's succulent lines would fall from her famous lips "like pearls on a crystal disc." As it turned out, the only thing that fell was the British censor's heavy hand.

Three weeks into the London rehearsal the Lord Chamberlain closed **Salome** on the grounds it portrayed Biblical characters and thus violated a law passed in Cromwell's time to stop the staging of Catholic mystery plays. Outraged by this archaic Puritanism, Oscar declared the English a nation of shop-keeping Tartuffes, then threatened to renounce his British nationality and move to art - loving France, even if it meant being conscripted into the army. **Punch** offered its readers a cartoon of a plump Oscar puffing a cigarette in a French private's uniform, a contraband copy of **Salome** protruding from his knapsack. However, the law could not prevent publication of the play, which provided the next act of this offstage comedy.

Oscar entrusted the translation of **Salome** into English to his youthful lover and constant companion, Lord Alfred Douglas--who promptly turned in such a "schoolboy" mess that even Oscar was forced to reject it; then Oscar compensated by telling the publisher he wanted the color of the book wrappers to match Lord Alfred's "gilt hair." Oscar's choice of an illustrator proved even more bothersome, since the twenty-year-old tuberculous Aubrey Beardsley created black-and-white grotesques both beautiful and obscene, then drew a caricature of Oscar's face on a fat moon. Oscar hated the drawings, saying Aubrey turned his Byzantine drama into something absurdly Japanese. Douglas, angry at Aubrey for offering to translate **Salome** after his own failed effort, loudly agreed with Oscar, prompting the artist to label both of them "perfectly dreadful people." The play was published in 1893 (the Beardsley drawings intact), then finally staged in France in 1896 (minus the divine Sarah), while Oscar languished in prison.



Oscar once quipped that the only difference between the saint and sinner is that every saint has a past, and every sinner has a future. The same might be said of **Salome**. It survived even England, where it was not publicly produced until 1931; but before that and since, *Salome* has lived a fanciful life as an opera by Richard Strauss, two silent movies with Theda Bara and Nazimova, and three splashy technicolored movies with Yvonne De Carlo, Rita Hayworth, and Glenda Jackson. Can Sondheim or Webber be far behind? However, it is through Oscar's brilliant imagination that the dancing, dangerous temptress and the Tetrach Herod with his fantastic garlands of poetic recitation come most magically alive. But the one person never allowed to enjoy the magic of a finished stage production of **Salome** was the man who wrote it. No doubt the cruel irony of that would have fascinated--and finally amused--Oscar Wilde.

## HONORARY THEATRE COMPANY MEMBERS

Each year the PSU THEATRE COMPANY recognizes the financial and artistic contribution to its work provided by members of the local community. Since 1992 the following have been awarded Honorary Theatre Company status:

**1992: Mr & Mrs Fred Boham**

**Mr Bill Daugherty**

**Dr & Mrs Earl Miller**

**1993: Mr & Mrs Edward T. McNally**

**Mr. Lem Sheppard**

## SAINT SALOME

'In its earliest dramatic form, Wilde thought he would call the play, 'The Decapitation of Salome.' The title seems to have gone with a story he told Maeterlinck and Georgette Leblanc. It was of how Salome eventually became a saint. Herod, incensed at her kissing the decollated head, wanted to have her crushed, but at the pleas of Herodias contented himself with banishing her. She went off to the desert, where for years she lived on, maligned, solitary, clothed in animal skins, and subsisting on locusts and wild honey like the Prophet himself. When Jesus passed by, she recognised him whom the dead voice had heralded and she believed in him. But feeling unworthy of living in his shadow, she went off again, with the intention of carrying the Word. Having passed over rivers and seas, she encountered, after the fiery deserts, the deserts of snow. One day she was crossing a frozen lake near the Rhone when the ice broke under her feet. She fell into the water and the jagged ice cut into her flesh and decapitated her, though not before she managed to utter the names of Jesus and John. And those who later went by saw, on the silver plate of the re-formed ice, showing like the stamen of a flower with rubies, a severed head on which gleamed the crown of a golden nimbus. Wilde's brain overflowed with such images.

The character of Salome evolved along with that of Herod. Herod's lust for Salome's body pales in comparison with Salome's lust for Iokanaan's bodiless head. Hers is a passion which drowns in its own excess. Sensation at this utmost bound is almost mystical. With all her savagery Salome has a virgin innocence.

Wilde made the central character neither Salome nor Iokanaan, but Herod. Swayed by rival dispensations, Herod eventually detaches himself from both. One cancels out the other. Herod is strong in his tremblings, a leaf but a sinuous one, swept but not destroyed by successive waves of physical attraction and spiritual revulsion. By yielding to each in turn, Herod remains Herod, beyond both.'

from *Oscar Wilde* by Richard Ellmann  
( Penguin Books, 1988 )



## THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK

( 6 : 17 - 29 )

For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife: for he had married her. For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife. Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not: For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things and heard him gladly.

And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief *estates* of Galilee; And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give *it* thee. And he sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give *it* thee unto the half of my kingdom.

And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask ? And she said, The head of John the Baptist. And she came in straightway with haste unto the King, and asked saying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist. And the King was exceedingly sorry; *yet* for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her.

And immediately the King sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went and beheaded him in the prison, And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel gave it to her mother. And when his disciples heard of *it*, they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb.

PSU THEATRE COMPANY

presents

THE 1994 HOMECOMING PRODUCTION

## ASSASSINS

by

Stephen Sondheim & John Weidman

Stephen Sondheim is universally acknowledged as one of America's greatest composers in the field of musical theatre and PSU Theatre Company has been responsible for introducing a number of his major works to the Four State area in recent years, among them *Sweeney Todd* (1986) and *Sunday in the Park with George* (1990). We now proudly present his latest creation, **ASSASSINS**. Evoking a fraternity of Presidential assassins and would-be assassins across a hundred years of our history (including John Wilkes Booth, Lynette "Squeaky" Fromme, John Hinckley and Lee Harvey Oswald), Sondheim and collaborator John Weidman examine success, failure and the questionable drive for power and celebrity in American society. The result is an unusually imaginative and utterly idiosyncratic entertainment compounded equally of insight, pleasure and provocation.

### PERFORMANCES

October 13, 14, & 15 at 7.30pm

October 16th at 2.00pm

PSU Studio Theatre

Grubbs Hall



# Special Thanks

The Communication Department would like to thank the following individuals and business for their contributions to this program.

**Wheeler & Mitchelson, Chartered Attorneys**

Fourth and Broadway  
Tel: 231-4650

**Ernie Williamson Music House**

408 N. Broadway  
Tel: 231-2380

**Rainbow Portrait & Photo Center**

1123 South Broadway  
Tel: 231-3090

**Bud's Jewelry**

702 N. Broadway  
Tel: 231-7399

**Bowlus School Supply**

201 E. 5th St.  
Tel: 231-3450

## Kansas Teachers Credit Union



*"Serving All Area Residents"*

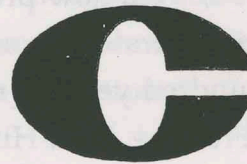
**EXPANDACHEK**

THE PERFECT CHECKING ACCOUNT

- . Loans
- . Expandachek
- . Passbook Share Accounts
- . Money Market Certificates
- . Drive-In Windows
- . Christmas Club
- . Safe Deposit Boxes
- . Traveler's Checks
- . Free Notary Service
- . Night Depository

**231-5719**

**416 N BROADWAY  
PITTSBURG**



**City  
National  
Bank**

2720 N. Broadway  
231-8280

100 S. Broadway  
231-8400

McCune Branch  
632-4267

**MEMBER FDIC**