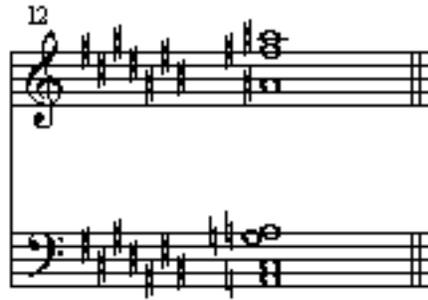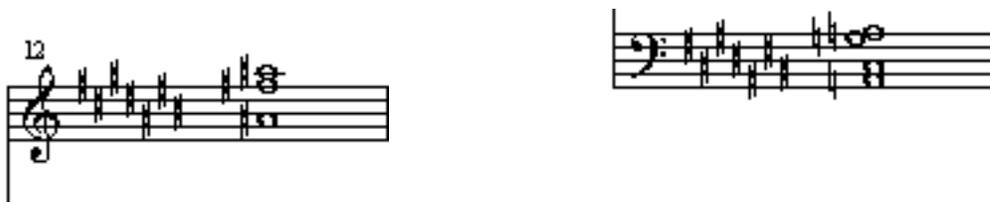# Salome, Jokanaan and the Organization of the Opera

This celebrated harmony—which occurs just before the end of *Salome*-- has been described as "the most sickening chord in all opera." If we take the chord apart, we hear two relatively consonant harmonies:

It's the juxtaposition of the two that produces the jarring dissonance. This chord, I submit, captures the essence of the opera: the clash between John the Baptist (referred to in the opera as Jokanaan) and Salome, the king's stepdaughter.

Strauss expresses this conflict musically by assigning to Jokanaan the key of C major, consisting of nothing but naturals, and to Salome—that un- natural woman--the key of C#, which has no naturals at all. The irresolv- able conflict ends in death, symbolized in the opera by C minor.

The Story

If by any chance there is someone in the audience who does not know the story of Salome, let me read the original biblical source in Matthew 14: 3-11:

For Herod had arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, 4 because John had been telling him, "It is not lawful for you to have her." 5 Though Herod wanted to put him to death, he feared the crowd, because they regarded him as a prophet. 6 But when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before the company, and she pleased Herod 7 so much that he promised on oath to grant her whatever she might ask. 8 Prompted by her mother, she said, "Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a platter." 9 The king was grieved, yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he commanded it to be given; 10 he sent and had John beheaded in the prison. 11 The head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, who brought it to her mother.

So why was it unlawful for Herod to have Herodias as wife? In the first place, Herod's own wife was still living. In the second place, Herodias' husband, Philip, was still living (Although in the opera, he is dead: Herod had him strangled by the royal executioner, his biblical hit-man) Leviticus 20:21 says *"If a man takes his brother's wife, it is impurity; he has uncovered his brother's nakedness; they shall be childless."*

The issue of childlessness actually comes up in the opera. When Herod reproaches Herodias for not bearing him a child, she correctly points out that she already bore a child—namely, Salome—with his brother, so the problem must be with Herod.

As if this were not enough, in the third place Herodias was the daughter of Aristobulus, the brother of both Philip and Herod, and Jewish law did not permit a man to marry his own niece. (If you're following this genealogy very closely, you'll have deduced—correctly—that Philip, Herodias' first husband—was also her uncle. But Jokanaan has so much on his prophetic plate that he doesn't mention this.

Thus Jokanaan has ample grounds for condemning the particular union between Herodias and Herod. Still, the prophet showed extraordinary courage—or poor judgement—in publicly criticizing the behavior of the ruling monarch.

The biblical story as it stands may well be described as "grisly." Oscar Wilde's treatment of the theme, the basis for Strauss's opera, moves from the grisly to the depraved. In the opera, Salome does not present the head

to her mother but instead kisses the prophet's lips, after which Herod calls on his soldiers to kill her. Indeed, when Herod objects to Salome's choice of reward, telling her not to follow her mother's counsel, Salome says, "I do not heed the voice of my other. 'Tis for mine own pleasure that I ask the head of Jokanaan." It's as if Strauss's Salome deliberately distinguishes herself from her biblical predecessor.

Other versions of the story

In this presentation I shall attempt to demonstrate that the relationship between Salome and Jokanaan—symbolized in that "sickening" chord—constitutes the organizing force for the opera. Some of you may be thinking that identifying the relationship between Salome and Jokanaan as the centerpiece of the story seems pretty trivial, even if you may be too polite to say "Duh." I mean, what other choice is there?

Well, you might focus on Salome's mother, Herodias and her relationship with Herod, as Flaubert did in his story *Hérodias*. Flaubert describes in some detail the loveless marriage that Herodias has had to endure. We read about how Herod rebuffs her advances.

During their brief conversation several attendants had come out upon the balcony; one slave brought a quantity of large, soft cushions, and arranged them in a kind of temporary couch upon the floor behind his mistress. Herodias sank upon them, and turning her face away from Antipas [i.e., Herod] seemed to be weeping silently. After a few moments she dried her eyes, declared that she would dream no more, and that she was, in reality, perfectly happy. She reminded Antipas of their former long delightful interviews in the atrium; their meetings at the baths; their walks along the Sacred Way, and the sweet evening rendezvous at the villa, among the flowery groves, listening to the murmur of splashing fountains, within sight of the Roman Campagna. Her glances were as tender as in former days; she drew near to him, leaned against his breast and caressed him fondly.

But he repelled her soft advances. The love she sought to rekindle had died long ago. He thought instead of all his misfortunes, and of the twelve long years during which the war had continued. Protracted anxiety had visibly aged the tetrarch. His shoulders were bent beneath his violet-bordered toga; his whitening locks were long and mingled with his beard, and the sunlight revealed many lines upon his brow, as well as upon that of Herodias. After the tetrarch's repulse of his wife's tender overtures, the pair gazed morosely at each other.

No such description occurs in Strauss's opera, based not on Flaubert's treatment of the story but on that of Oscar Wilde.

In Flaubert, Herodias is physically present as she listens to Jokanaan's diatribe.

"The Lord shall take from thee thy sparkling jewels, thy purple robes and fine linen; the bracelets from thine arms, the anklets from thy feet; the golden ornaments that dangle upon thy brow, thy mirrors of polished silver, thy fans of ostrich plumes, thy shoes with their heels of mother-of-pearl, that serve to increase thy stature; thy glittering diamonds, the scent of thy hair, the tint of thy nails,-- all the artifices of thy coquetry shall disappear, and missiles shall be found wherewith to stone the adulteress!"

For Flaubert, Salome is only the instrument of Herodias' will, not a separate agent.

The dancer was Salome, the daughter of Herodias, who for many months her mother had caused to be instructed in dancing, and other arts of pleasing, with the sole idea of bringing her to Machaerus and presenting her to the tetrarch, so that he should fall in love with her fresh young beauty and feminine wiles. The plan had proved successful, it seemed; he was evidently fascinated, and Herodias felt that at last she was sure of retaining her power over him!

A completely different take appears in Jules Massenet's opera, also called *Hérodias*. Here Salome and Jokanaan become lovers and Salome attempts to murder her mother. Here is a synopsis of the 4th act of the opera.

John is praying in his cell, saying that he is not afraid to die, but he is haunted by thoughts of Salome. She enters, and they declare their love for each other. John tells Salome to save herself, but she is determined to die with him. However, the guards take John away to be killed and drag Salome off to the palace, where Herod and Vitellus are holding court. Salome begs Herod and Herodiade for John's life; just as Herod is about to give in to her, the executioner carries in his bloody sword, indicating that John has already been killed. Salome draws a dagger and tries to kill Herodiade, but the queen tells her she is her mother; in despair, Salome kills herself instead.

As you can see, there are many ways of telling this story, which seems to be crying out for a version centering on that old pervert Herod. Perhaps one of you might be interested in taking up the challenge and composing that opera. At any rate, concentrating on the relationship between Salome and Jokanaan is a sensible way to organize an opera, but certainly not the only way.

The Libretto

Before approaching the music, it will be useful to consider the differences between Oscar Wilde's play (written in French) and the libretto of Strauss's opera (based on a German translation of the play). For Strauss's opera *Salome* does not simply set the German text to music. In fact, Strauss cut nearly half the text.

In the first place, Strauss eliminated a number of subplots and reduced the importance of minor characters. Narraboth, the captain of the guards, appears in the opera solely for the purpose of being seduced by Salome. The fate of Herodias's first husband is described in much greater detail in the play. Herod's political promise and the discussion of the types of wine he favours have also been eliminated. The moon, whose continually changing moods play an important symbolic role in the play, has a much-reduced place in the opera.

In the second place, Strauss tightened the libretto in a way that underlined Wilde's formal devices, in particular the organization of phrases and sections in threes. It would be tedious to identify every such arrangement, but I do want you to appreciate how often this pattern appears, so I have listed several examples in the handout.

Salome and Jokanaan

Since the relationship between Salome and Jokanaan forms the basis for the opera, it may be worthwhile to study it in greater detail. We may describe the three stages of the relationship--the first two of which occur while Jokanaan is still alive--as curiosity, attempted seduction, and "triumph."

1. Curiosity

The opera begins with Salome's motive in C# minor:

but Salome does not make her first appearance on the stage until Scene 2, to a musical motive associated with her seductiveness, a phrase that ends with the main Salome motive.

Salome has gone outside the palace in order to get away from her lecherous stepfather, King Herod. She says, "Why does the Tetrarch watch me all the while with his mole's eyes, from under his shaking eyelids? It is curious that my mother's husband looks at me like that."

The initial stage of Salome's involvement with Jokanaan is simple curiosity, when she hears his voice for the first time. The Tetrarch has been said to fear the prophet; Salome's mother Herodias hates him. When Salome looks into the cistern, the source of this strange voice, we hear a motive associated with the cistern, based on the infernal interval of the tritone:

Intrigued, Salome asks that Jokanaan be brought up so that she can talk with him. Narraboth, the captain of the king's guards, horrified, refuses. Herod has given strict orders that no one is allowed to talk to the prophet, much less remove him from the cistern. But Salome cajoles him until he gives in.

We have already been introduced to Jokanaan in Scene 1, where we hear a motive in C major associated with the prophet.

Now, in the orchestral interlude during which the soldiers bring Jokanaan out of the cistern, we hear another motive, sometimes called "Divine Vision," associated with Jokanaan's pronouncements regarding Jesus.

2. Attempted seduction

With Jokanaan standing before her, Salome attempts to seduce him. As the prophet utters various calls to repentance, Salome tries to learn more from Narraboth. She asks, "Of whom is he speaking?" Narraboth, desperate to deflect the girl, answers, "Nobody knows." But Salome catches on fast: "He speaks of my mother." She stares at the man. "It's his eyes above all that are terrible. They are like black caverns where dragons make their lair! They are like black lakes from which fantastic moons are rising. How wasted he is! I'm sure he is chaste like the moon."

Jokanaan inquires, "Who is the woman who is looking at me?" and Salome identifies herself: "I am Salome, the daughter of Herodias, the Princess of Judea." The orchestra plays the extended Salome motives we have already heard.

Jokanaan condemns her: "Stand back! Daughter of Babylon." Salome says, "Speak again, Jokanaan. Thy voice is like sweet music to my ears." Jokanaan: "Get thee gone to the desert and seek out the Son of Man!" Salome: "Who is he, the Son of Man? Is he as beautiful as thou art, Jokanaan?"

There follows Salome's perverse, seductive love song, in three stanzas. In the first stanza, Salome sings: "I am amorous of thy body, Jokanaan. Thy body is white, like the lilies of a wide field that the mowers never have mowed. You look as white as the snows on the hills of Judaea. The roses in the gardens of the Queen of Arabia are not so white as thy body. Neither the roses in the gardens of Arabia's Queen, nor the feet of the dawn when they light on the flowers nor the breast of the moon on the breast of the ocean: Nothing in this world is so white as thy body."

The music of this passage is extremely consonant and we hear a motive associated with Salome's curiosity or fascination with Jokanaan.

Jokanaan repulses her, saying "Get back, daughter of Babylon, for by woman came evil into the world. Speak not to me."

Salome immediately reverses herself, distorting her earlier words as the orchestra gives out a caricature of the love music: "Thy body is hideous. It's just like the body of a leper. It is like a plastered wall where vipers have crawled; like a plastered wall where the scorpions have made their nest. It is like a white sepulchre, full of loathsome things. It is horrible, thy body is horrible."

Then Salome returns to her seductive tone: "It's thy hair that I'm enamoured of, Jokanaan. Thy hair is like clusters of grapes, like the clusters of black grapes on the vine trees of Edom." I won't quote the entire speech, but it has the same over-the-top style as the preceding speech, while the orchestra plays a weird waltz theme.

Jokanaan rejects Salome for a second time, with the words "Stand Back, daughter of Sodom!" after which Salome again distorts her earlier words: "Thy hair is horrible. With mire and dust it's covered," and further sentiments to that effect.

Once again Salome returns to the seductive tone: "It is thy mouth that I desire, Jokanaan. Thy mouth is like a band of scarlet on a tower of ivory." As Ernest Newman writes, Salome pours out "a flood of images each more corruptly rapturous than the others, while the music lashes itself into a tempest of passion."

"Let me kiss thy mouth," Salome concludes. When Jokanaan once again rejects her, Salome sings a motive associated with a kiss, marked *molto appassionato*, that becomes increasingly important as the story continues.

Ich will dei-nen Mund   kus   sen   Jo - cha - na-an.

Although there is no key signature in the score at this point, the motive is clearly in the Salome's tonality of C# (= Db).

Narraboth, the captain of the guards, is so upset by Salome's words that he kills himself, his body falling between Salome and Jokanaan.

Salome takes no interest in Jokanaan's description of Christ's coming but repeats her desire to kiss Jokanaan's mouth. He rejects her again—"Thou art accursed!"—and is led back to the cistern as the orchestra plays the second interlude.

3. Salome's "triumph"

The third encounter between Salome and Jokanaan takes place after his death. If this strikes you as repellent, well, this is a pretty repellent opera. We hear the musical motives associated with Salome's curiosity and the *appassionato* motive that you just heard. We hear a recapitulation of the first stanza of Salome's song of seduction, ending with the motive that will eventually lead to the chord with which I began this presentation:

Nichts in der Welt war so weiss wie dein Leib.

Salome sings, "Nothing on earth was as white as thy skin." There follows a recapitulation of the third stanza of Salome's song of seduction, ending with the *appassionato* motive, "I want to kiss your mouth, Jokanaan." Eerie trills lead to a change in the text of this motive: "I have now kissed thy mouth, Jokanaan," concluding with that memorable clashing dissonance.

This whole monologue runs for nearly fifteen minutes, and some writers have speculated that Strauss actually began his composition of the opera with this final *scena*.

The Personality of Salome

What are we to make of Salome, now that we have seen her in three interactions with Jokanaan? We observe that she completely lacks conscience or empathy: the captain of the guards killed himself at her feet and she never batted an eyelash; she treats the dismembered head of the prophet as a love object. She is narcissistic and desensitized to life and death. We would describe such a person in modern terms as a sociopath. Loathsome as we may find Herod, his final act of having Salome killed almost feels like a relief. Sociopaths are scary creatures to have around.

But the more interesting question is what made her that way. Richard Strauss famously described Salome as a sixteen-year-old with the voice of Isolde, a clear impossibility. Strauss was notorious for his ill-treatment of singers. At one rehearsal he reportedly shouted at the orchestra, "Louder, louder. I can still hear her!" But let us for the sake of argument accept the notion of a sixteen-year-old Salome, regardless of the actual age of the singer playing the role.

The story takes place not in the present but in biblical times, where the concept of adolescence in the modern sense did not exist. Many young

women were already married by the age of sixteen, and we should be thinking of Salome as a woman, not as some kind of first-century Lolita.

Salome has been both protected and abused. As princess she has been guarded within the palace, her every movement observed. She has not been exposed to the kind of life an ordinary sixteen-year-old would have experienced in the first century. But she has been abused by premature sexualisation. The soldiers, the king—everyone is fascinated by Salome, physically and sexually. Even her experience of the prophet Jokanaan has been sexualized as she listens to him talk about her mother being a whore. Salome's relational skills come from everything being sexualized: entitlement, power, and manipulation. We can't say that Salome enjoys this—she finds Herod's sexual preoccupation with her thoroughly creepy—but it is definitely the environment in which she dwells.

Keep in mind that this is a household where Herod, Salome's stepfather, has and exercises the power of life and death. In the Bible, Salome's actual father Philip remains alive, but in the opera Herod has had him strangled by his executioner. The death of one's father is always a difficult experience, but to have one's father murdered by the man who subsequently marries one's mother—this can contribute to a twisted personality.

As princess, Salome assumes that she also has the power of life and death. Her sense of entitlement comes from always having gotten her way. Men can't resist Salome, and she knows it. "You can't say no to me," she tells Narraboth, the captain of the guards.

It would not be too much of an exaggeration to say that Salome's family structure and history have created a monster. (I am not alone in connecting Salome's distorted state of mind to premature sexualisation. In Atom Egoyan's production for the Canadian Opera Company, the Dance of the Seven Veils includes a simulated gang rape to suggest that sexual abuse lies behind Salome's behaviour.)

Herod

If the clash between the all-natural C major of Jokanaan and the all-unnatural C# of Salome encapsulates the essential conflict of the opera, what does Strauss make of Herod, arguably the epitome of bad parenting and indisputably the head of the household that shaped Salome?

Herod makes his first physical appearance on stage only in the fourth scene of the opera, when he comes looking for his stepdaughter with the words, "Where is Salome? Where is the Princess? Why did she not return to the banquet as I commanded her?" The voice is that of one accustomed

to being obeyed. But the music accompanying this entrance is quite curi-
ous.

This unusual succession of notes traces the whole-tone scale, a scale made
up entirely of whole steps. What makes this scale so unusual is the absence
of semitone markers that might give it some shape. Compare this with the
C major scale associated with Jokanaan.

The semitones between the third and fourth members of the scale and be-
tween the seventh and eighth members clearly establish C as the defining
element, the beginning and end of the scale, the "key" of the scale, if you
will. When you play the scale on the piano, once you arrive at B—the so-
called "leading tone," there is an almost irresistible force "leading" you to
the tonic C.
     Now listen to the whole-tone scale again. A repeated C in the bass of the
orchestra provides an anchor, but the scale itself is completely amorphous:
it has no clear beginning or end, nothing to distinguish any part of the scale
from any other part.
     What is the point of this? Doesn't it seem rather odd to assign a scale
with character and distinction to a man locked up in a cistern, and a scale
without distinction—the most wishy-washy scale in music—to the all-
powerful Tetrarch? Herod's omnipotence lies completely in the back-story.
The king we see on stage is putty in Salome's hands, with none too strong a
grip on reality, as we shall observe.
     Herod looks at the moon and says, "She is like a mad woman who seeks
for lovers everywhere," as we hear more whole-tone scale passages in the
orchestra. Herod then slips in Narraboth's blood, and utters a remark that
suggests his actual impotence in the opera. I paraphrase: "What's this
body doing here? I didn't order anybody to be killed." A soldier tells the
king that Narraboth committed suicide. When Herod asks why, the orches-
tra provides the answer.

Herod orders the body removed, then comments on the wind, as the orchestra plays chromatic wind passages.

Herodias tells him that there is no wind. Herod insists that he feels a wind and hears a sound like the beating of giant wings. Herodias says she doesn't hear anything but Herod goes on talking about the wind and the giant wings, as the orchestra continues its chromatic frenzy. They go inside and Herod orders more wine.

Herod, increasingly inebriated and somewhat delusional, tries to bring Salome beside him, but each time she rebuffs him.

Let us look at the text in greater detail. These are not the words of an affectionate stepfather but of a desperate lecher. First Herod asks Salome to dip her little red lips into the cup, and then he will drain it. Then he offers her fruit so that he can see the marks of her "little shining teeth." Finally Herod asks her to sit beside him, offering Salome her mother's throne. Audiences today, familiar with the way pedophiles "groom" their victims, may well shudder at these words, which also resonate with the incestuous substitution of a child for a spouse.

A religious dispute interrupts Herod's wooing of his stepdaughter, but when the commotion has come to an end Herod pleads with Salome to dance for him.

Salome finally agrees, but compels Herod to take a solemn oath that following the dance he will give her whatever she names. He agrees, only to be

beset by three hallucinations: first, a repetition of the icy wind; second, an intense heat; and third, a belief that he is choking.

After the Dance of the Seven Veils, Salome makes her gruesome demand and Herod tries to persuade her to change her mind, offering the girl emeralds, peacocks and jewels. Herod becomes so anxious that he loses his train of thought. When Salome refuses to accept these substitutes, Herod offers her "marvellous jewels that even thy mother has never seen." (Again we are likely to notice the incestuous substitution of a child for a spouse.) When Salome repeats her original demand—with a marking in the score of "ferociously"—Herod sinks back into his seat, his defeat accompanied in the orchestra by a passage in the feckless whole-tone scale.

As Herodias slides the ring of death from Herod's finger and hands it to a soldier to deliver to the executioner, the tetrarch experiences delirium, first wondering where his ring has gone and then imagining that someone has drunk all the wine from his goblet. Finally, sickened by Salome's lovemaking to Jokanaan's detached head, Herod commands his guards to crush her beneath their shields.

In the back story, Herod occupies the role of omnipotent tetrarch, but in the opera itself we see him as delusional, distracted, the victim of his own desires and powerless before the indomitable will of his stepdaughter.

The Tritone

The interval of the augmented fourth (or diminished fifth), known more succinctly as the tritone, has had infernal associations ever since the Middle Ages, when it was known as *diabolus in musica* (the devil in music). Theorists prohibited its use in melody, perhaps because the interval is so difficult to sing. Since that time composers have frequently employed the tritone to symbolize the diabolical. A familiar example comes from the opening of Saint-Saëns' "Danse Macabre," where the solo violinist must mistune one of the instruments open fifths to produce a tritone:

Strauss invokes these associations in the melodic motives associated with Salome and Jokanaan. A tritone between F double-sharp and C# appears within Salome's main motive.

We hear a tritone between Eb and A at the beginning of the cistern motive.

When Jokanaan appears on stage for the first time in Scene 3 we hear the tritone between A and D# at the end of the motive associated with divine vision.

Late in the opera Salome turns down Herod's proffered jewels and repeats her demand for the head of Jokanaan, with a prominent tritone from A to Eb.

Ich for-dre den Kopf des Jo - cha - na-an.

The same interval—using these exact pitches—occurs in the basic motive of Salome's Dance of the Seven Veils.

Herod outlines the interval of the tritone when he describes Salome as a monster.

He again outlines the interval of the tritone from Eb to A when he announces that something terrible is going to happen.

The tritone from C to Gb appears at Herod's command to the soldiers to kill Salome. Here the interval acts as a lead-in to the C minor triad associated with death.

Throughout the opera Strauss uses the tritone to identify the link between Salome and Jokanaan as diabolical and leading only to death.

Salome's Final Monologue

One commentator on the opera has speculated that Strauss began by composing Salome's final monologue. "The more one studies the score the more one is inclined to believe that the final scene was conceived first. Strauss, I imagine, would already have in his mind most of the main motifs of the work, but, as yet, principally as constituents of this superb piece of writing, which is, in essence, a closely and organically knit symphonic poem with a vocal solo." [Ernst Newman, *More Opera Nights*, p. 34, note 1]

Whether or not the end of the opera came first, it unquestionably summarizes and focuses the musical issues of the work, and so it will be worthwhile to look at Salome's final monologue in greater detail.

This sixteen-minute passage, in three sections preceded by an introduction, is organized around the tonal symbolism that we have already mentioned: specifically, Eb associated with the cistern; C# major or minor associated with Salome; C major associated with Jokanaan; and C minor associated with death. (See handout).

The Introduction begins with Salome leaning over the cistern and listening.

She hears a sound and says, "Ah! Something has fallen to the ground. It was the sword of the headsman." She is mistaken. It is the head of Jokanaan. The stage directions read, "*A huge black arm of the executioner comes forth from the cistern, bearing on a silver shield the head of Jokanaan. Salome seizes it.*" The first section of the monologue proper begins with a summary of the harmonic clash that lies at the foundation of the

opera: the C# minor associated with Salome (we hear her motive, lest there be any doubt), and the C associated with Jokanaan.

As Salome declares that now, at last, she will kiss the lips of Jokanaan; we hear the curiosity and Salome motives and the theme associated with the kiss, accompanied by sweet harmonies.

In the second part of this section Salome complains, "Why didn't you look at me?" She goes on in gruesome detail: "Thy head belongs to me. I'm free to do with it what I will. I may give it to the dogs to feed on. What is left by the dogs may be devoured by the birds." Again we hear the Salome motive in C# clashing with the C associated with Jokanaan.

The second main section of the monologue returns to praise of Jokanaan's body: "Thy body was a column of ivory set on a silver socket. It was a garden full of doves, full of silver lilies' shine." We hear a reprise of

the first stanza of Salome's Love Song from Scene 3, in her signature key of seven sharps.

Salome sings, "Nothing on earth was so white as thy skin. Nothing on earth was so black as thy hair. And in all the world was nothing so red as thy mouth." The music of this passage (what I have called the Love Theme), perhaps the most beautiful in the entire opera, encapsulates what makes *Salome* so disturbing: creating sublime music to accompany a loathsome subject.

In the second part of this section, like the second part of the first section, Salome asks "Why didn't you look at me?" We hear the Kiss motive repeated at different pitch levels.

Salome continues, "If you'd looked at me, you would have loved me," as the orchestra plays Jokanaan's motive in Salome's key of C# major intertwined

with Salome's motive—as close a music can come to depicting physical union.

As Herod and Herodias enter the scene, and Herod says "She is a monster," we hear Salome's "curiosity" motive in the timpani, transposed to the "death" key of C minor.

The third and final section of the monologue opens with eerie trills accompanying the "curiosity" motive.

As we approach the end of the opera, with the celebrated clashing chord, Strauss manages to weave all of Salome's motives into an extraordinarily complex texture: Salome sings the "kiss" theme to the words, "I have now kissed thy mouth, Jokanaan" while the orchestra plays the "love" theme and Salome's motive, with the "curiosity" motive sounded by the glockenspiel.

There follows the horrible clashing chord.

Herod orders his soldiers to kill Salome, and the opera ends in the "death" key of C minor.

To summarize: Strauss uses musical motives and symbolic tonalities to depict the clash between two utterly incompatible figures: on the one hand Jokanaan, identified with a scale of all naturals; on the other hand, Salome, identified with a scale of no naturals. The impossibility of reconciling these two incompatible harmonies produces a harmonic tension that the composer exploits throughout the opera. The clash between C major and C# minor/major finds an ending—but not a real resolution—in the death tonal-

ity of C minor. And the culmination of that harmonic tension occurs in that sickening chord that we hear just before the end of the opera: