

ON A MUSICAL SCORE TO SALOMÉ

by Carlos Garza and Rick O'Meara
"Silent Orchestra"

Some films from the silent era were presented with original scores created under the guidance of the film's producer or director. In other cases, house musicians improvised or relied on stock music to convey the emotions of the film. In all cases, the desired goal was to explore the meaning of the film while adding to its enjoyment. Silent Orchestra's more contemporary approach has the same goal. We inform our decisions from a careful study of lighting, sets, costumes, expressions and plot. Our primary guidance is our understanding of how we as composers can influence emotion and meaning using today's musical vocabulary.

Our SALOMÉ score premiered at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., in January of 2001. We prepared by

cataloging every scene, improvising material over each cue and selecting the most promising ideas for development. According to Eric Brace of *The Washington Post*, the performance was "stirring and remarkable." We further refined that score into the surround recording for this DVD.

The film begins with Herod's theme, which uses low brass and drums, an odd meter and a string progression with a chromatic inner voice to reflect the nature of his power: strong, yet unstable. As Herod is stewing over Salomé's impertinence, the theme returns in a slower, more pensive form. Narraboth (Captain of the Guard) seems bored with the same old distractions until he beholds his new obsession, Salomé. This scene required a flowing, sparkling theme that showcased her radiance and provided ambience for the art nouveau fantasy world that surrounds them.

The mood shifts as Salomé discovers
Jokanaan imprisoned in an
underground cell.

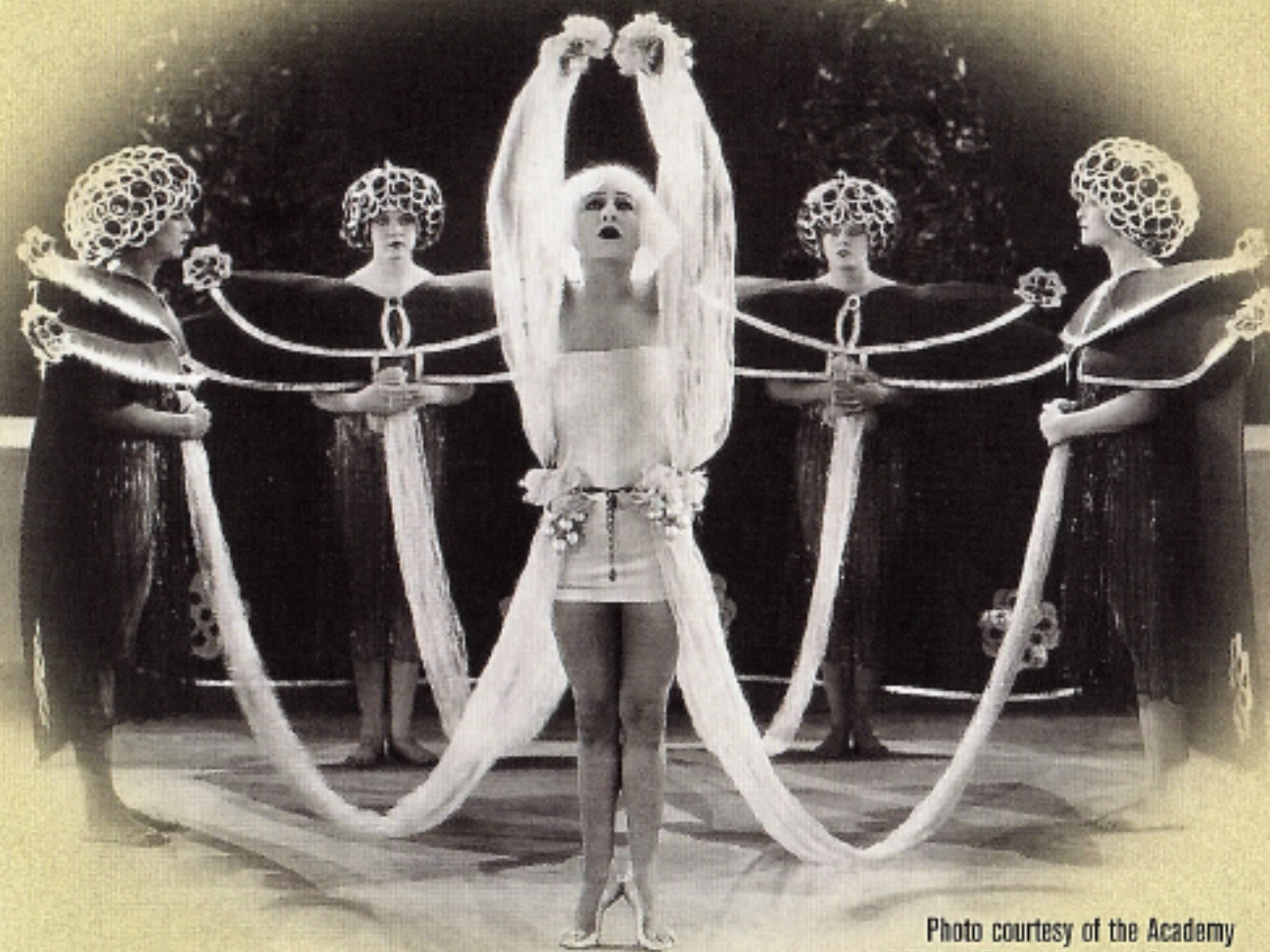


Photo courtesy of the Academy
of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences



From *Lot in Sodom*

A powerful pipe organ swells as a supernatural light explodes from below. A lilting theme initially echoes his meditative posture. This moves to a descending theme that resolves to reflect his solitary confinement. Near the end these themes return carried by a choir sound to convey his ascension.

A seductive doumbek groove accompanies Salomé as she realizes she can manipulate Narraboth to get the key to Jokanaan's cell. An English horn becomes the voice of her discontent. The Middle Eastern melodic concept returns later when she performs her ultimate seduction in the Dance of the Seven Veils for Herod. Here we shift from dramatic underscore to a newly created "source music" cue. Since Salomé is reacting to the musicians, we wanted to match their instrumentation and timing with percussion, woodwind and harp. We built on that concept to create a piece that follows their performance while it fuels Salomé's hypnotic dance with its driving rhythms and pounding drums.

A dark, unsettling sound crafted from a bowed tam tam accompanies the "angel of death"

shadow effect and moves through the surround sound field to amplify the ominous message. The supernatural audio quality returns at the conclusion of the film.

SALOMÉ (ALLIED ARTISTS AND DISTRIBUTORS, 1923)

DIRECTED BY CHARLES BRYANT

BASED UPON THE PLAY BY OSCAR WILDE
WRITTEN FOR THE SCREEN BY PETER M. WINTERS
[PSEUD. FOR ALLA NAZIMOVA]

COSTUMES AND SETTINGS BY NATACHA RAMBOVA
PHOTOGRAPHED BY CHARLES J. VAN ENGER, A.S.C.

CAST:

SALOMÉ: ALLA NAZIMOVA
HEROD ANTIPAS: MITCHELL LEWIS
HERODIAS: ROSE DIONE
THE PAGE OF HERODIAS: ARTHUR JASMINE
JOKANAAN THE PROPHET: NICEL DE BRULIER
NARRABOTH: EARL SCHENCK
NAMAAN THE EXECUTIONER: FREDERICK PETERS
TIGELLIUS: LUIS DUMER

74 MINUTES

COLOR TINTED AND TONED

IMAGE DIGITALLY RESTORED BY LOBSTER FILMS, PARIS

MUSIC SCORE 1 COMPOSED AND CONDUCTED BY
MARC-OLIVIER DUPIN

MUSIC SCORE 2 COMPOSED AND PERFORMED BY SILENT
ORCHESTRA (CARLOS GARZA AND RICK O'MEARA)

M. DUPIN'S MUSIC WAS COMMISSIONED BY THE MUSÉE
DE LOUVRE AND ARTE FRANCE AND IS ON THIS EDITION
BY ARRANGEMENT WITH ZZ PRODUCTIONS, PARIS.

LOT IN SODOM (1933)

A FILM BY J. S. WATSON JR. AND MELVILLE WEBBER
MUSIC AND SOUND BY ALEC WILDER

CAST: FREDERICK HAAK, HILDEGARDE WATSON,
DOROTHEA HOUSE, LEWIS WHITBECK

27 MINUTES



Special Contents of This Edition:

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