

## **Salomé + Sonia or rather, the sound of seduction**

'S' as in Salomé. But also 'S' as in Sonia (Sonia Bergamasco). Or rather, the kind of seduction that Salomé (or Herodiade) might be able to exert onstage if she was an actress of great expressive quality, subtle charm and above all, utterly exceptional vocal abilities. Naturally, to demonstrate this one must study something or someone wherein the word, without moreover depriving it of its "sign", has been used in the sense of pure sound, charged with a vague semantic value. A sound that finds its fulfillment in tonality, chord, harmony. And nobody, as we know, more than Mallarmé, who loved music though with some reserve, made more "verbal music" of poetry, in the way that dance is writing with the body. Above all, he did so through that poem - which was intended to become a theatrical tragedy but never did, and remained in fragments - which is entitled *Hérodiade*. Three wonderful, disquieting scenes that many Mallarmé scholars have taken as a symbol of his poetry. Verses, twisted into Italian (the undertaking attempted by Cosimo Ortosta), which we hear upon the lips of Sonia-Salomé-Hérodiade seated, bent forward or ready to rise in a pale body stocking and high-heeled shoes (a vamp) on a metal chair whose high back is nothing less than a shiny mirror. To said mirror (the immobile protagonist's aim is to reflect «la froide majesté de la femme sterile», as Baudelaire would have said), moreover, she never even turns her eyes, or only in a fleeting glance, heedful instead of how, in a long caricatured blond mane, with irony and cruelty, between hallucinations and disenchantments, her voice breaks, rushes, loses itself (the climax) even in grotesque, mocking laughter, sending out impudent echoes (almost suggestive of Carmelo Bene) to destroy a myth. Or perhaps not, to exalt it. To exalt it in that literary and conceptual key, we had best call Symbolist (and all forty minutes of the performance must be read in a Symbolist key), in which Salammbò, daughter of Hérodiade, is seen, envisaged as more than a carnal creature surfacing from the Bible.

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