

FC. MAKE A
XEROX!

From AUGUSTA HERALD June 30 1907 (Incomplete)

Source: Dance Collection, New York Public Library

PARIS JUNE 16 [1907]

It was not long after the dance of the lions.

To Maud Allan, swaying like a passion flower in the last steps of the Seven Veils, a giant negro brought upon a silver plate the head of Jokanaan.

All about the dim ~~salon of the dim~~ Budapest palace sat silent nobles of the city. ~~His~~ Eyes half closed, the dancer raised by its dank hair the ghastly prize of Herodas' daughter.

She leaned toward its lips. Gently the severed head touched her wrists, and there ran through her a terrible tremor, a shivering of the soul. Upon her white flesh were red stains, dark crimson clots. It was blood. Her body rigid as though carved in marble, the dancer slowly forced her eyes to the face she held aloft.

It was the face of a man not long dead. As one from whom life goes quickly, she crumbled to the floor. From her hands dropped the head. It rolled down upon her breast and fell beside her, leaving ~~her~~ on her white body a crimson trail.

So was the dancer Maud Allan taught not to jest with a noble of Hungary.

Not for many days did she dance as Salome after that. Not for many days did she dance at all. And now, as she glides about the waxen head on the stage of the Varietes Theatre [Paris] that gay stage where tragedy until this day has been tabooed, Paris watches and wonders at her diablerie, at the sinister power that radiates from every movement of that wonderful dance, marvels at its fiendishness and when it is done not so long can M. Brasseur and his joyous company bring back Paris to its normal condition of laughter.

That is because Maud Allan has been taught not to jest with Hungary, has learned what it means to stir by ridicule the current of barbarism that rolls strong beneath the veneer. It is because always when she dances Salome now, it is not the waxen head that is before her, but the human head not long severed of a man she never knew. It is his dank hair that she grasps, his dead flesh that she sees, and to stem the flood of horror and loathing that goes over her she strives and strives to die[?] most mightily, and so become in truth that phase of Salome's love.

Perhaps, too, there once lived a Roman Emperor who wished that all Roman people had but a single neck that he might sever it at one stroke. So, perhaps, dancer Maud Allan feels and sees in that head the combined heads of those Hungarian nobles who have turned one of the greatest triumphs of her art into a nightmare for her. No, not for worlds would she jest again with Count Zechy of Budapest and dance the Dance of the Lions.

It has curious contrasts - this story of the wit of an American [sic] girl which was met by the mordant spirit of Hungarian humor, a grim, barbaric touch that some old Tartar chieftain would have enjoyed or which would have tickled the heart of an ancient Russian court.

Less than a year it has been that Maud Allan by her unique

genius won the attention of Europe. It is less than two weeks that she appeared in Paris which promptly went wild over her. For Miss Allan, who was born in San Francisco [sic] by the way, had a new idea - or an idea almost as old as the world, but rejuvenated. Educated in France [?] and Germany, a pupil of Busoni in Berlin she had found in her the power to interpret the masters of music, not by singing, not by any instrument, but by dancing.

To the study and development of this gift she gave her years, from eighteen to twenty two [sic]. In Palestine, in Egypt, in Turkey and in the provinces thereabout where, among the wild clans still love the ancient dances, she studied. Steadily as she worked on, month by month, the strange innate knowledge within her kept and outstripped those things that come from without. It was as though the souls of old dancers awoke to being, interpreting, suggesting, supplying those gaps that time had swept away in the ancient dances. She emerged from the four year novitiate the very spirit of the dances.

The call to interpret by her art the masters of music came to her, sharp and imperative. And all of these, wonderfully, truthfully, she brings before the eyes as clearly as the great musician brings them to the ear. "Impressions plastiques" they call it here, but it is very much more than that. Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata, Chopin's Nocturnes, Mozart's Minuets, Grieg, Brahms, Strauss, she brings before one in graceful, lithe, beautiful lines of living flesh. There is no speaking, none of the ordinary movements of the art of acting. Her body sings the underlying motif of the music, her face completes the chain of ideas. Thus she plays upon emotions, whether it is the tender grace of a Chopin waltz, the tragedy of the Marche Funebre, or the religious ecstasy of Ave Maria.

Now, this is the manner of her moving upon Buda-Pest and why she danced before the Lions and why the bleeding head was given her.

In true art, she claims, there is no shame of naked flesh, and yet to the dancer steeped in the traditions of the Orient there came the battle between the Occidental ideal and the presentation of actual truth. Always she had danced with her bare feet and finally the concept of Salome won against her prejudice.

She was to dance the Salome at the Munchen Schauspielhaus and there to witness her rehearsal came Kaulbach and Grutzner and Franz Stuck and all the great musicians of the city.

Also came Miss Allan. About her forehead was a filet of pearls. Over her ~~great~~ bare shoulders fell a great barbaric necklace of many colored jewels. Strands of pearls fell from it over breastlets of pearls. Other strands fell to the jewelled girdle and beneath the jewels was only the dancer.

Soft, almost transparent, clinging to the body, so that not even the slightest movement was hidden, fell to her bare feet. The skirt was golden tinted.

She danced - and she was - Salome. Munich awaited her premiere.

Alas, for waiting Munich! Between the rehearsal and the premiere, the dancer had to appear one gala night in Belgrade. And while Belgrade was applauding, Miss Allan was reading, with tears in her eyes and with anger, a telegram that said the gates of Munich were closed between her and her anticipation. There would be no premiere.

Debut
Paris
Nov 8/07

It had happened that a men's club built on very conservative lines had moved strenuously and that Herr von Halder, the censor of last resort, had listened to their plea. The morals of Munich had to be preserved, said the club. Ergo, Miss Allan must not dance.

Miss Allan was very angry. She was so angry that at last she won against the club and came right back to Munich. But when she got there she danced in so many coverings that her face could hardly be seen. The only concession she made was to leave her feet uncovered. And she danced only the most classical of music and funereal marches and everything like that, which was just as much true art, but so terribly subdued that the good folk of Munich nearly went to sleep.

And after that - and she really hadn't thought of doing it before - she tripped away to Budapest, where people wouldn't know what you meant even if you mentioned Comstock, except, perhaps, to ask if it were not an American beer.

Unrestrained, uncensored, and mostly uncovered, Miss Allan danced in Budapest as the spirit listed and the program indicated. Budapest stood up and cheered. Strauss sent to her to come to Paris and dance in that famous production of Salome. But Miss Allan, confronted by a three year contract (and unbreakable) and a summons by the Grand Duke Montenuovo to appear before the Royal Court at Vienna, couldn't. She continued to delight Budapest.

Now amongst the most famous of the nobles of Hungary is the Count Zichy. Clubman, sportsman, owner of vast estates of which his serfs are as they were one hundred years ago, Count Zichy is one of the leaders of the fast set of that city. Courage is his shibboleth as it is with most of the nobles of Budapest. Primitive passions are thick in the medieval atmosphere of ancient Budapest. Primitive virtues, too. Life there is somewhat like a great barbaric jewel faceted curiously by modern hands and thought. The combination gives curious lights, strange flashes, weird shadows.

Courage, however, is a foundation stone. Therefore it was not odd that at a dinner given in the dancer's honor in March by a score of nobles, the talk should have turned to the manifold virtues of courage and its many aspects.

"It takes most tremendous courage" said Maud Allan
 "What does?" chorused the nobles

Why - to come out on stage before hundreds with feet bare, with shoulders bare, with little dress" she said.

"ha Ha Ha" laughed Count Zichy

"It does indeed" said the dancer earnestly. Every time I appear, until the spirit of it gets into my blood, it is as though I were about to undergo martyrdom. Don't you think that is courage - to fight that down and go out and face the thing you dread?"

"Ha Ha ha" laughed the Count again, thinking no doubt of boar hunts and duels and other blood curling specialities.

"Hundreds of eyes peering at you from the darkened house" said the dancer. "Eyes of men, eyes of women. In how many is the light of admiration for your art? In how many of them are there other lights - lights of contempt, of desire? Each time I dance if I think of it and dread it."

"what you call in America - brag" said the Count. He was not in a very good humour that night. "You would think you had the courage to dance in a den of lions. Puff."

Miss Allan thought for a moment, while the nobles laughed with the Count.

"How much will you bet?" she said suddenly.

"That you won't dance in a den of lions?" asked the Count. "Ten thousand marks!"

"Done" said Miss Allan.

Amid excitement the terms were set. She was to dance Mendlessohn's "Spring Song" clad in the costume of Botticelli's Primavera in the lion cage at the Zoo behind locked cage doors and with her two lions and a trainer.

Word went quietly about, and next day before the lion cage at the Zoo Gardens stood all of Budapest's noblest.

Very gaily had the cage been decorated. Inside it as yet was nothing. In a moment up dashed a closed carriage. Out of it stepped Maud Allan attired as Primavera. There was a gasp of admiration from the crowd. None had thought she would do it. Count Zichy twirled his moustache and looked annoyed.

And now in the center of the cage stood the dancer. Again the door swung open and there entered two limbering little lion cubs, grumblingly and playing like a pair of kittens. Above them a keeper gravely watched.

There was a perfect cyclone of laughter from the crowd. Count Zichy was mad all over. It was a fraud. It was a Yankee trick; he would not pay.

But in the gale of laughter Maud Allan went sweetly on with the dance. Now and then one of the fierce and untamed lions would stretch out a playful paw ~~at~~ to her or stand on its head in sympathy. And the dance went on to the end, with Count Zichy standing like a thundercloud in the midst of a laughing May morning.

By the time it was over the Count was madder than ever. He protested violently, even ~~rudely~~ rudely. The dancer was firm. She had danced in the king's cage before real lions. He must pay the ten thousand marks. The Count had friends, many of them, who sympathized with him, but pay he did finally.

Immediately the dancer turned the money over to one of the hostesses.

She forgot all about it. It was a good joke. He had been so positive and so positively nasty, it was a lesson for him.

Count Zichy stalked about in gloom, frowning down the jokes of those laughing around him.

A few days went tranquilly by and then there came a summons, to dance the Salome in one of the great palaces of Budapest. It came from a source there was little denying and the dancer went.

Up to a great, dim, gorgeous salon was she ushered. Clusters about were scarcely a score of men. She knew a few of them as nobles. Others were strangers to her, but nobles, too. Most courteously they greeted her, raised their glasses to her.

Then a hidden orchestra began softly to play the prelude to Strauss' [sic] Salome. The dancer wreathed herself in the seven veils and white feet twinkling, body lithely moving, began that wondrous dance. One by one the veils were cast aside until only