



**Athaliah**  
**by Jean Racine**  
**Translated by Robert Bruce Boswell**

Total running time: 02:00:47

This play, with which Racine's dramatic career fittingly concluded, was composed for semi-private performance by the young ladies of the College of Saint Cyr, where it was first acted, as well as afterwards, at Versailles, in 1691. It was not represented at a public theatre till 1716, a delay due, it may be, to its sacred character, though probably quite as much to the general lack of appreciation with which it had for long to contend. It is now universally acknowledged to deserve either first or second place among Racine's masterpieces, *Phèdre* being its rival for the palm. The scriptural narrative is faithfully followed as the main outline of the plot; and whatever Racine has added, such as Athaliah's dream, her first sight of the youthful Joash, and the characters of Abner and Mattan, so far from presenting incongruous elements, enhances the dramatic interest of the story.

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