

**NAXOS**
AudioBooks

Lawrence Durrell
Justine

Read by **Nigel Anthony**

**CLASSIC
FICTION**

**MODERN
CLASSICS**



NA304012D

THE ALEXANDRIA QUARTET • I

1	'I have escaped to this island'	4:56
2	Melissa – dusted by the pollen of kisses	5:15
3	Pale, slender, phthisic	6:11
4	Georges-Gaston Pombal	5:09
5	Rats, ticks, street noises – and Justine	4:53
6	'Prince' Nessim	8:25
7	Capodistria 'more a goblin than a man'	7:17
8	The anguish of Justine	4:17
9	On the beach	8:46
10	Pursewarden – and Melissa	9:06
11	The diaries of Justine	5:54
12	The pages of Moeurs	9:10
13	From another memory	8:23
14	Vertiginous uncertainty	10:27
15	Balthazar – a key of the city	10:27
16	In a town of sects and gospels – the Cabal	6:43

17	A dying rival	7:23
18	The tenebrous peninsula	10:02
19	Lieutenant Commander Scobie	5:59
20	Clea, the gentle, lovable, unknowable	5:17
21	Omens, warnings, suspicions	7:45
22	Scobie's promotion	6:55
23	Internal struggles	11:04
24	The boustrophedon of espionage	8:10
25	The great cycle of historical dreams	2:52
26	The yearly shoot on Lake Mareotis	6:11
27	In Nessim's car	5:46
28	Preparations for the shoot	5:55
29	Premonitions of the dawn	8:18
30	Absence and lesions	11:44
31	Recovering memories	8:11
32	A different Justine	10:07

Total time: 3:57:28

Lawrence Durrell

Justine

Lawrence Durrell was born in 1912 in India. When he was ten, the family returned to England and he went to school in Canterbury and then took many jobs, ranging from racing driver to a post in the Jamaican police. He eventually persuaded his family to move to Corfu: these years were recorded by his brother Gerald in *My Family And Other Animals* (1956) – it was like living ‘in one of the more flamboyant and comic operas,’ he notes. During the 1930s he lived in bohemian Paris and was friend and collaborator of Henry Miller. Later he spent much of his time as a journalist, teacher and diplomat in the Middle East.

He began writing early and published an unsuccessful first novel, *Pied Piper of Lovers*, in 1932. A second, *Panic Spring* (1937) appeared under a pseudonym. The third, *The Black Book* (1938) was a powerful erotic work published in Paris. He became noted as a poet and wrote travel books, plays, critical works and a children’s novel.

In 1957 he published *Justine*, the first volume of his ambitious *The Alexandria*

Quartet, which made him famous. *Balthazar* and *Mountolive* followed in 1958, *Clea* in 1960. Appearing at a time when realistic novels were the norm, this exotic and experimental work was both a critical and a popular success. The setting is Egypt and particularly Alexandria, the period immediately before the Second World War. The plan was experimental and elaborate: four novels are interwoven and contain the same characters – couples who come together and part as love grows and then wanes. Introducing *Justine*, Durrell gives an account of the conception, which explains both the work’s erotic character and its elaborate, interwoven schemes: ‘I am accustoming myself,’ he writes, ‘to the idea of regarding every sexual act as a process in which four persons are involved. We shall have a lot to discuss about that.’

The ‘discussion’ begins in *Justine*, which can stand on its own as a novel though its meaning grows in the subsequent works. Justine is a beautiful Jewish girl brought up in a poor part of Alexandria who is loved both for her beauty and also for her inability

to give herself to her lovers without 'check'. The storyteller is the Irishman Darley, who becomes obsessed by her heartlessness: 'She seemed so ignorant of the little prescribed loyalties which constitute the foundations of affection between man and woman,' he reflects. Justine is also trapped by forces she cannot control. Indeed, the city of Alexandria is perhaps the book's main character and it guides and shapes her actions.

In *The Alexandria Quartet*, Durrell is experimenting with place, space and time, and the erotic reflections and refractions that bring a web of characters together in sexual and political intrigue. Each character has obscure dimensions, nothing and no-one can be fully known. The strange and complex city, the difficulty, obscurity and variety of love and eroticism and the many voices of feeling are explored in a rich and poetic prose. Durrell called the book 'a four-dimensional dance, a relativity poem' and 'a four-card trick in the form of a novel', which might 'raise in human terms the problems of causality and indeterminacy'. But the heart of its appeal is its density of emotional feeling and its haunting, sensual, in some ways very un-English, prose.

Lawrence Durrell published other notable novels, including the later sequence

Tunc (1968) and *Nunquam* (1970). He died in 1990.

Notes by Elizabeth Bradbury

**The music on this recording is taken from the
NAXOS and MARCO POLO catalogues**

RAVEL/DEBUSSY STRING QUARTETS Kodály String Quartet	8.550249
RAVEL PIANO WORKS Klára Körmendi	8.550254
MACDOWELL PIANO WORKS James Barbagallo, piano	8.223631

Cover picture: Photo by Rodolphe Hammadi from 'Alexandrie d'Egypte,
les lieux du Quatuor d'Alexandrie' (Editions Eric Koehler)

Lawrence Durrell Justine

Read by **Nigel Anthony**

Justine is the first volume in *The Alexandria Quartet*, four interlinked novels set in the sensuous, hot environment of Alexandria just before the Second World War. Within this polyglot setting of richly idiosyncratic characters is Justine, wild and intense, wife to the wealthy businessman Nessim, a *mari complaisant*. Her emotional and sexual wildness fuels a highly-charged atmosphere which, caught famously by Durrell's poetic language, made *Justine* (1957), and the three novels that complete the Quartet – *Balthazar* (1958), *Mountolive* (1958) and *Clea* (1960) both a critical and a popular success.



Nigel Anthony has worked in television (*Coronation Street*, *Spender*, *Casualty*, etc.) and in theatre, with the RSC and with Alan Ayckbourn at Scarborough. He is, however, best known for his numerous broadcasts on BBC Radio. For many years he has been one of the leading actors in that medium and as a master of vocal disguise has played countless different character roles. He has twice won awards for best actor. Nigel Anthony also reads Durrell's *Balthazar*, *Mountolive* and *Clea* for Naxos AudioBooks.

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Total time
3:57:28