

NAXOS
AudioBooks

Alexandre Dumas
**The Count
of Monte Cristo**

Read by **Bill Homewood**

**CLASSIC
FICTION**



NA203912D

1	The arrival of the Pharaon	6:01
2	A beautiful girl – Mercédès	5:27
3	Valentine de Villefort – procureur du roi	7:04
4	Villefort gains the royal ear	8:30
5	Incarceration in the Château d’If	8:55
6	Education – and a revelation	6:51
7	A shroud and escape	7:06
8	The island of Monte Cristo	5:28
9	Names from the past	4:15
10	A mysterious Englishman	6:30
11	Monte Cristo again	5:53
12	An execution in Rome	7:15
13	Parisian society	9:05
14	Valentine de Villefort and Maximilian Morrel	5:56
15	Noirtier objects	7:52
16	An apparition begs	4:40
17	A ball – and a sudden death	9:27
18	The past catches up	7:45
19	Fernand de Morcerf confirmed a traitor	7:11
20	Valentine collapses	9:58
21	Andrea reveals his father’s identity	6:34
22	Baron Danglars’ fate	4:26
23	A love confessed	5:41

Total time: 2:38:12

Alexandre Dumas

The Count of Monte Cristo

'And now farewell kindness, humanity, and gratitude! Farewell to all those feelings which nourish the heart!... Now may the God of Vengeance yield to me his power to punish the wicked!'

With these words the sailor Edmond Dantès finally throws off ordinary, honest humanity to adopt the dangerous persona of the Count. In order to prepare himself for revenge, Monte Cristo makes himself invulnerable to pity, even to the point – the novel suggests several times – of enjoying the pain of others. The 'God of Vengeance' has almost a pagan ring to it and, at one particularly heartless moment, he seems to others 'like an avenging angel'.

Yet Monte Cristo describes himself as an 'emissary of God'. Indeed, his revenges are leavened with great acts of kindness and generosity; his invulnerability to the pain of others and his belief in himself as a godly agent of justice are both challenged near the end of the novel when the unexpected death of a child shows us the 'human' and almost Christian face of the man for the first time since the early chapters.

The Count of Monte Cristo has the same power to thrill as any classic adventure in which the hero is rescued in the nick of time, the villain gets his come-uppance and good fortune comes to those who deserve it. The twentieth century has produced its own mysterious masked saviours – The Lone Ranger, Zorro, Batman and Superman. Monte Cristo was perhaps the precursor of all these: the first 'Caped Crusader'.

Alexandre Dumas wrote or collaborated on nearly 100 plays and many novels, including the celebrated *The Three Musketeers*. He was born in 1802, the son of a general in Napoleon's army and the grandson of a French marquis and a Saint Domingo negress. As a child he lived through the upheavals of the Napoleonic Revolution and the subsequent restoration of the monarchy of France, which form the background to *The Count of Monte Cristo*. Like Monte Cristo, he received his private education from a priest. He was politically active and, though he is thought to have rather embellished the actions in his *Mémoires*, was involved heroically in

skirmishes during the 1830 revolution. He was the father of author Alexandre Dumas (fils), most famous for his *La Dame aux Camélias*.

Alexandre Dumas (père) ran his career as an industry. It is thought that he would sketch the outline of a story to an assistant who would write it up; then Dumas himself would take the story by the throat and wrestle it into a masterpiece. He was a generous, idiosyncratic and fun-loving man

who cooked brilliantly, gave a lot of money to cadgers and hangers-on, and spent prodigiously on his private life, most notoriously on various highly publicised *affaires* and the construction of a monstrous folly of a house at Saint-Germain-en-Laye. He died, just solvent, in 1870.

Notes by Bill Homewood

The music on this recording is taken from the NAXOS catalogue

BALAKIREV Symphony No.1/Tamara	8.550792
Russian State Symphony Orchestra/Igor Golovschin	
BALAKIREV Symphony No. 2/Russia	8.550793
Russian State Symphony Orchestra/Igor Golovschin	
BATTLE MUSIC Volkman/Overture Richard III	8.550230
Czecho-Slovak RSO/Ondrej Lenárd	

Alexandre Dumas

The Count of Monte Cristo

Read by **Bill Homewood**

The Count of Monte Cristo is a tale of revenge and retribution. Edmond Dantès, a young, energetic sailor, is falsely accused of treason on his wedding day and incarcerated in the forbidding Château d'If. His escape and ultimate revenge on those who wronged him makes this one of the most thrilling stories in French literature, as compelling now as when it was first published in 1846.



Bill Homewood is well-known for his innumerable television shows and leading credits in the West End, major theatres and the RSC. He has also directed theatre on both sides of the Atlantic and his various writing credits include *Theatrical Letters*, published by Marginalia Press. Other recordings for Naxos AudioBooks include *The Three Musketeers* and *The Man in the Iron Mask*.

"Homewood reads with great drama, and his French pronunciation is perfect. Stirring classical music creates a dramatic atmosphere."

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