

  
**NAXOS**  
AudioBooks

**CLASSIC  
FICTION**



Thomas Hardy  
**Far  
From  
The  
Madding  
Crowd**

Read by  
**Neville Jason**

NA313612D

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1	Farmer Oak	4:54
2	Night – The Flock	5:44
3	Gabriel Oak meets Bathsheba Everdene	8:23
4	Gabriel asks Bathsheba to marry him	9:21
5	Gabriel loses his flock and puts out a fire	8:39
6	Gabriel becomes Bathsheba Everdene's shepherd	9:51
7	Mr Boldwood calls on Bathsheba	6:53
8	Bathsheba decides to run the farm without the help of a bailiff and Fanny Robin visits Sergeant Troy	6:51
9	Bathsheba notices Mr Boldwood at market and sends him a Valentine	6:03
10	Boldwood delivers a letter to Gabriel from Fanny Robin	7:05
11	Fanny Robin goes to the wrong church and Mr Boldwood continues to be in love	5:19
12	Mr Boldwood makes Bathsheba an offer and asks Gabriel to leave the farm	8:26
13	Gabriel saves Bathsheba's flock, while Bathsheba becomes entangled with Sergeant Troy	10:34
14	Sergeant Troy continues his relationship with Bathsheba	6:25

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15	Bathsheba tells Mr Boldwood she cannot marry him	10:11
16	Night chase	7:15
17	Bathsheba returns from Bath and Mr Boldwood confronts Troy	11:30
18	Troy celebrates his marriage to Bathsheba	8:13
19	Gabriel saves the ricks from the storm and Bathsheba begins to learn the truth about Troy	9:56
20	Fanny Robin dies	7:05
21	Bathsheba discovers the truth	10:03
22	Troy leaves	8:25
23	Fanny's revenge – Troy disappears	9:39
24	Mr Boldwood regains hope	8:57
25	Greenhill Fair and 'Turpin's Ride to York'	7:05
26	Mr Boldwood's Christmas Party	7:55
27	The return of Troy	12:19
28	Mr Boldwood gives himself up and Bathsheba finds peace	11:35
29	The wedding	3:44

**Total time: 3:58:12**

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## Thomas Hardy

# Far From The Madding Crowd

Thomas Hardy was born near Dorchester on June 2nd 1840. It was in 1862, when he moved to London to pursue a career in architecture, that he began to write, but he did not begin his first novel until he moved back to Dorset in 1867 to become assistant to John Hicks, an architect and church restorer. Only fragments survive of this first novel, *The Poor Man and the Lady*, but he continued to write and in 1871 *Desperate Remedies* was published, followed by *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872) and *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1873). In 1874 Hardy married his first wife, Emma Gifford, and in the same year *Far From The Madding Crowd* was published to considerable acclaim. Four years later he moved back to London; *The Return of the Native* was published in the same year and he became a prominent figure in literary circles. Returning again to Dorset in 1885, Hardy continued his regular output: *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), *The Woodlanders* (1887) and a collection of short stories, *Wessex Tales* (1888). *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* was published in 1891 and his last novel, *Jude the Obscure* appeared in

1895. Towards the end of his life Hardy turned to the writing of poetry. Emma died in 1912 and in 1914 he married his secretary, Florence Dugdale, with whose help he began his autobiography, *The Early Life of Thomas Hardy*. This was published posthumously, as he died on January 11th, 1928. His ashes were laid in Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey and his heart was buried in the grave of his first wife at Stinsford, next to the tomb of his parents.

Hardy believed the purpose of writing fiction lay in giving pleasure to the reader by expressing rare events whilst 'disguising' their 'unlikelihood' within a strongly naturalistic style. Such a view was partly conditioned by the demands of the monthly magazines in which Victorian novels often made their first appearances. The idea of narrative subterfuge was vital as writers were forced to try to communicate plots and ideas forbidden by the rules of these delicate publications. It is partly for this reason that Hardy's work is so remarkably multilayered. Comedy hides tragedy, love and violence.

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Characters also represent an elaborate weaving of styles. Whereas Gabriel, who represents the archetype of The Faithful Shepherd, blends in with the landscape. Troy appears as an outsider whose red coat stands out in contrast against the greenery of the village, whereas Gabriel is a bringer of life, saving the lives of the bloated sheep. Troy is a destroyer, using his sword primarily to impress and seduce Bathsheba. She, of course, is the most fluid character of them all. She is a shimmering creation that, by turns, represents sex, property, authority, vulnerability. Our perception of her constantly shifts as we see her through the eyes of her three different suitors, until we become a suitor ourselves, fascinated and compelled by this most complex of literary creations.

Thus Hardy transcended the demands of literary subterfuge to create a world in *Far From The Madding Crowd* that by its pluralist nature comes close to matching our own. Like Shakespeare, Hardy understood that the world is best expressed as something rich, varying and surprising, and that the best kind of art disguises as it reveals.

**Notes by Heather Godwin**

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## The music on this recording is taken from the NAXOS catalogue

ENGLISH STRING FESTIVAL Capella Istropolitana/Adrian Leaper	8.550331
<b>BRIDGE</b> WORKS FOR STRING QUARTET Maggini Quartet	8.553718
<b>DEBUSSY/RAVEL</b> STRING QUARTETS Kodaly Quartet	8.550249
<b>ELGAR</b> STRING QUARTET/PIANO QUARTET Maggini String Quartet/Peter Donohoe, Piano	8.553737

### Music programming by Jan Fielden

Cover picture: The Mowers by Sir George Clausen (1852-1944). Usher Gallery,  
Lincoln/Bridgeman Art Library, London.

# Thomas Hardy

# Far From The Madding Crowd

Read by **Neville Jason**

In a remote corner of early-Victorian England, where traditional practices remain untouched by time, Bathsheba Everdene stands out as a beacon of feminine independence and self-reliance. However, when confronted with three suitors, among them the dashing Captain Troy, she shows a reckless capriciousness which threatens the stability of the whole community.

Published in 1847, and an immediate best-seller, *Far From The Madding Crowd* established Thomas Hardy as one of Britain's foremost novelists.



**Neville Jason** trained at RADA where he was awarded the Diction Prize by Sir John Gielgud. He has worked with the English Stage Co., the Old Vic Company and the RSC as well as in films and musicals. In television he has appeared in popular serials such as *Maigret*, *Emergency Ward 10* and *Doctor Who*, as well as playing classical roles such as Orestes and Horatio. Formerly a member of the BBC Radio Drama Co.,

he is frequently to be heard on radio. He also reads Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*, Tolstoy's *War and Peace* and Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* for Naxos AudioBooks.

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Total time  
3:58:12