


NAXOS
AudioBooks

George Eliot
Middlemarch

Read by **Carole Boyd**

**CLASSIC
FICTION**



NA619612D

1	Miss Dorothea Brooke	6:41
2	Dorothea returns from the infant school	4:56
3	Sir James Chettam and the Rev. Edward Casaubon	7:35
4	Miss Brooke, a suitable wife for Mr Casaubon?	7:29
5	Letters exchanged and a match made	8:52
6	Dorothea visits Mr Casaubon's home	7:05
7	A dinner party at The Grange	2:48
8	Tertius Lydgate is fascinated by Rosamond Vincy	6:48
9	Fred and Rosamond visit Mr Featherstone	11:13
10	Mr Bulstrode, the banker, and Mr Lydgate	5:44
11	Fred, with the help of Mr Featherstone,	6:29
12	Tertius Lydgate – a medical career	8:41
13	The vote for the new hospital chaplain	2:27
14	Dorothea and Mr Casaubon,	11:13
15	Dorothea and Will again	7:00
16	A painting of St Thomas Aquinas	9:29
17	Fred Vincy – a debt on his mind	11:11
18	Tertius Lydgate arrives at Stone Court to see Fred	2:50
19	Back at Lowick Manor	12:21
20	An impending engagement?	6:59
21	Mary Garth watches over Peter Featherstone	11:09

22	Mr Standish, the lawyer, reads the wills	6:22
23	Will Ladislav – a past and a future	16:57
24	Dorothea and Will alone	7:56
25	A change of fortune for Caleb Garth	7:57
26	Josua Rigg faces John Raffles	5:10
27	Mr Casaubon reconsiders his will	7:46
28	Dorothea visits the Lydgates	4:03
29	The Reform Bill debate	4:36
30	Mr Casaubon falls ill	8:53
31	Dorothea goes to stay with Celia at Freshitt Hall	3:51
32	Mr Brooke at the hustings	12:51
33	Good news for Camden Farebrother	9:35
34	Mr Bulstrode meets a man from the past	12:53
35	Dorothea – back at Lowick Manor	5:46
36	The march of progress	10:31
37	Tertius Lydgate reveals all to Rosamund	10:00
38	Will discovers Casubon's codicil	2:50
39	Raffles reveals all to Will	7:14
40	The past revisits Mr Bulstrode	7:35
41	Mr Bulstrode confesses to Will Ladislav	5:57
42	Will meets Dorothea	10:58

43	Lydgate's debts force changes	6:17
44	Rosamund's appeal fails	3:25
45	Lydgate goes to Mr Bulstrode for advice	6:56
46	Raffles reappears	5:03
47	Raffles falls ill	7:36
48	Mr Bulstrode sits up with Raffles	8:17
49	Scandal starts	5:24
50	Mr Bulstrode defends himself	7:55
51	The world of Mrs Bulstrode collapses	7:17
52	Mr Lydgate's reputation 'blighted'	5:50
53	Dorothea offers her help	3:51
54	Dorothea comes to see Rosamund	4:10
55	Rosamund and Will – motionless	2:27
56	Dorothea alone	5:18
57	Dorothea returns to Mrs Lydgate	10:18
58	Will returns to the Lydgates	1:18
59	Will and Dorothea	9:22
60	Mary resolves	4:21
61	Finale	4:34

Total time: 7:18:52

George Eliot

Middlemarch

Middlemarch is arguably the finest novel in the English language – and bears comparison with the greatest productions of the French and Russians. George Eliot (the pen name of Mary Anne Evans) wrote her masterpiece over several years, from 1869 to 1872, and it was eventually printed in bimonthly episodes. The book grew from what were originally intended to be two separate works: a novel based on Dr. Lydgate's struggles to establish himself in a provincial town, and a shorter piece called 'Miss Brooke', dealing with the aspirations and frustrations of a 'modern St. Teresa.' Evidently George Eliot came to see how the two stories could be satisfyingly merged to give a wide-ranging novel which at the same time focused in great depth on the ambitions and dilemmas of her protagonists.

Listeners more familiar with the works of Eliot's contemporary Dickens will quickly be struck by her profoundly different approach. Eliot's novel is, from the first, a novel about ideas as well as people, and the people themselves are realised in a manner almost

wholly devoid of caricature and hyperbole: the characters are placed in a context absolutely faithful to the period of the Great Reform Bill and the life of a provincial manufacturing town (Middlemarch is Coventry). Eliot has deliberately ensured that her characters are drawn from a wide range of social classes: although it's true that the middle classes predominate, we are also introduced to (for example) poor tenant farmers, and the 'county' set whose houses and estates lie outside the town limits. All are united in their concern with impending election and reform: Eliot is able to concentrate on this theme, amongst others, because she is quite specific in placing the action of the novel between September 1829 and the end of May 1832.

George Eliot puts her two main characters – Dorothea Brooke and Tertius Lydgate – at the centre of her novel, and proceeds to show with consummate skill the ways in which their lives impact on, or are affected by, the lives of others who become, as it were, satellites of these protagonists. There are four main groups:

(1) Dorothea and her two husbands, Casaubon and Ladislaw (2) Lydgate and Rosamond (3) Bulstrode and associates (4) Fred Vincy and Mary Garth. An example of interconnection would run as follows: Casaubon is related to Ladislaw, of whom he disapproves and is jealous; Rosamond flirts, in her discontent, with Ladislaw; Dorothea misinterprets this flirtation as love; Bulstrode, himself related by marriage to Rosamond, has been guilty in the past of cheating Ladislaw's family; Caleb Garth (Mary's father) refuses to work for Bulstrode when he discovers the dark secret of the latter's past...and so on. This may seem confusing, but all is made clear in the masterly unfolding of Eliot's narrative. The very interconnectedness of things, the ways in which the past influences the present, the fact that 'actions have consequences': these are not only the material of Eliot's narrative but also an essential part of her moral vision. This is, of course, most powerfully and movingly expressed in the story of Bulstrode's downfall – Bulstrode, the man who had thought to make of his religion a bulwark against his own earlier misdeeds.

Middlemarch is, among other things, a love story – or perhaps, more properly, love stories. But this is only the most obvious of

its themes. Indeed, there is a case for saying that the central idea of the novel is vocation, and the search for vocation. For Eliot, work well and happily done is crucially significant in her moral scheme of things, but she understands with deep humanity the difficulty we may encounter in achieving such satisfaction. Dorothea yearns to do some great good for her fellow men, yet is all too often thwarted in that desire, partly because she is still learning not only about the world but also herself. Lydgate, perhaps the most profoundly moving character in the novel, knows his vocation from an early age yet is ultimately frustrated by his own mistakes and others' obstructiveness – especially the stubborn refusal of his pretty, shallow wife to acknowledge the importance of his philanthropic ambitions. Fred Vincy only comes to his vocation almost by accident, and near the end of the novel. Casaubon must eventually confront the failure and emptiness of his great scheme to discover a 'Key to all Mythologies', and in so doing, acknowledge the littleness and emptiness of his own self. Reality, then, tempers idealism – yet all is not lost: Dorothea may never fully satisfy her early ardour, but 'the effect of her being on those around her was incalculably

diffusive...and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been, is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs.'

George Eliot (Mary Ann or Marian Evans) was born in 1819 and died in 1880. Her father was a land agent in Warwickshire and, in part, the model for Caleb Garth in *Middlemarch*. Her early devotion to Evangelical Christianity was replaced by an atheism which acknowledged that religious belief is emotionally and imaginatively natural for mankind, a view developed by her work in translating Strauss' *Life of Jesus*

(1846). Her abandonment of religious faith caused an intense but temporary breach with her father. She moved to London in 1851 and became a leading member of the capital's intellectual circle. She set up house with G.H. Lewes: this was at the time a startlingly unorthodox course of action. George Eliot only married towards the end of her life, after the death of Lewes in 1878: her husband was John Walter Cross. Her principal works are *Adam Bede* (1859), *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), *Silas Marner* (1861), *Romola* (1862), *Felix Holt*, *The Radical* (1866), *Middlemarch* (1872), and *Daniel Deronda* (1876).

Notes by Perry Keenlyside

The music on this recording is taken from the NAXOS catalogue

MENDELSSOHN PIANO SEXTET OP. 110	8.550966
Bartholdy Piano Quartet	
MENDELSSOHN SONGS WITHOUT WORDS VOL. II	8.550453
Péter Nagy, piano	
MENDELSSOHN PIANO QUARTETS	8.550967
Bartholdy Piano Quartet	

Music programmed by Nicolas Soames

Cover picture: A Jersey Lily (Lillie Lantry) by Sir John Everett Millais.
Courtesy: The Bridgeman Art Library, London.

George Eliot

Middlemarch

Read by **Carole Boyd**

Middlemarch is perhaps the finest novel in the English language. Set in a provincial town at the time of the Great Reform Bill in 1832, Eliot's novel is about the quest for both personal and political liberation and fulfilment, and centres upon two remarkable individuals, the ardently idealistic Dorothea Brooke and the philanthropically-motivated young doctor, Tertius Lydgate. Around them is woven a rich tapestry of character, theme and incident.



Carole Boyd trained at the Birmingham School of Speech and Drama where she won the principal national prize for voice, the Carleton Hobbs Award, and immediately joined the BBC Radio Drama Company. Vocal versatility is her speciality, from her creation of the notorious character of Lynda Snell in *The Archers* to *Poetry Please* and all the female characters in *Postman Pat*. She has won two prestigious awards for her reading of Roy's *The God of Small Things* and Huth's *Landgirls*. She has also written and recorded her own audiobook, Lynda Snell's *History of Ambridge*.

CD ISBN:

978-962-634-196-4

View our catalogue online at
www.naxosaudiobooks.com



Abridged by Perry Keenleyside. Produced by Nicolas Soames
Post-production: Sarah Butcher, SBS
Engineer (speech): Norman Goodman, Motivation Sound

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. UNAUTHORISED PUBLIC PERFORMANCE,
BROADCASTING AND COPYING OF THESE COMPACT DISCS PROHIBITED.
© 2000 NAXOS Audiobooks Ltd. © 2000 NAXOS Audiobooks Ltd.
Made in Germany.

Total time
7:18:52