

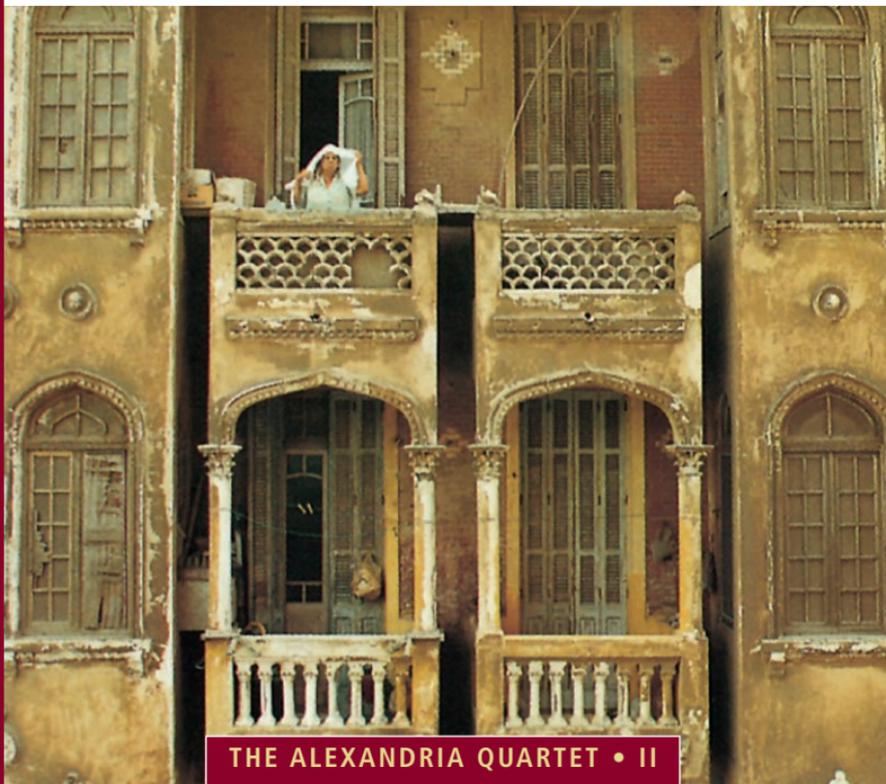
**NAXOS**  
AudioBooks

**CLASSIC  
FICTION**

**MODERN  
CLASSICS**

Lawrence Durrell  
**Balthazar**

Read by **Nigel Anthony**



NA304612D

**THE ALEXANDRIA QUARTET • II**

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1	'A memory catches sight of itself in the mirror'	8:16
2	Balthazar returns with a large packet	4:00
3	The Interlinear – new truths, painful truths	3:14
4	The literary society in the Ptolemaic parlour	4:21
5	Scobie and some secrets	12:49
6	Nessim, Mountolive – and Justine	4:47
7	Balthazar warns Clea	4:20
8	Justine – a painting and a kiss	9:44
9	'The most dangerous thing in the world...'	2:54
10	Nessim leaves for Karm Abu Girg	4:09
11	Narouz – the younger brother	9:25
12	Their mother, Leila	4:30
13	Leila, once beautiful and rich	6:51
14	A gallop – Nessim confides in Narouz	5:58
15	Nessim leaves for the city	5:41
16	The Interlinear: 'To imagine...'	12:58
17	Pursewarden – the writer	5:08
18	Justine – a love affair begins	7:55
19	Love – a whole vocabulary of adjectives	13:01
20	Justine's laughter	10:43

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21	Narouz decides to act	8:56
22	Magzub and a vision	5:22
23	Narouz reports to Nessim	2:25
24	The death of Scobie	5:58
25	Pombal's complications	7:10
26	Balthazar's Interlinear continues	6:56
27	The carnival in Alexandria	8:48
28	With dominoes in place, they set out for fun	9:05
29	Toto, Pursewarden, Spumante, Mountolive	6:17
30	An expected surprise – a death	7:40
31	Justine's echo: time immemorial	6:34
32	Clea reveals her encounter with Narouz	7:54
33	A letter from Clea	4:35
34	A letter from Pursewarden	1:40
35	The oil in the lamp is low	5:54

**Total time: 3:56:14**

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## Lawrence Durrell

# Balthazar

Lawrence Durrell's novel *Balthazar* is the second volume in his *Alexandria Quartet*. Darley, a writer, has been involved in the events and complex emotional relationships portrayed in the first volume *Justine*. And all the central characters have been influenced, above all, by the mysterious Egyptian city of the story, Alexandria itself: 'Landscape-tones: brown to bronze, steep skyline, low cloud, pearl ground with shadow oyster and violet reflections. The lion-dust of desert; prophets' tombs turned to zinc and copper at sunset on the ancient lake'.

Darley, the narrator of the first volume, has now left the city and is living on a remote Greek island with the child of a dead lover, Melissa. He writes of love, as he saw it between those whom he knew in the past, when he lived in the great metropolis of many races and religions. He feels he knows the truth about Justine and her love for him, about her feelings for her husband Nessim, indeed about the complex web of relationships and viewpoints that have arisen among the story's many characters, to form an ever-changing pattern:

'Justine, Melissa, Clea...There were so few of us really – you would have thought them easily disposed of in a single book, would you not? So would I, so did I. Dispersed now by time and circumstance, the circuit broken forever...I had set myself the task of trying to recover them in words, reinstate them in memory, allot to each his and her position in my time. Selfishly. And with that writing complete, I felt that I had turned a key upon the doll's house of our actions'.

But, after all, Darley has not fully turned the key on the actions and the story. He has sent the manuscript of *Justine* to Balthazar, the Alexandrian doctor who had known the actors and agents far better than Darley, and been acquainted with many of them for all of their lives. One evening Balthazar himself arrives on the island. He brings him the manuscript: Darley sees that the papers are 'scarred and starred by massive interlinear of sentences, paragraphs and question marks'. This seems to him to be somehow symbolic of the very reality he and his friends had shared – 'a palimpsest upon which each of us had left his or her

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individual traces, layer by layer’.

Balthazar leaves and Darley realizes that he must examine all the experiences he has detailed with new eyes, accustoming himself to the truths Balthazar has added. He must look again at how ‘The politics of love, the intrigues of desire, good and evil, virtue and caprice, love and murder, moved obscurely in the dark corners of Alexandria’s streets and squares, brothels and drawing-rooms – moved like a great congress of eels in the slime of plot and counter-plot...To set it all down in cold black and white, until such time as the memory and impulse of it is spent. I know that the key I am trying to turn is in myself’.

*Balthazar* thus reopens the story begun in *Justine*, drawing out new meanings and combinations from the tale. It explores the mystery of the deaths of some of the characters – Pursewarden, Scobie, Capodistria – and Darley’s growing awareness of the elusive strangeness of life itself. Again, a central theme is the problem of telling any human story, since all lives are refracted in other lives, and much in human experience is unknowable. In this volume Durrell’s rich, dense prose enlarges, and his sense of life grows more complicated – leading us onward to the final two works of the sequence.

Lawrence Durrell was born in 1912 in India. When he was ten, the family returned to England and he went to school in Canterbury. The family moved to Corfu some years later, and the period was recorded by Durrell’s brother Gerald in *My Family And Other Animals* (1956). During the thirties Durrell lived in Paris and later turned to journalism, teaching and diplomacy 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, but it was *The Alexandria Quartet* which made him famous. His last works were *The Avignon Quartet* and *Caesar’s Vast Ghost*. He died in 1990.

**Notes by Elizabeth Bradbury**

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

<b>FRENCH PIANO TRIOS</b> VOL. 1 Joachim Trio	8.550934
<b>DEBUSSY</b> STRING QUARTET NO. 1 <b>RAVEL</b> STRING QUARTET IN F Kodaly Quartet	8.550249
<b>MACDOWELL</b> PIANO MUSIC VOL. 1 James Barbagallo, piano	8.223631

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

Abridged by Elizabeth Bradbury. Produced by Nicolas Soames  
Post-production: Simon Weil. The Classical Recording  
Company  
Engineer (speech): Alan Smyth, Bucks Audio Cassettes

# Lawrence Durrell Balthazar

Read by **Nigel Anthony**

'The politics of love, the intrigues of desire...love and murder, moved obscurely in the dark corners of Alexandria's streets and squares, brothels and drawing-rooms – moved like a great congress of eels in the slime of plot and counter-plot...'

In *Balthazar*, the second volume in Durrell's *Alexandria Quartet*, the story and the characters come more clearly into focus. Darley, the reflective Englishman, receives from Balthazar, the pathologist, a mass of notes which attempts to explain what really happened between the tempestuous Justine, her husband Nessim, Clea the artist, Pursewarden the writer; new figures emerge and play key roles. Balthazar, in his 'Interlinear', explains and warns.

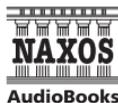


**Nigel Anthony** has worked in television (*Coronation Street*, *Spender*, *Casualty*, etc.) and in the theatre, with the RSC and with Alan Ayckbourn at Scarborough. He is, however, best known for his numerous broadcasts on BBC Radio. For many years he has been one of the leading actors in that medium 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 *Justine*, *Mountolive* and *Clea* for Naxos AudioBooks.

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Total time  
3:56:14