

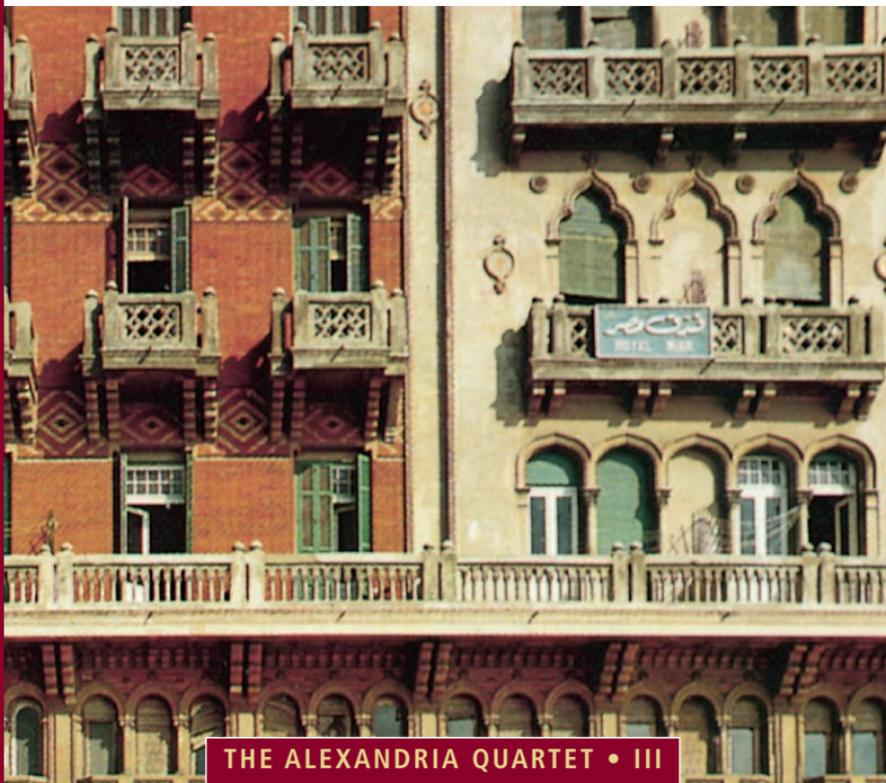
NAXOS
AudioBooks

**CLASSIC
FICTION**

**MODERN
CLASSICS**

Lawrence Durrell
Mountolive

Read by **Nigel Anthony**



NA306112D

THE ALEXANDRIA QUARTET • III

1	Across the waters of Mareotis	7:49
2	Leila – lips brush wrist	5:36
3	The home of the Coptic squire	9:35
4	The love of the inexperienced	10:00
5	Itinerant diplomacy – and letters from Egypt	9:06
6	The writer, Ludwig Pursewarden	8:44
7	Promotion – and the long-awaited posting	5:10
8	Berlin: a malignant euphoria	5:07
9	The Foreign Office – a warning	11:06
10	Deep in snow, the memories	7:17
11	A briefing from Pursewarden	10:32
12	Nessim's discourse on Coptic politics	12:15
13	Ambassador David Mountolive	9:09
14	Arrival in Alexandria	9:03

15	Alexandrian images as Clea paints	5:40
16	In the bubble of the Etoile – Melissa	9:04
17	An unexpected liaison	11:59
18	Mystery or simply a betrayal?	10:17
19	A very private understanding	12:08
20	The conspirators at home	5:13
21	Narouz – treading on quicksand	7:28
22	Proof from Maskelyne	10:14
23	Memlik – incurably venal	5:36
24	According to plan	8:38
25	An invitation from Leila	7:58
26	A stiff whisky	5:34
27	'The day of his death'	13:51

Total time: 3:52:21

Lawrence Durrell

Mountolive

Mountolive is the third volume of Lawrence Durrell's *The Alexandria Quartet*. Here he deals with *Mountolive*, the young British diplomat coming into contact with Egypt, and with Alexandria – the experience is central to his life. Characters from the two earlier novels – Nessim, Justine, Narouz, Pursewarden, Melissa – are present once again, but the central theme is of isolation. Again, all speak on the ubiquitous subject of love – which is different for every participant and viewer, and offers endless potential for variation. Characters are imposed upon by their surroundings, and again that chiefly means the city of Alexandria, which has so many sides and so many voices. Solutions to life, love and experience compound more mysteries than they solve; even death is contingent and tentative.

Mountolive has an effect on every other character, and in turn their lives impinge powerfully on him. A junior of exceptional promise in the diplomatic service, he goes to Egypt to improve his Arabic. He is attached to the British High Commission,

and carries a letter of introduction to the Hosnani family. This brings him into the rambling old-fashioned house, built upon a network of canals and embankments close to Alexandria, where he falls in love with Leila, the wife of the old and crippled Coptic squire, and also mother of Nessim and Narouz. Nessim is the handsome son, educated in Europe, and a banker; Narouz is a peasant farmer, whose appearance is marred by a hare-lip.

Mountolive leaves Egypt, and his career takes him to many distant countries. Meantime, through her engaging and brilliant letters, Leila transforms their affair into a close friendship. He longs to see her again, and eventually returns to Egypt as the British Ambassador. But by now Leila has been cruelly marked by smallpox, and she refuses to meet him.

In this volume of the *Quartet*, political themes grow stronger. What is the truth behind Nessim's real political manoeuvrings? What really underpins his relationship with Justine? As this emerges and the story moves to its dramatic

conclusion, various mysterious incidents from the previous novels start to be made clear; Pursewarden, Melissa, Pombal and Balthazar all return to the narrative.

Mountolive thus brings out the political dimensions of the *Quartet*. In Germany, David Mountolive has seen the beginnings of Hitler's influence, and watched the movement of Europe toward the Second World War. The resonance of these events reaches into Egypt and Palestine, where the dilemma of the victimized Jews will unfold on top of the Arab world. It is also a story of diplomatic routines and intrigues, developing the texture of the sequence as a whole towards its outcome in the final volume to follow.

Notes by Elizabeth Bradbury

The music on this recording is taken from the NAXOS catalogue

DEBUSSY IMAGES/LE MARTYRE DE ST. SÉBASTIEN BRT Philharmonic, Brussels/ Alexander Rahbari	8.550505
DEBUSSY/RAVEL VIOLIN SONATAS Dong-Suk Kang, violin; Pascal Devoyon, piano	8.550276
BRITTEN VARIATIONS ON A THEME OF FRANK BRIDGE Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Studt	8.550823
PIAZZOLLA LE GRAND TANGO Maria Kliegel, cello; Bern Glemser, piano	8.550785

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

Lawrence Durrell Mountolive

Read by **Nigel Anthony**

'With the open sesame of language ready to hand, he suddenly began to find himself really penetrating a foreign country'

In *Mountolive*, the third volume in Durrell's *The Alexandria Quartet*, the events surrounding the interwoven community of Nessim, Justine, Narouz, Pursewarden and the other major characters are given a very different perspective. The intrigues and complex relationships are seen through the political prism of a world plunging towards war. David Mountolive, once emotionally involved with Nessim's set, now returns to Egypt as the British ambassador.



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*, *Balthazar* and *Clea* for Naxos AudioBooks.

CD ISBN:

978-962-634-061-5

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Abridged by Elizabeth Bradbury, Produced by Nicholas Scames
Post-production: Simon Weir, The Classical Recording
Company
Engineer (speech): Alan Smyth, Bucks Audio Cassettes

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Total time
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