

# Performance Option 1

## Creating Choral Work Using *Antony and Cleopatra*

**Grade:** 2-12

**Goal(s):** To develop ensemble performance opportunities from a Shakespearean monologue. To provide greater exploration of Shakespeare's plays, themes, and language through ensemble performance.

**Materials:** Barge Scene from *Antony and Cleopatra* (Act 2, Scene 2) for each actor.

### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Distribute the text to each actor.
2. Assign the lines of the text. How does the actor's gender inform the delivery of a line? Do attitude, speed, and gesture change the meaning and/or power of how words are said?
3. Perform the text, with each performance being reviewed and revised for clarity and meaning.

### SUGGESTED VARIATION(S):

- **For beginning actors:** Review the text for pronunciation and meaning.
- **For advanced actors:** Assign the text to smaller groups. Within these groups, have the actors decide their own line assignments.
- **Raising The Bar:**
  - Have the actors research and develop their own choral pieces from monologues, scenes, and sonnets.
  - Combine the work of all of the groups to develop a final presentation in front of an audience.

### SYNOPSIS:

Arriving on the Nile aboard a lavish barge, Cleopatra visits Antony. In the play, this speech is spoken by one character. In this version, the text has been edited to be performed by nine actors. Any of Shakespeare's descriptive monologues, usually told by a messenger or servant witnessing the event, lend themselves to similar choral exploration.



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**All:** Look where they come:  
**Actor 1:** Take but good note, and you shall see in her the triple pillar of the world transform'd  
**All:** O  
**Actor 1:** Never was there such a queen, hear me  
**Actor 2:** My precious queen  
**Actor 3:** Wrangling queen  
**Actor 4:** My dearest queen  
**Actor 5:** O, my lord  
**Actor 6:** O, my love  
**Actor 7:** She's a most triumphant lady, if report be square to her.  
**Actor 1:** When she first met Marc Antony  
**Women:** Mark Antony  
**Actor 8:** She purs'd his heart upon the river of Cydnus  
**Actor 9:** There she appear'd indeed; or my reporters devis'd well for her  
**All:** I (we) will tell you  
**Actors 2 and 3:** The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne  
**Actors 4 and 5:** Burn'd on the water  
**Actors 6 and 7:** The poop was beaten gold  
**Actors 8 and 9:** Purple the sails and so perfumed that  
**Women:** The winds were lovesick with them;  
**Men:** The oars were silver  
**Actor 6:** Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke  
**Actor 5:** And made the water which they beat to follow faster, as amorous as their strokes.  
**Actor 1:** For her own person, it beggar'd all description:  
**Actor 4:** Did she lie in her pavilion  
**Actors 2 and 3:** Cloth of gold, of tissue-  
**Actor 1:** O'er-picturing that Venus where we see  
**Actors 2 and 3:** The fancy outwork nature.  
**Actors 5 and 7:** On each side her, stood pretty dimpled boys, like smiling Cupids.  
**Actors 4, 6, and 8:** With divers-coloured

fans whose wind did seem to glow the delicate cheeks which they did cool.  
**ALL:** Rare Egyptian!  
**Women:** Upon her landing,  
**Men:** Antony sent to her,  
**Actor 9:** Invited her to supper  
**Actor 8:** She replied,  
**Actor 7:** It should be better he became her guest  
**Women:** Which she entreated our courteous Antony  
**Men:** Whom ne'er the word "no" woman heard speak,  
**Actor 6:** Being barber'd ten times o'er,  
**Actor 5:** Goes to the feast  
**Actor 4:** And for his eyes ordinary eat only.  
**All:** Royal wench!  
**Actors 1, 2, and 3:** I saw her once  
**Actor 3:** Hop forty paces through the public street,  
**Actor 2:** And having lost her breath, she spoke, and panted,  
**Actor 1:** That she did make defect perfection and breathless power  
**Actors 1, 2, and 3:** Breathe form.  
**Men:** Now Antony must leave her utterly.  
**Women:** Never he will not.  
**Actor 1:** Age cannot wither her  
**Actor 2:** Nor custom stale  
**Actor 3:** Her infinite variety:  
**Actor 4:** Other women cloy  
**Actor 5:** The appetites they feed,  
**Actor 6:** But she makes hungry,  
**Actor 7:** Where most she satisfies.  
**Actor 8:** For vilest things  
**Actor 9:** Become themselves in her,  
**Actors 8 and 9:** That the holy priests  
**Men:** Bless her  
**Women:** When she is riggish  
**Actor 1:** O, never was there such a queen, hear me!  
**Actors: 2, 3, and 4:** My precious queen!  
**Actors 5, 6, and 7:** My wrangling Queen!  
**Actors 8 and 9:** My dearest queen  
**All:** Cleopatra!

