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.
All: Look where they come:

Actor 1: Take but good note, and you shall see in her the triple pillar of the world tranform'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!