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THEATRE ROYAL volume 3

Disc 1

1 The Case of Bardell v. Pickwick 20.04

2 Sydney Carton 27.52

Disc 2

1 Mr. Micawber's Difficulties 27.54

2 A Christmas Carol 24.11

SIR LAURENCE OLIVIER
with supporting cast

First Broadcast in the UK in 1952 and 1953
remastered and repackaged 2012
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Fiction/Classic Radio



Theatre
Royal
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THEATRE ROYAL

Volume 3

Disc 1

1 The Case of Bardell vs. Pickwick

First published in 1837, Charles Dickens' "Pickwick Papers", his tales of Mr. Pickwick and his Pickwick Club, were in fact set ten years earlier. Laurence Olivier stars as Sergeant Buzfuz, counsel for Mrs. Bardell in her action against Samuel Pickwick for Breach of Promise of Marriage.

As so often in Dickens' novels (and in life), confusion and misunderstanding lie at the root of the problem. Mr. Pickwick had only been trying to explain to Mrs. Bardell, his landlady at the 'George and Vulture', that he had decided to seek and manservant, not a wife!

2 Sydney Carton

Charles Dickens' "A Tale of Two Cities", published in 1859, is one of the great novels of the Victorian age. And Sydney Carton, here played by Laurence Olivier, is one of the most loveable and human of all Dickens' characters.

Carton, the gifted, drunken, self-loathing lawyer, loves Lucie Manette. He has no love for her future husband, Charles Darnay. Yet, amid the horror and violence of Revolutionary France, he sacrifices his life for Darnay out of his love for Lucie. "It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known."

Disc 2

1 Mr. Micawber's Difficulties

First published in 1850, "David Copperfield" was Charles Dickens' 'favourite child' among his novels and his most autobiographical. Laurence Olivier both narrates the tale and stars as Wilkins Micawber, the ever-optimistic wastrel for whom "something will turn up."

Sent from home as a child by his unfeeling stepfather, Mr. Murdstone, David Copperfield suffers misery cleaning out wine bottles (just as Dickens himself had suffered as a child working in a blacking factory), but finds contentment lodging with the Micawbers'. Yet soon Wilkins Micawber and his ever-loyal wife are incarcerated as debtors in the King's Bench Prison. Released, they set off for Plymouth, leaving young David alone once more.

2 A Christmas Carol

First published in 1843, Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" achieved instant success. Laurence Olivier both narrates the tale and stars as Ebenezer Scrooge, "a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner!" His wretched clerk, Bob Cratchit, is paid so meagre a wage that he cannot help his sickly son, Tiny Tim.

However, Scrooge has supernatural visitors in the form of his old, dead business partner, Jacob Marley, who warns against what may befall him, and the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Christmas Present and Christmas Yet to Come. And just as icy winter gives way to the warmth of spring, so is his cold, pinched, unfeeling heart transformed and restored to the warmth and innocence of childhood. The true spirit of Christmas finally prevails.

The recordings were carefully remastered so as not to detract from the ambience of the original performances.

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