

THE CHIMES enjoyed an enormous initial success - greater even than that of A CHRISTMAS CAROL. Dickens wrote to a friend, after its completion, "I believe I have written a tremendous book. It will make a great uproar, I have no doubt." He was quite right! Judgments reflected the political leanings of those writing and varied from: "as utter trash as was ever trodden underfoot" to "the finest thing Dickens has ever written". It takes up the themes introduced in A CHRISTMAS CAROL concerning the plight of England's poor, but uses a more directly satirical approach. Dickens satirises the attitudes of the comfortably rich who regarded the under-privileged as, at best, superfluous and, at worst, "born bad".

Within a few weeks of publication, five dramatisations of THE CHIMES appeared on the London stage. Two, at least, met with some success - especially with working-class audiences who identified with the character of Will Fern and applauded him "to the very echo".

#### FUTURE PRODUCTIONS

March 14-15-16

LONDON ASSURANCE by Dion Boucicault  
Directed by Charles Hill

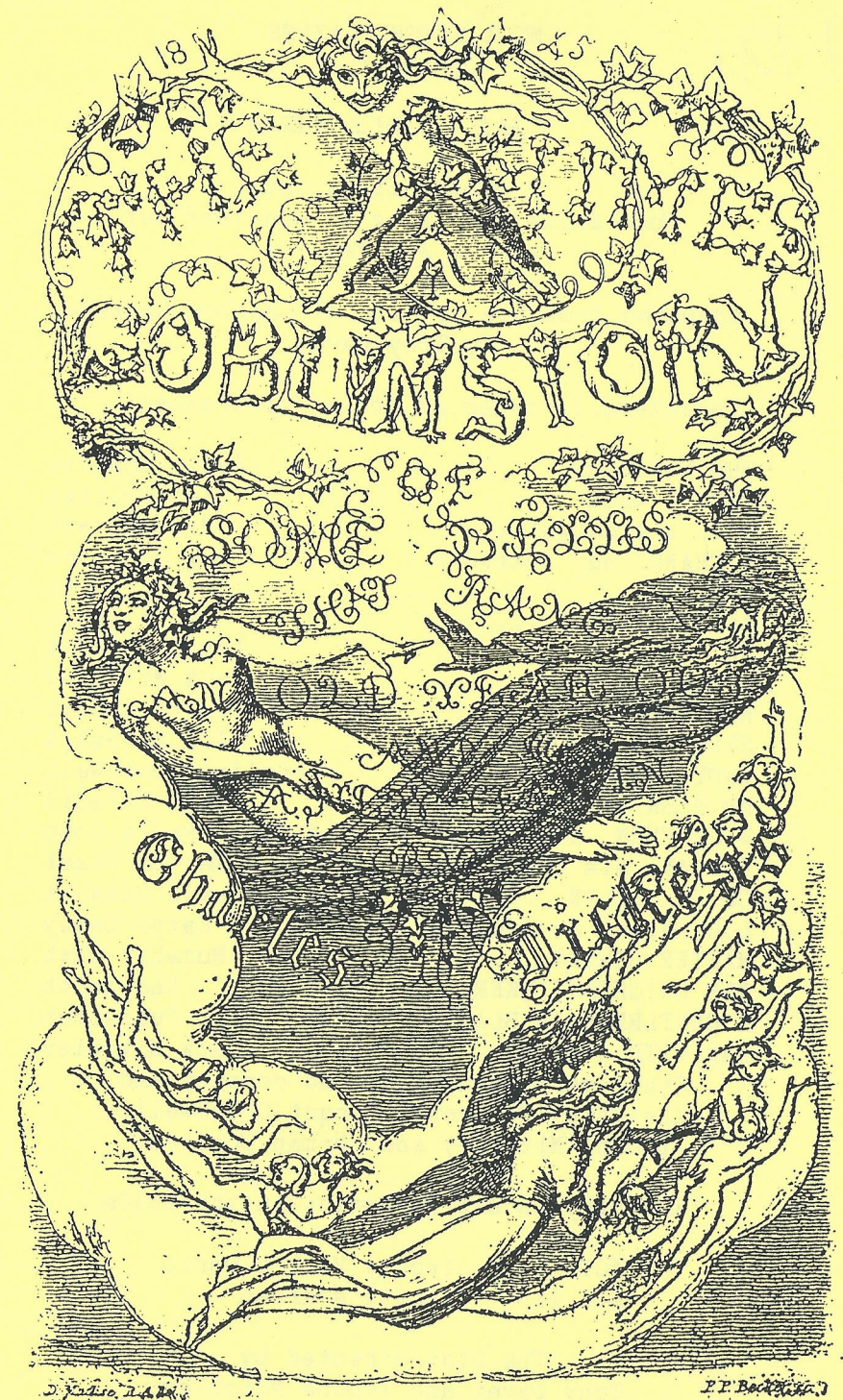
A veteran roué plans to marry a cynical country beauty. She, however, falls for his son who is, of course, in disguise so that not even his own father recognises him! An evening of fun.

May 9-10-11

THE ALCHEMIST by Ben Jonson  
Directed by Yvonne Mitchley

July 4-5-6

CAN YOU HEAR ME AT THE BACK? by Brian Clark  
Directed by Ian Beckett





1991

MOOT HOUSE PLAYERS  
present

## THE CHIMES

*A Goblin Story of  
Some Bells that Rang an Old Year out  
and a New Year in*

Adapted from the novella of Charles Dickens  
by Tony Davey

*Characters in order of their appearance:*

THE NARRATOR	...	...	David Schacht
TROTTY VECK	...	...	Ken Collins
MEG, his daughter	...	...	Mandy Grant
RICHARD, her intended	...	...	Doug Sheppard
FOOTMAN	...	...	John Banks
ALDERMAN CUTE	...	...	Geoff Leeds
MR FILER	...	...	David Schacht
A GENTLEMAN	...	...	Jack Mitchley
MR TUGBY	...	...	Charles Hill
SIR JOSEPH BOWLEY, MP	...	...	Jon McNamara
LADY BOWLEY	...	...	Jennifer Southwell
MR FISH, their secretary	...	...	Mike Haladij
WILL FERN, a labourer	...	...	Michael Rawle-Cope
LILIAN, his niece, as a girl	...	...	Marita Stark
CHIEF GOBLIN	...	...	David Schacht
LILIAN, as an adult	...	...	Katya Davey
MASTER BOWLEY	...	...	Mozahir Shah
MRS CHICKENSTALKER	...	...	Una Smith
A GENTLEMAN IN BLACK	...	...	Mark Puddefoot
MAN WITH A DRUM	...	...	Jack Mitchley

Other parts played by the company and  
Christina Scriven, Jacqui Cresswell,  
Yvonne Mitchley and Norman Scriven

The play is set in London in the 1840s

ACT I: Trotty Veck's world  
ACT II: Trotty's dream

The play directed by  
Tony Davey and Yvonne Mitchley

Lighting design and sound creation by  
Christopher Driver

Costumes by Laws; artwork by Paul Regeli  
Stage management by Roger Williamson and Ian Beckett

WE MUST WARN MEMBERS OF OUR AUDIENCE THAT  
STROBE LIGHTING IS USED AS AN EFFECT  
TOWARDS THE END OF EACH ACT

## THE PLAY

This dramatisation follows closely the text of the book. It falls naturally into two acts: In the first act we are introduced to the world in which Trotty Veck and his daughter Meg live. It is a world of contrasts, peopled by the very rich - represented by the insufferable Cute and his party, and the selfish and conceited Bowleys; and the very poor - the Vecks themselves and Will Fern and his niece Lilian. The voices of the Chimes haunt Trotty and entice him to the church tower, where he swoons.

In the second act we enter Trotty's dream which is set in the future, showing us what might happen. We meet again the people from the first act (now masked to suggest their dream characters), and discover how Lilian turns to earning her living on the streets; how both she and Richard, Meg's intended, die; and how Meg is reduced to begging. Despite all the gloom there is a hint of optimism when Trotty learns, from the Chimes that we must "neither doubt ourselves nor doubt the Good in one another".

## THE BOOK

THE CHIMES was entirely written during the month of October 1844 as a follow-up to the success of the previous year's A CHRISTMAS CAROL. It was completed in Genoa, and the title was inspired by the "maddening" bells of that town.

Dickens went on to write three more 'Christmas Books' including, most successfully, THE CRICKET ON THE HEARTH. He used the three mentioned books for his public readings, performing THE CHIMES for the first time in 1858.