

LITTLE DORRIT on MASTERPIECE CLASSIC

Hosted by Laura Linney

Sundays, March 29 through April 26, 2009 at 9pm ET on PBS

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

One of Charles Dickens' greatest love stories also has the timely theme of chronic debt and financial collapse. Adapted by screenwriter extraordinaire Andrew Davies (*Bleak House*, *Pride and Prejudice*), the five-part miniseries stars Matthew Macfadyen (*Pride and Prejudice* with Keira Knightley) as hero Arthur Clennam, newcomer Claire Foy as Amy "Little" Dorrit, and Tom Courtenay (*The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*) as her father, who has been incarcerated for 25 years for insolvency. Scores of other great actors appear in this moving tale that was particularly close to Dickens' heart, since his own father did time in debtor's prison.

PROGRAM LISTINGS

Part 1 – March 29, 2009 at 9pm on PBS

Amy "Little" Dorrit (Claire Foy) is mysteriously summoned from the Marshalsea debtor's prison, where she is caring for her father (Tom Courtenay), to work for the shut-in Mrs. Clennam (Judy Paritt). Arthur Clennam (Matthew Macfadyen) suspects a long-buried family secret behind his mother's unaccustomed act of charity.

Part 2 – April 5, 2009 at 9pm on PBS

Romance and heartbreak are in the air as John Chivery (Russell Tovey) proposes to Amy, Arthur vies for the hand of Pet Meagles (Georgia King), and Fanny Dorrit (Emma Pierson) leads on playboy Edmund Sparkler (Sebastian Armesto), stepson of financier Mr. Merdle (Anton Lesser).

Part 3 – April 12, 2009 at 9pm on PBS

The villainous Rigaud (Andy Serkis) begins an extortion scheme against Mrs. Clennam, while Flintwitch (Alun Armstrong) observes knowingly. Pancks (Eddie Marsan) uncovers information that frees Mr. Dorrit from the Marshalsea. The Dorrits, including Amy, leave for a life of upper-class idleness in Italy.

MASTERPIECE

Part 4 – April 19, 2009 at 9pm on PBS

Alarmed that his mother is suspected of murdering the missing Rigaud, Arthur searches high and low for the scoundrel. He also finds time to invest in Merdle's bank, as does most of London, including the newly arrived Mr. Dorrit. Meanwhile, Amy has stayed behind in Venice.

Part 5 – April 26, 2009 at 9pm on PBS

Broken by reminders of the past in London, Mr. Dorrit returns to Amy in Italy. Ruin threatens all who have invested with Merdle. The plot reaches a climax at the House of Clennam, where miracles and disasters ensue; and at the Marshalsea, where Amy and Arthur meet once more.

Little Dorrit is a BBC/WGBH Boston coproduction. It was adapted by Andrew Davies from the novel by Charles Dickens. The directors are Adam Smith and Diarmuid Lawrence. The producer is Anne Pivcevic. The executive producers are Kate Harwood for the BBC and Rebecca Eaton for WGBH. MASTERPIECE has been presented on PBS by WGBH since 1971. Rebecca Eaton is executive producer. Laura Linney is the host of MASTERPIECE CLASSIC. Public television viewers provide funding for MASTERPIECE.

January 2009

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Online press materials available at **pressroom.wgbh.org** and **pbs.org/pressroom**

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