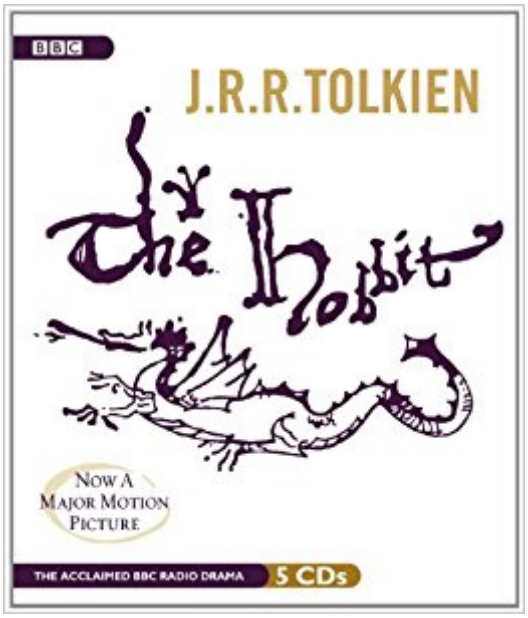
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The Hobbit (BBC Radio Full Cast Drama)



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Synopsis

The radio dramatization of The Hobbit became a classic when it was first broadcast on BBC Radio 4 in 1968 and it continues to delight today.Tolkiens famous saga, the prelude to The Lord of the Rings, has all the ingredients of fantasy and adventure: dwarves, elves, goblins and trolls, a fearsome dragon, a great wizard, a perilous quest, and a dramatic climax. Bilbo Baggins, the hobbit, is a peaceful sort who lives in a cozy hole in the Shire, a place where adventures are uncommonand rather unwanted. So when the wizard Gandalf whisks him away on a treasure-hunting expedition with a troop of rowdy dwarves, hes not entirely thrilled.

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Customer Reviews

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien was born on January 3, 1892. His mother died when he was twelve, and he and his brother became wards of the local priest. When a professor at Oxford, he wrote stories for his children telling them the story of The Hobbit. When his publisher asked for a sequel to The Hobbit, he wrote Lord of the Rings, which took twelve years to complete. He died in September 1973.

This is a great version of the Hobbit. It takes just a few minutes to tune your ear to the accents but once you do, you'll love it.

Excellent

The Hobbit: A BBC Full-Cast Radio DramaOver all it’s well done - however I have to say that I can’t stand the music that is used. Sounds like a dying moose or a cat at times. In my opintion the 1970/1980s when this was made didn’t always have the best sounding music.However, I enjoy the voices - though it is hard to tell them apart at times.I intend to give this version of the Hobbit a fair chance, but I will update if need be.

I have listened to and enjoyed the dramatization of The Hobbit produced by Mind’s Eye many times, but didn’t have enough patience to listen to this production through its entirety even once. The other "negative" comments regarding this set are spot on.

BBC simply tried too hard to entertain. The short pieces of acting were badly done and often distracting. The voice quality was sometimes poor, with mumbling and monotone speaking.

Horrible audio, terrible voices, vast majority of the book was left completely out of the production. Please fine a better one

This was recorded in 1968, when there were very few fantasy fans compared to today. As a result, the book is "dumbed down" for a general audience, and the result seems cheesy in parts. For example, whenever Gandalf lights his staff to give light, he says something like, "I will give us some light by lighting my staff." Then he says some mumbo jumbo, then all the dwarves say something like "Ah, that’s better," as if it’s a surprise every time. By the way, when the dwarves all talk at once, it sounds like the camping scene from Firesign Theatre’s "How Can You Be in Two Places at Once When You’re Not Anywhere at All?" And Gandalf sounds like a "dirty old man" rather than a great wizard. For that all I can say is to look at when it was produced, before these characters became cultural icons.I got a set in the early 2000s and listened to it while I was doing a long commute. Recently, when the radio news was only playing the same election stories again and again and again, I listened to it again, over about thirty short commutes (I live closer to work now.) Bilbo’s problems were a fun relief from the unbelievable "real-world" stuff on the radio. If you can’t stretch your "willing suspension of disbelief" to include the circumstances surrounding this production, you probably won’t get past the cheesy parts. On the other hand, it HAS informed subsequent productions, and put "The Hobbit" on the radar for a lot of folks who had never heard about it. So the true LOTR fan should be able to enjoy it for what it is.

This review is for the 5 disc BBC dramatization of The Hobbit, with the white cover, ISBN 1620641135. There is a newer release, with a yellow cover, that packages this version of The Hobbit (1968) and The Lord of the Rings (1981) together with some bonus material. This is a full-cast audio drama originally developed for radio, not an audiobook. There are 8 episodes clocking in at a little under half an hour each.***This is a much-beloved adaptation with some serious flaws. It's easy to forget that it will be half a century old in a few years. It is presented in frequently abrasive mono sound, with dated effects, a few questionable casting choices, and more than a few questionable music choices.So why bother?Bilbo - that's why. Paul Daneman's Bilbo is clever, bumbling, endearing, and frequently laugh-out-loud hilarious. In short, he is the perfect gentlehobbit. Much like Bill Nighy's Sam in the later Lord of the Rings radio production, Daneman is the overt inspiration for Martin Freeman's recent take on Bilbo in Peter Jackson's movies. Freeman does a great job, but the similarities are striking. In the end, Daneman's subtlety and sharpness set him apart as the greatest Bilbo interpreter.The rest of the cast for the most part dives in with great relish. There are unfortunately two glaring misfires: Gandalf and Gollum.Heron Carvic's Gandalf (interestingly pronounced "Gandalv" by most of the cast) is played as a sneering elite with a nasal drone. It is so vastly different from the great interpretations of Hordern and McKellen that it will probably take you out of the story the first few times he opens his mouth. Carvic is at least a perfectly serviceable actor, even if badly miscast, so you eventually get used to it.I can't really say the same for Gollum. Gollum is a tough character to play in an audio format, and even the fantastic later radio production of Lord of the Rings cannot escape the issue. Wolfe Morris hits the notes of manic schizophrenia just fine, but it is a screeching performance that is poorly served by the presentation. The audio is neither mixed nor compressed too carefully, so the dynamics allow Gollum's piercing wail to rise above the normal levels like a blaring commercial in the middle of a sedate TV show. The mastering leans heavily treble for the sake of clarity as well, due to technological issues with both the transmission and reproduction of radio programs at the time. In crisp digital audio on CD, it does Gollum no favors.Thankfully, Gollum is not in the story for long, and Gandalf's visits become more and more believable as the story draws on. Bilbo is there all the while, however, and his charm is a rock solid foundation for the rest of this aged, flawed, but ultimately delightful production.

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