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WELL, THIS is all rather exciting isn't it – **Torchwood** is back! And it's a new series, too, with involvement from Russell T Davies. Isn't it fantastic that Russell, one of the busiest and most in-demand writers in the UK today, still finds time to advise on **Torchwood** for Big Finish.

As you'll find out this issue, he has helped guide this fifth series, **Aliens Among Us**, with advice on new characters, and shaping the overall story.

One of the great things about **Torchwood** is discovering how ordinary people, like you or I, become part of the world. Look at Gwen Cooper's journey, from being a sceptic to becoming the beating

heart of the team. And then there's Rhys, the very definition of the long-suffering husband, and how he too became swept up in it all.

Of course that's not the only exciting new release. Nicholas Briggs's second series of **The Prisoner** is out this month and I can't wait to return to the Village. The first four stories were so absolutely on the money, capturing the spirit of the classic TV series but also bringing something new to the mix. And Mark Elstob was a complete revelation in the part of Number Six.

With some excellent performances, we're in for another treat with this set.

Be seeing you! KENNY

SNEAKPREVIEW

The War Master



THE ULTIMATE Doctor Who bad guy takes centre stage in a new series at the end of this year, as **The War Master** is unleashed upon the universe.

After his memorable appearance onscreen in *Utopia*, Sir Derek Jacobi reprises the part of the Doctor's arch foe in four new adventures

of his own, whilst all of time and space burns around him.

To be released in December, the box set features *Beneath the Viscoid* by Nicholas Briggs, *The Good Master* by Janine H Jones, *The Sky Man* by James Goss, and *The Heavenly Paradigm* by Guy Adams.

Producer and director Scott Hancock says: "I've wanted to tackle a series that focussed on the Master for years now, so when Big Finish got the rights to the New Series and started telling adventures with the War Doctor, it made sense to me to explore what the Master would have been up to.

"With all the fallout from the Time War, he'd surely have been in his element, exploiting the weak and the miserable. He's a

true villain, and against such a catastrophic backdrop, it's great to tell new stories where the Master doesn't have to be defeated."

The cast particularly enjoyed their time in studio. Scott explains: "The recording sessions were an absolute joy. We had four very different scripts and very different casts. We also had Daleks, and of course we had Sir Derek himself. If we were nervous before his arrival on that first day, he instantly put us at our ease – and by the end of the week, it felt like a proper family.

"Every day was a delight, full of laughs and anecdotes, before slipping away to explore the destruction of the universe. It was a thrill to record, and they will hopefully be an even bigger thrill to listen to!" **VORTEX**



Kenny Smith evades the clutches of Rover to sample...

THE JOY OF

SIX

WHEN THE first series of **The Prisoner** was released last year, it proved to be a critical success with fans of the classic ITV series and newcomers alike.

The audio revival of the cult 1960s TV show, written and directed by Nicholas Briggs and starring Mark Elstob in Patrick McGoochan's famous role, sees Number Six trying to escape from the Village, a strange, isolated community with a cheery veneer, but an undercurrent of mystery and threat.

Series Two of **The Prisoner** consists of four episodes – *Jet Met a Man Today* (adapted from the

..... *Many Happy Returns* TV episode),
..... *Project Six* (adapted from the *A,*
..... *B and C* TV episode), *Hammer*
..... *into Anvil* (adapted from the
..... TV episode of the same title),
..... and finally *Living in Harmony*

..... (which takes its title from the TV
..... episode, but is an original story).

..... When writing the second
..... series, did Nick's approach change
..... in any way, as a result of what he
..... had learned from Series One?

He smiles: "I suppose, given the success and the pretty much universal praise for the first box set, I approached this with at least the knowledge that I could do it and not muck it up. Mind you, that kind of confidence is dangerous!"

"The main thing is that I couldn't wait to get started, but there were so many other things on my plate at the time. In terms of where I was going with the narrative, I'd already formulated my fundamental, top secret idea about what's driving



Nick says: "Mark settled into the role about five minutes after starting it in the first episode of the first series. In many ways, Mark reminds me of David Tennant. He's an acting 'machine'.

"That doesn't mean to say that he's not packed with emotional content and creativity. What I mean is, he's immaculately well prepared and supremely vocally adept. He's dedicated and single-minded. There's no struggle with Mark. He's got every eventuality covered and loves the part."



Left to right: Mark Elstob, Lucy Briggs-Owen, Sarah Mowat and Andrew Ryan

“ I CAN ONLY ASSUME THAT WE WOULDN'T BE MAKING A SECOND SERIES IF THE FIRST HADN'T BEEN SUFFICIENTLY SUCCESSFUL! ”

MARK ELSTOB

all the stories. So, in that way, it was easier. The methodology was the same, though. I sat down and started writing storylines, creating a document that ultimately would go to ITV for approval."

Mark Elstob, who plays Number Six adds: "I was very pleased with the reaction to Series One. I attended the Big Finish weekend in January 2016 and that was the first time I was able to gauge people's reactions. I'm not a great reader of reviews, but I gather that they were generally very positive.

"I realise though, that this is a commercial project and the greatest reviews in the world won't matter if no-one wants to buy the thing! I can only (and cheerfully!) assume that we wouldn't be making a second series if the first hadn't been sufficiently successful!"

Mark's performance as Number Six won unanimous acclaim, capturing the spirit of Patrick McGoohan's original performance, whilst bringing his own nuances to the part.

be seeing you...

When Vortex suggested that Mark was channelling McGoohan, he laughed:

"Because I'm a bad mimic! I remember reading somewhere that Alec Guinness played Sir Andrew Aguecheek in *Twelfth Night* when he was a young man and decided to make it like Stan Laurel.

"What sticks in my mind is that apparently he didn't worry for a second about trying to capture an accurate and exact copy of Laurel - he knew that it would be enough just to keep Stan in his



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THE PRISONER

VOLUME TWO

Written and Directed By:
 Nicholas Briggs

Starring:
 Mark Elstob • Lucy Briggs-Owen
 John Heffernan • Sara Powell
 Deirdre Mullins • Michael Cochrane

- I MET A MAN TODAY
- PROJECT SIX
- HAMMER INTO ANVIL
- LIVING IN HARMONY

mind when playing the part. It's a bit like that. I don't want to (and I couldn't!) try to precisely copy McGoochan's voice, but I imagine how he might say a given line, and then I try to keep his voice and manner in my head when I'm saying it."

Mark was also more settled when it came to recording as the leading man.

"Yes, definitely. I at least knew what to expect from the recordings. The first episode of Series One was not only the first time I'd ever worked for Big Finish, it also was the first time I'd ever done an audio drama. I'd done lots of talking books, but never an actual dramatic piece with other actors and a director! Fortunately Nick Briggs has been the director of all the episodes and it's impossible to remain nervous in Nick's company for more than about seven seconds!"

SERIES TWO follows the template of the first season, with three episodes adapted from the original TV series, plus an all-new one written by Nick. What made him choose these particular stories for adaptation? Nick explains: "I'd had *Many*



Happy Returns in mind for ages. People kept telling me it was an impossible one to adapt for audio. But at some point between the end of producing the first series and starting work on the second, I'd thought of a way of doing it. I also wanted to tackle a couple more of my favourites: *Hammer into Anvil* and *A, B and C*. These were episodes that I loved back in the late 1970s, when I first saw the series. They have very clear, driving plot imperatives. In one, Number Six is trying to drive

Number Two mad and in the other, Six is subjected to three dream scenarios."

Nick also had fun coming up with his new storyline: "I didn't find it especially tough. It's a question of knowing what's behind it all, and then telling a story that brings out an element of that. With my *Living in Harmony* – not to be confused with the TV story of the same title (yes, that's just me being difficult!) – I wanted to explore to what extreme Six would go in the pursuit of freedom. I wanted



Left to right: Jez Fielder, Mark Elstob, Helen Goldwyn, Nicholas Briggs and John Heffernan

“And this time, I had Scott Hancock producing, who did the most beautiful job of organising everything. That made me even more relaxed. And, it has to be said, there was loads of fun to be had. Mark’s got a great sense of humour, and there’s always the brilliant Helen Goldwyn around – plus I had many laughs with my good friends Barnaby Edwards and Jez Fielder.”

Mark adds: “Series Two has a lot of great moments. Off the top of my head – an exquisite moral dilemma on the moon in *Living in Harmony*, Number Six befuddling the shopkeeper in *Hammer into Anvil*, Lucy Briggs-Owen’s fruity and strangely sexy chuckle as Number Two in *Project Six*... My personal



Left to right: Michael Cochrane, Sara Powell, Deirdre Mullins, Mark Elstob and Helen Goldwyn

“ I’D HAD MANY HAPPY RETURNS IN MIND FOR AGES. PEOPLE KEPT TELLING ME IT WAS AN IMPOSSIBLE ONE TO ADAPT FOR AUDIO. ”

NICHOLAS BRIGGS

to present him with someone who seems to be further along the scale of having been imprisoned. How would Six feel, essentially looking at what he might become?”

The team were more relaxed with the second series studio sessions, compared to the first run, when they were finding their feet. Nick says: “I think I was less

apprehensive and more able to relax. When you’ve got a leading man like Mark, who’s no trouble at all, you can just sit back and listen to him fly. And his brilliance is something that really impresses the rest of the cast. It’s inspiring to have a leading man who is so astoundingly good. They all sort of step up to the challenge.

highlights though, were those moments in *I Met a Man Today* when Number Six finds himself operating in the outside world.”

Of course, **The Prisoner** wouldn’t be the series it is without some memorable adversaries, in the form of the various Number Twos who try to crack Number Six. Nick says this series has: “A



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SOCIETY TO SOME
EXTENT. ”

MARK ELSTOB

be
seeing
you...

great bunch. I had to bring back Michael Cochrane. He is sort of the representative of the ‘established order’ in the Village. But the new Number Twos were incredible. We’ve got the delightful Lucy Briggs-Owen being really, really ghastly. Likewise, John Heffernan, who is one of the nicest men on Earth, being totally bonkers. And Deirdre Mullins being very sophisticated and cunning as our first Russian Number Two.”

Looking back at the reaction to Series One, Nick adds: “I was, of course, delighted. Yes. I did feel vindicated, as there had been many doubters. I don’t blame them for doubting – I would have been one of those had I not been the one making it! It is an odd proposition to re-imagine **The Prisoner**. But I think we’ve pulled it off. I’ve got a fantastic team of brilliant people. Great cast. And what’s particularly helped is the amazing sound design by Iain Meadows and the astoundingly good music by Jamie Robertson. You should hear what these guys are cooking up for

the second series. I love what they’re doing.”

Sound designer Iain says:

“It was easier coming to it the second time round but I did go back and look at things again. I think it’s always the case that you want to see if something needs a refresh or you might add in a little extra sparkle here and there; but for sure, having things like Rover ready to go was very handy for when an Orange Alert was called.

“You want to keep things fresh and surprise people... How much do I give away? One thing was having to go inside Rover and what that environment would sound like and then there was a moment where a travel tube was

required. I had a sound in mind and thought I could probably achieve what I needed with the help of some domestic appliances. It was a bit of a strange morning!

“I’m so proud to be involved with the series and it’s great that people have really taken it to their hearts. I’m a huge fan of the original but I love what Nick has done and Mark now, for me anyway, really is Number Six. I had to pinch myself when Nick asked me to sound

design Series One and to do it again has been fantastic!

And Jamie adds: “Series Two had a lot less fear for me to do it because I’ve now seen all the original 60s series and of course we’ve built up a new back story and tone through Series One on audio.

“There’s definitely some really good musical highlights in this series particularly in episodes one and four. Episode four is a real proper romp. It was rather fun and without giving anything away and being battered by Nick and Scott, I think there’s going to be a lot of big grins on people’s faces in episode four. But let’s not forget it’s meant to be threatening and that tone is always around the corner. Be seeing you!”

Mark adds: “I think the things that concerned McGoohan when he created the show are still powerful forces in all our lives today. I imagine he was coming at it from the point of view of a star, that is, a person (albeit materially rewarded) who is being treated as a commodity for the greater commercial gain of ‘Management’. It’s dehumanising.

“But all of us have experience of being dehumanised by society to some extent. The fight to maintain our freedom of speech, thought and will – to hang on to our humanity in the teeth of an inclement environment – is a fight that is going on every day.” **VORTEX**

LISTEN AGAIN

The Picture of Dorian Gray



IT WAS director Scott Hancock who first conceived **The Confessions of Dorian Gray** series based on Oscar Wilde's infamous creation from **The Picture of Dorian Gray**.

Following that, in late 2013, the **Dorian** team returned to the original text for an audiobook adaptation, dramatised by David Llewellyn and directed by Scott Hancock.

Scott says: "Dorian's journey has been a strange one, in a lot of ways. The **Confessions** series was always what I had in my head and wanted to do right from the word go, but instead we tackled him in a crossover **Bernice Summerfield** adventure to see whether the character might have life beyond the novel. Then we did the series, then the adaptation.

"Looking back, an adaptation should probably have been the starting point! But once we knew **Confessions** was a hit, and listeners had fallen for Alexander Vlahos

and the character, I couldn't not suggest a tie-in release for the **Big Finish Classics** range."

Writer David Llewellyn explains that adapting the book wasn't straightforward: "It was more challenging than I thought it would be before taking it on! I'd already read the novel a couple of times, and re-read it shortly before writing my first episode of **Confessions**, but in the interval between writing *This World Our Hell* and the adaptation I'd forgotten just how many characters there were!

"Oscar Wilde was primarily a playwright (**Dorian** was his first and only novel), and it shows in his writing – he clearly loved creating dialogue – but some of that dialogue doesn't half go on, and it doesn't always serve the story, it's just Wilde being frightfully witty!"

Alex was delighted to go back to the original text, to give an alternative take on the character. However, he

admits his first reaction when he heard about the adaptation going ahead was: "Fear, trepidation, worry. You know, the usual sort of reactions! Only because it is a 'classic' in every sense of the word. You have an obligation to do it justice. So initially I had to overcome that. I was thrilled, however, to hear that Big Finish were happy for me and Scott to tackle it ourselves. Having that trust was brilliant. It gave me a lot of confidence. Then came a lot of prep!"

Before doing the **Confessions** series, had Alex re-read the original novel? "I did, yes, but only to familiarise myself with the younger Dorian again. The funny thing was, David Llewellyn's script was far more exciting to read than the book. It got rid of the cloudy, muddy bits – it was bold, condensed and ripped off the page with great power. That was when the book had to take a back seat, unfortunately."

Scott adds: "I was thrilled with the end result. **The Picture of Dorian Gray** is still as fresh and brutal as it was back in the day, and the character remains one of literature's greatest anti-heroes. Everyone came together on this one. Not just the main cast of Alex, Marcus and Miles, but everyone else who popped into the studio that weekend, even if it was only for an hour or so. And then the Dunlop brothers did some phenomenal work on the sound design and music. It really does feel like a classy production, and one I think Oscar would have appreciated!"

Alexander Vlahos takes centre stage again in this month's release of **Hamlet. VORTEX**



Kenny Smith finds out about the release of Big Finish's first foray into Shakespeare – but which play is it?

that is the Question

BIG FINISH'S extensive variety of adaptations of classic literary works takes a new turn this month as it ventures into the world of William Shakespeare. Shakespeare's **Hamlet**, to be released in August, stars Alexander Vlahos (**The Confessions of Dorian Gray**, Monsieur Philippe d'Orléans in the BBC's **Versailles**) and is directed by Scott Handcock. Miles Richardson, Terry Molloy and Tracey Childs co-star.

This three-hour production tells the tale of the young prince Hamlet, who, following the death of his father the King of Denmark, returns home to find his mother married to his uncle – the late king's brother, Claudius. When Hamlet is later visited by the

ghost of his father, he learns that the murderer was actually the King's own brother, and he vows to take revenge.

SCOTT, WHO has also produced the release, says: "**Hamlet** happened because of Alexander Vlahos. When we decided to wrap up **The Confessions of Dorian Gray**, it was because neither of us wanted the series to feel stale, and it felt right to go out on a high. There are no regrets, but we both enjoyed working with each other and it was bittersweet knowing we wouldn't have a regular series to draw us back together.

"Then, around the time of our final recording sessions, Alex asked how I'd feel about tackling **Hamlet** with

him on audio, and naturally I was terrified! But it was an opportunity to challenge myself and work with one of my best mates, so there wasn't a moment's hesitation. Thankfully, Big Finish said 'yes' just as quickly, and that's how we ended up here!"

Alex was delighted to work with Scott again, explaining: "I love that man. There's a connection between us that's been built over the five or so years working closely on **Dorian**. I came to Scott with this idea to tackle **Hamlet**. I'm so pleased he agreed to do it with me, because honestly I don't think I could have done it with anyone else."

How difficult was it to adapt an important work like **Hamlet** for audio? Scott explains: "Very early

on I started reading **Shakespeare on Toast** by the wonderful Ben Crystal, and it introduced me to the obvious idea that Shakespeare isn't meant to be read but heard – and it really is an obvious idea.

“Justin Richards (Big Finish writer and script editor) knows the text like the back of his hand, and was able to provide us with an edit that made the most of the medium. The only real difference production-wise is that we have a lot more control over the performances – we're not projecting to the upper circle – so we



Left to right: Miles Richardson, Alexander Vlahos, Samuel Barnett, Tracey Childs, Terry Molloy and Deirdre Mullins

“IT IS A BEAST OF A PLAY. I REALLY HOPE WE'VE DONE IT JUSTICE.”

ALEXANDER VLAHOS

can really play with the nuances of the text and draw the listener in.”

Scott was particularly pleased with the cast he assembled.

He says: “It goes without saying that Alex really gives it his all as Hamlet, and we spent a lot of time beforehand plotting his journey so we'd be on the same page in studio. The supporting cast is uniformly terrific too. We deliberately chose people we knew had previously tackled Shakespeare, and who we'd both worked with and knew we could have fun with. Big Finish schedules mean you leap around a bit at the best of times, but doing that with something like Shakespeare is an added complication. Thankfully for me all our cast were so excited by the project, absolutely nothing fazed them. I love them all, and am still so thrilled we had them on board!”



PERFORMING **SHAKESPEARE** is not a new experience for Alex, who tells *Vortex*: “Shakespeare is woven into my career as closely as anything else. I've performed in many productions on stage – John Simm's **Hamlet** and Kenneth Branagh's **Macbeth** to name a couple. I adore Shakespeare, for his ambition and the complex craft in which he expects actors to realise his work. The text in **Hamlet** specifically is so fantastical at times, beautiful, haunting, majestic – it is a beast of a play. I really hope we've done it justice.”

How did Alex approach playing Hamlet? He admits: “I did a lot of research – watched as many productions as I could get my hands on, listened to as many audio recordings as I could find, and read the text thoroughly

from page to page – and then quickly put it to the back of my mind and tried to take each recording day as it came.

“It was, at times, an overwhelming experience – but I was surrounded by the most amazingly supportive cast and director. I'm just so grateful that I've been allowed this wonderful opportunity.”

Scott admits that there are probably more Shakespeare plays he'd be interested in doing for Big Finish in the future.

He explains: “I can honestly say that Hamlet tested me unlike anything else I've ever tackled. I enjoyed the process hugely, but the preparation time alone – several weeks of studying the text and understanding every line – isn't one I'm in a rush to repeat! I'm thrilled to have done it, and can't wait for people to hear the results, but I'd far sooner hear other people's take on Shakespeare going forward... That said, I'd love to do **Macbeth**, or **Romeo and Juliet**. Maybe, one day...?”

Alex agrees: “Well, considering this is the first Big Finish Shakespeare production, I'm hoping it opens up the possibility for many more in the future! Who knows, maybe I'd tackle **Richard III** next?” **VORTEX**



IT'S WHAT TORCHWOOD FANS HAVE BEEN CRYING OUT FOR... AND NOW THE STORY CONTINUES!

IT'S BEEN too long a wait for **Torchwood** fans, desperate to know what happened after the events of *Miracle Day*. Ever since Big Finish first announced that the series would feature in original audio adventures, the hope amongst the show's dedicated followers has been for a continuation after the 2011 TV series.

And now, it's finally here – **Torchwood: Aliens Among Us**. And this is real. It's authentic **Torchwood**. Captain Jack, Gwen, Rhys and Sergeant Andy are joined by new

characters co-created and overseen by the show's creator, Russell T Davies. John Barrowman, Eve Myles, Kai Owen and Tom Price will encounter Paul Clayton, Alexandria Riley, Sam Béart and Jonathan Green.

Releases in the monthly range have been leading to Torchwood being restarted in Cardiff, home of the original Torchwood Three. But it's in a very different Cardiff. Something terrible's happened to the city. With every day getting darker, will Torchwood need to adopt a whole new approach?

This box set features four stories, *Changes Everything* by James Goss, *Aliens & Sex & Chips & Gravy*, also by James, *Orr* by Juno Dawson (who recently wrote **Torchwood's** *The Dollhouse*) and *Superiority Complex* by AK Benedict (writer of **Torchwood's** *The Victorian Age* and *Outbreak*).

V**ORTEX ASKS** producer James Goss when talks about picking up from the end of *Miracle Day* began in earnest? "Really," he says, "once we'd got the regular range established. We

felt there was a real feeling from the fans of 'but what next?' and we thought it was time to answer it.

"We've been shamelessly teasing Gwen's return to Cardiff. Her adventures re-establishing Torchwood are basically series 4.5, along with John Barrowman's Titan comic. There's more of Gwen's series 4.5 to come – we've left a few things unexplored.

"The Hub is one of the many things that Russell 'helped' with. We originally suggested it be an utter ruin that they visit occasionally, but

He laughed, told us to do what we wanted, asked to have a look, gently shook his head and came up with a set of scenarios and characters that took what [director] Scott Handcock and I were doing and made them so much better.

"Some of the new cast you'll meet at once, some you'll meet after a while – but they all take their place alongside the familiar cast of **Torchwood**. He just came up with so many ideas, all of them fun, all of them exciting. He even – it's probably safe to say this – wrote



Left to right: Paul Clayton, Alexandria Riley and Jonathan Green

“ THEY’VE KEPT IT VERY CURRENT, IN SOME CASES, UNCOMFORTABLY SO. ” JAMES GOSS

Russell put his foot down – rightly pointing out it'd be much more fun if it was still their base, utter ruin and all. How they keep this wreck going has become part of the story."

Ah, yes. Russell T Davies.

Torchwood's creator and all-round lovely man – and a huge supporter of Big Finish.

James continues: "Russell has been so incredibly patient and supportive. He's stunningly busy – we asked him to write the first episode (we picked a week when he hadn't won an award and hoped).

some of it in the end, including a key moment in the last episode, which, when you hear it, you'll realise only Russell could write."

JAMES HAS written the first two episodes to re-establish Torchwood as an organisation, as well as mapping out the full 12-part series, with further episodes to follow in October this year and early in 2018.

He admits: "It was a lot of work. Juno Dawson and AK Benedict were brilliant, rushing in, picking



TORCHWOOD ALIENS AMONG US 1

CHANGES EVERYTHING
ALIENS & SEX & CHIPS & GRAVY
ORR
SUPERIORITY COMPLEX

Written By: James Goss,
Juno Dawson, AK Benedict

Directed By: Scott Handcock

Starring: John Barrowman,
Paul Clayton, Alexandria Riley,
Jonathan Green, Sam Béart,
Kai Owen, Eve Myles

OUT THIS MONTH CD: £28.00,

Download: £25.00

EXTRAS Interviews

MEET THE NEW MEMBERS

MR COLCHESTER PAUL CLAYTON

A dour northerner in his 50s, he's been assigned to Torchwood from the government. Seemingly a cardigan-y civil servant, he's ex-military and could kill you with his thumb – but you just couldn't imagine it. Torchwood isn't his first encounter with aliens – you know those nameless soldiers you see in ochre flashbacks doing a terrible thing? >>

up the ideas and running off with episodes three and four, while Scott and I worked to give the other box sets shape.

“Scott’s done a great job in bringing some new authors to **Torchwood** and it’s been a delight to read the scripts. They’ve kept it very current, in some cases uncomfortably so, but

“**ORR IS ALL THINGS TO ALL MEN.**”

SAM BÉART

overall it tells an interesting story of life in 2017, of a city that’s been invaded in a really unusual way.

“In many ways, Cardiff’s become Gotham – a society in miniature. I guess that makes Gwen and Jack Batman and Catwoman, only standing on a roof and sharing a kebab!”

the cast (in some surprising ways), and sets up a lot of what’s to come.

“*Aliens & Sex & Chips & Gravy* is a change of pace, really. It’s a story about humans and aliens finding some common ground. Being **Torchwood**, this happens on a hen night.

“*Orr* by Juno Dawson introduces one of Russell’s characters. Orr is, to say the least, mercurial, and less than thrilled to be a pawn in an intergalactic conspiracy thriller. Who’s side is she on?”

Orr is played by Sam Béart, who is a newcomer to **Torchwood**, but she already has some knowledge of the series and what it’s about.

Sam says: “I have watched a little, but I haven’t heard any of the Big Finish plays – yet. My last flatmate was a massive **Torchwood** fan and so it was on the TV quite often. I’m not an expert like a lot of the listeners are, but I’ve got a good idea of what it’s all about.”



Left to right: Paul Clayton, Alexandria Riley and Jonathan Green

Looking ahead at each of these stories, James says: “*Changes Everything* works to reintroduce Torchwood through the eyes of potential new recruit Tyler.

“If you’ve not heard any Big Finish **Torchwood**, or, if you’ve never even watched **Torchwood** (bool) it’s a great place to start. Well, hopefully. It covers a lot of ground, introduces

How does it feel to be ‘mercurial, and less than thrilled to be a pawn in an intergalactic conspiracy thriller’?

Sam laughs: “I’m sure they are not the first to feel like that, being in Torchwood! Orr comes in with a completely different background to the rest, being already in Torchwood, but with different experiences and



Long ago, he was one of them, and it ended badly. Incidentally, no-one uses, or seems to know his first name.

NG
ALEXANDRIA RILEY

[Pronounced ‘Eng’, fact fans].

Possibly the most efficient person ever employed by Torchwood – she’s ruthless, very good at her job, and an utter enigma. She’s very close to Gwen, adores Mr Colchester and loves Jack – but she also knows a lot more about what’s happened to Cardiff than she’s letting on.

TYLER
JONATHAN GREEN

A disgraced journalist, he’s washed up in Cardiff looking for a fresh start. Shark-handsome, morally quicksilver, he’s desperate to re-establish himself. Suddenly he finds out that Torchwood – a secret organisation that everyone thought long gone – is back in business. Tyler realises that this is the second chance he’s been looking for, and he’ll do anything to be a part of it. **VORTEX**



knowledge is able to be an asset and enhance the alchemy.

"It's really difficult to say too much without giving anything away. Orr has an incredible background.

"When playing Orr, there's a unique talent to the character, and I had to ask Scott Handcock, as the director, to make sure we got the technical side of things right. Orr's voice will change depending on who she is talking to. Orr is all things to all men, put it that way...

"The team I got to work with were great, they were very welcoming and I was flattered to be part of the group immediately."

Sam is especially delighted her part was created by Russell, adding: "It's something new – it's a great character. It would be nice to meet him and say thank you, for creating one of the best roles I've ever played.

"I hope I'll be back! I don't have a contract for that, and anything can happen at Big Finish and **Torchwood** – you can't take it for granted, anyone can die!"

James reveals that the series concludes with: "*The Superiority Complex* by AK Benedict. It's a lovely, nasty tale about a seven star luxury hotel. It's inspired by those all-inclusive hotels you see built next door to slums, allowing the poor to watch the super-rich help themselves to the endless



poolside buffet. Only, it's set in Cardiff and has a high body count."

S COTT HANDCOCK has worked closely with James on this series. He admits: "It's been strange working on this new era of **Torchwood**. Obviously it's been enormously exciting talking through ideas with James and Russell, working out what to do with our brand-new characters, as well as the established ones. The real joy has been plotting a 12-part series. We've been able to build in some really exciting twists across the three box sets, and develop an ongoing story arc with recurring characters, whilst at the same time being able to tell four standalone stories in each release. It really does feel like Torchwood here and now, in 2017, reflecting the bad as well as the good."

This series features new members of the team. Scott reveals: "I was sort of given free rein when it came to casting the regulars. James has worked with me a lot now and I think he trusts me to get the best people for the parts. I had the advantage, of course, that I'd been working on the scripts for a while before I came to direct, so I had a very clear idea of the kind of characters we were searching for. And obviously we needed a range of voices to complement each other and the existing cast



members – not to mention actors who were keen on the idea of coming back for more! Thankfully, all my first choices said yes, and they sound incredible together!

"As with all **Torchwood** recordings, the studio sessions have been enormous fun. There are some very dark ideas on the horizon in the new series, but also a lot of humour, and the cast have really run with all the material they've been given.

"What's been lovely has been building up a brand-new team of regulars. From the very first recording, they all got on like a house on fire, and were dropping each other messages between sessions. Similarly, when we had our first day of old and new **Torchwood** casts together, they initially kept their distance, sticking close to the people they knew, but by lunchtime it was like they'd all been mates for years!" **VORTEX**



Kenny Smith heads back to the early 70s for...

THE THIRD PHASE!

THE DALEKS are back to conquer and destroy, for their first audio encounter with the Third Doctor.

The Doctor and Jo Grant return for their latest pair of outings, *The Conquest of Far* by Nicholas Briggs which sees Skaro's finest at

their deadly best, and *Storm of the Horofax* by Andrew Smith which finds them all at sea against a new alien foe in Volume Three of **The Third Doctor Adventures**.

Katy Manning and Tim Treloar once again play Jo and the Doctor, with Tim having

settled into the role created by the late, great Jon Pertwee.

Producer David Richardson says: "We're onto the third box set now, and we're well past the point where Nick and I might have worried 'Can we make this work?' Of course it works - Tim



Left to right: Tim Treloar and Katy Manning

“KATY DELIVERS A MOVING AND EMOTIONAL PERFORMANCE. OF COURSE SHE DOES – IT’S KATY.”

DAVID RICHARDSON

Treloar is a fitting Third Doctor, paying tribute to Jon Pertwee’s marvellous five year reign, and Katy Manning is bursting with energy and full of joy at being by his side.

“I wanted to bring the Daleks back this time, because I have such clear and happy memories of watching the Third Doctor battling them when I was a child. And alongside that, I wanted a very traditional Earth invasion story – but it’s one that Andrew Smith has filled with so many rich ideas. He really puts Jo through some tough times in this adventure, and Katy delivers a moving and emotional performance. Of course she does – it’s Katy.”

NICK WRITES his first Third Doctor adventure with *The Conquest of Far*, in which he also voices the Daleks.

He explains: “I wanted to do a Dalek story that had that Third Doctor era feel. I wanted it to be action-packed and straight down the Terry Nation-style morality war storyline. The starting point was David Richardson saying to me that he’d just watched **A Bridge Too Far**, about the Arnhem offensive that went terribly wrong. It’s a film I know extremely well, being very interested in the two world wars.

“David said, ‘Can you do a Dalek story that uses that for inspiration?’. I immediately said I thought it was a great idea. Of course, you can’t tell exactly the same story for all sorts of reasons. And it’s because of the adjustments you have to make to turn it into a **Doctor Who** story that your real story emerges. But at its heart, it’s a story about failed military aspirations.”

The Conquest of Far follows on from the epic tale *Planet of the Daleks* – which in turn came after *Frontier in Space*.

Nick says: “It was my choice to make it a follow-on. I thought starting with the final scene of



Left to right: Richard Derrington, Ian Cunningham, Katy Manning, Tim Treloar, Robert Hands and Robin Weaver



THE THIRD DOCTOR ADVENTURES VOLUME THREE

*The Conquest of Far
Storm of the Horofax*

Written By: Nicholas Briggs, Andrew Smith
Directed By: Nicholas Briggs

Starring:
Tim Treloar, Katy Manning, Nicholas Briggs

OUT THIS MONTH CD: £25.00, Download: £20.00
EXTRAS Bonus behind-the-scenes disc

“ THE JON PERTWEE ERA WAS THE TIME WHEN I WAS REALLY STARTING TO SIT UP AND TAKE NOTICE OF DOCTOR WHO. ”

NICHOLAS BRIGGS



Left to right: Katy Manning, George Watkins, Tim Treloar, Nicholas Briggs and John Banks

Planet of the Daleks would help to give it more authenticity. But it came from my asking myself the question of where this would fit in the Third Doctor's continuity?

“I'm not usually concerned by continuity, but I wanted to know where Jo was with the Daleks. I thought it best if she'd already battled with them twice, so she had

a real knowledge of how horrible they were. That, of course, left very little space in Jo's era. So, it was at this point that I hit upon the idea of it all happening just after they'd defeated the Daleks on Spiridon. Jo's thinking, "Thank goodness that's all over" and it suddenly all sort of happens again!"

IN *STORM of the Horofax* during a North Sea military exercise, the crew of the destroyer *HMS Nemesis* find a futuristic ship with an alien occupant, Arianda, who is being followed by the warships of the Horofax.

Writer Andrew says: "The storyline was initially a little awkward as I didn't have the UNIT regulars. It didn't have the Brigadier, Captain Yates and Sergeant Benton, and finding a reason for the Doctor not to go to them could have been problematic, but then I came up with the setting of a Royal Navy destroyer which gave me some nice ideas, which I ran with and did research on.

"There's a new UNIT character, Major Paul Hardy, who has been around for quite a while and been through a lot with the Doctor



Left to right: Katy Manning and Tim Treloar

“IT WAS GREAT TO BE IN STUDIO AND HEAR HOW TIM GETS THE VOICE.”

ANDREW SMITH

and Jo, and he plays a pivotal role in the whole thing.”

For Andrew, writing for this incarnation of the Time Lord was something of a treat. He grins: “Writing for the Doctor came fairly easily as I’m so familiar with this incarnation, having grown up with him. When I was a kid, that was my Doctor. I’d written for him in *Vengeance of the Stones*, and I just remember finding it quite straightforward, getting the Doctor’s voice. When I got the notes that came back, I was told there were no issues with the character of the Doctor, which was pretty nice. It was very good to write for him.”

For Nick, it was also a nostalgic kick to bring this Doctor

back to life – especially as he had known Jon Pertwee.

He says: “Although I always name Patrick Troughton as my favourite Doctor, the Jon Pertwee era was the time when I was really starting to sit up and take notice of **Doctor Who**. It’s when I was asserting my love of the show and not letting my parents get away with tricking me into not watching it – which they tried to do many times! It was a battle being a **Doctor Who** fan in our household!

“So Pertwee-era **Doctor Who** feels very like home to me. I have a gut instinct for it. I can hear Jon Pertwee and Katy Manning speaking the lines I write. I have great affection for that era. And having such a lovely time with Katy has been part of my rehabilitation of Jon Pertwee’s Doctor in my affections.

“As a youngster, I sort of fell out of love with him when he left the show with the parting Daily Mirror headline of ‘Jon Pertwee – I Can’t Stand The Daleks – Quits’. I never quite forgave him for that. And even though he was often very nice to me when I met him many years later, he could also be a very harsh, difficult man.

He was a very imposing presence with a painfully penetrating stare. He terrified me. So it’s nice to go back and revisit the Third Doctor in a less tense atmosphere.

“The irony is that if Jon had still been alive when we started Big Finish, he would have been straight on the phone to demand to be part of it. He did that on a spin-off video I wrote, **The AirZone Solution**. He phoned the director and demanded to be in it! And considering radio was really his ‘thing’, I think he would have been an enthusiastic supporter of Big Finish. Of course, there’s no way of knowing that would have been true for sure, but I know Katy believes it too.”

Andrew adds: “I was 6 or 7 when the Pertwee-era started. I remember Patrick Troughton, and that’s still my era, but the Jon Pertwee years are very precious to me. I loved UNIT – and Jo Grant is right up there as one of the best-ever companions, so to get to write for Katy was marvellous.”

Talking of Katy, Nick is delighted with the way Katy and Tim have bonded. Nick explains: “Katy has taken a real leap of faith with Tim. We were nervous about approaching her initially, but she has wholeheartedly taken Tim on board. And she’s so encouraging to him. She sometimes offers advice, but mostly she’s just full of praise. It’s rather lovely to witness.”

Andrew agrees: “It was great to be in studio and hear how Tim gets the voice. He captures the essence of Jon Pertwee – it’s definitely the Third Doctor. He gets the spirit of him just right – impressive stuff. Katy and Tim have done a few stories together now, and you can feel there is a bond and relationship between the actor playing the Doctor and the actor playing the companion. Tim was the focal point in studio, keeping the positivity there, keeping the energy up and making people laugh – just as the other Doctors do.” **VORTEX**

VORTEXMAIL

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QUICK THINKING

Thank you for your consistently high productions across a large number of diverse ranges. They make my lengthy daily commute to work a pleasurable part of the day. What do you think of the following ideas as possible future productions?

An adaptation of the unmade film script **Doctor Who Meets Scratchman** starring Tom Baker? A 'Captain America Civil War' type story with **Torchwood** and the new series **UNIT** on opposite ends of some kind of moral dilemma (and both kind of being right)? I've always wondered how those two organisations would properly interact with each other!

Kevin Quick

Nick: Here's a controversial statement that I fully accept I may live to regret, but in order to adapt Doctor Who Meets Scratchman into something workable, it would make it so different from the original that it probably couldn't really be called Doctor Who Meets Scratchman. That said, someone might one day be up to the task – but currently that's not me or anyone I know. As for the 'Civil War'... quite a few rights issues in there, but you never know, one day...

FUN FUN FUN

I've been wondering if you can make a new **Red Dwarf** range and use the cast to make some audio adventures? I will be happy if you do it.

Eddie Davis

Nick: It's something we did

investigate a while back, but the rights holders didn't seem keen.

BIG FINISH, BIG THRILLS

Just a few comments to make, as I'm trying to catch up with all your lovely products. I'm looking forward to the return of David Tennant and Billie Piper, and also the War Master. Now that you have tried monsters that might not have worked on audio, referring to the Silence, please could we have a Yeti story and the Quarks? They would sound good on audio. The Worlds of Doctor Who are expanding and there is plenty to hear. It's my birthday soon and I'm going to purchase **Dark Eyes 2** soon. Once again, may your future be long – but please, one more thing. Do not get rid of the CD format! Thank you.

Michael Parsons

Nick: The only circumstance I can foresee in which we'd get rid of the CD format would be if we couldn't sell any! We are nowhere near that situation, and perhaps never will be. As for Yeti and Quarks, no definite plans, but it'd be a lovely thing to do.

PUT IN THE PICTURE

I would like to congratulate you on the continuing adventures of **Doctor Who** and the forthcoming 20 years in two years time. I have heard so many great adventures. We've had the **Lost Stories**, **The Stage Plays**, the **Novel Adaptations** (they will be missed) and the **Early Adventures**. There have been simply many great ideas. I got all excited about the

novels idea and often wondered what will appear next? The comic strip adaptations? Now there's a thought. I've often wondered what *The Tides of Time*, *The Neutron Knights* and *Emperor of the Daleks* would sound like. In one word – awesome. I wait with baited breath. So continue on with the good work. And may time and space be with you.

Peter Thorpe

Nick: Thanks, Peter. I take your praise and will spread it all around the team in the right places. There are some comic strip adaptations coming next. We're not sure when yet, though.

I COULD WEEP

After listening to **Doom Coalition 4**, I have realised (albeit, long suspected) that the scariest monster in **Doctor Who** is not the Daleks or the Cybermen, but is in fact the Weeping Angels. With (old **Who**) Daleks I could (mostly) hide upstairs. With the Cybermen I could pretend the false gold nuggets I found in streams on Dartmoor would work in Ace's catapult. However, with the Weeping Angels on audio there is literally nothing to look at to stop them coming: it does not matter whether I blink or not! Whoever came up with the twisted (and gifted) idea of bringing the Weeping Angels to audio deserves a medal.

Colin Deady
Nick: I think that's probably David Richardson and Matt Fitton. If you could make the medal, I'll pass it on to them. VORTEX

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DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: **THE SKIN OF THE SLEEK** (68, Fourth Doctor and Romana II)

DOCTOR WHO – SHORT TRIPS: **THE BRITISH INVASION** (7.08, Second Doctor, Jamie and Zoe)

DOCTOR WHO – THE THIRD DOCTOR ADVENTURES: **VOLUME 3** (Third Doctor and Jo Grant)

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DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: **THE THIEF WHO STOLE TIME** (6.9, Fourth Doctor and Romana II)

DOCTOR WHO – SHORT TRIPS: **A HEART ON BOTH SIDES** (7.09, Eighth Doctor and Nyssa)

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NOVEMBER 2017

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DOCTOR WHO – THE TENTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: **COLD VENGEANCE** (Tenth Doctor and Rose)

DOCTOR WHO – SHORT TRIPS: **THE INGENUOUS GENTLEMAN** **ADRIC OF ALZARIUS** (7.11, Fifth Doctor and Adric)

DOCTOR WHO – THE EARLY ADVENTURES: **THE MORTON LEGACY** (4.3, Second Doctor, Jamie, Ben and Polly)

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BLAKE'S 7: **CROSSFIRE** (Part Two)

FEBRUARY 2018

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