

# VORTEX



WINDING YOUR WAY DOWN ON

# BAKER STREET

**DOCTOR WHO:** THE EIGHTH DOCTOR, LIV AND HELEN ARE BACK ON EARTH, BUT THIS TIME THERE'S NO ESCAPE...



**PLUS!** MRS PEEL, WE'RE NEEDED...  
**THE AVENGERS ARE BACK!**



# BIG FINISH



WE MAKE GREAT **FULL-CAST AUDIO DRAMAS** AND **AUDIOBOOKS** THAT ARE AVAILABLE TO BUY ON CD AND/OR DOWNLOAD

[WWW.BIGFINISH.COM](http://WWW.BIGFINISH.COM)

@BIGFINISH

THEBIGFINISH

BIGFINISHPROD

BIG-FINISH

BIGFINISHPROD

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

If you subscribe to our **Doctor Who The Monthly Adventures** range, you get free audiobooks, PDFs of scripts, extra behind-the-scenes material, a bonus release, downloadable audio readings of new short stories and discounts.

Secure online ordering and details of all our products can be found at: [bgfn.sh/aboutBF](http://bgfn.sh/aboutBF)

## WE LOVE STORIES!

### ABOUT BIG FINISH

Our audio productions are based on much-loved TV series like **Doctor Who**, **Torchwood**, **Dark Shadows**, **Blake's 7**, **The Avengers**, **The Prisoner**, **The Omega Factor**, **Terrahawks**, **Captain Scarlet** and **Survivors**, as well as classics such as **HG Wells**, **Shakespeare**, **Sherlock Holmes**, **The Phantom of the Opera** and **Dorian Gray**.

We also produce original creations such as **Graceless**, **Charlotte Pollard** and **The Adventures of Bernice Summerfield**, plus the **Big Finish Originals** range featuring seven great new series: **ATA Girl**, **Cicero**, **Jeremiah Bourne in Time**, **Shilling & Sixpence**, **Investigate**, **Blind Terror**, **Transference** and **The Human Frontier**.



### BIG FINISH APP

The majority of Big Finish releases can be accessed on-the-go via the Big Finish App, available for both Apple and Android devices.







COMING SOON

# CYBERMEN!

The Cybermen return to face the Fourth Doctor next year, as another adventure from the show's past is resurrected...

**RETURN OF the Cybermen** by Gerry Davis was substantially rewritten by script editor Robert Holmes and aired as *Revenge of the Cybermen* in **Doctor Who** television season 12. And now John Dorney's adaptation of Gerry Davis's original script will be released as one of **The Lost Stories** range.

Fourth Doctor Tom Baker will be joined by Sadie Miller taking on her late mother's role as Sarah Jane Smith.

Producer David Richardson says: "I'd known about *Return of the Cybermen* for many years, but it was only relatively recently that I was able to source Gerry's script thanks to some great detective work by archivist Richard Bignell.

"John Dorney's adaptation stays true to the original and the era, though there have been some very minor changes to bring it in line with the kind of amendments we believe Robert Holmes would have asked for. Little things that make it sit more comfortably in season 12.

"It's rather different in tone to *Revenge of the Cybermen* – darker, scarier and more reminiscent of claustrophobic 1960s Cybermen tales like *The Moonbase* and *The Invasion*."

Director Nicholas Briggs adds: "It was really interesting working with Tom on this because he noticed the difference in style immediately. This is **Doctor Who** as Gerry Davis imagined it in 1974, and it's very much like he wrote **Doctor Who** in the mid-1960s." **VORTEX**



## EDITORIAL

**JUST AS** the final pages of this edition of *Vortex* were being written, we learnt the sad news that David Collings had passed away. He may not have been a name known to the general public at large, but us fans of cult television know exactly who he is. For many years it was said that he is one of the greatest Doctor Whos we *never* had – until he was finally given the chance to play the part in **Doctor Who Unbound: Full Fathom Five**. If you've not listened to it, David Bishop's script is fantastic. It's edgy and pushes the envelope as to just who the Doctor is. And he is superbly cast.

David was also well-known for playing Silver in ITV's **Sapphire & Steel**, a role he later recreated for Big Finish in the audio series.

We will soon be able to hear him revising another of his roles on audio when he plays Chief Mover Poul in **The Robots Volume Two**. Those who were in studio on recording day have told me that David was as brilliant as ever. We've lost a memorable actor who brought depth to everything he did. **VORTEX**





# a life less ordinary

the eighth doctor, liv and helen are back on earth, but this time there's no escape . . .

**I**N THE last few years, the Eighth Doctor's box sets have told intertwined stories featuring the Daleks, the Eminence, the Time Lords, the Eleven, River Song, the Meddling Monk, the Weeping Angels and the Kandy Man – amongst others – in *Dark Eyes*, *Doom Coalition* and *Ravenous*.

But now, they're gone. All gone. After escaping from the Crucible of Souls in the final episode of *Ravenous*, the TARDIS only just managed to escape – and it has landed on Earth in the 21st century. And in the next series, *Stranded*, the Doctor, Liv and Helen take refuge at home in Baker Street, but find that all is not as they

expected. They now have neighbours – and not all of them are welcoming.

Paul McGann, Nicola Walker and Hattie Morahan are joined by new regulars Rebecca Root as Tania Bell, and Tom Price as Sergeant Andy Davidson. Yes, THAT Andy Davidson, everyone's favourite police officer from *Torchwood*! Oh and the Curator from *The Day of the Doctor* is back, played once more by Tom Baker.

Producer David Richardson reveals: "We started thinking about *Stranded* ages ago. I'm pretty sure it was during the planning of *Ravenous 3* when I started to thinking ahead about where we were going next.

"The temptation with these ongoing box sets is to make the story

arcs bigger each time, to out-do ourselves. But after *Dark Eyes*, *Doom Coalition* and *Ravenous 1* I felt we had to go in the another direction and do something smaller – we could be bold by doing less. And so I fired off an email to Matt Fitton, John Dorney and Ken Bentley that basically said, 'They're trapped on Earth, in London, in the Doctor's house in 2020 which has been broken up into flats. This is a series about learning to live with the small challenges of life, and we will explore that through our big ensemble of characters.'

"In that pitch I also proposed a new companion (who Matt later named Tania Bell). Again I wanted to try and make stories with characters





Above (l-r): Hattie Morahan, Joel James Davison, Tom Price, Aurora Burghart, Ken Bentley, Nicola Walker, Rebecca Root, Alan Cox, David Richardson and Lisa McMullin



Above: Tom Price

i felt we had to go in the another direction and do something smaller — we could be bold by doing less.

DAVID RICHARDSON

who are new to **Doctor Who**, and Tania has her own life story to tell.”

As well as introducing Tania, we also encounter a couple of characters we’ve already met on television. David explains: “About the same time I sent an email to Russell T Davies to ask if we could use the character of Andy Davidson from **Torchwood** in a couple of

episodes. I just felt that Andy would be another interesting element in the mix – he’d play so brilliantly off Liv and Helen. And Russell came back and said, ‘How about making him a companion?’. That was a eureka moment! We wanted this series to be about the characters, and Andy is the perfect addition. Given our format there’s absolutely

no reason we can’t have four companions in the mix. It shakes things up in a really exciting way.

“And for the final piece of our jigsaw puzzle: the Curator is back! Steven Moffat gave his blessing for us to use the character, and shared a few details that were not clear from watching *The Day of the Doctor*. But we’ve been careful to remain true to the enigmatic figure you see in that story. He has an important role to play through *Stranded*, but we’re not breaking anything here. We love **Doctor Who** too much to do that.”

John Dorney and Matt Fitton were responsible for writing the majority of *Doom Coalition* and *Ravenous*, but more writers have been brought in to get *Stranded* underway. David explains: “John and Matt have done the most brilliant work on the other Eighth Doctor box sets, carrying the load between them, but I decided I wanted a bigger range of voices on *Stranded*. They’re still writing an episode each, but we’ve brought in Lisa McMullin and David K Barnes as fresh blood (and there will be more new voices in future sets too).

“Everyone bought into what we were trying to do, and the result is a very different kind of **Doctor Who**. So in addition to our lead cast of



Above: Rebecca Root

five, we have a wider ensemble who recur throughout the stories – the people who live in the flats that make up the Baker Street house.”

**MATT HAS** written the series’ opening story, *Lost Property*. He explains: “What David suggested for this range was, for the first box set especially, what if **Doctor Who** moved into your street, or even into your house? That’s the domestic setting we’re going for, all based around character and interactions, and seeing the TARDIS crew cope with living one day after another in London.

“We wanted to get it across that, while the Doctor can cope with alien invasions, mass disasters and death on a huge scale, if he’s not got problems to solve he’s like a

[the doctor is]  
like a loose  
wheel spinning  
around in a  
hamster cage,  
clawing at  
the walls.

MATT FITTON

loose wheel spinning around in a hamster cage, clawing at the walls. By contrast, Liv and Helen accept their situation and get on with it, living ordinary lives and enjoying having a breather. It was important to establish the dead end that they are in – they are stranded, after all.”

Keep your ears open to find out why the Baker Street house has changed (it will make you grin). Matt continues: “I think the key to setting everything up was starting several weeks on, when they’re established in the house, living side by side and shoulder to shoulder with these new characters. I wanted to get a sense of community happening, with people coming and going through the communal corridors and doors, rubbing shoulders when going up and down the stairs. Even though they’re not all in it much, you get a feel for everyone, from the sisters to Ron and Tony upstairs – and Tania, the mysterious occupant of flat one.”

#### THE SECOND story, *Wild*

*Animals* by John Dorney, is based on an idea he’s had for a long time. He says: “The origins of the story I ended up writing came about 20-odd years ago when I vaguely thought about pitching a New Adventure to Virgin Books. I realised there was a type of story **Doctor Who** hadn’t told before. They can be broken down into three genres: the historical; the pseudo-historical; and the science fiction story. It just struck me that no one had ever done a historical that’s set now, a contemporary historical with no science fiction elements.

“So I wrote a contemporary historical, and by the end of it I felt like I’d written an anti-**Doctor Who** story, but as a **Doctor Who** story! But the very non-**Doctor Who** quality of it really emphasised what **Doctor Who** is, and it is an interesting adventure to tell within this context. I think David expected me to do something about climate change, but I wrote a small story with petty little crimes and tiny little things like that – and then what if you throw the Doctor into it? It’s the exciting thing about the Doctor as a character and why you can tell any story with him. Put him into any situation and he will turn it into a **Doctor Who**



Above (l-r): Hattie Morahan and Nicola Walker

story, just by virtue of who he is.

“A big part of the detail we wanted was to introduce the new characters. I had some interesting and complicated stuff to write with regards to Tania, for example, and I was quite keen to do that as she has one of her big scenes in this story. I did a lot of research to try to understand how to approach it, and I hope I’ve covered the issues successfully.”

John adds: “I was writing some very domestic scenes where the Doctor’s making something that was intended to be steak and kidney pie but ended up being ratatouille! I tweeted at the time that this was the weirdest **Doctor Who** story I’ve ever written but not for the reasons people will think. They might see it as strange worlds



Above (l-r): Nicola Walker and Tom Price

and bizarre aliens, but actually it’s not – it’s everyday life.”

**MUST-SEE TV** by Lisa McMullin is the third story in the set. Matt says: “This is the first time we have a woman writing for Liv and Helen.”

Lisa tells us more: “This was a bit of a treat as I got to be in at the beginning of a series. We had a secret meeting in the basement of Starbucks to plot out the long game for this set. We talked about how each episode in this series might go and then bagsied the one we wanted. I loved the idea of bringing **Torchwood**’s Andy to Baker Street so that’s why I went for this episode. The actual story was wide open but we weren’t allowed to use the TARDIS and the Doctor isn’t allowed to know about **Torchwood**, which

**we weren’t allowed to use the TARDIS and the doctor isn’t allowed to know about torchwood.**

LISA MCMULLIN

are fun restrictions to play with.

“The Baker Street residents are getting twitchy. Ever since the Doctor and co moved in, strange things have started happening. And now everybody’s TV sets are acting oddly. Helen and the Doctor investigate the strange televisual phenomenon whilst Liv is preoccupied with a policeman (Andy) who’s turned up on their doorstep looking for Tania. Whilst chasing Andy down, the Doctor and Liv are caught up in a bomb explosion which seems to be connected to a new tenant at Baker Street – the peculiar Mr Bird. When Mr Bird also starts speaking to one of the other tenants through their TV set, the Doctor realises there is much more to him than meets the eye.”

The story sees the watchers becoming the watched, almost a



reverse **Gogglebox**, which was Lisa's intention. She adds: "Absolutely. And the fact that it's not such a fantastical, science fiction-y idea anymore. We know that TVs are now equipped with the technology to spy on us. This series is rooted in domesticity and I was looking

almost relieved – much to his own disgust. Then he finds himself hunted across London with Andy Davidson for company, whilst Helen discovers a mysterious new business venture with seemingly cult-like overtones..." David was pleased to write an

Earth-bound tale. He explains: "Galaxy-spanning threats to the web of time make my head spin! I don't know how the other writers manage it! So I'm much happier writing things on a smaller scale, sticking the Doctor in a kitchen and seeing him fall apart. His plans to fix the TARDIS are getting increasingly desperate and he doesn't take kindly to his friends telling him it won't possibly succeed. I enjoyed having a grumpier Doctor to play with. Mind you, I always do! Most of my work outside **Doctor Who** is light comedy but I can't seem to resist making my Doctors angry or upset!" "As far as the future is concerned, *Divine Intervention* is just the tip of the iceberg, really – not even the Doctor knows what's going on. To be honest, nor do I! I've asked all the questions, but Matt's keeping the answers a secret from me. He's devious like that."



Above (l-r): Jeremy Clyde, David Shaw Parker and Clive Wood

**SERGEANT ANDY** Davidson actor Tom Price was delighted to join the cast of this **Doctor Who** series. He says: "I was really surprised. I got a call from my agent to see if I wanted to do it – he didn't have to ask! I'm told Big Finish contacted Russell for permission to use Andy, and for some reason he suggested using the character as a companion. Russell has been very supportive of me.

"It's particularly magical as I've got two boys and my seven-year-old is really into **Doctor Who**. He loves it, and it was a fantastic moment for me to tell him I'm going to be helping the Doctor.

"It feels like everything is shared out equally. The scripts are written with an ensemble feel. I hope that will come across when you get to hear them, you just get on with it as we all want to make a good drama. And in the green room, it's lovely. There's no number one on the call sheet – everyone just gets on.

"With Sergeant Andy I'm coming in as an established character, and so I feel a part of the team already, like a cog in a wheel. Paul McGann was fantastic to work with – I'm a massive *Withnail and I* fan. He spoke to Rebecca and

for something that felt a bit **Doctor Who** but which was also pretty feasible in 21st century London. The question is – who is spying on them and why?"

**THE CONCLUDING** adventure in this first series of *Stranded* is *Divine Intervention* by David K Barnes. He tells *Vortex*: "The broad goal of *Divine Intervention* was to tee up events for the following sets, whilst juggling the expanded cast – along with Sergeant Andy Davidson and a couple of aliens! I also wanted to pick up on a few threads from the stories before mine, to help draw things together. Matt suggested the Doctor arranging dinner for everyone in the block as a scenario to unite all the story elements, so I took that as my starting position and weaved everything else around it.

"The Doctor is struggling to adjust to his new life, so when he finds a murdered alien in a smashed up electronics shop he's

the doctor is  
struggling to  
adjust to his  
new life, so  
when he finds a  
murdered alien  
in a smashed  
up electronics  
shop he's almost  
relieved . . .

DAVID K BARNES





Above: Tom Baker

for opportunities to cast them again – much like they do on TV.”

Actor Tom Price adds: “I really like the new set up. In **Torchwood**, Andy’s really domestic and a normal person with crazy things happening around him. He doesn’t get caught up in it. And it’s such a Welsh thing to be unimpressed. You could drive into town in your big new Mercedes after being away for 20 years and no one would be impressed. Andy’s partly based on my ex-girlfriend’s dad. He ran a restaurant in South Wales, but he was very hard to impress.

“There’s so much quality writing going on at Big Finish, whether on **Torchwood** or **Doctor Who**. It’s lovely being involved – it’s like being allowed to play in the big playground!”

Matt concludes: “The TARDIS is kaput and not going anywhere quite yet, but we’ll see how that pans out in *Stranded 2*...” **VORTEX**

**it’s lovely being involved — it’s like being allowed to play in the big playground!**

TOM PRICE

I in the green room about it for half an hour, sharing secrets!”

**KEN BENTLEY** has directed this series. How did he find the change of pace and tone with the actors being in everyday settings, rather than the more sci-fi settings of recent Eighth Doctor box sets? Ken says: “For me *Stranded* is a return to more familiar ground. I started my career working in theatre which is often much more low-key compared to most of the plays we produce at Big Finish. *Stranded* isn’t without its drama, but we’re all drawing on different resources which is refreshing. Bringing some of the work we do outside of Big Finish into the studio. It’s great fun.”

The character of Tania sees a transgender actress playing a transgender character. Ken says: “I could be wrong but I believe the role of Tania was conceived by producer David for Rebecca. David had worked with her a



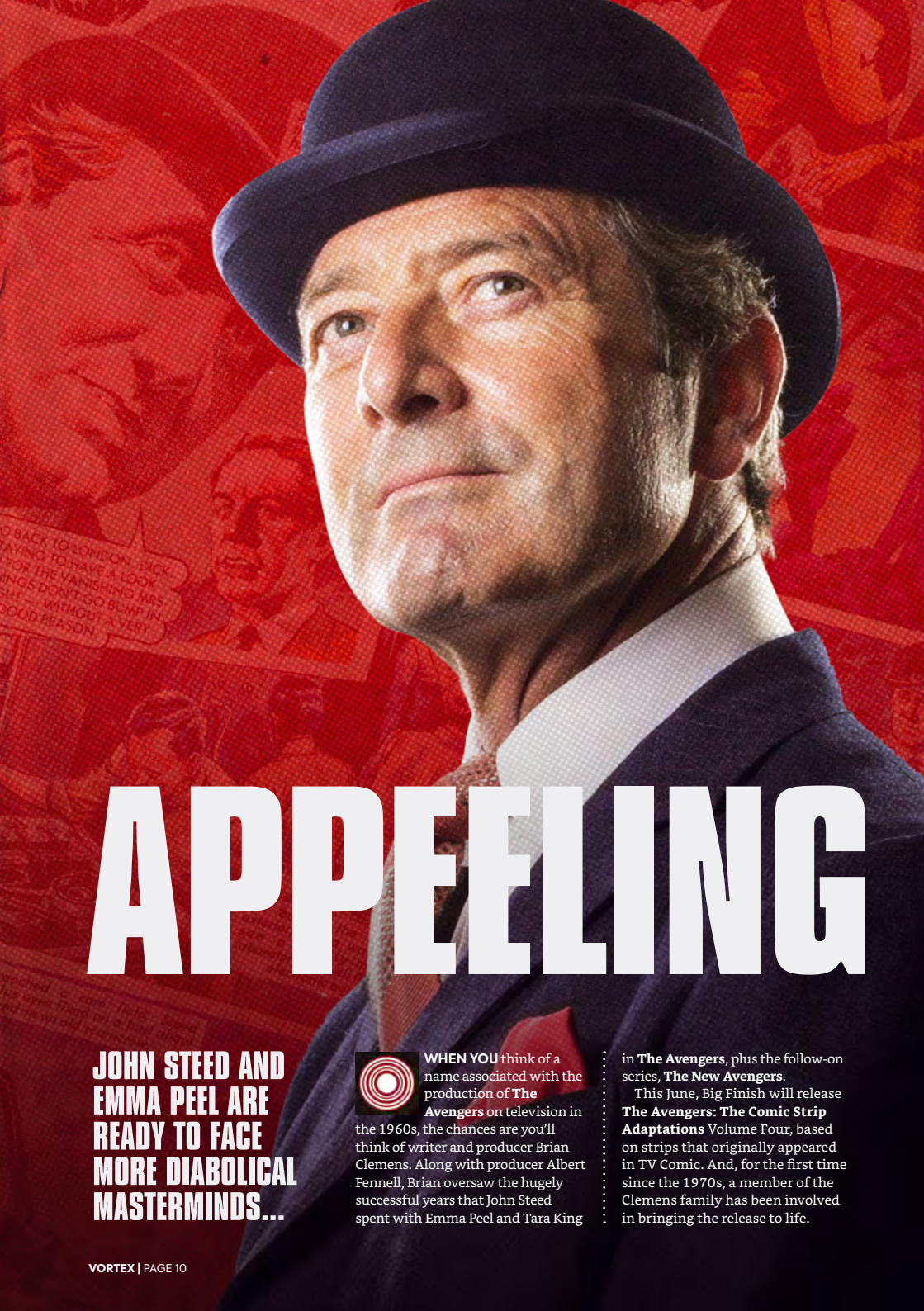
Above (l-r): Rebecca Root and Tom Price

couple of times before and it’s often the case that an actor will come in to play one role and make such an impression that we look



**DOCTOR WHO**  
STRANDED 1  
RELEASED: JUNE 2020  
FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

**ORDER NOW AT:**  
[bgfn.sh/london](http://bgfn.sh/london)



# APPEELING

**JOHN STEED AND EMMA PEEL ARE READY TO FACE MORE DIABOLICAL MASTERMINDS...**



WHEN YOU think of a name associated with the production of **The Avengers** on television in the 1960s, the chances are you'll think of writer and producer Brian Clemens. Along with producer Albert Fennell, Brian oversaw the hugely successful years that John Steed spent with Emma Peel and Tara King

in **The Avengers**, plus the follow-on series, **The New Avengers**.

This June, Big Finish will release **The Avengers: The Comic Strip Adaptations** Volume Four, based on strips that originally appeared in TV Comic. And, for the first time since the 1970s, a member of the Clemens family has been involved in bringing the release to life.





Above (l-r): Julian Wadham and Olivia Poulet

Producer David Richardson explains: "Ken Bentley wasn't available to direct this volume and so Sam Clemens instantly came to mind. Sam is a big fan of **The Avengers**, and it's no understatement to say that the

on the set of an episode. It is a very eclectic house, full of antiques and trinkets and weird and wonderful things. Like an **Avengers** emporium. "My mum and dad would have dinner parties with directors, stuntmen, writers and actors

radio or TV shows at home so I saw and heard a lot about the series and particular episodes. In fact *Noon Doomsday* was shot in our house

**WHAT I CAME TO LEARN IS THAT THE AVENGERS REALLY IS MY FATHER'S BRAIN.**

SAM CLEMENS

– Steed is actually hanging out of my childhood bedroom window!

"What I came to learn is that **The Avengers** really is my father's brain. From the Diana Rigg era onwards, he was the series runner and every script was filtered through the lens with which he saw the world – or would like to see the world. He always wanted it to be what the US thought the British would be doing – drinking tea or champagne, fighting crime, driving Bentleys in the countryside one moment and being in London the next – but with no extras as that would destroy the whole surreal illusion.

"Every time I see an **Avengers** episode it just reminds me of my dad, his wit, his charm and naughty quality, so it continues to be a big part of my life, and thankfully Steed and Peel are still needed!

"When David asked me if I would direct this box set I was utterly thrilled and immediately said yes, followed by an overwhelming sense of fear as one could imagine. However, I always think if a job frightens me I have to do it because I always end up learning something about myself. It reminds me what I am capable of. I also felt a self imposed pressure of comparison, but I know if my father was still alive he would be very proud, so I hung on to the positive edge of the stick."

# AUDIO

series is in his blood. As the son of Brian Clemens he was born to direct these audios! And Sam has done excellent work directing for us across a number of other ranges."

Sam reveals: "**The Avengers** has definitely been a huge part of my life. Even though I didn't grow up with them, it was always around me. Anyone who has been to my family home knows it is like being

from the show, so I was always a behind-the-scenes spectator. Dennis Spooner (writer), Ray Austin (director, stuntman), Gareth Hunt (Gambit), John Hough (director), Richard Harris (writer), Robert Fuest (director), Joanna Lumley (Purdey) and Patrick Macnee (Steed), were among the many that came over. "Dad would also be interviewed regularly for DVD commentaries,



Above (l-r): Olivia Poulet and Julian Wadham



**WHILE HIS** father worked with Patrick Macnee and Diana Rigg as John Steed and Emma Peel, Sam directed actors Julian Wadham and Olivia Poulet.

The first adventure is *Listen Hear* by Robert Khan and Tom Salinsky. Tom says: “The comic strips rarely give us much beyond a basic structure but it does save some time knowing what the beginning, middle and end of your story are going to be.

“In the strip there are two different sonic devices – a

surveillance device and a weapon – which we thought was untidy so initially we tried to pare it down to one. But script editor John Dorney suggested that making the villain a master of sound with a multitude of sonic devices was more fun, so that’s what we ended up doing. We also took the rather stock bad-guys and made them a mother-son duo and created a new character. But the set-pieces of the underwater fist fight and shenanigans on the lighthouse made it through unscathed.”

When asked to sum up the story, Tom simply teases in the style of the TV series: “Steed is left hanging. Emma wets her whistle.” He adds: “I’m a huge fan of this era of the show in particular. Also, having heard the excellent Julian Wadham and Olivia Poulet in these roles already, we were able to write with them in mind as well as the peerless Patrick Macnee and Diana Rigg.”

## I WAS SO EXCITED TO WRITE A BIG FINISH EPISODE THAT HAD FIREBALLS.

GEMMA LANGFORD



**THE CLOWN** *Has Two Faces* by Dan Starkey is the second escapade that Steed and Mrs Peel

undertake in this set. Dan says: “I had twelve pages of the original comic strip to work from. Looking at the dates, it must have been the first **Avengers** strip published, going out on the same week as Emma Peel’s screen debut. She’s not particularly present in the original adventure, with Steed instead acquiring an annoying sidekick called Slim, so I worked out how to give her something to do in the story.

“The grain of the idea – spies in a fairground – is a fun set-up, and I tried to enhance what was already in the strip and inject a tad more narrative logic. It seems as though the script and artwork were written by two different people, or possibly three as all the characters’ names change after episode three for no apparent reason! I hope that



my script – while authentically bonkers spi-fi – holds together a bit more coherently. In the comic strip the villain hides the plans by essentially stuffing them down his pants, so I've tried to be a bit more ingenious than that."



**WHITE HEAT** by Gemma Langford is the third story in this box set. She reveals: "I loved the

comic strip I was given to work with – it was wild! From the very first frame it was action, action! Exhilarating stuff. The story itself was quite straightforward and the bad guys had rather simple motives, so that left me with plenty of room for development. Looking back on

## IN THE COMIC STRIP THE VILLAIN HIDES THE PLANS BY ESSENTIALLY STUFFING THEM DOWN HIS PANTS...

DAN STARKEY



Above (l-r): Jeany Spark, Leo Starr and Corrinne Wicks

the strip, I'm happy that I've managed to maintain those bursts of action while adding to the world and plot of the story. The feel of the series came through really strongly on my first read, so I was able to absorb that from day one, which was great."

When *Vortex* asks Gemma what her highlight of the story

is, she grins: "Fireballs! Ha ha... but really I was so excited to write a Big Finish episode that had fireballs. To sum up the plot, London is being terrorised by a scientist who is holding the city to ransom. After sending a warning shot, they demand to be paid or else they'll burn London to the ground. So of course Steed

and Peel leap into action... with a quick stop for champagne on the way. There is suspense, heat, double dealing and audacious fights – all while being impeccably dressed with a twinkle of wit.

"I found the plot interesting as it did indeed feel very much like it was from another era with its mad scientists and simpering henchmen. But I wanted to embrace that, see what I could take on from it and develop. **The Avengers** has this gorgeous, sumptuous sense of style which I was eager to embody, but the challenge for me was bringing the plot forward and fleshing out the bad guys into characters who would connect with today's audience.

"As I say, the strip was very action based, which taught me a great deal about keeping a plot popping, but I wanted to make this a full rounded story in a fleshed out world. I adore the tone of the original strip and I was passionate about keeping that vibe intact, as it's as sexy today as it ever was. I had a wonderful few days watching the original **Avengers** TV episodes and soaking in their sense of finesse. (I did a voice-over for a video game that week and the team were laughing at how I had distinctly taken on a tinge of Peel!). This project was an interesting undertaking for sure, but one that taught me much. I hope listeners feel that *White Heat* brings forward the best of that 60s air with a story that rings true and has relevance for today."

Gemma has also become the first female writer for Steed and Mrs Peel. "Am I really? That is beyond an honour! I love Steed and Peel. Their relationship is so special and Emma Peel feels so powerful. To be able to step into that fierceness is a real treat as a writer. Gosh... I'm speechless if I'm being honest. That's so exciting! There are so many wonderful women on the writing team at Big Finish – I'm looking forward to more of them donning the bowler hat and taking us on an adventure! In a franchise that has such opportunity to



Above: Julian Wadham

more voices from writers who have the ability to spread their fire on to those who need it.”



**THE CONCLUDING** tale in this set is *Now You See Him...* by John Dorney. It’s the story that leads into

...*Now You Don’t* from the previous release – so the sequel was written before a word of the prequel! When reading the comic strips, John noticed a Steed and Mrs Peel story featured a magician, as did one with Tara, so John decided to make them the same character but write the

stories the wrong way round. He explains: “That was a sensible way of doing these things! It was an interesting experiment. I found it entertaining writing the sequel, and some people thought I was a bit mad for writing it without having first done the prequel, but it was a challenge to do it. I don’t think you need to have heard the first one to hear the second.

“I wrote in a flashback sequence in ...*Now You Don’t*, and I thought I’d been very systematic with that and everything I put in there was really carefully done, to make it

as easy as possible for me to adapt those into a proper full episode. A lot of it was actual words and original phrases from the comic strips.

“And, of course, every single one then proved incredibly awkward to get in. I thought, I need to get them all in otherwise it’s a cheat. I had to work quite hard to make that happen. But it was a fun experiment to try as you don’t get the chance to write something

**I LOVED THE SCRIPTS! THE WRITERS DID SUCH A BRILLIANT JOB OF KEEPING THE TONE AND HUMOUR OF THE SHOW.** SAM CLEMENS

like that terribly often, to do something a little bit crazy.”



**SAM WAS** delighted with all the stories: “I loved the scripts! The writers did such a

brilliant job of keeping the tone and humour of the show. They were weird, wacky, wonderful and very accurately the right world of **The Avengers**; plus such fun to record. Bowler hats off to John Dorney, Dan Starkey, Gemma Langford, Robert Khan and Tom Salinsky for making my job so much easier.

“I knew going into this we would need some larger than life performances. Luckily we had the incredibly versatile and gloriously rambunctious Nicholas Asbury returning from the prequel episode



...*Now You See Him* as Margrave which was fantastic. His energy and playfulness really infected the rest of the cast. Being an actor myself I like bringing in actors I have worked with previously on stage or film.

"The first episode we recorded was *The Clown Has Two Faces* and writer Dan Starkey had created such a richly maniacal circus character in Colino that I asked him if he would like to play it. Once Dan began recording I

(a classic stalwart of the profession), Marek Oravec and Leo Staar. I felt the key to this box set was to cast various styles of actor who would punch out the familiarity of Steed and Mrs Peel even more and help us gain a deeper understanding of their relationship."

Having met the original Steed, how did Sam find working with the Big Finish incarnation? He says: "The chemistry between Olivia and Julian is already there. You

just let them go and they make the magic. What was great was that I was able to impart my father's interpretation of the Steed and Peel relationship to them, to then do with what they wanted. I think we have found some real moments of tenderness, spark, fun and admiration for one another during this set. Julian is such a gentleman and very Steed-esque naturally, whereas Olivia has a twinkle in her eye and is so quick witted they are a perfect match. I think they have created, quite rightly, their own take on the roles. It was a privilege to direct, listen to and be a part of."

Sam has several memorable moments: "Personal highlights are bringing in a clapper board from the original TV show *The Avengers*, season five, episode 11, *Epic*, and having a photo together. It felt very apt. Laughing enormously during the recording of *Now You See Him*..., keeping a straight face during Nicholas Asbury's manic laughter was almost impossible.

"Finally, recording the episode *White Heat* on the 10th of January, the five year anniversary of when my father passed away, was an incredible experience. I couldn't think of a more appropriate way of spending the day than recording a new adventure of *The Avengers* to bring Steed and Mrs Peel to an audience from a new generation." **VORTEX**



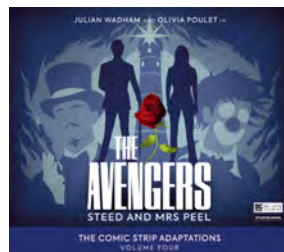
Above (l-r): Julian Wadham and Olivia Poulet

couldn't imagine anyone better in the role. I also cast my fellow Drama Centre graduate Stephen Wight as Flint for two reasons: one he is an incredible actor, both comedic and tragic; and two he knew my father and they got on very well. I felt having someone recording with me who knew Dad and understood the world he helped create would be a great start to this box set.

"The character accents are far and wide and so we brought in actors who are fantastic with voices such as Jake Wardle, Jessica Martin, Eve Webster, Rosie Jones, Daniel Hawksworth and Nigel Fairs. I also felt it important to bring some TV faces into this whose character work has been brilliant. We were incredibly lucky to get Jeany Spark, who is an utter delight, as well as Paul Putner

**THE CHEMISTRY BETWEEN OLIVIA AND JULIAN IS ALREADY THERE. YOU JUST LET THEM GO AND THEY MAKE THE MAGIC.**

SAM CLEMENS



**THE AVENGERS  
THE COMIC STRIP  
ADAPTATIONS**  
VOLUME 4: STEED & MRS PEEL  
RELEASED: JUNE 2020  
FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD



**ORDER NOW AT:**  
bgfn.sh/fizz



BUSINESS  
AS USUAL



# THE WORLD MIGHT BE IN LOCKDOWN, BUT THAT'S NOT STOPPED BIG FINISH FROM PRODUCING NEW STORIES...



**FOR 22** years Big Finish has gathered a multitude of actors together in sound studios all bringing audio dramas to life. As the news of the spread of coronavirus unfolded, Big Finish chairman Jason Haigh-Ellery took the decision to temporarily stop recording in professional studios, and look at what alternatives there were for continuing the release of the productions that we know and love.

**Doctor Who:** *Shadow of the Sun*, out on 12 May, has been recorded entirely during lockdown with everyone connected together using computers in their homes. Scheduled for release at a later date, Big Finish decided to bring this production forward to reassure listeners

It's a bizarre experience doing things this way. It's all so new, and yet, strangely very similar.

NICHOLAS BRIGGS

that even during lockdown it is business as usual.

## EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Nicholas Briggs says: "It's a rather bizarre experience doing things this way. It's all new, and yet strangely very similar as even in the professional studios we often record people in separate booths.

"Once upon a time, audio or radio was recorded around a single microphone, with occasional exceptions for when people were isolated because they were meant to be on the phone or something like that. Radio drama evolved from live recording, with effects and music being fed in 'live' during the takes.

"Big Finish has revolutionised audio drama recording. We were the ones who championed the idea that you could spend less time faffing around in a studio and get great recordings of all the actors if they were separated from each other, which also gives maximum flexibility in a longer, more detailed post-production period. This way of recording has, I'm told by others outside of Big Finish, become known as the 'Big Finish method' in the industry.

"So recording people in their homes is almost just an extension of our usual working practice. The actors are actually more perfectly isolated from each other because they're recording in completely different locations.

"The idea of doing things this way was first introduced to me by Big Finish sound designer extraordinaire, Martin

Montague, who conducted behind-the-scenes interviews with me over the phone with us each recording our side of the conversation. The two recordings were later synchronized giving the impression we were in the same location. This is how Benji

way, and I'm so grateful to those actors – and the many agents – who have rallied behind us and made it happen. "It's not easy. It has meant some people learning new skill sets. And I can't thank Toby Hyrcyk-Robinson, our engineer

at Moat Studios, enough. He's been in charge of collating the audio files, ensuring they are all of high quality and match in every scene. He's an absolute hero. Although, of course, there have been many complaints from the actors about the lack



Nicholas Briggs



David Richardson



Jane Slavin



Glen McCreedy

Clifford and I have been recording the Big Finish Podcast for years now, so I knew this would work."

Senior producer David Richardson adds: "I'm delighted by and very proud of the way the entertainment industry is adapting to lockdown – and Big Finish is at the forefront of this new method of working.

"When it became clear that all of our usual studios would be closed for the foreseeable future and our actors would be isolated at home, we took immediate measures to make sure that our schedules would be impacted as little as possible.

"The first week of lockdown was a mad flurry of trying to make sure that as many actors as possible could work this

I use a laundry basket, a hatstand, a duvet and foam rubber to sound proof everything...

LOUISE JAMESON

of his Big Finish lunches...!"

Nick adds: "One of the challenges is making sure that the quality of each individual recording is good enough, which, as David says, is being checked by the brilliant Toby. And the other problem is the variable internet coverage. There are still people struggling with painfully slow upload/download speeds. But we get by! And the results are great so far!"

**SHADOW OF the Sun** has been written by Robert Valentine, who tells us: "When lockdown happened I have to admit that one of my first (very selfish) thoughts was that my moment writing for Tom Baker, Louise Jameson and John



It's been hilarious and neurotic in equal measure. I was terribly nervous the first time as I'm not technically adept!

LOUISE JAMESON

stand, a duvet and foam rubber to soundproof everything. The only expensive thing I've got is a state-of-the-art microphone! When this is over, I'm definitely going to build a home studio, just in case there are more pandemics in the future.

spaceship is called the *Surya Namaskar*, which is the term for the 16 poses that you use in yoga, which are to do with sun worship. I love the fact that it is drawn from real life. It's a simple story but from an ancient tale with a cult."



Jason Haigh-Ellery

Leeson – the Doctor, Leela and K-actual-9 themselves – had been wrenched away. But when I learnt that the production was going ahead by recording remotely, I was (again, very, very selfishly) utterly overjoyed!"

Louise Jameson stars as Leela in *Shadow of the Sun*, alongside Tom Baker as the Doctor and John Leeson as K9, and she confirms it is an unusual experience working from home.

Louise tells us: "It's been hilarious and neurotic in equal measure. I was terribly nervous the first time as I'm not technically adept! There are so many little things, like turning on the microphone – if you don't press the little button that stops the red light flashing and makes it solid, you feel so foolish! I'm not a sound engineer, but I'm learning!"

"I've made a comedic makeshift studio outside my bathroom door. I use a laundry basket, a hat

"Toby talked me through the first session the day before the recording, he's been absolutely amazing. But just yesterday I had to re-record one file as it came though with an echo on it, and another was damaged. I thought I'd done it the same way as everything else and Big Finish were terribly apologetic when I feel I should be apologising to them! Everyone is being extremely patient.

"My recording cubicle is so tiny I have to put the computer on the floor so everyone gets the underside of my laundry basket to look at rather than me – we see each other at teabreaks! With people like Nick and David, who I know so well, it's just like having them speaking in the room."

Louise particularly enjoyed recording this adventure. She explains: "It's a lovely story and very, very accessible. It crosses over with the real world in its choice of names. The

**ONCE THE** audio files were brought together it meant that post-production could get underway.

Musician Jamie Robertson worked on *Shadow of the Sun*, and says: "Toby did the sound design on this release which meant I could concentrate on the music side. I wanted a sort of eerie tone for when we begin, with the usual Fourth Doctor comical moments included, of course.

"The music had to be done quite quickly, really. In the film industry there's something known as 'the 48-hour film challenge' where you have to write, film, edit and compose a production in just 48 hours. I had longer than that here, but it felt like we were doing a time challenge! It was written, recorded then edited by Toby. I helped on the K9 bits then composed the music, and... it was done!"

Cover artist Simon Holub also worked quickly. He explains: "I was very excited to be asked to

I usually let ideas bubble around in my head for a few days, but had to throw myself straight in to this one!

SIMON HOLUB

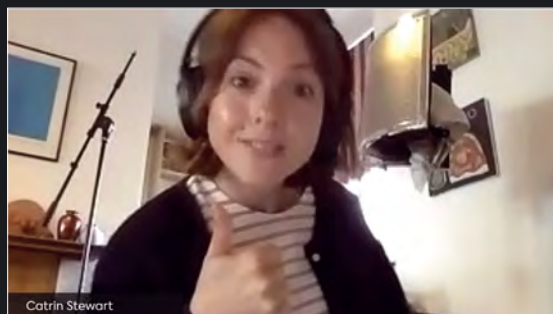
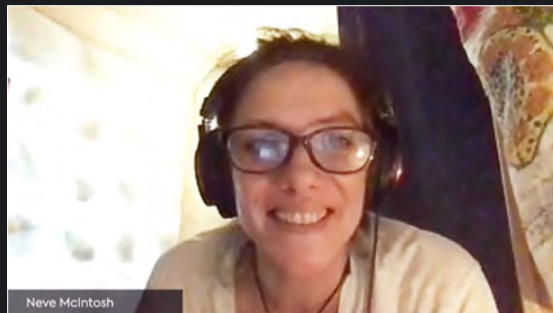
be a part of this release for two reasons. One, being involved in something put together quite quickly by everyone in lockdown, and two, my first opportunity at doing a cover for Tom Baker scratched a fan itch!

“I had just over a week from receiving the script to plan out and complete the cover. I usually let ideas bubble around in my head for a few days, but had to throw myself straight in to this one. Once I’d found a great image of Tom (a screengrab from TV episode *The Face of Evil*) the rest all fell into place.”

**AS WELL** as acting in *Shadow of the Sun*, Louise has also been remotely directing other productions.

She explains: “As a director it’s been interesting as we’ve had to narrow down the whole of Equity to basically the innovative and forward-thinking actors who have their own home studios.

“We’ve had a couple of newbies and for them it’s been particularly hard. Your first job is inevitably a bit of an audition,



but as Big Finish has shown in the past, if you’re good and a team player, then they will use you over and over again.

“I recently directed a couple of episodes of *The Robots*. I was very, very glad I’d directed an episode with Nicola Walker and Clare Rushbrook before lockdown started in a ‘real’ studio where I could hug them hello and goodbye – and tell them how much I respect their work.

“It was great to have that personal interaction before we embarked on the next one remotely. I surrounded myself with old mates which made things a lot more relaxed for everyone. I think if I’d had a completely new cast, it wouldn’t have been nearly as easy.” **VORTEX**



**DOCTOR WHO**  
SHADOW OF THE SUN  
RELEASED: MAY 2020  
FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD



**ORDER NOW AT:**  
[bgfn.sh/space](http://bgfn.sh/space)



## BOOKCLUB



## TORCHWOOD: CORPSE DAY

**BIG FINISH'S** *Torchwood* range has put together some fantastic pairings who never quite got their chance to shine on television.

May 2017's *Torchwood* release, *Corpse Day*, brought together Owen Harper (played by Burn Gorman) and PC Andy Davidson (Tom Price), in a very dark story as the police in Cardiff get to assist *Torchwood* on dead cases.

Writer James Goss said: "I worked with Guy Adams on the plot of this as I think I'm no good at horror!"

"One thing that stunned me when we started the range was how many story ideas had serial killers in, or surprise serial killers revealed as a twist, or just women screaming helplessly in a basement – and it felt very much *not* what *Torchwood* was or even should be.

"So I wanted to do a story that was taking the mickey out of all these proposals (partly so we could say, 'Sorry, done women screaming in basements, thanks.'). So yes, it's about a madman who keeps women in his basement but also about how the women screaming in the basement are actually the strongest characters. They've come up with a solution to make their own way out of this – sort of on their own terms.

"I'm not saying it's a feminist tract, but Andy and Owen definitely aren't quite the saviours charging in to the rescue in the story – they're being used. Everyone in the story is being used.

"It was also 'nice' to do something dark, cynical and twisted for Owen's

first story as that fits his character, but which also brings out his warmer side. Pairing Owen's darkness with Andy seemed a natural idea, but it wasn't until Burn said, 'You know we've never had a scene together,' that I went, 'Oh, huh!'. Burn Gorman. What an acting legend."

Director Scott Handcock adds: "I remember reading *Corpse Day* for the first time and thinking, This is dark. It was also our first script for Burn. It's so *Torchwood*, uncompromisingly so. But it's not for the faint-hearted – a lot of unpleasant things happen to good people.

## THE WOMEN SCREAMING IN THE BASEMENT ARE ACTUALLY THE STRONGEST CHARACTERS.

JAMES GOSS

"It has a peculiar sense of optimism and hope, and the horrors we experience are deeply rooted in humanity rather than the alien. There's a fascinating conflict at the heart of it, and it's especially interesting to see how both Owen and Andy respond to the situation. Neither behave the way you imagine they will, but actually, when you're with them in the moment, they way they respond feels absolutely right. It's a fascinating piece of *Torchwood* drama, but definitely a break from the norm."

Tom Price adds: "It's great working with Burn. He's hilarious. He's a good, proper actor. He works incredibly hard and he's such an under-rated star. I think he will get something British and very big soon, something like playing a grizzled cop and he'll be number one on the call sheet. You look at him and he's beautiful and terrifying at the same time!" **VORTEX**

**TORCHWOOD:**  
CORPSE DAY  
RELEASED: MAY 2017  
FORMAT: DOWNLOAD



**ORDER NOW AT:**  
[bgn.sh/corpse](http://bgn.sh/corpse)

# VORTEX MAIL



## PENGUIN PARADE

I am aware that on asking before that the reason for some characters not re-appearing in a Big Finish is due to not having the right ideas. However, I have seen it mentioned also that it is due to poor sales. I may be wrong here but as almost two decades have passed since say Frobisher debuted in Big Finish canon, a time when I wasn't born, would it be worth one more story? He has been appreciated over the years I feel, and especially with Robert Jezek's performance, he has truly become a fan favourite!

**Max Lynch**

*Nick: There are currently no plans for Frobisher's return, Max, but it's certainly something I would never rule out.*

## THE REVISITATION

If ever you were to do such a thing, which Big Finish stories would you remake if starting from scratch for a Revisitations box set.

**Qwilpen**

*Nick: The Sirens of Time, for starters, because I always look back at my work and can think of ways of improving it. However, spending time reworking old things is currently not as attractive to me as working on new projects.*

## PRINTED MATTER

Is there a way to subscribe for a printed Vortex each month? Or can you only receive it when you order a product?

I know you have the PDF on the website but I love physical media.

**Joe**

*Nick: Vortex was only available with a physical purchase but sorry to say, Joe, that because our warehouse has been closed during the current pandemic emergency, we've stopped printing Vortex for the time being. We'll revise the situation when the emergency is over. Apologies.*

## DAUGHTER IN THE TARDIS

Will there ever be a second set of

**Jenny: The Doctor's Daughter? Who Mysterio**

*Nick: I certainly wouldn't rule it out, Who Mysterio. The first series was great, wasn't it?*



Daughters in a TARDIS

## LET IT RAINE

Having watched season 26 of **Doctor Who** again with the recent release on Blu-ray, I immediately continued into **The Lost Stories** that would have made up season 27 had it not been cancelled. Not having listened to them since their release in 2011, there was so much I'd forgotten, especially how well the character Raine worked with the Doctor and Ace. I was wondering if you any plans to use her again?

**Dean Fletcher**

*Nick: There are no current plans to use Raine again, but she did feature in our Seventh Doctor box set UNIT: Dominion. Have you listened to that one? And, of course, Beth Chalmers was brilliant in the role. We really should bring her back one day.* **VORTEX**



# VORTEX

ISSUE: 135 • MAY 2020



Managing Editor:  
**Jason Haigh-Ellery**

Executive Producer:  
**Nicholas Briggs**

Senior Producer:  
**David Richardson**

Editor:  
**Kenny Smith**

The Big Finish Team:  
**Cheryl Bly, Sue Cowley, Emily Davis  
Karen Parks, Hannah Peel  
Alfie Shaw, Paul Spragg**

Graphic Designer:  
**Mark Plastow**

Copy Editor:  
**Stephanie Hornett**

Marketing:  
**Steve Berry**

BFP Administration:  
**Brenda Smith, Alison Taylor**

Publisher:  
**Big Finish Productions Ltd.**

[WWW.BIGFINISH.COM](http://WWW.BIGFINISH.COM)

[@BIGFINISH](https://twitter.com/BIGFINISH)

[f THEBIGFINISH](https://www.facebook.com/thebigfinish)

[@BIGFINISHPROD](https://www.instagram.com/bigfinishprod)

[■ BIG-FINISH](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBj31111111111111111111)

[▶ BIGFINISHPROD](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBj31111111111111111111)

"The 'Ulysses' of rock & roll saxophone."

# COMING SOON

## THE BIG FINISH

### RELEASE SCHEDULE

FOR FULL DETAILS AND UPDATES VISIT,  
[bgfn.sh/whatsnew](http://bgfn.sh/whatsnew)

#### MAY 2020

- **DW • THE MONTHLY ADVENTURES:** *Scorched Earth* (264, SIXTH DOCTOR)
- **DW • THE THIRD DOCTOR ADVENTURES:** *Volume 6* (BOX SET)
- **DW • THE PATERNOSTER GANG:** *Heritage 3* (BOX SET)
- **DW • SHORT TRIPS:** *Regeneration Impossible* (10.5) **DLO**
- **TORCHWOOD:** *Iceberg* (38)
- **TIMESLIP:** *Volume 1: The Age of the Death Lottery* (BOX SET)
- **BIG FINISH ORIGINALS:** *The Human Frontier* **DLO**

#### JUNE 2020

- **DW • THE MONTHLY ADVENTURES:** *The Lovecraft Invasion* (265, SIXTH DOCTOR)
- **DW • STRANDED 1:** (BOX SET)
- **DW • THE FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES:** *Shadow of the Sun*
- **DW • SHORT TRIPS:** *Out of the Deep* (10.6) **DLO**
- **TORCHWOOD:** *Dinner and a Show* (39)
- **THE AVENGERS:** *The Comic Strip Adaptations Volume 4* (BOX SET • STEED & MRS PELL)
- **TIMESLIP:** *Volume 2: The War That Never Was* (BOX SET)

#### JULY 2020

- **DW • THE MONTHLY ADVENTURES:** *Time Apart* (266, FIFTH DOCTOR)
- **DW • MISSY:** *Series 2* (BOX SET)
- **DW • THE ROBOTS 2:** (BOX SET)
- **DW • SHORT TRIPS:** *Downward Spiral* (10.7) **DLO**
- **TORCHWOOD:** *Save Our Souls* (40)
- **STAR COPS:** *Mars Part 2* (BOX SET)

#### AUGUST 2020

- **DW • THE MONTHLY ADVENTURES:** *Thin Time / Madquake* (267, FIFTH DOCTOR)
- **DW • THE SIXTH DOCTOR AND PERI:** *Volume One* (BOX SET)
- **DW • SHORT TRIPS:** *These Stolen Hours* (10.8) **DLO**
- **TORCHWOOD:** *Torchwood Soho – Parasite* (BOX SET)
- **TORCHWOOD:** *Red Base* (41)
- **ADAM ADAMANT LIVES!** **VOLUME 2** (BOX SET)

#### SEPTEMBER 2020

- **DW • THE MONTHLY ADVENTURES:** *TBC* (268, TBC)
- **DW • THE EIGHTH DOCTOR:** *Time War 4* (BOX SET)
- **DW • SHORT TRIPS:** *Her Own Bootstraps* (10.9) **DLO**
- **TORCHWOOD:** *Ex Machina* (42)
- **BIG FINISH CLASSICS:** *Dracula's War*



AMID THE ONGOING CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC, BIG FINISH HAS MOVED TO A DIGITAL-FIRST RELEASE SCHEDULE. ALL PHYSICAL ORDERS WILL BE FULFILLED, BUT YOU WILL HAVE TO WAIT LONGER FOR YOUR CDS TO ARRIVE.

**DLO** = DOWNLOAD ONLY • **DW** = DOCTOR WHO  
DATES CORRECT AT TIME OF GOING TO PRESS.

# VORTEX



# THE AVENGERS

MRS PEEL, WE'RE NEEDED...



**PLUS!** THE EIGHTH DOCTOR  
STRANDED IN LONDON