

VORTEX



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BROUGHT SOME DALEKS WITH HIM...**



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THE WAR OF RASSILON

ARMITAGE AGAINST A SEA OF TROUBLES...

SPACE AND time are being ripped apart – and watching the events unfold are the Time Lords. Once lofty observers of the universe, they have been drawn into a conflict with the Daleks. Nowhere and no when are safe as February 2021 sees the release of **Gallifrey: Time War Volume Four**.

Reprising their roles are Louise Jameson (Leela), Pippa Bennett-Warner (Livia), Seán Carlsen (Narvin), Miles Richardson (Braxiatel), Samuel Clemens (Mantus) with Nicholas Briggs as the Daleks. At the end of *Volume Three*, Romana was lost to the Time War, while Leela and Narvin continue to fight, caught between Rassilon's fury and the Dalek Emperor's mania.

The Stranger star Richard Armitage takes on the mantle of Rassilon, the resurrected Time Lord President.

Gallifrey: Time War Volume Four comprises *Deception* by Lisa McMullin, *Dissolution* by Lou Morgan, *Beyond* by David Llewellyn and *Homecoming* by Matt Fitton. Producer and director Scott Handcock says: "It's been a pleasure to induct Richard Armitage into the **Doctor Who** universe! He's such a brilliant actor. I loved him in **Hannibal** and most recently **The Stranger**, plus of course Big Finish's own HG Wells's adaptation, **The Martian Invasion of Earth**, so he's been on my wish list for a while. Richard's fantastic as Rassilon: powerful, headstrong and overflowing with self-conviction." **VORTEX**



EDITORIAL

SHE'S BACK! And with great excitement we're going to hear what happens when the Time Lords catch up with Bernice Summerfield and the Unbound Universe Doctor.

I've adored Bernice since she first appeared in Virgin Publishing's *New Adventures* novel, *Love and War*. But that adulation became love as soon as I heard Big Finish's first ever audio release, *Oh No It Isn't*, way back in 1998, when actor Lisa Bowerman slipped into her space shoes for the first time. I've followed Benny through her marriage (Jason Kane letting Benny go?! What a numpity!), escaping from Braxiatel during one of his slightly less stable phases, travelling the universe meeting new friends – several times over – before being reunited with the Doctor and Ace. And now to meeting the ultimate in grumpy Doctors (if you thought the War Doctor was in a bad mood, check out this incarnation!).

For a taster of this particular Doctor, head onto the Big Finish website and find his first story, *Sympathy for the Devil*, in the **Doctor Who Unbound** range. It features Nicholas Courtney, and, of course, one David Tennant.

Oh, and guess who's back in The Eighth Doctor -Time War range?! When you read the preview for this series, you might be surprised as it's Davros, the creator of the Daleks, but not quite as we know and love him (well, maybe not love, but adore him). I'm delighted it's Terry Molloy bringing him to life once again – the frisson between him and Paul McGann's Doctor in *Terror Firma* was first class and I can't wait to hear more! **VORTEX**



The creator of the Daleks is back and, as usual, he's brought his creations with him...

THE CHILDREN OF THE TIME WAR

SO FAR, in the **Eighth Doctor – Time War** range, we've seen the Doctor face the Daleks, the Dalek Time Strategist and the Twelve, but there's a rather familiar scarred face returning for **The Eighth Doctor – Time War Volume Four**. Or... is there?

The Doctor and Bliss are dragged into the Time War as the Daleks replenish their army using Davros himself.

Davros (played by Terry Molloy), faces Eighth Doctor (Paul McGann), for the first time since the 2005 release, *Terror Firma*. The set contains four new stories – *Palindrome* (parts one and two)

by John Dorney, *Dreadshade* by Lisa McMullin and *Restoration of the Daleks* by Matt Fitton.

Script editor (and writer) Matt sets the scene: "At the start of **The Eighth Doctor – Time War Volume Four**, the Time War is over with the Valeyard having helped end it. We begin the first half of the series in a different reality altogether, as the Doctor and Bliss meet a Davros who hasn't yet created the Daleks. However, the Dalek Time Strategist has escaped and has something to say about that! It wants to create a new army of Daleks to return to the war.

"It's a case of what could have been for Davros if Skaro hadn't embarked down the path it did.

But there's a question over his fate – do all roads lead to the Daleks?

"Then in Lisa's story we're back on Gallifrey. Because of how the war ended, the Time Lords don't really remember their enemy or what went on. We've got the first appearance of the General in Big Finish, teamed up with the Doctor. And the Twelve returns after her foray into the Time War in *Volume Two*."

Producer David Richardson says: "We'd always wanted to bring Davros into our Time War stories but it was choosing the right moment. And this is the moment – a powerful, huge Davros story that approaches the character in a brand new way, just as it approaches



Above (l-r): Julia McKenzie and Rakhee Thakrar

IT'S ALWAYS A THRILL WHEN THE CALL COMES IN WITH A BOOKING THAT MENTIONS THE 'D' WORD!

TERRY MOLLOY

the Time War in a new way too. I loved the scripts so much I got very excited when I sent them over to Terry, as I couldn't wait to hear his thoughts. And of course he loved them – he gets some really beautiful scenes to perform in these.”

Terry grins: “It’s always a thrill when the call comes in with a booking that mentions the ‘D’ word! He has been a regular visitor into my psyche during much of my working life – it’s sort of like welcoming an old friend back for another chin wag and a cup of Varga extract.

“There is a definite thrum of anticipation when I open a Davros script, as I’m always in awe of what new devilment the writers have come up with. In *Palindrome* and *Restoration of the Daleks* both John Dorney and Matt Fitton dealt me a couple of aces!

“It is good (and rightly so) to see Davros involved in the machinations of the Time War and in ways that may not initially be obvious. The creativity of the writers does not in any way disappoint!

“This was the last studio recording I did before lockdown

confined me to my home and working alone. What does everyone recall of the studio sessions at the Moat? Toby’s fabulous lunches, of course! The camaraderie and atmosphere of the studio is always a delight for me and it was lovely to be paired up with Paul McGann once more.

“It was a fast paced and intense period of time and you have to be at the top of your game in terms of concentration and energy.”

Palindrome by John Dorney takes place in an alternate universe where Davros lives in peace – until the Doctor and Bliss arrive and the Daleks emerge in a new reality.

John says: “We originally planned this for the third volume, but it sort of clashed with the **War Master** – *Anti-Genesis*, so we held

it back. More time has meant we could set it up in a different manner, which was really quite useful. We worked from an idea of doing something with Davros and seeing what that could be as he's such a fun character to explore.

"We haven't gone into the Nightmare Child or anything like that as we wanted to do something new with the Time War, and we liked the idea of there being a nominal finish to it. And then getting everything back was the next exciting thing!

"It's a very different relationship the Doctor and Davros have here. It's not quite the Davros we know which is a little bit obvious from the set-up. Here they are on each other's side, in a weird way, so it is a new take on their relationship. We have a Davros who is helping out the Doctor, and he has a Thal wife."

A palindrome is, of course, a word, phrase, or sequence that reads the same backwards as forwards.

John has been one of the lead writers of Eighth Doctor stories for a few years now.

John tells us: "The story's title does reference quite a specific thing – there's a reason for it!"

Vortex isn't going to tell you what it is but, as you might expect, it's rather clever. John continues: "I don't take a different approach to the Eighth Doctor in the Time War compared to his pre-War self. It's a case of, 'Can I hear Paul McGann saying the lines?'"

"It's more about the context. If I'm writing for Paul in a slightly different scenario, he's automatically going to be talking in a different way. I feel I've got a reasonably strong handle on him that never really wavers. Hopefully that comes across."

DREADSHADE BY Lisa McMullin sees the Time Lords, including the General and the Twelve, adjust to life after the Time War, until the Doctor and Bliss return with a warning.

Julia McKenzie reprises her role as the Twelve (the multiple-personality Time Lord whose previous incarnations exist all at once) introduced in the first



Above: Julia McKenzie

THE WORKING TITLE WAS ABSENCE OF THE DALEKS AS IT WAS A TIME WAR TALE WITHOUT ANY DALEKS!

LISA McMULLIN

Eighth Doctor – Time War series, along with the General from *Day of the Doctor* and *Hell Bent* played by Ken Bones.

Lisa grins: "I do like the name, *Dreadshade*, it sounds like it should be a battleship. I love a title! The working title was *Absence of the Daleks* as it was a Time War tale without any Daleks!"

"I was really pleased when they said, 'Can you include the General?' The Twelve was also interesting as I hadn't written for the Eleven before. I was given a crib sheet with all the different

personalities so I had to work out who is who and how to use them.

"It was a mind-melting storyline to come up with, as it follows on from John Dorney's *Palindrome*, which I had to read about three times! I read it over and over until I had a complete handle on what happens."

John laughs: "I would send stuff through to Lisa, and she would come back saying that her mind was blown!"

Summing up the events of her script, Lisa explains: "The Time Lords know there's been



Above: Chris Jarman



Above (l-r): Terry Molloy and Isla Blair

a big war as there's a load of debris and prisoners, but no one knows where they came from.

"The Twelve is locked away where she has been for a while, held in stasis until the arsenal

is unlocked and all the sentient weapons stored there make their bid for freedom... and chaos ensues!

"The Doctor and Bliss don't remember events to start with but various little things happen

that remind them, and by the end they remember the Time War. The Twelve is pretty much the only person who does know what's going on because she has been in stasis and avoided what happened in John's story, which also picks up from the end of the last Time War series with the War Valeyard.

"The Twelve is the most clued up of all of them – but that's not a very safe state of affairs. She enlists the help of a sentient preacher who has been incarcerated in the Omega Arsenal waiting to be used

I WAS PLEASED TO FIND A FITTING R-WORD FOR A DALEK TITLE. MATT FITTON

as a weapon, and the person who gets their hands on this 'weapon' is the Twelve. She exploits the Dreadshade for her own ends.

"She's got such a strong voice, as has the General, and that makes it easier to write for them."

IN THE final story of the set, the Dalek Time Strategist restores the Dalek armies to the universe, but wants to dispense with Davros in *Restoration of the Daleks* by Matt Fitton. Matt says: "Executive Producer Nicholas Briggs mentioned that this had been a possible title for what became *Victory of the Daleks* back in Matt Smith's first season – I was pleased to find a fitting R-word for a Dalek title.

"At the end of Lisa's story and the beginning of mine, the Time Lords have realised the Time War is restarting and the Daleks are coming back at a particular place in the universe where the barriers between realities are

I WANTED TO PUT THE DOCTOR HEAD TO HEAD WITH THE TIME STRATEGIST FOR MUCH OF THIS EPISODE.

MATT FITTON

weaker, so their armies head off to see what's happening there.

"Bliss insists they help the people of a nearby populated planet and evacuate them, but she and the Doctor find that Davros has already appeared and is being used by the Time Strategist to engineer the return of the Daleks.

"I wanted to put the Doctor head to head with the Time Strategist for much of this episode. Elsewhere, Davros's motivations are in question, and Bliss ends up stuck with him. Rasmus appears too, in a new incarnation, the Time Lord with a moral centre in the war.

"They are paired with Davros on this world, trying to defend the people from an incoming army of Daleks, while the Doctor is trapped with the Time Strategist in its own little enclave. It offers the Doctor all kinds of incentives and temptations, to get him to do its bidding."

THE RELEASE has a fantastic main cover image using a 21st century Davros body with the head of Terry Molloy's classic Davros. It was created by Tom Webster, who explains: "In terms of a brief, it was quite open as usual. I got to have a look through the scripts



Above: Paul McGann

and pull out elements which I thought were visually exciting. On top of that, it was all about the characters that had to be included. It was very exciting to have Davros on a Time War piece finally!

"It all starts with one central image and the rest fits around that to create an overall balance. With this one, it started with Davros. I knew it was going to be Terry Molloy playing him so I instantly got very excited about updating his costume to a new series one. I think he looks fab!"

Terry was delighted with the cover, adding: "It's a very interesting 'mash-up', certainly very relevant given the story premise explored in *Palindrome*. Of course, we have had a cover with Davros sporting a 'cyber' hand before – in *Juggernauts!*"

Terry concludes: "My overwhelming memory is of having fun with my giant extended family, and I include the fan base in that from the

many conventions I have been invited to, both here and abroad. The commonality of experience, a result of our differing involvements with **Doctor Who**, is very special." **VORTEX**



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IT'S A SIN

I've been really enjoying the Big Finish ranges during lockdown – in particular, **The Sins of Captain John**. I don't think I've ever laughed out loud at an audio story before! James Marsters is superb. I hope you'll consider doing more volumes, and have John pop up in more stories. Great stuff!

Joseph Barnes

Nick: Cheers, Joseph, yes James is a phenomenal performer, isn't he? And if you listen to the behind-the-scenes interviews, a good time was certainly had by all!

ALWAYS ON MY MIND

Is there any news of Series Three of **Charlotte Pollard** being released? You can't leave her in a cliffhanger situation forever! I have followed her adventures from your early days and she – and I – need closure!

Mervyn Capel

Nick: Hi Mervyn, yes there is a third series planned – first draft scripts were written by Iain Meadows some time ago. We are sharing writing duties on this and I haven't yet had the time to complete working on them. But they are high on my list, and rest assured that a shattering finale is promised...

SOME SPECULATION

I've read in the past that Russell T Davies does not want **The Sarah Jane**

Adventures audios to be produced by Big Finish. I understand why, as the show sits in a perfect little bubble in my head from when I was a child. However, I wondered if there was the possibility that races from **The Sarah Jane Adventures** episodes could crop up in other ranges? I think the Shansheeth or the Berserkers against UNIT, for example, would make an excellent story and add to **The Sarah Jane Adventures** stories without imposing on them too much.

Sam Holroyd

*Nick: I'm not really familiar with **The Sarah Jane Adventures**, Sam, but we could probably licence individual creations from them should we come up with a good story that needs them. No plans yet but I'd never rule that out.*

RETURN OF THE RANI

Are there any plans to have the Rani appear again? Because I have noticed we haven't heard from her in a while since *Planet of the Rani* back in 2015. I thought Siobhan Redmond did a brilliant job as the Rani and I would love to hear her face the Doctor again at some point.

Joshua Duffy

Nick: Hi Joshua, with the sad passing of the rights' holders there are some delicate issues involved in the licensing of the character, but it's something we'd really like to do and we will look into possibilities for the future.

MIRACLES

Big Finish's *Vortex 134* cover pays homage to *Look-in* magazine and introduces **Timeslip** – outstanding. I was fifteen in 1970 when **Timeslip** began. I recorded every episode using my tape recorder with the microphone next to my twelve-inch television. From the start I amassed a huge collection of **Timeslip** memorabilia including the original paperback to the *Look-in* comic strip, drawn superbly by the artist and illustrator Mike Noble, to various editions of DVDs. This collection has continued to grow throughout my life. Educated and entertained as a child of television, **Timeslip**, in my opinion, is one of the finest children's TV series ever made. And now fifty years on, I am as excited as I was then to cross the time-barrier again into new **Timeslip**. Thank you Big Finish.

Peter Hastings

Nick: Thanks, Peter. It's been a labour of love for us. Please continue to spread the word as it's still reaching only a very small audience – which seems a shame since it's such a great series. **VORTEX**



HOMeward UNBOUND

THE DOCTOR'S HEADING BACK TO GALLIFREY – BUT HE'S NOT QUITE THE TIME LORD THEY WERE EXPECTING...

BERNICE SUMMERFIELD has brought a Doctor from another universe into this one," explains producer James Goss. "They've been off having adventures for a while, but the Time Lords are now aware of them."

That's the set up for the sixth run of **The New Adventures of Bernice Summerfield** with Bernice, played by Lisa Bowerman, joined by David Warner's world-weary Doctor. After first encountering him in **Doctor Who Unbound: Sympathy for the Devil** in 2003, Benny spent a couple of seasons

in the Unbound Doctor's universe, before returning to 'ours' last year.

James continues: "**The New Adventures of Bernice Summerfield Volume Six: Lost in Translation** is a series of four stories all about communication, or failures to communicate. If that sounds boring and worthy, it's really not – it's a huge amount of fun leading up to a massive amount of drama!"

The box set begins with *Have I Told You Lately?* by Tim Foley, who was delighted to start off this new season of adventures. He admits: "I was ridiculously pleased to be

asked to write for Benny and replied within seconds of James Goss contacting me. She's the First Lady of Big Finish, her solo adventures were a must in childhood listening, and I've wanted to write for her forever! David Warner too, phwoar, what a legend! So yes, being asked to kick off this box set is an honour.

"James wanted a romp on a mysterious spaceship. Something that keeps Benny and the Doctor apart for quite a long chunk, so we can see what makes them tick. I started to figure out what might be interesting about the ship, how the pair of them



Above (back row l-r): Seán Carlsen and Lisa Bowerman (front row l-r): Siân Phillips, David Warner and Lawry Lewin

could communicate on it, and the story evolved from there. If this was a typical Doctor and companion relationship, it'd seem like a familiar set-up – the two of them wandering around a strange spaceship, working out where they were – but having this Time Lord as a fish out of water and Bernice in full archaeologist mode meant I could play around with what kind of adventure we're expecting from them."

Tim particularly enjoyed writing for this Doctor/companion relationship, as it doesn't have the dynamic we're more familiar with. Tim grins: "They're not your usual Doctor and companion, are they? It's very much Bernice in the lead and a Doctor who's along for the ride. You definitely get to write some different stuff with this duo and I've enjoyed that. Plus Bernice carries such a weight of history behind her, whereas this version of the Doctor is still a bit of an enigma, so that's a nice reversal too."

Tim also had a personal highlight

JOSHUA'S ENTRY SHONE WITH ITS ORIGINALITY AND HIS CLEAR LOVE BOTH FOR DOCTOR WHO AND FOR BERNICE...

JAMES GOSS

making something that you wouldn't expect to appear in a **Doctor Who** story, appear in a **Doctor Who** story... (*Vortex* won't spoil the surprise, but it will most definitely produce a smile!) Tim teases: "Other than writing for Benny herself, James asked me to include a certain piece

of machinery that hasn't appeared too often in the spin-off media. I had such fun researching it, hopefully someone will send me one now I've made copious references to it!"

LAST AUGUST, Big Finish launched a competition to find a new writer to create an original adventure featuring Bernice Summerfield and the Unbound Doctor. The winning entry, *The Undying Truth* written by Joshua A Prentice, is the second story of the set. James says: "We had an AMAZING number of entries, tirelessly worked through by a judging panel including one of the actual script editors of **Doctor Who** on television.

"There were a cluster that stood out, but Joshua's entry shone with its originality and his clear love both for **Doctor Who** and for Bernice Summerfield. He captured her voice perfectly."

Joshua said: "When I found out I'd won I was shocked and thrilled.



Above (l-r): David Warner, Lisa Bowerman and Misha Butler

THE IDEA OF TWO MAGNIFICENT PEOPLE WHO ARE ADVENTURERS BY IMPULSE FORCED TO HIDE OUT ON A NOTHING OF A WORLD DOING NOTHING FOR A MONTH.

JAMES GOSS



Above (l-r): Raj Ghatak, Rosie Day, David Warner, Lisa Bowerman and Lois Chimimba

It was a real honour as a **Doctor Who** fan, a Bernice Summerfield fan, and a fan of the consistently brilliant and imaginative **The New Adventures of Bernice Summerfield** range in particular.

“The parameters of the competition meant I was more or less open to pitch whatever story I wanted, so there wasn’t an initial brief beyond the status quo of Benny and the Unbound Doctor travelling in the ‘main’ universe. After my entry was selected, James gave me some notes to improve the story, making it stronger and more

character-focused but the core of the script remains my original idea. I’m one of those people who enjoys writing prompts though, so I probably would have had just as much fun working from a brief.”

How would Joshua sum up the plot in a spoiler free way? He says: “Benny and the Doctor encounter mud, amateur archaeology and catchy jingles, all of which are more dangerous than they sound.”

Joshua particularly enjoyed writing for Benny and the Unbound Doctor. He explains: “It was so much fun. I found it easy to write

for them because their characters are really strong and they have a great dynamic. Just put them in a room together and they start playing off each other – it felt more like transcribing than writing. They’ve both got a lot of wit and it’s fun to think of clever things for them to say, but there’s also a lot of depth to them. Beneath Benny’s snark there’s a lot of heart, and under the Doctor’s grumpiness there’s an almost childish joy in the wonder of the universe. The only trouble was sometimes I’d end up with ten pages of nothing but them talking and have to trim it down so I could fit in the plot!”

Joshua adds: “The whole experience has been incredible for me. Working with James Goss, who is an amazing writer, was definitely a highlight. Writing not only for Benny and **Doctor Who** but for a range with such a great track record of stories was another highlight. I’m also very proud of Arn, one of the characters I created for the story, and I hope the listeners like her as well. Creating this story for Big Finish has been such a privilege and I’m enjoying every minute of it.

“Writing words that Lisa Bowerman and David Warner are going to say is surreal, intimidating and awe-inspiring all at once. I know ‘it’s a dream come true’ is a cliché, but writing this episode really is – I can’t wait for people to hear the story.”



Above: Lisa Bowerman

INERTIA BY James Goss brings events towards their climax. James says: "It came from a brief I suggested to someone else – what if the Doctor and Benny have to do nothing?"

When they turned in a great script about something else entirely, the concept was free to use for this.

"The idea of two magnificent people who are adventurers by impulse forced to hide out on a nothing of a world doing nothing for a month. They've got board games, and the Doctor's got a sourdough starter – can they absolutely and definitely manage not to have an adventure or save a planet for a month?"

"Well of course they can. Only Benny finds a mysterious tile in some ruins and the Doctor notices the local tribe is being terrorised by monsters. But ignoring all that, putting it to one side, they can definitely absolutely do nothing for a month. Can't they?"

FOR THE final story in the set we're off to *Gallifrey* by Guy Adams and AK Benedict, as the Time Lords finally catch up with this unusual Time Lord. James says: "The finale is

set on Gallifrey. And it's a proper little epic. Something's very wrong on Gallifrey and only two outsiders can work out what it is.

"Next on our list of madly unsuitable people for Benny to have remarkable chemistry with, Narvin is, right from the start, absolutely entranced by her – even though they're on opposite sides of a terrible conflict. (Because it's Gallifrey you can't just have a conflict, it has to be a terrible conflict!)"

Co-writer Guy says: "This is the first Big Finish thing Alexandra and I have co-written – we pretty much co-write everything these days – but this is the first to be released.

"James and I have guided the Unbound Doctor through his adventures for a few years now, so when James asked if I wanted to take him home to Gallifrey, the answer was absolutely, 'Yes'.

"I feel particularly attached to David Warner's Doctor. We've put a lot into this quiet, slightly hidden corner of *Doctor Who* that feels quite personal and we are very proud of it. I would always heed the call to come back and spend a little bit more time with this Doctor.

"The opportunity to take him home was always going to be a mixed blessing as he's a grumpy fellow at the best of times. And, like all of us when at his grumpiest and most confrontational, it's because he's hiding an uncomfortable emotion.

"Going home is a difficult thing, especially if you're an itinerant creature such as the Doctor, so there was always going to be a lot of potential there.

"And then to go back to a home and find you no longer recognise it, that's perhaps common enough, but in this case, he might have a point."

Guy has a particular attachment to this Doctor, but even more to Bernice Summerfield, and keeping her as the lead in the series is vital. He explains: "These are Benny's adventures, so it's important to James and I that she never feels like 'just' a companion. I'm not keen on the idea of anyone being 'just' a companion anyway, but it's important the balance always feels correct and the partnership is equal.

"As two characters, the Unbound Doctor and Benny work very easily. She's his carer, his friend, his conscience. He needs her very much, far more than she needs him."

But is this the end of Benny and the Unbound Doctor? James grins: "They'll probably be back next year because Lisa and David are too much fun not to work with again!" **VORTEX**



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ACE VENTURES

IT'S TIME TO REVISIT A CLASSIC ERA OF **BIG FINISH** WITH MORE ADVENTURES FROM THE SEVENTH DOCTOR

HEX DETECTIVE

THE SEVENTH Doctor, Ace and Hex ended their regular travels together in 2014 when the popular Scouse nurse departed in *Signs and Wonders*. But time travel is a wonderful thing as we can sneak into the spaces between audio stories and fill them out with other adventures!

And that's exactly what we've got in *The Flying Dutchman / Displaced* – September's **The Monthly Adventures** release – when Sylvester McCoy, Sophie Aldred and Philip Olivier reprise their roles in a new pair of two-part adventures.

Matt Fitton, the script editor on *Displaced*, says: "It's nice to be able to dip back into that era of the Seventh Doctor. We can always go back and play with a

Big Finish classic era, just like any era of the television show.

"*Displaced* is set during the period when Hex and Ace are becoming a team and getting the measure of the Doctor. They start to realise how he operates and that he is prone to putting them into situations with a particular plan in mind – but that he doesn't necessarily tell them what it is!"

The Seventh Doctor, Ace and Hex board the infamous cursed sailing vessel, the *Flying Dutchman*, in a story by Gemma Arrowsmith. The ship is a mythical craft that is doomed to stay at sea forever and never make it to port.

Gemma reveals: "I was asked, simply, for a historical script with no aliens and no sci-fi; just the Doctor and his companions on a romp in history. I suppose

something akin to the First Doctor historical serials like *Marco Polo* or *The Aztecs*. I wanted to put a bit of a spin on it to leave the listeners guessing and so honed in on an unexplained mystery: the myth of the *Flying Dutchman* seemed to fit the bill.

"It's the Seventh Doctor, Ace and Hex onboard a ship which is attacked by the terrifying ghost ship *The Flying Dutchman*."

THE SECOND story of the release, *Displaced*, is by Katharine Armitage, which sees the TARDIS crew trapped in a perfectly ordinary house where the normal rules of time do not apply. Katharine tells *Vortex*: "The brief was very simple: a story featuring the Seventh Doctor, Ace and Hex



Above (l-r): Sophie Aldred and Phillip Olivier

that can be set anywhere in space and time. So, obviously, I went for the Norfolk fens in 2020...

"It's a locked room mystery where the Doctor, Ace and Hex arrive in a totally ordinary family home, except the family aren't there. It's a sort of *Marie Celeste* on land with it being clear that the family were there only moments ago, and yet there's dust over everything. The team are trapped inside the house but locked out of the TARDIS which means they don't have any of their usual tools to solve things; I always love those sorts of stories! And, of course, there are strange voices on the air..."

Katharine reveals the story also has a hint of life as we have known it this year, during lockdown. She explains: "Well, it's accidentally very prescient! I wrote it in 2019 but it is all about being trapped inside a home with the tensions (and the stakes) forever rising so it might strike even more of a chord with people these days! I'm not saying that I am a great prophet of the future and should be worshipped accordingly but..."

Oh and I'm really proud of a joke I made about an evil giant slug, but then, who wouldn't be?!"

Both writers agree that there is plenty of fun to be had with the Doctor, Ace and Hex, as the trio have a fascinating relationship. Gemma says: "Who doesn't want to write for Ace? **Doctor Who** was cancelled just after my 8th birthday. It returned briefly for **Doctor Who – The Movie** when I was 14 but wasn't rebooted until I was out the other side of university. So I didn't really have a Doctor when I was growing up – unless you count the Fourth Doctor re-runs on UK Gold.

"But Ace. Ace was my companion. I remember watching the last few episodes of **Doctor Who** go out before its cancellation. I have a faint memory of watching *Survival* while eating spaghetti bolognais! I'm pretty sure that's a real memory and not an invented one. Imagine how cool Ace is to an eight-year-old. She's a teenager who gets to fly around in space and time. So, yep, I'm pretty excited I got to write for her."

WELL, IT'S ACCIDENTALLY VERY PRESCIENT! I WROTE IT IN 2019 BUT IT IS ALL ABOUT BEING TRAPPED INSIDE A HOME WITH THE TENSIONS (AND THE STAKES) FOREVER RISING...

KATHARINE ARMITAGE

Katharine adds of her script: "Because they're all trapped together in a space which is getting increasingly claustrophobic, their personalities are amplified and they clash with each other even more than usual.

"These three are so brilliant to write for because they're all very playful (there's always time for a decent bit of banter) but then they all have their murky depths and big hearts. Ace gets her 'detective' on and the Doctor is as tricky as ever. Hex is really the one who holds them together in this story because it deals with themes he understands far better than the others." **NORTEX**



DOCTOR WHO
THE FLYING DUTCHMAN/
DISPLACED
RELEASED: SEPTEMBER 2020
FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD



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SPIES LIKE US



ONE OF TELEVISION'S GREATEST SHOWS IN THE 1960s WAS CALLAN. THE ORIGINAL TELEVISION SERIES, STARRING EDWARD WOODWARD IN THE TITLE ROLE, RAN FOR FOUR SEASONS BETWEEN 1967 AND 1972, WITH A CINEMA FILM RELEASED IN 1974 AND A TV COMEBACK IN 1981.

FROM ITS first episode, **Callan** brought a much darker tone to the spy genre, using the most ruthless and lethal techniques to get the job done, each method meticulously filed by 'The Section', who colour coded each deadly tactic.

Callan returned on audio in 2018 in tales from series creator James Mitchell's Sunday Express short stories, adapted for Big Finish by his son Peter. Ben Miles stars as David Callan with Frank Skinner as Lonely, originally portrayed by Russell Hunter. Lonely is a small-time thief, and despite his body odour problems, he is a handy source of information and assistance to Callan.

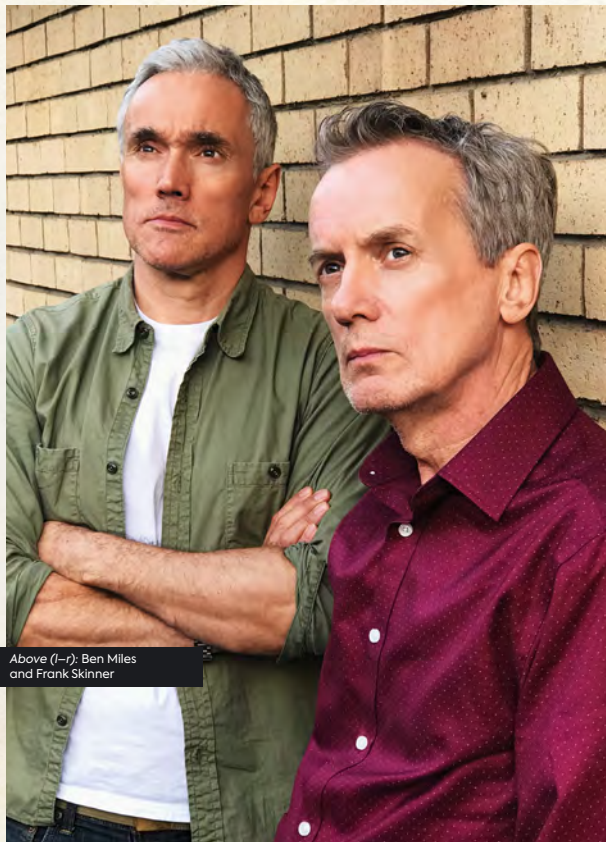
Due to Ben Miles being unavailable because of other work, there's been a longer than intended gap between the first series and the second, but because of the COVID-19 outbreak, Big Finish was able to get the stories recorded remotely, while everyone was home in lockdown.

Producer Emma Haigh tells us more: "It's really terrific we've got the **Callan** team back together to record a second series. We've had to be patient whilst Ben was busy with **The Lehman Trilogy** but the best things come to those who wait – and they certainly have here."

The return of the series has delighted Peter Mitchell, who

adapted these next four tales for audio. Peter said: "I was knocked out by the reaction to the first box set. There was always a nagging doubt that somehow we might not be able to recapture the atmosphere of the time, but the Big Finish team did a tremendous job and the quality has been maintained throughout.

"My dad always said that he was blessed by the leading actors in the original **Callan** TV series. All I can do is echo that sentiment in these audios. Ben Miles is outstanding as Callan, maintaining that potent mix of threat and vulnerability requires immense skill as an actor. And Ben portrayed Callan with



Above (l-r): Ben Miles
and Frank Skinner

apparent ease – as if he was slipping on an old jacket – quite incredible.

“Frank Skinner as Lonely beautifully captures that innocence and bewilderment that makes the character endearing and ridiculous all at the same time. Obviously Frank’s timing is superb – it adds a real lustre to the humour.

“And last, but by no means least, I have to say that Nicholas Briggs’s Hunter is a revelation. He brought just the right amount

FRANK SKINNER AS LONELY BEAUTIFULLY CAPTURES THAT INNOCENCE AND BEWILDERMENT THAT MAKES THE CHARACTER ENDEARING AND RIDICULOUS ALL AT THE SAME TIME.

PETER MITCHELL

of establishment menace to the table – tough as teak!”

The second box set contains another four adaptations from the short story collection. These are *File on an Angry American*, *File on a Difficult Don*, *File on an Elusive Engineer* and *File on a Mourning Mother*.

Peter explains: “*Angry American* sees Hunter and Callan make a deal to carry out an operation on British soil. But Callan is forced to intervene when the Americans overstep the mark.

“*Difficult Don* finds Callan among the dreaming spires of Oxford posing as a military historian. Having passed the examination of his intellect, he faces a much more physical challenge in the shape of a ‘Difficult Don’.

“Callan teams up with colleague and rival, Toby Meres, in *File on an*



Above (l-r): Frank Skinner and Ben Miles

DESPITE US BEING REMOTE THERE WAS A LOVELY ATMOSPHERE AMONGST THE CAST, LOTS OF CAMARADERIE AND HELPING EACH OTHER OUT... EMMA HAIGH

Elusive Engineer. When the trail goes cold in Britain, they track their target to Spain's Costa del Sol where they find sun, sea, sand and subterfuge.

"And finally, Callan is sent to interview a mourning mother whose son died in a motor accident. But what begins as an open and shut case leads to a tale of military secrets, manipulation and murder."

Although *Callan* comes from a time when the world was on the brink of war with paranoia, confusion and self-interest

dominating thinking, the stories are just as relevant today. Peter explains: "I think quality will always find an audience. If something is gripping and entertaining, people will be interested no matter what the era. But I also think stories from the Cold War period are beginning to have a particular resonance right now, for obviously worrying reasons."

PRODUCER EMMA adds: "We recorded this series towards the beginning of lockdown which was a learning curve for everyone – we all connected via Zoom so the actors and director could see and hear each other. And then each actor recorded themselves on their home systems, and remarkably, it worked!

"And despite us being remote there was a lovely atmosphere amongst the cast, lots of camaraderie and helping each other out – almost as good as being in the studio, just not quite!

"The engineer Toby Hrycek-Robinson has done a remarkable job piecing all the separate recordings together – it really does sound like we were all in the same room."

Peter concludes: "I have no idea whether there are likely to be more adaptations but there's still a lot of material that has yet to reach a wider audience. And I must say that it is a totally enjoyable endeavour to dust off these gems and re-introduce them to the world. I'd like to think there may be more in the pipeline, but it's not my call!" **VORTEX**



CALLAN
VOLUME TWO
RELEASED: SEPTEMBER 2020
FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD



ORDER NOW AT:
bgfn.sh/callan2

BOOKCLUB



DOCTOR WHO 1963: THE SPACE RACE

This month Big Finish Book Club turns back the clock to 1963 – or 1963!

THIS AUGUST, the Sixth Doctor and Peri return in a new box set – **The Sixth Doctor and Peri Volume One** – and so the Big Finish Book Club is celebrating this great duo!

Originally released in October 2013 in the build up to **Doctor Who's** fiftieth anniversary, *1963: The Space Race* sees the Sixth Doctor and Peri having a cosmic adventure in the year of the show's birth.

Writer Jonathan Morris explains: "1963: *The Space Race* is a story set in November 1963, in the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan, then part of the Soviet Union.

"It's about rockets and pioneers and that whole 'white heat of technology' era, where scientists achieved fantastic results with, by our standards, very primitive machines. It involved a bit of research, mostly listening to transcripts of the old Vostok missions in order to get the jargon exactly right.

"The story deliberately starts off very **Quatermass**, very switches-and-oscilloscopes, and then does something completely different.

"Tonally it's quite a modern, punchy, hard-science fiction, rather than being an attempt to recreate any previous television era. There are some serious ideas in there, some cutting edge hard sci-fi (or what I think passes for it), and I was so proud of each of the three cliff-hangers I was dancing around the room when I wrote them!

Tonally it's quite a modern, punchy, hard-science fiction...

JONATHAN MORRIS

"All credit goes to the stars Colin Baker and Nicola Bryant, the director Nicholas Briggs, noise wizard Howard Carter, and to the rest of the cast, particularly Samantha Béart who did a fantastic job bringing paths to an outlandish role."

The adventure marked the first Big Finish work for Samantha, who has gone on to become a regular guest actor, particularly in the cast of **Torchwood**, playing Orr. She made these notes on her first recording day: "The studio is hidden in a labyrinth of offices and workshops, I'm greeted with coffee and a quick chat, and then all the actors go into separate recording booths. No need for a rehearsal or any discussion, just straight in. Then Colin holding court over lunch. The lunch! 'So this is Toby's studio, he's the engineer, and he's fed us too?!' Peri (Nicola) gives me a lift to the train station. It is all rather magical.

"That first experience with Big Finish raised the bar with regard to voice acting: preparing with bold choices; trusting my instincts on the day and delivering with commitment but flexible enough to adapt to the director's vision. Great fun." **VORTEX**



DOCTOR WHO

1963: THE SPACE RACE

RELEASED: OCTOBER 2013

FORMAT: DOWNLOAD



ORDER NOW AT:
bgfn.sh/spacerace



FEAST ON THE
BLOOD OF
DRACULA!
THE VAMPIRE
RETURNS THIS
SEPTEMBER!

YOU CAN COUNT ON IT

BIG FINISH has resurrected Bram Stoker's most famous creation on a couple of occasions, from an adaptation of the original novel released in 2016, to *Dracula's Guests*, a brand new prequel by author Jonathan Barnes released in February this year.

And now, *Dracula* has risen from the grave once more in another original story, *Dracula's War*. Writer Jonathan Barnes says: "This new story is set years after the original novel, when the Great War is at its height. Whereas the last release, *Dracula's Guests*, was set entirely before the events of the book, *Dracula*, and drew on some of Bram Stoker's own ideas

and material, this takes us into brand new territory. It's an entirely original story though there are plenty of callbacks to the earlier Big Finish *Dracula* releases too.

"In each adventure I've tried to do something slightly different with the Count. In *Dracula's Guests* he is often at the heart of the action, especially when we get to see him at the peak of his powers. This time around, he's more of an ominous off-stage figure, an unseen evil. *Dracula's War* begins by focusing on a desperate faction who are determined to bring him back at any cost. They have come to believe that the only way to win the war is to enlist the aid of the king of vampires – a decision which

they may well come to regret...

"This is one big story, an epic three-hour tale which has, I hope, a dash of the old Hammer take on the character thrust into a slightly grittier real world setting. There are plenty of new people to meet in the course of it all but some old friends in there as well – though perhaps not necessarily the ones you're expecting!"

As ever, Big Finish's own king of horror, Scott Handcock, is producing and directing the release.

He says: "Like *Dracula's Guests*, it's been a thrill getting to revisit the



Above:
 Moronke Akinola

Dracula story, this time following on from the end of the novel. Jonathan deftly left some loose threads dangling at the end of the *Dracula* adaptation, as well as introducing some of his own, so it's been fascinating to take a look at how the story progresses. And it's been great to reunite with Mina Harker who was such a crucial

character in the original novel, magnificently played in the audio by Deirdre Mullins. Deirdre's a fantastic actor anyway, but it's been especially lovely to work with her on a project where we get to develop, rather than originate, a character.

"Where *Dracula's Guests* is three distinct (albeit connected) stories, *Dracula's War* is much like the Stoker

novel in that it follows one much larger storyline. There are lots of different through lines and subplots – all seemingly working at random – but Jonathan's a master at tying it all together in the end. And there are so many fantastic set pieces. It's hard to pin anything down specifically, even having heard the edits, because we had to record so wildly out of order – with some *Dracula's Guests* mixed in at the same time!

"There are lots of lovely double-acts in this series – and Silas Carson, whose character we came

EVERYONE INSTINCTIVELY HAS AN IDEA IN THEIR HEAD OF DRACULA AND THE WORLD WE'RE PLAYING IN...

SCOTT HANDCOCK

to know very briefly in *Dracula's Guests*, really comes into his own here. For something originally written in 2016 (yes, it took us that long to get everyone back!), the themes within the script feel frighteningly current in places."

Scott was delighted with the actors that came together for these tales of terror.

He says: "The casts across the board have been sublime for these productions. Every single one has nailed what's needed from the script, and it's perhaps helped that everyone instinctively has an idea in their head of *Dracula* and the world we're playing in, even before we go into studio.

"It would take me forever to go through everyone, but I was especially thrilled to welcome Moronke Akinola into the Big Finish fold. For the past few years, we've been working with the Alan Bates Award panel to offer opportunities to their winners, and that's how Moronke came to my attention. And



she's brilliant. For someone fresh to the medium, she took to it like a duck to water and really brings a lot of heart and strength to Sister Angelique. She's a great foil for Van Helsing too, once again played brilliantly by Glen McCready."

Scott also enjoyed working with Mark Gatiss once more, an expert in his own right on Dracula and the horror genre.

LIKE ALL GREAT FICTIONAL MONSTERS, DRACULA IS SURPRISINGLY FLEXIBLE, ADJUSTING TO FIT THE FEARS AND ANXIETIES OF THE AGE.

JONATHAN BARNES

He says: "It's always a pleasure working with Mark. We've done a fair bit of stuff together now, with him as both Dracula and also an alternative incarnation of the Master in **Doctor Who**, and he's always effortlessly easy to work with. His instincts are so strong when it comes to these kinds of characters but he also enjoys notes to push things further, which is all you can really want from an actor. It's clear he enjoys collaboration and I think that shows in his performances."

Jonathan agrees: "Like all great fictional monsters, Dracula is surprisingly flexible, adjusting to fit the fears and anxieties of the age. He is unstoppable, unquenchable. At Big Finish he's been so brilliantly played by Mark Gatiss that I really hope we get the chance to do more. At this point, the Count has only just begun his rampage through the twentieth century!"

These aren't the only tales written by Jonathan which feature the



Above:
Deirdre Mullins



Above:
Mark Gatiss

Count, as he adds: "Anyone who's enjoyed these Dracula stories is cordially invited to check out my new novel, *Dracula's Child*, which is

due to be published in September. It's intended as the sequel which Bram Stoker might have written and it fits pretty snugly, I think, in the Big Finish pantheon!" **VORTEX**



BIG FINISH CLASSICS
DRACULA'S WAR
RELEASED: SEPTEMBER 2020
FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD



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bgfn.sh/stakes

VORTEX

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"Son, I am able," she said "though you scare me."
"Watch," said I, "beloved," I said, "watch me scare
you though," said she, "able am I, Son."

COMING SOON

THE BIG FINISH

RELEASE SCHEDULE

FOR FULL DETAILS AND UPDATES VISIT,
bgfn.sh/whatsnew

AUGUST 2020

- **DW • THE MONTHLY ADVENTURES:**
Thin Time / Madquake
(267, FIFTH DOCTOR)
- **DW • THE SIXTH DOCTOR AND PERI:** *Volume One*
(BOX SET)
- **DW • OUT OF TIME 1**
(TENTH DOCTOR / FOURTH DOCTOR)
- **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:**
The Flying Dutchman / Displaced
(268, SEVENTH DOCTOR)
- **DW • THE EIGHTH DOCTOR:**
Time War 4 (BOX SET)
- **DW • SHORT TRIPS:**
Her Own Bootstraps (10.9) **DLO**
- **THE NEW ADVENTURES OF BERNICE SUMMERFIELD:**
Volume 6: Lost in Translation
(BOX SET)
- **TORCHWOOD:** *Ex Machina* (42)
- **BIG FINISH CLASSICS:**
Dracula's War (BOX SET)
- **CALLAN:** *Volume 2* (BOX SET)

OCTOBER 2020

- **DW • THE MONTHLY ADVENTURES:**
Shadow of the Daleks 1
(269, FIFTH DOCTOR)
- **DW • WAR MASTER:**
Hearts of Darkness (BOX SET)
- **DW • TIME LORD VICTORIOUS:**
He Kills Me, He Kills Me Not

- **DW • THE PATERNOSTER GANG:**
Heritage 4 (BOX SET)
- **DW • SHORT TRIPS:**
TIME LORD VICTORIOUS:
Master Thief / Lesser Evils **DLO**
- **DW • SHORT TRIPS:**
The Meaning of Red (10.10) **DLO**
- **TORCHWOOD:**
The Three Monkeys (43)
- **SPACE PRECINCT:**
Short Stories (AUDIOBOOK) **DLO**
- **GEMINI FORCE ONE:**
Ghost Mine (AUDIOBOOK) **DLO**
- **INTO INFINITY:**
Planetfall (AUDIOBOOK) **DLO**

NOVEMBER 2020

- **DW • THE MONTHLY ADVENTURES:**
Shadow of the Daleks 2
(270, FIFTH DOCTOR)
- **DW • THE TENTH DOCTOR AND RIVER SONG:**
AND RIVER SONG (BOX SET)
- **DW • THE TENTH DOCTOR AND RIVER SONG:**
Expiry Dating (TENTH DOCTOR)
- **DW • THE TENTH DOCTOR AND RIVER SONG:**
Precious Annihilation
(TENTH DOCTOR)
- **DW • THE TENTH DOCTOR AND RIVER SONG:**
Ghosts (TENTH DOCTOR)
- **DW • THE FIFTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES:** *Wicked Sisters*
(BOX SET)
- **DW • TIME LORD VICTORIOUS:**
The Enemy of My Enemy
- **DW • SHORT TRIPS:**
Blue Boxes (10.11) **DLO**
- **TORCHWOOD:**
Rhys and Ianto's Excellent Barbeque (44)
- **BLAKE'S 7:** *Chosen*
(AUDIOBOOK) **DLO**

! OUR WAREHOUSE IS NOW OPEN. WE HAVE A LOT OF PENDING ORDERS TO WORK THROUGH AND WE ARE NOT YET BACK TO FULL CAPACITY. WE ASK THAT CUSTOMERS CONTINUE TO BEAR WITH US AS WE START TO CLEAR THE BACKLOG.

DLO = DOWNLOAD ONLY • **DW** = DOCTOR WHO

DATES CORRECT AT TIME OF GOING TO PRESS.

VORTEX



HOMeward UNBOUND

**BERNICE SUMMERFIELD IS BACK WITH
A TIME LORD FROM ANOTHER UNIVERSE!**



PLUS! DRACULA'S WAR

FEAST ON BLOOD AND COUNT THE DAYS...
THE **VAMPIRE** RETURNS THIS SEPTEMBER!