

THE **BIG FINISH** MAGAZINE

# VORTEX

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**BIG FINISH**  
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STORIES

WELL, ANOTHER CRAZY DAY...

# STRANDED

MORE **IRREGULAR** ADVENTURES FOR  
THE RESIDENTS OF **BAKER STREET**...

**ALSO INSIDE**

## AUDIO **MASTER!**

THE MASTER'S **LOST INCARNATION**  
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# TORCHWOOD ABSENT FRIENDS

**TO CELEBRATE** the 15th anniversary of the **Doctor Who** spin-off and the 50th release of the Big Finish

**Torchwood** monthly range, John Barrowman will be teaming up with David Tennant once again. The Tenth Doctor and Captain Jack Harkness enjoyed an interesting relationship on television and this year they'll be reunited in **Torchwood: Absent Friends**, a rather special audio tale.

*On a dark and stormy night in Cardiff, the city is in danger, and the Doctor's put himself in charge of Torchwood in order to save it.*

*In a sealed recording studio, the voices of the dead have been playing for 17 years. Was it the project of a madman, or is this the site of something terrible?*

*Torchwood has been hunting for the Doctor since 1879. And now they've found him. They may regret it.*

Joining David and John in **Torchwood: Absent Friends** is Gareth David-Lloyd, reprising his role as Ianto Jones. John tells us: "Fans have been asking for this for a long time, and it's great to have Gareth on board. There's an interesting dynamic going on because Jack still wants to follow Ianto, but yet wants to impress on him that he's still the leader."

David adds: "Because this isn't a **Doctor Who** story, the Doctor doesn't have to be ahead of everything and save the day. What's interesting about this adventure – from the Doctor's point of view – is he sort of messes up. It's a story about the Doctor being imperfect, which is nice to see now and again, actually." **VORTEX**

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## EDITORIAL

**WHAT A** fantastic month March is going to be for our **Doctor Who** listeners. The Eighth Doctor and his friends continue their adventures on Earth while *stranded 2* (see what I did there), and their

housemates begin to learn that there's far more to their landlord than they may have thought.

We'll also be reunited with the Master played by Eric Roberts in a special release box set, **Master!** Until the Christopher Eccleston/Ninth Doctor announcement last year, this was the news that had surprised me the most for ages, and I can't wait to hear more of this Master's adventures.

And then there are more **The Lost Stories** releases – I always love these glimpses into a past that never was. With my favourite classic series pairing of the Fourth Doctor and Romana, I'm fascinated to hear how the Doctor will save the Earth in *The Doomsday Contract*. We'll also hear the audio debuts of Sadie Miller and Christopher Naylor playing Sarah Jane Smith and Harry Sullivan. Having spoken with both actors, I think it's safe to say we're in good hands, and I can't wait to hear how *Return of the Cybermen* will fit in with established continuity.

And, finally there's *The End of the Beginning*, the final release in the **Doctor Who – The Monthly Adventures** range of audio stories, starring the four Doctors who have featured in the range since it began way back in 1999. But never fear! Just because this range is concluding in its current format it's definitely not the last we've heard of these Doctors. It's the end of the beginning but the moment has been prepared for...! **VORTEX**

*Kenny*



THE DOCTOR AND HIS FRIENDS CAN TRAVEL  
IN TIME ONCE MORE BUT THEY'RE STILL...

# LOCKED IN SPACE

**STRANDED HAS** revealed huge changes in the life of the Eighth Doctor. He's faced the Daleks, a cabal of corrupt Time Lords, an ancient threat to his people and multiple incarnations of his arch-enemy, the Master. But after escaping from the Crucible of Souls, the TARDIS was stripped of its energies and left as its outer plasmic police box shell in a street in Camden.

Now the Doctor, his companions Liv and Helen plus new friends from the Doctor's house in Baker Street, are able to travel in time – if not space – as the TARDIS recovers.

**Stranded 2** has an element of

irony as the cast and crew were themselves *stranded* at home because of COVID-19 movement restrictions.

Producer David Richardson says: "We recorded **Stranded 2** in lockdown – a strange experience with everyone involved kept apart by the current circumstances while linked together virtually. There was a sense that everyone was just glad to be able to make it happen and tell these exciting stories when real life itself had become so much more difficult.

"Things have moved on a little since **Stranded 1**. The Doctor and his friends are no longer stuck in time – just in space! With the

ship able to move backwards and forwards through London's history, the Doctor gets to take his extended Baker Street family through their own pasts and futures."

Joining Paul McGann as the Doctor are Nicola Walker (Liv Chenka) and Hattie Morahan (Helen Sinclair), with Rebecca Root (Tania Bell), Tom Price (Sergeant Andy Davidson), Clive Wood (Mr Bird), Tom Baker (the Curator) and Jon Culshaw (Brigadier Lethbridge-Stewart).

Rebecca, who previously appeared in *Zaltys* and *Gallifrey: Time War* for Big Finish, says: "It was about a year ago that we recorded **Stranded 1**,





(l-r) Hattie Marahan,  
Rebecca Root,  
Tom Price, Paul McGann  
and Nicola Walker

a week or two before Christmas.

"I thought it was just a single box set but am delighted to be in a storyline that spans several releases – a great gift to any actor. I found out during one of the lunch breaks. Producer David did his Q&A for the CD extras and one of his early questions was, 'How do you feel about becoming a companion?' I knew I was a part of this adventure but I didn't realise it was going on further so I asked what he meant. And he said, 'Oh, yes, you'll be coming back in the next three box sets.' My jaw hit the floor – I just couldn't believe it! He said, 'Didn't your agent tell you?' and later that week I spoke to my agent who said, 'Oh, yeah, there was something else about you doing more! Didn't I tell you?' It was such a delightful surprise!

"The first box set we recorded in studio, and you have as much fun in the green room as you do in the recording booths. **Stranded 2** was made in lockdown and I recorded it under a duvet in my house as we all built our own home-made

## TWO PEOPLE CONNECTING – THAT'S ALL WE WANT, ISN'T IT?

REBECCA ROOT

studios. It was a bit of a learning curve! It will be really interesting to hear the final piece as we recorded under different circumstances."

**TANYA IS** the Doctor's first transgender companion, and there was love for the character from the outset. Rebecca admits: "I am delighted by the great comments about her – I feel so embraced by devotees of the show.

"It was most unexpected when **Stranded 1** was released last June. There was coverage in the mainstream press and larger

entertainment sites. A lot of the Twitterati were going on about her and I had to point out that she's not in the telly version – not yet – they'll have to knock on Chris Chibnall's door a bit harder!

"I hope Tania carries on with the Doctor for a while. Her relationship with Liv is lovely too. It's just about two people, and whatever their backgrounds are it doesn't matter. Two people connecting – that's all we want, isn't it?"

Rebecca finds the concept for **Stranded** to be an interesting one.

She explains: "The idea of being stranded in one place but not time is quite mind boggling. It's the kind of thing that's fascinated me since I was a kid and saw the old film version of *The Time Machine*, with this idea of an inventor sitting in his chair, remaining in one place but travelling to another time. It was quite extraordinary, and that's what we have here.

"What we find in the second box set are pretty difficult things to take. When we think about the future, we don't only think about





(Above): Tom Price

our mortality as individuals, but the life of the planet too. Not to be too 'Extinction Rebellion' about it, we live on a fragile planet and the **Doctor Who** storyline really taps into that. The future can be a bit scary, and with what we've seen recently with COVID, it is a bit scary."

**D**ead Time by script editor Matt Fitton, sees the TARDIS resume its travels, after a fashion. *The Doctor wants to take the TARDIS on a test flight. But he has rather more passengers than he'd like. Soon, the crew are stranded once again in an uncertain future. One where planet Earth appears to be dead. And very soon, so will any visitors...*

Matt says: "The reception to **Stranded 1** was just fantastic. It was really satisfying and encouraging

## WE DID SOMETHING SO DIFFERENT AND PRETTY MUCH EVERYONE WELCOMED IT.

MATT FITTON

that we did something so different and pretty much everyone welcomed it. They really took to the household of new characters in Baker Street, and we get to see a different side to the Doctor.

"In **Stranded 2**, the TARDIS is still unable to move in space, but it's

starting to be able to move around in time. My script follows straight on from the end of **Stranded 1**, with the Doctor realising the TARDIS is beginning to recover. He's absolutely desperate to take it on a test flight but he's also surrounded by all these people who want answers – to know who he is, what he's doing and what the TARDIS is.

"So he ends up taking a rather bigger test crew along with him than he's anticipated with Tania Bell and PC Andy – the Torchwood operatives who want to keep an eye on him – and a stowaway as well.

"What's lovely with this first episode is that it's just those characters, and they end up in a situation where they may be stranded again, in a much more dangerous environment. I pair them and mix them so we explore their conflicts, their alliances, differences and so on, in all these different combinations."

Rebecca adds: "I really enjoyed it – it made me think this could be the future of our planet, and it was a sobering thought. It was quite a mind-bending scenario for my character. It's one thing for the actor to wrap her head around, let alone the character, and here she is finding her TARDIS legs as she travels in time not space."

**UNIT Dating** is the first script for the Eighth Doctor by writer Roy Gill – an amusingly-titled tale.

*When the Doctor dips into his past to help TARDIS repairs in the present, Andy joins him on a trip to UNIT. In the 1970s, young soldier Ron Winters has just met lab assistant Tony Clare. But in 2020 they need Liv and Helen's help when their memories start falling apart...*

A beaming Roy tells *Vortex*: "I was very happy to jump onboard for **Stranded 2**. Matt Fitton sent me the scripts for **Stranded 1**, and they blew me away. The whole set-up of the Doctor's house on Baker Street, the intriguing and diverse cast around him, the type of stories being told... they all appealed very much. It feels very fresh and new. And how wonderful to write a Paul McGann adventure! He's been in my ears for years, so it's lovely to give him some words..."



(l-r): Hattie Morahan,  
Paul McGann  
and Nicola Walker

Revealing his brief, Roy says it was: “A test flight for the TARDIS with PC Andy on board, a guest appearance by the Brigadier, and a chance to discover more about Ron Winters and Tony Clare... How do those elements come together? You’ll just have to wait and find out!

“Although **Stranded** is a character-driven series, the story I wanted to tell required a close eye on plot mechanics. So working out the logic of the story and how the scenes would intercut was probably the biggest challenge. That did mean I went into scripting with a very tight plan, so I was able to have a lot of fun exploring dialogue and character moments... It was a tricky one to outline and a fun one to write.”

An appearance of note is by Brigadier Lethbridge-Stewart, with the Doctor travelling back to the era when his third incarnation was scientific advisor to UNIT.

Roy grins: “I have a huge affection for the Brigadier. He has a very distinctive voice, an instinctive sense of what is right and proper that I tried my best to channel. I was

## WE GET TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE LIVES OF THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN THE DOCTOR'S HOUSE.

LISA McMULLIN

conscious of wanting to show his heart as well as the comedic bluster.

“There were lots of highlights! Writing the Brig and the Eighth Doctor together – it’s not a combination we have very often. Paul McGann’s Doctor has a very different approach to Tom Baker’s or Jon Pertwee’s, for example, and can perhaps say things they never would... I enjoyed writing the Doctor

and PC Andy as well – they’ve a fun dynamic – and developing Ron and Tony from the hints seeded in **Stranded 1**. And there’s a Liv and Helen scene I can’t wait to hear...”

In *The Baker Street Irregulars* by Lisa McMullin, the Doctor takes Zakia and Aisha to see some family history: their grandmother had her own secret life in Baker Street during World War II. As Tania and Liv try to defuse an unexploded bomb, the sisters face explosive revelations of their own. Lisa says: “With the TARDIS capable of moving in time but not space, we get to find out more about the lives of the people who live in the Doctor’s house.

“We decided to do something with the sisters which would be connected to the Special Operations Executive – the country’s sabotage and espionage department during the Second World War. It was based for a time in Baker Street so it would have been rude not to visit them!

“We were talking about Noor Khan who featured in one of the



TV episodes, and that inspired us to go back in time to see what went on at the Special Operations Executive and connect it to our characters in some way. So we have Zakia and Aisha's grandmother and grandfather who meet while they are both working there.

"I had absolutely no idea the department was based there – they were nicknamed The Baker Street Irregulars, which comes from a Sherlock Holmes story. I didn't know

## I REMEMBER THINKING ABOUT THE PLOT IN THE SHOWER ONE DAY AND WONDERING WHAT KIND OF STORY WOULD BE IMPROVED FROM BEING RECORDED IN LOCKDOWN?

JOHN DORNEY

any of this, so it was really interesting researching and discovering these things. There were so many women too. The first women sent to the front line came from the SOE!

"I didn't get to write very much for Zakia and Aisha in the first series but I was able to take a look at the differences between them this time – which of them would be totally up for a bit of spying, and who would be more reticent.

"The relationship between them isn't quite as it seems. We all have these thoughts at some point – wouldn't it be nice to meet your relatives when they are young and carefree, or as carefree as you can be in wartime!"

Lisa has been delighted to return to **Stranded 2** after writing *Must-See TV* for **Stranded 1**. She adds: "I was a bit worried that once the TARDIS



Rebecca Root



(l-r): Jeremy Clide and David Shaw Parker

started working again we would return to the usual travelling in space and time, but because it's about the lives of the domestic characters there's still a feeling of the freshness of the first series. There's a through line across the entire four series, which is very, very slowly dripping in, something for the listeners to try and work out as they go along."

The final story of the set is *The Long Way Round* by John Dorney. *Something is wrong with Earth's future – so the Doctor decides to see it for himself. But very soon, the travellers are captured. Someone seems to know their every move. An interrogator wants answers, but do they even know the right questions?*

John says: "When we were still planning **Ravenous 3** and **4**, we





Tom Baker

knew where this box set was going to be and that it would break the format a bit. We all felt the tone and style of **Stranded 1** had been fairly unusual – almost unique even – in **Doctor Who**, and we didn't want to throw out the low-key quality that we had established.

"*The Long Way Round* is, in its own way, just as weird as my story *Wild Animals* was in the first set. I had a relatively light brief for the story and as we were developing it, in the earliest weeks of the Coronavirus pandemic and the lockdown, it became clear we were going to be recording remotely.

"I remember thinking about the plot in the shower one day and wondering what kind of story would be improved from being recorded in lockdown? What would be the gain? I thought about

**OFTEN A LOT OF THE DRAMATIC IMPETUS IS THE THINGS THAT HAPPEN BETWEEN THE SCENES.**

JOHN DORNEY

conversations being recorded, which led me to interrogations.

"I'm really interested in TV shows like **Criminal** or **Line of**

**Duty** which rely quite heavily on interrogations. As a dramatic device they are a means for telling stories but they kind of defy logic. We always talk about show don't tell, rather than have someone relate things to you afterwards. Then something like **Line of Duty** or **Criminal** comes along and it very clearly demonstrates that sometimes you can still have a dramatic battle and clash of personalities on either side of an interrogation table. The focus of the conflict changes and that interested me as an idea.

"Another thing vaguely in the mix was an episode of **Babylon 5** called *Intersections in Real Time*. There were a series of interrogations of the lead character in that which fed into this story."

As well as television, more traditional influences have played their part in shaping John's script. He explains: "I've got a lot of interest in theatrical storytelling, having started in the theatre, where often with something like Chekov or Eugene O'Neill – people along those lines – the scenes aren't sequential. For example, Chekov will often just shift months or weeks between four scenes. Often a lot of the dramatic impetus is the things that happen between the scenes. So I was interested in the actual amount of movement that you can do within a story while still seeing if you can tell a **Doctor Who** story where the audience is left to fill in the gaps at different points."

John adds: "The reaction to **Stranded 1** was really gratifying. When it came out we were all very aware of how unusual it is. We knew what we were trying to do was atypical **Doctor Who** and we weren't sure how our listeners were going to respond, although we were all very proud of it. But everyone very much liked that we were doing something rather different." **VORTEX**

DOCTOR WHO: STRANDED 2

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# LOST IN TIME

TOM BAKER RETURNS THIS MONTH AS THE DOCTOR IN TWO MORE **LOST STORIES...**

**BIG FINISH'S The Lost Stories** range has previously given us a couple of tales for the Fourth Doctor – *Foe from the Future* and *The Valley of Death* – which were conceived but never fully developed for television. Two more adventures that were planned but never made, are now being brought to life this March.

The first, *Return of the Cybermen* by Gerry Davis, may be slightly more familiar than the other as it was rewritten by Robert Holmes and broadcast as *Revenge of the Cybermen*. The second, *The Doomsday Contract* by John Lloyd, was planned for TV season 17. Decades have passed but now Tom Baker will finally star in them both.

*Return of the Cybermen* has been adapted by John Dorney, but with the sad passing of both co-stars Elisabeth Sladen and Ian Marter, Sadie Miller takes on her late mother's part as Sarah Jane Smith, and Big Finish regular Christopher Naylor slots into Harry Sullivan's perfectly-fitted blazer.

John says: "I had the original script to work from. I also looked at a version published in a copy of the old *DWB* [*DreamWatch Bulletin* magazine] which wasn't entirely the same. But I remember thinking it was a really strong, decent script.

"One of the things I had to do first was write a synopsis for BBC approval, where it didn't feel like I was describing *Revenge of the Cybermen*. There are similarities, of course, but when I came to write

the full dialogue for *Return of the Cybermen*, beat by beat, it's actually very different. The closest thing I can equate it to is when I worked on *Tunnel of Fear*, **The Avengers** lost script that I adapted based on original notes and details – before a copy of the original script was found.

"*Return of the Cybermen* fits with the TV continuity and makes a sidestep at the same time. You can slot *Return of the Cybermen* into the place of *Revenge of the Cybermen* and switch them over, and the rest of the series would continue as normal.

"I wanted to present the script much as it was originally written. As with **The Avengers** episode, there's a degree to which you are presenting a historical document and telling a story. This is research





(l-r): Christopher Naylor,  
Tom Baker and Sadie Miller

as much as it is entertainment, so I was keen to keep every single line of dialogue in there.

“There are a few things that I’ve also put in there such as bringing Sarah more into it as she’s barely featured in the original draft – and when she does feature she barely speaks – so including her more was a key aspect of the plotting.

“And there was a lot of stuff that was visual which we had to make comprehensible to an audio audience.”

**SADIE MILLER**, who long-term Big Finish listeners will remember as Natalie in the **Sarah Jane Smith** audio series, reveals: “When I was first approached about recording this release, I thought it would be for a character much as I’d played before. When they explained – I couldn’t believe it, really! I thought I should ask my dad what he thought, and he said to do it. Then a couple of months ago he said to me, ‘I didn’t know it was for Sarah Jane, I thought it was just for a little part!’ It’s very humbling to even be asked

**I’VE BEEN TRYING TO FIND OUT WHO SARAH IS AS WELL, RATHER THAN JUST PLAYING MY MUM, SO I CAN CARRY THROUGH WITH THE CHARACTER.**

SADIE MILLER

and I imagine it must have been a huge consideration for Big Finish to do any adventures at all with Sarah Jane. When someone has passed away, like with Carrie John, you do wonder whether to start bringing that character back or not, so it must have been tricky to decide what to do next.

“I have no idea how it will go down as mum created the character and was so well loved, but hopefully the love for her will come through on audio. I’m not trying to replicate my mum’s performance, as I don’t think that would be possible, but hopefully listeners will recognise it as a homage and be able to enjoy it in a nostalgic and loving way.

“I’ve not heard how it comes across yet, or if I do sound like her

at all. Being related you have an inherent similar voice quality and her being my mum gave me a head start as to how she would place her voice. I’ve watched a lot of **Doctor Who** and know mum had a lovely mouth and teeth, so I’ve tried to capture that element, of where she would speak from. I’ve been trying to find who Sarah is as well, rather than just playing my mum, so I can carry through with the character.”

Christopher Naylor, playing Harry, also has a Big Finish pedigree of note. His first appearances were in *The Sacrifice of Sherlock Holmes* and *The Avengers – The Golden Dresses*. Christopher tells Vortex: “Tom Baker really was my childhood hero and I was completely transfixed by him from as soon



(l-r): John Leeson  
and Tom Baker

## TOM BAKER REALLY WAS MY CHILDHOOD HERO AND I WAS COMPLETELY TRANSFIXED BY HIM... CHRISTOPHER NAYLOR

as I was watching television – my consciousness grasped onto him quite early on Saturday nights!

“I have done loads and loads of Big Finishes across various Doctors, and have become something of a regular – I love working with them. I landed a lovely big theatre job doing an international tour of **War Horse** for the National Theatre, and I told David Richardson how excited I was, and that I’d be off around the world for a year-and-a-half.

“Then I was on my way home from Sainsbury’s one day when I got a text from David who said to me, ‘I didn’t want to tell you this as you’ve got **War Horse**, but we really want you to be Harry Sullivan for us. I don’t know now if we can make it work.’

“My head exploded, with my hands full of shopping, and I said, ‘We have to make it work!’ I was



Nickolas Grace

sure I’d have days off and because a lot of the tour was in the UK, I could travel from the other end of the country to play Harry Sullivan!

“I looked at my schedule and we were able to book in recording days, after a lot of bouncing back and forth of emails saying I was free on such and such a day.

“I was born in 1972 so Harry appeared when I was two-years-old and probably had left when I was three-and-a-half. I have strong memories of watching Ian Marter and I know they repeated *Genesis of the Daleks* and did feature length versions. I certainly knew who Harry was on telly and I read the Target books, so I knew he was a really important part of Tom’s time as the Doctor. When it came to playing him I thought I’d better do some serious study and watch everything again, which was such a huge joy. Those early stories are just wonderful, definitive Tom, with that team.”

Sadie adds: “When we recorded *Return of the Cybermen* before the lockdown, Chris and I were able to meet in person which helped us form a better bond. He has that old world gentlemanly quality to him that Ian Marter had, and if you were in a dangerous situation,



(l-r): Jeany Spark  
and Tom Baker

you feel he would take your hand and say, 'This is what we're doing.' He sounds very like Ian too, so when we got into studio, it all clicked together very quickly."

And Chris reveals: "I was so excited when I heard Sadie was going to be Sarah Jane. Put the headphones on and she sounds so like her mother, it's extraordinary. She's captured the mood and spirit of Sarah Jane perfectly, and hearing her and Tom together was wonderful. It must have been very strange for Tom as well, as she does such a lovely job."

John Dorney adds: "There's a sense of it being a newly-discovered story from the period, rather than our attempt to recreate it. There's something gloriously old-fashioned about *Return of the Cybermen*, with the dialogue and plotting, which gives it an authentic feel."

"I was only able to attend for one day in studio but it was fabulous to meet Chris and Sadie and hear them doing the voices, which were pretty uncanny. Sadie does a terrific job of it, and I've worked



Amanda Shodeko

with Chris a few times before, and they are perfect. I adore what Chris does with Harry – he's such a natural and easy performer in the role. I'm looking forward to people hearing him properly."

**THE SECOND** release is *The Doomsday Contract* which has been adapted by Nev Fountain. The Doctor, Romana and K9 find themselves at the centre of a most unusual trial. An intergalactic corporation wants to bulldoze the planet for a development project, only a previous court's preservation document is standing in their way.

Tom Baker is joined by Lalla Ward as Romana and John Leeson as K9. Nev reveals: "This has been ten years or so in the making, yet it suddenly seems to have appeared from nowhere – like the Improbability Drive in *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy!* – and I was very excited to adapt it. Tom Baker is the Doctor I watched most in my childhood. I hadn't written for Tom before so this was really exciting."

Although *The Doomsday Contract* didn't reach a scripting stage, Nev found he had lots of source material, explaining: "I almost had too much material to work with. *The Doomsday*

**I WAS SO EXCITED WHEN I HEARD SADIE WAS GOING TO BE SARAH JANE. PUT THE HEADPHONES ON AND SHE SOUNDS SO LIKE HER MOTHER, IT'S EXTRAORDINARY.**

CHRIS NAYLOR

*Contract* is based on an unpublished book by John Lloyd called *GiGax*, and it's very much in the style of *The Hitch-Hikers Guide to the Galaxy* as it has lots of interesting details and jokes.

"It's all appendix and not so much story. The characters were there, the colour was there, the situation was funny and the events were good, I just needed to make a little sense of it from start to finish."



Lalla Ward

from one of the co-stars. He tells us: "I didn't meet Lalla but I had very nice comments from her saying it was witty **Doctor Who** in the style of Douglas Adams. Tom was in the studio and he seemed to be enjoying the script, as much as one can fathom anything from Tom's reactions! He approved of almost every line.

"I think I was already onto a winner taking John Lloyd's work and making it into an audio drama.

## JOHN LLOYD IS A GENIUS, HE'S A COMEDY GOD, AND THERE'S ALL OF HIS GREAT STUFF THERE. AND DOUGLAS ADAMS'S NOTES ARE THERE IN THE MARGINS. ■ NEV FOUNTAIN

"There was a lot to work from as David Richardson sent me two drafts – there was the original pitch and a slightly less mad subsequent pitch – and I went through them both. I used a highlighter pen to show just how much of the original I was working on, and by the end of this lengthy process, I'd scribbled through sixty percent of John's work. It started off with me not using a lot as I tried to make sense of it and work out where I could put in his funny jokes, how I could use his villains, and so on. I was trying to get as much of John's original stuff in there as I could."

Nev attended the recording, and received some positive feedback




It was great to write for Tom and for K9 too, who has always been my favourite companion.

"John Lloyd is a genius, he's a comedy god, and there's all of his great stuff there. And Douglas Adams's notes are there in the margins. You're working with Douglas as a script editor on John's work – that's just as exciting as writing for Tom Baker, Lalla Ward and John Leeson! It works on both levels for me, as a writer and a fan." **VORTEX**

### DOCTOR WHO: THE LOST STORIES: RETURN OF THE CYBERMEN

- RELEASED: MARCH 2021
- FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

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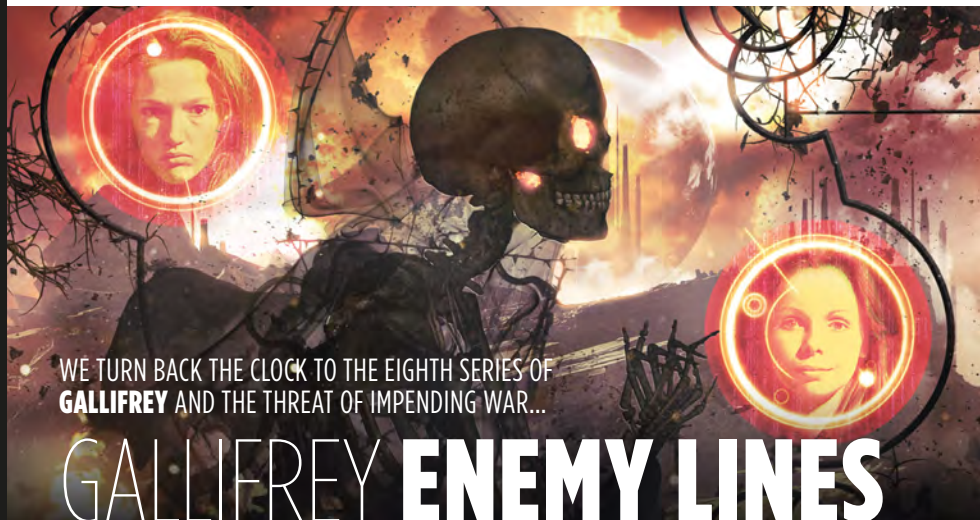
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WE TURN BACK THE CLOCK TO THE EIGHTH SERIES OF **GALLIFREY** AND THE THREAT OF IMPENDING WAR...

## GALLIFREY ENEMY LINES

**BEFORE THE** Time War began, Gallifrey was wrapped up in its own internal political battles with negotiations ongoing. Series eight of **Gallifrey: Enemy Lines** picks up from the events of *Intervention Earth* and features Lalla Ward as Romana, Louise Jameson as Leela and Seán Carlsen as Narvin.

Producer, director and script editor of this release, Scott Handcock, told us: “Some of my first work for Big Finish was assisting Gary Russell on the production of the fourth, fifth and sixth series of **Gallifrey**. They enabled me to glean an insight into the kind of material that appealed to Lalla and Louise and I briefed the writer, David Llewellyn, for this one accordingly. It was very exciting, knowing how much the actors enjoy working together, to be able to reunite them for new adventures. They really are a dream to have in studio. “*Enemy Lines* switches its focus to the political machinations

of Gallifrey and the temporal powers. It still has plenty of action, don’t get me wrong, but there’s also a creeping sense of dread that builds throughout the six episodes. It really will keep you guessing!”

Writer David Llewellyn says: “*Enemy Lines* is great fun. One of the things Scott and I discussed early on was having at least one or two episodes that really focus on the dynamic between Romana and Leela. They’re such opposites that the temptation is to split them up, send them off to work with separate factions, but if you basically lock them in a room together, that’s when you get fireworks! Especially when the room in question is actually a spaceship that’s about to turn into a black hole.

“Romana and Leela make a great double act for that very reason – because there’s conflict there. Romana is wry and urbane while Leela is pragmatic and headstrong. I hate saying that a story ‘wrote

itself’ because nothing ever does, but having two characters who knock sparks off one another from the get-go makes it a lot easier!”

“We tried something a little different in terms of the scale of storytelling in this one, but we were both very keen that this didn’t mean slowing down the pace.”

Scott concludes: “How could you not be pleased? It’s a series set on the Time Lords’ home planet, with Lalla Ward, Louise Jameson and Sophie Aldred, not to mention regulars Seán Carlsen and Miles Richardson. Plus a divine guest cast led by Celia Imrie as Lady Livia Caralis! It’s been a thrill to work on, every step of the way.” **VORTEX**

### GALLIFREY: ENEMY LINES

- RELEASED: MAY 2016
- FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

ORDER NOW: [bgfn.sh/sacrifices](http://bgfn.sh/sacrifices) 



# AUDIO MASTER!

ABANDONED IN THE VORTEX, THE **MASTER'S LOST INCARNATION** IS ABOUT TO BE THROWN A LIFELINE...

**THE MASTER** we know the least about is the Eric Roberts's incarnation from the 1996 *TV Movie* where, under the form of a deathworm morphant, the Master possessed the body of ambulance driver Bruce. After being defeated by the Doctor he was then cast into the heart of the TARDIS and the Eye of Harmony. And that, we thought, was that.

Until we learned in **The Diary of River Song** that he had escaped, and he later featured in *The Day of the Master* in **Ravenous 4**. Producer David Richardson reveals: "Our

executive producer Jason Haigh-Ellery suggested the idea of **Master!** We had successfully launched the **War Master** range, which Scott Hancock produces brilliantly, and our **Missy** range has become a big success, and so I think Jason felt that it was time for the **Movie Master** to get his own series."

Script editor Matt Fitton adds: "I really enjoyed Eric's portrayal of the **Master** in the *TV Movie*. I love how he's channelling the **Master** we know, but an Americanised version of him. He has a sense of the **Master** played by Anthony Ainley in the

1980s. In that he's trapped in this body, but it's not what he really wants and he is trying to get out. There's a pent-up scariness about him, as well as having wonderful showmanship too. It's everything the **Master** is, perfectly encapsulated.

"Our starting point for this **Master** comes from **The Diary of River Song** when he's stuck floating in the vortex. We run with that, seeing him try to get out of his trap and back into the real world."

Eric is delighted to be back as the **Master** in his own series, and says: "My wife, Eliza, and I, and the kids, display our box set with great joy and pride. Doing so has shown us how wide the fan base is for **Doctor Who** and the **Master** as a character. Everyone who comes into the house reacts to it. It's fantastic.





(l-r): Eric Roberts  
and Chase Masterson

“What appeals to me about the role of the Master are the endless layers. The only other role it really can be compared to is the Joker from **Batman to The Dark Knight to Joker**. Also the magic of roles like this is that the character affects each listener differently, and yet bonds people together in their shared fascination.

“I loved playing Bruce and then morphing into the Master. And I got to ‘kill’ my real-life wife, Eliza, in **Doctor Who** when she was playing Miranda!”

**DESCRIBING THE** nub of the series, David explains: “The series actually has a very distinct tone. It feels quite Philip K Dick to me – a brilliantly imagined future with a lot of detailed world building. It’s very people based, and central to the whole thing is the character Lila Kreeg, played brilliantly by Laura Aikman. Lila is really the heart, soul and tragedy of the piece – the human scientist who ends up in the Master’s thrall.”

## THE SERIES ACTUALLY HAS A VERY DISTINCT TONE. IT FEELS QUITE PHILIP K DICK TO ME...

DAVID RICHARDSON

*Faustian* by Robert Valentine opens this set. *Drake Enterprises is the most powerful company on Earth. Dr Lila Kreeg is its most valued asset. But her experiments open a doorway which allow an evil back into the universe. The Master can offer Lila the world, so long as she obeys him...*

Matt says: “The first story is very much about the Master tempting this very clever but rather full-of-herself scientist with the offer of all kinds of glories and power, so he can get out of the predicament that he’s in.”

Writer Robert reveals: “I must admit there was a mighty *squee* in my fanboy heart when Matt invited me to resurrect Eric Roberts’s Master. Although he features in a River Song adventure for Big Finish already, from my point of view this is very much the story where he returns to the world at large.

“Matt’s one-line brief was that a brilliant scientist called Lila Kreeg brings back the Master as a result of her experiments, and he explained that the story would take place in a cyberpunk future reminiscent of **Blade Runner**. And I was all for that!

“The clue is definitely in the title with this one, as it’s the story of how a visionary scientist raises the devil and makes a deal with him. But as there’s no definitive version of the Faust legend, there’s no guarantee as to which of them will get the better of the other. You’ll have to listen to the whole box set to find out.”

Robert adds: “We wanted to treat this episode as a stand-alone tragedy as well as the opening adventure. Although it sets up everything that



Chase Masterson

incarnations (particularly Anthony Ainley who was the second actor that I saw play him), I managed to put something together.

"I got very excited about the idea of throwing Vienna Salvatori and the Master into the same space and came up with all kinds of fiendish plans for them. These were quickly scuppered when Matt explained to me that Vienna was looking to get out of the assassination game and had become much more morally respectable. From there, it became an interesting challenge to navigate her journey through facing some murderous opposition without killing everything that moved. I personally felt very satisfied with the result and I think it adds a more complex element to the story.

"The Master is busy getting his feet under the table as a major

## I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO WRITE A HUNTER/KILLER STORY THAT'S BASED IN THE LONDON UNDERGROUND...

ROBERT WHITELOCK

follows, it's also a character study of this fascinating woman who makes herself a diabolical new best friend."

**PREY BY** Robert Whitelock sees the return of a familiar face (or should that be voice?) to Big Finish listeners with Chase Masterson reprising her familiar role.

*Impossibly glamorous assassin Vienna Salvatori has a new target. Crossing time and space, Vienna takes one final job to free her from this life. But when the Master is hunted through the slums and ganglands of London, the line is blurred between predator and prey...*

Producer David explains how bringing Vienna into the mix came about: "It was my idea. I love working with Chase and I love the character Vienna, and the idea of placing her in this world was

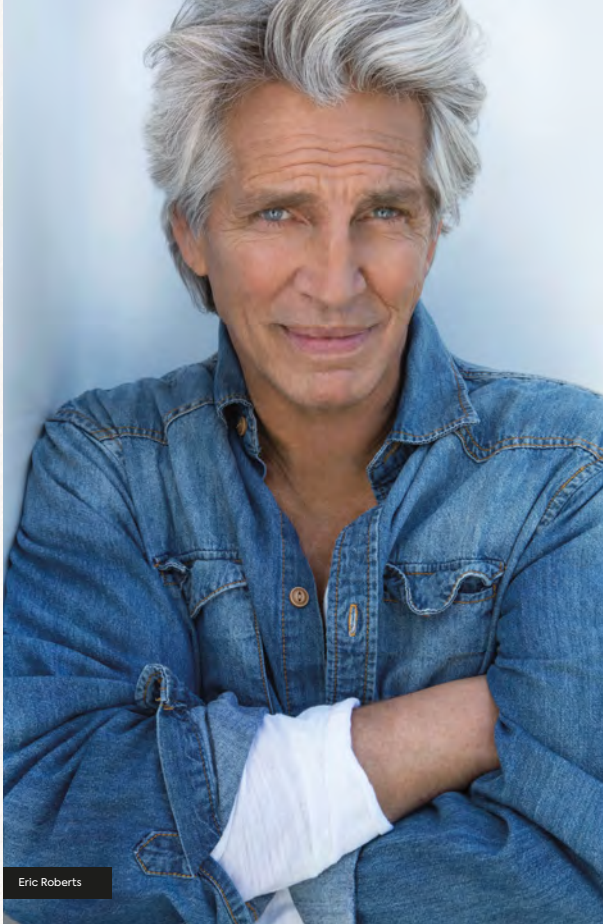
irresistible. Chase's enthusiasm for working at Big Finish adds so much to a production – she really throws herself into it, and Vienna seemed like such a great foil for Eric's Master. And – bonus – I realised that as Chase lives in LA, we could record her and Eric together at the Hollywood studio. So Jason directed Eric and Chase's contribution in America, while the rest was directed by Jamie Anderson in the UK."

Writing for this incarnation of the Master, Robert says: "At first I found it a bit daunting. I hadn't seen the TV movie since it was first released, so I went back and watched it straight away. Matt gave me some great pointers about the way that this Master's dialogue should be constructed, and, together with a strong sense of who the Master was from his other

player in Earth's corporatocracy when Vienna air-drops into London to assassinate him – doing one last job to make enough cash to get out of the killing game for good. The Master, however, is no normal prey and together with Lila Kreeg he escapes. Vienna and her disguised war droid Artie, hunt them through the walled shanties of post Dalek invasion London, then through the treacherous tunnels of the London tube network that are inhabited by feral gangs of human scavengers. Whether any of them will escape with their lives is anybody's guess..."

Robert concludes: "I've always wanted to write a hunter/killer story that's based in the London Underground system. I think it comes from when I was a kid watching **An American Werewolf in London** and the segment in which Gerald Bringsley (played





Eric Roberts

by a friend of mine, Mike Carter) is hunted through Tottenham Court Road station by the werewolf. That part of the film has stuck with me, vividly, so creating the tube as this monstrous no-go area that even the Master is wary of, was pure joy. I also enjoyed creating the part of King Muggy who is based on a few guys that I knew growing up. He's the type of character that I love writing for but don't often get the chance to."

**VENGEANCE BY** Matt Fitton concludes the set. *The Daleks are returning. Their plan, long in the making, is complete. Earth will be theirs once more. But someone stands against them. Someone with his own reasons for revenge – and Vienna and Lila are caught in the crossfire. Because Earth's greatest hope against the Daleks lies with the Master.*



Matt says: "One of the things I wanted to do was have this Master face the Daleks. David had suggested that we have Daleks at some point, and Vienna should be in it as well.

"At the beginning of the TV Movie, the reason the Master is in the state he is in is because of the Daleks, so this is a chance for him to get his own back – he wants revenge. The Daleks want to invade, and the Master ends up defending

Earth because of his vendetta.

"The whole thing about putting the Master against the Daleks again really appealed to me. As a nod to a Nicholas Briggs creation, I used the Dalek Litigator. It's implied that he's the one who sent the Master down at his trial, and anyone who's read Nick's *The Dalek Generation* novel will know who the Litigator really is!

"With Eric having featured in *The Diary of River Song* and *The Day of the Master*, we already had a good feel for how his Master works on audio, and what works for him.

"Jason directed him in LA, and having Chase in studio with Eric

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE TV MOVIE, THE REASON THE MASTER IS IN THE STATE HE IS IN IS **BECAUSE OF THE DALEKS**, SO THIS IS A CHANCE FOR HIM TO GET HIS OWN BACK...

MATT FITTON

was a big part of our thinking when we started writing because it meant he had someone to bounce off. I absolutely love Chase. I've met her a few times at conventions over the years, and I know how much she loves playing Vienna. This was my first chance to write for her."

Given that the **War Master** and **Missy** have ongoing box set series, could this be the first release of a new **Master!** range? David nods: "If it does well I don't see why not. The world and the characters are so vividly realised that there is lots of potential for more. I'd love that!" **VORTEX**

**MASTER!**

- RELEASED: MARCH 2021
- FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

ORDER NOW: [bgfn.sh/roberts](http://bgfn.sh/roberts)



THE MONTHLY ADVENTURES RANGE IS ENDING... BUT  
THE MOMENT HAS BEEN  
**PREPARED FOR**

**THE MONTHLY Adventures** range started in July 1999 with at least one audio drama released every four weeks since January 2000. In May 2020, Big Finish announced that the range would come to an end with *The End of the Beginning*, a (very special) 275th release.

*The End of the Beginning*, in parallel with the first release, *The Sirens of Time*, is a multi-Doctor crossover featuring the Fifth Doctor (Peter Davison), the Sixth Doctor (Colin Baker) and the Seventh Doctor (Sylvester McCoy). But in addition, *The End of the Beginning* also features the Eighth Doctor (Paul McGann).

And that's not where the parallels end. The synopsis for *The End of the Beginning* reads: *The Universe is in a state of crisis, facing destruction from the results of a strange spatio-temporal*

*event. And the Doctor is involved in three different incarnations – each caught up in a deadly adventure, scattered across time and space. The whole of creation is threatened – and someone is hunting the Doctor. The three incarnations of the Doctor must join together to confront their implacable pursuer – but in doing so will they unleash a still greater threat?*

Eagle-eyed listeners may have noticed that *The Sirens of Time* synopsis says: *Gallifrey is in a state of crisis, facing destruction at the hands of an overwhelming enemy. And the Doctor is involved in three different incarnations – each caught up in a deadly adventure, scattered across time and space. The web of time is threatened – and someone wants the Doctor dead. The three incarnations of the Doctor must join together to set time back on the right track – but in doing so, will they unleash a still greater threat?*

**TASKED WITH** writing this epic special adventure was Robert Valentine. *Vortex* asks how he reacted at being asked to write for more than three Doctors. He winks: "That's only fractionally less than 'five-ish' you know! My initial reaction was disbelief that they were asking me, to be quite honest. But that was quickly followed by terror that David Richardson would come to his senses and change his mind! And after that it was just a joy to write.

"My brief for this one was simply to write a multi-Doctor story that echoed the structure of *The Sirens of Time*. So yes, absolutely, in that regard you could call it a companion piece or a spiritual successor, but otherwise it's unrelated. I sort of think of it like they're the bookends at either end of a very long shelf; necessarily similar but nevertheless far apart.





"I wanted it to be a big celebration of **The Monthly Adventures** Doctors, and also something of a promise that their adventures are far from over." Robert adds: "I'm pretty good at compartmentalising pressure especially when I've got the chance to work on something as wonderful as this. Knowing it was the last story of the range, I knew it had to have a certain weight and a bit of a 'victory lap' feel to it. And I also wanted to make it as fun and exciting as I possibly could."

#### EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Nicholas Briggs, who wrote *The Sirens of Time*, explains: "The change to the **Main** or **The Monthly Adventures** range is simply a re-organisation to make Big Finish **Doctor Who** accessible to a wider audience.

"As everyone knows, we've been going for over twenty years now and that means there's been a huge amount of exciting audio drama produced. For those who have been with us, listening from the start, it all makes perfect sense: a monthly range featuring the Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Doctors, and at several points, the Eighth Doctor. It's just the way things happened.

"But to anyone visiting us for the first time, trying to work out where to start or which set of adventures to embark upon first, it's very



confusing that each Doctor doesn't have their own separate range. And that confusion creates a barrier between a potential listener and Big Finish, and a listener losing out.

"Also, in a world where the cost of everything only goes up we have to keep expanding our audience to be able to afford to produce these adventures. If the cold, hard, economic argument doesn't appeal to you – and why should it? Think of it this way..."

"The Big Finish **Main/The Monthly Adventures** range is like the bud on a flower – full of great stuff but locked in where no one can see it. By reorganising the way we release things, we're not stopping/cancelling/ending anything. We're simply allowing that bud to flower.

"As it opens up, the detail of how beautiful all these exciting stories are is revealed. You can

see which Doctors feature in which adventures. This really is the beginning of something very exciting. And as with all great **Doctor Who**, there will be something old, something new, something borrowed and, of course, something blue... vworp, vworp... Four-part stories, two-part stories, three-part stories... maybe even six-part stories. Exciting casting, old monsters, new monsters... so many thrilling adventures ahead."

Producer David Richardson adds: "There are lots of wonderful new things to come. Where did the First Doctor and Dodo go after leaving the planet of *The Savages*? What happened to the Second Doctor after *The War Games*? What new adventures await the Third Doctor and Sarah Jane Smith? What happened on the Seventh

WITH A RANGE FOR EACH DOCTOR THERE WILL BE A NATURAL 'STEPPING ON POINT' FOR NEW LISTENERS...

JASON HAIGH-ELLERY

*Doctor's Last Day*? The adventures are only just beginning..."

Big Finish chairman and executive producer Jason Haigh-Ellery concludes: "One comment we hear quite often from new listeners is that they find it hard to know where to begin with our back catalogue of **Doctor Who** adventures. This change to our ranges will make it much easier for people to start choosing. With a range for each Doctor there will be a natural 'stepping on point' for new listeners and it'll be much more straightforward for everyone." **VORTEX**

#### DOCTOR WHO:

THE END OF THE BEGINNING

- RELEASED: MARCH 2021
- FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

ORDER NOW: [bgfn.sh/endbegin](http://bgfn.sh/endbegin)



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## CASTING NEW SHADOWS

Big Finish has done the best with continuing **Dark Shadows** in *Bloodlust* and *Bloodline*, finding a way to continue the legacy of **Dark Shadows** better than anyone who's ever attempted to reinvent it. I loved those (almost) monthly dramatic readings, especially how they were used to tell stories after *Bloodlust* and before *Bloodline*, and the short stories, **Tony & Cassandra**... I understand the mountain of a task that an annual 13-part soap opera (*Windcliff*) is to produce, but in the meantime,

## PAT-ERNOSTER ON THE BACK

First, thanks so much for all the stories. When I was a kid I spent a lot of time listening to cassettes of old-time radio shows like **Dragnet** and **The Shadow**, so I was already familiar with "TV without pictures". When I started getting into **Doctor Who** a couple of years ago, I was thrilled to re-discover the audio medium through Big Finish, and it's now my favourite way to

could you make more dramatic readings, even a couple a year would be fantastic, or short stories or even single narrated audiobooks (like **Benny** or **The Omega Factor** has). I know you can't confirm anything but just give us **Dark Shadows** fans a sign that the series still has a future in good hands.

### MICHAEL

*Nick: Hi Michael, various pandemic-related issues have made it difficult for the **Dark Shadows** range to continue at the moment. But we hope to be able to make some progress before long.*

experience **Doctor Who**. I'm very excited about all the stuff you've been announcing recently, but I'm also dying to know: what's next for the Paternosters? They've become one of my favourite ranges, and I'm really hoping there's lots more planned!

### JORDAN SMITH

*Nick: We too love the Paternoster Gang, Jordan, so it'd be very strange if we didn't continue with them. But you'll just have to wait and see...*

## FREE SPEECH

Well, I confess I was envious. Like many I was beaten by the *Free Speech* entry for the Paul Spragg Memorial **Short Trips** writing opportunity. But upon listening to this wonderful piece of inventive, original and satirical fiction I can do nothing but applaud the better story. I didn't lose, I didn't win; this story was phenomenal. I couldn't afford to mince words; but now, I am inspired to flourish!! Hats off to Eugenie [Pusenjak]!

### ANDREW KYLE

*Nick: Yes, it was the clear winner for me in our discussions when judging this, Andrew. And I think Jake Dudman's done a superb job on the narration.*

## DAUGHTER OF TIME

Now that David Tennant is recording audios with his Doctor, how do you guys feel about having him meet up with daughter Jenny again? Or even have a few sets where she could travel with him? I think it would be a sweet and very interesting dynamic having the Doctor show his daughter the universe.

### JOSH

*Nick: I'd be fibbing if I said we'd never considered this, Josh. Let's see what we can come up with...*

## PROFESSIONAL APPROACH

I was wondering if you would ever do a **C15 Professionals** audio set in the 80s timeline with Bodie, Doyle and Cowley?

### MARTIN MCCONNELL

*Nick: I would certainly never rule that out, Martin. But it falls right into that problem area of non-sci-fi action thriller series which form part of the the most popular fictional genre, and our audience is largely sci-fi orientated. But I foresee a time when we will find a way to reach those other audiences... well, I can dream, can't I? **VORTEX***



CITY OF WESTMINSTER  
BAKER STREET W1

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BIG FINISH  
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Please note that due to COVID-19 restrictions Big Finish is currently operating a digital-first release schedule. Our warehouse remains open but the mail-out of collector's edition CDs may be delayed. However, all physical purchases of new releases will unlock a digital version that can be immediately downloaded, or played on the Big Finish app from the release date.

FOR FULL DETAILS AND UPDATES VISIT:

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FEBRUARY 2021

DW | THE MONTHLY ADVENTURES:  
*The Blazing Hour*  
(274, FIFTH DOCTOR AND TURLOUGH)

DW | THE FOURTH DOCTOR  
ADVENTURES:  
*Series Ten: Volume Two* (BOX SET)

DW | THE FOURTH DOCTOR  
ADVENTURES:  
*The Tribulations of Thadeus Nook*  
(10.3) **DLO**

DW | THE FOURTH DOCTOR  
ADVENTURES:  
*The Primeval Design* (10.4) **DLO**

DW | TIME LORD VICTORIOUS:  
*Echoes of Extinction*  
(EIGHTH AND TENTH DOCTORS) **DLO**

DW | GALLIFREY: *Time War 4* (BOX SET)

TORCHWOOD: *Drive* (47)

BERNICE SUMMERFIELD:  
*The Tree of Life* (AUDIOBOOK) **DLO**

SPACE: 1999: *Volume 1* (BOX SET)

TORCHWOOD: *Lease of Life* (48)

BLAKE'S 7:  
*Lucifer: Genesis* (AUDIOBOOK) **DLO**

APRIL 2021

DW | THE TENTH DOCTOR  
ADVENTURES: *Dalek Universe 1*  
(BOX SET)

DW | THE TENTH DOCTOR  
ADVENTURES: *Dalek Universe 1*  
(LIMITED VINYL EDITION)

DW | THE FOURTH DOCTOR  
ADVENTURES:  
*Dalek Universe: The Dalek Protocol*  
(THE FOURTH DOCTOR)

DW | THE FIRST DOCTOR  
ADVENTURES: *Volume 5* (BOX SET)

DW | THE LONE CENTURION  
*Volume 1* (BOX SET)

THE AVENGERS – THE COMIC  
STRIP ADAPTATIONS:  
*Volume 5: Steed & Tara King*  
(BOX SET)

MARCH 2021

DW | THE MONTHLY ADVENTURES:  
*The End of the Beginning*  
(275, FIFTH, SIXTH, SEVENTH, EIGHTH DOCTORS)

DW | THE EIGHTH DOCTOR  
ADVENTURES: *Stranded 2* (BOX SET)

DW | THE LOST STORIES:  
*Return of the Cybermen*  
(6.1, THE FOURTH DOCTOR)

DW | THE LOST STORIES:  
*The Doomsday Contract*  
(6.2, THE FOURTH DOCTOR)

DW | SPECIAL RELEASES:  
*Master!* (BOX SET)

MAY 2021

DW | THE NINTH DOCTOR  
ADVENTURES: *Ravagers* (BOX SET)

DW | THE NINTH DOCTOR  
ADVENTURES: *Ravagers*  
(LIMITED VINYL EDITION)

DW | THE THIRD DOCTOR  
ADVENTURES: *Volume 7* (BOX SET)

IRIS WILDTHYME: *Enter Wildthyme*  
(AUDIOBOOK) **DLO**

TORCHWOOD: *Absent Friends* (50)

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

DATES CORRECT AT TIME OF GOING TO PRESS.

THE **BIG FINISH** MAGAZINE

# VORTEX

ISSUE 144  
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**BIG FINISH**  
LOVE  
STORIES

# AUDIO MASTER!

**ERIC ROBERTS RETURNS**

THE MASTER'S **LOST INCARNATION**  
IS ABOUT TO BE THROWN A LIFELINE...

**ALSO INSIDE**

**STILL STRANDED**

MORE **IRREGULAR** ADVENTURES FOR  
THE RESIDENTS OF **BAKER STREET...**

