

THE **BIG FINISH** MAGAZINE

VORTEX



DALEK UNIVERSE

The Tenth Doctor, Anya Kingdom
and Mark Seven are back...

ALSO INSIDE

THE BOX OF DELIGHTS

The wolves are running...



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DOCTOR WHO WATCHERS

In this edition of *Vortex* we preview the first release in the **Doctor Who – The Audio Novels** range, *Scourge of the Cybermen*.

AND NOW the follow-up can be revealed. The ingenious gentleman Adric of Alzarius, better known to us as actor and writer Matthew Waterhouse, will narrate his own audiobook, *Watchers*, out for release in January 2022.

The Fourth Doctor and his young companion, Adric, are trapped in the time vortex. With time running out they encounter one of the Doctor's most terrifying foes – while in the shadows, someone is watching...

Matthew says: "It's been very exciting doing this project. When Big Finish asked me to write a novel set

in the second half of Tom Baker's last year, specifically between television episodes *The Keeper of Traken* and *Logopolis*, I wanted to create something that would fit with the tone of that season. *Watchers* has a slightly minor-key, mournful quality – something that fits in to that spirit."

Watchers also features a guest appearance by Nicholas Briggs as The Daleks. **VORTEX**

DOCTOR WHO: THE AUDIO NOVELS WATCHERS

- RELEASED: JANUARY 2022
- FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

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EDITORIAL

DALEK UNIVERSE 1... well that was fun, wasn't it! Released in April, I've already listened to it and *The Dalek Protocol*, many times. If you've not heard it yet I can tell you it's amazing – and I say that as a **Doctor Who** fan not as someone with a Big Finish attachment. The first episode cliffhanger, the revelation half way through episode two – I wasn't expecting any of it! With actors David Tennant, Jane Slavin and Joe Sims among the cast, I can't recommend it highly enough.

John Dorney, writer of the first two episodes, pulls off a feat that Russell T Davies would be proud of, and Andrew Smith's *House of Kingdom* is the perfect adventure to complete the set – with a cliffhanger which will be resolved in **Dalek Universe 2** (see preview to follow). Wow!

This month's *Vortex* also previews *The Box of Delights* based on John Masefield's classic novel. I am from a generation that watched an adaptation on television in the early 1980s which we recorded on our Video 2000. Starring Patrick Troughton, it was a true favourite of the whole family and we watched it over and over again, particularly at Christmas. My sister and I even got our dad to make us a posset – a milky drink used by Kay in *The Box of Delights* – which he successfully managed, always with a bit of nutmeg grated on the top.

I can't wait to hear the work that director Barnaby Edwards and the team have done on it. I hope that everyone gets as much enjoyment from the audio as I did from the TV series. **VORTEX**



UNIVERSAL ACCLAIM

The Tenth Doctor, Anya Kingdom and Mark Seven are back...

WE'VE ENTERED the Dalek Universe. Something or someone has pulled the Tenth Doctor from his own timeline and dragged him back to around the year 4,000, as the Space Security Service tries to keep order across the Earth Empire. And the Doctor wants to know why...

The next trio of tales in **Dalek Universe 2** take the Doctor (David Tennant), Anya Kingdom (Jane Slavin) and Mark Seven (Joe Sims)

deeper into family histories, aboard the strangest of space stations and to a truth that might tear them apart...

Producer David Richardson says: "The Dalek Universe series is a roller-coaster ride and something rarely done in **Doctor Who** – a journey through different worlds within one storyline universe, but not really a journey through time.

"It gives us such a lovely tapestry to work within: interlinking themes, over-arching plots and brilliant

character histories to explore. And all this with David Tennant, Jane Slavin and Joe Sims – what a joyous nine days of recording we had!"

Script editor and writer John Dorney was very pleased with the reaction to the first box set, especially THAT cliffhanger and THAT reveal (no spoilers, sweeties)!

He confirms: "The reaction to **Dalek Universe 1** was really lovely – listeners seemed hyped up and enthralled by it, and bought into the twist. There was a lot of excitement on social media, but everyone was very careful not to spoil it for anyone else, which was great. It's allowed other listeners to



Above:
Jane Slavin

have those moments as they were supposed to be experienced, and it was lovely for me too on the other side of it all. **Dalek Universe 1** has had some of the most overwhelmingly positive reactions I've ever known for a release. Everyone appreciated we were trying to do something new and different while still fitting in with elements from the past."

MARK SEVEN actor, Joe Sims, has been delighted to join the **Doctor Who** fold with his **Broadchurch** colleague David Tennant. What was Joe's first reaction when he was asked to play Mark Seven? He laughs: "Oh, I was absolutely delighted. Such an interesting character and I have always wanted to be a companion. So the idea of being an SSS android ass-kicking agent is the very definition of a dream come true. Proper bucket list stuff. And seeing me as Mark Seven on that absolutely stunning art work makes me soooooo happy!"

"The scripts, the internet, John, David, DT [David Tennant], Jane, director Ken Bentley and creative director Nicholas Briggs are absolute treasure troves of information. I gathered some thoughts and then enjoyed several passionate and illuminating conversations with the collective genius at Big Finish HQ and we were able to cultivate a character that I hope listeners like. **Doctor Who** fans are informed and passionate so it was important for me to dive in and be as committed and prepared as possible.

"The interesting thing with Mark is he is an android whose programming feels ever more corrupted by the exceptional forces of nature around him. I can't say too much for fear of ruining the story but his formative years are very important as the series and character develops, not to mention the strong and exciting relationship he has with the Doctor and even more so with Anya. It's hard, though, as he is so polite, forthright

and measured in conversation – and clinical, unflappable and decisive in battle. It's almost as if he is two characters – and they certainly sound different! But what I really enjoy is listening to him change as the story develops and succumbing to human traits for both good and ill."

Joe was particularly pleased to be working with David again, and explains: "He's an absolute diamond. We first met recording **Romeo and Juliet** for the BBC and when I got to the read-through for **Broadchurch** I recognised everyone but actually knew nobody except David who took

SHE MANAGES TO STRADDLE CUTTING, WORLD WEARY CYNICISM WITH PURE JOY AND CHILDLIKE WONDER...

JOE SIMS

the time to introduce me to everyone. A very generous and talented actor but an even lovelier bloke. We always have a laugh together.

"I texted him the other day when my son was watching **Duck Tales**. David is the voice of Scrooge McDuck and I told him he's finally arrived! Scrooge McFlipping Duck! What a role. I loved that show when I was a kid, massive shoes to fill and he nailed it!"

Joe has also forged a good working relationship with Anya actor Jane.

Joe tells *Vortex*: "I absolutely love Jane. I've been lucky enough to work with her many times and she manages to straddle cutting, world weary cynicism with pure joy and childlike wonder, often in the same conversation. She's funny, sarcastic, loyal and loving and they haven't come up with the superlatives yet that do her justice. All this runs through Anya like a stick of rock and makes her a compelling and well drawn character. Anya and Mark have an incredible relationship with two very exciting back stories, and the thing I've enjoyed most is listening to their complex relationship blossom."

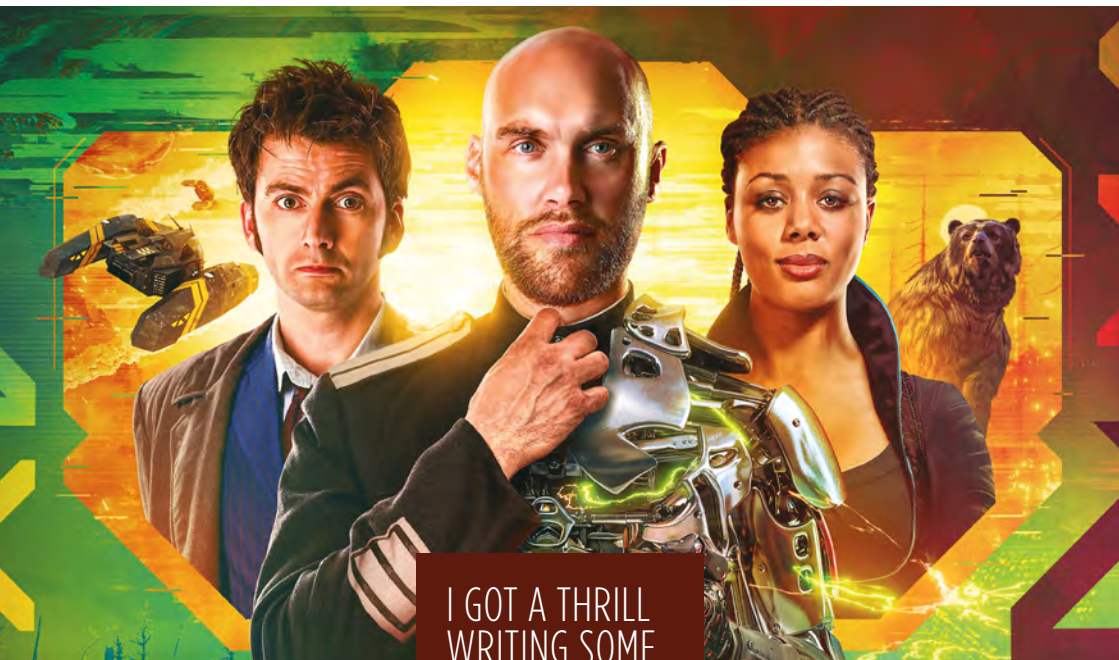
CYCLE OF Destruction by Roy Gill opens the set. After Mark starts behaving oddly, the Doctor and Anya find themselves on a strange planet. Searching for their friend, they find their way to an isolated research base where a big surprise is waiting for them. This is where Mark Seven came from and they're about to find out who he is. John says: "*The House of Kingdom in Dalek Universe 1* was obviously leaning into Anya's past and now we look into Mark's background,

science research centre... *Cycle of Destruction* is a science fiction mystery, character-driven with the occasional alien bear..."

Roy previously wrote for David Tennant in the Scribe award-winning *The Creeping Death*, part of **The Tenth Doctor Adventures** range.

Roy confirms: "This was my second script for David and I don't think it will ever not be exciting to write for him! His Doctor has a reckless, unpredictable energy that drives scenes forward – and you

THE TROJAN Dalek by John Dorney sees the Doctor, Mark and Anya head for an SSS space-station searching for the missing temporal scientist, Arborecc. But the officer in charge denies all knowledge of the scientist and demands their departure. The group splits up to investigate uncovering a heinous plot involving the Doctor's oldest foes. John says: "*The Trojan Dalek* is very different in tone to my previous two episodes in **Dalek**



exploring and explaining where he's come from. We get to delve into the character and people will hopefully get a kick out of that."

Roy reveals: "My episode could perhaps be described as 'Dalek-lite' but I was determined they would not be entirely off stage – their malevolent influence is still felt. I must admit I got a thrill writing some traditionally vicious Dalek dialogue!"

"While tracking down a mysterious figure from **Dalek Universe 1**, the Doctor, Mark and Anya become embroiled in an intrigue at a

I GOT A THRILL
WRITING SOME
TRADITIONALLY
VICIOUS DALEK
DIALOGUE!

ROY GILL

absolutely know you can give him complex speeches that he'll deliver effortlessly. Also, by this stage, he and Mark and Anya are a team. It was lovely to write them sparring off each other as they investigate."

Universe 1. It has a few details that conclude one section of the arc before kicking it into the next one, and it gets a lot darker in its general attitude, as you would hope for when you feature Daleks.

"I don't want to be spoilerific, but the Daleks are there in an interesting form, put it that way. There are some key moments that I hope will wrong-foot listeners and trick them a little. In one scene I deliberately set the listener up. They will expect something to happen for thirty or forty minutes, and will think they're



my story comes in this saga, John felt it was the right place for a narrative palate cleanser and to have a scenario that deals entirely with our heroes and their relationships. To be honest I actually found that more exciting than the prospect of writing something that pitted the Doctor against the Daleks.

"*The Lost* plucks the Doctor and Anya out of their ongoing adventure and drops them into a more imminently deadly (but also far stranger) situation, where they encounter a godlike being who rightly terrifies the Doctor. It's a story that really gets under our heroes' skin and digs into the Doctor's ongoing relationship with Anya. It occurred to me that there is a lot of unaddressed baggage between the two, and that this story would be the perfect place to unpack it all and see what happens between them as a result."

John concludes: "There are several clues dotted through **Dalek Universe 1** which set up where we're going in **Dalek Universe 2** and I don't think anyone has picked up on them yet! Which means we've done a good

THERE ARE SEVERAL CLUES DOTTED THROUGH **DALEK UNIVERSE 1** WHICH SET UP WHERE WE'RE GOING IN **DALEK UNIVERSE 2** AND I DON'T THINK ANYONE HAS PICKED UP ON THEM YET!

JOHN DORNEY

ahead of me, and then I pull the carpet out from under their feet!"

WHEN THE Doctor's latest scheme to get back to the future fails, the team's ship crashes on a strange world, potentially trapping them forever, in *The Lost* by Robert Valentine.

Searching for replacement parts, the Doctor, Anya and Mark find their way to a building where heart-breakingly familiar faces await them.

John reveals: "There are seven complete stories across **Dalek**

Universe's nine discs, and I would say that four of those really push the plot on, while three are heavy on character. *House of Kingdom*, *Cycle of Destruction* and *The Lost* really resolve a lot of the ongoing character arcs and the emotional states of the Doctor, Anya and Mark."

Robert tells *Vortex*: "Right after explaining the idea of this huge new series to me, John then said that for my story in this Dalek/Movellan/Mechonoid extravaganza, they'd like it not to have any Daleks, Movellans or Mechonoids! Where

job! You can spot all these little bits, hinting about what's coming, right from the earliest days, so if you go back and re-listen you'll find them all and it will have a big pay-off further down the line. There's one I thought was really obvious but nobody has noticed it at all, yet!" **VORTEX**

DOCTOR WHO
DALEK UNIVERSE 2

■ RELEASED: JULY 2021
■ FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

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Christmas has come early with presents waiting for us in...



KAY'S CATALOGUE

(of delights)

FOR THOSE of us of a certain generation, *The Box of Delights* is held in great affection. Adapted from John Masefield's 1935 novel for television by the BBC in 1984 (starring Patrick Troughton as Cole Hawlings), *The Box of Delights* has also been broadcast several times on BBC Radio. And now it's been given a new lease of audio life by Big Finish.

The Box of Delights follows the classic fantasy adventure of schoolboy Kay Harker who is entrusted with a magical box by the elderly Punch and Judy man, Cole Hawlings. Kay realizes he now has the ability to time travel and shapeshift, as he is thrown into a race against time to protect the box from an evil magician and save Christmas.

Christopher William Hill has adapted the novel for Big Finish.

He tells *Vortex*: "I've previously adapted *The Midnight Folk*, the prequel to *The Box of Delights*, for BBC Radio so coming to this was a real pleasure. Like many other people, I loved the television version of *The Box of Delights* so I was delighted to be asked to be involved with this audio adaptation."

And what an adaptation it is! *The Box of Delights* is being released as a limited edition six-CD box set and digital download. Sir Derek Jacobi takes on the part of Cole Hawlings with newcomer Mack Keith-Roach playing Kay Harker, in this ten-part epic production.

Working on the release has been a labour of love for director Barnaby Edwards, who has also been involved in additional scripting. Barney tells *Vortex*: "Like most people of my generation, I watched the BBC's TV

adaptation which aired at Christmas 1984. I remember it being trailed on *Blue Peter* and articles being written about it in newspapers and magazines. It was a big deal. This was not yet the era when the BBC released much on video, so it remained a fond memory for many years until I bought a copy on DVD.

"Since that time, watching it in the lead up to Christmas each year has become a yuletide tradition. There's nothing that quite puts me in the festive spirit like the opening music by Victor Hely-Hutchinson. Inspired by the TV adaptation, I read the novel and its prequel, *The Midnight Folk*, and loved them both. I'm a very big fan."

Producer Emma Haigh continues: "I'm really excited that Big Finish is bringing this magical story to a



Above:
Mark Gatiss

THERE'S SOMETHING SPECIAL ABOUT THE BOX OF DELIGHTS, IT IS SO BEAUTIFUL IT MAKES YOUR HAIR STAND ON END. MARK GATISS

whole new audio audience. It will take you on a great adventure with plenty of surprises and wonderful characters to meet along the way. It's a fabulous story that all the family, young and not so young, can escape into together – prepare to go swiftly and enjoy!"

Right from the start, the producer and director knew they'd love to have Sir Derek in the cast. Barney explains: "The funny thing is that Emma and I both said that we wanted Derek, but we couldn't decide whether to offer him Cole Hawlings or Abner Brown. He would play either to perfection, so we booked him for the project before telling him the role. It was only when I was chatting to Mark Gatiss about something entirely unrelated and discovered he was a monumental *The Box of Delights* fan that the decision was made: Derek would play the good wizard and Mark the bad. Their performances are the bedrock of the story and they both excelled themselves. Patrick Troughton and Robert Stephens,



Above:
Mack Keith-Roach

who play the roles in the TV adaptation, had cast long shadows, but what Derek and Mark have achieved here is equally dazzling."

Sir Derek says: "I have loved being involved in this new reimagining of

The Box of Delights, and taking on such an iconic role as Cole Hawlings. The narrative, the characters, the amazing way it's been brought to life on audio – it's a perfect slice of storytelling magic!"

Actor Mark adds: "There's something special about *The Box of Delights*, it is so beautiful it makes your hair stand on end. The whole tale and the ideas in it have such magic to them. And Abner's a great part. The idea of a corrupt magician posing as a clergyman... it's weird and mystical and then also villainous. What can I say? It's why you do it!"

BARNEY'S NEXT task was to find the young lead. He tells *Vortex*: "Next up was our hero, schoolboy Kay Harker, a role which is almost always played by a female actor. It's a ludicrously difficult part and massive to boot (Kay has more lines than Hamlet!). I'd had the great good fortune to have just worked with Mack Keith-Roach on a huge historical audio drama and so knew how good he is. There's no better 14-year-old in the business and Mack is easily the best Kay I've heard.

"Lizzie Waterworth-Santo (the voice of Horrid Henry) was on that same historical production and I knew her voice worked really well with Mack's. So now we had our Kay and Peter.

"Maria Jones, Peter's sister, is a heck of a part too – one of my favourites – and I'd had the brilliant Clare Corbett in mind for that all along. Finding their sensible older sister was trickier. Susan's part is minimal in the original book and although I'd bumped up her part considerably for our adaptation, it would still need an actress who could play sensible without being dull! Fortunately I

had a sudden revelation about the excellent Deeivya Meir, someone I'd worked alongside as a voice actor.

"Completing the Seekings household we needed two more women: Kay's guardian – the smart and sassy Miss Caroline Louisa, and the loving but intrepid housekeeper, Ellen. Both are mother figures to Kay so they needed to compliment each other but also to contrast. Once I'd tried out various combinations in my head, I came to the conclusion that the perfect pairing would be



a truly delicious performance. The comedy double act of Foxy-Faced Charles and Chubby Joe – a posh twit and a working class bungler – went to Nicholas Pegg and Damian Lynch, two wonderful performers who fit so well together. And last but by no means least there's Rat, whom Homer Todiwala plays with great relish (along with bringing most of Abner's other gang members to life).

"Then came the eternal – figures who've lived for hundreds of years and are full of mystery and magic.

*ALTHOUGH HE'S A
CRIMINAL MASTERMIND
HE'S SURROUNDED
HIMSELF WITH
INCOMPETENTS AND
INGRATES.* BARNABY EDWARDS



Top:
Mina Anwar

Right:
Louise Jameson

Bottom:
Raj Ghatak

Lisa Bowerman and Mina Anwar. Thankfully they were both available."

The story has a huge cast, which kept Barney on his toes when it came to finding the right voices. He continues: "Next came the villains. Abner Brown's great tragedy is that although he's a criminal mastermind he's surrounded himself with incompetents and ingrates. I therefore needed actors who could be villainous but also had a fine comic touch. For Abner's deceitful wife, Sylvia Daisy Pouncer, there was only one choice in my mind and that was Louise Jameson, and she turns in



Herne the Hunter has to have the most beautiful voice because he is the embodiment of Nature: Raj Ghatak fitted the bill perfectly and is always a delight to work with. It was a similar story with the White Lady who embodies Time and can age forwards or backwards. Asking someone to play the same character at different ages is a big ask, but audio actors don't come any finer than Annette Badland and I was so happy the day she said yes.

"Finally I cast the non-magical world. One of the standout characters from the novel (and

from the TV adaptation) is the Police Inspector. Tim Bentinck gives a tour-de-force performance, full of humour and warmth and wisdom. The Inspector doesn't have a sidekick in the novel but I thought he needed one in the audio so I created the role of the Constable as a comic foil. Because this was a new character I had free rein to make him anything I liked. But I already knew who I had in mind for the part – the fantastic Sam Stafford – and so I wrote the

one but five different characters. Such a great and versatile actor."

Barney had one remaining role to complete his cast. He says: "That left one character but a massively significant one: the creator of the Box of Delights himself, Arnold of Todri. He's spoken of in great detail before we meet him and so I really wanted it to be an impressive moment when he first appears.

"He's as important a figure as Cole Hawlings and Abner Brown and I needed a great actor to

involved in the post-production process. We have the luxury of more running time than any other adaptation and we've used it to flesh out Masefield's world. That goes not just for the dialogue, characters, plot and action – it applies equally to the soundscape. This sounds like a movie, it's so immersive. And the music. Oh the music! The wolves are running!"

Sound designer Steve Foxon concludes: "I'd never seen or heard any previous versions of *The Box of Delights* so I was really looking forward to opening it up and seeing what's inside... And I'm happy to say it didn't disappoint!" **VORTEX**



Above:
Dan Starkey

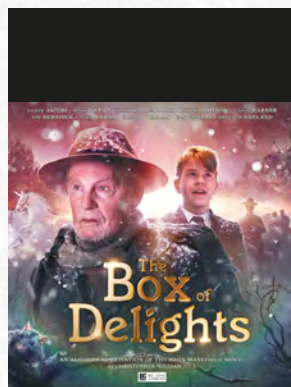
I'D NEVER SEEN OR HEARD ANY PREVIOUS VERSIONS OF THE BOX OF DELIGHTS SO I WAS REALLY LOOKING FORWARD TO OPENING IT UP AND SEEING WHAT'S INSIDE... STEVE FOXON

part with his voice in my ears.

"The Bishop runs the Inspector a close race as one of Masefield's greatest creations and I had an idea who I'd like to play him. Tony Millan is one of my very favourite performers and he's been in all of my literary adaptations. I adore the man! As with the Inspector, the Bishop needs a sidekick and that's where the Dean comes in. He's a very minor character in the book but we boosted him for our adaptation and Dan Starkey is magnificently fierce in the role. And then we have the endless joy that is George Naylor bringing to life not

match those two. I suggested the role to David Warner, explaining to him that it was basically just one scene but a really key one. Happily, he leapt at the idea and his performance is one of my favourite things in the whole drama. The man is a legend."

BARNEY WAS listening to edits of the story as *Vortex* spoke to him. He reveals: "It is beyond exciting. As a massive fan of *The Box of Delights*, I am doing everything in my power to get it right and so is everyone



BIG FINISH CLASSICS
THE BOX OF DELIGHTS

■ RELEASED: JUNE 2021
■ FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

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A new **Doctor Who** range begins next month with a series of enhanced audiobooks...

METAL STRAIN

IF YOU bought the Limited Edition of **Masterful** earlier this year, you will have heard *Terror of the Master*, written by Trevor Baxendale and narrated by Jon Culshaw, with sound effects and music bringing it to life.

Jon returns this July to read *Scourge of the Cybermen*, the first official release in the **Doctor Who – The Audio Novels** range. Written by Simon Guerrier, this six-hour epic tells the terrifying story of the Third Doctor and Sarah Jane Smith battling cybernetic monstrosities on a futuristic off-world sea base.

Producer David Richardson reveals: "I've had the idea for this range for some years. As a **Doctor Who** fan who grew

up reading the Target novels, I figured it would be great if we could do full-length audiobook readings – thinking of them as novelisations of television episodes that were never made. So I put the suggestion to executive producers Jason Haigh-Ellery and Nicholas Briggs and thankfully got the go ahead to start developing them.

"The audiobooks are devised to be, in essence, six part stories so there is huge scope for massive plotting and characters with depth. And we've pushed the post production side too: there will be full soundscapes and music to embellish the brilliant readings by our line-up of much-respected narrators. Nick will voice

the classic monsters when they appear – and in this first release he's bringing the Cybermen from the TV episode *The Invasion* back to life.

"*Scourge of the Cybermen* is a stunning launch for the range. I love Simon's script which is dripping with atmosphere and menace. It gives us the Cybermen at their best – skulking in the dark shadows, waiting to pounce on the unsuspecting. I think we've hit on something very special indeed with this range. Fingers crossed crossed – I'm hoping it has a very bright future!"

Simon tells *Vortex*: "David emailed out of the blue in October 2019 to ask if I'd like to write an audio novel featuring the Third Doctor and



Above:
Jon Culshaw

Sarah Jane, running to 60,000 words broken into six episodes. I suggested Cybermen, partly because the Third Doctor didn't meet them on TV until *The Five Doctors*, and partly because I had the beginnings of an idea already...

"My vague plan was to do something based on the atmospheric prologue to the Target novelisation, *Doctor Who and the Cybermen* by Gerry Davis, in which he describes the Cybermen as marauding Vikings, skulking in the darkness of space and only preying on the weak. Also I absolutely love Terrance Dicks's novelisation of *Death to the Daleks* – possibly my favourite **Doctor Who** novel – and wanted something of the same spooky, unsettling atmosphere and futuristic setting.

"So that all went into a two-paragraph idea about a scientific research base falling victim to a disease which weakens the crew enough that some

battered old Cybermen then attack. In discussions with David and with script editor Roland Moore, we developed the idea into a full outline. As it was suggested that some of the stuff I was creating might be similar to the Lone Cyberman due to be seen at the end of the 2020 series on TV, we held off until those episodes had been broadcast and then I revised my story so it wasn't the same in any way."

Simon has written for several classic monsters previously but never the Cybermen – until now. He grins: "It was brilliant! I've written Daleks, Sontarans, Ogrons and even Vardans but was keen to do Cybermen because the TV episode *Earthshock* made such an impression on me as a kid. I watched *The Invasion* on DVD, as that was their last appearance before my story, and then listened to the audiobook of Ian Marter's novelisation. I also re-read David

Banks's book *Cybermen* for a sense of the lore around them. But as I say, the main thing was that vivid description of them in *Doctor Who and the Cybermen*. Knowing that Nick would be voicing them also helped, as I knew he'd make them authentic."

Was it fun bringing the Third Doctor and Sarah together again? Simon nods: "Yes, and also challenging because I wanted to get them right. I know from previous things that I've written that it's all too easy to make the Third Doctor imperious and overbearing. It takes effort to convey the dynamism and charm Jon Pertwee brought to the character. I rewatched *The Time Warrior* TV episode and listened to Jon Culshaw reading the

IT'S VERY OMINOUS, VERY BROODING AND IT REALLY STIRS THE THEATRE OF THE MIND.

JON CULSHAW

BBC's audio CD of *Death to the Daleks* a few times, to try to get their voices and an image of them in my head."

Jon Culshaw tells *Vortex*: "There are many stand-out moments in this script. It's a story which builds tremendous atmosphere; it's very ominous, very brooding and it really stirs the theatre of the mind. You do see the scenes playing out in your imagination. Some of them are as beautiful as they are tantalising and mysterious."


Asked for his highlights, Simon concludes: "Oh, all the things other people did! I've not heard any of it completely finished yet, but Steve Foxon has worked wonders with the music and I'm very excited that Jon is narrating it. And the cover by Claudia Gironi is just absolutely beautiful." **VORTEX**

DOCTOR WHO:
THE AUDIO NOVELS
SCOURGE OF THE CYBERMEN

■ RELEASED: JULY 2021
■ FORMAT: DOWNLOAD

ORDER NOW: bgfn.sh/cybernetic





She's got style...
she's got grace...
she's a winner...

She's a lady

LADY CHRISTINA de Souza – international jetsetter, adventurer and the owner of a very unusual London bus – returns for three more tales of derring-do across the world in **Lady Christina Series 2**.

When Christina's offer to join the Tenth Doctor was turned down after the events in television episode *Planet of the Dead*, she returned to her previous life.

Producer David Richardson says: "I love how much actor Michelle Ryan cares about the character and this audio range. There's a lovely collaboration between us all on **Lady Christina**. Michelle is always contributing ideas, looking for ways to make things better if they can be made better – you'll find that

many of the settings and ideas in this new volume were inspired by things that Michelle suggested."

The Wreck by James Goss opens the second box set.

When Christina joins her father on a cruise off the coast of Zanzibar, she is surprised to meet his new fiancée Bunny. But Lord Alfred has his eyes on another trophy altogether. An underwater shipwreck, containing treasures as deadly as they are beautiful.

James, who also wrote *Skin Deep* for the first series, says: "People really adored the first box set, which was lovely, and it's always nice to be asked to do more. Everyone responded very well to Christina's simply vile father, too, so it was a delight to revisit him! Lady Christina is at her most brilliant when she's at her most vulnerable."

How would James sum this adventure up? "Accidentally very contemporary. It was conceived and written before the real-life debate about the horrific origins of some statues arose, and it's about finding two of the most valuable statues in the world and how their existence corrupts everyone around them."

THE SECOND story of the set, *Outback* by Sarah Grochala, sees Christina looking for her Great Aunt Eugenia, and finding herself searching for answers in the Australian outback. But what secrets lie within the Jajutuma crater? Sarah says: "Lady Christina's one of the great **Doctor Who** female characters. I love the fact that there's something a bit archaic about her. She



Above:
Michelle Ryan

has a very British feel – it's not quite Bond, it's almost something that pre-dates him. I was delighted to have the chance to go into her world with her.

"My story is set in an imaginary place rather than a real location. It's a sort of Western Australia-type landscape. Great Aunt Eugenia came from a family trip my mum had booked for us where we all went to stay in the top floor of Agatha Christie's house in Devon. Exploring the house, I discovered that Agatha Christie was also an amateur archaeologist. And that was the inspiration for Eugenia, although Eugenia's more of a tomb raider than an archaeologist.

"The idea for the story was developed pre-lockdown but I wrote the script during the summer last year when it was nice to be able to travel in my mind, even if I couldn't do it in real life."

"Originally when I was given the brief it was mentioned that Michelle

really likes quokkas – and that if someone at some point could get some quokkas in, she would just love it!

"I've never had anything quite that specific as a request before but I have met quokkas. A quokka is a cat-sized wallaby and Rottneest Island in Australia is one of the few places where they live. I don't remember them making any sounds though, which is quite difficult for an audio drama!

LONG SHOT written by John Dorney concludes the series, and Lady Christina heads to Royal Northcote, the highlight of the racing calendar. John says: "I was really excited to write another adventure for Lady Christina – it's one of my favourite spin-offs to work on. *It Takes a Thief* was the opening story of the first box set and it flowed very easily once I'd decided what to do after the introductory sequence of a car chase and her being casual about it.

I like that edge of her being an anti-hero.

"In *Long Shot*, I've brought back one of the characters from *It Takes a Thief*, now known as Ivo Hislop-Cannon, because I enjoy writing for him and it gives you an almost-but-not-quite love triangle with Ivo, Christina and Sam Bishop of UNIT.

"I spent a lot of time trying to figure out what I wanted to do with it. Fairly early on when I was looking for an angle, I woke up one morning and thought, 'Hold on, why don't I do something like *The Killing*, the classic Kubrick film. *Long Shot* is not quite *The Killing*, but it is inspired by it with

MICHELLE REALLY LIKES QUOKKAS – SO IF SOMEONE AT SOME POINT COULD GET SOME QUOKKAS IN...

SARAH GROCHALA

things happening at a racecourse and a racetrack. A not-terribly-successful film from about 15 years ago called *Vantage Point* was a bit of an inspiration too. I've always wanted to look at the same event from different perspectives, with whoever you are following giving you a different lead." **VORTEX**



LADY CHRISTINA
SERIES TWO

■ RELEASED: JULY 2021
■ FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

ORDER NOW: bgfn.sh/zanzibar 



ALL SEWN UP

BIG FINISH IS MAKING A RETURN TO BAKER STREET THIS JULY FOR ANOTHER ENCOUNTER WITH SHERLOCK HOLMES AND DR JOHN WATSON.

AS WELL as adapting many stories by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Big Finish has been producing its own original adventures from the pen of writer Jonathan Barnes.

Nicholas Briggs reprises his role as Sherlock Holmes with Richard Earl as Dr Watson, directed by Ken Bentley.

Jonathan says: "As ever, it is both a pleasure and a real privilege to be invited back to the world of Sherlock Holmes. There was quite a bit of unfinished business after the last release so this was a great opportunity to dive back into the Holmes universe and explore some of the plot strands which I'd left unresolved.

"In *The Seamstress of Peckham Rye* we see how the characters have moved on a year after *The Master of Blackstone Grange*. I'm fascinated by this period in Holmes and Watson's life (which Arthur Conan Doyle

doesn't tell us a great deal about) – after Holmes has returned from the 'dead' and Watson has become involved with a new woman.

"Watson has moved out of Baker Street and Holmes is on his own again. Without the steadying influence of his best friend, Holmes is an especially unpredictable and dangerous force – and he comes into contact with a new power who is at least his equal in that regard: the Seamstress herself...

"*The Seamstress of Peckham Rye* is quite a sombre story, I think, in the tradition of some of Conan



Above (l-r):
Richard Earl and
Nicholas Briggs

Doyle's most serious Holmes tales. It pushes Holmes and Watson in some (hopefully) interesting and unexpected directions, and it introduces what I think is our most subtle yet relentless threat so far..."

NICK IS delighted to be back playing Sherlock Holmes once more. He says: "It is fantastic to be playing Holmes again – the last one we recorded was released in 2017. It's always such a delightful challenge and so much fun playing someone who is unfathomably clever."

Unlike previous Holmes adventures, *The Seamstress of Peckham Rye* was recorded during lockdown with the cast and crew recording from home.

Nick tells *Vortex*: "Even though we were all recording remotely and consequently couldn't see each other in real life, having the old team back together was so uplifting. Richard and I spent two hours on the phone catching up over the weekend beforehand. And Ken made sure that the cast was full of lovely actors like Lucy Briggs-Owen and Glen McCready, to name but two."

"We've been doing original Holmes stories for a while now and we've really become accustomed to Jonathan's beautiful style of writing. He captures the essentials of Conan Doyle but takes us further, upping the emotional content while still being faithful to that rewarding style of old fashioned restraint coupled with high stakes drama."

HAVING CRAFTED several tales for Big Finish's sleuthing duo, Jonathan knows the characters very well, and the way in which Nick and Richard bring the leading men to life.

Jonathan adds: "It's always a treat to write for the peerless Briggs/Earl team who really have made these parts their own. Lovely also to work with Ken who has a real sympathy for this kind of material. Generally the personal highlight is the chance to attend a recording and see the cast at work. No such luck this time though, thanks to COVID-19!"

If anyone hasn't given an original Big Finish Holmes case a listen as of yet, what would Jonathan say to

HE CAPTURES THE
**ESSENTIALS OF
CONAN DOYLE**
BUT TAKES US
FURTHER, UPPING
THE EMOTIONAL
CONTENT... NICHOLAS BRIGGS

them? He smiles: "These adventures are a real labour of love for all involved and I would say if you're a fan of Conan Doyle's stories, then this new set of stories is amongst the most authentic that we've done."

"If you've never heard any of them, I suggest starting with *The Adventure of the Perfidious Mariner* which sets out the stall for the kind of approach we've taken on these productions. It's only £2.99 on download – less than the price of a posh coffee!" **VORTEX**

Holmes and Watson will be returning for another adventure next year in *The Fiends of New York City*.

SHERLOCK HOLMES
THE SEAMSTRESS OF PECKHAM RYE

- RELEASED: JULY 2021
- FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

ORDER NOW: bgfn.sh/threads 



Red Hand Gang

We're back on the streets of London with the superb, secretive sleuthings of **Jago & Litefoot**...

JAGO & LITEFOOT a spin-off range from the classic **Doctor Who** television episode, *The Talons of Weng-Chiang*, is one of Big Finish's most popular and beloved series starring

Christopher Benjamin and Trevor Baxter as Henry Gordon Jago and Professor George Litefoot.

Jago & Litefoot ran for an incredible 13 series with plans for another release under producer Ian Atkins. But the next adventures were put to one side after the late, great Trevor's passing in 2017.

Written as full-cast audio dramas, the scripts have now been adapted into audiobooks performed by a single voice actor, overseen by producer

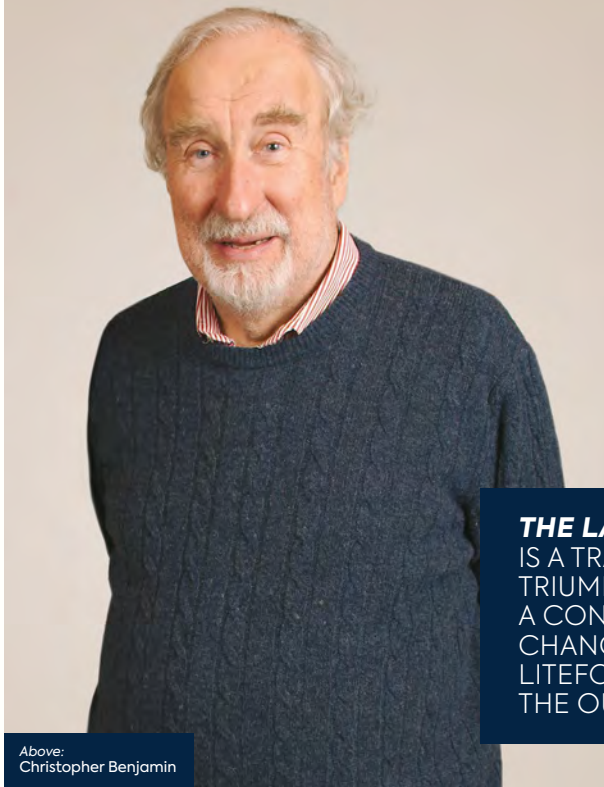
Alfie Shaw. Alfie admits he enjoyed working on this 'lost' season telling *Vortex*: "I loved it! Like many of our listeners, **Jago & Litefoot** was a series that I adored listening to, and being given the opportunity to bring this lost season to life has been such a thrill.

"The switch between the formats was fairly seamless. Once the plan was put in place to covert them into audiobooks, really the only decision left was whether to combine all four scripts into a single adventure or to keep them as individual stories. We went for the latter as it more closely mirrors the structure of the previous box sets and gave us a chance to feature more of the characters from the world of **Jago & Litefoot**."

JAGO & LITEFOOT *Series Fourteen (Audiobook)* opens with *The Red Hand* by Simon Barnard and Paul Morris, adapted by Paul Morris and narrated by Jamie Newall.

Returning home from their voyage to a parallel world, Jago and Litefoot find that things aren't quite as they left them – and there's a new chief inspector in town...

Paul says: "*The Red Hand* is a paranoid conspiracy thriller that takes us from the cliffhanger in *Series Thirteen* on a rollercoaster journey through the nightmarish world our heroes have found themselves in, at the end of which the stakes are horrifyingly clear.



Above:
Christopher Benjamin

"It's always a joy to write for Jago and Litefoot, and giving them the extra dimension of prose made me appreciate them all over again. I had already said goodbye to the characters at what I thought was the end, but it seems you can never say never!"

The second adventure in the set, *The Laughing Policeman* by Jonathan Barnes, has been adapted by Julian Richards and narrated by Duncan Wisbey. Inspector Gilhoey is given a new assignment to root out enemies of the state – two traitors called Jago and Litefoot!

Julian reveals: "*The Laughing Policeman* was already written with a first person narrator which is rare for **Jago & Litefoot** but not unheard of. So a lot of the work to adapt it into an audiobook had been done for me in that regard: the descriptions were already carried by the narration and dialogue and not by the diegetic. My work was mostly about keeping the continuity of voice and character already there, fleshing out the story, which Jonathan Barnes had done a cracking job of in the script format.

"*The Laughing Policeman* is a tragedy, a personal triumph, a murder mystery, a conspiracy and a chance to see Jago and Litefoot's world from the outside."

THE CORRIDORS of *Power* has been adapted by Paul Morris from his own original script, and is narrated by Lisa Bowerman. In order to get closer to the truth of what's happened to the world, Jago and Litefoot are forced to split up, but the professor gets trapped...

Paul tells *Vortex*: "It's an interesting challenge adapting an existing script into a mini-novel. When I've written prose before it's mostly been planned that way from the start. It's a reminder, if you needed one, just how good Terrance Dicks was at his job. *The Red Hand* needed to be told as a brisk adventure story but *The Corridors of Power* is trickier. It had a lot of 'visual' comedy that would have been conjured up by the actors and sound effects, which instead now relied entirely on me (and my choice of adjectives).

"In *The Corridors of Power*, Jago and Litefoot's investigations finally show them what needs to be done. They enter the domain of alien invaders and are surprised what they find there, but not nearly as surprised as you'll be by the way they make their dramatic escape...!"

THE SET concludes with *A Command Performance* written by Justin Richards and his son Julian, adapted by Julian and narrated by Christopher Benjamin. It's Christmas Day and time for the pantomime at the New Regency Theatre.


THE LAUGHING POLICEMAN
IS A TRAGEDY, A PERSONAL TRIUMPH, A MURDER MYSTERY, A CONSPIRACY AND A CHANCE TO SEE JAGO AND LITEFOOT'S WORLD FROM THE OUTSIDE. JULIAN RICHARDS

Julian reveals: "Adapting *A Command Performance* was different to adapting *The Laughing Policeman* because I already knew the script as I'd written it from the synopsis in the first place! So I was able to expand things I'd not had room for previously, to play more with character and motivation away from what was sensible in the script format. I was also able to tightly define what the characters were like – I could talk about how they looked, how they moved, the cadence and nature of their speech – much more definitively than when I was writing for an actor to bring an individual performance to bear on them."

Paul concludes: "We all worked very hard on these scripts a few years back so it's great that we're finally able to share them with everyone." **VORTEX**

JAGO & LITEFOOT
SERIES 14 (AUDIOBOOK)

■ RELEASED: JUNE 2021
■ FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

ORDER NOW: bgfn.sh/j14 

There's a familiar face
back at **Torchwood**...



WOULD YOU ADAM AND EVE IT?

WE ALL loved Adam Smith when he was part of television **Torchwood** in Cardiff, a great friend and support to the whole group. And then we found out that he was an alien who had integrated himself into the team's lives... Now it's the 1950s in Torchwood Soho and disgraced agent Norton Folgate has a new boyfriend – the very lovely Adam.

If you've ever wondered why Torchwood don't just create an interstellar battle fleet and head off to form an intergalactic empire, you'll find the answer in July's **Torchwood** release, *Madam, I'm*. Samuel Barnett returns as Norton Folgate with Bryan Dick reprising his TV role as Adam. Scientist Lizbeth Hayhoe, played by Dervla Kirwan, completes the cast.

Producer James Goss tells *Vortex* about the return of Adam: "Director Scott suggested we dive into the goings on in Torchwood Soho and I said, 'But what?

But who?' and he said, 'Bring back Adam!'. So I rewatched the episode with the memory-shifting parasite and realised, 'Oh, this could actually be great.'

Scott confirms: "Adam's return came about in quite a simple way, James asked if I had any thoughts on characters we could bring back from Torchwood's past, not unlike Bilis Manger, and Adam was – perhaps ironically given his nature – one of the more memorable. I'd also directed Bryan Dick in the **Novel Adaptation Theatre of War** and *The Devil You Know* from **Gallifrey: Time War Volume One**, and really enjoyed working with him. He's just a brilliant actor with a really fun personality. More importantly, I knew from chats that he'd really enjoyed being in **Torchwood** and he'd actually asked whether Adam might return one day when he found out we were doing audios. So he was an obvious fit."

James, who also wrote the script, says there's lots of enjoyment to be had from the character: "Yes, enormous fun! Adam is *so sinister* in the TV episode as he absolutely destroys the original team. And it was a real joy to hear Bryan Dick pretending to be utterly, appallingly evil!"

Scott adds: "Bryan was very enthusiastic about revisiting the character of Adam.

"*Madam, I'm* picks up on the TV episode in terms of Adam's nature but also – because it's a prequel – allows James and Bryan to put a slightly different spin on him and his motivations." **VORTEX**

TORCHWOOD

MADAM, I'M

- RELEASED: JULY 2021
- FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

ORDER NOW: bgfn.sh/adamsoho



BOOK CLUB



THE WAR DOCTOR ONLY THE MONSTROUS

AS BIG Finish starts its travels back to the early days of the War Doctor's life, we already know how things transpire as the years go forward. Sir John Hurt reprised the role he created on television in four box sets for Big Finish – the last one released posthumously – showing that while this incarnation maybe went about things differently, he was still our favourite Time Lord at hearts.

Producer David Richardson tells *Vortex*: "It all started with one of those conversations between myself, Nicholas Briggs and Jason Haigh-Ellery... 'Wouldn't it be amazing if we could do stories with the War Doctor'. I put in a request to the BBC in Cardiff and got a very encouraging response back from

Steven Moffat – I got the feeling that he too was excited by the idea of this era being explored further. Jason then spoke to BBC Worldwide and John Hurt's agents."

Sir John was happy to return to the character and a total of twelve adventures were recorded starting with the *Only the Monstrous* box set containing three stories written and directed by Nick.

Nick says: "I look back on these with incredible pride. We had to move really fast when John's agent confirmed he was available and keen, so I went full steam ahead. The notion of the Doctor trapped in a war that he both hated but knew he had no choice but to fight, is something that really suited my preferences. But I was worried that we wouldn't see anything of

'the Doctor' because he renounced that title – so I killed him, had his people mourn his loss, and then I secretly resurrected him!

"He was like a soldier from World War One recovering from the horror of the trenches, drained of all his anger. You see what this incarnation might have been like as a true 'Doctor'. Then, bit by bit as he recovers, his warrior-like tendencies come to the fore. His early scenes with Rejoice (played by Lucy Briggs-Owen as a young woman and Carolyn Seymour as an older woman) are some of my favourite moments as he struggles trying not to be the Doctor."

The Innocent, *The Thousand Worlds* and *The Heart of the Battle* were recorded with Sir John working from a studio near his home in Norfolk.

Nick tells us: "Bizarrely, I don't really remember him not being there in person because he was completely present on audio. And of course that memory is informed by having worked with him in real life in later recordings.

"I was insanely nervous but John was very much at pains to put me at my ease. We all chatted and joked between takes. John phoned me a few days before the first recording to ask how we worked. I explained and he said, 'Well, that sounds all right, good'. One of the stand-out moments of my life is when I saw that I had a missed call and a voicemail of a familiar voice saying, 'Hello, it's John here. John Hurt.' I nearly dropped my phone!" **VORTEX**

THE WAR DOCTOR ONLY THE MONSTROUS

- RELEASED: DECEMBER 2015
- FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD
(now only available on download)

ORDER NOW: bgfn.sh/themonstrous



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AND USE **VORTEX MAIL** AS THE SUBJECT

VORTEX MAIL



AUDIO SLAY

I've really got into Big Finish since lockdown began and Paul McGann has become my favourite Doctor. I've discovered the force of nature that is Bernice Summerfield, and am working my way through her adventures from the very beginning. I've also heard some **Torchwood** and, as a **Buffy the Vampire Slayer** fan, was delighted to hear James Marsters feature. I see that over the years you've worked with a few other **Buffy** stars, including Anthony Stewart Head and Juliet Landau, and was wondering if

you've ever tried to get the rights to do anything with **Buffy**?

REBECCA C

Nick: Really love that you've been enjoying the Eighth Doctor and Bernice Summerfield, Rebecca. As for Buffy, wouldn't that be great - but I suspect the rights are too tied up.

PRIMAL SCREAM?

It was a delight to hear Juliet Aubrey in the new **Dalek Universe** set, having been a big fan of her in **Primeval** when I was younger, and it got me thinking how great it would be to hear new **Primeval** stories

with the original cast back. Has Big Finish ever looked into the possibility of **Primeval** audios? I think there'd be a big overlap of interest with fans that grew up with new **Who!**

RONAN

Nick: It's a nice idea, Ronan, I remember Primeval with great fondness. We did approach the creators years back but they weren't interested at that point. Maybe it's worth another try...

PHAROAH

I am a big fan of Erimem, the pharaoh companion of the Fifth Doctor. Is there any way we can get an eBook version of her novel *The Coming of the Queen*? Perhaps even an audiobook version? And maybe Cavan Scott and Mark Wright's Project: *Valhalla* and *Wildthyme on Top* as well? Also, only half the **Excelsis** saga is available for download - *Excelsis Dawns* and *Excelsis Rising* - any chance we could get *Excelsis Decays* and *The Plague Herds of Excelsis* too?

ZACHARYAH T HONIKMAN

Nick: I'd certainly never rule it out, Zacharyah, I'll have a word.

ANTHOLOGY ASKING

I'm a new listener and I've just started getting into the **Bernice Summerfield** series. It's awesome that you're currently releasing the audiobook versions of the first novels as they are now so difficult to find. I was wondering if there are any plans to record the anthologies as well? It would be a pity to have such gaps. Keep up the good work. Love from Italy.

JULIA

Nick: No plans for this, currently, Julia, but I think it's worth investigating for the future. Lisa Bowerman is a brilliant performer and she's done a great job on the audiobooks - no surprises there - we're very grateful for her contribution to Big Finish.

VORTEX



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"The truth is where the sculptor's chisel chipped away the lie."

BIG FINISH RELEASE SCHEDULE

Please note that due to factors beyond our control, Big Finish is currently operating a digital-first release schedule. Our warehouse remains open but the mail-out of collector's edition CDs and vinyls 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.

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(AUDIOBOOK) **DLO**

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THE **BIG FINISH** MAGAZINE

VORTEX



The **BOX** *of* **DELIGHTS**

THE **WOLVES** ARE RUNNING...



ALSO INSIDE

DALEK UNIVERSE 2

The Tenth Doctor, Anya Kingdom and Mark Seven are back...

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STORIES

ISSUE 148
JUNE 2021