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VORTEX



DOCTOR
ON CALL

The Ninth Doctor travels the big, wide universe armed with wit, a sonic screwdriver and psychic paper...

ALSO INSIDE

THE WAR MASTER
KILLING AND THRILLING...

ISSUE 149
JULY 2021
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DOCTOR WHO

HOOFPRIENTS & CONSPIRACY

The Third Doctor resumes his travels this October for another two stories in the eighth volume of **The Third Doctor Adventures**.

CONSPIRACY IN

SPACE by Alan Barnes sees the TARDIS diverted to Draconia where the Doctor and Jo fall foul of the hawkish Lady Zinn.

War with Earth seems imminent as rumours of a super-weapon are rife...

Conspiracy in Space producer Heather Challands says: "*Conspiracy in Space* is a wonderful action-packed adventure that really celebrates the heart of **Doctor Who**'s tenth television season, with brilliant performances from Katy Manning, Tim Treloar and our guest cast."

And in *The Devil's Hoofprints* by Robert Valentine, the Doctor, Sarah and the Brigadier have come to Devon to visit a controversial scientific establishment in the wake of a mysterious death and rumours of strange occurrences in the vicinity.

More than a century before, overnight and during a terrible blizzard, thousands of hoofprints appeared in the snow. The tracks led on for miles... and no-one ever identified who or what caused them. That is until now...

The Devil's Hoofprints producer David Richardson tells us: "The Third Doctor, Sarah Jane and the Brigadier are on Earth exploring mysteries and terrifying events in Devon. What a perfect story to release in the run up to Christmas – it's full of frosty frights and atmosphere." **VORTEX**

DOCTOR WHO: THE THIRD DOCTOR ADVENTURES

VOLUME EIGHT

- RELEASED: OCTOBER 2021
- FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

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EDITORIAL

THE NINTH Doctor Adventures:

Ravagers has been out for a few weeks now and I've listened to it at least three times already. I never expected actor Christopher Eccleston to metaphorically don his battered black leather jacket again and return to that incarnation of the Doctor which he created for thirteen episodes on television.

But he has, and wow, what a blisteringly great performance he gives. On listening you would never know this was the first time he's returned to playing the Doctor again after such a long gap.

I've never met or spoken to Chris but what struck me was just how much passion he has for **Doctor Who**. Just listen to his glee as he becomes the Doctor again and gets to utter his famous catchphrase... "Fantastic!" A very large part of me thinks that's Chris himself expressing such delight and not him being the Time Lord! His joy in the CD extras is also evident.

This month *Vortex* previews the second box set of **The Ninth Doctor Adventures: Respond to All Calls**. Three new tales follow the mold that the BBC Books range established when they first started publishing their original new series novels, with one episode set in the past, one in the present and one in the future – a perfect mix.

And in other releases the War Master is back with Jo and Nyssa, the Doctor and Leela reunite in a story conceived by Philip Hinchcliffe, we have another adventure with **Cicero**, more **Torchwood** and two **Early Adventures**. It's going to be a veritable party in our ears... **VORTEX**



The Ninth Doctor travels the big, wide universe armed with wit, a sonic screwdriver and psychic paper...

DOCTOR ON CALL

CHRISTOPHER ECCLESTON is well and truly back as the Doctor. His return to the role with Big Finish has received critical acclaim but there's no resting on the laurels following the release of *Ravagers*.

In the second box set of **The Ninth Doctor Adventures**, the Doctor is roaming the universe doing his best to avoid getting too involved - but he just can't resist the odd alien signal or a distant SOS... *Respond to All Calls*, with three new standalone tales, is out for release this August.

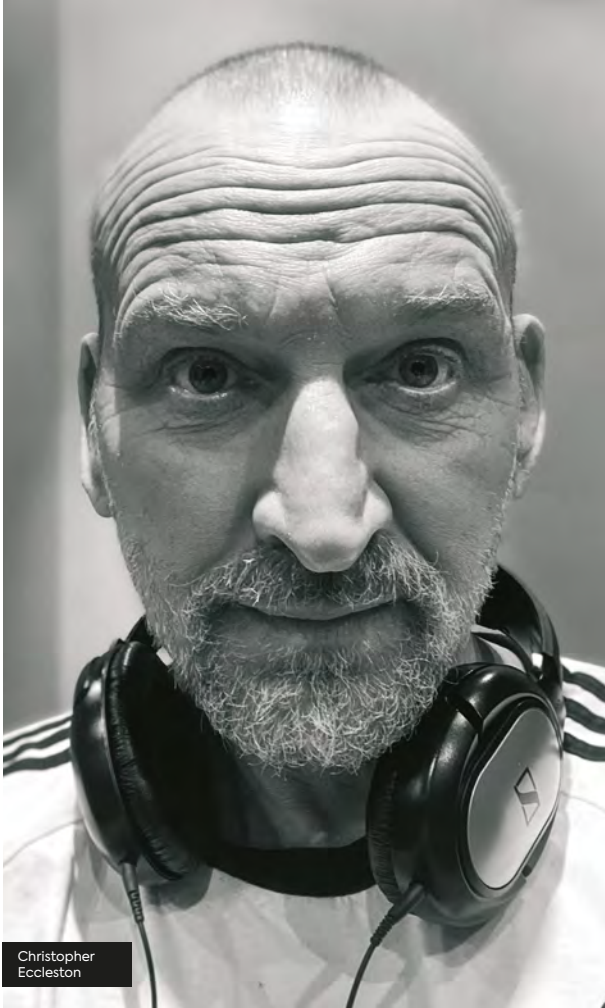
Producer David Richardson says: "What I love about this set is that it contains three character-based dramas - each of the writers has given the casts something really meaty to play with. Chris remarked many times how thrilled he was with the quality of the writing, and that after the high bar we'd set on *Ravagers*, we were continuing to deliver what he sees as 'top drawer' writing.

"My over-riding memory of this recording is that it was just a blast - we laughed so much in between the takes - and Chris

really enjoyed working with the brilliant director Helen Goldwyn who always balances creativity and detail with having a great time.

"They are also three very contrasting stories - from present day Scotland to post-WWII Paris to the graveyard planet Occasus - each of the adventures in this CD box set (or download folder) offers something new and exciting, with brilliant new friends and terrifying foes."

Script editor Matt Fitton adds: "What's lovely about this range is that it's a whole different era. We



Christopher Eccleston

capture the flavour of the Russell T Davies television series but by setting our adventures beforehand, the universe is our oyster. We can go anywhere and do anything – as long as we don't tread on the toes of the self-contained storyline that runs through Chris's series on TV.

"We can explore the Doctor before he meets Rose. The biggest challenge is keeping him slightly on the outside – he's not ready to take on a companion. That's the thing we have to draw a line under, so his relationship with Rose remains special. What the Doctor does in these stories, following on from the re-launch of the Doctor in *Ravagers*, is help out where he can, maybe give people a ride in the TARDIS from A

THAT'S AN ASPECT THAT CHRIS REALLY LIKES, A LONELY WANDERER WHO CAN'T SETTLE DOWN WITH ANYONE...

MATT FITTON

to B. And while he might be tempted to invite them along for the 'trip of a lifetime', it'd strictly be a one-off and they won't be staying onboard.

"That's an aspect that Chris really likes, a lonely wanderer who can't settle down with anyone as he feels he has to keep moving. He's falling through time, grabbing onto things as he passes, but he never stays in the one place.

"He's finding out who he is, what it means to be the Doctor in a universe after the Time War when he's got freedom to wander again, but he is wary of getting too close to anyone because of what might happen."

THIS SERIES contains three very different adventures as Matt explains: "For this second set, we asked our three writers to pitch stories with the intention of doing one that was contemporary, one that was historical and one that was sci-fi/future-y."

We start the adventures in Scotland with *Girl, Deconstructed* by Lisa McMullin. *Marnie is missing. But she hasn't run away, as her dad fears – Marnie is still very much at home. But not quite as she was. The Doctor joins forces with Missing Persons detective Jana Lee to help solve the mystery of a girl who's gone to pieces.*

Matt tells Vortex: "*Girl, Deconstructed* is a bit *Rose*-like in a way, an introductory story with the Doctor arriving on contemporary Earth and helping out where he can. He finds himself alongside a missing persons detective looking for a girl who's vanished from home – but she's not that far away, really.

"It's what Steven Moffat and Russell T Davies do, find everyday things and make them scary, tapping into childhood fears and that alienation or just that worry, of disappearing when you feel people aren't listening to you, or you can't talk to someone."

LISA EXPLAINS more: "*Girl, Deconstructed* all came from a nightmare that I used to have, which is a very **Doctor Who** way of getting ideas! When I was growing up, our house had some windows on the stairs which opened outwards, fairly far, it would have been easy for a child to fall out.



Mirren Mack

mixed up in her frustrated teenage emotions, and it all goes a bit wrong. "If I said I thought I might write for Christopher Eccleston's Doctor one day, I'd be lying! It was real surprise and delight when I was asked to be involved. I'm really looking forward to hearing how the cast take that childhood nightmare from my head and release it through the medium of audio!"

FOR THE second adventure we travel back in time for the wittily titled *Fright Motif* by Tim Foley. In post-war Paris, musician Artie Berger has lost his mojo, but gained a predator – something that seeps through the cracks of dissonance to devour the unwary. Luckily for Artie, the Doctor is here. Unluckily for

I'VE NEVER BEEN PART OF SOMETHING SO CLANDESTINE FOR BIG FINISH. TIM FOLEY

"My parents told me not to open them saying if I did, I would never see them again... it was a weird thing for a three-year-old. I didn't think at the time that it was because I would fall out and die, in my mind it would have created a situation where I could see them but they wouldn't be able to see me or talk to me. You would be in the same space as your loved ones yet you wouldn't be able to connect with them. A child processes the world in such a different way! "So, we have a girl who's gone to pieces in many senses of the word. She's not run away from home but she was thinking about it. She's a teenager who's feeling unsettled and wanting to escape as she's not able to connect with her father. And unfortunately some aliens get



Benjamin Davies

everyone, he needs bait to trap a monster... Matt says: "I've heard Christopher Eccleston talk on stage about the things he enjoys and what he's been influenced by. He mentioned music so in *Fright Motif* we feature a jazz musician in Paris. We also discussed setting it in New York or somewhere else in the States, but we thought Paris would better capture the imagination. "Music sets the theme for the story – it's all about sound – and there is a creature within it that feeds on dissonance and the fact that the musician has lost his mojo. He can't make music as he used to and that lets in an extra-dimensional being." Tim tells *Vortex*: "When Matt asked me to be involved, I couldn't believe I'd been considered and then I honestly didn't think **The Ninth Doctor Adventures** were really going to happen! Even after we bounced around ideas and outlines and heard what Chris was keen to do with the part, it still felt so impossible. And then came the big announcement that the Ninth

Christopher Eccleston



Doctor was coming back and we actually got the thumbs-up to start scripting... I think I have nearly come to terms with the fact that this is now happening – I may need a sit down!

"I've never been part of something so clandestine for Big Finish. I'm glad my friend Timothy X Attack was involved as well so we could send each other supportive squeals. I'm happy to report I've now learnt all of Big Finish's secret winks and handshakes so as soon as they have another secret project for me I'll turn up the collar of my trench coat in a flash!

"I wanted to write something that had all the blockbuster ingredients of a Russell T Davies story but stirred a little differently to feel a tad more raw. So we're in post-war Paris just before the Christmas of 1946. It's a city free from occupation but everyone is broke and bruised and bitterly cold. There's a hotel pianist called Artie who seems to have lost his musical ability, and the Doctor is worried this heralds something much more disastrous. It's a big emotional adventure through the



Pearl Appleby

capital at night, zipping through empty hotels and grungy jazz clubs and historic Parisian landmarks, all whilst facing an impossible menace."

Does Tim have a particular highlight from the whole process? He says: "There are just too many

to mention, from conception to recording! But one absolute highlight was the comradery of the writers guided beautifully by Matt, because that made us push ourselves to write stories that felt bold and fresh. Reading the scripts by Lisa and Tim X made me appreciate how talented my colleagues are and what excitement lay ahead. It feels like I've played a small part in shaping a whole new era for a wonderful Doctor, and I'll forever be grateful for that."

THE SET concludes with *Planet of the End* by Tim X Attack. *The Doctor arrives on a mausoleum world for sightseeing and light pedantry, correcting its planetary records. The resident AI has other ideas. Deep within a tomb, something stirs. Occasus is the last resting place of a species far too dangerous to exist. And the Doctor is its way back.*

Matt says: "*Planet of the End*, like the other stories in this set, pretty much the first pitch that the

writer suggested. We get to explore a sense of loss and devastation as we have this lonely Doctor visiting a mausoleum world to correct some of their records. He's keeping himself away from everything that's living and meets an AI robot that maintains the grounds. And then we discover that everything in the mausoleum isn't quite as dead as it should be – there is an alien presence keen to use the Doctor to escape..."

Tim X says: "The moment the email from Matt arrived my brain exploded! That was it, the whole weekend gone... gone to daydreaming and plotting and, of course, an instant re-watch of the 2005 television series. Staying quiet about it during lockdown might not have been so tough except my niece and nephews have begun to fall in love with **Doctor Who** over the last few years, and I've been helping them write their own TARDIS stories via Zoom. One of my nephews has a particular fondness for the Ninth Doctor, and keeping schtum about the fact that I was writing an adventure for Chris Eccleston has taken some proper resolve..."

"There was a point, mid-pitching-process, where creative director Nicholas Briggs and Chris definitively decided to take the Doctor in a direction that didn't have his personal grief as a driving force, and that felt like a real release, a whole new energy. Beforehand I'd sent through a few ideas that had the Doctor looking back a bit, even while running for his life, but we cast aside that ball and chain."

"The 2005 series is such a brilliantly balanced run of stories, and the time war journey is handled so well, it felt like the best thing was not to mess with that. What it left us with was a Doctor giddy with freedom, setting about things anew. I was so excited to have him dive headlong into some vibrant, strange, unpredictable situations and I sense my fellow writers were chasing that feeling, too. Matt asked if I could write something set on another world and the only question was: OK, where?"

Tim continues: "The Doctor detects a distress call in thousands of languages coming from the planet Occasus. This wouldn't be all that unusual except Occasus is a global necropolis, a sacred burial ground for thousands of long-extinct

THE MOMENT THE EMAIL FROM MATT ARRIVED MY BRAIN EXPLODED!

TIMOTHY X ATACK



Akshay
Khanna



Damian
Lynch

species – and there's absolutely no-one alive on the planet.

"Of course, the Doctor investigates but the artificial intelligence that guards the planet won't allow the Doctor any of his tech, assuming him to be a grave robber. So to track down the signal the Doctor has to set out across Occusus, on foot, through crumbling graveyards and tombs of many kinds.

"Despite the setting, it's not necessarily the darkest story in the world. I wanted to write something that had a bit of a Studio Ghibli [Japanese animation] feel to it, a landscape for the Doctor to travel through accompanied by some unlikely, otherworldly companions he picks up along the way. Occusus is a very beautiful place so there's a fairy-tale mystery to it all – and a horrific lurking menace maybe, why not?"

Tim admits: "I'm the kind of writer that 'embodies' things as I write. At the very least I'm sitting at the desk pulling faces, and from time to time I'll leap up and act out what I think the pace and dynamic of a scene might be... I was like a kid in a schoolyard, it sent a shiver down my spine! That's what every Big Finish writer is in it for – don't believe

anyone who tells you otherwise. We're back in the playground."

RESPONSIBLE FOR bringing this series to life is director Helen Goldwyn. She tells *Vortex*: "I was completely shocked when I was asked to direct these as I had no expectation that it might happen. I'd not thought about it, imagined or hoped for it – I just never expected it to come my way.

"I was then very excited and wanted to play my part in making sure Chris



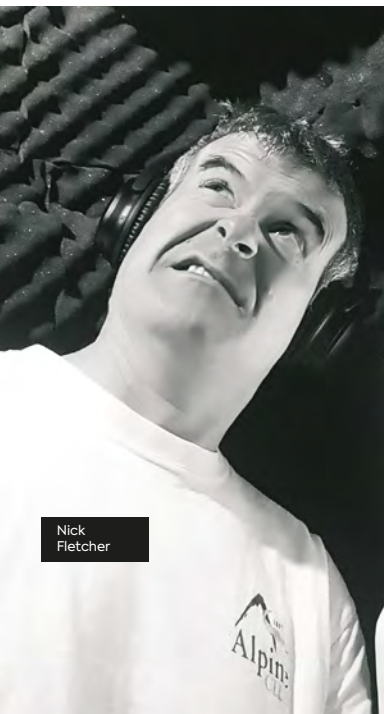
Helen Goldwyn

the work. I really missed that and I think the actors did too. But the fact we can carry on and work in lockdowns is remarkable – we're so fortunate to be able to do that."

Helen, who has also directed the fourth box set for the Ninth Doctor, admits: "At the beginning everyone is a bit tentative as you're sussing each other out! Chris doesn't know me, so I had to play it by ear and earn his trust. Nick had worked with him on the first series before I came in to do mine, so it was great to chat with Nick and establish what kind of pace Chris likes to work at.

"Chris is very quick, he picks up direction speedily and likes to re-do takes straight away. By the time we were recording the second adventure we were all very much more relaxed and enjoying the banter, really feeling like we were getting to know each other.

"And it's an absolute thrill getting to hear the Ninth Doctor again. There's no question that it's a privileged position to be in. When I heard the first edits it made my hair stand on end because Chris gives it so much commitment and energy and conviction. He really cares – he wants to get it as brilliant as he can." **VORTEX**



Nick Fletcher

had a great time. We were working entirely remotely so that changes the dynamic a bit, but really once you're up and running and doing the scenes it's not that different from actually being in a studio. I can't really see people in the studio anyway, I'm only able to see an elbow or a leg through the partition window!

"Once you've all got the headphones on and are acting, remote recording is pretty much the same as a studio day. The bit that's missing is the stuff in between takes and on the lunch breaks when you get to know each other outside of

I'D NOT THOUGHT ABOUT IT, IMAGINED OR HOPED FOR IT – I JUST NEVER EXPECTED IT TO COME MY WAY. HELEN GOLDWYN

DOCTOR WHO: THE NINTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES – RESPOND TO ALL CALLS
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WE'RE HEADING BACK
TO THE SIXTIES FOR...



TWO FIRSTS



DOCTOR WHO – The Early Adventures range captures the formative years of the television series. In two new releases available this August, there's an adventure with Susan in *After the Daleks* and the First Doctor in *The Secrets of Det-Sen*.

Producer Alfie Shaw says: "When I started as producer of this range, both of these scripts had already been commissioned and it was like uncovering two lost stories from the

1960s. We had to use very modern techniques (all together now – home recording!) for *The Secrets of Det-Sen*, but due to the great cast and director, as well as Toby Hrycek-Robinson working his magic on sound design and music, it evokes the 60s perfectly."

The first release is *After the Daleks* by Roland Moore, where we find out what happened to Susan in the wake of the Dalek invasion of Earth. How did Roland enjoy working in a desolate setting once again, given he's written for **Survivors** before?

Roland says: "Tonally **Survivors** is a lot darker although *After the Daleks* does have its moments..."

"I was interested in that survivor instinct though. In *After the Daleks* we're confronted, not just with getting the human race back on its feet, but also dealing with the aftermath of an occupation."

How different is a post-Dalek world to a post-Death world? Roland explains: "On the surface there are some similarities but one of the

many things that intrigued me about *The Dalek Invasion of Earth* was how the society depicted in it had no futuristic technology despite it being the 22nd century.

"So I ran with the idea that human technology and innovation has been banned or destroyed by the Daleks, and that once they'd been defeated the technology could be regained. For instance, we know that 22nd century Earth had Ganger [doppelgangers formed from a type of flesh] technology and the time shot experiments of time traveller Orson Pink – so where were those things during the Dalek invasion?"

THERE'S A new face in this adventure as Dodo Chaplet, originally played by Jackie Lane, has been taken on by Lauren Cornelius. Alfie explains:

"Lauren's casting was a result of a conversation primarily between creative director Nicholas Briggs and Mark Wright who is producing **The**



Sean
Biggerstaff

myself and script editor John Dorney as I developed the storyline.

“It was fun to write. If you’ve seen the TV episode, *The Abominable Snowmen*, you’ll know that the Doctor came into the possession of the Ghanta [holy bell], just as we know there were thieves of some sort. So the real trick for me was to find a way to do something with the Ghanta, adding a few twists and details. Why is it so important, and just why did it get given to the Doctor? Around that, there was also the tale of the bandits that needed revealing. And in addition I wanted to include some interesting stuff with the regulars!

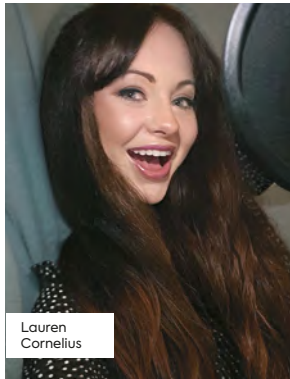
“We’re a good three hundred years prior to the Great Intelligence’s

IT WAS LIKE UNCOVERING TWO LOST STORIES FROM THE 1960S. ALFIE SHAW

First Doctor Adventures. Nick’s worked with Lauren before and it was his suggestion to cast her. She’s done a great job and I look forward to hearing where Mark takes Dodo next.”

Lauren, who memorably played Ivy Clark alongside David Tennant in Big Finish’s *The Creeping Death*, says: “Since starting to work with Big Finish, I’ve dreamed of coming on board as a companion to the Doctor – so this is a genuine dream come true! Dodo wasn’t around for very long but is still an established character – it’s been wonderful to be able to study her previous adventures and bring her back to life in 2021.

“I watched the old TV episodes which featured Dodo, and the original actress Jackie Lane did a marvellous job with her! She’s got a real playful side, and she can be very quick witted and comical at times which is lovely. I also really like how, even though she had a tough upbringing, she’s still got a wonderful caring, kind side – as well as a little feistiness which she has had to develop in order to survive.”



Lauren
Cornelius

The Secrets of Det-Sen has been written by Andy Frankham-Allen. He reveals: “A story around Det-Sen was one of the first ideas I suggested to Nick during our initial meeting. So I always had the basic idea of what to do with the Doctor but then it took a while to come to pass with an extended back and forth between

introduction to the universe of **Who**, and indeed to the Doctor, which gave me a lot of freedom to tell a different story of Det-Sen, one we’d not seen before. This adventure could be classed as a pure historical. No sci-fi as such, just a tale of pilgrims, bandits and monks, and the mysteries that surround Det-Sen, a little monastery on the hills of the Transhimalaya. It is, hopefully, a character-led story, a story of self-discovery for our leads. And yes of course there will be yeti! A real yeti!” **VORTEX**

DOCTOR WHO: THE EARLY ADVENTURES

AFTER THE DALEKS

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DOCTOR WHO: THE EARLY ADVENTURES

THE SECRETS OF DET-SEN

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The War Master is back in **KILLING TIME**, his sixth box set of adventures...

KILLS AND THRILLS

EVIL HAS many faces, particularly when it's the Master, and there's no stopping him (or her) on the eternal quest for universal domination, even if all of space and time is being ripped apart around them.

The War Master, played by Sir Derek Jacobi, has deceived Daleks and Time Lords alike in the first five box sets of adventures. And now he returns in *Killing Time* with a couple of familiar faces from the past – Jo Grant and Nyssa.

Producer Scott Handcock admits: “It’s strange looking back. When I pitched **The War Master** idea back in 2016, we had no idea if Derek would be interested and thought it might only be for the one set

of stories. Now, it’s difficult to imagine not working with Derek.

“We’ve kept in touch, especially during lockdowns, and Derek is even in a short film I’ve directed. But it’s always lovely to unite with Derek for these recordings. **The War Master** feels like coming home. And I absolutely adore the Master. It’s such a brilliant character throughout all the incarnations, there’s always something more to discover.”

In *Killing Time* we have the Master encountering two old companions of the Doctor. What made Scott choose Jo and Nyssa, two people with long histories with the Doctor’s arch nemesis?

He explains: “It wasn’t really about having the Master meet

old companions exactly. I mean, naturally you look for hooks from **Doctor Who**’s history that could be worth exploring, but it was as much me realising that both characters have a checkered history with their respective Masters – and wanting to work with Katy and Sarah again.

“Jo and the Delgado Master had an odd respect between them. Meanwhile, Nyssa’s father was killed and his body possessed by the Master’s spirit – not to mention her whole family wiped out. So both have interesting takes to explore. Jo is meeting a man she knew but who’s now more sadistic than suave, while Nyssa has an opportunity to confront the man who killed her family.”



Alexandria Riley
and Derek Jacobi

encounters first as a guard but who rises through the ranks to become a truly formidable opponent."

James has written the first and last episodes of the series. He tells *Vortex*: "I love how the War Master has a lot of different structures – it's a properly daring range. In my episodes I provide the two layers of bread for Lou Morgan's meaty filling!"

"Scott's idea was essentially the Master going on a date. Seriously! How would the Master define a 'date'? So the first three episodes are him meeting three remarkable women and how he changes their lives – and they change his.

"The first adventure sees the

Scott's idea was essentially the Master going on a date. Seriously!

JAMES GOSS

THIS SIXTH series centres around an empire populated by a race that can never advance – a race the Master seeks to seize control of. However, he has a rival in the form of Calantha.

There are four tales in the set: *The Sincerest Form of Flattery* by James Goss, *A Quiet Night In* by Lou Morgan, *The Orphan* also by Lou Morgan, *The Orphan* also by Lou Morgan, *The Orphan* also by Lou Morgan, *Unfinished Business* again by James.

Scott says: "The set kicks off on the Stagnant Protocol, a world where the populace are near-immortal but unable to reproduce. It's also a world of tactical significance during the Time War. So naturally the Master arrives attempting to hijack it and claim its power for himself but, unusually, he gets caught up in the bureaucracy of governments. It's a witty set of stories as the Master tries to work his way into the corridors of power and manages not to succeed. Alexandria Riley is the most magnificent foil as Calantha: a character he



Derek
Jacobi

Master meeting his match, only he doesn't realise it. And the final adventure is the Master getting his revenge. Both episodes are set in an area of space where people are damaged by the Time War – sterile and almost ageless. It's a corrupt and stagnant empire and the Master has to work out how to conquer it. It's a proper epic."

Lou was very excited to be asked to write for the War Master but concedes: "It was a bit daunting at first: the War Master's a tricky one to invite into your head as he's intimidating! You have to take the worst thing you can imagine him doing at any point, and dial it up about 15 percent – everything about him is just that little bit extra. When you're writing for the Master, it's very much a case of 'he's a monster, but he's *our* monster...' which is probably why I love him!"

And Lou was also asked to write for the Doctor's old companions. She confirms: "Yes, that was brilliant because Jo and Nyssa are phenomenal. We know that they're both more than a match for the Master, but for his plan to

Derek Jacobi and
Sarah Sutton
(thankfully still standing!)



...when
it was
revealed
that the
Master
was to be
played by
**Sir Derek
Jacobi I
nearly fell
over!**

SARAH SUTTON

succeed here he has no choice but to go through them. Individually, their strengths lie in different places, so you know he's going to try and weaponise that however he can. The way the Master sees it, if he's going to have to deal with them, he might as well have a little fun (and perhaps settle a couple of old scores) while he's at it.

"Being able to write for all three of them was such a treat, but I actually felt a little guilty because Jo is such a lovely, genuinely good person that going out of your way to be horrible to her just feels wrong – especially if you're having fun doing it! But that's exactly the kind of thing the War Master would enjoy, isn't it? His approach to Jo is to totally and utterly dismantle her, almost as an act of vengeance. She has something he wants but it isn't enough to just take it from her, he has to take *everything*. Which he does, with relish.

"With Nyssa, the Master takes a slightly different tack to the one

he uses with Jo: you get the feeling he sees Nyssa as something of a test. How far can he push it, how much can he get away with before she realises who she's dealing with? He likes being the cleverest in the room so you know he won't be able to resist gloating if he can beat her. He's not exactly subtle."

Working with Derek came as a real surprise to actor Sarah Sutton. She tells *Vortex*: "I was delighted with the script because I knew that it would give Nyssa's character huge scope to explore her incredibly difficult relationship with the Master.

"But when it was revealed that the Master was to be played by Sir Derek Jacobi I nearly fell over! Surely Big Finish was having a laugh at my expense but no, they were in fact completely serious! Once I had recovered from the shock, the panic then set in. Over all the years I have worked with Big Finish I have been lucky and privileged enough to work with some really amazing actors and the prospect of working with Derek was so exciting if not a little terrifying!

"Whilst Nyssa often appears to have her emotions and feelings in check she finds that actually when it comes to her relationship with the Master, once exposed, those emotions and feelings are very raw – understandably so.

I was able to pick out moments between the Master and Nyssa to add in that feeling. Nyssa has some lovely moments of reflection in this story so I've been able to really reflect her maturing and wising up with the music. Seeing her grapple with emotional baggage and dealing with it is really rewarding to hear and score.

"Nyssa and Jo Grant both have some really traumatic history with the Master. Knowing this, I'm really hoping those moments between the person that caused such pain and suffering and the two companions comes across in the right manner - I really had to make sure this was the main focus of all of the music. The Master

...it forces me to write music that could be considered more classical in influence. ROB HARVEY

Katy Manning

"Everyone had told me that Derek was really lovely and a joy to act with and they were all spot on. When you work with someone who is so assured, sensitive and engaging you naturally respond to them. There is a rhythm to the scenes and the timing becomes instinctive. It feels as though your performance is enhanced because of them. Well in my case I certainly hope so!

"I really didn't want the day to end but I am so proud to say that I had the opportunity to work with Derek Jacobi."

MUSICIAN AND sound designer Rob Harvey had the responsibility of realising the adventure's soundscape. He says: "The War Master series has always been a fun one. Derek Jacobi's portrayal of the Master demands a certain level of class from everyone. I very much relish these times working with

such a cast because it forces me to write music that could be considered more classical in influence. This is quite a challenge for me because I have to really do my research. On the lead up to a War Master job I'll listen to a lot of things like Elgar, Mahler, Chopin or Rachmaninov so I can get myself into that mindset. It's quite a challenge but it's a really fulfilling one! In order to properly support such performances I have to essentially up my game to something more in line with what the cast is delivering.

"As you may be aware, Nyssa already has a television theme in place though for licensing reasons I can't actually use it. So what I've done is make a version of it using the same musical DNA. I go into detail about it in the extras of this set, but basically her theme is simple enough that you're able to add tonality to it. Going through,

here is such a predator in disguise and for me that's been a really interesting point to home in on."

Scott adds: "We recorded this in December 2019 so it was one of the last sets we managed to record with Derek and everyone in the same room. And it was a delight. The scripts are, I think, the strongest Derek's had to play to date. Plus seeing him interact with Katy and Sarah was an added joy. They all behaved as if they'd known each other for years - you could actually imagine they'd been working together in the 1970s and '80s, despite never having met. *Killing Time* is a real treat of a box set!" **VORTEX**

DOCTOR WHO: THE WAR MASTER
KILLING TIME

- RELEASED: AUGUST 2021
- FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

ORDER NOW: bgfn.sh/calantha





THE FOURTH DOCTOR AND LEEA PREPARE TO FACE...

THE PHANTOM MENACE*

BIG FINISH is particularly well known for two distinctive kinds of **Doctor Who** storytelling: those that push the Doctor and his friends in new directions, and those that perfectly capture the era of the series.

The **Philip Hinchcliffe Presents** range fits most definitely into the latter camp. Philip Hinchcliffe himself – the producer of Tom Baker’s first three seasons on television – provides the basis for story ideas before working with writer Marc Platt during the scripting process to get something as close as possible to the feel of that time on TV.

There are currently three releases in the range with a fourth, *The God of Phantoms* now on its way.

Producer David Richardson says: “The **Philip Hinchcliffe Presents** adventures can take many months and indeed years in the making. I think it’s at least two years since Philip suggested the bare bones of an idea for *The God of Phantoms* which was commissioned on the spot. What then followed was a long gestation period in which Philip crafted the detailed storyline, before going to Marc to develop into script form and then back to Philip for notes.

“It’s been lovely to see how well these two work together. *The God of*

Phantoms is their fourth collaboration and I think Philip and Marc working on audio are as compatible as Philip and Robert Holmes were on the TV series. They share certain sensibilities and yet when their instincts do diverge Marc is skilfully able to adjust his writing voice to be in line with Philip’s intentions.

“What we have here, as with previous stories in the range, is an adventure that could easily have been on TV (had Philip continued working on the show and produced a fourth series with the Fourth Doctor and Leela). It’s an era I love and so naturally this is a range I love too.”

Marc – who has written *Ghost Light* for the Seventh Doctor on TV

*No, not that one...

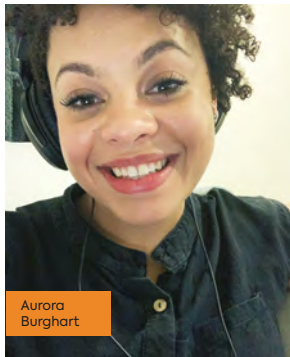
Tim
Faulkner

and many **Doctor Who** novels and audios – admits he was hoping for the chance to do more work with Philip.

He reveals: “We certainly talked about doing another story at the end of the third one so it’s always exciting to hear from Philip again. I still have to kick myself that I’m working on another story involving Tom Baker and Louise Jameson – only 45 years after I was watching them on the telly! This is our fourth release and they’ve all been a huge, scary pleasure to work on.

“Philip always starts off a set-up with details of possible characters, locations and situations. And it also usually involves quite a bit of background reading. It’s a bit like Philip filling up a firework with various ingredients, lighting the blue touch paper and then handing it to me – my job is to get it to explode in the most interesting way!

“Philip is always very generous in allowing me the freedom to expand on his ideas. I fill in the details and the dialogue and then, usually around

Aurora
Burghart

the start of part four, Philip says OK, go ahead and see where it leads you. Hopefully by then the characters have got their own steam up and it writes itself but Philip always has the final stamp of approval.”

Looking ahead to the release of *The God of Phantoms*, Marc tells us:

“It’s like a historical story set on the planet Sister Serene in the far future. A sort of cross between **The Last of the Mohicans**, **The Crucible** and **The Revenant**. There are battles and double crossings and a plague of ghosts. It’s about possession and identity and what you can believe in.

“In the early 1980s there was a production of **Hamlet** at the Royal Court theatre in London which Philip and I both saw. Actor Jonathan Pryce played both the prince and the ghost of his murdered father. He alternated the voices, arguing with himself: one voice normal, the other raw and gravelly. It

THE IDEA OF SOMEONE OR SOMETHING INHABITING YOUR BODY IS HORRIFYING...


MARC PLATT

was mesmerising, visceral and genuinely scary. The idea of someone or something inhabiting your body is horrifying, but if you are still there too, trying to fight back, then that’s twice as bad.

“*The God of Phantoms* is about a war between various groups of settlers as their societies and cultures start slipping backwards, devolving under the influence of a third malign presence that inhabits the landscape itself. While the Doctor finds that he may be more directly implicated in the battle than he expected, Leela is entrusted with a darker secret that tests her faith and loyalty to the limit.” **VORTEX**

DOCTOR WHO: PHILIP HINCHCLIFFE PRESENTS
THE GOD OF PHANTOMS

■ RELEASED: AUGUST 2021
■ FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

ORDER NOW: bgfn.sh/forge 



LETTER OF THE LAW

ANCIENT ROMAN CICERO IS BACK IN THE LINE OF DUTY...*

THE BIG Finish Originals range launched in 2017 with **Cicero**, a collection of adventures based on the real life of Marcus Tullius Cicero, a lawyer in Ancient Rome. With Samuel Barnett playing the titular character and George Naylor as his brother Quintus, the series proved to be an instant hit.

Cicero was also a finalist in the Best Audio Drama category of the Audie Awards, and now Big Finish chairman Jason Haigh-Ellery has commissioned producer Scott Hancock to create more.

Scott tells *Vortex*: "Jason is very pleased with the reaction to the **Cicero** audios. We made the one-off pilot about the Trial of Sextus

Roscius before the **Big Finish Originals** range came into fruition and it subsequently expanded into the series. Then Jason suggested we might like to tackle an 'audio movie' – a longer-form drama – not unlike the recent **ATA Girl** follow-up. So that just left us mulling over which period in Cicero's life to place it."

The Crossroads, out for release in July, has been written by David Llewellyn reuniting Sam, George and actor Laura Riseborough as Cicero's wife Terentia. Scott says: "Cicero's a good twenty years older now (ironically a little closer to Sam's real age – I hadn't really realised how much younger than himself Sam was playing before as he's so brilliant at changing his energy!)."

"I studied Cicero during my A-Levels and the corrupt triumvirate of Pompey, Caesar and Crassus has always stuck in my mind, so I suggested that as a starting point to David. His original idea had been to tell the story of Cicero's death (when he'd have been in his sixties) which would have been a stretch for Sam, George and Laura, so thankfully he leapt at the opportunity to meet in the middle."

David reveals: "The initial idea was to have Cicero and Quintus holed up at a remote villa; something we could record easily during the confines of the first lockdown. It sounded nice and simple but I was really struggling to come up with ideas. Thankfully lockdowns and

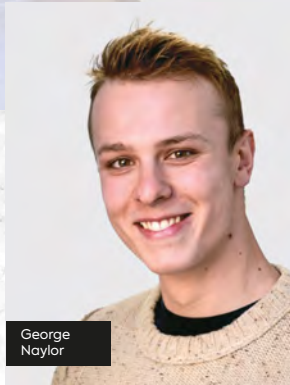
* No, not that one...

Samuel
Barnett

the plan changed and we had the opportunity to do something epic.

"*The Crossroads* is set around the time of the first triumvirate of Caesar, Crassus and Pompey. Cicero finds himself on the receiving end of a vendetta by his neighbour and nemesis, Clodius Pulcher, so it's a bit like one of those nineties 'Yuppies in Peril' thrillers. Except in this case the setting is Rome in the 1st Century BCE!

"Thankfully I kept most of my notes from the first series so I didn't have to read up on the minutiae of everyday life in the Roman Republic, but Plutarch's biographies came in very handy. Also, this is a period in which Cicero and Quintus were writing to one another frequently, so I was able to draw on their correspondence from Shackleton Bailey's brilliant translations. The letters written in exile are incredibly moving, and one of those featured in *The Crossroads* is taken, almost

George
Naylor

word for word, from the original. It's possibly the only time I've welled up while writing a script!"

BRINGING THE script to life is musician and sound designer Rob Harvey who wanted to emulate ancient Rome in our ears. He explains: "A big part of selling soundscapes is finding that little bit of character that allows you to latch on and create a visual. This might be something as simple as

a particular bird call, but when it works, it works well.

"But in order to sell the soundscape for this particular time period we have to essentially take away those little latching points which actually allows more space to imagine what you might think it sounds like. I needed to take a more involved approach to the soundscape where lots of complicated and detailed things are happening, to create something more like what you'd experience if you, for example, visited a new town or city.

"This makes you listen harder and then you find yourself being drawn in. If I were to place audio cues that seem familiar to you into

IT'S A BIT LIKE ONE OF THOSE NINETIES 'YUPPIES IN PERIL' THRILLERS.

DAVID LLEWELLYN

the soundscape, there's a danger that you might assume too much and be left with too clear a picture too early. We want to take you on a journey to formulate your own idea of what Ancient Rome was like. Which is both the hardest thing to get right and the most rewarding."

Looking back on the first run, Scott concludes: "The reaction to **Cicero** has been lovely. It's easy to dismiss historical drama as being a bit dusty or worthy but when you step back and take a look at what was going on it's really not very different from our world. We have the same kinds of characters, the same kind of political wrangling. The world may have been less sophisticated back then but the people and the attitudes were as complicated as ever. And I think that makes for a really interesting drama." **VORTEX**

BIG FINISH ORIGINALS

CICERO: THE CROSSROADS

- RELEASED: JULY 2021
- FORMAT: DOWNLOAD

ORDER NOW: bgfn.sh/repub



WE'RE GOING INTO THE FAR-FLUNG FUTURE WITH A FAMILIAR FACE IN AUGUST'S TORCHWOOD RELEASE...

FUTURETENSE

FROM LISTENING to Big

Finish and watching **Doctor Who** on television, we've encountered Torchwood in the past, present and future. We witnessed how Queen Victoria established the institute in the television episode *Tooth and Claw*, heard it (dis)function in many adventures in the present day, and had a glimpse into its future in the TV episodes *The Impossible Planet/The Satan Pit*.

And we stay in the future in August's **Torchwood** audio release, *Empire of Shadows*, which features the return of Shaun Parkes as Zachary Cross Flame, the Torchwood Archive agent.

In the far future of the Earth Empire, Torchwood is forgotten. So it's a surprise when Zachary Cross Flame of the Torchwood Archive finds himself summoned to the opening of the late Empress's Library. Her son believes that the conspiracy which deposed his mother is still active, and that the key to it is hidden somewhere in the

library. But does Zachary want to find it? Writer and producer James Goss said: "We've wanted to do an adventure with Zachary Cross Flame since the start of the **Torchwood** audio range but we thought, 'Shaun's so famous, the chances of getting him are really small. But wait, what?!"

"It was an absolute delight to find out that Shaun was interested in coming back to the part and we had a great day with him in studio. He'd stayed up into the small hours the night before re-watching his TV episodes and was full of happy memories of fighting the devil all those years ago.

"Zachary is a sort of a weary everyman figure. There are lots of hints in *The Impossible Planet* that there's an Earth Empire and that Torchwood are sort of pushed to one side – Zachary's crew aren't on the *USS Enterprise*. There's a wonderfully downbeat feel about him and his world, and that's what we get to revisit.

"There's been a lot of talk in the news about Presidential Libraries and this takes that idea: what if Earth Emperors have libraries, and what if Torchwood is responsible for maintaining them? What secrets are in them?"

"*Empire of Shadows* is a story of conspiracies and corruption but it's also about Zachary and his synth colleague Chloe who feel like the last two good people in the entire empire. How does Torchwood fit into this devious expanse of emperors and courtiers and corrupt systems – and what happens to Zachary Cross Flame after *The Impossible Planet*?" **VORTEX**

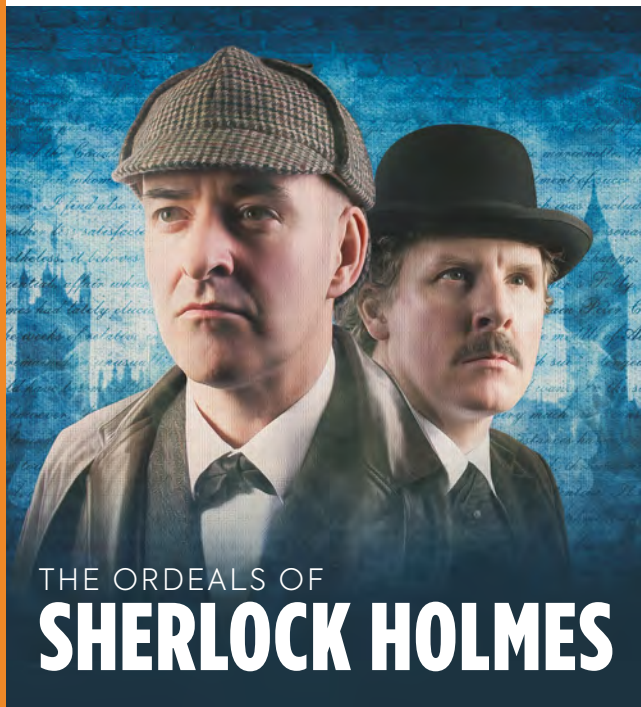
TORCHWOOD EMPIRE OF SHADOWS

- RELEASED: AUGUST 2021
- FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

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BOOK CLUB



THE ORDEALS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES

ONE THING that writers often struggle with is the perfect story title. Novels and scripts can be drafted, but that final elusive element, the thing that might persuade a dithering customer to purchase the work, can elude them. But that most certainly isn't the case with *The Ordeals of Sherlock Holmes* where the title sounds authentically true to the works of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

Written by Jonathan Barnes and first released in December 2013, *The Ordeals of Sherlock Holmes* sees the detective and Dr John Watson in a quartet of astonishing new investigations which span their

lifelong friendship, and beyond...

Jonathan explains: "*The Ordeals of Sherlock Holmes* is – if it's not too grand a statement – my attempt to tell the ultimate new Sherlock Holmes story.

"The box set contains four one-hour dramas starring the classic Big Finish team of Nicholas Briggs and Richard Earl (as Holmes and Watson). Each adventure is from a different period in Holmes' life, from the plains of Afghanistan to the alleyways of Victorian London, from the dark heart of the English countryside to the ruin of Europe after the Great War, and they build into a much bigger narrative.

"I've tried to tell stories that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle might have given us but with an edge – as if he'd had more time or greater license or some slightly different perspective, perhaps."

Entering the worlds of Sherlock Holmes was nothing unusual to Jonathan who reveals: "There's never been a year, I don't think, in the past 20 when I haven't revisited at least some of the adventures. And being asked to write my own versions is the perfect excuse to go back to them once again. Watson's voice, as Conan Doyle writes it, is highly distinctive and you really have to spend a lot of time immersed in the books to have a hope of sounding at all convincing."

Our heroes face some dastardly villains in this box set, and Jonathan admits: "One of the difficulties with Holmes – and you feel this even in the original stories – is how to present him with a worthy adversary. Professor Moriarty aside, the books are full of opponents who don't really offer too much of a challenge to someone of Holmes's genius-level intellect.

"Female characters, however, seem to make particularly strong antagonists for the detective: Irene Adler in *A Scandal in Bohemia*; Gale Sondergaard's character in the 1944 film *Spider Woman*; Cecile Stapleton in Hammer's *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. As to why this should be so... well, I think he's frightened of them, frankly! And there are several strong female characters in *The Ordeals of Sherlock Holmes*." **VORTEX**

THE ORDEALS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES

- RELEASED: DECEMBER 2013
- FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

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VORTEX MAIL



THE NINTH DEGREE

I recently started reading *Vortex* so I thought I'd share my opinions on the Ninth Doctor's return in *Ravagers*. The Ninth Doctor has always been a favourite of mine and I was really excited when this was announced. Overall, the box set was amazing! Great story and ideas, amazing characters and we can't forget Christopher Eccleston who sounds like he never left. I also really like Nova, the companion of this set. She was really fun. Is there any hope of her return? It really lived up to expectations and I can't wait for *Responds to All Calls*.

EVAN CUNNINGHAM

Nick: Many thanks, Evan, so glad you liked it. There is currently no arrangement in place for Nova

to return but the Ninth Doctor will be encountering all sorts of exciting other characters over the next few box sets.

IT'S A SECRET

I enjoy listening to your *Doctor Who* and *The Avengers* audio dramas. Would you please consider doing new audio dramas using Gerry Anderson's *The Secret Service*? My choice for the portrayal of Father One would be either Tom Baker or Sylvester McCoy!

JOSEPH CULP

Nick: I think The Secret Service is one of the oddest TV series ever made – I rewatched some of it recently! But we don't have any plans to revive that delightful slice of Anderson eccentricity at the moment, Joseph.

YOU AUTON KNOW

I have thoroughly enjoyed listening to *The Third Doctor Adventures* volume seven. Perfectly timed for the 25th anniversary of Jon Pertwee's passing, by giving both television seasons seven and eleven an outstanding introduction on audio. With Sarah Jane and UNIT due to appear in volume eight, are there any plans to do a story involving them up against the Autons serving as a sequel to Robert Holmes' two other serials? That could actually work for a potential ninth volume!

ANDREW HSIEH

Nick: Hi Andrew, these are certainly some exciting suggestions...

PARALLEL WORLDS

A thought has occurred to me regarding your *Space: 1999*. It would be so cool, if – when you adapt *Another Time, Another Place* – you could get as many of the surviving original cast members to voice their 'alternate universe' counterpart roles (i.e. Nick Tate to voice the Alternate Allan and Prentis Hancock to voice Alternate Paul, likewise Clifton Jones, Anton Philips et al).

KELD R HANSEN

Nick: Nice idea, Keld. That story isn't up for adaptation as yet but scripts are now in for Space: 1999 Volume Two and we hope to be recording them soon.

BACK IN TIME (WAR)

I'm really enjoying your Time War audios. Whether it's *War Doctor* or *Gallifrey*, I've enjoyed them all. I'm curious about what's next for the Eighth Doctor though, do you have any plans to produce more episodes for him during the Time War? I really hope so after the way you ended Volume Four last year! Keep up the good work!

JONATHAN WESTALL

Nick: Without giving too much away, Jonathan, I don't think you're going to be disappointed! VORTEX



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JULY 2021

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(THE THIRD DOCTOR) **DLO**

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Cicero: The Crossroads **DLO**

SHERLOCK HOLMES
The Seamstress of Peckham Rye (BOX SET)

BLAKE'S 7
The Palluma Project (AUDIOBOOK) **DLO**

TORCHWOOD *Madam, I'm* (52)

AUGUST 2021

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(THE FIRST DOCTOR AND SUSAN)

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(THE SECOND DOCTOR, STEVEN AND DODO)

DW | PHILIP HINCHCLIFFE PRESENTS
4. The God of Phantoms
(THE FOURTH DOCTOR AND LEEA)

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TORCHWOOD *Empire of Shadows* (53)

SEPTEMBER 2021

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(BOX SET)

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THE WORLDS OF BLAKE'S 7
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(AUDIOBOOK) **DLO**

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Immaculate Possessions **DLO**

TORCHWOOD TBA (55)

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DATES CORRECT AT TIME OF GOING TO PRESS.

"Yeah, you could just call me, you know?
On my mobile number,
'cause I'm always in."

THE **BIG FINISH** MAGAZINE

VORTEX



THE WAR MASTER

The War Master is back in **KILLING TIME**, his sixth box set of audio adventures...

ALSO INSIDE

THE NINTH DOCTOR

HE WILL BE RESPONDING
TO ALL CALLS...



ISSUE 149
JULY 2021
BIG FINISH
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STORIES