

THE **BIG FINISH** MAGAZINE

# VORTEX



# ELEVEN

**THE ELEVEN IS BACK** – and this time, he's brought a companion with him...

ALSO INSIDE

**MISSY AND THE MONK**

GETTING BACK INTO THE HABIT...



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THE OMEGA FACTOR

# IMMACULATE POSSESSIONS

**THE OMEGA** Factor, Big Finish's scariest audio output, is making a return this October in the form of a new audiobook. *Immaculate Possessions* has been written by Natasha Gerson, daughter of the original television series creator Jack Gerson, with narration by Louise Jameson who has played Anne Reynolds on both television and audio.

*When Tom Crane and Anne Reynolds are sent to aid the mysterious Paris branch of Department 7 with their investigations, they have no idea how quickly they will get swept up in the unfolding horror.*

*Something dark and rotten is lurking beneath the beauty of the Jardin des Plantes, and two young girls are already dead...*


*As Tom finds himself plagued by perplexing visions of the ghostly Morag, he becomes sure that his worst nightmares are coming true. But can Edward Drexel really be behind this? Or is it someone – or something – even worse?*

Set in the era of the original TV show, Tom and Anne find far more than they bargained for in this new twisted tale. Producer Xanna Eve Chown says: "Natasha's knowledge and love of the characters of Tom and Anne really shines through in her writing, and we get a lovely playful sense of them as a couple in *Immaculate Possessions*. But, of course it's not all romance in Paris – there are devils and demons, possessions and murder and all sorts of horrible things for the couple to contend with. It's a really thrilling audiobook that expands on **The Omega Factor** universe in an unsettling way... I've really loved working on this one!" **VORTEX**

## THE OMEGA FACTOR

IMMACULATE POSSESSIONS

- RELEASED: OCTOBER 2021
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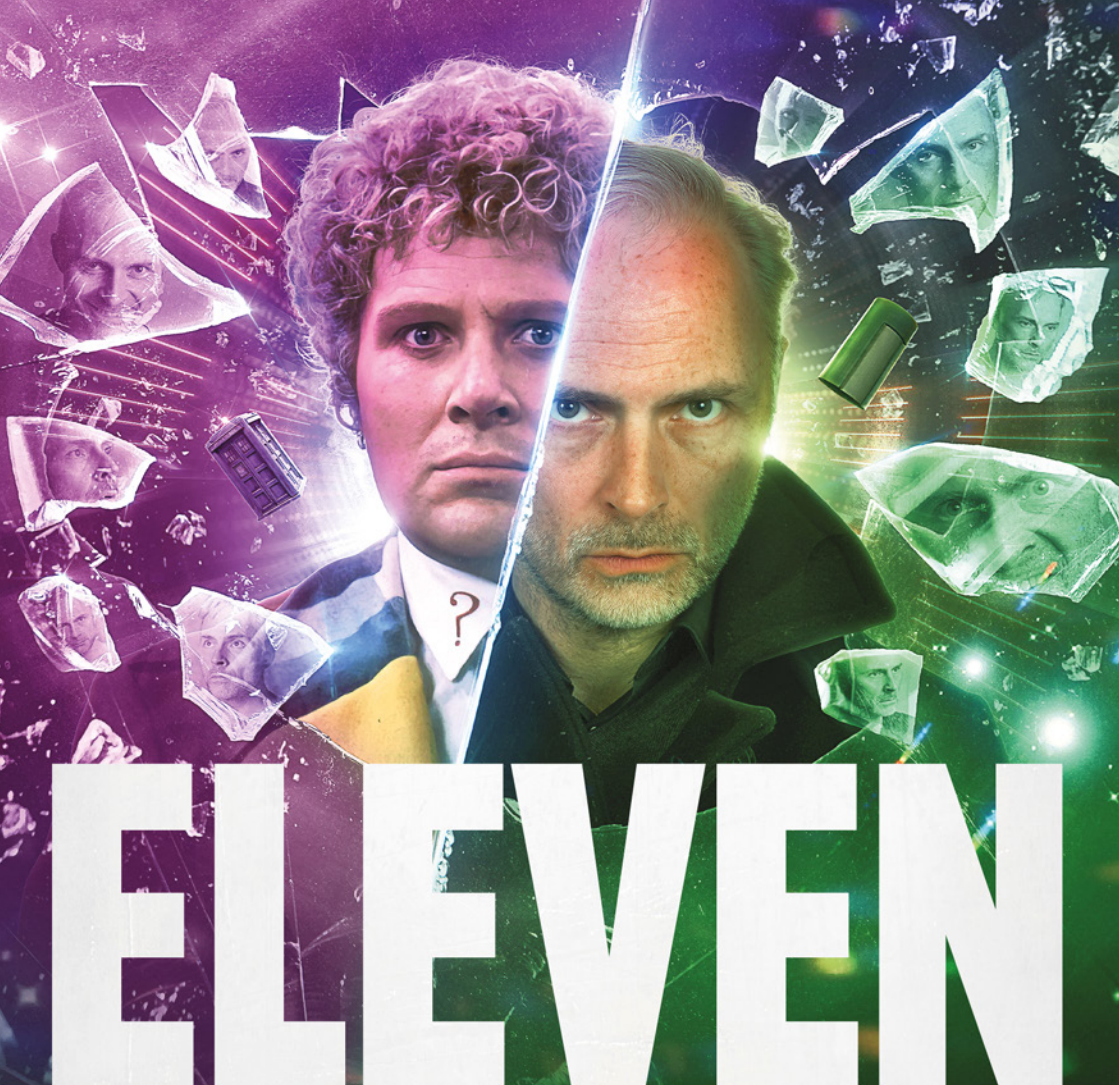
## EDITORIAL

**ONE OF** the most phenomenal creations to have been devised by Big Finish (from so, so many) is the character, the Eleven. Conceived by David Richardson and Ken Bentley, and developed by Matt Fitton, he is a Time Lord whose multiple personalities co-exist all at once.

The Eleven has been brought brilliantly to life by actor Mark Bonnar, and I think it's fair to say that no one would have predicted just how popular he's become. We've met two of his other incarnations in full (the Nine and the Twelve), and I've marvelled at how such a complex character can be so fascinating.

The Eleven has met the Eighth Doctor on several occasions in *Doom Coalition* and *Ravenous*, and the Seventh Doctor in *Dark Universe*. And now we're about to find out how he fares with Colin Baker's Sixth Doctor.

I haven't read the scripts yet but I can't wait to hear the electricity between these two fantastic actors – you just know that sparks are going to fly! And I'm excited by the thought of the Sixth Doctor facing off against the psychopathic Six, should he rise to the surface... **VORTEX**



## THE ELEVEN IS BACK – AND HE’S BROUGHT A COMPANION WITH HIM THIS TIME...

**OVER THE** past few years Big Finish has unleashed a new foe into the life of the Doctor in the form of the Eleven – a Time Lord criminal whose past selves all live on inside his head.

In **The Eighth Doctor Adventures: Ravenous 4**, we saw what happened to the Eleven after his clash with the Doctor and four incarnations

of the Master. And now we’re stepping back into the timeline of this chaotic yet brilliant Time Lord as Mark Bonnar’s villain encounters the Sixth Doctor and Constance – only this time in *The Eleven*, he has a companion of his own.

Producer David Richardson says: “We’d always planned that the story of the Eleven with the Eighth Doctor, Liv and Helen would be finite, and I remember having a chat with Mark on the last day of recording of *Ravenous* when I promised him that it wasn’t the end of the character. There’s so much we can do with

the Eleven, and this new box set is an example of us playing with that potential. We’re putting him up against the wonderful Sixth Doctor and Constance, giving the Eleven a companion of his own, and placing him on a world that feels rather fitting for him.

“Mark had mentioned to us that his wife Lucy Gaskell would love to work for Big Finish. It was an instant yes to that idea but what I wanted to do was create a role for Lucy that would actually allow them to work together (even though that had never been discussed!). Enter





Above: Mark Bonnar  
Below: Colin Baker

the magnificent Miskavel, who won us all over from her first scene."

Actor Mark tells *Vortex*: "It was very exciting being asked to do my own box set as the Eleven with Colin Baker, and it was lovely to be able to get Lucy involved, giving us a chance to work together again after many years."

"We have two recording set-ups at home, one in the shed in the garden and I also have a portable set-up which I can use anywhere. This meant we could record at the same time – albeit me under the stairs and Lucy in the shed."



I had to squeeze into my space, which was uncomfortable but very well soundproofed with all the coats under there. It is a wee bit more restricting playing the Eleven in a confined space – you just have to watch that you don't knock anything off a hanger at the wrong moment!

"It was strange knowing that Lucy was only at the bottom of the garden. She was playing a multi-faceted character as well so it was quite funny both of us doing our voices at separate ends of the house. We had a good laugh, recording through the headphones and sending messages with silly emojis!

"I do miss being in the studio with everybody though, that's part of the fun – as well as Toby's Moat Studios lunches. I miss really being able to see each other. But playing the Eleven is always a joy and long may it continue. I keep thinking that it's bound to stop at some point but the creatives at Big Finish have loads of ideas, and as long as they have great ideas I'm more than happy to keep recording. Why would you want to stop doing something as much fun as that?!"

IT'S REALLY JUST LIKE HAVING 11 PEOPLE IN THE ROOM. OR **ONE BIG HEAD.** LIZZIE HOPLEY

#### WE OPEN with *One for All* by

Lizzie Hopley where the locals of Molaruss are in two minds – quite literally – as everyone has duo-minds inside single bodies!

The Eleven and his new wife, the mutant alien Miskavel, pay a visit.

Lizzie's previous scripts for Big Finish have seen her create many fascinating characters. She says: "I think it comes from me being primarily an actor – actors need to get into people's heads. I always see both sides of an argument, it's an annoying habit of mine! But here the skill came in handy: I can see eleven sides of the argument..."

"The Eleven is a wondrous creation by the very clever Matt Fitton. He's

provided a great guide to the different personalities and it's really just like having 11 people in the room. Or one big head. And of course, you know you can trust Mark Bonnar because he's immensely talented and can differentiate between them all so well. I love pitching the different voices against each other for that very reason. There's part of me that just wants to make Mark laugh."

Give the Eleven's multiple personalities, what was the most difficult part in writing for him? Lizzie tells *Vortex*: "Remembering to put little guidelines in the script so Mark can negotiate the personalities more easily, such as starting lines with: 'Good point, Six' or something like that! Mark is a genius but he's not a mind reader! Then you've got to make those lines sound natural and not like they're there to guide the actor."

"I don't know why but I can hear Colin's voice particularly clearly in my head when I write for him. I do for the other Doctors too but the Sixth Doctor is especially belligerent so maybe I identify with it more! I find him so funny. I adored writing his voice against the eleven others. He also gets to battle with a fabulous villainess too!"

**THE DOCTOR** is absent in the set's second adventure, *The Murder of Oliver Akkron* by Nigel Fairs. *The Global President of Molaruss* has been assassinated. The authorities believe they have the killer in custody – but which of his personalities did the deed? Nigel has written scripts for various Big Finish ranges over the years including for Leela in **The Companion Chronicles**, as well as **Jago & Litefoot** and **Blake's 7**. Nigel particularly liked writing for the Eleven. He tells *Vortex*: "I'm an actor and I was also a psychodynamic counsellor for four years so

naturally I have an interest in how people think. I loved writing for the Eleven. I was drawn to the project because it seemed to me to be a fabulous opportunity to explore schizophrenia – or at least the paranoid schizoid position – in psychological terms. But then I was asked not to approach him in that way so instead I explored the dynamic between murderer and victim in their last hour together.

"In other words, what would you talk about if you intend to kill the person you are talking to? How does the conversation go? Both characters are lying (or at least hiding the truth) for most of the conversation. It's the kind of stuff I love acting in so I hope the cast enjoyed it."

"I listened in on them recording their first scene together and it sounded really good – treading the fine line between subtly acknowledging and playing the subtext. I'm really looking forward to hearing the finished play."

**ELEVATION BY** Chris Chapman concludes the set. *Molaruss* has a new ruler: the wise and benevolent Eleven – alongside his loving consort Miskavel – his many minds guiding every aspect of successful government. But the Eleven has a plan to elevate his people to a new level of consciousness. And

he cannot resist inviting the Doctor and Constance to witness his ultimate triumph...

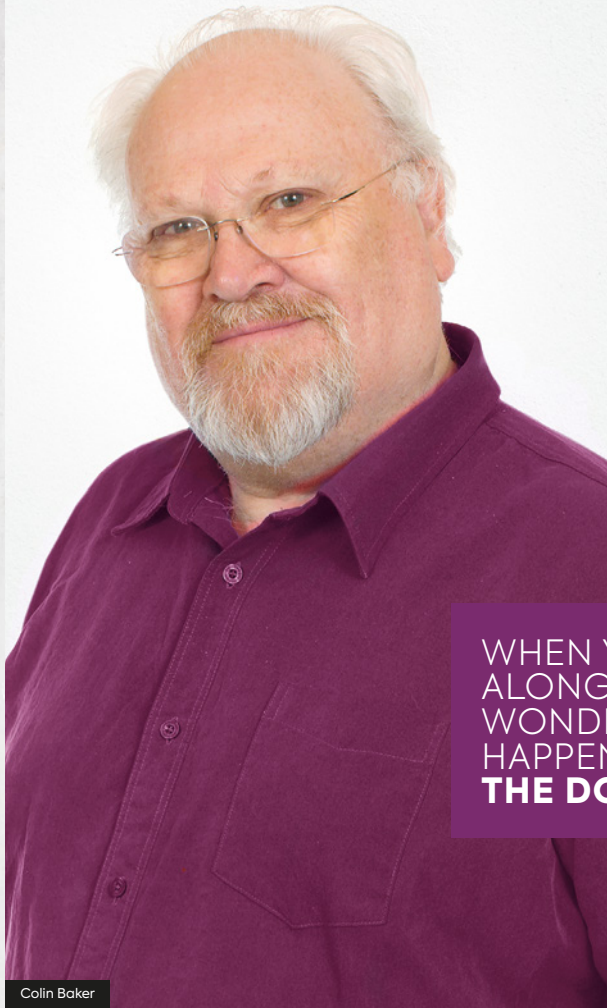
Chris says: "This is my ninth script for Big Finish and my fifth one for Colin which I'm taking as a compliment! I really enjoy writing for the



IT NEVER STOPS BEING **SLIGHTLY SURREAL** THAT I'M IN THIS AND THAT PEOPLE LOVE THE ELEVEN. **I LOVE THE ELEVEN!**

MARK BONNAR





Colin Baker

Sixth Doctor as he's a big character with a voice that comes naturally to me – I think I know how he would react to things. This Doctor is really well defined, mainly through the work Big Finish has done.

"I'm a big fan of Constance as well but when I was asked to be involved I knew she wouldn't necessarily be the main star of this box set. When Matt said it was starring the Eleven, I didn't know very much about him as I hadn't heard him before, so I got a crib sheet from Matt about his different personalities and listened to as many stories as I could. And wow,

Mark Bonnar delivers such a clever, kinetic, fast-paced performance.

"Sometimes the Eleven is just so chaotic, and the lovely thing in Mark's performance is that there is room for charm and likeability! He can be at odds with himself and surprise you as you never know how his mixture of personalities is going to come together.

"When I was asked to write the final episode, *Elevation*, I thought, 'Let's make this a Russell T Davies kind of finale to bring things together'. Many of us have a voice in our heads, an internal

debate that goes back and forth. For example, when you're driving along a road and you wonder what would happen if you opened the door. Or if you're on a bridge and think what if I jumped off... Of course, we don't, but it's there as a thought and I wanted to explore part of that – what would happen if that inner voice was set free?"

**THE WRITERS** particularly enjoyed working with script editor Matt. Chris says: "This box set has been a real collaboration, the most collaborative thing I've worked on yet, which has been great. I particularly loved the brainstorming in the early stages."

"As writers, myself, Lizzie, Nigel and Matt gave the Eleven his own little arc and a bit of a different character situation to put

## WHEN YOU'RE DRIVING ALONG A ROAD AND YOU WONDER WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF YOU **OPENED THE DOOR.** CHRIS CHAPMAN

him in. I suggested the planet of Molaruss where the people have duo-minds inside the one body.

"One mind could be good at socialising for example, while the other is very quiet and prefers balancing the books! I thought that would be an interesting place to put the Eleven, where the people are in awe of him as he has eleven voices in his head not just the two."

**LIZZIE ALSO** found the writing process a highlight. She says: "For me, creating the alien world with Matt and the other writers, Chris and Nigel, was one of the best sharing experiences I've had – deciding how it all worked and having fun tying our stories together with little details.

"That was the best thing for me. There's a fun scene in my script that comes directly from



*l-r* Mark Bonnar  
and Colin Baker

## THE SIXTH DOCTOR IS QUITE LAID BACK, HE TAKES IT ALL IN HIS STRIDE AND HE'S VERY ASTUTE.

MARK BONNAR

something that happens in Nigel's story so see if you can spot it!"

Nigel agrees: "The highlight of the process in this project was working with Matt and the other writers on creating the world it's set on. I had the idea of having my episode on an entirely different part of the planet to the first (where they'd never heard of the Doctor). I even instigated a glossary of expressions that give the planet a real sense of being – I hope!"

**VORTEX INFORMS** Mark that the Eleven has become one of Big Finish's most beloved and popular original **Doctor Who** creations. He modestly says: "That's very kind of you to say so, I just love being a part of this whole **Doctor Who** universe. It's

reward enough to be part of a wonderful thing like this, along with **Space: 1999** and **The Prisoner**, more bucket list things for me, if I had a bucket list!

"It never stops being slightly surreal that I'm in this and that people love the Eleven. I love the Eleven! He's a fantastic character, a fantastic creation, and that's due to the wonderful minds at Big Finish that invented him and nudged me in the various directions when we first started talking about him as a character and what he would be like. All the team helped with that evolution.

"It's great to work with the Doctors. As the Eleven I've only worked with three so far – Sylvester McCoy, Paul McGann and

Colin – and it's very interesting to see how they deal with the Eleven as they all do it very differently! The Sixth Doctor is quite laid back, he takes it all in his stride and he's very astute. They've all got very different energies and long may it continue.

"I would love to face Tom Baker as the Eleven and record a big box set with him. He's my Doctor!"

"It's great fun playing the character. I look forward to seeing what the writers have got up their sleeves for him next time round..." **VORTEX**

### DOCTOR WHO THE SIXTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES THE ELEVEN

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**THE VERY** first release in **The Early Adventures** range was a story set during season one of television **Doctor Who**. *Domain of the Voord*, a four-part story written by Andrew Smith, marked the first appearance of Terry Nation's wetsuit-clad creations on audio.

Producer David Richardson recalls: "The Voord are monsters that we last saw in the TV episode, *The Keys of Marinus*, yet they have a huge amount of potential for new stories. Terry Nation created a fantastic foe and now Andrew has filled in some fascinating backstory."

Andrew recalls: "It all started with an email from David saying, 'We've got a new range coming up, **The Early Adventures**.' And I was given

a couple of original cast members from the earliest episodes of TV **Doctor Who** – Carole Ann Ford and William Russell – along with the Voord. I thought up a handful of ideas, one of which involved the TARDIS landing on a ship amidst a massive flotilla – loads of boats travelling across an expanse of ocean

## YOU'RE WRITING FOR TWO PEOPLE WHO WERE ACTUALLY THERE, RIGHT AT THE VERY BEGINNING...

ANDREW SMITH

– and we just took it from there.

"I did some research – reading a *Doctor Who Magazine* article by Jonny Morris on *The Keys of Marinus*, and looking at the history of the Voord and where they had appeared in other stories. One was in a 1966 Annual in a story called *The Fishmen of Kandalinga*, and the other was *The World Shapers* in *Doctor Who Magazine* where it was revealed they had turned into the Cybermen. But I decided pretty quickly I would take no notice of that!"

Andrew was delighted to work with the Voord, whose background and genesis were largely undefined. He explains: "*Domain of the Voord*

was great fun to write! The Voord are amazing, although there are a number of questions left unanswered and some contradictions about them in their TV story. For example, what does a Voord look like? They are very striking but one possibility in *The Keys of Marinus* is that they are wearing protective suits in order to cross the acid sea.


"Of course their look is great and I wanted to keep to that, but to do so meant coming up with a rationale for it. So, together with my first pitches, I wrote up a few paragraphs on where I wanted to go with the Voord, for whichever story idea David favoured. And now listeners will learn what it means to be Voord..."

*Vortex* was present at the recording in which one scene was made in two versions describing the Voord as having flippers (as they had on *Marinus*) and then one without – the former version was used.

Andrew admitted there was a real thrill about writing for people who were part of the genesis of **Doctor Who**, saying: "It's been great having William Russell performing the dialogue for Ian and the Doctor, and Carole Ann Ford being Susan and Barbara. It was lovely to meet them in studio – they were fantastic, giving great performances and they were very complimentary about the script. When you are writing something like this tailored for them, it's amazing to think you're writing for two people who were actually there, right at the very beginning when **Doctor Who** first started." **VORTEX**

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DOMAIN OF THE VOORD

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THE FIFTH DOCTOR AND HIS FRIENDS RETURN  
TO CONCLUDE THEIR 2020 STORY ARC...

# LOST AND FOUND

**THE FIFTH** Doctor's adventures were left on a cliffhanger last year when he and his friends separated. And when they finally get back together again, the Doctor has issues to resolve with his companions, Nyssa, Tegan and Marc. In *The Lost Resort* and *Other Stories* out for release this September, three new adventures continue the story arc.

Explaining what happens next, producer Scott Handcock says: "*The Lost Resort* picks up from the end of last year's monthly release *Madquake* where the Doctor and his companions are reunited in

body if not in spirit. It's a lovely, contemplative story that examines the TARDIS crew's new dynamics, as well as confronting them with a ghost from their collective past. And *The Perils of Nellie Bly* and *Nightmare of the Daleks* form a double-bill of two-parters to round off the mini-season that started with Marc's introduction."

*The Lost Resort* by AK Benedict is a four-part adventure which sees the TARDIS materialise on the Soresia – a planetoid with an unusual temporal atmosphere. Home to the Welkin Sanatorium, Soresia seems like an ideal place to recuperate. *The Lost Resort* notably features an

appearance from Adric who died before Marc joined the TARDIS crew.

Scott says: "We always knew when we introduced Marc as a companion that parallels with Adric would be drawn. The brilliant Guy Adams also script edited those early Adric adventures and we both agreed we'd need to draw a line and resolve his unspoken turmoil at some point – and how better than reintroducing Matthew Waterhouse for a guest role alongside the ongoing cast.

"It's sort of how his appearance in the television episode *Time-Flight* ought to have been. Rather than a quick cameo, it's a significant appearance that affects our





l-r: Peter Davison, Janet Fielding, George Watkins, Sarah Sutton and Matthew Waterhouse

heroes and impacts on how they perceive a unique situation.

"We were toying for a while about whether to reveal it or keep it as a surprise, but frankly knowing Adric returns to haunt the Fifth Doctor, Nyssa and Tegan (not to mention Marc) is too intriguing a notion not to tease. And Matthew really cared about getting this appearance right which was so lovely to experience. He could have just delivered Adric's TV persona but Matthew recognised the opportunity to play him a little bit differently. I'd never had the chance to work with Matthew before so it was fascinating to see how he fitted into the crew dynamic."

Writer AK admits: "I love writing within an arc! It gives walls to bounce off and press right up against, to hear what's on the other side. Set in a haunted sanatorium, on a planetoid with an unstable atmosphere, *The Lost Resort* is a story about facing up to the past, even when you're running away from it.

"Creating an adventure for this TARDIS team was a joy. I love this era of the Fifth Doctor and Nyssa is one of my favourite companions of all time. Marc is great to write for as he had to do more than most to examine and philosophise about what it is to be

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AK BENEDICT

human, alive, a hero and someone existing between classifications. That makes him fascinating: the Hamlet of companions.

"But writing for Adric was my absolute highlight! I adored him when I was a child (I think my love of abstract maths comes from Adric in the TV episode *Logopolis!*), and his death haunted me. This story has helped me exorcise the trauma my five-year-old self experienced watching *Earthshock*, and maybe it helped the Doctor, too."

**THE PERILS** of *Nellie Bly* by Sarah Ward sees the TARDIS crew arrive on the RMS *Oceanic*, where they meet notorious real-life journalist Nellie Bly in the final stages of her

around-the-world voyage. Sarah says: "I enjoyed writing for the Fifth Doctor along with Tegan and Nyssa but also with the addition of Marc who is a great character. I'd listened to the audio adventure *Tartarus* so was already immersed in Marc's world and was intrigued by his emerging role.

"Nellie Bly is racing to circumnavigate the globe in less than 80 days but, on board the RMS *Oceanic*, a rival is determined to foil her plans. It's up to the Fifth Doctor and his companions to find the culprit and get Nellie Bly to San Francisco on time. I loved putting the Doctor into a historical event. It's always great to combine history and time travel!"

Concluding the set is *Nightmare of the Daleks* by Martyn Waites, where, deep within a drilling rig on planet XB93, its crew has been suffering nightmares: nightmares of Daleks.

Martyn reveals: "Script editor Guy explained to me what had happened before, what was wanted and whereabouts my story would come in the arc. He gave me a list of things I needed to do (wrap up Marc's storyline, etc.) and things that had already been done, along with plots and settings that had already been used so that I didn't duplicate them.

"And then he said Daleks: it had to contain Daleks! I was asked to do something different with the Daleks and submitted several different ideas... and this was the one we all agreed on. I thought there was a different way to exploit fear and tension from them, especially audibly. So I guess I would describe this two-parter as kind of *Nightmare on Elm Street* – with Daleks..." **VORTEX**

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WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU PUT TWO  
RENEGADE TIME LORDS TOGETHER? THEY . . .

# MISSY BEHAVE

**A GENUINE** delight for Big Finish listeners who've loved the first two *Missy* box sets has been the unexpected rapport between Missy and the Meddling Monk. And because Missy's psychotic approach to life and the Monk's attempts to better his own existence have made for such a salivating combination, Big Finish is giving us more.

Due for release in September, *Missy and the Monk* finds the Master's mischievous female incarnation running amok in three brand new stories, with

a (reluctant) companion of her own in the Monk. Producer David Richardson says: "It was kind of inevitable. After being paired for an episode in the first box set of *Missy* and then for another in the second, we just couldn't resist! The idea of giving Missy and the Monk a whole box set to spar with each other was simply perfection.

"They're such brilliantly mismatched characters, played so sublimely by two actors with impeccable comic skills. I howled with laughter when reading the scripts, and then did so all over

again as Michelle Gomez and Rufus Hound worked their magic on them.

"What could be better? Well, perhaps a nun! Enter Gemma Whelan as the Meddling Nun, returning after her standout turn in *Dalek Universe 1*, adding a delicious extra slice of mayhem to the proceedings. You see, I'm telling you all this and smiling. They just make me so happy!"

Script editor Matt Fitton agrees: "We knew how well Missy and the Monk worked with each other so the plan was that we would finish the second box set with them meeting again, and leave them together at



Rufus  
Hound

the end. They are forced into each other's company and we thought we would see what comes out of that."

**BODY AND** *Souless* by James Goss opens the set. *Stuck with a co-pilot, Missy has taken extreme measures. After all, she only needs the Monk's brain to fly his TARDIS. But when Missy and the bodiless Monk end up on different sides of a planetary war, they may need one another to survive...*

James says: "Isn't it wonderful how Big Finish can sometimes create the most unexpected magic? The first time I heard Missy and the Monk together in John Dorney's script (Henry 8th and Missy playing tennis with sass in *Missy: Series One - Divorced, Beheaded, Regenerated*) it just felt right. And it's an honour to be allowed to continue that. "The Monk thinks he's a villain but, despite all the bloodshed and chaos

DESPITE ALL  
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HIM, HE'S  
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JAMES GOSS

he leaves behind him, he's really just incompetent compared to Missy who clearly manages to succeed without even trying. And it must hurt that he's a villain who really puts the hours in whereas she's the equivalent of that artist who swans in late, drops three spots of ink on an envelope, sells it for £3 million and goes out for a long lunch!"

How much fun can you have with someone utterly amoral and someone who just wants to have a laugh?

James laughs: "I was inspired ('inspired' ha!) by that magical moment in *The 39 Steps* where the hero and heroine can't abide each other and find they're handcuffed together fleeing across the moors from German Spies. It's such a genius piece of dynamic character work you're amazed neither Jane Austen nor Emily Bronte thought of it first.

"And this is essentially a tribute to that. Two people who can't stand each other forced to work together because they're in the middle of a terrible situation where they have to cooperate in order to survive.

"My big thought was the opening image: Missy and the Monk fleeing, all their plans gone awry, the world exploding around them, and the Monk just a brain in Missy's handbag. And trying to keep that pace going

as we march through and at no point falling into the trap of, 'Yes, that's a nice opening image, now let's go back a day and potter towards it.' Never explain the chaos, just keep running through it. It's what Missy would do.

"It's huge fun throughout with a few serious messages. And there's a nice moment where All Is Most Definitely Lost and Missy does the one thing you'd hope she'd never do but she does it anyway. I'm quite pleased with that!"

**THE SECOND** adventure is *War Seed* by Johnny Candon. *Missy takes the Monk to Earth to make a point – she can be nice if she wants. In fact, she can save the planet! While the Monk tries to charm the corporate sharks, Missy makes them a better offer. To supply the ultimate warrior, created in the ultimate war...*

Johnny – an EastEnders writer introduced to Big Finish by fellow soap scribe and Big Finish regular Lisa McMullin – says: "I got an email from Matt Fitton asking if I'd be interested in writing for Missy, and I said I'd love to. Actually I nearly fell off my chair! So it's all down to Lisa and lovely Matt!"

"Because I'd not written for Big Finish before, Matt sent me a sample of outlines showing me what was and wasn't required, and a bunch of scripts so I could see the format. I was reading James Goss, reading Lisa, and loads of things that hadn't been recorded – which was so exciting for me as a fan!"

"I was asked to pitch an idea and I came up with three and Matt picked one. We then banded it backwards and forwards. The initial idea of *War Seed* was in there but it changed location and time. It was originally set in World War I but I think there was something else coming up that was already set then."

Johnny – who has also written a column in *Doctor Who Magazine* – continues: "I've been a fan of *Doctor Who* for years. When I found out Michelle was going to be in the television series, I was delighted – I thought she would be so good. And when you find out she's the Master/Missy, you just know she's going to be magnificent. I love her! When I was writing *War*

*Seed*, I could hear exactly what she'd say and what she wouldn't.

"I've known Rufus for a long time. I do stand-up comedy as well, and I think his *Monk* is just excellent. His relationship with Missy is so lovely. You can almost be quite sitcom with them as a pair, bouncing off each other, without taking it into the realm of being too ridiculous. Missy has that underlying edge of being evil and a complete psychopath, and it's great playing around that.



"It's really hard to sum up the plot without spoilers! Missy and the *Monk* encounter someone from her past in New York and she decides to help them out of a sticky situation. I can't say who it is, what the situation is or why Missy helps them, without giving at all away! I just hope it's exciting!"

"Getting to write this was an absolute highlight. Every now and again, when I was typing the word 'MISSY', I realised Michelle Gomez was going to be saying my words. And eventually you get a real CD with your name on it that you can hold in your hand, I can't wait!"

**TWO MONKS**, *One Mistress* by James Kettle concludes the set. *On the trail of some weapons-grade plutonium, Missy and the Monk visit Renaissance Italy and the house of an elderly Borgia. But someone else is en route to the Tuscan villa with designs on the old man's*



MISSY DOES THE  
ONE THING YOU'D  
HOPE SHE'D NEVER  
DO BUT SHE DOES  
IT ANYWAY. I'M  
QUITE PLEASED  
WITH THAT!

JAMES GOSS





James  
Smillie

treasures. Someone the Monk will soon know very well...

Matt says: "We bring back the (female) Monk we met in **Dalek Universe 1** played by Gemma Whelan. Gemma and Rufus have both been in the stage play *One Man, Two Guvvners*, and we kind of bounce off that dynamic in *Two Monks, One Mistress*."

Speaking of his brief from Matt, James says: "Only that Missy and the Monk would be arriving together at the beginning and that I needed to leave them in a certain place at the end. Oh, and could there be two Monks, which is rather an integral part of the whole thing!"

"The setting and the beats of the story were largely devised in a chilly 45 minute lockdown walk in the hills above Folkestone where naturally my mind immediately turned to sun-dappled Renaissance

Italy. One of the things about good script editing (speaking as a bad script editor – I always think too much about how I'd have done it rather than how the writer has!) is that you listen first and redirect later."

When *Vortex* asks how exciting it is to write for the Missy/Monk pairing, James says: "Well, there are two 'pairings' in this story – one of which is a case of opposites sparking off each other, one of which isn't really a case of opposites at all!"

"In terms of Missy and the Monk, there's great fun to be had in mixing up characters from almost the furthest extremes of the show's history, and finding what a strong and perhaps surprising connection there is between Dennis Spooner and Steven Moffat's approach to injecting intelligent comedy

**I WAS READING JAMES GOSS, READING LISA, AND LOADS OF THINGS THAT HADN'T BEEN RECORDED — WHICH WAS SO EXCITING FOR ME AS A FAN!**

JOHNNY CANDON

into the show. In terms of the actors, Michelle, Rufus and Gemma are all sublimely talented comic actors who can time a gag like virtuosos so that took some of the pressure off."


Actor Gemma tells *Vortex*: "I was just thrilled by the reaction to the Nun in **Dalek Universe 1** – it's so nice to hear that people are enjoying the recordings. The scripts are brilliant and the way she's written is so informative as to how I play the character, so it's a great team effort."

"Bringing her back in *Missy and the Monk* has been enormous fun because I loved playing her so much last time – she's such a great character to put all sorts of lovely inflection into, and she can get away with anything. I really have relished bringing her back."

James adds: "I think there are some scripts that seem like a pitched battle to get right and some that just flow out. That doesn't always correlate to the quality of the finished product but in this case I really enjoyed the experience of writing, and still really liked the script when I re-read it recently!" **VORTEX**

**MISSY: VOLUME 3**  
MISSY AND THE MONK

- RELEASED: SEPTEMBER 2021
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# THE POWER OF FOUR

THE ELEVENTH DOCTOR'S ERA ON AUDIO OPENS UP AS THE RANGE EXPANDS INTO FULL-CAST ADVENTURES AND A QUARTET OF NEW STORIES STARRING JACOB DUDMAN...

**THE ELEVENTH Doctor Chronicles** returns this September with four new stories, but there's a difference this time. *Volume Two*, which again stars the acclaimed Jacob Dudman in Matt Smith's role, is now full-cast audio drama rather than being partly narrated.

Producer Alfie Shaw says of the new format: "It has opened up the types of stories we can tell with the Eleventh Doctor. We now have the opportunity to create a new era for this incarnation, as Big Finish has done so successfully with other iterations of the Doctor."

Looking at the opening adventure, Alfie says: "*The Evolving Dead* is a great sci-fi twist on the zombie genre. **Doctor Who** has a history of taking classic horror monsters and adapting them in new and interesting ways. *The Evolving Dead* continues that tradition and does some great character work to boot!"

Writer Doris V Sutherland says: "I was offered the choice between creating a Tenth Doctor or Eleventh

Doctor story, and I went with the Eleventh because his era fits my sensibilities a little more. I'm a horror writer at heart, so I appreciate that Hammer-Horror-for-the-21st-century vibe that comes with the Eleventh Doctor. The opportunity to write a story harking back to that era is right up my alley!

"*The Evolving Dead* takes place on a space station designed to further humanity's evolution, but things have started going wrong. One: people are dying. Two: people are still evolving even after they've died..."

"**Doctor Who** has featured a number of zombie-like creatures over the decades but the series has never really done a 'zombie story' in the same way that the television



Jacob  
Dudman

episode *Tooth and Claw* is a werewolf story or *Vampires of Venice* is a vampire story. *The Evolving Dead* fills that gap. I was influenced by past masters of the genre from George A Romero (of course!) to A Hyatt Verrill (a lesser-known horror writer of the 1920s) and I was also keen to give fans something new. As the title suggests, these are evolved zombies..."

#### DESCRIBING THE

second tale, Alfie says: "Daniel Blythe's *The Day Before They Came* is a surprisingly grounded tale set in an off-season seaside town. The Eleventh Doctor has so many facets. He can be incredibly childish at times, and then he has moments when he's one of the darkest Doctors. In this story, Dan highlights so many aspects of the Doctor's character, in particular his reflective side."

Writer Dan says: "It's very exciting because Matt Smith is one of the Doctors I watched as an adult but with children who were not as young as they had been during the Christopher Eccleston and David Tennant years. So I found myself assessing Matt's episodes on their own terms rather than in terms of how much my children were enjoying them."

"I didn't set out particularly to write the kind of story that would fit in the Eleventh Doctor's era on TV. I just wanted to get the feel of his character right and then create an adventure that worked for me. It's the story of an alien invasion where the actual invasion isn't really the main thing! In a shabby seaside town called Bayview, the Doctor meets Kayla Worthington who has, let's say, more to her than meets the eye..."

"This happens in one of the Eleventh Doctor's many travels off on his own and he's intrigued by a puzzle, as ever. I love the run-down seaside town setting and I've used it in two of my novels, *The Cut* and *Shadow Runners*. There's something fascinating about these places which come alive in the summer, with the whirl of fairgrounds and the shouts of children, with people eating ice-creams in the blazing sun – well, if you're lucky! But then, out of season, they are hanging grimly on to what entertainment they can offer with the cafes desperate for trade, the fairground rides creaking in the wind and the echoing arcades almost empty."

"So I hope it is an entertaining story. It's a story within a limited setting and just a few fun characters, not a big thunderous



Jacob  
Dudman

epic. A quiet, thoughtful story with a couple of epic moments.”

**THE THIRD** story in the set is *The Melting Pot* by Christopher Cooper, and Alfie reveals: “*The Melting Pot* taps into the subject of belief which is one of the main themes that runs through the Eleventh Doctor’s TV run. Chris has done such a fantastic job with the world-building in this one. It feels so alien yet completely relatable.”

Chris says: “This was an incredible opportunity. I’ve previously written a Big Finish story for Sylvester McCoy so it’s been great to have a crack at writing a Doctor from the modern era. And I love the Eleventh Doctor. I love his warmth and sense of wonder, tempered by that steely determination to make things better. He exemplifies what I love about both the Doctor and the series as a whole.”

“I’ve always liked the idea of the Doctor revisiting somewhere he’s been before but finding the place has changed beyond recognition. Not because of anything he did – he’d only popped by for lunch one time – but something serious

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ALFIE SHAW

happened between those visits to transform the planet from paradise to purgatory. The Doctor sets out to find out why, although of course he never interferes.”

Chris adds: “It’s a plot that I’d originally sketched out, perhaps a decade ago, inspired by a BBC documentary that explored some really unpleasant truths about relatively recent European history.

I don’t want to give too much away but there’s definitely a resonance with how our past is, quite rightly, being reevaluated today.”

**OF THE** concluding story, Alfie says: “*A Tragical History* sees the Doctor visiting an old prison. It’s a setting we haven’t seen much of in the history of the show, and the way Tessa North plays with that setting and the themes that come with it, make a really interesting story.”

Writer Tessa tells *Vortex*: “Writing for the Eleventh Doctor was brilliant. I remember not being sure what to expect with him on TV, but I was a fan within about five seconds of him appearing! I rewatched some of his episodes as prep for this and I immediately felt that excitement again. The way he turns on a dime and can project deadly seriousness and humour all at once is so great.”

“*A Tragical History* is a historical adventure set in a debtors’ prison in the 18th century. The prisoners are desperate to get away from their horrific conditions, and then something appears which seems to offer them a way out... but it’s not what it appears to be (obviously!).”

“I really like Lady Dora Swift, the prison reformer. Originally the character in that position was the artist William Hogarth but the script didn’t work with him in it, so in came Dora. She’s pretty unflappable and she’s not really fazed by the Doctor and his technology. She’s very no-nonsense. I can’t wait to hear how she sounds!”

Alfie concludes that his set highlight was working with Jacob Dudman: “It’s always just amazing watching Jake perform, and he’s such a wonderful person. He’s everything you could want from a leading man and I love working with him.” **VORTEX**

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VOLUME 2

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# VORTEX MAIL



## CARLEY CLASS

I've just finished listening to the first volume of **The War Doctor Begins** [*Forged in Fire*] and I just had to drop you a line to say it was absolutely brilliant. Jonathon Carley was superb as the War Doctor, I genuinely thought I was listening to Sir John [Hurt] at times. It was a note perfect performance and far more than just an "impression". Recasting is a delicate matter but this succeeds 100 percent. Jonathon was helped by some exciting writing – I think Andrew Smith's *The Shadow Squad* was my favourite of the set. An exciting war story with great science fiction ideas that didn't get too timey-wimey. I look forward to the next volume very much!

DAVID STEEL

*Nick: Thank you, David. We're so proud of what Jonathon has achieved, which in no small part is also due to the beautiful and sensitive way Louise Jameson directed him.*

## TRIPPING OVER

I'm a massive fan of the **Short Trips** range and I'm a bit concerned over the fact that the most recent batch of **Rarities** was released two years ago. Are there any plans to release the rest of those subscriber **Short Trips**? I'd hate it if there are all these great stories I can't get a hold of at all! Secondly, are there any plans to release the older prose **Short Trips** collections as digital releases somewhere? Not only can I not afford to pay about 80 bucks per secondhand book, but I find

reading on my Kindle a lot more convenient than physical ones.

## DYLAN CARROLL

*Nick: Dylan, I'm afraid that we no longer have a licence to release Doctor Who books in any form – and there are currently no plans to release any more Rarities.*

## PONDERING PACKAGING

I am a physical media enthusiast but also something of an environmentalist and squaring these two away is challenging. I know downloads are the sensible option but have or would Big Finish consider switching physical releases to a digipack format or something that reduces the amount of plastic used?

## DAN

*Nick: That's a really good point, Dan. We are constantly balancing options of cost, environmental concerns and value – the trend is definitely away from physical media in terms of purchasing patterns. We have no plans to stop pressing CDs at the moment though they are (because of factors beyond our control) getting more and more expensive. There will be a lot of tricky decisions to navigate through over the next few years but our central motivation is always to do the best we can for as many customers as possible.*

## SEVENTH SETS

Have there been any thoughts about doing a set with Raine or Mags as their stories were never fully told, and also are there any thoughts about an Ace spin-off? I would love to hear more Ace in the present day as *Dark Universe* and *In Remembrance* were two brilliant stories.

## TANYA CASEY

*Nick: Bizarrely, I don't think we've considered any of those things recently! But they are fabulous ideas that we'll certainly keep in mind, Tanya.* **VORTEX**



# CLONE ON THE RANGE

**HOT ON THE HEELS OF THE RECENT AVALON BOX SETS, WE HAVE MORE FROM THE WORLDS OF BLAKE'S 7...**

**BIG FINISH** is expanding the worlds of **Blake's 7** as some familiar faces take centre stage in a new series of full-cast audio adventures. Sadly in recent years we have lost star actors Gareth Thomas, Paul Darrow and Jacqueline Pearce, but Big Finish

is now giving us a look at the lives of other characters from the series.

Three box sets and tie-in audio novels are due to be released over 2021 and 2022, featuring beloved cast members reprising their original television roles including Michael Keating, Sally Knyvette, Jan Chappell, Stephen Greif, Brian Croucher – and Colin Baker!

The first release available this September is *The Clone Masters* written by Tim Foley. Producer David Richardson tells *Vortex*: "I've had this in my mind for nine years! When we first started making **Blake's 7** at Big Finish, I was hoping to do a series of box sets that centred on characters

originally created for the series by Chris Boucher. And now, here we are!

*"The Clone Masters* explores that enigmatic race which was introduced in the brilliant Season B television episode, *Weapon*. We have Jenna and Cally on a mission together. We have the return of Travis who comes face to face with... another Travis! (Fear not, it's not down to time travel and it all makes sense within the series story world!). And we have Hinton, a psychostrategist who... ah, but that's for later. It might have taken nine years but it's been worth the wait!"

Script editor Peter Anghelides adds: "I've been fortunate to write **Blake's 7** audios for Big Finish





## THE RULE BOOK

THIS SEPTEMBER WE'VE TWO MORE EXCITING **BLAKE'S 7** RELEASES: *THE CLONE MASTERS* AUDIO DRAMA AND A FULL-LENGTH TIE-IN AUDIOBOOK *THE RULE OF DEATH* WRITTEN BY TREVOR BAXENDALE.

**TREVOR SAYS:** "I was asked if I'd like to create another **Blake's 7** audiobook. I hadn't had an easy time writing *Outlaw* and so I was a bit wary – writing exclusively for an audiobook feels different to writing for a physical book, and I wasn't sure if I was doing the format justice.

"But then I thought this was an opportunity to have another go. And then when I was told that the audiobook was going to tie in to a new series of audio adventures using Chris Boucher's creations from the second television season (Series B), namely the *Terra Nostra* and the *Clone Masters*, I realised I absolutely had to do it!

"I chose to do the *Clone Masters* story because I thought it offered scope for a type of adventure I hadn't

attempted before. *The Rule of Death* goes back to the character of Rashel, the slave girl from the Series B episode *Weapon*, who was left on the unnamed planet with the clone copy of Blake. What happened to them? Did they live happily ever after? Well, it's **Blake's 7**, so of course not! In *The Rule of Death* I explore what does happen to them – and how they need to reach out to the original Blake and a renegade faction of the *Clone Masters* for help when things start to go wrong.

"And just how wrong do things go? Very! Especially as they involve the discredited psychostrategist Carnell (also from *Weapon*), a hired assassin known only as the *Headman*, an intergalactic bank heist and a flotilla of Federation destructor ships..." **VORTEX**

before, including the first full-cast one, and I've also had some input on the tie-in novels to help with continuity. As script editor of these three adventures plus the stories in the two subsequent box sets, I've been able to provide a framework based on events and concepts from the TV series. What a treat! It's very satisfying when our smart writers spot the potential and bring their own imagination and creativity to the brief. And it's very energising to collaborate with them on their stories.

"In that brief scene in TV Season B's *Weapon* we get hints and suggestions about the power and potential of the *Clone Masters*. On the face of it, it's one character in one simple set providing the Blake



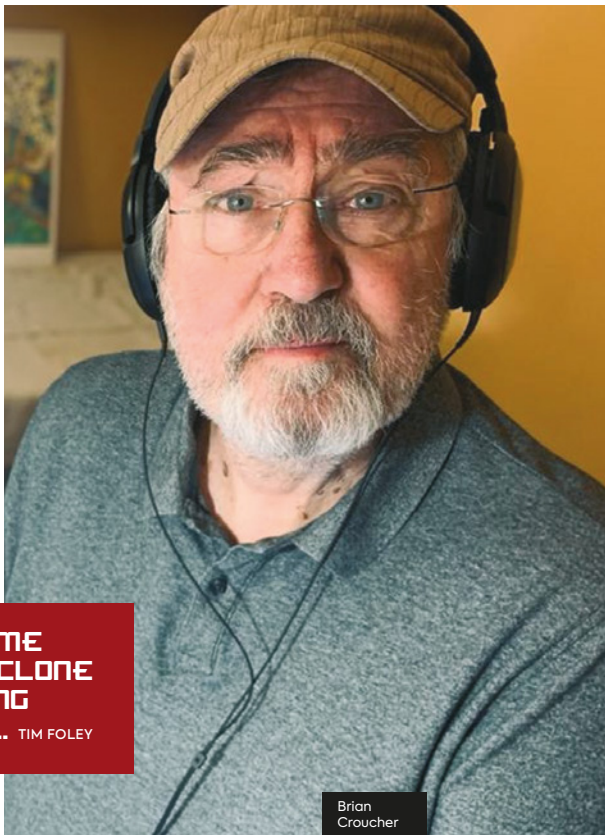
Jan Chappell

clone as a plot device for that story. But the dialogue cleverly hints at a depth to their unnamed world, social structure and beliefs. They're on their best behaviour in that ceremonial sequence, and you also see how deferential the Federation needs to be with them. Then, in TV Season C when the *Clone Masters* are gone after the galactic war, you understand something of the vacuum that was created by the time of *Children of Auron*. Tim has done a great job spinning those things, and more, into an absorbing trilogy."

### THE CLONE Masters

comprises three adventures: *Separation*, *The Rule of Life* and *The Conclave*. Writer Tim says: "I was given a great deal of freedom to choose which aspects of the Clone Masters I would like to explore. I was asked to write three stories with three different 'feels' rather than one big long story. Having said that we worked out a way to cross-pollinate the stories and have emotional through-lines across the three episodes. There has certainly been a lot to pack in. We bounce across different planets and play around with the timeline, we've got a mystery about a certain shadowy figure, 'Lara K', and we get to answer some questions about the Clone Masters whilst asking new ones of our own..."

"They're three different takes on what it means to be and have a clone. *Separation* sees Cally and Jenna team up on a spooky planet to investigate the claims of Jenna's



Brian Croucher

WE GET TO ANSWER SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CLONE MASTERS WHILST ASKING NEW ONES OF OUR OWN... TIM FOLEY

old associate, Hinton (a fantastic character who'll be rocking up in future box sets). *The Rule of Life* sees the two Travises (Travii?) together at last, and let me tell you that was a hoot to write! And *The Conclave* is our grand conclusion where we'll see the Clone Masters in full swing with all sorts of characters and themes from the previous two episodes."

Tim was delighted to be given the chance to create his own worlds across the three stories.

He admits it was: "So satisfying! We had a good hook – a power struggle on the world of the Clone Masters – and it was very enjoyable tracing out the ripples across the cosmos. I feel really lucky that David and Peter gave me such free rein to explore this little corner of the **Blake's 7** universe over an entire box set. It's allowed for all sorts of world building and fun concepts, and it's really given the



Sally Knyvette

characters room to breathe. I hope it's something that fans both new and old will find rewarding."

Peter concludes: "When you read a script that's really working, you already have the final thing in your mind's ear. And then listening to the studio recording gives you a tantalising tease of the performances – but nothing beats hearing the finished work. Tim and I talked about differentiating soundscapes as well as distinctive themes for each of the three stories, and I'm really looking forward to hearing them." **VORTEX**

### THE WORLDS OF BLAKE'S 7 THE CLONE MASTERS

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A chrome-covered clone am I!"

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THE WORLDS OF BLAKE'S 7  
*The Clone Masters* (BOX SET)

THE WORLDS OF BLAKE'S 7  
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THE **BIG FINISH** MAGAZINE

# VORTEX



# MISSY

## AND THE MONK

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU PUT TWO RENEGADE  
TIME LORDS TOGETHER, AND ADD A NUN?

**ALSO INSIDE**



### **DOCTOR WHO**

**THE ELEVEN IS BACK** – and this time,  
he's brought a companion with him...

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AUGUST 2021  
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