

THE **BIG FINISH** MAGAZINE

VORTEX

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DOCTOR WHO OLD FRIENDS

THE NINTH DOCTOR MEETS
BRIGADIER ALISTAIR GORDON
LETHBRIDGE-STEWART

ALSO INSIDE

SPACE: 1999 EARTHBOUND

THE CREW OF THE *EAGLE 1* ARE HEADING
BACK TO MOONBASE ALPHA...





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THE AVENGERS

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JOHN STEED and Emma Peel face more diabolical masterminds in **The Avengers – The Comic Strip Adaptations Volume Six**.

ADAPTED FROM stories which were first published in *TV Comic*, Big Finish offers an escape in time, back to the 1960s. Julian Wadham reprises his role as John Steed, a part he first took on in 2014 in adaptations of the **Lost Stories** broadcast in 1961. And Olivia Poulet continues to play Mrs Emma Peel with her usual elan.

The epic triumverate of new tales are *Seven Deadly... Assassins* by Roland Moore, *Stand and Deliver* by Sarah Grochala and *You Won't Believe Your Eyes* by John Dorney. Just how will Steed and Mrs Peel survive a septuplet of killers, highwaymen and dinosaurs in the English countryside? **VORTEX**

Steed and Tara King are on the way too in Volume Seven!

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EDITORIAL

THERE'S SOMETHING rather appropriate about the title of the latest **The Ninth Doctor Adventures** box set title – *Old Friends*. To me it feels like most of the Big Finish releases are exactly that, meetings with our old friends. We've got the Ninth Doctor himself meeting Brigadier Sir Alistair Lethbridge-Stewart. I can't wait to hear how the pair engage and what kind of relationship they have, especially as two old soldiers.

We've got Rory Williams in his second **The Lone Centurion** box set, this time in Camelot. Rory's one of my favourite 21st century **Doctor Who** characters. He is, perhaps, the most *every man* type of person we've met, who gets swept up in adventures with the Doctor through Amy Pond.

In **The Third Doctor Adventures** we've got the Doctor, Liz Shaw and the Brigadier (again) meeting up with some other old friends of ours – the Second Doctor and Jamie.

And in **Space: 1999** we're onto the second volume, *Earthbound*, as we continue to get to know John Koenig, Helena Russell and the rest of the crew of Moombase Alpha. They're not quite friends, yet, but a group thrown together in adversity.

And finally we're off to see how Abby and Jenny are coping in the 1990s in **Survivors** as the events of *New Dawn* come to a conclusion.

Given the past couple of years there's something very reassuring about having these familiar voices around us. Long may our friendships endure! **VORTEX**

Kenny

A LOT OF GOING BACK AND FORTH FOR NO REALLY GOOD REASON.



FRIENDS REUNITED

THE NINTH

Doctor's Adventures have so far seen the Doctor rediscovering his lust for life after the traumas of his previous incarnation.

He's been having all-new encounters – bar his run in with a lone Cyberman – but now in *Old Friends* he finally meets a familiar face or two. Producer David Richardson says: “It’s season finale time! We end our first run of the Ninth Doctor in a suitably epic way: a battle for the Earth, an unstoppable enemy... and old friends.

“I wanted to include the Brigadier in this run because he never got to meet any of the modern Doctors on

screen and frankly he deserves to. So here we have the retired Brigadier, played impeccably by Jon Culshaw, doing consolation work for UNIT and finding himself standing shoulder to shoulder with his oldest friend.

“So we already had the UNIT connection in place and then Warren Brown dropped me a text, having seen the announcement that we were making Ninth Doctor audios, asking if there was any chance he might be able to act with Christopher Eccleston. And I leaped at the opportunity.

We’re so lucky to work with Warren at Big Finish, and pairing the Doctor and Sam Bishop was irresistible: it

meant we could go back and look at Sam’s origin story. What made him the man we know today in our **UNIT** series and *Lady Christina*?”

THE FIRST

story of the set is *Fond Farewell* by David K Barnes. *Fond Farewell* is the intergalactic funeral parlour with a difference: the deceased can attend their own wake. Invited by celebrated naturalist Flynn Beckett to attend his own memorial, the Doctor finds Flynn not quite the man he was. But who wants to erase a dead man’s memories?

David says: “I was a year away from doing my A Levels when **Doctor**



Above (l-r), Warren Brown and Christopher Eccleston

Who came back to our screens. At school I kept my **Who** love a secret so I wouldn't make myself a target for passing bullies. But then the show returned and became a massive hit! Nobody can deny the enormous impact that Chris made in that role. I loved him. The energy, the attitude, the big grin full of teeth. We didn't really have any money growing up and it meant so much to have a Doctor who wasn't doing the frock coats and pocket watches thing.

For the first time he was a Doctor I almost believed I could bump into myself on the streets of my home town. Being the Doctor wasn't about how expensive your clothes were; it was a state of mind and action!

"Matt Fitton asked me to pitch a few ideas and the one that got the thumbs up was 'an intergalactic funeral parlour that allows you to attend your own funeral.' I was working on the last season of a sitcom all about funerals called **Wooden Overcoats** so perhaps I didn't have to look too far for inspiration! I associate the

IT MEANT SO MUCH TO HAVE A DOCTOR WHO WASN'T DOING THE FROCK COATS AND POCKET WATCHES THING.

DAVID K BARNES

Ninth Doctor with feelings of loss and, though I was asked not to pull on the Time War thread too much, the funeral setting seemed appropriate.

"The Doctor has been invited to a funeral at the Fond Farewell funerary institute but the deceased is walking around and welcoming his own guests! Furthermore, he doesn't know who the Doctor is which is odd because he invited him to the funeral in the first place!

"I got to thinking about what sort of people would want to attend their own funerals and whether that

technology would be a blessing or a curse for the loved ones left behind. What – and who – is a funeral really for? And I also wanted to poke at the idea of 'speaking ill of the dead' especially with public figures. How do we shape, and sometimes distort, our memory of the deceased because it's our only way of coping?"

Director Helen Goldwyn says: "It's a brilliant idea and when I read it I was quite jealous that I hadn't come up with such a great concept! It's something we can all relate to, yearning for one last meeting with a loved one. It's actually a fun script with hijinks and deception. And there are aliens. The whole concept of someone attending their own funeral is such an amazing thing to imagine – what would you want people to say about you at your own funeral?"

Writer David adds: "It's all juicy thematic stuff and letting the bull-in-a-china-shop Ninth Doctor tackle the issues seemed too good an opportunity to miss."

THE SECOND story is a two-parter by Roy Gill. Set in Edinburgh it continues the theme of the Ninth Doctor in Scotland as established over the previous two box sets. In *Way of the Burryman* and *The Forth Generation*, young Sam Bishop is at a crossroads with girlfriend Fiona (Elinor Lawless) where she wants to stay in Scotland but he wants to travel the world. Amid the annual Burryman celebrations, the Brigadier is called in as an advisor as there has been a haunting at a military installation

near the Forth Railway Bridge. And then the Doctor arrives.

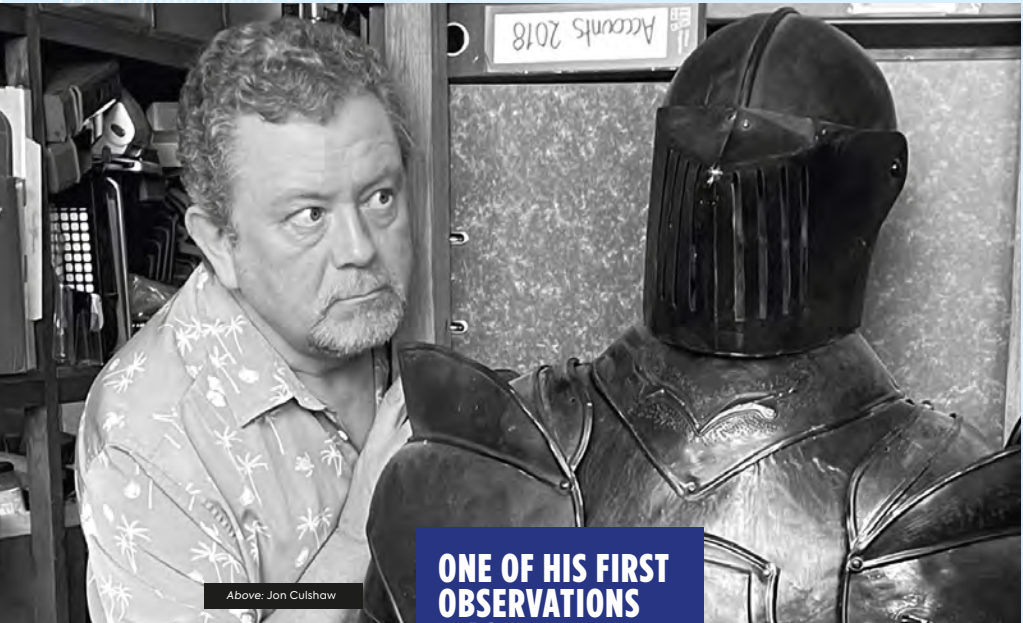
Roy admitted that writing for the Ninth Doctor was: "Very exciting and a huge responsibility. Like so many other fans I adored the 2005 television season and had always hoped we might hear more from Chris. It's clear he's really invested in the Doctor and is excited about where he can now take the character. It's an absolute privilege to be part of the process.

material in order to find out about the process of construction and how it had been innovative in its day. I wanted to acknowledge what an epic task it had been and to recognise the danger of that process and the skill of the Briggers concerned. One of the characters in the story, Fiona McCall, is very passionate about local history – and that passion in turn intrigues the Doctor..."

Fiona's other half is, of course, Sam Bishop played by Warren. Roy

a new and perhaps slightly more vulnerable side to his character..."

How did Roy find writing for the Brigadier and having the old soldier meet this Doctor who's a war veteran himself? Roy says: "I was aware that Chris doesn't want to lean too heavily into the traumatised side of his Doctor in these new episodes preferring to look forward, and that informed a lot of how I wrote their relationship. The Doctor and the Brigadier have this incredible shared



Above: Jon Culshaw

ONE OF HIS FIRST OBSERVATIONS WAS 'THE DOCTOR HAS TWO HEARTS SO THAT'S TWICE THE LOVE'.

JON CULSHAW

"The story is set in and around South Queensferry and on several islands in the Forth. I've been back and forth (no pun intended!) over the Forth Rail Bridge numerous times, especially from growing up on one side of the Forth with my gran and cousins on the other. I married my husband, Russ, in the registry office in South Queensferry in direct view of the bridge so it's fair to say it's a landscape I'm very fond of and familiar with!

"The bridge is an incredible, iconic bit of architecture and engineering, over a hundred years old and still in daily use. I dug into a fair amount of documentary and historical

reveals: "These are very early days for Sam. I dug back into the **UNIT** New Series episodes for hints of backstory and also watched a fair chunk of Warren's TV work so I really felt I had his voice in my head. He had a great rapport with Chris in the studio. **UNIT** listeners might discover

history, which they acknowledge, though sometimes the Doctor might pretend to have less memory of those events than he really has..."

"But there's a very deep connection there and I think the moments when that shared experience of conflict emerge and we realise how it has changed their outlook over time are among my favourites. I was lucky enough to be able to hear some of the studio sessions in progress and Jon Culshaw and Chris just played them so beautifully, with emotion just below the surface..."

Jon, playing the Brigadier, says: "To work with Chris was simply fantastic. He brings such an immediacy, such a



**I'VE SEEN
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GUY COVERED
HEAD TO TOE IN
GREEN STICKY
BURRS, HE LOOKS
SO ALIEN AND
STRANGE...**

ROY GILL

force, such a truth and I think that's one of the reasons why he's so loved as the Doctor - his sense of truth. Look at how he reads the character - one of his first observations was 'the Doctor has two hearts so that's twice the love'. And having emerged from a Time War and all the trauma that would bring, is one of his survival techniques is to give all of his energy to the present. The Doctor is collecting new experiences and staying in the moment is a way of keeping his mind straight.

"What really intrigued me about this story was how the Brigadier would feel about the Ninth Doctor, with the sense of what he's been through. I think that the Brigadier

Above: Elinor Lawless
Below: A Burryman



can pick up on something the Doctor has experienced, something utterly cataclysmic that he can't talk about. And the Brigadier would have great respect for him. An old soldier can recognise those who know first hand that times of war are utterly traumatic. And

the Doctor's great strength but haunted fortitude which only those who have experienced war at its most extreme can pick up on. That makes it a fascinating sensibility."

Helen adds: "We've got Warren back as Sam Bishop giving us his brilliant performance and we've got the fabulous Jon on marvellous form as ever. Jon wants it to be the best it can possibly be and is very supportive of everyone else. He's a wonderful cast member to have around."

And then, of course, there is the titular Burryman... Roy reveals: "The Burryman is a wonderful bit of local folklore ritual, the precise origins of which are a mystery. His walk round the town is an annual event which always draws crowds of locals and tourists. Whenever I've seen pictures of this guy covered head to toe in green sticky burrs, he looks so alien and strange - a real bit of living folk horror - that I thought it ideal he should make his way into a **Doctor Who** story. But how his influence is felt... that's another mystery."

Helen adds: "This was recorded remotely but by this point Chris and I had got to know each other and had a bit of a dynamic going with a little bit of teasing and banter back and forth. And that's made it all more fun for everyone else. We really got into a rhythm of making it work brilliantly and it's been a delight hearing him play the Doctor, seizing upon it and bringing such conviction and pleasure to it. It's just a real privilege to be around that.

"Chris is such a funny guy, a real comedian, and he makes us all howl with laughter. He's got great humour in him and tells really funny stories." **VORTEX**

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THE THIRD DOCTOR IS BACK – AND HE’S NOT ALONE...

TWO THIRDS

BIG FINISH is always doing its best to recreate past eras of Doctor Who whether by capturing themes of the period of the original television broadcast or using incidental music along with sound effects and moods that are evocative of the time.

Previous volumes of **The Third Doctor Adventures** have been two or four-part stories but volume nine is a new seven-part story in keeping with television episodes *Doctor Who and the Silurians*, *The Ambassadors of Death* and *Inferno*.

Nicholas Briggs has written and directed *The Annihilators*. *Vortex* asks him what it was like to write a full seven-part story for the Third Doctor played by Tim Treloar, with

Daisy Ashford as Liz Shaw and Jon Culshaw as Brigadier Lethbridge-Stewart? Nick confirms: "It was really exciting. I think the most thrilling part of my job at Big Finish is trying to capture the spirit and feel of a particular era of **Doctor Who** that is special for me. Being 60 now my special times are the 1960s and 70s. I was planning to make this a six-part story because I was thinking about what would fit practically on a CD. But when I was chatting about it with Sue Cowley (who freelances for Big Finish) and she said, 'If it's in TV season seven, it has to be a seven-parter!' And I just replied, 'Yes, it does!'"

As someone used to writing the more traditional four-part stories,

Nick admits that he enjoyed creating a story of a different length: "It was really interesting because essentially you're using an imperfect structure. As all we fans know, the TV series did seven-parters to make the budgets stretch further, to give them fewer 'first nights' and new set-ups.

"And those long stories ended up being packed with a lot of going back and forth for no really good reason. Or they had overlong sequences of events like all that messing around with the convoy in *Ambassadors of Death*. Don't get me wrong, I actually love all that stuff but viewed dispassionately it could be seen as perhaps a bit lame and pedestrian.

"Where they work better is when they have an extra injection of plot.



Above (l-r):
Karen Archer, Tim Treloar
and Daisy Ashbrook

seven **Doctor Who** story with the Doctor investigating a seemingly nonsensical accident that might be the result of gangland violence. But there's an alien twist. There are creatures hiding on Earth, each with a secret agenda relating to matters of galactic ecology."

THE REAL surprise with *The Annihilators* is the appearance of the Second Doctor and Jamie. Frazer Hines, who plays Jamie, has previously also played Patrick Troughton's role but that part is being taken on in these adventures by Patrick's son Michael. And Michael will also play the part of the Doctor in the forthcoming **The Second Doctor Adventures**.

Nick says: "This was my extra bit of the plot to keep the excitement



Above: Frazer Hines

**INEXPLICABLY,
THE SECOND
DOCTOR AND A
MUCH OLDER
VERSION OF
JAMIE TURN
UP. WHY ARE
THEY THERE?
HOW DID THIS
HAPPEN?
WILL WE
EVER KNOW?**

NICHOLAS BRIGGS

In *Doctor Who* and *the Silurians* they had the plague and in *Inferno* they had the alternative reality to go to. So I knew that I'd have to add something extra into this.

"For the structuring and pace of *The Annihilators*, I wanted to give it the feel of a police procedural. It's kind of **Line of Duty** 1970s style – with monsters! So rather than the Doctor jumping to conclusions I had him working

hard to make sense of things. He wants to examine a body in the morgue to get vital proof. He wants to set up a gizmo to find out where some radiation is coming from. That sort of thing. In a four- or two-parter he'd just leap over all that with pronouncements. Here, I have him and his friends do all the leg-work, as it were."

How would Nick sum up the plot? He explains: "It's a very TV season

across the seven episodes. Right in the middle, inexplicably, the Second Doctor and a much older version of Jamie turn up. Why are they there? How did this happen? Will we ever know?

"It's also a throw-forward to our new **The Second Doctor Adventures** range. I think it really brings a lovely interaction into the story and I wanted our listeners to get an early audio listen of Michael



Above: Nicholas Briggs

Troughton in his father's role. **The Second Doctor Adventures** don't start until August but I thought that was far too long for everyone to wait."

SPEAKING TO *Vortex*, Michael says: "When Big Finish phoned up out of the blue and said, 'How would you feel about playing your dad?', I sort of had to think about it. I said to myself, 'Well, it would be a really fun thing to try and do,' and I knew I wouldn't recreate his voice perfectly but I could give it the kind of emotional fun character that he gave, so it's a mix of myself and Dad, really."

"We've only recorded one story, the introductory one so far with another few to do – hopefully more if listeners enjoy them!"

Nick adds: "I've had it in mind to have Michael play the Second Doctor for ages. He has a lightness of touch and I knew he'd studied his father's work a lot for the book he wrote about him. Also, I've worked with Michael quite a bit and chatted with him a lot at conventions and have found him to be

such a delightful human being. Always full of cheer and a really great actor.

"I've always been an admirer of Frazer too. And here he gives what I believe to be his best performance ever. He really did some great emotional stuff in this story. Frazer is such a brilliant and accomplished actor. He's also a much loved part of the **Doctor Who** furniture so we think we know what to expect from him. But here, he really pulls the stops out. Such fun."

HAVING RESEARCHED his father for a biography of Patrick Troughton, Michael found that watching old episodes of **Doctor Who** in preparation for this box set was an interesting

experience. He tells *Vortex*: "I started working on the book after my mum passed away. I felt it was the right time to do it as I didn't want to start it when she was still here. It's quite an interesting story. During the research I discovered all sorts of things I didn't know and I've become re-engaged with who my dad was.

"With a week to go before we started recording I thought I'd better watch some of his **Doctor Who** episodes as I was trying to get the feel of his voice.

WITH A WEEK TO GO BEFORE WE STARTED RECORDING I THOUGHT I'D BETTER WATCH SOME OF HIS DOCTOR WHO EPISODES... MICHAEL TROUGHTON

Myself, Dad and [my brother] David do have a similar vocal quality.

"I also talked with Frazer about it – lots of the fun stuff in the TV episodes was brought to the recordings by them ad libbing. I think it might have been *The Tomb of the Cybermen* where they were at a door and for some reason he ended up holding Frazer's hand. That wasn't scripted, that was a moment they created together! It's difficult to do that kind of thing on audio, of course, but it was that fun inflection in Dad's voice that I wanted to try and get.



Above (l-r): Bethan Walker and Daon Broni



Above (l-r): Frazer Hines and Michael Troughton

“Getting a lot of Dad’s physical nature into the audio was hard to do but I think it works and hopefully the voice is pretty close.”

THE PRODUCER for *The Third Doctor Adventures* is Heather Challands who oversaw *Conspiracy in Space* in the previous volume. Heather says: “To take over the reins as producer was thrilling. It’s an immense privilege as I know how close to the heart this is for the people who work on it. For Nick it’s one of his favourite ranges and all the actors and the team that work on it absolutely love it. You can’t wish for much better than that and it’s such a cracking era to get your teeth into.

“I’m fortunate that I’ve got a good friendship with Nick and for this particular release he’s written it, directed it and is doing the music as well, so it’s been great to have his opinion all the way through.

“I’m thrilled that my first full Third Doctor box set is a multi-Doctor story – I don’t think many people get to have that, especially with classic Doctors! You can count on one hand the number of times it’s happened on TV. It felt quite natural having the Third and Second Doctors meet as they did in the TV episodes *The Three Doctors* and *The Five Doctors*. And Michael Troughton was wonderful to work with – very dedicated to getting his performance right – and he gelled so well with Frazer.

“The thing I love is that everyone involved is so passionate about it and Tim is totally on it as the Third Doctor. A lot of care goes into these releases. Hearing Michael and Frazer record together was very, very special. Everyone is so invested. Jon Culshaw as the Brig is always fantastic and it means a lot to Daisy Ashford with her mum having played Liz. There’s so much love there from the actors for their characters.”

This new volume of *The Third Doctor Adventures* has a bit of a different feel to it. Heather explains: “We’ve moved into a new era of titled box sets and I was quite keen to refresh the series, so to speak.

“This is such a well-established range but you want to find some space to make your mark and I was very keen to give it a new look with the cover art and I think we’ve got a great new style. Very *TV Action* so Nick tells me!”

THE LAST word goes to Michael who has already established the fun relationship that existed between Troughton senior and Frazer in the 1960s. Michael agrees: “It was extraordinary working with Frazer. I first met him years ago when I was going to conventions – I told him that the first time I had met him I was 13-years-old. This was another relationship that blossomed because of the book research! My early recollections of Frazer were at Lime Grove or BBC Television Centre.

“Frazer has provided the voice of Dad’s Doctor for Big Finish for a long while. There was a convention recently where the audience suggested we had a Patrick Troughton-off to see who could do the best impression!”

And Michael laughs. It’s reassuring to know that the Second Doctor is in good hands. **VORTEX**

DOCTOR WHO: THE THIRD DOCTOR ADVENTURES



THE ANNIHILATORS

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WE'RE HEADING BACK TO MOONBASE ALPHA WHERE THE SURVIVORS ARE...

EARTH SHOCKED

IT'S 1999 and the Moon has been blown out of Earth's orbit and travelled through a rift in space, ending up... who knows where! **Space: 1999** volume two – *Earthbound* – sees the return of both Mark Bonnar as Commander John Koenig and Maria Teresa Creasey as Doctor Helena Russell, leading the Moonbase Alpha survivors in their bid to find a permanent home.

Big Finish's new take on Gerry Anderson's classic 1970s television series continues with three more adventures following the pilot release, *Breakaway*, and volume one.

Producer David Richardson tells *Vortex*: "We are having so much fun playing in the **Space: 1999** world,

telling brand new stories for Koenig and his crew, and also revisiting episodes from the TV series and reimagining and rewiring them.

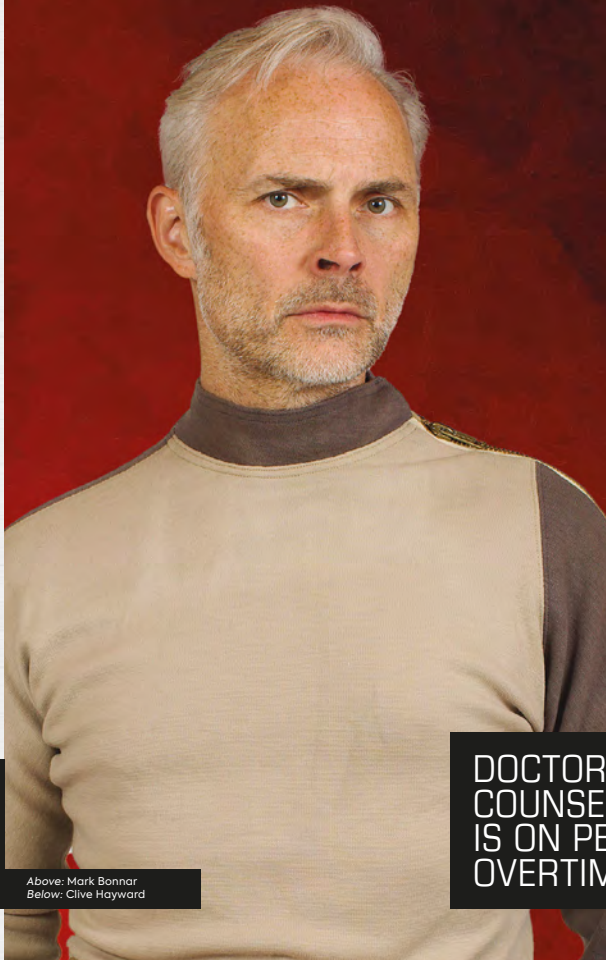
"Everything is approached with love for the show from the first writing discussions right through to the recordings. This box set is called *Earthbound* because – no surprise – it revisits that particular classic season one TV episode but expands upon it, using it as a changing point in our series. Things are about get a whole lot darker on Moonbase Alpha..."

Mooncatcher by Marc Platt opens the set and he admits he was a fan of the TV series on original broadcast. Marc says: "The big draw with any Gerry Anderson production was always the special effects and how

they created the future in minute detail. The premise of the lost Moon hurtling into the unknown is genius but it seemed to me that although the characters had great potential they were hindered by appearing as handsome but rather po-faced 1970s fashion models!

"In the days before VCR, my day (and night) job in catering with its terrible hours was not good for following TV series so although I watched when I could, it was several years before I actually saw the very first episode – and even now I'm still catching up!

"David asked for a story about an alien planet featuring the regular cast and no more than two guest characters. My usual Platt



Above: Mark Bonnar
Below: Clive Hayward

strangeness then! And he sent me a link to the audio pilot episode as re-imagined by Nicholas Briggs which was so good that I didn't need any more persuading."

Summing up the tale, Marc says: "The alien planet is more alien and less planet but it presents a definite threat, not just to Alpha but the entire Moon. The past rears its head reminding everyone what they have lost. Particularly Paul Morrow, who always seemed a rather dour figure on TV and I wanted to find out why."

"Writing for this was like playing with a new toy. Audio takes the spotlight away from the spaceships and onto the characters. And



DOCTOR RUSSELL'S COUNSELLING TEAM IS ON PERMANENT OVERTIME!

MARC PLATT

the more I dug down, the more potential I found and wanted to explore. Unlike the crews of **Star Trek**'s multiple *Enterprises*, the inhabitants of Moonbase Alpha are not a quasi-military expedition force. They are a team of civilians removed from their previous lives and loves on Mother Earth, struggling to survive the resulting trauma which was never meant to happen.

"Doctor Russell's counselling team is on permanent overtime! As Simmons points out, Alpha is no longer just a scientific base, it has become a colony.

"The cast are terrific. After I'd heard *Breakaway*, I told Nick how grateful I was that Commissioner Simmons was still around – the constant, niggling fly in Commander Koenig's ointment. He's the shot in the arm the series needs – and so much fun to write."

THE SECOND episode in the set is *Earthbound* by Iain Meadows which had its starting point as an original TV episode screenplay written by Anthony Terpiloff. This is a first writing

credit for Iain who more usually works as a sound designer on various ranges – including **Space: 1999**.

Iain tells *Vortex*: "It really was a pleasure being asked to write for this. I mentioned to David and Nick that I was also a writer but didn't necessarily think anything would come of it.

"Then out of the blue David said, 'Would you like to write for **Space: 1999**?', and of course I said yes because I love the series.

"I was given *Earthbound*, which is one of the most famous episodes, because of the ending of it. If people know of *Earthbound*, they'll also know the ending – it's horrific, that whole buried alive thing.

"I did watch the TV episode but because I had Mark, Marie and

Clive – the new cast – in my mind it was easier to write it afresh.

Any excuse to watch **Space: 1999** has to be a good thing!

“In the adaptation process, I said to Nick, ‘Can we do a little bit more with it?’ There were some elements which I thought could be teased out, and one of them –

but weren’t, such as when the aliens come off the ship, Captain Zantor gives Dr Russell an egg – the Libra egg from their planet – that’s almost like a love token.

“Things like that you can tease out even when they weren’t originally very explicit. You can do something with things the

JOURNEY’S END by

Nicholas Briggs concludes the set. Nick says: “*Journey’s End* is an emotional story – both good and bad emotions. It also takes a look at what it is that makes others important to us and the consequences of the desire to return to Earth.

THERE WAS A LOT OF JOSHING ABOUT HOW ROTTEN SIMMONS CAN BE, PARTICULARLY FROM TIM BENTINCK HIMSELF WHO PLAYS THE PART!

NICHOLAS BRIGGS



Above: Tim Bentinck

which is in the audio adaptation but isn’t really addressed in the TV episode – mirrors stuff that happened in real life...

“The adaptation was lovely to write but don’t rely too much on it following the TV episode slavishly. There were lots of things on TV which could have been expanded

writers put in but didn’t fully develop. We’ve also tied some things up and Nick’s run with them in the final episode.”

As a fan of the original TV series, Iain couldn’t wait to hear the audio version. He explains: “Whenever a production is recast, as a fan you wonder if the new voices can live up to the original – but actually I’m liking the new voices rather more than the old! If **Space: 1999** was remade today for TV they would absolutely go down the route this audio series has taken.

“I might be biased because I’m sound designing it but the audios are really coming to the fore, they are beautifully evocative and the cast make the characters more visceral than they are on TV.”

“I’m realising that the best way to develop this series is to make it all about how the characters interact and how their relationships develop. This wasn’t really possible in the original TV series because there was no set running order.

“We are on a journey with these characters. They’re locked into a set of circumstances beyond their control so, in a way, their emotional responses are sort of ‘hot-housed’. The temperature of emotion rises rapidly because they feel trapped and powerless. The stories are about the different kinds of personalities and how they react to their situation. And there’s also the great ability to interrogate the nature of the relationship between Koenig and Russell.”



Above: Maria Teresa Creasey

As well as writing *Journey's End*, Nick was the director of this box set.

He tells Vortex: "It's really fun to direct a returning ensemble cast, I've never really done this for Big Finish before. It was so brilliant that because of *Breakaway* and volume one they'd all got a handle on their characters and so gave performances that were already fully developed.

"There are loads of memorable moments of fun between the scenes but frankly most of them are unrepeatable in polite conversation! There was a lot of joshing about how rotten Simmons can be, particularly from Tim Bentinck himself who plays the part! And it's always fun when Mark Bonnar breaks out of his gravelly Koenig voice to make an amusing comment. They're such a great bunch of people. As director, I just have to make sure they're all having a good time and then they truly soar."

AS SOUND designer Iain says: "While I was writing there was the temptation of knowing what I could later achieve but I had to put that out of my mind and write for the drama first – and work out the sound design afterwards. There were some sequences that looked simple on paper but when I came to sound design it I thought, who wrote that? And then I remembered... 'Oh, it was me...!' I made a rod for my own back!

"The most wonderful thing about Big Finish is the trust they give us sound designers to come up with what the writers have asked for. It was really quite nice doing the sound design for my own thing!

"My highlight was seeing how the box set came together following so many people's contributions. To see where Nick's taken it is amazing, he's done a fantastic job. I like the fact that a lot of the enemies

aren't monsters of the week – the enemy is actually human frailty.

"And you have to take your hat off to Gerry Anderson. What a mind coming up with such an amazing concept."

Nick concludes: "Iain is someone I really enjoy working with. There's an absolute mutual

I THOUGHT, WHO
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I MADE A ROD FOR
MY OWN BACK!

IAIN MEADOWS

respect between us and I'm always genuinely awed by the brilliant sounds he comes up with.

"And Joe Kraemer who did the music is such an adept composer. Music flows from his fingers with ease and I find myself always excited to hear what he's created. There's something of the Barry Gray grandeur in what he does, but Joe always injects something extra too." **VORTEX**

SPACE: 1999



EARTHBOUND

- RELEASED: FEBRUARY 2022
- FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

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LIFE'S A CAMELOTTERY

**RORY WILLIAMS, STILL STANDING
GUARD OVER THE PANDORICA SINCE
WE LAST MET HIM IN ROMAN TIMES...**

RORY WILLIAMS – *the Lone Centurion: a man trapped in a body not his own and stranded in history. His one job is to guard the Pandorica, the tomb of his fiancée.*

But, as he's discovered, life gets in the way, even when you're immortal.

Arthur Darvill returns as Rory this February for three more tales in **The Lone Centurion: Volume Two – Camelot** following the release of *Volume One – Rome* last year.

Producer Scott Handcock, who worked with script editor James Goss on the series, reveals: "When James and I first started discussing ideas for **The Lone Centurion** we thrashed

around a number of settings and time periods just to get a sense of how much mileage the format might have. Fortunately, with it being an alternative timeline, we came up with plenty of different options each with a distinct flavour, and Camelot was one of them. Obviously we know that Arthurian legend has a strong place in **Doctor Who** lore due to the *Battlefield* television episodes but this was an opportunity to explore a different side to those stories."

The set begins with *The Once and Future Nurse*. *Camelot is in trouble. Lancelot is wounded and Merlin warns that dark times are ahead. The wizard's convinced the solution*

lies in the mythical Pandorica. Meanwhile, Lancelot owes his life to a humble servant named Rory.

Scott says: "*The Once and Future Nurse* is a lovely script from Alfie Shaw that introduces us to our characters and the wider world of Camelot. It's a great contrast to Rory's adventures in Rome where he was treated almost as some divine figure. Here, he's little more than a peasant, biding his time, keeping as low a profile as possible and trying to keep the Pandorica hidden."

Alfie says: "Rory is my favourite new series companion. Don't get me wrong, the others are great in their own ways but they're not Rory."



Above: Arthur Darvill

“The set’s second episode – *The Glowing Warrior* – is an all-out farce from Tim Foley as Rory has to accompany the legendary Sir Lancelot on a quest to save the kingdom.”

Tim tells *Vortex*: “It’s always great fun to be asked to be part of a new range and I was delighted to work with the very talented Scott again. Plus... it’s Rory! Mr Pond himself! I was buzzing about that. It’s so lovely when one of the stars of **Doctor Who** not only returns to the role but knows what they want to explore in their character. It was great to have such clear guidance from Scott and Arthur about this series.

“*The Glowing Warrior* is a rollicking adventure. It riffs off a few legends including the story of the Green Knight. Once upon a time I studied chivalry in medieval literature and lo and behold some of those distant memories proved useful to this tale. Ultimately it’s the story of a knight who absolutely does not want to be a knight. And there’s one or two funny moments along the way.”

IT'S ALL GOING WELL FOR HIM UNTIL MERLIN ROCKS UP LOOKING TO GET HIS HANDS ON THE PANDORICA.

ALFIE SHAW

Being able to do something with a more comedic angle was refreshing. In scripts, jokes are normally what don’t survive the edits in order to make everything fit to the runtime.

“The other thing that was very appealing was that we were told not to worry too much about continuity with the rest of **Doctor Who** because of when these stories take place. Linking up to older adventures is usually one of the joys of **Doctor Who** but sometimes it is fun to deviate from the norm and be able to make a little sandbox of our own to play in.

“Rory has got himself a job as an apprentice to a court physician, a man who believes his medical knowledge is far more advanced than Rory’s. It’s all going well for

him until Merlin rocks up looking to get his hands on the Pandorica.

“Due to the unique setting of the series, when the rest of the universe died off we were able to treat this as its own version of Camelot. It’s free from previously established riffs of Arthurian myth like the one set up in *Battlefield*. It’s not a future Doctor. It’s an actual Merlin who can do actual magic – and he’s a self-serving git really!”

ARISE SIR *Rory! Every new knight must embark upon a quest, and soon Sir Rory (and his noble squire Lancelot) head out to solve the mystery of the Glowing Knight and save a damsel in distress. But are they walking into a trap? Scott says:*

TIM PARTICULARLY enjoyed writing for Sir Rory the knight. He confirms: “It was great fun. Arthur is an incredible performer. It’s really interesting how a genre switch can throw up new aspects of a character. Here we have Rory as a leader, a healer, a detective, a hero... and there’s lots of joy to be had with all of that.

“I don’t get to write much comedy for Big Finish so this was a blast. Truly the daftest and most loveable script I’ve ever written. Sign me up for the next **Doctor Who**-inspired sitcom please!”

This set concludes with *The Last King of Camelot*. *Camelot is under attack. Arthur and Guinevere have fled and Merlin’s direst prophecies*



RORY IS ONE OF THE MOST RELATABLE CHARACTERS I'VE ENCOUNTERED IN THE DOCTOR WHO UNIVERSE.

KATE THORMAN

have come true. Can Rory prevail before the kingdom falls?

Writer Kate Thorman was very happy to work on the release. She says: "I was thrilled to be asked to join. Not only is this such a cool project with lots of room to play around and have fun but it's also great to get to write for an actor like Arthur.

"Rory is one of the most relatable characters I've encountered in the **Doctor Who** universe. He sees that everything going on is crazy and unbelievable, and he calls that out, but he's also still consistently trying to do the right thing and help people in a very human way. I think listeners are drawn to that – as are the characters around him. It doesn't hurt that he's got some fun lines, too!"

How exciting was it to close a box set and conclude a story arc? Kate admits: "Honestly, I was a bit intimidated at first – it felt

like a lot of responsibility. But once we got into the story it was great. I felt lucky to get to tie up the characters' stories after this journey we've been on with them.

"But my highlight was probably getting to write the banter between Rory and the other characters. There's so much humour to be found in this adventure, and I had a blast with it."

SCOTT ALSO directed the set and was delighted with the cast. He says: "The cast for this box set are really quite brilliant and formed a strong rapport with Arthur almost instantly. Richard Clifford brings a splendid oily authority to Merlin, while Sam Stafford plays Arthur as a king propelled to the throne slightly ahead of his time.

"The standouts, however, are Luyanda Unati Lewis-Nyawo as Guinevere and Hugh Skinner as

Lancelot, both of whom express such loyalty and affection in their performances. Hugh, especially, is no stranger to comedy – you just have to look at **Fleabag** or **The Windsors** – and so, between him and Arthur as Rory, it sort of gave everyone else permission to enjoy the lighter tone these stories have. They're all such brilliant actors, they can absolutely handle the emotion and jeopardy when it counts. It's a brilliant team.

"We recorded Camelot in November 2020 so it'll be about 16 months from recording to release. It was a lot of fun to do. We had to leap around the script quite a lot because of various people's scheduling, and recording as the nights drew in produced other issues as a lockdown

population finishing work and school logged on to the internet all at once.

"But my overriding memory of this set is of smiling a lot and really wishing we could have all been in the same physical place to share jokes and gossip in the green room." **VORTEX**

THE LONE CENTURION



VOLUME 2: CAMELOT

- RELEASED: FEBRUARY 2022
- FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

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CHARLOTTE POLLARD: SERIES ONE



IN JANUARY 2001, Big Finish was delighted to release four new audio adventures starring Paul McGann as the Eighth Doctor. His first audio companion was Charlotte Pollard (played by India Fisher) created by producer Gary Russell and writer Alan Barnes.

Over the next eight years, Charley (to her friends) travelled to the Divergent Universe, saw her friend C'rizz arrive and die, and met an earlier incarnation of the Doctor before joining the alien Viyrans on their quest to mop up all viruses spread throughout space and time.

And that's where we join Charley in the first series of **Charlotte Pollard**. Giving the Edwardian Adventurers her own spin-off range wasn't something that Big Finish had always planned. Executive producer Nicholas Briggs explains: "It was seriously never on our minds. Gary had an idea to write her out and commissioned Alan to write the script which turned into *The Girl Who Never Was*.

LIFE AFTER THE DOCTOR! I ALWAYS WONDERED WHAT SHE WAS UP TO...

INDIA FISHER

"Gary then left Big Finish and Alan asked me if we could bring Charley back with the Sixth Doctor. He said something like, 'You know, I'm not done with Charley yet. She's too good to let go.'

"That's just how I felt after *Blue Forgotten Planet* when Charley left the Sixth Doctor so I wanted to create something very special for her, having adventures on her own - I'd already set up something quite conducive to that in *Blue Forgotten Planet*. And then Matt Fitton and Jonathan Barnes came up with some new ideas."

The writing pair crafted four tales for **Charlotte Pollard Series One** - *The Lamentation Cipher*, *The Shadow*

at the Edge of the World, *The Fall of the House of Pollard* and *The Viyrans Solution*. Featuring with Charley was her own companion, Robert Buchan, played by James Joyce.

Matt says: "We pretty much had a blank slate when we met up and talked about this range. We had the starting point of *Blue Forgotten Planet* and Charley going off with the Viyrans, so we had to extract her from that and free her up - that was pretty much our beginning."

India was delighted to play the part once more, especially as she was taking the lead role.

She tells *Vortex*: "It's always great to play Charley: she's like an old friend and has been part of my life for well over a decade now, which is scary. I was very sad she'd left the Sixth Doctor and I missed playing her and being part of the Big Finish family. So I was naturally thrilled when I got the call to say they were writing a spin-off. It is especially interesting to venture into this new era with her. Life after the Doctor! I always wondered what she was up to and how she was coping." **VORTEX**

CHARLOTTE POLLARD



SERIES 1

- RELEASED: MAY 2014
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RACE AGAINST

BIG FINISH RETURNS TO TERRY NATION'S POST-APOCALYPTIC WORLD ONCE AGAIN...

The world has ended. The pandemic crossed continents, sparing only a fraction of the global population. The survivors are now trying to pick up the pieces and rebuild society to create a new future.

A handful of towns and cities have started rising from the ashes, and with governance and law-making in a fragile, fledgling state, everyone must start over.

And the worst of human nature has survived along with the best. Abby Grant and Jenny Richards face a renewed fight for survival.

SURVIVORS: NEW Dawn 2 is

set some 20 years after the original Big Finish series ended. Script editor Andrew Smith says:

"In this new set we open with Abby and Jenny heading north to confront Governor Dominic Crayle over the things we learned about – the things he is alleged to have done – which emerged in *New Dawn 1*.

"The first story, *Bad Blood*, features a very young governor and there's a fractious rebel group.

"It highlights characters who were born before the Death but we also wanted to have a look at the attitudes of people who have no recollection of what life was like in the 1970s before the Death struck. It was a very open brief for Lizbeth Myles, simply, 'Abby and Jenny have an adventure on their way north', and

stories and they're still having these awesome adventures. And they have this amazing friendship and understanding of one another."

WHEN FIRST *We Practise to Deceive* by Andrew is the middle tale in this set. Without wanting to give too much away he tells *Vortex*: "We pick up on characters we met in the first episode in the first set. Governor Dominic Crayle makes an appearance and there's something of a game of cat and mouse between him and Abby and Jenny. Is he innocent of the allegations against him or is he covering his tracks?"

Last Stand by Roland Moore concludes the series. Andrew says: "Episode three is a big old chase with a lovely character that Roland's created called Akhil. You really care for him, much like Roland's character of the entertainer in the third story of *New Dawn 1*. Akhil has a tragic backstory and becomes an ally

Survivors, the governors in charge of the new democracy are prone to corruption, cronyism and ineptitude – much like real life. But at heart, this box set concerns itself with telling an edge-of-the-seat tale.

"The storyline for *Last Stand* sees Abby and Jenny being hunted and taking refuge in a place where they can make a last stand. But they are running out of time and the odds are stacked against them.

"It uses a setting that I don't think we've used before for **Survivors**. It's pretty relentless and because it's the concluding story, there are some big shocks in store. I can't wait for you to hear it..."

Of writing this script, Roland adds: "It was a massive honour when Andrew Smith asked me if I'd like to write this one. I couldn't even play it cool and I emailed straight back, probably using too many exclamation marks! It's been a privilege to be part of **Survivors** and to work with such talented

TIME

IN SURVIVORS, THE GOVERNORS IN CHARGE OF THE NEW DEMOCRACY ARE PRONE TO CORRUPTION, CRONYISM AND INEPTITUDE – MUCH LIKE REAL LIFE. ROLAND MOORE

she's delivered a cracking episode of a clash of authority versus rebels mixed with interpersonal rivalries."

Lizbeth continues: "It was awesome to write for a series I've loved for so many years. (And I've loved Carolyn Seymour since I was a kid thanks to her playing one of the best Romulans – my fave **Trek** civilisation – in *Star Trek*.)

"Andrew wanted an adventure with Abby and Jenny as they headed north to York. Honestly, I tried very hard not to think about the current pandemic while writing. Like everyone else, I've found it enormously stressful and the current world circumstances made it rather more difficult work than usual.

"I love that the series has continued on far enough that Abby and Jenny are now middle-aged women in the

of Abby and Jenny to defend them against the bad guys."

Roland says: "**Survivors** is always an exciting series to work on, but this box set pushed the excitement level way up the scale! Because of the subject matter and the tone of **Survivors** you can expand the limits of where you take the characters.

"The last couple of years have had a bearing on how the scripts were approached but in an oblique way. During the COVID-19 pandemic, people have been forced to put their trust in governments and those in power to guide them through it.

With some parallels to that, people in **Survivors** trust the new power structure to safeguard them. But, as in real life, there are factors that get in the way of those in power doing what they should. In

cast and crew – and I'm very proud of what we've done."

Andrew concludes: "*New Dawn 2* pays off everything we set up in *New Dawn 1*. For Abby, there's an element of revenge and she's seeking justice. And Jenny as Law Minister is there to see she gets it. But they are up against people trying to hide their wrongdoings.

"I couldn't have asked for a better set of **Survivors** adventures." **VORTEX**

SURVIVORS NEW DAWN 2

- RELEASED: FEBRUARY 2022
- FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

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MONSTERS, INC

I just want to congratulate everyone involved in the making of the Ninth Doctor story *Monsters in Metropolis*, I have a new favourite audio story. My previous go to story has been *The Chimes of Midnight* but I have to say *Monsters in Metropolis* is a near perfect story having been a fan of the movie and watched numerous documentaries on the making of it, and the reason why a complete version of the movie has never been seen did make me laugh. Well done everyone: I highly recommend this brilliant story to anyone.

NEIL PALFREY

Nick: Cheers, Neil. We had such

fun with this one on the recording day – director Barnaby Edwards was on particularly fine form.

PURE DELIGHT

I bought *The Box of Delights* back in the summer but it just didn't feel right to listen to it then. So I waited. And on the cold, dark winter days now when the wolves just could be running, the time is right. It is fabulous. Well done to everybody involved! Is it too much to hope for *The Midnight Folk* one day?

STEPHEN MOXON

Nick: So glad you enjoyed it, Stephen. The Midnight Folk... ooh, that's a good idea!

MORE TIMESLIP

I wanted to ask, are there going to be more Big Finish audios of **Timeslip** anytime soon? I greatly enjoyed *The Age of the Death Lottery* and *The War That Never Was*. I would like to hear more of them, especially since *The War That Never Was* ended on a cliffhanger. Also, will there more full-cast **Star Cops** audios in future? I appreciate Linda Newton is in Australia but I was wondering what the situation is regarding future **Star Cops** audios with the ensemble cast.

TIM BRADLEY

Nick: There are plans simmering away on some of the things you ask about, Tim. But, sorry, it's too soon to reveal them yet.

MADE FROM SCRATCH?

I've just finished listening to *The God of Phantoms* and I can't wait for Tom Baker new **Lost Stories** and I was thinking will you ever do a *Scratchman* full-cast audio lost story since you have Sadie Miller and Christopher Naylor who play Sarah and Harry perfectly?

NATHAN TOBIN

*Nick: I don't think there's much likelihood of us doing a full-cast *Scratchman* adaptation, Nathan. We did have the opportunity to make it at one point but there just wasn't enough in the script for it to work as an audio adventure. And the book adaptation bears very little resemblance to the original movie script. Maybe that is the best way to go, totally reinvent it, but for an audio drama I couldn't see the point of changing the original so much that it turns into something else. It's a very odd movie script with very little substance – perhaps it'll be worth revisiting some day.*

VORTEX



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