

THE **BIG FINISH** MAGAZINE

# VORTEX

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**BIG FINISH**  
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OF STORIES



# UNBOUND

**AN UNBOUND TIME WAR HAS BROKEN LOOSE, AS THE DOCTOR GOES FROM TIME LORD TO WAR LORD...**



**ALSO INSIDE**

**DOCTOR WHO: STRANDED**  
THE EIGHTH DOCTOR'S LATEST CYCLE OF ADVENTURES COME TO AN END...



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## A STRANGE CASE

**BIG FINISH'S** eagerly-anticipated adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* is scheduled to be released this August. Based on executive producer Nicholas Briggs's adaptation for a successful UK theatre touring production, *Jekyll and Hyde* is set in the foreboding streets of Victorian London as Dr Henry Jekyll disastrously tries to control the evil within himself via the creation of the bestial alter-ego, Edward Hyde.

Nick says: "The movies and television adaptations of *Jekyll and Hyde* are all very different from the book – my adaptation for the theatre production and this audio drama are much closer to the original story. It's not about bubbling potions and transformations. At its heart, it poses the terrifying question of what would happen if the evil in a person could be distilled – and the consequences are horrifying."

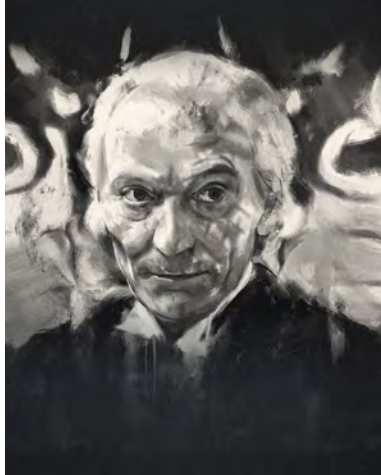
John Heffernan, known particularly to Big Finish listeners as the Nine, stars in both title roles opposite Barnaby Kay as Gabriel Utterson, a lawyer and friend of Jekyll who is haunted by the disturbing presence of Mr Hyde and seeks to discover the truth. **VORTEX**

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## EDITORIAL

**TO SAY** that this is a full-on issue of *Vortex* is an understatement! I could genuinely have filled it twice over with all the info about the amazing upcoming releases. Take **Doctor of War**, for example, the return of the **Unbound** concept which we first experienced in 2003. There's so much to write about – what a fantastic idea bringing a Doctor of War into being long before he should have existed and then having an existing incarnation of the Doctor give a different take on the part... wow!

And then we've got the arrival of the new **The First Doctor Adventures**. I had a lengthy chat with Stephen Noonan (we nattered for about two hours!), who's taken on the mantle of William Hartnell's part, and I'm really excited to hear these. Stephen is one of us, he's a dyed-in-the-wool **Doctor Who** fan who just so happens to be an actor. And he worked with an actor called Jodie Whittaker a long, long time ago...

We've also got the return of the fantastic team from **Torchwood One** and then there's another three adventures from **The Worlds of Blake's 7 – Heroes and Villains**. I can remember watching Dorian in Series D in the TV episode, *Rescue*. And now he's back on audio, along with some other familiar names.

And we also reach the end of the line in *Stranded* as we find out just how the Eighth Doctor finishes his enforced exile on Earth.

I can guarantee there will be tears before bedtime. **VORTEX**

*Kerry*

YOU KNOW WHAT YOU SHOULD BE SEEING BUT WHAT'S IN FRONT OF YOU IS NOT QUITE THAT...





AN UNBOUND TIME WAR HAS BROKEN LOOSE,  
AS THE DOCTOR GOES FROM TIME LORD TO...

# WAR LORD

**TO MARK** the 40th anniversary of *Doctor Who* in 2003, Big Finish producer Gary Russell conceived a new series, **Unbound**, in which new actors were cast as the Doctor in 'What if...' situations, exploring possibilities outside of the normal scope of the television universe.

**Unbound's** concept is returning with the first of two box sets exploring an alternate timeline set in the immediate aftermath of the TV episode *Genesis of the Daleks*.

'Do I have the right?' What if the Fourth Doctor had answered

yes to this question on Skaro and destroyed the Daleks once and for all? We're about to find out in **Doctor of War** – *Genesis* as Colin Baker's incarnation of the Time Lord is brought into being early and encounters characters from his past and future – Romana (Rebecca Night), the Master (Geoffrey Beevers) and Peri (Nicola Bryant) – facing challenges unlike any he's ever had before. Senior producer David Richardson says: "**Doctor of War** was a pitch suggested by executive producer Jason Haigh-Ellery, and the whole concept of

the series snowballed in a flurry of emails between myself, executive producer Nicholas Briggs and Jason. And then John Dorney came in as script editor and writer with his own brilliant developments.

"I loved the idea of bringing back the **Doctor Who Unbound** range but in the form of a limited run. So not only do we get to play in an alternate universe Time War but we get six hours to explore how the Doctor's life could have been changed by a different decision during *Genesis of the Daleks* and how later key events in his life

# WE HAVE SOME STORIES THAT ARE TIMEY AND SOME ARE WIMEY – BUT NOT BOTH TOGETHER!

JOHN DORNEY



Right: Colin Baker

"I was encouraging everyone to throw in things that they didn't understand, things that can link back and forth across a Time War. And because it's **Unbound** they can do things out of the ordinary and a little bit weird and I think everyone's really embraced the chance to go a little bit strange with it.

"It was great encouraging the writers to do what they wanted to do and it didn't matter if it made sense. I wanted to have moments

whether it's quite the Peri we're used to or a Peri storyline we're going to experience for the first time, is something you're going to discover."

**DUST DEVIL** by John opens the set as we get to meet this new not-the-Doctor, the Warrior. *The TARDIS crew are on the run pursued by an unstoppable force. But who is hunting them? And why? Will they find the answers on Aridius? Or just more*



could have turned out differently. We have a lot of fun on this series!"

John tells *Vortex*: "I think this series is, in effect, **Time War Unbound**. Once you've got that as a description you realise that the whole series has got to be a little bit loopy because that's what people are going to expect and want. And I too kind of wanted to go with the inherent madness of that.

"I was talking with the other writers and they were expecting the stories to be a bit timey-wimey. We have some stories that are timey and some are wimey – but not both together!

that are quite jarring and that's very much the case in the first box set where the continuity across stories doesn't seem to match.

And that makes it simultaneously make sense and not make sense!"

The series was conceived with its star at its heart(s), as John explains: "We always knew it was going to be Colin playing the Doctor, right from the get go, which immediately gives you a strong sense of what you can do with it.

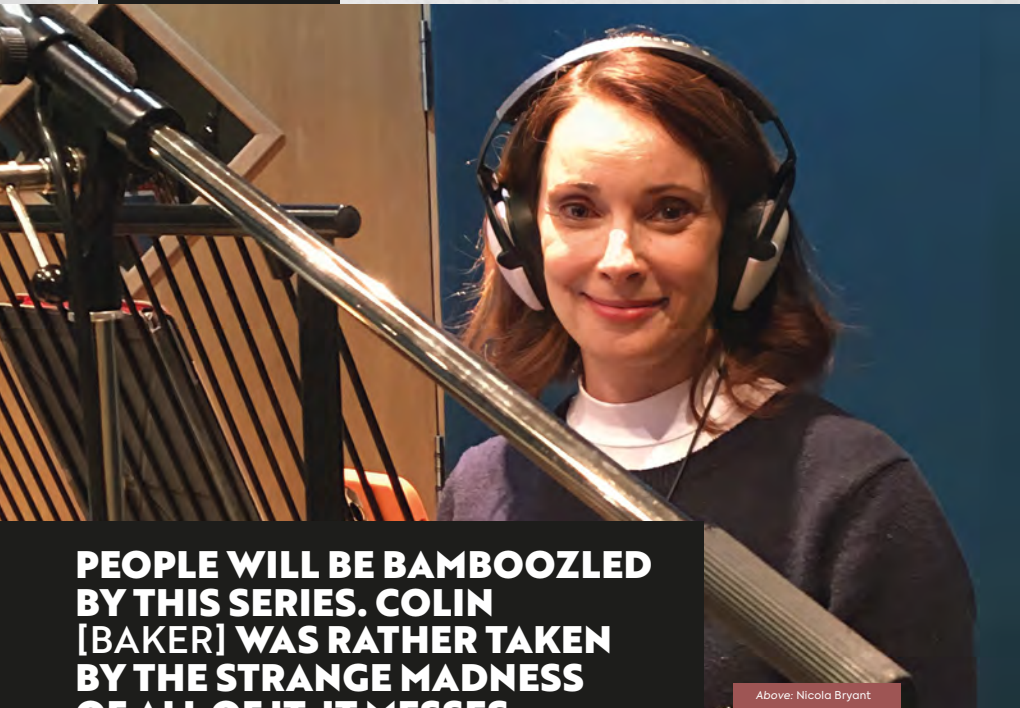
"We were also keen to bring in other characters that people would find familiar. I was able to write for Peri, which I hadn't done before, but

*questions?* John says: "I have just been reading the book *Dune* and I wanted to do something that had a bit of a feel of that but still with its own original ideas. Of all things I thought of the planet Aridius from the TV episode *The Chase*.

"So I've got a story involving the Doctor in some very strange events on Aridius which has him on the run from something pursuing him from, what can I say, an evil direction.

"People will be bamboozled by this series. Colin was rather taken by the strange madness of all of it, it messes with your head! The watch word I use for it is 'surprising'."





Above: Nicola Bryant

## PEOPLE WILL BE BAMBOOZLED BY THIS SERIES. COLIN [BAKER] WAS RATHER TAKEN BY THE STRANGE MADNESS OF ALL OF IT, IT MESSES WITH YOUR HEAD!

JOHN DORNEY

**AFTERSHOCKS BY** Lou Morgan places the Doctor in a familiar surrounding. *The ripples are spreading out. The Warrior is on trial. Or is he?*

*No-one's willing to tell him his crime so how can he know if he's guilty? And who is trying him anyway?* John says: "The Doctor is on trial but precisely who he's on trial by and what for isn't clear for a while yet."

Lou tells *Vortex*: "I love the Time War. Everyone knows I love the Time War! So to be given a version of the Time War where the rules aren't just there to be broken but stomped on with big temporal boots... it's like Christmas. All bets are off and history can rewrite itself at the drop of a hat. Even more so than normal!"

What was Lou's brief? "It was the classic 'What if...?' scenario: the working title for *Aftershocks* was literally 'What Happened Next'. If the Doctor had gone through with the destruction of the Dalek incubators

in *Genesis of the Daleks* what happens to history and what happens to the Doctor? More broadly, the brief for the set was that episodes could cross-pollinate but that everything should also feel a bit disconnected and unstable. I liked that: it was as though simply by listening to the stories you're somehow complicit in changing history."

Summing her story up, Lou says: "After the Doctor's decision to destroy the Dalek incubators on Skaro, history as we know it – and as the Doctor knows it – rewrites. The Doctor might not be who he was but what about everyone else?"

"Skaro is almost unrecognisable: the Kaleds and the Thals have set aside their differences to form a Unified Skaroan Alliance helped in no small part by the time ring left behind in the debris of the explosion. Meanwhile, a Time Lord who calls himself the Warrior – who may once have been the Doctor – is being

held by the CIA and interrogated about a crime he doesn't remember committing, while a figure from a past he doesn't recognise haunts his post-regeneration dreams...

"Also, I had two separate outlines that ran in different directions (one forwards, one backwards) to try and keep everything straight. And I still got a headache!"

Lou adds that her highlight was: "Being able to unpick the Doctor's DNA (and not just any Doctor's, either) and put it back together again in a slightly different way, piece by piece, in a version of his world that is slightly off-kilter... it's really fun and unnerving. It's like looking in a funhouse mirror: you know what you should be seeing but what's in front of you is not *quite* that – or hopefully not, at least."

**THE SET** ends with *The Difference Office* by James Kettle. *The Warrior is President of the Time Lords... and suffering from visions. Is he the right man to combat an invasion? Because there's someone out there in the*



Above: Sean Carlsen

## THE RULES AREN'T JUST THERE TO BE BROKEN BUT STOMPED ON WITH BIG TEMPORAL BOOTS...

LOU MORGAN

wilderness of Gallifrey. Someone with the Warrior's face. And he's heading for the Capitol. John says: "This riffs on a couple of **Doctor Who** TV episodes that people will be familiar with. It's mainly set on Gallifrey and largely smashes two old stories together and we see what happens from nudging them towards each other."

On entering the Time War, James says: "I was very nervous about it all. Conventions (as in the things we expect to find in a **Doctor Who** story not autograph sessions in a hotel!) can be restrictive but they also provide you with a lot of handholds in creating a narrative. Throwing them out of the window presents a lot of challenges as well as opportunities. I was delighted to have my first go at writing for Colin, and I wanted to create an **Unbound** Doctor that related to his usual Sixth Doctor characterisation – to give a sense of there being links and points of comparison rather than it being an altogether different character.

"Then I decided I wanted to get him playing two Doctors. Then loads of Doctors. All of which would be different to each other but also the same. I hope he enjoyed it but if not I do apologise!

"I can best sum up the brief as 'can you crash the TV episodes *The Android Invasion* into *The Invasion of Time* as if the two stories were the ships in *Nightmare of Eden*?' I came up with a number of answers. I can tell you that along the way it involved a TARDIS chase visiting various rooms created by different companions (including Jo Grant's boutique and the potting shed of Ian Chesterton) and culminating in a showdown in a Frank Matcham theatre involving a bunch of actors rehearsing a production of the TV episode *The Robots of Death*. None of that is in the finished production, I'm happy to say!

"I was anxious that although it's a story homaging old adventures it shouldn't end up being a story that's only about **Doctor Who**. So I wanted to bring in some big emotions – love and loss and revenge – those old chestnuts.

"The Warrior version of the Doctor faces an invasion of Gallifrey – and the arrival of

his better self. Could this be a chance to resolve the terrible traumas of this altered timeline? Along the way we'll encounter the Dickensian bureaucracies of the Gallifreyan paradox-busting Difference Office, a Time Lady we know very well but might not entirely recognise and a new Borusa. And Borusa's girlfriend. All the gang." **VORTEX**

### DOCTOR WHO: UNBOUND



#### DOCTOR OF WAR: GENESIS

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BAKER  
STREET  
OF WESTMINSTER

# STRAND OFF!

THE EIGHTH DOCTOR'S LATEST CYCLE OF ADVENTURES COME TO AN END...

**OVER THE** past two years we've spent time with the Eighth Doctor, Liv and Helen at his home in Baker Street, where they – and we – have made a new circle of friends in *Stranded*.

Living in the 2020s, however, has not been exactly how the time travellers would have imagined it – even with a fully operational TARDIS. They've had a glimpse at

the future and time is fractured with Earth and its empire destroyed before they should have been. With only a partially functioning TARDIS to help them, the friends have had to effectively feel around in the dark to work out what's happening.

Producer David Richardson says: "*Stranded* started as the story of the Doctor, Liv and Helen stuck in one time but it developed into the story of

them confined in an aberrant timeline. In *Stranded 4*, the final box set, the travellers and their new friends set out to put things right – and they might just end up back where they started.

"I'm so proud of this series, not just for the great reviews and prestigious Audie Award for Best Drama but also for the top notch work from our writers and the spectacular performances from our cast. I know



we are so fortunate to have them and despite the huge challenges of the last two years, recording this series has been uplifting and really rewarding.”

Script editor Matt Fitton adds: “It’s strange to think that we began

**MATT IS** also responsible for the set opener, *Crossed Lines*, which picks up from the end of *Stranded 3*. He explains: “By the end of *What Just Happened* in volume 3, the Doctor and his

at which he wants to drop in on Robin as he makes his journey.

“Robin and his dad leave Baker Street, as we saw in *Stranded 2*, but the Doctor hasn’t really thought his plan through. He wants to



**IT'S STRANGE TO THINK THAT WE BEGAN WRITING STRANDED AT THE END OF 2019 WHEN WE HAD NO IDEA WHAT THE NEXT TWO YEARS WOULD HAVE IN STORE.** MATT FITTON

writing *Stranded* at the end of 2019 when we had no idea what the next two years would have in store. It’s one of those timey-wimey things where it feels like a very long time ago and also no time at all!

“I think the key thing with what we’ve tried to in *Stranded* is that however much the scale expanded and the scope of the story grew as the TARDIS healed, we’ve always kept the focus of the story on the characters and keeping the Baker Street community at the centre of it.

“It’s very pleasing when a series is taken to heart like this has been, especially the Liv and Tania relationship, bringing in Andy and the popularity of the other residents – Ron and Tony, Zakia and Aisha, and Robin and his dad.

“We’ve heard the journey they’ve been on and dipped into their potential futures. It gives you an emotional attachment to those people.”

friends now know who is at the root of the change of history and who’s behind the human race being wiped out way too soon, as well as how they became an aggressive imperialised power.

“The Doctor has been trying to work out a way of doing something about it and tweaking the timelines to change a certain person’s future, so he’s identified a point

find Robin, to try and change him, but doesn’t really know how.

“Because there’s a potentially catastrophic effect on the timelines the Curator is also involved, so when Tania finds herself particularly affected by the change, she and Liv go in search of the Curator in his Under-Gallery and find he’s also changed somewhat – he’s not the man they were expecting.”

Ah yes... the Curator. He’s back – but he’s perhaps not played by the Baker Street were expecting as this time it’s Colin, not Tom, playing the part!

Matt explains: “When David spoke to Steven Moffat about the Curator, the intention was that he is a fluid character so he’s someone who can wear different faces as the mood takes him. What’s nice is that this also reflects changes in the story. History is in flux so the Curator’s face is one of those things that’s changing around the Doctor and his friends as they try to fix



Above (f-r): Hattie Morahan, Rebecca Root, Tom Price, Paul McGann and Nicola Walker

## THE DOCTOR AND FRIENDS TRAVELLING UP THROUGH THE HOUSE TRYING TO FIND A WAY OUT AFTER THEY'VE MESSED UP THE WHOLE OF REALITY.

MATT FITTON

everything. It's a particular set of circumstances where the usual rules don't apply – the TARDIS crash has splintered the timelines and made everything vulnerable.”

**WHAT JUST Happened** saw Andy Davidson depart from the Doctor's side in surprising circumstances, and the second episode of the set, *Get Andy* by Lisa McMullin, continues this story strand.

Matt says: “What happened to Andy at the end of *Stranded 3* was something that had to be addressed. I liked the idea of a fun rescue mission and gave Lisa the basic title and the premise. We also get to meet Mr Bird once again and he's got his own agenda. He kind of wants to prove a point to the Doctor in this story so we have him teamed up with Andy, while the Doctor himself is on a rescue mission that goes wrong.”

Lisa explains: “The title is a bit of a giveaway, isn't it? It's about trying to get Andy but it doesn't say if we actually do!

“We left Andy hurtling into a space station on board a spaceship which was full of dead people and that's it! He's gone – smashed to smithereens. “Of course, the Doctor can't accept

that's the end. Mr Bird makes another appearance and we discover who he is in relation to the whole *Stranded* story. Mr Bird has been causing chaos and he and the Doctor have the same idea – that they're going to get Andy – which is unfortunate as it leads to timey-wimey confusion!

“There are all sorts of time paradoxes that they have to work their way around in order to get Andy, and sacrifices that people are asked to make.”

**THE KEYS of Baker Street** by Roy Gill is the penultimate episode of the series and Matt says: “For the resolution of the main thread of *Stranded* – the biggest dilemma for the Doctor and friends with the broken timeline – we were always going to head back to Baker Street.

“Roy initially had this brilliant image of a house in a void, a bit like the end of *Sapphire & Steel* where it's the only thing left in reality. And people are trapped inside having to face one another as well as the decisions they've made and the consequences.

“So here we have the Doctor and friends travelling up through the house trying to find a way out after they've messed up the whole of reality.”

Roy, who also wrote *UNIT Dating* in *Stranded 2*, says: “I've really loved the whole world of *Stranded* – this diverse, unpredictable, ambiguous and sparky cast of characters around the Doctor and his friends – and taking time to get to know them over several box sets. I think I feel especially invested in Ron and Tony having been able to dig into and develop their story in *UNIT Dating*, but one of the best things about writing for this last set was the chance to write for many of the others as well.

“In *The Keys of Baker Street* the Doctor and his friends try to take decisive action to stop the diverging timelines but end up trapped inside another conundrum. But can the keys of Baker Street help them find a way home?”





**THESE CHARACTERS ARE GOING TO BE HAPPY AND SCARED AND SAD AND TELLING DAFT JOKES AT INAPPROPRIATE MOMENTS.** ROY GILL

Above (l-r): Nicola Walker and Tom Price

“Tying up a big storyline is a complicated mix of respecting and understanding the original ideas that set up the series, and looking at how those ideas and characters have developed over time in response to what the various writers and actors and other creatives have brought to it. I wanted this episode to feel like *Stranded* coming home – in lots of ways – and as we all know, coming home isn’t always an easy thing to do. These characters are going to be happy and scared and sad and telling daft jokes at inappropriate moments. It should feel like the world of *Stranded* coming together – and falling apart.”

Roy also got to write for the ‘new’ Curator, which he very much enjoyed. He explains: “I definitely had Colin’s voice in mind as I was writing. I think much as Tom’s Curator connects to and reflects Tom’s Doctor, so Colin’s Curator has Sixth Doctor qualities.

He’s more direct if no less mysterious, more willing to intervene and take action. There’s an assertiveness there and a strong moral certainty about what needs to be done – coupled with playfulness with words and some self-aware pride.”

**AND SO**, it comes to an end with *Best Year Ever* by John Dorney. We can’t say too much about what actually happens for fear of spoiling it, but *Vortex* can guarantee there will be tears before bedtime. Matt explains: “This has been very carefully written and considered. There are some problems the Doctor can’t really solve. It’s a resolution that’s like life – it’s happy and sad.

“*Stranded* has pushed the boundaries of *Doctor Who* and what *Doctor Who* can be. It always felt that it was something to take a risk with and the final story is very much

a risk that I wouldn’t have taken with anything else, but this felt like the right series with which to do it.

“We had discussions on how we wanted *Stranded 4* to play out before we had even discussed *Stranded 3*, so a lot of this last set was plotted out a long time ago. Much of what became the final episode was worked out early on although not necessarily the central hook of it, which I can’t go into! I can tell you that the final line of the originally planned out episode and the actual final line of the finished script were the same apart from one word.

“I had a revelation when I went to see *No Time To Die* at the cinema, not from the film but the trailers. It

made me realise I had to do the bold and honest thing, so I went home and emailed Matt to say, ‘Can I do xxx?’, and I fully expected him to say, ‘No’, but he said, ‘Yes!’ Then David and executive producer Nicholas Briggs were up for it, the BBC were up for it, and I started to write it.

“It’s bold and brave and I hope listeners will love it.” **VORTEX**

## DOCTOR WHO

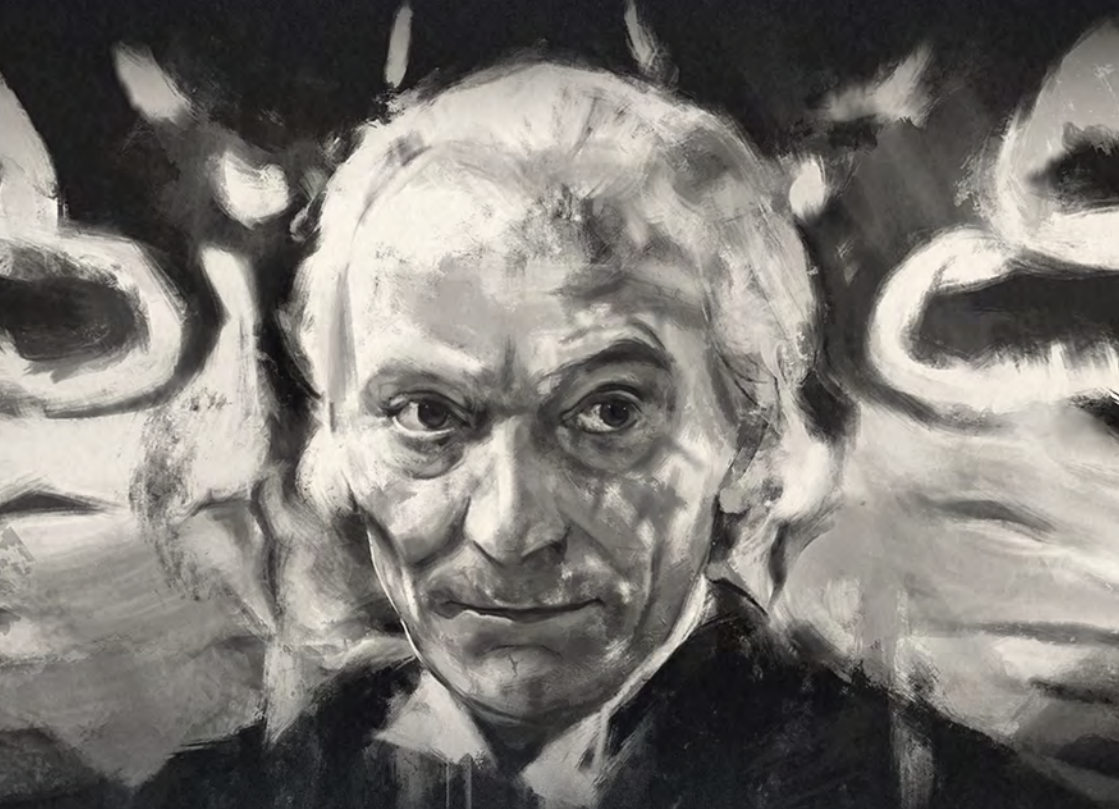


### THE EIGHTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES STRANDED 4

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DO YOU REMEMBER THE

# FIRST TIME?

THE FIRST DOCTOR RETURNS – AND HE MIGHT NOT BE THE ONE YOU WERE EXPECTING...

## THE FIRST Doctor

Adventures are back and there's a new man at the controls of the TARDIS. Actor Stephen Noonan takes on the part for his debut box set *The Outlaws*, with

Lauren Cornelius reprising her role as Dodo Chaplet.

Executive producer Nicholas Briggs tells *Vortex* about recasting the role: "We realised we'd need someone who was in their 50s who could play up to the age that William Hartnell did. There's something inherent in the performance that is a younger man

playing-up to an unspecified, ancient age and I felt that would give it some extra authenticity. At this stage we were thinking we needn't necessarily need to have someone who sounded close to William Hartnell's voice.

"We asked a number of actors to audition for the part and then one of the actors, Mark Elstob, said something along the lines of, 'I want this job and I will do the audition for you but it would be remiss of me not to mention that my good friend Stephen Noonan, who is an actor and a **Doctor Who**

fan, does a rather brilliant William Hartnell voice'. And I replied: 'I think you'd better give me Stephen's contact details!'. Well, suffice it to say that Stephen's audition was superb and we gave him the job!"

The set has been produced by Mark Wright who says: "It was hugely daunting to take on the relaunch of **The First Doctor Adventures** – not to mention very exciting. The prospect of finding a new First Doctor was the most crucial element to get right as we knew it would get a lot of scrutiny.





Above (l-r): Stephen Noonan and Lauren Cornelius

## I COULDN'T BELIEVE THE GUNFIGHTERS! I HADN'T SEEN IT BEFORE AND IT BLEW ME AWAY WITH THE AUDACITY OF ITS STORYTELLING. LIZZIE HOPLEY

Nick and I had many discussions but we got our man! Along with the brilliant Lauren as Dodo, I immediately wanted to tell stories that were at once traditional and a little unusual."

**THE SET** opens with the titular *The Outlaws* written by Lizbeth Myles. Mark reveals: "*The Outlaws* is a fun, fast romp in the classic William Hartnell historical mode. I knew from the word go that I wanted to open the box set with a historical featuring the Meddling Monk. It was a way of doing something traditional but using a modern element of Big Finish's output to marry everything together. Liz delivered a brilliantly fun script with more than a hint of **Robin Hood**, but turning it on its head. And we have a fantastic guest cast not least Glynis Barber as Nicola de la Haye, a real life Sheriff of Lincolnshire from the 13th century, so we could include some of **Doctor**

**Who's** original educational remit. Most of all, it's a chance to get to know our new Doctor and Dodo in a setting that's sort of familiar."

Liz admits it was: "Terribly exciting, especially as it's the first 1960s **Doctor Who** I've written. I re-watched all of Dodo's television episodes and *The Gunfighters* quite a few times as, for me, that's her best one. Her characterisation onscreen was all over the place thanks to what was going on behind-the-scenes but she's an absolute joy in that story.

"*The Outlaws* is a homage both to my love of **Robin Hood** and to the great Donald Cotton. Doing the historical research for this one was brilliant. I was familiar with Nicola de la Haye, a remarkable woman who was Sheriff of Lincolnshire, but exploring a bit more of the context of her defense of Lincoln Castle, and seeing how the actual history fitted so well with the story was a delight."

Mark adds: "Rufus Hound had a ball with this script as the Monk enjoys a lot of sparring with the Doctor. I was keen to have loads of confrontation between them as that's where the most fun comes from. Liz really gave it her all with the dialogue and it's interesting to see Rufus's Monk in something where you'd have easily found Peter Butterworth's original Monk."

**THE SET'S** second adventure is *The Miniaturist* by Lizzie Hopley. Mark continues: "*The Miniaturist* takes the Doctor and Dodo into an era of history that the First Doctor is not wholly familiar with – the first quarter of the 21st century. It's a more sideways step from Lizzie with a mystery deep beneath a North Yorkshire mine, bending dimensions and an unusual entity that finds the Doctor intensely interesting. And there's a lot of emotional drama for Dodo to play with here, adding some layers that were perhaps missing from the conception of the original character."

Lizzie says: "It was a completely new departure for me as I didn't

know the First Doctor's era as well as others – the perfect excuse to swot up on some early episodes! Mark asked me to watch *The Ark*, *The Gunfighters* and *The War Machines* TV stories in particular. I couldn't believe



Above (l-r): Paul Capley and Lauren Cornelius

*The Gunfighters*! I hadn't seen it before and it blew me away with the audacity of its storytelling.

"I've been fascinated by the craft of miniaturists for years: who doesn't love a doll's house? I also have links to Boulby potash mine in North Yorkshire as my husband and his family worked (and still work) down there. It's the home of a dark matter lab as it's a rare geological 'quiet place' and hence one of the most exciting places I could think of to set a story. It also seemed a perfect match for Dodo and the Doctor.

"I wanted to create an alien as old and as mysterious as Erato from the TV episode *The Creature from the Pit* (one of my personal favourites) – something terrifying and misunderstood." **VORTEX**

## DOCTOR WHO THE FIRST DOCTOR ADVENTURES THE OUTLAWS

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# HIGH NOONAN

STEPHEN NOONAN IS DELIGHTED TO  
BE PLAYING THE FIRST DOCTOR...



## RICHARD HURNDALL,

David Bradley and now Stephen Noonan – three actors who have followed in the steps of William Hartnell to portray the First Doctor. For Stephen, a lifelong **Doctor Who** fan (he can refer to First Doctor stories by their opening episode title from the 1973 *Radio Times* special), this is a genuine treat.

Stephen says: "I first became familiar with William Hartnell's voice from the 1977 television documentary **Whose Doctor Who** when we got those clips of him down by the Thames in TV episode two of *The Dalek Invasion of Earth* and from episode one of *Galaxy 4*.

"When I was initially asked to play the First Doctor, I took a bit of time to think about it. You want it to be as good as it can be – you don't want to ridicule, you want to be as faithful as possible. And with generosity from the listeners they will hopefully suspend their disbelief and think it is the First Doctor.

"Executive producer Nicholas Briggs sent me an email with several TV scenes to audition

with, five different scenes which were very good at contrasting five different aspects of Hartnell's modes such as the scene from *The Edge of Destruction* about the birth of a star, and one from *The War Machines* when the Doctor and Dodo leave the TARDIS. I recorded them and sent them back – I couldn't have done any more work on my performance.

"I then got an email asking me to do a Zoom the next day and we had a three hour fan conversation before we even got round to discussing the part. We were enjoying the mutual appreciation of classic **Doctor Who**!"

Stephen was offered the job and accepted it at the end of June last year with the first recording taking place in November.

Stephen continues: "It was a couple of weeks before I said yes, and then I had a lot of time to prepare. I asked if I could see the scripts as soon as possible. It's all very well recording versions of scenes or speeches from existing TV episodes – we can all do an impression or try to mimic the intonation of an existing line – but it's a different thing trying to get the voice right for new lines.

"I listened to the audio soundtracks of the missing TV episodes to further capture the voice – a fantastic opportunity to do research on something I loved and to discover treasures I hadn't encountered before."

Nick concludes: "Stephen's studying of William Hartnell has been epic. He's re-watched and re-listened to every Hartnell episode and then recorded his versions of them. Stephen has totally absorbed the essential Hartnell vocal tones and really captured the spirit of it while bringing his own Hartnell-esque zest to it. It's so exciting to listen to!" **VORTEX**





# ONE LOVE

WE'RE BACK IN THE TORCHWOOD TOWER IN LONDON BEFORE ITS FALL WITH YVONNE HARTMAN AND HER TEAM...

**WORKING FOR** Torchwood can be very rewarding. If you don't end up dead after a mission, that's a good start, but it can all be a bit of a nightmare... Yvonne Hartman, Ianto Jones and Old Tommy Pierce are back for three new adventures as Torchwood One wake up to three very bad dreams: an endless chat show; a dead member of the royal family; and an invasion of Torchwood One. Is it too late to save the world in **Torchwood One: Nightmares**?

*My Guest Tonight* by Tim Foley opens the set. Many people have poured out their souls on Nigel Best's sofa and this time his guest is Yvonne Hartman. Tracy-Ann Oberman reprises her role as Yvonne Hartman and Jon Culshaw plays Nigel Best, showing a side of him that you may not have expected.

*Vortex* asks Tim if he enjoys writing for the **Torchwood One** team? Tim says: "It's great fun! I thought we'd wrapped the range up with the

last box set but I'm very happy the team is back. This is the best kind of spin-off where it's recognisably the same show but with different aesthetics and approaches."

This tale gave Tim the chance to create a bit of satire on British chat shows and how they have evolved over the past few decades. He admits: "It was lovely to research – I trawled through YouTube watching old 1980s and 90s shows, seeing the different methods of interviewer and the types of guests they'd get on. Yvonne is a guest on a talk show and gets more than she bargained for when the show just won't stop! Nigel is an amalgamation of many characters and I'm delighted that Jon is playing him – a talented amalgamation himself! Jon gets to do things in this story that he certainly hasn't done in any Big Finish so far..."

"I couldn't attend the recording but hearing the actors' responses to the

text is always thrilling. You want to push them but also let them have a good time and hopefully *My Guest Tonight* did exactly that."

The other stories in this set are *Lola* by Rochana Patel in which Ianto Jones thinks something's wrong with Torchwood and *Less Majesty* by producer and writer James Goss where Yvonne Hartman wakes up in a reasonably nice hotel room next to a dead member of the royal family. **VORTEX**

## TORCHWOOD ONE NIGHTMARES

■ RELEASED: APRIL 2022  
■ FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

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THE COMPANION CHRONICLES ARE BACK WITH  
FOUR NEW TALES FROM THE SECOND DOCTOR'S ERA...

# GOODY TWO SHOWS

## THE COMPANION

**Chronicles** range was launched by Big Finish in 2007, mostly containing stories from the eras of the earlier Doctors.

From season 9 in 2015, the range was divided into **The Companion Chronicles: The First Doctor** and **The Second Doctor** ranges. This new release will be the third featuring companions from Patrick Troughton's era. Two stories have been produced by Ian Atkins, with two produced by Dominic G Martin in his first work as a producer for Big Finish.

Dominic told *Vortex*: "These scripts were meant to be recorded before the pandemic set in so I'm really pleased to be working on getting them made, finally!"

The set opens with *The Death of the Daleks* by George Mann. George says: "The brief from Ian

was to write a very different type of Dalek story about a very different type of Dalek! Ian had come to me with the idea of a Dalek Grim Reaper – or at least a mysterious Dalek figure that the other Daleks are wary of. One that uses its temporal shift to visit battlefields throughout time, 'cleaning up' after any Dalek defeats to make it look as though they never happened. The idea is that the Daleks, being the supreme beings in the universe, cannot possibly be defeated so when they do find themselves in that position, this is the 'Winston Wolf' type figure who swoops in to sort out the mess. From there we started bouncing around ideas and settled on a Second Doctor and Jamie story set soon after the events of the television episode *The Evil of the Daleks*."

**IN THE** second story of the set, *The Phantom Piper* by Martin Day, Jamie and Zoe are reunited.

Martin says: "Back in June 2017, Ian asked me to think about writing a **Zoe Companion**

**Chronicle**. His suggestion was to do something about 'missing episodes' – a riff on the Second Doctor's absence from the archives, of course, but actually an exploration of memory and how increasingly we use technology and the internet to supplement or enhance our 'biological' recollections. Before I'd written much more than a paragraph it became a Jamie story and then the ideas started to slot into place...

"It's a story about whether our memories impact who we are as people if, for example, someone is compassionate in part because of habit, because they have memories of being compassionate in the past. And





Above (l-r): Frazer Hines  
and Simone Lahbib

it's a bit of an examination of Jamie's childhood – his upbringing, influences and naturally the legendary phantom piper of the McCrimmons! All wrapped up in a science fiction story."

**THE THIRD** story of the set, *The Prints of Denmark* (geddit?!) will raise a smile, as the witty Paul Morris brings back the Meddling Monk played by Rufus Hound. Paul says: "Writing for the Monk

was an absolute blast. It was particularly lovely to use him in a **Companion Chronicle** where by necessity he takes on a Doctor-ish role – initially anyway.

"Back in 2017, Rufus's early appearances as the Monk went down rather well so Ian was keen to use them both more. The germ of the story came from a single line in the TV episode *The Time Meddler*: the Monk's desire to see the premiere of Hamlet via a rather different medium than the Elizabethan stage. As ideas sparked between us this one line grew and grew, first plot wise (part conceptual time-heist, part game of temporal hopscotch) and then in terms of the telling. Another important aspect of the story is that it plays with the idea of 'missing episodes', something which was planned to run through the entire set. As I have an obsession

## WRITING FOR ZOE IN A TWO-HANDER MEANT THAT SHE HAS TO BE MUCH MORE THAN JUST A PROBLEM SOLVER...

PENELOPE FAITH



Above: Wendy Padbury

with lost TV of all kinds, I didn't need any encouragement to take this theme slightly more literally than intended. In fact, as a Shakespeare buff as well, the story couldn't be any more 'me'. (So if you don't like it, I WILL take it personally!)"

**THE DEEPEST** *Tragedian* by Penelope Faith concludes the series. Penny says: "The brief, as I recall, was to showcase Zoe. The interesting thing about **The Companion Chronicles** is that it puts different characters centre stage – a **Doctor Who** story without the Doctor – which, from a writer's point of view, is 'a story'! Ian reminded me that Zoe's great skill is problem solving so she must be presented with a problem which only she can solve, that is there is no use/need for the Doctor here, it's Zoe on her own.

"But writing for Zoe in a two-hander meant that she has to be much more than just a problem solver, it was an opportunity to give the listeners aspects of her that might not have been immediately obvious previously.

"I loved writing this. I called on subjects that I have long been fascinated by – The First World War, the theatre. It's really hard to sum up the play but I wanted to explore ideas of isolation, loneliness (which nowadays have a new relevance), rewriting your past, failing memory. I hope it's an emotional experience for the audience because it was for me."

Dominic adds: "These last two stories couldn't be more different to each other. *The Prints of Denmark* is a marvellous tale with Zoe and the Meddling Monk. A dynamic duo if ever I heard one, and this is an especially fun tale that plays to both their comedic strengths.

"And then *The Deepest Tragedian* by the wonderful wordsmith that is Penny is a much more sombre tale with a lot of emotion to it. A genuine script for Wendy Padbury to absolutely shine throughout. Fans of the Second Doctor's era are really in for a treat with all these stories." **VORTEX**

## DOCTOR WHO THE COMPANION CHRONICLES THE SECOND DOCTOR: VOLUME 3

■ RELEASED: APRIL 2022  
■ FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

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GET READY FOR SOME HEROES AND VILLAINS IN THE WORLDS OF BLAKE'S 7...

# VOICES FROM THE PAST

## AN UNSCRUPULOUS

bounty hunter. A cunning rogue trader. A sadistic interrogator. They're adversaries to avoid but they've found Jenna Stannis and Cally in **The Worlds of Blake's 7** – *Heroes and Villains*.

Peter Anghelides, script editor and producer, tells *Vortex*: “The reaction to Cally and Jenna’s adventure together in *The Clone Masters* was great – both from listeners but also from actors Jan Chapell and Sally Knyvette. So we decided to create three new adventures for them together, foregrounding the characters in a way that perhaps the television series didn’t always manage to do.

“As it’s **The Worlds of Blake's 7** we also wanted to do a further exploration of some opponents

who we wish had got more screen time on the telly. And that’s the basis for our *Heroes and Villains* trilogy of adventures.”

*The Amagon Queen* by Trevor Baxendale opens the set and Peter explains: “The Amagons were in the very first TV series in the episode *Bounty* – pirates who get aboard the *Liberator* by using a fake distress call while Blake is off the ship on a mission and Jenna pretends to side with them in order to protect her friends.

“Tarvin (Marc Zuber) was the principal pirate and he had previously met Jenna on *Zolat Four*. The backstory there was that Jenna and Tarvin hid in the mountains to avoid hundreds of customs guards and Jenna saved Tarvin’s life in a pre-*Liberator* time. But revisiting

that ‘unseen adventure’ wouldn’t let us feature Cally in the same story which meant we needed to have a story set after that TV appearance. And as Tarvin is unambiguously killed, that meant new Amagon characters for our episode.

“I asked Trevor to pit Jenna and Cally against a band led by a female Amagon pirate. Trevor suggested an episode set on a world of lakes, bayous and riverboats with lots of potentially interesting soundscapes. It throws Jenna right in at the deep end and Cally has to catch up with her. Tania Rodrigues makes a splendid new opponent as Mandala, the Amagon Queen. And there’s a mystery mutoid to contend with as well.”

Trevor says: “The Amagons feature in my **Blake's 7** audio novel





Above:  
Matthew Gravelle

**MATTHEW IS FABULOUS AS OUR GUEST OPPONENT, CAPTURING THE CHARM AND MENACE OF THAT SMOOTH OPERATOR RIGHT FROM HIS FIRST SCENE...** PETER ANGHELIDES

*Outlaw* so Peter thought it might be something I'd like to revisit.

"Jenna was a smuggler, a convicted criminal in fact, before she met up with Blake in the TV episode *The Way Back*. The world of bounty hunters, smugglers and pirates is gritty, just as much as a lot of *Blake's 7* is gritty, so I didn't see it as a problem for Jenna. We know from *Bounty* that she was involved with the Amagon pirates a long time ago: there's some history there. She's beautiful and glamorous but she's also practical and clever. She has to be. Putting Jenna right into the thick of the action and plot was very satisfying. No more teleport duty!

"Jenna tries to persuade an Amagon pirate to help her take down a Federation outpost on a swamp world. But the pirate has her own problems and a very different agenda. Meanwhile, Cally's stirring up the local rebel faction against the Federation officer in charge but they've all underestimated the brutal efficiency of his Mutoid lieutenant. It's an action-packed thriller set in a hostile environment full of crooks, smugglers and rebels with plenty of twists and turns."



Above: Laura Aikman

**THE SECOND** story of the set is *The Deal with Dorian* by Mark B Oliver where Jenna and Cally need supplies to repair the damaged *Liberator* and treacherous polymath Dorian – as seen in TV episode *Rescue* – is the only one who can help. But he has dangerous plans of his own at a remote Federation research station. Peter says: "Although we steer clear of *Blake's 7's* final series because Terry Nation wasn't involved in that,

we did reach an agreement with Chris Boucher to use one-off characters he'd created for the series. And Dorian was one who really appealed, right back when we were making the previous box sets.

"Mark is a collector of *Blake's 7* memorabilia and author of a book about it, as well as a writer for other Big Finish ranges. And he's especially a huge fan of the character of Dorian. Usually with these things I send a detailed briefing document to each prospective author but with this one I just said, 'Jenna and Cally are away from the *Liberator* and meet Dorian

during Season B. What ideas have you got?' And then I was able to pick and choose from the several lovely suggestions that Mark came up with."

Mark tells *Vortex*: "In conversations with Peter, he suggested that Dorian could meet Jenna and Cally. In *Rescue* Dorian is clearly hunting for the *Liberator* crew and is aware Cally is a telepath which, to my mind, meant that Dorian had come across Cally before. I was also intrigued by how submissive Soolin is in her initial scenes – her portrayal is quite at odds with the Soolin we see in the latter part of Season D. I was intrigued by why that would be and Dorian seemed the obvious answer, so I was eager to explore that.

"*Rescue* is one of my all-time favourite *Blake's 7* TV episodes, right up there with *Star One* and *Blake*, so I know the story well. I re-watched it to make sure my memory wasn't failing me on some of the important aspects of the story and in particular to listen to the cadence of Geoffrey Burridge's superb portrayal which I've hopefully been able to approximate."

Sadly, the actor who originally played Dorian passed away in the 1980s but the part is now played by Matthew Gravelle.



Above: Tania Rodrigues

**Doctor Who.** He's got that line in the TV episode when he says to Avon, 'I think I'll start by burning out your eyes...', and there's no way you could do that in **Doctor Who** – on TV or at Big Finish – but you can do it in **Blake's 7**. It occupies a similar universe but it's just that little bit edgier.

"I wanted to show Shrinker's origins and how he had become the pre-eminent Federation torturer. You really get to know Shrinker and what drives him. But nothing excuses it as he's a thoroughly disgusting, nasty, evil little man.

"I was able to get an idea of his own perspective. During my police career I had a project once where I looked at the international picture and saw reports of torture with comments from people, particularly in the military in the Middle East,

**HE'S A THOROUGHLY DISGUSTING, NASTY, EVIL LITTLE MAN.** ANDREW SMITH

Peter adds: "Matthew is fabulous as our guest opponent, capturing the charm and menace of that smooth operator right from his first scene: 'The name's Dorian.'

"Cally and Jenna spend a lot of time together in this one and there's a great cliffhanger into the following story."

**EVERYONE TALKS** to *Shrinker* by Andrew Smith concludes the box set and Peter says: "I couldn't work out in our previous box sets how to get Shrinker involved. There was so

much going on with our other characters in those stories that I didn't want him to be just a token appearance, a sort of continuity throwaway. This was the ideal opportunity to put him front and centre in his own story.

"For Jenna and Cally to encounter Shrinker it had to be set before the TV episode *Rumours of Death* and we needed to accommodate a continuity element that Cally sees Shrinker in that story but does not recognise him. So this new adventure hinges on a survival ordeal



Above: Sally Knyvette

with Jenna at Shrinker's mercy and a rescue attempt by Cally."

Andrew says: "It was great to be given Shrinker. Peter dropped me a line asking if I'd be interested in writing for the character. And funnily enough I had only recently seen *Rumours of Death* as I was doing a *Blake's 7* re-watch.

"Shrinker is an example of a character you couldn't have in

who talked about how and why they tortured and their opinion on how effective it is. Two torturers said they didn't think torture was a good idea – yes, it got people to talk but they didn't necessarily tell the truth.

"Generally though, torturers believe in their cause and ideology, and Shrinker is someone who believes in the Federation and believes rebels are traitors – a threat; and he's prepared to do anything to them in the name of the Federation."

Peter concludes: "Actor Nigel Betts has captured Shrinker perfectly with his ability to move from silky threat to brutal menace. I was grinning from ear to ear when I heard him and Sally perform the characters' crucial confrontation." **VORTEX**

## THE WORLDS OF BLAKE'S 7 HEROES AND VILLAINS

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# BOOK CLUB



## DOCTOR WHO: THE HOLLOW OF TIME

**ORIGINALLY RELEASED** in 2010, *The Hollows of Time* by Christopher H Bidmead is the fourth adventure in **The Lost Stories** range. Producer David Richardson suggested **The Lost Stories** as, from having worked at the BBC in 1985, he was aware of what remained unmade when the previously planned television season 23 was cancelled. David confirms: "I was there when season 23 was changed – from the announcement of the hiatus to the discovery that the show would return as shorter seasons, to the reveal that the originally scheduled stories would be replaced by *The Trial of a Time Lord*. I still remember the disappointment that

there would be no more new adventures with the Celestial Toymaker, Sil and the Ice Warriors...

"So it was a great privilege to be able to oversee those stories finally being made on audio with the principle cast and, in the case of *Mission to Magnus* and *The Hollows of Time*, with the original writers completing their work."

Following *The Nightmare Fair*, *Mission to Magnus* and *Leviathan*, David wanted to produce a story by Christopher H Bidmead, a sequel to *Frontios* featuring the Tractators and the Gravis called *The Hollows of Time*.

Chris had been a script editor for **Doctor Who** in the 1980s as well as contributing three stories during

that time: *Logopolis*, *Castrovalva* and *Frontios*. He had also previously written for Big Finish providing the basis for *Renaissance of the Daleks* which was adapted for its final release by executive producer Nicholas Briggs.

David recalls: "When I approached Chris about *The Hollows of Time* he did ask for some reassurances. His previous story for Big Finish, *Renaissance of the Daleks*, had undergone a lot of rewrites and he said that while he was happy to adapt *The Hollows of Time* for audio it was on the guarantee that we wouldn't further alter his work. I did offer some feedback on the script but Chris was essentially his own script editor on this one.

"The original script featured the Master to be played by Anthony Ainley and so we had two issues here. One was that we couldn't get the rights to use the Master at the time and the other was that, of course, Anthony Ainley was no longer around to play him anyway.

"But Chris came up with an ingenious solution. It is clearly the Master in the story but his powers actually prevent the Doctor from recognising him properly. The anagram 'Stream' gives it away but the Doctor's clouded mind cannot access the truth."

The newest **Lost Story** from Big Finish will be released in March starring Colin Baker's Sixth Doctor with Bonnie Langford as Mel in *Mind of the Hodiak* written by Russell T Davies and Scott Handcock. **VORTEX**

## DOCTOR WHO: THE LOST STORIES THE HOLLOW OF TIME

■ RELEASED: FEBRUARY 2010  
■ FORMAT: DOWNLOAD

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# VORTEX MAIL



## RETURNING SERIES?

With the rerelease of the complete 2008 **Robin Hood** series last year, would there be any chance in the future of rereleasing your old **Sapphire & Steel** range in a similar format considering how popular it was? **Jake Williams**

**Nick:** *That's a matter of negotiation with ITV, Jake, and currently we haven't made any progress on that score. But hope springs eternal!*

## THIRD DOCTOR ASSEMBLED

I know you probably get hundreds of series suggestions but whilst listening to **The Third Doctor Adventures** story *Primord* recently featuring Liz Shaw I thought it'd be really lovely to have a post UNIT era series where Liz, Jo and Sarah team up to have adventures. You could also chuck in the Brig for good measure, from time to time. **Paul Castle**

**Nick:** *I'm very tempted, Paul.*

## KEEP ON SURVIVING

I've recently been listening to the **Survivors** range and I love it! Just as good as the TV series with such rich characters and brilliantly tense stories. I was wondering if we'll be getting future box sets for the **Survivors** range after *New Dawn*?

**Matt Bevan**

**Nick:** *It's certainly something we're actively continuing, Matt. So pleased you're enjoying the series.*

## GAME ON?

I grew up in the Matt Smith era and the thing I find myself feeling nostalgic for are the Adventure Games. I played *City of the Daleks* and loved it, and years later (2019) I found the full series one (no *Gunpowder Plot* sadly) and I really enjoyed them. So I was wondering, would you ever make audio adaptations of them, as I think the audio side could enhance the story?

**Finlay L Kidd**

**Nick:** *Sorry, Finlay, we've no plans to do that. Apologies.*

## CALL FOR CALLAN

Resurrecting **Callan** is a tough task – big shoes to fill in replacing Edward Woodward and Russell Hunter – but Ben Miles and Frank Skinner pull off a fantastic homage. Are plans afoot for further volumes? The material is there, I guess, and Peter Mitchell's involvement gives it legitimacy and authenticity.

**Richard Higgins**

**Nick:** *We'd love to do more, Richard, it's one of my favourite things in the whole wide world. But it's always tricky aligning the availability of the star actors. Fingers crossed for the future.*

VORTEX



# BIG FINISH

## RELEASE SCHEDULE

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

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*Series 11: Solo* (BOX SET)

DW | THE FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES  
*Blood of the Time Lords* **DLO**

DW | THE FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES  
*The Ravencroft Witch* **DLO**

DW | THE LOST STORIES  
*Mind of the Hodiac* (SIXTH DOCTOR)

DW | UNIT: THE NEW SERIES  
*Nemesis - Agents of the Vulpreen*  
(BOX SET)

DW | THE EIGHTH OF MARCH  
*Volume 2: Protectors of Time* (BOX SET)

THE AVENGERS: THE COMIC STRIP  
ADAPTATIONS  
*Volume 6: Steed & Mrs Peel* (BOX SET)

TORCHWOOD *The Black Knight* (50X)

### APRIL 2022

DW | THE EIGHTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES  
*Stranded 4* (BOX SET)

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TORCHWOOD ONE  
*Nightmares* (BOX SET)

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DW | THE ROBOTS  
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*The Dreams of Avarice* **DLO**

DW | THE FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES  
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"I get it, don't sweat it,  
I'm not your cup of tea."

THE **BIG FINISH** MAGAZINE

# VORTEX

ISSUE 157  
MARCH 2022  
**BIG FOR THE LOVE**  
FINISH OF STORIES

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Y OF WEST

# STRANDED

THE EIGHTH DOCTOR'S LATEST  
CYCLE OF ADVENTURES COME  
TO AN END...

ALSO INSIDE

**THE WORLDS OF BLAKE'S 7**  
IT'S TIME TO GET READY FOR  
SOME HEROES AND VILLAINS...

