

THE **BIG FINISH** MAGAZINE

VORTEX



CLASSIC COMPANIONS

THE TENTH DOCTOR IS BACK
AND HE IS CATCHING UP WITH
SOME VERY FAMILIAR FACES...

ALSO INSIDE

THE FIFTH DOCTOR
FORTY 2: WE CONTINUE TO CELEBRATE
40 YEARS OF THE FIFTH DOCTOR...



ISSUE 162
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STAR COPS

STAR COPS

THE HIGH FRONTIER

THERE'S NO ESCAPING THE LONG ARM OF THE LAW – EVEN IN SPACE!

BIG FINISH returns with a new run of **Star Cops** audio adventures, 35 years after the original series aired on BBC2. Starring David Calder as Commander Nathan Spring, **Star Cops** tells the story of the International Space Police Force and features Trevor Cooper as Inspector Colin Devis and Linda Newton as newly-promoted Acting Chief Superintendent Pal Kenzy. The trio of original stars are joined again on audio by Philip Olivier reprising his role as Inspector Paul Bailey.

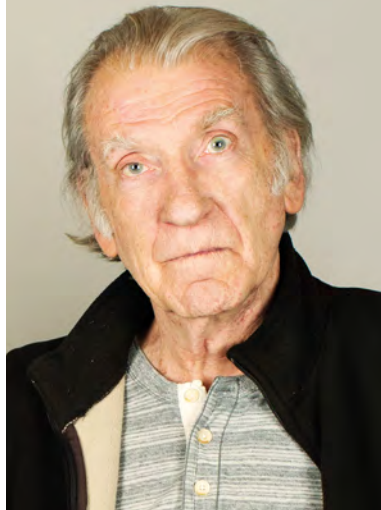
Star Cops – The High Frontier 1, script edited by former policeman Andrew Smith – features *Dead Air* by Roland Moore, *Hostile Takeover* by Rossa McPhillips and *Death in the Desert* by Sarah Grochala.

David Calder says: "It's wonderful to be able to celebrate the 35th anniversary of **Star Cops** with these new great new audio adventures." **VORTEX**

STAR COPS THE HIGH FRONTIER 1

- RELEASED: NOVEMBER 2022
- FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

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EDITORIAL

JUST AS this edition of *Vortex* was going to press we learned of the sad news of the loss of the lovely David Warner, who has been part of the Big Finish family since 2003.

When I first heard that he had been cast to appear in **Doctor Who Unbound – Sympathy for the Devil**, I was astonished that David Warner – THAT David Warner – was appearing in a Big Finish story! A brilliant actor, a REAL Hollywood star. And there he was in the Big Finish studios for a day appearing as a 'what if' Doctor.

That was the start of a long, happy partnership. David worked on virtually every series Big Finish has produced in one form or another, and during my interviewing for *Vortex* and *The Big Finish Companions*, everyone who worked with him has sung his praises as a wonderful, warm, kind, giving human being.

I never had the honour of interviewing the great man directly but his partner, the first lady of Big Finish, Lisa Bowerman, would sometimes shout a question to him when we were chatting on the phone and I'd get a short, witty answer to my quizzing!

His loss is immense to Big Finish and the acting world, and to his family and Lisa. We all send our deepest condolences and so much love.

Rest in peace, David. You were brilliant and will never be forgotten. **VORTEX**

Kenny

"THAT WAS A BIG UNEXPECTED BONUS!"



FRIENDS

REUNITED

The Tenth Doctor is back and he is catching up with some very familiar faces...

THE TENTH Doctor has always been very close to his companions as we saw on television when he went round to see them all before he regenerated. And this

September in **Tenth Doctor, Classic Companions** the Doctor revisits K9, Leela, Ace and Nyssa long after their time-travelling adventures have finished because they all need help, and when people need help the Doctor will never refuse.

David Tennant is joined by John Leeson, Louise Jameson, Sarah Sutton and Sophie Aldred in this

new set of adventures recorded during the 2020 lockdown.

Producer David Richardson says: "Was it really two years ago that we were all locked away in our homes, unable to mingle in the outside world? It feels like a lifetime, or like it was yesterday, or it never happened!"

"It was the worst of times but also, for me in my little bubble, in some ways the best of times because it meant that with the TV and film industry shut down indefinitely, David Tennant had availability to work with us! **Tenth Doctor, Classic Companions** was

recorded towards the end of a big recording block – we'd pitched the premise of the set to David and he couldn't resist the idea of the Doctor reuniting with some old friends.

"It was also clear that David was delighted to be working with **Doctor Who** legends from his own childhood – Louise, Sarah, Sophie and John received the warmest of welcomes and they in turn were thrilled to be working with David."

SPLINTERS BY John Dorney opens the set. *The Doctor finds K9 floating in space, and sets off to clear up Time War fallout. First, they find Leela protecting a village from the Spriggan.* John says: "Matt Fitton, our script editor,



Above: David Tennant
Below: Sarah Sutton

just got to decide, 'Well, what do I want to do?' Often, it can be just as good, if not better, with a shorter turnaround. And, to be honest, this is one of my favourite things that I wrote during lockdown.

"I didn't have ages to run around trying to work out what I wanted it to be, exploring everything, and I feel it actually works better because of that.

"One of my highlights was a joke that I've been playing about with for ages that I knew was a Tenth Doctor gag but I'd never found a spot for it. I eventually managed to get it in here because it was the perfect place for it – it was now or never!

IT FEELS LIKE A LIFETIME, OR LIKE IT WAS YESTERDAY, OR IT NEVER HAPPENED!

DAVID RICHARDSON

had put out feelers to find out who would be interested in writing for which companions and I was very interested in getting Leela as I've always a great affection for her character and Louise is always lovely to work with.

"It was a pretty open brief. In lockdown, I read a lot of *Sandman* and *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*, and was inspired to do something along the lines of Neil Gaiman. So that was essentially my way into it as I was thinking about folklore.

"In particular, there's a sculpture somewhere up near Highgate where there's a disused railway arch with a giant figure looming out of it called a Spriggan, and I was thinking... 'That's a **Doctor Who** story just waiting to happen.' I then needed the right time for it to be utilised, and this was it!

"There's a figure who's terrorising a small village, somewhere non-specific in England, but for what reasons and how you'll have to listen to find out!"



With the stories being commissioned in lockdown it meant John had a short turnaround on his script to fit in with David Tennant's new-found availability. John explains: "With a longer deadline you can often end up trying to second guess yourself for ages but with a shorter one you've

"Also, the opportunity to write for the Tenth Doctor is always great. It's such a fun thing to do, and pairing him Leela was wonderful. When you've got a couple of really great actors, like David and Louise, you want to put something new in there for them, and see what interesting angles you can explore."

THE SECOND story of the set is *The Stuntman* by Lizzie Hopley. *The Doctor and K9* enter a virtual world of a movie stuntman to help Nyssa escape a Time War criminal's scheme.

Lizzie's first reaction on being asked to write the story was one of sheer joy: "An opportunity to write for K9 was a big tick off my Big Finish bucket list! Sensation-wise, it was like being given the best bag of pick 'n' mix!

"I knew I wanted to do something different. I loved Nyssa's journey after the TV episode *Terminus* where she took on a great mission.

And discovering her robot medical team, the Sisters, was an added bonus – they are an excellent invention. To be honest though, the idea of K9 as a stunt man just popped into my head and it had to be written and it was case of making everything else fit around that!

logic there too. I think I've always been a bit emotionally connected to K9. He's such a little hero and yet (in my childhood days at least) was so limited in movement and always seemed rather vulnerable.

"I wanted to blast that open and have him experience an actual

physical life as that hero. I wanted his character believing he was a stunt man in a constructed world that seemed real but that he was lost in – and a Hollywood film set with all its tropes seemed a good metaphor for that construct.

"The adventure does unfold in an unusual way. I'll admit I got a bit teary writing this one and it's now a favourite of mine, not just for the adorable line up but because I can't think of anything that it's like."

Lizzie adds: "I loved having the Doctor visit the film set like a big movie fan, but in the end my highlight has to be Kent Novem, I just love him to bits!"



Above: John Leeson
Below: Louise Jameson

ACE RETURNS in the third episode, *Quantum of Axos* by Roy Gill. Ace investigates a new tech company which seems too good to be true and meets the

Doctor and K9 as Axos escapes its trap. Roy tells Vortex: "Writing this felt like being a kid on Christmas Day! Like you're mixing up all your **Doctor Who** toys, teaming Ace with K9 and making up a new story!"

"I'll always jump at the chance to write for David Tennant: he's

I'VE ALWAYS LOVED K9 – HE'S A ROBOT DOG, HOW COULD YOU NOT?

ROY GILL

"With so many fabulous actors being available during lockdown Big Finish was understandably making the most of them. The brief was 'old companions with K9'. We put up a bit of a fight for who got who! There was a bidding war and I 'won' David Tennant, Sarah Sutton and John Leeson. Now that was an exciting email to read!"

Looking at the details, it's a bit of a crazy mix-up and the set-up is not what listeners would expect either! How would Lizzie sum it up?

She explains: "The direct quote from David [Richardson] on reading my treatment was 'mad as biscuits' and he's spot on but there is a strange



so nimble, deft and mercurial as a performer. And I've always loved K9 – he's a robot dog, how could you not? Plus Ace was pretty much 'my' companion when I was growing up watching **Doctor Who**. Those seasons with Sylvester really show her mature and change in a way that was relatively unusual for a companion then, so it was an extra thrill to write for her."

What was in the brief from Matt? Roy replies: "It just said the Tenth Doctor, Ace and K9. We quite quickly settled on Axos as a monster and I dug into the TV story *The Claws of Axos* to see what I could find out. It's packed with ideas, that four-parter,

some really just dropped in for a line or two! I was intrigued by a mention of Axos as something that could 'program' forms of energy. Then I started to think how they might try to infiltrate the modern world, away from 1970s power stations, and that gave me my story."

level, this story is a big fun adventure with spaghetti monsters, jokes and explosions, on another, it's about the seductive power of nostalgia...

"I had a lovely message from Helen Goldwyn, the director, about the scenes where the Doctor and Ace reunite and how well they

a Doctor other than the Seventh incarnation, as she joins Jodie Whittaker's Thirteenth Doctor in her final episode on TV.

Roy confirms: "That was a big unexpected bonus! I was so thrilled when I saw Sophie (and Janet Fielding) in the trailer for the special. 1980s *Who* sometimes doesn't get the same attention and respect as the 70s serials so it's good to see that redressed a little."

"I know some fans got a bit worried that the dialogue in that trailer might cause continuity problems for Ace meeting another Doctor. We'll all have to see how things play out, of course, but I'm sure listeners will enjoy this story alongside the special."

JUST AS delighted to be joining the Tenth Doctor is Sophie Aldred, Ace herself, who admits it was hugely exciting when she got the message during lockdown asking if she would like to do an audio with David Tennant. Sophie says: "It was so bizarre because at the beginning of lockdown I thought, 'Right... how

I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT I WAS DOING AT FIRST – LIKE MOST OF US I GUESS.

SOPHIE ALDRED

Above: Sophie Aldred

Summing up the adventure, Roy says: "A mysterious tech company is offering new advances through the power of quantum computing – but is it all too good to be true? The Doctor, Ace and K9 investigate from different angles and then suddenly collide – I was aiming for a bit of a *Partners in Crime* TV episode vibe here! On one

played out in recording. I was writing this one back in 2020 when things in the world seemed particularly difficult. *Doctor Who* was a really good place to escape into! I can't wait to hear them!"

Of course, since the recording of *Quantum of Axos* it's been revealed that Ace will be meeting

am I going to sort things out so I can keep working?' So I bought myself a microphone, although I didn't know what I was doing at first – like most of us, I guess. People had often said that my airing cupboard was actually very good acoustically so I turned this tiny little place into a studio! I took some of the shelves out, put my microphone in there, and I used the towels and sheets because, of course, they're really good for dampening the sound. And then I got some woollen material, sewed it all together and put it on the walls, before I started learning the technical side of recording which took a little time.



Above: David Tennant

"I have to say, I mastered it and by the time Big Finish got in touch to ask me to do this particular story, I was reasonably au fait with the technology, thank goodness!

"It would have been absolutely lovely to see David in person, of course, but it's almost as good to hear his voice in your ears! So there was me in the airing cupboard with my laptop and microphone and we had a bit of a laugh because

I said, 'Well, where are you?', and I think he said he was in the attic because it was nice and quiet!

"It was just so funny having this visual image of us both sitting in these bizarre spaces that we would never have thought that we needed to use before – and recording **Doctor Who**. It's amazing."

Sophie first worked with David back in 2001 when a young Scottish actor guest starred in a

Big Finish **Doctor Who** adventure called *Colditz*. She recalls: "Yes, it is amazing to think of that and I remember I kind of clocked him at the time. David has a presence. When he walks into a room you can't help but notice him and I did think, 'Oh, who is this young man?'"

"As an actor you are aware of him because he's very good, obviously, and I just love his voice. I think he'd really wanted to play the Doctor as a **Doctor Who** fan. And then the very next time I met him was when he had left **Doctor Who** and he played my sidekick – let's make that clear, **MY** sidekick – in **Tree Fu Tom**, the children's series!

YOU CAN'T HELP BUT NOTICE HIM AND I DID THINK, 'OH, WHO IS THIS YOUNG MAN?'

SOPHIE ALDRED

"David played this wonderful character called Twig, a funny character and a great job he did too. It was just so lovely to see him again.

"We had a great time recording *Quantum of Axos*, and the way we worked together was really, really good. We had such a good ensemble cast as well and it was a lovely way to spend the day." **VORTEX**

TENTH DOCTOR, CLASSIC COMPANIONS



- RELEASED: SEPTEMBER 2022
- FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

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"Shadow, the television episode that introduced the Terra Nostra, was the first broadcast episode not to be written by Terry Nation and, as always, Chris Boucher knocked it out of the park. His effortless worldbuilding really adds texture to the *Blake's 7* galaxy. The Terra Nostra, and their relationship with the Federation, was sadly never explored again on TV. So, what a delight to dig a little deeper and explore the Terra Nostra away from Space City and how they've been forced to evolve after the intergalactic war."

Mark adds: "This is the first time I've written for the Season C

CASE IN POINT

A NEW BLAKE'S 7 AUDIOBOOK IS ON THE WAY...

BIG FINISH'S series of *Blake's 7* audio novels continues in September with the release of another gripping adventure. The Terra Nostra are back following their recent

appearance in January's *The Worlds of Blake's 7* box set featuring original series stars Michael Keating and Sally Knывette.

Producer Peter Anghelides explains: "*The Worlds of Blake's 7 – The Terra Nostra: Zero Point* is an original audio novel that ties in with the Big Finish audio series.

"It's a Season C story that gives us a chance to put the whole of the *Liberator* crew from that series into a struggle with the villainous organisation that first appeared in Season B's TV episode *Shadow*.

"*Zero Point* has been written by Mark B Oliver (based on a story concept by Scott Harrison). Mark also wrote the recent *The Worlds of Blake's 7* audio play *The Deal with Dorian*."

During a skirmish with a small patrol of Federation pursuit ships, Orac is badly damaged. There is only one person who can repair the super-computer: Federation Doctor Brynn Pellas. Tarrant

takes Orac to her base unaware that the planet she lives on is now under the control of the Terra Nostra – and Pellas is in the crime syndicate's back pocket.

Pellas can repair Orac but first the Liberator crew must steal a secret Federation weapon for the Terra Nostra. Codename: Zero Point.

Each of the *Liberator* crew has a distinctive role to play as they coordinate across multiple locations while trying to keep one step ahead of both the Terra Nostra and the Federation. Mark adds: "Scott devised an intriguing story concept which I took on and developed. Peter asked me to create meaningful storylines

crew, and writing 'said Dayna' or 'demanded Tarrant' was an absolute thrill! Having lived with these characters for decades, Josette Simon and Steven Pacey's voices were very clearly in my head while I wrote, and I very much enjoyed bringing these wonderful characters to life, together with the rest of the crew.

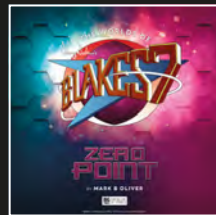
"This is my first *Blake's 7* novel. The length of a novel allows you to explore the motivations and backgrounds of all the characters in a way that you simply can't in a hour-long drama so that was certainly one of the many highlights." **VORTEX**

WRITING 'SAID DAYNA' OR 'DEMANDED TARRANT' WAS AN ABSOLUTE THRILL!

MARK B OLIVER

for all the *Liberator* crew, and to write scenes from the point of view of a character involved where it benefited the story. That's the wonderful thing about prose, unlike television or audio scripts you can get inside the characters' heads.

THE WORLDS OF BLAKE'S 7 ZERO POINT



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BENNY IS BACK WITH THE UNBOUND DOCTOR – PLAYED BY THE LATE GREAT DAVID WARNER...

NERVES OF STEEL

PROFESSOR BERNICE

Summerfield with her travelling companion, the Time Lord from another universe known as the Doctor, is back in four new adventures next month in *Blood and Steel*.

The TARDIS brings the pair to 1930s Berlin and the party before the end of the world. This is a city that laughs at the gathering storm but it's also the location of a mysterious alien signal. Bernice and the Doctor investigate and discover the Cybermen are in Germany – but why? And who are the Ancient Vril? And what horrors lurk beneath the city's most infamous nightclub?

Lisa Bowerman reprises her role as Benny with the late David Warner as the Unbound universe Doctor. Lisa tells *Vortex*: "It's so nice to be back in the studio as I've missed seeing people's faces and catching up in green rooms, having lunches and acting with people. Yes, you can act with people over

the internet but it's not quite the same. Seeing people's eyes is great.

"When I read we would be in 1930s Berlin, I thought this was an interesting revisit because Benny has experienced the Second World War before. In *Just War*, one of the first Big Finish adventures ever released, Benny gets first-hand experience of what the Nazis have in store for people.

"Everything is coloured by this personal experience but the Doctor has also seen many awful things over the course of his long life – he encounters enemies and bad people in many guises. His approach is a little bit more detached and maybe a bit more pragmatic, while Benny's is more personal. And that's what makes this particular box set."

WILLKOMMEN BY James

Goss opens the set – just why do the Cybermen wish to save the people of Berlin? James, who is also the producer of the series, says: "Berlin in the 1930s was a

fascinating city. It spent much of the 20th century being apart from the country it was in, and in the 1930s it became this hedonistic paradise that was loathed by the rest of Germany.

"*Willkommen* sees the Cybermen turn up at this key point in history – decadent, freedom-loving, defiantly non-conforming Weimar-era Berlin is the last place you'd expect to find the Cybermen – and yet also an amazingly obvious place. Berlin refuses to admit the party can ever end but the Cybermen have seen the writing on the wall.

"It's a great setting for Benny, and a delight to have Lisa and David both in it. It's also great to get the genuine article in the form of Andrew Pepper to play the cabaret compere – an increasingly amoral presence throughout the box set. His scenes with David are a definite highlight."

Did director Scott Handcock have a challenge on his hands to get authentic sounding German accents? He reveals: "I like to try and



Above (l-r): David Warner, Lisa Bowerman, Natascha Slatten and Jeremias Amoore

cast authentically when it comes to accents so you get a sense of local flavour. The brilliant thing is we know a lot of acting and voice agencies who have international clients, a lot of whom are from Germany or grew up within the UK but can speak German or spent a lot of time out in Germany, so we've steered towards actors with 'proper' German accents."

THE SECOND adventure, *Wolf* by Aaron Lamont, sees a young man return home – will he save his village or will it save him? Scott says: "*Wolf* is a fascinating piece. It's like *Frankenstein* in a way as it's about a broken man returning home. It's a story of acceptance and finding your place in the world. There's a lot of heart to it."

Aaron was delighted to be asked to write for Benny. He reveals: "It was very, very exciting and utterly terrifying at the same time. I had

IT ALWAYS SEEMS AS IF HOME STAYS THE SAME – FROZEN, WAITING FOR US TO COME BACK.

AARON LAMONT

a serious bout of nerves halfway through draft one wondering if I was getting her voice right. Then there she was, this character I've known since I was 14 – the smartest, spikiest, warmest person in the room. I've got so much love for Bernice Summerfield. She's 'my' companion – and I'll fight anybody who doesn't agree with me that she's the greatest **Doctor Who** character ever created! Can I write some more please, thank you!

"We were given a full series outline and asked to pick which story we'd

like to write. I emailed back less than five minutes later saying, 'I want that one!' And I didn't think I'd get it – the response I expected was, 'Nah, we want a proper writer to do that one!' The outline was so delicate and beautiful that I fell in love with it. James was calling it 'the simple one' – but it actually isn't. It's emotionally really complex. And it was very clear that this script was about what characters weren't saying to each other rather than what they were."

Summing up the script, Aaron explains: "It's a parable about coming home, about the prodigal son, about the smalltown boy after he's run away... whichever you like. We all change when we leave home and yet it always seems as if home stays the same – frozen, waiting for us to come back. So for me this is about what happens when we do. Will we be accepted by the ones we've left behind? What will we become to make sure we are? James will probably say it's about



Above (l-r): Leonie Schliesing,
Jack Forsyth-Noble and Lisa Bowerman
Below (l-r): David Warner and Lisa Bowerman

THERE'S SOMETHING GREAT ABOUT THE IDEA OF THE DOCTOR THINKING HE'S BEING CLEVER BUT ACTUALLY THE DOCTOR IS BEING REALLY STUPID!

JAMES GOSS

something entirely different, and yes, it's clearly about more than that. But that's the core of it for me.

"There's a scene around a dinner table which might be my absolute favourite moment in anything I've ever written. And I say that knowing everybody else will say, 'Huh?!' Also, it includes the single darkest line I've ever put in a Big Finish script, and that says a lot. This is my first bit of writing 'real' Doctor Who as it's got your actual Doctor in it and everything! AND I got to write Cybermen..."

"But this story is not like anything I've ever been asked to write before. It makes me nervous talking about it – it's my secret favourite script ever, so, I hope you enjoy it too."

ÜBERMENSCH BY Rochana

Patel sees the Doctor wanting Benny to join a German archaeological expedition.

Producer James says: "One of the things I like about episode three is that it's a puzzle box episode. There's something great about the



idea of the Doctor thinking he's being clever but actually the Doctor is being really stupid! The Doctor's weakness is that he wants to be cleverer than everyone else.

"There's a wonderful antagonism between Benny, who is a proper archaeologist and always argues that when they have real archaeological adventures, things should be done properly, and the Doctor is saying, 'No! My methods!' In this the Doctor is Bernice's companion and she is the one who has to save him."

AUF WIEDERSEHEN by

Victoria Saxton concludes the set – can Benny stop an alien invasion after it has happened? Director Scott tells us more:

"Episode four sees us dragged

back to Berlin. We've been on a bit of a journey, to Wulf's rural home and then out to the archaeological dig, and the Doctor – as Benny says – has been whisked away and she's having to go the long way round in a truck and really struggles to track him down. We all end up back at the cabaret again where the Compere is looking fabulous in their steel augmentation. It's a really interesting, quite introverted finale."

think you'd want to have them at a dinner party! They've got many layers to them. They're a person who wants to provide a safe haven for the misfits, those whom society deems as the outcasts, a place where you can be who you want to be and love who you want to love without judgement, to let your hair down and have fun – and that was especially brave and special in 1930s Berlin."

time back in the day out in Berlin, so I emailed and said would you be up for **Doctor Who**? They are a massive **Doctor Who** fan, and I asked, 'Do you mind digging out your accents from your Berlin memories?!' Curiously, when I mentioned their name to James Goss, James was already familiar with them from the cabaret scene so we have someone who fulfils that role in real life as well as behind the microphone." **VORTEX**



Above (l-r): Issy Van Randwyck, Harry Myers and Travis Oliver

Victoria says: "I work a lot as a book writer and lyricist for musical theatre which is why I leapt at the chance to write episode four – *Cabaret* is one of my all-time favourite musicals!

"I think writing musicals is actually quite similar to audio drama because in musical theatre we're always thinking about how the lyrics sound in a character's mouth, and how a song works and what energy and momentum it brings to a scene – so it's a very audio-like medium when you think about it.

"On the plus side with audio you don't have the constraints of set and costume budgets – your imagination is the only limit!"

Victoria particularly liked writing for the Compere. She explains: "I

I THINK YOU'D WANT TO HAVE THEM AT A DINNER PARTY!

VICTORIA SAXTON

Scott adds: The Compere is an interesting character – they are non-binary and don't identify as male or female. They are quite bold and theatrical – in Berlin, anything goes – and there's a very strong *Cabaret* vibe throughout.

"I know Andrew Pepper does a lot of cabaret and also spent a lot of

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THE DOCTOR OF
WAR IS BACK FOR
A SECOND BOX SET
OF THREE TALES...



DESTINY OF THE WARRIOR

WHEN BIG Finish's Doctor Who Unbound range returned earlier this year, it took many listeners by surprise.

Previous releases in the range had pondered 'What if...' questions such as what if the Doctor had never left Gallifrey, what if the Doctor believed the ends justified the means, what if the Doctor hadn't been exiled to Earth in the 1970s. And what if **Doctor Who** had existed on television featuring all-new actors in the lead role including Geoffrey Bayldon, David Warner, David Collings and Sir Derek Jacobi.

In the first box set, **Doctor of War: Genesis**, an existing TV incarnation portrayed a very different slant on the character as Tom Baker's Fourth Doctor chose to connect the wires in TV story *Genesis of the Daleks*. In the resulting fall out as reality

began to collapse, he regenerated into Colin Baker's Sixth Doctor and the Time War began far too early.

Producer David Richardson says: "I was thrilled by the massively positive response to the first box set. **Unbound** is a kind of creative madness — we've taken **Doctor Who** lore from the 1970s, mashed it up with the Time War and gone in a brand-new direction. And that's how **Doctor of War: Destiny** begins as Leela is introduced into the life of a Time Lord. But what if that Time Lord was the Master?"

Colin Baker adds: "It's a complicated story and it was a delight to record because it was chaotic and crazy. It's all about confronting realities, being subsumed by them, and being reborn and regurgitated.

"It's a sequence of trials by combat and the poor old Warrior has to battle

through them again and again. If I were a listener, I would be entranced by it because every time you think you're standing on solid ground the sand shifts and you're somewhere else where something even worse is happening. It's a fascinating tale."

Script editor John Dorney has been delighted by the response to the range, and says: "Everyone has been incredibly positive on Twitter and Facebook about **Doctor of War: Genesis** and it's got a lot of good reviews. I'm really looking forward to people getting to hear *Destiny*."

WHO AM I? by Nigel Fairs opens the set. *The Tesh and the Sevateem are at war, obeying the orders of their god Xoanon. But they cannot know their battle has a higher purpose, one led by the Time Lord responsible for Xoanon's condition.*



Above: Geoffrey Beavers
Inset: Lara Lemon

A *Time Lord* called... the Master.

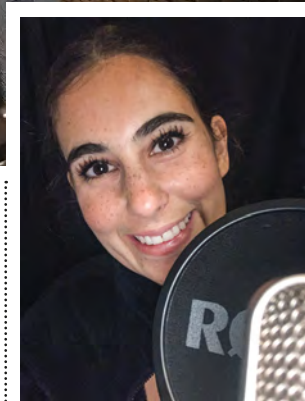
John says: "This adventure runs along the lines of the TV story *The Face of Evil* with the Warrior and the Master – and encountering Leela and Xoanon but in a very unexpected way. You've got to remember this Master isn't the soul we're used to."

Nigel admits he initially found the **Unbound** concept a tough one to work with. He explains: "I really didn't understand it. And the more I asked, the more complicated and unintelligible it seemed to get!"

Nigel says his brief was to: "Rewrite *The Face of Evil* with Colin as the War Doctor rather than Tom as the Doctor. It's the same as *The Face of Evil* – the Master does it all on purpose – only it's not the same as *The Face of Evil*!"

Nigel was particularly happy to be writing for his great friend Louise Jameson again, having written several times for Leela in **The Companion Chronicles** and **The Fourth Doctor Adventures**.

Nigel says: "I love writing for Louise. She has such a distinct voice and



delivery, and a mastery of her craft that she brings to every part that she plays, including Leela of course. Geoffrey Beavers also brings a richness and professionalism to the table, so it's a pleasure to write for them both."

THE SECOND story, *Time Killers* by Lizzie Hopley, also features the Master. *Arriving on Marinus in search of a temporal weapon, the Warrior and the Master are confronted by a place where time literally is money. As the Master finds himself in changed circumstances, the Warrior finds himself with a deadly decision to make.*

John says: "I think when people get to hear this they'll wonder just why it's an **Unbound** story even though it's on Marinus and it's doing things differently. But when you get to the end you'll see what we've been doing. Lizzie is very good at imagining the strange!"

The writer was particularly excited to work in a dark, warped universe of **Doctor Who**. Lizzie explains: "It's always exciting to get into the darker side of **Doctor Who**. I've been there a few times with the War Master and that's always a treat for me. The task is to get as weird as John wants you to be. I am getting more used to this!"

"John wanted to take advantage of both the Time War and **Unbound**. He tempted us with having things literally go to pot at the end, like having the entire universe destroyed. And remaining as deliciously non-chronological as we could get away with.

IT'S ALWAYS
EXCITING TO
GET INTO THE
DARKER SIDE
OF **DOCTOR**
WHO. I'VE
BEEN THERE A
FEW TIMES...

LIZZIE HOPLEY

"The Warrior and the Master (united as a team) track a Time Weapon to Marinus in order to steal it but find this crazy fast-paced world ruled by the Time Bank and a bank manager called Horol who punishes time wasters with ageing. I've then got a parallel world with totally different time rules where the Master spends years outside the city walls leading the resistance while the Warrior Doctor is trapped in a Time Vault with the TARDIS! I mean that's not the entire story but my head's hurting..."

What's the most enjoyable part about working on a story like this where most of the rules are out of



Above: Jason Forbes

I LOVE THE IDEA OF TIME BEING A COMMODITY THAT YOU CAN SAVE IN A BANK.

LIZZIE HOPELY

the window? Lizzie tells *Vortex*: “I love the idea of time being a commodity that you can save in a bank. I wanted to mess with speed and have people literally being stressed to death by having time go faster in order to save it. I also wanted to create a nice bit of time-paradoxy stuff where the (spoiler alert) Warrior and the Master are entirely responsible for the mess they’re in.

“I’m really looking forward to hearing this one as it was definitely my most time-crazy story yet.”

THE KEY to *Key to Time* by Tim Foley concludes the set. *As battle continues to rage across the history of the cosmos, the White Guardian opts to provide the Warrior with a way out... located at the end of a dangerous quest, with an even more dangerous companion. But can a Time War ever truly end?*

The Warrior and his companion Davros face new perils. Yes, you read that correctly! Davros is now the Warrior’s travelling companion... John says: “I really enjoyed working on this with Tim. I would keep giving him notes and suggestions, and every time I gave him a tweak, it became something a bit madder... it’s become one of the meatier ones in this set as Tim takes it to some slightly weird places.

“One of the influences on this story, and indeed the whole series, is a back-up comic strip I think from an old **Transformers** comic, which had a very memorable ending and I’ve applied that to the Doctor of War.”

Tim tells *Vortex*: “This is **Doctor Who** put in a blender! I love the scale and audacity of this range, we really get to push the boat out.”

Describing his brief from John, Tim says it was: “A wild one! I knew I was going to write the last story so it had to be suitably epic, but I had a lot of free rein. I also got to script edit the first story in box set one, *Genesis – Dust Devil*, which certainly set the bar in terms of visuals and temporal horrors.

“The Warrior and Davros must find the Key to Time! But they’re going to discover more than they bargained for...”

“I love Davros, I think he’s a superb villain. I was delighted to put him in such a different context.”

This script also had an extra meaning for Tim as it meant he was able to write for an actor who has a very special place in his heart. Tim explains: “My highlight was writing for Colin Baker. It’s something I’ve always wanted to do. He was the first actor from the show I ever met and I think he’s a superb ambassador.

“*The Key to Key to Time* is by no means your traditional **Doctor Who** story but Colin approached it with relish (he called it a ‘mind scrambler’).” **VORTEX**

DOCTOR WHO UNBOUND
DOCTOR OF WAR: DESTINY



■ RELEASED: SEPTEMBER 2022
■ FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

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BOOK CLUB



BIG FINISH CLASSICS THE INVISIBLE MAN

THE WORKS of Herbert George Wells are, without a doubt, some of the most important and influential pieces of science fiction ever written.

The writer of seminal works including *The Time Machine*, *The War of the Worlds*, *The Invisible Man*, *The First Men in the Moon* and *The Island of Dr Moreau*, Big Finish has adapted a number of his books for audio including *The Invisible Man*. It stars the late Sir John Hurt in his final Big Finish appearance.

Producer David Richardson recalls: "We'd been chatting for some time about adapting HG Wells books. *The War of the Worlds* was at the forefront of our minds and Nicholas Briggs was thrilled by the prospect of bringing that to the Big Finish catalogue.

"Then the more we thought about it, the more the idea of doing a whole run of full-cast adaptations appealed. *The War of the Worlds* is perhaps the most well-known of Wells's science fiction novels but there are many

others that have made an indelible impression on the genre. *The Time Machine* is almost a forerunner to the behemoth that is **Doctor Who!**

"And so one audio adaptation became six and this became a very high-profile project for us. "We had big aspirations when we were casting our HG Wells's adaptations but I never dreamed when we came to cast *The Invisible Man* we'd get one of the very finest actors this country has ever seen.

"We were really lucky. John had enjoyed working with us on the *War Doctor* stories and clearly also

adding two more notches to his list with *The Invisible Man* and *The First Men in the Moon*.

Jonathan adds: "I first encountered HG Wells as a child when I was given *The War of the Worlds* and *The Time Machine* books as presents. There was then, as there is now, such a terrific freshness about them for all the familiarity of the stories and their key tropes. Because Wells was inventing so much of this stuff – almost from whole cloth – the best of his work retains a sense of startling newness.

"I never forget how lucky I am to be invited to do the sort of work I do for Big Finish and these were particularly exciting projects to work on. I've adapted several novels now, all by favourite authors in my absolute favourite era of literary history.

"And the audio medium allowed for the inclusion of much narrative taken directly from the original novels. I was very pleased, for example, to be able to use the remarkable opening paragraph of *The Invisible Man* almost in its entirety." **VORTEX**

I NEVER FORGET HOW LUCKY I AM TO BE INVITED TO DO THE SORT OF WORK I DO FOR BIG FINISH...

JONATHAN BARNES

enjoyed the bonus of Toby Hrycek-Robinson's Moat Studios lunches!

"Also in the cast is Annette Badland, whose first TV role was in **The Naked Civil Servant** in which John played Quentin Crisp. What a privilege it was to sit there and hear them reminisce about that classic TV drama over a cup of tea!"

Jonathan Barnes has previously adapted *Frankenstein* and *Dracula* for Big Finish's Classics range,

BIG FINISH CLASSICS THE INVISIBLE MAN



■ RELEASED: FEBRUARY 2017
■ FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

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PLASTIC FANTASTIC!

SO YOU THINK YOU'VE WORKED OUT WHAT'S GOING ON IN BIG FINISH'S CELEBRATIONS OF 40 YEARS OF THE FIFTH DOCTOR?

AN ARRAY of familiar friends and foes are joining the party to mark 40 years of the Fifth Doctor. At the beginning of the year, the Doctor found himself earlier in his own time stream encountering the Cybermen and the Ice Warriors in **The Fifth Doctor Adventures: Forty**.

Out for release this September, Peter Davison stars in *Forty 2* which contains the six-part adventure *The Auton Infinity* written by Tim Foley.

The Doctor and his companions Tegan (Janet Fielding) and Turlough (Mark Strickson) arrive unexpectedly at a UNIT base. But something is wrong with time and soon the Time Lord is reunited with Brigadier Lethbridge-Stewart and the shape-shifting Kamelion (both voiced by Jon Culshaw). The Anthony Ainley incarnation of the Master (also played by Jon) lurks... what is causing the Doctor's time-shifting crisis?

Producer David Richardson reveals: "The Fifth Doctor's anniversary year celebrations continue and there are many

listener-favourite guests attending the party in *The Auton Infinity* — and plenty of surprises too! Tim has written a wonderful twisty-turny epic where he takes the Nestenes and Autons into new territory.

"I must also give a special mention to the amazing voices ability of Jon on triple duty here as the Brigadier, the Master and Kamelion — sometimes within the same scene!"

Script editor John Dorney says: "The brief was quite complicated but we were allowed to be a little bit liberal with it, to pick and choose as much as we wanted to.

"Tim being Tim, and me being me, we ended up flinging in extra ideas to try and make it even more complex and crazy than it otherwise was! So it's not necessarily what you'd expect it to be if you've

been listening to *Forty*, it pushes things in a different direction.

"We had a meeting before the pandemic with myself, Tim, Matt Fitton and Sarah Grochala to discuss what we wanted to do and how the arc could work, and I think I suggested this slightly crazy idea of the Master there. I'm a child of the 1980s so the Anthony Ainley Master was my first Master, and having the chance to bring him back properly in a full-cast audio is deeply exciting.

"Jon has got quite a bit to do in this adventure but he is, of course, a quite magnificent performer and we knew we could give him as much crazy stuff as we possibly could and it would work out amazingly.

"The idea to bring in the Autons came from David. It was very clear, right at the beginning, that this

WE ENDED UP FLINGING IN EXTRA IDEAS TO TRY AND MAKE IT EVEN MORE COMPLEX AND CRAZY...

JOHN DORNEY

was a six-parter with the Master and probably the Brigadier while also concluding the arc. Obviously we wanted some classic monsters in there. We've featured the Autons a few times on audio before and they're really good fun to do!"

TIM WAS delighted to be involved in this celebratory tale, saying it was: "Hugely exciting! It was flattering to be asked to be part of such a milestone story. This is my love letter to the 1980s, an era very dear to my heart. I want it to feel like something that might have

Above: Peter Davison



Above (l-r): Jon Culshaw, Janet Fielding, Peter Davison and Mark Strickson

I'M SURPRISED HIS MASTER HASN'T BEEN BACK SOONER — JON DOES AN AMAZING IMPRESSION.

TIM FOLEY

been in the cinema in 1984 but with the breadth and depth we've come to expect from modern **Doctor Who**.

"We had such a fun in-person planning session for this release – it was the very last thing I did before the first lockdown, actually – so I was in on the conversations from the start.

"I knew for a three-hour story I wanted it chock-a-block full of characters, story and action – it had to feel like a real blockbuster. I've

never written a six-parter before but I had the wonderful John on hand for advice. There are so many regulars and you want to do right by them all, plus you want your guest characters to have a fun ride as well. So you're spinning lots of plates at any one time – hopefully we haven't smashed any!"

The Ainley Master – who has featured in a **Short Trip** and **Masterful** – finally faces the Fifth Doctor once again. Tim tells **Vortex**: "Yeah, that was great fun! I'm

surprised his Master hasn't been back sooner – Jon does an amazing impression. And the Master's scheme is suitably devious... It feels true to me that an anniversary release of that era features old monsters and villains (just look at *The Five Doctors*) but hopefully we've done something different with them."

Tim has a personal highlight. He explains: "I love the cliffhangers and there are some really good ones in this! Plus there's a nod to an un-filmed scene from Season 20."

HANDLING THE sound design on *The Auton Infinity* is Lee Adams. How exciting was it to be given Autons to work with, and using those famous sound effects from our childhoods? Lee explains: "When David asked if I



Above: Lucy Fleming

would like to take on sound design for both box sets, I was very excited as the only classic monsters I've worked with so far have been Sontarans and Vardans. When I found out that *Forty* had Cybermen and Ice Warriors, and *Forty 2* had Autons as the baddies, I was delighted and also daunted!

"My first thought was do these classic sound effects exist and where do I get them, especially for the Autons. I already had a couple of effects on file like the gun and the ominous hum from TV episode *Spearhead from Space*, so I had to ask around if anyone had anything and luckily Howard Carter had a couple that I needed, which helped a lot.

"I did have to use a recording of the Auton sphere sound from *Spearhead*, which did take a bit

to clean up and get loop-able... but I got there in the end!"

As well as sourcing the sound effects, Lee had a few other challenges along the way. He explains: "I hope I'm not giving away too many spoilers but in terms of fun design challenges there were two TARDIS effects that needed to be created. One involved a lot of samples sped up and slowed down which was fun, but the one I enjoyed the most was the Auton ship. I had decided to redo the TARDIS effect from scratch using a sample of house keys running up piano strings just like the original squelching sounds, and a couple of samples from the original TARDIS effect used in the pilot episode that I struggled to replicate.

"I then pitch-bended them and added other FX and I think it

turned out pretty well. It had to be large and ancient sounding, and was great to create."

Lee adds: "It was exciting, daunting and a huge privilege to work on this, not just because of the classic monsters but the fact I got to work with the entire Fifth Doctor era team. There are so many call backs to previous stories that made me smile when I read them in the script."

I HAD DECIDED TO REDO THE TARDIS EFFECT FROM SCRATCH USING A SAMPLE OF HOUSE KEYS...

LEE ADAMS

John concludes: "One of the things that was key for us was to mix and match the story lengths for the Fifth Doctor sets so you could have the freedom to tell a six-parter or a four-parter and a two-parter. We've got a couple of three-parters in the next set so this is by no means the end of the craziness we're playing with in episode counts!" **VORTEX**

DOCTOR WHO
THE FIFTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES
FORTY 2



■ RELEASED: SEPTEMBER 2022
■ FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

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HOLMES TIME

With *Out of Time* at an end, have you considered carrying on the series but not necessarily with David Tennant? I'd love to hear a David Bradley and Colin Baker team-up, also the Third and Fourth Doctors. Though if David Tennant came back for more, that'd be good too. And secondly, could I also suggest that along with your superb *Sherlock Holmes*, you consider the teaming of Nicholas Rowe and Alan Cox as Holmes and Watson as older versions of their interpretations from *Young Sherlock Holmes*? Maybe in less canon and more fantasy stories.

ADRIAN MAJ

Nick: Interesting and fun ideas, Adrian! I think we must be sparing

in our Doctor mash-ups but they are fun – let's see what develops over the years in relation to actor availability. Of course, Nicholas Rowe and Alan Cox are pretty much the same age as Richard Earl and me!

BROUGHT TO BOOK?

I am a huge fan of the **Doctor Who Novel Adaptations** range and was just wondering why it was cancelled or if we would ever see a revival of that series?

B TOWNSEND

Nick: I'm guessing that you've never listened to the Big Finish Podcast — which is fair enough – 'B'. But if you had, you'd know that we've been answering this question for about five years! Sadly the novel adaptations did not sell well enough for them to be continued.



SHADOW PLAYS

I was just wondering if there are any plans to bring back the **Dark Shadows** range? I adored *Bloodlust* and *Bloodline*! Is another full-cast series a possibility?

KEITH-ANDREW KERSHAW

Nick: The range hasn't been cancelled, Keith-Andrew, and we're

*hoping that things will get moving soon. We're currently waiting on the producer of *Dark Shadows*.*

MASTER PLANS

Are there any more stories and/or box sets in the planning that will feature or include John Simm as the Master? I loved *Masterful*, and I can't believe there wouldn't be sufficient interest and/or audience to have him return to the role for Big Finish.

BOB JAMES

Nick: Sorry, no plans at the moment, Bob.

GREEN THINKING

I'm a long-standing purchaser of practically every **Doctor Who**-related release of yours since 1999. I'm also concerned, like everyone else, about the environment. I know I can purchase downloads instead of CDs but I wondered if you envisage a time when downloads will be the only choice?

STEPHEN BROWN

Nick: This is a very pertinent question, Stephen. We're currently investigating ways to make our physical releases more environmentally responsible. As I have said in this column previously, the trend is that CDs are selling fewer and fewer copies – particularly since the COVID-19 lockdowns – and we're now in a position where 70% of purchases are actually downloads. There's no sign of a slow-down or reversal of this trend, but as long as there is a demand for CDs we'll do our best to produce them.

VORTEX



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2.2 Into the Stars (BOX SET)

DW | THE NINTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES
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TV CENTURY 21 AUDIO ANNUAL 2022
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Jekyll and Hyde

TORCHWOOD *Suckers* (64)

SEPTEMBER 2022

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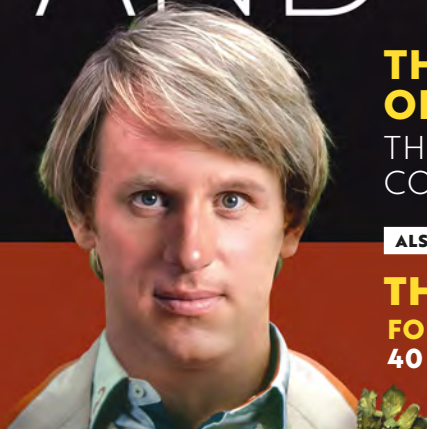
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AUGUST 2022
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