

VORTEX

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RANI TAKES ON THE WORLD

THE REVENGE OF WORMWOOD

THE SECOND *Rani Takes on the World* box set will see our heroes Rani Chandra (played by Anjali Mohindra) and Clyde Langer (Daniel Anthony) take on an old foe. In *The Revenge of Wormwood*, Samantha Bond (best-known as Miss Moneypenny in the Pierce Brosnan James Bond films) returns as Mrs Wormwood – leader of malevolent aliens the Bane – for the first time in 15 years.

Mrs Wormwood first appeared in *The Sarah Jane Adventure*'s pilot television episode, before making a comeback in the season two finale. Samantha laughs: "Getting back into character was really rather easy. I hadn't forgotten her and she hadn't forgotten me – it's been a lovely experience. I don't get to play baddies very often and the audio scripts are captivating."

Producer Emily Cook says: "What an absolute treat to have Samantha return to the world of *The Sarah Jane Adventures*! It's a testament to the show that these actors are so keen to reprise their roles. We wanted to raise the stakes for Rani and co. in volume two and what could be better than bringing back the Bane?" **VORTEX**

RANI TAKES ON THE WORLD THE REVENGE OF WORMWOOD

- RELEASED: DECEMBER 2023
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EDITORIAL

THERE HAS always been something about the whole concept of lost and unmade **Doctor Who** scripts that has fascinated me. Those of us who were fans in the 1980s were well aware of the fact that a whole season of adventures planned for 1986 had been scrapped and replaced with what became *The Trial of a Time Lord*. And when the Target novelisations of these came out, I was just desperate to read them.

When the Big Finish **Lost Stories** range was first announced, I subscribed to the stories with glee, starting with John Ainsworth's fantastic adaptation of *The Nightmare Fair* which not only used Graham Williams's original scripts but tapped into the novelisation for some additional content, keeping it as faithful as possible to the writer's voice.

That sums up the level of care that has gone into this range over the years, bringing us lots of stories we'd heard of – and just as many we hadn't – thanks to the work of people like Richard Bignell.

I'm really excited to hear this month's release of *The Ark* in its original form by John Lucarotti, long before it was rewritten by Robert Holmes to include the Wirrn and become *The Ark in Space*. I remember reading about it having individual episode titles like *Puffball* and *Golfball*, and the Doctor apparently defeating the aliens by hitting their heads into space with a golf club!

But it seems this was not actually the case... roll on the arrival of this version to separate the fact from the fiction! **VORTEX**

Kerry



HOME and Away

The Seventh Doctor still has Harry Sullivan and Naomi Cross at his side, and the pair find themselves far from home...

THE SEVENTH Doctor picked up his old friends Harry Sullivan and Naomi Cross last year, having left them behind on Earth in the 21st century, whilst in his fourth incarnation.

We've still not been told too much about what happened but we might find out a little more in the next **The Seventh Doctor Adventures** box set, *Far From Home*. Sylvester McCoy is joined once again by Christopher Naylor as Harry and Eleanor Crooks as Naomi.

We open with *Operation Dusk*, which has been written by Alfie Shaw. He says this TARDIS team is: "A very interesting challenge. They've had a lot of adventures with each other, but we've yet to get a key part of their travels in terms of releases. I'd heard their **UNIT: Nemesis**

stories and was able to read their first few adventures. Fortunately, the Seventh Doctor and Harry are characters I've grown up with so it was easy to key into their voices."

Alfie believes that finding the key to this TARDIS team's dynamic is: "Leaning into their unique situation. Harry is now a veteran time-traveller, having gone on at least three sets of TARDIS travels. Naomi is similarly experienced. Both of them have been pulled away from their lives in two different decades, so their position is unique among **Doctor Who** companions.

"Of course, the other element is the Doctor who's trying to get them home but is taking the long way around. Everyone has a slightly different view on it, and that was an interesting source of tension

to explore. They're all friends, but it is a precarious situation."

A familiar foe is on hand in this set, as a deadly menace is lurking in the shadows. Alfie describes *Operation Dusk* as: "A World War Two-based murder mystery with the Vashta Nerada. Putting the Vashta Nerada in the Blitz really appealed as it made both light and dark dangerous for the TARDIS team. The trick then was to try and find something to go along with the Vashta Nerada, as even in their debut adventure several other elements are in play."

As a Big Finish listener of many years, Alfie was overjoyed to have the chance to write this script.

He says his personal highlight was: "Getting to write for Sylvester. The first ever Big Finish story I heard was *The Fearmonger*, so being able to write



Above (l-r): Sylvester McCoy and Indra Ove

a full-cast Seventh Doctor story has been on my Big Finish bingo card since I joined the company. I can't wait to hear the phrase 'Vashta Nerada' with the Seventh Doctor's rolling r's!"

NAOMI'S ARK by Alison

Winter is the second full-cast tale in this set. Ali tells *Vortex*: "All I had to go on was that this story would need to be set among the stars to contrast with this TARDIS team's previous adventures, and that it would also present the opportunity for Naomi to discover more agency than she had been afforded in her original time period. I knew I wanted her exposed to a completely different reality and power structure, so we could watch her strive to find a new centre of gravity, and a new power.

"When the Doctor, Harry and Naomi are separated light-years apart in a distant galaxy, Naomi finds herself in the company of some very unusual aliens who surprisingly need her help. Meanwhile, Harry and the Doctor realise any attempts to rescue her

HE WOULD HAVE HAD TIME TO REFLECT ON HIS YOUNGER, MORE MANIPULATIVE SELF, AND THE GUILT AROUND HURTING HIS FRIENDS...

ALISON WINTER

would be at the expense of an already critically endangered civilisation."

Ali found this TARDIS team a joy to bring to life: "They are a brilliant trio to write for. I love Harry's almost fuddy-duddy propriety contrasted with Naomi's witty candour. They both encounter very different worlds in this story, which touch them in different ways.

"As for the Seventh Doctor, it's fascinating to explore his older years. He would have had time to reflect

on his younger, more manipulative self, and the guilt around hurting his friends or putting them in danger. He's trying hard not to be that person, perhaps even atone, when he's confronted by his own old behaviours and clumsy failures. But this story throws up some questions about what and who the universe needs him to be, and perhaps within that he can forgive himself.

"I loved creating a very different and inspiring civilisation. It's one that rivals the wisdom and longevity of the Time Lords and gives the Doctor food for thought, let alone Naomi and Harry. But most of all, on a personal note, the Seventh Doctor and Ace were my TARDIS team. Just two seasons but as a child that's a lot of stories, worlds, creatures and moments. To be able to write for my Doctor, but also to continue his story after I thought it had all just disappeared when I was 10 is magical. It's like getting your imaginary friend back. Frankly, it's wicked!"

THERE IS also another of the narrated *Interlude* releases in this set which features the Seventh Doctor but earlier in his timeline. *Frozen Worlds* has been written by Katharine Armitage, who says: "The idea was to create something for the Seventh Doctor and Ace but in prose rather than script which would act as a (hopefully) surprise little bonus for listeners who really commit to **The Seventh Doctor Adventures**. I was really excited from the off because I knew Sophie Aldred would be reading it and I absolutely love her work as a performer and voice artist; the subtle shift that takes her from storyteller to Ace is a beautiful thing to witness.

"The brief was wonderfully open because there was no limit on the number of characters, places or time. It was also suggested that it would be for a young version of Ace which was lovely as I like exploring her early travels with the Doctor, and how that shapes the epic hero she becomes. So I let my brain wonder into some of its stranger corners and came up with the idea of the Flitters – benign bird-like creatures who feed off the potential energy of decisions. And then I let things go wrong!"

"The story sees the Doctor and Ace arriving on a farming planet where Ace is instantly drawn to the Flitters and a game the locals play which allows them glimpses into other worlds. But, of course, the Doctor has an ulterior motive for being there and his not telling Ace the whole story leads her into great danger."

Kat has previously written full-cast scripts for Big Finish, so how did she find writing in this different form?

She explains: "I absolutely loved getting the chance to write prose. One of my problems as a script writer

HE WAS AN ANARCHIC ICON OF MY YOUTH. I HAVE HEAPS OF MEMORIES OF HIM LARKING ABOUT ON SHOWS LIKE VISION ON...

CHRISTOPHER NAYLOR



Above (l-r): Alfie Shaw, Pepter Lunkuse, Christopher Naylor, Sylvester McCoy, Eleanor Crooks, Emily Raymond, Nicholas Rowe and Samuel Clemens

is that I can be overly wordy and get carried away by strings of nice-sounding language, so it was really fun to get to brush off my simile-writing skills and dive into some imagery.

"I also adored being able to create Ace's inner monologue which is something you don't get to do with regular dialogue. I have always felt oddly connected to the character (even though we're really very different people) and so I just loved living in her mind for a bit. Honestly I had a blast writing it and I only hope it's as much fun to listen to."

For Chris Naylor, it's been a real joy working with another Doctor, having had the chance to enjoy Tom Baker's companionship on many

occasions, and now adding the seventh incarnation of the Time Lord to his 'collection'. Chris has stepped into Harry Sullivan's blazer and slacks with a consummate ease, capturing the constant surprise but steadfast loyalty of the naval surgeon.

IT WAS FIRST revealed in 2020 that the Fourth Doctor would be joined on his travels by Harry and Naomi – a UNIT secretary – and we'd get to hear their adventures together in **The Fourth Doctor Adventures Series 13**, Volume 1, currently scheduled for release in March 2024. Thanks to **UNIT: Nemesis** and **The Seventh Doctor Adventures**, we've already

had an introduction to this pairing and we'll find out just why they were on 21st century Earth in *Storm of the Sea Devils*.

Chris says: "It's been an absolute blast working with Sylvester. Much like Tom, he was an anarchic icon of my youth. I have heaps of memories of him larking about on shows like **Vision On**, hammering nails into his face with Ken Campbell and generally looking like he was having a wonderful time. He is a joy to work with, a really lovely and properly eccentric chap."

For one of the Doctor's most grounded and down to earth companions, how does Chris think Harry has found these adventures, travelling with such a very different incarnation? Chris tells *Vortex*: "Since Harry first crossed paths with the Doctor, I think he's become used to life being chaotic and dangerous – not Harry's naturally happy place!

"But as much as he'd love to get back home again and put his feet up, he still throws himself into any challenges that life with the Doctor brings. The Seventh Doctor is just as mercurial and unpredictable as the Fourth, but perhaps a little less brusque..."

Chris is also enjoying working with Eleanor as Naomi, with the pair already having created their own double act. Chris adds: "Ellie is brilliant, and it's always great to get back in the studio with her. I think we've been working together since about 2018 and long may it continue. Harry and Naomi have a very funny and warm relationship, rather like squabbling siblings at times, but I think they have a lot to teach each other.

"I really loved listening to Ellie recording Naomi's space cowboy exploits in *Naomi's Ark*. It's just wonderful. I think people will really love it." **VORTEX**

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THE LOST STORIES: THE ELITE

WHILE THE first two seasons of *The Lost Stories* mainly concentrate on the Sixth and Seventh Doctors, in the next set Peter Davison was able to bring to life stories that were conceived for his incarnation on television but ultimately never made.

Season three features a trio of adventures for the Fifth Doctor and the first of these, *The Elite*, was released at the tail end of 2011. It was adapted by John Dorney from a storyline submitted by Barbara Clegg, the writer of *Enlightenment* on television.

Producer David Richardson tells *Vortex*: “We had a meeting with Barbara Clegg during season one for *Point of Entry*, and the possibility of also adapting *The Elite* was at the forefront of my mind.”

John says: “*The Elite* was about two and a half-typed pages. Quite a lot of detail in there but also lots of scope for expansion. Loads of little bits and references that weren’t quite set up, weren’t quite paid off or explored fully.”

The Elite contains a twist with the

reappearance of an old enemy, whose presence was kept as a surprise – although it was hinted at on the CD cover with a recognisable alien (and readers of the small print on the back of the CD release may have seen the copyright credit for Terry Nation!).

John reveals that little of what would become the story structure of the play was in place, especially the reveal of the High Priest at the end of part one.

He says: “The storyline I received was complete – beginning, middle and end – but too thin for four episodes. It was up to me how I expanded it so I brought up the church angle which wasn’t really emphasised in the original to make up some of the time.

“In the original storyline the Dalek doesn’t appear until the last paragraph or so. David had initially said we should have it appear at the end of part three, but then suggested the end of part two so we could have ‘two episodes of Dalek action’ – which couldn’t be further from what he got! I wanted to reflect the original storyline where it only appeared briefly, and this gave me the idea of

bumping it off early, which excited me as it made all the thematic ideas click. So in that sense episode four is largely me, but the original storyline wasn’t incomplete in the *Foe from the Future* sense.”

David adds: “I think it’s a smashing concept with a really stellar twist – and it’s something that John worked brilliantly into this adaptation. Actually this production is a favourite of mine, and that ending for episode two never fails to send a shiver down my spine.”

John is very happy with the final audio, and writing it was a happy experience. He concludes: “When I thought of the end of episode three twist I was desperately excited but David kept saying ‘no’... so I sent him the whole storyline with my fingers crossed, and he emailed back saying, ‘I love this’. I literally jumped around the house with excitement. And then I really enjoyed writing it. I watched a lot of the episodes from my childhood as research, and had a thoroughly good time. And then to be in the studio with that cracking cast, such a joy.” **VORTEX**

DOCTOR WHO THE LOST STORIES: THE ELITE



■ RELEASED: OCTOBER 2011
■ FORMAT: DOWNLOAD

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THE TORCHWOOD TEAM ARE STILL ON THE RUN...

AMONG OLD FRIENDS

AFTER TWO series of official continuations following the television show in the highly-acclaimed **Torchwood** *Aliens Among Us* and *God Among Us*, the second volume of *Among Us* sees the team continue to seek safe spaces as the world puts itself back together again. But of course, there's trouble ahead and Team Torchwood are there to pick up the pieces – with something nasty hiding in them.

Familiar names returning to hunt aliens include Murray Melvin (in his

final performance as Billis Manger before his recent passing), Paul Clayton (Mr Colchester), Tracy-Ann Oberman (Yvonne Hartman), Tom Price (Andy Davidson), Samantha Béart (Orr), Alexandria Riley (Ng), Jonny Green (Tyler Steele), and one Gareth David-Lloyd... playing the deceased Ianto Jones!

Also making a special appearance is **It's a Sin** and **The Witcher: Blood Origin** star, Nathaniel Curtis as Vijay. And there are plenty of events to contend with. Orr's on a mercy mission to a doomed city. Sgt Andy

is visiting an old flame in prison. Billis Manger spends a night in the Torchwood Hub. And Mr Colchester has to keep the most hated man in Britain alive for one more day.

The set opens with *Propaganda* by Ash Darby. Orr is desperate to get to *Voloshnik*. The city's sealed off in the middle of a war the world's forgotten. There has to be someone left to save.

Producer James Goss explains: "*Propaganda* is a story about a forgotten war which, at the time it was written, was about a forgotten war in Ukraine. So much time



WHO DOESN'T WANT TO LOCK YVONNE UP AND LET HER CAUSE HAVOC?

TIM FOLEY

has passed that not only have we all remembered about the war in Ukraine, we're all forgetting about it again. It features Orr – Orr is determined to try and save some people while stumbling over what could be the ultimate weapon."

At Her Majesty's Pleasure by Tim Foley is the second adventure in the set. *Yvonne Hartman* in a very special prison. And there's absolutely no way out of it. So why is she convinced she's escaped?

James says: "The title is no longer quite as ambiguous as it once was since recording, but it's still glorious. It's a reverse version of *Prison Break*, with Andy convinced that Yvonne's escaped from the prison he put her in at the end of the last box set. But everyone else knows that she's still there."

Writer Tim adds: "Who doesn't

want to lock Yvonne up and let her cause havoc? I had a brilliant time reuniting her and Andy, they're two of my favourites from the *Among Us* crew. They've swapped secrets, swapped bodies, it's the ultimate romance right?"

Tracy-Ann Oberman says: "Yvonne is the person you want in the world – she's always ahead of the game. The writers really know this world and have invested in it. Everything has a logic and meaning so there's a pay-off later."

Tom Price is delighted, as ever, to be back: "It's great fun to play Andy Davidson. He's still got the bouncy enthusiasm – leaping into every situation and reacting with real honesty."

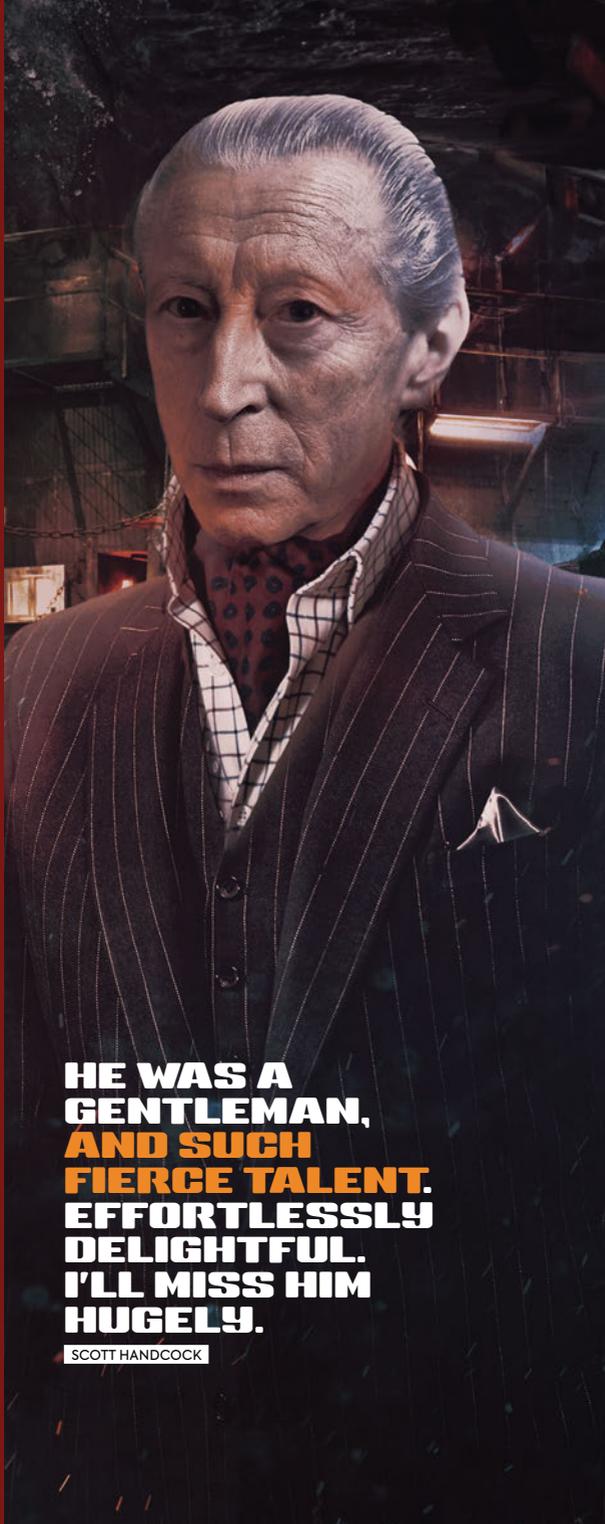
Tim is also the writer of the third story in the set, *Cuckoo*. A group of urban explorers get

into the Torchwood Hub. They disturb Bilis Manger who has his own plans for the evening.

James says: "Cuckoo's a glorious, wicked script by Tim Foley. Possibly one of the more astonishing casts of any of Big Finish given how huge Nathaniel Curtis has become since we recorded it. It features urban explorers breaking into the ruins of the Torchwood Hub and finding way more than they bargained for."

Tim grins: "I love this one. It's a very different story for the *Among Us* range – writing for characters I wasn't sure we'd see again. We also get to put the Hub front and centre, and realise just how scary it can be."

Nathaniel says of the recording: "What a lovely group of people. It's been so enjoyable to bounce off each other. Bilis Manger is genuinely quite frightening!"



**HE WAS A
GENTLEMAN,
AND SUCH
FIERCE TALENT.
EFFORTLESSLY
DELIGHTFUL.
I'LL MISS HIM
HUGELY.**

SCOTT HANDCOCK

Very sadly, Murray Melvin passed away at the age of 90 on 14 April. Director Scott Handcock says: "Heartbroken to hear about Murray Melvin's passing. It's preoccupied me a lot today. But so it should. He was a marvel. 'We did have such fun', he said the other week. And we did. He was a gentleman, and such fierce talent. Effortlessly delightful. I'll miss him hugely."

PARIAHS BY James Goss concludes the set. *We've all spent the last two years sticking our DNA in jars and sending it off in the post. But what happened to it? Two people know the secrets of the Phobos Scandal, and Torchwood have to keep them alive.*

James tells Vortex: "An inquiry is going on – will the most powerful man in the country attend or will he get killed before he can give evidence? This features a terribly brutal comedy death. It's all about the work of Nudge Units – who've oddly become much more famous since we started work on this box set.

"But it's the idea of who really runs the country, and how do you make people decide things? Madly, this one has been in the works for so long it was originally about a discredited member of the royal family, but we decided that was going too close to the bone and instead made it about the prime minister's special adviser. Who can say which of these is more timely now?" **VORTEX**

TORCHWOOD AMONG US 2



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FINDING THE LOST

The Lost Stories is my favourite Big Finish range. I love hearing adventures that could have been on TV but ultimately never made it. The slight twist on **The Lost Stories** that started with *Return of the Cybermen* featuring earlier drafts gives a wonderful insight on the journey these stories had before hitting our screens. It's fascinating. Any chance of adapting the original *Pyramids of Mars* by Lewis Grierfer? The outline that appeared in *Doctor Who Magazine* many years ago tells a very different story set in the 'modern' day and features the Brigadier. An adaptation of Chris Langley's *Space Station* would also nicely complete the Nerva journey, if the scripts still exist.

GERARD PECK

Nick: Interesting ideas, Gerard, I'll suggest this to the team.

GOOD BREAK

I just received my copy of **UFO: Breaking Point**. I want to tell you how much I enjoyed it. Your first release was a magnificent reimagining of one of my all-time favourite shows, and from what I have heard so far this set is even better. I first watched **UFO** when it debuted on ITV and for me, this is like the show is back and re-engaged after the longest ever hiatus. I kee out the stories so that I can savour the experience over a few days, even though I am tempted to gorge myself on the fantastic stories and the talents of the wonderful cast members. This leads me to ask, when can we expect the next release in the series?

TREVOR COOK

Nick: Sadly, there are no further UFO box sets planned, Trevor, because of licensing issues. But we'll let everyone know if that situation changes.

FANTASTIC FRIEND

It may be a slight few months overdue but I wanted to write in as to the utter majesty of the phenomenal **River Song** release, *Friend of the Family*. It has been quite some time since I have experienced a **Doctor Who** story of such a quality, and that is not an insult to the current wonderful quality of stories that are continually released but rather a testament to the fact that I believe it to be one of the best things to ever have the Big Finish logo on it. My compliments to Tim Foley, Alex Kingston and all of the other phenomenal people involved in the project.

'PLUM PUDDING'

Nick: Well, 'Plum', you know you're onto a winner when Tim and Alex are involved!

LAST BUT NOT LEAST

I have had a distant relationship with Big Finish for many years, but I recently re-listened to the Paul McGann story, *The Last*, whilst exercising. I'd completely forgotten how good and how clever this story was and it has rekindled my positive attitude towards audio **Doctor Who** with Big Finish; yes, new purchases have already been made! And, of course, a good reason to continue exercising! However, I did wonder whether the company had plans, through your app, to make direct purchases or to have extra payment methods like Apple Pay?

STEVE TAYLOR

Nick: Glad you're back on board after your time on Flight Red 50, Steve. (That's an old Doctor Who joke, if you didn't get it!). Unfortunately, if we make direct purchases available through our app, Apple take a huge chunk of the money for themselves – so we won't be doing that any time soon.

VORTEX

MARGARET HOPWOOD'S BACK IN
FOUR NEW STORIES, BUT WILL THE
DOCTOR AND LEELA BE HER...



GUARDIAN ANGELS

I **WE'VE RECENTLY** enjoyed the return of Nerys Hughes to **The Fourth Doctor Adventures** as her character, Margaret Hopwood, once more encountered the Time Lord in *Ice Heist!* Margaret's story continues in *Angels and Demons* as she, the Doctor and Leela have four new adventures which will make you laugh, cry and wince in terror! Producer David Richardson tells *Vortex*: "As we head in to the second box set of Margaret Hopwood stories, there's something of a light arc that's beginning to grow.

"Margaret is learning to embrace her adventures in space and time, but discovers that it comes at a cost. We've been able to play with a rather different structure to the season. In a sense *Stone Cold* is the big season finale but we actually end with *The Ghost of Margaret*. Tim Foley's character piece is, of course, gorgeous and moving. So this is a box set of contrasts and colour, of adventures and character development."

The Wizard of Time by Roy Gill is the first tale in the set, and he says: "The brief was very open and it took me a while to work out how I wanted

to approach the task. Eventually I realised that the first place I really got to know Tom Baker's Doctor was in the Target novelisations I'd borrow from the library. For this reason, perhaps, he was sort of mixed up in my imagination with the children's novels I read as a kid: adventures with snow and wolves, magic boxes and wild hunts, elemental danger and never-ending stories!

"I ended up with a script that was a bit unconventional in structure, small in scale and quite personal to me. I hope people enjoy it.

"It's a story of a boy called Jacob



Above - The late Ronald Pickup

who keeps meeting the Doctor and his friends at different stages in his life. The Doctor's TARDIS is under threat from the Raposa, a pack of strange canine-like creatures that run wild in the Time Vortex. The Doctor, Leela and Margaret are thrown from the TARDIS into some snowy woods – and that's where Jacob meets them. Along the way, and over time, Jacob grows up and becomes a writer, and it's that older voice (as played by Ronald Pickup) that tells much of the story."

Roy was delighted to write for this trio. He explains: "I think they're all just really fond of each other. They're strong characters with their own specialities and obsessions, and those quirks come to the fore at different moments. I was very keen to find something for Margaret to do that would lean into her sculptor background. And I always enjoy Louise Jameson's Leela: she's this mixture of wise and naive that can be very endearing and

RONALD PICKUP WAS SUCH GOOD CASTING... HE CARRIES WITH HIM THE RESONANCE AND WEIGHT OF ALL THOSE AMAZING ROLES HE'S PLAYED.

ROY GILL

funny at times. Obviously they both adore this Doctor – don't we all?"

Roy travelled from his home in Scotland to attend the recording in Tunbridge Wells, and recalls: "Tom was magnificent: a source of strange tales and wild improvisations; I'm curious to find out which made it into the final recording. Nerys and Louise were kind and welcoming – Louise even remembered my writing for **The Omega Factor** so that was a good start."

The Wizard of Time features one of the final performances from the

late Ronald Pickup, whose television career began with *The Reign of Terror*.

Roy concludes: "I thought Ronald Pickup was such good casting as the older Jacob Harmer. A great voice and he carries with him the resonance and weight of all those amazing roles he's played. He was so modest about his huge career – I think some of the younger cast were probably a little in awe of him. I feel lucky to be able to say I worked with him."

CHRIS CHAPMAN takes us back in time for *The Friendly Invasion*, a story which was inspired by the Jon Pertwee classic *The Daemons* – but not in the obvious way.

Chris says: "The inspiration for this isn't particularly subtle. In the story, the village that comes under threat is called Westbourne. It's not accidental that it's close to the village of Aldbourne which **Doctor Who** fans know very well as the real life location of Devil's End from *The Daemons*.

"There's a lovely old pub in Aldbourne called The Blue Boar which is on the village green. Hung on the walls in the pub are these beautiful framed pieces of paper and parchments describing the meetings that took place for Easy Company just before they were deployed on D-Day.

Easy Company was a group of American GIs that were featured in **Band of Brothers** – they were stationed in Aldbourne before they went over to France to fight the Nazis.

"I sat in The Blue Boar when I was preparing for a shoot and read them, thinking, 'Wow – how amazing that these guys were over here!'"

The upcoming conflict, plus a **Doctor Who** twist, gave Chris his starting point. He explains: "I was intrigued by the idea of these GIs in this little pub, knowing that they're going to leave soon, cross to Europe and fight for their lives.

"I was thinking what would happen if a **Doctor Who** story occurred on the night before they leave. They'd be having to fight for their lives a day early, essentially. That was my intention.

The Friendly Invasion is not about Easy Company but it is inspired by the troops that were stationed here. It's sort of a tribute to them and I think

it's a very interesting space in which to tell a story because of this idea of the friendly invasion. That was a term which was very popular at the time because of the way some British people thought of the Americans. But I don't think all of the British entirely welcomed their guests."

Chris was delighted to write for this trio of travellers. He explains: "Margaret is a really lovely contrast to Leela. When I was told it was Nerys Hughes playing the part, it felt like such a perfect fit for Tom. She's someone you can imagine being cast in the show in the 1970s, and of course she guest starred in a **Doctor Who** story in the 1980s.

"What you realise when you write for the Doctor and Leela is that they are both crazy, alien people who do things their own way, and don't react the way that you and I

THEY ARE BOTH CRAZY, ALIEN PEOPLE WHO DO THINGS THEIR OWN WAY...

CHRIS CHAPMAN

would react. So with Margaret it's helpful to have a more recognisable human character alongside them.

"Margaret is an older, wiser, slightly sharper, more spiky Sarah Jane kind of character. She can pull the Doctor and Leela up and say, 'Why are you doing that? Why? Why on Earth would we do that? What's going on?' You can write for her in the knowledge that your words are going to be said by a lovely, skilled performer, knowing that she'll be able to bounce off Tom and Louise and not take any nonsense. It's great to see Tom's Doctor with two very strong female characters who will not take anything ridiculous from him."

STONE COLD by Roland Moore brings the Doctor, Leela and Margaret face to face with a 21st century TV series foe which seems apt for a sculptor like Margaret – the Weeping Angels! Roland says: "I asked if I could pitch



Above (l-r): Louise Jameson and Tom Baker



Above (l-r): Nerys Hughes and Tom Baker



Above (l-r): Chase Brown, Evie Killip, Nerys Hughes, Tom Baker, Louise Jameson, Jackson Milner and Barnaby Edwards

a Fourth Doctor story and David told me they were planning stories with the Fourth Doctor, Leela and their companion called Margaret Hopwood.

“David was interested in having a new series monster in it and suggested the Weeping Angels. That was very exciting. My immediate thought was how Leela would face such an enemy. She’s used to never looking away from her opponents, but this would stretch that idea of combat to the limit.

“The only challenge with the story was to think up a slightly new angle for the Weeping Angels but also not to contradict or pre-empt anything that would come later. This time, the foe is more desperate than those we’ve seen before; and that gives things an emotional danger.

“I wanted to write a story about a crashed pleasure liner showing how the crew and holiday makers would respond to a dangerous monster in their midst; something they’re all ill-equipped to handle.

“When we join them, there aren’t many of them left. The captain and crew don’t know what is killing everyone and they’re all living in fear, trapped in the carcass of their ship protected by a failing force field. And into that come

the Doctor, Leela and Margaret.

“When the Doctor works out what is happening it becomes a visceral battle of wills to keep everyone alive.”

Roland admits he had several highlights: “In terms of the script, the scene when the Fourth Doctor first faces their enemy in a small room with Margaret. And secondly, when the Time Lord realises what he is facing – I love the moment when the penny drops.

“And the highlight of the recording was meeting Tom, Louise and Nerys. During a quiet moment, I told Tom and Louise that I had to pinch myself over the fact I was writing for their characters – something my childhood self would never have thought possible.”

THE GHOST of Margaret by Tim Foley brings the 2023 run of **The Fourth Doctor Adventures** to a close. Tim particularly enjoyed having the opportunity to write for this TARDIS trio. He says: “It’s so great writing for an audio-original character. I grew up with Charley and Evelyn, and it’s great Big Finish continue to make these new entry points into the Doctor’s life.

“After the events of *Stone Cold*,

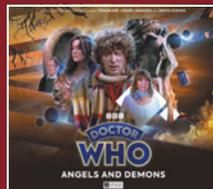
Margaret finds herself making a difficult decision – and it has consequences not just for herself but for her two new friends.”

Tim adds: “This was my second ever **Doctor Who** script, and it was written quite a while after the rest of the series so it was great to be able to read all the other stories and write a conclusion to this lovely arc.”

And we’re not saying any more than that to keep the events a surprise!

VORTEX

THE FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES ANGELS AND DEMONS



■ RELEASED: JUNE 2023
■ FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

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**SURVIVAL IS A PREFERENCE FOR THE
ALIEN RACES, IN WHAT IS KNOWN AS...**

ARKLIFE

IN MARCH 2021, Big Finish released a familiar **Doctor Who** story but not quite as we knew it. Gerry Davis's *Return of the Cybermen*, written for Tom Baker's first season as the Doctor, appeared on our television screens as *Revenge of the Cybermen* after being extensively revised by script editor Robert Holmes.

Big Finish went back to the original *Return of the Cybermen* script for its audio version, adapted by John Dorney. And two more of these **Lost Scripts** are being released this year. *Daleks: Genesis of Terror* [see last month's *Vortex*] will be available in May, with *The Ark* released in June.

The Ark was written by John Lucarotti, but when Robert Holmes revamped it for release

as *The Ark in Space*, he added a host of elements including the Wirrn (or Wirrrn, if you prefer).

And now we'll be able to hear the story as first penned. Tom Baker stars as the Fourth Doctor alongside Sadie Miller (playing Sarah Jane Smith) and Christopher Naylor (playing Harry Sullivan).

Producer Simon Guerrier says of looking over the original script: "It was thrilling! I'd read accounts of the draft and how odd it was, and was tantalised by some of the details – the weird episode titles especially. It all sounded very peculiar and intriguing.

"But I didn't think the script had survived so it was a bit of a shock to learn from David Richardson that not only had clever Richard Bignell found them, but that we had the rights to

produce an audio version. I leapt at the chance to read the original document. Treasure from the archives!"

Writer Jonathan Morris says: "From reading interviews with John Lucarotti, I expected a story about a race that consisted of disembodied heads that were a kind of fungus that released spores to reproduce. But it seems that Lucarotti had misremembered it, because the story in the script was almost entirely different from the one that had been described in those interviews – it had so much more going on!

"It was also interesting to watch the TV episode and see which bits had been picked up by Robert Holmes when he adapted it into *The Ark in Space*. Stuff like a creature being able to move through vents, and a



Above (l-r): Tom Baker and Sadie Miller

set-piece of Sarah having to crawl through the ducting – and even odd lines referring to a dust extractor.”

Simon continues: “Two things really struck me. Firstly, I’d expected this first draft to be awful and assumed that was why it got extensively reworked. In fact, a lot of what made it to the screen is here, and there are lots of good ideas and dramatic moments including an amazing cliffhanger. It’s a good story, worth telling. I think that then new producer Philip Hinchcliffe and script editor Robert Holmes were ambitious to make it much more. So reading the script and working on this adaptation have been really revealing about what the two of them brought to **Doctor Who**.

“Secondly, it’s clearly not written for Tom Baker’s Doctor as we know him. This is a different, more cerebral, less action-oriented character, one who comes to the Ark on purpose as a sort of benign custodian of humanity. I think Tom was really taken by that too, and wanted to play the Doctor differently. So I got an insight into his working methods and his contribution to the Fourth Doctor. I thought I knew *The Ark in Space*

I EXPECTED A STORY ABOUT A RACE THAT CONSISTED OF DISEMBODED HEADS THAT WERE A KIND OF FUNGUS...

JONATHAN MORRIS

really well but working on this story has really opened it up. I hope that’s what listeners will get from it too.”

JONNY, ADAPTING the script from completed drafts, explains: “In adapting *The Ark*, I tried to simulate the process that it would have gone through if it had been put on TV, where the cast and the director would have taken the script in rehearsals and polished it up a bit. Not altering the meaning but just tweaking lines to make the dialogue more of a back-and-forth, and to make things clearer.

“The main challenge was that a big chunk of episodes three and four is about Harry and various characters spacewalking outside the Ark which, if it had been on TV, would have been

mostly visual with very little dialogue. So it needed to be taken apart and put back together again beat-by-beat to work for the audio medium.

“What I found most interesting about the script was that it was written at a point when the show’s producers didn’t know whether or not the Doctor would be a man of action, and so they included Harry Sullivan to get into fights and so on.

“And this script is from a very specific point in time; it’s written to a different format to the one that ended up on screen, being much more like how it was in the 1960s with the First Doctor and Ian, or the First Doctor and Steven. The Doctor is written as a Hartnell-type figure, tinkering with electronics, and being cryptic and absent-minded, while Harry is the one who does a spacewalk and gets into punch-ups. It’s very interesting as a piece of **Doctor Who** archaeology!”

Simon concludes: “I’m really glad David Richardson suggested that we get Terry Molloy to play Noah in this rather than just have him as a cameo in *Daleks! Genesis of Terror*. I’ve met Terry previously at conventions but this is the first time we’ve worked together, and he was really engaging and enthusiastic. The whole cast were great and seemed to relish the oddness of the story. Director Samuel Clemens made the whole thing run very smoothly. And I should mention Mark Hendrick the sound designer who is new to Big Finish and has done the most fantastic job.” **VORTEX**

DOCTOR WHO
THE LOST STORIES: THE ARK



■ RELEASED: JUNE 2023
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ArtLife

THE FIFTH DOCTOR'S ABOUT TO ENCOUNTER HIS DAUGHTER AND ANOTHER FAMILIAR FACE, AS *ONCE AND FUTURE* CONTINUES THE DOCTOR WHO 60TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS...

THE DOCTOR is in trouble, slipping through his different incarnations, after being caught up in the aftermath of a weapon in the Time War.

The Artist at the End of Time, the second part of *Once and Future*, has been written by James Goss.

After being introduced to the Big Finish 60th anniversary story in May's release, this time the Fifth Doctor is taking centre stage. And he's joined by a couple of well-known faces in the form of Jenny – the cloned daughter of the tenth incarnation, and the Curator – who

bears an uncanny resemblance to an older Sixth Doctor.

Producer David Richardson says: "This was one of the last episodes to be recorded and the story that went through the most revisions. Absolutely nothing to do with James's work (which is, of course, beyond the highest standard). We just had trouble nailing who The Artist should be. It's such an important and unusual role in the story, and we had to find the one key character that it would fit like a glove. We tried drafts with three different established **Who** characters before we settled on the one that – once he was in place – was obvious that it's who it should have been from the very beginning.

"The Curator, with a key role in the 60th anniversary, is celebrating his own 10th anniversary too. Everything is finally locked in, and this is a brilliant episode to behold."

Writer James tells *Vortex*: "I

don't think the Doctor considers immortality that much. Nor do they really agonise about what they'll leave behind. After all, the universe is the Doctor's life's work. Some of us will leave behind a best selling beach read, a charitable foundation, a large family or a nicely knitted jumper, and that'll be enough for us. But if the Doctor ever worried about their legacy, what would that be like?

"Part of the inspiration for this story comes from the fact that so many of the Doctor's earlier adventures are missing. How would the Doctor react if they found that out? Would they care? (Actually, that's a good game to play. I think the Third and Sixth Doctor would be FURIOUS, the Eleventh and Fourth quietly amused).

"This story is also inspired by the insane world of art collecting. At the time I was writing this, Banksy had just shredded a work of art at



Above (l-r): Georgia Tennant and Peter Davison

auction. You may remember that everyone was appalled and then the remains actually went up in value!”

GEORGIA TENNANT is delighted to be back as Jenny, encountering two of the Time Lords. This will be the third time she's worked with her father, Peter Davison, having begun her acting career back in 2000 in *Red Dawn*, before working with him in Big Finish's 20th anniversary tale, **The Legacy of Time: Relative Time**.

Georgia says: “I have been bringing Jenny back through Big Finish for quite a while now and each time I do I can honestly say it's the best part of my working year. To be able to collaborate with writers, directors, producers and actors on a show from the start is such a privilege and not something that happens very often.

“I feel like I'm always working with Dad – is this only the third time?! I love working with him. It's so nice to see a different side to him – he's

IT SEEMS TO HAVE TURNED INTO A COMPETITION AS TO WHO CAN TALK THE FASTEST.

GEORGIA TENNANT

very impressive to watch. It seems to have turned into a competition as to who can talk the fastest. 'Fast is funny' he always says. Pretty sure he still wins! I learn a lot from him, but don't tell him that.

“*The Artist at the End of Time* was particularly good as I got to work with both Dad and Colin Baker. I've known Colin since I was very small, so it was a little like being a kid back in the 1980s. They haven't changed and their rapport is pretty special. It was fun

to try and find my space in that.”

Talking of the plot, James explains: “This story poses the idea of what will happen to art when the universe begins to die. I'm sure there'd be a bit of a boom in the art market as civilisations are reduced to one artefact.

“I imagine the bidding on the final artefacts would start out as frantic and excited – but what would happen as the universe continues to shrink?

“What will it be like living at the sunset of the universe? We can see some of it already as billionaires plan their own immortality, building themselves new bodies and bunkers, refusing to admit that death will come for them too.

“I guess this is where this story is heading. It's about a Doctor displaced from themselves, finding themselves again by being washed up at the one point in the universe's history where they have to ask if it's all been worth it. And they're about to find out the answer...”

Georgia concludes: “**Doctor Who** has always been in my life in quite a real and present way, so not to have been involved in the 60th anniversary would have felt like not being invited to a family wedding.

“I'm so honoured to have managed to carve out a little section of the Whoniverse with Jenny, I'm really glad the fans have allowed me and her to do that. Long may **Doctor Who** continue. Happy 60th, Dad.” **VORTEX**

DOCTOR WHO ONCE AND FUTURE: THE ARTIST AT THE END OF TIME



- RELEASED: JUNE 2023
- FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

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THE DOCTOR MAY
HAVE BEEN TOLD
“YOU ARE NOT
ALONE”, BUT THE
WAR MASTER IS...

ON HIS OWN

THE MASTER is one of the most corrupt beings the Time Lord race has ever produced. His crimes are without number and his villainy without end – so it’s about time he was punished for his sins!

The War Master faces *Solitary Confinement* in June, the ninth box set in **The War Master** series starring Sir Derek Jacobi.

Scott Handcock, the script editor, producer and director of the range, worked on this and the next two sets of **The War Master** adventures before handing over the reins. He says: “I’ve absolutely loved bringing the War

Master back to life at Big Finish. Not only do I love the character but the opportunity to work with Derek has been a highlight of my career. We’ve thrown him into so many strange and varied situations... and there are a great many more to come!”

The Walls of Absence by James Goss is the introductory story in the box set, bringing together two of the stars of **I, Claudius** as Sir Derek is reunited with Siân Phillips.

James tells *Vortex*: “This is an attempt to do a love story – a romance for the War Master. So I’ve created a character who we believe could fall in love with him. We know it’ll end

badly, but it’s a small story about love in the middle of a Time War.

“It’s a delight that Scott pulled off such a coup and reunited Sir Derek with Dame Siân from **I, Claudius**. And they’re just magnificent together. There comes a point where you’re not sure who is playing against who!

“What I like about this story is that you actually root for the War Master. He’s ill and needs help, and he finds that help and becomes a better person as a result of it. But when he has the option of changing for the better, does he? Well, obviously not! But is it really that simple?”



Above (l-r): Eva Pope, Jack Forsyth-Noble, Lois Chimimba and Silas Carson

EVERYBODY LOVES WRITING FOR THE VILLAINS!

TIM FOLEY

Primeval. He had some interesting stories – about his dad too.”

THE LIFE and *Loves of Mr Alexander Bennett* is written by Alfie Shaw, who was delighted to write for the series. Alfie tells *Vortex*: “I’ve been a huge fan of the range since it began so it was such an honour to be invited to write for the War Master. It’s a bit of a quirk that this was actually the first War Master script I wrote, even though it’s the second one of mine to be released!

THE LONG Despair by Tim Foley continues the War Master’s travels, and the author admits there’s a real joy to be found in writing for this character. Tim explains:

“Everybody loves writing for the villains! Writing for Sir Derek Jacobi is a treat and it’s a privilege to put words in his mouth. To take advantage of his silky voice, I thought I’d put him in a nautical tale that’s semi-narrated by the War Master. It’s an evocative performance.”

Summing up the plot, Tim says: “The War Master has to hire a sea captain to reach an unusual light. The duo must undergo many trials at sea and face ‘the long despair’...”

One of Tim’s highlights of the whole process was guest star Jason Flemyng, the son of Gordon Flemyng who directed the two 1960s Dalek films with Peter Cushing.

Tim adds: “It was just great getting Jason in, I used to watch him on

“The War Master is such a joy to write for as he’s so thoroughly evil and ruthless while also being capable of great charm. You can go a lot darker with the stories than in the ranges that are led by heroes. I like taking things as close to the line as we can in terms of darkness.”

What was in Alfie’s brief from Scott? He says: “‘The War Master as Alexa’ was the entirety of the brief. But, what a gift of a brief it was! I detest all of those voice activated home assistant unit things – I find them really creepy – so it was an easy thing to channel it into the adventure.”

“The script’s messed up! Possibly not quite as messed up as *The Adventure of the Deceased Doctor* got, but it’s another one where the Master does some really disturbing things. I don’t think I could do a **War Master** story without him doing something utterly despicable in a very casual way. It feels like his entire MO.”

Alfie says his high point was: “Well obviously getting to write for Sir



Above (l-r): Amanda Shodeko, Jacob Dudman and Mateo Oxley

Derek is always a highlight. And I got to have fun with some of the character names. In fact, one of them has the best character name I've ever come up with, although people will have to listen to it to find out why..."

THE FINAL adventure, *The Kicker*, marks Trevor Baxendale's first script for the series. Trevor says: "I was invited to pitch ideas for **The War Master** series at the end of 2019. I sent three brief outlines and Scott was kind enough to like one of them – a story about the War Master in an asylum that he thought would fit in well with one of the upcoming themes.

"Scott was looking for this adventure to be the concluding part of a set with an added twist. The story went through quite a few different permutations before we agreed on a final version – and that development process continued

ONE OF THEM HAS THE BEST CHARACTER NAME I'VE EVER COME UP WITH...

ALFIE SHAW

well into writing the actual script too – but the basic brief and conclusion remained the same.

"The War Master is being held in an asylum – or is he? How do we know it's really the Master and not some delusional old man? An agent of the Temporal Inquisition arrives to find

out the truth but with the Master, the truth is never what it seems."

Trevor wrote the Big Finish audio novel *Terror of the Master*. So how did he enjoy writing for this incarnation of the Master compared to the Delgado incarnation?

He explains: "I enjoyed it very much, the chance to write for Sir Derek doesn't come along very often. I loved his brief, wicked appearance on TV as the Master so it was a delight to return to that incarnation. The Master, in all his forms, can be so charming and evil, and Sir Derek really brings out the enduring allure of the character: someone who you really rather like but is intrinsically, irredeemably, evil.

"This was a chance to dig into a story that was more of a character piece, something I probably haven't done much of before, and come up with interrogation scenes that were basically two-handers to allow Sir Derek full reign with his Master to be as charming, cunning, clever and wicked as possible."

He adds that his highlight was: "Writing for Sir Derek and knowing that he enjoyed it. That, ultimately, is my personal highlight. But I'm really pleased with the way the story turned out too – it's probably much cleverer, and richer, than anything I've done before.

"It certainly wasn't easy, and Scott – being the brilliant and incredibly patient editor that he is – really pushed me on it and I'm so grateful for that. It was worth all the blood, sweat and tears in the end." **VORTEX**

THE WAR MASTER SOLITARY CONFINEMENT



■ RELEASED: JUNE 2023
■ FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

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VORTEX

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FINISH OF STORIES

TORCHWOOD

AMONGUS

**"I KNOW WHERE YOU ARE NOW.
AND I KNOW WHAT I WILL DO NEXT."**

ALSO INSIDE

SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

**THE WAR MASTER'S CRIMES ARE WITHOUT NUMBER...
SO IT'S ABOUT TIME HE WAS PUNISHED FOR HIS SINS!**

