

THE BIG FINISH MAGAZINE

VORTEX



JO MARTIN IS THE FUGITIVE

WE'RE ABOUT TO LEARN A LOT MORE ABOUT THE FUGITIVE DOCTOR, AS JO MARTIN GOES ON THE RUN...

ZYGMON CENTURY

THE FAMOUS SHAPE CHANGERS ARE PLAYING THE LONG GAME...



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DOCTOR WHO AND THE BRAIN DRAIN

THE THIRD Doctor is heading for Scotland in February 2025 in *Doctor Who and the Brain Drain*.

This new adventure, set during television Season Seven, sees the Doctor (played by Tim Treloar) getting used to his recent exile on Earth and settling into his role as UNIT's scientific advisor when he's dispatched north of the border. Accompanying him are Dr Liz Shaw (Daisy Ashford) and Brigadier Lethbridge-Stewart (Jon Culshaw).

A newly exiled Doctor accompanies Liz Shaw and the Brigadier to a symposium held in an imposing castle, Professor MacLeod and her son have developed a new treatment for memory loss and a possible cure for dementia.

As the Doctor investigates sightings of strange mythical creatures, and ghosts are unleashed in the castle's corridors, Liz and the Brigadier search for a connection.

The script is co-written by Nicholas Briggs, Big Finish's executive producer and Richard James, an experienced writer of stage plays and thriller novels making his Big Finish debut. Nick tells *Vortex*: "My wife Steph had been editing one of Richard's books and mentioned that Richard writes beautifully. He also knows his old **Doctor Who** and has a very clear sense of the Third Doctor era, so I asked him for ideas for stories. He sent this pitch and there was something about it that I really liked. It felt like **Doctor Who** but also an old-fashioned Sunday afternoon teatime adventure." **VORTEX**

DOCTOR WHO DOCTOR WHO AND THE BRAIN DRAIN

- RELEASED: FEBRUARY 2025
- FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

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Above: Paul Spragg

EDITORIAL

HERE WE are, December already! How can that be? It's only been a couple of months since the release of the recent **The Ninth Doctor Adventures**, hasn't it? What do you mean, *Star-Crossed* came out in May?

It doesn't seem that long ago that I was jogging along the coast in Costa Teguese in Lanzarote playing **The Seventh Doctor Adventure The Last Day Part Two**. I always remember what I've been listening to at one particular spot – last year was Roy Gill's **Fourth Doctor Adventure The Wizard of Time** and the year before was Lisa McMullin's **Wink** – an adventure with the Tenth Doctor.

It's been quite a year, and as I flick back through all of 2024's *Vortex*, it's quite amazing to see how many releases have been previewed. An average issue of the magazine has approximately 9,000 words in it, that's 108,000 per year (all expertly copy-edited by Stephanie Briggs and beautifully designed by Mark Plastow). I've probably written over a million words in *Vortex* over the past decade!

I succeeded the late, great Paul Spragg as *Vortex* editor in 2014 and this year marks a decade since his passing. On Paul's birthday, 29 December, a free **Short Trip** will be available for download. *War Stories* by Patrick Ross features the Twelfth Doctor and Bill with narration by Alan Cox. This will be the ninth adventure in Paul's memory, so please, raise a glass to remember the man who made *Vortex* what it is today. **VORTEX**

Kenny



THE SHOWRUNNER FROM THE THIRTEENTH DOCTOR'S ERA CHATS EXCLUSIVELY WITH VORTEX...

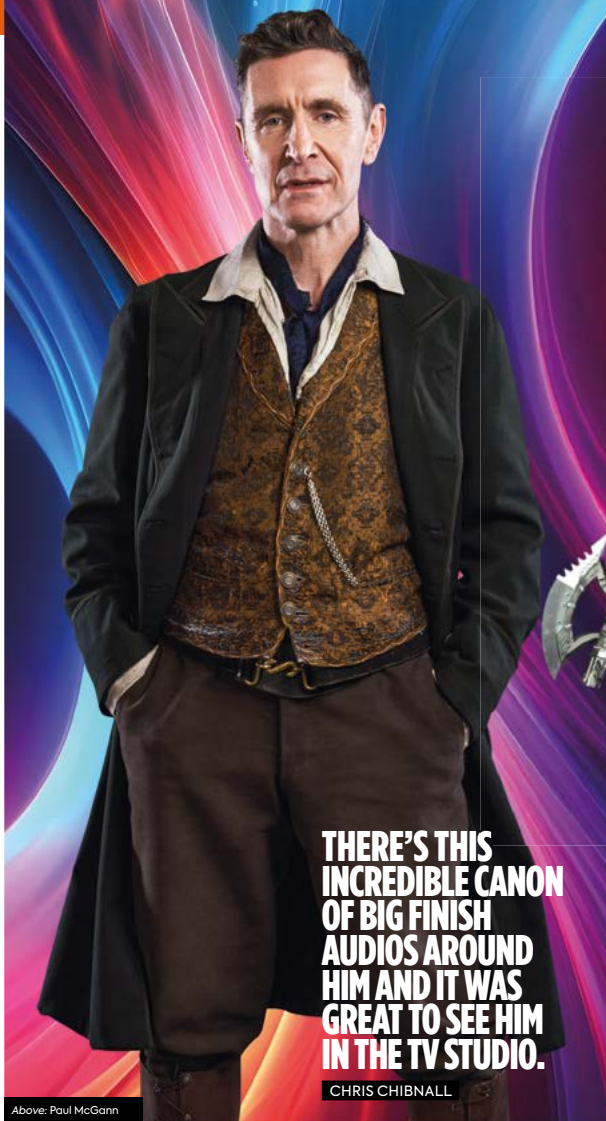
ACHIB OFF THE OLD BLOCK!

DURING HIS three series as executive producer on television's **Doctor Who**, Chris Chibnall certainly crammed a lot in. As well as bringing us Jodie Whittaker as the Thirteenth Doctor, Chris also introduced the concept of the Timeless Child and previously unknown incarnations of our Time Lord hero such as Jo Martin's Fugitive Doctor.

Vortex had an exclusive chat with Chris, starting with asking how much of a Big Finish fan he is. Chris says: "I don't have a huge knowledge of everything that Big Finish produces, but I'm very aware of the company. I remember getting the first couple of series with Paul McGann when they came out and I listened to things like **The Monthly Adventure** *The Chimes of Midnight* back in the day.

"I must admit it's just not been possible for me to keep up with all of the Big Finish audio – it's the same with the books that come out. Nicholas Briggs is a very close neighbour so I'm expecting an outraged text from him as soon as he reads this!

"I do dip in and out, but life is busy. I have a family, and my tastes and interests are wide-ranging and eclectic.



Above: Paul McGann

**THERE'S THIS
INCREDIBLE CANON
OF BIG FINISH
AUDIOS AROUND
HIM AND IT WAS
GREAT TO SEE HIM
IN THE TV STUDIO.**

CHRIS CHIBNALL

Doctor Who's obviously a big part of those interests and always has been, but there are many things going on."

Vortex thinks that Chris can be forgiven, after all, he's worked on a lot of television over the past 25 years including the award-winning *Broadchurch*, *Law & Order: UK*, *Life on Mars* and *Born and Bred*. Chris also gave us some more Paul McGann – arguably THE Big Finish Doctor – on screen in *The Power of the Doctor* alongside Peter

Davison, Colin Baker and Sylvester McCoy, plus David Bradley.

He recalls: "That was a fantastic day, it was lovely welcoming Paul back. It was very special all round. Paul was amazing and it was just brilliant to see him back in the costume.

"When he was first approached, Paul accepted immediately, saying, 'Who wouldn't want to work with Jodie?' He said on the day, and I don't think it's betraying any confidences, that it was a strange experience for him



Above: Karvanista

as he'd only been the Doctor twice before on screen. It must have felt weird slotting back in to something that you haven't spent lots of time doing on camera. But for us, as fans, he's always a Doctor, and obviously he's been playing the Doctor for a long time now with Big Finish.

"There's this incredible canon of Big Finish audios around him and it was great to see him in the TV studio. He was doing **Doctor Who** again, the same way we were with Peter, Colin and Sylvester. As Jodie had already wrapped on her scenes, we had Janet Fielding reading in for her. That was a nice touch as she used to be Paul's agent."

A NEW audio release featuring one of Chris's creations is **The Fugitive Doctor** which begins in January. As part of the series set up, Chris had a meeting with some of the Big Finish team. Chris explains: "We had a chat about



Above (l-r): Jodie Whittaker and Jo Martin

what the thinking behind the character is, and where it all fits. I will say no more about that and what the deliberate gaps were!

"But we had a long, really great conversation. What's really lovely is bringing new things into the TV show and then feeling they've got an afterlife in other forms. It's probably one of the greatest things as a writer that you can do.

"You've created something and it's then taken on by other people, which is of course the whole thing about **Doctor Who**. Since it started, the baton has been handed around and around, with different people adding new things – and you always know you're passing the baton on to someone else at the end and to people in other media, not just television.

"**Doctor Who** is the definition of creativity. You're making things for specific purposes to tell specific stories. But then people love those characters or worlds enough that they can have another life that you never envisaged.

"So much of the appeal of the

SO MUCH OF THE APPEAL OF THE FUGITIVE DOCTOR IS DUE TO JO MARTIN – HER PRESENCE, BRILLIANCE, GRACE – HER EVERYTHING

CHRIS CHIBNALL

Fugitive Doctor is due to Jo Martin – her presence, brilliance, grace – her everything, really. She embraced the part. She has carried it and owned it. She is just phenomenal. I'm really absolutely thrilled that there's more being done with her character. I'll be interested to hear what happens there."

Also on their way are the Lupari as part of the next **Classic Doctors**, **New Monsters** set out in January.

Chris explains: "Yes, they're my

absolute favourite! I'm sure Nick won't mind me saying this, but there has been a point where I have been slightly under the influence of a beer or two where I've said to him, 'I'll write a Karvanista script for you. Let's do one with Karvanista!' because I love that character. I love what Craigie Els did with it. Craigie is great as a



Above: Chris Chibnall

human being and I love the race. It's always tickled me, the idea of dog warriors having to look after humans and being disgruntled by that.

"The Lupari are really close to my heart. Karvanista is based on our dog. I'd never had a dog before, and we got him about 2016/2017. It's all about understanding the bonds that occur between a dog and its owners – they are family. Seeing that is a really alien thing. There are rules, boundaries and duties – and dogs want jobs. Our dog looks really cute but thinks it's a ferocious Alsatian – it's a cockerpool! All of those things had been sitting in my head for a long time and were then fed into Karvanista.

"I remember when I went in to tell everyone what I wanted to do, I told them it was a dog-faced grumpy Samurai warrior, and they just said, 'Yes!'" **VORTEX**

Coming up in 2025: Chris talks exclusively to Vortex about his excitement at Jodie arriving at Big Finish.



Jago and Litefoot return in the next Big Finish Audio Novel...

MISRULES OF ENGAGEMENT

BIG FINISH'S *Doctor Who* Audio Novels range returns in January 2025 with some beloved old friends. *The Lord of Misrule* written by Paul Morris and narrated by Jon Culshaw, brings back Henry Gordon Jago and Professor George Litefoot.

After surviving the *Doctor Who* television episode *The Talons of Weng-Chiang*, the investigators of infernal incidents had many adventures in their own audio drama series *Jago & Litefoot*. The duo also appeared in *The Fourth Doctor Adventures: The Justice of Jalxar* where they teamed up with Tom Baker's Doctor and the late Mary Tamm's Romana.

Producer David Richardson tells *Vortex*: "I feel absolutely privileged to have produced a season of *The Fourth Doctor Adventures* with Tom and Mary, and so many episodes of *Jago & Litefoot* with the marvellous Christopher Benjamin and Trevor Baxter. The loss of Mary and Trevor still fills

IT'S THE CLOSEST WE WILL GET TO NEW ADVENTURES WITH THE MUCH-LOVED DUO AND IT'S AN UTTER JOY TO HEAR THEM AGAIN.

DAVID RICHARDSON

me with great sadness – they were both such really special people.

"The chance to revisit the Fourth Doctor, Romana, Jago and Litefoot in an audio novel really excited me, allowing us to fill our ears with the exploits of these characters once again. And who better to write the script than Paul who penned so many classic episodes of *Jago & Litefoot*.

"I hadn't dare dream how much Jon would capture the essence of Trevor and Christopher's

performances in his readings of Jago and Litefoot. It's the closest we will get to new adventures with the much-loved duo and it's an utter joy to hear them again."

IN 1901, something strange haunts the streets of London. A mysterious carriage appears from nowhere and seems to spirit away the unwary. But to where? When Romana is taken by the carriage, the Doctor teams up with Jago and Litefoot to find her.

Writer Paul says: "The brief for this was simply the four main characters, which was fine by me! It's the first time I've written for Jago and Litefoot in a *Doctor Who* context but having a larger cast made it easy to fill six episodes.

"There are two main strands. The core of the story is 'What if something nasty invaded a small Georgian market town full of archetypal Jane Austen characters and made them do horrible things to each other?' – which comes from a place of love as I'm a big Austen fan. That story is bookended with episodes set in more typical *Jago & Litefoot* foggy London backstreets, and a great big ending that brings our heroes bang up to date (i.e. 1901!)."

How did Paul find writing prose compared to a script?

He explains: "Through work on various narrated new series stories and Companion Chronicles, I've been incorporating more and more prose into my Big Finish scripts, and it was good to have that practice because this – essentially a full length novel – is on a different scale altogether, quite apart from the fact that I chose to write great chunks of it in a faux Jane Austen style. The only tricky thing is getting the balance right with the dialogue because that's still my first love. But I've wanted to be a novelist since I knew what the word meant. And now I am so yay!" **VORTEX**

THE AUDIO NOVELS
THE LORD OF MISRULE

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WE'RE ABOUT TO LEARN A LOT MORE ABOUT THE FUGITIVE DOCTOR, AS JO MARTIN GOES ON THE RUN...

THE FUGITIVE

ONE OF the most engaging performances in recent **Doctor Who** episodes on television has been the fleeting glimpses of the Fugitive Doctor played by Jo Martin. This mysterious incarnation from the Doctor's past, first seen in the 2020 TV episode *Fugitive of the Judoon*, sees the Fugitive Doctor on the run from her Time Lord employers, the secretive Division.

And now she's materialising in three exciting audio adventures from Big Finish, in which she will face

ruthless bounty hunters, a mythical Russian witch and even the Daleks. All on top of evading the Time Lord agent Cosmogon played by Alice Krige (the Borg Queen in *Star Trek*).

Producer David Richardson says: "I absolutely adored the Fugitive Doctor's appearances on screen, and when the chance arose to make Jo the focus of her own series of audio adventures I leapt to the front of the queue to produce them.

"I signed up Robert Valentine as script editor, and our first discussions were all about what kind of stories

we should be telling. I knew that I didn't want us to step on the toes of Chris Chibnall's backstory of the Fugitive Doctor, and so asked if Chris might be able to attend a Zoom meeting with myself and Rob so we could make sure we were on the right lines. Chris was incredibly generous with his time and we had a brilliant chat during which I felt much more confident about our plans.

"We all agreed that we shouldn't be trying to solve any mysteries of the Fugitive Doctor – at least not yet. For that reason, but mainly because I



Above: Jo Martin
Right: Alice Krige

I was absolutely delighted. We then had the Zoom meeting with Chris to discuss the project and find out what his thinking behind the character was, and it led us to some pretty interesting places.

"A good chunk of the overall brief came from myself on this one, but a request I had from David for this opening story was that I include the Daleks and make it a bit like the TV episode *The Chase*. Including the Daleks is a very quick method



didn't want to clash with anything in **The Second Doctor Adventures**, we have steered clear of her time working for Division. Well, to some degree, there's some of that in there... but there were fine lines to tread and we have navigated our way through them.

"So we're at the point in her life before the TV episode *Fugitive of the Judoon*, when the Fugitive Doctor is (the clue is in the name!) on the run from Division. There are mysteries aplenty – more questions that one day might need answers – and tonally these are quite different from standard **Doctor Who**, if there is such a thing.

"How can she meet the Daleks?" I hear you ask. 'How can she be in a police box?' I might ask too. I know the answers to these because I've chatted to Chris. We wanted to bring in some newer writers amongst established ones, and shake things up a bit. I'm confident that we have an exciting journey ahead..."

FAST TIMES by script editor Robert Valentine kicks off the series. *When the mysterious Division tries to arrest their equally mysterious agent, the Doctor, she evades capture and heads out in search of answers... but trouble is never far behind.*

THE FUGITIVE DOCTOR IS (THE CLUE IS IN THE NAME!) ON THE RUN...

DAVID RICHARDSON

Captured by bounty hunters and imprisoned in a maximum-security hulk ship, the Doctor is about to learn that there's no time to stand still when you're a fugitive. And times are about to get very fast indeed.

Rob says: "When David asked me to script edit and come up with the premise for **The Fugitive Doctor**,

to establish a Doctor by virtue of their personal relationship to them, and here I saw an opportunity to use them to illustrate the Fugitive Doctor's attitude and unique situation in the canon.

"*Fast Times* is the story of where this incarnation of the Doctor becomes a fugitive and Time Lord detective Cosmogon is tasked with catching her. One of Chris's touchstones for the character was Patrick McGoochan's *The Prisoner*, so we open by seeing how the mysterious Division decides to capture their equally mysterious agent, the Doctor, before she can remember the big secret they don't want getting out. That's the running theme throughout the series – no pun intended – but along the way, we and Cosmogon start to discover what this Doctor is really like."

Rob adds: "One of the highlights of writing this story, aside from introducing Jo's Doctor in her very own series, was introducing the



Above (l-r): Dominic G. Martin, Matt Wycliffe, Jo Martin, Nneke Okoye and Bethany Weimers

character of Cosmogon aka 'Cosmo'. Cosmo is a dogged Time Lord detective with a very dry sense of humour who is determined to capture the Doctor, and their relationship is the heart of the series as it goes on. The Fugitive Doctor isn't in a position to have a traditional companion sharing her adventures, but this Doctor has Cosmo and just can't shake her off."

THE LEGEND of Baba Yaga by Rochana Patel is the second story in this first Fugitive Doctor set. She tells *Vortex*: "It's incredibly exciting writing for this Doctor, particularly at such an early stage because so far we've only had tantalising glimpses of her nature. So we get to shape and define her character now, which is something you can't do with the already established incarnations. "I had a completely free hand



Above: Leah Harvey

in choosing what to do for this episode. We knocked a lot of ideas backwards and forwards for it, more than any other range I've written for, before settling on something we felt was right. The only true guideline was the setting; she's on her own and she's on the run... "The Legend of Baba Yaga is based on a famous set of Slavic folklore tales

which most people are vaguely aware of, but very few have read. Your brain is probably itching when you hear the name Baba Yaga. You think you know it, but you don't know her story or even how you know her name!

"If I mention her hut, which walks around on chicken legs, that itch will only grow stronger... Baba Yaga has been with us for a very long time. And once you start looking for her, you'll find her everywhere..."

"Have you seen the John Wick movies? John Wick was so terrifying to his enemies, they nicknamed him after the Baba Yaga. Have you seen the Marvel movies? In *Antman and the Wasp*, a terrified Kurt sings a song about the Baba Yaga.

I LIKE DOCTOR WHO TO BE A LITTLE BIT SCARY. DARK, GOTHIC AND MYSTERIOUS.

ROCHANA PATEL

"You'll find her in everything from *Hellboy* to *Supernatural*. She's the original old woman who lives alone in the woods, with powers beyond your comprehension and a unique and twisted moral compass. You'd have to be very brave, or very foolish, to ever ask the Baba Yaga for help..."

"I like **Doctor Who** to be a little bit scary. Dark, gothic and mysterious. So that's what I've done here. It's the Fugitive Doctor in a story which wouldn't feel out of place in the Hinchcliffe era..."

THE SET'S third adventure is *The Dimension of Lost Things* by Lisa McMullin. *Fleeing Cosmo through the Vortex, the TARDIS gets sucked down a temporal plughole and the Doctor emerges into a weird landscape. Finding other lost souls in the form of mountaineer George Mallory and scavenger Athelia, the Doctor soon stumbles across another, more surprising denizen of this strange dimension - herself!*

Being involved in writing for the Fugitive Doctor is, as Lisa puts it: "So exciting! "That sequence in the TV episode *Fugitive of the Judoon* where you



Above: Jo Martin

realise she's the Doctor absolutely floored me. I just didn't see it coming and Jo absolutely nails the change in direction as she 'becomes' the Doctor. I definitely wanted more of her.

"Rob was clear that he wanted to keep the Fugitive Doctor's mystery intact and build on it. He also said that the series would be influenced by the TV show (and 1994 film) *The Fugitive* – an innocent on the run from a crime they didn't necessarily commit. So we find the Fugitive Doctor being pursued across time and space looking for places to hide with no clear memory of who she is or what she's done.

"It's a story in which the Fugitive Doctor finds herself. Literally not metaphorically!"

Lisa adds that her highlight was: "Getting to write two versions of the same character. And discovering what really happened to George Mallory on Everest. And explaining why they found Mallory's body on Everest but they never found Sandy Irvine's. This is rather a plot point. Which is a little awkward because... since recording it has been announced that they have

HER LIFE AS A FUGITIVE WOULD BE SO MUCH EASIER IF SHE DIDN'T NEED TO HELP PEOPLE AND FIX PROBLEMS.

ROBERT VALENTINE

found a foot on Everest they believe to be Irvine's because the sock has his name stitched into it. I would like people to listen to my Fugitive story bearing in mind the possibility that somebody *stole* Irvine's sock and therefore it is not a part of Irvine's body that they found!"

HOW DID the team find writing for this 'new' Doctor? Rob says: "I loved writing for Jo, and I loved coming up with the whole concept for the series. There's a lot of *The Fugitive* in this, with the Doctor being our Dr Richard Kimble figure and Cosmogon our US Marshal Sam Gerard.

"The Fugitive Doctor has exactly

the same moral core as all the other Doctors, and I wanted to make her frustration with herself that she cares so much about other people a big feature of her character. She has an inherent inner conflict because she thinks her life as a fugitive would be so much easier if she didn't need to help people and fix problems. But ultimately, she is the Doctor whether she likes it or not, and helping people is what she does even when it increases her risk of getting caught."

Rochana agrees: "I really like this version of the Doctor. I'm a bit of an introvert so the fact that this Doctor is choosing to be on their own really resonates with me; it sets her apart from all the other Doctors who are often highly reliant on their 'found families'.

"I like to compare her to David Warner's Unbound Doctor. She's very similar to the Doctors we know and love, but she's also entirely different; her own person. She possesses all of the innate qualities of the Doctor. She'll stand up to bullies. She'll protect people. She'll always do what's right. She'll make the hard decisions. However, she's also capable of stepping much further out of our familiar comfort zone."

Lisa found the Fugitive Doctor: "Tricky as I was writing for two versions of this Doctor – neither of which we've really encountered on screen. Trying to differentiate between them was a challenge. Poor Jo, it must have been quite a head-twister! Trying to work out who both of these versions are was really fun." **VORTEX**

THE FUGITIVE DOCTOR MOST WANTED



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It's the return of the Big Finish range that does exactly what it says on the tin... Classic Doctors, New Monsters!

MONSTER MASH!

FOUR STORIES, four Doctors and three new series monsters are all together in one brilliant box set. **Classic Doctors, New Monsters** volume five brings the Krillitane, Lupari and Monks to audio for the first time where they encounter a number of different Doctors.

Producer David Richardson says: "What I love about this set is, yes, it's full of great monsters and classic TARDIS teams. But we have Tim Foley and John Dorney on writing duties so it's obviously going to be far more than that. These are four character-led and inventive stories by two writers who always give our actors great material to play with."

The Krillitane Feint by John Dorney

opens the set and features the aliens which first appeared in Toby Whithouse's television episode *School Reunion*. John says: "Some of the difficulties with writing a Krillitane story is they don't feel like a natural fit for the **Classic Doctors, New Monsters** range. It's hard to do stories about them before *School Reunion*, because the USP of the Krillitanes is basically that they have no USP! They constantly change what they look like and what they do. It's a challenge, finding an angle that makes them distinctly Krillitane on one level, but also follows details of what we know about them."

John continues: "We have the Second Doctor, Jamie and Zoe, which is really exciting for me as they're something of a favourite team of

mine. I had an idea for what I wanted to do – having a military base in space – and it was important to me to write something that hadn't been done already. That was my approach, really.

"I put the team in what you could call a base under siege situation in the classic Troughton manner. Yes, I was trying to give it that vibe but with a bit of a modern edge."

THE DYING *Breed* by Tim Foley sees the first appearance in the range from creatures created during Chris Chibnall's era – the Lupari. They encounter the Fourth Doctor, Leela and K9.

Tim was delighted to write for **Classic Doctors, New Monsters**, explaining: "I delved into this box set with two very distinct

ideas. I love that this range is an exercise in tone. One wise **Who** writer has said that **Doctor Who** adventures in genre, and you can really feel it when you're asked to add new elements to old Doctors."

How does Tim approach a story like this – watch Lupari officer Karvanista and pick up what he can about the Lupari? He nods: "Yes! It was all about

linked to *The Krillitane Feint* but this is somewhat further down the timeline. I knew it would be with Sylvester McCoy's Seventh Doctor and David emailed and said, 'What do you think about doing this one with Sara Griffiths as Ray? And I was all over that because she was a really fun character in the TV episode *Delta and the Bannermen*.

complicated circumstances – which will be revealed in another box set at some point in the future..."

FIVE HUNDRED Ways to

Leave Your Lover by Tim Foley grabs the attention through its title, but it also features the Monks from the Twelfth

Doctor's era – and introduces the Eighth Doctor's boyfriend.

Tim says: "David is always very good, giving broad briefs though it had to be a story for the Eighth Doctor and the Monks. I decided I wanted to write a screwball comedy – the Eighth Doctor is a very sexy Doctor after all!"

And what can he say about Chris? ('Boyfriend to the Doctor', according to the script!)

Tim explains: "Well, we have our 'will they or won't they' lovers. Yes, Chris is the Doctor's boyfriend, and, as you can imagine, he's having a tough time of it!"

The story's monsters are the Monks who featured in three adventures on TV. The writer admits they're a tough species to write for. Tim tells *Vortex*: "Tremendously difficult! They're such strange nebulous creatures – with different ideas about them cropping up in their original trilogy. But I love that – it's very alien to have a foe that's so impenetrable, so inhuman. And they have such a distinct look as well. A strange positive on audio, but one I definitely play around with."

Tim sums it up succinctly as: "A gay romcom with the Monks. Please enjoy the bit where our heroes have to strip!" **VORTEX**



Above (l-r): George Naylor, Wendy Padbury, Sylvester McCoy, Sheila Hancock and Sara Griffiths

THE DOCTOR, LEELA AND K9 ARRIVE AT A TRICKY TIME. EXPECT FEASTS, FIGHTS AND K9 SINGING!

TIM FOLEY

playing detective with the delicious crumbs we heard in the thirteenth TV series *Flux*, and building them into a bigger story. I was allowed free rein on the Lupari backstory on the proviso that Chris Chibnall himself would be overseeing it all.

"WE'RE RIGHT back in the history of the Lupari. It's a medieval epic in a snowy landscape where the Doctor, Leela and K9 arrive at a tricky time. Expect feasts, fights and K9 singing!"

The Krillitane Relic by John Dorney features the Seventh Doctor. John explains: "*The Krillitane Relic* is



Above (l-r): Wendy Padbury and Frazer Hines

I really enjoyed the story when I rerewatched it, it's an absolute hoot. "That was part of my thinking about how to set it. There's an element of *School Reunion* where the Doctor is encountering someone he's met before. I should point out that this isn't technically Sara's first story back with the Doctor, she is a bit older than she was in *Delta*. Sara has grown up and reunited with the Doctor in somewhat

CLASSIC DOCTORS, NEW MONSTERS
FAITHFUL FRIENDS



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STEVEN TAYLOR IS SET TO MEET A
PAIR OF OLD FRIENDS ONCE MORE...

TAYLOR MADE

BRITISH TELEVISION

legend Peter Purves reprises the role of Steven Taylor as **The First Doctor Adventures** return.

The Living Darkness by Jacqueline Rayner marks the first time that Steven has been paired with Big Finish's First Doctor played by Stephen Noonan, although he has had an adventure with Dodo Chaplet (Lauren Cornelius) in **The Early Adventures** *The Secrets of Det-Sen*.

Steven Taylor thought he'd left a life of adventure behind when he said goodbye to the Doctor and forged his future as the leader of a world. But decades later, when a broken and grieving Steven awakes aboard a mysterious spacecraft, terror is close at hand.

What is the purpose of the ship's voyage and why has it collected a random group from different points in time and space? What sinister

presence lurks within the darkness that smothers its corridors? And can Steven really trust the new arrival claiming to be the Doctor...?

Explaining his planning for this release, producer Mark Wright says: "It was very much the next instalment of the Doctor's intergalactic roller-coaster ride that started with the cliffhanger ending to **The Incheron Incident** in **The First Doctor Adventures: The Demon**



Above (l-r): Stephen Noonan, Dido Miles and Peter Purves

Song. Nicholas Briggs (script editor and incidental music provider on this release) and I were both keen to work with Peter Purves and to catch up with Steven in his later years.

"I feel there's a lot of story possibility and pathos to come out of revisiting companions decades after their travels, a way to examine where we are now and honour the work of these legends of *Doctor Who*. It's a real privilege. And to see Peter in studio, and how everybody in the cast hung off his every word, was a joy to behold.

"Peter is a true icon of not just *Doctor Who* but of British popular culture, and it was great to see him and our First Doctor, Stephen, working together so effortlessly.

"*The Living Darkness* is a terrific script – full of suspense, terror and rich emotion. Jacqueline was the natural choice to write this release. She is so in tune with the middle 1960s period of *Doctor Who* on

I LOVE THE CHARACTER OF STEVEN. HE'S NOT PERFECT (THAT WOULD BE BORING!), BUT HE'S IMPERFECT IN INTERESTING WAYS.

JACQUELINE RAYNER

television. This is a love letter to that slightly pulp sci-fi era, a nod to the styles of *The Chase* and *The Daleks' Master Plan*. It's a story with monsters and mystery but told from a human perspective. Which is *Doctor Who* in a nutshell."

Jacqueline tells *Vortex*: "I was asked for a story to give Steven some closure, something with a new monster and something that would be part of a new direction for the First Doctor. Trying to make Dodo's departure tie in was an element I

wanted to add in to the mix – she had such a rough go of it on TV.

"I love the character of Steven. He's not perfect (that would be boring!), but he's imperfect in interesting ways. Peter's performance on screen is what really made him. His excitement in meeting fellow humans in *The Chase*! His anger towards the Doctor



Above: Helen Phillips

in *The Massacre*. I especially adore him in *The Gunfighters* where he shows impeccable comic timing. I grew up watching Peter on *Blue Peter* and loved him there, but the world did miss out that he didn't go into comedy instead."

STEPHEN WAS delighted to get to work with 'the other Steven'. He explains: "For those of us of a certain generation, Peter's voice was part of the indelible soundtrack of our childhoods. He was on the telly every week, twice a week, throughout the 1970s as a presenter on *Blue Peter*.

"It's impressive and poignant to meet somebody whose work is so familiar to you, having made such a big impression on you – along with John Noakes, Valerie Singleton and Lesley Judd. *Blue Peter* was, over the years, a sort of companion programme to *Doctor Who*. You'd watch it because there was a strong

possibility of there being clips from **Doctor Who** which wouldn't be on any other programme, particularly because of Peter Purves's association being Steven Taylor."

Peter voiced the First Doctor for Big Finish in **The Companion Chronicles** and **The Early**

do an impression of – I can more easily do Jon Pertwee and Tom Baker – they are more consistent as the actors were using their own voices. With William Hartnell, he invented the voice.

"If you listen to the two recordings that exist of Hartnell speaking,

his game, he had a virile energy and a delivery that's almost like a machine gun – so much speed."

Having worked with both Maureen and Peter, Stephen was given another feather in his cap. He explains: "When we were recording *The Living Darkness*, there was a moment when somebody crept into the control room. I was having a stand-off with a computer at the time and I looked through the glass and I thought, 'Oh heck.' It was only Carole Ann Ford! I said to Helen Goldwyn, who was directing, 'Susan Foreman is in the control room – no pressure!'

"Carole listened to us and said, 'I've got tears in my eyes,' and I asked, 'Was it that bad?' She said, 'No, it was like I've just time travelled back to 1963.' Mark teared up a bit too!

"When I came out of the recording for a break, Carole was lovely. She seemed totally genuine. And then she came out with the weirdest thing – she said, 'I want somebody to take a photograph of me with my grandfather!' I thought, 'Well, if there's any vindication about what I'm doing, that was it!'

Mark concludes: "Helen assembled a fabulous guest cast. We had a mini Doctors' reunion with Laura Rollins and Dido Miles, and I was thrilled to catch up with Trevor Littledale. I worked with Trevor on **The Tomorrow People** and **Pathfinder Legends** and he was as delightful as ever. It was a happy band in studio and I'm so pleased with the results. And Nick's music is so brilliantly 1960s **Who**, it really completes the circle." **VORTEX**



Above (l-r): Dido Miles, Jack Ayres, Laura Rollins, Stephen Noonan, Peter Purves, Lauren Cornelius and Trevor Littledale

Adventures. Stephen says: "It was great working with Peter. We immediately established a rapport and he was very complimentary about what I was doing. There were a few moments when he turned around and put his thumb come up, and said, 'That was Bill.'

"It's similar to when I worked with Maureen O'Brien on the last set. It couldn't have gone better. It's quite surreal to be standing at the microphone opposite the 'real' Vicki or the 'real' Steven. You can't help but think that you've got this strange, actual connection to William Hartnell standing there in Riverside Studios. That realisation makes it all a little more magical."

THIS IS Stephen's fourth box set as the First Doctor on top of appearances in *Once and Future* and the *Lost Story Deathworld*. He tells **Vortex**: "I think the First Doctor's voice is the hardest to

HE'S GOT A VIRILE ENERGY AND A DELIVERY THAT'S ALMOST LIKE A MACHINE GUN – SO MUCH SPEED.

STEPHEN NOONAN

you'll notice that his voice is very different from the Doctor's. And on screen, his voice as the Doctor even varies massively between stories.

"I think people have got a particular couple of scenes or lines in their heads where they think that's what the First Doctor archetypally sounds like, such as when he says farewell to Susan in the TV episode *The Dalek Invasion of Earth*. There's so much energy and vigour when you listen to him. There's the cliché of him fluffing the lines, but when he was on

THE FIRST DOCTOR ADVENTURES THE LIVING DARKNESS



■ RELEASED: JANUARY 2025
■ FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

ORDER NOW: bgfn.sh/taylor 



Ianto Jones is going to find that leaving a car park isn't as simple as it sounds...

DIVINE COMEDY

WHEN IANTO Jones meets Dean Vosker and Anthony Hollins – two amateur traders in alien artefacts – he plans to take them back to the Hub. The only trouble is that they can't find Dean's van in the car park. The staircase of the five-storey building now stretches to infinity and each door is locked shut. Oh, and there are monsters too...

Gareth David-Lloyd is back as everyone's favourite Welshman in the Torchwood Hub, where a new danger awaits him in *Ianto's Inferno* by Roland Moore. Producer James Goss says: "It was great to record down in Newport again – the studio there is just so **Torchwood** it's unbelievable – gritty but full of soul and warmth, and unlimited biscuits."

"Director Lisa Bowerman assembled an amazing cast for it – that's partly what's great about recording in Newport. Not only are we on Gareth's doorstep, but we can tap into the local acting talent without having to hoick them all the way to London."

"And that was especially important for this story as Roland's written



Above (l-r): Robert Vernon, Gareth David-Lloyd and James Glyn

LOTS OF SCI-FI STORIES HAVE DONE TIME LOOPS BUT NO-ONE'S DONE ONE IN A SMELLY CARPARK STAIRWELL BEFORE!

JAMES GOSS

an adventure that's absolutely **Torchwood**: down-to-earth, a little grubby and sometimes sordid. Lots of sci-fi stories have done time loops but no-one's done one in a smelly carpark stairwell before!"

Roland tells *Vortex*: "I'm not going to pretend I was cool about writing a **Torchwood**. Actually I was so excited by it I had to rein myself in! I think James might have got an inkling..."

"Writing a **Torchwood** story was one of my goals at Big Finish. I love the show and as I naturally gravitate towards writing dark situations (you're talking to the person who got Abby Grant to dig up a grave to find her son in Big Finish's **Survivors**), it really appealed."

"James suggested a few story ideas but also allowed me to devise my own. He just wanted a Ianto story."

"I initially pitched an idea to James who encouraged me to develop it into a longer synopsis. But that story didn't really work so I went away and came up with this idea instead. We went through a few drafts of the two-page synopsis until we were both happy, and then I got to write it."

How would you sum up the story? Roland says: "It seems like a simple task when Ianto sets out to ensnare two amateur traders dealing in alien tech but when they can't find their van, the evening turns into a nightmare as they are trapped in a stairwell in a car park."


"The story relies on perception being altered and how it is very difficult to disbelieve what you see with your own eyes."

"I have always been fascinated with MC Escher, particularly his impossible building with its staircases that go forever downwards (or upwards depending how you look at it). It was used memorably in the **Doctor Who** television episode *Castrovalva*, of course, but here I could give it a gritty, real world **Torchwood** feel."

"I wanted to plug into that frustration you feel when you can't find your car in a car park – and ramp it up into something nasty and life threatening. And of course, being **Torchwood**, it's not only the stairwell that isn't all it seems..." **VORTEX**

TORCHWOOD
IANTO'S INFERNO

■ RELEASED: JANUARY 2025
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ORDER NOW: bgfn.sh/car 



DOCTOR WHO'S MOST FAMOUS SHAPE
CHANGERS ARE PLAYING THE LONG GAME...

GAME CHANGER

THERE HAS always been something about the Zygons which really appeals to **Doctor Who** fans. Perhaps it was their incredible design, scheming nature and the fact that they made just one appearance in the classic series which lent them an extra air of intrigue?

Big Finish is now ready to let Zygons be Zygons with its fantastic new audio range **Zygon Century**.

The Zygons have come to claim the Earth and this time they're playing the long game. The Black Cadre have a plan, a plan that will take exactly one hundred years to come to fruition.

The first box set is *Infiltration* with episodes written by Jonathan Barnes, Lauren Mooney and Stewart Pringle, and Trevor Baxendale.

Script editor Jonathan Barnes says: "I was asked by John Ainsworth and Nicholas Briggs to put together some ideas for a series focusing on the Zygons. The brief was to make it more than a spin-off show... something with its own style and identity.

"The great previous successes of this kind of thing are Nick's **Dalek Empire** and **The War Master** series, both of which have forged really distinct identities from the parent show. It was a wonderful opportunity

for me as I got to try all kinds of things I've wanted to do for years!

"In particular, what we're trying to do here is to give listeners something different – a serial which is also an anthology series. So there's a big bad Zygon plan and a massive time-frame (the clue's in the title!) in which we'll be able to tell all kinds of different stories. Producer Jonathan S Powell came on board with ideas of his own and we've melded them into something pretty special."

Jon tells *Vortex*: "We all remember our first **Doctor Who** and *Terror of the Zygons* was mine – my first classic **Who**.



Above (l-r), Jonathan Rigby and Jonathan Forbes

“The Zygons only appeared that once on TV (pre-2013) but their whispering menace and terrifying design became immediately iconic. Fifty years and a few more appearances on and they’ve more than earned their own range.

“I think shape changers are just great fun, aren’t they? And as I’ve said before, Zygons aren’t immune to bullets. It’s a tiny thing, but that vulnerability is part of what makes them just as fascinating as we are.”

JON IS really excited about working on the series, especially as he got to direct the adventures as well. He explains: “The stories in this set were a unique challenge to direct because they’re all so, so different. We’ve got a haunting (of sorts) in 1901, a love story on the Cornish coast in 1935 and a Fleming inspired spy caper (with a very special guest star) in 1957. So they each had to have their own sound, score and feel while still forming part of a whole.

“There’s an ongoing Zygon scheme bubbling in the background that will hopefully come to fruition down the line, but our main focus was to

WE PICKED THE EXACT YEAR OF 1935 BECAUSE WE WERE GOING THROUGH A BIT OF A BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN PHASE...

STEWART PRINGLE

create three vibrant, gripping audio adventures that can be enjoyed just as well on their own as they can as a unit. A proper anthology, and a foray into unfamiliar waters...

“The casts I managed to pull together for these adventures are really top tier – all just wonderful performers – a few making their Big Finish debuts but really clued in to the material.”

THE SERIES opens in 1901 with *The Unknowing Mirror* by the script editor. Jonathan says: “The years are all significant in different ways. It’s important in this first box-set to see how

things begin and that’s the 1901 story. With the others I wanted to give listeners glimpses of the Zygon plan and how it may (or may not!) be proceeding through the decades. Future potential is enormous.

“I’m thrilled with how my script has been realised. It’s a spooky Edwardian story (with a dash of Hammer, a dash of Arthur Machen’s *The Great God Pan* and a dash of *The Exorcist*) which sets the whole world of this series up and running. I was particularly thrilled to get to work with Jonathan Rigby who plays the occult investigator Herbert Scott. What a wonderful actor.”

The second story is *The Miracle of Pendour Cove* by Lauren Mooney and Stewart Pringle, set in 1935.

Jonathan says: “I’ve wanted to work with Stewart and Lauren for some time now. They are both brilliant and so distinctive in their writing. Their story – a sort of twisted folk tale with some tough, unflinching themes – will break your heart.”

Lauren says: “We were drawn to Cornwall as a setting because it has such a strong sense of place, and we love it. We went on holiday there a bit as kids (separately), and in the last few years we’ve taken a couple of lovely trips to St Ives together – and actually got engaged there so it’s close to our hearts. It’s also a place with its own mythology, language and music, and all of that gave us a really strong base to build the story from.

Stewart adds: “I think we picked the exact year of 1935 because we were going through a bit of a *Bride of Frankenstein* phase (when are we not?) and we wanted it to be possible for the characters to go and see that at the cinema at St Ives and to weave some of the themes of that film – of otherness, exploitation, the nature of ‘monstrosity’ – into the story.”

TEASING THE plot, Stewart says: “We really don’t want to mention too much about the storyline except to say that this feels like one of the most ‘domestic’ and least fantastical stories we’ve tackled. The original inspiration came from the story of the Mermaid of Zennor which is a classic Cornish legend filled with a strange sort of yearning beauty. “The main character of Freddie is very loosely based on Mathey Trewella from that story, and the



Above (l-r): Jonathan S Powell, Roger Rongross, Nicholas Pegg, Joanna Monro, Joshua Manning, Beth Lilly

initial encounter between Freddie and Vovoren was drawn from that too. But it's also derived from quite a few other Selkie stories and other similarly nautical myths and legends from across the country. We wanted this episode to have the real texture of the north Cornish shores. That wild, cragged landscape, churches on clifftops, low-beamed pubs soaked in cider and sea-spray. All that good stuff!"

THE FINAL adventure is

Double Agent by Trevor Baxendale, set in 1957.

Jonathan says: "For the 1950s story I wanted something Ian Fleming-esque with a macho hero who would find himself tested when brought face to face with the Zygons. Who better to tackle this than Trevor? He's an absolute expert on all things Fleming and James Bond, and there's some really lovely work here as he brings the Second Doctor into that world."

Trevor says: "I was very flattered to be asked because of the specific setting Jonathan was after – a 1950s Cold War story in the style of Ian



Above: Patricia Allison

Fleming. I think he knew – or my name must have been suggested – that I am a Bond nut! So this was a very exciting set up for me: as a big Ian Fleming fan I easily understood what they were after. Obviously I didn't want to pastiche Bond – I wanted that slightly grittier attitude of the early Fleming novels.

"There were a couple of things that had to be established, but apart from that I had a free rein. I wanted my spy character, who works for MI5 (dealing with homeland security and counter-espionage) rather than James Bond's MI6 (which only operates abroad) to be front and centre, but I also needed to bring in the Second Doctor as a major

I DIDN'T WANT TO PASTICHE BOND – I WANTED THAT SLIGHTLY GRITTIER ATTITUDE OF THE EARLY FLEMING NOVELS.

TREVOR BAXENDALE

character. That set up a fascinating little dynamic. Both men are involved in the story as agents of another power, but of course they operate in completely different – and often conflicting – ways."

Jonathan concludes: "I've always loved the Zygons, especially in their first story. We're taking them seriously, here, and writing them as a terrifying threat, while also going some way to exploring their characters. I'm very proud of the result, I don't think it's quite like anything Big Finish has done before. I can't wait to find out what people make of it." **VORTEX**

**ZYGMON CENTURY
INFILTRATION**



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DOCTOR WHO THE DALEK CONTRACT/ THE FINAL PHASE



THE DALEK *Contract* and the continuing story in *The Final Phase* brought an end to the second series of **The Fourth Doctor Adventures**.

The Doctor, Romana in her first incarnation and K9 ended up facing the Daleks as well as Cuthbert, a villainous businessman played by the late David Warner.

Writer, director and Daleks voice actor Nicholas Briggs says: "The idea in this was the Daleks appearing to just be hired security troops. It's a bit of that *Power of the Daleks*/*Victory of the Daleks* vibe where someone thinks they can make use of them. So we have a feeling of impending doom as we are waiting for the Daleks to start operating on their own agenda, and the joy of seeing Cuthbert having bitten off more than he can chew.

"Cuthbert's arrogance really makes him think he has the Daleks under control. But we and the Doctor know otherwise. I also wanted to establish that Cuthbert was doing something to perpetuate his own existence, temporally speaking.

**RELAXED,
NAUGHTY,
OUTRAGEOUS
AND GOSSIPY!
DELIGHTFUL
AND GENEROUS
AND KIND.**

NICHOLAS BRIGGS

"It was great fun having Cuthbert assuming the Daleks were on his side, apparently being more worried about chips and brown sauce rather than any danger from the most ruthless killing machines the cosmos has ever known. His arguments with the Dalek Supreme particularly delighted me."

The story also pits K9 against the Daleks. Nick says: "I know that [co-creator] Bob Baker wasn't very happy, in retrospect, with the Daleks torturing K9 and seeming to get the better of him. But I think perhaps Bob didn't carry on listening to the part where K9 single-handedly wipes out an entire Dalek invasion force. K9 got his revenge because he's really, really clever."

Sadly, it proved to be the final run of adventures recorded by Mary Tamm as Romana as she

passed away before their release.

Nick tells *Vortex*: "I loved Mary to bits. We met years ago when I interviewed her for the Myth Makers video series. We spent a day on location together, dressing up and doing silly things. She immediately put me at my ease and was great company; relaxed, naughty, outrageous and gossipy! Delightful and generous and kind.

"But from the moment she turned up to work on the first episode, I had a feeling she was ill although she covered it really, really well. David Richardson told me that she'd confided in him that she had cancer and that the prognosis wasn't good. She didn't want anyone else to know, but David, very reluctantly because he's the most honourable man ever, felt I had to know.

"Mary understood she just didn't want people to be burdened by the knowledge. It was because of her illness that we recorded her on her own. She asked if she could do that.

"Tom asked me about her and I very guardedly told him that Mary was a bit ill at the moment. He's such an astute, sensitive man. He heard the tone in my voice and immediately said, 'Oh, I understand.' He always spoke eloquently and compassionately about Mary. And his tribute to her on the final episode is so moving that I can't listen to it without copiously weeping. I'm tearing up just thinking about it now." **VORTEX**

THE FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES THE DALEK CONTRACT

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THE FINAL PHASE

- RELEASED: JULY 2013
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THE POD COUPLE

I just want to thank everyone at Big Finish including Nick and Benji for the brilliant podcasts. I really enjoy the spontaneity of the Big Finish podcasts. I just wanted to ask Nick, now that according to Russell T Davies the Fourteenth Doctor is 'resting', would Big Finish, with kind permission of the BBC, ever consider doing a one-off adventure with David Tennant playing dual roles both as the Fourteenth Doctor meeting his younger self the Tenth Doctor? I think it would be interesting if there was a storyline where due to a temporal glitch they were made to switch places. After all, anything is possible in the Whoniverse. It would be fun to hear David playing a dual role! And thanks to everyone at Big Finish, the writers, the musicians and, of course, all the cast members and the directors. Keep up the good work.

TOM DOUGLAS

Nick: Tom, thanks so much for your support of the podcasts, they wouldn't be possible without the input of the wonderful Benji Clifford. Big shout out for Benji!!! On the Tenth/Fourteenth issue, we've no plans to do that, but the next time David is in I promise to have a chat with him about it. If he's up for it, maybe we can twist Russell's arm a bit...

SOUND THINKING

Your audio dramas are some of my favourite **Doctor Who** stories of all time. Some of them have the best soundtracks out there such as – *Fanfare for the Common Men*, *No Man's Land*, *Enemy of the Daleks*, *Sympathy for the Devil* and *Cold Fusion* – my ears are in heaven! Is there a possibility that you would make soundtrack releases again because some of the soundtracks mentioned (especially *Enemy* and *Cold Fusion*) are begging to be heard on their own?

MARK OSNAY

Nick: No plans for that, sorry, Mark. A number of our releases have music suites attached to them and some of those are digital-only. But, believe it or not, the soundtracks didn't sell very well, so if we were to release them they'd probably be download only.

SEVENTH HEAVEN

Only a few years after its release, I listened to the **Blake's 7** story *Happy Ever After* from the **Restoration** part two box set while doing my ironing this evening. It was so good. What a fascinating spin on the concept of precognition! What a great insight into the character of Tarrant while still giving Avon his 'moments of

charm'. The guest characters and their motivations were also very intriguing. I think the whole cast was given great material to work with. When the play was over, I had to put the iron down to give the production a round of applause. A while later, after the ironing was done, I surprised myself by saying out loud 'that story was really brilliant' and had to give it another round of applause. I love your **Who** stories but, honestly, your **Blake's 7** tales are on another level! Bravo! Now, go on, give yourselves a round of applause.

ANTHONY MUSGRAVE

Nick: Wait a minute, I'll just put the iron down. Oh, hang on, I never iron anything as a glance at any photo of me will reveal! Thank you, Anthony.

PERFECT PICK ME UP

I was having a really low day recently. The last couple of years have been rough with bereavements and illnesses, and when some big social plans collapsed that day, it all weighed heavily on me. I needed a pick me up but I didn't know what. And then I checked the Big Finish site, and I saw the announcement of *The Lord of Misrule* with the return of Jago and Litefoot. I immediately felt better. Big Finish, but especially Jago and Litefoot (possibly my favourite characters in anything) continues to be a source of joy just when I need it. Please never forget how much these characters, and the stories you tell with them, mean to your listeners. And I for one hope you do more audiobooks with the infernal investigators; they're a brilliant way to extend the legacy of those amazing guests.

DAVID LEVER

Nick: Oh David, I know that feeling so well, and Doctor Who in general has always been there to pick me up to. Really warms the cockles of my heart to read your email. Any time life has you outnumbered, Big Finish will be there for you. VORTEX



CREDITS

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Jason Haigh-Ellery

Executive Producer:
Nicholas Briggs

Senior Producer:
John Ainsworth

Editor: Kenny Smith

The Big Finish Team:
Chris Allen, Cheryl Bryant,
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Stephanie Briggs

Marketing & Publicity:
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Reanne Hawkins, Deanna Shore,
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THE BIG FINISH MAGAZINE

VORTEX



ISSUE 190
DECEMBER 2024
BIG FOR THE LOVE
OF FINISH
STORIES

TAYLOR MADE

STEVEN TAYLOR IS SET
TO MEET A PAIR OF OLD
FRIENDS ONCE MORE...

ZYGON CENTURY

THE FAMOUS SHAPE CHANGERS
ARE PLAYING THE LONG GAME...

