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**MATTHEW SWEET and JOHN DORNEY**  
on writing for the third series

ALSO

**Sarah Sutton**  
Back in the  
TARDIS

**Andrew Cartmel**  
The Lost Stories  
interview continues

**Tom Allen**  
Companion to  
the First Doctor

**PLUS!** Geoffrey Beevers' Drama Showcase

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# EDITORIAL

Busy days! Nick is currently swept off his feet directing (with help from Ken Bentley) and starring in series two of **Sherlock Holmes**, so I've stepped in to do a bit of editorial. It's 6.30am, I'm tapping away between my cup of tea and toast with marmite, and about to head over to the Moat for the final day of **Holmes**, and then we'll be prepping for a load of other things...

So what can I reveal? Well, the Sixth Doctor is going to get a new companion in 2012. And, for those lucky people attending Big Finish Day on June 11, there'll be a chance to meet and chat to the actor who plays this character, who'll be there with Colin himself. (Though don't worry – we'll do an announcement on the day too, so those who can't make it to Barking at least discover who we're talking about). Actually, it's all very exciting. I've read the three scripts that form

this mini-series and it's a bold, exciting new direction for the Sixth Doctor – who is now paired with somebody who will bring out new aspects of his personality.

Those stories are being recorded in June (either side of Big Finish Day), and while we're having fun in the studio the Big Finish Sale will be well underway. A bit of a change to proceedings this year – the month-long sale goes ahead as normal, but we also have Big Finish Week which comprises five days of brilliant bargains. From Monday 6 June to Friday 10 June you'll get the chance to buy bargain priced CDs every day. It's a great opportunity to fill in the gaps in your **Doctor Who** audio collection – or even kick start a collection – so don't miss out!

**David Richardson**

## SNEAK PREVIEWS AND WHISPERS



### Doctor Who: The Five Companions

The past catches up with the Fifth Doctor in a big way in this year's Subscriber Special, as a host of former companions – and a couple of old enemies – come together in a mysterious space/time event. The story may be full of familiar faces but it's packed with a lot of heart too, as writer Eddie Robson explores the idea of what it means to be one of the Doctor's companions. For Ian Chesterton, Steven Taylor, Sara Kingdom and Polly Wright – all a bit older than when they last met their Doctor, who is now ironically looking somewhat younger than when he met them – it's a chance to reflect on how life moves on. For everyone involved, this became one of their favourite recording days at Big Finish, with Jean Marsh remarking on her admiration for the affectionate script. The story is being released to Main Range subscribers only whose subscription includes *Army of Death*, although 12-month CD subscribers can nominate it as their free disc. *(Out in December)*

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# THE FOURTH DOCTOR

## ADVENTURES

David Richardson gives his thoughts on the first day of recording for *The Fourth Doctor Adventures*

It was one of those ‘pinch yourself’ days. And I can’t pretend I wasn’t nervous – after all, it’s not very often that we welcome one of the classic TV Doctors to the Big Finish fold. And there we were, on Friday 22nd April, reuniting Tom Baker’s Doctor and Louise Jameson’s Leela for the first time in thirty-three years.

The day began stressfully. Good ol’ John Dorney was giving me a lift to the studio in Tunbridge Wells but, despite the fact he only lives about five minutes away, managed to get lost and couldn’t find my house. I sat there glumly with a pile of scripts, camera and recording equipment wondering if Tom’s BF launch might continue without me. And then – huzzah – the phone rings. Dorney’s here. All’s well, and we get to the studio so ridiculously early we end up driving around for half an hour and drinking coffee, because even the engineer isn’t here yet.

Tom arrives early too, striding in with a broad smile and a cry of ‘Hello boys!’ So a few of us sit and drink coffee, and have the pleasure of listening to Tom regaling us with his anecdotes. We’re crying with laughter, and it’s only 9:15.

There’s a roar of a sports car and outside we can see Louise Jameson pulling up. It’s a glorious day – clear blue skies and blazing sunshine – and it couldn’t be a better backdrop for Tom and Louise to embrace each other outside. I seize the moment and take a photo of them together, quickly uploading it to our website and Facebook. It’s a statement to the world but mainly to myself (still pinching, you see) to say ‘We’re here, and recording is about to commence’.

We head into the studio and start the day’s recording with scene two, which is the Doctor

and Leela inside the wooden TARDIS console room. Nick and I have chatted endlessly about the ‘authenticity’ required for these stories. This is taking place the day after *The Talons of Weng-Chiang*. The Doctor is still educating Leela. The TARDIS console room is wooden. K9 has yet to be introduced.

“Would you like to say anything to mark the occasion?” Nick asks Louise. She gives that infectious smile of hers and says, “Who’d have thought?” And we’re off. It’s 1977 all over again. I’m 14 years old and it’s Saturday teatime.

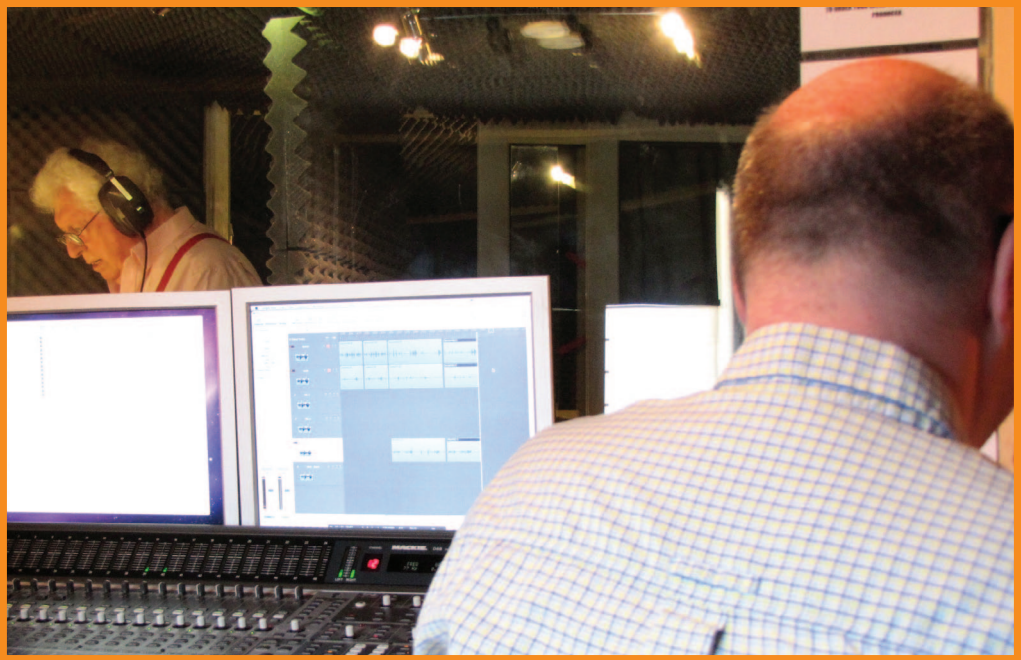
Tom’s a true pro, with tremendous energy, and we plough through scenes in the morning. A very chuffed John Dorney becomes the first actor to appear opposite Tom and Louise in these audios, in the role of The Man. It’s a small part, but he’s just happy with the accolade.

We take lunch at 1pm, some of us sitting outside in the sun wolfing down the buffet. And then it’s time for photos, the signing of some script fronts (these will no doubt be rare collectors’ items for the random subscribers who are sent them) and back for an afternoon’s recording.

The overwhelming sense of the day is the ease of it all. Everyone is so good, and so lovely, that it passes by very quickly. And we’re finished well ahead of schedule, with time for Dan Tostevin and Ben Cook from *Doctor Who Magazine* to get their interviews.

Tom and some of the cast head home; Louise and the rest of us head over to a beautiful pub in Tunbridge Wells that overlooks a country estate, and drink wine and eat fine food.

A truly great day. The Fourth Doctor has returned.

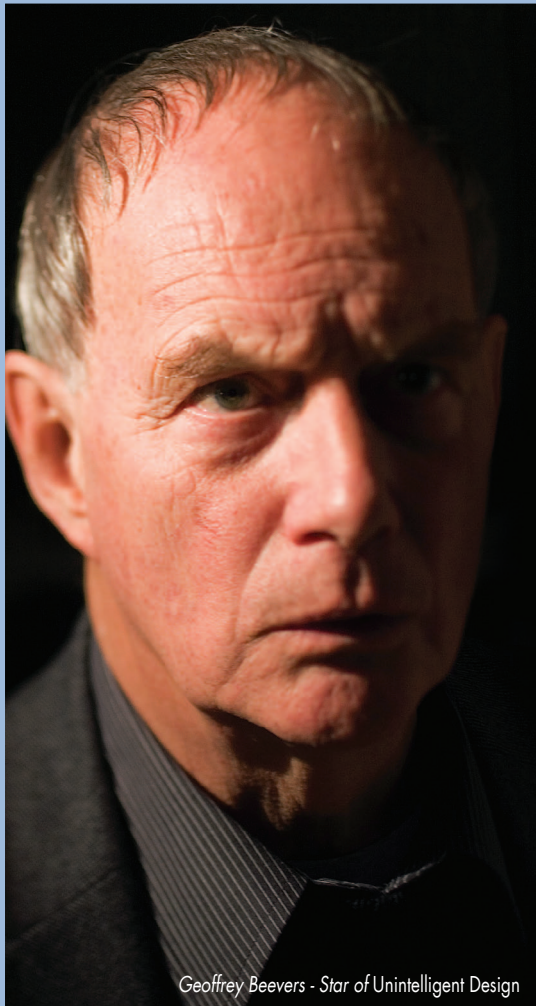


*Above: Tom Baker performs while Nick Briggs oversees the technical stuff*



*Tom Baker and Louise Jameson are reunited*

# Master Piece



Geoffrey Beevers - Star of Unintelligent Design

He's played the Master on TV and audio, and he's played several priests, but now he's presenting a comedy of ideas in the latest Drama Showcase. Meet Geoffrey Beevers!

Hi Geoffrey. How did you get involved in the **Drama Showcase** project?

I'd already worked for Big Finish as an actor, playing the Master in *Dust Breeding* and *Master*. But I had no idea they were doing the **Drama Showcase** project. I'd written the play before I knew about that. I tend to just write what I want to write and don't persist so much with marketing my writing – I find it enough to have to market myself as an actor! I had tried the play with the BBC, who have done plays of mine before, but they implied that this one was not the sort of play they did on Radio 4, so it was left on the shelf. Then my wife (actress Caroline John, who played Liz Shaw in **Doctor Who**) asked David Richardson if he'd look at it and gave him the play at a **Doctor Who** convention. It's a comedy of ideas and she thought the followers of **Doctor Who** might enjoy the ideas in it. As it happened, it fitted in with the idea of a **Drama Showcase** that Big Finish was considering.

What's the play about, and how would you classify it?

The play is a comedy about science and religion – more specifically about evolution and creationism! There is quite a tension between the idea that the universe is billions of light years across and all

life has evolved over billions of years by natural selection, and the idea that everything was created by God about four thousand years ago, as it says in the Bible, and that Man is at the centre of creation. I call it a Comedy of Ideas because it tries to dramatise this rather absurd tension in a comic way.

**What inspired you to write *Unintelligent Design*, and how long had it been gestating in your brain?**

I've always been interested in the ideas of science since I was young and have always read books on how life in the universe began. They knew very little when I was a child. It's amazing how much more they know now, but how many more questions it raises. I was also always fascinated by religions and why people believe the things they do.

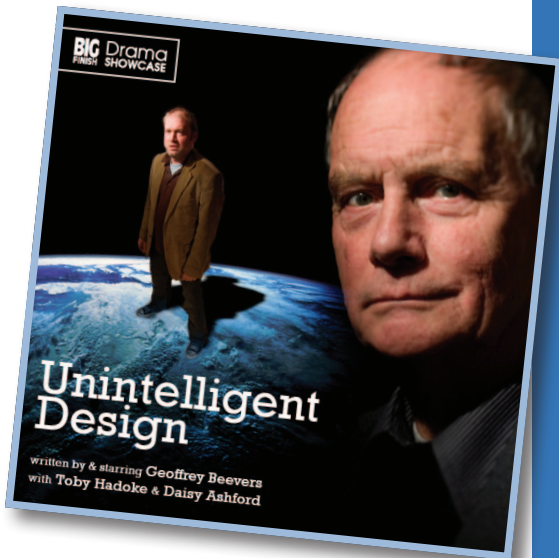
But the idea for this play started in the year of Darwin's bicentenary (2007) when there were lots of programmes on television and radio about Darwin's discoveries and how science has developed the understanding of evolution since. There were also programmes about Creationism and the millions of people, especially in America, who still believe in the Bible literally. Somehow, out of this background, I struck on the idea of this rather naive student who was trying to save from disaster the evolutionary world he had created, by appealing to his rather disillusioned teacher for help...!

**Did you have to make any adaptations for audio?**

I had thought of it from the start as a radio or audio play. You can suggest things and the audience can imagine it in their own way. Also, it is possible to concentrate on thoughts and ideas without distraction. I've learnt in the theatre that if people have to choose between watching and listening, they prefer to watch and stop listening. In audio, there is only listening and imagining for yourself.

**Was it always your intention to star in the play too?**

Some people find it hard to believe, but I really don't think about trying to write good parts for myself when I'm writing! I wrote what I wanted to write, but as soon



as I'd finished it I realised I would really enjoy playing the Teacher! There is usually a part for me in most of the plays I write. In some ways, all the parts come out of parts of the writer.

**What were the other cast members like to work with?**

A great pleasure. Toby Hadoke I had not worked with before, but he has a wonderful instinct and sense of timing. Daisy Ashford I know quite well and I think she's a very natural, very talented actor. But then, I would say that wouldn't I, because she's my daughter! So you must judge for yourself. A word too about Lisa

Bowerman, who not only directed beautifully but does a presenter quite the equal of Davina McCall! It's been such fun to do. I hope everyone will enjoy it as much!

**What's next for you? Further playwriting? More acting?**

At this moment I've no idea what I'm doing next as an actor, which is why I'm writing again. Something for the theatre, I hope, but early days at present. My ambition as an actor is to do more Shakespeare, which I love.

**Drama Showcase: *Unintelligent Design* is out this month**

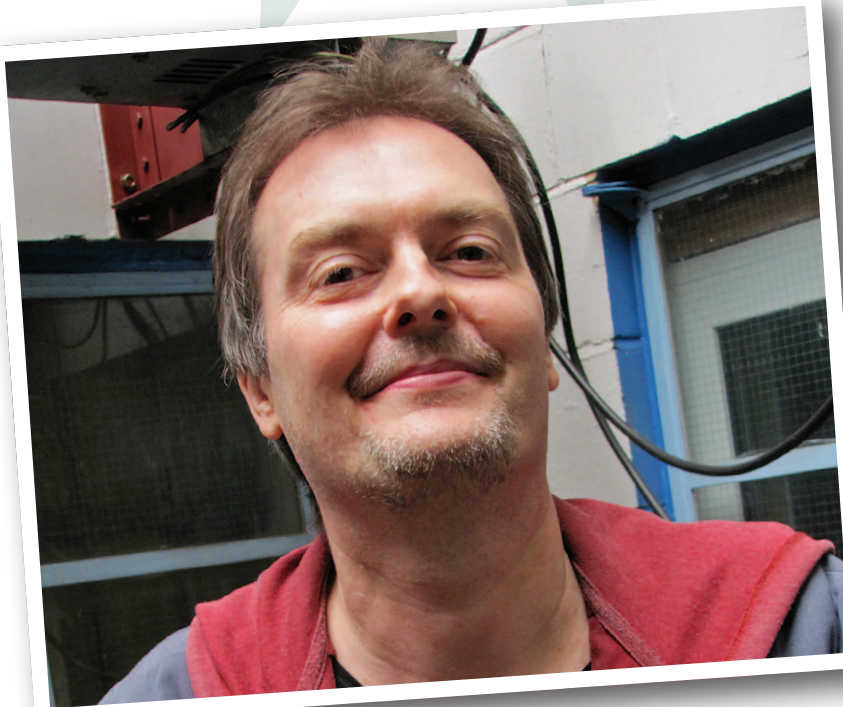


*Big Finish regular, Toby Hadoke*

TALES FROM THE  
SCRIPT  
EDITOR

# II

Andrew Cartmel continues his chat with Paul Spragg about the stories which make up the latter part of the Lost Stories' season 27...





Have you explored the chance to have Ace overlapping with new companion Raine Creevy? I loved the idea that we could have both and I don't see that there's any urgency for the Ace character to leave. As far as I'm concerned, we have the best of both worlds here because you can have Ace or Raine or the two of them together in any combination you like and I think that's the way to run it. Just keep it open-ended. Because it's such a pleasure to be working with Sophie again, and also, I was very interested to see how Ace and Raine would work together as characters, because although we create these characters in our minds, until you actually get them out there on the page and also get the actors involved, you're not quite sure what the chemistry's gonna be.

I knew that initially there might be a bit of antipathy or hostility between Ace and Raine, and I wanted to get that out of the way right away, because I thought that's the most boring possible thing you can do with the characters is have them bitching at each other. So I got rid of that quite early on in the first story where they met, and since then I think they work really well together. And there have been plenty of instances of more than one companion in the TARDIS. It wasn't in terms of trying to make it work with the other Big Finish adventures, from my point of view. It's just from the point of view of trying to do the era of Raine full justice. It's great to have Ace in there too and I like that better.

How has Raine developed from the original concept?

Although I like to think I'm a godfather to the character, she's very much Ben Aaronovitch's Raine as well because he was there developing the character of Raine, and in fact all the stuff about Raine's gangland father, that's entirely Ben. It was wonderful to have her finally allowed to go beyond that one scene in my mind, because the

only one fully developed scene was that one of cracking the safe and unleashing the Doctor, and then what is she gonna say next? What are they gonna do next? I had kind of ghostly images in my mind of how that was going to play out, but they weren't fully fleshed out. And she's exactly the way I imagined her. The only thing that really has changed is the surname, because we were going to call her Raine Cunningham and thanks to the wonder of the internet, I looked it up and there are actually girls out there called Raine Cunningham. I wanted her to be totally unique so we came up with a name that was totally made for her. So really the only thing that has changed over all these years is her surname.

How's Beth Chalmers in the role?

She's perfect. I know in these things everybody's really luvvie luvvie and says everybody's wonderful, but I just thought she was great. Because she's got exactly what you need, which is poshness, with the acerbity and the intelligence, and the sense of fun to it. Because she is a different character from Ace and it's



Beth Chalmers plays Raine

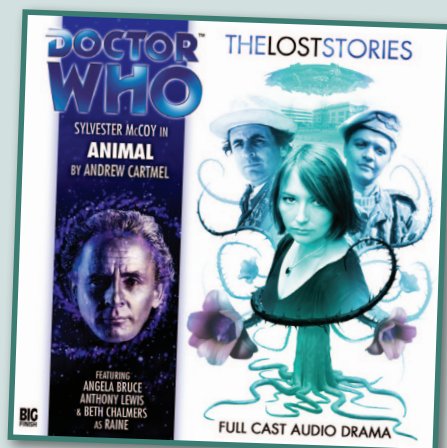
delightful because Ace is quite hard in some ways and plucky and funny. If we were talking about music, it would be an instrument that plays at a different range, so when you're writing it's like writing a piece of music which you can do more things with because you've got this very varied instrumentation. So you do an Ace solo and then you do a Raine solo, and you've got the Doctor there constantly like the bassline, it's fantastic.

You've written stories yourself too, unlike on the TV show.

I would like to have had Ian Briggs on board, but he just wasn't available at the time. In fact, most of the writers I would have been delighted to work with again. But I was quite pleased to do a lot of the writing myself because I knew exactly what I had in mind, so that was helpful. But at the same time I was tremendously happy to have Ben on board, both from the point of view of him being the custodian of Raine but also because Ben writes different stuff from me, so *Earth Aid*, all that hard science fiction and deep space starship kind of stuff, that's totally Ben's area. And to have Marc Platt on board, because Marc's got this wild, off the wall imagination, it was just great to be working with him again. It was a pleasure after all these years. And I know he's been doing Big Finish adventures so to the Big Finish listeners he's not a new writer, but it was wonderful for me to be working with him again because I hadn't worked with him for twenty years. So it's fantastic to just pick up that working relationship.



Andrew Cartmel with Sophie Aldred



Which stories would you still like to tell?

I've got a list at home of various projects; I'd have to go through them before I told you my favourites, but there's no shortage of ideas and, of course, new ideas or variations on the old ideas suggest themselves because I've got a better feel for the character of Raine all fully formed, and Raine's father, there's plenty of scope to have him back too. One of the most moving things was there's a reunion scene between Raine and her dad and I will confess to having a manly tear in my eye as I listened to it being performed; it was just lovely. So we've got those character dynamics which we can explore, so although we've got story ideas, all of which are in fairly vestigial form, we can begin to develop them in some depth because we know about these characters and their range, it's really a great feeling. I've just loved doing this season and if it's well received and there's a chance to do more, I really think we could be on to a winner here.

Are you enjoying being back on **Doctor Who** after so long away?

Well, the funny thing about **Doctor Who** is you never really leave it. It just never goes away and it's funny, it never went away in all the years when the show was off the air so it's sure as hell not gone away since it came back, it's back in spades. It's just a sheer pleasure to write for Ace and the Doctor, and you know their strengths, and when I write the dialogue I can hear their voices very clearly in my head. But I can do that with Raine too, obviously. It's a great little team; I'm just loving it actually.

*The Lost Stories: Animal is out this month*

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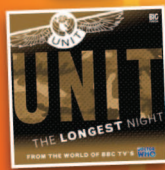
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# Sutton

**Sarah Sutton reminisces  
with Paul Spragg about her  
second return to the good old  
days in the latest trilogy of  
Fifth Doctor stories**



# Wha

What have you thought of the latest batch of stories? What can I remember about this trilogy... this could be a very short interview! Now we've come to the end of the recording and we've done three stories in six days, you tend to jettison memories of stories; as you finish them it gets deleted and you go on to the next one. Three stories with the three assistants back, and Nyssa as the older Nyssa, the more experienced and wiser Nyssa. Every time I've shown anyone a cover of the last time we did a trilogy, they go, 'Why are you old?' It's because I *am* old! Everyone else gets to look young. I shall complain. [laughs]

A few fans have said they'd like to see the companions as they are now on the covers. That's interesting, that they're making the jump to the stories moving on as a whole so they're not just looking back to the 1980s or whatever, they feel as if they're more contemporary.

How is Nyssa developing through these stories?

The essence of Nyssa is still there. There's nearly always something sort of scientific-y to have to be sorted out, and Nyssa will be doing that. I think she's on a more level term with the Doctor because she's grown up and she's obviously had life experiences. It's quite interesting to be this Nyssa because I've obviously got a back catalogue in

my life, and these little stories and little bits of information are dropped into various stories as we go along and it's like joining the dots with the character. It's really interesting.

She even tells the Doctor she's a better biochemist than he is at one point.

Yes. I'm surprised the Doctor didn't cuff me round the ear or something! I'm not sure the young Nyssa would have said that to the Doctor.

This is your second reunion with Peter Davison, Janet Fielding and Mark Strickson and Mark's only around for half the days.

[Mark] manages to do these without actually being here, which is quite a miracle! I can't believe it's a year ago since we were in exactly the same position. And it was snowing then and freezing cold, so I think the weather is something to do with it. I blame Mark, actually. I think it's all to do with him. But it's lovely. Hopefully this time next year we'll be doing all the same again. Fingers crossed.

And how's Peter been? He is known for ribbing his colleagues...

He's very kind. He takes lines off me that I'm struggling to say. Last time I couldn't say intradimensional, which I can now say perfectly, so he said, 'I'll say it'. So he took the line. So I owe him one for that. [But] I don't want any of his lines! He can say all the complicated stuff. He's so busy! Nothing's changed there; it was the same when we were on the television programme, he was doing commercials for this and voiceovers for that and this, that and the other

There's no change there thirty-odd years on, it's all the same. As soon as we stepped into the studio, Janet's on great form and bantering with Peter and he's answering her back and it's lovely. It's great fun. I think there's a really good chemistry between all of us when we're in the studio together so I'm hoping that gets passed on. It reminds me



of what good friends we were, actually, and how years can pass but that friendship's still there. It's been really nice to work with them again.

**Up to now you've been more used to just working solo with Peter.**

I banished [Mark] to the other side of the world, and banished Janet to deepest, darkest Ramsgate, so there is only me! A cunning plan.

**How does that experience compare with these recordings?**

I enjoy the ones where it's just the Doctor and Nyssa because I get to do a little bit more and see the story through to its conclusion. When there's all of us together, it's slightly more fragmented because we all go off doing different things, but it's a joy in a different way. So it's lovely to be able to do the two, the two complement each other.

I think it's slightly easier on audio than it was on the telly because you don't have budget restrictions; doing it on the telly, to get us all split up – which is what you have to do, you can't have us all traipsing around together with the Doctor – you then have sub-plots and they require some sort of placing, so that requires extra sets, etc, etc. But with audio it's great because it's all in your mind, so it's actually easier to give people things to do.

**Which have been your favourite Nyssa adventures?**

*Castle of Fear* was such fun. And Nyssa did get separated from the Doctor quite substantially in that story and she really did create the story herself rather than just following along. And again, in *Circular Time*, you got to see Nyssa in

a completely different scenario. I thought that was brilliant, that one.

[*The Demons of Red Lodge and Other Stories*] was great fun to do, and of course in the final one, *Special Features*, I get to play Nyssa doing something completely different. And we had a great ensemble cast. I quite enjoy the short stories. I think that's the lovely thing about Big Finish, is giving her opportunities. The relationship between her and the Doctor has grown.

**You've also done a Companion Chronicle, *The Darkening Eye*.**

Ooh dear. I was absolutely exhausted after I'd finished that! Don't ever ask me to do one of those again! I found it really stressful, I have to say. Much more difficult than I thought. I just have this awful fear that I was so bad! I was doing Janet, I was doing Matthew [Waterhouse, Adric], Peter. It is difficult because it's not as if it would be me doing an impersonation of Tegan, it's me doing Nyssa doing an impersonation of Tegan. It's very difficult to get your head round it.

A lot of words to say. I was absolutely shattered at the end of it and so disheartened by it all, I just felt like I'd let everyone down. So I really hope people got some enjoyment from my pain!

**Have you listened to any of your stories?**

I haven't. I hate listening to myself! I'm frightened that if I listen to them, and I'm so horrified, I might not offer to do another one. While you keep asking me, I'm thinking, 'Well, that's okay; I can't be that awful if they keep asking me back!' So that's my hope.

*Rat Trap is out this month*





# FORTHCOMING RELEASES

## JUNE 2011

**Doctor Who:** *Rat Trap* (148, Fifth Doctor/Tegan/Turlough/Nyssa)

**Doctor Who - The Lost Stories:** *Animal* (2.5, Seventh Doctor, Ace & Raine)

**Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:** *The Cold Equations* (5.12, First Doctor)

**Jago and Litefoot:** *Series 3 Box Set* (Four full cast adventures)

**Drama Showcase 4:** *Unintelligent Design* (Geoffrey Beavers)

**Dark Shadows:** 17 - *The Creeping Fog* (David Selby, Matthew Waterhouse)

**Dark Shadows:** 18 - *The Carrion Queen* (Lara Parker, Jerry Lacy)

## JULY 2011

**Doctor Who:** *Robophobia* (149, Seventh Doctor)

**Doctor Who - The Lost Stories:** *Earth Aid* (2.6, Seventh Doctor, Ace & Raine)

**Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:**

*Tales from the Vault* (6.01, First, Second, Third and Fourth Doctors)

**Dark Shadows:** 19 - *The Poisoned Soul* (Nancy Barrett)

**Dark Shadows:** 20 - *The Last Girl* (Kathryn Leigh Scott)

**Everyone's Just So So Special** by Robert Shearman (Special Leatherbound, Leatherbound and Hardback)

## AUGUST 2011

**Doctor Who:** *Recorded Time and Other Stories* (150, Sixth Doctor and Peri)

**Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:** *The Rocket Men* (6.02, First Doctor)

**Doctor Who - Short Trips:** *Volume 4* (2 CDs, various readers)

**Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:** *The Specials Box Set* (*The Three Companions, The Mists of Time, Freakshow*)

**Dark Shadows:** 21 - *The Crimson Pearl*

## SEPTEMBER 2011

**Doctor Who:** *The Doomsday Quatrain* (151, Seventh Doctor)

**Doctor Who:** *House of Blue Fire* (152, Seventh Doctor)

**Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:**

*The Memory Cheats* (6.03, Second Doctor)

**Bernice Summerfield Box Set 1:** *Epoch*

## OCTOBER 2011

**Doctor Who:** *The Silver Turk* (153, Eighth Doctor and Mary Shelley)

**Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:**

*The Many Deaths of Jo Grant* (6.04, Third Doctor)

**Doctor Who - The Lost Stories:** *The Elite* (3.1, Fifth Doctor, Tegan and Nyssa)

**Sherlock Holmes:** *The Final Problem/The Empty House* (2.1)

## NOVEMBER 2011

**Doctor Who:** *The Witch from the Well* (154, Eighth Doctor and Mary Shelley)

**Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:** TBA (6.05, Doctor TBA)

**Doctor Who - The Lost Stories:** *Hexagora* (3.2, Fifth Doctor, Tegan and Nyssa)

**The Big Finish Companion:** Volume 1 by Richard Dinnick (hardback)

**Sherlock Holmes:** *The Reification of Hans Gerber* (2.2)

## DECEMBER 2011

**Doctor Who:** *Army of Death* (154, Eighth Doctor and Mary Shelley)

**Doctor Who:** *The Five Companions* - Subscriber Special (Fifth Doctor, Nyssa, Ian, Steven, Sara and Polly)

**Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:** TBA (6.06, Doctor TBA)

**Doctor Who - The Lost Stories:** *The Children of Seth* (3.3, Fifth Doctor, Tegan and Nyssa)

**Sherlock Holmes:** *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (2.3)

**Graceless:** *Series 2 Box Set*

## JANUARY 2012

**Doctor Who:** TBA (155, Sixth Doctor and TBA)

**Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures:** TBA (1.1, Fourth Doctor and Leela)

**Doctor Who - The Lost Stories:** *The Fourth Doctor Box Set (Foe From the Future + TBA)*; Fourth Doctor and Leela)

**Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:** TBA (6.06, Doctor TBA)

**Sherlock Holmes:** *The Tangled Skein* (4.4)

## FEBRUARY 2012

**Doctor Who:** TBA (156, Sixth Doctor and TBA)

**Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures:** TBA (1.2, Fourth Doctor and Leela)

**Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:** TBA (6.07, Doctor TBA)

**Bernice Summerfield Box Set 2:** *Road Trip*

## MARCH 2012

**Doctor Who:** TBA (156, Sixth Doctor and TBA)

**Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures:** TBA (1.3, Fourth Doctor and Leela)

**Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:** TBA (6.08, Doctor TBA)

**Jago and Litefoot:** *Series 4 Box Set* (Four full cast adventures)



# BOND OF FRIENDSHIP

**Tom Allen, star of Radio 4's brilliant *Bleak Expectations*, discusses his new role as a companion of the First Doctor with Paul Spragg**

Hello Tom! So, man-hug?  
Why not?

Lovely. Tell us a bit about your character in *The Perpetual Bond*.

Oliver, who's the character I play in this particular **Companion Chronicle**, is a city trader from the Sixties, which I think is a really interesting time because the Sixties, as far as I understand, were this big kind of meeting point of the new world and the old world. It's often assumed that it's all to do with teenagers and The Beatles but there was still an old guard, I think, that was hanging around. And Oliver was a young trader who was part of that in the city in London and he runs off with the Doctor because he's being pursued by the police. I'm really excited to be part of this storyline. I think what's exciting about the whole **Doctor Who** thing is that it's about huge differences in the world and the universe beyond that and the way Oliver deals with everything. So I think it's a good story and a nice role to be playing.

*The Perpetual Bond* is the first of a trilogy of stories with you alongside Steven Taylor. What's the relationship like between the two?

We get quite snappy with each other. Steven's not that keen on Oliver; I think he sees him as you would sort of like a younger brother arriving in the family, so he's quite waspish with him and quite horrible to him. And Oliver's a little naïve, a little bit open-hearted but he does start to fight back quite a lot.

It's a lovely thing to be part of, this. It's brilliant writing and storytelling and it's really great to have a go at doing that. And it's nice to play it through Oliver's eyes because it's going to these worlds people would find quite strange and you can play that quite truthfully as Oliver because it's all new to him. So he's not like Steven, who's like, 'Yes, of course they look like that'; Oliver's going, 'Wow! They look like that!' which feels honest and truthful; I like playing him, I like his adventures.

What's Peter Purves like to work with?

Dreadful. [laughs] No, brilliant! So brilliant. And he's so clever. He has to work so hard because he's doing the Doctor and Steven and he does it all impeccably. He's really, really brilliant, and just the way he distinguishes it and the way he times and paces things is so perfect; I like to think I've learnt a lot from just being here.

Would you be keen to do more Big Finish audios?

I'd love to, yeah, I'd love to.

Perhaps a full cast one?

Oh, I'd love that as well, yes. Yeah. I love it here, the lunch is great, and it's a very pared down way of telling stories. I just think it's really beautiful and really honest. It's sort of



traditional in a way, isn't it, people just simply using their voice; it's what I really like to listen to so I think it's a really great thing to be part of. I really enjoy it.

You've worked as part of an ensemble before; do you prefer that or the **Companion Chronicles** type of two-person set-up?

I don't mind either, really. There's something quite nice about being in a big company, I suppose, when you can have a bit of a laugh and make each other laugh a bit in rehearsals which is always quite nice, just to explore it. But this is very lovely because you're just in the middle of the action and you have to keep the pace going and I like that too. I don't have a preference really. I work as a stand-up quite a lot of the time and that's very solitary, and much as I love that as well, it's nice to have the balance of working with other people sometimes.

The first three series are out on CD; here's your chance to introduce people to **Bleak Expectations**.

**Bleak Expectations** is a Dickensian spoof, is the best way to describe it; or a Victorian spoof, it's gone beyond Dickens now to pretty much every nineteenth century writer who ever existed. I play Pip, and Pip is the young man who does his best to deal with this strange, peculiar world and a world that's brought to life by Richard Johnson – who plays the older me – Geoffrey Whitehead and Anthony Head and Celia Imrie and Sarah Hadland and Suzy Kane and James Bachman, amongst others. David Mitchell, occasionally. We have a lot of fun doing it and its brilliant, brilliant scripts so we're very lucky with Mark Evans, that he's so imaginative and so inspired in the way he just surprises you with ridiculousness which is very, very funny. And we're very proud of it.

James Bachman came in for an Eighth Doctor story recently and everyone took a shine to him.

He's really lovely. I remember him being quite camp at the last recording, actually, when the engineer told us to stop and we'd turned into Julian and Sandy. Maybe there was something about being in the BBC Radio Theatre that **Round the Horne** took over us. But it's lovely. Everybody is very, very nice and we have a lot of biscuits and we have a nice time. We won a Sony award

for the third one, and this [fourth] series will be going out in December 2010, but I'm sure it'll be repeated, probably when this is released in 2012.

It'll probably be out on CD by then.

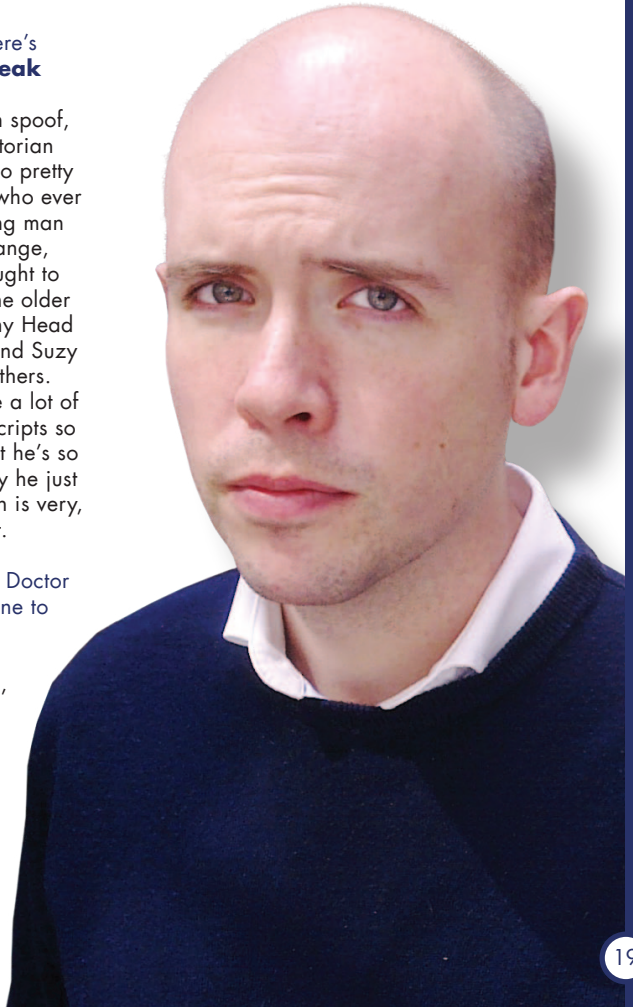
Do pop down to your local Our Price and buy it.

Do they have those any more?

No. They don't have CDs any more.

By the time this article comes out we'll probably have moved on to something else anyway. Something completely different. There probably won't be any electricity left, so it will just be a wind-up gramophone.

*The Cold Equations is out this month*



# The Write Stuff

Matthew Sweet and John Dorney describe their experiences of writing for **Jago & Litefoot's** third series of adventures!

You're both new to **Jago & Litefoot** this series; how did you manage to leap on board?

**Matthew Sweet:** It was Justin Richards who blew the whistle. I think he knew my book **Inventing the Victorians**, which is a revisionist account of nineteenth-century culture and has plenty of infernal incidents. Some of them involve figures such as Julia Pastrana the Baboon Lady.

**John Dorney:** I got an email out of the blue. Simple as that, really. David and Lisa like my work, thankfully, so I suspect it was always on the cards as a possibility. It was all a little secretive (because of Leela's presence) but I was invited to attend one of the studio days for series two, which turned out to be for *The Necropolis Express*. I'm probably still in the mix as some of the zombies, even if the cameo I recorded for *Theatre of Dreams* was cut for all sorts of contractual reasons.

What was your brief for **Jago & Litefoot**, or was it fairly open-ended?

**MS:** Justin produces a document that sets out a framework for the season, and it comes with some very useful suggestions about what kind of story would suit the slot, and what points of the overarching narrative have to be accommodated. Justin's plot was an eye-wateringly violent story about automata and taxidermy, but I'd already had some thoughts about a different story – and because he's a very gentlemanly sort of figure, he let me do something that didn't have a single stuffed thing in it.

**JD:** We were told we could do what we liked as long as we kept the arc elements from the brief intact. I had quite a lot of them in my outline, in particular a specific location and structural 'gimmick', but it didn't really have a plot or an



antagonist, so I was able to come up with the actual story for the episode.

How do you set about coming up with an adventure for **Jago & Litefoot**?

**MS:** For all my Big Finish plays, I've started by deciding which novel of the period I'm going to steal some ideas from. *Year of the Pig* was about a sci-fi creature who behaved like a character from Proust. *The Magic Mousetrap* was pilfered from Thomas Mann – down to the whistling pneumothoracic tube. I nicked things from a number of Victorian and Edwardian writers for *The Man at the End of the Garden* – Edith Nesbit is the woman who lies somewhere underneath the matriarch of the story, Eleanor Naismith. She's the woman who wrote **The Phoenix and the Carpet**, of which there's a great BBC adaptation starring a sweet little boy called Gary Russell. But it was someone else's version of Nesbit that made me think she might be a good



Left to right: Trevor Baxter, Christopher Benjamin, Louise Jameson and Conrad Asquith

foil for Jago and Litefoot. I'd just interviewed AS Byatt about her novel **The Children's Book**, a great panoramic drama about that golden age of late Victorian and Edwardian fiction for young readers, written by a generation of writers who had a faintly vampire-like relationship with their own children. Antonia Byatt's heroine – who is also modelled on Nesbit – betrays her children by publishing stories she created just for them, and then the Great War makes a clean sweep of her household. So once you've latched on to a set of ideas and situations, you then go about building a story with them that feels like a Jago and Litefoot mystery.

**JD:** Long walks and thinking. *Swan Song* came together remarkably quickly, it only took about two or three days to get together pretty much the entire story, which is quick. I mooched around a bit, looking at the brief from every angle I could, looking for elements that grabbed me. An idea popped into my head, and I found solutions to the problems it posed quite swiftly. The actual writing just flowed. It really does just come down to character. Jago and Litefoot's voices are so clear and their personalities so distinct, it's simply a joy to write their dialogue. I missed them terribly when I stopped writing. Christopher Benjamin and Trevor Baxter are such fine actors,

I could listen to them doing anything. Then throw the wonder that is Louise Jameson into the mix too and you've got one of the most joyous writing experiences I've ever had.

**Things have changed for the boys; what new dynamic does Leela add to the series?**

**MS:** It's great to have Leela because it brings you a step closer to the world of *The Talons of Weng-Chiang*, unquestionably my favourite **Doctor Who** story of all time. Those character scenes with Litefoot and Leela in Ranskill Gardens are some of the loveliest moments ever produced by **Doctor Who**. But everyone loves that story. My colleague on Radio 3, the Oxford sinologist Rana Mitter, can do a creepily accurate impression of Mr Sin shouting "He been smoking pipe of pop-eeeeee!" And he's a real professor.

**JD:** Leela's more of a leader than they are – she'll dive into dangerous situations head first and they feel morally obliged to back her up. But at the same time, they're much more worldly-wise than her (even as Victorians), so they all have a lot to teach each other.

**How do the other regulars react to this new savage in their midst?**

**MS:** Like gentlemen. And she changes the shape

of the stories because Leela is a character of violent action. She's the sort of person who leaps through windows on a regular basis. Neither Jago nor Litefoot are natural men of action, but Leela's presence sometimes forces them into that role, just to keep up.

**What can you tell us about the arc for series three, and what secrets can you reveal about your own stories?**

**MS:** The end of time and space as we know it, of course! I'm not going to give away anything about my story but I can tell you that John wraps it all up with effortless elegance.

**JD:** Leela's been sent to deal with a series of dangerous time breaks that risk tearing causality apart. But that's really only a backdrop to more small-scale character pieces. Mine's a hopefully melancholic story about emotions and what they do to us. It's got a sequence inspired by the Brian Friel play **Translations** and the final line of the penultimate scene is my favourite I've written. I think that's all I'm willing to say... not least because everything else in the plot sounds barking out of context!

**How was the atmosphere in studio?**

**MS:** I couldn't come to the recording of *The Man at the End of the Garden*, but I was present for a story in season four. I barely made it out of the green room because I was so captivated by Trevor's story about William Empson's beard. Put those words into Google images and just see what you get.

**JD:** Wasn't there, sadly, which was gutting. The only one of my scripts where I wasn't able to

attend even a minute of the recording. I was too busy off rehearsing a tour of **The Caretaker**.

**Was there anything you wanted to do but was vetoed?**

**JD:** I've said there's a structural gimmick, meaning it's an atypical **Jago and Litefoot**, and that's still true, but in the original synopsis I took this to quite an extreme degree and Justin pulled me back – which he was quite right to do as the new version was much stronger, and the other would have been far less fun to write. Everything else I was allowed, no matter how extreme, which was lovely. There was one tweak to the format I wanted which Justin wasn't keen on... but I've no idea whether it's still there on the final disc, so I look forward to finding out when it arrives in the post!

**What would you tell newcomers to convince them to try out **Jago & Litefoot**?**

**MS:** They look so beautiful on the shelf. They're worth having just for the box design. And when you listen to them they're even better. I think of them as a love letter to Robert Holmes, Trevor Baxter, Lou Jameson and Chris Benjamin. Buying them is like putting your name on next to ours.

**JD:** It is, without doubt, my favourite Big Finish range bar none, both to work on and to listen to. I can hardly wait to hear series three, and I know what's coming! Beautiful stories, well told, performed by three of the best actors the company has, playing at the top of their game. Fun, heartfelt, moving and dramatic stories, they're simply a joy from beginning to end. I can't recommend them enough.

**Jago and Litefoot - Series Three Box Set is out this month**



Left to right: Christopher Benjamin, Lisa Bowerman, Hywel Morgan, David Richardson, Louise Jameson, Andrew Westfield, Toby Hrycek-Robinson, Abigail Hollick and Trevor Baxter

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