

VORTEX

THE BIG FINISH MAGAZINE



SWEET SEVATEEM
LOUISE JAMESON ON TOM BAKER
AND RUNNING DOWN CORRIDORS

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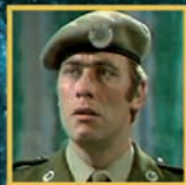
MEET THESE DOCTOR WHO STARS

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JOHN LEESON
JOHN LEVENE
ADRIENNE BURGESS
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Well, there I was last month, pondering about the intricacies of the public side of being an executive producer at Big Finish (and by the way, thanks to those of you who wrote expressing your considered support), when suddenly I get to enjoy the luxurious side of it all.

Yes, I'm not just talking luxury in an LA hotel at the Gallifrey One convention – I'm talking luxury at Barking Abbey School and Big Finish Day 2!

Okay, perhaps not so much luxury at Barking Abbey School as reminders of my old junior school days, when we used to paint hands and arms green during art lessons and pretend we had the Silurian plague. Not that I actually went to Barking Abbey School, but that venerable institution is of an architectural style much copied in the UK, sometime during the Middle Ages, I believe. I love quadrangles, don't you? They conjure up the smells of sour milk (before Mrs Thatcher valiantly put paid to that!) and urinals with gigantic disinfectant blocks, which teachers sternly forbade us to crush with our cheap slip-on shoes. There... a window into my scary childhood!

Anyway, sarcasm aside, it was lovely to meet you all. Big Finish Day 2 and Gallifrey One (sounds like an odd football score!) were both joyous occasions. They happened the right way round too. BF Day 2 seemed enormous, with around 400 people attending – over twice as many as attended the first Big Finish Day. Imagine my dizziness when I was faced with over 3,000 attendees in LA! Still, I loved both equally (he said, diplomatically) and although LA had the edge with the weather and the swimming pool, Barking triumphed with the shorter journey time and the food. Neither topped the other for the sheer, good-natured enthusiasm we experienced.

Thank you all. You make us proud to serve.

NICK BRIGGS



Big Finish's first original **Blake's 7** novel *The Forgotten* is a rollickingly great adventure story set during series one, which leads into the TV story *Breakdown*. Blake and his crew on the *Liberator* are being mercilessly hunted by Travis and his pursuit ships, and the path of escape actually leads to something far more dangerous...

Writers Cavan Scott and Mark Wright, who created *The Forge* for the **Doctor Who** main range, work to **Blake's 7's** strengths, highlighting the dynamics between the characters while building towards a dark and cataclysmic climax.

The Forgotten is the first in our range of **Blake's 7** novels – the follow-up, *Archangel* by Scott Harrison, is due in November – and old and new fans alike should enjoy the thrilling ride. (Out May)

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SAVAGE TALES

LOUISE JAMESON HAS A CHINWAG WITH PAUL SPRAGG ON THE SUBJECTS OF EDUCATION, RUNNING DOWN CORRIDORS AND JUST HOW RESPONSIBLE SHE WAS FOR GETTING TOM BAKER TO WORK FOR BIG FINISH

Lovely to see you, Louise. What's it like being back working with Tom?

● It's such a different experience from how it was in the Seventies and he's been hugely publicly apologetic for that time. I just adore it. I absolutely adore working with Tom Baker.

You've obviously been working with Big Finish for a while on the Companion Chronicles, all of which have been written by Nigel Fairs.

● He's my best friend; I love his writing. I jump for joy when David [Richardson] says that Nigel's going to write a script for me because he just knows me, my rhythms and my interpretations now so well. We wrote collaboratively all year round – we're writing a script together for Brighton and the Edinburgh Festival next year; I've directed the show that he's just about to tour, **In Conversation with an Acid Bath Murderer**; we work with twenty teenagers every Sunday. He devises with them and I do

more classical work, so we spend a lot of time with each other.

In the Fourth Doctor Adventures, we're back with 'early' Leela. What aspects of the character are being explored?

● What they decided to do was make this Leela's education, so I've learnt to read a little bit, a bit like a four-year-old. The vocabulary's expanded somewhat, which actually makes life a bit easier for the writers,

"Of course, it all comes right in the end because that's what happens in Doctor Who."

I think. For instance the word tug, as in boat, ship, has been incorporated into Leela's language in this one we've just done, but I say 'ship' up until I hear everybody else using the word tug. So they're being quite careful about when it comes in; there's quite a logical progression. And more often than not Tom and I get split up, so it's more satisfying for me because I get to lead some of the action and I'm given a companion. The script tomorrow [*The Wrath of the Iceni* by John Dorney], I'm really excited about; I think it's a cracking script [about] her personality and her skills and, indeed, her misjudgement. Her lack of communication with the Doctor, her pig-headedness, comes forward. Of course, it all comes right in the end because that's what happens in **Doctor Who**, but it's a very interesting journey John's taken her on. I really, really like the script.

It must make a nice change to be doing some full cast audios at last.

● It makes it easier actually, because there's less responsibility and I'm only playing me. If I'm doing a **Chronicle** where I'm also trying to play Tom and

a monster and reported speech and young Leela and old Leela... That's not to say they're not exciting and good scripts, but obviously it's harder work in preparation. I'm not a very good Tom Baker, I think. I don't think I do Tom terribly well!

You've also recorded some Lost Stories; did they feel different to the Fourth Doctor Adventures?

● Rather than compare the **Lost Stories** with the newer ones, it tends to go writer to writer for me. You can hear a particular voice in the writing and that's how they differ. This one we've just done, *Destination: Nerva* [written and directed by Nick Briggs], is incredibly visual. I know that sounds crazy for an audio, but they say the best films are made on radio, don't they? Others will be more conversational; more interaction between established characters rather than running from the monsters all the time. I think this has lifted off the page well. Very pacy. A lot of Nick's notes were to do with 'remember you're struggling, remember you're trying to escape, remember the imminent danger, keep the energy up'.

With the Lost Stories, did you get the sense that they could have been made in the Seventies?

● I certainly did with Robert Banks Stewart's story [*The Foe from the Future*]. Absolutely. Because you're doing so many on the trot, they tend to get just a bit blurred in my mind, so as I'm reading them for the first time, I write notes down. And I wrote on the front of that one 'good old-fashioned Seventies running down corridors, dodging round corners'. It just felt like I was back in the rehearsal room! And then [David] told me afterwards that it would have been the story that was in the *Talons of Weng-Chiang* slot, so that would never have happened had this not been shelved for whatever reason. Interesting, isn't it? A whole other world.

There would have been no Jago & Litefoot spin-off for Christopher Benjamin and Trevor Baxter, for one.

● Aww. Aren't they brilliant? I love working with them. Fantastic. They've both aged so well, and

they're so funny to be around, they're so funny together. And they just slip back into that pattern they had in '77.

Did you feel like the new girl when you joined Jago & Litefoot?

● Not at all. I completely claim this role!

Now, I gather you were particularly instrumental in convincing Tom to join the Big Finish fold.

● I take full credit! I said to him on and off, 'They're lovely, Big Finish, you must work with them', but not in any serious conversation. Then David just happened to mention that he'd been trying for years to get Tom to work for them, and I thought, 'Let me just fire off an e-mail'. And it probably just arrived in the inbox at the right time and I went, 'Big Finish: great, fantastic lunches, they pay on the nose, the scripts are good, there's great artistic integrity about what goes on, they really listen to your input if you want to change a line or you think that a plot twist

doesn't quite work; you have a really respectful ear on what you have to say – go for it'. And the next thing, about four weeks later, David says, 'We've got Tom on board! Yay!' And the rest is history. It's good to talk to the right people!

Evidently we don't appreciate the influence you hold! Who are you going to get in to work with next?

● I love working with Colin Baker. He's one of my dear friends.

What directions would you like to see Leela develop in?

● I'd love to go back into the TV series [for the 50th anniversary] as a sixty-year-old woman with a horde of children and even more grandchildren. Nobody's said anything but it just would be wonderful, wouldn't it, if they had as many companions as possible in there? I just think it would be a great coup de theatre. In these scripts, I'd like to see her

Ella Kenion and Louise Jameson during the recording of *The Wrath of the Iceni*



“I'd love to go back into the TV series as a sixty-year-old woman with a horde of children.”

just getting a bit more educated without losing any of that animal instinct. But you know what, maybe she could learn how to fly the TARDIS...

Away from Doctor Who, of course, you've also been heavily involved in our Drama Showcase range.

● Oh, I was so excited by doing that. And also, I got to direct – hurrah! – *In Conversation with an Acid Bath Murderer*. I thought it was just a lovely, lovely experience and I have a soft spot for [technician] Toby [Hrycek-Robinson], because I had him sitting



"You eat babies!" Tom Baker and Louise Jameson

on my left, I knew as a director I was in completely safe hands if I overlooked anything. He picked me up on a couple of things, I think, but that was all. I think he does that with any director so I felt I did my job okay. And of course the other one I recorded, *Pulling Faces*, I've already done as a one-woman show even though we cast it out this time. Colin [Baker] did a guest appearance in that, which is great. Because I knew it – I mean literally knew it, I had it completely in my head – something happens when you have a script memorised that makes it absolutely organic to you, so it's one of the easiest audios I've done.

Did you start delivering other people's lines?

● No, but it was interesting to hear their take on it, so when I went back to taking it on stage, I took some of what they did back into the stage performance.

What's coming up next for you?

● I'm touring the show again and I'm going to New Zealand and Australia for three **Doctor Who** conventions, which is terrific. I'm going to a writers' retreat to knock this script into shape for next year, which is gonna be called **My Gay Best Friend**, and I'm teaching twenty teenagers every Sunday so it's all pretty full on!

It's a wonder you had time to come in and make these stories...

● Bless them, they absolutely fitted this around my schedule because I've been filming **Doc Martin** all summer!

DOCTOR WHO THE WRATH OF THE ICENI OUT THIS MONTH



STARRING TOM BAKER AND LOUISE JAMESON

■ Britain. The height of the Roman occupation. The Doctor has brought Leela to ancient Norfolk to learn about her ancestors... but has no idea how much of an education she is going to get.

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■ This story takes place between *The Talons of Weng-Chiang* and *Horror of Fang Rock*.

AUTHOR: JOHN DORNEY
DIRECTOR: KEN BENTLEY

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INVESTIGATORS OF INFERNAL INCIDENTS

MR JAGO AND MR LITEFOOT

DARK RISING



Jago and Litefoot return for their fourth series, accompanied by the reliable Ellie, Sergeant Quick and Leela – and with the mysterious Professor Claudius Dark lurking just out of sight. Producer David Richardson gives a preview of what lies ahead...

Could you remind us where we left Jago and Litefoot at the end of series three?

● Spoiler-phobes, look away! We left Jago and Litefoot in the presence of the mysterious Professor Claudius Dark, played by the inimitable Colin Baker. Dark might be exactly who he says he is. He might be the Doctor. He might be Burner from the **Gallifrey** series. Or he might be something entirely different...

What were your thoughts as you went into the fourth series?

● Actually, my overriding thought was that it was probably, and sadly, going to be the last. Thankfully, we now know that it's not the last – far from it.

“At the time we thought we were bringing Jago & Litefoot to a neat close, and to some extent the stories reflect that.”

But at the time we thought we were bringing **Jago & Litefoot** to a neat close, and to some extent the stories reflect that. Actually, what it does do rather nicely is bring the series to a sort of close and then open a new chapter – though not the one you might think you're getting when you hear the cliffhanger!

The cast list is quite full these days, isn't it?

● That's true. We've got Jago and Litefoot, plus Ellie and Quick, our series regulars. On top of that, Louise Jameson is still around as Leela, while Colin is on board as Professor Dark, although not all of them are major players in every episode. Even so, I think next time you'll see a change of direction – we're stripping things right back for series five, which will just be Jago, Litefoot and Ellie

investigating a bunch of cases. I think, by then, it's time for the series to stand on its own again for a while. It's been a lot of fun playing with some new dynamics, but I always wanted to ensure this was a series that never rests on its laurels.

Where do Jago and Litefoot go this year?

● Oh, lots of places they haven't been before. They go on holiday to Brighton, where Jago meets the love of his life. They go to the theatre, and Litefoot meets Oscar Wilde, who he cannot abide. They go round in circles on a train trapped in time, and they go far and wide to defeat a new and deadly enemy...

As usual, there is danger, humour and adventure in spades, plus there's romance and some very poignant heartbreak. I'm a bit in love with these four stories, and I think our recurring enemy is just sublime.

Everyone seems to have such a good time making it.

● We do. We have the best time, and that all comes from Christopher Benjamin [Jago] and Trevor Baxter [Litefoot], who are every bit as adorable, warm and entertaining as their fictional characters. And it's not an easy series to make – it's a tight budget, so there's lots of difficult scheduling, doubling, pre- and post-recording. Poor Lisa Bowerman has to wear two hats – director and actor – while keeping on top of it all. But there is constant laughter, which you'll discover if you listen to the CD extras. In fact, the CD extras of this series contain my favourite interview moment ever, as Trevor recalls a dinner party from the early 1970s.

In terms of production, where are you at now with the series?

● Series five is recorded, and will be entering post-production soon for release early next year. Series six is being written right now – I've had the script for episode four, episodes one and three are due, and episode two is about to get underway. I expect we'll be recording that around May. We have a commission for series seven, which I suspect we'll be recording early next year.



Courteous covers Trevor Baxter and Christopher Benjamin

.....

“We have the best time, and that all comes from Christopher Benjamin and Trevor Baxter, who are every bit as adorable, warm and entertaining as their fictional characters”

.....

Jago and Litefoot are reunited with the Fourth Doctor next year. How did that come about?

● It really was an obvious thing to do, but we've actually done it in a way that's not very obvious. We've shaken up the dynamic by doing the story with Romana rather than Leela, so there's a whole new frisson between Romana and Jago. I knew I wanted John Dorney to write it, as he'd done such lovely work on *Swan Song* and *Beautiful Things*, and it's a lovely steampunk romp that's very different to both *The Talons of Weng-Chiang* and the **Jago & Litefoot** series.

My only regret is that we originally wanted Lisa Bowerman to be in it as Ellie and she was in an early draft of the script. But it just felt like the Fourth Doctor was guest starring in **Jago & Litefoot** rather than the other way around, and I think we had to respect that this was Tom's show. But I think it will be great and I'm itching to hear the edits.

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DARK THOUGHTS

THE PRODUCERS OF DARK SHADOWS HAVE A
CHAT ABOUT UPCOMING RELEASES

Joe Lidster: Hello, James. That's a lovely cardigan. As you know but the reader might not, we've been asked by Paul Spragg to interview each other for *Vortex* magazine. I presume we're meant to be talking about **Dark Shadows** and not cake or Tom Baker's utter obsession with it being Saturday teatime in 1977, so let's open with: tell me about *The House by the Sea*.

James Goss: *The House by the Sea* is an attempt to do something different. It's a tribute to Radio 4's **Fear on Four** and a little bit to MR James – basically the story of a naive man who goes on holiday and has a truly, truly terrible time...

But, whereas the Man In Black would send you to

Cornwall, or MR James would send you to Norfolk, we wondered what it would be like if you were sent to Collinsport. So it serves as a perfect introduction to the world of **Dark Shadows** to people who've never listened to one. We were inspired to do it by someone on the Big Finish forum suggesting Collinsport's doomed *The House by the Sea* as a great location for a drama. And it really is.

It was conceived very much with Colin Baker in mind. He'd asked to do one, and who better to carry a single voice drama? So tell me, Joe: what was it like directing Colin?

JL: Colin was amazing. I'd worked with him briefly a few years before on **Doctor Who**, but this was my

first proper directing gig. He knew the script and the character and really gave it his all. The part was written for him but he still managed to surprise us in places. I genuinely think it's one of the best plays Big Finish has ever produced. Every aspect of it just works. It's one to listen to in the dark.

So James, tell me about the actors and recording process for *Dress Me in Dark Dreams*. That was fun, wasn't it!

JG: *Dress Me in Dark Dreams* is either our most technically ambitious play or the one where we got hopelessly out of our depth. It's hard to arrange recording sessions for **Dark Shadows** – in the forty years since the show was on the air, the cast have moved and are quite busy, and my geographical knowledge of America is based on the **Sex and the City** episode where the girls drive from New York to LA in an hour. This was going to bite me on the bum at some point. So when we realised that one of our original stars (the lovely Terrayne Crawford) lived so far from our LA studio that there was a three-hour time difference, and that flying her to the studio would melt our budget, we had to come up with a solution. Luckily Paul Spragg and Toby Hrycek-Robinson at the Moat both suggested using Skype. So we directed Terry in Florida, James Unsworth in London and... Amber Benson in LA.

I'd worked with Amber years ago on a lovely webcast series she wrote called **Ghosts of Albion**. She who was Tara-from-**Buffy** is now a justly-famed author for her **Death's Daughter** series of books, but we Facebooked her and she said she'd be happy to do one – little realising that she'd be making supernatural love to an actor in London while being told off from a studio in Florida over a Skype line that made it sound like she was getting saucy phone calls from the Daleks.

But anyway... it worked, thanks to our cast being amazing and patient and transcending the technology. And our sound designer says that it's actually going to end up sounding pretty brilliant. Plus, thanks to Toby, he's been supplied with a crystal clear copy of me in the studio saying, 'Er, right... no... hang on... wait... fzzzz... brr... ake two... oh, wait... whoops...'



Joe Lidster and James Goss

“DRESS ME IN DARK DREAMS IS EITHER OUR MOST TECHNICALLY AMBITIOUS PLAY OR THE ONE WHERE WE GOT HOPELESSLY OUT OF OUR DEPTH.”

So Joey: last year it was Adric and Peri and this year the Sixth Doctor. Is there anything you won't do to get **Doctor Who** fans listening?

JL: Obviously one of the reasons we chose those actors, and put them in relatively continuity free stories, is to appeal to **Doctor Who** fans. Basically because I think that if you like **Doctor Who**, you'll like **Dark Shadows**. Simple, really!

The other reason is that the series itself had such a great mix of actors. Old movie stars, actors from the stage, people straight out of drama school and so on. And that's part of the appeal of the show – again, a bit like early **Doctor Who** – in that it's a great mix of acting styles that come together to create something special. The casting, like every other aspect of the show, is imaginative and exciting in a way that you rarely see these days.

Also, it's about us trying to bring in interesting people to play new characters. For us **Doctor Who** fans, it's a chance to hear just how good our favourite actors can be by giving them something

very different to do. Nicola Bryant as a villainous vixen! Colin Baker as a terrified lawyer! We wouldn't just shove a **Doctor Who** actor into a Dramatic Reading unless we thought the choice was, in itself, interesting and, well, dramatic. Anything you've done differently from last year?

JG: I think we learned a lot from last year. But, as I'm constantly discovering, there are always exciting new mistakes to make. But, to be honest, for the most part we've just continued with what we did last year. Telling good horror stories that appeal to fans of both **Dark Shadows** and gothic horror in general. One of the other nice things about this year has been continuing to work with different authors and actors. You've written *The Fall of the House of Trask*. Tell me about it.

JL: One of the things that's difficult with the Dramatic Readings range is that the show itself was a soap opera with ongoing storylines overlapping and interacting with each other. It's pretty hard to do that in a range of what are effectively two-hander plays which usually feature different actors and characters. One thing we've tried to do is increase some ongoing elements across a few individual releases, whilst ensuring that each play works as an exciting, scary original drama. So we've had the 'Quentin in London' series that started in *London's Burning*, continued in last year's *The Creeping Fog* and ends in this year's *Operation Victor* – a story that sets him off on a new path. The story of what happened to doomed bride Josette after her death was told over two releases (*Final Judgement* and *The Lost Girl*).

And then, across a number of releases we've continued the stories of a lot of characters from the 1897 strand of the series. So the villainous Reverend Trask, who, in the TV series, we last saw shooting himself in a locked room, has continued his adventures in *The Wicked and the Dead* and *The*

Carrion Queen whilst his daughter, the possessed Charity, still in Collinsport, fell in love with star-of-**The Invaders** Roy Thinnies in last year's *The Poisoned Soul*. The ending of *The Poisoned Soul* and *The Carrion Queen* saw both characters being reunited in 1941. And *Fall* is the story of what happened next. It ties up a lot of ongoing storylines and sets up something

very exciting indeed. It's also a chance to really prove that the Dramatic Readings aren't just reflective musings on the past – big things happen in this story. But never mind that! What comes next?

JG: They're a really interesting batch – there's the return of a Big Name From the Original Series, we've got Quentin Collins being parachuted into Nazi Germany, we've got a woman with a haunted record player, a mystery in a mental asylum, and a version of **A Christmas Carol** that... well, actually, won't have you checking

your watch and wishing you were listening to the **Muppets Christmas Carol** album.

How excited or worried are you about this movie thing? Are you looking forward to no longer having to explain to people what **Dark Shadows** is?

JL: I'm actually counting down the days! I think it's going to be amazing. It'll be interesting to see how they've dealt with the same issue we have – how to adapt a soap opera television series into a standalone story. The cast is rightfully fantastic and, like us, Tim Burton is a huge fan of the show so there's no way it's not going to respect the madness and brilliance of one of the best television series ever made. Like **Doctor Who**, I genuinely think **Dark Shadows** is a story that will never end. Another brandy, Quentin? **JG:** Don't mind if I do, Roger. Look out for that bat!



Tara from *Buffy*, Amber Benson

Dark Shadows: *The House by the Sea* is released this month, and is available from www.bigfinish.com. [CLICK HERE FOR DETAILS](#)

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FORTHCOMING RELEASES

MARCH 2012

Doctor Who: *Wirm Isle* (158, Sixth Doctor and Flip)

Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures:

The Wrath of the Iceni (1.3, Fourth Doctor and Leela)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:

Binary (6.09, Third Doctor)

Jago and Litefoot: *Series 4 Box Set*

(Four full cast adventures)

Everyone's Just So So Special by Robert Shearman

(paperback)

Dark Shadows 23: *The House by the Sea*

APRIL 2012

Doctor Who: *The Emerald Tiger*

(159, Fifth Doctor, Tegan, Turlough and Nyssa)

Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures:

Energy of the Daleks (1.4, Fourth Doctor and Leela)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:

The Wanderer (6.10, First Doctor)

Sherlock Holmes:

The Adventure of the Perfidious Mariner

Dark Shadows 24: *Dress Me in Dark Dreams*

MAY 2012

Doctor Who: *The Jupiter Conjunction*

(160, Fifth Doctor, Tegan, Turlough and Nyssa)

Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures:

Trail of the White Worm (1.5, Fourth Doctor and Leela)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:

The Jigsaw War (6.11, Second Doctor)

Doctor Who - The Lost Stories:

The Guardians of Prophecy (3.4, Sixth Doctor and Peri)

Blake's 7: *The Forgotten* by Mark Wright and Cavan Scott

Dark Shadows 25: *Eternal Actress*

Stargate SG-1: *Series 3 Box Set 1*

(Three full cast adventures)

JUNE 2012

Doctor Who: *The Butcher of Brisbane*

(161, Fifth Doctor, Tegan, Turlough and Nyssa)

Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures:

The Oseidon Adventure (1.6, Fourth Doctor and Leela)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:

The Rings of Ikiria (6.12, Third Doctor)

Doctor Who - The Lost Stories: *Power Play*

(3.5, Sixth Doctor and Peri)

Dark Shadows 26: *The Fall of the House of Task*

JULY 2012

Doctor Who: *Protect and Survive*

(162, Seventh Doctor, Ace and Hex)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:

The Alchemists (7.01, First Doctor)

Doctor Who - The Lost Stories: *The First Santarans*

(3.6, Sixth Doctor and Peri)

Counter-Measures: *Series 1 Box Set*

(Four full cast adventures)

Dark Shadows 27: *Operation Victor*

AUGUST 2012

Doctor Who: *Black and White*

(163, Seventh Doctor, Ace and Hex)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:

The Uncertainty Principle (7.02, Second Doctor)

Doctor Who - The Lost Stories: *The Masters of Luxor*

(3.7, First Doctor, Ian, Susan and Barbara)

Iris Wildthyme *Series 3 Box Set*

(Three full cast adventures)

Blake's 7: *The Liberator Chronicles* — *Box Set 2*

Dark Shadows 28: *TBA*

Stargate SG-1: *Series 3 Box Set 2*

(Three full cast adventures)

SEPTEMBER 2012

Doctor Who: *Gods and Monsters*

(164, Seventh Doctor, Ace and Hex)

Doctor Who: *The Burning Prince* (165, TBA)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:

Project: Nirvana (7.03, Seventh Doctor)

Doctor Who - The Lost Stories: *The Rosemariners* (3.8,

Second Doctor, Jamie and Zoe)

Bernice Summerfield *Box Set 3: Legion*

Bernice Summerfield: *Legion tie-in book* (title tba)

Dark Shadows 29: *TBA*

OCTOBER 2012

Doctor Who: *The Orpheus Pulse* (166, TBA)

Doctor Who — U.N.I.T.: *Dominion*

(Seventh Doctor, Raine and Klein)

Doctor Who Special: *Love and War*

(Seventh Doctor, Ace and Benny)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:

The Last Post (7.04, Doctor TBA)

Dark Shadows 30: *TBA*

NOVEMBER 2012

Doctor Who: *The Castle at the End of the World* (167, TBA)

Doctor Who: *The Eighth Doctor Box Set*

Doctor Who: *The Sixth Doctor Specials 1*

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: *TBA*

(7.05, First Doctor)

Blake's 7: *Archangel* by Scott Harrison

Dark Shadows 31: *TBA*

DECEMBER 2012

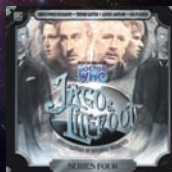
Doctor Who: *TBA* (168, TBA)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:

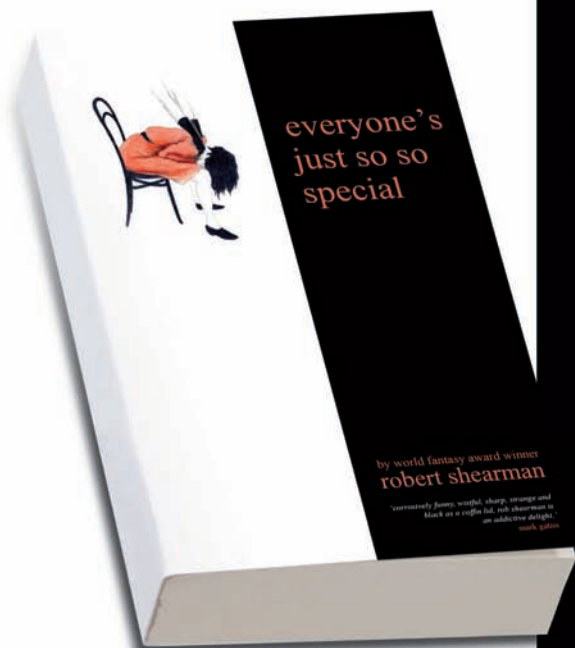
The Child (7.06, Fourth Doctor)

Doctor Who: *The Sixth Doctor Specials 2*

Dark Shadows 32: *TBA*



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While I was listening to *The Tangled Skein* I was thinking that I'd be interested in hearing a Big Finish adaptation of *A Study in Scarlet*. That wasn't part of the Jeremy Brett series and I've never seen an adaptation of it. There was the new, modernized *A Study in Pink*, but I'd like to hear the original story that started it all.

Anyway, if there is a third series of **Holmes** from Big Finish, please consider doing *A Study in Scarlet*.

Neil Ottenstein

Nick: I could've sworn they'd done a Jeremy Brett version of that! It's certainly something we'd consider.

I seem to recall reading about **Sapphire & Steel** audios being cancelled due to low sales. Just curious if it's still the same or if there are any plans to start the series back up.

Thomas Embry

PS: Any chance of audio adventures for **Firefly**?

Nick: I'm afraid things are still the same on that front. Approvals for **Firefly** might prove quite time-consuming, it has been suggested to me.

I've been an avid Big Finish listener for a good number of years, and have built up a large collection of **Doctor Who** CDs. However, I now find buying your stories via the download option to be much more convenient. Do you (or might you in the future) offer a trade-in service for previously purchased CDs, in order to convert them to downloadable files in users' online accounts? I'm sure if there was such a service, even for a small charge, others would be interested too.

Glenn Lewis

Nick: It's an interesting idea, but I can't really see a practical, cost-effective way to do it. With our limited resources, it's not something we could easily offer at the moment.

Has this gem – *The Anachronauts* – been overlooked slightly after the 'Tom Baker is back' announcements and releases?

What a stunning, stunning piece of work. Both Peter Purves and Jean Marsh are sublime, the story was amazing and episode two has the most beautiful monologue from Sara Kingdom in the middle (nearly the whole episode is Jean Marsh). Another pinnacle of sound design and cast and crew working together to produce something that transcends its place in the middle to late stages of the current series.

For those who have the original TV episode on audio, then these four episodes just fit in, making *The Daleks' Masterplan* sixteen episodes long

(although disc one is three episodes in length anyway at 65 mins).

But to capture the whole audiobook/readings performed vibe, I would encourage you all to get the two novels from the Target audiobook range and fit *The Anachronauts* in between the two as both of these are read by Peter Purves and Jean Marsh with moments almost like cast sections, as are the **Companion Chronicles**. It really does expand the whole saga and shows just how superb the Big Finish team are at making what feel like TV soundtracks.

Well done to all for something truly special, that may have been overlooked in January.

Bryan Simcott

Nick: Thanks so much for that, Bryan. We're very proud of it and I know David Richardson, who is in total charge of the **Companion Chronicles**, will be beaming with delight at this, especially since he has repeatedly put his admiration for Jean Marsh on the record (or 'podcast' as we say in these modern times).

I've been a part of the Big Finish family for about a decade now. I had purchased a number of early **Doctor Who** CDs. Then I was unable to purchase due to a credit card issue (your site wouldn't take my US issued card).

I am so happy that I can now 'catch up' on my purchases using PayPal. I am enjoying your productions so very much and wanted to say how nice it feels to be back and didn't realize how much I missed Big Finish and your products.

Thank you!!!!!!

Bob Sanders

Nick: I'm not sure what the issue could have been with your card. Apologies for that. Payments to our site are dealt with by a third party financial services company so that our site doesn't hold any confidential financial information. But glad you are back and enjoying it.

To all staff and celebrities: many thanks for a fantastic day at Big Finish 2. Brilliant celebrities and staff and a wheelchair-friendly venue. I couldn't ask for more. Hope there's a Big Finish 3 next year.

Kevin Hallwell

Nick: Cheers, Kevin. Glad you enjoyed it. It was a great day, wasn't it?

I have got to say how much I have enjoyed listening to the **Iris Wildthyme** stories. Cannot wait for series three, they will be out in time for my week off work and will have a nice relax and a laugh. This series

is great, the interplay between Katy Manning and David Benson is superb. Here's hoping we get further series (fingers crossed). Anyway, thanks again for such an entertaining series.

Darren Bibby

Nick: And a big thanks to Paul Magrs and all the team for their excellent work on this.

Just wanted to let you know that I enjoyed *The Foer from the Future* and *The Valley of Death*. It's a pity that Dudley Simpson did not do the incidentals; it would have been the icing on the cake.

What happened to your range of **Tomorrow People** CDs? I think it is the sort of programme that could be done quite well on a low budget with Russell T Davies family-style scripts.

Stephen Broome

Nick: We rather like the 'icing' Andy Hardwick and Howard Carter provide! The company who owned **The Tomorrow People** did not renew our licence – oddly enough, we're told, in order to offer the series format to Russell T Davies who, allegedly, declined to take them up on it. We'd certainly be interested in doing **The Tomorrow People** again. It wasn't our biggest success, but it was well loved and beautifully crafted.

Hello from Nebraska, USA! I just finished listening to *No More Lies*, which I downloaded today (along with *Immortal Beloved* and *Phobos*) thanks to Big Finish's Eighth Doctor sale! I now have all of seasons one and two, and by Wednesday all of three and four.

Paul McGann is my favourite audio Doctor and I am thrilled to be able to get the (relatively few) remaining episodes. Thanks to Big Finish and the IRS (for the tax refund that made these purchases possible!).

Will we hear from DI Menzies again? She is a great character. She's smart, sharp-witted and willing to accept that there are things going on in the world she'd never expected. DI Menzies would make a good companion too, I think.

Thanks again for the audio that keeps me sane – despite kids, commute and work!

Nanci Hamicksburg

Nick: Glad you finally caught up with the McGanns. Our sales figures indicated that quite a few of you seemed to be biding your time before you caught up with these and the large response to the final sale day would seem to confirm this. This sale was, however, an experimental model, and not something we will necessarily repeat. DI Menzies is a popular character, and I certainly wouldn't rule out bringing her back in some context or other.

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LIBERATING TIMES

Blake's 7 writers Simon Guerrier, Nigel Fairs and Peter Anghelides discuss their opening salvos for the crew of the Liberator

When did you first come to be a fan of Blake's 7 and what most appealed to you about the show?

Simon Guerrier: I was only five when *Blake's 7* ended and wasn't allowed to stay up late to watch it. I saw one or two episodes – or caught bits of them – when my parents weren't looking. But I first watched the four edited-together videos released in the late Eighties, and then caught up with the episodes in the late Nineties. It's a strange show, gritty and difficult but at the same time a camp classic. I especially like the feeling that no one is safe, not even our heroes.

Nigel Fairs: I saw it when it was on, because I'm that old. I loved the fact that, at first at least, it was more about interesting characters' relationships with each other and less about silly spaceships and aliens. I loved – and love – the concept of the freedom fighters versus the dictatorship, and the muddy moral waters that Blake's actions stir up.

Peter Anghelides: I was a teenager, so I skipped teatime to watch the very first episode. I was very excited, because I'd been a big *Doctor Who* fan, and the *Radio Times* made me think this was another show I'd like. As it turned out, it was a darker and more morally ambiguous series than *Doctor Who*. And I loved the way that the episodes built the storyline and the characters over the whole of series A. Yes, it's series A, not series one. That's how much of a *Blake's 7* geek I am.

Did you go back and rewatch the series to get in the right frame of mind?

SG: I did, and continued to watch the episodes while I was writing. It's a very different experience when you're looking for gaps into which you can fit new stories, or aspects of characters that you can expand.

NF: I watched the first series and thought that the first episode in particular was stunning; even more

gritty and 'out there' than I'd remembered. I think I might try watching it again now, with jetlag. I'm sure it'll really space me out.

PA: Yes, I did the entire run of thirteen. And then I had a look at the fan encyclopaedia that I wrote with my pals Tony and Peter back in the 1980s. It was called **Tarial Cell**, and it detailed the first series in excruciating detail. (Did I mention I was a **Blake's 7** geek?) I think at the time the number of copies it sold ran well into the double figures.

What do you think were the most important elements of the series to bring to the audio version?

SG: I think it's best as an adventure series full of jeopardy, the odds stacked against our heroes – who we know might not make it to the end. A lot of the time, there's an element of tragedy about the show. The heroes in **Blake's 7** are often flawed but noble – even Vila gets his moments of heroism. But they're heroes in a very cynical universe. And even if they win at the end of an adventure, there's often a terrible cost.

NF: The relationships between the leads and also their motives in joining the resistance fighters.

PA: More than the later series, that opening year had the challenge of doing a space series on a terrestrial budget. If you're unable to get past the dodgy visual effects, then you're a) never going to like the show and b) seriously missing the point. What stood out for me was the way that the dialogue between the main cast crackled along, right from the opening episodes. And audio eats that up, of course. So I loved writing the scenes between the main protagonists.

What was it like writing for Avon, Blake and Vila and which other B7 favourites would you like to write for?

SG: Avon and Vila are a great combination. I'd worked with Michael Keating before (on the first series of **Graceless** and on a DVD documentary) and found writing for Vila came quite easily. Avon was harder work, until I saw an interview with

original script editor Chris Boucher, who said he always tried to give Avon's actions two possible motivations – a heroic one and a selfish one. That way, we could never be quite sure whether he was a hero or villain. Once I'd got that, the rest of the story followed. I'd like to write for Servalan (and have) and Dayna. Please.

NF: I adored writing for Vila, as his characterisation in the original really did lend itself to the format we're using. Vila talked to himself on the telly too!! I also relished the chance of fleshing out Travis and Servalan, getting inside

"It's a strange show, gritty and difficult but at the same time a camp classic."

Simon Guerrier

their heads and trying to understand why they made the decision to go along with the Federation rather than fight it. And Cally was always my favourite character so I was thrilled to write for Jan Chappell. I've been especially lucky to create my own crewmember, Gustav Nyrron, and to hear him magnificently portrayed by the astoundingly good Anthony Howell.

PA: My story is set before *Breakdown*, but there's a great sequence in that where Kayn thinks he can stall because Blake can't kill him because he needs his surgeon skills. And in a casually menacing line, almost a throwaway, Blake tells Kayn that he'd better get on with it because otherwise he will destroy his hands – a loss that would destroy Kayn's life, of course. It's a brilliant and brutal insight into how Blake is prepared to behave to protect his crew, but also his approach to dealing with the Federation. And, of course, Avon's motivations are ambiguous throughout that story, as in other episodes. So I enjoyed capturing those elements of their characters,

most obviously in the scenes where they're together. Absurdly, I'd have liked to have written one for Gan, because I could get past the limiter and inside his head. But as David Jackson is, alas, unavailable, I think I'd like to give Jenna and Cally something more interesting to do than operate the teleport.

Is this tougher or easier than writing for Doctor Who? Are morally shady characters better/more fun to write as the lead players?

SG: I didn't find it any tougher or easier than writing **Doctor Who**. The process isn't very different: you try to find ways to expand on the characters as seen on

more actors, I think. Besides, full cast would mean recasting several characters, wouldn't it? So in some ways these are more authentic.

PA: There are obvious reasons for not doing full-cast audios, mostly to do with the availability of the original cast. But it also gives writers a chance to do a couple of things that would otherwise be more difficult – and yet still stay true to the series. One is that you simply don't have to have every character involved in the story (which is itself a practical cost for an audio – even if you could get them all, you then have to afford a guest cast) so you can focus on one or two people. The other is that you can

“I think I'd like to give Jenna and Cally something more interesting to do than operate the teleport.”

Peter Anghelides

screen, to find some new perspective about how they see the world around them. Once you've got that, everything comes quite easily. So a morally shady character is good. The more I had Avon insisting that he's not a hero, the more heroic he appears.

NF: I'm finding it *far* more fun to do than **Doctor Who**, which, despite its apparent 'flexibility', is extremely limited when it comes to exploring the leads! The moral questions that **B7** throws up are fascinating.

PA: It's not tougher or easier, just different. Unlike back at the beginning, **Blake's 7** isn't darker than some current **Doctor Who**, for example. But the principal characters sometimes have conflicting motivations, and that means there's a different tension between them that you can exploit for dramatic purposes.

For those on the fence about Blake's 7 on audio, what would you say to encourage them to give it a try?

SG: A smaller cast makes these stories more intimate, and allows us to get into the heads of the characters in a way that wouldn't happen with

have a narrator articulate his inner thoughts and motivations in a way he never would in conventional dialogue. Though I use the convention of a third-person narration in my audio, too – Gareth Thomas (actor) describes another person's thoughts rather than being Gareth Thomas (playing Blake) at several points.

Finally, and most importantly: if you could be any kind of biscuit, what kind of biscuit would you be?

SG: A bourbon. They are good for dunking.

NF: I am not a biscuit. I eat biscuits. I would be someone who can eat biscuits without putting on weight.

PA: A chocolate hobnob. They're stylish and celebratory. Plus, they're useless for dunking and very fattening, and so neither Simon Guerrier nor Nigel Fairs will want to eat me.

Blake's 7: The Liberator Chronicles Volume One is out now, and is available from www.bigfinish.com. [CLICK HERE FOR DETAILS](#)

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