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In the depths of darkest Wales, producer Scott Handcock is currently pulling together a brand new audio horror series. Based on the classic novel by Oscar Wilde, **The Confessions of Dorian Gray** will explore the life of the infamous immortal beyond the book, right through to the present day.

"It's a premise I've been developing for a couple of years," explains Scott, "and I'm thrilled we're finally getting the chance to make it. Jason Haigh-Ellery and Nick Briggs have been behind it all the way. We've got some great writers on board, Gary Russell as script editor, and a fun cast – including our Dorian! It feels very different from anything Big Finish has done before, and very exciting!"

The Confessions of Dorian Gray begins recording in Cardiff this August, and will be released exclusively to download from October as five half-hour episodes. A special hour-long festive story will then follow in December.

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EDITORIAL

Someone once told me that **Dalek Empire** – still available, folks! – (*That's enough hard sell – Ed*) was my 'concept album', and I think they were sort of right. I wrote, directed, sound designed and composed the music for it. Now, although my executive producer-ish duties prevent me from taking on big sound design and music projects, I'm proud to say that the new Eighth Doctor box set **Dark Eyes** feels very much like my latest concept album.

Barnaby Edwards, Alan Barnes and I worked so hard and had so much fun creating the Eighth Doctor and Lucie adventures, and it was my exciting and heart-rending honour to bring that four-series storyline to a close with **To the Death** (which has just won the *DWM* poll, I'm surprised and thrilled to report!). So emotionally exhausted were we all after that that we felt we needed a breather from all the trauma, so Barnaby Edwards took the helm with three Eighth Doctor and Mary Shelley adventures late last year. But all the time, I was brooding over the question of 'what next?' for the Eighth Doctor. He'd suffered so much and had stomped off, threatening to go to 'the edge', leaving his granddaughter Susan behind, worrying about him.

But how do you create a new beginning without seeming to brush all the previous emotional turmoil under the carpet? And how do you deal with that emotional turmoil without making your new story a terrible dirge of broken-hearted regret and resentment? Well... the Doctor moves ever onwards, and hopefully I've found the answer in **Dark Eyes**. As has been revealed on our website and in *DWM*, there's a new companion, Molly O'Sullivan (played by the brilliant and lovely Ruth Bradley), plus there are magnificent star turns by Peter Egan as a new incarnation of Straxus (the Time Lord who's been bothering the Eighth Doctor for years now) and Toby Jones as... well, I shan't give too much away. But it's all recorded and Andy Hardwick is doing some utterly superb sound design work as you read this very editorial. Expect lots of teaser trailers and some incredible cover artwork.

Oh, and by the way, I did find some time to do some composing – for **Counter-Measures**. It's a great series, based on those intrepid lasses and lad (that's Chunky Gilmore to you, soldier!) from *Remembrance of the Daleks*. What do you mean you haven't bought it yet?!?

Happy listening,
NICK BRIGGS



SYLVESTER McCOY TAKES TIME OUT FROM AN EPIC NEW TRILOGY TO TALK TO PAUL SPRAGG ABOUT HIS PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE. JUST DON'T MENTION THE HOBBIT...

Hi Sylvester, I gather you've been saving the world again.

No, no, I don't just save the world. I go off and I save the universe! I haven't quite worked out yet, at the time of this interview, whether I've succeeded. So if you're not reading this, that means I haven't succeeded and if you are reading it, that means I have.

It's interesting the way it's all going, because I'm doing a film called **The Hobbit** [he makes strangulation noises], which of course I'm not allowed to talk about at this very moment in time. Because I was doing that, Big Finish wasn't very sure as to my availability. So they've written Doctor-lite stories, and given much more to the companions to do.

It would have been a shame to do stories without the Doctor at all.

Doctor Where you could call it, if I weren't in one.

Do you mind being a lighter presence in the stories?

Gosh, no! Not at all, really. Because it means you get much more time to chat in the green room with all the other amazing guests we've got, and it's a great privilege to sit down and talk to these actors who are in it.

I'm not sure it would work as well with the other Doctors; the Seventh's manipulative side makes him feel present even when he's not.

Yes, that makes him quite good, doesn't it? Is he manipulating what's happening to Ace [Sophie Aldred] and Hex [Philip Oliver] and all the others, is he somehow behind this? The question's always being asked, isn't it, not only by the characters but by the listeners as well. That's good.

For the first of these stories, you were reunited with Ian Hogg.

I was! Terrific! Yes, I worked with him before and I've met him since as well, and it's lovely to meet him again.

Were you reminiscing about being in *Ghost Light*?

I think we were both trying to remember what the hell happened! Or maybe we were both trying to remember

when we worked together. We had such a nice time on that, a very nice time.

Has thinking about *Ghost Light* made you reminisce about other stories in that final season?

Yes, I was thinking about [*The Curse of Fenric*] because it was great to do it, and also I think it was one of the best in many ways. There were lots of lovely things in it, tremendous actors as well. And the locations were good fun. And I also remember the part that we filmed down in Dorset, some cove or other, one of the coldest bays because of the nature of the way the rivers run into it. I remember watching the Haemovores coming out of it feeling utterly sorry for them; those poor extras and what they were expected to do. And also those two young actresses too, they were with them, I believe. They had to go into this freezing water even though they were covered in rubber and stuff like that and they had to submerge themselves and come up and come back out again. And Sophie, as well, had to dive in! I think they had to give her some warm rubber suit underneath because it was incredibly cold, although it was the height of summer! It was very warm everywhere else, but that particular bay was very cold.

That's the English summer for you.

But there were warmer bays they could have put them in! The BBC sent them to the coldest place...

Has filming in New Zealand for *The Hobbit* been more pleasant?

New Zealand is similar to Britain; very, very similar. Just ever so slightly bigger, the mountains are slightly taller, the weather's slightly better. Everything's just ever so slightly different...

"NO, NO, I DON'T JUST SAVE THE WORLD. I GO OFF AND I SAVE THE UNIVERSE! I HAVEN'T QUITE WORKED OUT YET, AT THE TIME OF THIS INTERVIEW, WHETHER I'VE SUCCEEDED."

This is a big trilogy for the Seventh Doctor as we've been building up to some of these revelations for years...

My goodness gracious me, really? I'm still not even sure if I'm on top of it yet! It's a good idea. It's good that it's worked out in a way as well, just going back to the fact that I possibly wasn't that available. We can keep the Doctor just for now and again.

You've been interspersing the trilogies with the Season 27 Lost Stories; is it a different Doctor in these? Is he older and wiser?

I'm not sure about wiser! I don't know really. I suppose in this particular story [*Gods and Monsters*], it does seem slightly more humorous; the writing's humorous, there's jokes in it. I think it might be not only Doctor-lite but Doctor lighter.

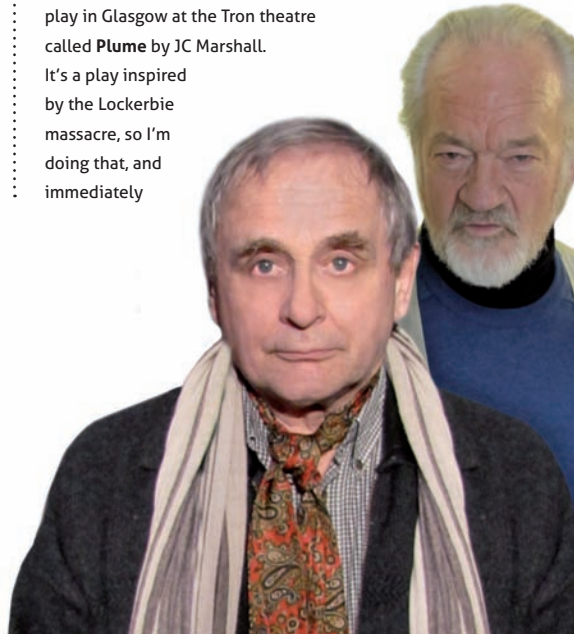
The Seventh Doctor is particularly sneaky in these stories. Does he deserve to be taken down a peg?

No, he doesn't. I think it's terrible, because the Doctor is absolutely right and he knows exactly what he's doing and people are much less than he is and they should just wait and see!

Your life recently has been taken up with world travel and *The Hobbit*. What do you have planned afterwards?

Oh gosh! I've no idea what happens after that, really. I've only just thought up to then. I'm doing a play in Glasgow at the Tron theatre called *Plume* by JC Marshall.

It's a play inspired by the Lockerbie massacre, so I'm doing that, and immediately



SYLVESTER MCCOY

after that I fly to New Zealand for about three days, maybe more, I'm not quite sure, they haven't told me precisely. And then I fly back, popping in to Thailand to see my son, who's teaching yoga there, and then on my way back to London to change clothes to fly out to New York to do a big science fact, fiction and fantasy convention, which I'd been to twenty years ago. At it were a cosmonaut and an astronaut: the real McCoy, if I'm allowed to say that! They've actually been to Outer Space. So that's kind of what's happening. Then after that there might be a play, there might not. There might be a holiday – or just retirement!

"THE HOBBIT'S GOT TO COME OUT, AND THERE'LL BE A WHOLE HOO-HA AND HOW'S YOUR FATHER WHEN THAT COMES OUT, WON'T THERE?"

You do keep very busy.

I do! I keep thinking, 'Oh my gosh, have I got to slow down a little bit?' I mean, I do like it. Obviously I wouldn't do it if I didn't enjoy it. **The Hobbit's** got to come out, and there'll be a whole hoo-ha and how's your father when that comes out, won't there?

There might be people camping out on your doorstep.

I hope not! I've managed to keep people away from my doorstep. But I'm looking forward to the future with excitement.

And are you still happy to be here?

Here here? Sitting talking to you?

Yes, if you like. I'll take compliments. But I meant here in the studio.

Obviously, if you've been sitting around listening, we've been having a great time. I always have a nice time here. And the food is wow. It should be in the Michelin guide really.

Someone said earlier that Toby Robinson, the studio engineer, should write a cookbook.

He should, really! Amazing food that he gives every day while he's also being a technical wizard. It's astonishing! He's astonishing. He's the unsung hero of **Doctor Who** and Big Finish. ■



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A CLONE BILL OF HEALTH

ANDREW SMITH TAKES ON THE CHALLENGE OF BRINGING THE ORIGIN OF THE SONTARANS TO AUDIO THIS MONTH; PAUL SPRAGG FINDS OUT MORE ABOUT HIS **LOST STORY**

Hello Andrew. The most obvious question to ask is: this is a Lost Story, so what are its origins?

Back in 1983 I think it was, [script editor] Eric Saward asked me down to London – I was living in Glasgow at the time – for a meeting and he commissioned me to come up with a storyline for the Sontarans with the additional element that he wanted the *Mary Celeste* in the story. The *Mary Celeste* doesn't feature in this version we're doing, apart from it's briefly mentioned by the Doctor [Colin Baker] and Peri [Nicola Bryant]. So I went away and wrote a storyline and then that went to scene breakdown but that was as far as it went, we didn't actually get to

the script stage with it. I don't remember getting any feedback on it. Obviously *The Two Doctors* was Colin's Sontaran story so I think what happened was I got trumped by Robert Holmes. But that's no bad thing; can't argue with that really! So yes, I had the storyline and the scene breakdown still sitting in the loft at home, and the reason we're here today is because [in] 2009, I was at a *Doctor Who* convention in Glasgow as a guest and met David [Richardson] there, and he was aware that there was a story I'd written that had been commissioned as part of the series. David came back to me, asked me to do a **Companion Chronicle**, which became *The Invasion of E-Space*, and I think, just as we were recording that actually, I was commissioned to do this and we cracked on with David producing and John Dorney as my script editor.

Was the genesis of the Sontarans part of your original brief?

I don't think it was. It's difficult to remember now, all the detail of it.

Oh come now, it's only been twenty years.

Yeah, twenty years! I really can't remember much more than that and I'd forgotten the vast majority of the story because I hadn't read the storyline or the scene breakdowns since 1983. So it was quite fresh to me, actually, when I sat down to read it for this job. All I could remember was 1872, the Mary Celeste and the cockfight in the first episode that the Doctor breaks up. I couldn't remember why *The First Sontarans* was the title and when I got to the bit of the story where it turns out that *[that*

"I THINK WHAT HAPPENED WAS I GOT TRUMPED BY ROBERT HOLMES. BUT THAT'S NO BAD THING; CAN'T ARGUE WITH THAT REALLY!"



would be very much spoiling it so we're leaving that bit out – Ed], I thought, 'That's not bad!' There was a lot of rubbish in there I got rid of; I was editing myself the first run at the storyline I did for David.

Has the use of Sontarans in the new series resulted in any adjustments?

The new series didn't influence this at all, I don't think. The only thing it influenced is the Sontaran's homeworld

is actually called Sontar; in my initial breakdown it was Sontara, which I have to say from the novelisation of *The Time Warrior* the first Sontaran story, the prologue of that was actually written by Robert Holmes and he named it Sontara in the book.

So technically you're still right!

I am right! But that was the only thing I changed. I deliberately stayed away from the 'Sontar-ha!' chant and things like that.

How did it feel to finally hear the script come to life?

Listening to Colin and Nicola speaking those lines was quite special really. I think Peri demonstrates her intelligence and is not just along for the ride. Because as a character, she has got the scientific background, she is bright, and it's quite nice to present her in that way; for much of the story they are separated, and she's off doing her own thing with one of the other characters and being quite proactive in her own way. So it's nice to do that and Nicola seemed to appreciate it as well. It's just really nice to hear them speaking the lines twenty-eight years later and the story getting out.

What about the rest of the cast?

Dan Starkey is obviously a Sontaran off of the TV series and there's ubiquitous Big Finisher John Banks; I was saying to John earlier, in the persona of the Gentleman he scares me! Again, it's on the page and you think, 'That's not bad', but when John takes it... I think the opening scene is really scary, it really sets it up very, very well. You think, 'This guy's nasty, nasty, nasty and off his trolley' and you wouldn't want to be in the same room as him. The way this is being performed it really does augment the script and might prove to be a nice



ANDREW SMITH

listening experience for people! I hope so! We've got some really good actors in this who are making it much better than it is on the page.

I feel you do yourself a disservice, Andrew! Do you have any more unmade stories hiding in your sock drawer?

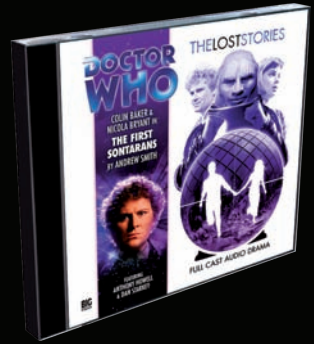
There was another one that was commissioned called *The Torson Triumvirate* but I don't have any of the documents for that and I barely remember anything about it. So I won't be able to do that one. I've got a lot of storylines

"I THINK THAT THE DOCTORS ARE TREATED VERY WELL BY BIG FINISH."

that I submitted to the production office around the same time, but they're not so much **Lost Stories** because they were spec things that I put in. Those storylines are with David; we haven't talked any more about them. I might pitch a couple of ideas at him, see if he's interested in doing any more.

As you wrote Full Circle for the TV series, would you like to write for the Fourth Doctor again?

It would be nice, actually. Tom Baker was the Doctor when I really got into the series; I remember Patrick Troughton and Jon Pertwee very well because I was born in '62; I don't remember William Hartnell but I do remember Patrick Troughton and the Yeti and the Cybermen. But Tom Baker was there while I was twelve onwards, so it's formative **Who** years, I think you'd say. People do become aware I've written for the TV series and say, 'Oh, you've written for **Doctor Who**' and they sort of sit up a little bit, you know? All the Doctors have got something and I think that the Doctors are treated very well by Big Finish. They've captured the best of the characters and there's something to be said for all of them. And there are different reasons why it'd be good to write for whichever one, I think. ■



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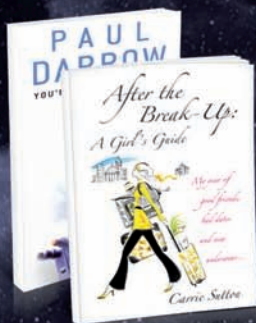
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COUNTER PLEASURES



YOU LAST SAW THEM IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE DALEKS: NOW IT'S TIME TO REJOIN RACHEL, ALLISON AND 'CHUNKY' GILMORE FOR COUNTER-MEASURES! STARS PAMELA SALEM AND KAREN GLEDHILL TOLD PAUL SPRAGG MORE ABOUT THE SIXTIES-SET SPIN-OFF



You're based in Los Angeles now, Pamela; what's it like being back in the UK?

PAMELA SALEM: It's lovely to be back; it's always lovely to be back. And in a heat wave as well! I didn't bring any summer clothes, I've been borrowing my friend's!

How did you first hear about the project?

KAREN GLEDHILL: I had a call from David [Richardson, producer] and he said that he was thinking of doing an audiobook which would be a spin-off from the **Doctor Who** that I did twenty-four years ago, which is slightly

“OFTEN PEOPLE WHO ARE EXTREMELY CLEVER LACK IN ONE OR TWO SOCIAL SKILLS; THEY DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THEM.” PAMELA SALEM

strange in itself, and that Pamela would be coming over from America to do it and Simon [Williams, Gilmore] would be involved and would I be interested? I said yes, I'd be very interested.

PS: It's a lovely idea. I was saying to somebody else, whoever originally had the idea of spinning them off, it's so clever, because you can go on and on and make further stories, it's really fun, like peopling a whole universe.

Where do we find your characters at the start of the story?

PS: [Rachel] has been overworking, she's been told to take a break because she's always manic about her work, and she has come to stay with Alison, who she worked with before, of course, and then she gets drawn into Allison's world, Counter-Measures Group. And I think she thoroughly enjoys being with this bunch of people again and that's why she decides to stay.

KG: I'm a person in my own right now! I am a doctor, so I've obviously got my PhD in there somewhere, and I've got a boyfriend. Obviously he must have been around during *Remembrance of the Daleks* but we didn't know

anything about him at that time. I'm very much more my own person and I'm not working for Rachel any more, I'm working *with* her. And with Gilmore actually, which is interesting.

What are the dynamics like between the team?

KG: Well, the relationship between Allison and Gilmore is certainly developing. It starts out still quite prickly and he's quite formal but I think through these adventures that they have together, she and he spend quite a lot of time together. Particularly in one of the stories; I think it brings them closer. I'm already quite friendly with Rachel, we have dinner together right at the beginning. We've become more good friends than just her sidekick.

PS: [Rachel] always was quite bossy, wasn't she? It was her way or no way. And she's very, very clever. Often people who are extremely clever lack in one or two social skills; they don't have time for them, it's 'Come on, do it this way'. But I think she really responds to people around her. I see the journey as becoming slightly more human.

KG: She gets more scientific stuff to say, which is good because I find that quite hard. I'm allowed to be a bit silly. It's quite nice because I'm a bit younger and a little more foolish and I'm allowed to do that. So I get more of an emotional story, while she's the older, sensible person who understands the physics of it all.

PS: I think Allison's always looked up to her and she's been a bit of a role model, and it's probably she sees that she's teaching her. With Ian I think she's short with the military but she sees the human; the character covers up his feelings too in a military fashion, and I think they both see human beings underneath as this goes on; they have moments of understanding about each other. And I like Sir Toby [Hugh Ross] as well because I think that's a lovely character and we can all mill around him, it makes a sort of family.

Did you have any trouble finding the characters again?

KG: I don't think I've ever really left her, that's the sad truth! The great thing about doing it on audio rather than doing it visually is that nobody has to know that I'm any

COUNTER MEASURES

different! It's not difficult to get back there really. I'd pretty much reached my peak of maturity around that time! She's much more fleshed out, of course, in this than she was in *Remembrance of the Daleks*, because that was just one story and this is four stories, so there's a lot more scope for exploring different things.

What did you make of your guest stars?

KG: Hilarious! Adrian Lukis was hilarious, very rude, very funny, he's just been great. John Banks is lovely, he's a chameleon. Vernon Dobtcheff I haven't seen for a while so it was lovely to see him and as for Alistair McKenzie... I



mean... very nice. I'm glad he's my boyfriend! They found me a pretty boyfriend! Yeah, I liked him! He's coming again tomorrow as well! That was exciting.

What do you remember of your time on Doctor Who?

PS: I remember it all because it's one of those fun times, and *Doctor Who* always was great fun to do. I remember Sylvester was wonderful; he did tricks off-stage. Actually, [my husband and I] were running a theatre for a while in Los Angeles and Sylvester came through and we said, 'Would you do a one-man thing?' and he said, 'Yes, I've got a one-man show, **The Real McCoy**,' and he did it for us on a Sunday evening and it was brilliant. And I hadn't seen that side of Sylvester at all. So there was real pleasure at picking up with him. I remember very well a lot of dust; I remember one of the poor little Daleks got locked in

when everybody went to lunch and he was left there shouting, 'Let me out!' And I'd never seen the Daleks before. I was rather impressed.

KG: I can remember a lot about *Remembrance of the Daleks* because it was pretty much the first telly I ever did and we were working together for eight weeks on that show, so I can remember quite a lot about it because it was very funny. Simon tells a lot of wicked stories. Bit of a corpse. We did have a lot of fun. It was a really nice cast. Sylvester and Sophie were lovely, and everybody was really friendly and it was just great to be working

"I REMEMBER ONE OF THE POOR LITTLE DALEKS GOT LOCKED IN WHEN EVERYBODY WENT TO LUNCH AND HE WAS LEFT THERE SHOUTING, 'LET ME OUT!'"

PAMELA SALEM

with Daleks. We went down to Waterloo to film one of the scenes with the Daleks and there were all these big bangs and nobody had warned the appropriate authorities and all these police and fire engines and ambulances turned up because they thought there were bombs under Waterloo Bridge; it was just Daleks! It was silly, they should have known it was just Daleks...

I was very obsessed with getting all my scenes in the right order because you film everything out of sequence. I'm quite organized, so I had this chart, a colour-coded chart, so I knew which day it was and where in the sequence of events and what I was wearing. I know there's somebody else who's actually paid to do this job for you in television, but I didn't quite trust them so I became a bit obsessional about it! 'Was my duffel coat on or off?'

Do you still get fan mail?

PS: Yes; I'm utterly amazed! Because it's gone well in America as well, and they're just doing such wonderful

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things with it, it keeps it alive with all its many manifestations. I had some delivered to me here, which is very nice! It's lovely, and occasionally I'll go to conventions and things and meet these people who know so much about it, and it's great fun! I always felt slightly nervous of them to start with. The only thing that's worrying is having your 'young' photographs in front of you and you're in a different timeframe and you think, 'Well, they seem to accept [it's me], so that's all right!'



Have you rewatched *Remembrance* since it was on?

KG: I have. I don't just sit up and watch it on my own! But my kids, both of them, as they've grown up have been interested to see it. Moreso as they've got older, funnily enough. I think when they were younger it seemed very dated, but now it's okay to be dated. They understand the cult aspect of it.

Speaking of cult classics, it would be a shame to let you go, Pamela, without mentioning *Into the Labyrinth*.

PS: Lovely to do that. Belor the witch. 'I deny you the nidus'; I still remember! I remember a little child during that time coming to see me and I opened the door and my hair was in my ordinary ponytail, I think, and I was in my ordinary clothes. And she looked at me and she said, 'Oh, you don't look like Belor,' and I said, 'Ah, well, I'm under a spell,' and it was all right!

Do you mind being remembered for these roles from the past?

PS: No! I'm very grateful that I've done things that pleased people and I hope there'll still be a future of doing things I can please people with, because you feel sometimes, if you can make people laugh or be amused or understand more, you're not a voice out in an empty cavern. And acting; I'm very lucky to have been able to do it all my life; it's not always possible for everybody and I'm just terribly grateful that one can keep on doing it as long as one's able to. So it's nice to know there are people who see it and come back and say they like it. Of course, sometimes you hear people who don't like some of the things you do. But that's good for you too. ■



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IT'S WAR!

WRITER JONATHAN MORRIS REVEALS HOW HE BROUGHT THIS MONTH'S **DARK SHADOWS** RELEASE TO UNSETTLING LIFE



The attraction of **Dark Shadows**, for me, is that it is pure melodrama. A television soap opera with ghosts, vampires, werewolves, gypsy curses, parallel universes, and time travel. It's about larger-than-life characters facing larger-than-life crises. And in my second **Dark Shadows** audio play, *Operation Victor*, I wanted to celebrate that; where *The Blind Painter* had been quite intimate and character-based, this time I'd write the grandest, most Wagnerian story imaginable. It may only be an audio, but it has a plot on the scale of a major Hollywood blockbuster.

Whilst of course it was written to work as a standalone piece, *Operation Victor* is also the third part of a trilogy of stories about Quentin Collins' activities during the Second World War, following on from *London's Burning* and *The Creeping Fog*. Both of those audios were set in London during the Blitz, so to mark the changes, I decided to do something completely different and set my story in Nazi Germany, in a remote castle in the Bavarian alps, where an immortal scientist, Doctor Moloch, is conducting abominable experiments on vampires, werewolves and zombies. Only one man has what it takes to stop him – and that man is Quentin Collins.

Dark Shadows is a very self-aware show, with tongue-in-cheek dialogue and a keen sense of its own ridiculousness. So when writing *Operation Victor* I deliberately didn't hold back; I don't think the story

remotely crosses the line in terms of bad taste but it does get fairly close to it. The Nazis in

this story are comic-book Nazis fighting in a comic-book Second World War, and are intended to bear as much similarity to real life as the rest of **Dark Shadows** does (ie none whatsoever).

Where *The Blind Painter* took **The Picture of Dorian Gray** and gave it a **Dark Shadows** twist, *Operation Victor* does the same with **Frankenstein**, but not so much the book as the James Whale versions and all the exploitation B-movies of the Sixties. It's a combination of traditional gothic horror and action movie; it's taking Quentin Collins out of Collinwood and putting him in an entirely different situation, whilst remaining absolutely true to the **Dark Shadows** ethos in terms of style and tone.

After writing goodness-knows-how-many **Doctor Who** things, it's refreshing to step away from that and enter an entirely different world where I don't know all the continuity and characters backwards, to write in a different style and be a 'newcomer' rather than an 'old hand'. I'm a little bit worried that *Operation Victor* may incite some **Dark Shadows** fans to hunt me down with flaming torches, but if that doesn't happen, I look forward to making another return visit to Collinwood. ■

Review?

I am writing to ask whether or not there is a facility on bigfinish.com that allows you to review products you have bought. If there isn't, then I think it may be a good idea to consider, because if a CD has good reviews, then people may be more likely to buy it.

Marilla Dobson

Nick: It's a really good idea. Currently, people put their reviews in our forum or supply links to their review blogs. But reviews actually on the release/product page would be great, and it's certainly something we'll be looking into doing in the future.

Where's Benny?

You probably don't remember anything at all about the below conversation (that took place a long time ago) about the **Benny** paperback books: *The Squire's Crystal*, *The Infernal Nexus* and *The Glass Prison* (and, to a lesser extent, *A Life of Surprises*). Part of it was published in an issue of *Vortex* some time ago and Nick said he'd bring it up in a production meeting.

Allow me to refresh your collective memory. These books are no longer available from you good people and I understand that they don't sell particularly well and that the outlay in getting a new batch printed probably won't be recouped in sales very quickly, if at all. It's just that they are rather vital to the ongoing plot of the series. *The Squire's Crystal*, I understand, details how Peter (Benny's son for the uninitiated) was conceived, *The Infernal Nexus* featured Jason's apparently impossible return from the alternate hellish universe he'd been trapped in and *The Glass Prison* details Peter's birth. Such significant events really shouldn't be left out of the series and I feel at something of a disadvantage, and frankly rather miffed, to have forked out money for the second and third series of **Bernice Summerfield** to discover that the important parts of the ongoing story aren't present and aren't even available for purchase! Please could you make these available in some way! As an ebook, anything! And with the greatest of respect, please don't say you're taking it to a production meeting and then say nothing more on the subject for years.

Thank you all,

Christopher Forbes

Nick: You're right, Christopher, this had slipped off my list of things to do – which is unforgivable. Really sorry about that. As I write, I'm cutting and pasting your email into an email to all concerned at Big Finish. Stay tuned...

Adric?

Could you do a season of **The Fourth Doctor Adventures** where he is travelling with Adric? It would take place between *The Keeper of Taken* and *Logopolis*. I would like to think they had some interesting adventures, just the two of them.

You could do one with the Daleks and/or the Sontarans because Adric never encountered either of them during his travels with the Fourth or the Fifth Doctor.

Matthew Moy

Nick: It's certainly something we'd consider doing.

Thanks...

I don't know who to send this to, but I just wanted to say that **Blake's 7** fans are all gonna be ecstatic when *Warship* arrives. Thank you so much for this gift to the fans, it means a lot. If there's ever anything I can do to help out, I will.

Alex O'Neil

Nick: Alex, you are most welcome. This is the brainchild of the ever-brilliant David Richardson, who is a **Blake's 7** fan through and through... and I think he's got all bases covered, but thanks for the offer of help.

More thanks...

I also wanted to comment just a moment about the editorial from Nick Briggs in issue #40 of *Vortex*. In the first place, I can't get over the fact that the people who run Big Finish actually interact with your customers. Thanks for doing so! I ran into some issues during the conversion to the new website. I was unable to download my Fourth Doctor episodes for a short time, and I placed an order for an autographed CD from Sylvester McCoy that ended up not actually being available. I look at both of these issues as just being 'growing pains' with the switch to the new website format. I remember the first time I came to the Big Finish website and had no real clue what was what. So your efforts to update the website should be applauded. I wanted to be sure that you knew that some of us appreciate your efforts!

I did not happen to notice any episodes inadvertently made available to me that I had not paid for. Had I found some I would not have taken advantage of them. I have been a **Doctor Who** fan for a very long time. A few years ago, someone who knew I liked **Doctor Who** found, downloaded, and gave me a few pirated **Doctor Who** audio stories. This was the first time I knew that **Doctor Who** audio stories even existed and the first time I ever heard of Big Finish. I placed my first order in November of

2010 and have been a happy customer since then. I also purchased the 'pirated' stories that I was given so that I would be legal and so that you would get paid for your work. My account with Big Finish currently shows 127 results (and I have more in the queue that have not been finished yet). I know that this doesn't mean that all people who pirate the stories turn around and buy them, but I wanted you to know that sometimes they do.

I really appreciate all of the sales that you offer. It has allowed me to make a lot of purchases that I would otherwise not have made. Case in point: I purchased the **Doctor Who** stage plays when you put them on sale and am currently listening to *The Seven Keys to Doomsday*. I almost didn't purchase it because it was not read by one of the 'real' Doctors. I only bought it because it was on sale. But I have to tell you, it's great! Trevor Martin makes an excellent Doctor and the story is great! I also really liked the behind the scenes information about how the play came to be. If not for Big Finish, this excellent story would have been lost. So, again, there are people who recognize that it is indeed all about the stories! And Big Finish is the place to go to find them.

I listen to them when I exercise and it really helps the time fly. I'm even expanding my horizons into some non-**Doctor Who** stories. I purchased and listened to **Stargate** series three and now you are putting series one on sale, so I'll be ordering them as well. And that means that I'll have to eventually purchase series two so that I'll have heard them all. I've rambled enough. Nick's editorial sounded like he was kind of down and I wanted to be sure that you knew that there are people out there who really really enjoy the work that you all do and the stories that you create!

Thanks so very much, and please keep making them!

John Taylor

Nick: Many thanks, John. I wasn't exactly 'down', but I was trying to be fair and honest. It really means a lot to all of us at Big Finish that people, like you, write to us and tell us the good things. It's only natural for people to contact us when things are going wrong. I have no problem with that. I never, for example, telephone British Telecom to tell them their service is excellent. I only call them (literally at this moment, actually – my wife is on the phone to them as I type this!) to tell them when the broadband isn't working! Which is far too often! So I hope we don't give our customers anywhere near as many problems as BT give me! Thanks again, John. Hugely appreciated.

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FORTHCOMING RELEASES

JULY 2012

Doctor Who: **Protect and Survive** (162, Seventh Doctor, Ace and Hex)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: **The Time Museum**

(7.01, First Doctor)

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

(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)

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

Dark Shadows 28: **Speak No Evil**

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, Fifth Doctor)

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)

Iris Wildthyme **Series 3 Box Set** (Three full cast adventures)

Bernice Summerfield **Box Set 3: Legion**

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

Bernice Summerfield: **Many Happy Returns** (download only)

Dark Shadows 29: **The Last Stop**

OCTOBER 2012

Doctor Who: **The Acheron Pulse** (166, Sixth Doctor)

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, Third Doctor)

Dark Shadows 30: **Dreaming of the Water**

NOVEMBER 2012

Doctor Who: **The Shadow Heart** (167, Seventh Doctor)

Doctor Who: The Eighth Doctor Box Set – **Dark Eyes**

Doctor Who: The Sixth Doctor Specials 1 –

The Voyages of Jago & Litefoot – Voyage to Venus

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: **Return of the Rocket Men**
(7.05, First Doctor)

Blake's 7: **Archangel** by Scott Harrison

Dark Shadows 31: **The Haunted Refrain**

DECEMBER 2012

Doctor Who: **1001 Nights** (168, Fifth Doctor)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: **The Child**

(7.06, Fourth Doctor)

Doctor Who: The Sixth Doctor Specials 2 –

The Voyages of Jago & Litefoot – Voyage to the New World

Dark Shadows 32: **A Christmas Collins**

JANUARY 2013

Doctor Who: **The Wrong Doctors** (169, Sixth Doctor and Mel)

Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures: **The Auntie Matter**

(2.1, Fourth Doctor and Romana)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: **The Flames of Cadiz**

(7.07, First Doctor, double disc)

FEBRUARY 2013

Doctor Who: **TBA** (170, Sixth Doctor and Mel)

Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures: **The Sands of Life**

(2.2, Fourth Doctor and Romana)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: **TBA**

(7.08, Second Doctor)

Gallifrey V (Three full cast adventures)

Blake's 7: The Liberator Chronicles – **Box Set 3**

MARCH 2013

Doctor Who: **TBA** (171, Sixth Doctor and Mel)

Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures: **War Against the Laan**

(2.3, Fourth Doctor and Romana)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: **TBA** (7.09, Third Doctor)

Jago & Litefoot: **Series Five Box Set**

APRIL 2013

Doctor Who: **TBA** (172, TBA)

Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures: **The Justice of Jalxar**

(2.4, Fourth Doctor, Romana, Jago and Litefoot)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: **TBA** (7.09, Third Doctor)

Bernice Summerfield: **New Frontiers Box Set**

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