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PHILIP OLIVIER AND AMY PEMBERTON TELL US ABOUT SHARING A TARDIS!

PLUS!

BERNICE SUMMERFIELD: LEGION

BENNY GETS BACK TO HER ROOTS IN A NEW BOX SET

THE ROSEMARINERS

WRITER DONALD TOSH ON HIS 1960s LOST STORY

VORTEX ISSUE 43 ■ September 2012

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All guests appear subject to work commitments
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SNEAK PREVIEWS
AND WHISPERS

Lalla Ward, Louise Jameson and Seán Carlsen return to studio later this month to begin recording the final series of **Gallifrey** audio dramas for 2013.

Last time we heard them, Romana, Leela and Narvin were traversing the multiverse (with K-9 and Braxiatel still in tow). Now they're stranded on a barbaric Gallifrey that never discovered time travel... and they're looking for an escape.

Fans of the first three series of **Gallifrey** will be pleased to hear that we're back to the political machinations of those very first adventures, and that, at some point, our heroes will be returning to the world they left behind: a Gallifrey on the brink of a terrible war.

The first three scripts have been written by James Peaty, Una McCormack and David Llewellyn, and will be released early next year. The final sixth series, due for release in November 2013, has been written by Scott Handcock, James Goss and Justin Richards – and will bring the series to a very definite conclusion!

EDITORIAL

Listen, just wanted to remind you about the **Doctor Who** Special Releases. What do you mean, you haven't heard of them?

It's a special bundle of low-priced but excessively exciting new releases. The package consists of two box sets: **Doctor Who: Dark Eyes** (featuring the Eighth Doctor and the Daleks), **UNIT: Dominion** (featuring the Seventh Doctor and Klein). PLUS! **Doctor Who: Love and War** (featuring the Seventh Doctor and Bernice Summerfield). PLUS! Two amazing adventures for the Sixth Doctor with Jago and Litefoot (yes, I know!), **Doctor Who: Voyage to Venus** and **Doctor Who: Voyage to the New World**.

Now, here's the thing: this package is an experiment in cheaper pricing. Giving you even more value for money. If it works and it attracts more people to listen – and persuades any of you illegal downloaders out there – then it's a model for pricing that we will repeat more and more.

For example, **Doctor Who: Voyage to Venus** and **Voyage to the New World** are both available for downloading at only £1 each. £1!!! We're not kidding. And our two box sets (four hour-long episodes plus an in-depth 'making of' CD) are also ultra-low, low priced. £30 for **UNIT: Dominion** and £20 for **Dark Eyes**.

And if you buy all these releases together, you can get them for just £65 (CDs) or £55 (for downloads). Can we tempt you? Will you be part of a Big Finish revolution in pricing? It's up to you.

Keep your eye on our website for teasers and trailers. There's also a whole podcast devoted to them, with clips and trailers galore.

But remember, this offer expires soon after release, so get clicking on the website.

Enjoy!

NICK BRIGGS

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TRAVELLING COMPANIONS

PHILIP OLIVIER AND AMY PEMBERTON, AKA HEX AND SALLY, TALK TO PAUL SPRAGG ABOUT SHARING A TARDIS. OR TARDISES. MAYBE TARDI?



Hello Phil. You've had a year off from *Doctor Who*; have you been reminding yourself what's happened to Hex so far?

■ Yeah, I've been going through his back catalogue. That's the only difficult bit; sometimes when you

do three stories a year and you have a year in between, it is a little bit hard to remember everything. But this script, *Gods and Monsters*, it brings everything back. So I'm glad that I'm giving the interview while recording this because it's all come back to me!

Let's go back to *Protect and Survive*.

■ *Protect and Survive* was a great script because it was **Groundhog Day**, basically. It's about a nuclear holocaust if it would have happened, and Ace and Hex

get to relive it over and over again. But the good thing about this was, it was a smaller cast. It was just four of us, which is really nice because it meant we could have a lot more play with the script; there's a lot more time in the booths and more interaction going on. But it was also nice me and Sophie [Aldred, Ace] got to do a bit of character acting and copy Peggy [Elizabeth Bennett] and Albert [Ian Hogg], two Yorkshire people. It was fun having a play with that.

What was good about *Protect and Survive* was that the Doctor wasn't around much, so the relationship between Ace and Hex was nice without it being interrupted by the Doctor putting his grounding rules on. It let it flourish a bit.

Was it a happy cast reunion?

■ It's been brilliant to be reunited with Sophie and Sylvester [McCoy, the Doctor]! Especially after the good news of Sylvester; he's got **The Hobbit** so he's been telling us untold stories. But it's always a pleasure to see them, especially my era. I'm thirty-one

now, and growing up I was watching Sylvester and Soph. And now I've been working with them eight years, I feel like I'm part of the family and it's nice to be friends with people I admired when I was young.

What's the dynamic like with new companions in the mix?

■ It's nice having the other two companions and bouncing off; having Ace with Aristedes [Maggie O'Neil] having their conflict. It was always skirting the fact that Hex was flirting with Ace and their relationship was kind of going that way, but I think after *Black and White* it's cemented that they're more brother and sister. Especially when it's explained that he fancies Sally [Amy Pemberton]!

What did you make of the whole black and white TARDIS concept?

■ Wow! The *Black and White* story, I must have read that script about three times. I personally like to read my own scenes, I don't like to read the rest because my character shouldn't know what else is going on. In this: different story. You have to read everything because it was flashback city! But once I got my head around it, it was very complicated and a great script. And it sets up nicely for the next one.

“WOW! THE BLACK AND WHITE STORY, I MUST HAVE READ THAT SCRIPT ABOUT THREE TIMES.”

Credit to the writers because I don't know how they put it all together, and also linking this history from 1989 – wow. So you've gotta trawl right back through and go through the archives and pick up all these bits of information and incorporate it into a new script, and they have done and it sits beautifully.

I thought this would have been in the back catalogue but Ace, Hex, Lysandra and Sally, they were all asking if it's TARDISes or TARDI! When I heard that, I was like,

'Wow, there's never been two TARDIS before so this is a new one'.

What's Hex's journey through these scripts?

■ I've really enjoyed watching Hex develop from this young, naïve lad to creating his own rapport with Ace. It's nice to see in the past couple of scripts how he's gone towards resenting the Doctor, which is a bold move, to be honest; the Doctor's given him most things. Then when I was doing these two scripts [*Protect and Survive*, *Black and White*], I was like, 'Oh God, he's kind of gone back to a little bit of a bumbling idiot'. But when you read *Gods and Monsters*, you go, 'Aha!' I'm really excited for this final one and how it ties it all together and I just want the next script!

This is one of my favourite jobs. You come here and I think the imagination is better than any CGI you can have. The human imagination is the best, and every time you step into the booth, everyone's got their own picture of what's going on. And in my head it's just a great job to do because... I can't explain it! It's



Nurse Hex, Philip Olivier

like we're filming CGI. Sometimes I close my eyes, I'm imagining sonic screwdrivers and it's crazy; it really has opened my eyes up to the world of **Doctor Who**. I'm watching the series avidly now. It's created a fan out of me!

AMY PEMBERTON

Hi Amy. Did you know your character was coming back after *House of Blue Fire*?

■ I had been told and David [Richardson, line producer] was saying, 'There is a possibility that we're looking at Sally coming back in,' and I thought, 'That'd be amazing!' And then as the year went on, I definitely knew I was coming back, so I just kept it a bit hush hush. So I did know, which was great, because I loved *House of Blue Fire*. I went to it the other day because I wanted to listen to it again and I sat in bed and I was like, 'This is really scary in parts!'

Sally has a phobia of being forgotten about; could you relate?

■ Well, not really. I'd love to say that I did because that'd be great! But what a great phobia to play off. Some people think that way, don't they? Just disappear into life and don't be remembered for anything.

What brings Sally back?

■ Well, basically I completely impressed the Doctor and he loves me a little bit now and so he's bringing me along on all his adventures! I think in *House of Blue Fire* she proved herself massively and she's just dead chuffed that she's been taken along. There's a few bits in *Black and White* where people are questioning the Doctor's motives and why certain things are happening and she's like, 'Absolutely not, he wouldn't do that', so I think she's very much with him on that level and doesn't think he'd be doing anything against her. I think other people, like Aristedes, may question it a bit.

Ace doesn't take to Sally very quickly.

■ Ace has had all that experience; for someone younger to come along and step on her toes a bit and take charge – and she takes charge of a lot and puts all the plans together – I don't think she likes that too much. I think even Aristedes has a few problems with that to start off with, with Sally's age. I think there's a respect there. But Sally is away from her unit now and she's away from all the guys you meet in *House of Blue Fire*; she has gone with the Doctor now. Under the thumb? I don't know. Not far off, maybe. I think Sally just likes to impress everybody. She's not dominant, she just knows what she's doing. She's trying to do things for everybody's sake, not to prove so much anymore. She's looking out for everybody.

But there's still time for a spot of flirting with Hex.

■ I think she deals with it really well; with Hex, I think especially from his point of view, there's that attraction there a little bit, so they've got that little connection going on. I know that Ace finds that a bit much and ribs Hex for it: 'Having fun with Blondie, are you?', all that sort



of stuff. But Sally knows her stuff. She knows a lot, so I think that's probably quite attractive to him, and she's strong and independent. Obviously Ace doesn't like that, but Ace and Hex have had their time together and she doesn't like the fact somebody else is getting in the middle of it. I love it because I'm dealing with a few more characters now being a companion, which is amazing, so I'm striking up those relationships and Sally's figuring out how she stands with certain people.

It's quite a female-orientated trilogy with you, Ace and Aristedes leading it.

■ Strong women together! Maybe we should get someone to write one that's just the women. No Doctor. No, I'm joking! *House of Blue Fire* was very male-orientated but that's what's great about Sally piping up and coming through: the strong young girl. With the ages the women are, there is a bit of...

"WELL, BASICALLY I COMPLETELY IMPRESSED THE DOCTOR AND HE LOVES ME A LITTLE BIT NOW."

not jealousy, but competition almost, I think. There shouldn't be, but there is. And that female drive and hormones, that's good too. I think everyone's getting a bit feisty with each other.

At least you're not all fighting over Hex.

■ Exactly! I think she's got that one in the bag...

You're also in the **Companion Chronicle**

Project: Nirvana.

■ Wowzers! Actual companion. I've made it. Took me five years [Amy first joined Big Finish for **Doctor Who Unbound: Masters of War**] but I'm here. I was chatting to Maggie about it earlier; I'm really looking forward to doing the narration side of it and telling the story that way rather than just the acting side of it. Obviously

you act through the narration but it'll be nice to get that down. Proper storytelling. I'm just trying to get my head around it because I'm reading three scripts at the moment!

Do you think there's a future for Sally with the Doctor?

■ Yeah, I do. I really do because she's young and she's feisty and she's not afraid to say no to someone. Even though she's very respectful to Aristedes, I think she's got a lot of guts and she could go quite far and help a lot.

This is your second character for us; would you come back for more?

■ I'd love to. I've done a few monsters in the past, which is quite fun. I'm falling in love with Sally now a little bit, but I'll always do a monster. That's fine. I do a good monster voice, and I can scream quite well...

DOCTOR WHO: GODS AND MONSTERS



The TARDIS travellers arrive in a bizarre landscape seemingly immune to the physical laws governing the rest of the universe. Ace, Hex and their motley army of allies battle to rescue the Doctor from the trap he's walked into... soon realising that the odds are stacked against them.

But the gods and monsters who inhabit this strange realm loaded the dice against them long ago, in the dim and distant past – and defeat's their only option.

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BRAX TO BASICS

BERNICE SUMMERFIELD IS REUNITED WITH BOTH OLD FRIENDS AND ENEMIES IN *LEGION*, SO WE ASKED SCRIPTERS TONY LEE AND BRAX ACTOR MILES RICHARDSON ABOUT THEIR RESPECTIVE STORIES FOR THE NEW BOX SET

Hi Tony. You've written *Vesuvius Falling* to kick off the *Legion* box set. Where does it find our heroines?

■ Pretty much immediately after the end of the last box set. They're on Legion, which is effectively Mos Eisley if it was an entire planet, and it's the day after Benny's reunited with Peter [Thomas Grant] – who is less than impressed with her, shall we say. She's also thrown by this new, improved 'nice guy' Brax and of course Ruth [Ayesha Antoine], who's never met him before, thinks he's great, and they're both not sure about Jack's [David Ames] appearance in the bar yet and are convinced that he has some kind of game plan.

So it finds them a bit out of sync as everything's finally come together, but the years apart have caused more problems than solutions.

This is your second time writing for *Benny*. How are you finding it so far? What are your favourite aspects of the franchise?

■ I was a fan of *Benny* back in the days of the *Virgin New Adventures*, so to work with the characters I've read and



"I SPOKE TO ONE OF THE BIGGEST BENNY FANS OUT THERE, AND ASKED WHAT I SHOULD BE LOOKING AT THAT'S BEEN LACKING OF LATE. 'ARCHAEOLOGY,' HE REPLIED, AND I AGREED. "

listened to for years is always a joy. And hopefully I'm finding aspects of this that have been left alone for a while. When I got the chance to pitch for this I spoke to

“LISA KNOWS BETTER THAN ANYONE WHAT BENNY WOULD DO ON ANY GIVEN SCENARIO, AND SHE’S A GREAT RESOURCE FOR THE REST OF THE CREW.”

my old roommate Craig, possibly one of the biggest **Benny** fans out there, and asked what I should be looking at that’s been lacking of late. ‘Archaeology,’ he replied, and I agreed. So in this she’s going back to her roots.

As for favourite part, anything with Lisa [Bowerman, Benny] is wonderful. She’s brilliant.

Benny can be a lighter and more comedic series than the other BF ranges; how much does this appeal to your writing sensibilities?

■ Oh, very much so. When I wrote the Eleventh Doctor issues of the IDW *Doctor Who* comic, I found I was throwing more and more humour into my stories, and the option to write this audio came pretty much in the middle of that run, so it was quite a natural progression to move from one to the other and throw humour into the mix. That said, it’s probably a darker story for me than my *Epoch* story, because it’s far more claustrophobic.

Who were your favourite characters to write?

■ I’m finding Benny and Ruth are a great combination to write; Benny’s now even more cynical and world weary than ever, while Ruth’s this eternally perky optimist. It was my first time writing Brax, but again he’s a different Brax, so I’m following the box set remit of taking these well-known, old characters and giving them new spins. Likewise Peter, who really gets to flex his muscles this season.

What does Lisa Bowerman bring to the role?

■ Everything. Even after all these years she’s still bringing her A-game to the studio each and every time, and she’s still finding new directions to take the character. Lisa knows better than anyone what Benny would do on any given scenario, and she’s a great resource for the rest of the crew.

You mentioned the US comics range; will you be working more on that?

■ I left the range on issue #12 of the last run – it cancelled on #16 and Andy Diggle starts a new ongoing later this year. I’m also only on issues #1-#4 of the eight issues of *Assimilation2* which, being a **Star Trek: The Next Generation/Doctor Who** crossover had about a dozen different cooks on every single piece and therefore wasn’t typical of the creation process. I don’t really know what IDW have planned for **Doctor Who** except for a 2012 annual that is out in the autumn with stories from myself and also Big Finish writer Richard Dinnick, among others. There’s talk of something big for 2013, but until I’m greenlit to do something, I never believe I’m going to get it.

What other projects do you have lined up?

■ I’m currently working on the fourth of my **Heroes & Heroines** books for Walker Books, writing a **MacGyver** series for Image Comics and adapting Amanda Hocking’s **Hollowland** books for Dynamite. Outside of comics I’ve just done a Christmas special **Confessions of Dorian Gray**



Alexander Vlahos as Dorian Gray

audio script for Big Finish that was a dream come true for reasons that will soon come to light. I'm writing a Young Adult novel, a couple of screenplays and a TV series pitch is currently doing the rounds. It might sound a lot, but the way these things stagger, I've always got room for one or two more audios, guys...

MILES RICHARDSON

Hello Miles! You've written *Everybody Loves Irving* for the new **Benny** box set. What's it about?

■ Well, it's not really about anything. When I say that, I mean it's not about rampaging evil aliens, challenging Benny in maniacal and dastardly ways. I've always felt that the most interesting part of the **Bernice** stories was the somewhat tart, domestic relationship she had with Brax. So I set out to write a simple domestic piece which would play with that relationship. Having said that, there are some aliens and there is some threat, mainly involving intergalactic plumbers.



From left: Lisa Bowerman, Ayesha Antoine, David Ames, Thomas Grant

How loved do you feel Braxiatel is?

■ I was surprised by Brax's popularity – almost from his first outing. But then, he is a somewhat ambiguous character. On the one hand, he can be charming and witty. On the other, he is capable of unspeakable evil. But that latter side, I have always felt, was driven by a desire for the greater good. But the two aspects combined do make for

an attractive character. Of course, in more recent stories he became a bit extreme. With the new scenario put forward in *Legion*, I think we are back with a Brax that both Lisa and I are more comfortable with.

How did the opportunity to write for **Benny** arise? What was the writing process like for you?

■ I simply wrote a story and sent it off to Gary Russell [producer]. I was in a dull moment in between jobs and it was something to do. At first he wasn't keen at all, mainly because

"I'VE ALWAYS FELT THAT THE MOST INTERESTING PART OF THE BERNICE STORIES WAS THE SOMEWHAT TART, DOMESTIC RELATIONSHIP SHE HAD WITH BRAX."



FULL CAST AUDIO DRAMA - OUT SEPTEMBER!

Bernice Summerfield

STARRING LISA BOWERMAN



LEGION

WHAT ARE WE ALL DOING HERE, I WONDER?

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Bernice Summerfield created by Paul Cornell and used under licence. Irving Braxiatel created by Justin Richards and used with kind permission.

it didn't fit in with the new storylines. Then he saw that as it was a self-contained vignette, it could – with the addition of some judicious rewrites – fit comfortably within the *Legion* box set. I found the writing surprisingly easy. It flowed very easily. But then, I've known the characters for over a decade now, so knew how they would interact. The difficult part was trying not to make it all Irving (he does love the sound of his own voice). I didn't have any plot in mind when I started. I just let the story develop as it went along. I just asked myself, 'What would they do now?'

What does Brax do that he's never done before?

■ He goes shopping. How's that? He's also more vulnerable than of old. Courage is the prerogative of the young, and even though he's a Time Lord, he's no longer in the first flush of youth.

"I WOULD SUGGEST THAT IT WOULD BE A PERFECT TIME TO COME TO THE BERNICE SUMMERFIELD STORIES... THE DECKS HAVE BEEN CLEARED, SO TO SPEAK."

What's the relationship now between Benny and Brax, and between you and Lisa?

■ After going through an extremely difficult time together, Brax and Benny have found a new – hopefully – working relationship. Mind you, it's the same Benny, but not the same Brax. For those who don't know, the old Brax from the *Bernice* stories is now elsewhere and the new Brax is the one we have come to know from the *Gallifrey* series. I think their relationship – when it works at its best – is like a marriage. They do tend to argue like an old married couple. Though, despite the wishes of some of the fanbase, any plot along those lines would be detrimental to the storyline. Brax still holds a candle for Romana, anyway.

Lisa and I have been friends for a quarter of a century now and have always got on well together, both in and out of the recording studio. Mind you, she never stops talking. But then, I am a man and therefore most comfortable in

silence. We socialise outside of the workplace, which is very healthy, as in the studio we are normally separated by industrial glass.

If someone hasn't tried out *Benny* before, why should they pick up the *Legion* box set?

■ I would suggest that it would be a perfect time to come to the *Bernice Summerfield* stories. The old run of stories had become crowded with so much baggage that you sometimes lost sight of Benny and what she was and did. Now the decks have been cleared, so to speak, and we are back, almost, to square one. I, thankfully, survived the cull.

BERNICE SUMMERFIELD: LEGION



VESUVIUS FALLING

Written by: Tony Lee
Directed by: Gary Russell

SHADES OF GRAY

Written and directed by: Scott Handcock

EVERYBODY LOVES IRVING

Written By: Miles Richardson
Directed by: Gary Russell

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THE ROSEMARINERS

WRITER DONALD TOSH REFLECTS ON HIS STORY **THE ROSEMARINERS** – ORIGINALLY DEvised TO BE MADE IN THE 1960S, AND OUT AT LAST THIS MONTH AS ONE OF OUR **DOCTOR WHO LOST STORIES**...

The idea of having a race of creatures who were 'powered' by roses came to me while I was assisting my late wife in creating a rose garden. The plants and their roots frequently seemed to have a life of their own, no matter what you wanted to do with them and in the ensuing struggle, one got scratched. They were therefore ideal villains and heroes. They were beautiful, but could also respond viciously, they also had a propensity for exotic names.

When I approached the **Doctor Who** office with the idea, they responded positively and I agreed to submit a detailed storyline. However, before I could do that I was commissioned to write a script for a film to be based on the writings of Stephen Crane and set during the American Civil War. This involved a very great deal of research for me and the roses story got put on the back burner. Unfortunately, when I was able to get down to work and submit it, a

lot of time had passed and Pat Troughton's Doctor was about to make way for Jon Pertwee's. As this was not the sort of story they were looking for, it got shelved. Many years later I was approached by *Doctor Who Magazine* to write up the story as one of the 'lost' **Doctor Who** stories, and then to my surprise and delight Big Finish asked me to fully script it and here, with a very distinguished and talented cast, it now takes on a real lease of life.

I loved my time on **Doctor Who**, working with a producer, John Wiles, whom I respected and admired and with whom, as far as the programme was concerned, I was nicely balanced. He was very much into the sci-fi side whereas the historical stories were more mine. We also appreciated that for our audience the future tended to be more popular than the past. Both of us believed that although we had a good adult audience we were

primarily a 'Children's Programme' (and suffered the budget limitations that went with that). We also believed that children were far more resilient and loved being scared. They may watch from behind the sofa – but heaven forfend you should think of turning it off. They were watching it!



Friends and enemies, but who is who?
David Warner and Clive Wood as Professor Biggs
and Rugosa

“WE WERE THE FIRST TO KILL OFF A COMPANION. THIS WAS NOT DONE LIGHTLY, BUT AFTER MUCH SOUL SEARCHING.”

Consequently we were, I suppose, somewhat darker in tone than other teams (though not as splendidly dark as they have become in the Second Coming). We were the first to 'kill off' a companion (in *The Daleks' Master Plan*). This was not done lightly, but after much soul searching. However, the problems inherent in having a handmaiden from Troy as a companion were going to seriously affect and slow up the storytelling, so alas Katarina had to go. The death of Sara Kingdom was another matter, for we had hoped to have Jean Marsh with us for some time, but her own created programme *Upstairs Downstairs* was about to go into production with a major part for

her and it would have been absurd to ask her to forego that, so she had to be written out. This meant that she and Adrienne Hill were two of the briefest companions and John and I were forever labelled as being 'cavalier' with casts' lives.

I find it sad that little remains of John and my time on *Doctor Who*, especially the twelve-part Dalek story. It may have been the nearest thing to a nightmare to get onto the screen but it lost one of the great portraits of *Doctor Who* villains in Kevin Stoney's masterly Mavic Chen. *The Rosemariners* comes from a more innocent time and I crave forgiveness for referencing the *The Daleks' Master Plan*, but for now I just hope that you enjoy yet another 'journey into the unknown' with the great peripatetic Doctor.

DOCTOR WHO - THE LOST STORIES THE ROSEMARINERS



The Doctor, Jamie and Zoe find themselves on an almost deserted space lab. Earth Station 454 is being closed down, years of research are coming to an end and only xeno-botanist Professor Arnold Biggs remains on board.

But is there more to the closure than meets the eye? For the operation is being supervised by the Rosemariners of the planet Rosa Damascena. What do the Rosemariners want with the scientists? And what is the secret of Rosedream?

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ON THE RIGHT TRACK

THIS MONTH'S **DARK SHADOWS** FINDS TONY PETERSON HAVING A TERRIFYINGLY CLOSE ENCOUNTER. WRITER DAVID LLEWELLYN REVEALS MORE.

Hello David! You've written this month's **Dark Shadows** offering, *The Last Stop*, what's going down in Collinsport?

■ Well, actually, we're just outside Collinsport, on a midnight train from Boston. Lawyer Tony Peterson is on his way home from a night with an old college friend, but the journey isn't a smooth one!

Have you been mired in the world of **Dark Shadows** long?

■ I'm very much a new recruit. It's only a couple of years since I was introduced to the show, and even then it was the 2004 pilot. It was a while before I'd see any of the original series.

What appeals to you most about the characters of Tony and Cassandra?

■ It was actually Tony I was drawn to initially. My story started as an idea I had while travelling on the Tube a few years ago, and I knew that as a protagonist I needed an everyman character, someone contemporary – or at least contemporary to when the original series aired – and more down-to-earth than some **Dark Shadows** characters! Of course, Cassandra/Angelique is the total opposite of that; she's larger-than-life, supernatural, and about 300 years old, but that's what makes them good foils for one another.

How much research is required to get into the minds of the characters?

■ It's good to read over character histories, any appropriate scripts, etc, to make sure the characters are themselves in the finished piece, but there always has to be a departure point when you're the ventriloquist and the character is the dummy; when you're imagining what they think, how they'll react, and not just basing it on what's gone before. So some research is essential, but too much can be a lead weight.

What can new listeners and old find to love in *The Last Stop*?

■ I hope long-time fans will see a new side to Tony Peterson, but being a **Dark Shadows** novice myself, I think it's written in such a way that newcomers can just enjoy it as a claustrophobic and sinister little drama.

Have you seen the **Dark Shadows** movie?

■ Confession time... I still haven't, but it's on my list. From the trailer, it's clearly a very different animal to the original series and the audio dramas, but the clip where Barnabas attacks the TV ("Reveal yourself, tiny songstress!") made me laugh like a drain. I just hope it's not the only good joke in the movie.

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JUDGING BY THE COVER

I have a question about the artwork for the CDs. Has any thought been given to selling the compact disc art in poster size or maybe 11 by 8? Big 'hurrahs' to all of the fantastic artists that work so hard to make them look so cool. I have found myself 'drawn' to order some **Doctor Who** adventures because of the art. *The Butcher of Brisbane* and *Voyage to Venus* really look cool.

One thought is that you could solicit pre-orders so that you could have enough ordered to make a profit. Another idea could be to have fans vote on a set number of covers (three or five) and the top vote getter could be made into a poster. Let me know what you think. I have to go and listen to the *The Nightmare Fair* – the Doctor is calling!

Greg Stoj

Nick: Hope you enjoyed The Nightmare Fair, Greg. The poster idea is a good one. It's something we'll look into. Might be a good subscriber bonus!

MISSING

I noticed that many of the original wave of **2000 AD** releases are no longer available to buy on CD, and in some cases there is no download option either. Are these ever likely to be available again? Maybe a box set if the film does well?

John Duckworth

Nick: The issue here, John, is clearance of contributor rights. It's an ongoing process of contacting contributors and asking them to release the rights for downloads, as some of our old contracts didn't allow for this.

NEW COMPANIONS 1?

Just wondering: what is the likelihood – if ever – of Big Finish obtaining the licence to Chang Lee and Grace from the TV movie? Despite my mixed feelings about the TV movie, I really like Grace and Chang Lee, and it would be brilliant to hear them in a Big Finish run. But if it's not to be, it's not to be. (Mind you, BF did get Tom Baker, Janet Fielding and have gotten interest from Matthew Waterhouse, so perhaps one day...?)

And is it too early for a **Dark Eyes** trailer? Please, please? Even a teaser for the teaser would be appreciated! (And would probably make that dastardly Nick Briggs cackle with glee, he's really enjoying tormenting his fans, isn't he?)

Michael Hocking

Nick: Those character rights are quite a difficult issue to untangle. We do investigate from time to time, but no easy solution presents itself. Excuse me for being delicate and cryptic, but there are confidential matters here. But

never say never. There is a Dark Eyes teaser trailer. We're just working out the best time to put it live. I'm listening to sound design from Andy Hardwick now and it's making me very excited!

PRAISE!

Hello there, this isn't an enquiry as such; it's just a quick note to say that I think Big Finish does a fantastic job!

I've recently got an account with Big Finish primarily for the **Doctor Who** ranges, although I'm looking forward to exploring your other products. I'd heard some of the audio dramas on 4 Extra, or BBC7 as was, but I'd never realized how many hundreds of plays and audio books you have produced.

The standard is so high and every **Doctor Who** story is gripping. I particularly appreciate hearing classic Doctors again. Colin Baker was a particular favourite of mine back in the day and it's great to hear the Sixth Doctor and Peri reincarnated, as it were. I have enjoyed the new TV **Doctor Who** seasons, but I am a sucker for nostalgia and these audio dramas bring back so many good memories and create great new ones.

It's also brilliant news that the Fourth Doctor has come back and I look forward to listening to more of his stories. Also, I'm a great admirer of Mr Briggs. His amazing contributions along with all the people at Big Finish have created and will continue to create something very special.

I am totally blind. Although I get a lot out of TV, it's great to know that in such a visual world all these audio dramas are being created and we can make the pictures ourselves.

So, many thanks to all at Big Finish. Long may you continue.

Peter Jones

Nick: Peter, it's great to read all this. I'll make a point of reading out your comment on a podcast, since we currently don't produce a version of Vortex for the visually impaired.

NEW COMPANIONS 2?

The recent tragic deaths of Caroline John and Mary Tamm prompted me to assess the talent pool available for future **Companion Chronicles**, and whether there are any classic **Who** actors who have yet to feature in these stories.

Neither Matthew (Adric) Waterhouse, John (Benton) Levene, Adrienne (Katarina) Hill and Jackie (Dodo) Lane are represented, and whereas I appreciate there is a certain degree of sensitivity in any contract negotiations, I was wondering whether BF could say whether we can rule out appearances from any of these characters in the future.

It would be delightful to hear Dodo teamed up with Steven again, or a 'missing' adventure for Katarina set between scenes in *The Daleks' Master Plan* (after seeing

how you managed to pull off a trilogy of stories with Sara Kingdom, nothing seems impossible anymore!). Or how good would it be for the Fourth Doctor and Leela to join forces with Sgt Benton and Mike Yates to fend off an alien invasion?

Your comments would be welcome.

Matt Adams

Nick: We never say never about anything. But, as you'll appreciate, bringing back some of the characters you mention might be tricky. But there is some good news on the way for you.

OH, MY WORD!

I see you plan on releasing more Second **Doctor Lost Stories** with Frazer Hines. Could you pass on my thanks and appreciation for his mimicry of the Second Doctor – his cadence and rhythms perfectly capture Patrick Troughton and increase my enjoyment of your range. Especially since over the years I have grown to love the Second Doctor and mourn the fact we are missing so many of his episodes.

On another topic, since you have Tom Baker now, have you ever considered a new adaptation of *Shada*? I realise that he and Lalla Ward may not be comfortable recording together but you could record their tracks separately much as you do for **Stargate**, etc. On still another note I wish to congratulate you on the extension of your licence of the **Doctor Who** range. I have greatly enjoyed many of your stories.

On an unrelated note, why did you decide to recast the actors for **Sapphire and Steel**? Was it because Joanna Lumley and David McCallum were unavailable?

Thanks for everything, I wish you a long and prosperous existence (I am not being totally altruistic since that way I get to enjoy your audio range for a long time.)

PS: Have you ever considered getting the licence for the TV show **UFO**, which I loved as a child, or do you fear it would not have a large enough audience or would the licensing be a problem?

Walter Barnett

*Nick: Quite a lot to answer here... I'm always telling Frazer how brilliant his Patrick Troughton voice is. I think the key is that it is done with so much love and affection by Frazer. Brilliant work. We don't have any plans for *Shada*, I'm afraid. Thanks for your congratulations on the licence renewal. Joanna Lumley's representatives indicated that she would not be interested and David McCallum suddenly got a job in the States and was unavailable.*

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LISTEN AGAIN: SCHERZO

KENNY SMITH LOOKS BACK AT A CLASSIC BIG FINISH TALE THIS MONTH: **SCHERZO**



Two characters telling a story is one of the Big Finish staples these days in the form of the **Companion Chronicles**. But in December 2003, Big Finish released a play in effectively the same format, but as part of the monthly release schedule: Robert Shearman's *Scherzo*.

Featuring the Eighth Doctor and Charley Pollard, it immediately followed the events of *Zagreus*, the story with Big Finish's biggest cast to date, going from one

extreme to the other. Robert Shearman, fresh from his successes with fan favourites *The Chimes of Midnight* and *Jubilee*, was invited by co-producer Gary Russell to write the story that immediately followed the fortieth anniversary special.

Gary says, "*Scherzo* is a love story – we needed to resolve that, have the Doctor and Charley fall out of love with each other. That was the point. It was meant to be like a theatre play – like *The Chimes of Midnight*, you could do it on stage if you wanted to. I wanted to do a play about music, but me being me, I didn't want much music in it."

Rob says, "I was quite used to writing two-handers as I had been writing quite a number of them for the Stephen Joseph Theatre in Scarborough. Every season, around the full-length plays for five or six actors in the main theatre, they'd like to put on shorter, cheaper plays to be staged in the restaurant as people ate

their lunch! So it wasn't a new format for me, writing a sustained piece of drama for only two people. I was quite happy to do the two-hander, as I thought it would be interesting to do something that was minimalist, and off I went."

The writer also wanted to reward India Fisher [Charley] for her earlier work. "I wanted to give India a present. I

"I WAS SO HONOURED THAT HE'D WRITTEN IT FOR US. NO ONE HAD EVER WRITTEN A PLAY SPECIFICALLY FOR ME!"



Love is in the air, India Fisher and Paul McGann.

thought she'd been so remarkably good in *Chimes*, and I just wanted to see what an actress of her ability and enthusiasm would make of something like *Scherzo*. Bless her heart, she certainly seized that and ran with it."

India adored the challenge. "It was Shearman so I just adored it. I was so honoured that he'd written it for us. No one had ever written a play specifically for me! I had no issue with the 'love' aspect of the Eighth Doctor and Charley's relationship, so I thought *Scherzo* was a wonderful exploration of it. And I'm a sucker for the bizarre, so kissing and melding into one entity was right up my street.

"We recorded it as live, in one take. We had a read-through and then we just did it. Weirdly, being a two-hander makes that easier. By then, Paul [McGann] and I were very in tune with how the other one worked, we set up our mics facing one another and just went for it. I loved working like that and it made sense of all the emotion and crescendos."

Rob adds, "The inspiration was that Gary told me that when the Doctor went into this new universe, he was sacrificing himself. I remember wanting to do something with that – he had given up his life for Charley, and everything and everyone he knew, but then she goes and follows him in. I remember thinking, 'Wouldn't that really annoy him, as he's sacrificed himself for nothing, because she's gone in too, making that sacrifice invalid.'

That's what I wanted to do, but as a result I had the Doctor being very un-Doctorish, being very angry throughout it, as he couldn't deal with Charley's declaration of love for him, which was something the TV series hadn't dealt with at the time, the whole idea of a companion having feelings for the Doctor."

Handling the sound design was Andy Hardwick at ERS Studios, but with no music present, did that make it harder? "Harder in a way, but as soon as I heard the words being spoken, it was obvious that any music and much in the way of background noise would completely ruin the vibe. It was like these two are so completely alone that any background music would be like providing company for them or something.

"I loved the way that when something in terms of sound did start occurring, it was almost whimsical and a character you'd care about – so I absolutely love the bit where it suddenly screams, 'Help me!' I tried to make that sound as loud, violent and unexpected as I possibly could. I tried it out on a friend and he spilt his coffee all over his trousers, so I knew we'd got it right!"

Scherzo starring Paul McGann and India Fisher is available on CD and for download from www.bigfinish.com **CLICK HERE FOR DETAILS**

FORTHCOMING RELEASES

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)

Bernice Summerfield Box Set 3: **Leigon**

Bernice Summerfield: **The Slender-Fingered Cats of Bubastis**

by **Xanna Eve Chown** (Legion tie-in book)

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**

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

Stargate SG-1: **Series 3 Box Set 2** (Three full cast adventures)

DECEMBER 2012

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

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 Collinwood Christmas**

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: **Spaceport Fear** (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**

Blake's 7: **Warship** (Full cast drama)

Blake's 7: **Warship** (Novelisation)

MARCH 2013

Doctor Who: **The Seeds of War** (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 Jabar**

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

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: **The Alchemists** (7.10, First Doctor)

Bernice Summerfield: **New Frontiers Box Set**

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

MAY 2013

Doctor Who: **TBA** (173, TBA)

Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures: **Phantoms of the Deep**

(2.5, Fourth Doctor and Romana)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: **TBA** (7.10, TBA)

Blake's 7: **The Liberator Chronicles – Box Set 4**

Blake's 7: **Lucifer** by Paul Darrow

Blake's 7: **Lucifer audiobook** (Read by Paul Darrow)

JUNE 2013

Doctor Who: **TBA** (174, TBA)

Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures: **The Dalek Contract**

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Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: **TBA** (7.12, Doctor TBA)



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