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VORTEX

A man with dark hair and a leather jacket is in the foreground, pointing a glowing device towards the viewer. Behind him is a woman with blonde hair wearing a grey and red uniform. The background is a swirling blue vortex.

DARK EYES

NEW COMPANION RUTH BRADLEY TALKS!

PLUS!

BOUNTY HUNTING WITH CHASE MASTERSON!
JONATHAN MORRIS VOYAGES TO VENUS!

ISSUE 45 · NOVEMBER 2012

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SNEAK PREVIEWS AND WHISPERS

VIENNA: THE MEMORY BOX



Sometimes things just work. And they work so instantly and so perfectly that you want more. To be honest, it was sheer serendipity that Chase Masterson was cast as the mercenary assassin Vienna Salvatori in the upcoming **Doctor Who** story *The Shadow Heart*. But from the day of recording it became clear that there was a huge potential for something more – plenty more stories to tell with Vienna. Not a **Doctor Who** spin-off, but a self-contained series in its own right.

Chase was delighted by the chance to return, and the character's creator Jonathan Morris embraced the idea of writing more. And his script for *The Memory Box* is just wonderful – a twisty-turny outer space romp that introduces Vienna's universe and some potential returning characters played by John Banks, Gemma Whelan (*Game of Thrones*) and Tom Price (*Torchwood*).

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EDITORIAL

So, at last, **Doctor Who: Dark Eyes** is released this month! I hope you'll all forgive me a particularly self-indulgent editorial this month (what do you mean, 'they always are'!?). The release of *Dark Eyes* is the end of a very long journey for me. I have personally invested so much time and energy in it and the enormity of it is only just really occurring to me. I had this mad idea to write and direct a box set of **Doctor Who** all by myself! And it's happened...

The truth is, of course, that I didn't do it all by myself. Right from the story and script stage, I had our brilliant script editor Alan Barnes advising and guiding me. And then, to get it actually recorded, David Richardson brought his considerable organisational and casting skills to bear. Along the way, comedy genius Paul Spragg gave me great encouragement, telling me how much he enjoyed reading the script (let's hope he wasn't joking, the wag!). Then, of course, the cast did some fantastic work, with Paul McGann showing such enthusiasm for his new travelling companion and Ruth Bradley excelling as Molly O'Sullivan. Finally, Andy Hardwick, a sound designer and composer who has been with us for many years, has produced some of his best work here. The challenges were many: planes, trains and automobiles are all in there! There are chases, explosions, four-dimensional temporal maps, historical settings, alien planets... My aim was to create a rollercoaster of an adventure, but the ride is no good if all the exciting elements aren't in place. Luckily for me Andy has brought it all beautifully to life with his customary energy and attention to detail, with a musical score that is at times touching and sensitive, but also raucous, excitable and sometimes doom-laden. I love it. But then, I'm biased, aren't I?

In this edition of *Vortex*, you can find out what actress Ruth Bradley thought about her part in this brand new era of **Doctor Who**. I hope you all find out you love it as much as she does.

NICK BRIGGS



THE RUTH OF THE WORLD

INTRODUCING NEW COMPANION MOLLY O'SULLIVAN! RUTH BRADLEY TALKS IRISH ACCENTS, DAMAGED DOCTORS AND BEING DIRECTED BY DALEKS FOR EPIC EIGHTH DOCTOR ADVENTURE **DARK EYES**

Hello Ruth! What's it like being part of the **Doctor Who** audios?

► It's lovely! It's very relaxed and great fun. Like being a kid because there's endless opportunities and you can end up anywhere. Great for the imagination and yeah, I've had a ball, a great laugh!

How did you get involved?

► I got a phone call from my agent saying, 'Do you want to do **Doctor Who**?' and they sent me through the scripts and I thought it was great. Nicholas [Briggs] wrote great scripts and I really liked Molly O'Sullivan. I just thought, 'Definitely, I wanna do that!' And it's a while since I've done voice work like this as well, so it's really exciting to get into a booth and let rip and have a ball.

Plus you're getting to use your actual voice!

► Well, almost, except my accent is slightly different. Molly is more rural Ireland; but yes, I am getting to use my voice, which is nice. No face! And no make-up or hair in the morning; that's nice.

It's okay, we will be using your face on the cover.

► Even if it's got no make-up on it. Grand.

What do you make of Molly?

► She's very strong and courageous and I think she's had quite a hard life but [she's] definitely not one to be bemoaning it or giving out about her lot. I think she's quite positive, even though when we first come across her she seems kind of sharp and maybe a little cruel. But she's had some difficult things happen,

particularly recently, with her friend Kitty and being a VAD in the War. She definitely learns to lighten up but initially she's very strong; I suppose a little hard. But I really like her. I think she's quite a modern woman, she's definitely not afraid to tell the Doctor [Paul McGann] what she thinks of him and to put him in his place, and [to] not think that he is impressing her with his big words, just that he's being a bit silly. And I loved that about her, because she's not in any way in awe of him and flattering his ego at all. Quite the opposite. But they still get on, which is good.

“IT’S PROBABLY EXACTLY WHAT THE DOCTOR NEEDS: SOMEBODY WHO DOESN’T KNOW OR CARE THAT MUCH ABOUT WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO HIM IN THE PAST.”

How did you approach playing that familiar **Who** companion role?

► I think the companion, it's a great thing because it's different with every single character. The chemistry between the Doctor and whichever companion is completely different; there's some who are so girly and some who are strong and I think it also depends on the actor because whatever chemistry the two actors have together completely changes the dynamic as well. A lot of it is obviously on the page, but I think what's great about the companion is it brings something new to the Doctor, so it brings a new side of him out. I hope! Here's me talking, I haven't heard it, we haven't finished it yet!

Molly doesn't exactly encounter the Eighth Doctor at his best, as he's dealing with some big recent losses.

► There's a lot of talk about his loss and he's very gutted and torn apart by it, obviously. But what's nice is Molly doesn't have a clue; she's not aware of Lucie or Susan or any of these people, so she's great at saying, 'Come on, chin up now, get over it' which is really refreshing!

Also, while the Doctor is filled with grief, Molly has her own issues simply from being caught in the middle of the First World War.

► Because she's in immediate danger. And also she's losing her best friend, so she can relate to all this stuff. But I think her way has never been to wallow in it and she probably isn't great, initially anyway, at being aware of how she's feeling and dealing with it and she definitely takes it out on a lot of people. But even within that she doesn't lie down and go, 'Oh God, I'm going to die and the world is awful', she just gets up and keeps going on. So it's probably exactly what the Doctor needs: somebody who doesn't know or care that much about what has happened to him in the past and has just said, 'Hey, let's deal with right now today'.

And then you live life in fast forward, bouncing from place to place.

► There's no stopping these two! They're literally in one place for two minutes. Which is another brilliant



thing about **Doctor Who**. You never know where you're going to end up when you walk out of the TARDIS. There's endless possibilities and they do end up in so many places. And Ireland features in it as well, which is nice. I don't think I've seen Ireland in a **Doctor Who** in a while. It's not as exciting as alternate universes but it's quite nice when they go to a normal place. I always love it when they end up in France or something in **Doctor Who** because you can relate to that in the midst of all the other galaxies.

There's a strange water planet...

► I love that! Planet Halalka!

'Exterminate!' and then he goes, 'Can we just take that bit again?' It's so funny. The Daleks are not scary now when they tell me to do that line again. But no, it's such a sound. Even in the TV show when you hear the noise, it is a terrifying noise. So it's scary working with them but lovely being directed by them in the form of Nick. And Paul is a lovely man. He's brilliant. We've had a great old laugh.

It's good that you've bonded so quickly as it helps forge the bond between the characters as well.

► Yeah, and I guess what's different about it is, when you're doing screen or film or telly or theatre, you



Blimey, you have been paying attention, haven't you!

► I haven't been just sight-reading! I have actually read them a few times! I think they're great scripts but Halalka has waves that you're suspended in and I was like, 'God, I'd love to get myself to Halalka and have a swim in them waves!' I liked Halalka particularly. I liked the Mezcoranis too, they're quite funny. Thelus the octopus man is great!

You've been working with both Paul McGann and a lot of Daleks; how were they?

► Daleks are hilarious! I don't like that sound, it's terrifying, but what is hilarious is when [Nick] directs you in the voice, so you're like, 'Oh God!' He says

meet the actor and you're looking in each other's face all day, so you make a bond like you normally would with anybody. But when you're in a booth beside each other, there's no eye contact so you're bonding through your voices and you can barely really look because the mic is in the way. But yeah, it was great and [Paul's] just so good and he knows exactly what he's doing. You know you're in safe hands. He's got a great sense of humour so there was lots of laughing from the off, and a few little dry comments, so it was just a load of fun. Non-stop laughing in the booth, me cracking up a few times. And being directed by Daleks. Who didn't exterminate me, so that was grand.

DOCTOR WHO

DARK EYES



'I really hoped it would be a wonderful view... to look back from the end of everything... to see how things finally turned out.'

The Doctor is looking for hope. But instead, he finds himself on a mission. The Time Lords have uncovered terrifying fragments of an insane plot to destroy the universe. And somehow, at the centre of that plot is one, random female in Earth's history, Molly O'Sullivan.

Soon, the Doctor and Molly find themselves thrown headlong into a series of dangerous and terrifying adventures, with the dreaded Daleks never far behind them. **VIEW DETAILS**

Part One: *The Great War*

Part Two: *Fugitives*

Part Three: *Tangled Web*

Part Four: *'X' and the Daleks*

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY: NICHOLAS BRIGGS

"DALEKS ARE HILARIOUS! I DON'T LIKE THAT SOUND, IT'S TERRIFYING, BUT WHAT IS HILARIOUS IS WHEN [NICK] DIRECTS YOU IN THE VOICE."

So you'd happily do all this again, then?

► Absolutely! I'd love to come back as Molly. And she's learned so much during the course of these four episodes, I'd love to see what she's like next time. I think she might want to take over the TARDIS and go, 'You sit back there, Doctor, I'll work this one, don't worry about it'. She's very eager to get going in the TARDIS. I'd love to revisit and see where she ends up.

For those wondering where they've seen you before, you played out-of-time Victorian Emily in **Primeval**, ITV's dinosaur-based sci-fi show.

► That was the first time I'd ever done sci-fi was **Primeval**, I'd never done anything like it before.

And it was great because it was a real education, you know, with the man with the tennis ball on the stick and the lights on the ground. You just run riot with your imagination and I'd have moments going, 'What a hilarious job I do for a living! Getting paid for running around and pretending there's a dinosaur! It's just a man with a tennis ball!' But yeah, that was great fun. I did that for a good bit and have since done a sci-fi film, so I wouldn't say no to sci-fi, it's great craic.

Which leads neatly to asking where people can see you in action next.

► I have a film coming out called **Grabbers** in a few months. It's a kind of sci-fi about an alien monster who comes to a little fishing village, and I'm a hard-nosed policewoman and there's an alcoholic policeman who live on this little island. Basically, we figure out the only way not to be eaten by this alien is if you're drunk 'cos it's allergic to alcohol in blood so it's a sci-fi comedy romantic horror. We all have to get hammered, and it's hilarious. And romantic. And quite scary! **VORTEX**



VALIANT VOYAGERS

JAGO AND LITEFOOT ARE NOW TARDIS TRAVELLERS! WRITER JONATHAN MORRIS REVEALS HIS INSPIRATIONS FOR SENDING THE INTREPID INVESTIGATORS TO VENUS WITH THE SIXTH DOCTOR

Professor George Litefoot and Henry Gordon Jago have faced many freakish, fearsome foes and experienced many exciting, extraordinary exploits. First of all, of course, there was that business with the despicable Weng-Chiang, and the affair with *The Mahogany Murders* (or *The Mahogany Murderers*, nobody was ever completely sure). Then along came the fiendish Doctor Tulp and the devious Gabriel Sanders, followed by the nightmarish Wet Men, the mysterious Man At The End Of The Garden and all those giant metal spheres, not to mention the noble savage, Leela. And then, most recently, our gallant heroes encountered haunted mirrors, exchanged quips with Oscar Wilde, resolved a time-loop on the London Underground, defeated the sinister Sand Men and unmasked the enigmatic Claudius Dark. What else was left for them to do but to explore outer space?

And that's where *Voyage to Venus* picks up, as Litefoot and Jago have finally stepped on board the TARDIS for a tour of the wonders of the universe with the Sixth Doctor. But where, in all the universe, would they go?

The planet Venus seemed the perfect destination for a couple of reasons. Firstly, it wouldn't feel right to feature Litefoot and Jago in an out-and-out modern science fiction adventure. No, they should have an adventure with a Victorian sensibility, reflecting the concerns of that time (colonialism, class, female emancipation, eugenics) and informed by the science fiction of that time; HG Wells and Jules Verne, as well as slightly later authors such as Edgar Rice Burroughs, CS Lewis and Olaf Stapledon. But it wouldn't be 'steampunk'; those authors wouldn't have considered their work to be steampunk but based on the very latest scientific knowledge, so I decided to follow suit

and draw my inspiration from *New Scientist* rather than brass rivets.

The second reason why Venus appealed was that it's always had a kind of background presence in **Doctor Who** lore. We've never seen the Doctor visit the planet, but it's been mentioned on numerous occasions: Susan alluding to its 'metal seas', the Third Doctor practising Venusian aikido, singing Venusian lullabies and playing Venusian hopscotch, as well as referring to its inhabitants, the Thraskins (also known as Plinges) and the Shanghorns (which should never be trusted with a Perigosto stick). So there was all sorts of stuff to have fun with and try to work into my story. And, of course, I had to throw a few even more obscure references in there as well.

Having decided on Venus, I then had to come up with a story. Clearly it wouldn't be much fun to set it on a world with a searing hot, dense and unbreathable atmosphere, so instead I followed the lead of those early science fiction novels and imagined Venus as a tropical paradise. And of course, being named after the Roman goddess of love, it would have to be ruled entirely by women (which would also help balance out a cast with three male leads). But rather than go down the corsets-and-kinky-boots route of all those Fifties B-movies, I was determined to do something a little more subversive and science fiction with the idea. I'm particularly proud of the explanation of what became of all the Venusian men.

Once I had a setting, and a plot driven by a powerful female villain (the Grand Empress Vulpina) it was simply a matter of imagining the characters of Litefoot, Jago and the Doctor in those situations and writing down what they would say. Litefoot and Jago are such well-drawn characters – and have such distinctive voices, thanks to Trevor Baxter and Christopher Benjamin – that the challenge is not so much a matter of thinking of things for them to say as a matter of trying to get them to shut up so somebody else can get a word in edgeways! Fortunately, that's not much of a problem with the Sixth Doctor, who was never exactly one to politely wait his turn in conversation.

I can honestly say that this story is one of the most enjoyable things I've ever written. I couldn't wait to

sit down and write the next bit; I could quite easily have gone on for another hour or so. The risk, that I was very aware of, was that by taking Litefoot and Jago out of the Victorian era it would undermine their characters or feel jarring, but the solution was clear: Litefoot and Jago may travel to alien worlds in the far-flung future, but they will always take a nineteenth century worldview with them.

And of course – of course – it *had* to be called *Voyage to Venus*. It had to be a title that you could imagine on a pulpy Edgar Rice Burroughs paperback, but also a title that you could imagine Henry Gordon Jago using to describe his adventure. So "Roll up, roll up, for the trip of lifetime! The magnificent, the marvellous... *Voyage to Venus!*" **VORTEX**

DOCTOR WHO - VOYAGE TO VENUS



Professor Litefoot and Henry Gordon Jago are accustomed to the murky fog of Victorian London and the palatable pints of half and half at the Red Tavern. They are not used to travelling through time and space with their old friend the Doctor.

And now they find themselves whisked off to the planet Venus in the distant future, at a time when warrior women rule from a floating city in the clouds. There's a mystery here, one that the Grand Empress Vulpina intends to keep secret. Even if it means destroying these visitors from the long-dead planet Earth... **MORE DETAILS**

WRITTEN BY: JONATHAN MORRIS

DIRECTED BY: KEN BENTLEY



Nerry Nahon's
BLAKE'S 7

A HEAVENLY JOB

NOVELIST SCOTT HARRISON TAKES US ALONG THE BUMPY ROAD TO THE FINAL VERSION OF NEW **BLAKE'S 7** BOOK **ARCHANGEL**

When I was commissioned to write one of the first novels in the new **Blake's 7** range back in the summer of 2011, it was a very different story that I pitched to editor Xanna Eve Chown and producer David Richardson.

The story was called *Wolf's Head* and concerned itself with a group of young copycat rebels who, styling themselves on the legends of Roj Blake and the Liberator crew, organise a violent and bloody insurrection on an ore-cracking station on the Outer Planets.

The only stipulation I was given when pitching for the range was that my book must be set during Series D – other than that I had a totally free hand. And so I went away and, after a few days of endlessly walking up and down sunny country lanes with iPod and notebook, I sat down at my laptop and wrote a two-page proposal for a story set between the TV episodes *Orbit* and *Warlord*, then I sent it off.

Two days later I got a lovely email back from Xanna asking that if it's not too much trouble, would I very much mind rewriting the proposal as a Series B story? Of course I didn't mind. I spent the next few days carefully redrafting and retweaking the proposal.

The trouble was that certain elements in the synopsis clashed with one of the *Liberator Chronicles*

they were developing, so I was asked to go away and write a brand new proposal. This time, I decided, I wanted to write a story that dealt with the flip side of the Liberator crew's heroic escapades, a story about death and how it touched and affected those left behind.

Obviously, with this taking place during Series B, it needed to be set in the direct aftermath of Olag Gan's death and while the crew were still way out of their comfort zone, but not so near that all Blake was thinking about was clearing off to an alien planet to be alone. The perfect place was between *Trial* and *Killer*, a time when Blake is trying to put Gan's death behind him and move on, but the rest of the crew are still resentful of their leader.

They say that a writer never writes a novel alone and this is doubly true for a tie-in novel. I owe a great deal of thanks to so many wonderful and talented people for making the writing of this book such enormous fun for me. I can't tell you how happy I am to have written a novel for one of the best television series of all time. All I can say is I can now die a happy man... hopefully not just yet, though! **VORTEX**

ARCHANGEL IS OUT THIS MONTH AND AVAILABLE FROM WWW.BIGFINISH.COM • VIEW DETAILS



Nerys Nahon's
BLAKE'S 7



ARCHANGEL BY SCOTT HARRISON

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THE THRILL OF THE CHASE



DAN TOSTEVIN CHATS TO NEW SPIN-OFF STAR CHASE MASTERSON ABOUT HER FIRST APPEARANCE AS GLAMOROUS BOUNTY HUNTER VIENNA SALVATORI IN THIS MONTH'S **THE SHADOW HEART**

Hello Chase. How did you come to be working with Big Finish? The casting announcement on the website said you got the job through Frazer Hines, which is kind of a weird connection.

► It is! I met Frazer – along with a very well-loved *Doctor Who* author, David Howe, and Sam Stone, author of *The Vampire Gene* – at a convention [GalaxyFest 2012] in Colorado. It was great. We became fast friends, and they all mentioned collectively, 'Gosh, you should do a Big Finish'. I was aware of it, but I hadn't heard any episodes.

Were you aware of *Doctor Who*?

► Oh, very much so. Oh yeah. Of course! I had seen quite a bit of it! I really loved the range of stories in *Doctor Who*. There's such a whimsicality, and a lot of richness in the stories. And fifty years of that... *everyone* in science fiction knows about it and respects it greatly!

I first became aware of *Doctor Who* a couple of years ago when I was doing a British convention – unfortunately, I did not grow up on the series like a

lot of Americans actually did. I grew up mostly in El Paso, and we didn't really have science fiction there. It's not a very culturally-orientated city. But I've had a wonderful introduction to science fiction, and *Doctor Who*, even *Star Trek*, through being around it.

So how did you go from friends saying 'You should do a Big Finish!' to actually doing it? Did you just knock on the studio door and say 'Hi, I act!'?

► [laughs] Yeah. 'I act!' No, Frazer called [line producer] David Richardson, and David emailed me and said, 'We'd love for you to do this, are you coming over any time soon?' and as it happened I was doing a convention in Peterborough, and so David picked out a role that was recording around that time. I did *Night of the Stormcrow* first, with Tom Baker and Louise Jameson, and they are just wonderful. The chemistry!

What did you make of Tom? I think he takes great joy in fulfilling people's expectations of him as this whimsical eccentric, blurring the line between him

and his characters, but presumably you came to him without those expectations...

► Right, I do come without those preconceptions.

I think he is definitely a national treasure! As is Sylvester McCoy. In such different ways, I think.

Tom is, from what I could see in one day of working with each of them, a little more difficult to pin down. He's definitely more mysterious. It would be very difficult for him to have a role for that long and to be expected to fill certain shoes and not show that

"I LOVE THAT THIS IS CATCHING ON TO THE EXTENT THAT IT IS, THAT AUDIO PLAYS ARE COMING BACK."



Jaimi Barbakoff, Sylvester McCoy and Kirsty Besterman

right off the bat. That is what I think a lot of **Star Trek** captains do, for instance; I mean, they are in that realm for a reason, and they fill those shoes beautifully.

What about Louise?

► She was so delightful. I had read quite a bit on her, actually – on both of them – but I had read about her work with different charities and her standing up for causes, and she carries that with her into a room. She has that wonderful warm, almost maternal, awareness about things. She wears that in who she is.

You don't have to work at a bond with her, do you – it's so easy and instant.

► No, no. Naturally warm and naturally open, which is actually, I think, fairly rare to find that in that level

on someone who started as a sex symbol. I mean, my God, she was, and still is, absolutely stunning!

I like that you did so much research!

► Oh yeah. No, no, I didn't have to, I know of these things!

The research that I *did* do before Big Finish is that I downloaded every single **Doctor Who** Big Finish that Tom Baker and Louise did. Every single one of them. And I was really enthused to hear the production value. They really make a rich, full world with these audios. The sound effects and the pace and the music, it all really adds up to create a very attention-grabbing, compelling piece of work.

How much experience did you have of audio drama, either as an actor performing in one or as a listener? My understanding is that the medium's died out a bit more in the US than it has here...

► I hadn't had a lot of experience of it before, I'll be honest. I'd done some voiceover – I did **Robotech: The Shadow Chronicles**, playing the role of Janice, which was another really wonderful foray into a well-loved property – but in terms of audio plays, I really hadn't.

I love that this is catching on to the extent that it is, that audio plays are coming back. We all spend so much time commuting that I can see why people would want to download this and take it with them, and escape into the wonderful worlds of **Doctor Who** while they spend an hour on the train.

What was the experience of recording them like, just from a practical perspective? If you're doing a voiceover for a game it's usually just you on your own, whereas at Big Finish you had a whole cast of other actors to bounce off.

► Honestly, it was so easy. It was wonderful chemistry. It was like falling off a log. We finished early. We sometimes didn't even have to do a second take, because these are fine actors. I can see how Nick [Briggs, director and executive producer] is a perfectionist – we always did it until we got it right – but sometimes it was just pure chemistry, really easy. That comes with David and Nick casting a bunch of talented actors – it was a great cast.

“OH JEEZ! THERE WERE FUN THINGS [SYLVESTER] WAS SHARING ABOUT THE HOBBIT – CONFIDENTIALLY, MIND YOU.”

Nick has got a really sharp ear too, because there are some things that I wouldn't have caught and he said, 'Nope, we need to do that again'. I really respected that. A lot of directors I find have an eye and an ear for technicality – how to line up the shot, or how to make the explosions happen, or what angle to take on the camera – but they're not necessarily able to hit the emotional highs and lows, and walk with an actor through those things to get the inner light as rich as it can be. And I found that Big Finish actors are certainly really strong, and Nick – and Ken Bentley, who directed *The Shadow Heart* – were really able to refine our performances whenever necessary. I really appreciated that as an actor.

Let's talk about Sylvester. Did he share any of his showbiz stories?

► Oh jeez! There were fun things he was sharing about **The Hobbit** – confidentially, mind you. He is so fun. He's really an actor that doesn't bring any ego to the table. He's truly humble. He's truly a human being first.

He's very sweet. The first time I met him at Big Finish I accidentally kicked him quite hard in the leg and he didn't mind at all.

► He's just lovely. You don't always find that, quite frankly. Some of the actors I've been around...

...Protest when you kick them in the leg?

► Protest when I kick them in the leg, yes. How dare they! I think that's the litmus test. I should bring you with me so that you can kick each of them in the leg and see. Can I use you in that way?

Sure.

► Thank you. I will ask for that to be in my contract next time. You can be the guinea pig. Anyway, I find too often that actors who have played certain roles

of status cannot really remember that humility is one of the most important parts of life, and Sylvester has that in the most beautiful way. I just adored that man. Also, I was watching some Patrick Troughton episodes this weekend...

Wow, you weren't lying about the research thing.

► Oh yeah. The research is fun! He's got such a wonderful face anyway, and sensibility. And the acting was so natural for way back then, and the camera is also really good, and the direction. The show doesn't comment on itself, it really has a lot of respect for its audience. I really enjoyed watching those older episodes – I hope they find more of them. **VORTEX**

DOCTOR WHO - THE SHADOW HEART



One empire has fallen and another has taken its place. The race known as The Wrath are expanding into new territory. Only the Earth Empire stands in their way.

It's been fifty years since the Doctor last visited this sector of space. And one man in particular has been awaiting his return. As the mistakes of his past come back to haunt him, and with a price on his head and bounty hunters on his tail, the Doctor is heading for a last reckoning.

The pieces are finally coming together. Somewhere deep within *The Shadow Heart*. **VIEW DETAILS**

WRITTEN BY: JONATHAN MORRIS | DIRECTED BY: KEN BENTLEY

VIENNA: THE MEMORY BOX, the first in a new audio series starring Chase Masterson, is out in February! **VIEW DETAILS**

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LOVING THE ALIEN

DRAMA SHOWCASE IS BACK! STAR LOUISE JAMESON TELLS US ABOUT THE INTRIGUINGLY TITLED **MY MOTHER WAS AN ALIEN... IS THAT WHY I'M GAY?**

Hi Louise. You've worked with writer/star Nigel Fairs many times before, but how did this play first come to your attention?

▶ I saw a performance of *MMWAAITWIG* at the Arundel Jail House fringe venue. I've seen masses of Nigel's brilliant work, but I think this is one of his best performances. So vulnerable, funny, interesting, complicated, accessible. Like the play itself.

What makes this play particularly interesting is that it isn't issue driven. I think Nigel's forte as a so-called 'gay playwright' is that the sexuality of his characters is not always of primary importance – despite the title, which is entirely ironic. This story grabs its audience, because the extraordinarily well-drawn characters give everyone something to identify with. They all behave quite badly, there is no victim culture, they deceive and bully and use, but all with wit and reason and intelligence. The rhythms are specific,

and therefore trip off the tongue and are kind on the ear. The ending is a happy one but, like real life, not utterly resolved, but you have the sense that these people are developing, caring, wanting to improve.

What aspects most appealed to you about this project? The story? The role you play? Working with Nigel again?

▶ Yes, to all of the above, but I would be lying if I didn't say to you that the role is heaven-sent for me. Someone now past their prime, a bit of a diva, and who used to star in a sci-fi series!!! I rest my case.

You've been working with Nigel on and off for quite a while now; why do you think the two of you have such a special chemistry?

▶ He makes me laugh, I feel very safe with him, he brings out the best and the worst in me. There's no

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pressure to look or feel good. As I’m writing this he’s on his way over to watch *The X Factor* – yes, our guilty secret – while I nurse a mammoth hangover... and that’s fine! He also challenges me and has given me belief in my own abilities... and I think I do similar for him, but you’d have to send this question his way to find out.

This is Big Finish’s first co-production with your company TLC; what plans do you have for future projects?

▶ OMG – so, so many. One brilliant one I am simply not allowed to talk about yet. Dammit. But... this week I directed Katy Manning [Jo Grant] in a *Companion Chronicle*. I have another educational drama that I want to record; that sounds dry, but it is beautifully written by Adam Rood, so that’s in the pipeline, and there’s a musical that I have been brewing in my imagination, nearly ready to flourish... Oh yes, and a children’s book. So watch this space!!!!

You’re also back in the first part of Nigel’s new Leela trilogy, *The Child*, next month. What can you tell us about it? Doesn’t dying in the last one make it tricky to come back?

▶ Nigel always finds a way out of those things... and anyway, we time travel, so anything is possible! In *The Child* we cast the lovely Anna Hawkes, doing her first professional gig!

You’ve also been recording more *Gallifrey* as it heads towards its conclusion. How’s it been going?

▶ Bit sad to be concluding *Gallifrey* – it’s been a decade(ish) – but always glorious to work with [director] Gary Russell. My first ever autograph as

Leela was given to Gary Russell. He knocked on my dressing room door (he had been with his dad in the adjoining studio) so I hadn’t even been on screen – I think it may well have been my first day’s filming!

I love working with Lalla [Ward, Romana] – her parting words to me on the last recording day were ‘Write another script for you and me... let me rescue you from something’ – so I pitched an idea to [producer] David Richardson as a *Companion Chronicle* and I *think* he may run with it... but he did point out, ‘Aren’t you just a little bit busy at the moment?’ **VORTEX**

MY MOTHER WAS AN ALIEN... IS THAT WHY I’M GAY?



My Mother Was an Alien... is the tale of Danny (Nigel Fairs), a fan of cult show *Space Station 17*. His life changes when he learns firstly that his boyfriend Paul (Max Day) isn’t really called Paul, but also that ‘Paul’s mother is Yvette Dupont (Louise Jameson), former star of *Space Station 17* – and she’s about to move in.

RELEASED 30 NOVEMBER 2012

Note: contains adult material and is not suitable for younger listeners.

PRICING ?

I have been a subscriber and purchaser of your audio works for over ten years and I reckon that I can describe myself as a bit of a fan. To replace my audio collection would cost over £4,000. So to complain over £74.99 is not something I do lightly.

Yesterday, I made two orders. The first, for £53, is fine because they are items that have already been released.

But I have a major issue with the one for £74.99. **UNIT:** *Dominion, Love and War, Dark Eyes, Voyage to Venus and Voyage to the New World*, none of which are available before 31st October and yet you took the money immediately. It's sharp practice which I do not care for.

I may have got the benefit of ordering early, but I have also eased your cashflow, without any consideration on your part to mine.

You're a great company, I love what you do, but please don't take advantage.

I am planning to spend a minimum of £375 in just catching up on purchases outside normal subscriptions. Yes, I can afford it, but please don't take the mick!

Keith Andrews

Nick: I'm sorry you feel this is sharp practice, Keith. This is something we have always done. It's the basis of how the company can fund the budgets for production. That's why we ask for people to pay for subscriptions in advance. That money pays for the productions to be made. We have no other income stream than the money paid to us by loyal customers such as yourself. As I say, it's what we've been doing for years, and I personally am not aware of anyone ever unfavourably drawing attention to this before. The money you paid for the Special Releases package is a direct contribution to the budgets we needed to raise to pay for these productions to be made. In many ways, that fact is even more crucial to us in this case, because the prices are so massively

discounted. Thanks so much for your loyalty and dedication to Big Finish and sincere apologies that this offended you. But I can't honestly see any other way of funding our productions except by selling them.

EASY ORDERING

Just thought I'd write and let you know how good your latest releases are and how easy your new website is to use – so easy in fact that I've just finally subscribed to the **Companion Chronicles** (which now work out cheaper from you directly than from Amazon or Play – and I like to support you by pre-ordering as well) and, while I was there, I put in a pre-order for next year's **Lost Stories** season, starting with the interestingly titled *The Dark Planet*. Basically, with a little cost outlay, those CDs are now paid for and out the way and I can look forward to them arriving next year – always on time of course!

Well done for having such an easy-to-use ordering system – it's good to have forthcoming releases to look forward to, knowing they are already ordered!

Si Hunt

PS Any chance of getting Nabil Shaban back as Sil sometime soon, and doing another story with Michael Jayston as the Valeyard?

Nick: Thanks, Si. As I said in my answer to Keith (above), this system of pre-ordering is how we pay for the productions that our loyal listeners love to listen to. Really glad that you embrace it and found the process easy. As for Nabil and Michael, no firm plans at the moment, but I would never say never to bringing back two great characters like these!

RUNNING TIME

I have purchased *Pier Pressure* and *Loups-Garoux* through third parties and the first seasons of **Jago and Litefoot** and **Sapphire and Steel** through your website.

I'm fairly happy with the **Jago** and **Sapphire** purchases, because for the money I get lots of entertainment (meaning running time-wise). I liked the **Doctor Who** stories a lot, but I felt that I had been overcharged for what I got. I did look on your website for something like a bundle of **Doctor Who** stories, but found nothing.

I'm sure your attitude at this point is one of 'It costs what it costs' and that is fine, but mine is one of 'No sale. Ever.' **Ron Storozyszyn**

Nick: Ron, I'm really sorry you feel like this. You may not want to hear this, but audio drama is extremely expensive to make. The cost of the studio, the casts, the sound design, the music, the CD booklets and the CD production... it all adds up to quite a startlingly large figure. So we price our productions accordingly, to cover costs and invest in future production. Nobody at Big Finish is walking away from this with bundles of money stuffed in their pockets.

Our rates of pay are very modest. If we were to charge less, it would not be feasible to make the productions. We do, however, offer special bundles now and then; we have special offers for limited periods and, of course, it works out much cheaper to buy a subscription. We would dearly love to offer our products at a lower price, but that would require substantially more people to buy them, and to be blunt, we've really been harmed by piracy. We survive because of the loyal support of our listeners. With those specific **Doctor Who** releases you mention, there is a total running time difference, because, unlike our more recent releases, they don't offer the CD Extras or the music tracks, so I can appreciate that you found the total running time a little shorter than perhaps you'd expected. I hope you will understand that there is no profiteering here.

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LISTEN AGAIN: ...ISH

KENNY SMITH UNRAVELS THE MYSTERIES OF ONE OF BIG FINISH'S WEIRDER STORIES: ...ISH

It's the release that puts the 'ish' in Big Fin. When the Doctor takes Peri to witness the launch of the Lexicon, the most exhaustive dictionary of the English language ever seen, little does he realise he's literally about to engage in a real war of words in ...ish.

Writer Phil Pascoe was inspired to send in his submission to Big Finish during one of their open door windows in the early days, allowing writers to send in their unsolicited story ideas. He had heard Big Finish executive producer Jason Haigh-Ellery talking at a **Doctor Who** convention in Sydney in February 2000, and decided to try his luck.

He says, "After Jason Haigh-Ellery's talk at Whovention, I wandered into the video room where they happened to be showing *The Trial of a Time Lord* part five, the scene where the guard asks, 'Is he a young man, this Crozier?' and the Doctor replies, 'Well, young... ish.' He then suggests he and Peri try the 'skedaddle technique'.

"Now, I found this interesting. The Doctor spends much of season 22 telling Peri off for her Americanisms, but here he's using verbal shorthand as a kind of code that only they share. The way they communicate has changed, so exploring why that might be became the story."

His submission was read by producer Gary Russell, who was impressed with the notion and commissioned Phil to write the full play. But, Phil says, "I worried at times about how well an Australian could play up the differences in the Doctor and Peri's ways of speaking. But I think that an outsider's perspective gave me an advantage that a North American or British author tackling the same idea wouldn't have.

"The Sixth Doctor was fun to write for, especially writing him as the Sixth Doctor, bombast and pedantry and all. I always had a feeling the audios would give Colin Baker's interpretation of the character a renaissance."

Colin Baker himself admits, "I relished it because I have an abiding love of language and the subject matter appealed to me enormously."

Directing the story was Nick Briggs. He says: "...ish was an interesting challenge. We had a lot of fun in the studio, because Colin Baker, noting the linguistic nature of the script, brought in his volumes of the concise **Oxford English Dictionary**. The print was so small, each volume came with its own individual magnifying glass to read it. We made use of those magnifying glasses. So Colin and I spent a lot of time in the control room looking up words. We found a few better replacements, but also reaffirmed some of Phil's excellent use of language.

"It is true that I felt it my duty to bolster up the drama a bit with some last-minute rewrites. I felt that the very clever, engaging concept behind the story also needed some dramatic build-up, especially around the episode climaxes. But it all came together rather well. There were some problems in post-production, with a new sound designer who was extremely talented but not quite prepared for the huge weight of the actual workload. It taught me a lesson about auditioning and preparing new sound designers properly! Life is one big learning curve, that's for sure..." **VORTEX**

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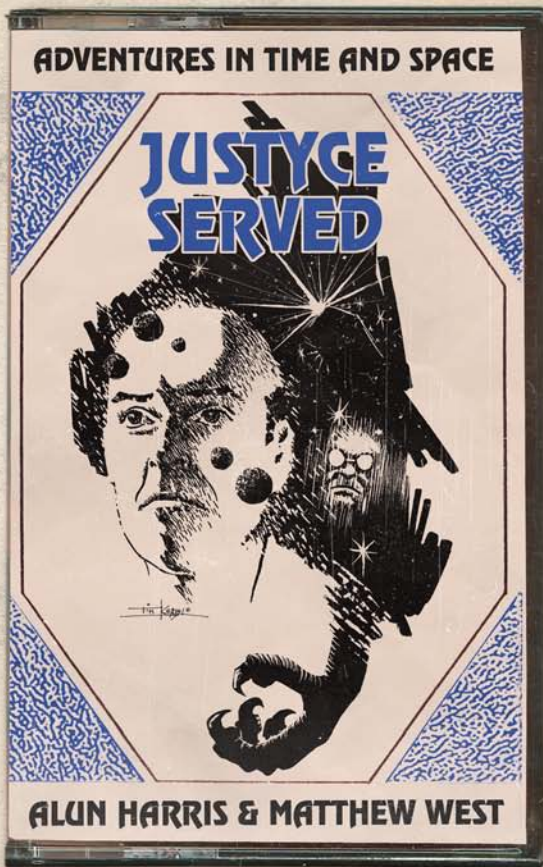
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(7.05, First Doctor)

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

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Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: **The Child** (7.06, Fourth Doctor)

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- **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: **The House of Cards**

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

(2.3, Fourth Doctor and Romana)

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

(7.10, First Doctor)

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

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Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: **TBA** (7.11, Doctor TBA)

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

JUNE 2013

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

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

(2.6, Fourth Doctor and Romana)

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

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Doctor Who: **TBA** (175, Seventh Doctor)

Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures: **The Final Phase**

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