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**DOCTOR WHO** SWINGS INTO THE SIXTIES!

# FANFARE FOR THE COMMON MEN

**MITCH BENN • TRACEY CHILDS**  
**JAGO & LITEFOOT • DARK SHADOWS**

ISSUE 55 • SEPTEMBER 2013

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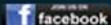
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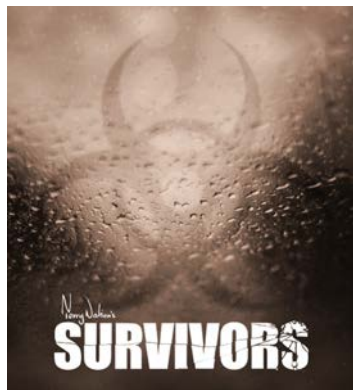
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**OUT JUNE 2014**

# EDITORIAL

It's been quite a month, has August. Embracing the time of year when people traditionally go on holiday, myself, Nick Briggs and David Richardson have all been having a spot of time off. Indeed, there was one day when all three of us were away at once and Big Finish was terrifyingly rudderless! Of course, that's not technically what happened as, thanks to the advancement of technology to the point where you can be contacted pretty much anywhere at any time, none of us are ever fully 'off the clock' if something urgent is required.

Even if you're still checking e-mails once a day, though, it's nice to have some time off. I made my yearly pilgrimage with my girlfriend Nat to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival – and this year it was lovely to have my brother Nick and his girlfriend Georgie along for the ride. Nat's been going far longer than I, but both of us are big fans of comedy and there's certainly no shortage of that during the Fringe. It's not an event for the faint of heart, requiring quite a bit of forward planning to organise travel and a place to stay, coupled with a sturdy pair of shoes and a substantial list of potential shows to watch, fully aware that you'll only manage to see a percentage of them. (Luckily, living in London, many of the shows ultimately make it down here later so we can catch most that we miss.)

It's a little off-topic for this magazine, but if you get the chance, it's well worth seeking out Max & Ivan, Colin Hout, John-Luke Roberts, Tim Key, Josh Widdicombe, Tim Fitzthigham, Pete Firman, Tom Binns, The Horne Section, Richard Herring, Joe Lycett, Daniel Rigby, Tony Law and Michael Legge – all absolutely superb, and hi, Michael, if you're reading this. I know you're a huge *Who* and Big Finish fan.

It also gave me the perfect opportunity to catch up with Mitch Benn, guest star of this month's *Fanfare for the Common Men*, and chat to him about that, his new book and his superb Beatles-centric Fringe hour. Considering the subject matter of *Fanfare* neatly matches his show, he was clearly the perfect casting. Of course, *Fanfare* (quite rightly, given that name) begins our *Doctor Who* fiftieth anniversary releases. It's a corking (or should that be Korky-ing?) start to what we believe are stories which embrace all the eras of our favourite show, provide some new perspectives and, above all, are a joy to listen to. Nick, David, Alan Barnes and everyone else on the team has put a lot of work into what's coming and we hope you'll enjoy hearing these stories at least as much as we've enjoyed creating them. And perhaps even more!

## PAUL SPRAGG

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## TRACEY CHILDS, THE WOMAN WHO BRINGS ELIZABETH KLEIN TO MALEVOLENT LIFE, CHATS TO PAUL SPRAGG ABOUT THE PAST, THE FUTURE AND HER UNENDING QUEST TO APPEAR IN MORE BOX SETS

**Hello Tracey. Where do we find Klein as we enter the conclusion of this trilogy of tales, *Daleks Among Us*?**

■ Now there's a story with a slightly complicated answer! We find Klein having to confront her Nazi past and where she came from, and who she is and it's rather a dramatic story for Klein, so yeah, I'm having a lovely time with it!

**Is it good to be back in studio with Sylvester McCoy's *Seventh Doctor*?**

■ Always. Always, always, always. I love working with Sylvester. I'll happily work with him forever; I think he's just a joy and we have a huge amount of fun and, I hope, create some magic together! There is a wonderful moment in this when they talk about Doctors Smith and Klein and I said, 'Right, there you go. That's a new spin-off series.' I'll do anything! As long as Big Finish keeps employing me, I'll keep turning up quite happily! I've been playing Klein on and off for ten years now.

**The scriptwriters have always had quite a fascination with her.**

■ They've been really, really clever with it because she keeps going in completely different directions but somehow retains a bit of her. I think what becomes very apparent in this one is she's doing her best not to live up to that past and to prove it wrong. She's still clipped and does not suffer fools gladly and all of those things, but she is trying to be something other than that two-dimensional Nazi. What is frustrating her is that the Umbrella Man [the Doctor] does not see her as she truly is and he keeps seeing her past, as do others.

**You've also got an assistant of your own this time.**

■ A fairly useless one! The gorgeous Christian [Edwards, Will], who is very good and very funny and whimpers a great deal around Klein. Which is great, it adds a whole new dimension to it. So we're having a really good time, the three of us. Obviously he is never going to come up to her idea of what an assistant should

be. He's going to fail miserably on every count at every possible opportunity. So there's a lot of disappointment from Klein, vocalised all the time, and Christian whimpers beautifully.

**"THERE IS A WONDERFUL MOMENT IN [DALEKS AMONG US] WHEN THEY TALK ABOUT DOCTORS SMITH AND KLEIN AND I SAID, 'RIGHT, THERE YOU GO. THAT'S A NEW SPIN-OFF SERIES.'"**



**How much do you remember about the opening two stories in this trilogy, *Persuasion* and *Starlight Robbery*, which were recorded a fair bit earlier than *Daleks Among Us*.**

■ I'm trying to open a play at the same time; I've got a lot of scripts in my head!

**Are you always this busy?**

■ Yes. I'm also producing two shows. We've just finished the *Haunting Julia* tour, of Alan Ayckbourn's ghost story, that we had out last year – which was a success, which in this economic climate is extraordinary. So we've just paid all the money back to the investors with their profit on it. I'm working as an actress playing Matthew Kelly's wife in *God of Carnage* which we're doing down at the Nuffield in Southampton, and then of course doing this with Big Finish. So it's a nice busy time. And setting up the new producing projects.

**You've had some fun guest actors for these stories; Miranda Raison, David Sibley, Dan Starkey, Stuart Milligan...**

■ I had no idea what Garundel was going to sound like, but I didn't expect him to sound like that. It's just sensational! Love it. We've had some superb guests in, as always. It's one of the lovely things about coming and doing these jobs. Just for a day or two days, you get to work with some really superb people. And everyone who signed up for this is really up for it, so they're good fun, they're extremely professional, and I think they're all absolutely wonderful. It constantly takes me by surprise, you kind of go into the booth and go, 'Ah! I didn't know it was going to sound like that!' And of course now, on the last one, I've got Daleks, actually saying 'Exterminate!' What an honour is that!

**And let's not forget Davros (Terry Molloy).**

■ Absolutely. I've got everyone in this one. It's like we got to the last episode and went, 'Okay, how much more can we cram in here?' So I am slightly worried that they're thinking this is the last one, whereas I'm thinking this series should run and run forever. But I got a bit worried when I saw they'd got Davros and the Daleks in, I thought, 'Oooh, this might be the end of Klein.' Hopefully not.

**While we love having you (and Klein) about, the Seventh Doctor does have other companions, sadly...**

■ I'm sorry, what do you mean? Brain does not compute. There are stories that are not all about me? Is that true?

**Afraid so. What do you think is the future for Klein?**

■ Now she's found out her origins, she could really become a force for good. So that's definitely at least three more box sets, I think!

**DOCTOR WHO: DALEKS AMONG US IS AVAILABLE THIS MONTH ON CD AND DOWNLOAD FROM BIGFINISH.COM**



# UNCOMMON BENN

**YOU MAY KNOW HIM FROM RADIO 4'S *THE NOW SHOW*, YOU MAY HAVE SEEN HIM ON TOUR. BUT THIS MONTH MUSICIAN, COMEDIAN, WRITER AND ACTOR MITCH BENN IS IN *1963: FANFARE FOR THE COMMON MEN*. PAUL SPRAGG MET UP WITH HIM ON EDINBURGH'S FRINGE...**

**Hello Mitch! What's the Big Finish experience like for a guest star?**

It's great fun. The thing about audio is you want to be able to act with each other but if you're all standing round the one mic, it makes it impossible to edit because you end up with a jumble of sound of everyone talking over each other. What they've very cleverly done at Big Finish is they have a ring of vocal booths, basically a bunch of little phone boxes, and all the actors go into one. What it means is, you actually get to play off each other like you're on stage with somebody but all the individual parts end up on a different vocal track, like you were recording vocals on a record. I'm sure it makes the editing a lot easier. But it's a completely unique set-up; I've never encountered that before.

This is the second one I've done; the first one I did [*Army of Death*] was with Paul [McGann] and Julie Cox [Mary Shelley] and this was with Peter [Davison] and Sarah Sutton [Nyssa], who are absolutely my era, incidentally. Peter and Sarah [appeared] when I was twelve, thirteen, which if you're ever gonna be a **Doctor Who** fan, that's probably the age at which it's most intense. And of course they both sound exactly like they did in the Eighties; when you're in the booth, it's not just Peter and Sarah, it's *that* Peter and Sarah that you see in your head. It's great fun and the atmosphere is great; [director] Barnaby [Edwards] is a great guy and they lay on this buffet for lunch, which is brilliant. It's quite epic, lunch at Big Finish.





## DOCTOR WHO: 1963: FANFARE FOR THE COMMON MEN

If you remember the Sixties, they say, then you can't have been there.

The Doctor remembers the Sixties. That's why he's taking Nyssa on a trip back to November 1963. Back to where it all began. Back to the birth of the biggest band in the history of British music. Back to see those cheeky lads from Liverpool...

Mark, James and Korky. The Common Men. The boys who made the Sixties swing with songs like *Oh, Won't You Please Love Me?*, *Just Count To Three* and *Who Is That Man*.

The Doctor remembers the Sixties. And there's something very wrong with the Sixties, if the Beatles no longer exist...

**DOCTOR WHO: 1963: FANFARE FOR THE COMMON MEN**  
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### How do your Doctors compare?

Paul is the most laidback person I've ever worked with. He sits around in the green room talking about things in that McCartney-esque voice of his, [then] in he goes and does everything in his *Doctor Who* voice and then sits down again. Insanely relaxed, Paul McGann. Peter's very, very affable. Peter was one of the first Doctors to be a proper established TV star before he got the job and he just seemed to slot straight back into that when he left. That's the thing about Peter; he's always been busy. But he was dead easy to work with.

I think *Fanfare* had a slightly idiosyncratic atmos because it was a Beatles thing as well as a *Doctor Who* thing. The plot is the Doctor goes to see The Beatles, The Beatles have

**“I'M PLAYING A CHARACTER CALLED MARK, WHO IS JOHN LENNON EXCEPT HE ISN'T. IT'S QUITE INTERESTING ACTUALLY, BECAUSE THE JOHN CHARACTER IN PARTICULAR DEVELOPS IN A PROPER SCI-FI WAY.”**



been removed from history and replaced by a band who are The Beatles in everything but name. And one of the things that myself and the two other guys who are playing 'not The Beatles' tried to do is, there was a certain Beatles vibe – certainly to the Beatles' conversations – and we were trying to get that Beatle-y rhythm into the conversations. That's also something

I'm trying to do in this Fringe show [*the splendid Mitch Benn is the 37th Beatle – Ed*], is get that weird sort of Beatle-y vibe.

[In *Fanfare*] I'm playing a character called Mark, who is John Lennon except he isn't. It's quite interesting actually, because the John character in particular develops in a proper sci-fi way; without giving anything away, proper sci-fi things happen to the Lennon character...

**So your Fringe show was about The Beatles, *Fanfare* is about The Beatles – have you had enough Beatles yet?**

At the age of 43, if I've not had enough Beatles yet, I don't think it's coming, you know what I mean? I grew up drenched in Beatledom; I was born in Liverpool about a week before The Beatles split up, I think. My parents did know them in the Fifties. My mum in particular grew up with them and did kind of know them in the Fifties. Saw them a bunch of times when they were The Quarrymen. But my Mum never went to see them at The Cavern because she was the same age as them, and you know what it's like when you're twenty-two; whatever the sixteen-year-olds are into is unspeakably infantile. But she did see them when they came back to play the Empire



The Common Men:  
David Dobson, Mitch Benn and Andrew Knott



**“I WAS BASICALLY HOLDING OUT FOR ‘CREDITABLE FIRST ATTEMPT’ KIND OF REVIEWS BUT I’VE BEEN GETTING ‘FEELGOOD HIT OF THE SUMMER’ REVIEWS, WHICH IS ASTONISHING.”** ON DEBUT NOVEL TERRA

in ‘64, the last time they ever played Liverpool. So I’ve been immersed in Beatle culture my entire life and in that respect it was a fairly obvious thing to do for a Fringe show. Funnily enough, the *Three Weeks* review described it as ‘incredibly well researched’; the sad truth is, I knew all that already. I didn’t research anything! A couple of things I checked to make sure I was right, but that’s it. That torrent of Beatles minutiae was in there already!

**You’ve appeared on audio with two Doctors; who would you like to appear alongside next?**

I’m on with Colin [Baker] – I forget where we’re doing it, but he’s a guest Book in *Hitch-Hiker’s* [Guide to the Galaxy]; my

next job after this is I’m taking over as Zaphod in the *Hitch-Hiker’s* tour. I’m so looking forward to it. I was doing a thing for Comic Relief with Dirk Maggs, who produces it, and I was saying to Dirk, ‘What’s next?’ and he said, ‘We’re taking *Hitch-Hiker’s* back on the road in the autumn.’ I said, ‘Ooh, can I come and be a guest Book?’ because they have rotating guest narrators, and he said, ‘Yeah, we can probably do that,’ and I said, ‘Hey, unless Mark [Wing-Davey] ever drops out – I’ve pretty much based my personality on Zaphod Beeblebrox.’ And there’s this weird moment and he said, ‘Are you being cute, or is that a suggestion?’ I thought I was being cute; Mark’s Professor of Drama at New York University, so he could do the last run because it was across the summer but he can’t do the autumn run. And Dirk had literally found this out about two days previously, so he was just wrestling with the replacement Zaphod dilemma when I turned up.

**It’s a busy time for you, with your first book, Terra, out now too...**

The reviews for the book have been beyond my wildest expectations. I was basically holding out for ‘credible first attempt’ kind of reviews

but I’ve been getting ‘feelgood hit of the summer’ reviews, which is astonishing. The reviews are all picking up on different aspects of it; some of them are reviewing it as a flat-out comedy; I didn’t really write it as a comedy. There’s a lot of jokes in it, as I imagine there probably will be in anything I ever do, but I didn’t necessarily write it as a comedy with a capital C. It gets pretty grim towards the end; things actually get pretty bleak in the last third. Some people have reviewed it as a kids’ book. I didn’t specifically write it as a kids’ book. It’s a kid-friendly book, is how I would describe it. It’s okay for anyone over the age of twelve to read, but that doesn’t necessarily mean that it’s only for twelve-year-olds. There’s nothing in there that your average bright eleven- or twelve-year-old wouldn’t get or would find particularly traumatic. There’s gags in there that literally me and three other guys are gonna get. But there’s gags in there that only the grown-ups will get. In particular the central relationship, which is between this little human baby and an adopted alien father, kids and adults will read that very differently. I think I’ve touched on something fairly universal as regards parenthood in the way I’ve written it and I think kids will definitely respond to seeing it from the kid’s point of view. **VORTEX**



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A black silhouette of a man wearing a bowler hat, a white shirt, a red tie, and a dark suit jacket with a red pocket square. The background is a light, textured grey.

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JANUARY 2014



THE

# WHOLE SLEUTH

RETURNING ONCE MORE, THIS TIME BY ROYAL APPOINTMENT, CHRISTOPHER BENJAMIN AND TREVOR BAXTER SPOKE TO PAUL SPRAGG ABOUT THEIR SIXTH OUTING AS **JAGO & LITEFOOT**

**Hello Christopher and Trevor. Last time we encountered Jago & Litefoot, they were trapped in the Sixties. When are you this time?**

**TREVOR BAXTER:** We're back in our own time and in tight situations.

**CHRISTOPHER BENJAMIN:** In tights?

**TB:** No, no. In tight situations.

**CB:** That's going to come later when we go into our drag.

**This box set marks your sixth series. Did you foresee this day?**

**CB:** Not at all.

**TB:** I remember us joking when we finished the first day of [Companion Chronicle] *Mahogany Murderers*, 'Well, the ending suggests there might be another', and I remember saying, 'If we can agree terms!' and laughing about it, never thinking it would happen.

**CB:** But apparently they decided halfway through! That's what I heard.

**TB:** Did they really?

**CB:** They were sitting in the box and we were working our socks off, full of doubt and uncertainty, and they'd already decided to go ahead with the series!

**TB:** Oh, good God!

**CB:** And then, later on, they decided to have you in it.

**Is it nice to be back 'home' in Victorian London?**

**TB:** Yes, but it was lovely doing it in the Sixties.

**TB:** Because we stayed the same. I loved the Sixties, by the way, I loved talking about the National Health Service, all the puzzlement of it.

**Between series, you got the chance to reunite with the Fourth Doctor in *The Justice of Jalzar*. How was Tom Baker?**

**TB:** Oh yes, that was a very happy reunion. Not seen him since we did the original *Talons*, and he was lovely, great, terrific to be with again.

**Did he remember you?**

**TB:** He did, he did. Apparently he looked forward to it very much.

**CB:** We had fun together on the first one, didn't we?

**TB:** He's a terrific character and I'm full of admiration. He's so good, so committed to it. He's wonderful.





## JAGO & LITEFOOT: SERIES SIX

After returning to Victorian London, Jago and Litefoot are approached by the enigmatic Colonel and offered a role they cannot refuse – investigators by Royal Appointment to Queen Victoria!

Their missions include a mystery on the Suffolk coast where strange things lurk in the sea mist, an encounter with Freud and a threat to the realm itself... But who can save Professor Litefoot when he is accused of murder, and no one can be convinced of his innocence?

### 6.1 THE SKELETON QUAY

by Jonathan Morris

### 6.2 RETURN OF THE REPRESSED

by Matthew Sweet

### 6.3 MILITARY INTELLIGENCE

by George Mann

### 6.4 THE TRIAL OF GEORGE LITEFOOT

by Justin Richards

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**Did you enjoy being supporting characters or do you like to be leading the story?**

**TB:** I like having other people involved, don't you?

**CB:** Oh, very much so.

**TB:** It's nice to meet them, and also it makes it more varied.

**CB:** It means that sometimes we just sit in...

**TB:** ...the Green Room, which is what we really like doing!

**CB:** Having a coffee and a chat while they're doing the work!

**“IT’S WONDERFUL MEETING PEOPLE... IN AMERICA  
A CHAP CAME UP AND SAID, ‘I DO LONG CAR  
JOURNEYS AND I CAN’T DO IT WITHOUT YOU GUYS!’”**



Nancy Carroll, Trevor Baxter, Christopher Benjamin  
and Geoffrey Whitehead

**Six series in, Jago & Litefoot still gets a lot of love from the audience.**

**CB:** It's wonderful meeting people, isn't it? In America a chap came up and said, 'I do long car journeys and I can't do it without you guys!'

**TB:** Oh, that's wonderful. I had a fan letter from Germany the other day saying how much he enjoyed it, which is good to know.

**CB:** Beautifully produced, aren't they?

**TB:** Oh, exemplary. And all the post-production is just excellent.

**CB:** Really well done.

**You've visited the Sixties; is there another time period you'd like to drop in on?**

**CB:** Well, we're actors and we always want to go back to Shakespeare's time.

**TB:** That would be amazing. They so have their own integrity as characters, it doesn't matter where you put them; they're going to be Jago & Litefoot whatever circumstance they find



## “WE DID TALONS AND DIDN'T MEET AGAIN UNTIL WE CAME TO DO THE MAHOGANY MURDERERS!”

themselves in. We're not changed by circumstances are we, really? We respond to them differently but we're still Jago & Litefoot. And we are inseparable. One without the other is unthinkable.

**CB:** I'm just surprised that you spend so much time in a pub!

**TB:** That's your influence! I don't think he'd been in a pub until he met you! Oh, no, no, no, no, no. Pubs aren't really his scene at all. He's a club man.

**I'm now imagining Litefoot in a spangly outfit going clubbing.**

**TB:** Oh, no, no, no! I'm thinking Whites, or The Athenaeum, the Reform.

**CB:** Would you ever take Henry there?

**TB:** No, no! You'd be too common! They always said about the Garrick club that it was where gentlemen could meet actors.

**Which of you is which?**

**TB:** Oh, well, I'm the gentleman and he's common as muck! But I'd be a member, possibly of the Reform club, and possibly the Athenaeum. The Athenaeum might be just a little bit grand. The Athenaeum was very much bishops and archbishops and leading surgeons and classicists, great classical scholars. And the Reform was people... well, what the name suggests.

**CB:** What, prisoners?

**TB:** No, no, no! I think it was founded at the time of the Reform Acts in 1832, when they extended the Suffrage. It's a magnificent building. I've had lunch there. Absolutely superb architecture. Charles Barry was the architect.

**CB:** Did he do the House of Commons?

**TB:** Yes, he did. Well done, Christopher.

**CB:** Just demonstrating my knowledge.

**What has doing these done to your personal relationship?**

**CB:** We spend a lot of time avoiding each other now...

**TB:** We didn't have a personal relationship! We did *Talons* and didn't meet again until we came to do *The Mahogany Murderers!* And then we were just back where we were. We got on very well. That's actors for you.

**CB:** We always say we're going to go to an art gallery together, but we never have.

**TB:** We did do one, the Tate.

**CB:** Oh yes.

**TB:** And you didn't enjoy it very much. I enjoyed it more than you did.

**CB:** I quite enjoyed it...

**TB:** But that's actors for you; you go on and do different jobs, you work with other people, but then when you meet up you're just back where you were.

**CB:** We had a wonderful tea.

**TB:** We did. There was a very good restaurant. Very good.

**Are you becoming more like Jago & Litefoot or are Jago & Litefoot becoming more like you?**

**CB:** I think they might be becoming a bit more like us.

**TB:** Yes, I do. Good acting means getting as close to yourself as you can possibly be. And the more we do with them, the closer that can be, really, while staying those characters. It becomes more natural to be them. Would you agree with that?

**CB:** I agree, absolutely, with everything you say.

**What are your final thoughts on this series?**

**TB:** I think series six is the most exciting yet.

**CB:** I think it's excellent. And also lots of nice comedy bits.

**TB:** And I think they've grown. I think the writing has grown with the characters and the characters have grown with the writing.

**What would you say to encourage people to try Jago & Litefoot?**

**CB:** I'd say watch [*Talons*] to start with. Because in a way you need to go through them chronologically, don't you?

**TB:** Well, it helps I think, yes.

**CB:** It's like reading a series of detective novels. I went through all the Rebus novels and I read one and I thought, 'This is good,' and so I then went back to the beginning, the first one ever, and read all the novels in order until the end.

**TB:** I would say dive in at the deep end; go in anywhere because most of the stories are self-sufficient.

**CB:** But they all refer back all the time...

**TB:** Yes, they do, but that's connoisseurship, really. If you want to become a connoisseur, then go back and go in sequence.

**CB:** So I'm a connoisseur of detective stories?

**TB:** You are of that particular genre. And with this you could dive in anywhere in the series and then if that piques your curiosity, go back! **VORTEX**



COLIN  
SALMON

DEREK  
RIDDELL

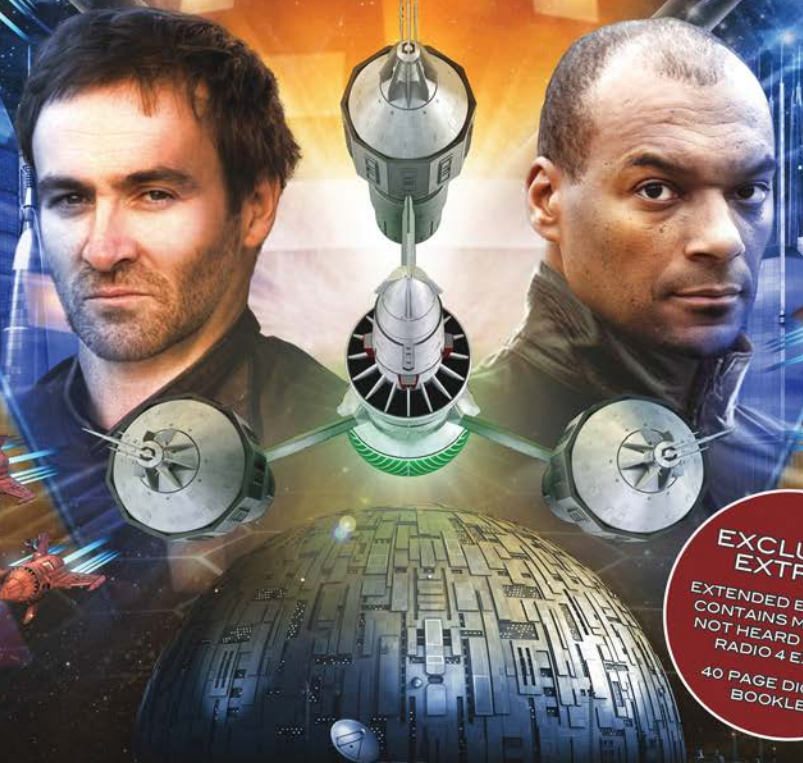
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**DARK  
SHADOWS**

# TAKING SIDES

**THE FLIP SIDE** WRITER CODY QUIJANO-SHELL EXPLAINS HOW HE GOT INVOLVED IN THE MYSTERIOUS WORLD OF **DARK SHADOWS**



Cody Quijano-Schell

**Hello Cody. So, what can you tell us about *The Flip Side*?**

■ It's a tense, psychological thriller with Carolyn Stoddard in the spotlight. It's also an oddity – it explores some concepts mentioned on the show, with a fresh twist. *The Flip Side* is a self-contained story, but long-term fans and listeners of this current run of audios will find hidden surprises.

**So who is Carolyn Stoddard?**

■ No one in the Collins family is innocent, and Carolyn is no exception. She's a spoiled rich girl. She gets what she wants – even when she's not sure what that is! On the other hand, she's sweet, vulnerable and deeply troubled, which makes her easy prey. She's

really a wonderfully complex character and Nancy Barrett is an amazing actress.

**Is this your first audio play? Tell us about your writing career and how you got involved in *Dark Shadows* for *Big Finish*.**

■ Yes, it's my first audio – an exciting milestone! I've written scads of short stories and novellas prior to this (including a **Bernice Summerfield**). When [producer] Joe Lidster picked my pitch, I was nervous about making the transition from prose to script writing. Joe was a huge help and very patient. It's great that Big Finish gives new writers a shot.

**What else have you been up to and what's next for Cody Quijano-Schell?**

■ Currently, I edit an e-novella series called **The Periodic Adventures of Senor 105** with printed editions planned. ([www.senor105.co.uk](http://www.senor105.co.uk)). In Mexico, weirdo 'Masked Wrestler





BEING ALREADY COMMITTED TO WORK ON GALLIFREY AND IRIS WILDTHYME, DAVID DARLINGTON KNEW THAT WORK ON THE DARK SHADOWS RANGE WOULD BE TIGHT AND INTENSE THIS YEAR. SO HE CALLED IN SOME HELP FROM SEAN MCGHEE...

Hi Sean, what can you tell us about yourself?

■ I write, sing and produce. I've mixed number one singles for Britney Spears, worked with Imogen Heap and Robyn, had my songs used on US TV shows like *Grey's Anatomy* and sung with Alanis Morissette and Alison Moyet. Most recently, I made an album with Suede guitarist Richard Oakes as Artmagic. ([www.artmagicmusic.com](http://www.artmagicmusic.com))

Listeners won't have seen your name on a Big Finish CD before. Did you have any idea what you were getting into?

■ I was there at the start. I loved the *Doctor Who New Adventures* books and followed Bernice Summerfield to Big Finish, just in time for *The Sirens of Time!* *Dark Shadows* was a mystery to me, though; I'd never heard of the original show until recently. But I've really enjoyed the plays I've heard since.

What appealed to you about the notion of writing a song to order for a specific purpose?

■ When you asked me to write a song for a supernatural tale of possession, I was intrigued. When you said it should be a pretend 1970s radio hit, I was amused. So I said yes! I listened to a lot of Steely Dan and Joni Mitchell, and the resulting song, *The Better Side*, goes for the full 1972 approach.

With this having worked so well and so quickly, I thought it might be useful to get you to compose some melodies and chord progressions for the incidental music, which I could then twist and mangle into shape for appropriate use in the finished plays...

■ I tried to write themes ripe for deconstruction, but which also felt strong enough to be introduced without additional orchestration. I knew you'd rework whatever I did into the right style for the plays. Knowing you were a safe pair of hands made everything much easier – a good collaboration. It's been great to listen to each play and hear how you've approached my raw material – I'm always surprised, in a good way.

And do you fancy doing it again?

■ In a spooky, supernatural heartbeat. **VORTEX**



Above: Christopher Ragland

**“NO ONE IN THE COLLINS FAMILY IS INNOCENT, AND CAROLYN IS NO EXCEPTION.”**



Nancy Barrett

vs Monsters' movies fill a cultural niche similar to *Dark Shadows* or *Doctor Who*. Senior 105 is a character I created who is a retired masked wrestler turned academic. He wears a different mask for every element (discovered by 1970) and has thrilling, surreal adventures. I've gotten a lot of *Benny, Faction Paradox* and *Iris Wildthyme* writers in to write them. He's even

mentioned in an *Iris* audio. I'd love to bring him to audio properly someday! (Barnabas and Quentin had better watch out.)

And finally, why should someone buy this story?

■ It has everything that made me fall in love with *Dark Shadows*: great characters, lots of danger, a little bit of soap and all that great Robert Cobert jukebox music! I'm really proud! **VORTEX**



# COWARD'S WAY

**MAT COWARD, WRITER OF THIS MONTH'S COMPANION CHRONICLE, UPSTAIRS, TALKS OF HIS DELIGHT AT ADDING THINGS TO A GROWING MYTHOLOGY...**

**T**his will only make sense to other **Doctor Who** fans – but since I'm writing it in *Vortex* and not in *Grocer's Weekly*, that probably doesn't matter. For me, just about the most thrilling part of twice being commissioned to write **Doctor Who** stories for Big Finish is that I have been able to add some tiny footnotes to the universe of **Who**; I have left my eternal fingerprints on the sacred canon.

As well as this month's **Companion Chronicle**, *Upstairs*, I wrote a short story a few years ago for the **Short Trips** range of print anthologies. As many readers will know, one of the stages Big Finish scripts have to go through is being approved by senior Whoologists at the BBC to ensure that they don't contradict, undermine or otherwise interfere with existing or planned continuity. As far as I'm concerned, that means that anything I write which gets past the Guardians of Past and Future is official.

For instance, in my **Short Trips** story, *Losing the Audience*, I have the First Doctor using an 'aqua-spanner' to fiddle

**"THE DOCTOR ISN'T A HOLLYWOOD SUPERHERO, AND SHOULDN'T BE ABLE TO GET OUT OF TROUBLE BY WAVING A MAGIC WAND."**

with his ship's innards. This was mainly because I've always disliked the sonic screwdriver (the Doctor isn't a Hollywood superhero, and shouldn't be able to get out of trouble by waving a magic wand), and hoped to undermine its standing by suggesting that it is merely one entry in an entire toolkit of fancy torque.

But the point is, the aqua-spanner now *exists*; it is now part of **Who**, and always will be. The excitement I get from that is intense. Deluded, quite possibly, would be a better word – but I can't help it.





OUT THIS MONTH!

## DOCTOR WHO: UPSTAIRS

When the TARDIS lands in a dilapidated attic, the Doctor, Vicki and Steven discover they are on Earth, in London... in Number 10 Downing Street.

However alien forces are at play here, affecting the very fabric of the building... and adjusting the very essence of history itself.

**DOCTOR WHO: UPSTAIRS IS AVAILABLE THIS MONTH ON CD AND DOWNLOAD FROM [CD AND DOWNLOAD FROM CD AND DOWNLOAD FROM CD.FINISH.COM](http://CD.FINISH.COM)**



For *Upstairs*, I wrote an exchange between the First Doctor and Steven which excites me even more.

### SNACKS

Snacks were not as easily available to children fifty years ago as they are today, which is perhaps why my friends and I were always so taken with the idea of the TARDIS's food machine. In this story, I have included some never-before-revealed detail about exactly how the food machine works. I mean, yes, I do know I made it up – but all the same, it's true now. It's approved. It's official.

The funny thing is, when it comes to Whovian canonicity I am generally very strict. I've been known to insist that the main character's name is 'Dr. Who,' partly because that's what he was called in the original credits, but much more importantly because it's what we used to call him in the playgrounds of the 1960s. And that, surely, is the one authority you simply can't argue with.

Furthermore, I am convinced that there has only ever been one arrangement of the theme tune – anything else you might think you've heard is just the same recording accidentally played at the wrong speed – and I suppose it goes without saying, even to the most radical modernist, that 'TARDIS' does not employ a definite article; hmmm, child, hmmm?

## "I'VE BEEN KNOWN TO INSIST THAT THE MAIN CHARACTER'S NAME IS 'DR. WHO'."

### EMOTIONAL CANON

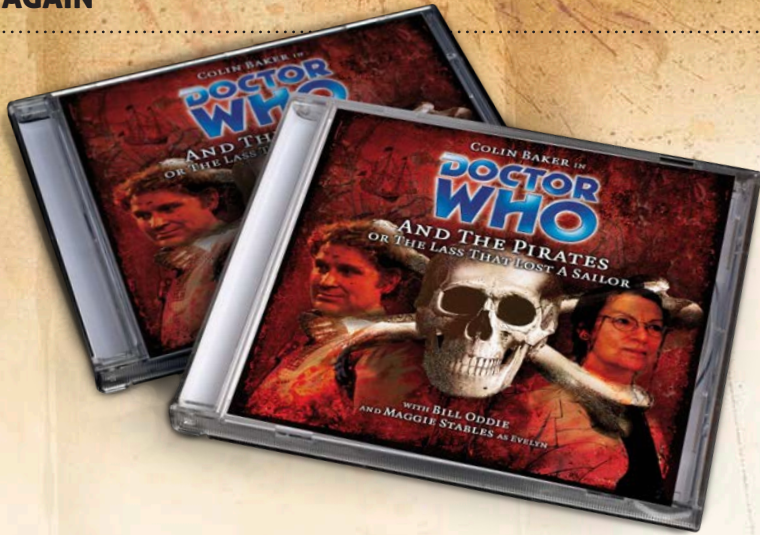
I am a 1963 Fundamentalist, an adherent of the Unbending Cult of the 23rd November. I hold it to be self-evident that for its first three years, *Doctor Who* was a fly-on-the-wall documentary, and that it was only after then that it became a drama series in which Dr. Who himself was played by a series of actors. I still feel slightly uncomfortable that the programme isn't made in black and white.

And yet, in both my Big Finish stories to date, I've done something which is so audacious it makes me blanch to think of it. I've interfered with the *emotional canon*.

Audacious, but inevitable; the narrated format of *The Companion Chronicles* in particular means that we must know more of the companion's thoughts than we ever do in a full cast episode. In *Upstairs*, for instance, Vicki talks briefly about how she views her relationships with Steven and the Doctor.

It's the responsibility that's frightening. I've spent all but the first three-and-a-half years of my life feeling very strongly about every aspect of *Doctor Who*, so it's unsurprising that at this stage I couldn't help yelling at myself, "Who the hell do you think you are? Aqua-spanners are one thing, but you used to watch this character when you were a four-year-old, and now you're presuming to tell the world what's going on inside her head? By what right? And anyway, how do you know you're not wrong? You're just making this stuff up!"

Because, of course, once it's there, it's permanent – to the writer's delight, and horror. **VORTEX**



WITH A YO HO HO AND QUITE POSSIBLY A LITTLE SNIFTER OF SOMETHING, KENNY SMITH REVISITS

# DOCTOR WHO AND THE PIRATES

**T**his month sees the release of *1963: Fanfare for the Common Men*, and Big Finish plays which are centred on music aren't that... ahem... common.

Back in 2003, *Doctor Who and the Pirates* was released. Producer Gary Russell commissioned Jac Rayner to write the play, with Barnaby Edwards directing, and although its third episode is now legendary amongst Big Finish devotees for its take on Gilbert & Sullivan songs, they didn't actually feature in the original plan for the play.

Jac says, "It was just that, partway through, that felt right. I needed a way for Sally to open up her heart, and that just worked. And what can I say about Gary Russell here? I phoned him up and asked, 'Can Colin and Maggie sing?' and instead of freaking out, he listened to what I had to say and said I could try it.

"He was a producer/editor in a million, to be honest. If he thought you knew what you were doing, he would let you try it, and he wouldn't change things just because he had the power to do so – only if there was a very good reason. You were allowed to have your own voice, and that's such an amazing thing when you're a writer in a shared universe."

Tim Sutton, who would later work with Barnaby Edwards on *Horror of Glam Rock* and *The Zygon Who Fell to Earth* in the

Eighth Doctor range, remembers, "Our first collaboration was *Doctor Who and the Pirates*, where I was responsible for turning Jacqueline Rayner's incredible sea-faring script into a musical reality, incorporating the vocal talents of Colin Baker and Bill Oddie. There was an enormous amount of music throughout that double episode, but the high-water mark was part three, where the nautical narrative became a Gilbert & Sullivan operetta. We had such a good time."

Designing the cover was Lee Binding, who offers, "I wanted to give it a more Gilbert & Sullivan feel, in the style of a vaudeville poster, but I was talked out of it by Gary. But after talking it through, Gary was right to just go for the simple skull and crossbones. He says it's one of his favourites now, bless him."

Jac adds, "Oh my word, what can I say? Barnaby Edwards, I love you. To have brought it all to life, with such music, and such performances..."

"I could write a paean to every individual cast member! Tim Sutton's music – the singing – how lucky was I?! We were allowed three days to record it instead of the usual two. Oh, I cringe at some lines, because I hate reading or listening to my own stuff, but at least I know they are bad lines beautifully delivered!" **VORTEX**



## ADVANCED ANXIETY

I agree with the contributor who raised the issue of pre-ordering but I agree with both of their letters. Personally, at the moment I feel wary of placing pre-orders. Several highly regarded companies have ceased trading. I do feel twitchy about tying money up where the goods won't be available. With Big Finish though, there's such a diverse range of titles I think the already released titles will keep me going for years.

I was a late developer, only came to you relatively recently. Some titles like **The Liberator Chronicles** I'll grab on release. I know companies rely on pre-sales, but all sales keep the lights on.

Now if we could just have early **Gallifrey** as a download. I understand the legal side from previous correspondence but it's galling when you can download the later parts but not the start. As the majority of the cast's the same, it's puzzling.

I can understand the **Doctor Who Companion Chronicles** are trickier to sort – individual titles with a diverse cast, some of whom may be no longer with us. Love the audiobooks though; haven't had a disappointing one yet! I know I've just set myself up here, folks!

**Barbara Keogh**

**NICK:** You really shouldn't be wary of placing advance orders with us. But, naturally, we understand your caution. As for clearing things for download release, it's just a case of workload. There's currently no one at Big Finish with enough time to go through and check all the old contracts. Even if the cast members or contributors are the same, they may have previously been issued different contracts which, stupidly, didn't foresee the possibility of downloads.

## WHO'S WHO?

This comment is about your audioplay *The Wrong Doctors*. Both my husband and I found it a bit confusing to follow. We feel it would have worked better as a visual story, where we could have seen the various Doctors and Mels, presumably dressed differently and making it easier to keep track of who was who.

The performers were great; we just find stories about intersecting timelines, etc, a bit difficult to follow, at least in the audio format.

**Phyllis S Schmutz**

**NICK:** Well, fair point. But it was meant to be a bit confusing. That was supposed to be part of the charm of it. If you listen on headphones

(where the stereo effect is more obvious), you will notice that the different Mels and Doctors are always on different sides of the stereo field.

## MINI MCGANN?

I was just wondering: has Big Finish ever thought about maybe being able to make (due to licensing) Eighth Doctor mini TV episodes? He does seem to be BF's own Doctor and never really got a fair opportunity after the TV movie. I think it would be something worth considering. If the BBC would ever let you is another matter; I imagine it wouldn't cost too much for a few days shooting.

**Timothy Harness**

**NICK:** We only have a licence for audio production. Producing television is a whole different kettle of fish.

## FEMALE WHO

Kind of an obvious question and I'm sure you've had it a lot, buuuu...

Why haven't you guys made at least a female Doctor-led mini-series. And yeah, I know about *Exile*, but I'm talking about one that isn't an out-and-out comedy. There's obviously a market for it given the amount of noise that gets made every regeneration.

I'm sure you've had this a lot, but I'd like to keep making noise about it if nothing else.

**Claude**

**NICK:** The only way I could see us doing this is if we revived the **Doctor Who Unbound** line, which we've currently no plans to do. But maybe one day, who knows? It would certainly be fun and interesting to explore.

## TRIPODS

You've probably been asked this millions of times, but I was wondering if anyone has ever thought about doing **Tripods** on audio? In particular getting some or all – of the principles, at least – from the TV show to do the unmade third series.

We've just watched the first two seasons and can't be the only ones to go, 'Oh, is that it?' Don't know if any of them are still acting, or if the book series has since been optioned for a movie or anything, but if it hasn't...

They've even gone and done the music for the *Pool of Fire* for you. Just a thought. Keep up the good work.

**Stephen Donlan**

**NICK:** The whole **Tripods** thing has come up again and again. I think the last time we

investigated, the rights were held by another company. But I shall ask about it again.

## AFTER EIGHT

I just want to say thank you for all of the brilliant work all of you at Big Finish have done over the years, especially with the **Doctor Who** range. I always enjoy ordering a new story from you. I've been wanting to ask this one for a while now. (I don't know if it's been asked before or not.) Could you possibly explain the current situation with the **Doctor Who** range and why you're not allowed to feature stories with Doctors and companions after the Eighth Doctor, or if you've ever tried to negotiate to use them someday? I've read in *Doctor Who Magazine* that you have to pass stories and scripts by the TV production office so that you can avoid clashing storylines; would it be a problem to also ask them to use the Ninth to Eleventh (and eventually the Twelfth) Doctor, if the actors were available and willing? I personally would love to hear David Tennant appear as the Tenth Doctor, and the others too, in a future Big Finish audio.

**Simon Hendy-Ibbs**

**NICK:** All of a sudden, this question is being asked over and over again. Our licence with the BBC was granted before the new TV series returned in 2005. Latterly, our licence has been a sub-licensing deal with AudioGo, the company who are the official home of all BBC audio, and they have traditionally produced all audio material relating to the new TV series. We find ourselves now in a situation where no other licences for **Doctor Who** merchandise differentiate between the old and new series, so perhaps this will be something for us to investigate in the future.

## CRAZY IDEA?

I've got a crazy idea which you may find weird. How about getting Matthew Waterhouse to re-dub *The Boy That Time Forgot* as Adric, now Matthew's doing BF audios? Maybe you could do a special edition of the story containing original and new versions in a box set, maybe add deleted scenes back into the story to entice the listener to buy it. How about doing a thread to see if there's interest from the fans to do this sort of thing?

**Simon Rogers**

**NICK:** Simon, that is indeed a crazy idea.

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Simon Cogan - by email

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Oi, Spaceman! via GallifreyBase



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