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SNEAK PREVIEWS AND WHISPERS

VIENNA – SERIES ONE



Fans of that impossibly glamorous bounty hunter Vienna Salvatori will be pleased to hear that she has three new assignments to take on in her first full series of solo adventures, due out in early 2014.

Big Finish is delighted to be working with Chase Masterson – best known as Leeta in *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* – on further adventures for Vienna. Vienna – and Chase – certainly made her mark in the *Doctor Who* audio drama *The Shadow Heart*, and in her first solo adventure *The Memory Box*. These new adventures will explore Vienna's dark universe further and perhaps shed some light on the question: who is Vienna Salvatori?

What can fans expect from the three new adventures in *Vienna: Series One*? Vienna will be at the centre of the action when the assassination of a military commander soon turns into a fight for survival as a starship plunges towards a burning sun. An assignment to take down an alien faith-stealing gang brings Vienna to the attention of the Church of New Wonderment and its charismatic leader Bax Spendlove, and in the series finale, will she survive long enough to discover the truth about her past and be the last assassin standing in a brutal contest?

Vienna: Series One stars Chase Masterson. The three-disc box set will be released by Big Finish in February 2014.

EDITORIAL

So, *The Light at the End* is out. Didn't expect that, did you? You could have heard the mass exhaling of Big Finish employees across the country when I clicked the 'yes' button for that (until the website also exhaled and gave up for a time – huge thanks to the Hughes Media web team for dealing with that so efficiently). It's been a long, complex road, and we'd always hoped to have the story available now, but with a variety of issues complicating the process (frankly I got off lightly with only, ooh, six different download options to create – I eventually left Jamie Robertson to handle the 5.1 mix one), it was looking unlikely for a while there. So we're delighted it's now available for all to hear. Good, isn't it? Eight Doctors. Sixteen companions. One Master. Great writing and direction. Astonishing sound design and music. And that's glossing over all the other people involved behind the scenes in every part of the process of getting it from a blank piece of paper to a beautifully packaged CD (or vinyl) set. A lot of love went into this release and we really hope it shows through. Because we love stories, and we really, really love *Doctor Who* stories.

Anyway, thinking that there was probably enough coverage of the actual making of *The Light at the End* across the various releases, when it came to interviewing the cast for *Vortex* I thought I'd take a different approach. So I asked each of them the same two questions to find out where they thought they'd be were it not for *Doctor Who*, and what their overriding *Who*-based memory is. There are some surprising and particularly heartfelt answers in there. Oh, and in case you're wondering, Peter Davison had to dash before I had a chance to interview him. But I shall still ask him the same questions when I next encounter him, so you'll find out his answers in a future issue.

Of course, it's not all about *The Light at the End* this month; we're just as proud of our other anniversary month releases: *1963: The Assassination Games*, *Lost Story Lords of the Red Planet* and the labour of love which is *Companion Chronicle The Beginning*. I was listening to it on the way to the office the last couple of days and it's a lovely piece of work.

All that's left to say, slightly inevitably, is happy birthday *Doctor Who*. Fifty years and still so much love and affection for a series that had such humble beginnings. Long may that continue.

PAUL SPRAGG

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"Fifty years! Blimey I feel old."



LIGHT HEADED

THE PRINCIPAL CAST MEMBERS OF ANNIVERSARY RELEASE
THE LIGHT AT THE END TELL PAUL SPRAGG WHAT A
DIFFERENCE DOCTOR WHO HAS MADE IN THEIR LIVES...

With such a large cast, if I wanted to get most of them into a *Vortex* article, I realized I had to fine-tune my questioning. So, in this fiftieth anniversary year, I had two questions I wanted to know the answers to: without **Doctor Who**, where did our stars think they'd be, and what is their strongest **Who**-related memory?

COLIN BAKER AND NICOLA BRYANT

Without Doctor Who, you would (or would not)... what?

COLIN BAKER: Without **Doctor Who** I wouldn't be going to any conventions! My world travelling would have been diminished but I'd have probably got a lead role in some other magnificent television programme and be concentrating on that. I'd have probably been the captain in **Star Trek** if I hadn't done **Doctor Who**. You couldn't have a **Doctor Who** being Captain Kirk, could you? So Shatner only got his job because I played **Doctor Who**. Even though he did it before me...!

NICOLA BRYANT: The same in terms of conventions, travel, definitely. I feel like I've travelled the world with **Doctor Who**, and the jobs that have come out of being from **Doctor Who** involved quite a bit of travelling as well. What I would be doing, I've no idea! My first love was theatre, so I probably would have worked my way up in the theatre rather than starting with a splash in **Doctor Who**. I might never have played an American role in my life. Who knows?

CB: Without **Doctor Who**, I would never have met Nicola, which would be very sad.

NB: We were destined to meet. We would have met on another show.

What's your one biggest Doctor Who memory?

CB: I can give you a generic memory, which is what the Irish call the craic. The craic of being in those wonderful rehearsal rooms at Acton and coming in with a new script with Nicola for each story, and just the feeling of being the ones who created **Doctor Who** stories. It's not a specific moment, it's a sequence of moments. Those read-throughs, those run-throughs, those first days in the studio. They all lump together as being something rather special for me.

The extraordinary thing, of course, is that my memories of Big Finish are more recent and therefore more powerful. The feeling of coming here to do **Doctor Who**

is not dissimilar to that of going to Acton, those lovely rehearsal rooms that have now gone.

INDIA FISHER

Without Doctor Who, you would (or would not)... what?

■ Without **Doctor Who**, I would be... probably still temping! And I kid you not, actually, because I did **Doctor Whos**, Big Finish got me some of my first ever audio jobs and through that I met Nev Fountain, through that I got onto **Dead Ringers**, through **Dead Ringers** I met Jan Ravens, who got me my first voiceover agent, through that I got **Masterchef** and so genuinely I owe my entire career (such as it is) to Big Finish and **Doctor Who**. So I thank Nick [Briggs], Jason [Haigh-Ellery] and Gary [Russell] greatly. They are the reason you have to put up with me talking about food on television.

What's your one biggest Doctor Who memory?

■ Ooh! You know what? He's gonna kill me for saying this, but it would be at a convention in

“GENUINELY I OWE MY ENTIRE CAREER TO BIG FINISH AND DOCTOR WHO.”
INDIA FISHER





Manchester. I remember walking into the lobby and seeing a group of people I knew, Clayton Hickman and people like that, and then there was this incredibly tall, good-looking, beautiful man and I just remember thinking, 'Who is that?' and Clay got me over and was like, 'Oh, India, meet Conrad [Westmaas], Conrad meet India,' and it sounds really cheesy but he's one of my closest friends and I met him through Big Finish.

LOUISE JAMESON

Without Doctor Who, you would (or would not)... what?

■ Well, I do consider **Doctor Who** as part of my pension, so my pension would be halved! I'm touching wood here because I've done several other series, so there's a little **Bergerac** clique of fans, there's a little **Tenko** clique, there's **Eastenders**, so I've had some quite high profile stuff. Without **Doctor Who** I wouldn't have such a strong

fanbase. I wouldn't have all the little spin-off series that I've had. I would still be an actress and have a career and do what I do. I wouldn't have travelled as much. Next week Sydney – literally! I'd have missed out on a few opportunities for sure. And one of my fondest memories is 1979, the very first event I was asked to go to in Los Angeles, which was a Louise Jameson Day in a pub, and I went with my Mum. And she died very young, and it was very rare that Mum and I had that amount of time together, and we just spent these five glorious days exploring a new country together and had this weird day. She sat on the edge of the stage and she said she was asked to sign autographs as Louise Jameson's Mum and it just thrilled her to do that. So I'd be a few memories short.

You've pre-empted my other question about your one biggest Doctor Who memory.

■ I would certainly go for that. And I do, just as a little incident, remember being absolutely freezing on top of a

factory filming *The Sunmakers* and not having a dressing gown available and Tom [Baker] – it's no secret that we didn't get on so well at the time – but it was one of his rather tender moments; he literally wrapped me up in his scarf like a mummy and then span me out later when it came to recording. So that was nice, that was lovely.

PAUL MCGANN

Without Doctor Who, you would (or would not)... what?

■ Well, I'd certainly have fewer Twitter friends. And friends generally, probably! It's a funny one, isn't it? They asked Peter Crouch that last year; if you'd not been a professional footballer, what would you have been, and he said, 'Single'. I'd certainly have more of a private life. I heard Tom before talking about the time before he was Doctor Who and the time after and it's two different lives, and that's how he painted the picture, you know? I suppose if I didn't have **Doctor Who** I'd just be I from **Withnail and I**, solely. It's something, at least. It hasn't all been wasted!

What's your one biggest Doctor Who memory?

■ The first convention I finally relented and went to, because I was nervous, I was thinking, 'Why would I wanna do that? It sounds horrendous!' And when I was finally persuaded to go – it was in a hotel in London – I got quite stage affrighted, realising how many people were there. It was way over a thousand in this one room. And someone filmed it, me walking out on stage for the very first time at a convention and this noise – it was like a jumbo jet taking off! I've seen the film back and you can see the blood leaving my face; I'm not that big anyway but I shrunk to about two foot six, I was terrified, I couldn't even speak! I've got a bit easier with it all since but I'd never forget that. And the first time someone sticks a mic in your hand and pushes you out onto a stage and it's just you and them and says, 'You've got forty minutes'. You're like a stand-up act. That was an eye-opener. Most of us are actually quite shy and retiring, you might be surprised to hear. But now I really enjoy it. It took me a few gos but I realized it was actually great; the real sense of humour, everybody knows each other, there's a sort of family feel to it and I really like that. But there's

another answer to your question there: if I'd not been Doctor Who, I'd certainly have been a bit lonelier.

SYLVESTER MCGOY

Without Doctor Who, you would (or would not)... what?

■ Well, without **Doctor Who** I might have gone on to... oh no, I did lots of stuff in the theatre! I don't know, really. I can't really think because it's been part of my life for twenty-five years. I got the job on Monday, I was sent to a convention in Atlanta, Georgia on the Thursday and came rushing back and started filming it! It all happened very quickly in the end. What else would I have done if I hadn't been Doctor Who? I don't know. Because of the very nature of my eccentric acting, my kind of characteristics, I would have carried on as I was. Because while I was doing **Doctor Who**, people were writing musicals for me, plays for me; I was doing plays and musicals. I've done everything except ballet in this business. So maybe if I didn't do **Doctor Who** I would have done some ballet.

"IF I'D NOT BEEN DOCTOR WHO, I'D CERTAINLY HAVE BEEN A BIT LONELIER."
PAUL MCGANN



THE LIGHT AT THE END

What's your one biggest Doctor Who memory?

■ I suppose it's the moment I saved Sophie's life really [on the set of *Battlefield*], and I became an actual superhero for a few minutes. That's it.

SOPHIE ALDRED AND SARAH SUTTON

Without Doctor Who, you would (or would not)... what?

SOPHIE ALDRED: I don't think I'd have had the career I've had. Definitely. Now I do mainly voiceovers, people often cast me through fondness for my character in *Doctor Who* – or pure curiosity. They'll call me in because, 'Wow, that was Ace in *Doctor Who*!' It's opened the door to so many possibilities. Travelling around the world, meeting all these fabulous people. And I wouldn't know Sylvester.

SARAH SUTTON: Likewise, it's the opportunities of Big Finish that have come up, and meeting all these wonderful actors

**“I BECAME
AN ACTUAL
SUPERHERO
FOR A FEW
MINUTES.”
SYLVESTER MCCOY**



we have in to do all the stories that's great. It came at a funny time for me, *Doctor Who*, because I'd been a child actress for so long, and it was the first job I had where I was playing a person of my own age, a teenager-y type, because I'd always played slightly younger than myself. And so it's very special to me. It's lovely feeling like you do actually belong to something. It's like a big family.

SA: I remember getting this postcard when I first got [the part] saying, 'Welcome to the family,' and at the time I thought, [Sophie makes a retching noise]. But actually, it's really true, and the family doesn't only include the actors, the family also includes all the special effects guys, the costume maker, everything. And the fans as well, because a lot of the fans have grown up with us and so we'll go to a convention and say, 'Hi so-and-so, how's...?' You really get to know people and their trials and tribulations over twenty-five years. It's extraordinary.

What's your one biggest Doctor Who memory?

SS: I think Peter's *This is Your Life* was great fun. I do remember that. He was told he was doing a photoshoot for something so they had the TARDIS in Trafalgar Square and

we were hiding inside before he got there. He was posing and we suddenly just came out of the TARDIS and it was really good fun.

SA: Was he shocked?

SS: Yes, he was. Or he pretended he was! But he seemed very shocked. That was fun.

SA: I think my relationships with people are the most important thing for me. Like being on a cruise ship with my family and Sylvester, coming in to Acapulco standing next to Sylvester and thinking, 'This is weird!' Or being in New Zealand with Paul McGann and Sylvester McCoy. Paul I was absolutely in love with when he did *The Monocled Mutineer*, almost so much it hurt! And then Sylvester, seeing him on *Vision On*, he was like this crazy character. Suddenly mucking about with them, having a few drinks in New Zealand and being great mates and thinking, 'How did that happen?'

SS: That's a lovely vision.

TOM BAKER

Without Doctor Who, you would (or would not)... what?

■ Oh, nothing without *Doctor Who*. It was the greatest and most positive thing to happen to me. Barry Letts and



THE LIGHT AT THE END

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the others took me out to dinner and at the end Barry said, 'So Tom, how do you see it? What are you going to do with it?' Now, if I had not signed a contract, I would have done a big spiel but as I'd signed a contract and I was safe for a year – no one gets fired before they've even started! – I said, 'I don't know', and it was true, I didn't know. I couldn't believe I had got it. He gave me the scripts, all of which, the first couple of years I was doing it, were written for Jon Pertwee. Pertwee stamped on it so hard that all the writers were used to writing for him so it was all sarcastic putdowns. And then I realised, as I was saying these lines the way I wanted to do them, everyone was falling around laughing. Then I realised – because I'm often slow to realise things – this is what I was born for. There was no acting about it. Everything about the character; being a benevolent alien, indeterminate age; he didn't think like other people. Maybe he didn't even walk like other people. You could do anything you wanted to as long as you didn't break the trust of the audience. So without **Doctor Who**, well, I certainly wouldn't be here. I might have actually been able to go into production; I don't mean as a leading producer, but as a production assistant or something like that, but as an actor? Well, when I was at the National at the end of the Sixties, the place was absolutely teeming with talent. Derek Jacobi and Anthony Hopkins and Ron Pickup, all those people. Jeremy Brett. No chance of me really getting leading parts. And so I didn't even get to play human beings; I think the first part I had was a horse...

What's your one biggest Doctor Who memory?

■ I remember a man stopping me in Oxford Street once, looking at me with absolute incredulity; he couldn't believe it. He said, 'Tom Baker?' A man in his late thirties. I said, 'Yes'. He said, 'Tom Baker?' I said, 'Yes!' And he looked at me and in his brain he catapulted back in time and he said, 'You know, when I was a boy, I was in a home for children; nobody wanted us, you know? It was terrible. And you made Saturday night good.' And I went to say something to him and I could see him so close to tears that he couldn't speak. And he shook his head as if to say, 'Don't go on, don't remind me' and he just did [a thumbs up]. Such a common thing, isn't it, but suddenly backed up with an expression on his face through his tears that was a knighthood. It was a knighthood. Just thumbs up, meaning it was great, and thanks. It's incredible, isn't it? Just a gesture. **VORTEX**



GENESES

The first **Doctor Who** adventure ever. The genesis of the Ice Warriors. The origins of **Counter-Measures**. The people behind three of this month's **Doctor Who** releases talk beginnings...

DAVID RICHARDSON

When did you first start thinking about the fiftieth anniversary?

■ It was at least two or three years ago. That was when I thought of the idea (and the title) for *The Beginning*, and thought it would be perfect for the November 2013 *Companion Chronicle* release. I was so excited by the prospect that I approached Cardiff for approval on the concept there and then, and that offered the opportunity for Marc Platt to write the script ahead of time and it was recorded well ahead of schedule.

In *The Name of the Doctor*, we got to see the Doctor and Susan leaving Gallifrey. Do the events fit in with *The Beginning*?

■ The simple answer is yes, our story actually dovetails perfectly into *The Name of the Doctor*. Though not without

... a studio remount! The downside of our advance recording was that our initial script didn't match what you saw on TV – I mean, it was similar, with very slight differences, but the differences were there. What was brilliant is that Cardiff were happy for us to fit in with what you saw on screen, Marc Platt was happy to do a rewrite, and Carole Ann Ford [Susan] was happy to do some studio pick-ups. So now they mesh perfectly. *The Beginning* starts slightly before that scene on TV, tells the scene from Susan's perspective, and then hurtles into the terrifying and wondrous story of the Doctor and Susan's first flight from Gallifrey.

Having now heard *The Beginning*, what do you think of it?

■ Oh, I think it's beautiful. Really lovely. It just feels special. It works as a landmark **Doctor Who** release, and as a start to the whole **Doctor Who** story. Carole is superb, as is Terry Molloy – who was my first and only choice to play Quadrigger Stoyne, the Time Lord that the Doctor and Susan

unwittingly kidnap from Gallifrey. Stoy'n's story continues in *The Dying Light* and *Luna Romana* – the trilogy becomes the tale of one wronged man, glimpsed at different points in the Doctor's life.

What about *The Light at the End*? When did work first begin on that?

■ It was about a year ago. We had plans for a fiftieth anniversary special, but it wasn't a multi-Doctor story. I felt passionately that we needed to do a multi-Doctor story, and badgered Nick Briggs so constantly about it that I seriously began to wonder if it might make myself unpopular. My worry was that we were missing the golden opportunity to do something incredibly special; his worry was that the story could be a poisoned chalice – it would raise expectations to the degree that we would be unable to meet them.

Two things changed his mind. First off, at a recording Tom Baker said he wanted to do a multi-Doctor story, and work with the other Doctors. And, driving back from the studio that day, John Dorney and

I brainstormed ideas for what sort of framework would be different and exciting enough to make it worthwhile.

I took that to Nick, and he said yes. We took it to Cardiff, and they said yes.

So from there, Nick developed it into a storyline and script, which ultimately became very different to the idea Dorney and I first pitched.

It actually became something much better.

“There are definitely some amazing things to look forward to”

Was everyone happy to be involved?

■ You bet. Every single Doctor and companion that I approached embraced the idea. So it felt very special right from the start. It was, without a doubt, the most challenging, the most enormous production we have ever made – I have a spreadsheet covering all the actor bookings and recording dates that I would colour in as we completed each bit. When the very last line was coloured in... that felt quite an achievement.

Tell us about the companion cameos. How did they come about?

■ We have a whole host of companions who drop in as we shift through different eras of **Doctor Who**. That was something of a privilege to do, as I presented the idea and a (constantly growing) list of companions to Nick and he said, 'Lovely – why don't you write it'. So I wrote that sequence, and kept adding to it as more

and more actors agreed to take part. The challenge was to find a way to include everybody but not make it repetitive – as they are all essentially going through the same event. But I don't think it's turned out to be repetitive at all. I'm particularly fond of the little moment with the Second Doctor, Polly and Ben, which takes place immediately after the end of *The Power of the Daleks*. I was accused by someone of just stealing that scene from the TV show!

It must have been exciting following the edits as they came in.

■ Actually, I did start with the dialogue edit... and then I pulled back from listening to the different stages. I kind of saved myself for the final thing to some extent. And I think the final version is absolutely stunning. Nick's script is beautiful. Just beautiful. And Jamie Robertson's sound design and music are exquisite. It is such a love letter to **Doctor Who**. One of my favourite memories is playing one scene to John Dorney, and he just started crying. Real man tears. 'It's just so lovely,' he blubbed.

So... the million dollar question. How does Big Finish follow the anniversary? Is there a danger that 2014 could be a bit of an anti-climax?

■ I worried about that for about ten minutes. And then some very exciting things came along. One of them will be announced soon. There are definitely some amazing things to look forward to.



David Richardson

MARC PLATT

How do I feel about writing the Doctor and Susan's first steps off Gallifrey?

Let's get one thing clear before we start. When the first episode of **Doctor Who** erupted into the lives of those of us lucky (or ancient) enough to be in front of a black and white telly on Saturday 23rd November 1963, that was not *The Beginning*.



Terry Molloy

I didn't grow to love **Doctor Who** over the ensuing weeks. The love was instantaneous. I was ten years old and I got hit by a Damascene thunderbolt that changed my life utterly. Thank heaven my Dad couldn't see the future – he'd have banned the telly from the house immediately.

As for the Doctor and Susan, their thunderbolt was stepping inside the TARDIS for the first time and careering off into the unknown. Uncovering their first steps was a thrilling, daunting and potentially portentous task. *The Beginning* is not about how or why the Doctor is on the run. That's a different story. There are plenty of different versions of why they are fugitives – I'm guilty of two of them myself. Doesn't each of us have our own take to fit the private parallel universe in our own heads? All versions

can be valid. It's like life – we tend to take it personally. It's what happened next that's important here.

The Beginning starts as a journey into the unknown. Two desperate people, running for their lives, doing the Gallifreyan equivalent of getting on the first bus they see without checking the destination on the front.

That's what's so special about writing this story. It isn't about the worldly-wise Doctor with years of travel under his belt. Neither he nor Susan has set foot off their planet before. They have led sheltered existences on a world where people only observe the universe from a safe distance, certainly never at first hand – far too messy. So for these two virginal explorers, half thrilled, half terrified, everything is new. The universe is their very big, scary and intriguing oyster; the sooner they get lost in it the better. In those days, the TARDIS time console might just as well have been a roulette table. 'Come along, Susan, spin the wheel. Yes, yes, now throw in the ball and we'll see where we come out.' There is, of course, a subtle distinction between time travellers and time tourists.

David Richardson's shopping list for this anniversary story was simple: the Doctor and Susan's first adventure could go wherever I liked. But there was no contest really.

One of the Doctor's other major obsessions is our own planet – pivotal throughout his career.

Even with the whole universe to choose from, wouldn't it be irresponsible to go anywhere else? Of course, the Doctor hasn't even heard of the Earth, although Susan has read about it in spatial cartography lessons and liked the name because it was the only planet she knew with a definite article. The Sense Sphere comes later.

This being a **Companion Chronicle**,

David gave me the production dream team of [director] Lisa Bowerman and [studio engineer]

Toby Hrycek-Robinson. His only other request was for the *de rigueur* second voice to accompany the amazing Carole Ann Ford, there right from the start and still going strong! I'd been mulling over a phalanx of historical characters, but none of them was right, and then I remembered those grey-suited technicians who are working on the TARDIS in the last episode of *The War Games*. Suppose one of them was working in the depths of the ship when the Doctor purloined it? How would he feel about being kidnapped? 'And could you leave the story open-ended so that we

"It isn't about the worldly-wise Doctor with years of travel under his belt."

can do a trilogy?’ said David. So the hapless Quadrigger Stoyin blundered out of the shadows, played with great disgruntled style by Terry Molloy (aka Davros), which allowed me to have a good old natter about one of my other obsessions, **The Archers**.

And then, about a year after we’d recorded the play, Clara from nearly fifty years in the future stuck her oar in and had a word with the departing Doctor, which called for a couple of line changes – and a tweak to the CD cover. So the Beginning shifted again. I doubt it’ll be the last time.

Happy birthday, Doctor. I can’t thank you enough!

JOHN DORNEY

I’ve two scripts out this month – one of those unplanned quirks of timing you sometimes get working for Big Finish – the release order so rarely reflects the writing order.

Taken chronologically for the Doctor, the first of the two is for the **Lost Stories** range – *Lords of the Red Planet*, an adaptation of the Brian Hayles TV storyline that was originally developed for the *Seeds of Death* slot. Initial discussions about me doing a version of this tale started at least two years ago (to the degree that the synopsis for

“A complex, epic adventure... and one that told the origins of the iconic Ice Warriors.”

the first episode of the adaptation was written and saved on my computer a full eighteen months before I started on the rest of it), way before an anniversary slot was even

a possibility, so its arrival now is the beautiful realisation of circumstance. We’d received a wide selection of Hayles’ unused

ideas for the show, and went through looking for any that might have the potential for adaptation. *Lords* was the obvious stand-out. A complex, epic adventure with no recognisably human characters in the guest cast – and one that told the origins of the iconic Ice Warriors in the words of their original creator? Kind of hard to resist. It

was a challenging brief – after all, there were two distinctly different storylines that Hayles had

written and I wanted to make sure it didn’t contradict any of the later stories featuring our favourite Martians. But it was too exciting not to do.

The thing I noticed reading the storyline was that, even after *Genesis of the Daleks*, *Spare Parts* and *The First Sontarans* had done their own unique angle on the creation of a legendary monster, this tale (which in conception preceded them all by several years, several decades in some cases) also managed to plough its own furrow and do something totally original. The



Abigail Thaw, Wendy Padbury, Nicholas Briggs, Frazer Hines and Michael Troughton



Karen Gledhill, Simon Williams, Pamela Salem and Hugh Ross

“It had always niggled slightly that I didn’t get to write the opener for *Counter-Measures*.”

Ice Warriors are such a well-regarded monster, so richly developed, that the option to see how their creator visualised their birth was hugely thrilling. That it managed to subvert expectations of what these complex creatures are as early as it does was the icing on the cake.

The other story I have out this month is the monthly range’s fiftieth anniversary release, the culmination of the 1963 trilogy – *The Assassination Games*. Set largely on the 30th November 1963 (fun fact: the trilogy moves from the beginning to the end of the month across the three stories. Something we, amazingly, didn’t consciously plan), this features the reunion of the Seventh Doctor, Ace and the group we now know as the ‘Counter-Measures Gang’: Gilmore, Rachel and Allison from *Remembrance of the Daleks*, with added Sir Toby Kinsella thrown into the mix.

It had always niggled slightly that I didn’t get to write the opener for **Counter-Measures**. It had been part of the plan, but time pressure and other projects got in the way. So when I got assigned this story to write I was delighted. Okay, it was always going to be a bit of a juggling act, trying to squeeze a story in between *Remembrance* and the series one opener... but at the same time it was also

going to be fun doing a little bit of tidying up. I’d had such a lovely time writing these characters in series two, and enjoyed working with the actors hugely – all utterly lovely, charming people – that I couldn’t say no. Coming up with

the storyline was tough; it had to cover a lot of bases: British politics and military action, and yet also work as a birthday treat. I went back to the *Remembrance* novelisation, the original television episodes, multiple history books (I read one backstage at the Edinburgh festival whilst in a play that contributed one tiny but vital bit of info... with Sophie Aldred herself sat in the audience watching the show at the same time!). Eventually after quite a while, I got a story that I was happy with. All of the research came together into a concept I couldn’t wait to write, little ideas and notions all blending together. The month or so I spent in coffee shops tapping away over egg nog lattes was a great pleasure.

Having been a **Doctor Who** fan for over thirty years, to be involved in the show’s fiftieth anniversary celebrations in any way was always going to be a thrill. One connection would have been great. To write two of the Big Finish audios coming out in November 2013 is a privilege. I only hope the plays prove worthy of the honour. **VORTEX**

REGENERATION

I just wanted to first of all state what a fabulous job everyone at Big Finish has done in producing your audio dramas. I'm also very appreciative of the many sales you've been having recently. My income doesn't really allow for a lot of purchases and I was very excited to get the opportunity to try out many of your **Doctor Who** dramas as well as a couple of your **Dark Shadows** releases as well. All have been top notch and I'm looking forward to the chance to sample other ranges in the future. On that note, I do have one suggestion and one question in regards to future ranges:

1. Even from the few I've heard thus far, I'm really enjoying what you and Colin Baker have done with the Sixth Doctor and I really feel that the version presented in your audios is superior to the one Colin was allowed to portray on TV. Along with the main range releases I've also had the chance to listen to a few of the Sixth Doctor **Lost Stories** which are highly enjoyable. I was curious if you've ever given any thought to writing an appropriate regeneration story for the Sixth Doctor. Aside from having his tenure on the show cut so short, I feel the biggest crime to the Sixth Doctor and Colin Baker was not to allow him a proper send-off. Although we did get the Sylvester McCoy-in-a-Colin-wig regeneration in *Time and the Rani*, I don't recall an actual explanation given for the cause of his regeneration. I think a proper regeneration story for Colin's Doctor is long overdue and would give great closure to his overall run as the character.

2. Aside from the **Doctor Who** range, I'm very excited about the other ranges you're producing, including **Dark Shadows**, **Highlander** (of which I'd love to see full cast dramas produced) and **Sherlock Holmes**, as well as upcoming new ranges like **The Avengers**. I was wondering if you'd ever given any thought to obtaining the rights to and producing full cast audios based on Richard Carpenter's **Robin of Sherwood**. This interpretation has always been my favourite version of the Robin

Hood legend and having rewatched it again recently on Blu-ray, it occurred to me that there is a lot Big Finish could do with the range. Aside from being able to create new stories to fit either version of Robin (Michael Praed or Jason Connery), I think it would also be an amazing chance to create the originally planned fourth series for audio.

Thank you for your time and keep up the great work.

Robert Graff

Nick: Hi Robert, glad you like the Sixth Doctor stories. Colin spoke to us very early on about what he'd like us to do, and it turns out he was dead right. He's also a joy to work with. You may have heard his current theory about the Doctors, which he's telling everyone about at conventions these days. He's only kind of joking, but he's also quite adamant about it. We never saw his Doctor regenerate, because he didn't! He's still the Doctor and the other Doctors are some other, alternative line of Doctors. But seriously, though, he's dead against us doing a regeneration story, so we would never force him to do something he wasn't keen on. Glad you like our other ranges. I'm afraid the **Highlander** audios never found an audience, and full-cast drama would be extremely expensive, given that very few people apparently want to buy them anyway. We can't see that there's a huge audience for **Robin of Sherwood**, either – a series which we all love. We did do **Robin Hood** audios based on the recent BBC reinterpretation of it, and they didn't exactly sell in large quantities. If we did ever decide to do Robin Hood, it seems silly to have to pay for the rights to use a character who is in the public domain. But the real answer is, we have no plans to do this currently.

KLEIN

Thank you for bringing back Klein for the latest three-story arc with the Seventh Doctor. I thought her return in *A Thousand Tiny Wings* properly balanced her villainy and tragedy, and when I listened to *The Architects of History*, I feared that would be the last we'd hear from her. Rehabilitated

though she is, I do hope that this new Klein still keeps the Doctor on his toes.

Phil Nadeau

Nick: Did you hear her in **UNIT: Dominion**?

MINUS THE LESS-GREAT BITS!

I'm not sure if this is the right email address to send this to, but I just wanted to send you fan mail and tell you guys how awesome you are.

I started watching the new **Doctor Who** a few years ago at the suggestion of a friend, and from there I ended up getting into the fandom and watching Classic **Who** as well. A Classic **Who** fan then recommended Big Finish to me, and I started with *Storm Warning* as I'd heard good things about the Eighth Doctor. Now, several years later, I no longer watch the current series and I rarely watch Classic **Who**, but I'm constantly listening to Big Finish and have close to one hundred audios (an expensive habit!). Your audio plays are wonderful and often keep me entertained on a long commute on public transit. They're so well written, acted and produced, and the format really encourages you to expand your imagination.

It's great experiencing new adventures with characters I love, minus the less-great bits from the original show, like poor special effects or sexism towards the companions. And it's also great to meet fabulous new companions, like Evelyn or the incomparable Lucie Miller. I also greatly enjoy getting to see nuances of the Doctor's character that previously had not been illuminated – I especially love your adventures featuring the Sixth Doctor and the Eighth Doctor, though I've enjoyed all of the audios I've heard.

Anyway, I just wanted to let you know how much I appreciate what you all do. Keep up the fabulous work!

Desiree Herrera


Nick: Thanks Desiree, it's lovely for us to read an email like yours. You kind of home in on everything we've set out to achieve. My only worry about printing this email is that it sounds like we wrote it! Anyway, it's a real boost to know we've got it just right for you.



WHAT HAPPENED NEXT...?

BIG THINGS ARE AFOOT IN THE LATEST **LIBERATOR CHRONICLES BOX SET, **VOLUME 6**. THE WRITERS REVEAL ALL...**

PETER ANGHELIDES

 *Incentive* is my companion piece for *Warship*. That full-cast audio bridges season B and season C, revealing how Blake and Jenna came to leave the *Liberator*. This new audio addresses the question: when the others returned to the ship, how hard did they try to find their missing colleagues?

The other two stories in this sixth **Liberator Chronicles** explore what happened to Blake and Jenna following their escape. But what about our familiar heroes from season C – including newcomers Tarrant and Dayna? That was the most exciting thing about writing this story.


When I started writing **Blake's 7** stories for Big Finish, I began with Blake and Avon. By *Warship* I'd had the great pleasure of writing dialogue for all the available *Liberator* crew from the first two seasons. So it was obviously a fabulous opportunity when they asked me to start on season C!

Tarrant's fairly new to the crew as my story starts. I imagine that it could fit either side of the episode *Volcano* – the last story that mentions them searching for Blake until the season finale. Poor Jenna isn't even name-checked after *Powerplay*. Why was that? And what might have led up to the angry confrontation about Blake between Avon and Tarrant in *Sarcophagus*? Perhaps Avon already regrets putting his faith in Tarrant so quickly – even trusting him enough to give Tarrant control access to the *Liberator*.

And yet *Incentive* didn't originally feature Tarrant as a principal role. When I heard about Steven Pacey's availability, it was perfect timing to rework my original idea – and I think the story is stronger for it.

Steven Pacey and Paul Darrow slipped back effortlessly into their roles, bringing Tarrant and Avon's fractious partnership back to life. You'd never guess that it was the first new **Blake's 7** that they recorded together for nearly a decade and a half.

MARK WRIGHT AND CAVAN SCOTT

 This was the most challenging assignment we'd ever received from Big Finish – tell the story of what happened to Roj Blake from the moment he left the *Liberator* in *Star One* to returning in *Blake* for that unforgettable climax to one of the best TV dramas of all time.

Along with the fate of Jenna Stannis – so brilliantly brought to life by Steve Lyons in *Jenna's Story* – these are events that every **Blake's 7** fan has wanted to see resolved for over three decades, and probably have imagined in their heads over and over. To actually be given the opportunity to write that story was exciting and daunting.

We wanted to push Blake a little – what does the man who has lost everything have left to lose? How does he relate to the most important people in his life when they are no longer there? When we see him in *Blake*, although he is resolved and determined, this is clearly a man who has lived a life. There's a fragile quality to Blake's

"WE WANTED TO PUSH BLAKE A LITTLE – WHAT DOES THE MAN WHO HAS LOST EVERYTHING HAVE LEFT TO LOSE?"


determination in that final episode, and we wanted to explore the psychological aspect of that amongst his experiences before Gauda Prime.

Despite the daunting prospect of writing *Blake's Story*, we knew we had the talent of Gareth Thomas to bring the story to life. His performance is breathtaking, cutting to the heart of a character he knows so well. He brings out the hope and determination of Blake, tinged with a loneliness and desperation to find his way back to his cause.

The reaction has been strong, as we expected. Not only does everyone have their own theory of what happened after *Star One*, they also have their own view about the great man himself. For some he is a hero. Others believe he's a madman. Is he a tragic figure or misunderstood? The joy of these characters is that he can be all of these things. The characters of **Blake's 7** can be interpreted in so many ways. That's why we love them so much.

Anything else? Oh yes, you find out how Blake got that scar...

STEVE LYONS

 *Jenna's Story* does exactly what it says on the spine. It takes us from the moment that Jenna abandoned the Liberator all the way up to... well, let's just say we learn the truth about her fate at long last.

It was an honour to be asked to write this script. In a series like **The Liberator Chronicles** – set in the gaps between old television episodes – you don't expect to have the fate of a major character placed in your hands.

There was some discussion about the Big Question, of course – was Blake lying to Tarrant in the final episode or wasn't he? Does Jenna live or does she die? – but actually, less than I thought there would be.

David Richardson had his own idea about how *Jenna's Story* should end – and, because I agreed with him completely, I just said, 'Yup' and got on with it.

I wrote up a rough outline. Then a flurry of e-mails passed between me and David and Cav and Mark, as we worked out the details of how *Jenna's Story* and *Blake's Story* would intersect.

I was keen to write Jenna as a strong, independent character. I felt that, on TV, she took a back seat to her crewmates (literally) far too often. Now that she was separated from them, it was time for her to take charge of her own destiny.

The best thing about this story, though, is just knowing that – over three decades after her character 'died' off-screen – we have Sally Knyvette back in the studio to show us what really happened. And hopefully, there will even be a few surprises along the way.

We find Jenna on a lawless frontier world – where she has just infiltrated the organisation of a ruthless warlord. She wants to recruit him. Jenna Stannis is building an army.

VORTEX

BLAKE'S 7: THE LIBERATOR CHRONICLES VOLUME 6 IS OUT NOW AND AVAILABLE ON CD AND DOWNLOAD FROM BIGFINISH.COM





LISTEN AGAIN: THE FOUR DOCTORS

WITH LATEST MULTI-DOCTOR
EXTRAVAGANZA **THE LIGHT AT
THE END** OUT NOW, KENNY
SMITH LOOKS BACK AT THE
LAST UNION OF TIME LORDS IN
THE FOUR DOCTORS

It was the story when Big Finish's Doctors came to the fore – when Peter Davison, Colin Baker, Sylvester McCoy and Paul McGann defeated the Daleks. Released in December 2010, Peter Anghelides wrote *The Four Doctors*, which mainly kept the different incarnations apart until a scene at the end which brought them together (and was added by executive producer Nicholas Briggs).

Nick explains, "It was a busy, busy time and we needed someone who could deliver quickly. Peter is a very fast, no-nonsense writer, with a good sense of narrative."

"Big Finish originally asked me about doing a **Doctor Who** version of **A Christmas Carol**," says Peter, before the idea was dropped due a clash with the Matt Smith 2010 Christmas special on TV. "The CD was coming out as a festive special for subscribers, and that was therefore quite a good proposal. They were also quite keen that I kept the Doctors apart, and do something less obviously like previous multi-Doctor stories.

"I'd written an audio for Peter Davison (*The Chaos Pool*), but not for any of the other three Doctors. I'd done three novels for the Eighth Doctor, and short fiction featuring the Seventh. But this was my first chance to write anything for the Sixth.

"Part of the brief was to keep them apart, for two reasons. One reason was the availability of the principal actors – you can record stuff separately and combine them later, but that's a post-production complexity you may prefer to avoid. Another more important reason was to avoid retreading some of the sort of 'dandy/clown/fancypants/scarecrow' dialogue. That's quite amusing stuff, but it's much more interesting to explore other things.

"In my script, the four Doctors work together over an extended period of time (from their perspective) because they are the same person, not because they happen to be in the same place at the same time. I had a variety of excuses about why the Doctor couldn't meet himself in the story, with the crux being that distanced Fifth/Eighth conversation."

Peter enjoyed the challenge of not just writing for the Daleks, but having the very rare chance to bring together multiple Doctors in the one story. "When it comes down to it, how many people get a change to write a Big Finish audio, let alone one with the Daleks in it, let alone one with four Doctors? It was a wonderful experience, and I'm very proud of the final version."

The Four Doctors is only available to **Doctor Who** main range subscribers whose run includes *The Demons of Red Lodge*, or when buying a twelve-release subscription, you can select *The Four Doctors* as your free gift from the **Doctor Who** Special Releases range. **VORTEX**



the **AVENGERS**
COMING JANUARY 2013

FORTCOMING RELEASES

NOVEMBER 2013

Doctor Who: **1963: The Assassination Games**
(1.80, Seventh Doctor, Ace, Counter-Measures)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: **The Beginning**
(8.05, First Doctor)

Doctor Who - The Lost Stories: **Lords of the Red Planet**
(4.03, Second Doctor)

Bernice Summerfield: **Missing Persons Box Set**

DECEMBER 2013

Doctor Who: **Afterlife** (181, Seventh Doctor, Ace and Hex)

Doctor Who: **Night of the Stormcrow** (Fourth Doctor and Leela)

Doctor Who: **Trial of the Valeyard** (Sixth Doctor – Subscriber Special)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: **The Dying Light**
(8.06, Second Doctor)

Doctor Who - The Lost Stories: **The Mega** (4.04, Third Doctor)
The Ordeals of Sherlock Holmes **Box Set**

JANUARY 2014

Doctor Who: **Antidote to Oblivion** (182, Sixth Doctor and Flip)

Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures: **The King of Sontar**
(3.1, Fourth Doctor and Leela)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: **Luna Romana**
(8.07, Fourth Doctor)

Blake's 7: **Fractures** (1.1, Full Cast)

The Avengers – The Lost Episodes: **Volume 1** (Box Set)

Pathfinder Legends: **Rise of the Runelords – Burnt Offerings**
(1.1, Full Cast)

FEBRUARY 2014

Doctor Who: **The Brood of Eryls** (183, Sixth Doctor and Flip)

Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures: **White Ghosts**
(3.2, Fourth Doctor and Leela)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: **TBA** (8.08, First Doctor)

Doctor Who: **Dark Eyes 2** (Eighth Doctor)

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

Blake's 7: **Battleground** (1.2, Full Cast)

Vienna: **Series One** (Box Set)

Bernice Summerfield: **Adorable Illusion** (Missing Persons tie-in book)

MARCH 2014

Doctor Who: **Scavenger** (184, Sixth Doctor and Flip)

Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures: **The Crooked Man**
(3.3, Fourth Doctor and Leela)

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

(8.09, First Doctor)

Blake's 7: **Drones** (1.3, Full Cast)

Pathfinder Legends: **Rise of the Runelords – The Skinsaw Murders**
(1.2, Full Cast)

APRIL 2014

Doctor Who: **TBA** (185, TBA)

Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures: **The Evil One**
(3.4, Fourth Doctor and Leela)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: **TBA** (8.10, First Doctor)

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

Blake's 7: **Mirror** (1.4, Full Cast)

MAY 2014

Doctor Who: **TBA** (186, TBA)

Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures: **Last of the Colophon**
(3.5, Fourth Doctor and Leela)

Doctor Who: **Philip Hinchcliffe Presents – Volume 1**
(Fourth Doctor and Leela)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: **The Elixir of Doom**
(8.11, Third Doctor)

Blake's 7: **The Liberator Chronicles – Box Set 8**

Blake's 7: **Cold Fury** (1.5, Full Cast)

Blake's 7: **Novel 5** (Author TBA)

Pathfinder Legends: **Rise of the Runelords – The Hook Mountain Massacre** (1.3, Full Cast)

JUNE 2014

Doctor Who: **TBA** (187, TBA)

Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures: **Destroy the Infinite**
(3.6, Fourth Doctor and Leela)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: **Second Chances**
(8.12, Second Doctor)

Survivors: **Series One Box Set**

Blake's 7: **Caged** (1.6, Full Cast)

JULY 2014

Doctor Who: **TBA** (188, TBA)

Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures: **The Abandoned**
(3.7, Fourth Doctor and Leela)

The Avengers – The Lost Episodes: **Volume 2** (Box Set)

Pathfinder Legends: **Rise of the Runelords – Fortress of the Stone Giants** (1.4, Full Cast)

AUGUST 2014

Doctor Who: **TBA** (189, TBA)

Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures: **Zygon Hunt**

(3.8, Fourth Doctor and Leela)

Blake's 7: **The Liberator Chronicles – Box Set 9**





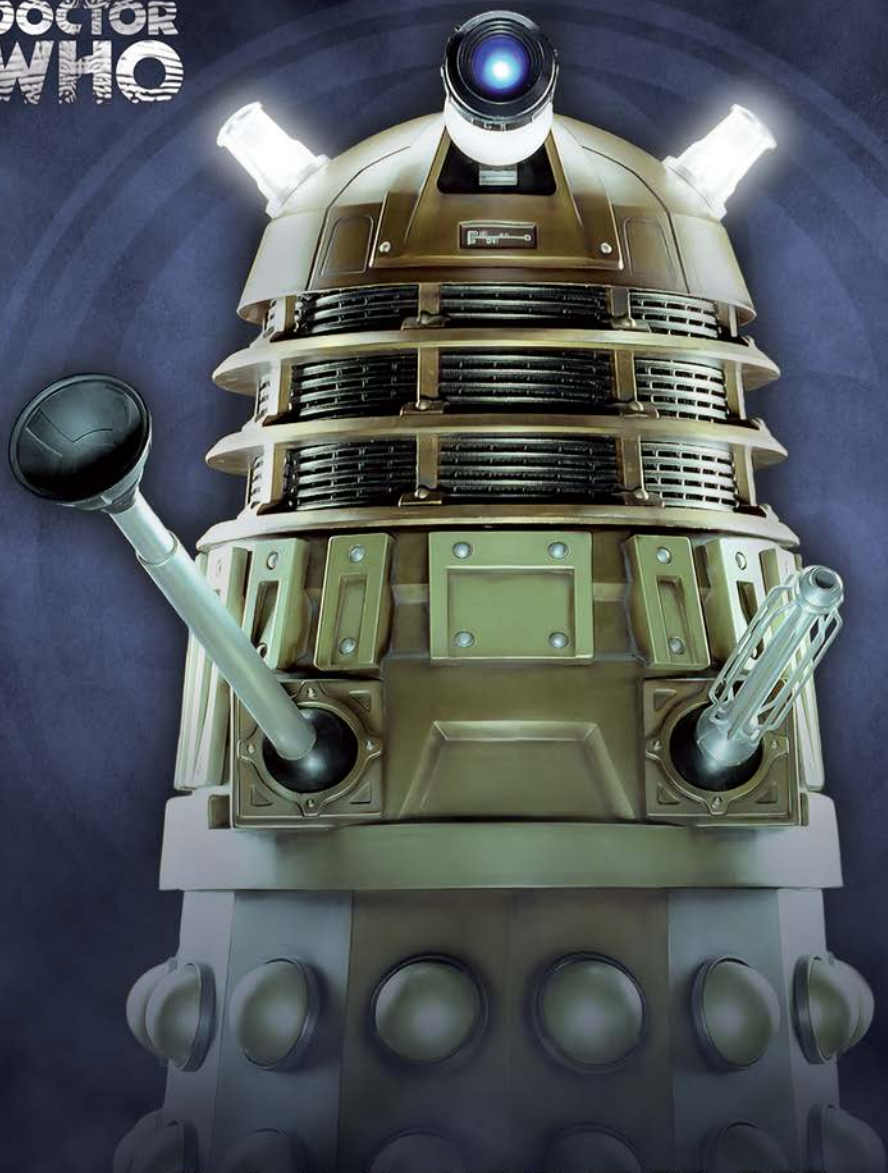
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