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ISSUE 65 • JULY 2014

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DOCTOR WHO – THE ROMANCE OF CRIME AND THE ENGLISH WAY OF DEATH



Two delightful Missing Adventures novels by Gareth Roberts, lovingly adapted into two delightful four-part audio stories by John Dorney. It's the first release for Tom Baker as the Fourth Doctor, Lalla Ward as Romana and John Leeson as K9, and the team will go on to a run of original *Doctor Who* stories in 2016.

In *Romance of Crime*, the travellers arrive on the Rock of Judgement just as strange deaths begin to occur – and a deadly threat from the past rises again... In *The English Way of Death* the TARDIS lands in England in 1930, where they become embroiled in a secret society and an evil industrialist.

Expect witty, elegant writing, brilliant guest casts and the authentic flavour of late 1970s *Doctor Who*, as one of *Doctor Who*'s dream teams is back together!

Out: January 2015

EDITORIAL

HELLO! I'm Kenny, and I've kindly been invited by Big Finish to succeed the late, great Paul Spragg as editor of Vortex. Don't fear if you think that Big Finish have allowed Vortex to fall into the hands of someone who has no idea of what the company is all about. I'm editor of a local weekly newspaper just outside Glasgow in my day job, but I'm one of you, a fan. I wrote volume two of the **Big Finish Companion** (still available at www.bigfinish.com), and before that, was editor of an unofficial Big Finish fanzine, **The Finished Product**.

So, like you, I love my Big Finish.

What I want to do is keep Vortex as an essential part of your monthly Big Finish life – I know that I always download my issue on the first of each month! Over the last couple of years, Paul was kind enough to allow me to contribute Listen Again each month, highlighting Big Finish releases from the past that are worth sampling, and now I look fo'ward to featuring the present and future (I couldn't resist – here's to you, Paul).

Paul's dedication to Big Finish was second to none, going above and beyond the call of duty to ensure that everything ran smoothly, and I feel honoured to have had the pleasure of knowing him through email exchanges (you wouldn't believe the wee things I'd pester him with for the **Big Finish Companion**), regular phone chats on Friday afternoons as I walked to collect my daughter from school, and meeting him at Big Finish Day last spring. He was a true one off, and impossible to replace.

Looking to days to come, there's lots of releases I can't wait to hear over the coming months – the Big Finish version of **Frankenstein**, **The Worlds of Doctor Who**, the return of Matthew Waterhouse as Adric, **Philip Hinchcliffe Presents**, the next **Jago & Litefoot** box set, **Dark Eyes 3**, and, as a New Adventures fan, the adaptation of *The Highest Science*. Actually, looking at the release schedule as I type, there's plenty of other releases on top of that to relish in the coming months.

The individual release I really want to hear is *Domain of the Voord*, which I was fortunate enough to attend the recording of in January last year. It sounded great then – I can't wait to hear what's been done with it in post-production.

But, back to the present. There's plenty to enjoy this month – I adored the first **Avengers** box set, and can't wait to hear four more adventures for John Steed that I'm unfamiliar with. And if you've not heard it yet, **Survivors** is a stunning listen – it's not what I expected it to be at all, and it well worth taking a chance on.

KENNY

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COUNTERACT

The third series of **COUNTER-MEASURES** is out this month, and the cast of the series reveal that the dividing line between them and their characters is narrowing.



COUNTER-Measures – a specialist team created by the British Government to investigate strange phenomena and dangerous technology.

The team return for their third series this month, with four more plays that take the group into places they've never ventured before, in *Changing of the Guard* by Matt Fitton, *The Concrete Cage* by Justin Richards, *The Forgotten Village* by Ken Bentley – making his writing debut for Big Finish – and *Unto the Breach* by John Dorney.

Producer David Richardson said: "For the first time, we went into a season of **Counter-Measures** knowing that it would be back again next year. It allowed us to plan in some long-term storytelling, and start moving around some pieces in our intricate storytelling chess game."

Pamela Salem returns as Professor Rachel Jensen, and she believes that **Counter-Measures** has really found its feet now that the characters have been re-established in the minds of the writers. She said: "I feel I'm coming back to a family – I'm beginning to think I own this laboratory for real! Every time I get the scripts, I think, what happens in this lot? I'm fascinated where it's going to go. It does feel as if we've been working together – which we have!

"I think what's really nice is these characters have got more complex and deeper as the writers have got to know the way we work with each other and their imaginations are running riot. It's become more and more interesting to pull these little things out, which the audience is picking it all up."

Simon Williams again plays Group Captain Ian 'Chunky' Gilmore, and he agreed that the characters are taking on a life of their own – or are taking over the stars! He explained: "It's very nice to



COUNTER-MEASURES SERIES THREE

The British government has created the Counter-Measures group, a specialist team that investigates strange phenomena and dangerous technology. This box set contains four of their adventures plus a behind-the-scenes documentary.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

Written by Matt Fitton
Sir Toby fights for his career, while Counter-Measures leads a very different fight...

THE CONCRETE CAGE

Written by Justin Richards
Counter-Measures investigates strange events at a tower block under construction.

THE FORGOTTEN VILLAGE

Written by Ken Bentley
A personal crisis for Allison turns into one of Counter-Measures' most dangerous assignments.

UNTO THE BREACH

Written by John Dorney
When footage emerges of an alien creature held in the Eastern Bloc, the team goes undercover to find it.

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play characters who you just slip into. The interesting thing that happens is the character and the actor get closer and closer every time – you can't really find the dividing line between Chunky and me, I'm getting more like him or he's getting more like me. I do enjoy playing him, and I terribly enjoy the other three members of **Counter-Measures**.

"I think they get better and better as the writers get to know what the actors can do. They write more and more, it's like tailor-made material and the stories are reaching back in time and forward in time. I think it's the best series so far.



"It's great to see dear Gilmore slightly struggling and probably he's getting a bit long in the tooth, He's not the sharpest knife in the box but I enjoy playing him."

Karen Gledhill – playing Dr Allison Williams – also found that the lines are getting more and more blurred between the actors and their characters. She said: "It's great being back. I've really, really enjoyed seeing everybody again and tackling new stories. It's wonderful.

"It's rather sad, I'm getting more and more caught up in it and I take it very seriously. Ken was actually calling me Allison and even he has got a little bit confused between Karen and Allison. They are fusing!"

Completing the **Counter-Measures** team is Sir Toby Kinsella, played with consummate

debonair wit, charm and authority by Hugh Ross. He said of working on **Counter-Measures**: "It's great, great fun, a real treat – highlight of the year!

"He [Sir Toby] still remains quite ambiguous. He was being terribly flirty with a young secretary and that was an aspect of him we hadn't seen with him before. It's just kind of fun finding other things to do with him. The writers have all got the lines so easy to say, because they now understand the way Toby speaks with the dry, edged lines. I wish I could do it on screen."

The **Counter-Measures** team were out in force when they attended Big Finish Day 4,

'[GILMORE'S] NOT THE SHARPEST KNIFE IN THE BOX BUT I ENJOY PLAYING HIM.'

SIMON WILLIAMS

bringing the group face to face with their devoted fans.

Pamela said: "It was great going together. I'm always slightly apprehensive – is anybody going to be there? It was non-stop, the people were so wonderful lining up. They had collected such a bunch of stuff i'd not seen before and the day shot by.

"Even in America, audiences were saying 'We love **Counter-Measures**,' and that's fantastic. It's really hitting a market and when you think they are just listening to voice, it's terrific they are picking up these little nuances. There are more this time, and there will be more next time, and that makes more rounded characters: they are more fulfilling to do."

Karen added: "It's been a real lesson, meeting the fans of **Doctor Who** and **Counter-Measures**, particularly **Counter-Measures** which seems to have taken on a life of its own. People are coming up and saying how much they enjoy it, without even referencing *Remembrance of the Daleks*, which is nice – it has moved into its own sphere.

"I have the most enormous respect for these people who come along to the conventions. At first I was slightly alarmed

COUNTER-MEASURES

as I wasn't sure what the fan base was and who I'd be meeting, now I've met a lot of people several times. You meet people two or three times, maybe four, and you start to feel they are part of your world, and you are part of theirs. Their knowledge of **Doctor Who** and **Counter-Measures** is completely spectacular and enviable and very, very impressive.

"It's nice when you arrive somewhere and there's a bunch of people who are absolutely delighted to see you – it doesn't happen when you're at home with your family very often!"

Simon believes that Big Finish fans – and followers of audio drama in general – truly invest in their favourite

shows. He explained: "The interesting thing about audio aficionados, is people who know **The Archers** know **The Archers** really well. People who know us know the characters really well.

"I have great respect for that. I don't think this occurs with television drama. You could ask people about **Hollyoaks** and they wouldn't remember what happened last week, but there's something about audio work that imprints, that people retain the stories. They are very vivid. They [the fans] are very passionate, kind of very undemanding and very humble – they just seem so appreciative that we come and I think that's adorable. It's such a cold medium to be in a booth playing these parts; to meet the audience is a great treat."

With **Counter-Measures** having reached a third series, as well as doing last year's *The Assassination Games* in the main **Doctor Who** monthly range, the actors are well and truly back in the flow of working together.

Hugh said: "Pamela is extremely bright, extremely hard-working and sometimes worries too much but you can tease her and she quickly gets over it

"Simon is just an outrage – he's far too much fun. I love working with Simon, he makes me laugh a lot.

'SIMON IS VERY, VERY NAUGHTY, HE MAKES US ALL LAUGH A GREAT DEAL. I LOVE WORKING WITH HIM.'

KAREN GLEDHILL



"Karen is quite like Allison, very well cast – she's very earnest and rather more of a method actor than I am. She takes it all extremely seriously."

Karen countered: "I think we're all slightly adopting traits of our own characters. Hugh likes to play on this inscrutability that Toby Kinsella has.

"Simon is very, very naughty, he makes us all laugh a great deal. I love working with him. Underneath his naughtiness he's a true gentleman, he treats all of us with an enormous amount of respect and he's very, very funny. I find him absolutely delightful and look forward to seeing him each time. We've now started playing Scrabble on the internet!

"Pamela is just the most unchanging person. Even from all those many years ago, she just doesn't seem to change, she's so gracious and thoughtful and there's something truly regal

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COUNTER-MEASURES

about her. I find her very, very kind, very easy to work with and completely inhabits the character of Rachel."

Pamela in turn was full of praise for Karen: "Karen's lovely, she hasn't changed in all these years, it makes me sick! She looks really as she did and it's just as much fun playing with her. Now I'm beginning to feel like her grandmother instead of her mother!

"It's lovely to be reunited – but it really does feel like the gap between our ages has got bigger!

"Hugh's much nicer than the boss in the series! I love him dearly, we've now done some travelling together. I feel much fonder towards him than I do with my boss in the story.

"All my make-up runs when I'm working with Simon. He's a natural wit, Simon. He made us laugh all those years ago and he makes us laugh even more now. He gets away with murder. I don't know how he does it! It lifts my spirits to work with him."

Simon too is full of affection for his co-stars. He said: "Pamela is everyone's fantasy of the cool, sophisticated no-nonsense woman, who everybody rather wants to make laugh or ruffle her hair a bit. She's got this icy-cool, efficient quality that comes from her wonderfully articulate voice. She's a joy to work with and in real life is completely giggly and lovely.

"Karen is absolute head girl material. I think of her as being the chief Girl Guide of the group! She's very good on her homework, she's very conscientious, and she's great fun – she's lovely. I've kept in touch with her a bit over the years since we first met in the 80s when we worked on *Remembrance of the Daleks*. She hasn't changed a bit in that time, she's still a prefect, really! She's quite easily shocked, which is great fun, and she's terribly good in the role.

"And Hugh – I could listen to that voice all day long! He's always in a booth to my left, and there's always a little twinkle in his eye. He's very dry and a wonderful actor and something slightly sinister in the way he speaks. I'm sure when we decide to wrap up the series after ten seasons we

'IT'S LOVELY TO BE REUNITED - BUT IT REALLY DOES FEEL LIKE THE GAP BETWEEN OUR AGES HAS GOT BIGGER!'

PAMELA SALEM

will find he's been a double agent all along!"

While there's plenty of fun to be had behind the scenes, things are about to get much, much darker for the Counter-Measures team as new dangers arise over the course of the third series.

David added: "On the face of it, series three is four new standalone cases for the group that will take them to gangland London, a construction site, a rural village and East Berlin. It also drives us towards series four – and I think it's going to be a long wait between seasons!

"There's also some lovely character stuff this time. You may learn more about Toby this season, or perhaps you might learn less. Allison's background and upbringing are exposed in Ken Bentley's *The Forgotten Village*, Rachel is pushed to breaking point and Gilmore is more willing to question orders."

Talking of *The Forgotten Village*, Karen said: "Some things are explained about Allison which will help me in the future, to move on and I found it actually quite touching. I'm surprised by it... it's a little unusual but I'm really enjoying doing it."

Hugh added: "It was very, very good, it was excellent. It rattled along very nicely, a very English, pastoral thing with this village having its problems with a bit of alien invasion."

Pamela concluded: "So many possibilities have come into the stories, the universe is our limit. I want to know where it goes too!" **VORTEX**

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SURVIVOR MANUAL

SINCE BEING RELEASED LAST MONTH, BIG FINISH'S NEWEST SERIES, *SURVIVORS*, HAS GATHERED UNIVERSAL PRAISE AND OUTSTANDING CRITICAL SUCCESS IN REVIEWS.

BASED on Terry Nation's BBC series which ran from 1975-77, Big Finish's newest series will provoke debate, entertain and shock in equal measure.

Producer David Richardson said: "I love *Survivors* and I always have, right back to when I saw episode one on its first transmission in 1975. I'd always felt like we should do the show on audio, and as our catalogue has grown over the years it seemed the perfect point to apply for a licence.

"No big story there – we asked, and Tim Hancock who represents Terry Nation's estate kindly said yes. Tim's always been very supportive towards Big Finish and what we do, and it's a privilege to be trusted with another of Terry Nation's brilliant creations."

Original series characters Greg Richards (Ian McCulloch) and Jenny Preston (Lucy Fleming) appear, along with brief cameos from Carolyn Seymour as Abby Grant.

The new series doesn't pick up from where the TV series left off, as it instead runs parallel with the first run of the television series, as the outbreak of the disease begins to take its toll across the Earth.

Script editor Matt Fitton said: "It was always the intent to begin at the beginning. When David came to me with the commission, he said that this was the way we were going to do it: tell the story of the outbreak with our own original characters and then integrate Greg and Jenny into the storyline.

"It's a very sensible course of action: this way, people who don't know the TV series, or who remember it only vaguely can pick up this boxset of stories and start the journey afresh. Equally, those more familiar with the TV series can enjoy spotting how the audio series interweaves with the events we see in the first few TV episodes. It also means that, in using our own characters, there is still that real sense of jeopardy: we truly don't know which of them will make it."

Ian McCulloch was delighted to return to the part of Greg after nearly 40 years. He explained: "It's one of those things that amaze: that things have such a long life and people remember and have been influenced by them and enjoyed them, and someone wants to produce them in another form of media.



SURVIVORS
SERIES ONE

REVELATION

Written by Matt Fitton
When people begin to die of a new strain of a flu virus, newspaper journalists Helen Wiseman and Daniel Connor investigate. They uncover a terrifying story – but will anyone ever get to read it?

EXODUS

Written by Jonathan Morris
Billions of people have died across the globe. Cities are rife with secondary diseases, and the survivors attempt to make their way out of London.

JUDGES

Written by Andrew Smith
After a storm wipes out much of their community's supplies, Greg and Jenny go in search of new provisions – much to Abby's disapproval.

ESTHER

Written by John Dorney
Greg, Jenny and their new friends are trapped. Will they ever make it out alive?

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"It's rather gratifying and adds to the life of something you thought would die when it finished 30 plus years ago.

"I do think it's written in a style that Terry Nation would have approved of and it very much fits in with the first series that he wrote. I wasn't happy with the direction it took after he stopped writing so it's a pleasure to read something that seems to develop in the way he did, with drama that holds your attention from beginning to end."

Original co-star Lucy Fleming added: "The appeal of coming back was huge because it's a part and a series I love when we did

university lecturer who lectures in sociology. He's a man who's particularly interested in the structures of society and how society evolves and how it's held together.

"In this terrible crisis, this dreadful illness, society is reduced to its principal components of food, survival and shelter, things we take for granted in our beautifully centrally heated homes and fully-stocked supermarkets.

"People have to use their wits to survive. He elects himself, with the best will in the world, to be the leader of a somewhat utopian society where people will be able to band together to forge, out of this

"SOCIETY IS REDUCED TO ITS PRINCIPAL COMPONENTS OF FOOD, SURVIVAL AND SHELTER." ADRIAN LUKIS

it in the 70s. It was very much part of my younger life and I've been very fond of it ever since. It's just lovely to come back and, slightly older, have another go at bringing Jenny to life.

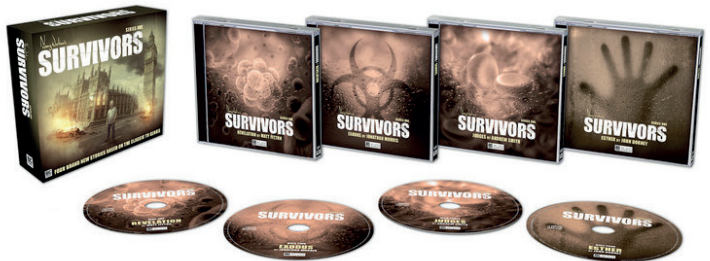
"I think it's been interesting with the way people have stayed with the series and younger audiences are finding them on DVD. It is a universal theme, when everybody had different questions about what they would do to survive."

Appearing in all four episodes of this first series of *Survivors* is Adrian Lukis, who plays the crucial role of James Gillison, who establishes a community for survivors within a polytechnic.

Adrian explained: "He's a very, very interesting character because he's an intellectual, he's highly intelligent, he's a

terrible crisis, a new white heat of social cohesion and live intelligently. He makes the mistake of all those despots, from Stalin, Ghengis and Pol Pot, to create the perfect society in their own image and unfortunately that can't brook dissent. He sets out with the best will in the world."

Another new character is Daniel Connor, a journalist, who is brought to life by John Banks. He said: "Daniel is a great treat to play – he's a fascinating character and as you will see from the opening episodes, he's taken into this story looking at his friends being ill and thinking, as a journalist, 'I can make something of this and use this as a fantastic story,' little realising that his friends who are falling ill are part of a global pandemic and terrible things are going to happen.





“THERE’S A KIND OF LEVITY IN THE RECORDING OF THEM WHICH IS INEVITABLE AS THE STORYLINES ARE SO DARK” JOHN BANKS

The plays have a very serious feel to them, as the remaining members of humanity fight against the odds – and each other – to survive. In the new Big Finish world of **Survivors**, you’re never quite sure who’s going to make it from one episode to the next.

John Banks added: “I am very keen on the dark and apocalyptic, I enjoy working on great scripts with a lot of meat and reasonance to them and all four of the scripts are fantastically dark.

“Curiously enough, there’s a kind of levity in the recording of them which is inevitable as the storylines are

so dark and people are put into extreme circumstances. You get the two things going on together – I am personally finding it fascinating to do, I don’t find it depressing at all.”

Script editor Matt added: “I am absolutely delighted with the final box set – I think everyone involved is!

“Everything from the incredible performances, detailed sound design, Nick Briggs’s strange, unsettling, ambient ‘music’ – it’s all come together to make something very distinctive in the Big

Finish stable – I do think **Survivors** sounds unique. It’s an adult, challenging drama that pushes our performers to the limit. Across all the stories,

“I am so pleased with how the narrative has come together: establishing this world, then taking on a particular journey with one community – Jonny, Andrew and John have written some powerful, emotional scripts. And the cast – did I mention the cast already? – in many cases playing against type, and showcasing the fact that we truly have the best of the best working for us. I’m so very proud of **Survivors** – I just hope lots and lots of people get to hear it.” **VORTEX**



“He has to reassess pretty much everything up to that point in his life he’s assumed, as do all the characters.”

Someone who was almost in the original **Survivors** TV series – but ultimately didn’t appear – was Louise Jameson, who now makes up for lost time. Lou said: “Although I was never in it, it’s **Survivors** that was the foundation stone of my career because Pennant Roberts interviewed me for **Survivors**, liked me very much, didn’t think I was right for the part, remembered me then cast me as Leela, and much later as Blanche in **Tenko**: two huge stepping stones, from one little interview that didn’t quite pay off.

“I love it – the writing on this is extraordinary. I haven’t read the very first script because I didn’t come in till the second episode, and I just loved it – it just leapt off the page. It’s incredibly moving and economic writing – I adore it.

“Jackie carries a very dark secret around with her and that’s going to influence the audience’s hearing of her all the way through, even though other characters in the scene are unaware of her profound grief.”

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LOUISE Jameson is a woman of many talents – she’s best-known for her acting, but also her work with young people, encouraging them to become actors and help them hone their craft. This month, she adds another string to her bow, as she makes her **Doctor Who** writing debut.

THE RENAISSANCE WOMAN

LOUISE Jameson has never been one to rest on her laurels, and this month has co-written for the **Fourth Doctor Adventures**, *The Abandoned*, collaborating with Nigel Fairs.

Producer David Richardson said: “We all know that Lou is a really brilliant and confident actor, but it’s been a joy to learn that her skill set also extends into great scriptwriting. I saw *My Gay Best Friend*, the stage show she wrote with Nigel Fairs, and was deeply impressed by its wit, charm and depth of emotion. And when, shortly afterwards, Louise asked if we might consider her writing a **Doctor Who**, the reply was an instant ‘yes’.”

Lou said: “I actually had two ideas for a story, one for a **Companion Chronicle**, and the other was this. It came about when I was at a convention, and when I was looking out at the audience, I realised just what an eclectic and extraordinary bunch the fans are.

“**Doctor Who** can attract the most challenged minds and literally the best minds in the country. Imagination can keep you trapped in a room because of what you think is on the other side. But imagination can also get you a job in Australia. If you envisage yourself there, you can make it happen.

“Imagination is your best friend and your worst enemy.

“I thought how interesting it would be to have the enemy and the saviour being the same thing, as imagination can both hamper and liberate.

“Given that Leela doesn’t have an enormous amount of imagination, being of a very literal mind, but the Doctor does – he really thinks outside the box all of the time – it would be a perfect story for the two of them.”

The Abandoned gives Louise a chance to be reunited with her former **Tenko** co-star, Stephanie Cole, who played Dr Beatrice Mason, when Louise was Blanche Simmons. Louise explained: “I wanted to work with my dear friend since



DOCTOR WHO: THE ABANDONED

The Point of Stillness. A place the Time Lords are forbidden to go. It cannot be drawn, it cannot be whispered, it cannot be thought. And yet somebody is very keen to reach it.

Deep within the TARDIS, something unusual is happening. One of the ship's oldest secrets is about to be revealed, and once it is, nothing will ever be the same again.

As danger materialises deep within the ship, spectral strangers lurk in the corridors and bizarre events flood the rooms, someone long-forgotten is ready to reappear. The Doctor and Leela are soon to discover that their home isn't quite the safe stronghold they thought.

Written By: Nigel Fairs
and Louise Jameson
Directed By: Nicholas Briggs

Cast
Tom Baker (The Doctor)
Louise Jameson (Leela)
Stephanie Cole (Marianna)
Mandi Symonds (One)
Andy Snowball (Two)
Nigel Fairs (Three)

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1981, Steph Cole. When I rang her up and told her about the story, before a scene was written, I wanted to ask her if she'd like to be involved, she said yes, straight away. She said, 'I get to play a mad old lady, be in the TARDIS and work with Tom Baker. How can I say no?'

"I was delighted as I got to co-write it with my good friend Nigel, and I got my best friend in to act in it. As I'd never written a thing like this before, I needed mentoring, and Nigel took my initial idea and ran with it. He writes so well for Leela."

As well as writing for Leela, Louise also had the chance to write for Tom Baker –

'Imagination can keep you trapped in a room because of what you think is on the other side. But imagination can also get you a job in Australia.'

and put words in his mouth, for once! Lou smiled: "It was great writing for Tom, I can say that without hesitation. I'm so fond of him now, but it's well-known we didn't have the greatest working relationship when we did *Doctor Who* on TV.

"I love the man – I can say that I count him as one of my best friends, which makes it so much easier to write for him, and Leela does have a fair crack of the whip in *The Abandoned*. I know her voice so well, and the Doctor is still there to save her at the end of the day."

Louise is no stranger to other roles with Big Finish, having previously directed last October's *Companion Chronicle*, *Ghost in the Machine*, which starred Katy Manning as Jo Grant. Lou explained: "I directed Katy in one of the *Companion Chronicles*, which was a great experience.

"Katy is a tough old cookie, but surprisingly nervous, and you have to woo her into the recording booth. As soon as

she's in there, she produces gold dust.

"I'd directed a lot of stage work as I work with teenagers and students – if you can cope with them, you can cope with actors as well!

"As I've become older, the more interested I've become in the overview, the bigger picture, of how the production is made.

"When you're a younger actor, it's almost like being a teenager – you think you are the centre of the universe, and when you get older and have children yourself, you realise how insignificant you are, you are just here to help your fellow human



beings. It's like that, when you look at how productions are made."

As well as writing, directing and acting for Big Finish, Louise is also involved in the organisation of Timey Wimey, a convention being held on November 23 this year. Other guests include her Big Finish co-stars Tom Baker and John Leeson, as well as Sophie Aldred, Sarah Sutton and Wendy Padbury.

She added: "It's a challenge – but I love it all." **VORTEX**



AN EVEN KEEL

JOHN STEED, TOP PROFESSIONAL, AND HIS PARTNER, DAVID KEEL, TALENTED AMATEUR — OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE AVENGERS — ARE BACK!

July sees the second box set of plays adapted from the long-lost first season of **The Avengers**, with Julian Wadham returning as Steed, and Anthony Howell playing Keel once more. Adapted by John Dorney from the original TV scripts, Keel has now adapted to his new life of occasionally assisting Steed in his duplicitous dealings, following the murder of his fiancée Peggy.

For many people, **The Avengers** is about John Steed and his female partner of the period, but that's not the case for the early years, as Anthony Howell explains of Keel: "He's a doctor — a very well-respected and capable doctor who lost his fiancée tragically at the beginning of the series, and is now part of Steed's gang of intrepid detectives.

"How would you describe Steed? He's very enigmatic.

"David Keel works with him, he has been seconded to

Steed's assignments from time to time, but still runs his practice, so he's sort of got one foot in the espionage-spy world and one foot in his rather ordinary GP practice."

The series has three regulars, with not just Steed and Keel, but the doctor's secretary Carol Wilson, played by Lucy Briggs-Owen.

Anthony said: "I think the key to Keel is his relationship with Steed, and then the relationship to Carol. Steed and he spar with each other so reading the scenes between him and Steed, you get a feeling that he has his own mind and is strong-willed, but he's also quite a complex character in terms of what he wants and how he deals with life after his fiancée's death. They are both quite enigmatic characters."

To listeners of the first Big Finish series, the vast majority will have been familiar with the original Dr Keel, as played by Ian Hendry, although only two-and-a-third of his episodes exist in the StudioCanal archive. Anthony felt more at home with this recording block, as he has been able to make this character his own having had the previous experience of playing Keel.

"Before recording the first four, I listened to the clips and everything I could find online because the two roles



THE AVENGERS: THE LOST EPISODES VOLUME TWO

ASHES OF ROSES

Written by Peter Ling and Sheila Ward, adapted by John Dorney
Carol goes undercover at a hairdressing salon, which appears to be at the centre of an arson ring.

PLEASE DON'T FEED THE ANIMALS

Written by Dennis Spooner, adapted by John Dorney
Steed takes on blackmailers who are extorting secrets from government officials.

THE RADIOACTIVE MAN

Written by Fred Edge, adapted by John Dorney
Someone is at loose in London, unwittingly carrying a radioactive isotope.

DANCE WITH DEATH

Written by Peter Ling and Sheila Ward, adapted by John Dorney
Dr Keel is framed for murder, and Steed investigates a dance school.

OUT THIS MONTH ON CD AND
DOWNLOAD!

(of Steed and Keel) are quite iconic and the series is definitely a cult, iconic series. But now as we've done the first four and having done those, you feel that it's more yours now, that I'm playing Keel, rather than Ian Hendry.

"There's still the period, which you have to think about, the language, what is going on at the time, the attitudes of men, the attitudes of women, the attitudes of men towards women... which we're very aware of with some of Steed's remarks."

"I think Keel is more under my skin now."

The second box set features adaptations of the episodes *Ashes of Roses*, *Please Don't Feed the Animals*, *The Radioactive Man*

'[KEEL'S] SORT OF GOT ONE FOOT IN THE ESPIONAGE SPY WORLD AND ONE FOOT IN HIS RATHER ORDINARY GP PRACTICE.'



and *Dance With Death*, all of which were broadcast in 1961.

Anthony admitted there was a challenge about getting into the mindset to make the plays sound as they would have on original transmission: "I suppose when you approach a script that's not contemporary, it's a good idea to read around the period and find out what was going on, certainly the scripts we have to do them pretty much verbatim. It's difficult at first because you are not often saying things the way you would not but at the same time it's also a good thing as it helps you get into the period and the character, and the delivery.

"It think it's good – it's nice as an actor to have to try something different. I'm enjoying it."

This set features a host of guest stars, including Terry Molloy, Beth Chalmers, Dan Starkey and Jacqueline King, with whom Anthony enjoyed working.

The actor enjoys the audio medium, especially for Big Finish.

He said: "I think it's just another facet of what I do, another discipline – there's film, television and theatre, and there's radio, and now there's recorded drama. I've been doing it for a few years now with Big Finish. I love it.

"It's so immediate, you tend to work with really lovely people, there's not the stresses and strains of working in front of the camera or on stage, and you get access to the most incredible scripts. I've done *Doctor Who* and *Blake's 7*, which were huge childhood favourites, and now I'm doing *The Avengers*."

With more episodes to come, and the first box set having had a positive response from fans, Anthony admits he's enjoyed hearing the fans' views on the 21st century revival of the series.

He smiled: "It's been lovely, actually – I joined Twitter a while ago and I follow Big Finish's updates – and when the news was released when we were recording the first four, the response was fantastic.

"There were lovely comments about Julian and myself, and the other actors, because we've had a great cast and continue to have a great cast. The response has been great." **VORTEX**

DOCTOR WHO: THE COMPANION CHRONICLES

THE TIME VAMPIRE

WE CELEBRATE ALL THINGS LEELA WITH A LOOK BACK AT HER LAST MOMENTS OF LIFE...



LEELA is one of the most popular *Doctor Who* characters to have featured in Big Finish plays – she’s appeared in the main monthly range in *Zagreus*, in *Gallifrey* with Romana, alongside Jago & Litefoot for two series, in the *Fourth Doctor Adventures*, and the *Fourth Doctor Lost Stories*.

She’s also appeared in various *Companion Chronicles*, which have been written by her close friend Nigel Fairs, in an initial trilogy comprising *The Catalyst*, *Empathy Games* and *The Time Vampire*. The latter was released in May 2011, and – surprisingly – brought Leela’s life to an end.

Nigel had a tremendous time writing for his friend, and admitted: “It was a joy. I love working with Lou and by the time I wrote this one I had a much more thorough knowledge of her working techniques so I could tailor the script to her many considerable strengths! I’d also seen her tour in *Women On The Verge Of HRT* that summer so I knew she did a mean Belfast accent!”

The Time Vampire challenges the listener to play the release more than once to fully appreciate the storyline.

The writer explains: “I’ve always thought that if people are shelling out money for a CD, then they should benefit from a second, third or fourth listening!”

Producer David Richardson added: “When Nigel writes I tend to leave him to do pretty much everything.”

Louise Jameson was delighted to return as Leela again for the *Companion Chronicles*. She said: “I’ll just keep doing

scripts as long as they keep throwing them at me! I feel hugely loyal to them. It’s not as if they are getting boring or monotonous or repetitive. I really marvel at the writers.

“David Richardson keeps a strong eye and I know he sends them back for re-writes if he doesn’t think they cut the mustard. He really cares and wants to knock them into shape before we do them.

‘THE TIME VAMPIRE CHALLENGES THE LISTENER TO PLAY THE RELEASE MORE THAN ONCE TO FULLY APPRECIATE THE STORYLINE.’

“Nigel Fairs is also an editor, and as an actor you don’t always trust an editor. If I’m playing two different voices and want a certain rhythm in the scene, I’m effectively talking to myself.

“On one occasion Nigel told me he wanted to do a slight treatment on the other voice so requested I change it so I wasn’t speaking in natural rhythms. He told me to trust him, and because he knows me so well he can say these things to me, and he was right.

“It makes a huge difference if a writer you trust is editing their own work, and as an actor you feel safe with them, you can go anywhere.”

Nigel, who not only wrote the play but directed it and performed the post-production duties, added: “I was very pleased with it. Lou of course was superb, I loved working with John Leeson again and I’m particularly proud of the music score for that one. Emma Gray’s vocals are hauntingly beautiful.” **VORTEX**

DOCTOR WHO: THE TIME VAMPIRE IS OUT NOW ON CD AND DOWNLOAD!

VORTEX MAIL

I finally got around to listening to this story [*The Adventure of the Perfidious Mariner*] – The first **Sherlock Holmes** audio I have ever listened to. I bought it during the 12 days of Christmas sale, but I was not sure if I would enjoy it or not as I had only ever listened to sci-fi audio dramas from you before so I had held off listening to it until yesterday when I finally decided to listen. And I was mesmerised! It was such a fantastic story – Nick Briggs is great as Holmes. The story was very creepy and mysterious and I am definitely considering getting *The Ordeals of Sherlock Holmes* box set next payday – I really want to find out how Holmes finally deals with Mrs Curbishley.

So I just thought I would drop you this email to say how much I enjoyed my first **Sherlock Holmes** story!

JAMES MCLEOD

Nick: James, I'm blushing. So glad you enjoyed it. *Perfidious Mariner* and *Ordeals* have something very special in common. They're both written by Jonathan Barnes who is a barnstormingly good writer. His **Holmes** stories are amazing. We're about to record another box set by Jonathan, entitled *The Judgement of Sherlock Holmes*.

Hello to all at Big Finish. First, may I offer condolences to all for the passing of Paul Spragg. I never met him but when a man is missed by so many, he must have been good.

As for my question, which also regards a recent, sad loss: with the news of the return of the Rani, now played by Siobhan Redmond in place of the late Kate O'Mara, I am curious as to whether or not Ms. Redmond's version is a new incarnation or a re-casting more along the lines of Richard Hurndall in *The Five Doctors*? I ask this because, if *The Rani Elite* is in fact a Sixth Doctor audio, then this Rani will appear during or in between the two television stories where

Ms. O'Mara was the Rani. Given that Time Lords are generally meeting in order, so to speak, I wonder if this issue will be addressed in the upcoming audio?

CHRIS MCKEON

Nick: Hi Chris, thanks for your condolences. Paul was one in a million and I don't think we'll ever stop missing him. The Rani is a new regeneration, not just a recasting.

First of all, my condolences regarding Paul Spragg. Secondly in **UNIT Dominion** Alex Macqueen's Master made his first appearance. He made his next appearance in **Dark Eyes 2**. What I want know is how can he appear alongside the Eighth Doctor when we saw a different incarnation in the **Doctor Who Movie**? Can someone help me out here?

BO MERCHANT

Nick: It's perfectly easy when you can time travel, Bo! Anything's possible.

Just got back from two months abroad without internet, logged on to the Big Finish website and saw the latest Vortex. Paul felt like a friend. I've never met him, and only corresponded with him a few times about the odd problem I had, but he felt like a friend who was working for you. I am so sorry that he's gone. He will be irreplaceable.

PAUL OLDROYD

Nick: Paul, you're so right. It was a big shock for all of us. Life goes on and we will, of course, carry on without him. But things will never be quite the same again.

Hi there, I've just enjoyed the latest of the **Charlotte Pollard** series is there going to be another and if so when?

She has mentioned the Doctor throughout the series. Are we going to see her bump into Paul McGann again? It would be nice for her to know he is still alive and she did ask the Vyrans

to find the right Doctor. I know she had a stretch with Colin Baker, which was lovely, but she still wanted to find 'her' Doctor is this a possibility? Please think on it as I do hope she is around to stay for long time.

JOHN

Nick: There will be another series of **Charlotte Pollard**. She's not due to bump into the Eighth Doctor again just yet, though.

Great, great **Blake's 7** story! Well done to all involved – writer, cast, director, etc... Sadly having to ration myself to a CD a month, can't wait for *Mirror*...

Also a word about Mr Spragg, he very kindly replied to an enquiry I sent in some months ago about downloading to an iPad (it doesn't work). Paul set out clearly and simply what I needed to do to work round it (I didn't understand a word of it, but I'm sure if you were even a 50th techie it would all have been quite clear). But that's not important. He took the time to reply.

Big Finish is not a faceless company; it is the combined reflection of the people who work there. Paul helped make you who you are, Big Finish, and I'm rather glad that he was able to enjoy his time with you.

Not sure if that helps anyone at all, but I was keen to share the thought.

ALISTAIR GALE

Nick: Thanks, Alistair. Yes, Paul really embraced the idea of customer care and our aim has always been not to be a faceless company. It's just us lot doing great stuff. We will do our best to uphold Paul's high standards. Now, about this downloading to an iPad. It should work, you know. But if you really can't get your head round it, you can download to your computer and copy across using iTunes. If you can't work that, don't worry, there will be another solution in the coming months. Stay tuned...

COMING UP...

BIG FINISH RELEASE SCHEDULE

NEW AND FORTHCOMING AUDIO RELEASES

JULY 2014

- **Doctor Who: *Breaking Bubbles and Other Stories***
(188, Sixth Doctor and Peri)
- **Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures: *The Abandoned***
(3.7, Fourth Doctor and Leela)
- **Counter-Measures: *Series 3 (Box Set) Volume 2*** (Box Set)
- **Pathfinder Legends: *Rise of the Runelords - The Hook Mountain Massacre*** (1.3, Full Cast)

AUGUST 2014

- **Doctor Who: *Revenge of the Swarm***
(189, Seventh Doctor, Ace and Hex)
- **Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures: *Zygon Hunt***
(3.8, Fourth Doctor and Leela)
- **The Fifth Doctor Box Set**
(Fifth Doctor, Adric, Nyssa and Tegan)
- **Blake's 7: *The Liberator Chronicles - Box Set 9***

SEPTEMBER 2014

- **Doctor Who: *Mask of Tragedy***
(190, Seventh Doctor, Ace and Hex)
- **Doctor Who: *Signs and Wonders***
(191, Seventh Doctor, Ace and Hex)
- **Doctor Who - The Early Adventures: *Domain of the Voord*** (1.1, First Doctor)
- **Doctor Who - Philip Hinchcliffe Presents: *Volume 1 Box Set***
(Fourth Doctor)
- **Pathfinder Legends: *Rise of the Runelords - Fortress of the Stone Giants*** (1.4, Full Cast)
- **Big Finish Classics: *Frankenstein***
- **Tom Baker at 80**
- **Night of the Trifids** (Full Cast)

OCTOBER 2014

- **Doctor Who: *The Widow's Assassin***
(192, Sixth Doctor and Peri)
- **Doctor Who - The Early Adventures: *The Doctor's Tale*** (1.2, First Doctor)

- **The Worlds of Doctor Who *Box Set***
- **Jago & Litefoot: *Series Eight Box Set***
- **The Omega Factor: *Audiobook of Novel***
(read by Louise Jameson)

NOVEMBER 2014

- **Doctor Who: *Masters of Earth***
(193, Sixth Doctor and Peri)
- **Doctor Who - The Early Adventures: *The Bounty of Ceres***
(1.3, First Doctor)
- **Doctor Who: *Dark Eyes 3***
(Eighth Doctor)
- **Blake's 7: *The Liberator Chronicles - Box Set 10***
- **Pathfinder Legends: *Rise of the Runelords - Sins of the Saviors*** (1.5, Full Cast)
- **Blake's 7: The Classic Audio Adventures 1: *Scimitar*** (Full Cast)

DECEMBER 2014

- **Doctor Who: TBA**
(194, Sixth Doctor and Peri)
- **Doctor Who - The Early Adventures: *An Ordinary Life***
(1.4, First Doctor)
- **Doctor Who: *Trial of the Valeyard***
- **Doctor Who: *The Highest Science***
- **Blake's 7: The Classic Audio Adventures 2: TBA** (Full Cast)

JANUARY 2015

- **Doctor Who: *Mistfall***
(195, TBA)
- **Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures: *The Exxilons***
(4.1, Fourth Doctor and Leela)
- **Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor by Gareth Roberts *Box Set: The English Way of Death/The Romance of Crime***
(Fourth Doctor and Romana)
- **Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor by Gareth Roberts: *The English Way of Death***
(Fourth Doctor and Romana)

- **Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor by Gareth Roberts: *The Romance of Crime***
(Fourth Doctor and Romana)
- **The Avengers - The Lost Episodes: *Volume 3*** (Box Set)
- **Pathfinder Legends: *Rise of the Runelords - Spires of Xin-Shalast***
(1.6, Full Cast)
- **Blake's 7: The Classic Audio Adventures 3: TBA** (Full Cast)

FEBRUARY 2015

- **Doctor Who: *Equilibrium*** (196, TBA)
- **Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures: *The Darkness of Glass***
(4.2, Fourth Doctor and Leela)
- **Doctor Who: *Dark Eyes 4***
(Eighth Doctor)
- **Blake's 7: *The Liberator Chronicles - Box Set 11***
- **Blake's 7: The Classic Audio Adventures 4: TBA** (Full Cast)

MARCH 2015

- **Doctor Who: *The Entropy Plague***
(197, TBA)
- **Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures: *Requiem for the Rocket Men*** (4.3, Fourth Doctor and Leela)
- **Blake's 7: The Classic Audio Adventures 5: TBA** (Full Cast)
- **Blake's 7: Lucifer Revelation: *Audiobook of Novel***
(Read by Paul Darrow)

APRIL 2015

- **Doctor Who: *The Defectors***
(198, TBA)
- **Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures: *Death-Match***
(4.4, Fourth Doctor and Leela)
- **Jago and Litefoot: *Series Nine Box Set***
- **Blake's 7: The Classic Audio Adventures 5: TBA** (Full Cast)
- **Terrahawks *Volume 1*** (Full Cast)



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