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VORTEX

BIG FINISH WE LOVE STORIES
ISSUE 80 • OCTOBER 2015

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DOOM!

BEHIND-THE-SCENES ON THE EPIC NEW DOCTOR WHO ADVENTURE AND WHY ELEVEN IS THE SCARIEST NUMBER!

PLUS!

DOCTOR WHO

HATTIE MORAHAN

A NEW COMPANION FOR THE EIGHTH DOCTOR!

DARK SHADOWS

BEYOND THE GRAVE

LOOKING BACK AT THE DARK SHADOWS PROJECT!

DOCTOR WHO

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Sneak Previews & Whispers



Doctor Who: The Diary of River Song

BIG FINISH will celebrate 2016 with one of the most eagerly-anticipated releases ever in January – **The Diary of River Song**.

Alex Kingston will make her debut as the Doctor's wife on audio, and she will star in four brand-new adventures, *The Boundless Sea* by Jenny T Colgan, *I Went to a Marvellous Party* by Justin Richards, *Signs* by James Goss and *The Rulers of the Universe* by Matt Fitton.

As we know, River will also be appearing in the second series of **Doom Coalition**, but things will get even more wibbly-wobbly, timey-wimey, when Paul McGann's Eighth Doctor shows up in the final story in the set.

Producer David Richardson teases: "River Song. The Eighth Doctor. The secret Rulers of the Universe... and mysteries to solve.

"It's been such a blast to play with the character of River, work with Alex Kingston, and place them both centre stage in their own full cast spin-off audio series. One in which she will cross paths with her husband...

"And what a Happy River Christmas it will be – a **Doctor Who** special on BBC One, and this four episode box set following soon after..."

VORTEX

Editorial

EVERY NOW and again, it's rather easy to get excited by a new Big Finish release. I've had a few of those moments this year, especially with the fantastic farewell to Colin Baker's Sixth Doctor in *The Last Adventure*, the thrills of *Damaged Goods*, the danger of **Dark Eyes 4** and the fantastic drama of **Dark Shadows: Bloodlust**. This month is another of those moments – the arrival of **Doom Coalition**.

What's not to get excited about? There's more Eighth Doctor (and as I've said before, with his lust for life, I love Paul McGann's Doctor), there's more Liv Chenka (now fully settled in as a companion), the arrival of a new companion in the form of Helen Sinclair and then there's the Eleven...

It's a brilliant concept – a Time Lord whose first 11 incarnations all exist in his head at the same time – and what I love even more is that it's Mark Bonnar who's playing him. I've been a fan of his work for years, especially after his portrayal of the dodgy Bruno Jenkins in **Casualty**, and in **Line of Duty** – wow, he's great. To be able to play one complex character takes a lot of skill, but to portray someone with 11 voices and personalities in his mind at the one time – that's got to put anyone through their paces.

And what a variety of stories too – we start on Gallifrey, then we're going to get a good, old-fashioned horror story in *The Red Lady*, there's the eternally brilliant John Woodvine appearing in *The Galileo Trap* and we're back out into space for the end of the set...

It's funny to think this is just the first 25 per cent of the overall story, and I know that I'm not the only one who can't wait for March to arrive with **Doom Coalition 2**.

Isn't it great to have something to look forward to?

KENNY

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Paul McGann's Doctor returns for a new series of adventures as Kenny Smith learns about the first **Doom Coalition** box set, which is released this month.

Cast interviews by Ian Atkins, written by Kenny Smith

PIECES OF EIGHTH

“IT’S VERY different from **Dark Eyes**,” says Paul McGann, the star of the new Eighth Doctor box set series, **Doom Coalition**. “It’s actually a lot more physical and on its feet more – there’s more jeopardy in it. **Dark Eyes** seemed like a psychological thriller – that’s what it felt like to me.”

“From what we’ve done so far on **Doom Coalition**, there’s been much more jeopardy – it’s big stuff. It felt like a Cecil B DeMille adventure story, while **Dark Eyes** was more film noir.”

The follow-up to the award-winning **Dark Eyes** sees McGann and Nicola Walker, back as Liv Chenka (along with new TARDIS arrival Hattie Morahan as Helen Sinclair), face a new and ruthless enemy, the likes of which the Doctor has never encountered before.

Producer David Richardson and director Ken Bentley – who is also script-editing the series, conceived **Doom Coalition**.

How long did it take them come up with the format for this set? “Oooh golly,” admits David, “I have no idea. But given that we meet for coffee every day at Paddington, do the half-hour walk along the canal to the studio, and then often do it again at the end of the day... you can imagine over the course of days and weeks we spent rather a lot of time planning it.”

“I really enjoy doing that actually – mooching along, coffee in hand, just lost in a **Doctor Who** story-telling zone where you throw ideas around and see what sticks.”

“**Doom Coalition** is a massive 16-part tapestry of storytelling. The first box set starts off with one section of that tapestry, but even that echoes back through the Doctor’s lives.”

THE DOCTOR will face off with a Time Lord foe, who's nothing like the Master, the Rani or the Monk. Mark Bonnar – who appeared in TV *Doctor Who* as Jimmy and his ganger doppelgänger in *The Rebel Flesh/The Almost People* and Porteus in the Big Finish adaptation of the Fourth Doctor novel *The English Way of Death* – will chill listeners as the Eleven.

David explains: "The Eleven is incarcerated on Gallifrey, but we discover in a flashback who put him there... There

I'm a fan of his work anyway (have you seen him in *Line of Duty*? He's extraordinary...), but he's such a versatile actor who can play so many different characters. Which was essential to the part."

Ken adds: "David had worked with Mark a couple of times. We needed a bold actor to play the Eleven. It's a tough role. Most of the normal rules of acting don't apply. You need a brave actor to tackle a character like this and Mark's body of work speaks for itself. He has the acting chops to do it."

Ken was particularly delighted to be involved in planning a series from scratch and having a creative input from the start, rather than coming in at a casting stage.

He beams: "I had no idea I'd have the opportunity to work on plays featuring the Eighth Doctor, let alone have this degree of input into the stories we're telling. The range sits apart, so it allows us to focus on it in a different way compared to other ranges and other Doctors. It's very satisfying to be able to construct such a large story and a great honour to be trusted to help pull it all together.

"David and I have been developing stories and collaborating on productions for some time now. It feels to me as if *Doom Coalition* is what we've been training for. I can't imagine anything else we work on together will come close to matching the ambition of this series."



Above: Paul McGann and Hattie Morahan • Inset: Mark Bonnar

"You need a brave actor to tackle a character like The Eleven and Mark's body of work speaks for itself. He has the acting chops to do it." Ken Bentley



are so many elements included besides the Eleven – so many people and places to introduce along the way plus, of course, Alex Kingston returns as River Song in the second box set.

"Although a returning classic monster might come back for a brief appearance Along the way in that second box set (and not one you might think...), *Doom Coalition* is really about inventing our own villains and monsters.

"I remember the moment he popped into my head, and I said to Ken: 'A Time Lord villain. All of his incarnations still live inside his head at the same time. There are 11 of them, so he's called The Eleven'. That's who he is and the brief hasn't changed along the way. Mark was my first choice –

DOOM COALITION begins with *The Eleven*, written by Matt Fitton, and returns the Doctor to Gallifrey, where he and Liv discover that one of the Time Lords' most notorious criminals is attempting to break free from prison. Think *Skyfall* in space, as Silva tries to escape from MI6.

Matt explains: "Ken and David worked out the series arc and came up with the initial idea for the Eleven: the basic concept was a Time Lord whose previous incarnations all exist at the same time in his mind. They gave me that, and some details of what their characters were like.

"What's really interesting is the fact they are almost wholly evil.

“It’s brilliant to be able to go back and write a story on Gallifrey, because there’s so many different versions of it.” Matt Fitton

“With this being an ongoing range for the Eighth Doctor, but the start of something new, it’s somewhere people can join his journey and jump onboard.

“All you need to know is Liv is his companion, and that’s it. The history of **Dark Eyes** is not explicitly referred to, so it’s definitely a good place to join, if you haven’t already.

straddles both classic and new **Who** and Paul McGann’s voice is always so good to write for. It’s great trying to imagine him saying the lines in your head.”

David adds: “*The Eleven* is like the pilot episode for the whole series, if you like. It brings the Doctor back to Gallifrey, with Liv, where the Eleven has escaped from his incarceration and is on the rampage. It’s a great thriller by Matt.”

“WHEN I first played Liv Chenka in *Robophobia*,” says actress Nicola Walker, “I was certain that I’d never be back playing her again. I couldn’t believe this world I had found, where the stories are fantastic and Big Finish was so good to work for.

“When we finished, I remember them saying ‘We’ll get you back,’ and I’d heard that so many times over the years, but



Above: Bethan Walker, Robert Bathurst and Caroline Langrishe



Above: Nicola Walker and Ken Bentley

“It’s brilliant to be able to go back and write a story on Gallifrey, because there’s so many different versions of it. But you can make sense of it all and see it all fitting together – *The Deadly Assassin*, *The Invasion of Time*, *Arc of Infinity*, *The Five Doctors*, the *Gallifrey* series from Big Finish and the new series as well.”

Get ready for a host of interesting new characters and a mystery to be solved as to how the Eleven makes his escape bid. Matt continues: “It’s one of those things where it just flows and it rattled off the page.

“You have the villain, the Doctor and Liv and when I had to come up with a character who was a Time Lady, it made sense that she would be companion material.

“There’s a mystery to be solved and there’s lots of different suspects as to who has sprung the Eleven.”

Having crafted adventures for **Dark Eyes 2, 3 and 4**, Matt’s delighted to be back writing for Paul McGann’s Doctor. He adds: “The great thing about the Eighth Doctor is he

they were good to their word and I was back quite a short time afterwards.

“Liv started in a very dark place and she seems to have found some joy in her life, travelling with the Doctor. They’ve been in such appalling situations.”

Having joined the TARDIS crew in **Dark Eyes 2**, Liv is now the Doctor’s ongoing companion.

Nicola says: “There’s many perks to coming in as an established companion, but you’re not guaranteed to survive the stories, ever!”

“You know you’re going to be in the thick of it because you are in the TARDIS with the Doctor, but on a personal note, it’s lovely to come to work and feel you are seeing friends, which is how it feels now.

“I really love the dynamic between the Doctor and Liv. It’s not trite – they are not like husband and wife, and she doesn’t seem to be hanging on his coat tails. There’s a great mutual respect between them.



Doctor Who: Doom Coalition 1

EPISODE 1: THE ELEVEN

When one of Gallifrey's most notorious criminals attempts to escape from prison, Cardinal Padrac turns for help to the Time Lord who put him there in the first place.

EPISODE 2: THE RED LADY

A London Museum holds the key to many secrets from the past. But some secrets are so deadly they should remain locked away. Forever.

EPISODE 3: THE GALILEO TRAP

With a mysterious plague sweeping through Florence, a rampaging alien behemoth comes between the Doctor and the answers he seeks.

EPISODE 4: THE SATANIC MILL

Long buried animosities come boiling to the surface on an ancient and powerful satellite, in a final confrontation that could have unimaginable consequences.

DIRECTED BY: Ken Bentley

STARRING: Paul McGann, Nicola Walker, Hattie Morahan, Mark Bonnar, Robert Bathurst, Caroline Langrishe, Ramon Tikaram, David Yelland, John Woodvine, Harry Myers, Esther Hall, Matthew Cottle

OUT: THIS MONTH!

"She's now known him for quite a long time and she's got that lovely way where she can be quite rude to him, but it's out of love and respect."

TWO BECOME three with the second story of the set, *The Red Lady*, by John Dorney, as the Doctor and Liv meet a new companion who joins them on their travels. John, who wrote two of the four stories in *Dark Eyes 4*, was given the task of introducing Helen Sinclair to the Time Lord and his friend, bringing the TARDIS to 1960s London.

open brief, I like to give myself my own tighter one.

"In particular, with this one, I felt with McGann, we haven't really had a scary one since *The Chimes of Midnight*. As a Rob Shearman story, it starts off scary and then goes into black humour. My brief to myself was to do something that was more of a Gothic horror – a scary story.

"I wanted to hear something that was a ghost story and looked around for inspiration, which I got from a couple of Stephen King short stories, and some M R James, mixed with some Japanese cinema horror."



Above (left to right): Lizzie Mounter, Gunnar Cauthery, Ewan Bailey, Hattie Morahan, Harry Myers, Esther Hall and John Woodvine

"The brief was very much focussed on the character of Helen," says John, "who I got to introduce. I had to specify who she was and get her involved in the story. That and museums and antiquities.

"It was going to be relatively stand-alone from the general arc of the box set, but have a slight link into the next story, but really, I was pretty free with it all. Yes, there's a few elements that run through all four stories, but not too many.

"Being me, I sometimes prefer something with a tighter brief, because then I've got a starting point. I've got a file full of ideas I might use at some point, so when I've got an

David adds: "*The Red Lady* is absolutely terrifying. I've heard the first edits and it's so nice to do a scary, almost supernatural episode of *Doctor Who*. I've told Dorney that he's at the top of his game at the moment and this script is evidence of that. It also introduces our new companion Helen Sinclair, played by Hattie Morahan. Paul McGann had brought Hattie to our attention and... oh, she's perfect. I know fans are going to love her."

John was happy to help Helen find her voice.

"I really enjoyed writing for the Doctor and his companion – I get into their voices. It's a curious thing, the

“It’s a real privilege to be involved with this series, and working with such fine actors. You have a cast that any West End production would kill for!”

John Dorney



first time you write for a new Doctor and companion. You know how other people write for them, so it’s the same voice, but with a slightly different angle on it.

“On *Dark Eyes 4*, my Doctor is more bouncy and puppyish, while Matt’s is more serious.

“It’s exciting to go back and get into that headspace, writing for the Doctor and Liv again and it’s good to add someone else into the mix to change it.”

He adds: “It’s a real privilege to be involved with this series and working with such fine actors – you have a cast that any West End production would kill for!”

H ELEN’S FIRST trip in the TARDIS with her new friends takes her back in time to Florence, where the time travellers discover a mysterious plague is sweeping through the city, as well as a rampaging alien.

Marc Platt is the writer of *The Galileo Trap*, which sees the astronomer, physicist, engineer and philosopher meet the Doctor in the box set’s celebrity historical.

Marc was delighted to be involved in *Doom Coalition* and the team spirit involved between the writers.

“Basically,” he smiles, “it was a lot of fun – not unlike working on the old TV *Who* seasons. A sense of trying to come up with something fresh with a fair bit of batting ideas about between the writers. There was a lengthy discussion about the nature of the Eleven – a sort of Jekyll and Hyde/Norman Bates x 10 character and a wonderful idea as a villain. Starting points included possible hints of the Riddler, Lewis Carroll or the string of emperors from I, *Claudius*. But these were early suggestions and characters

tend to take on their own life. Ultimately Ken and David, having plotted out the overall series framework, had the final say over what went in. The great thing we were presented with was a sense of a thought-through narrative that actually knew where it was going.”

As with the other writers, Marc was given a brief by the production team.

“‘Galileo Galilei has discovered a planet in the solar system which shouldn’t be there – expand.’ That was Ken’s basic request, along with a few required links into the **Coalition** arc.

“So it was the pseudo-historical story, but I got to pick where in Galileo’s life it would be set and to do a ton of research (the best bit) in the process. I’ve dodged the obvious case of Galileo’s showdown with the Pope over his championing of heliocentrism. Instead, I’ve set the story during his later years, imprisoned as a heretic in his own villa just outside Florence. To set a pseudo-historical story on a broad subject like the Black Death or the Crimean War is safer, but taking a well-documented historical personage and involving him with a pair of ruthless aliens and their pets is far dicier and much more fun.

“Although Galileo was disgraced, isolated and had lost his eyesight, he was still busy receiving visitors and was full of ideas. He’s an old friend of the Doctor too, which is where the trouble starts. Unfortunately his jailers are not quite what they seem.”

Marc particularly enjoyed writing for the Eighth Doctor again, having previously crafted tales for him in his adventures with Lucie Miller.



Above: Paul McGann and Hattie Morahan
Inset: Hattie Morahan and Matthew Cottle



“The Galileo Trap is Helen’s first trip into the past – expect monsters, Galileo... and a trap!”

David Richardson

“The earlier Doctors have fixed TV seasons,” Marc says. “In between Stories A and B, we have to wedge Stories A+ and B- and possibly whole seasons in between those. You develop a knack of reading between the lines. But unless we’re jumping parallel time tracks, we are always going to crunch back to Story B eventually. Sometimes that’s a potential killer for tension, particularly when you long to kill off a much-loved companion, but can’t. Everyone knows they’ll survive.

“But it’s also a great way to expand on themes that get raised, but not explored in existing stories. With the Eighth Doctor, all sorts of mayhem can be let loose. Suddenly no-one is safe. Even with the War Doctor looming on the distant horizon, it’s still not certain what route the Eighth will take to get there. Or who will survive to get there with him.”

David adds: “*The Galileo Trap* is Helen’s first trip into the past – expect monsters, Galileo... and a trap! Marc Platt writes such rich, textured scripts. It’s gorgeous.”

For Marc, the highlight was being at the recording.

“John Woodvine came in to play Galileo with great humour and zest. Hattie Morahan was pitch perfect as Helen. Paul McGann was on brilliant form. The Vulchbrood and their pets were suitably gruesome. Ken coped masterfully with absentee cast members – to be recorded later. He is a paragon of calm of insightfulness. Just another happy day at Big Finish!

T HE FIRST series of **Doom Coalition** concludes with *The Satanic Mill*, written by Edward Collier.

Vortex won’t delve into the storyline, other than to say that long-buried animosities will finally come to the surface on an ancient and powerful satellite, in a confrontation that could have unimaginable consequences.


David teases: “The series finale is *The Satanic Mill* by Edward Collier, which – you won’t be surprised to hear – marks a big showdown between the Doctor and the Eleven. One thing I will say... there are clues

scattered throughout the box set of what is to come. That’s been part of the joy – laying little seeds here and there for our stories in box sets 2, 3 and 4, because they were already planned out. And keen eyed-listeners to **Dark Eyes 4** may have noticed that Dorney even foreshadowed *The Red Lady* in that...”

Ken adds: “It’s certainly the plan for **Doom Coalition** to have its own identity as a series. It’s unlike most things I’ve worked on for Big Finish. But that identity might only become clear the further we get into the story.”

As we already know, a certain archaeologist from the Doctor’s future will be appearing in **Doom Coalition 2**, but was it always planned that River Song would be appearing?

David reveals: “We hadn’t planned **Doom Coalition 2** to feature River, but we secured Alex and the rights to the character just at the perfect time. We knew what happened in that episode, so it was just a case of who it happened with – and by adding River into the mix it suddenly became very special indeed.” **VORTEX**



Kenny Smith learns there's a new girl in the TARDIS for **Doom Coalition!**

ALL HELEN BREAKS LOOSE

THERE'S ALWAYS something exciting about the arrival of a new companion in the TARDIS – it means a new dynamic for the Doctor, as he adapts to his new traveller and they adapt to him.

Doom Coalition sees the arrival of Helen Sinclair in the Doctor's time and space machine, joining him and Liv Chenka on their adventures.

So who is this new girl in town? Hailing from the 1960s, Helen was a brilliant student, having read the philosophy of language at the University of London and graduated with a degree in philosophy in 1963. She's also a gifted symbolologist and enthusiastic semiotician.

As a young woman studying in London she's embraced the swinging 60s, as she loves the music and the nightlife. As a brilliant academic she was employed by the National Museum to help unlock the secrets of ancient texts and tablets, but such a fussy old institution frustrated her. The slow pace and old boy's network was an obstacle she was determined to overcome.

With an established pairing already in place in the TARDIS, why has producer David Richardson decided to shake things up?

"I really liked how the Doctor/Liv/Molly dynamic worked in **Dark Eyes**," he explains, "and I'm sure we would have continued with that but Ruth was working in LA a lot, so it was hard to schedule her into the series.

"I love the character of Liv – she's been through so much, such terrible times, she's come out of that and has learned to live life to the full again. Helen is a wonderful companion for Liv as well as the Doctor – they become such close friends, because Helen is all about living life to the full. She'd rather try something and hate it rather than never try it at all. And so Helen is nudging Liv further along her own personal journey."

David reveals there's a bit of introspection into **Doctor Who** itself, when coming up with a source of inspiration for Helen. "We were actually inspired by Verity Lambert – that woman working in a man's world, in an institution with very long-held traditions. Helen works at the National Museum in the 1960s and wants to shake it up. She has echoes of Barbara Wright and Sarah Jane Smith too, yet she's wholly original – beyond the brief, Hattie brings her own huge spark to the role. I'm utterly thrilled with her."

BRINGING HELEN to life is Hattie Morahan, who was cast, in part, thanks to Paul McGann. The Eighth Doctor actor says: "The nice thing is, David Richardson (the producer) has lately taken to asking me, at least once a year if there's anyone I would really like to work with, I come up with the names – and they turn up!

"Hattie Morahan was one of those names and she's fantastic. I've always admired her – I had just seen her in **A Dolls House** on the London stage and she won everyone's heart. David sent me an email saying, 'She's coming,' but I'm convinced it's the food that gets them here!"

The producer confirms: "Paul McGann and I were just chatting in the green room, I just said to him, 'If there's ever anyone you'd like to work with here, just let me know'. And he said, 'I'd love to work with Hattie Morahan – she's incredible'. And that was just as we were coming to create the role of Helen.

"Shortly before recording **Doom Coalition 1** I emailed Paul and said 'Oh by the way, Hattie Morahan is your new companion.' He replied in big capital letters 'YOU'RE

KIDDING!!!' And what's lovely is that Hattie, like Nicola, fits right in.

That's what amazes me about Big Finish – we get these phenomenal actors whose work I have admired for ages and they quickly become part of the family.

"I mean, Nicola Walker is one of the most in-

demand actors in the country. I imagine she can pick and choose whatever she does. And yet she chooses to be part of our **Doctor Who** world. I never take that for granted and it's so gratifying."

Director Ken Bentley continues: "It was one of those serendipitous moments in the green room. David and I were thinking of someone to play Helen Sinclair when we were in the studio recording **Dark Eyes 4**. We'd cast Blake Ritson – Hattie's partner. He's brilliant and we've worked with him a



Above: Harry Myers, Gunnar Cauthery and Hattie Morahan

"I emailed Paul McGann and said 'Oh by the way, Hattie Morahan is your new companion.' He replied in big capital letters 'YOU'RE KIDDING!'" David Richardson

number of times. Paul McGann knows both Blake and Hattie and turned to Blake in the green room to tell him how much he'd like to work with Hattie."

Hattie tells *Vortex* she was delighted to join the Big Finish team, although concedes she doesn't know too much about **Doctor Who**. She says: "I was really thrilled to be asked to play the part. There's the kudos of being an assistant.

"I'd heard through so many channels what a lovely place Big Finish was to work – my partner has done some work here, you hear about the atmosphere, the people and the food!

"I'd worked with Paul before, and knew Nicola, so I thought, 'What a lovely gig to go to'. I'm not a **Doctor Who**

“You need an actor who understands the social construct the character exists within, has the craft and skill to enjoy playing the role and who sounds appropriate. Hattie has all those qualities, plus she’s a star!” Ken Bentley



Above: Hattie Morahan

expert, as I’ve only seen bits and bobs over the years, but it’s been nothing but a pleasure at Big Finish.

“Through my childhood I caught bits of **Doctor Who** and I remember Paul as the Doctor on TV, I’ve enjoyed what I’ve seen.”

How does Hattie view her new character?

Pausing, she explains: “Helen is very bright and we first meet her in her own time, the 1960s, in her job working at the National Museum. She’s quite frustrated at that time, at the lack of opportunities for women in the museum world and has ambitions and capabilities, far more than she’s given credit for.

“She’s bright and capable but has an impulsive quality, throwing herself into situations, hence joining the Doctor and Liv on their adventures.

“Helen’s quite fearless – she’s up for an adventure and open to things. She’s great fun to play.”

Ken Bentley adds: “Helen Sinclair isn’t an easy role to play. She comes from a particular time. People spoke differently then. They also battled different things in their

daily lives. For example patriarchy. A problem now, but at least we recognise it as a problem now. In the early sixties it was still being embraced far too enthusiastically!

“You need an actor who understands the social construct the character exists within, has the craft skill to enjoy playing the role and who sounds appropriate. Hattie has all those qualities, plus she’s a star! We’re very lucky to have her join us.”

WITH HELEN Sinclair joining Liv Chenka as a travelling companion for the Doctor, it’s easy to imagine there could be some resentment from the more experienced traveller. But Hattie reveals: “What’s lovely about the writing is Liv and Helen feel quite complimentary to each other – they have respect for each other’s expertise, but there’s no jealousy. It feels like they are in it for each other – there’s loyalty, which is lovely and really refreshing, and doesn’t feel like there’s any cheap point scoring.”

Nicola Walker, who plays Liv, agrees: “What’s fantastic is we’ve these two great female parts, two great female



Above: Mark Bonnar

“I love passion and enthusiasm and I’m always fascinated to talk to people who have liked work I’ve been involved in. It’s interesting and rewarding to meet people who are passionate.” Hattie Morahan

script as a springboard for her character. This is Helen’s first trip in the TARDIS and she’s really not sure that the Doctor is the safest of travelling companions. Is he good? Bad? Slightly eccentric? Or right round the twist?

“Liv is the stabiliser, she and Helen will soon become good friends. Helen has her roots in dusty academic history, but suddenly it’s alive all round her and not in ways she expected. She soon finds out that life with the Doctor can be absolutely lethal!”



roles, and they are very, very different. It’s not trite, they both really like each other and get on.

“They come from completely different times and environments, so bring very different personalities to the TARDIS and support the Doctor. It would have been very boring to have two women and have then not get on – the triumverate works very well.

“I think Liv can see they have a very good relationship and is very pleased for Helen, but she understands more – she’s been there for longer and she’s from the future.”

Marc Platt, writer of the third story in the set, *The Galileo Trap*, was delighted to have the chance to write for two strongly-defined characters.

He explains: “Companions can be variations on a theme – strong-willed, dizzy, opinionated, but almost always devoted to the Doctor. Fortunately John Dorney had done a grand job setting up Helen Sinclair, so it was easy to use his

NOW THAT Hattie has joined the Big Finish and **Doctor Who** family, she can expect a whole new following and appreciation of her work through the devoted fanbase.

She adds: “I’ve heard through friends who have done **Doctor Who**, that if you’re in the television show, it goes with the territory, but I haven’t got a sense of how the Big Finish world has its associated perks.

“I love passion and enthusiasm and I’m always fascinated to talk to people who have liked work I’ve been involved in. It’s interesting and rewarding to meet people who are passionate.

“We’re all fans at some point, because we might have seen a film and loved it, and for me, that never goes away. I feel very honoured if people have an excitement because I’ve been part of a world – it’s great.”

With a new companion added into the established mix of the Doctor and Liv, David adds: “It fits in perfectly with **Doom Coalition**, because it’s such a fresh new start. New storytelling world, new villain, new companion, new direction. Everything is new again...” **VORTEX**



TOTALLY BEN-EFICIAL

THERE'S A NEW VOICE IN THE TARDIS THIS MONTH, AS KENNY SMITH MEETS THE 'SECOND' MR JACKSON IN THE SECOND DOCTOR EARLY ADVENTURES

BIG FINISH has, until recently, been reticent to recast leading actors from bygone eras of *Doctor Who*, who have sadly passed away.

Tim Treloar has won acclaim from fans online for his interpretation of the Third Doctor and this month, Elliot Chapman steps into the sailor shoes of the late Michael Craze, to recreate Ben Jackson.

Elliot appears in *The Yes Men* and *The Forsaken*, alongside Frazer Hines, who plays both the Doctor and Jamie McCrimmon, while Anneke Wills is back as Polly Wright. The casting of Elliot came about for a very simple reason.

Producer David Richardson laughs: "Frazer didn't want to do it. Actually it was a big ask – we were looking at having Frazer playing the Doctor, Jamie and Ben – because he's a great, versatile actor and we knew he could do it. But Frazer,

quite rightly, thought it was too much – to flip between three roles in one scene, which would be recorded as live. He was quite right – it would have been like tap dancing while juggling at the same time.

"So our director Lisa Bowerman suggested Elliot – and what a find he was. It was pure serendipity – suddenly we had a lovely recreation of that team. Both Anneke and Frazer were gobsmacked by how good Elliot is."

Elliot – not only a *Doctor Who* fan but a Big Finish aficionado – recalls that he was given early encouragement by Big Finish's beloved and much-missed producer's assistant Paul Spragg.

"Paul was the first person I had contact with at Big Finish," recalls Elliot. "It was really odd – I was at drama school and they selected a couple of us for the Carleton Hobbs



Above: Anneke Wills and Elliot Chapman

“AN EMAIL ARRIVED FROM LISA [BOWERMAN], SAYING ‘WE’VE GOT A PART FOR YOU...’ AND I WAS NOT EXPECTING THE PART I GOT!” **ELLIOT CHAPMAN**

BBC bursary, where you get five or six months on the rep company at Radio 4.

“As we were doing it, there was one day when we were told who we should write to, to try and get work. The bulk of the list was people at Radio 4 and they also started talking about independent companies and my ears pricked up as I heard them say Big Finish, because I had listened to some of the early *Doctor Who* stuff.

“There’s been points in my life where I’ve really enjoyed *Doctor Who*. As it was off air for such a long time, I drifted away and didn’t really get back into it until the end of the 1990s. I was in a record store and I saw there was a big poster for *The Sirens of Time*, and as I had so much happy nostalgia for Colin and Sylvester, I bought it, along with quite a few of the other early ones.

“There were so many great stories I listened to as I was doing quite a bit of travelling for work in those days – *The Holy Terror*, *Jubilee*... so many of them.

“So, when the name of Big Finish came up, I wrote off, not expecting to hear anything back; you hear of actors sending

off hundreds of letters and getting no reply. But within a couple of weeks, Paul Spragg got back in contact – such a nice human touch.

“He said he would send my voice reel round to their various directors and about six months later, Lisa Bowerman got in touch to say she had heard my reel and liked it.”

Lisa says: “It was quite fortuitous – Sunny Ormonde, who’s worked for Big Finish on several occasions, and who, when she’s not acting – teaches radio at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School, (my old alma mater) and her friend Sue Wilson who also taught there – dropped me a line about Elliot a while ago.

“Elliot had taken part in the Carleton Hobbs award – the long-running BBC radio competition for drama students, (which is always a good indication as to their talent in the medium). He had at some point dropped me a line, following

up their recommendation. I’d listened to his voice reel, and made a mental note that he was worth considering.

“So, when it was decided to re-cast Ben, I remembered Elliot and thought he was worth sounding out. As it turned out, and quite unknown to me; he had the added advantage of knowing his *Doctor Who*! So when I emailed him to say, ‘I’m recasting Ben, explaining who he was... and would Elliot be interested; I got an almost immediate reply that literally went along the lines of, ‘OMG!!!!!!’ – and saying what an honour and responsibility it would be to follow Michael Craze.

“I think we can safely say he was quite pleased!”

Elliot continues: “An email arrived from Lisa, saying ‘We’ve got a part for you...’ and I was not expecting the part I got! I thought I might get a few lines or a small part in a Jago & Litefoot, and then I read further down the email.

“I really didn’t make the link, when I saw I was to play a character called ‘Ben Jackson’ – a first, I thought it was another character of the same name, and then when I saw he was from London, and talked in a cockney accent, I realised, ‘This is THE Ben Jackson’, and had to sit down, as I was leaning over my laptop!”

Lisa continues: “Most of us make notes on our scripts at some point or other, but when he turned up, Elliot had covered his; full of notes on inflexions and vocal rhythms, he’d gone into great detail as to how Ben’s voice and intonation had changed slightly during the course of his time in the series.

“It was like having a young puppy bounding into the studio! His enthusiasm is boundless – and it’s heartening that he’s so passionate about getting it right.”

Doctor Who: The Early Adventures



Above (left to right): Elliot Chapman, Anneke Wills and Frazer Hines

heard someone playing a role, and someone else had established it. If you hear an actor nowhere in the region of what the original did, you wouldn't like it.' So, I went back to that whole season, watched what I could of it, and thankfully so much of it survives as audio."

Although confident in his own ability to play the part, Elliot concedes there were two factors that he found slightly daunting – Michael Craze's old colleagues, Frazer and Anneke.

"The only thing that worried me, to be honest, was how Anneke and Frazer would react," he admits. "They had a relationship with him and would have been friends. It could have been awkward, but it was nothing of

"THE ONLY THING THAT WORRIED ME, TO BE HONEST, WAS HOW ANNEKE AND FRAZER WOULD REACT..."

ELLIOT CHAPMAN

Elliot has been delighted to have joined the TARDIS team, and threw himself heart and soul into capturing the essence of Michael Craze's performance.

"The lovely thing is, Lisa and David Richardson were so good to me," he says. "There was never any point where they said to me, 'You need to sound like Michael Craze.' They said, 'We're recasting, just bring your own thing to it.'"

"But I had this voice in my head saying, 'Elliot, know your audience. It would be jarring for you, as a listener, if you

the sort. They were so welcoming and because I had seen Anneke a couple of times outside of recording **Doctor Who**, we've become chums.

"Fraser is such a relaxed person – when he comes in, we just suddenly relax – he cracks a few jokes and is so ebullient, and that lets us just go out and do the performance. I really look forward to seeing them again at some conventions."

Looking at this first run of Troughton-era stories in **The Early Adventures**, Elliot concludes: "They are just fantastic – the format is great, and with Frazer and Anneke narrating them, they really do sound like soundtracks to missing BBC stories, as it really takes you back. When Anneke does her Polly voice, it really could be 1966 – to be able to do that, it's amazing.

"And with Frazer doing his impression of Patrick, it's so successful because it totally captures him. I'm looking forward to hearing them." **VORTEX**

The Early Adventures: Series Two



THE YES MEN
by Simon Guerrier
OUT: THIS MONTH



THE FORSAKEN
by Justin Richards
OUT: NOVEMBER



THE BLACK HOLE
by Simon Guerrier
OUT: DECEMBER



THE ISOS NETWORK
by Nicholas Briggs
OUT: JANUARY 2016

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BEYOND THE GRAVE

Kenny Smith unearths the **Dark Shadows** version of **The Blair Witch Project** – and it's even more terrifying than the film



ONE OF the most acclaimed releases in the **Dark Shadows** Big Finish range has been *Beyond The Grave*. Released to coincide with Halloween in 2013, writer Aaron Lamont came up with a great conceit to draw in the listeners, as well as being easily accessible to those who've never heard a **Dark Shadows** play before.

Co-producer Joseph Lidster says: "I think the initial idea for a found-footage audio came from Aaron himself and we then realised it was a nice hook to seed through the previous audios. We were taking a bit of a chance with it as **Dark Shadows** in the television series has a very timeless quality – nobody has a television set for example – so it's definitely not something you'd have seen in the show."

Co-producer David Darlington adds: "For the previous year Joe and James Goss had been chasing their tails a bit to get products out the door and it was good for Joe to take a breath and think more about the series structure while I began to chip in my own ideas. Ultimately, it was something of a studio nightmare of course – the really challenging parts often are and there were something like 26 speaking parts in the final edit. But worth it, absolutely."

Aaron takes up the story: "It's fairly obvious looking back that Joe was doing a dry-run of *Bloodlust*, with all that year's releases loosely connected to each other to increase the 'soap' vibe and reward long-term listeners. So the brief kept getting bigger – at the start I was working on a

standalone **Dark Shadows**, and by the end I was writing the finale of a six episode 'season.'

"But *Beyond The Grave* turned out to be something different as well. Because it's radically different from the usual **Dark Shadows** format, it's the one most likely to hook new listeners. Bottom line is, we just wanted to make the most terrifying audio drama ever. It's up to the audience to decide if we actually managed it."

"It's radically different from the usual **Dark Shadows format."** Aaron Lamont

And he says there was plenty of fun to be had in doing a **Blair Witch**-kind of story for **Dark Shadows**.

"**Dark Shadows** naturally lends itself to 'spooky' so that was quite fun. *Beyond The Grave* really pushes the dark elements to the fore. But because I was learning how to write and format it on the job, it was actually extremely hard work. Some scripts you write for the actors – this wasn't one of them. I was writing the script for the sound designer and by God, did David Darlington do a great job – though I'm sure at the time he could have quite happily killed me. Two years down the line, when I hear some of the things he did with it I still get goosebumps."

The release won universal praise across the board as it chilled fans across the globe.

Joe says: "It all comes down to a brilliant script from Aaron – it manages to feel so dark without being too graphic. So much of the horror is implied which somehow makes it even scarier..."

David concludes: "We won't do anything quite like that again – part of its strength lies in its uniqueness. But I'm very glad we did it once." **VORTEX**

Beyond the Grave is available now on CD and download from bigfinish.com.

VORTEX MAIL

AT LAST

I have to add my voice to the chorus of praise for the Sixth Doctor's **Last Adventure!** The whole thing was brilliant but *The Brink of Death* was especially satisfying. It made perfect sense for the Doctor's final bow to be a plot involving a threat to the Time Lords from the Valeyard and the seamless segue into *Time and the Rani* was the perfect icing on the cake. The other stories were great too; I'm looking forward to more stories with Constance, it was nice to have a missing adventure for the Doctor and Charley, but best of all was *Stage Fright*. Flip is fantastic! I hadn't heard anything with her in it before and will be seeking out her other stories! Congratulations to all involved. And thanks to Big Finish for giving Colin Baker the chance to play a proper ending for his Doctor!
David Steel

Nick: Glad you enjoyed it, David. Also very pleased to hear you'll be seeking out more Flip adventures. Lisa Greenwood, who plays her, is awesome. And we certainly have more plans for that character.

NIGHT TIME

I love how many different ranges you guys have, but one of my favorites is your **Classics** range. I had been thinking, have you guys ever thought of doing an adaptation of *The 1001 Nights* or even doing a range for all 1001 nights of stories? I would love to see Sinbad, Ali Baba and Aladdin right next to Dorothy Gale, Dorian Gray and Frankenstein.
Douglas

*Nick: Nice idea, Douglas. No plans for that, but it's something for us to bear in mind. We've got another **Classics** release or two planned.*

MONKEY BUSINESS

I have been a buyer of your productions for many years and never thought of a property until now that would be great for your line-up. A continuation of the **Planet of The Apes** TV series that still remains popular would do well. A fan-made for charity production has been popular for years and did have a great story that shows you the potential for such a series. The two lead human actors are still alive and well, one does conventions.
Scott

*Nick: Just imagine! Wouldn't that be brilliant. I had a crisis of loyalty when the series was aired on ITV in 1975. They put it opposite **Doctor Who** for a while, but soon realised they couldn't win. I would really love to do this.*

VERY SPECIAL

Regarding **Jago & Litefoot** – whilst Trevor Baxter and Christopher Benjamin are still with us (may it be forever), I think they well and truly deserve to have (at least one) limited special edition (as you have done so well in the past).
Alan Croy

*Nick: But, Alan, every **Jago & Litefoot** release is special to us. I know what you're saying, though. I'll have a chat to David Richardson about that.*

MASS APPEAL?

Ever thought about doing some **Quatermass** stories?
Mark Williams

*Nick: Ever thought of it? Frankly, we've thought about it an awful lot. And we're still thinking about it. I love **Quatermass!***

MEL MEETING

It is very good news that the Eighth Doctor will be meeting River Song – Big Finish should be able to do **Doctor Who** up to and after the Ninth Doctor. It would be good to hear John Hurt and Chris Eccleston with Big Finish. How about writing in audio format how the Sixth Doctor first meets Mel Bush in Brighton in 1989? That would be very good, perhaps as one episode or as a series?
Gareth Humphreys

*Nick: Well there's a bunch of great ideas right there. I think Chris Eccleston would be the biggest challenge there. He's gone on record as having some reservations about **Doctor Who** and he didn't return for the 50th anniversary, which is a strong sign that he might not feel it's right for him. But, never say never. Love the Mel idea too!*

EMAIL US AT:
feedback@bigfinish.com and remember to put 'Vortex Mail' as the subject...

Coming up...

RELEASE SCHEDULE

Forthcoming audio releases.



OCTOBER 2015

- **DOCTOR WHO: PLANET OF THE RAIN** (205, Sixth Doctor and Constance)
- **DOCTOR WHO – THE EARLY ADVENTURES: THE FORSAKEN** (2.2, Second Doctor)
- **DOCTOR WHO – SHORT TRIPS: THE WAY OF THE EMPTY HAND** (5.10, Download only)
- **DOCTOR WHO: DOOM COALITION 1** (Eighth Doctor)
- **TORCHWOOD: FALL TO EARTH** (1.2)
- **JAGO & LITEFOOT: SERIES TO BOX SET**
- **DARK SHADOWS: AND RED ALL OVER** (50)
- **PATHFINDER LEGENDS – MUMMY'S MASK: EMBLY GRAVES** (2.2)

NOVEMBER 2015

- **DOCTOR WHO: SHIELD OF THE JÖTUNN** (206, Sixth Doctor and Constance)
- **DOCTOR WHO – THE EARLY ADVENTURES: THE BLACK HOLE** (2.3, Second Doctor)
- **DOCTOR WHO – SHORT TRIPS: THE OTHER WOMAN** (5.11, Download only)
- **UNIT: THE NEW SERIES: UNIT: EXTINCTION** (11, Kate Stewart)
- **JAGO & LITEFOOT & STRAX: THE HAUNTING**
- **TORCHWOOD: FORGOTTEN LIVES** (1.3)
- **SURVIVORS – SERIES 3 BOX SET** (Full Cast)
- **THE CONFESSIONS OF DORIAN GRAY: SERIES FOUR**
- **PATHFINDER LEGENDS – MUMMY'S MASK: SHIFTING SANDS** (2.3)

DECEMBER 2015

- **DOCTOR WHO: YOU ARE THE DOCTOR (AND OTHER STORIES)** (207, Seventh Doctor and Ace)
- **DOCTOR WHO – THE NOVEL ADAPTATIONS: THEATRE OF WAR** (07 Seventh Doctor, Ace and Bernice)
- **DOCTOR WHO – THE NOVEL ADAPTATIONS: ALL-CONSUMING FIRE** (08 Seventh Doctor, Ace and Bernice)
- **DOCTOR WHO – SHORT TRIPS: BLACK DOG** (5.12, Download only)
- **DOCTOR WHO – THE EARLY ADVENTURES: THE ISOS NETWORK** (2.4, Second Doctor)
- **TORCHWOOD: ONE RULE** (1.4)
- **THE CONFESSIONS OF DORIAN GRAY: THE SPIRITS OF CHRISTMAS**
- **PATHFINDER LEGENDS – MUMMY'S MASK: SECRETS OF THE SPHINX** (2.4)

JANUARY 2016

- **DOCTOR WHO: THE WATERS OF AMSTERDAM** (208, Fifth Doctor, Tegan and Nyssa)
- **DOCTOR WHO – THE FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: WAVE OF DESTRUCTION** (5.1, Fourth Doctor and Romana II)
- **DOCTOR WHO: THE DIARY OF RIVER SONG** (Box Set)
- **DOCTOR WHO: THE CHURCHILL YEARS** (Box Set)
- **DOCTOR WHO: SHORT TRIPS: TBA** (6.01, TBA, Download only)
- **TORCHWOOD: TBA** (1.5)
- **THE PRISONER: VOLUME 1 BOX SET**
- **THE AVENGERS – THE LOST EPISODES: VOLUME 5** (Box Set)
- **CHARLOTTE POLLARD: SERIES TWO** (Box Set)
- **PATHFINDER LEGENDS – MUMMY'S MASK: THE SLAVE TRENCHES OF HAKOTEPE** (2.5)

FEBRUARY 2016

- **DOCTOR WHO: AQUITAINE** (209, Fifth Doctor, Tegan and Nyssa)
- **DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: THE LABYRINTH OF BUDA CASTLE** (5.2, Fourth Doctor and Romana II)
- **DOCTOR WHO: SHORT TRIPS: TBA** (6.02, TBA, Download only)
- **TORCHWOOD: TBA** (1.6)
- **GALLIFREY: ENEMY LINES** (8, Romana II, Leela and Ace)
- **VIENNA SERIES 3** (Full Cast)
- **PATHFINDER LEGENDS – MUMMY'S MASK: PYRAMID OF THE SKY PHAROAH** (2.6)

MARCH 2016

- **DOCTOR WHO: THE PETERLOO MASSACRE** (210, Fifth Doctor, Tegan and Nyssa)
- **DOCTOR WHO – THE FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: THE PARADOX PLANET** (5.3, Fourth Doctor and Romana II)
- **DOCTOR WHO: DOOM COALITION 2** (Eighth Doctor)
- **DOCTOR WHO: SHORT TRIPS: TBA** (6.03, TBA, Download only)
- **TORCHWOOD: TBA** (2.1)

APRIL 2016

- **DOCTOR WHO: TBA** (211, Fifth Doctor)
- **DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: THE LEGACY OF DEATH** (5.4, Fourth Doctor and Romana II)

TERRAHAWKS: VOLUME 02

- **DOCTOR WHO – THE NOVEL ADAPTATIONS: NIGHTSHADE** (Seventh Doctor and Ace)
- **DOCTOR WHO: SHORT TRIPS: TBA** (6.04, TBA, Download only)
- **BLAKE'S 7: THE LIBERATOR CHRONICLES** (Box Set 12)
- **THE AVENGERS – STEED AND MRS PEEL: THE COMIC STRIP ADAPTATIONS** (Volume 1)
- **TORCHWOOD: TBA** (2.2)

MAY 2016

- **DOCTOR WHO: VAMPIRE OF THE MIND** (212, Sixth Doctor)
- **DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: GALLERY OF GHOUHS** (5.5, Fourth Doctor and Romana II)
- **UNIT: THE NEW SERIES: TBA** (21, TBA)
- **DOCTOR WHO: SHORT TRIPS: TBA** (6.05, TBA, Download only)
- **TORCHWOOD: TBA** (2.3)

JUNE 2016

- **DOCTOR WHO: TBA** (213, Seventh Doctor)
- **DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: THE TROUBLE WITH DRAX** (5.6, Fourth Doctor and Romana II)
- **DOCTOR WHO: SHORT TRIPS: TBA** (6.06, TBA, Download only)
- **DOCTOR WHO – THE COMPANION CHRONICLES: THE SECOND DOCTOR – VOLUME 1** (TBA)
- **SURVIVORS – SERIES 4: BOX SET** (Full Cast)
- **TORCHWOOD: TBA** (2.4)

JULY 2016

- **DOCTOR WHO: TBA** (214, Seventh Doctor, Mel and Ace)
- **DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: THE PURSUIT OF HISTORY** (5.6, Fourth Doctor and Romana II)
- **DOCTOR WHO: SHORT TRIPS: TBA** (6.07, TBA, Download only)
- **TORCHWOOD: TBA** (2.5)
- **THE AVENGERS – THE LOST EPISODES: VOLUME 6** (Box Set)



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