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(AND SO IS ALEX MACQUEEN!)

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**BIG
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Sneak Previews & Whispers



GRACELESS

I S IT really six years since the release of the first series of *Graceless*? Ciara Janson and Laura Doddington are heading back into the studio later this year for a fourth run of the series, which was a spin-off from the *Doctor Who* – *The Key 2 Time* trilogy.

For the uninitiated, Ciara and Laura play Abby and Zara, sisters with amazing powers, which they lost at the end of the third series. Surely, there was no way back from there?

Writer Simon Guerrier says: "I'm more than halfway through the writing of *Graceless 4* – I've delivered two scripts and am hard at work on two more.

"There are the usual global calamities and sinister extra-dimensional forces up to diabolical stuff but, as per the end of *Graceless 3*, Abby and Zara are now powerless to do anything about it. And that's bad news for their children...

"Plus there's a snake with legs and a trip to the Moon and a chance to match-make that can't possibly end well..." **VORTEX**

Editorial



T HIS MONTH, I'm pretty excited, as Big Finish is taking me on a real nostalgic tour of my youth.

As I've previously mentioned in *Vortex*, one of my favourite TV shows as a child was *Terrahawks*. Last year's first audio series was just fantastic as it took me back to those heady days of the mid-80s, when the summers seemed to last forever, the sun was always shining, and every day was a play day.

Terrahawks kept me hooked on Sunday afternoons, and I loved my annuals, toys and posters. Last year I mentioned my Sergeant Major Zero football – I found him in the loft recently, and he's looking a little worse for wear. But I still love him!

Going back in time again, this time to those wilderness years of the 1990s, it seems hard to believe there was once a time when no new *Doctor Who* looked in sight. A highlight of my month was picking up the latest *New Adventures* novel, and I remember buying *Nightshade* in August 1992, as I'd finished school, and was waiting to go off to university in Edinburgh.

Nightshade was an early favourite of mine, as it was the kind of *Doctor Who* story that I wanted to see on television, and was obviously written with real love for the original series. Whatever happened to its writer chappy anyway?

It was around this time I discovered *The Avengers* too – through repeats of Diana Rigg stories on German satellite television. I later discovered the other eras of the show, but it's the Steed and Mrs Peel shows I love most. I actually wanted to name my daughter after her. My wife said no to Emma, so the first name of *Doctor Who* actress Ms Manning was borrowed instead!

KENNY

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EVEN. LET'S SEE
WE CAN GET THEM
ORE THEY GET US.

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great jet of flame...
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MRS PEEL... YOU'RE NEEDED!

Kenny Smith is ready for some comic capers as he meets the a-Peel-ing Olivia Poulet...

FISH AND chips. Bangers and mash. Steed and Mrs Peel. They're all quintessential British double acts that are beloved the world over. The audio adventures of the first two wouldn't be that great, but with Steed and Mrs Peel – oh, we're about to enter audio heaven.

Up until now, Big Finish has tackled the first season of **The Avengers**, adapting the long-lost adventures of John Steed and Dr David Keel. At this point in its history, **The Avengers** was more a crime show than the fantasy series it would evolve into by the time of its fourth season. By this point, Dr Keel had departed, Mrs Cathy Gale had come and gone, and Dr Martin King and Venus Smith had briefly been at Steed's side.

For its fourth and fifth seasons, Patrick Macnee's Steed was accompanied by Mrs Emma Peel, played with elan and epic grace by Diana Rigg.

Big Finish is now entering this period of **Avengers** history with its adaptations of comic strips which appeared in the girls' comic *Diana*, between 1966 and 1967. Transforming comic strip adventures into audio adventures is something of an unusual step for Big Finish.

Producer David Richardson reveals: "The project was actually suggested by Massimo Moretti, who we work with at StudioCanal (who grant us the licence). Massimo has been such a kind and supportive person to work with – he always comes back with lovely comments on **The Lost Episodes** – and he had long admired the



Olivia Poulet and Julian Wadham

the nuances and yet make the role their own. We looked at so many CVs, listened to so many voice reels and considered so many actors.

"After a few months, I did begin to wonder if we'd ever find the right person and then one day, we were in the studio recording *Doctor Who – Planet of the Rani* and I was making a cup of tea. And behind me, Olivia was



“TRYING TO FIND SOMEONE TO PLAY MRS PEEL WAS, ACTUALLY, THE SINGLE HARDEST CASTING I’VE EVER HAD AT BIG FINISH!” David Richardson

Diana comic strips, and thought they would be a good fit for being adapted by Big Finish. He sent over the artwork, and I thought it was stunning – such delicate, hand-crafted frames... every one was beautiful. And the stories were terrific too, so I met with Massimo and Martin Lindsay at DC Thomson, and we reached agreement on the project."

These adventures unfolded over two pages, in three parts, so get ready to *Return to Castle De'ath*, have an encounter with *The Miser*, attend the grand reveal of *The Golden Dresses* and crack *The Norse Code*, as Julian Wadham returns to play Steed once more, alongside Olivia Poulet as Mrs Peel.

DIANA RIGG starred as Emma Peel for 51 episodes of *The Avengers*. Diana Appleby played the part in South Africa's Springbok Radio adaptations of various TV episodes in the late 1960s. Uma Thurman stepped into Diana Rigg's leather boots in the 1998 film version of *The Avengers*. Now, it's time to meet the fourth incarnation of Mrs Peel. However, casting her was a difficult task.

David says: "Trying to find someone to play Mrs Peel was, actually, the single hardest casting I've ever had at Big Finish. The problem is that Diana Rigg was so brilliant in the part, and just made something magical out of it. So we had to find someone who could do their own thing, capture all

just sitting there chatting – and her voice just had the quality we were looking for. I beckoned Nick Briggs over, and said, 'Listen to Olivia. Mrs Peel.' He said, 'Let's get her to read for it.'

"So, at the end of the day, Olivia was ushered into the booths, with Nick reading for Steed, and they did a couple of scenes from *The Golden Dresses* – which at that stage was the only script we had in. We tried a few variations, and decided there and then that the role should be hers."

Olivia confirms: "I was doing a *Doctor Who* and David was just listening away. He got me in to do a little reading, and I honestly had no idea what was going on. I read the lines for the audition, and I just assumed they were considering lots and lots of other people.

"I knew they were having some trouble finding the right Emma Peel, then they called me to say, 'You've got it!' It was a fantastic feeling."

Olivia previously voiced Myrren in *Requiem for the Rocket Men* and Pazmi

“I DIDN'T WANT TO DO AN IMITATION OF DIANA RIGG – I DIDN'T THINK IT SHOULD BE A CASE OF SIMPLY COPYING HER, AS I WANTED TO GET A FEEL FOR THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HER AND STEED AND BRING A NEW SLANT.”

Olivia Poulet



Olivia Poulet as Mrs Peel

in *Planet of the Rani*. She continues: “The first one I did for Big Finish was a *Doctor Who* and had a fantastic time. Everyone was so friendly and welcoming.

“I love the guys at Big Finish. It’s a real joy to be involved with them. From the first time I went in, they’ve been nothing but brilliant with me. Everything is done properly – they always look after the actors, and they really care about what they do.”

PRIOR TO taking on the part of Mrs Peel, Olivia had a good idea of who the character was. She reveals: “My dad used to love Diana Rigg as Emma Peel and I’d seen some of them. But to be honest, I wasn’t massively well acquainted with the show, so I went and watched some.

“Once I’d got an idea of who she was, I stopped watching because I didn’t want to do an imitation of Diana Rigg – I didn’t think it should be a case of simply copying her,

as I wanted to get a feel for the relationship between her and Steed and bring a new slant.

“There’s no point in going out and trying to copy someone else’s delivery, especially when it’s so well-known and loved.”

Olivia particularly enjoyed the relationship between Emma and Steed. “It’s such great fun – there’s a lot of double entendres going on, and on Emma’s part, she’s quite flirty and coquettish, but also very intelligent as well.

“The scripts are very good as they’ve captured the unique relationship between the duo really well, and the scripts are really out there. I mean, how often do you come up against Vikings?”

David has been delighted by the dynamic between Julian and Olivia. He grins: “Well, I’d challenge anyone not to get on with either of them – they are just the most delightful people, and they both

have a great energy. But put them together, and they’re magical.

“I had to miss a couple of the recordings because they clashed with another project I was working on, and I hated doing that because the studio sessions very quickly became something special. Everyone had great fun with it, laughed at all the right bits, and found excitement in all the right bits. It’s been an utter joy.”

Olivia says: “It’s been so much fun and it’s very exciting – Julian has such an incredible quality which he brings to the part. There’s a real easy, fun camaraderie there that you can’t guarantee with any of these things –





THE AVENGERS

STEED AND MRS PEEL

Recreations of the comic strip adventures of Steed and Mrs Peel which appeared in *Diana* magazine in 1966 and 1967.

RETURN TO CASTLE DE'ATH

Steed is left hanging, Emma pays the piper.

THE MISER

Steed has a nasty scare, Emma has a pressing engagement

THE GOLDEN DRESSES

Emma hits the heights of fashion, Steed plumbs the very depths.

THE NORSE CODE

Steed has the horns of a dilemma, Emma milks her moment.

WRITTEN BY: Simon Barnard, Paul Morris, Paul Magrs, John Dorney

DIRECTED BY: Ken Bentley

CAST: Julian Wadham, Olivia Poulet, Sam Kordbacheh, Shelia Reid, Allan Corduner, Ruby Thomas, Simon Greenall, Jeremy Clyde, Graham Seed, David Acton, John Banks, Phillip Pope, Jacqueline Pearce, Becky Wright, Christopher Naylor, Nick Underwood, Timothy Speyer, Ewan Bailey, Francesca Hunt, Jot Davies



Left to right:
Allan Corduner, Shelia Reid, Sam Kordbacheh, Julian Wadham, Simon Greenall and Olivia Poulet

you can bring actors together but you can't be sure there will be a chemistry. "We just had a really good rapport, straight away. That's made it a really enjoyable job."

Julian confirms: "Olivia is just lovely – she's so sparky and bright, as well as being gorgeous.

"That's one of the first things you notice about her, just how bright and intelligent she is, and she brings a lot of herself to Mrs Peel. It's a real pleasure to find myself working with someone like her."

Another part of the job with Big Finish was the photoshoot for the CD covers and publicity material for the release.

Olivia says: "We did that in a lunch break, but it was really good fun.

"I wasn't quite sure if I was meant to dress up as Emma for it. Some people love having their picture taken, but to be perfectly honest, I'm not a big fan of it – nor very good at it!

"But there was an element of the performance in it, as I was in character as Emma. They seemed pleased with them!"

IN TAKING on the part of Mrs Peel, Olivia will have to get used to fans of the series, and Big Finish, bringing copies of the CD box sets to the stage door, when she's appearing in theatre.

She laughs: "Oh, really? I can handle that! It's interesting when you do certain shows – mainly popular television – as your Twitter followers suddenly shoot up! It can go quiet for a bit, and then there's another flurry of activity."

With a second box set of comic strip adaptations currently in preparation, would Olivia like to return to the part of Mrs Peel beyond that?

"I've had a such a great time doing them. Crossing everything, we will get to make some more". **VORTEX**





DOCTORS MASTERS



Kenny Smith falls under the spell of the most evil being in the universe...

DOCTOR WHO fans are used to the idea of bringing together different incarnations of the Doctor. Usually, it happens in anniversary stories, although there have been exceptions, like Big Finish's own *Project: Twilight* or the Children In Need short *Time Crash*.

This year is a bit of an anniversary for the Master. It's just over 45 years since he originally appeared on television, antagonising Jon Pertwee's Doctor.

Over the next few months, both of Big Finish's Masters – Geoffrey Beevers and Alex Macqueen – return to menace the Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Doctors in a special trilogy in the monthly range.

Script editor Alan Barnes says: "A 'Two Masters' storyline was something I'd been thinking about for a while.

Ever since Alex Macqueen's new Master arrived in *UNIT: Dominion*, putting him opposite Geoffrey Beevers' Master seemed an irresistible idea. But if two Masters are better than one, then three Master stories are definitely better than two! So I came up with a dastardly plan to put together a whole trilogy of adventures."

The first of the three Master tales is released this month with *And You Will Obey Me*, written by Alan himself, in which the Peter Davison's Time Lord arrives at a quiet churchyard in the English village of Hexford – the supposed last resting-



Left to right:
Russ Bain, Peta Cornish, Alex Foley, Peter Davison,
Geoffrey Beevers, Tessa Coates and Sheena Bhattessa

doing conventions and the like in the 1990s, having resisted for years, then I got involved too."

What listeners at the time didn't know was that Mr Seta was, of course, the Master. The episode two cliffhanger was a huge surprise for listeners...

Geoffrey laughs again: "Is that right? You know more about it than I do! It was right back at the beginning of Big Finish, some 15 years ago – I didn't know that it was a big secret, and I'm glad it surprised you – it's just grown from there.

"Since then, I've been doing some readings of the old novelisations, which I love doing. I do enjoy them, very much so."



Left to right: John Dorney and Jamie Anderson

"You have to look hard and find the evil in yourself. When it comes out, I think it's really good."

Geoffrey Beevers

place of the Master, as played by Geoffrey Beevers. However, alien forces are gathered, determined to ensure that the Master will not rest in peace.

Geoffrey first played the Master in *The Keeper of Traken*, which was aired in early 1981. Did he ever think that he would be returning to a job he did for a couple of weeks, some 35 years later?" "No, absolutely not," chuckles Geoffrey (in a friendly way, nothing like the Master). "And of course, I didn't do it for a long time after that.

At the time, it was a job that just seemed like any other."

However, things changed when then Big Finish producer Gary Russell invited Geoffrey to play a part in the Seventh Doctor play *Dust Breeding*. He played Mr Seta, a mysterious man in a mask, alongside Madame Salvatori, who was brought to life by Geoffrey's beloved wife, Caroline John.

Geoffrey said: "Carrie hadn't been involved with the world of **Doctor Who** for a long time after playing Liz Shaw, but then she got involved with

GEOFFREY'S PORTRAYAL of the Master, with his creepy, smooth, oozing voice, was a massive success with the Big Finish fans, and it wasn't long before he returned to face Sylvester McCoy again, in *Master*. The play looked at the close relationship between the two characters, offering a fascinating insight into the Master's mind.

Since then, Geoffrey has played the Master several times more, featuring in a variety of stories with Tom Baker's Fourth Doctor, been the leading character in his own **Companion Chronicle**, as well as being the, ahem, mastermind, behind Big Finish's 50th anniversary special story, *The Light at the End*.



Left to right: Geoffrey Beevers and Alex Macqueen

Geoffrey says: "It's a story being told over three parts, which is really interesting. And, of course, there's a new Master."

"I had not met Alex before, or even heard how he played the part, but when we were doing *And You Will Obey Me*, I was told to do it very playfully, for a certain reason – and so I did, but without ever having found out why!

"I didn't quite know what the full story was at that point, or how I was going to meet Alex's Master, so I was doing it rather blind. I rather enjoyed that, in *And You Will Obey Me*, being more playful. He was really sinister, but more playful at the same time, which I really enjoyed. It's beautifully written. I do enjoy it when he's more terrible and the things he does are



"The note I'd written on my script, about his Master, was 'playful to the point of insanity!'"

Geoffrey Beevers

Whilst chatting to Geoffrey, *Vortex* can't believe that this kind, softly-spoken gentleman puts such malevolence into his voice to bring the Master to life.

He says: "You have to look hard and find the evil in yourself. When it comes out, I think it's really good. And it's a joy for me, playing baddies. They are much more fun than goodies and you can stretch yourself more."

"Earlier in my career, on TV, I used to get cast in lots of different things, which was lovely. They really did appreciate the range that an actor could provide in those days."

"You tend not to get in television these days. Nowadays one tends to get typecast in television and I tend to get vicars, doctors and nice people,

on the whole – so it's a huge relief to play something like the Master.

"It's been great fun doing the stories with Tom Baker – he's wonderful. We go down to Tunbridge Wells and record with him. He brings a lot of joy and fun to it, especially when he holds court."

IN MAY, Colin Baker's Doctor meets the Master again in Justin Richards' *Vampire of the Mind*, with the Doctor suspecting the hand of his oldest enemy behind a spate of mysterious disappearances. But will he even recognise this 'new' Master, played by Alex Macqueen, when he arrives at the scene of one of their earlier encounters?

The trilogy comes to its zenith in June, with *The Two Masters* by John Dorney. Sylvester McCoy is drawn into a desperate battle with his arch-enemy – squared!

more horrible! It's not straight down the line sinister.

"Then when we did meet on the third one, I understood what it was all about much more, seeing Alex and seeing how he does it, and it all made a lot more sense. It was very complex. It's full of references to other things I didn't quite get, not being a full aficionado. I can't devote all my time to it! It's full of back story I wasn't sure I knew anything about."

"I took away the front page of my script – I always take them away – I'd written all over it notes like, 'What happened on Tersurus?' or 'The Anomaly Cage?' There's a lot of things I didn't understand – I had all these questions and was trying to work them out as we went along!"

Prior to this trilogy, Geoffrey was unaware there was another incarnation of the Master menacing the Doctors in the Big Finish universe.



DOCTOR WHO AND YOU WILL OBEY ME

The Master: wanted for crimes without number, across five galaxies.

The Master: escaped his pursuers. Last known location: rural Hexford, England, Earth.

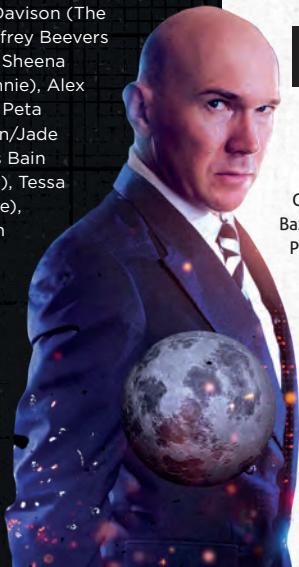
The Master: dead and buried in an unmarked grave, in a lonely churchyard.

Apparently.

WRITTEN BY: Alan Barnes

DIRECTED BY: Jamie Anderson

CAST: Peter Davison (The Doctor), Geoffrey Beevers (The Master), Sheena Bhattacha (Annie), Alex Foley (Colin), Peta Cornish (Helen/Jade Nymph), Russ Bain (Mikey/Grigor), Tessa Coates (Janine), Nick Ellsworth (Gomphus/Auctioneer)



Left to right: Catriona Knox, Elliot Levey, Neil Edmond, Alex Macqueen, Colin Baker, Kate Kennedy and John Standing

He admits: "No, I didn't know that at all! I went off to America on Broadway for six months last year, doing *The Audience* with Helen Mirren, and I don't think I knew before I went he was doing them, and when I came back, I found out about it.

"It's interesting they wanted us to meet. It was great fun to work with Alex. The note I'd written on my script, about his Master, was 'playful to the point of insanity,' which I thought was a good description if someone asks me what's the difference between our Masters."

MASTER FANS looking for an extra outing of the evil Time Lord are in for a further treat this month, as Geoffrey's emaciated incarnation travels back to Victorian London, to encounter Christopher Benjamin and Trevor Baxter as Henry Gordon Jago and Professor George Litefoot, in the 11th series of **Jago & Litefoot**. Producer David Richardson adds: "I'd actually had the idea of bringing the Master into **Jago and Litefoot** AGES ago. I mean, right back at the very beginning of the series. But we were

"I'd had the idea of bringing the Master into Jago and Litefoot AGES ago... Right back at the very beginning."

David Richardson

cautious not to have too much **Doctor Who** continuity in the series in the early days, given that we had Leela and the Sixth Doctor already lined up back then.

"So, as the Master always does, he waited and bided his time until it was right for him to appear. He's playing the long game – and this time he's determined to win it."

Geoffrey concludes: "Oh, yes, I love it. That was the first time I'd met Trevor and Christopher together. They are very funny, aren't they? They get on really well and wind each other up in the studio when they're in character and it carries on in real life. I enjoyed that – I really did." **VORTEX**



SHADES OF NIGHT

It's one of the most popular **New Adventures** and Kenny Smith finds out how it has been given a new lease of life – almost a quarter of a century after it was first published...

THE NINETIES revival continues this month as another classic **Doctor Who New Adventures** novel is brought to life by Big Finish. Over the last four years we've had adventures with the Doctor, Ace and Bernice Summerfield, the Doctor and Bernice, the Doctor, Roz Forrester and Chris Cwej, and now it's the turn of the Doctor and Ace on their own.

Nightshade was the eighth **New Adventure** published, and was written by Mark Gatiss – who's since gone on to write

Phantasmagoria and *Invaders From Mars* for Big Finish, as well as a host of episodes of **Doctor Who** on TV, including *The Unquiet Dead*, *The Idiot's Lantern*, *Victory of the Daleks* and *Robot of Sherwood*.

Mark's 1992 novel has been adapted by Kyle Szikora.

Speaking exclusively to *Vortex*, Mark says: "Big Finish got in touch and said they'd like to do it! I was thrilled. I'm very pleased they're tackling the **New Adventures** (New!)."



Left to right: Jonny Magnanti, Samuel Barnett, Sylvester McCoy, Edward Harrison, Sophie Aldred, Katherine Jakeways and John Castle • Inset: Mark Gatiss



"Kyle is the son of someone I went to school with. Terrifying! We have a very similar sense of humour and love of horror. He's an aspiring screenwriter and, after reading some of his stuff, I thought he'd be perfect to adapt the story. He also loves *Doctor Who* so that was a bonus!

"I WAITED AROUND HOPING THAT SOMEONE WOULD SEND ME A RULE BOOK ON HOW TO ADAPT THIS CRAZY SCI-FI NOVEL INTO AN AUDIO DRAMA, BUT THAT DOESN'T EXIST!" Kyle Szikora

"I re-read the book (from behind the sofa) and suggested a few things I thought we could safely abandon or keep. Of course, it had to come down a lot to fit into the format – much more the TV version than the book, as it were. Kyle wrote several drafts based on notes and then I took a look at it late in the day and suggested a few alterations/line changes or bits that I thought should go back in! I'm very pleased with Kyle's adaptation. I hope he does many more. And some original ones too."

Kyle continues: "We wanted this adaptation to have what the novel has

and is loved for by fans: that strained, tested relationship between the Doctor and Ace, as well as a sinister, haunted atmosphere throughout, and I think that's definitely been achieved.

"The first step of course was to read it a few times, then once I'd done that, I waited around hoping that someone at Big Finish would send me a rule book on how to adapt this crazy sci-fi novel into an audio drama, but that doesn't exist so I just had to get on with writing the dreaded first draft. It was very much like my usual writing process. I spent what seemed like a millennial age puzzling over the



Left to right: Tom Price and John Castle

“JOHN CASTLE HAS GENUINELY ALWAYS BEEN ONE OF MY FAVOURITE ACTORS AND I SUPPOSE I WROTE EDMUND TREVITHICK WITH SOMEONE LIKE HIM IN MIND.” Mark Gatiss

had a lengthy chat one lunchtime about the various parts, particularly Trevithick, where we just threw names back and forth at each other. Certain names just landed and ended the discussion there and then because they felt so right. Mark suggested John Castle,

who I'd adored in his adaptation of *The Tractate Middoth* a few years back. I suggested Sam

Barnett, who I knew Mark had worked with a few times and was equally keen on. Then everyone else just came together between the pair of us!

“The studio sessions were lots of fun. It's the lovely thing about having smaller cast for productions like this: people form bonds extremely quickly, and it feels like a really tight ensemble piece. Sylvester and John Castle hit it off in the green room instantly, giving their scenes together a wonderfully gentlemanly respect. Similarly, having been a child of the 80s, Samuel Barnett was genuinely smitten with Sophie Aldred, so there's a very real sense of affection between their characters.”

Mark says the *Nightshade* cast is: “Terrific! John Castle has genuinely always been one of my favourite actors and I've now worked with him



story, tearing my hair out, agonising over how I'm going to do it justice, making notes, writing scene outlines, pages of dialogue, living on a diet of coffee and fingernails. But I had a team of beautiful minds to guide me and nurture me through the process; James Goss (producer), Scott Handcock (director), John Dorney (script editor), and of course Mark. Heroes.”

CHARGED WITH bringing the play to vivid life – and death – was Scott Handcock, who has directed previous novel adaptations *The Highest Science*, *Theatre of War* and *All-Consuming Fire*.

Scott was delighted to work on the adaptation, saying: “*Nightshade*'s a

funny one. Like all adaptations, it's had to be altered and stripped back for audio, but that actually really helps to focus the story. Effectively, it's a ghost story with a sci-fi twist, where the ghosts are conjured up by our own memories and regrets. I'm sure everyone has that sense of being haunted by past experiences, so it's hugely relatable, and a very human, honest story. Kyle's done an amazing job at adapting it for audio. Plus, of course, there's the delicious story in adapting a story about nostalgia 25 years down the line!”

Scott has assembled a tremendous cast to bring the tale to life.

He reveals: “I'd already been working with Mark on *Dracula*, and



DOCTOR WHO NIGHTSHADE

Professor Nightshade - tea time terror for all the family, and the most loved show in Britain. But Professor Nightshade's days are long over, and Edmund Trevithick is now just an unemployed actor in a retirement home, fondly remembering his past.

It's the same through the entire village - people are falling prey to their memories. At first harmlessly, and then, the bodies begin to turn up.

The Doctor and Ace arrive on the scene - but, with the Doctor planning his retirement, it may be time for Professor Nightshade to solve one last case.

WRITTEN BY: Mark Gatiss
ADAPTED BY: Kyle C Szikora
DIRECTED BY: Scott Handcock

CAST: Sylvester McCoy (The Doctor), Sophie Aldred (Ace), John Castle (Edmund Trevithick), Samuel Barnett (Robin), Katherine Jakeways (Jill), Edward Harrison (Dr Hawthorne), Jonny Magnanti (Lawrence), Tom Price (Sgt Barclay) and Carole Ann Ford (Susan)

three times. I suppose I wrote Edmund Trevithick with someone like him in mind. I'm delighted he's done it. Sam Barnett is an old friend of mine and I suggested the great Johnny Magnanti. I hadn't seen him in years and then he came to see a play I was in at the National. I said 'Are you free next weekend?' He said 'YES!' as all actors do. I'm looking forward to hearing the whole cast."

Kyle adds: "I had a lump in my throat during a few of their scenes actually. It's very touching. And John Castle as Edmund Trevithick is an aural treat. What he does with that role I could never write on the page. He shifts from being ratty to bitchy to vulnerable to heart-rending to fearless at break-neck speed. And hearing it moves you. He owns that character. Fans are going to be taken places whilst listening to *Nightshade*. Into darkness, mainly..."

One guest star of note in the play is Carole Ann Ford, returning to the part of Susan.

Scott adds: "Susan's appearance in *Nightshade* is such a fleeting but important moment, I couldn't help but get a little shiver when I read it, and then again when I heard it performed. It's one of those things I assumed we'd have to cut, but I'm extremely glad we didn't because it's a lovely, melancholy sequence. Sylvester worked hard to get the quality right in studio, even asking to watch their farewell scenes from *The Dalek Invasion of Earth* so he could channel a similar energy. It's great when you get two actors who care so much about a relationship in that way!"

SINCE WRITING *Nightshade*, Mark's gone on to have a stellar career, as a writer, actor and producer.

He admits there's a certain pride when he looks back on his first published work.

"I think it's still pretty good. It's a good idea, I think (they're rare beasts) and though I think it's a bit rambling, there's some good scary stuff in there.

A LEAGUE OF GENTLEMEN?
 Characters named Dr Shearsmith and Mr Pemberton are mentioned.

THE NIGHTSHADE EXPERIMENT
 Professor Nightshade was inspired by Bernard Quatermass.

Nightshade was produced by the BBC. Edmund Trevithick starred as the titular hero from 1953 to 1958.

CONTINUITY
 The prologue of the book gives a different version of the Doctor's departure from Gallifrey compared to other accounts.

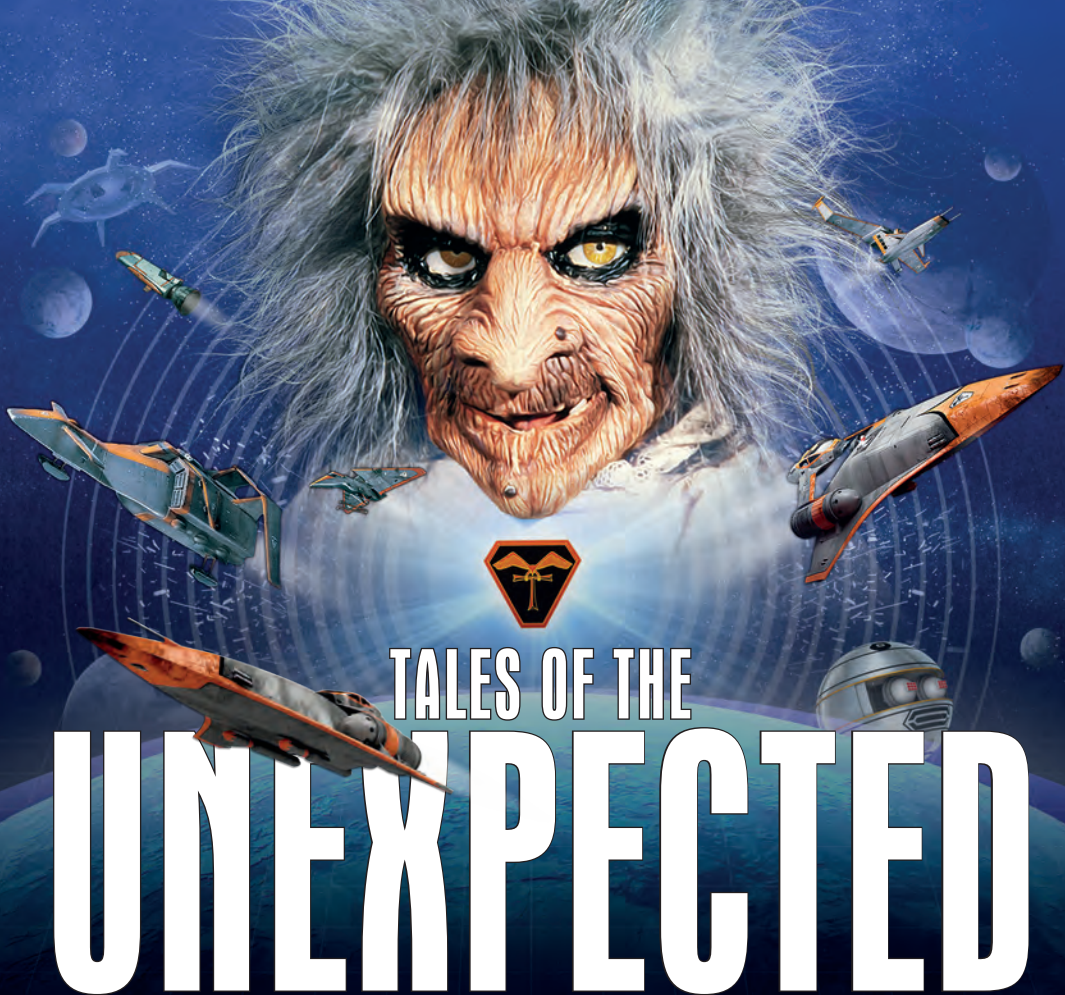
“SUSAN’S APPEARANCE IN NIGHTSHADE IS A FLEETING BUT IMPORTANT MOMENT.”

Scott Handcock

I was writing the version of the show I wanted the series to be at the time and I think it holds up okay."

Producer James Goss is delighted to have been asked to work on the play. He says it's: "One of those jobs you just couldn't turn down. It's a proper piece of *Doctor Who* history – and also a book I can vividly remember reading when it came out. Of course, then I was far too young to know how painfully sad some memories can be – but it's such a clever, wise idea. And bringing it back to life was a delight.

"I know it sounds trivial, but Kyle and Mark have produced some wonderfully clever scenes from Professor Nightshade and listening to them happen in the studio was lovely. John Castle and Tom Price perfectly hit the tone – especially when Scott, the director, told them 'Treat it like live TV. One take and it's in the can. Any fluffs stay in., They were annoyingly perfect, but there's a slight stumble and a long pause, in the proper Quatermass tradition." **VORTEX**



Kenny Smith says 10-10 to his latest mission – to find out... more about **Terrahawks** series two!

TERRAHAWKS – THIS is still an emergency! Get ready to expect the unexpected – again! A second series of Gerry Anderson and Christopher Burr's cult 80s puppet show is released this month by Big Finish, as Zelda and her alien hordes continue in their bid to conquer the Earth. Standing tall, as ever, to protect us, are the Terrahawks, the secret organisation led by Dr Tiger Ninestine.

Producing the series is Gerry's son Jamie, who says: "I was really looking forward to doing these. The nerves of the first time had gone, back when we were wondering if people would like where we had gone with it, but it's made the original series fans very happy, and it's also appealed to those who never saw

the original, and even those who didn't like the 1980s incarnation. With the audios, it's not quite the same tone as the original TV series. We've gone for a little bit more in there for the grown-ups; plenty of tongue in cheek material, in-jokes, and silly references. And while it strikes a similar tone to the first audio series we certainly haven't rested on our laurels! I'd like to think it's more of the same... only better.

"The original brief to the writers was that this series was to take the mickey out of other Anderson shows, which was their jumping off point. *Lights, Camera, Disaster* is a spin on the Supermarionation years, *The Trouble With Toy Boys* is a spin on *Torchy the Battery Boy*, and *Return to Sender* is very loosely based on *UFO* and *Space: 1999*."



TERRAHAWKS VOLUME TWO

SALE OF THE GALAXY

by Andrew T Smith and
Jamie Anderson

THE TROUBLE WITH TOY BOYS

by Chris Dale

RETURN TO SENDER

by Chris Dale

RENTA-HAWKS

by Andrew T Smith

CHAIN OF COMMAND

by Geraldine Donaldson

LIGHTS, CAMERA, DISASTER

by David Hirsch

COUNT ANACONDA'S MAGNIFICENT ORBITING CIRCUS

by Terry Adlam

MY ENEMY'S ENEMY

by Jamie Anderson

DIRECTED BY: Jamie Anderson

CAST: Jeremy Hitchen (Ninestein, Hiro, It-Star [male]), Hawkeye, Dick Branston, Robbie Stevens (101, Hudson, Yung-Star, Stew Dapples, Cy Splitter), Denise Bryer (Zelda, Mary Falconer, It-Star [female], Grandma Buggins), Beth Chalmers (Kate Kestrel, Cy-Star, Miss Donaldson), Nicholas Parsons (Nickel-plate Starsons), Richard James (Jeremy Vile)



Left to right: Robbie Stevens, Denise Bryer and Jeremy Hitchen

"TERRAHAWKS IS NOW, TECHNICALLY, THE ANDERSON SERIES WITH THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF EPISODES!"

Jamie Anderson

"TERRAHAWKS IS now, technically, the Anderson series with the highest number of episodes," says Jeremy Hitchen, who plays Ninestein, amongst others in the series. "We had 39 on television, plus another 16 on audio, so that's quite a nice claim to have!"

Jeremy was joined in studio by original series co-stars Robbie Stevens and Denise Bryer, while Beth Chalmers was back to carry on as Kate Kestrel.

Jeremy continues: "It just feels like it always did, when we go back in studio. The slight difference is I'm doing Zero, rather than Windsor Davies, and we have Beth Chalmers in, after Anne Ridler sadly passed away. Working with Robbie is always great fun because we're just old mates and it's a great excuse to have a catch up. And Denise – she's just marvellous."



Denise – who voices the legendary Zelda, as well as Mary Falconer – was joined by a familiar face from the classic Anderson stable in studio, with her ex-husband Nicholas Parsons playing, erm, Nickel-plate Starsons.

Jamie says: "We brought Nicholas Parsons in to play galaxy-famous Nickel-plate Starsons... Zelda's ex-husband, so there was a nice parallel there – as Nicholas and Denise were married for a long time. They have a great chemistry and dynamic together.

"He had been involved with Anderson series back in 1959 when he did *Four Feather Falls*, alongside his then wife Denise. I think that was the last time they worked together other than a series of adverts they did together in the



"I GAVE JEREMY THE INSTRUCTION OF PLAYING A CHARACTER LIKE BOB HOSKINS ON STEROIDS" Jamie Anderson

early 1960s for Blue Cars Travel, but they certainly haven't voiced puppets together for 56 years!"

T ITH A talented team of voice artists, there's plenty of opportunities for them to push themselves to the limits, as they have a large number of other parts to play. Jamie laughs: "Jeremy was very happy as he's played tons of guest characters! There's a lot more guest characters in this series than the last, as there's more voices to develop, which Jeremy and Robbie both loved. When I gave Jeremy the instruction of playing a character like Bob Hoskins on steroids (an instruction from script editor Andrew T Smith), he just loved that and leapt straight into it!

"We did have a worry at one point that Denise wasn't going to be able to do it because she had trouble with her voice for a couple of months. At one point we were considering that we might have to either cut Zelda out or replace Denise, but she was determined to make a return and made a complete recovery in order to rejoin the cast.



Left to right: Denise Bryer, Robbie Stevens, Beth Chalmers and Jeremy Hitchen

She's nearly 88, and remains an absolutely amazing talent.

"Robbie is just great too – I've cast him in two of my *Doctor Whos* because he's just so versatile. He is very, very good at listening to what's going on, even when he's not in a scene, and will chime in if he has a suggestion. There's a scene in *Chain of Command* where Ninestein has got Kate to open a door for him, and

leaves, and Beth was dumbfounded that Kate Kestrel would be a glorified door opener! Robbie suggested an alternative, and it worked, taking the mickey out of Ninestein.

"Beth is just fantastic. We've got a story for Mary and Kate, which is a real chance for Denise and Beth to shine. We've also got Lois Price back for a couple of episodes, which Beth was really pleased about because she loves her. Beth's very creative."

F ANS OF the classic TV series were delighted to hear the original music score featured in the first series, giving them an authentic feel.

Jamies adds: "We've got some new music cues, which have been transferred and cleaned up – it's about a minute and 40 seconds, but we're really pleased to have them.

"I've been in touch with Richard Harvey, who's looking to see if he has any more. It's great music – I love it!

"It's really nice there's all these themes that you recognise straight away – if there's synthy brass, then it's going to be set on *Spacehawk*. It's really handy, as it acts as a shorthand for the listener – almost as if they knew there was going to be an audio series 30 years later!" **VORTEX**

GRAND THEFT COSMOS

Kenny Smith turns back the clock to 2008 for some fun with the Doctor and Lucie...



LUCIE MILLER is one of the most beloved characters to have been created by Big Finish, and actress Sheridan Smith makes a welcome return to Big Finish this month with the release of the *Short Trip The Curse of the Fugue*.

The sense of fun that Sheridan brought to Lucie made her such a favourite, and the humour is rarely more prominent than in *Grand Theft Cosmos*, by Eddie Robson.

He says: "Script editor Alan Barnes asked me for 'a heist story, with a cool European feel'. I went for the Stockholm setting purely because I've been there and it's a lovely city; also, my original idea had a technology maguffin and there's a big tech industry around the city.

"I love a good heist movie. I wrote a book on film noir of the 40s and

50s for Virgin a few years ago, and there are some great heist movies in that era. I was originally thinking of *The Killing* and *Ocean's Eleven* when plotting this, but then I realised that wouldn't work – those films put lots of screen time into recruiting the team and then planning the heist before you get the satisfaction of seeing it come off.

"However, with a cast of eight we couldn't have a big team, and on audio I thought the planning stuff would just seem like someone explaining the plot to you before the plot actually happens. In the end I took inspiration from *Reservoir Dogs*, which is perhaps a surprising reference point for a *Doctor Who* story but there you go.

"In that, the heist is really simple and doesn't take loads of planning, and the interest is mostly in the complications which arise and the aftermath of that. So the Doctor and Lucie do a bit of planning, but then spend much of the story reacting to how the Headhunter's plan interferes with theirs."

Unlike season one, when Eddie wrote both episodes of *Human Resources* without a voice in mind for Lucie, he found it easier for series two, knowing what Sheridan brought to the part.

"Oh yes," he agrees. "It's always easier when you know what voices you're writing for. We'd talked about different voices during the first series

and I wasn't sure at first what voice Nick and Alan envisaged. For the second series, that was easy. I came down for both studio days of *Human Resources* and got a good sense of how Sheridan tackled the part, and the voice was fixed in my head."

In the guest cast were Christopher Benjamin, making his Big Finish debut before returning to the part of Henry Gordon Jago, along with Colin Spaul.

He says: "Working on an audio version of *Doctor Who* means you don't have to learn your lines and there is very little rehearsal. Big Finish Productions did not exist when I was working on *Revelation of the Daleks*. It was only after I'd finished recording *Rise of the Cybermen* and *The Age of Steel* that I knew about the existence of Big Finish and was delighted to be asked to record with them. Recording with Big Finish is a joy – everyone is brilliant and the recording day goes so quickly."

Handling music for the play was Andy Hardwick. He recalls: "Aside from that *Max Warp* theme, I think the most fun was probably *Grand Theft Cosmos*. Barnaby Edwards had suggested *The Great Train Robbery* as a possible angle for the music. I think I may have gone a bit too far with that, but it was great fun to do and I loved the story and that everyone was so good in it."

VORTEX

VORTEX MAIL

I LOVE LUCIE

Like many other listeners, I am very chuffed to hear that Sheridan Smith will be back as Lucie Miller! Lucie just hits that right mark for a companion, and I really liked her with Paul McGann's Eighth Doctor. I think there's something about Lucie for everyone to connect with. I was sad when she left the Eighth Doctor series, but so excited that we'll have her back for two more stories! I've already pre-ordered *The Curse of the Fugue*. I can't wait to hear it!

Jim Hall

Nick: *Jim, I feel exactly the same as you. Great to have her back. Wouldn't it be great to get her doing some more full-cast audios too?*

THE TROUBLE WITH REFERENCE

I was slightly shocked after seeing the name and the number of the future **Fourth Doctor Adventure** release *The Trouble with Drax*. This title is mostly to coincide with the title of **Star Trek: The Original Series** episode *The Trouble with Tribbles*, which is... well, the Tribbles-centered episode. This is not too uncommon word-combination, so it wouldn't've been regarded as a reference by me at first. But the number of this play is 5.06, and this exact number belongs to **Star Trek: Deep Space Nine** episode *Trials and Tribble-ations*, which is also the Tribbles-centered episode! And moreover, there are only three Tribbles-centered episodes through all **Star Trek** television stories, so it's not really high probability to just randomly choose two of 726 episodes and discover they both are Tribbles-centered. In view of all that I start thinking this is an actual reference!

Or it could be just an amazing coincidence?

Ivan Rogozhin

Nick: *Ivan, it is a truly amazing coincidence.*

BLOWN AWAY

I have been an enthusiastic fan of your work for some years now but feel moved, reflecting on the sheer quality of some of your work over the last 12 months, for the first time to share my gratitude to you in e-mail form. I have very fond memories of four much cherished TV series as a child, loved, lost then replayed endlessly in the age of VHS and DVD. One by one you have breathed new life back into these childhood friends.

Firstly **Doctor Who**, then believe my joy as **Survivors** returned! Just superbly re-imagined, and series three just a perfect piece of audio drama.

Today I have just finished listening to **The Prisoner**, and I am blown away by the care taken to carefully craft and so brilliantly recast one of my all time favourites. Congratulations to Nick on what he has created here. It has surpassed all my expectations. Just a final plea, there is only one more series left from my childhood fandom that you haven't touched.

So come on Big Finish, come on Nick Briggs, **Quatermass** – the iconic *Quatermass and the Pit* rendered in audio, what a truly terrifying experience that would be in this format, come on Nick... just imagine! **James Randle**

Nick: *I frequently do imagine it, James. As far as I understand, the rights are tied up and unobtainable, but we will see what we can do.*

EATING MY WORDS

I was amongst those that voiced sceptical concern when **The Prisoner** was announced, but I've got to eat my words. Nick Briggs has done a superb job bringing Number 6 and the Village back to life, and Mark Elstob has proven to be an extremely good choice for the lead. I thoroughly enjoyed every episode, but the adaptation of *Chimes of Big Ben* clinches it as my favourite. Thanks to Nick (and everyone else involved) for being brave enough to dare to ruffle fan feathers. I'm extremely pleased to say I was completely wrong to doubt him. Oh, and could Celia Imrie come back soon?

David

Nick: *Many thanks, David. I fully sympathised with the scepticism that many people expressed. Why on Earth would anyone want to reinvent **The Prisoner**? In many ways, it's a daft idea. And I'm not entirely sure I can wholly justify it. All I know is that I felt I had to do it and, thankfully (and it's hard to express just how utterly thankful I really am), it turned out all right in the end. It's one of the biggest thrills of my professional life that people have loved the new version so much. And yes, I'd love to work with Celia again.*

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

RELEASE SCHEDULE

Forthcoming audio releases.



APRIL 2016

- **DOCTOR WHO: AND YOU WILL OBEY ME** (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: THE CURSE OF THE FUGUE** (6.04, Eighth Doctor, Download only)
- **BLAKE'S 7: THE LIBERATOR CHRONICLES** (Box Set 12)
- **THE AVENGERS – STEED AND MRS PEEL: THE COMIC STRIP ADAPTATIONS** (Volume 1)
- **TORCHWOOD: ZONE 10** (2.2)
- **JAGO AND LITEFOOT: SERIES II** (Box Set)
- **PATHFINDER LEGENDS – MUMMY'S MASK: THE SLAVE TRENCHES OF HAKOTEP** (2.5)

MAY 2016

- **DOCTOR WHO: VAMPIRE OF THE MIND** (212, Sixth Doctor)
- **DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: GALLERY OF GHOULS** (5.5, Fourth Doctor and Romana II)
- **DOCTOR WHO – THE TENTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: TECHNOPHOBIA** (1.1, Tenth Doctor and Donna)
- **DOCTOR WHO – THE TENTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: TIME REAVER** (1.2, Tenth Doctor and Donna)
- **DOCTOR WHO – THE TENTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: DEATH AND THE QUEEN** (1.3, Tenth Doctor and Donna)
- **DOCTOR WHO – THE TENTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: VOLUME 1** (Ltd Edition Box Set, Tenth Doctor and Donna)
- **DOCTOR WHO: SHORT TRIPS: THIS SPORTING LIFE** (6.05, First Doctor, Download only)
- **GALLIFREY: ENEMY LINES** (8, Romana II, Leela and Ace)
- **CYBERMAN: THE COMPLETE SERIES 1 & 2** (Box Set)
- **TORCHWOOD: GHOST MISSION** (2.3)
- **BIG FINISH CLASSICS: DRACULA**
- **PATHFINDER LEGENDS – MUMMY'S MASK: PYRAMID OF THE SKY PHARAOH** (2.6)

JUNE 2016

- **DOCTOR WHO: THE TWO MASTERS** (215, Seventh Doctor)
- **DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: THE TROUBLE WITH DRAX** (5.6, Fourth Doctor and Romana II)
- **DOCTOR WHO: SHORT TRIPS: LOST AND FOUND** (6.06, Second Doctor, Download only)

- **DOCTOR WHO – THE COMPANION CHRONICLES: THE SECOND DOCTOR – VOLUME 1**
- **UNIT: THE NEW SERIES: SHUTDOWN** (2.1)
- **SURVIVORS – SERIES 4: BOX SET** (Full Cast)
- **TORCHWOOD: MOVING TARGET** (2.4)
- **DARK SHADOWS: 50TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL**

JULY 2016

- **DOCTOR WHO: A LIFE OF CRIME** (214, Seventh Doctor, Mel and Ace)
- **DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: THE PURSUIT OF HISTORY** (5.7, Fourth Doctor and Romana II)
- **DOCTOR WHO: SHORT TRIPS: TBA** (6.07, TBA, Download only)
- **DOCTOR WHO: CLASSIC DOCTORS NEW MONSTERS** (Volume 1)
- **THE NEW COUNTER-MEASURES: WHO KILLED TOBY KINSELLA?**
- **TORCHWOOD: TBA** (2.5)
- **THE AVENGERS – THE LOST EPISODES: VOLUME 6** (Box Set)

AUGUST 2016

- **DOCTOR WHO: FIESTA OF THE DAMNED** (215, Seventh Doctor, Mel and Ace)
- **DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: CASUALTIES OF TIME** (5.8 Fourth Doctor and Romana II)
- **DOCTOR WHO: SHORT TRIPS: TBA** (6.08 TBA, Download only)
- **THE NEW ADVENTURES OF BERNICE SUMMERFIELD – VOLUME 03: THE UNBOUND UNIVERSE** (Box Set)
- **SHERLOCK HOLMES: THE SACRIFICE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES** (Box Set)
- **YOU'RE HIM, AREN'T YOU?** (Audiobook, Paul Darrow)

SEPTEMBER 2016

- **DOCTOR WHO: MAKER OF DEMONS** (216, Seventh Doctor, Mel and Ace)
- **DOCTOR WHO: THE WAR DOCTOR: AGENTS OF CHAOS** (Box Set, The War Doctor)
- **DOCTOR WHO: SHORT TRIPS: TBA** (6.09, TBA, Download only)
- **GRACELESS: SERIES 4** (Box Set)
- **DOCTOR WHO: THE EARLY ADVENTURES: THE AGE OF ENDURANCE** (3.1, First Doctor)

OCTOBER 2016

- **DOCTOR WHO: THE MEMORY BANK AND OTHER STORIES** (217, Fifth Doctor)

- **DOCTOR WHO: DOOM COALITION 3** (Eighth Doctor)
- **DOCTOR WHO: THE EARLY ADVENTURES: THE FIFTH TRAVELLER** (3.2, First Doctor)
- **DOCTOR WHO: SHORT TRIPS: TBA** (6.10, TBA, Download only)
- **DOCTOR WHO: THE CHIMES OF MIDNIGHT LIMITED VINYL EDITION**
- **CHARLOTTE POLLARD: SERIES 02** (Box Set)
- **JAGO AND LITEFOOT: SERIES 12** (Box Set)
- **THE CONFESSIONS OF DORIAN GRAY: SERIES 5**

NOVEMBER 2016

- **DOCTOR WHO: ORDER** (218, Sixth Doctor and Constance)
- **DOCTOR WHO: SHORT TRIPS: TBA** (6.11, TBA, Download only)
- **DOCTOR WHO: THE EARLY ADVENTURES: THE RAVELLI CONSPIRACY** (3.3, First Doctor)
- **SURVIVORS – SERIES 5: BOX SET** (Full Cast)
- **THE AVENGERS – STEED AND MRS PEEL: THE GRAPHIC NOVEL**
- **THE AVENGERS – STEED AND MRS PEEL: THE COMIC STRIP ADAPTATIONS** (Volume 2)
- **UNIT: THE NEW SERIES: TBA** (3.1, TBA)

DECEMBER 2016

- **DOCTOR WHO: ABSOLUTE POWER** (219, Sixth Doctor and Constance)
- **DOCTOR WHO: QUICKSILVER** (220, Sixth Doctor and Constance)
- **THE NEW COUNTER-MEASURES: SERIES 1**
- **THE OMEGA FACTOR: SERIES 2**
- **DOCTOR WHO: SHORT TRIPS: TBA** (6.12, TBA, Download only)
- **DOCTOR WHO – THE NOVEL ADAPTATIONS: ORIGINAL SIN** (Seventh Doctor)
- **DOCTOR WHO – THE NOVEL ADAPTATIONS: TBA** (TBA)
- **DOCTOR WHO: THE EARLY ADVENTURES: THE SONTARANS** (3.4, First Doctor)

JANUARY 2017

- **DOCTOR WHO: THE STAR MEN** (221, Fifth Doctor)
- **DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: THE THIEF OF KRAVENOS** (6.1 Fourth Doctor)
- **DOCTOR WHO: SHORT TRIPS: TBA** (7.01, TBA, Download only)
- **DOCTOR WHO – THE DIARY OF RIVER SONG: SERIES 02** (Box Set)
- **THE PRISONER VOLUME 02** (Box Set)
- **THE AVENGERS – THE LOST EPISODES: VOLUME 07** (Box Set)

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