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JOHN HURT

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EDITORIAL

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JUST AS this issue of *Vortex* was about to go to press, we learned of the sad news that Sir John Hurt had died at the age of 77.

His involvement with **Doctor Who** may have been brief, but through Big Finish, his time as the wonderful, world-weary warrior has been extended by 12 more adventures. Working with the production team was obviously an enjoyable experience for Sir John, as he was delighted to also be involved in the adaptation of HG Wells's *The Invisible Man*.

Big Finish line producer, David Richardson said: "It's a bitter blow to the whole country to lose Sir John Hurt. He was extraordinary – an actor whose work I have admired for as long as I've been watching television and films. We were so lucky to have him as a nation, and we were delighted to have him at Big Finish. He was lovely to work with – down to earth, immensely funny... he had time for everyone in the studio. As the War Doctor and as our Invisible Man, and with every other role he has ever played in a

long and unforgettable career, he was magnificent. What an honour to have worked with him. What an honour."

Co-executive producer Nick Briggs added: "John was a lovely, funny, warm, talented man. It seemed to me that he always looked to enjoy himself, to see the positive and practical and not to look for problems. The warmth and trust we felt from him was entirely mutual and such a privilege. It is a measure of the profound effect he's had on my life that, although I knew he was very ill and not expected to recover, I am deeply upset at the news of his passing. All of us who met, knew, worked with him or just loved his work are so lucky to have had him in our lives. He had about him the air of a simple, generous greatness the like of which I have never experienced before and strongly suspect I will never experience again."

This issue of *Vortex* – featuring the final adventure of Sir John Hurt as the War Doctor – is respectfully dedicated to his memory.

KENNY

SNEAKPREVIEW

Terrahawks Return!

LAST YEAR, fans of **Terrahawks** were left in shock – the second series of the cult Gerry Anderson show ended on one heck of a cliffhanger. If you've not heard it, it's fair to say it's one that you can't imagine there being any way back from. But producer/director/writer Jamie Anderson reveals: "The Terrahawks are back – against all the odds.

"Despite the epic and (for the Terrahawks) catastrophic finale


to season two, you'd be forgiven for being surprised by a third season of the audio series. But of course, when Zelda is involved... nothing is as it seems.

"Series three will see the Terrahawks trying to rebuild and regroup after the deadly encounter with Prince Zegar.

"We have a great mix of stories from established **Terrahawks** writers – Terry Adlam, Mark Woollard, Chris Dale and David Hirsch with the usual bonkers



storylines that include: the Queen being held hostage at Buckingham Palace, battles with pirate ships, a returning deep-space explorer, potentially deadly romance and the (re)making of an often-maligned hero. It really is a ten-fifty for **Terrahawks** season three!" **VORTEX**



Vortex goes behind the scenes of the final **War Doctor** box set starring Sir John Hurt...

WAR TIME

“THE WAR Doctor is a series about a Time Lord on a dark journey,” says producer David Richardson, “one that will lead to his darkest of days, when he activates the Moment in *Day of the Doctor*. We’re a long way off that, but this is not the Doctor as we know him”. The War Doctor’s latest box set **Casualties of War** puts a different

slant on the fight between the Time Lords and the Daleks. We discover the effect the battle has had on others caught up in the war. From the outer reaches of the galaxy, to the heart of Gallifrey itself, the Doctor finds casualties in every place the conflict has touched.

Pretty Lies by Guy Adams continues the story after the events

of *Eye of Harmony* (**Agents of Chaos, 3.3**) as, trapped and desperate, light years from their armies at the heart of the Time War, the War Doctor and Cardinal Ollistra encounter a war reporter named Schandel – a man who knows of the heroic ‘Doctor’.

How exciting was it to be asked to write for the War Doctor? Guy grins: “There may have been joyous



Above: Louise Jameson and John Hurt

wailing. Possibly a small faint. There's lots of emotional scope with the War Doctor of course, the reluctant warrior. Writing him is like steering a rain cloud through a thunderstorm."

What was Guy's starting point for this one? "I wanted to write

jokes Guy, "but yes, Sir John Hurt... that's a biggie. Thing is, I could have delivered a shopping list and he would still have made it sound amazing. 'Small red onion, packet of halloumi cheese and... (BEAT) a courgette.' (AUDIENCE FAINTS WITH EXCITEMENT)."

“ I TRY TO ENSURE ANY ACTOR FORCED TO REGURGITATE MY NONSENSE ISN'T TOO UPSET BY THE EXPERIENCE. ” GUY ADAMS

about how the media distorts war. We live in a world where we think we're drowning in information, and yet much of it is so distorted it could be argued we know nothing. Of all the weapons of war, few are so potent as carefully massaged journalism."

In writing for the War Doctor, did Guy feel any pressure knowing Sir John Hurt was going to be performing his work?

"I try my best to ensure any actor forced to regurgitate my nonsense isn't too upset by the experience,"

THE SECOND story is one that will be of interest as the man who says he is not the Doctor meets an old friend, someone who knows what the Doctor was like.

Leela returns in *The Lady of Obsidian* by Andrew Smith. As a Dalek Strike Fleet heads to destroy another defenceless world, the Doctor seeks help from a shadowy guerrilla force – but in the *Obsidian* Nebula, he discovers who has been leading a successful resistance. On bringing Leela back into the Doctor's

life, producer David explains: "It made sense that, if we wanted to bring in Leela (which we did!) then it should not be Leela as we know her. The Time War has changed her too. And ironically they are now both warriors, and yet they have far less in common than they ever did."

Andrew says: "I was given the story to reintroduce Leela. I had seen what Guy was being asked to do, and for me, it was suggested I do something along the lines of **Apocalypse Now**, with Leela as the Colonel Kurtz figure. Kurtz was a leader of a fighting group, affected by the horrors of the Vietnam war, and I wanted to play with elements of that character for Leela. She too has been leading a guerilla campaign, and is 'damaged' – but in a way that is peculiar to someone who has fought the Time War.

"I don't think the **Apocalypse Now** parallels are too obvious, here, but they were a nice jumping off point. One comparison is that, whereas in the movie Martin Sheen's character has a grainy photograph of Kurtz to help him, here the Doctor has CCTV footage to go by.



Kenny Smith encounters the man who's been the War Doctor's constant companion throughout the four box sets...

HOWARD'S WAY

THE WAR Doctor has made one thing perfectly clear to everyone across *Only The Monstrous*, *Infernal Devices*, *Agents of Chaos* and now *Casualties of War*. He travels alone.

Of course, that's not strictly true. One man has been with him all the way – musician and sound designer Howard Carter. He's worked his magic on the studio sessions, to bring the Time War into vivid life.

For Howard, how special have these releases with Sir John Hurt felt?

He admits: "They feel very special. It has been and continues to be a real privilege to be able to bring the War Doctor to life on audio, and to start weaving his stories into the fabric of the **Doctor Who** universe.

"I try to make the score for each box set as original as possible. With the first series I created a number of themes and a general style which serve as a starting point with each new collection

of stories, but I always like to make each set, and indeed each episode, as unique as possible."

The Time War is massive in its scope, which poses huge challenges

“ I DID GIVE HIM QUITE A ROUGH TIME, WITH LOADS OF NOTES, BUT BOY DID HE LEARN FAST! ”

NICHOLAS BRIGGS

for Howard, to ensure it matches the grandeur of the conflict.

He says: "I think the biggest challenge with these stories is to give a sense of the scale of the drama without losing touch with the very human themes running throughout.

"With the turbulent background of the Time War and the cinematic scope of the stories there's a temptation to constantly get louder, faster and more intense, but it's important to remember that these dramas are about people, often

dealing with very complex moral issues in an ever-changing universe.

"The sound design should only ever aid in the telling of these stories, not try to compete with or overwhelm them.

"There is nothing hard about it, it is endless fun. The writers keep throwing challenges my way, and I thank them for it!"

WORKING ON any play is a challenge for all of the Big Finish musicians and sound designers – from the moment they start work on the first dialogue edit, to the final delivery of the masters.

He says: "That tends to depend on deadlines and schedules, but given the rate at which we are releasing these sets it will usually take a month from the first edit to the final delivery of the masters. Those are, inevitably, a few rather intense weeks."

The initial series, *Only The Monstrous*, was recorded at the end of September 2014, and the set had to be delivered in December, giving him a very short time to prepare the three plays.

Howard says: "I'm so pleased

with the way it came out and the way it was received. It felt like we were venturing into uncharted territory, but Nick Briggs had done such an incredible job with the set that when it came time for me to put everything together it seemed very natural.

"Again, the turnaround was very short so it was an intense period, but I think pressure of that kind focuses one's attention and creativity."

Director Nick is full of praise for Howard's work. "Howard Carter



Patient Zero

is such a talent. I auditioned him years back and his first main-range **Doctor Who** production was for my script *Patient Zero*. I remember being so excited when I heard some of his first bits of work for us. I did give him quite a rough time, with loads of notes, but boy did he learn fast! And now, he's not only brilliant, he's really fast and has such a fantastic instinct.

"Even before I bombarded him with notes, he had such obvious, natural talent. I realise it sounds, immodestly, as though I'm claiming some credit for his being so good – no, he's much better than that. And his work on all the 'new series' stuff is outstanding. On top of it all, he's one of the nicest, most polite, intelligent and affable people I've ever worked with. He's a such a gentleman and a true pleasure to work with. And he's good looking too!"

Producer David Richardson adds: "Sound design and music composition are magic to me. As a producer, I'm with a production from the first germ of an idea through to the final signed off edit. I get to read and hear every stage, and marvel as hugely talented people join the production to create a new level of the fantasy. And it's always those last two stages of sound design and music where a production begins to breathe – when all the scenes are in order, when the world around the actors has been created, and the tone has been coloured. I don't quite understand how they do it, and I almost don't want to – I just enjoy experiencing it!"

"Howard wears his brilliance very lightly – if you meet him he's a mild-mannered, socially engaging chap who you'd never think could create whole worlds, whole universes... but that's exactly what he does in his spare room at home. He has been vital to the success of all our new series titles, including *The Tenth Doctor*, *The War Doctor*, *River Song*, *UNIT*... and I doubt he has had much sleep over the last year!"

WITH THE release of *Casualties of War*, what has been Howard's personal highlight on the War Doctor series?

"I'm not sure I have one specific highlight across the four sets, but I do love how the writers are constantly exploring the darker side of the Doctor's personality, and forging his character in the fire of the Time War.

"It's not only wonderful to read the stories, but an absolute joy and privilege to then try to bring them to life with sound and music." **VORTEX**

"Initially, I thought I would keep it back that Leela was in the story. However, I very quickly realised that you don't have a story with Leela, and with Louise Jameson in your cast, without putting her on the cover of the CD and the box set. So I changed my thinking and introduced her far earlier."

Listeners should prepare themselves for one particular scene which will break hearts. David says: "With actors of the calibre of John Hurt and Louise Jameson, we wanted to give them strong emotional material and the scripts deliver in spades. During the recording of one key scene, everyone in the control room was weeping openly. John and Louise just broke our hearts."

Andrew continues: "I don't really know where the idea came from – it just came to me. It probably was as a result of thinking about a damaged character like Colonel Kurtz and how they have become a different person. Kurtz has been changed by the war and become a very cruel man.

"That's never going to be the case with Leela. She has been injured in some way in the course of the Time War, in a way that offered me several narrative opportunities.

"It threw up so many ideas, so I just wrote and wrote and wrote, going ahead with some possibilities and throwing out others. What's in the script is just a small part of what I actually came up with as a fall-out from what has happened to her.

"And then, yes, there's that scene. Which, when Louise performed it, had Nick and me in tears – in fact, Nick was bereft! And when Louise asked if he wanted her to go again he said, 'No, I couldn't put myself through that again.' Just a wonderful performance. I think listeners will know the scene I'm talking about when they get there."



Above (from left to right): Mark Elstob, Jacqueline Pearce, Julia Hills, Nicholas Briggs, John Hurt and Joseph Kloska



Above (from left to right): Beth Chalmers, Nicholas Briggs, Jane Slavin, Alan David, John Hurt, Jacqueline Pearce and Toby Hrycek-Robinson

FOR LOUISE Jameson, working with Sir John isn't a new experience. She says: "I actually did a **Play For Today** with John back in the 1970s. I would have been about 25 at the time, and Claude Whatham was the director. It was called *The Peddler* and he was playing someone who sold

medicines to doctors for profit, not medical ethics.

"His character had a wife, a mistress and a one night stand – I was the one night stand! It was an extraordinary time – he was quite wild in those days. Both John and Tom (Baker) have those incredible faces – even if you knew absolutely nothing about them, you could tell they've both lived a life."

She particularly enjoyed the chance to face off against Sir John. "There's one scene where I have a battle with John and it's very strongly written for us both. As I left for a tea break, David Richardson said, 'That's why we wanted Leela back.' "I suppose most of the companions wouldn't react to him in the way that Leela does,

“ I’M RATHER JEALOUS OF THE SCENE WHERE ACE TOOK A BASEBALL BAT TO A DALEK AND SMASHED IT UP. ” LOUISE JAMESON

by standing up to him – probably the only other one of the classic companions who would react like that would be Ace. I have to admit, I'm rather jealous of the scene where she took a baseball bat to a Dalek and smashed it up. I would love to have done that!

"For me, it's always interesting when a writer investigates Leela's character properly and Andrew Smith always delivers beautifully, but sometimes in **Doctor Who**, it can be a problem with the companion having the cipher role. You know there has to be someone to ask questions of the Doctor, so he can explain things to the companion, and





me, 'No one knows Leela better than you.' I've been playing Leela for Big Finish over a longer period than I did with her on television, so yes, I do understand her.

"When we're working on scripts, and when I'm prepping for it, David often tells me, 'I feel like I've got another editor on board when you are about.' If there's something which I don't think

been very fortunate over the years with the actors they've cast. It's not a role that just anyone can play."

THE WAR Doctor comes full circle as the final release of this set is written by the man responsible for all three parts of the first series, Nicholas Briggs. Nick returns for *The Enigma Dimension*, which sees the Dalek

“IT'S GREAT TO HAVE A LEADING ACTOR WHO IS FULLY BEHIND THE PROJECT AND TAKES IT SERIOUSLY.” NICHOLAS BRIGGS

is right or in character for Leela – and it's not that often – they let me make changes in studio. They are very open to suggestions."

Having appeared alongside various incarnations of the Doctor for Big

Time Strategist unleash a new plan, as something hovers above Gallifrey – where the shadows move among the cloisters.

After series one of the War Doctor, what did Nick learn

DOCTOR WHO: THE WAR DOCTOR CASUALTIES OF WAR

■ OUT FEBRUARY! ■ CD/DOWNLOAD

Written By:
Guy Adams, Andrew Smith
and Nicholas Briggs
Directed By: Nicholas Briggs

CAST
John Hurt (The War Doctor),
Louise Jameson (Leela),
Jacqueline Pearce (Cardinal
Ollistra), Joseph Kloska

(Schandel), Julia Hills (Sera/
Spokesperson), Mark Elstob
(Editor/Old Man), Lizzie Roper
(Rosata Laxter/High Minister),
Chris Porter (Skaul/Freel),
Alan David (Castellan Kanteer),
Jane Slavin (Panopticon
Guard Lintok), and Nicholas
Briggs (Dalek Time Strategist/
Daleks/Assault Team Leader)



so to the audience, that they may understand all the facts.

"When a writer allows you to delve deep – and it happens a lot with Big Finish – it really gives you some direction. Over the years, they've trusted my interpretation because, as David Richardson keeps telling

Finish, Louise has chalked another one-off with the War Doctor.

She laughs: "I'm definitely working my way through the Doctors now – and who knows, I might get another one some time soon! Being the Doctor is an amazing part to play and we've

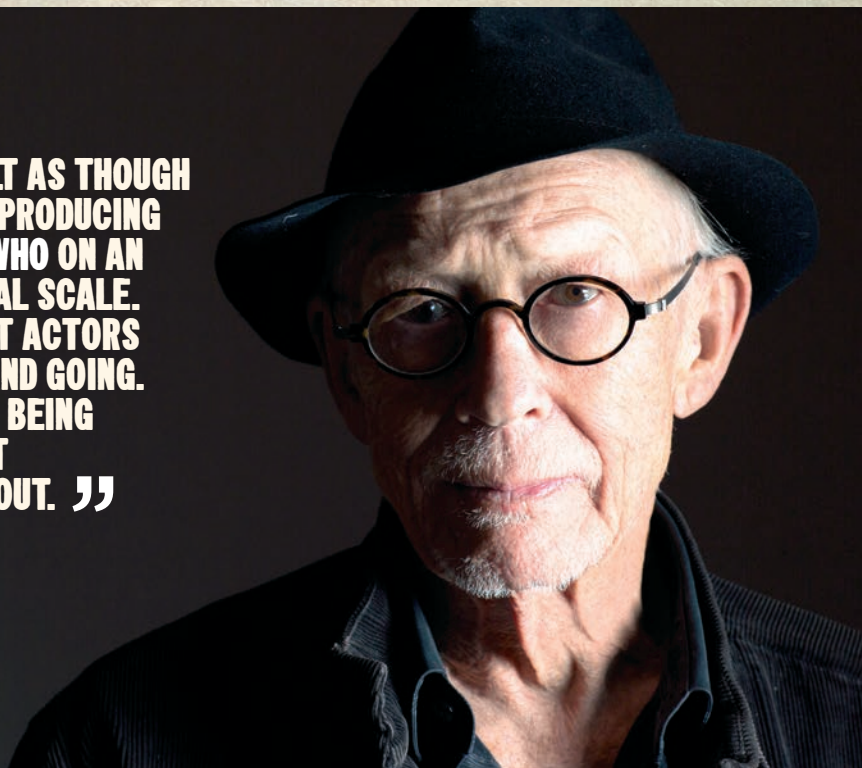
from working on it which he brought into this adventure?"

Nick says: "I learnt that the whole Time War scenario worked well in story terms.

"I also learnt that John Hurt was lovely to work with. It's great to have a leading actor who is fully

“IT FELT AS THOUGH WE WERE PRODUCING DOCTOR WHO ON AN INDUSTRIAL SCALE. DIFFERENT ACTORS COMING AND GOING. AND JOHN BEING BRILLIANT THROUGHOUT.”

NICHOLAS BRIGGS



Above: John Hurt

behind the project and takes it seriously. We have fun and are not poe-faced about it, but we're absolutely dedicated to getting it right. John is brilliant at that."

By setting a series within the Time War, that backdrop allows the writing team to push the barriers.

Nick agrees: "It allows you to raise the stakes incredibly high, which is always good for drama. This makes every story you tell feel extra-special, because, more often than not, the whole of creation is at stake. The Doctor can be more raw and less sympathetic. He may not be deliberately unkind or cruel, but may end up being so because of the terrible stress put upon him by the War. It's interesting to show him in that situation."

Like *The Lady of Obsidian*, *The Enigma Dimension* features Leela. Nick adds: "The idea came from David Richardson, as do many, many good ideas. With Leela's involvement on the planet Gallifrey, it seemed to be a great thing to do. Maybe at some point, we can go back and fill in the blanks with what led her to the situation we find her in during the Time War."

Nick also directed the plays in this box set, as he did with its predecessors.

"It was, I think, part of a second, big block. So it was full-steam-ahead, very concentrated work. We had loads of fun. It felt, also, as though we were producing **Doctor Who** on an industrial

scale. So many different actors coming and going. And John being brilliant throughout."

How would Nick sum up the whole experience of these four box sets? He grins – and groans! "It almost felt like being in a war itself. Hard work, danger round every corner – oh, hold on, no there wasn't! But seriously, it was very concentrated, and because of John's availability, we had to work fast and hard to get everything ready in time.

"There were some interesting scheduling challengers. Work under pressure can be a nightmare, but when you've got the right people, it can produce some really special moments. Luckily, it was the latter!" **VORTEX**

HIDDEN TREASURES



Jacqueline Rayner tells Xanna Eve Chown about the return of two 'lost' Bernice Summerfield adventures...

THE *SQUIRE'S Crystal* and *The Glass Prison* were the third and fifth novels in Big Finish's **Bernice Summerfield** series. Fun and exciting, these are especially notable for Benny fans, as it is in *The Squire's Crystal* that Benny becomes possessed and conceives her son Peter, who is then born in *The Glass Prison*. Originally published in 2001 and 2002, they will finally be available to purchase as ebooks this month.

Jac says: "I'd been lucky enough to get involved with the **Benny** audios quite early on, and I'd also had the fun of helping Gary Russell and Justin Richards create Benny's new headquarters in the Braxiatel Collection. I'm not sure – because I am now elderly and have no memory – at what point it was decided to do the novels, but Gary knew that I'd wanted to write a Benny book when Virgin were doing them, so when asked if I'd write one, I said, 'Yes please!'

"As time has proven, splitting the ongoing storyline between different mediums was a mistake; I guess no one thought for a second that people

might still be wanting to follow it years later, long after the books went out of print, and getting confused as to how Benny got pregnant – and then had a magically appearing baby. Oops. So hurrah for Big Finish getting those life events out there again to stop the confusion!"

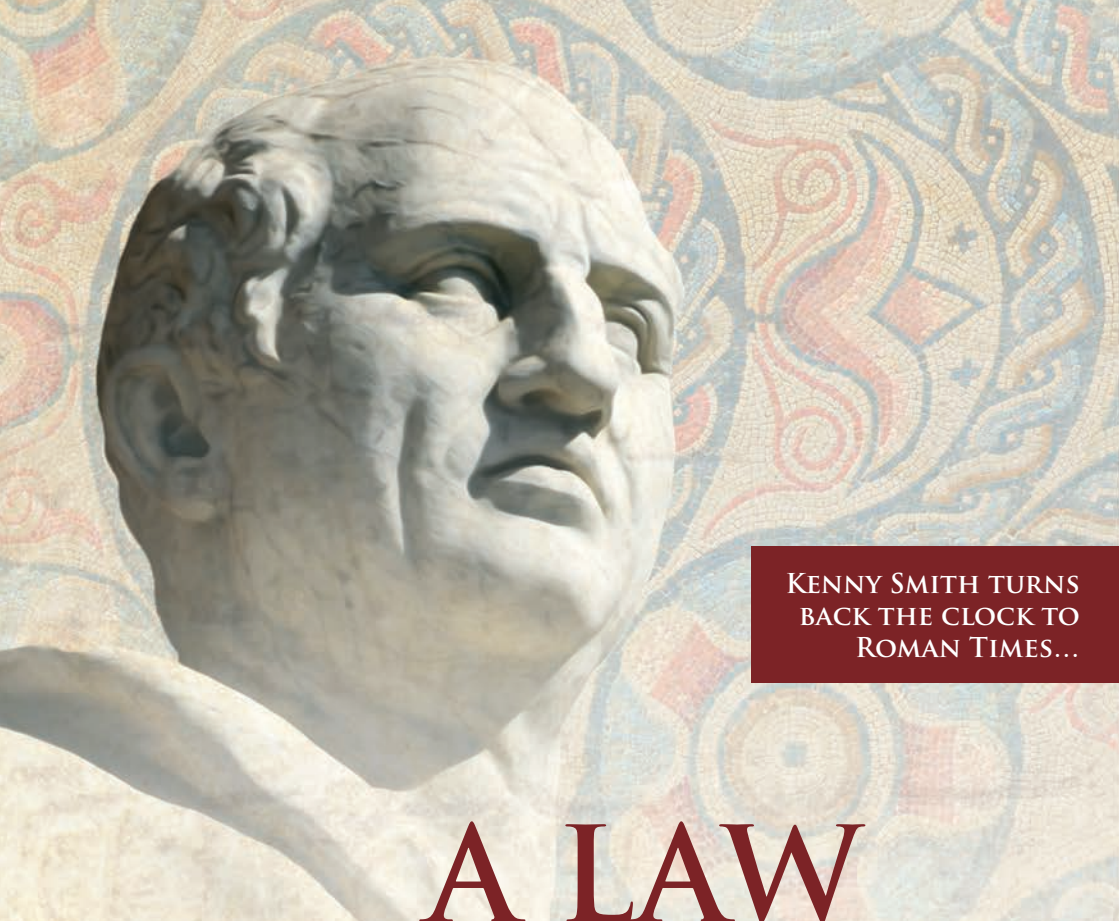
Jac was commissioned to write an Eighth Doctor BBC novel around the same time as her first **Benny** book.

She recalls: "The thing I remember most is discovering just how long a book has to be. I mean, I knew factually how many words make a book, but getting that many on paper – wow! I still write short, it doesn't matter how much plot I have to start with, somehow I just race through it. I think in *Glass Prison* I have a chapter that's only a line long. That's how long chapters would be in my ideal world. I also remember how much fun it was. I love getting deep into a character, and I discovered that writing in the first person – as I did with *Glass Prison* – was absolutely my favourite way of writing.

What does Jac like best about Benny? "What don't I like about

her! She is fun and passionate and adventurous and brave and caring and 100 per cent human – which is due to Paul Cornell, of course, he created someone real. Unlike a lot of fictional characters, she grows. It's Paul who did that too. Go from *Love and War* to *Happy Endings* to *Oh No It Isn't!* and that's a character developing – not just having life events happening to them, but changing and ageing and growing.

"And on top of all that, as soon as Lisa Bowerman inhabited the character, she added a whole new layer. Benny is unique, and I love her! I hope everyone enjoys the books! Oh, and there's one other thing – a dear friend of mine (and a **Benny** fan!), Peter Cooke, died not long before I wrote *Glass Prison*, and baby Peter was named after him. I've talked about this a few times before when I've been asked about **Benny** things, but as I'm writing this the day after Peter's birthday – he would have been 45 – it seems a nice moment to remember again where Peter got his name." **VORTEX**



KENNY SMITH TURNS
BACK THE CLOCK TO
ROMAN TIMES...

UNTO A LAW HIMSELF

BIG FINISH always likes to try something new. Skip back a few years, and look at **The Confessions of Dorian Gray**, conceived by Scott Hancock and starring Alexander Vlahos as the titular character. It expanded themes and concepts from the novel **The Picture of Dorian Gray** and has ended up with its own core following.

In 2017, Scott's back with another new download-only series, **Cicero**. The producer and director explains: "It's a pure historical drama – something I don't think Big Finish have ever tackled before

– set in Ancient Rome, focussing on the life of Marcus Tullius Cicero. It's part courtroom drama, part detective story, focussing on the true events surrounding Cicero's rise to prominence. This is the story of Cicero's first and most famous case as a Roman lawyer: the trial of Sextus Roscius, a man accused of patricide. It's a fascinating tale of the underdog fighting against all odds, and unwittingly stumbling upon corruption at the top of Roman society."

What led to the creation of **Cicero**? Scott continues: "A combination

of factors, really. I love working for Big Finish, and am constantly on the lookout for new and exciting projects, and Cicero's something I've wanted to tackle for a while. And I mean quite a long while.

"I studied him first during my A-levels and found him utterly fascinating – not just during the period we find him in here, but his later life. He's a big, intelligent, awkward character in Rome – unafraid to make serious enemies in the name of justice – and it struck me his story's never really been told. But it's great. It really

gets to the heart of Roman society and embraces a world that's larger than life in so many ways. It's not a world we'd recognise, except for the politics and personalities!"

Scott is working with another of his **Confessions** compatriots on **Cicero**. He says: "David Llewellyn's written it. Again, it happened by chance, long before I even mentioned it to Big Finish. David and I were chatting – probably as far back as 2013 – and I happened to tell him about my thoughts for **Cicero** and what a great drama I thought it

But he's also a flawed character.

"He begins his career with an anti-authoritarian streak (while also being something of a snob), but as he becomes a member of the political elite, so this begins to toughen and corrupt him."

WITH A series and script in hand, the next task for Scott was to find a star.

Cicero is brought to life by Samuel Barnett, the star of Netflix series **Dirk Gently**. Sam's no stranger to Big Finish, with his

working with him – we've done a few things together, including *Nightshade*, **Dorian Gray**, and of course **Torchwood** – so I had him at the back of my mind. Then he came back from Canada where he'd been filming **Dirk Gently** for BBC America, he happened to be free, and so we took it into studio. It was all ridiculously straightforward!

"Sam brings everything you could possibly want – and more. Not only is he a good actor, but he's a hell of a lot of fun, and when you have to cast a leading man, you want someone

“ HE'S A BIG, INTELLIGENT, AWKWARD CHARACTER IN ROME ”

SCOTT HANDCOCK

could be. David being David, he went off and read up on him. Next thing I know, he'd written an entire draft just because he wanted to – he loved the idea that much! It then sat on my desk for a while before getting revisited early last year when Big Finish said yes."

David concedes his knowledge of the lawyer prior to working on the project amounted to: "Not a great deal, I must admit. I knew he was an orator and politician who'd met a particularly grisly end, and I remembered David Bamber playing an older Cicero brilliantly in the TV series **Rome**, but that was pretty much it."

The writer tells Vortex what it was about the character that he found so interesting: "Well, for starters, he was a genius. He's still considered the benchmark for political and legal rhetoric over 2000 years after his death, and he was the gold standard for Latin prose throughout the Renaissance.



Above (from left to right): Samuel Barnett and George Naylor

credits including Hans Tod in *The Beast of Orlok*, Robin Yeadon in *Nightshade*, and **Torchwood's** unfriendly ghost Norton Folgate.

Scott says: "Sam came on board not long after David delivered his final draft. I absolutely love

who infects everyone else with their enthusiasm for the material. Suffice it to say, Sam loved the script – it's a real change of pace – but also has a lot of heart and humour. Sam's great at that. His double-act with George Naylor (playing Quintus)

was a joy to listen to. But he also communicates a great intelligence and sense of righteousness that's perfect for Cicero, and I couldn't be happier to have him aboard!"

Sam says: "I believe some of the script is taken from the transcripts or written recordings of some of the trials. It is fantastic. The big trial scene speech that he gives is brilliantly constructed and structured. He's clearly an extraordinary man. It's a real pleasure to play it.

"But also, everything is dramatised but you keep reminding oneself that this was real, it happened. It's really funny – I've always loved sci-fi, I've got a real inner geek. It's not so inner, actually, I'm a bit of a geek. In this industry you take what you can get jobs-wise, and I'm really, really thrilled and happy that in recent years, my career has started going into sci-fi. **Dirk Gently** is really quite sci-fi. I absolutely love that stuff. Probably my favourite childhood show was **The X Files**. I met Gillian Anderson once – and was totally tongue tied. She's so beautiful and so composed – she's Scully!

"It's really nice to have variety so to do this and be part of a double-act with my younger brother Quintus, played by George Naylor, is

to be honest. I love the *Claudius* novels and the TV adaptation, but **Cicero** is coming at that era from a different angle, I think.

"Both Scott and I were keen to avoid the characters talking to one another in too high a register. You find that kind of talk in Cicero's speeches, but when you look at a lot of Roman drama and prose – e.g. *The Satyricon* or Terence's comedies – the language tends to be a lot earthier and less formal.

He smiles: "Really pleased. It was interesting coming back to the original spec script, because that was written when I was still relatively new to writing for audio. I've done quite a bit since then, and so it was almost like editing and rewriting someone else's work! But I'm confident that we've stayed faithful to the spirit of who Cicero was and the nature of the real-life Sextus Roscius case, while still telling a ruddy good yarn!"

Big Finish Classics: CICERO



OUT FEBRUARY!
DOWNLOAD

Written By: David Llewellyn
Directed By: Scott Handcock

CAST

Samuel Barnett (Marcus Tullius Cicero), George Naylor (Quintus Tullius Cicero), Simon Ludders (Sextus Roscius), Elizabeth Morton (Caecilia Metella), Stephen Critchlow (Etrucius), Youssef Kerkour (Titus Capito)

“ I GAVE MYSELF A BIT OF A CRASH COURSE IN THE LATE ROMAN REPUBLIC. ”

DAVID LLEWELLYN

fantastic. I felt we had quite a strong chemistry and a good little rapport.

"There's scope for more."

WHEN THINKING of a drama set in Roman times, people will, rightly or wrongly, draw parallels with *I, Claudius*. Does that add any pressure?

David laughs: "It does now! But I hadn't really thought of it,

"I gave myself a bit of a crash course in the late Roman republic, and read Cicero's transcribed speeches from a few murder cases. Of course, there comes a point when you have to step away from all that and just tell a story, and if that involves tweaking things here and there, so be it!"

How proud is David of the finished script?

Scott adds: "The original dramas have an added thrill to them. With something established like **Doctor Who**, you know the rules and – to some extent – the audience, so you have a strong sense of where to pitch things. **Cicero**, however, is very much like **Dorian** was back in 2012: it's an unknown quantity.

"We know the story's strong – it's stuck for over 2000 years – and hopefully the Big Finish audience will think it's worth telling too. If so, well, Cicero had a long and varied career – both legal and political – meaning there's plenty of scope to build upon this story if people like it." **VORTEX**

SIMON WILLIAMS • PAMELA SALEM • KAREN GLEDHILL • HUGH ROSS



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PUT TO THE SWORD

Kenny Smith ascends to Crimson Throne with the **Pathfinder Legends**...

SWORDS AND sorcery on the planet Golarion return this month, for the third series of **Pathfinder Legends**. Stewart Alexander (Valeros), Trevor Littleedale (Ezren), Ian Brooker (Harsk) and Kerry Skinner (Merisiel) are back for six new tales, under the overall arc of the *Curse of the Crimson Throne – Edge of Anarchy, Seven Days to the Grave, Escape from Old Korvosa, A History of Ashes, Skeletons of Scarwall* and *Crown of Fangs*.

In the shadow of the ailing king of the city of Korvosa, a new ruler gathers power, sending shockwaves through a populace already plagued by unrest and pushing the city to the brink of disaster – and it's up to our heroes to decide whether the rule of a new monarch will usher in a new age of glory or a reign of chaos.

Producer John Ainsworth says: "The four main characters, and their relationships with each other have become very well established, and almost second nature to the cast. So, the interplay between them all is now very natural, and probably more subtle. We have a new writer for this series in the form of David Bryher. Although David hadn't written for **Pathfinder Legends** before, he was very familiar with the **Pathfinder** world, and of course has our previous two series to dip into as reference for the characters.

"As before, each chapter contributes to a single overall story, building to a climax in the final instalment. For this series, the setting is the city of Korvosa. Valeros, Merisiel, Harsk and Ezren have come to the city in search of Merisiel's friend Kyra who has sent them a cryptic message.

While they are there, chaos erupts when the city's king dies, and his queen, Illeosa, takes over. But who was responsible for the death of the king? Naturally, our heroes get drawn into the mystery."

FOR DAVID to write all six parts of the third run, is a dream come true.

He says: "I've been friends with (previous writers) Mark Wright and Cavan Scott for years and, when Big Finish first embarked on **Pathfinder Legends** and I saw they were writing it, I immediately got in touch and started... I think the word is 'hectoring'. Maybe even 'nagging'. When they moved on

became a subscriber and huge fan of their work and their world.

"I have a couple of shelves full of **Pathfinder** books, and many more PDFs of their products on my hard drive. When Big Finish announced **Pathfinder Legends**, as I said, my ears pricked up. I've really, really enjoyed what Mark, Cav and John have done so far. There's so little drama quite like this in the world,



“THIS WAS THE FIRST ADAPTATION – OF ANYTHING – THAT I HAVE WRITTEN. THAT IS A REALLY INTERESTING CHALLENGE IN ITSELF.”

David Bryher

after the second series, they pointed producer John Ainsworth in my direction. When he got in touch with me, I nearly snapped his hand off."

As a fan of the **Pathfinder** series, David needed no introduction to the set-up.

He admits: "I started playing roleplaying games when I was a kid, stuck with them on and off while growing up, and returned to them with a vengeance in 2000 with the release of the third edition of *Dungeons and Dragons* – the game that would eventually evolve into **Pathfinder**. When Paizo started producing their Adventure Paths – the products on which **Pathfinder Legends** are based – I

and it makes for big, ballsy, fun listening. So, as you can probably guess, it was a total thrill to be asked to work on the series."

He continues: "This was the first adaptation – of anything – that I have written. That is a really interesting challenge in itself, but when you're working with something that isn't quite a normal piece of fiction, it becomes really fun. I will never slag off a book-to-film adaptation ever again!

"Knowing that I'm doing the whole thing has given me some lovely control over the pace and flow of the big story. Initially, John and I talked about me writing two or three of the plays but, as I finished

the second script, I realised that there were some unique challenges to *Curse of the Crimson Throne* and that it might be better if I could tackle the whole thing.

"Every series of **Pathfinder Legends** is one big story told in six chapters, but the plays in this series are more interconnected than most – and the story is quite complex and twisty, too. A relatively minor character from the first play pops up again in the fourth. Someone else appears in the first, third and sixth. Someone else, second, third and sixth. Another, the third and sixth. Another, third and fifth. Another, in the first and sixth... It was quite a juggling act at times! Then, of course, there is the big bad, who – even when she's not there in the flesh – casts a long shadow over all the plays.

"Of course, I could have sat down with another writer or two and planned all this stuff out carefully for us all to handle, but doing it all myself did offer a degree of flexibility. And in the end, this flexibility was very useful, as we've had to write and record the last two plays out of order due to cast availability.

"It has, at times, been quite a mountain to climb. I have pages and pages of notes to help me keep everything straight in my head. But that said, it has been an absolute privilege to write a whole, 12-hour drama series. Not many people get the chance to get stuck into such a chunky bit of work, so it's been fun – especially so when it's all set in a world and style of fiction I love so much."

PLAYING AXE-carrying dwarf is Ian Brooker – how does he get into the mindset for a character like that?

He laughs: "Good question. Ha! Firstly: how does one create a dwarf in sound? It's not easy. As with any research into a character – you go to the existing

source material. Fortunately there are plenty of images of the **Pathfinder** characters online and a lot of character information in the Paizo publications to guide you. I wanted to be faithful to the character as he is played in the game and as he appears in graphic art. But whereas it is quite clear what Harsk looks like – there are



in *Lord of the Rings* and Ken Stott in *The Hobbit*, so we didn't want to go down that route. I made him English – South Eastern but without much of an accent. The images often emphasised his teeth. So I filtered this voice through the prominent teeth. Once I had the voice, the stance and the attitude, I could see myself as the character in my mind's eye."

PATHFINDER LEGENDS: CURSE OF THE CRIMSON THRONE SEVEN DAYS TO THE GRAVE

■ OUT FEBRUARY! ■ CD/DOWNLOAD

Written By: David Bryher

Directed By: John Ainsworth

CAST: Stewart Alexander (Valeros), Trevor Littledale (Ezren), Ian Brooker (Harsk), Kerry Skinner (Merisiel), Amerjit Deu (Ishana Dhatri), Rebecca Crankshaw (Taycev/Yvicca), Evie Dawnay (Kyra), Roger Parrott (Doctor Davaulus), Susie Riddell (Eries), Julia Righton (Lady Andaisin)



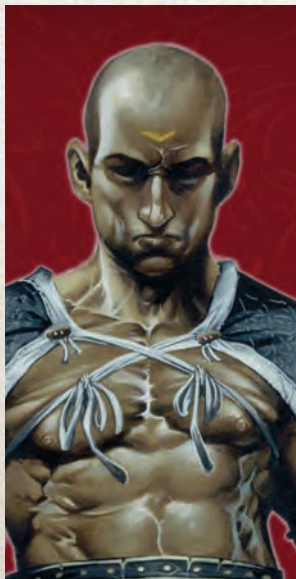
“THEY ARE REALLY WELL-DEFINED CHARACTERS, VERY DIFFERENT FROM EACH OTHER, AND REALLY BROUGHT TO LIFE BY THE CAST.”

JOHN AINSWORTH

very few clues – other than his gruffness – as to how he sounds.

“Before we first met for the test recording three and a half years ago, John sent us copies of the graphic novel *Pathfinder: Dark Waters Rising* (written by Jim Zub) with illustrations by the artist Andrew Huerta. I studied the various images of Harsk by Huerta and others and tried to replicate his look: the face, the eyes, the mouth, the teeth, the stance. This allowed me to find the voice for Harsk. I didn't want to make the voice too high as it would be a strain to maintain it in studio so I chose to go for a gruff middle range chest voice.

“Obviously we have had Scottish dwarves in the past: John Rhys Davies



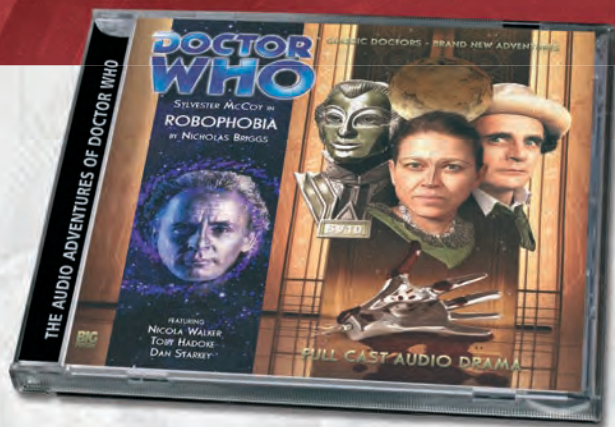
PRODUCER JOHN adds: “I think the strength of the series is the four heroes.

They are really well-defined characters, very different from each other, and really brought to life by the cast. You can't help but like and care for them, and you get drawn into the adventures with them. Like the previous two series, *The Curse of the Crimson Throne* is a self-contained adventure, so you could certainly jump on here with the first chapter, *Edge of Anarchy* and enjoy it as it stands.”

Ian adds: “It naturally appeals to the established **Pathfinder** gamers. Outside the world of gaming, I think that the series probably appeals to all lovers of fantasy, adventure, character-driven drama and humour. If people have as much fun listening to the series as we have had making it – then they will be very happy!” **VORTEX**

LISTEN AGAIN

Doctor Who: Robophobia



Kenny Smith catches
Grimwade's Syndrome!

ROBOPHOBIA WAS a direct sequel to Chris Boucher's 1977 Tom Baker classic *The Robots of Death*, written by Nicholas Briggs. But he admits the story wasn't actually his idea – it came from script editor Alan Barnes. Nick says: "I leapt at the idea straight away. I loved it even more when he said, 'And it's got you written all over it'. So that was the initial inspiration. Then there was a long gap, and when I finally got round to starting to write it, I phoned Alan and said, 'So, what I was I supposed to be doing with this?' And he reminded me.

"He said, 'It must be called *Robophobia*, because that's the coolest title' I agreed! 'And,' he continued, 'it must be an inversion of the original. The robots won't be killing the people. The people

“ THE ROBOTS WON'T BE KILLING THE PEOPLE. THE PEOPLE WILL BE KILLING THE ROBOTS! ”

ALAN BARNES

will be killing the robots! 'And that was my starting point. From then on, I started creating. But those essential principles kept me on the straight and narrow. I have a great trust for Alan."

Nick continues: "I think it was a brilliant brief of Alan's. But I knew that it would have to be connected to something very human, something very emotional. And I knew the mental illness of robophobia would have to be at the centre of it. I wanted to explore a particular robophobia case study, as it were. What caused someone to go 'overboard'. That was never really explored in the original. I wanted to do that and keep the same *Robots of Death* vibe by giving the audience a 'murder mystery' of sorts to work out."

Of course, *Robophobia's* lasting contribution to Big Finish was the introduction of Liv Chenka, who would go on to appear with the Eighth Doctor, in *Dark Eyes* and then *Doom Coalition*. Nick added: "We wanted someone really powerful who was, in many ways, carrying the story. She is the Doctor's temporary companion, but in many ways it's Liv Chenka's story. We could leave Sylvester to do that brilliant, enigmatic thing he does.

"With *Return of the Daleks*, I'd tried having the Seventh Doctor kind of just drift in and out of the story for the first three-quarters, before he finally really arrives, in story terms. So, Nicola Walker was breathtakingly good as our leading lady. She's so real. And loads of fun to work with."

Nicola adds: "When I first played Liv Chenka in *Robophobia*, I was certain that I'd never be playing her again. I couldn't believe this world I had found, the stories are fantastic and Big Finish are so good.

"When we finished, I remember them saying 'We'll get you back'. I have heard that so many times over the years, I wasn't convinced, but they were good to their word... I was back quite a short time afterwards." **VORTEX**

VORTEXMAIL

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

A GREAT YEAR

This has been another fine year (2016) for Big Finish, from the arrival of the Tenth Doctor to the glorious continuation of **Doom Coalition** (how will it end?!), to the meeting of **Classic Doctors**, **New Monsters** and the long-awaited return of the Third Doctor, beautifully channelled by Tim Treolar. There are times when I've wondered 'what can they do next?' then in an instant Big Finish pull something glorious out of the bag. The announcement of **UNIT: Assembled** is very exciting with old meeting new for instance. For the future: 1, Are there plans for a full-cast Cybermen encounter for the Third Doctor, Jo and UNIT; 2, As kind of part of the new series do you hope to use characters from **The Sarah Jane Adventures**; and 3, Will Winston Churchill meet a classic Doctor in one of his future boxsets? Keep surprising and delighting!

DANNY LAVERY

Nick: Hi Danny. Thanks for your continuing support of Big Finish. There are no concrete plans for the Cybermen with the Third Doctor, but we should seriously do that, shouldn't we? We're not planning to do work with **The Sarah Jane Adventures** characters. No plans for any further adventures with Winston meeting classic Doctors. Naturally, I'd never say never to any of these ideas.

BACK WITH AVENG-ANCE

I just wanted to give a heartfelt thank you for your excellent

recreations of the first season of **The Avengers**. I grew to love the series as a student in the late nineties, when Granada Plus showed all the Emma Peel and Tara King episodes, and was saddened by the near-total absence of the early stories which, unlike the missing episodes of **Doctor Who**, didn't have novelisations, script books, telesnaps or off-air bootlegs of the soundtracks. Thanks to everyone concerned at Big Finish, as of January 2017 **The Avengers** is as good as complete. It will be sad to hear the last of Anthony Howell and Julian Wadham, as I'd loved their portrayals of Keel and Steed right from the first episode. Thanks, you've made a committed retrofreak very happy.

PAUL CASTLE

Nick: Thanks so much, Paul. We shall miss them too. We love Julian, Anthony and Lucy. They've done such brilliant work for us.



MORE MALCOLM?

I was curious to know if there had been thought of – or an attempt to – get Lee Evans to reprise his role as Scientific Advisor Malcolm Taylor in a **UNIT** story. He was fantastic in *Planet of the Dead*.

DOUG ANDERSON

Nick: No plans for Malcolm, Doug.

FLOODGATES ARE OPEN

Just want to say how much I'm enjoying your audio ranges. I first started collecting in 2011 with me buying a bulk-set of **Gallfrey's** early seasons (with great affection for K9), Leela and Romana II. I (foolishly) couldn't find the time to listen to them, but then the 50th anniversary release *The Light at the End* was the beginning of the floodgates opening and I've explored many **Who** ranges (and even a non-**Who** range: **The Confessions of Dorian Gray**) since. Just a couple questions: 1, Have River Song and Bernice Summerfield ever worked together on an archaeological dig/site? All the fun, without the 'timey-wimey' headache that starts when she's in a 5km radius of a classic-era Doctor! 2, In a similar vein, have River and Captain Jack ever taken their vortex manipulators to the same repair shop simultaneously?

JOSH SHIELDS

Nick: Josh, we're always grateful for floodgates opening. Interesting questions. Crazy antics would surely ensue from both ideas. Hmm... (that's my brain ticking over). **VORTEX**

COMING SOON

Forthcoming audio releases



FEBRUARY 2017

DOCTOR WHO: THE CONTINGENCY CLUB

(222, Fifth Doctor, Adric, Tegan and Nyssa)

DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES:

THE ETERNAL BATTLE (6.2 Fourth Doctor, Romana II and K9)

DOCTOR WHO: THE WAR DOCTOR VOLUME 4

(4, War Doctor, Leela)

DOCTOR WHO – SHORT TRIPS: GARDENERS' WORLDS

(7.02, The Third Doctor and Jo Grant, Download only)

PATHFINDER LEGENDS – CURSE OF THE CRIMSON

THRONE: **SEVEN DAYS TO THE GRAVE** (3.2)

ORIGINAL DRAMA: CICERO

HG WELLS: **THE INVISIBLE MAN** (1)

DARK SHADOWS: PHANTOM MELODIES

BERNICE SUMMERFIELD: THE SQUIRE'S CRYSTAL (eBook)

BERNICE SUMMERFIELD: THE GLASS PRISON (eBook)

MARCH 2017

DOCTOR WHO: ZALTYZ

(223, Fifth Doctor, Adric, Tegan and Nyssa)

DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: THE

SILENT SCREAM (6.3 Fourth Doctor, Romana II and K9)

DOCTOR WHO: SHORT TRIPS: HOW TO WIN PLANETS

AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE (7.03, The Fourth Doctor, Sarah, Harry and the Monk, Download only)

DOCTOR WHO: DOOM COALITION 4 (Box Set)

CHARLOTTE POLLARD: **SERIES 2** (Box Set)

TORCHWOOD: **VISITING HOURS** (13)

PATHFINDER LEGENDS – CURSE OF THE CRIMSON

THRONE: **ESCAPE FROM OLD KORVOZA** (3.3)

HG WELLS: **THE FIRST MEN IN THE MOON** (2)

APRIL 2017

DOCTOR WHO – SPECIAL RELEASES: SPARE PARTS

(LIMITED VINYL EDITION) (Fifth Doctor and Nyssa)

THE OMEGA FACTOR SERIES TWO

DOCTOR WHO – SHORT TRIPS: FLASHPOINT

(7.04, The Eighth Doctor, Lucie Miller, Download only)

DOCTOR WHO – MAIN RANGE: ALIEN HEART/

BALEK SOUL (224, Fifth Doctor and Nyssa)

DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES:

BETHRAS (6.4, Fourth Doctor and Romana II)

JAGO & LIFEFOOT: **SERIES 13** (Box Set)

TORCHWOOD: **THE DOLLHOUSE** (14)

DAN DARE: THE AUDIO ADVENTURES:

VOLUME TWO (Box Set)

PATHFINDER LEGENDS – CURSE OF THE CRIMSON

THRONE: **A HISTORY OF ASHES** (3.4)

MAY 2017

DOCTOR WHO – SHORT TRIPS: FALLING

(7.05, The First Doctor, Polly, Ben, Download only)

DOCTOR WHO – MAIN RANGE: VORTEX ICE/CORTEX

FIRE (225, Sixth Doctor and Flip)

DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES:

THE HAUNTING OF MALKIN PLACE

(6.5, Fourth Doctor and Romana II)

UNIT – THE NEW SERIES: ASSEMBLED

(Box Set 4, Kate Stewart and Osgood)

TORCHWOOD: **CORPSE DAY** (15)

PATHFINDER LEGENDS – CURSE OF THE CRIMSON

THRONE: **SKELETONS OF SCARWALL** (3.5)

HG WELLS: **THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME** (3)

JUNE 2017

DOCTOR WHO – SHORT TRIPS: TBA (7.06, TBA)

DOCTOR WHO – THE COMPANION CHRONICLES:

THE FIRST DOCTOR VOLUME 2 (11.0, TBA)

DOCTOR WHO – MAIN RANGE: SHADOW PLANET/

WORLD APART (226, Seventh Doctor and Ace)

DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES:

SUBTERRANEA (6.6, Fourth Doctor and Romana II)

SURVIVORS: **SERIES 6** (Box Set)

THE LIVES OF CAPTAIN JACK

TORCHWOOD: TBA (16)

PATHFINDER LEGENDS – CURSE OF THE CRIMSON

THRONE: **CROWN OF FANGS** (3.6)

JULY 2017

DOCTOR WHO – CLASSIC DOCTORS NEW

MONSTERS: **VOLUME TWO** (Box Set)

DOCTOR WHO – SHORT TRIPS: TBA (7.07, TBA)

DOCTOR WHO – MAIN RANGE: THE HIGH

PRICE OF PARKING (227, Seventh Doctor)

DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES:

THE MOVELLAN GRAVE (6.7, Fourth

Doctor and Romana II)

DOCTOR WHO – THE THIRD DOCTOR ADVENTURES:

VOLUME 3 (TBA)

TORCHWOOD: TBA (17)

DARK SHADOWS: **DREAMS OF LONG AGO**

TERRAHAWKS: VOLUME 3

HG WELLS: **THE ISLAND OF DR MOREAU** (4)

AUGUST 2017

DOCTOR WHO – MAIN RANGE: TBA (228, TBA)

DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES:

THE SKIN OF THE SLEEK (6.8, Fourth

Doctor and Romana II)

DOCTOR WHO – SHORT TRIPS:

THE BRITISH INVASION (7.08, TBA)

TORCHWOOD: TBA (18)

THE PRISONER: **VOLUME TWO** (Box Set)

BIG FINISH CLASSICS: HAMLET

(Box Set 2017)

SEPTEMBER 2017

DOCTOR WHO – MAIN RANGE: THE SILURIAN

CANDIDATE (229, Seventh Doctor)

DOCTOR WHO – MAIN RANGE: TIME IN OFFICE

(230, Fifth Doctor and Tegan)

DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES:

THE THIEF WHO STOLE TIME (6.9, Fourth Doctor

and Romana II)

DOCTOR WHO – SHORT TRIPS: A HEART

ON BOTH SIDES (7.09, TBA)

DOCTOR WHO – THE EARLY ADVENTURES:

TBA (4.1, TBA)

HG WELLS: **THE TIME MACHINE** (5)

OCTOBER 2017

DOCTOR WHO – MAIN RANGE: TBA (231, TBA)

DOCTOR WHO – THE EARLY ADVENTURES:

TBA (4.2, TBA)

DOCTOR WHO – SHORT TRIPS: ALL HANDS ON DECK

(7.10, TBA)

DARK SHADOWS: LOVE LIVES ON

(Box Set 2017)

NOVEMBER 2017

DOCTOR WHO – MAIN RANGE: TBA (232, TBA)

DOCTOR WHO – THE EARLY ADVENTURES:

TBA (4.3, TBA)

DOCTOR WHO – SHORT TRIPS: THE INGENUOUS

GENTLEMAN ADRIC OF ALZARIUS (7.11, TBA)

DOCTOR WHO – THE EIGHTH DOCTOR:

THE TIME WAR (Box Set)

UNIT – THE NEW SERIES: TBA (5)

SURVIVORS: **SERIES 7** (Box Set)

HG WELLS: **THE MARTIAN INVASION OF EARTH** (6)

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