

PREPARE FOR SOME COLD COMFORT AS BLIND TERROR, THE LATEST BIG FINISH ORIGINALS PRODUCTION, IS READIED FOR RELEASE...

MYLES BETTER



TODAY, the Big Finish Originals series has brought us a diverse range of productions, from following the lives of women in World War II in *ATA Girl*, historical life in Rome with *Cicero*, to science fiction with *Jeremiah Bourne in Time*. The breadth of scope continues this month with *Blind Terror: The Gods of Frost*, which, if a label has to be put on it, would be horror.

But really, it's not. It's far more than that. The premise sounds like a recognisable setting, as, following the death of her husband, Kathryn Ellis becomes the new housekeeper at Hodder Hall, keen to embark on a bright new future. Only, her past won't let her go just yet, and the ghosts that stalk the village threaten to cut her future short. *Torchwood's* Eve Myles stars in this series written by Guy

Adams, comprising six half-hour episodes, produced and directed by Scott Handcock. *Vortex* asked Big Finish senior producer David Richardson what led the series to be commissioned, and he replied: "In six words, 'You had me at Eve Myles!' Quite simply, I believe that Eve is one of the finest actors in this country. She radiates passion, warmth, belief and every emotion on the scale with everything that she appears

in. Plus it's written by Guy Adams, one of our finest writers at Big Finish. For me, this is one of the highlights of our 2018 schedule." Guy reveals: "It's entirely thanks to Eve Myles that *Blind Terror* came about. The idea was actually floating about for a while before it was one of what became known as the **Big Finish Originals**. "It was purely because I had become the go-to person to write horror stories for *Torchwood*. Eve had said she enjoyed what I was doing and liked my scripts and we've become friends. She effectively said to Scott, 'Get Guy

I love Guy's work. We all get on very well, and we were chatting, and I said to Scott, you direct, Guy, you write, I'll perform, and we'll do a horror. Let's make it unique, let's make it for Big Finish, and let's make it our own. I'm so pleased we've got to do it. Kathryn Ellis is a great character." **H**AVING WRITTEN many stories for Big Finish over the past few years, Guy – also an accomplished book author – was delighted to create something new on audio. He explained: "I'm so pleased. I've

"In some ways, I looked to *American Horror Story*, which takes these tropes and stirs them together, to find a new voice. I like doing that with traditional supernatural structures and creating something that would be unusual and eerie. Audio is the perfect medium for horror. That way, you have a voice whispering in your ear..." Talking of her character, Eve explains: "I worked quite hard just to find her manner. On screen, you have a costume and make-up and the aesthetics to help you with your character,



Above (l-r): Guy Adams, Eve Myles and Scott Handcock

to write an original horror series, and if you do, I'll star in it' "Scott then went to Big Finish and explained the situation, and when the answer came back, it was, 'Alright then – do it!' So it's really down to Eve herself." Eve confirms: "I was coming in and out doing *Torchwood*, and Guy kept writing horror episodes for me. I love them and

had the opportunity to write three hours of horror, starring the wonderful Eve Myles. "The thing that interested me was that I wanted to take a very traditional piece of supernatural fiction, the governess taking a position at a haunted house, and then do something different and unusual with it, so it's not what you expect it's going to be.

and on audio you really have to sell it through your voice – how you pace it and how you pitch it. "Kathryn is an intriguing character as she's incredibly gentle, but she's broken, and yet she's still very assertive though lost and grief-stricken. It's lovely to be working on something completely different from Gwen Cooper being so strong, physical

and in the midst of the action, to find the lovely Kathryn in a rather strange world that she's very happy to be in.

"Awful events happen to her, and yet this woman does her best to survive it, so we tell a great story. Guy has written a fantastic piece and there was no way I wasn't going to do it.

"Kathryn Ellis is a gift. She's incredibly vulnerable. The way it's been designed and written by Guy is completely plausible and you buy into it straight away. It's a world of spirits, and all these characters are haunted, even before the ghosts turn up – but the ghosts seem in a much better place than the living.

"It's a really complex story, and that's what I like, it's not black and white. It isn't a horror. It isn't a thriller. It isn't sci-fi. It's its own genre – it's **Blind Terror**. It's layered, it's complex and it's intelligent."

GUY WAS delighted to work with Scott, as well as script editor James Goss. He says: "It's a good production team, we've done a lot of stuff now. I know James and Scott very well, either working with them individually or together on various series, like **Torchwood**, **Bernice Summerfield** and **Vienna**. We're old lags!"

Scott says: "James and I have worked on so much together at Big Finish now, and I've had the pleasure of directing many a Guy Adams script along the way, and that's always something I look forward to. It goes without saying that I love working with Eve, but doing something wholly new was a blast. It's a team that trusts each other, and she's completely committed to every role she undertakes.

"We had long, hour-long phone calls before recording discussing character and atmosphere, even the cover artwork! She's just someone who cares so much about her work, and I couldn't respect her more." Scott

continues: "There's always an extra excitement in trying out something new, because there are absolutely no expectations from the audience which means you can really make an impact. Whether that's with something like **The Confessions of Dorian Gray**, or even introducing a new team to the **Torchwood** franchise, the original formats allow us to play within new territories. The process is the same, but creatively it allows you huge freedom.

"I was involved from the outset as it came up during recording sessions with Eve on the **Torchwood** range, and she was very keen to work with us all

and I curled up and read them. It was a joy because there were no external branding concerns for Guy to answer to. No-one could say, 'This character wouldn't do this,' or anything like that. You could just sit and nod along, and throw in suggestions, and wholeheartedly approve of it all."

HELPING BRING the production to life is sound designer and musician Rob Harvey. With the setting of a creaky house, does that give him an advantage – a shorthand for the sound design – as we all know what to expect? Rob says: "Generally yes. A creaky haunted



Above (l-r): Guy Adams and Eve Myles

on something original. Eve, Guy and I are massive horror fans, as is James who script edited, so that was an instant must for us all."

James agrees: "It was great fun as there's a shorthand when working between Scott and Guy. Guy knows the things that Scott will enjoy and the things that he won't enjoy, and caters to one while maliciously sprinkling a few of the other! Script editing them was so easy. They turned up while I was in a hotel with bunk beds in Cardiff,

house is a creaky haunted house, though Hodder Hall is something else outside of the usual tropes. Kathryn Ellis, who is taking over as housekeeper, will be able to find more than just creaky old beams and dead rats for company. The house is lived in, has character and needs to feel homely at times.

"Atmosphere is possibly the most important part of this genre after the dialogue. A creaky atmosphere is created by clever use of reverb. If you've ever been

AWFUL EVENTS HAPPEN TO HER, AND YET THIS WOMAN DOES HER BEST TO SURVIVE IT. EVE MYLES



BLIND TERROR

BIG FINISH ORIGINALS

▶ RELEASED October 2018

▶ Download £17.00

▶ Extras Interviews

▶ Written by Guy Adams

▶ Director Scott Handcock

▶ Cast Eve Myles, Joseph Tweedale, Bethan Rose Young, Kerry Joy Stewart, Bradley Freegard, Kezrena James, Gareth Jewell, John Cording, Laura Dalglish, Richard Elfyn, Guy Adams

EPISODE 1: SOUL CAKE

EPISODE 2: THEY'RE COMING

EPISODE 3: HODDER'S FOLLY

EPISODE 4: THE LORD OF MISRULE

EPISODE 5: HIDE AND SEEK

EPISODE 6: SOLSTICE

somewhere creepy like an old army bunker, or a deserted old house, you'll have noticed the lack of sound. With nothing happening around you your brain starts to make stuff up. I'll take a sound source like a wooden creak or a roof tile rattling and run it through a special reverb. This reverb (or echo) warps and changes the sound to a point where you can't really tell what it is anymore.

"Think of someone standing at one end of a cave shouting at you. Do you think you would understand what that person was saying? It's the same principle. That creak, by the time it's echoed through the house might sound

put the sound of anything from a restaurant to an ocean, your brain will make you feel a certain way about it. This in turn adds to the immersion factor and sets the listener up for a scare!"

AS WE'RE now a month or so from release, Eve teases: "We have an attentive audience here at Big Finish and Guy has written this so beautifully. When they hear this, the image of what we're doing – the image of the scene – will pop into their ears, and they can decide if those ghosts are real. You can decide what you want to do. You are part of the story as well, as



Above (l-r): Eve Myles, Kezrena James, Kerry Joy Stewart, Joseph Tweedale, Bethan Rose Young and Gareth Jewell

like a footstep or your door opening... this is an auditory hallucination. Much the same way you sometimes see something out of the corner of your eye. Your brain will tell you it's definitely evil and you need to leave.

"Weather is also important. A recording of a windy cold horrible day will do a lot for the feeling of your play. We have this wonderful opportunity with audio to walk a thin line between imagination and reality. If you

much as we are telling it. It's how you hear it."

Guy concludes: "We have six half-hours, and it's a lovely thing to have for a winter's evening. The timing of the release of these episodes is quite unintentional, being October, the month of Halloween, but should you choose to do so, you could listen to one every week in the run-up to the shortest day. Should you be mad enough to do so, it would pretty much work!" **VORTEX**