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The majority of Big Finish releases can be accessed on-the-go via the Big Finish App, available for both Apple and Android devices.
It’s a particularly exciting time for me this month as The Lost Stories, one of my very favourite Doctor Who ranges, makes a welcome return with two new releases.

The Ultimate Evil was written originally for TV season 23 by Wally K Daly. It was subsequently adapted into a novelisation and an audiobook but only now has it actually been performed by Colin Baker and Nicola Bryant as the Doctor and Peri.

We also take a trip in Nightmare Country, a story idea from Stephen Gallagher pitched for season 21 on TV, where at last the Doctor, Tegan and Turlough are reunited in what will be their first adventure together at Big Finish. It’s only taken 20 years!

Of course this is October which means that Hallowe’en isn’t far away, so it’s apt that the third volume of the new Dark Shadows spin-off, The Tony & Cassandra Mysteries, is on its way.

If you’ve not heard either of the first two volumes you should do yourself a favour and get them. Even if you’re not familiar with the concept it’s very easy to pick up – a witch and a private detective pair up to solve mysteries. And what happens next? Well… that’s magic!

VER SINCE the Sixth Doctor and Peri were reunited after the events in TV episode, The Trial of a Time Lord, Big Finish listeners have wanted to know what happens next. We’ve not heard from this pair of travellers since the events of The Rani Elite (although The Monthly Adventures this year has seen the Doctor and Peri carry on their adventures in between the stories of the TV series), but that’s going to change in August 2020.

The first Sixth Doctor and Peri box set features not only the return of Colin Baker and Nicola Bryant, but writers whose work with Big Finish goes back many years. The set comprises The Headless Ones by James Parsons and Andrew Stirling-Brown (writers of LIVE 34), Like by Jacqueline Rayner (writer of The Marian Conspiracy), The Vanity Trap by Stuart Manning (original producer of the Dark Shadows range) and Conflict Theory by Nev Fountain (writer of Omega).

Producer and director Scott Handcock says: “Ever since the release of The Widow’s Assassin in 2014, listeners have wanted a continuation of the Sixth Doctor and Peri’s post-Trial of a Time Lord adventures together. And so now, to commemorate 20 years of Doctor Who on audio at Big Finish, they’re getting a new collection of stories spanning the cosmos. We travel to 19th-century Africa, futuristic Earth colonies and a 1970s film studio, plus we meet the ultimate Doctor/companion relationship counsellor in Sigmund Freud!”

DOCTOR WHO
THE SIXTH DOCTOR AND PERI

VORTEX
THE FIFTH and Sixth Doctors are literally time travelling this month to feature in two stories originally conceived for television but ultimately never made.

The history of both of these The Lost Stories couldn’t be more contrasting. Fans already know a lot about The Ultimate Evil, it having been novelised by writer Wally K Daly and also released as an audiobook for the blind.

But Nightmare Country is more of an unknown quantity. It has a good pedigree. It’s written, after all, by Stephen Gallagher who wrote Warrior’s Gate for Tom Baker’s Fourth Doctor, and Terminus for Peter Davison’s incarnation.

Producer David Richardson explains: “Uncovering any lost story is like finding the Holy Grail, but there’s something really special about Nightmare Country because it’s written by Stephen Gallagher – someone whose work as an author and screenwriter we all admire.

“The chance to work with him on this was very special indeed, and what a lovely chap he is – turning in not only a terrific script but also some fantastic interview material for the CD extras.”

In Nightmare Country, the Doctor helps a rootless tribe of engineers in their efforts to create a virtual homeland, only to find himself adrift in a virtual hell with no memory of the world outside.

Writer Steve tells Vortex: “I’d already written stories for two Doctor Who TV seasons so I suppose you could say I had a foot in the door for at least getting a new pitch read. My idea for Nightmare Country was pretty much fully-formed and what I submitted already had all its moving parts in place – plot, characters, structure – all the key essentials.

“But it never even entered the development stage! It came straight back with a rejection letter: ‘another million-dollar movie, no thanks.’”

Luckily Nightmare Country became known again thanks to script editor,
Actor Mark Strickson was delighted to be working on a Steve Gallagher script again, with Terminus having been Turlough’s second ever story on TV. Mark says: “I thought Terminus was a very strong story for Sarah Sutton to leave with – great writing from Steve. People often forget that Nyssa was a big character – in a way, Turlough replaced her. He too was intelligent and understood ‘the ways of the universe’. An Earthling like Tegan wasn’t quite up to our high intellectual standards – but she was lovely in her own way!

“Is it really 36 years ago? It doesn’t seem that long since Terminus but I guess it is. Many thanks to Big Finish.”

Guy Adams. Steve explains: “Guy Adams got in touch to ask if I’d be interested in writing something new for Big Finish. I hesitated because I felt I’d already stepped too far away, plus I knew that it was a suggestion one shouldn’t lightly say yes to – you can’t just dash something off. So with regret I turned it down – until I remembered that I’d come across the Nightmare Country treatment in my files just a couple of weeks before. “By fluke it was one of the few Who-related items that hadn’t gone off to the archive at my old uni. Younger me had already done the tough part; it was like the prospect of having a collaborator who’d take on all the heavy lifting! So I asked Guy if there’d be any interest and the answer was yes.”

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HAVING LAST written for the Doctor, Tegan and Turlough for TV episode Terminus in 1983, how did Steve find returning to the trio?

He laughs: “Surprisingly easy, easier now than before in many ways! Back then I was still learning, overworking my dialogue, struggling sometimes to meld character and action, a novice at hiding exposition. I surely must have picked up something in the meantime!

“It was like a return to my roots. Before Who I’d been writing radio drama, first for local stations and then for the BBC. Serials and Saturday Night Theatres. So staging for a soundscape was nothing new to me.”

Steve was delighted to be back in the Doctor Who fold, getting into the recording studio to see his work brought to life. He confirms: “I got to see the well-oiled Big Finish machine in action! It’s great but I’m not sure I’ve really ever been away. I mean, I’m not in the thick of fandom, but over the years there’s always been one thing or another to remind me that I’m still family.

“I’ve participated in the odd event and there’s also been the Terminus audio commentary with Peter Davison, Mark Strickson and Sarah Sutton; the season 18 writers’ reunion with Andrew Smith, John Flanagan and Chris Bidmead; and the recent restoration of the ‘lost’ version of the Warrior’s Gate novelisation. And now there’s a new thing for BBC Audio that I can’t say anything about just yet…”

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“It was great to perform another of Steve’s scripts. He’s had a very strong career and his writing is always good for actors – I always say that it’s all about the script. And it’s true. A good script sparks up the cast and we don’t have to struggle.

“On a personal level, it’s always great to be in a Big Finish production because it reunites Peter, Janet, Sarah, Nicola and I as friends. We meet each other at the occasional convention but it’s a different thing revisiting our old roles. I think all of us would agree that we just ‘slip back in time’ and become our characters again, without any effort. It’s always lovely to see the old TARDIS crew. Big hugs all round when we meet up. Maybe that came across on screen when we worked on the series. We all really liked each other and it was a pleasure to go to work.

“Is it really 36 years ago? It doesn’t seem that long since Terminus but I guess it is. Many thanks to Big Finish.”
Finish and their many talented script writers, not least Steve, for getting us together to create more great stories.”

Director Ken Bentley was delighted to work on what was essentially a period piece, it having been conceived in the 1980s.

He grins: “I leave continuity to those who know far more than I do, so for me period plays are more of an aesthetic exercise. Television has changed over the years and it’s always fascinating to recreate a particular period or style on audio. We live in iconoclastic times but I believe there are a lot of good lessons to be learnt from the past. A good antidote to the accelerated lives we lead is to pause for a moment, look back, and learn from those who trod the path before us.

“Sometimes I read a play and instantly think of actors I know who would relish the chance to take on a particular role. Often in science fiction, particularly on audio, you find you need to cast similar voices or accents to create a sense of a cohesive group or society. In Nightmare Country I was able to cast people who have very different vocal qualities which gave the sound engineers a sense of structure in terms of rank and experience.”

Ken was delighted with some of the casting in particular.

He explains: “We recently discovered that, despite being great friends, Beth Chalmers and Tracy Wiles had never worked together, so this was a great opportunity to finally give them the chance to do so. Ours is a strange and transitory business, so it’s always nice to help build a sense of community and continuity.”

The second story, The Ultimate Evil is one which Big Finish tried to release a decade back, before it became a lost Lost Story – but now The Ultimate Evil is definitely arriving on audio.

Producer David explains: “I tried to make this Lost Story 10 years ago but at the time we were not able to reach an agreement with the writer, Wally K Daly. I’m so pleased now that patience has paid off, and
here we have Wally not only writing the script but also playing a part.

"Wally is an amazing character – it was a joy to have him in studio, and he looked so delighted to finally have his lost piece of Doctor Who history dramatised!"

Wally confirms that he is:

"Thrilled that it is finally being made, albeit in another version. As the script had already been rewritten as a book it was a matter of picking and choosing between the two versions to begin with.

"Of course some of the action sequences had to be described for the audio version. But as a radio playwright this presented no problem to me, and John Dorney – the script editor – was also extremely helpful."

Did The Ultimate Evil feel like unfinished business for Wally?

He smiles: "Not really because although it didn’t become a TV production, the original script formed the basis of a book published by WH Allen, which I then narrated for an audiobook of the same title for the RNIB. So for me it had developed its own life."

Script editor, John, adds: "I remember eagerly buying all the missing season books when they originally came out – I was a young fan hungry for more stories I adored! They’re powerfully nostalgic for me, and it was fascinating going back to one of these tales to find something so redolent of its period. Reading the script instantly transported..."
me back to my childhood.

“It was great fun working with Wally who’s very much a writer of the old school – there was very little in the way of email correspondence and much more meeting up for lunches to talk over the script. So I was already transported to way back when, getting some sense of what it must have been like working on the TV show back in the seventies and eighties when we weren’t all trapped behind computer screens! Such a pleasure to bring The Ultimate Evil to audio life.”

Nicola Bryant gets the chance to reprise her role as Peri in the story. She says: “A fan sent me a copy of the script years ago which I’d already read. I’ve always wanted to record it so I was very excited when David Richardson sent me a message saying it was finally going to happen.

“Everything I’ve managed to do with Big Finish gives me a great sense of satisfaction. It all adds to Peri’s journey. The first time David mentioned we might be able to record The Lost Stories I was a little nervous as I felt Peri had come so far and I didn’t want to go backwards in her journey, but I have to say that every single Lost Story has been so wonderfully adapted it’s never been an issue.”

The adventure has been directed by Helen Goldwyn. She admits: “Obviously I was aware The Ultimate Evil was a Lost Story, but I suspect I would have known that anyway as soon as I read the script! It has a definite period feel to it and the characters are more ‘broad’ than we’d probably find in modern writing. However, it’s a great fundamental, ageless concept about the good and bad in every man.

“With any script where the tone is of its time, I’m acutely aware that we still have to make it accessible for the current audience. So, although some of the characters are heightened in this story, I asked all of the actors to play their roles as truthfully as possible. As long as they believe in who they are and what they’re saying, the audience should believe it too!”

The story’s main villain is Mordant – did Helen find him, and the rest of the characters, hard to cast? She continues: “I searched long and hard for the right voices (in a very short lead up time) and was delighted to find Robin Sebastian to play Mordant. I was looking for a rich, deep voice with great colour and Robin gave us exactly that.

“I’ve been wanting to cast Issy Van Randwyck for a long time so was pleased to be able to bring her in for our calm, intelligent Koreelya; Paul Panting I’ve also known for many years and wanted to work with. Kim Durham may be known to some for his long running role
in *The Archers* but never having heard him in that, I was able to listen to his demo with fresh ears and hear how wonderfully nuanced his acting is – I was delighted to get him on board for Abatan.

“The two Jacks (Forsyth-Noble and Myers) were our young blood and did a great job of holding their own. I believe this was Jack M’s first audio drama, but he’s destined to do much more with his wonderfully resonant voice. Finally, Guy Burgess was subtle and sneaky as Escoval. I know Guy is usually cast as dashing heroic types with the RSC and The National etc, so he had great fun playing an evil character for once!”

Helen also had the rare opportunity to have the author in the cast. Wally appears in the play as... a parrot.

Wally reveals: “The story of the parrot requires a book all by itself! It begins in 1967 with *The Avengers* episode, *The Bird Who Knew Too Much*, starring Diana Rigg. Ever since then I have been a regular voice over artist for parrots and was once the answer to a *Times* Christmas crossword clue after I played Captain Flint in a Radio 4 version of *Treasure Island*.”

Nicola adds: “Wally is such an interesting man. We had several conversations about so many things, but mostly about his career, his wife’s encouragement, artistic choices, creative differences etc. It was a privilege and an utterly enjoyable time in studio. And such a fabulous cast too!”

Helen laughs: “It was wonderful to have Wally in studio for the day. He had plenty of tales to tell about the earlier *Who* era and he rather revelled in his role as the parrot! I anticipated we’d be putting an FX treatment on the noise of the bird but he did such a good job it stayed as is in the final sound design.”

Helen looks back fondly on the studio sessions, saying: “As with any *Doctor Who* recording day, much laughter was shared. Colin and Nicola are such warm characters there’s always a family feeling having them in studio together. I seem to recall we got a little hysterical by the end (we’d done a lot of wildtracks by then recording ourselves as people under the influence of the hate beam) but that’s nothing new!”

Both stories have covers designed by Ryan Aplin. He tells Vortex: “The only brief I was really given was to have a play around. It’s sort of a given to include the Doctor and the companions, but then reading the scripts it was clear that the Vodyani should feature as they have such a horrific look, and of course the infamous Mordant was a must!”

“It was challenging at first but fun on the whole. It was tricky coming up with something for the Vodyani based on just a few descriptions in the script, but I cobbled a few bits and pieces together and tried to make them as scary and menacing as possible. On the other hand with Mordant, I tried to make a more fearsome version of his depiction on the novel cover. I hope I succeeded with both, I’m really pleased with them, very proud!”
PACE COMMANDER Travis – the terror of the spaceways and the arch enemy of Roj Blake. But we know so little about him. He has an eyepatch and has had his left arm replaced. His service number is Alpha 15105. He hates Blake with a passion...

Now, Travis is placed front and centre in a new audiobook, Outlaw, by Trevor Baxendale – the first in a new series. Blake’s 7 producer John Ainsworth says: “I was delighted when Trevor proposed the idea of doing a story all about Travis. I felt that this was something particularly suited to an audiobook and it provided a nice contrast of style and focus to what we are doing in the full-cast audio dramas.”

Book editor Xanna Eve Chown adds: “I completely agree that Trevor is a fantastic and capable pair of hands to start the new series of Blake’s 7 audiobooks.”

Trevor was delighted to be given the go ahead to write for the Space Commander. He says: “I’ve always wanted to do a story devoted to Travis who I think is a fascinating character. I originally envisaged one that concentrated on the transition between actors – to try and explain the in-story change from Stephen Greif to Brian Croucher – but that was rejected for very good reasons.

“I do touch on the subject, but the brief was to concentrate on the time after the television episode Trial and what brought Travis to the point where he bows out of the series altogether. I don’t go into it too much, but I have taken the opportunity to cover some of the events we know about prior to his very first appearance on TV in Seek-locate-Destroy in more detail. That was great fun to do.

“So I’m writing for both versions of Travis and at different stages in their ‘lives’. It’s interesting – and challenging – to write for the villain as a protagonist and see things from his perspective. Does Travis see himself as the bad guy? Absolutely not!”

How would Trevor sum up the plot? He explains: “How did Travis deal with his fall from grace in Trial? What did it mean to him to be an outlaw? How did he get from that to the point where he wants to help another galaxy invade ours? It touches on familiar moments from TV series two, but also other events that we haven’t seen – things that have affected Travis for a very long time, from before we first met him. So the story also deals with events in Travis’s life before series one – before he’s ever heard of a man called Roj Blake…”

Servalan, played by the late, great Jacqueline Pearce, features in the audio, and there was an added poignancy writing for the character, given her recent passing. Trevor admits: “Inevitably Servalan features quite a lot in this audiobook, and it’s always great fun to write her scenes because Jacqueline Pearce made her such a wonderful character.

“She has a very special relationship with Travis – she completely sells him down the river in Trial to save her own neck but she still needs him. Or at least she still uses him. But in the end who is using who?”

OUTLAW

Released: November 2019
Format: Download

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DOCTOR WHO
THE BLACK HOLE

WE DISCUSSED THE KNOTTY CONTINUITY ISSUES OF JAMIE AND VICTORIA MEETING ANOTHER TIME LORD.
SIMON GUERRIER

INSIGHT IS an amazing thing. Little did we know in November 2015, when The Early Adventure The Black Hole was released, that it was introducing us to a character who’d be back time and again to face the Doctor. Constable Pavo, as we discover in the course of the adventure, is actually a new incarnation of the Meddling Monk.

Having originally toyed with the idea of a Master story, writer Simon Guerrier says: “Missy was being introduced to the TV series and so there was a pause on doing Master stories on audio. In November 2014 producer David Richardson emailed me about something else and I suggested swapping the Master for the Monk. David liked the idea of using the Monk and also mentioned that he was keen to do more with Deborah Watling as Victoria. I was very happy to write the story for her, and we discussed the knotty continuity issues of Jamie and Victoria meeting another Time Lord. That led David to suggest we ‘have fun and explain the continuity errors of the television episode The Two Doctors.’ I put together an outline involving a fake version of the Doctor, but it was too similar to something else Big Finish had done.

Then when I went back to my very first idea – of three different Time Lords, one of whom turns out to be the Master – it all came together. It was about a black hole because in the TV episode The Three Doctors a black hole allows different incarnations of the Doctor to meet, and this was a similar breaking of the normal rules of continuity.”

The story was aimed to tie-in with The Two Doctors as being along the lines of something 1980s TV producer John Nathan-Turner would have done, picking up on a throwaway line from a 60s adventure to tell the backstory.

I WAS THRILLED TO MEET RUFUS HOUND WHO THREW HIMSELF INTO THE PART OF THE MONK...
SIMON GUERRIER

Simon admits: “That was all from [script editor] John Dorney after I’d written my first draft. I’d mentioned various plot points from The Two Doctors, and John said to scale those back. It was a good guide for my next pass on the script generally: think less about tying up every last detail of continuity, and concentrate more on the decisions the production team would have made had this been written for television in 1968. That way I’m not joining every dot and the listener does some of it themselves.

“And that set exactly the right tone, I think, and was just one of John’s invaluable contributions. He also did a pass on the script to make the Monk’s character more fun, with an eye for using this incarnation in future stories.”

Looking back Simon adds: “My main memory is how enjoyable it was to record. Frazer Hines and director Lisa Bowerman are always really enthusiastic and engaged, even with the daft nonsense I write! And I was thrilled to meet Rufus Hound who threw himself into the part of the Monk – it’s no surprise at all that Big Finish brought him back. I’m also really pleased I got to write for the lovely Deborah Watling, who I’d met a few times at conventions and things.”

VORTEX
ARK SHADOWS icons Lara Parker and Jerry Lacy return in a new release of The Tony & Cassandra Mysteries, as the witch and private detective reunite for their third box set of cases. Co-producer Joseph Lidster says: “I love the characters of Tony and Cassandra – and the fantastic actors who play them, Jerry Lacy and Lara Parker. I used to think that the adventures of Tony and Cassandra might not be hugely popular with the Dark Shadows fanbase because they’re really quite different to the television series. They’re not set in Collinsport, the Collins family themselves don’t feature and they don’t have the same gothic atmosphere or anything. But I was wrong. Listeners seem to love the pairing and they love the stories.” Set during the period when Angelique Bouchard – having created a new life for herself as Cassandra Blair
Collins – teams up with Tony Peterson, listeners have said it’s the relationship between the pair that really makes the series work. Does Joe agree?

He admits: “I think it’s a number of things, really. Firstly, and most importantly, it’s Jerry Lacy and Lara Parker. They’re both astonishingly good actors. The characters themselves, though, are also brilliant. She’s a witch and he’s a private detective! It really does feel like a 1970s TV show that never happened. What’s really great is that although they have a history together (in Dark Shadows she hypnotised him to do her bidding), they’ve moved on from that. They clearly adore one another which they usually demonstrate by taking the mickey out of each other! Also, both characters are very intelligent and bring their own specific skills to the party. But, most importantly, they’re just really great fun.”

The Tony & Cassandra Mysteries Series 3 contains four new adventures. Joe continues: “The first story, The Mystery of the Grandest Order by Aaron Lamont, picks up directly from the cliffhanger ending of Series 2. It’s a big, fun runaround with a real Invasion of the Bodysnatchers vibe as Tony and Cassandra investigate a mysterious organisation who seem to be everywhere. Oh, and they have their secretary, Alice, with them and she’s in labour throughout the adventure!”

How did writer, Aaron, find resolving the cliffhanger? He smiles: “Of course the fun came from figuring out just what that resolution would be – hopefully not what you expect!”

Aaron was pleased to be writing something different in tone from his usual work. He explains: “I’ve always been tagged as ‘the one who writes the scary ones.’ That was my brief on the first series so I think they were a bit surprised I turned in a comedy this time. But for me, Tony and Cassandra are the best screwball comedy due that never was. They’re Spencer Tracy and Katherine Hepburn in all those glorious old movies, or Cybill Shepherd and Bruce Willis in a crazy grin plastered all over my face! It was a joy from start to finish. “I’ve said this repeatedly but I’ll say it again – I love writing Tony & Cassandra. The format is perfect prime-time telly – he’s a private detective and she’s a witch. What’s there not to like? Oh! And I wrote a love song for them! Love Theme from The Tony & Cassandra Mysteries! Coming soon to an edition of Top of the Pops!”

Joe continues: “The second story of the set, The Mystery of the Fisherman’s Wife, is by new writer Moonlighting. That’s the register they work best in and previously I couldn’t even contemplate writing them any other way. But this time I wanted not just the dialogue to be wacky, I wanted the plot to be as well. I was allowed to be bonkers for a change instead of grim-dark-evil. So I literally spent two months with
Jessica Smith. It’s one of our more serious adventures as Tony and Cassandra investigate a marriage where everything isn’t quite what it seems. It’s a beautiful, poetic script that features Eva Pope as the mysterious Briar Stevenson.

“The third story, The Mystery of a Mother’s Love is by William Proudler. I saw a play by William at the Edinburgh Festival a couple of years ago and it was one of the darkest but also most beautiful things I’ve ever seen, so I got in touch with him and The Mystery of a Mother’s Love was pretty much an instant commission.”

William tells Vortex: “The brief was for a crazy mad horror story, and basically whatever I wanted. So I tried to put together something that didn’t only inject fear into the characters, but caused them to change paths and re-evaluate their whole journey in life. The fear for me always came from an internal place, and even though they encounter a creature from out of this world it was always their homespun anxieties that sifted to the top. This was to be the last outing of their close friend and colleague Alice, so I knew then it had to be a story that not only put shivers down the listener’s spine but was also a proper send-off for a major character in the series. The key theme that Alice was toiling with was how she could be a mother always surrounded by danger. It all lined up as I began to put together a story that was sending the characters down a very, very dark path.”

William particularly enjoyed writing for the leading characters. He admits: “They irritate each other in the way that only those closest to you can, and there is always their indignant lack of attraction to each other that only best friends can hold that was just so fun to write. I feel at their heart they are always trying to figure out if the other one still wants to be there. They know that if they can put up with each other they can look after one another. I see them as two wandering souls not sure what to do after the events in their past. Forging a future, the only way they can.”
Joe adds: “The Mystery of a Mother’s Love is by far one of the most horrific things Big Finish has ever released. Usually in recordings when actors have finished a take we all have a laugh about a joke in the script or about something that went wrong or whatever. With this, though, after pretty much every take there’d be a second of silence followed by an actor saying, ‘Woah… OK, and now relax’.

“The series ends with The Mystery of the Jack-in-the-Box by returning writer Zara Symes. Both this story and The Mystery of the Grandest Order guest star Zehra Jane Naqvi as gypsy nightclub singer, Mari. Zehra was in one of my Doctor Whos many years ago and I’d always wanted to find another role for her because her performance in The Gathering really stood out to me back then. This story delves into Mari’s background a little more and she and Cassandray have such a brilliant relationship. Tony, Cassandra and Mari visit a circus so there’s lots of chills and fun to be had there.”

Zara said: “I chose the fairground to serve three purposes. The first was to create a space where Mari the Gypsy had a history (i.e. she used to work there as a fortune teller) so that she can tap some of her old contacts and lead our detective duo closer to the person responsible for the cursed Jack-in-the-Box. The second was to jar the listener from the quietly creepy location of the orphanage where the Jack-in-the-Box has been tormenting a young child, and the third was because the soundscape of a fairground is fantastic and really adds texture to a story told through audio – circuses can be seriously creepy!”

JOE HAS had many highlights from working on this box set. He reveals: “As ever I’ve really enjoyed working with writers new to Big Finish. Both Jessica and William have really risen to the challenge of writing for Tony and Cassandra. The first story has so much joy in it but it’s also one of the most shocking deaths I think we’ve ever recorded. We really challenge Tony and Cassandra’s relationship in The Fisherman’s Wife, with some fascinating explorations of sexual politics and free will. A Mother’s Love is just simply terrifying but also has some great scenes with Tony, Cassandra and Alice living as the ‘perfect’ family. And Jack-in-the-Box has some of the funniest scenes we’ve ever done as our witch and private detective are chased around an attic by a Jack-in-the-Box.”

Zara adds: “I wanted to pay homage to some of the great horror stories of the past in this scene. I came across so many myths and legends surrounding cursed dolls in my research for the episode – everything from Robert the doll (whose owner would swear that Robert was moving things in the night) to the Raggedy Ann doll supposedly possessed by the ghost of a girl called Annabelle (whose terrifying and almost-deadly exploits inspired The Conjuring films). Several of the stories involved hearing footsteps in the dark which would sound terrifying! Add the creepy music of a classic Jack-in-the-Box and we had a scene worthy of Tony and Cassandra!”

OE, WHO produces Dark Shadows with David Darlington, reveals that this looks like being the final release of adventures for Tony and Cassandra. Joe explains: “That’s definitely the plan, yes. We thought we’d finished Tony and Cassandra’s adventures a few years ago in an audio called The Devil Cat, so these three box sets had to be placed before then and that does limit where we can take the characters. Plus I do think I’d rather have a few brilliant stories rather than them just continuing on and on. It definitely won’t be the last we’ll hear of either character though…”

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DARK SHADOWS: THE TONY & CASSANDRA MYSTERIES: SERIES THREE

Released: November 2019
Format: CD/Download

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TERRANCE DICKS
1935–2019

In The New Audio Adventures: The Inside Story book produced by Big Finish, Gary Russell revealed that Terrance became involved with Big Finish as actor Elisabeth Sladen requested he write for the Sarah Jane Smith spin-off series. The very first of her adventures, Comeback, was written by Terrance and released in July 2002. Gary said: “Having Terrance’s name on a Big Finish release was something I’d wanted to see since the day I started working for them. And Lis was very keen to have him involved in her series so this was the ideal melding of everyone’s desires.”

Terrance returned to the Big Finish fold six years later when he adapted his 1989 Doctor Who stage plays, The Ultimate Adventure and Seven Keys to Doomsday for audio – both were released in 2008. Seven Keys to Doomsday, which featured Trevor Martin reprising his role as the Doctor after playing the part in the original 1974 show, was the first play Terrance had ever written.

In an interview for Big Finish, Terrance said: “It was quite difficult to do because if you think about it, on stage you show people things, you give them things to look at with specific dialogue and drama. When I first wrote the scripts one of the things I hadn’t realised was that, unlike television, you can’t have things in mid-shot and there are no close-ups – you can’t just have people slipping the drugs into drinks, and so on.

“Adapting the plays for audio can also be difficult as you have to come up with some contrivances. For example you have a hero and a heroine, and he’s saying, ‘Duck down there, so you won’t get shot.’ Then she’ll say, ‘What’s going on, tell me...’"
what’s happening.’ It can be hard to make it sound like natural dialogue.”

The audio version of Seven Keys to Doomsday was directed by John Ainsworth, who said: “I didn’t liaise with Terrance prior to the studio recording as he’d been commissioned to adapt both The Ultimate Adventure and Seven Keys to Doomsday before I was involved. When he came along to the studio his first words were, ‘I’m interested to see what you’ve done with it’. I explained that I had done a bit of script-editing to his play and fortunately as a script editor himself, he completely understood. He sat with me for the entire recording following the action in the script and being ready to discuss any points as they arose. But happily he never once raised any concerns about the changes that I’d made!

“I later read in an interview with Terrance, although not specifically talking about Seven Keys, that he believed that once a script reaches studio it becomes the property of the director and the actors and no longer belongs to the writer – a sentiment that I entirely agree with. It can be tricky having the writer present during recordings but Terrance was a total professional – of course – and I’m honoured to have had him in studio while I brought his script to life. He sent me a lovely email a few days later saying that it had been a new and fascinating experience for him and had opened his eyes to what can be achieved with sound alone.”

TERRANCE’s NEXT Big Finish credit was Beyond the Ultimate Adventure, the December 2011 The Companion Chronicles release. A story very much in the pantomime mold and a sequel to The Ultimate Adventure, it came about from a suggestion by Big Finish executive producer Jason Haigh-Ellery. Beyond the Ultimate Adventure was a true nostalgia fest with appearances from vampires, the Rutans and the Raston monsters then no one needed to worry about the copyright! It’s more fun to use your own anyway!

“Actually someone interviewed me recently and said that they were surprised the Raston Robot hadn’t come back, and I said it did come back, frequently, in my fiction! I’m fond of it but it’s never quite taken off.”

“IF YOU’VE GOT A GOOD MONSTER IT WOULD BE SILLY NOT TO USE IT. AND I THOUGHT THAT IF I USED MY OWN MONSTERS THEN NO ONE NEEDED TO WORRY ABOUT THE COPYRIGHT!” TERRANCE DICKS

Warrior Robot – all of which were created by Terrance.

Producer David Richardson said: “For some time Jason had wanted to feature the Sixth Doctor in a sequel to The Ultimate Adventure, so we asked Terrance to write one. The first new adventure for the Doctor, Crystal and Jason in 22 years!

“It was a fantastic process of discovery as even I didn’t know that a Rutan and Raston Warrior Robot were going to pitch up until I read the script!” Terrance said of his script: “If you’ve got a good monster it would be silly not to use it. And I thought that if I used my own

IN FEBRUARY 2008, Big Finish re-published Star Quest, Terrance’s classic abduction trilogy. Previously published in 1978, 1979 and 1981, Terrance’s three Star Quest novels were brought together for the first time in a single volume with a new introduction by the author. His other contribution to Big Finish was the adventure, A Mutual Friend, published both in the Bernice Summerfield short-story anthology, A Life of Surprises in 2002, and in Bernice Summerfield: Treasury, released last year as a talking book. VORTEX

Photographs © Catherine Cranston
REMEMBER WHEN the First and Second Doctors met in an exciting adventure with the Daleks to mark Doctor Who’s fifth anniversary? What do you mean, ‘No’?! Well, that’s the thing about time travel, you see. These things happen but not necessarily in the right order...

Here in 2019 it’s 1968 all over again in Daughter of the Gods, the latest release in The Early Adventures range. Producer David Richardson explains: “It was Jason Haigh-Ellery’s idea to do a story with the First and Second Doctors, and it seemed to me rather fitting we should release it in our 20th anniversary year a few months after Legacy of Time. “Script editor John Dorney and I set writer David K Barnes a list of characters, most of which made it into the final piece (no room for the Meddling Monk though sadly). What he’s written is really beautiful, a piece about sacrifice and bravery, and it all starts when the TARDIS never actually makes it to the planet Kembel…”

Not only do we have Daleks but we have the return to Doctor Who of the short-lived companion, Katarina. Writer David admits: “I had to devise a story for the First and Second Doctors, but it wasn’t until Katarina was thrown into the mix that my ideas had a focus. I knew the story now had two unique selling points – the Doctors and Katarina – which had to be mined for their potential whilst still supporting one another. “It took me a long time to crack it. I nearly admitted defeat, virtually handing John Dorney 80 pages of notes with no actual storyline to accompany it! He said, ‘I suspect you’re overthinking this,’ and helped me whittle everything down to the adventure I really wanted to tell.”

David B was delighted when he was asked to bring together the first two Doctors. He grins: “They’re both amongst my favourites. I had such fun writing for the First Doctor in The Dalek Occupation of Winter and I knew I wanted to find out what he would do when meeting the Second. There’s plenty of humour to be had there but I also wanted their encounter to have dramatic stakes, and be a situation that they’d approach from very different perspectives. That’s what Katarina’s inclusion brought to the table, though to say any more would spoil the story!”

A

H, YES, Katarina – the handmaiden from Troy. She briefly accompanied the Doctor and Steven before sacrificing herself to warn them of the
alien threat in TV episode *The Daleks’ Master Plan*. Originally played by the late Adrienne Hill, actor Ajjaz Awad now fills her sandals.

Producer David continues: “We had to cast Ajjaz well ahead of recording *Daughter of the Gods* – even before the script had been written – because... well, she appears elsewhere. But I won’t spoil that for anyone who hasn’t heard Katarina’s other appearance! I was keen to cast Ajjaz when we worked with her on the First Doctor adventure, *The Phoenicians*, last year. She’s just great – and always comes into the studio with such enthusiasm. She even brought a costume along for the photoshoot, she was that keen!”

Director Lisa Bowerman adds: “Ajjaz is superb. I first discovered her when I was casting for the *Torchwood* story *The Dollhouse* back in 2017. Her facility with accents combined with her acting ability is invaluable. David Richardson asked me some time ago if I knew anyone who would fit the bill for *Daughter of the Gods* – and knowing he’d used Ajjaz for a few other projects, I didn’t hesitate in recommending her.”

Given that Katarina only featured in five episodes and came from ancient Troy, did that cause David issues when writing for her? He says: “Katarina presented several challenges but that she came from the distant past wasn’t really one of them. Rather she’s a character almost entirely overshadowed by her status as ‘the first companion to die in *Doctor Who*.’ Adrienne Hill did her best in a sadly subservient role with very few lines, but the character contributes little in the five episodes in which she appears beyond getting killed off.

“It was important to me that Katarina stood at the heart of the adventure – and on her own terms. She is not just a walking set of continuity bullet points; she is a character and personality. I built the whole story around two important conversations she has with the Doctor. I had no idea if Big Finish would use her again so I wanted to try and get it right if I could.”

By having the Doctor meet himself for the first time in his chronology in this story, did later meetings between incarnations shape how writer David wrote their encounter? He laughs: “For one thing, I wanted to correct something *The Three Doctors* and *The Five Doctors* got wrong: the first Doctor shouldn’t be the one with all the answers! He’s the youngest, the least experienced! That’s something I really wanted to tap into, especially with Peter Purves voicing the character.
“I think Peter draws upon the whimsical and almost irresponsible side of the first Doctor, the side that gives me the greatest joy when watching William Hartnell’s performance. I wanted to balance out the gruff, crotchety stuff. Hartnell’s take on the role had so many more facets than he was later given credit for.”

As for the relationships between the different companions and Doctors, writer David says it was: “Hard to juggle but immensely satisfying. You want to ensure that everyone gets an opportunity to interact, so long as it’s in service to the story. Their personalities should spark off each other and push the narrative in a new direction. At least, that’s what I tried to do!

“I had to remember that it wasn’t just two TARDIS crews I was dealing with; it was also two entirely different ways of making the programme. How is our understanding of the TV season three crew informed by contrasting them with the regulars of season six, and vice-versa? I had that in the back of my mind.”

David wrote for the Daleks in The Dalek Invasion of Winter, released last year. He adds: “Having previously explored the more manipulative side of the Daleks, I decided this time I’d make them the all-conquering force of nature that only Daleks can be! With so much else to do in this story I needed a relatively simple and unequivocal threat to put the screws on our heroes. They don’t need to hide in the shadows: the universe is theirs for the taking so they’re flipping well getting on with it!”

ISA BOWERMAN has regularly directed Peter Purves, Frazer Hines and Wendy Padbury over the years in The Early Adventures and The Companion Chronicles, but this was the first time Peter Purves, who plays the First Doctor as well as Steven, and Frazer Hines, playing the Second Doctor and Jamie, have come together in studio as these characters.

Lisa says: “There's always a fear that the chemistry won't work, but as ever the writing’s the thing and David K Barnes balanced the relationships between them all perfectly without having to compromise the characters we know and love. Of course many of the actors are old friends with everyone having done the convention circuit, not to speak of jobs other than Who that they’ve worked together on. Two dream teams!

“Everyone was very enthusiastic about the script which made recording days really enjoyable. The freedom of just playing with the drama and relationships, knowing the words are going to make the job easy, makes for a very good day.

“I cast a couple of actors I knew – Ian Crowe had just done a show with Peter Purves up in Edinburgh and Max Keeble I worked with in theatre recently. It was his first experience of audio drama but he appeared to relish
every moment – it’s lovely to have that sort of mix of social familiarity.”

How did it feel having that special celebration of the first two incarnations of the Doctor (literally) meeting? Lisa says: “Peter and Frazer had fun with every minute they had playing their respective Doctors, and companions as well of course. Both of them have absolutely nailed the spirit and personalities of their Doctors over the years, and watching them sparring against each other was wonderful. Again David’s script really brought a sparkle to their meeting – but never at the expense of the drama. “The story has some lovely twist and turns, relationships formed and moral dilemmas to be faced. Perfect.”

THE ADVENTURE comes with an eye-catching cover from Tom Webster. Tom says: “In terms of a starting point for this it really just boiled down to the incredible brief. It was one of the easiest to assemble in that respect, no question marks at all. Daleks, the two TARDIS teams, Time Destructor, and a nice fusion of the two 1960s titles sequences. I had such a clear picture in my head – I hope the cover does the story justice!

“I mainly use archive photography and screenshots and I’ve combined elements from different photographs to make new images. I was particularly proud of the way William Hartnell came out on this one. It all started from an old black and white photo from TV episode The Space Museum and the hand was added on to make it look more brooding. “Actually it wasn’t too hard at all to fit everything on. The layout was very simple and symmetrical, I probably could have fitted in more. Two TARDISes (TARDii?) would have been fun! “The Dalek images were sourced from the wonderful people at This Planet Earth – they had the 60s Dalek on show at the Doctor Who festival. Tom Saunders took some amazing shots which they kindly allowed us to use in return for a credit. Thank you so much guys. Fun fact – all three Daleks on the cover are the same Dalek, including the Supreme Dalek at the front which was colourised to look like the one in Master Plan!”

“PETER AND FRAZER HAD FUN WITH EVERY MINUTE THEY HAD PLAYING THEIR RESPECTIVE DOCTORS, AND COMPANIONS AS WELL OF COURSE. LISA BOWERMAN"
**Quatermass Question**

Is there ever any possibility of Big Finish getting a licence to tell Quatermass stories?

**Beverly Sanford**

**Nick:** Beverly, we’d love that, but the rights have not been available. Your query has inspired me to make a fresh enquiry, though – and if there’s any news we will let you know.

**Short Battles**

Are there plans for any more Time War Short Trips? The first two were extremely enjoyable, among my favourites of the Short Trips range, and any excuse for more would be most welcome.

**James Hawkins**

**Nick:** Thanks to the incredible efficiency of our new Short Trips range feels like it’s already planned right up until the end of time! But I will certainly chat to Alfie about this, James. And if I forget he’ll have read this message and will remind me!

**Eleventh Heaven**

Was the Eleven intended to be a long-term, multi-range recurring character right from the start? Or is that an outgrowth of something – be that fan reception, enjoying writing the character, or simply the pleasure of working with Mark Bonnar and John Heffernan?

**@DigiGeekTV**

**Nick:** Producer David Richardson did think the idea had ‘legs’, but yes, it has grown and grown and grown. You’ve put your finger on all the reasons for the long-term, multi-range nature of the Eleven.

**Fully Bookleted?**

Will the interior booklets ever be made available as a PDF with the downloads, please?

**John Porter**

**Nick:** There are no plans at the moment, John. Currently our thinking is to preserve the uniqueness and collectability of the CD releases.

**Romana v River**

Will we be getting Romana meeting River at some point? I need her to address the fact that River is impersonating her across the universe.

**@abitmeddlesome**

**Nick:** Interesting assertion! No current plans but I certainly wouldn’t rule it out.

**Trekking On?**

What’s coming up next with the Big Finish Star Trek range?

Will we ever see any Star Trek full-cast audios (either following characters from any of the TV series or with a completely original BF exclusive crew)? Either option is just really exciting.

**Philip Basket**

**Nick:** Sadly, there are no current plans for any more Star Trek, Philip, as this was a licensing deal with a German publishing company to produce a single voice English language version of their audiobook. I’ve been ferreting around to find a way to do Star Trek audios, but the rights surrounding Star Trek are fiendishly difficult to unearth. Still, I have faith that one day we’ll find a way. It is my biggest, unrealised ambition for Big Finish – I love a bit of Star Trek!

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WRITE TO: FEEDBACK@BIGFINISH.COM USING VORTEX MAIL AS THE SUBJECT
OCTOBER 2019
- DW • THE MONTHLY ADVENTURES:
  - Interstitial/Feast of Fear (257, FIFTH DOCTOR, TEGAN, NYSSA AND MARC)
- DW • THE EIGHTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES:
  - Ravenous 4 (BOX SET)
- DW • THE PATERNOSTER GANG:
  - Heritage 2 (BOX SET)
- DW • SHORT TRIPS:
  - The Second Oldest Question (9.10)
- TORCHWOOD: Smashed (32)
- BERNICE SUMMERFIELD:
  - The Squire's Crystal (AUDIOBOOK)
- DARK SHADOWS:
  - The Tony & Cassandra Mysteries (VOLUME 3, BOX SET)

NOVEMBER 2019
- DW • THE MONTHLY ADVENTURES:
  - Warzone/Conversion (258, FIFTH DOCTOR, TEGAN, NYSSA AND MARC)
- DW • THE LOST STORIES:
  - Nightmare Country (5.1 FIFTH DOCTOR, TEGAN AND TURLOUGH)
- DW • THE LOST STORIES:
  - The Ultimate Evil (5.2 SIXTH DOCTOR AND PERI)
- DW • THE EARLY ADVENTURES:
  - The Home Guard (6.1, SECOND DOCTOR)
- DW • THE EARLY ADVENTURES:
  - Daughter of the Gods (6.2, FIRST DOCTOR AND SECOND DOCTOR)
- DW • SHORT TRIPS:
  - Hall of the Ten Thousand (9.11)
- TORCHWOOD: Dead Man's Switch (33)
- BLAKE'S 7: Restoration Part 2 (BOX SET)
- BLAKE'S 7: Outlaw (AUDIOBOOK)
- THE PRISONER: Volume 3 (BOX SET)

DECEMBER 2019
- DW • THE MONTHLY ADVENTURES:
  - Blood on Santa's Claw (259, SIXTH DOCTOR AND PERI)
- DW • THE WARMASTER 4:
  - Anti-Genesis (BOX SET)
- DW • THE ROBOTS:
  - Volume 1 (BOX SET)
- DW • SHORT TRIPS:
  - Peace in our Time (9.12)
- TORCHWOOD: Expectorant (34)

JANUARY 2020
- DW • THE MONTHLY ADVENTURES:
  - Dark Universe (260, SEVENTH DOCTOR AND ACE)
- DW • THE FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES:
  - Series 9: Volume 1 (BOX SET)
- DW • THE FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES:
  - Purgatory 12 (9.1)
- DW • THE FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES:
  - Chase the Night (9.2)
- DW • SHORT TRIPS:
  - The Infinite Nexus (AUDIOBOOK)
- TORCHWOOD: Fortitude (35)
- TORCHWOOD: The Sins of Captain John (BOX SET)

FEBRUARY 2020
- DW • THE MONTHLY ADVENTURES:
  - The Psychic Circus (261, SEVENTH DOCTOR)
- DW • THE FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES:
  - Series 9: Volume 2 (BOX SET)
- DW • THE FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES:
  - The Planet of Witches (9.3)
- DW • THE FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES:
  - The Quest of the Engineer (9.4)
- DW • THE DOCTOR CHRONICLES:
  - The Twelfth Doctor: Volume 1 (BOX SET)
- DW • GALLIFREY:
  - Time War 3 (BOX SET)
- DW • SHORT TRIPS:
  - Deleted Scenes (10.2)
- BLAKE'S 7: Restoration Part 3 (BOX SET)
- TORCHWOOD: Dissected (36)

MARCH 2020
- DW • THE MONTHLY ADVENTURES:
  - TBA
- DW • SHORT TRIPS:
  - Decline of the Ancient Mariner (10.3)
- DW • THE PATERNOSTER GANG:
  - Heritage 3 (BOX SET)
- BERNICE SUMMERFIELD:
  - The Glass Prison (AUDIOBOOK)

DATES CORRECT AT TIME OF GOING TO PRESS.
DOCTOR WHO
THE EARLY ADVENTURES

DOCTOR WHO
THE LOST STORIES

DARK SHADOWS
TONY & CASSANDRA

PLUS BLAKE’S 7
TRAVIS: THE MAN WHO...