

I AM NOT A NUMBER, I'M A FREE MAG!

# VORTEX

STAR COPS

LIFE ON **MARS**

DOCTOR WHO

THE **WAR** MASTER

# THE PRISONER

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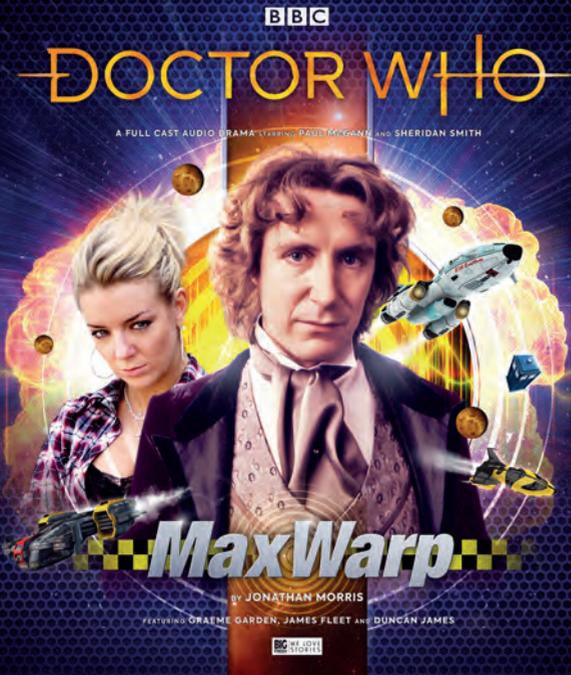
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COMING SOON

# DOCTOR WHO

## MAX WARP

**T**O DATE, Big Finish's *Doctor Who* high street vinyl record releases have been adventures with the Fourth or Tenth Doctors – but all that's about to change.

This November sees the arrival of the Eighth Doctor spinning on the turntable in *Max Warp*, with the Doctor played by Paul McGann and Lucie Miller played by Sheridan Smith facing a murder mystery with a high-speed twist.

*Max Warp* will be the second exclusive collaboration with ASDA following the sell-out success of the limited edition release of *The Creeping Death* on vinyl record earlier this year.

Out on November 15th, *Max Warp* will be released as a limited edition of only 2,000 on

coloured splatter-effect vinyl. It will also feature brand new artwork and production notes.

Actor Sheridan said: "I've got right into vinyl, I've just bought a record player so I'm going round all the vintage shops and buying lots of cool, amazing albums. I can't stop playing them in the house. I'm going to buy it all! Hours of enjoyment!"

*Max Warp* also stars Graeme Garden – best known as a member of *The Goodies* – as the outspoken Geoffrey Vantage. Plus actor and singer (from boy band Blue) Duncan James plays Timbo 'The Ferret', and actor James Fleet from BBC sitcom *The Vicar of Dibley* plays O'Reilly. **VORTEX**

Please note this release is only available in the UK.

**I**N ADVANCE of this month's *Vortex* with news on the release of the third series of Big Finish's *The Prisoner*, I decided to indulge in the first two series once again.

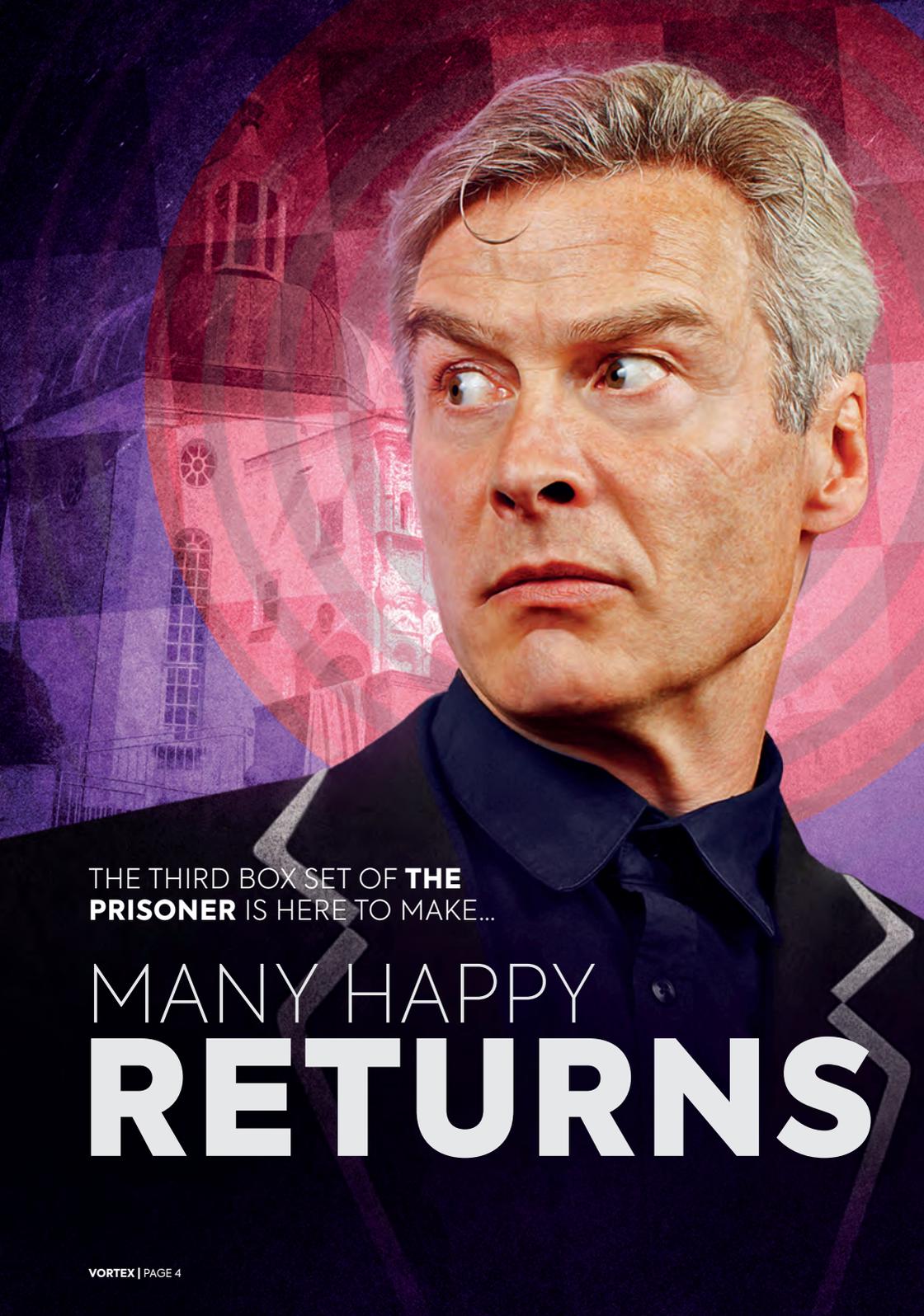
I remembered them as being exciting and tense when I listened to them when they first came out, but this time they had me gripped to the edge of my seat! As I've previously mentioned, I drive 100 miles each day for work, and I found myself sitting in my car – just for another five minutes – to keep the adventures going!

After listening to box sets one and two back to back, I've gone back to the television episodes and started watching them again. And what's really struck me is just how close Mark Elstob's Number Six in the audios is to Patrick McGoohan's Number Six on TV. The vocal performance, the restrained anger, the bemusement... it's all there. It's very, very layered.

Writer and director Nicholas Briggs has done a fantastic job giving the audio reimagining a new twist, but it's still instantly recognisable (and it's funny how the superb theme by Jamie Robertson isn't the original but you know exactly what it is!).

I can't wait to hear what happens next in the Village.

Be seeing you! **VORTEX**



THE THIRD BOX SET OF **THE PRISONER** IS HERE TO MAKE...

MANY HAPPY  
**RETURNS**

I WILL NOT BE  
PUSHED, FILED,  
STAMPED,  
INDEXED, BRIEFED,  
DEBRIEFED, OR  
NUMBERED! MY  
LIFE IS MY OWN!

**S** O SAYS Number Six, the titular character of *The Prisoner*, kept in the Village as people try to find out his reason for resigning from the British Secret Service.

Based on the ITV series conceived by and starring Patrick McGoochan, in Big Finish's reimagined version of *The Prisoner* we've come across stories and concepts that feel very familiar, but are at the same time different. Some of the titles we know but with all new adventures built around them.

*The Prisoner Volume Three* continues in that vein.

Director and writer Nicholas Briggs explains: "The first episode is *Free For All*, which is extremely loosely based on the television episode of the same title in which there's an election in the Village for the position of Number Two. The second one is *The Girl Who Was Death* which has almost nothing to do with the TV episode of that name, except that it does have a deadly woman in it. *The Seltzman Connection* has some remote link with *Do Not Forsake Me Oh My Darling*, but only very obliquely. And *No One Will Know*

is my finale, which isn't based on any of the TV episodes, and certainly not *Fall Out* – the final TV episode – which I sort of covered in *The Prisoner Volume Two*."

How has his approach to writing these changed since the release of the first box set?

Nick says: "There's been a big change, actually. The previous episodes weren't standalone with a reset button being pressed at the end as they were in the TV series most of the time (hence the debate about which order the episodes should be shown): they linked into each other. But this volume is very much written as a serial. It's one long story with characters that continue from episode to episode."

**T** HE RELEASE of Volume Three was somewhat delayed. Nick explains the reason for the

hold-up: "My job as executive producer has partially transmogrified into me being creative director for Big Finish too. It's not a change in my job, more of a development. But this has meant an increasing involvement in organisational, structural and personnel-related issues in the company. It took me some time to

sort out how to incorporate these new responsibilities into my duties as a writer and director, hence the delay.

"My aim is to be creative and my determination to continue being creative necessarily involves me in all sorts of organisational decisions which then allow the space to be creative. That is to say, I have to make sure the company continues to thrive. I wonder, if I resigned, would I wake up in a strange 'Village'?"

"Luckily the delay gave me time for all the ideas to mature in my head, so much so that when I started writing I did it really quickly and got terrible RSI-style pains all down the diodes of my left side (as a certain paranoid android might say!).

"Another big challenge was assembling the cast. When you have a lot of characters who appear in a number of episodes, it becomes quite a tricky task to secure everyone all

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TO EPISODE.

NICHOLAS BRIGGS

at the same time. In the process we did lose one actor, sadly, as our dear friend Helen Goldwyn couldn't make it. So I had to recast the Village Voice and the Clones, but that gave us the opportunity to employ the wonderful Jennifer Healy – who sounds uncannily like the late, great Fenella Fielding."



Lucy Briggs-Owen  
and Mark Elstob

in an overbearing way, he doesn't dominate the conversations in the green room or tell other actors what to do – but his passion and expertise inspires everyone.”

Mark adds: “Playing Number Six is and always has been a dream come true for me. Nick is not only a great writer of fascinating, engaging, funny and thought-provoking scripts, but also a fantastic director. He's able to keep a light, jokey

NICK'S SCRIPTS  
NEVER LET YOU  
DOWN, AND  
THE FINISHED  
PRODUCTS ARE  
BREATHTAKING.

MARK ELSTOB



Sarah Mowat and  
Mark Elstob

The Big Finish reimagining has been nominated for a BBC Audio Drama Award for Best Online or Podcast Audio Drama, and has also received critical acclaim from fans.

Nick says: “It's been absolutely lovely and such a relief that people like what we've done. I knew I was entering controversial territory so there was a big danger that

our version would be seen as terrible, sacrilege, or at the very least an irritating irrelevance.

So many people have been really generous and encouraging, not least Rick Davy of *The Unmutual* – a website dedicated to Patrick McGooohan and **The Prisoner** – and Six of One has given us some tremendous reviews too.”

Key to the success of **The Prisoner** has been its fabulous actors. Nick chose not to go with a big name TV star when casting Number Six, but went with his gut instinct and cast Mark Elstob, an experienced actor and a fan of the series.

Nick says: “I thank my lucky stars that our listeners seem to share my high opinion of our cast and in particular Mark. Some think he's a dead ringer for Patrick McGooohan's voice while others feel he's an entirely different Number Six, but everyone seems to agree that he is brilliant. And he's particularly good as the leading man in studio. He leads the cast – not

atmosphere and still maintain a grip on the finished output.

Mark says: “I've been an actor for well over 30 years and this is easily one of my favourite jobs. Number Six himself is almost entirely unlike me (I think!) and to be him for the duration of the recording (which takes about four days per series) with all his fantastic stubbornness and refusal to yield has been a genuine thrill.”

How did Mark find this latest set of stories? He continues: “Well Nick's scripts never let you down, and the finished products are breathtaking. Topical (standing for re-election on a platform of 'send them all back where they came from!'), emotional (with the return of Sarah Mowat as Janet), exciting (plenty of explosions and crashes) and appropriately bonkers (Numbers Two and Six swapping minds!). I think I can say without fear of contradiction that there is something here for everyone.”



Glen McCreehy

N

ICK WAS delighted with the cast for this new batch of adventures. He says:

“The truth is that good casting is a group effort. I sought loads of advice from Ken Bentley, Barnaby Edwards, Jamie Anderson and from Emma Haigh, the producer of this series. And together we came up with what we thought were the best people. Of course a lot of the casting of this series was a question of ‘fingers crossed’ as I was bringing back characters who had appeared before – I was really hoping they’d be available.

“Lucy Briggs-Owen is back as Kate Butterworth and her apparently villainous alter-ego Number Two. Jim Barclay is back as Control – the head of British Intelligence, with Barnaby Edwards returning as his wonderfully irritating assistant, Danvers.

“This isn’t a set of typical



Genevieve Gaunt

**The Prisoner** stories so we only feature two Number Twos. We have a brand new one in the form of Lorelei King, who some people call the ‘Queen of Audio’ because she has done so many audio roles and is vocally superb. I wanted a US Southern accent for *Free For All*’s Number Two and Lorelei was just right for it. And

she really got into the whole **The Prisoner** thing, having not really known much about it before.”

G

**IVEN THE** tense nature of the stories for **The Prisoner**, how did Nick find the recording days?

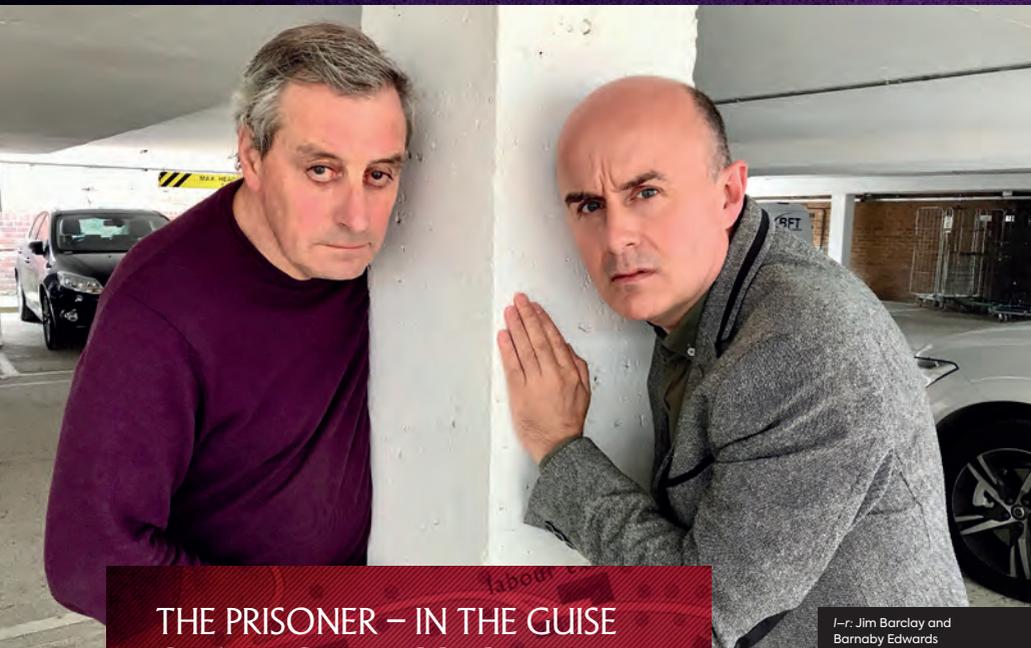
He reveals: “You may have heard it said that when you’re performing comedy it gets really serious. And when you perform the more serious stuff, the atmosphere lifts as a kind of antidote to the harsh ‘reality’ of your storytelling. That was exactly the case here with **The Prisoner**.

“Everyone was brilliantly engaged but there was a kind of crazy, end of term atmosphere about the recording. Mark Elstob in particular went totally bonkers during the wildtracks and had an absolute ball! In amongst all this you’ve got Lucy Briggs-Owen being so moving that I actually sobbed in the control room. And, of course, our brilliant new character Number 43, as portrayed by the fantastic Genevieve Gaunt, had us all in raptures of delight. She played two entirely different facets of the same character, and had to do it in reverse order. Quite some feat!”

Mark adds that he has: “Loads of highlights – in fact, no lowlights. From a technical point of view my favourite part of the recording was when Number Two and Number Six finally meet. In this series the wonderful Lucy Briggs-Owen reprises her Number Two from Volume Two, but the whole thing is given a massive spin by application of the Seltzmann weapon. Their minds are swapped so Lucy and I had to try to capture the nature of each other’s characters but in our ‘prime’ character’s voices. Only Nick would dare attempt that on audio.”

Has Mark enjoyed the often complex relationships between his character and the various Number Twos?

He reveals: “I would say we’ve been blessed with all our Numbers Two actors throughout the three series. One of the benefits of the original TV show’s format was that it allowed the personal characteristics of the respective actors to shine through so the viewer always had a fresh



l-r: Jim Barclay and  
Barnaby Edwards

THE PRISONER – IN THE GUISE OF A BRIGHTLY COLOURED, TURBO-CHARGED, SIXTIES FANTASY-CUM-SPY SHOW – ADDRESSED UNIVERSAL THEMES AND ASKED MANY IMPORTANT QUESTIONS ABOUT OUR MODERN SOCIETY. MARK ELSTOB

opponent stepping up to have a crack at breaking Number Six.”

**T**HE FINAL magic of the release is made by the music and sound designers who captured the feel of the Village from its TV days, perfectly evoking its spirit on audio. Sound designer, Iain Meadows, says: “It’s great fun creating the Village soundscape and Nick always takes us to different places and buildings so it never gets repetitive.

“There’s also been the scope to pop in one particular feature, that in mind at least, was yet another way to psychologically torture Number Six. I’m talking here about the brass band who march about the Village with their one tune! Most of the villagers have just succumbed and phased it out but I guess if Number Six gave it any serious thought, after a while of hearing the same tune day after day, he might just crack! The Village is, for the time period of the Cold War, a surprisingly advanced

and cosmopolitan place and so it’s a great opportunity to reflect that.

“I like to think of any ‘challenges’ as chances to demonstrate how exciting the audio medium can be and again Nick really lets his imagination go to places that make **The Prisoner** a vivid experience. It also reflects life – the things we might take for granted as we wander from one situation to the next. That’s what I love about it really, the fact that you have such ordinary things sitting beside the extraordinary.

Remember the clock ticking away as Number Six gets enveloped by Rover back in Volume Two, for example. As for the specifics on this one, well, that would be telling!”

Musician Jamie Robertson adds: “I had a blast scoring the **The Prisoner Volume Three**. Some of the instrumentation used is not far off that of the Tom Baker era **Doctor Who** so I was already halfway there.

“Simple electric guitars, especially the classic ‘heartbeat’ sound as I call it, were used in Buddy Holly’s



Jennifer Healy and  
Mark Elstob



*Heartbeat* and a TV series of the same name (a C Minor to F Major) with some delay and chorus. But when you dive deeper into the arrangements of percussion beyond the bongos and shaker, there are many underlying cymbal effects added within, to give a sort of drone. A Tam Tam for sure.

“Some of **The Prisoner**’s instrumentation is so simple, yet once arranged can be very evocative of the era. Then the bass guitars or acoustic bass deliver a deep drone to help run the score along with the atmosphere and ominous danger that’s constantly at Number Six’s door.

“When I started **The Prisoner** scores on the first episode, *Arrival*, for Big Finish, Nick wanted it to be as close to the original style but with my added Jamie touch. I remember a conversation where Nick said he really wanted the audience to think we had just grabbed the original soundtracks (though not in reality, of course!).

“But I think and hope people remember this series more because of the theme tune I’ve written. The start is very close to the original with the snare drum/bongos and Timpani and double bass as Number Six is walking down the corridor to hand his resignation in.

“I hope the elements within the theme have helped capture Number Six’s journey. We have also got flowing strings for the emotional elements of the score.”



**HY DOES** Mark think **The Prisoner** has been so popular over the years – and still continues to

be so? He explains: “As I’m sure I’ve said before somewhere, **The Prisoner** – in the guise of a brightly coloured, turbo-charged, sixties fantasy-cum-spy show – addressed universal themes and asked many important questions about our modern society. The world has changed immensely but I don’t think any of the questions have.

“Almost everywhere we look citizens are being controlled, shepherded and ordered by their governments. We are spied on as a matter of course by all sorts of people. Do we really want that?”

IT IS THE FINAL  
SERIES. THAT’S  
OFFICIAL.  
UNTIL IT ISN’T.  
NICHOLAS BRIGGS

There is surely nobody anywhere who *wants* to be, oh, I don’t know... filed, stamped, indexed, briefed or de-briefed, is there? The voice of Number Six – some Number Six somewhere – must always be heard!”

Nick concludes: “It is the final series. That’s official. Until it isn’t. But that’s currently my intention. I mean, we could do more. I don’t send Earth into the heart of the Sun or anything, so... I’ll never say never!” **VORTEX**

**THE PRISONER:**  
VOLUME THREE

■ Released: **November 2019**  
■ Format: **CD/Download**



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**Anti-Genesis** is the latest adventure featuring the Master's exploits in the Time War

# ANTI-MATTERS

“**L**OVE A villain,” says Scott Handcock, producer and director of **The War Master** series, “and in **Doctor Who** the Master is the ultimate. Obviously in **The Monthly Adventures** he's destined to fail because he's always against the Doctor. So the Time War seemed like a perfect opportunity for us to explore the Master's true capabilities while the Doctor's either shunning the war or in the heart of the battle, leaving the Master free to exploit the fallout on the fringes. I wanted to show how dangerous he can be but also thoroughly charming – which makes him all the more dangerous. Secretly we're all rooting for him!”

We're discussing *Anti-Genesis*, the fourth box set in **The War Master** series starring Sir Derek

Jacobi. And, to **Doctor Who** fans, the word 'genesis' tends to have an association that doesn't mean the first book of the Bible.

Scott continues: “It struck me that in a war between two great and powerful races, the Master would realise quite early on that the Daleks were the more destructive force... so why ally himself with the Time Lords when he could ally himself with the Daleks? Only knowing there can never be a true Dalek alliance he takes that idea a step further still and seeks to seize command of them from their very beginnings.”

Scott says: “I knew Nicholas Briggs and Alan Barnes wanted to write this fourth box set and that such a concept would immediately appeal to them... and they ran with it!

“Nick plotted all four episodes

then divided it up between him and Alan, and they produced a hugely intricate tale that embraces the new series, the classic series and original Big Finish characters too.

“Who'd have thought that Derek Jacobi's Master would ever be making references to *Genesis of the Daleks*, in a script featuring Narvin and Mark Gatiss's Unbound universe Master. There's a lot going on which gives our actors a lot to play with!”

**T** HIS BOX set features *From the Flames* by Nicholas Briggs, *The Master's Dalek Plan* by Alan Barnes, *Shockwave* by Alan Barnes and *He Who Wins* by Nicholas Briggs. Nick takes up the story: “I wrote the storylines for all four episodes and then allocated myself



l-r: Franchi Webb, Christopher Harper, Jordan Renzo, Seda Carlsen, Gavin Swift, Derek Jacobi and Ben Crystal

I WROTE SOMEWHERE YEARS AGO THAT I RECKON **GENESIS OF THE DALEKS** COULD EASILY HAVE BEEN A 12-PARTER OR MAYBE MORE. ALAN BARNES

the first and last scripts with Alan doing the difficult bits in the middle. I did give him loads of detail (probably too much!). I remember reading his scripts months later and thinking, 'this is all bonkers, he's gone completely off-piste here'. And then I checked my storylines only to find he'd followed my brief to the letter! So yes, these are crazy stories. And it's really difficult to tell you about them without spoilers, although the cover and the title partly give it away.

"Let's just say that the Master decides to reshape history in his own image but in order to do that he has to lay a very long, convoluted plan to get round all the safeguards the Time Lords have in place. And then because the Daleks are trying to outwit him, they plunder a Master from another reality or dimension – or however you'd like to describe it. Basically the Daleks grab the Master from from the **Unbound** universe of **The New Adventures of Bernice Summerfield**."

Alan adds: "We wrote these in much the same way we did *Orbis* all those years ago. Nick and I batted around a few fairly vague ideas about going back to Skaro at around the time of the Kaled/Thal



Derek Jacobi

war, and revisiting the world of *Genesis of the Daleks*. After that we sent me full storylines which was a very pleasant surprise because

storylines are the absolute worst thing as far as I'm concerned! There's always so much colour to put into a script – character stuff and world-building and beats within scenes – that's where my heart is."

*The Master's Dalek Plan* is a title that immediately grabs attention – and raises a smile. Alan explains: "It wasn't really meant as a funny title – it's a 100% accurate title, the perfect title – which is why it was too good to resist!

"But it's all-but impossible to sum it up without spoilers! *The Master's Dalek Plan* is almost entirely set in the *Genesis* world which is so rich. I wrote somewhere years ago that I reckon *Genesis of the Daleks* could easily have been a 12-parter or maybe more. There's so much in it that gets contracted and compressed, like the characters' journeys to and from the various Domes across

## DOCTOR WHO THE WAR MASTER

No Man's Land, and so on. Whole series have been based on less. Actually I'm pretty sure I could set a whole series in that world – not just the Davros-y, Dalek-y part of it. I think that'd be brilliant!

"The third episode, *Shockwave*, is focused heavily around the **Unbound** universe Master played by Mark Gatiss. It's the one where events

# NARVIN'S IN THIS ONE – WHICH WAS EXCITING FOR ME BECAUSE I'M PRETTY SURE THAT NARVIN WAS MY CREATION!

ALAN BARNES



Clackwise from bottom left: Seán Carlsen, Derek Jacobi, Richard Clifford, Zaraah Abrahams, Daniel Brocklebank, Nicholas Briggs, Franchi Webb and Vikash Bhal



really start slipping out of Gallifrey's control. Narvin's in this one – which was exciting for me because I'm pretty sure that Narvin was my creation! When I killed off Vansell in *Neverland*, I had to create a new co-ordinator for the **Gallifrey** series. I sort of felt Narvin was the ultimate weasel, someone who always finds a way to survive, regardless

of changing circumstances.

And I guess that's worked!"

Both Alan and Nick enjoyed working with Sir Derek. Alan says: "Writing for Sir Derek is a massive honour, of course, but you really have to be on your A game as he's so good; you don't hire Michaelangelo and ask him to slap some white emulsion on your bathroom ceiling – you give him the Sistine Chapel!"

Nick agrees: "I just spoke to Mark Gatiss today and he summed it up so well I'm going to pinch what he said about Derek's acting: 'The perfect example of how to do it. Wears it all so lightly! Wants to have fun!' And I'd add to that the fact that Derek is brilliant at it. It's kind of breathtaking to witness."

Big Finish previously announced that **The War Master** series would only run to the four box sets. Is it the end? Scott adds: "When we first worked with Derek on *Only the Good* we honestly believed that it would be a one-off. But he loved the role and the work so

much we couldn't resist doing more when he asked to come back. After four box sets and various encounters in other ranges, I think it's safe to say that this enthusiasm has only increased... so I'd be very surprised if this is the last we hear from him."

Nick agrees: "Well, we'd be mad not to do more, wouldn't we? More brilliant Derek, more fun coming up with great scenarios for him to tear up? Why on Earth wouldn't we?!" **VORTEX**

### THE WAR MASTER: ANTI-GENESIS

- Released: December 2019
- Format: CD/Download



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# VORTEXMAIL

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## MORE, MORE, MORE!

There are a few awesome series (**Classic Doctors**, **New Monsters**; **Philip Hinchcliffe Presents** etc.) that as far as I know weren't 'ended'. If a series hasn't been identified as being completed, can we hope for more volumes in the future?  
JUSTIN BUSH

*Nick: As I'm always saying, Justin, I never say 'never' or indeed 'never again'! There will definitely be more **Classic Doctors**, **New Monsters** but there are currently no plans for more **Philip Hinchcliffe Presents**. But I wouldn't rule out its return at some point!*

### 'WOOD WORK?

Is there any possibility that **Torchwood** tie-in novels, short stories or comic stories might get adapted into full-cast audio dramas at Big Finish (like in the case of **Doctor Who: The Comic Strip Adaptations**)?  
**'MISCELLANY'**  
*Nick: We've no plans for this*

*currently, 'Miscellany'. But I'll have a chat with **Torchwood** producer James Goss about it.*

### A COMPANY OF FRIENDS

Is there any chance for Matt Di Angelo and Jemima Rooper to come back as Fitz and Izzy for new adventures?  
**'THE CLOCKWORK MAN'**

*Nick: Alan Barnes and I were chatting about Izzy the other day and playing around with possibilities – but we've no firm plans yet, 'The Clockwork Man'.*

### (UN)BOUND TO SUCCEED

With David Warner's **Unbound Doctor** now living in the main universe, is it possible he may one day meet his main universe counterparts? And has Big Finish ever considered adapting *The Scream of the Shalka* sequel *Feast of the Stone* as an **Unbound** story?  
JIMI WOLFE

*Nick: The whole **Unbound** thing is rather fascinating, it's something I've been thinking about quite seriously recently. When some concrete plans are formulated you'll be the first to know, Jimi... along with everyone else of course!*

### WANDS WONDERING

There's just one series left that I wish you'd get the licence to recreate (you've pretty much exhausted my wish list, so well done, thanks for that!). I refer to **Ace of Wands** – any plans for that, sir?  
DENNIS CATTELL

*Nick: I'd personally love to do **Ace of Wands**, Dennis – I think everyone at Big Finish knows that! But pimming down the rights has proved rather difficult. I'd be very keen if we could find out who exactly owns it.*

### MASTER PLANS?

Are there any plans for audios with John Simm's Master?  
GLEN  
*Nick: We'd certainly love to do this. Let's see what we can come up with, eh Glen?* **VORTEX**



THE STAR COPS ARE BACK ON THE BEAT...  
AND THEY'RE ON NEW TERRITORY!

# MARTIAN CHRONICLES

**S** TAR COPS only ran for one series of nine episodes on television, but its third box set of audios – containing another three fantastic episodes – is on the way from Big Finish.

Nathan Spring, Colin Devis and Pal Kenzy are back with more cases to solve, and this time they are shifting from their base of operations on the Moon to somewhere further afield.

**Star Cops: Mars** takes the intrepid trio to another world as humanity begins to colonise the red planet. The series script editor

is Andrew Smith – a former officer of the law himself based with the Metropolitan Police in London, rather than somewhere offworld!

He tells *Vortex*: “The first two **Star Cops** box sets were my first as a script editor for Big Finish so I was a little more nervous than normal about the reaction to them, having been very much across the whole thing rather than just the episodes I wrote. But the reaction has been great, especially with people saying it was spot on in terms of evoking the original. And at the same time listeners

with no previous knowledge of the series seemed to love it.

“In **Star Cops: Mars** there are six episodes and I’ve written three of them. Released in two box sets they tell the story of the Star Cops going to Mars with hopes of setting up an office of the International Space Police Force there. We’re telling a story with a strong connecting narrative across the two sets, so the adventures are more interlinked than before with new guest characters appearing across a number of episodes. These include Barbara Holmberg, the leader of



Issy Van Randwyck

make it a place where mankind will be able to walk around without the need for breathing apparatus or radiation protection. This is all taken from the research I conducted.

“Almost straight away, we’re drawn into an incident at Olympus Mons base where water has been stolen. That’s a major crime on Mars as water is so precious. That escalates with a death – a proper kind of locked room mystery. The investigation

I DID SO MUCH READING, WATCHED MANY DOCUMENTARIES AND TOOK MANY NOTES, ALL ABOUT MARS. ANDREW SMITH

Barack Obama Base – the first and largest of the Mars colonies.

“Because the episodes are linked more strongly, the series plan and episode outlines I provided to the writers were fairly detailed in places – the plan for this one ran to 14 pages! There was an overview of the overall narrative, biographies of some of the main characters and then details of Mars itself. I carried out a lot of research – I did so much reading, watched many documentaries and took many notes, all about Mars. It was really fascinating. It allowed me to provide an overview for the writers – of things like atmosphere, gravity, terrain, length of day, travelling time from Earth, etc – that would give them a head start on their own research.”

**T** HIS BOX set begins with *The New World*, which has been written by Andrew. He explains: “The idea to take the Star Cops to the

red planet came up while we were planning the first two box sets. It was inspired by hearing that the series creator, Chris Boucher, had intended that if there had been a second TV series then it would have seen Nathan and others go to Mars (the last episode of the TV series, *Little Green Men and Other Martians*, involved Nathan planning to make the trip).

“In the first **Star Cops: Mars** box set, we join Nathan, Kenzy and Devis as they arrive on Mars on their mission to convince colonists they should have a police presence. It’s taken them months to get there and they’ve got their work cut out for them. They are away from Earth and the Moon for two years. They find a different way of life on the 30 or 40 colonies compared to what they’re used to. On the Moon everyone returned to Earth periodically, but some of our characters on Mars are there for life and they don’t want to go back. They want to be part of this mission to terraform Mars, to

and unravelling of that mystery underlines that these stories are investigative thrillers/procedurals rather than what someone might normally expect from sci-fi. The Star Cops are problem solving and they don’t have technology that we couldn’t feasibly have in the near future. They’re real-world stories where it just so happens that that real world is not Earth but Mars.”

**T** HE MYSTERY continues in *The Shadow of This Red Rock* by Una McCormack. Andrew explains: “The second adventure is a direct continuation of my opening story. There’s an incident at the end of episode one that leads directly into episode two, which has Nathan and Kenzy on the run on Mars. They come across Grace Kavanagh, one of the first Mars colonists and pioneers, who helps them out.

“One of the story elements I suggested to Una was to use Mariner Valley which is a key Mars landmark,



l-r: Issey Van Randwyck, Heather Coombs, David Calder, Linda Newton, Oliver Dimsdale

a canyon that forms a vivid gash across the planet's surface. It's as wide as the United States and up to four miles deep, so we have a showdown there in the crevices around Mariner Valley. I was keen for us to use the topography of Mars and its outstanding natural features. So there's Olympus Mons in the opening episode, Mariner Valley in episode two – and we'll be coming back to Olympus Mons in a big way in the second box set."

Una adds: "I got sent a very detailed brief. Andrew had worked through not only the setting but the overarching storyline for the season. The episode itself had a thumbnail sketch and from this Andrew and I bounced around ideas and characters until we hit on something that not only didn't cover already-covered ground, but that we both liked and were enthusiastic about. I'm really pleased with the original character who appears in this episode; I think she has an affecting story.

"I'm used to writing space opera where you can gleefully make up technobabble to cover all the technicalities! But that doesn't cut it with sci-fi like this which has to work with what's plausible. Fortunately Andrew was on top of

things – not only in the brief but in working through the storyline. And, of course, as I found in writing, the technicalities led to storytelling possibilities in terms of suspense, setting and theme."

*Whatever Happened to Gary Rice?* by Guy Adams, rounds off this set.

Andrew says: "Episode three by Guy is a missing person mystery. Across these three episodes there are elements dropped into the stories that will become more significant when we get into the next box set. There's a revelation in Guy's episode which sets it up nicely."

Guy adds: "The joy of working with Andrew as your script editor and effectively the showrunner, is his thinking. It's so expansive, and the notes and suggestions he gave for the first two box sets were already pretty full.

"Andrew has created a bible for the world of *Star Cops*, but at the same time he allows you freedom within that to express yourself. Andrew knows what he wants and when you're given the outline for the story, he's almost written it out for you. With these two new box sets the amount of research he has done on Mars is phenomenal. It's an interesting backdrop.

"It was a real joy to go back and write for these characters again. I had a whale of a time the first time around, and it's always very enjoyable to research something like this.

"One of the big issues with colonisation is that you've got to eat, so it's a question of finding ways of providing protein which can seem a very noble aim – and then seeing how that can be subverted."

A

**ANDREW HAS** been delighted with the commitment of the cast to the *Star Cops* range.

He reveals: "David Calder, Trevor Cooper and Linda Newton do an amazing job bringing their characters – Nathan Spring, Colin Devis and Pal Kenzy – back to vivid life. They obviously love it. David is so energised about it while Trevor is one of the biggest *Star Cops* fans there! He has a collection of *Star Cops* T-shirts. Linda even brought in some photographs and press cuttings from the TV days – they clearly have very fond memories and she's loving bringing the character back."

Speaking to *Vortex* from her home in Australia, Linda says: "The script team do a terrific job – each episode feels like a logical move for the *Star*

Colin. If they're going somewhere she wants to be there too.

"I found it interesting how much research and exploration has already been done about Mars. The script team really did their homework.

I WAS KEEN FOR US TO USE THE TOPOGRAPHY OF MARS AND ITS OUTSTANDING NATURAL FEATURES. ANDREW SMITH

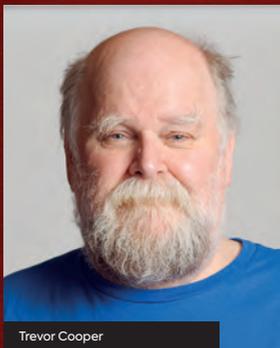
l-r. Jake Wardle, Elizabeth Uter and Heather Coombs



David Calder

**Cops** team. It was a bit daunting at first, travelling all the way from Australia and walking into a studio at the back of Ladbroke Grove to recreate a character I'd done 30 years ago in a show I'd pretty much forgotten about! Daunting and wonderful in equal measure. But by the time I'd finished recording last year, I was really hoping there'd be another series."

To Linda, does the audio series feel like a natural extension to the TV series? She says: "Yes, surprisingly it does. As I mentioned, the writers have worked hard to keep the feel of the TV series, the



Trevor Cooper

characterisation, the plots, and the day to day frustrations, boredom and challenges of being police working in a hostile and dangerous environment. And of course, having three of the original characters is a great advantage because the listeners already know them."

How did Linda find the idea of heading to Mars in this series?

"Well Kenzy's always up for an adventure. If there's crime happening, she's happy to be there. She's a bit of an adrenaline junkie. And she doesn't have personal ties - her colleagues are her family - particularly Nathan and

But Moonbase has a special place in my heart - I love those sets. So I think Kenzy would always want to go back to the Moon."

Andrew concludes: "I hope **Star**

**Cop: Mars** is really popular so we get to do more! The reaction to the first two box sets has been so good that I'm hopeful. I already have more ideas!

"It wasn't feasible to include all the **Star Cops** in this two-year mission but the second **Star Cop: Mars** box set will include investigations on the Moon, so I'm delighted to say we'll be seeing more of Rakhee Thakrar and Philip Olivier as Chief Superintendent Priya Basu and Inspector Paul Bailey then." **VORTEX**

## STAR COPS:

MARS 1

- Released: November 2019
- Format: CD/Download



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## KALDOR'S UNIVERSAL

# ROBOTS

**T**HE EIGHTH Doctor's **Ravenous** adventures came to a conclusion in October leaving us with one outstanding question – what did Liv Chenka do during her year on Kaldor where she was supposed to get to know her sister Tula all over again? We'll be able to find out in the brand new series **The Robots**, available from December 2019.

*Kaldor is going through a period of tumultuous change. Technology is changing at an advanced rate – the robots are evolving, artificial intelligence is adapting,*

*and with these changes so politics is altering too. Dangerously.*

*Can Liv (Nicola Walker) and Tula (Claire Rushbrook) make a difference during the most turbulent time in the world's history?*

All we know is that by the end, Liv is desperate to return to her travels in the TARDIS... Senior producer David Richardson reveals: "**The Robots** all began when we were working on **Ravenous 2**. Matt Fitton was writing *Escape from Kaldor*, and suddenly the thought hit me that there was a huge story to tell about Liv and Kaldor and the robots.

"What really excited me was that it was a futuristic sci-fi story but it was also very much about today – our technological revolution, the changing political landscape – there was so much potential there. So I asked Matt to write in a scene in **Ravenous** where Liv leaves the Doctor for one year – and we would return to tell that year in four box sets.

"We offered the new series to Nicola and, I have to say, I've never had such an enthusiastic response from anyone to anything! I think of all the amazing projects she



l-r: Nicola Walker and Claire Rushbrook

is offered, all those fantastic TV series, and yet I suggested **The Robots** to her and it was clearly an exciting prospect. With that sort of enthusiasm from your lead the project is already flying before you've even started!"

The series script editor is John Dorney, who adds: "When we started planning we were initially looking at three box sets of four stories each, but when we changed to four box sets of three stories it had a positive impact on the stories themselves and the content of each set.

"We know that we're looking at a year in Liv's life, and we've got 12 stories and 12 months which is a good match-up – but that doesn't mean there's one story set each month!

"What it does do, though, is give us a sense of progression and consequences across the releases. We're often tied down by where things end up and it felt very exciting in this case that all we knew is that Liv returns to the Doctor and Helen 12 months later. There's not too much of an idea of the overall game plan by the end of the first box set, but by the second you'll get a better idea of it."

**T**HE ROBOTS of *Life* begins the series, where, settling into life back on Kaldor, Liv investigates a medical centre where the patients are dying.

Writer Roland Moore was especially delighted to be involved. He explains: "It was very exciting to be on board for this series. It sounds like I'm making it up but *The Robots of Death* is my absolute favourite classic television **Doctor Who** story. I love the robots with their silky and impassive voices and the world-building in that story is quite incredible. I am always surprised that it was never revisited on TV – especially given the cost of the robot costumes! – but it's great it wasn't in a way as it gives us more scope for this new series."

How did Roland find integrating Liv into the world established in *The Robots of Death*? He says: "Liv originated from Kaldor and various stories have shown her in that world (*Robophobia*, *Escape from Kaldor*) but this is full immersion for her. It's a homecoming of sorts as she has stopped travelling with the Doctor. She hopes he will come back, but for now she's trying to

adjust to a normal life. But the world of robots has changed and some worrying advancements have been made in her absence. So she's living with her sister, Tula, with whom she has a bit of a fractious relationship, and she's trying to find a job. It's not long before she's in great danger...

"*The Robots of Life* (thank you David Richardson for that title!) shows a seemingly benevolent



side to the robots. Liv finds that most of Kaldor City Hospital is now run seamlessly by robots who perform everything from menial tasks to major surgery. And the previous way of humans doing these things is being superseded. Liv finds that her old mentor, a surgeon himself, is struggling not to become obsolete. But is he also hiding a dreadful secret?"

**T**HE CONCEPT of artificial intelligence is at the heart of the second story, *The Sentient* by Robert



l-r: Claire Rushbrook, Nicola Walker, Venice Van Someren and Jaye Griffiths



l-r: Eric Carter, Robert Whitelock, Nicola Walker, Claire Rushbrook and Roland Moore

Whitelock, in which we meet Vissey, a young child – the ‘perfect’ young girl any parents would want to adopt. But Vissey is artificial and sees the world in a very different way to the humans around her.

Robert has a couple of connections back to the original *The Robots of Death* TV episode, as he reveals: “I was taken to the pub by David, director Ken Bentley, John and Matt after a recording session one day last year and was asked if I knew the **Doctor Who** adventure, *The Robots of Death*. Not only did I know it well but I was taught at RADA by Greg de Polnay (who played D84 in the episode), and I’d also done a season with David Collings (who played Poul) at the RSC. They told me about the planned series and asked me if I’d like to write one – I leapt at the chance.

“I was asked to pitch a storyline so I suggested a tale of a learning Artificial Intelligence that goes mad in the process of trying to become human. I had a blast

reading about the development of AI on internet publications that keep track of what the big tech companies are doing, but I also read Yuval Noah Harari’s book *Homo Deus* which proved to be an incredibly rich source of ideas. I learnt a lot and some of it was pretty scary.

“*The Sentient* is about a child AI being developed for the lucrative elite market. Customers give their DNA to be cloned and a child synthetic is produced from that genetic material. It’s then used to house a learning AI, which

is taught similarly as to how any child would be, except in a laboratory and via the socio-virtual networks (a Kaldoran version of complete immersion Facebook). The problems begin when the AI starts fiddling with its source code and deciding its own goals and operational parameters. I mean, what could possibly go wrong...?”

**T**

**HE SET** concludes with *Love Me Not* by John Dorney, as a widower goes to extreme lengths to keep the memories of



Annabelle Dowler and Anthony Howell

## DOCTOR WHO THE ROBOTS

one of those covers where I wasn't too sure how it was going to look at the end but it came together really well! I love the armies of Voccs and Dums flanking Liv and Tula. I've just got to hope my covers for the next three volumes go as well as this one – fingers crossed!"

**T**HE ROBOTS gives Liv the chance to really shine on her own, to showcase just why she has become such a popular and beloved character since she first appeared in July 2011 in *Robophobia*. Roland adds: "The series gives us a chance to show Liv in a new light. She's such a brilliant character and a joy to write for. She's tenacious and acerbic – lots of fun. But it also examines big themes such as self-awareness in artificial intelligence, redundancy due to technology, and how to heal family rifts."

Robert says writing for her is: "Much too enjoyable! After I finished my first draft I read it back and was horrified that I'd made Liv far too glib. I phoned David who reassured me that it was practically impossible to make Liv too glib! With that in mind I dialled up the sarcasm at every available opportunity, hopefully without detracting from the forward movement of the plot! I could hear Nicola's voice in my head for everything that I wrote for her. I've known her for about 25 years as we auditioned for RADA together back in the dim and distant past. I know that anything I write for her, she'll make work, which took some strain off me too. It was a joyous process." **VORTEX**

become a standard, key part of our lives) – asking where it's going.

"It's a sort of **Doctor Who Black Mirror**. But it's also got its own identity, not just **Doctor Who** without the Doctor as it has its own

# IT'S A SLIGHTLY WEIRD, PSYCHOLOGICAL SCRIPT THAT DOES STRANGE THINGS. IT'S SOMETHING I'M PROPERLY PROUD OF...

JOHN DORNEY

his dead wife alive. John says: "It's a slightly weird, psychological script that does strange things. It's something I'm properly proud of – it's quite an exciting one.

"Liv and Tula have been flinging themselves into the world of Kaldor and its society. They get involved with one of Tula's colleagues who lost his wife in unusual circumstances.

"Chris Boucher created a gloriously dense scene and we have previously expanded on that at Big Finish in *Robophobia*, *The Sons of Kaldor* and *Escape from Kaldor*. It was an already rich environment and we're using it more as a window onto our world today, telling contemporary stories and looking at our relationship with technology (which has

central conceit that we can use to reflect the things in our world."

The cover for this series has been created by Ryan Aplin. He tells *Vortex*: "The brief I got was, 'Liv and Tula (Nicola and Claire) front and centre and lots of robots!', which is a brilliant brief. You can't ever have too many robots!

"It was great to be able to create some slightly newer costumes for Liv and Tula. I didn't want to do a straight copy of the originals as it was thought they were too ornate for the direction this series was going in. Clearly Kaldor has outgrown that look but I was keen to keep some Art Deco style to the costumes and general design, just as a nod to *The Robots of Death*.

"I'm really pleased with the finished result. It started off as

## DOCTOR WHO: THE ROBOTS

- Released: December 2019
- Format: CD/Download



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## THE AVENGERS THE LOST EPISODES VOLUME ONE

THE THING I THINK I SHARE WITH PATRICK MACNEE IS I THAT I HAVE AN AFFECTIONATE REGARD ON LIFE. JULIAN WADHAM

**T**HINK OF **The Avengers** (British television spy not the bunch of superheroes!), and most people will think of an English gentleman spy in a bowler hat with a glamorous female assistant in leather. Of course that's the image that's become stuck in our heads based on the characters of John Steed and either Mrs Cathy Gale or Mrs Emma Peel at his side. But before Cathy and Emma there was Dr David Keel. And in reality, Steed was more Keel's sidekick!

Like **Doctor Who**, **The Avengers** is nowadays incomplete in the TV archives so Big Finish's David Richardson, Nicholas Briggs and Jason Haigh-Ellery decided to rectify that by adapting the lost episodes for audio.

Producer David says: "The lovely thing about **The Avengers** is it wasn't really planned. We were in a meeting with StudioCanal about an entirely different project and during the course of our chat **The Avengers** came to light.

"I brought up the fact that we had a **Doctor Who The Lost Stories** range and conversation

drifted towards the idea of us making audio adaptations of the missing episodes of the first series of **The Avengers**. As Jason, Nick and I headed out of the building after that very successful meeting, I said to them – in a moment of instinctive casting – that I'd love to have Julian Wadham as Steed and Anthony Howell as Keel. And that's exactly who we went for!

"Julian and Anthony are with the same agent who in turn suggested Lucy Briggs-Owen to play Carol Wilson. I was told that Lucy was very keen to venture into audio and her voice reel was excellent so we offered her the role. We have, of course, worked with Lucy many times since on other things – she's wonderful."

Julian says: "The thing I think I share with Patrick Macnee is I that I have an affectionate regard on life and it seems to me that he did. And there's something about the twinkle in his eye and his smile that is a pleasure to replicate.

"When you approach a part that other people have played before you really want to run in the opposite direction; at least I certainly do! But then you let the character come to you through your understanding of the script. It's great that we're playing the

original scripts – this really is the sixties that we're reading, it's not a contrivance. These are the authentic, original documents."

**The Lost Episodes** ran for seven box sets bringing 26 original episodes to life once more. David adds: "It was a dream project to work on. On our last day of recording Jason took us all out for a really lovely meal – Julian, Anthony and Lucy came – and Olivia Poulet (who plays our Mrs Peel) as well as director Ken Bentley, Nick, me, script editor/writer John Dorney and Toby Hrycek-Robinson, the sound engineer. We thought this range was the big final send off for **The Avengers** – how perfect that history has proved that to be wrong!" **VORTEX**

### THE AVENGERS: THE LOST EPISODES: VOL 1

■ Released: January 2014

■ Available to download now for the special price of £9.99



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# VORTEX

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"I'm not a prisoner, I'm a free man,  
and my blood is my own now.  
Don't care where the past was,  
I know where I'm going... out."

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### 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) **DLO**
- **TORCHWOOD:** *Dead Man's Switch* (33)
- **BLAKE'S 7:** *Restoration Part 2* (BOX SET)
- **BLAKE'S 7:** *Outlaw* (AUDIOBOOK) **DLO**
- **THE PRISONER:** *Volume 3* (BOX SET)

### DECEMBER 2019

- **DW • THE MONTHLY ADVENTURES:**  
*Blood on Santa's Claw and Other Stories* (259, SIXTH DOCTOR AND PERI)
- **DW • THE WAR MASTER 4:**  
*Anti-Genesis* (BOX SET)
- **DW • THE ROBOTS:**  
*Volume 1* (BOX SET)
- **DW • SHORT TRIPS:**  
*Peace in our Time* (9.12) **DLO**
- **DW • SHORT TRIPS:**  
*The Best Laid Plans* (9.X) **DLO**
- **TORCHWOOD:** *Expectant* (34)
- **STAR COPS:** *Mars 1*
- **STAR COPS:** *The Stuff of Life* (AUDIOBOOK) **DLO**
- **THE WITHDRAWAL** (AUDIOBOOK) **DLO**

### 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) **DLO**
- **DW • THE FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES:**  
*Chase the Night* (9.2) **DLO**

### DW • SHORT TRIPS:

- The Infinite Today* (10.1) **DLO**
- **DW • THE DIARY OF RIVER SONG**  
*Series 7* (BOX SET)
- **BERNICE SUMMERFIELD:**  
*The Infernal Nexus* (AUDIOBOOK) **DLO**
- **TORCHWOOD:** *Fortitude* (35)
- **TORCHWOOD:**  
*The Sins of Captain John* (BOX SET)
- **ADAM ADAMANT LIVES:**  
*A Vintage Year for Scoundrels* (VOLUME 1, 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) **DLO**
- **DW • THE FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES:**  
*The Quest of the Engineer* (9.4) **DLO**
- **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) **DLO**
- **BLAKE'S 7:** *Restoration Part 3* (BOX SET)
- **TORCHWOOD:** *Dissected* (36)

### MARCH 2020

- **DW • THE MONTHLY ADVENTURES:**  
*TBA* (262, TBA)
- **DW • SHORT TRIPS:**  
*Decline of the Ancient Mariner* (10.3) **DLO**
- **DW • THE PATERNOSTER GANG:**  
*Heritage 3* (BOX SET)
- **BERNICE SUMMERFIELD:**  
*The Glass Prison* (AUDIOBOOK) **DLO**

### APRIL 2020

- **DW • THE MONTHLY ADVENTURES:**  
*TBA* (263, TBA)
- **DW • SHORT TRIPS:**  
*Dead Woman Walking* (10.4) **DLO**
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"I'M SORRY, DAVE. I'M AFRAID I CAN'T DO THAT."

# VORTEX



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LIFE ON **MARS**

DOCTOR WHO

THE **WAR** MASTER

# ROBOTS

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