**ISSUE: 131 •** JANUARY 2020

"I HAVE NEVER ADVOCATED WAR EXCEPT AS A MEANS OF PEACE."

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DOCTOR WHO THE TWELFTH DOCTOR

TORCHWOOD MARTHA JONES RETURNS!

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# COMING SOON

# ATA GIRL 2

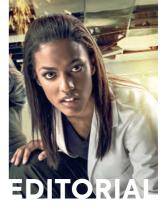
THE AIR TRANSPORT AUXILIARY (ATA) TEAM ARE RETURNING IN MARCH TO TELL MORE STORIES ABOUT THE COURAGEOUS FEMALE PILOTS OF WORLD WAR II.

NTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S Day 2020 will see the release of the second series of ATA Girl, part of the Big Finish **Originals** range of audio dramas. ATA Girl 2 is being led by the creative team behind the first series, with creator/director Louise Jameson and producer/ writer Helen Goldwyn. Louise says: "I think it's a series that's worthy, not just because of the amount of talent that's gone towards its conclusion, but also because of the women that it's about. These are unsung heroines and very brave women – especially our main protagonist, Pauline Gower,

who managed to get equal pay for equal work. This was back in 1942 and we're still fighting that battle!" Helen adds: "It's all been about respecting and honouring the memory of these women because in these audios we are fictionalising their lives. But every single thing that we write is inspired by the real stories of the real women. We've been very careful about that, I think, and I'm proud of the end products."

**ATA Girl 2** will be available on 8 March 2020 (download only).

Please note this release contains adult material and may not be suitable for younger listeners.



HERE'S ALWAYS something rather exciting about a character from the 21st century **Doctor Who** 

universe joining the Big Finish stable. This February sees the long-awaited and eagerly anticipated arrival of Martha Jones, the Tenth Doctor's friend, at Big Finish – but it's probably not in the manner you were expecting... Our first encounter with Dr Jones focusses on her time with Torchwood, when she joined Captain Jack, Gwen Cooper and company at the Hub in Cardiff. I've always had a soft spot for Martha. I'm sure that at one time or another, we've all had a bit of a crush on someone who just didn't know how we felt about them. Russell T Davies cleverly addressed the fact that the Doctor could look like an attractive human being, and Martha's love for the Doctor was evident – but he just didn't realise it. especially as his friendly nature could be mistaken for something else.

Also this month we've got the arrival of The Twelfth Doctor Chronicles which is really exciting. Anyone who follows me on Twitter (@finishedzine) will know that I am a huge fan of Peter Capaldi (him being from the city near where I grew up is just a coincidence - I've loved his work since Lair of the White Worm in which he effectively plays the Doctor!). You might be wondering how Jake Dudman, a young man in his 20s. can capture the spirit of a man in his 50s - but he does it with aplomb. The answer's easy – Jake is a talented actor! VORTEX

# ROMANA IS ROAMING THE Cosmos, as the time war Rages around her...

N GALLIFREY: Time War Volume Two we saw Romana and former CIA

Coordinator, Narvin, exiled from Gallifrey and plunged into the heights of the Time War," says producer/director Scott Handcock. "They have their own agenda – allies they hope to track down to form a resistance – but their priority is simply to stay alive. To the wider universe the Time Lords are just as monstrous as the Daleks, so they're not going to be welcomed with open arms wherever they go."

In *Time War Volume Three*, Romana and Narvin are now travelling the universe together, with Leela, Braxiatel and Ace having already departed. Scott continues: "It's lovely to see Romana and Narvin thrown together after so long. Across all the **Gallifrey** series they've slowly thawed to one another. Now they have no choice but to work together and support one another, and it's great to find a new dynamic to their characters after 15 years. It's fun for the audience and for the actors, and these four stories are very different from the previous *Time War* volumes."

TIME-FIGHT

The *Time War* series has seen the **Gallifrey** regulars torn apart – Scott admits that not only is that a good dramatic device, it's also been for practical reasons too. He explains: "When senior producer David Richardson first briefed me about **Gallifrey**: *Time War*, he asked for a combination of the original **Gallifrey** line-up of Lalla Ward and Louise Jameson; fan favourites Seán Carlsen and Miles Richardson; plus Sophie Aldred as Ace, who'd most recently featured in *Intervention Earth* and *Enemy Lines*. So we had a lot of regulars to cater for which was both a difficult thing to sustain on our budget and it limited the number of new characters we could also feature.

"In that sense it was a practical decision, going forward, that if we wanted to expand our view of the Time War, we'd need to retire some of our regulars. But also, dramatically, the Time War is a dangerous environment, so

# IT HAS TO BE SOMETHING STRANGE AND ALMOST BEYOND IMAGINING. david llewellyn

CARHARTT



being able to write out some of our leads in the first volume made it clear to the audience that nobody was safe. Even when we came back for Volume Two, some people were convinced we'd just bring back Leela, Ace and Braxiatel – but there are no easy fixes. And even in this next release, *Time War Volume Three*, which features Leela, it's more a glimpse of her role and life beyond Volume One away from the others."



HIS BOX set of four stories features an experienced hand writing half of them,

with two newcomers brought into the mix by script editor Matt Fitton. Scott explains: **"Gallifrey** can

be a tough series for writers to enter into because there's such a wealth of backstory, but Matt Fitton has a plan for where these tales are taking us. Veteran writer David Llewellyn opens and closes the series, with Lou Morgan and Helen Goldwyn providing the middle two adventures.

"The opening episode, Hostiles, sets up the premise for the volume with Romana and Narvin under attack as they enter the Time War, before pitching them Above (I-r): Lorna Brown, Omar Austin, Wilf Scolding, Louise Jameson and Lucy Reynolds

against the consequences of their previous actions on an abandoned Time Lord research station."

David tells us more: "Hostiles is kind of a gothic fairy tale set on a decaying space wreck. I really wanted to tell a story from the fringes of the Time War, something that might try and capture the mind-boggling strangeness of what was going on in the war zone. We get hints of it in the television series. with mentions of the Nightmare Child and so on, and I kind of like that we haven't tried visualising too much of that because it's nice when there's a bit of mystery. But at the same time the Time War couldn't just be a rehash of Star Wars or Star Trek with photon torpedoes and tractor beams and spaceships going bang. It has to be something strange and almost beyond imagining."



**HIS IS** followed by Lou Morgan's *Nevernor*, which is a more traditional horror story

set in the woods of an isolated alien planet. Lou says: "Gallifrey: Time War Volume Three as a whole is very much about seeing Romana and Above (I-r): Maxine Evans, Sam Hallion, Louise Jameson, Will Kirk and Sarah Doualas

Narvin out in the wider universe, one which is increasingly feeling the effects of the Time War rippling out. In my story, *Nevernor*, they arrive on Njagilheim – an isolated, rural world with a Viking-like society. But as they realise the Time War is affecting even this far-away land, they discover that something has followed them out of the Vortex: the Orrovix.

"When Matt Fitton approached me about writing a Time War story, I think I practically bit his hand off! I've always loved the concept of the Time War and its effects, so I couldn't have been more excited to write a story set in it. I'd been reading an article about Sandby Borg in Sweden, and an archeological dig on the site of what is thought to be a fifth century massacre there. The whole piece had a feeling of real strangeness to it, and it felt like it was already halfway to being a Time War story. So I wondered what might happen if Romana and Narvin found themselves in a place with its own similarly terrible history. And to make sure they don't have too easy a time, there's a monster on their trail, something that has caught their scent from inside the Time Vortex itself... and it is very, very hungry."

WHEN MATT FITTON APPROACHED ME ABOUT WRITING A TIME WAR STORY, I THINK I PRACTICALLY BIT HIS HAND OFF! I'VE ALWAYS LOVED THE CONCEPT OF THE TIME WAR... LOU MORGAN

Lou enjoyed writing for Narvin and Romana in particular. She admits: "The great thing about taking Narvin and Romana away from Gallifrey itself is that their relationship changes. Their expectations of one another change, the way they interact (or don't) with each other changes ... everything shifts, just slightly. It's a wonderful opportunity to dig down into who they are - especially in Narvin's case, away from Gallifrey and the boundaries he's been more comfortable operating inside. With Romana it's about how she adapts to the realities of the changing universe, and seeing how her leadership develops when there are no politics involved. They're fantastic characters to write for, collectively and individually, and besides how could you not love Narvin?

"It's not every day you get the chance to invent a new monster, let alone one that lives in the Time Vortex. That felt very special, but then, the experience of being one thread in the epic tapestry that is the Time War is a pretty special one all round."



HE THIRD story lets us catch up with Leela, who was apparently lost in time during her meeting ar Master in the first

with the War Master in the first Gallifrey: Time War box set

Scott explains: "Helen Goldwyn's Mother Tongue whisks us away from Romana and Narvin to catch up with Leela's exploits. It's very much a bottle-episode, focussing on Leela's life following the events of Volume One's The Devil You Know – it allows us to show the effects of the Time War from a more human perspective. It's a very personal story for Leela and I knew Helen would be the ideal person to write it."

Helen reveals: "This was my favourite kind of brief because

Above (I-r): Suzanne Bertish, Seán Carlsen and Lalla Ward

I was told it was a 'stand-alone' story (albeit one that emerges out of Leela's last episode in the *Time War*) which means I was able to let my imagination run riot without some of the usual constraints of a through-line story. Obviously I knew I was writing for my dear friend, Louise Jameson, so that made it an extra special project. Nothing like having the voice of one of your favourite people (and actors) in your head when you're writing to make the time fly!

"For this particular plot I set myself the challenge of creating something in numerous timelines where the pieces had to fit together like a jigsaw puzzle. In essence, I wanted Leela to experience an alternative version of her life, where she has a profound experience that she's never likely to have in her own universe, and to see how her choices could profoundly impact the lives of others. As Leela is such a strong, determined character, I also aimed to show her traits working equally for and against her. She's a natural survivor and full of courage, but she can also be stubborn and blinkered, which means her choices are not always the right ones.

"Of course it's essential in any drama to create conflict for our

LEELA IS THROWN INTO A SITUATION WITH FEELINGS SHE'S NEVER EXPERIENCED BEFORE. HELEN GOLDWYN

main protagonist, and in this case I set out to make the conflict about the degree of influence we exert over others. Leela is thrown into a situation with feelings she's never experienced before and initially she leads with her instinct. Later, when she has the chance to fix her mistakes, she knows she has to fight that instinct and sacrifice something precious in order to make things right. I really hope it's the kind of scenario we haven't seen Leela in yet."

NITY IS the concluding adventure in this series, also written by David Llewellyn. Scott says: "The final episode returns us to Romana and Narvin as they arrive on the planet Unity and discover a Dalek plot that could affect the outcome of the Time War and bolster Dalek forces across the universe. It features one of our heroes choosing to make the ultimate sacrifice – and it genuinely shocks our leads. Again it's one of the advantages of driving the Gallifrey story forward into the Time War: it's a dangerous universe and we can't keep everybody safe forever..."

David continues: "Unity is a little more traditional. It's basically a space western with all the trimmings. I was interested in looking at how the Time War might affect different worlds, different societies – even those where no conflict has taken place. The people on Unity think they're safe from the war, but the war has other ideas."

David feels that the series is changing its tone as the Time War escalates. He concludes: "It's the idea of how the war grinds everything down, how on one level it's about mind-bending concepts like time itself being torn to shreds, and on another level it's about more familiar – and maybe scarier – things like food shortages, refugees and grief." **VORTX** 

BGFN.SH/UNITY

A NEW MEMBER OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY DOCTOR WHO UNIVERSE IS COMING TO BIG FINISH...



VERYTHING COMES to those who wait according to the old saying, and it's coming true in February as Freema Agyeman joins the Big Finish family reprising her role as Martha Jones.

MAHAMY JEAK

As well as featuring on television in **Doctor Who**, Martha had a stint working with Captain Jack Harkness and his team in Cardiff as part of the Torchwood team. And now Martha is reunited with her friend Gwen Cooper in the **Torchwood** monthly range audio story, *Dissected*.

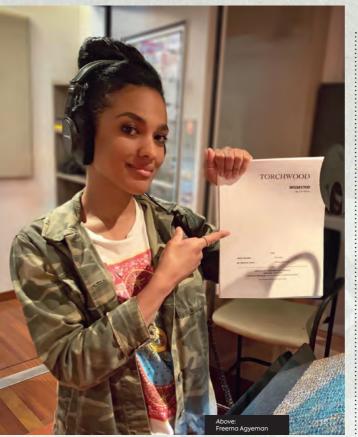
Freema says: "The nostalgia has been quite overwhelming. It really is like stepping into comfortable old shoes. It feels like about five minutes ago and yet so much time has passed. That's the wonderful thing about the Whoniverse – you never feel on the outside of it. It's great to be back."

The man who opened the doors to bring back Martha was regular

**Torchwood** director Scott Handcock, who was delighted to have Freema in an adventure alongside Eve Myles.

He explains: "I met Freema back in 2006 when I was working as a runner for BBC Wales. It was my first job out of university and I was still in awe of working at the BBC and on Doctor Who especially, but Freema was instantly welcoming and down-to-earth. She's one of those actors who knows every member of the crew she's working with, and really cares about her role. Also during that period I worked on The Infinite Quest animation with her and David Tennant (produced by James Goss, no less) so I got to know her a little bit better then.

"I think I first asked Freema, quite casually a few years ago, if she'd be interested in tackling a **Torchwood**.



I know at the time she wasn't sure about reprising the role, but the incentive of Eve and familiar faces appealed so we got the ball rolling. It's just taken a long time to sort logistically as both Freema and Eve are so busy – and Freema's now based in New York – but we finally managed to make it work and can welcome Martha Jones into the world of Big Finish!"

HE WRITER of Dissected is Tim Foley. Producer James Goss says: "Tim was our one and only choice and he did a fabulous job, as ever."

What was Tim's reaction when he was asked to write Martha's Big Finish debut? He grins: "I shouted words that cannot possibly be printed! I was so honoured to be writing a script to convince Freema to return. I definitely felt the pressure. I was particularly





FREEMA AGYEMAN

pleased we were bringing her back in **Torchwood**. I remember when her appearance in the spin-off show was announced and I thought that was such a bold crossover. I love meeting companions again after their journeys with the Doctor."

In this tale, Gwen turns up on Martha's doorstep with a dead body in tow. She needs to ask one final favour of her – and to find out why they stopped being friends. Dr Jones finds that a lot has happened to Torchwood since she left, and there's something very odd about the dead body...

Speaking of his brief, Tim says: "It was extremely open-ended – James simply asked: 'How would you reintroduce Martha?' She was brought in for an autopsy in her first **Torchwood** TV episode so that was my starting block: Martha as a specialist, Martha as an expert. And when compared to the 'improvised' nature of Torchwood's approach, I thought there would be an interesting clash here – head v heart, UNIT v Torchwood, Martha v Gwen.

"As we developed the idea of a real-time autopsy, James came up with a beautiful angle to the story's perspective, which makes this all rather experimental! I'm glad we were bold about this choice,

### TORCHWOOD DISSECTED



line between character and plot so what's left unsaid is just as dramatic as the developments in the room. It's a fantastic chamber piece, and a really strong debut for Freema in the Big Finish universe."

IM WAS also delighted to write for Freema and Eve. He says it was: "So much fun. I've been lucky enough to write for Eve before. I know she loves her verbal spars and dark moments, so there's some funny bickering and horrifying imagery in this adventure. It was a joy to hear Freema seamlessly step into the role again. I think she relished diving back into her character and appreciated that we're finding out what happened to Martha post TV episode Stolen Earth."

Scott continues: "To be honest the recording was as much relief as excitement because we had so

# TO BE HONEST THE RECORDING WAS AS MUCH RELIEF AS EXCITEMENT BECAUSE WE HAD SO MANY FALSE STARTS TRYING TO GET EVE AND FREEMA TOGETHER IN STUDIO! SCOTT HANDCOCK

because it made both the writing and the recording tricksy but fun.

"This is two friends reconnecting and working out why they're not friends anymore. Oh, and there's a dead body between them. It's going to be a long night for all three of them!"

Scott adds: "I can't remember quite how I was introduced to Tim – I think his first commission may have been for **Gallifrey** – but he's become a proper part of the **Torchwood** family now. He's not only a safe pair of hands but he really challenges himself with each and every script, offering something wonderfully unpredictable each time. *Dissected* is no different. It's a two-hander between two brilliantly strong characters, neither of whom have seen one another in a while. Tim balances that fine many false starts trying to get Eve and Freema together in studio! Eve's schedule is tricky these days, though she's very good at letting us know when she's going to be free, and Freema had a very short window of time when she was back in the UK - and their dates didn't always align. But once it was confirmed and in the can we were able to breathe out, and it sort of hit us that this would excite not only Torchwood listeners, but also Doctor Who listeners who have been waiting for the return of Martha Jones.

"It was a delight. We were quite pressured for time given the amount of material we had to get through, but Freema's such a pro. She'd really done her homework on the script, so even though the process was quite intense, we were able to focus on the nuances of the material and have a lot of fun with it too. It's always a treat when you're working with friends, but an added delight when people come away from their first Big Finish session saying that they'd like to do more, they enjoyed it so much."

*Vortex* asks Tim what he thinks is the difference between the **Torchwood** Martha Jones and the **Doctor Who** Martha Jones?

He replies: "I think it's not necessarily about the difference in Martha – who has always been brave, bright, magnificent - but the differences in the shows. In Doctor Who we bounce around the universe with a phenomenal Time Lord. We see wonders and then zip away! Whereas in Torchwood... things are a bit more fixed, day-to-day, we have to live with our consequences and face up to moral ambiguities. We would see a different side to any companion that steps out of the Doctor's shadow. I think in this story we're seeing a Martha who is a little bit trapped, and we'll see how she squares up to that. It would be wonderful to see how Martha fares in her own range!" VORTEX

Please note: this release contains adult material and may not be suitable for younger listeners.



#### TORCHWOOD DISSECTED

Released: February 2020
 Format: CD/Download

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# WOOD WORK

I love how beloved minor characters from the spin-off Torchwood get showcased in the Torchwood monthly range (stories with Suzie, Captain John Hart, Billis Manger, Andy Davidson and Norton Folgate have all been surprising delights, and I am over the moon to see Martha's impending return!). I am wondering if there's any chance we'll hear Paul Kasey as (Jim?) the Blowfish or Yasmin Bannerman (her work as Sapling Jabe in Tales of New Earth and Roz in The Seventh Doctor Adventures has been phenomenal) as police detective Kathy Swanson in any upcoming releases? Would love to hear more Roz and Cwej adventures too! Keep up the great work - my ears are singing with praise! JOSHUA SHIELDS

**Nick**: Cheers, Joshua. No plans for those characters as yet... but just imagine!

# **OMEGA SUPREME**

I heard some while ago that the story arc covering the first three volumes of **The Omega Factor** has now come to an end. Will there be any further audio dramas from Big Finish in the series? Also I very much enjoyed Iain McLaughlin's book, *Spider's Web*. Will there be any more novels? **ANDREW K SHENTON** 

Nick: There are no plans for further volumes of **The Omega Factor** as fullcast audio dramas, Andrew, but I would personally be delighted if that decision were to be reversed one day. Currently there is a possibility of more audiobooks – but no firm plans.

# THIRD WAR

I have been listening to the frankly superb **The Third Doctor Adventures** and was wondering if there were going to be any more, and if so any chance of the War Master appearing, as Sir Derek Jacobi's Master is such a delicious villain I would love to hear him go up against Tim Treloar's third Doctor! **NICK COX** 

Nick: There will definitely be more of The Third Doctor Adventures, Nick, but no plans for the War Master to appear in them – although that would be a fantastic battle of wills, wouldn't it?

# **PARADISE TOWERS**

Have you ever considered making **Death in Paradise** audio dramas? I would love to see the original cast return for more murder mysteries on Saint Marie... **PHILP SCHOLES** 

Nick: Well, crime and thriller is the most popular fictional genre... we should think about that. The trouble is that Big Finish's listeners are largely a **Doctor** Who and science fiction audience. We'd have to find an effective way of attracting the right listeners for them, and at the moment that is eluding us. All suggestions welcome though, Philip!

# TRIPPING OVER CDS

Is there any way we will ever see **Short Trips** from the past few years being put on CD even if for a limited run? **LUKE BENNETT** 

Nick: We've no plans for this, Luke. The general movement nowadays is away from CDs as more and more people go digital. There's also the problem of CDs being extremely environmentally unfriendly – there's so much plastic in a traditional CD jewel case.

# WAR TIME

Just wondering, if we had been blessed with more time with John Hurt, what would his next project(s) have been? I hope we get a lot more War Doctor in the future. John Hurt was the best. MATTHEW

Nick: We did have more plans for the War Doctor, Matthew, as Sir John had said he wanted to do more. Maybe one day those plans will come to fruition. Watch this space! **VORTEX** 

# THIS IS THE BREATEST SHOW ==

NOW WELCOME FOLKS, WE'VE GOT A BRAND NEW RELEASE; IT'S FULL OF WONDERS, THAT WILL NEVER CEASE. IT'LL ENTERTAIN YOU, A TREAT FOR YOUR EARS, AND THE PSYCHIC CIRCUS WILL PLAY ON YOUR FEARS...

# WE ESTABLISHED HOW THE PSYCHIC CIRCUS CAME INTO BEING, AND THEN HOW IT FELL APART. STEPHEN WYATT



Stephen Wyatt

VER THE past 20 years, Big Finish has employed the talents of all sorts of people who have worked on the television series of Doctor Who - Terrance Dicks, Barry Letts, Andrew Cartmel, Marc Platt, Christopher H Bidmead, Andrew Smith... and now, Stephen Wyatt.

Stephen, who wrote Paradise Towers and The Greatest Show in the Galaxy, created the werewolf, Mags, who featured in the 2019 Seventh Doctor audio trilogy. And it was Mags actor, Jessica Martin, who had a hand in bringing the writer to Big Finish.

Script editor Matt Fitton said: "I was very excited to meet Stephen in person at the Gallifrey One convention in LA as I adored both his TV Who stories. They captured Above (I-r): Chris Jury ester McCoy a n Reddingtor

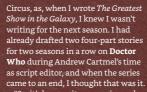
the clever and funny Seventh Doctor perfectly, and built strange worlds with a logic and language all of their own. We chatted about Mags, who I'd just written for, and knowing Stephen had something of a pedigree in radio drama, to say the least – I floated the idea of a possible sequel to The Greatest Show. Stephen said he had some ideas around Kingpin and how the circus started, and the rest is just history...

RN RICH

Stephen tells Vortex: "The Psychic Circus all came about through Jessica Martin. We were both at the the Gallifrey One convention the year before, and Jessica was already doing the Mags audio dramas for Big Finish. Jessica introduced me to the Big Finish people – in particular to Matt Fitton who was working on the werewolf scripts.

"Jessica said, 'Wouldn't it be great if Stephen did a story about the origins of the Psychic Circus?' And Matt said yes, so I then had to produce a detailed synopsis. I was very lucky to be working with Matt

### DOCTOR WHO THE PSYCHIC CIRCUS



"So, it's been quite a surprise and also rather nice to come back. For quite a few years I thought classic **Doctor Who** was dead and gone. which are always more difficult to do than to come up with sounds of your own from scratch. They can also be hampered by music playing or people talking over the FX, making them difficult to pinpoint.

"Additionally, any new effects you come up with also need to sound like they would fit, so they have to be approached a bit differently than normal.

# I KEPT ASKING IF BIG FINISH WAS SURE THE ORIGINAL ACTORS HAD AGREED TO COME BACK AND DO IT! STEPHEN WYATT

I've only discovered recently that wasn't actually the case, particularly because of the new series of **Doctor Who**. People who have watched the new series have gone back and discovered the older ones."

Director Samuel Clemens cast original stars Ian Reddington (Chief Clown) and Chris Jury (Deadbeat) to recreate their roles from 1988 - which delighted Stephen. He admits: "Part of the attraction in writing The Psychic Circus was the idea of coming back to those characters again. I kept asking if Big Finish was sure the original actors had agreed to come back to do it! I was only in studio for the first day of recording so I met Chris again and it was really lovely to see him. And it was just great to hear that Ian's Chief Clown's mad laugh is as scary as ever!"

**ELPING TO** bring the

adventure to life is

sound designer and

Steve reveals: "With this being set

in the same world as The Greatest

important to capture the sound

challenging recreating effects

Show in the Galaxy, it was

and feel of that. It can be

musician Steve Foxon.

"Composing the music can also be difficult; coming up with something with a similar feel, yet not copying it. So I tend to pick similar sounds and try not to get too familiar with the original score, and then see what happens. At the same time, composing a soundtrack with 1980s synths in this style is also a huge amount of fun!" <u>vorrex</u>



Above: Sioned Jones

who's incredibly good as a script editor as he held my hand and got me through it. We established how the Psychic Circus came into being, and then how it fell apart."

HE GR the Ga junkm the TA

HE GREATEST Show in the Galaxy saw a junkmail robot invade the TARDIS, and when it

happens again the Doctor is led down an unnervingly familiar path. Elsewhere, space beatniks Kingpin and Juniper Berry just want to hitch rides and busk – until a greater purpose calls. Things then get timey-wimey as the Doctor's past and Kingpin's future are entangled by malevolent forces. Together, they discover the Psychic Circus is just beginning. Stephen admits: "I wasn't ever expecting to revisit the Psychic

VORTEX | PAGE 14



# **TORCHWOOD:** THE VICTORIAN AGE

HE 19TH century is when everything changes... and we are ready." So says Queen Victoria, the founder of The Torchwood Institute in March 2016's release, The Victorian Age.

Played by Rowena Cooper, Queen Victoria comes face to face with Captain Jack Harkness at a time when the Torchwood One team have just moved into their new base in the Natural History Museum. With Jack as the face of the Torchwood we know and love, this release tied up the origins of the organisation with the modern version created by Russell T Davies. Producer James Goss reveals this was a deliberate idea: "I think it came up in an early discussion with the BBC. Russell is very keen on exploring the history and breadth of Torchwood, and it's also a fascinating chunk of time. How did Jack fit in to early Torchwood? What was Queen Victoria like beyond the television episode Tooth and Claw?"

James admits that in producing **Torchwood** he takes a lot of joy in being able to tie together all the various elements – the foundation of Torchwood, Torchwood One and Torchwood Three – into one big narrative. James grins: "We really enjoy pushing out the borders of **Torchwood**, and we're going to do more of it this year."

Tasked with joining up the dots was writer AK Benedict (who also featured in the story playing Josephine). James says: "AK delivered a brilliant, fun script and the real joy was in Queen Victoria and Captain Jack sparring off each other as that dreadful, magical man teaches her how to live again."

AK adds: "The brief was 'Queen Victoria and Captain Jack', with an emphasis on

fast-paced excitement. I couldn't ask for a more delicious brief for my first Big Finish story. *The Victorian Age* features a gun-toting queen at the end of her reign, a chase across London and a decision that could change the British Empire. Oh, and ice-cream!

"I loved every second of writing for both Jack and Victoria – it's the most fun I've had with a mouse in my hand. Writing Queen Victoria's putdowns has been a career highlight!

"I've been a **Torchwood** fan from the start, adoring the humour, pathos and the team itself. I love the creepier stories in particular *Ghost Machine, From Out of the Rain* and *Children of Earth*, and ones that show the characters' faultlines."

The adventure also features a different version of the **Torchwood** theme, arranged in a period style by Blair Mowat. Blair reveals: "We created a string quartet

RUSSELL IS VERY KEEN ON EXPLORING THE HISTORY AND BREADTH OF TORCHWOOD, AND IT'S ALSO A FASCINATING CHUNK OF TIME. JAMES GOSS

version of the **Torchwood** theme for *The Victorian Age*. I'm not sure anyone actually asked me to do it – I just did it because I thought it would be cool! Sadly we haven't been able to use it very often but January 2020's release, **Torchwood**: *Fortitude* provided the perfect excuse to dust it off and put it back on play.

"It strips back some of the bells and whistles from the main Big Finish version of the theme and makes it easier to hear how I adapted the TV theme in terms of the musical structure itself. The strings are live players and then I jumped on the piano myself to add the final touch – it was a lot of fun to create!" Voorext

TORCHWOOD: THE VICTORIAN AGE Released: March 2016 Format: CD/Download

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# RESTORAT STANDARD BY SEVEN THE CREW OF THE LIBERATOR IS BACK

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#### **BLAKE'S 7 RESTORATION PART 3**



LAKE'S 7, Big Finish and science fiction in general, lost a true icon with the passing of

Paul Darrow in 2019. Paul had become synonymous with the part of Kerr Avon – with both actor and character sharing a dry sense of humour.

Paul's death sadly meant that Blake's 7 producer John Ainsworth had to write out the beloved part and bring the series to a close. John explains John explains: "Purely by

Failsafe and David Bryher has written Reunion. Needless to say, Avon's presence is still felt in these new adventures."

Writer Trevor tells us more: "The overall story of Restoration had been established in the season arc outline I prepared for John back in 2018, so we knew the general start-middle-end scenarios for each box set. The sad loss of Paul Darrow soon after the recording of Part 2 obviously meant that we had to change our approach

by the Federation, at a time of acute danger for the ship. Can Vila, Cally, Tarrant and Dayna trust Selene, the last person to see Avon alive, and is she even willing to help them? Nothing is ever easy for our heroes, but right now they've never been more vulnerable.



NEEDLESS TO SAY. AVON'S PRESENCE IS STILL FELT IN THESE NEW ADVENTURES.

JOHN AINSWORTH

chance the closing moments of Hyperion, the final episode of Blake's 7: Restoration Part 2, unfolded in such a way that it only took a minimal amount of re-writing and re-recording to write Avon out of the story in a credible way. And by introducing Selene Shan on to the Liberator in Avon's place, we also set up an interesting, new dramatic situation which weaves its way through the four episodes of the final box set, Restoration Part 3.

"What proved slightly trickier, was concluding the Restoration

for Part 3. John and I discussed in some detail how, and indeed if, we could proceed without Paul.

"Once we had agreed on that and made some minor adjustments to the end of Hyperion, it made sense for me to write Parasite, the first episode of Restoration Part 3, in order to establish the set up for the closing episodes which deal with Avon's absence. and allow the season arc to run its course without him. The final episode of the set had to resolve everything - all the plot threads



trilogy in a satisfying way that also remained true to the existing chronology of the series, but I think we have managed to pull that off. Trevor Baxendale, who masterminded much of the overall story arc of Restoration, has written two of the final four episodes - Parasite and Imperium. Steve Lyons has written and character arcs that had been developing since Part 1 - and to an extent the story of Imperium survived in its original form on that basis, only without Paul."

"In Parasite, the Liberator and specifically Zen, have been infected by an alien computer parasite but the crew are in a state of shock as Avon is missing, dead or captured

"The overall direction and storyline of Restoration didn't require many changes - we knew we were going to be without Avon before the scripts for Part 3 were written, so it was a case of establishing his fate and then cracking on with the rest of the story.

"I had to address Avon's absence straightaway in Parasite when Paul's death was still very fresh

# BLAKE'S 7 **RESTORATION PART 3**



and raw for the rest of the cast. The characters all had to react in exactly the way you'd expect them to if Avon was missing, but I was very aware the lines would be spoken by Paul's friends and colleagues of many years standing.

"It must have been quite an emotional recording although they were all determined to finish the season because they knew that's what Paul would have wanted."

#### AILSAFE FEATURES Tarrant, Dayna and

Selene who are forced to cooperate with their old nemesis, General Mordekain, as well as the President in order to survive.

Writer Steve Lyons says: "The Liberator has been away from Federation space for a while. Now it's back, and John asked me to touch base with the President and see how his mysterious plans have been advancing.

"This also allowed me to revisit General Mordekain, whom I created for the Blake's 7: Crossfire series. There are aspects of the character that I've always meant to explore more fully - and with this iteration of Blake's 7 ending sadly sooner than planned, I seized the chance to do so.

"The President and Mordekain set a trap for the *Liberator* crew – but when it backfires on them they're forced to work with their worst enemies to survive. Like a lot of Blake's 7 episodes, it's a tale of suspicion and betraval, in which no one knows who they can trust.

In Reunion Vila once again meets his old partner in crime, Zeera Vos, and together they search for ancient hidden secrets on a world Vila hoped never to return to.

David Bryher, who wrote the adventure, says: "The brief was a bit of a shopping list to be honest - but a fun one! John asked me to include Zeera Vos, and to set the action on Cygnus Alpha. I was also given a few developments to include for the wider Quonar plotline. I enjoyed having to jumble all those things

# IT MUST HAVE BEEN QUITE AN EMOTIONAL RECORDING ALTHOUGH THEY WERE ALL DETERMINED TO FINISH THE SEASON ... TREVOR BAXENDALE

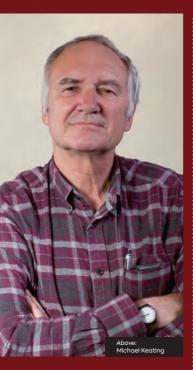
"Failsafe was actually conceived after we lost Paul, so Avon was never a part of it. It focuses on a small group of characters, with Tarrant, Dayna and Orac representing the regular crew – and I suppose for that reason I didn't miss Avon as much as I might otherwise have done. He still finds a way to make his presence felt."



together into something coherent – at least I hope it's coherent! A key part of the brief was that this should be Zeera's final story, and I was delighted to have the chance to write her swansong after having introduced the character in Restoration Part 1's, Fearless.

"I couldn't help but put the spotlight on Vila again, too; it was really lovely to delve into his past with Zeera one last time. And it was great to get the chance to visit Cygnus – and to unearth a few new secrets of this iconic location in Blake's 7's history.'

Summing up his script, David says: "The parasite that has infested the Liberator is causing more trouble for our beleaguered heroes. It wants something hidden on the old Federation prison colony planet of Cygnus Alpha. Zeera, following some intriguing clues she found on Quonar, wants to get her greedy paws on the same thing. Everyone else is caught in the crossfire – especially Vila, who



ends up reluctantly helping Zeera explore the ancient chambers beneath the surface of Cygnus."

HE FINAL story, Imperium, takes the Liberator crew to a distant world where the fate of the ship and the galaxy hangs in the balance.

Trevor continues: "The season reaches a climax in *Imperium*, as the President seeks to restore the Federation to its former glory. With Zen under the control of the Quonar parasite, Orac held hostage, and an old enemy lying in wait, the crew of the *Liberator* must make a final, desperate stand – and learn the ultimate fate of Avon."

The writer was full of praise for Paul Darrow and Avon.

He admits: "Paul Darrow created a television sci-fi legend in Avon. He was utterly committed to **Blake's 7** and played the character, even when in ill health, with all the steely resolve you would expect. He was a delight to write for because you knew exactly how he would deliver a line and could rely on him to hit the right tone every time without fail. He knew the character inside out and had strong ideas on how he should be written. I like to think we had the same opinions – we were coming from pretty much the same angle.

"I knew from his brilliantly funny autobiography, You're Him, Aren't You? that he loved Westerns and I tried to bring that very masculine sensibility into the scripts I wrote for him. He loved to play Avon as giving no quarter or favour, and rightly so, but I always tried to OCKING TO the future, John says that there will be more **Blake's 7** audios. He explains: "There is definitely still a future for **Blake's 7** at Big Finish, however, emulating the format of the TV series – which has always been my goal with the episodes that I have produced – is now no longer possible. We don't feel it would be appropriate to re-cast either Blake or Avon, and continuing the series without either of them just isn't feasible.

"However, this is not to say that there will be no more full-cast adventures set in the **Blake's 7** universe. It's early days yet, but

# IT'S EARLY DAYS YET, BUT WE ARE DEVISING A NEW FORMAT FOR THE SERIES. JOHN AINSWORTH

give him a little emotional scene – just a little! – because I knew he'd play that brilliantly in among all the hard-nosed one liners.

"Finishing the *Restoration* season after he passed away was always going to be a challenge, but I felt much better about it after John Ainsworth told me that knowing his wicked sense of humour, Paul would have found it hilarious that we were having to find a way to carry on without him. That gave me the confidence to forge ahead and finish the season in a way that I think Paul would have appreciated."

John adds: "During the time that I have produced **Blake's 7**, Paul recorded all of his dialogue separately from the rest of the cast, so in practical terms the studio sessions for *Restoration Part 3* were no different. But of course Paul was very much in our minds, and there was a degree of sadness that these would be the last episodes of **Blake's 7** in its current form." we are devising a new format for the series that will allow the surviving cast members to appear in further adventures." **VORTEX** 



BLAKE'S 7 RESTORATION 3

Released: February 2020
 Format: CD/Download

# TWELVE: ANGRY MAN?

GET READY FOR FOUR NEW STORIES FROM THE TWELFTH DOCTOR'S ERA IN A NEW SERIES OF THE DOCTOR CHRONICLES

HE TWELFTH Doctor arrives at Big Finish this February as we get ready for the launch of the latest Doctor Who – The Doctor Chronicles range.

Vortex asked producer Alfie Shaw what his intentions are with the first adventures of this new series. Alfie explains: "Thematically the exploration of war and conflict is prevalent throughout the Twelfth Doctor's era, weirdly more so than when the previous Doctors are discussing (or in) the Time War. So we picked that up and ran with it. Each story examines an aspect of what it is like being caught up in a war and the effect it has on those involved.

"In terms of format we haven't strayed from the previous **The Doctor Chronicles** box sets. That might change in the future though – all the classic era Doctors have enjoyed box sets with overarching stories, but the new **Who** Doctors have mainly existed in standalone adventures. That's something I'd like to rectify, particularly as serieslong storylines have been a feature of most of the post-revival episodes to a greater or lesser extent."

As with The Tenth Doctor Chronicles and The Eleventh Doctor Chronicles, the narrator for this series is Jacob Dudman. Jake has won acclaim from listeners for his interpretations of both David Tennant and Matt Smith's Time Lords. *Vortex* asked Alfie if casting the actor – a young Yorkshireman in his 20s as a Scotsman in his late 50s – raised an eyebrow or two?

The producer grins: "I'm aware that I sound like a broken record whenever I'm asked about Jake, but he is simply phenomenal. We are so fortunate to be working with someone who is not only a superb impressionist but also a really talented actor and just an all-round wonderful man. These box sets highlight this as Jake is not only the Doctor and the narrator, he's also about three or four other characters as well per story! Listening to him in the studio, all I can do is marvel."

Jake tells us: "There are parts of the Twelfth Doctor's voice that are an enigma to me, so at first I was only brave enough to try and capture the essence of him. The years weigh on the voice: you can't capture the experience he's had in his life, not having been in a rock and roll band 40 years ago. He's such an interesting character to play. "David Tennant and Matt Smith are both more predictable in their characters, but Peter Capaldi can flip! That's what makes his Doctor so alien – you don't know what you are going to get. He can turn from cuddly to stern in a heartbeat.

"His voice does change – I noticed during the TV show that there are moments where it becomes more formal, and more Tom Baker-esque.

"I spent some time in Glasgow last year, and I think that's helped me to find the voice. When I think of delivering a pitch-perfect historical adventure that sees the two having to combat an unusual illness..."

David says: "I was asked to write a historical – I think it was literally as open as that! I can't remember who suggested we feature Mary Seacole. I'd always been interested in her, in the tensions between reality and myth, so it might have been me.

The Doctor finds himself in the muddy, bloody surroundings of the Crimean War, where he meets his match in the Jamaican doesn't like the Doctor and is trying to move on from his past as a soldier. So naturally we drop them off slap-bang in the middle of an alien war! Mark has nailed both characters in a compelling script and it was a delight to have Samuel Anderson back as Danny in his first Big Finish story."

Mark continues: "When Danny finds the TARDIS in a store cupboard at Coal Hill school with the door open, he decides to have it out with the Doctor once and for all.

# DAVID TENNANT AND MATT Smith are both more Predictable in their Characters, but peter Capaldi can flip!

Above (I-r): Jake Dudman and Samuel Anderson

a generic Scottish accent I tend to think of an Edinburgh one, which I'd say generally is more posh, more similar to an English accent."

**HE HARGE** of the Night Brigade by David Llewellyn opens the set, as the Doctor finds

himself in the Crimean War in 1855. There's a strange sickness stalking the streets of Balaklava and it's up to the Doctor and Mary Seacole to put a stop to it.

Alfie says: "The Charge of the Night Brigade kicks us off with the Doctor crossing paths with Mary Seattle during the Crimean War. While **Doctor Who** has some preferred timezones (Victorian England and World War Two spring to mind) it's always interesting to push away from those, and find new eras and historical figures to set stories around. The result here is a joyous clash of personalities, with David 'Doctress' (her own preferred title), Mary Seacole. There's something in the rain."

David adds: "It wasn't my first time writing for the Twelfth Doctor (I wrote a story in which he meets Geoffrey Chaucer for the BBC book, *The Scientific Secrets of Doctor Who*) so it wasn't too intimidating. And even though I knew he'd be voiced by Jacob Dudman, I'd seen some of Jacob's videos online so I knew he'd nail the voice. I think the only surprise for us was that he could do so many different voices, not to mention act."

The second story brings a character from the TV series into the Big Finish world, as *War Wounds* by Mark Wright reunites the Doctor with Danny Pink. When Danny finds the TARDIS he can't help wondering about Clara's double life, and the truth about the Doctor.

Alfie says: "The Doctor doesn't like soldiers or Danny. Danny What ensues is a breakneck trip to an alien world where the Doctor and Danny get caught in the middle of a border war between two factions of the indigenous Kathilians. Can the Doctor and Danny put their mutual loathing aside to survive long enough and get home before Clara finds out?"

Mark, a Big Finish veteran, was delighted to write for another incarnation of the Doctor on audio, although he's no newcomer to Peter Capaldi's Doctor.

He smiles: "I love writing for the Twelfth Doctor, especially in this early part of his life. You can get away with a lot more thanks to that rude and angry persona, but the trick is to keep a bit of charm there. I'm really familiar with his voice from my run on the *DWM* comic, and oddly after years of writing different Doctors in audio and print, I think this is the Doctor I've written for the most now in quite a short

## DOCTOR WHO THE TWELFTH DOCTOR

space of time. Jake is amazing too, he really has Peter Capaldi's vocal tics and tones down perfectly."

Jake adds: "It was really interesting to meet the other actors, especially Samuel Anderson as the Doctor has an interesting relationship with Danny Pink. It was actually fun having to shout in his face! Danny's a character who apparently can never do any right in the eyes of the Doctor."

Mark's highlight of the recording was: "Seeing the look on Samuel's face when Jake started doing his first lines of Doctor dialogue. Sam said that Jake sounded more like Peter Capaldi than he sounded like Danny Pink!"

NTHE third adventure, Distant Voices by Lizbeth Myles, Cameron is haunted by strange voices. As she gets on with her job showing visitors around Rochester Castle, she hopes that they'll just go away. Fortunately for Cameron the Doctor has joined her tour. He hears the voices too, and he knows what they mean. Time itself is starting to fracture...

Alfie explains: "Distant Voices is another strong Twelfth Doctor story from Lizbeth following on from her writing Big Finish's first ever Twelfth Doctor adventure, **Short Trips**: The Astrea Conspiracy. It's a brilliant character piece focusing around the Doctor helping a tour guide who is haunted by strange voices."

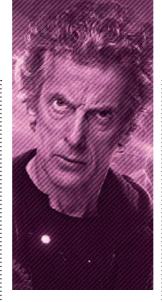
Lizbeth says of her brief: "It was completely open in the where and when and what. The main thing I had to think about was the sort of story that'd work best with the format.

"And there are trebuchets in it! (There's also a plot, but I really do love trebuchets rather a bit, so I tend to mention them first!)"

Having written a **Short Trip**, **The Doctor Chronicles** format was something new for Lizbeth.

She admits: "It was a lot of fun working in a different style. That's what I love about the **Chronicles**: they feel very much their own thing whatever the actual story is because of the restrictions of the format."

Lizbeth particularly enjoys writing for Peter Capaldi's Doctor, as a fellow



I WAS THINKING OF SOMETHING LIKE TERRANCE DICKS'S STAR QUEST BOOKS, IF ANYONE REMEMBERS THEM. UNA MCCORMACK

Scot: "Ha! It certainly biases me towards him. And he is one of my favourite incarnations – but that's thanks to the brilliant writing and performance. It is lovely being able to make Scottish jokes though."

HE CONCLUDING tale is *Field Trip* by Una McCormack which features another regular from the TV show with Ingrid Oliver back as Osgood. The Doctor is calling on Osgood's expertise to stop an invasion, but what begins as a fact-finding mission quickly becomes something far more dangerous. Alfie explains: "Field Trip is Osgood's first trip in the TARDIS! Well, one of the Osgood's first trips in the TARDIS, but as for which one that would be telling. It has been great to explore how Osgood reacts to an alien world and Ingrid is as superb as ever. Osgood fans will love this!"

Una continues: "As I recall it was a fairly open brief, and I think the idea was to emphasize the adventure aspects: I pitched something on the lines of **The Champions**, but that overlapped too much with the **UNIT** series. So we went for **The Champions** in space and time! This allowed us to have a nice big universe teeming with planets and alien life – I was thinking of something like Terrance Dicks's *Star Quest* books, if anyone remembers them."

Una particularly liked writing for a character as full of life as Osgood: "Lots of fun: smart and sharp and ready to have a go. Also slightly geeky and out of her comfort zone."

Jake adds: "With Osgood you have a character who would be a great companion, and you always want to hear more of her. Her knowledge of the Doctor comes in very handy, and that saves on a lot of exposition because she's so bright. This story with her is quite intellectual as well. It's very clever and she helps elevate that." VORTEX



DOCTOR WHO: THE TWELFTH DOCTOR CHRONICLES

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- Purgatory 12 (9.1) DLO

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  ADVENTURES:
- Chase the Night (9.2) DLO
- The Infinite Today (10.1) DLO
- DW THE DIARY OF RIVER SONG Series 7 (BOX SET)
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- 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
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#### **MARCH 2020**

- DW THE MONTHLY ADVENTURES: Subterfuge (262, TBA)
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#### APRIL 2020

- DW THE MONTHLY ADVENTURES: TBA (263, TBA)
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- DW THE MONTHLY ADVENTURES: TBA (264, TBA)
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