

VORTEX

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TEMPORARY TEMPORAL DISPLACEMENT
FOR THE FOURTH AND TENTH DOCTORS!



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APOCALYPSE SOON! **THE WAR MASTER** HEARTS OF DARKNESS

*Peoples of the universe, please attend carefully.
The message that follows is vital to the future
of you all. The choice for you all is simple...*

PREPARE YOURSELF for more adventures in space and time, as Sir Derek Jacobi returns for another two box sets of stories in **The War Master** volumes five and six.

The War Master: Hearts of Darkness will be released in October 2020 containing four new adventures: *The Edge of Redemption* by David Llewellyn, *The Scaramancer* by Lisa McMullin, *The Castle of Kurnos 5* by David Llewellyn and *The Cognition Shift* by Lisa McMullin. Sent on a mission by the Time Lords, the Master must face his arch-enemy,

the Doctor (in the shape of Paul McGann) – and kill him.

The War Master: Killing Time will follow in August 2021 with *The Sincerest Form of Flattery* by James Goss, *A Quiet Night In* by Lou Morgan, *The Orphan* by Lou Morgan and *Unfinished Business* by James Goss.

Producer Scott Handcock says: "I'm immensely proud of the work we've done on **The War Master** range to date, so it's a great thrill to be able to reunite with Derek and tell even more stories with his particular incarnation."

VORTEX



EDITORIAL

I'M LOOKING out of my home office window as I type this. It's Monday 1st June and it is beautifully sunny, however, the world is still in lockdown limbo with COVID-19 having halted our more usual everyday lives.

Fortunately I've been able to keep myself busy over the past couple of months with *Vortex* giving me some focus, but I know there are lots of people out there who are struggling to cope, especially with the isolation.

One of my friends in particular has been having a tough time. She contracted COVID-19 and weeks later is still struggling. Her mental health has suffered – difficult to hear about from afar. However, it's not all doom and gloom. She's found that listening to Big Finish adventures, especially **The Eighth Doctor Time War** tales, have given her a real lift in some of her lowest moments. That's what we all need in these times – the Big Finish family rallying round to support each other.

I was a regular theatre goer in Glasgow and I'm missing seeing actors showcasing their skills to a live audience. But fortunately I can still enjoy plenty of new drama from Big Finish. Never before have Peter Capaldi's last words as the Doctor been more appropriate: "Be kind." And finally, a huge thanks to my friend Rebecca Chapman for the headlines inspiration when my brain was lagging! **VORTEX**

Kenny



HE WILL KNOCK FOUR TIMES

TOM BAKER MEETS DAVID TENNANT? TEN-FOUR!

WE CAN'T deny that, as Doctor Who fans, we love to see our favourite Time Lord meet his other incarnations! Whether it's the bickering of the Second and Third Doctors in the television episode *The Three Doctors*, each Doctor casually

dismissing the others in *The Five Doctors*, the one-upmanship of *The Two Doctors*, or the sheer fanboy-ishness of the Tenth Doctor and his fifth incarnation in the mini television episode *Time Crash* – it's always fun. With *Big Finish* we've had several self-encounters in *The*

Sirens of Time, *Project: Lazarus*, *The Light at the End* and more recently, *The Legacy of Time*. And now two popular incarnations come face to face in the first volume of **Doctor Who: Out of Time**, which sees the Fourth Doctor (Tom Baker) and the Tenth Doctor (David Tennant) team up.



Above: David Tennant

Tom Baker was the first Doctor that I knew... I grew up through the seven years that he played the part. **I was a massive fan.**

DAVID TENNANT

Actor David is a well-known **Doctor Who** fan. He recalls: “Tom Baker was the first Doctor that I knew. I was small when he took over and I grew up through the seven years that he played the part. I was a massive fan. I met him in John Menzies in Glasgow and he signed my book. I had a doll of him. All that! Tom Baker was very much THE Doctor. There is something about the way he is associated with the character that seems utterly timeless.”

It’s believed that other people at that same signing included Peter Capaldi and Steven Moffat. And while the John Menzies store is no more, a police box stands just up from where the shop once was.

Producer David Richardson tells us more: “We’ve had this

idea up our sleeves for a long time. I can’t even remember when we first made the suggestion to David Tennant and began work on the storyline and script. We’d hoped to record some months ago but the timing didn’t work with David’s filming commitments to *Around the World in 80 Days*.

“And then the awful tragedy of the Coronavirus hit, and the world became frozen all of a sudden. Everything went on hold – well pretty much everything – except Big Finish and our remote recording venture. And so we were able to coordinate with Tom and David (and the Daleks), and *Out of Time* was recorded in lockdown. What a magical thing it is. These two magnificent, charismatic, brilliant men together

– and what a wonderful release for us all to look forward to.”

Executive producer and director Nicholas Briggs adds: “We were in a planning meeting about a year ago. There was a pause and then David Richardson said, ‘What about asking David Tennant if he’d like to do an adventure with Tom Baker?’ We all agreed and so I texted David Tennant there and then. He replied within about five minutes, saying yes, and so we made our plans from that point on.

“*Out of Time* has got a really neat idea in it that brings the Doctors together. It gives them both a lot of space to be quintessentially their Doctors, while also giving them a lot of interaction with each other – plus fighting the Daleks! What’s not to love about that?”



Above: Tom Baker

MATT FITTON'S script takes us to: *The Cathedral of Contemplation, an enigma, existing outside time. It turns through history, opening its doors across the universe to offer solace to those in need.*

Occasionally, the Doctor drops in: when he's avoiding his destiny, it's an ideal place to get some perspective. Only this time he's already there from several lives earlier, so when dimension barriers break down his past and present collide.

Matt says: "Of course it was hugely exciting to bring together two of the most iconic Doctors, cemented in the public imagination from new and classic TV eras of **Doctor Who**. I thought putting them up against the Daleks – the Doctor's most persistent enemy – would

bring out all the ways in which they are at once the same Time Lord and also very different versions too. We find them both at particular points in their lives. The Tenth Doctor is avoiding his destiny and the Fourth Doctor is wandering alone, missing a friend – but even he may be shocked at what his future holds...

"Tom was my Doctor growing up, so it's kind of a loving tribute to them both. I took the lead from *Time Crash*, where the Tenth Doctor is seen to be a fan of his earlier selves, so to begin with he's sitting back and letting the Fourth Doctor do his thing.

"There was also the aspect of highlighting the differences between them. The story is set at a very specific point in the life of the Tenth Doctor when he's waiting for the four knocks. He's

avoiding his fate, and doing all he can to halt meeting his destiny. I put in a couple of references to what he gets up to while he's swanning about before meeting the Ood: the Magellan Gestalt and the Phosphorous Carousel. Here, he drops in on this strange cathedral that spins through space and time as he thinks he can use it as a bit of a party-planner.

"It was an absolute joy to be asked to do it – and then there was the realisation of the pressure that came with it in bringing these two characters together.

"I had a taste of that when I wrote *Technophobia*, the first story in **The Tenth Doctor Adventures**, but you learn to just jump in and do the thing that feels right and true. You hope it will be entertaining for



Above: David Tennant



everyone else, and try to capture these characters as best you can.”

With two hugely charismatic leading men, how did the recording sessions go?

Nick reveals: “They were very jolly recordings. Everyone threw themselves into it with gusto, overcoming all the problems of remote recordings. This was the first production we did entirely under lockdown conditions, actually. Quite a challenge, forging new methods.

“There were some harsher words in the script from Tom’s Doctor towards David’s, and Tom was very keen to soften that.”

The writer was very pleased with his guest cast, Matt confirms: “We’ve got the Abbess of the cathedral played by Claire Rushbrook, who we’re all familiar with from the

Robots series where she plays Liv’s sister Tula. Part of the casting process necessitated people with home recording facilities and Claire had already recorded some **Robots** by that point in lockdown and was comfortable with it.

“We’ve Nicholas Asbury as Captain Zenna, a military commander who storms onboard the cathedral looking for a fugitive. He’s really good. I love his portrayal of Dante in **The Diary of River Song** Series Four, where he plays a Poirot-like detective.

“And then in the companion role, we have Jora – a runaway soldier from the Dalek Wars – hiding out in the cathedral. She initially meets the Fourth Doctor. We asked Kathryn Drysdale, who was also in the TV episode *Love & Monsters*, to play her.”

NICK WAS delighted with the casting: “Claire Rushbrook is an actor I have long admired, and of course I had the pleasure of standing next to her on **The Weakest Link Doctor Who**

special all those years ago. She’s one of the nicest people you could hope to work with, and she gave two excellent performances in this.

“Kathryn Drysdale was perfect – she recorded from within a portable sauna! I didn’t even think such a thing existed. Then, of course, there’s good old Nick Asbury who I’d work with every day of the week if I could. Such a strong performer.”

Matt adds: “Nick B is playing the Daleks as well as directing. He said that when he spoke to David Tennant beforehand and explained how he was going to

record the Daleks with his ring modulator later, David seemed a little disappointed. So Nick wired up his modulator in his office shed so he could do them live!"

Matt is regularly in studio when his scripts are recording, and on this occasion he was able to

In my mind, it's the **Tenth Doctor** crashing into the classic era...

MATT FITTON

participate without having to leave his home. He laughs: "It was weird, like having live **Doctor Who** play out in my bedroom over Zoom!"

"I was curious about how it worked, and Nick B was pleased to have me there in case there were any questions about the script.

"The actors were talking about how good it is that we've been able to record this way – but they miss the direct contact and the lunches, of course. Being able to shake hands or get a hug is something we're all missing.

"However, in terms of the performances there's a vibe there and a chemistry between them all, and it comes over on the screen as well. It's the same and not the same all at once."

Howard Carter is responsible for the release's sound design and music. He tells *Vortex*: "It's an absolute thrill to hear the Fourth and Tenth Doctors on audio, they fit so naturally together as both characters and actors. They each have a commanding sense of seriousness punctuated with a frivolity and bonhomie that will hopefully be as much of a joy to listen to as it has been to edit.

"Combined with a cracking script from Matt Fitton, this is one of my favourite episodes. Musically it's a chance for me to explore a little, combining elements of the sensational new series feel with the more nostalgic era of Dudley



Above: David Tennant

Simpson. It's a true meeting of greats in so many ways."

ARTIST SIMON Holub has created the distinctive cover. He explains: "My aim for this cover was to get a level of interaction between the Doctors. Imagine if we could

have plucked Tom from 1975 and have a big new series-style photoshoot with David – that was the feeling I wanted to create. Then just have huge fun smashing the eras together with their respective Daleks, TARDISes and a subtle hint of title sequences in the background."

Matt adds: "We were talking about what sort of Daleks would go on the cover, and as we've got two Doctors clashing together, I thought it would be fun to mix it up with the invading Daleks too.

"In my mind, it's the Tenth Doctor crashing into the classic era, and there are references to the grey Daleks in the script. But they're led by a red and gold Supreme in the style seen in the new series."

Out of Time is the first in a series of adventures which will

see different Doctors meeting, but what else can executive producer Nick reveal about them? He grins, mischievously: "The other productions are all under wraps at the moment as we hope to make a real splash with the reveals... but it's going to be very exciting..." **VORTEX**



DOCTOR WHO
OUT OF TIME

RELEASED: AUGUST 2020
FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD



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VORTEX MAIL

THANK YOU

Thank you so much to every single person in front of and behind the mic for producing your Big Finish stories. They have kept me happy/sane (well almost!) for a long time but so much more at the moment. So truly thank you. I am just happy that you keep coming up with brilliant stories and that all the actors are involved and things just get better and better (except for my bank balance – still it's better than other vices I could have). Thank you again and if you can pass on my thanks to every single person involved and everyone on your payroll at all levels and for all jobs that often people forget.

Peter

Nick: Thank YOU, Peter, consider your thanks passed along via this reply in Vortex. The fact is that most of us just can't help coming up with stories and we feel so lucky to be able to work on all our favourite things.

ON THE HOLMES FRONT

Does Big Finish have any more of its **Sherlock Holmes** stories in the pipeline? I enjoyed the escalating stakes and international adventures of the previous box sets, and the more personal scope of *The Master of the Blackstone Grange*, and I'm hoping we have plenty more of Nick Briggs's Holmes and Richard Earl's Watson to come.

Alex Watts

Nick: There is indeed more Holmes in the pipeline, Alex... which brier, I'm not sure. (Little Holmes/pipe 'joke' for you there, ahem!) We have scripts in now, but one of our problems is that Richard Earl has no technical or recording abilities as yet, so I'm blaming him!

FINDING THE LOST

I have to say I am very excited about the two new Tom Baker **The Lost Stories** being announced. I can't wait to hear *Return of the Cybermen* and *The Doomsday Contract*. **The Lost Stories** is my favourite range, it is always fascinating to hear 'what could have been'. One question though, any chance of going back to the previous type of artwork for this series? I'm not talking about the logo and design layout, but the 'Target' like artwork that the older releases had. They really gave **The Lost Stories** a unique look and feel, making it stand out as a true separate range. Also any more **Philip Hinchcliffe Presents** planned?

Sarah Smith

Nick: Hi Sarah, the new cover layout doesn't really lend itself to that 'Target'

design you mention, there would be too much space around the main artwork, I think. The horizontal space available for artwork when we used the sidebar for the Doctor Who logo etc was ideal for this kind of design because it was largely the same dimensions as a book cover. With the advent of the BBC's new Doctor Who logo a couple of years ago, we had to change our layout, as the new logo didn't work in the sidebar. We've no plans for more from Philip.

LOVE IS EVERYWHERE!

I loved the initial **Cicero** box set and I was very happy to see him pop up opposite the Fifth Doctor and co last year. Are there plans for any follow up stories or sets?

Ben Moore

Nick: I'd never rule that out, Ben, and I'm sure its producer, Scott Handcock, will make sure we haven't heard the end of Cicero.

**BOXED UP?**

I am very much enjoying the re-releases of previous series such as **Sarah Jane Smith** and **UNIT: The Classic Series** as digital box sets, and was wondering if we can expect other series such as **Dalek Empire** or **Iris Wildthyme** in a similar format?

Seth B. Nick: Hi, Seth, there are certainly plans for Dalek Empire to be bundled up.

FACTORED IN?

I really enjoyed **The Omega Factor** series – will you be doing any more stories?

Jane Baynton

Nick: Good news, Jane, I can exclusively reveal here that another audiobook has been commissioned. VORTEX



ADAM IS STILL ADAMANTLY IN THE WRONG TIME, AS HE ENCOUNTERS HIS TWO-FACED ARCH FOE ONCE MORE. IT'S TIME TO...

STAND & DELIVER

IS THIS the real life? Is this just fantasy? Caught in a landslide, no escape from reality... That's definitely the mindset for the Edwardian adventurer Adam Adamant, who encounters Georgina Jones in swinging sixties London in volume one of **Adam Adamant Lives! A Vintage Year for Scoundrels**.

Georgina, however, is unsure if he is actually the real deal: is he a revived Edwardian gentleman,

or is he a man who has suffered a mental breakdown and believes he is said gentleman? At the end of the first box set, Georgina had been captured by Adam's arch enemy known as the Face, and her friend thought she had died.

Writer Guy Adams has retooled the original BBC television series, and says: "Most listeners seem to have got it. It's interesting that some people are saying, 'Is he or isn't

he? Surely they'll tell us in the second volume. They had better resolve it in the next box set!"

Adam Adamant Lives! Volume Two: Face Off has three more adventures: *A Slight Case of Reincarnation*, *Face It!* and *The Important Questions*. Did Guy always know how he would resolve the *Scoundrels* cliffhanger?: "Yes, I always had an idea in mind. From the title alone, *Georgina Jones Dies!*, you can



Above (l-r): Guy Adams and Milly Thomas

got to use it, haven't you? It's just so obvious to go with. But we weren't going to kill off someone as fun as Georgina so swiftly.

"I always knew that the second box set would, amongst other things, address the Face. The Face has been an ever-present thing in Adam's life in the form of his own self-loathing, his worst enemy. The question is, is there a real Face somewhere, and has he managed to travel through time to be there in the sixties to cause Adam trouble? Has he two greatest enemies to fight? Will there be a deep jealousy

— and how will they feel about it...?"

The set opens with *A Slight Case of Reincarnation*. Guy says: "In the first box set I was very interested in making sure that each story was different, to keep playing with the format so you don't get a sense of, 'Oh, this is what an episode of *Adam Adamant* is'. Each episode was tonally and structurally different. This second box set has another format. Each episode is linked, all three stories are effectively one big story.

"The first adventure very much picks up from where we left off.

Adam has completely retired from the world of crime fighting, convinced that he was making matters worse rather than better. His ex-theatrical butler, Simms, refuses to let go of such things, and he is currently fighting crime in the company of an ex-sharp shooting and current bouncer, Lina. They are a very strange double-act.

"Of course, poor Georgina is presumed dead but is actually in the company of either a very misunderstood man who may be correct in warning her that Adam is a dangerous man to associate with, or he himself is a dangerous man with whom to associate.

"She's not quite sure. Is Adam deranged, or is the Face her salvation – or is it the other way round? Or is it both?!"

THE QUESTION IS, IS THERE A REAL FACE SOMEWHERE, AND HAS HE MANAGED TO TRAVEL THROUGH TIME?

GUY ADAMS

The second tale is one that pretty much features just two cast members, in *Face It!*.

"Story two is the strange one of the set," reveals Guy, before pausing: "Okay, the stranger one of the set, to be more accurate!

"Even though it's all one big story, I wanted to continue to play with form. It's just Adam and his worst enemies trapped in a room together.

"It's surreal and horrifying and one of the most difficult things anyone has ever asked poor Blake Ritson to record, or indeed

Nicholas Asbury as Milligan. If you think of the penultimate episode of *The Prisoner, Once Upon a Time*, we're in that kind of territory. I don't want to evoke or compare it with another show, but tonally it's playing in that area. It's not dissimilar."

STORY TWO IS THE STRANGE ONE OF THE SET... OKAY, THE STRANGER ONE OF THE SET!

GUY ADAMS

THE SERIES concludes with *The Important Questions*, in which Guy says:

"We get to resolve who is the greatest enemy of Adam Adamant. Is it himself, is it the Face, or the woman who's just killed him?! It also involves a gentleman called Vernon, who's a famous collector of memorabilia connected to the Marquis de Sade."

In contrast to the first set, Guy is now writing for established voices, with Blake Ritson reprising his role as Adam, and Milly Thomas as Georgina. Guy laughs: "As far as Blake is concerned, he is the Adam who was always in my head. His portrayal is by far the closest embodiment of my mental image of the character."

"When writing Georgina, there's now an awareness of Milly's voice and delivery, which helps. But she's such a great actor, I put her through the mill the way I always planned to."

"It's also more interesting knowing I'm playing a part – I'd probably have given myself



Above (l-r): Blake Ritson, Nicholas Asbury and Nicholas Briggs



Above: Dan Starkey

more lines in the first set if I'd realised! I am now writing Sims for me, and I get a strangely guilty mixture of good, fun big speeches and long periods of absence where I feel I can't be overly generous to myself!" **VORTEX**



ADAM ADAMANT LIVES!
VOLUME TWO: FACE OFF
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BOOKCLUB



THE OMEGA FACTOR

Created by Scottish writer Jack Gerson, **The Omega Factor** ran for one ten-part series aired by the BBC in 1979.

COMBINING SCIENCE fiction, horror and thriller elements, it was hugely popular with television viewers. To whet the appetite before the release of their first series of **The Omega Factor** full-cast audio dramas, Big Finish recorded a talking book. Producer David Richardson explains: "Like many things I've ended up producing at Big Finish, **The Omega Factor** was a series I enjoyed on TV back in the 70s and I'd long felt that it would work brilliantly on audio.

"So I got in touch with Natasha Gerson, the daughter of the late Jack Gerson who created the show, and she was very happy for us to make not only the audio dramas, but also an audiobook of Jack's original TV novelisation."

Read by Louise Jameson, who appeared in the TV episodes as Dr Anne Reynolds, Natasha was delighted that the novelisation was given new life in the 21st century.

Natasha said: "The novel is different from the TV series because Dad wanted to write his own version of **The Omega Factor** rather than using other writers' storylines."

Louise said: "It's a rather thrilling one. David asked if I would have lunch with him and Natasha during the early negotiations for the audio dramas as he hoped that me being there would give it a bit more gravitas. It was lovely to see

Many people say **The X-Files** was just **The Omega Factor** with a budget!

LOUISE JAMESON

Natasha again as I'd met her way back in 1979 when we filmed the TV series.

"Then when David asked me to narrate the audiobook, I was a bit surprised! It's supernatural and outrageous and other-worldly, but it's not really science fiction. Back then, and still today, there's an interest as people have that great question – is there anything else out there other than us? And if so, who's responsible for it? Many people say **The X Files** was just **The Omega Factor** with a budget!"

David adds: "Louise did a smashing reading of the book – we played it through pretty much in one sitting."

Natasha – who also acted in the audio series as the mysterious Morag – said: "My dad was a fan of anything to do with the supernatural. I don't know if he believed in it, but he always found it fascinating. When I was a kid, I didn't like Enid Blyton – I wanted to read MR James and Sherlock Holmes, which I loved. I inherited my dad's penchant for things like that!"

A new **The Omega Factor** audiobook, *Divinity*, written by Doris V Sutherland and read by Louise Jameson, is out this month. **VORTEX**

THE OMEGA FACTOR

A NOVELISATION OF THE TV SERIES
BY JACK GERSON
READ BY LOUISE JAMESON

THE OMEGA FACTOR
A NOVELISATION OF
THE TV SERIES
RELEASED: **OCTOBER 2013**
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FORGET CARDIFF. SERGEANT ANDY DAVIDSON HAS LEFT THE WELSH CAPITAL TO HEAD TO THE BRIGHT LIGHTS OF LONDON IN THE FIFTIES. THIS IS...

TORCHWOOD CSI SOHO

TORCHWOOD HAS had the honour of being populated by larger than life characters over the years. We've met Captain Jack Harkness and Yvonne Hartman, plus Gwen Cooper, Toshiko Sato, Owen Harper and

Susie Costello on television. And Big Finish has given us Mr Colchester, Ng and Orr – as well as the one and only Norton Folgate.

We had a glimpse of bygone **Torchwood** in 2018's audio release, *Goodbye Piccadilly*, in which Norton dragged his friend

Sergeant Andy Davidson back in time to Soho in the 1950s. And now we turn back the clock again to witness Norton accompanied by Andy in **Torchwood Soho**. Tom Price reprises his role as Andy, joining Samuel Barnett (Dirk Gently in the BBC series) as Norton.



Above (l-r): Liz Sutherland-Lim, Samuel Barnett, Joe Shire, Tom Price and Franchi Webb

WE GET TO SEE NORTON HUNTING DOWN ALIEN ARTEFACTS STOLEN BY NAZIS, ESCAPING FROM A TIME-TRAVELLING PUB, AND BATTLING ZOMBIES IN MARGATE.

JAMES GOSS

Gangsters are vanishing from the streets of Soho, there's a deadly Nazi secret on the loose, and something's moving in the smog. Norton Folgate should be sorting this out, but the Torchwood agent is in disgrace. Who's going to save London this time?

Torchwood Soho – *Parasite* contains six stories: *The Man From Room 13*, *Meet Mr Lyme*, *The Mould*, *The Spread*, *The Dead Hand* and *The Liberty of Norton Folgate*.

Vortex asks writer/producer James Goss at what point did he think that Andy and Norton should get their own series?

James explains: "Actually, everyone's been so kind about the relationship between Norton and Andy, that it really didn't take much arm-twisting to convince Big Finish to let us spend three blissful days in studio with Sam and Tom."

"The fabulous thing about **Torchwood** as a franchise is that it spans a huge period, and there are chunks of it that are just

worth exploring. We vaguely glimpsed 1950s **Torchwood** in the **Doctor Who** TV episode, *The Idiot's Lantern*, and this new release is a real peep under the murky, awful bonnet."

James has been particularly pleased by the reception Norton has had from listeners: "Thrilled, blown away, boggled – and that's just in reaction to some of the fan art on Tumblr!"

"Seriously, it's weird to have sort of created a **Torchwood** character that wasn't on TV who the Big Finish listeners are dying to hear more of and who has a following of his own. I'd love to say it's all

down to the writing, but really it's down to Sam's performance and his rapport with Tom. They're just audio magic, aren't they?"

"As it's set in the 1950s, it was obvious to follow the rhythm of the **Quatermass** serials – so there are six half-hour episodes. And, in the tradition of **Quatermass**, we start out in an office and end with the world in peril."

"We get to see Norton hunting down alien artefacts stolen by Nazis, escaping from a time-travelling pub, and battling zombies in Margate. We get to meet Norton's boss (played by Dervla Kirwan) and the hapless

leader of Torchwood Soho (David Troughton) – who both share a terrible secret. And we get to discover why Torchwood hid the Skylon at the Festival of Britain. Norton's also trying to avoid the attentions of a journalist (played by Joe Shire) who is

the world you build and characters you cast, but it's the same approach as creating a civilisation of reptilian aliens in the far future. The script sets up the rules and everyone plays by them. If anything, period pieces are often a bit easier because everyone has a

things and putting up barriers – which makes characters like Andy and Gideon more relatable as our identification figures.”

Tom Price is delighted that not only does Sergeant Andy continue to feature in **Torchwood**, but he's also a series lead.



Above (l-r): David Troughton, Samuel Barnett and Dervla Kirwan

determined to uncover what Torchwood is. Norton's in a whole lot of trouble – and this time he needs Andy to help him.”

Scott Handcock has been responsible for directing the series. How did he find bringing this volume – effectively a period piece – to life?

He grins: “Maybe it's just because I've done a lot of **Doctor Who**, where you're constantly flitting all over space and time, but I'm not sure I really register the difference!

“Obviously, you're aware of the period and need to convey that in

frame of reference. Though having said that, it also means you have to really do your homework.

“The 50s is a fascinating period. Yes, you have a bit more Received Pronunciation – especially with Norton, who throws in a dash of Polari every so often – but there's a lovely mix of characters in this script, covering various classes and backgrounds. Belle Epoch (gloriously portrayed by Franchi Webb) is a character who you could probably only bring to life in this era. People own those identities more – a lot of them are hiding

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BECAUSE
EVERYONE HAS
A FRAME OF
REFERENCE.**

SCOTT HANDCOCK

He admits: “The listeners really like what Big Finish is doing with **Torchwood**, which means we can rock up and do more. It's amazing that the world of **Torchwood** has been built on good foundations and we can keep adding to it.

“I watched **The X Files** back in the day, and **Star Trek: The Next Generation**, as they can reboot and keep going forever and ever. If something is built well, it will last, and that's exactly what's happening with **Torchwood**.

It's got a good engine, and you can tweak it here and there so we can take the cast and put them into a new setting.

“Norton is such a great personality – he was never on TV and I think Sam Barnett is slightly annoyed about that! Characters like him have just got that thing, where they're big and funny and very memorable.

“I love our team of Scott and James. James is a magnificent writer – he has such a brilliant ear for a story and putting these worlds together. If he was writing music he would be Guy Chambers! And Scott understands the

characters better than you or I do. A lot of directors throw way too much stuff at you, but Scott has a good hand on the tiller and will give you a couple of points that can change your performance.

"I just love going into this created world, and having such fun."

push the material further. It also means when we get new characters coming in, and the actors see what Sam and Tom are bringing to it, they relax and feel able to give that little bit extra, which is kind of what you need when you're

fantastic set pieces that test you as you leap around the schedule.

"One of the biggest highlights was getting Dervla Kirwan in to play Lizbeth Heyhoe. She fell in love with the script and said it's absolutely the kind of part she'd never get seen for on screen – and



Above (l-r): Samuel Barnett, Joe Shire and Tom Price

SCOTT ENJOYS the dynamic between Sam and Tom, in particular. He says: "I think it's fair to say that Sam and Tom hit it off instantly. Even before *Ghost Mission* (their first *Torchwood* together), they met at the recording of *Doctor Who: Nightshade* and it was clear they enjoyed working together – and that's only grown the more we've done.

"There's a shorthand between them that comes from having recorded a lot together, and that trust means they can

projecting an entire performance through your voice."

Scott adds: "It's a lovely change of pace for *Torchwood*. I remember the old BBC *Sexton Blake* dramas, and that slightly pulpy, serialised style they had, so when James first mooted this I suggested we do it as a six-part serial of half-hour episodes. It moves along at one hell of a lick!

"And as always with James's scripts, the humour is contrasted with some genuine horror and drama. It's a really strong character piece and, as a director, has some

I SUGGESTED WE DO IT AS A SIX-PART SERIAL OF HALF-HOUR EPISODES. IT MOVES ALONG AT ONE HELL OF A LICK!

SCOTT HANDCOCK

we just had an absolute blast. It was our first Big Finish together, though obviously when I had to recast Miss Quill in *Class*, she was my immediate first choice. She's simply amazing. The entire cast just got it..."

And James concludes: "Honestly, it was just three days of bliss in a studio with a great set of actors." **VORTEX**



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Colin Baker and Nicola Bryant are reunited in a new box set and...



IT'S GOT TO BE PERI-FECT

WHEN THE Sixth Doctor and Peri were forced apart during events on Thoros Beta, it seemed the pair would never meet again. But thanks to Big Finish they were reunited in a trio of adventures starting with *The Widow's Assassin* released in 2014.

The Sixth Doctor and Peri Volume One is their first box set together, with four new adventures set after the events of *The Rani Elite*.

Producer/director Scott Hancock says: "It's been lovely getting to work with Colin and Nicola again. I've directed both of them previously on other productions, but never as the

Doctor and Peri. In fact I think we recorded this set before we started recording Colin's Doctor in **The Lives of Captain Jack**. It was a joy to reunite them, and particularly at a point in their timeline where we can drive the relationship forward as opposed to slipping in between the gaps in television adventures.

"It all began with writer Nev Fountain, from what I remember – always a good way to open an explanation for something! He'd been chatting with David Richardson about doing a new story in **The Monthly Adventures**, picking up from the last Sixth

Doctor and Peri release. The monthly range was already well-advanced in its plans but David, in typical David fashion, suggested a box set of adventures. So I connected with Nev, who I've also had the pleasure of working with before, and we thrashed a few ideas around. Originally Nev suggested a big four-part epic with Daleks and the Time War, and I think possibly HG Wells and his Martians, all culminating on a cliffhanger; but it got overthrown because of Time War continuity, clashing themes in other releases, and my insistence that it wasn't fair to end a box set on a cliffhanger!



Above (l-r): David Sibley, Colin Baker, Nicola Bryant, Nev Fountain, George Naylor and Raj Ghatak

“We settled instead on the more traditional format of four one-hour stories, allowing us to throw the characters into a number of different adventures. I asked Nev if he wanted to script edit, but he was happy simply to write one episode rather than oversee all four.”

Nicola Bryant is pleased to be working with Colin Baker once more, and tells Vortex: “Well, as always it’s a delight! And it’s very easy to work with my dear friend and colleague Colin. I have been working with him for over half my life – so ‘easy’ is kind of an understatement!”

“It is always exciting to be playing such a well-rounded character as Peri. To have so much information from her childhood to being a middle-aged woman is a rare thing in our business. It makes the job fun and the work interesting.”

“Recording the stories of an older Peri gives me the advantage of avoiding having to play naïve or immature scenarios. It’s particularly enjoyable for me playing a wiser, more rounded Peri.”

IT ALL BEGAN WITH WRITER NEV FOUNTAIN, FROM WHAT I REMEMBER – ALWAYS A GOOD WAY TO OPEN AN EXPLANATION FOR SOMETHING!

SCOTT HANDCOCK

WE OPEN with *The Headless Ones* by James Parsons and Andrew Stirling-Brown. When a distress call from an unknown source threatens to rip the TARDIS from the vortex, the Doctor and Peri arrive in nineteenth-century Africa hoping to find the cause of the disturbance.

James says: “*The Headless Ones* started life as an idea for a much longer travelogue, a *Marco Polo*-like story where the journey from port

into the interior of Africa was going to take up a large part of the narrative. But once it got squeezed down into an hour, pretty much all of that got jettisoned – and all the better for it I think, it might otherwise have been a little too leisurely.”

Andrew adds: “Yes, I’d long had an idea to do a 1980’s era story in the style of Hartnell’s *Marco Polo*. It comes over really well on audio soundtrack alone, I think, and obviously you are always looking for things that work strongly in that medium. The next question was where to set it, and again, with a soundscape environment in mind plus the long journey approach, we settled on 19th century Africa with all its wildlife, jungles and rainforests.”

The actual inspiration of the story comes from the Mappa Mundi. Andrew explains: “I’ve passed a lot of time over the years – probably too much – thinking up **Doctor Who** monsters. For this story I spent ages trying to come up with something new and then it hit me one day that I didn’t necessarily need to invent



Above (l-r): Ryan Ford, Sarah Douglas, Nicola Bryant, Stephen Critchlow, Rosie Baker and Colin Baker



Back row (l-r): James Parsons, Vivienne Acheampong, Colin Baker, Javone Prince and Hugh Skinner
Front row (l-r): Nicola Bryant, Deirdre Mullins (holding the Mappa Mundi) and Andrew Stirling-Brown

something! I love mythological creatures and I remembered about the Mappa Mundi, Hereford Cathedral's unique 14th century map of the world, which contains amazing drawings of the different tribes and fantastical species of people that inhabit it. One of the

creatures illustrated is a tribesman with no head, his facial features are in his chest. An image brilliantly brought to life on the box set cover. And this creature just happened to be found in Africa, too. So here was our perfect monster, they become the subject of the story's quest. I

bought a copy of the map and took it down to the recording as a bit of reference material for everyone, and as you will see it makes a great addition to the cast photo."

LIKE IS written by Jacqueline Rayner. *On the Earth colony world Rusina, the populace strive to be popular. Likes lead to promotion, dislikes lead to demotion – and more recently, something worse. So when the Doctor investigates the truth behind their subscriber-led society, he finds himself about to become very unpopular indeed.*

Jac recalls that her brief was: "Just the Sixth Doctor and an older Peri, I think." And having previously written *The Marian Conspiracy* and *Doctor Who and the Pirates* for Colin Baker's Doctor, she was delighted to create another tale for this incarnation. Jac confirms: "It always feels like coming home.

LIKE WAS PLOTTED A VERY LONG TIME AGO WHEN MY CHILDREN WERE STILL AT PRIMARY SCHOOL, I REMEMBER I WAS WORKING ON IT DURING SCHOOL SPORTS DAY.

JACQUELINE RAYNER

My happy place. I love him.

"*Like* was plotted a very long time ago when my children were still at primary school, I remember I was working on it during school sports day. They were in Hoffmann house – Hoffmann is a local manufacturer to which we have strong family ties anyway – we're a very pro-Hoffmann family! But Hoffmann always came last, every sports day, and Crompton house always won. So I named my four main characters after the four school houses, and made Hoffmann



Above: Nicola Bryant

the good guy and Crompton the baddie, to even the score a bit!

"I like to have as many female characters in a story as can be squeezed in, and this story lent itself nicely to strong female characters, so that was good. My only real worry about the story is the title – it's a gift to anyone who doesn't 'like' it...!"

Jac also found it interesting to write for this older Doctor and Peri combination.

She adds: "It's rather lovely. The Doctor regards Peri as more of an equal now and they clearly care about and trust each other. A more settled, grown-up relationship with so much shared history. But not every corner has been totally smoothed, so it's not entirely predictable."

IN THE third adventure, *The Vanity Trap* by Stuart Manning, we meet Myrna Kendal, a former Hollywood film star now spending her life on chat shows.

Stuart says: "The part from the initial conversation that stuck with me was that this was originally commissioned to celebrate 20 years of the Sixth Doctor and Peri with Big Finish. That's an interesting thing in itself, the fact that those performances and characters have now far outlived the original source material. I also felt that there was no point in writing a story for 2020 as a pastiche of a 1986 TV show.

"So my starting point was to try and find locations and characters that felt new for that TARDIS team and take it from there. I watched an early 1970s documentary about the failing British film industry on iPlayer, all doom and gloom on grainy 16mm, which I really enjoyed. The 1970s is a very underexplored era for **Doctor Who**, which surprises me since it's so downbeat and grimy and evocative. I love second wave Hollywood too, and I've read lots about that, so I had the idea of a slightly fading film star

slumming it in a British B-picture, only for the Doctor to turn up and put a spanner in the works."

THE FOURTH story, *Conflict Theory* by Nev Fountain, sees Peri present the Doctor with an ultimatum after becoming worried by how wary he is of her. Given the choice of having counselling or she leaves the TARDIS permanently, the

THE 1970s IS A VERY UNDEREXPLORED ERA FOR DOCTOR WHO, WHICH SURPRISES ME SINCE IT'S SO DOWNBEAT AND GRIMY AND EVOCATIVE.

STUART MANNING

Doctor seeks out Dr Sigmund Freud. Nev says: "When the brief came though, this box set was to be one of several marking Big Finish's 20th anniversary, and be a celebration of the Doctor and Peri.

"I wanted to examine, in a playful way (of course!), the long history of Doctor/Peri, the issues that have been brought up from their adventures together. Does the Doctor feel guilt from putting Peri in danger so many times over the years? Does Peri resent the Doctor for leaving her on Thoros Beta? So where better to examine those issues but on a giant spaceship devoted to psychoanalysis populated with robot Sigmund Freuds? And that's where we're at when the story starts."

Nev enjoys the new interplay between the Doctor and Peri. He explains: "I love writing for this older Peri/Doctor, because their relationship is probably the most like 'modern' **Doctor Who**. When she came along Peri was already



Above: Colin Baker

WHAT IS REALLY INTERESTING IS THAT PERI HAS GROWN BUT OF COURSE THE DOCTOR HASN'T CHANGED AT ALL

NICOLA BRVANT

an intelligent woman who *wanted* to travel with the Doctor, rather than an orphan or someone who wanted to get back home, so to me that already puts her in the Clara/Rose/Martha/Donna/Amy bracket.

Nicola adds: "I really adore all of these stories. Interesting, complex and diverse. They all tackle the inevitable change between the

Sixth Doctor and Peri that would be reflected in the decades they have known each other. What is really interesting is that Peri has grown but of course the Doctor hasn't changed at all.

"It was great fun heading into the jungle with *The Headless Ones* and learning the inspiration behind James Parsons and Andrew Stirling-Brown's work. Being plunged into the world of *Like* by Jacqueline Rayner felt uncomfortably real – how far away are we from this world already? And Jac nails so perfectly the relationship between Peri and the Doctor.

"Who wouldn't want to travel back to a time filled with Hollywood screen idols and meet the long forgotten Myrna Kendal in *The Vanity Trap* by Stuart Manning? I particularly enjoyed how Peri's appearance was the

catalyst of this dark story. And I was deeply amused by the idea that the Doctor and Peri had reached a place where the only answer would be therapy, in *Conflict Theory* by Nev Fountain. Of course the only therapist who could handle this pair would be Dr Sigmund Freud. But this is a Nev Fountain story so nothing is as it seems..."

LOOKING BACK on the studio days, Scott remembers: "It's funny what you recall about recording sessions. These scripts were commissioned in 2017 then recorded late in 2018 – almost two years ahead of its eventual release – but some details stick in my mind. I remember Colin really loving Stuart Manning's *The Vanity Trap* because it reminded him a lot of *Sapphire & Steel*, plus we introduced his daughter, Rosie, to the Big Finish fold during that recording (before I immediately nabbed her again for a role in *The Sins of Captain John*)."

Nicola adds: "I particularly enjoyed meeting Rosie again, I've known her since she was in nappies! It's great that having recently left drama school she's now a fully fledged actress, and she did a wonderful job in the role of Carolyn Sue." **VORTEX**



DOCTOR WHO
THE SIXTH DOCTOR
AND PERI: VOLUME ONE
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(TENTH DOCTOR / FOURTH DOCTOR)
- **DW • SHORT TRIPS:**
These Stolen Hours (10.8) **DLO**
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