

VORTEX



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UNIT

NEMESIS

MASTERS OF TIME
KATE STEWART LEADS THE
HUMAN RESISTANCE...

ALSO INSIDE

ONCE AND FUTURE

A GENIUS FOR WAR: WILL DAVROS HELP
THE TIME LORDS WIN THE TIME WAR?





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EVERYWHERE AND ANYWHERE

THE CRITICALLY-acclaimed **The Doctor Chronicles: The Eleventh Doctor** will return later this year with *Everywhere and Anywhere* – and a familiar foe is lurking. The Eleventh Doctor (played by Jacob Dudman, continuing to impress with his stunning portrayal) and his new friend, fearless cybernetics engineer Valarie Lockwood (played by Safiyya Ingar), will face the terrifying Cybermen.

Three adventures await us starting with *Spirit of the Season* by Georgia Cook in which the Doctor and Valarie have finally found another Clara at Christmas – but she wants to kill them both! *All's Fair* by Max Kashevsky takes the travellers to Chicago's World's Fair, 1893 but abominations are stalking the streets. And *Sins of the Flesh* by Alfie Shaw, the producer of the series, concludes this set in which the Rebirth Organisation helps to convert those exhibiting sinful behaviour.

The box set also features the return of Roanna (Mia Tomlinson) – the engineer with a crush on Valarie who featured in February's *All of Time and Space*.

Alfie says: "Mia and Safiyya had such a wonderful rapport – both on and off the mic – that reuniting their characters and picking up the thread from *The Yearn* was a must for this set. We've done the meeting and we're now on to Roanna and Valarie's first proper date. Obviously, this is **Doctor Who**, so it might not go exactly to plan..." **VORTEX**

THE DOCTOR CHRONICLES: THE ELEVENTH DOCTOR EVERYWHERE AND ANYWHERE

- RELEASED: DECEMBER 2023
- FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

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EDITORIAL

THERE'S SO much going on at Big Finish! I'm aware of a lot of it, but there's plenty more I won't find out about for a while. I get to discover certain details about what's coming up – sometimes years in advance – then I have to wait, quietly bubbling with excitement, until it's announced and I can share the news in *Vortex*.

I was in London recently on a trip from my home near Glasgow, and spent a day at a Big Finish recording. This was only my second time in studio, the previous visit having been a decade ago when I was lucky enough to hear **The Early Adventures: Domain of the Voord** being recorded with William Russell and Carole Ann Ford.

Although I can't say what I heard (yet!), it's a real treat for later this year, and it certainly gave me a few shivers as I listened to the talented cast bring it to life. It also gave me a chance to meet up with a Big Finish actor friend of many years for the first time in ages. And I even found the famous car park and took a picture of it!

So here I am now saying a lot, and at the same time saying nothing about something I can't share. But I really look forward to revealing it in November's issue! **VORTEX**

Kenny



ONCE AND FUTURE
CONTINUES WITH THE
SEVENTH DOCTOR TAKING
CENTRE STAGE IN THE
THIRD ADVENTURE...

WAR OF WORDS

THE DOCTOR'S journey up and down his own timeline continues in the next adventure of Big Finish's 60th anniversary range with **Once and Future: A Genius for War**.

Davros, the General and Veklin are just some of the familiar faces encountered as the Doctor tries to find out more about the mysterious weapon which injured him during the Time War.

Producer David Richardson explains: "Episode three was always going to be set in the heart of the Time War – our damaged Doctor united with the General and Veklin facing Davros and the Daleks.

"For quite some time it was going to be a different story entirely but that encroached on territory that

is currently off limits to us. So Jonathan Morris came up with this huge, spectacular tale in which Davros is set to betray his own creations and sell out to the Time Lords. What an irresistible pitch!"

Writer Jonny was delighted to be involved in the official 60th anniversary celebrations.

He explains: "I was thrilled to be asked. Working on other Big Finish things, I'd occasionally caught a tantalising glimpse of a page of script or overheard actors in the studio recording a scene which I didn't know about. And I was all, 'Oh, that sounds terribly exciting, I wish they'd ask me to do something'. And then, out of the blue, they did!"

Jonny was given some specific requirements for his episode, but also

plenty of space for his own ideas as well. He explains: "With these type of things, you want to give all the different Doctors and eras a big slice of the cake – the birthday cake – and my portion of the cake had to include the Seventh Doctor, Davros and the Daleks, with the Time Lord General as well. Beyond that, it was all up to me.

"I had two main thoughts, though, which you could consider part of my 'brief to self'. It needed to deal with a significant part of the series mythology – it couldn't be 'just another Doctor Who story'. And rather than being written in the style of the Seventh Doctor's era it had to be a contemporary piece because it's not only a celebration of the past, it's a celebration of the fact that it's still going. And, of course, as soon

as I came up with a story, I had to make sure it fitted with existing continuity even so far as including facts that have only appeared in the *Doctor Who and the Daleks Omnibus* published in 1976. So not only does it have big slices, it has deep cuts too.”

Jonny continues: “Davros has been incarcerated on Falkus, the prison-moon of Skaro. He transmits a message to the Time Lords: with typical egotism, he’s decided that if the Daleks don’t want his help

TERRY MOLLOY is back as Davros and felt it was a joy to be invited to be a part of Big Finish’s 60th anniversary celebrations. He confirms: “It was indeed! This was actually the first time I’d visited the studio since the COVID-19 pandemic so it was great to actually meet up with other actors again.

“Sylvester McCoy and I have worked together many times in the past. We have known each

worked together about 35 years ago, and we’ve kept in touch.”

Terry still enjoys playing the part of the Daleks’ creator. He tells *Vortex*: “The thing I’ve always said about Davros and the Doctor is that they have a kind of a touching respect for each other as well as hatred because they know they’re both on the same intellectual level. And they know they’re both alone.

“So for them, and for me, the joyous bit is the intellectual chess game they play with each other, as to who’s going to win, rather than the bangs and the whistles. I mean, they’re very good as well, but at the end of it, it’s all about the battle of minds.”

Vortex asks Jonny for his highlight of the script: “I could say writing it, or hearing Sylvester and Terry performing my words, but really, the highlight of any story is when it is released and people start hearing it. That’s the bit I’m most excited about. That’s the bit I look forward to from the moment I start writing any script.” **VORTEX**



Above (l-r): Sylvester McCoy and Beth Chalmers

in the Time War, then he’ll help their enemies instead. With one condition, that the Doctor is the one to come and rescue him...”

This wasn’t Jonny’s first experience of writing for the Daleks’ creator, having previously brought him to life in *The Curse of Davros*. Jonny explains: “The difference with writing Davros now is that there is whole lot more Davros stuff to feed off. Not just the other audios but his appearance in *The Magician’s Apprentice*/*The Witch’s Familiar*. *A Genius for War* was written not only with the knowledge of where he was coming from but also where he would be going. I also wanted to explore Davros’s morality; he was once willing to sacrifice his own race in order to further his ambitions, would he be willing to do so again?”

THE THING I’VE ALWAYS SAID ABOUT DAVROS AND THE DOCTOR IS THAT THEY HAVE A KIND OF A TOUCHING RESPECT FOR EACH OTHER...

TERRY MOLLOY

other for a long time, way before *Doctor Who*. It’s always great fun to get together with him again.

“I had a lot of scenes in this with Ken Bones, who I’ve also known a long time. I think he and I first

**DOCTOR WHO
ONCE AND FUTURE:
A GENIUS FOR WAR**



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HIT AND

MISSY

UNIT: Nemesis reaches its conclusion with *Masters of Time*...

WE KNOW that, as a rule, UNIT and Time Lords tend not to get on, with one notable exception in the form of their erstwhile scientific advisor.

Brigadier Alistair Gordon Lethbridge-Stewart was regularly plagued by the Master's plans throughout the decade in which their adventures were set, whilst his daughter Kate has had to deal with Missy on television, and the Eleven (aided and abetted by the Vulpreen) more recently on audio with Big Finish. And now, Missy's back to battle Kate, Osgood and the

team as **UNIT: Nemesis** draws to a close in *Masters of Time*. Script editor Andrew Smith has overseen the series with producer Heather Challands.

Andrew says: "Nemesis evolved over the four sets, and *Masters of Time* is a hugely satisfying conclusion to the story of UNIT facing up to the threat from the Vulpreen. The Vulpreen have been lurking ever since the first episode in *Nemesis: Between Two Worlds*. We didn't know their name in the first set, but they were in the background. We then met them properly in the second set, *Agents of the Vulpreen*, and they became very much a presence and a huge threat.

"It was David Richardson who came up with the idea of Missy being involved in the finale, and from the moment he suggested it,

it was a mouth-watering prospect. Having Missy as our main villain was always the plan: she's been in the background for a while too.

"One thing I wanted to do with this series was have the Vulpreen actually working in league with Missy – that was the big reveal at the end of set three, which will be fully developed and incorporated into the story arc in set four."

ONE WAY or *Another* by John Dorney opens this quartet of adventures. Andrew explains: "John always finds a fresh way of telling a story, and this one is telling the same set of events but from two different perspectives.

"We go with Kate, first of all, and there's quite an exciting ending to



Above (l-r): Jemma Redgrave and Ingrid Oliver

that, with a bit of jeopardy. From Osgood's point of view, she's in a different location and that answers some of the questions around the jeopardy that Kate's witnessed. It's really interesting to get these two perspectives on the same set of events, within the one episode."

John continues: "The brief was pretty loose. It was basically Osgood and Kate, separately fighting back in their own individual ways. The difficulty I had was making it seem like a coherent story: I couldn't really have Kate and Osgood meet, and I didn't want them to interact very much."

"*One Way or Another* contains two very distinct but basically separate plots happening simultaneously – they both start and finish at exactly the same point. The title comes from the fact that it is literally 30 minutes with Osgood, and 30 minutes with Kate."

Although John is known for his complex writing, this one required real precision. He explains: "I had to write everything really specifically. There are around 12 points where

the plots don't exactly interact, but hit the same beats. That was a slightly tricky writing process but I was looking back and forth between the two, mostly with a pretty strict

IT IS LITERALLY 30 MINUTES WITH OSGOOD, AND 30 MINUTES WITH KATE.

JOHN DORNEY

word count I had to hit. I mean, specifically, within a couple of words.

"That meant when I was writing a second or third draft, if I changed anything in the second half, I had to go back in to do a corresponding change in the first, just to try and make the timing work between the two sides.

"It's set around a former post

depot that's being converted into the main headquarters of a prison camp. I chose it largely on the basis of my mum having been a postwoman – I've got a lot of respect for postal workers. And there's a former post office employee in this who gets to be a bit heroic!"

TRAITOR'S GATE by Sarah Grochala deliberately inverts a previous adventure in **UNIT**. Andrew explains: "In our second Big Finish **UNIT** series, *Shutdown*, I wrote an episode called *The Battle of the Tower* in which aliens called the Tengobushi laid siege to UNIT HQ in the Tower of London.

"*Traitor's Gate* turns the tables on that very deliberately. UNIT are trying to break into their old home where the Vulpreen have now set up a base. There's a lovely character who's met by Kate when she goes in, a former Yeoman warder of the Tower who's got a raven that's also quite a character, in a lovely way.

"Sarah's done a great job with it. There are some fantastic pieces



Above (l-r): Allistair Simpson and Harry Myers



Above (l-r): Eleanor Crooks, Ingrid Oliver and Christopher Naylor

of humour, drama and threats. One character has something quite horrible done to him at one point by the Vulpreen.”

Sarah says: “I was delighted to get this commission on two counts. First of all, my very first Big Finish was for *The Eighth of March* and it was a UNIT story with Osgood and Kate. I was really excited to have the chance to write for them again, it felt like going back to the beginning, in a nice way. I really love them as characters, especially Osgood – no disrespect to Kate – but I think Osgood

is brilliant. She's like the ultimate nerdy genius super-fan. I was a bit of a nerd at school so she's definitely someone who I strongly identify with. There's a bit of Osgood in all of us.

“Secondly, I really do like creating episodes that are part of longer story. These ones are lovely to write because all the writers get a chance to talk to each other and thrash the narrative out together. I like the jigsaw puzzle of trying to match up what everyone's doing, to make sure that there's a good through line. It's great fun.

“My brief was the basic storyline.

Osgood is taken to the Tower of London and Kate has to find a way to get her out. Andrew and I talked a lot about his episode *UNIT: Shutdown*, where it's the opposite way round. UNIT were having to defend the Tower from invaders. I looked at that quite closely, in terms of thinking about ways into and out of the Tower. I don't want to reveal too much about the plot, but with what the Vulpreen have done to the world, there were moments where it just seemed like it would be impossible for Kate get into the Tower. But I got there in the end!”

Sarah did her due diligence by visiting the story's location.

She reveals: “I went to the Tower of London to do my research. Bizarrely, I ended up there on the day the Queen died. I wanted to see the Ceremony of the Keys – Andrew uses it in his episode and, at one point, I thought I might include it in mine.

“It takes place in the evening and I assumed it would be cancelled when the news about the Queen

I WENT TO THE TOWER OF LONDON TO DO MY RESEARCH. BIZARRELY, I ENDED UP THERE ON THE DAY THE QUEEN DIED.

SARAH GROCHALA

was released. But no one contacted me, so I went anyway, and they still did it. It was the first time they had completed the ceremony with the King's Keys rather than the Queen's Keys. It was a unique experience, and obviously everyone was deeply affected by the fact that she'd just died. It felt quite special to encounter the Tower in that way.”

EVENTS HURTLE towards their conclusion in *The Destiny Labyrinth* by Alison Winter. Andrew tells *Vortex*: “The events at the end of episode two lead us very directly into this episode. It's a great script from Ali which also links very well to episode four, and



Above (l-r): Fiona Hampton and Oscar Batterham

takes our characters through different places.

"They are moving between locations in time in Earth's history while being pursued by the Vulpreen. Along the way, they meet Nostradamus. That was quite interesting as he wasn't someone I knew an awful lot about, so it was an education for me to read Ali's script! He becomes something of a companion to Osgood and Kate."

Ali tells *Vortex*: "The episode steers was that UNIT are lost in various epochs in Earth's history while in pursuit of the enemy. True to the brief, we see Kate, Osgood and two other characters called Josh and Jimmy, step through arches that lead to any period in Earth's history. They have to puzzle out the time and place, and then find a way out. But help comes from an unexpected quarter..."

"I was drawn to write for this series because of my love for Kate and Osgood, primarily. They have such a great dynamic. But I also found I relished scenes with Josh and Jimmy that felt a bit 'Buddy Cop'. I also love playing with time, so this was a great fit."

Asked what her biggest personal highlight from this script was, Ali notes: "Getting to lose myself in time periods, geology, and historical figures and events, was great fun."

"Establishing a different episode with its own threats, obstacles



Above: James Joyce

and solutions numerous times in one episode was a huge technical challenge, especially given this box set is one continuous story and various details were in flux at times. I think we're all proud of the result!"

AND SO, ALL good things come to an end in *True Nemesis*, which Andrew has written himself. He says: "Straight away at the end of the previous episode, boom, we're into the final part, where UNIT meets Missy."

"It's the conclusion of the whole thing, which was a bit daunting when I first started. I knew I wanted Missy to be somewhere remote, somewhere

we could have these huge arches which are being used by the Vulpreen as their next step to become masters of time. Hence the box set title!

"I played around with a few things and considered some obvious places like Monument

THEY HAVE TO PUZZLE OUT THE TIME AND PLACE, AND THEN FIND A WAY OUT.

ALISON WINTER

Valley and the Grand Canyon, and various deserts around the world. And then I went off on holiday.

"My girlfriend had booked a trip to Portugal, to the Douro Valley, where we stayed in a *quinta* on a vineyard. A *quinta* is a villa, the equivalent of a country house, on a wine-growing estate. The Douro Valley is the most beautiful place and also very serene, very quiet, very remote and just beautiful. I thought, 'This is the place. This would be perfect.'"

"So a lot of the action in this episode is set in the Douro Valley which I think is somewhere fresh, somewhere that a lot of people won't know about it. It's a great location. Missy has based herself in one of these *quintas*. And most of the action takes place in the beautiful hills and valleys around it..." **VORTEX**

UNIT: NEMESIS MASTERS OF TIME



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FRIENDS UNITED

THE SOUNDS OF THE SIXTIES ARE BACK AS THE SECOND DOCTOR IS REUNITED WITH HIS SCOTTISH COMPANION...

FISH AND chips. Batman and Robin. Rhubarb and custard. The Doctor and Jamie – all double acts which easily trip off the tongue!

This July we're getting more of the latter pairing as Michael Troughton reprises his late father's role in **The Second Doctor Adventures**, alongside a certain hairy-legged highlander. We had a brief glimpse of the duo in **The Third Doctor Adventures** *The Annihilators*, but now it's time to

find out how they met up again.

With Frazer Hines as Jamie McCrimmon, the Doctor and Jamie continue their adventures after the end of the television episode *The War Games*, and the Second Doctor is now grudgingly assisting the Celestial Intervention Agency (CIA).

Producer Mark Wright was delighted by the reaction to the first volume of **The Second Doctor Adventures**: "I've always said *Beyond War Games* was our proof of concept, a shakedown cruise to see how everything worked – and it exceeded our expectations. Michael hit the ground running, and I was thrilled with not only the response to the stories but also how Michael was embraced as the Doctor.

"Their appearance in *The Annihilators* was a lovely tease for

The Second Doctor Adventures

with the Doctor and an older Jamie appearing. Bringing Jamie back was always executive producer Nicholas Briggs's plan – Frazer is such a part of the Big Finish family, and there's a lot we can do with a Jamie who's older and perhaps just a little bit wiser. It also gives Michael a partnership to play with and face a diverse array of adventures with a trusted friend alongside."

JAMIE, THE opening story, has been written by Mark. He tells *Vortex*: "Writing *Jamie* was a real challenge as it had to work on different levels. A good, historical adventure in Edinburgh for the Doctor; monsters and a really strong reintroduction for Jamie. We look at Jamie's whole life – and lives not lived



Above (l-r): Daisy Ashford and Frazer Hines

– and I really wanted to give Frazer something he could get his teeth into as an actor.

“The Doctor arrives in Edinburgh, 1776 and Raven is soon popping up to give him his latest mission for the CIA, as ever. Raven worked so well in the first volume’s *The Final Beginning* and we loved Emma Noakes’s performance, so she has a lot to do in this one. Meanwhile there’s a prisoner in the vaults at Edinburgh Castle who they say escaped Culloden 30 years back, a prisoner by the name of James Robert McCrimmon...”

THE SECOND adventure, *The Green Man*, marks the full-cast Big Finish debut for Paul F Verhoeven. Mark says: “*The Green Man* finds the Doctor and Jamie exhausted after several missions for Raven, so she arranges

THERE’S A LOT WE CAN DO WITH A JAMIE WHO’S OLDER AND PERHAPS JUST A LITTLE BIT WISER.

MARK WRIGHT

for a visit to The Grove rehabilitation centre for some rest and recuperation. Mysteriously there are no other patients in this exclusive resort – so why is Overseer Fuller doing rounds late at night?”

Paul adds: “Right after my first **Short Trip** came out – *Fear of Flying*, a Tenth Doctor story in Volume 11 – I pitched *The Green Man* to executive producer, Nicholas Briggs. Nick has an absolutely brilliant mind and loves stories that are a little left-of-centre, so I knew he’d get a kick out of it. Actually, he gave me the go-ahead whilst I was in London over the Christmas break so it was a proper treat to write my first full-length Big Finish story in the homeland of **Doctor Who**!

“**The Second Doctor Adventures** are a really fertile environment for storytellers, but at the same time we have to be very careful – and respectful – when it comes to hewing close to these beloved characters. Nick was instrumental in making sure I didn’t go too far off the beaten path. He also encouraged me to cut loose in areas I didn’t think we were going to, which was, frankly, thrilling. In short, the brief was to marry old and new in a really delicate way, which I hope I’ve pulled off.”

Summing up the tale, Paul says: “Essentially, it’s **Doctor Who** meets *Rear Window*. I became obsessed with the idea of writing, in essence, a play set in the one room. The simplest way to do that? Literally lock down the Doctor and tell a story about him being incapacitated, helpless and relying on Jamie to be his man on the ground.

“It also marks the return of an iconic **Doctor Who** villain, and working them into the story was an absolutely exhilarating challenge. I mean, how does the Doctor – a control freak – cope when he has to let someone else deal with monsters? I wanted to create a setting that was evocative and atmospheric so I invented a deluxe retreat for the fabulously wealthy to deal with their various illnesses. So there’s a little bit of class stuff thrown in this one, too.”

THE SHROUD by Bob Ayres is third and final story of the set. Mark says: “*The Shroud* is a traditional colony under siege story but with some clever twists from Bob that uses the audio format to good effect, all with some overarching developments in our ongoing arc of the Doctor working as a puppet of the CIA.”



Above (l-r): Emma Noakes, Frazer Hines, Daisy Ashford, Alec Newman and Glen McCreeley

Bob tells *Vortex*: "I love the Second Doctor! I always get the feeling with the Second Doctor that there's a lot more going on under the surface than we see – or than he'd like us to see. A lot of the time he hides his intelligence, his bravery and his heroism because he doesn't really want the responsibility of it all. He just wants to travel the universe and have fun."

This is Bob's second Big Finish script to be released, having recently written for **The First Doctor Adventures**. He explains: "I pitched a number of story ideas, and Big Finish chose *The Demon Song* for the First Doctor and *The Shroud* for the Second Doctor – both at the same time.

"For this, I wanted to put the Doctor and Jamie in a situation where they would be relying totally on their hearing in the same way that the audience does when they listen to an audio drama. So that led to the idea of a superweapon that cancels out light, which in turn, led me on to think about who might use such a weapon.

"The bare bones of the story already existed, and the only additional instruction I was given was to bear in mind the story arc established in *Beyond War Games*, with Raven sending the Doctor and Jamie on missions for the Time Lords. I thought that the Doctor would be looking for a way to get out of the arrangement

as soon as he possibly could, and that helped to shape the story."

Summing up the adventure, Bob says: "The Doctor and Jamie land on the planet Ninevah, a human colony in the far future. But on leaving the TARDIS, they find that it is dark. Very dark. In fact, there's no light at all. Nineveh has fallen victim to



Above: Frazer Hines

the Shroud – a superweapon that cancels out all light, right across the visible spectrum, leaving the human population helpless and at the mercy of an alien race called the Hearken. Little is known about the Hearken, only that they are big, they have a lot of tentacles, and they are

I BECAME OBSESSED WITH THE IDEA OF WRITING, IN ESSENCE, A PLAY SET IN THE ONE ROOM.

PAUL FVERHOEVEN

sightless, using natural echolocation to find their way about in the dark.

"In many ways, it's a story about communication – why communication is important, the different ways in which people communicate and what happens when communication fails."

Bob adds: "I don't know if it will make the edit but I was Michael's stunt recorder player! He did his own recorder playing in other stories of this box set but for *The Shroud* we specifically wanted *Three Blind Mice*, which I played – so I can now say that I have doubled for the Doctor!"

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THE SECOND DOCTOR
JAMES ROBERT McCRIMMON



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DOCTOR WHO: DESTINATION: NERVA

EVERYTHING COMES to those who wait, and that was definitely the case with the Fourth Doctor and Big Finish. After many years of invitations, Tom Baker expressed an interest in being involved in a Big Finish production after recording **Doctor Who: The Nest Cottage Chronicles** for BBC Audio.

Executive producer Nicholas Briggs recalls: “David Richardson and I paid a visit to Tom. We’d been chatting to him for some time about what he was going to do for Big Finish, but it was Tom who emailed and suggested we went over for lunch. I’m clarifying that, just in case you think we turned up on his doorstep uninvited! He even provided us with the correct space-time coordinates. “We had a really lovely time. Tom was delightfully welcoming, extremely enthusiastic, hugely entertaining and I firmly believe that if we’d taken a microphone and

a script with us, he’d have started recording plays for us there and then.”

The Fourth Doctor’s Big Finish debut came in January 2012 in the form of *Destination: Nerva*, which took the Time Lord and Leela (played by Louise Jameson) back to the space station from television episode *The Ark in Space*.

Nick recalls: “Knowing that this would be a largely sci-fi, hardware story set on a space station, I wanted to give it as much of a broad Fourth Doctor era appeal as possible. Shiny corridors and space are a very important part of that era, but I was aware that many people also remembered it for the dark stately homes and the historical settings.

“The story I had in mind was about ‘past’ human beings somehow getting

always used to have the climax of a previous mission before the opening titles. I didn’t want people to have to hang around to hear our Fourth Doctor and Leela in high stakes, action-packed situations. So I gave them mystery, threat and danger within the first five minutes!”

The story features a horrific transformation – was Nick deliberately going for the body horror of the Hinchcliffe/Holmes era?

He explains: “Oh yes. What can I say, I was thinking Hinchcliffe/Holmes through and through. The idea, for me, was that the television episode *The Talons of Weng-Chiang* ended and this happened next, long before Mary Whitehouse forced the BBC to ruin it all a bit.”

Nick, who also directed the play, concludes: “I’m really happy with it. I think it did everything that we needed to do to start the Fourth Doctor off and give the audience the confidence that we were going to get it right. I love the performances. This one was a few recordings down the line and Tom was really confident back in the role. Great supporting cast too.” **VORTEX**

TOM WAS DELIGHTFULLY WELCOMING, EXTREMELY ENTHUSIASTIC, HUGEY ENTERTAINING...

NICHOLAS BRIGGS

to wreck an alien culture — an idea I’d had in mind since 2006 — I thought this was an excellent opportunity to show how the situation came about.

“In the normal course of things, I wouldn’t have had the opening section at all, that would have been stuff that got revealed later. But I wanted to start with the Doctor and Leela sneaking about in a grand house. I also liked the idea of us getting straight into the action like *James Bond* films which

DOCTOR WHO DESTINATION: NERVA



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SLIP OF THE MIND

THE TIME BARRIER HAS OPENED AGAIN SPELLING TROUBLE FOR LIZ, SIMON AND THEIR FRIENDS...

BIG FINISH'S core strength is taking established science fiction characters and doing something new with them.

That's been the case, for example, with **Bernice Summerfield**, **Doctor Who**, **The Tomorrow People**, **Sapphire & Steel** and **Highlander** – and a host

of other popular creations all given a new lease of life on audio.

In 2020, **Timeslip** returned after a gap of 49 years continuing the adventures of two children – now adults – Liz Skinner and Simon Randall, who discovered an anomaly known as the Time Barrier which enables them to visit the past and alternative futures. *The Age of the Death Lottery* by Andrew Smith and *The War That Never Was* by Marc Platt saw Cheryl Burfield reprising her role as Liz, with Spencer Banks returning to the part of Simon.

This July, the pair return in a new adventure, *A Life Never Lived* written by Roland Moore with

a concluding story, *The Time of the Tipping Point* by Helen Goldwyn, scheduled for August.

Producer David Richardson tells *Vortex*: "I was delighted when Big Finish chairman Jason Haigh-Ellery asked me to commission two more four-part stories to conclude this run of **Timeslip** stories.

"**Timeslip** is so much a part of my nostalgic DNA – I adored the television series when I was a child, as much as I loved **Doctor Who**, and to work with and spend time with Spencer and Cheryl has been an absolute privilege. I feel very lucky to have been in charge of bringing back **Timeslip** after



Above (l-r): Spencer Banks and Cheryl Burfield

nearly five decades, and it is great to hear how much people enjoy them – Spencer and Cheryl included!

“**Timeslip** was a sci-fi series for children’s TV, but it told stories in a very adult way. Russell T Davies has since taken the same approach with his brilliant children’s shows. The joy of it is, because the scripts are so sophisticated, they can they be enjoyed at any time of life. I love the original **Timeslip** episodes as much as I did when I was seven years old. Probably more so, because I can now appreciate how terrifyingly prescient they were.”

CHERYL BURFIELD was delighted to be asked to play Liz again. She explains: “I was very surprised to hear from Big Finish as I wasn’t aware of the amazing work that they do. They are so impressive and professional and to be asked to work for them was an enormous honour. “I was really excited to receive the scripts and discover the new adventures that the older Liz and Simon were going to embark on.

I WAS SURPRISED AND DELIGHTED AT THE QUALITY OF THE SCRIPTS. I'M SURE IT'S WHY THEY HAVE BEEN SO WELL RECEIVED.

CHERYL BURFIELD

I was also extremely nervous as I had never recorded any audio plays before so this was completely new to me – coupled with the fact that I hadn’t acted at all for many years, it was a daunting prospect.”

The Big Finish series introduced three new regulars – Neil Riley played by Orlando Gibbs, Jade Okafor portrayed by Amanda Shodeko and Charlotte Trent brought to life by Sarah Sutton.

Cheryl continues: “On arrival on that very first day everyone at Big

Finish was so friendly, welcoming and kind. It didn’t take long at all once I became familiar with the studio and the equipment to feel at home and start to thoroughly enjoy the whole experience.

“I was surprised and delighted at the quality of the scripts. I’m sure it’s why they have been so well received. The scripts were so good they made it very easy to slip back into the Liz character.”

David, too, was pleased with the reaction to the first two stories.

He says: “As always, I sat down afterwards and analysed what I felt we could do differently in subsequent adventures.

“I wanted the new stories to capture some specific elements of the 1970s show. I wanted it to be more about family, especially in relation to Liz and Simon. So that’s what these two stories explore more.”

“Roland has incorporated that beautifully into *A Life Never Lived* which takes **Timeslip** somewhere new while at the same time remaining faithful to what has gone before. Both Spencer



Above (l-r): Sarah Sutton, Orlando
Gibbs and Amanda Shodeko

and Cheryl loved the scripts, and said how true they were to their characters' relationship on screen."

WHAT CONVINCED David to ask Roland to write this adventure? He explains: "Roland is great at telling character-led stories, and that's what we needed for this slot. He's got barrels of imagination too, of course, but he's a very experienced script writer who knows how to bring the best out of the characters which is especially useful on an audio series like this where there are five leads!"

Roland says: "By the time I came to write for **Timeslip**, I was very familiar with it but I hadn't heard of it before Big Finish released their version. When the first box set came out, I was intrigued and so got the original TV episodes and watched the whole thing. I loved it and couldn't believe I'd known nothing about it before! "My story involved Liz's family so I went back and rewatched the TV series

I RAN WITH
THE IDEA
POSTULATED
IN THE BIG
FINISH SERIES
THAT THE
BARRIER MAY
BE SENTIENT...

ROLAND MOORE

and listened to the audio adventures for anything relating to them. I wanted to get the details right. I also wanted to find out the 'rules' of the time barrier – and for that I ran with the idea postulated in the Big Finish series that the barrier may be sentient, or at least have elements of sentience. Could it make you go to a time that would benefit from you being there? "It was also fun exploring the

realities of the time barrier taking you somewhere. Modern money wouldn't be any use – and you'd probably need to get clothes suitable for the period. It's not easy being dumped somewhere and trying to survive. At one point, when these realities hit home, Neil says that time travel sucks!"

Roland continues: "The first two box sets were superb and really showed the flexibility of the format. Andrew's superbly dark story, *The Age of the Death Lottery*, was gripping. And I was really impressed with Sarah's performance as Charlotte. Without giving spoilers for Andrew's story, there are a couple of scenes with Sarah which are genuinely breath-taking.

"Marc's story, *The War That Never Was*, is an engrossing puzzle that has the global repercussions of a believable 'Sliding Doors' moment. Both those stories set the benchmark for the quality of the series. Both left me thinking, 'No pressure, Roland'...!

"I had a pretty open brief for this one. We agreed to do a story in the



Above (l-r): Hugh Ross, Rachel Fenwick and Luke R Francis

past but David wanted it to be our past rather than an alternate version, as he felt it would give us something different. And that led me to pitching the idea of *A Life Never Lived*, where the fact it is our past increases the stakes for Liz and Simon. It's a personal story for Liz where the outcome can change everything for her.

"Liz, Simon, Charlotte, Jade and Neil find themselves in 1914. They soon realise that it is the real past – their past – rather than an alternate one: Simon knows that they must be careful not to cause any major changes. As they try to find food and shelter so they can wait for the barrier to return, Liz becomes interested in attending a Suffragette meeting led by a woman named Flora Walsh.

"Simon realises that Liz has another reason for wanting to be there – Flora is her great-grandmother and she's destined to die the next day. Liz wants to spend that last day with her. She knows she can't warn Flora

IT FITS SO PERFECTLY WITH THE TV SERIES, RIGHT BACK TO THEIR FIRST STORY.

DAVID RICHARDSON

or save her. She just wants to get to know a relative she never met. There's no harm in that, surely?"

CHERYL TELLS *Vortex* the recordings have been: "An enormous joy for so many reasons. Firstly, it gave Spencer and I an opportunity to work together after so many years, something we thought we would never do again. And secondly, every single actor involved is so talented

and versatile, they are a delight to spend time with and listen to as they go about their work. I looked forward to arriving every day, as the atmosphere was so warm you felt like part of a big creative family."

Roland was in studio to listen to his scripts come to life. He confirms: "Yes, I attended some of the recording. It was a joy to hear it coming off the page. I can't wait to listen to it in full.

"One of the highlights was thinking up a story and then dealing with it in a way that's unique to **Timeslip**. I hope what happens surprises the listener by virtue of the dilemma being explored by Liz and Simon. They aren't experts on the repercussions of time travel and they react to what's happening in a very human, compassionate and normal way – while being fearful of what could be the ultimate outcome.

"I also loved writing for the ensemble. Liz and Simon are great characters and the new additions of Charlotte, Jade and Neil fit really well into that group. It's a big central cast but a joy to write for as their voices are so distinct."

David concludes: "I love the relationship of Liz and Simon in this. It fits so perfectly with the TV series, right back to their first story. Having now listened to the final edits, I couldn't be happier with *A Life Never Lived*. If these two new stories are to be the end of Big Finish's audio **Timeslip**, then it certainly goes out on a high." **VORTEX**

TIMESLIP A LIFE NEVER LIVED



■ RELEASED: JULY 2023
■ FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

ORDER NOW: bgfn.sh/lived 



THE CURRENT SERIES OF **TORCHWOOD** COMES TO A CLOSE WITH THE THIRD PART OF THE GRIPPING **AMONG US...**

APOCALYPSEnOW

TO BRITISH television viewers, Janet Ellis is a familiar and beloved face. Best known as a presenter on *Blue Peter* and also as the mum of pop star Sophie Ellis-Bextor, it shouldn't be forgotten she was once a guest star in *Doctor Who* when she played Teka in *The Horns of Nimon*.

And now, she's coming face to face with the Torchwood team playing a character named Janet!

Torchwood: Among Us 3 features a quartet of adventures with *How I Conquered the World*, written by Ash Darby, Tim Foley and James Goss; *Doomscroll* by Ash Darby; *Heistland* by Tim Foley and *The Apocalypse Starts at 6pm* by James Goss.

The team, with Yvonne Hartman (Tracy-Ann Oberman), Ng

(Alexandria Riley), Orr (Samantha Béart), Mr Colchester (Paul Clayton) and Tyler Steele (Jonny Green) are surviving against the odds as it seems that the whole world has been turned against the organisation. But who is behind this? It's time to find out.

How I Conquered the World has been co-written by the three writers of this set. Writer James, also the producer of the series, explains: "Episode nine is where we find out what set Torchwood up and why it did it.

"It ties into all of the stories so far in the season. Who turned a cul-de-sac into killers, who was persecuting Colin, who was behind Voloshnik and what Bilis was doing in the Torchwood Hub? It's also a story about our lives now, and how, if we really are angrier all the time,

where does all that anger go?

"It's an interesting piece of storytelling and features some use of artificial voices, which is curiously rewarding and sometimes hilarious."

Co-author Tim was delighted to work on a collaboration for the first story in this set. He says: "Oh, it was wonderful. Writing **Torchwood** is always a team sport. It's great building a series like this together – I've had such a good time with James and Ash."

THE SECOND adventure, *Doomscroll* by Ash, features a very recognisable world with social media influencers. James explains: "Episode 10 might be the one where Twitter goes, 'I cringed so hard at this!'



"Something's killing influencers and Torchwood have to stop it. It's got a lot of very dark humour in it and truly disturbing situations. The cast are all phenomenal, delivering some lines that are probably unsayably weird.

"It might be the most relevant thing we've ever done, or it might be way off beam, or it might be the kind of thing you listen to in 2027 and go, 'What's an influencer?'"

The next story *Heistland* has been written by Tim. James says: "Episode 11 sees Torchwood Cardiff and their Icelandic equivalent carrying out two heists. Yvonne Hartman sets out to steal a crypto currency before an auction that could end the world.

"When it was scripted we were still getting our head around NFTs. Now it's coming out after the bankruptcy of Sam Bankman-Fried and seems strangely wise.

"A lot of it is set in the French city of Carcassonne, which is beautiful and very dear to Tim's heart. Clearly he thought, 'Where's the least likely place to base a crypto currency?'

"It's joyous to get Kai Owen back, and Rhys and the mysterious Kristin's dynamic make me long

IT'S ALSO A STORY ABOUT OUR LIVES NOW, AND HOW, IF WE REALLY ARE ANGRIER ALL THE TIME, WHERE DOES ALL THAT ANGER GO?

JAMES GOSS

for more Torchwood Iceland."

Tim was delighted to be able to send Torchwood to Iceland. He agrees: "Absolutely! After we went there for *Misty Eyes*, James was keen we returned. It was fun to send Yvonne to France as well – gives a real international flavour to what we expect from 'heist' stories."

But has Tim actually ever visited Iceland? He concedes: "No! I'm a fraud! I do have friends from there though. I'd love to visit. And it was fun learning facts about the country. No trains in Iceland! Outrageous."

Summing up the story, Tim says: "Yvonne performs a heist

and Rhys tries to stop her! Or is it the other way around?

"I love writing for Rhys. Whether he's barbecuing or making delicious sandwiches, I always seem to be feeding him. And giving him nice warm jumpers. That's all I want to do for characters I love. And there's something that happens in a turret that'll get the listeners talking."

THE APOCALYPSE Starts at 6pm concludes the series and features the aforementioned Janet Ellis. James says: "Episode 12 was the most glorious, starstruck day in studio since we got Sir Michael Palin in! We had Janet Ellis, MBE, playing a national treasure called Janet.

"It's essentially, 'What if you found out the world was going to end during *The One Show*? How would they cover it?'"

"And the answer is this episode. It features riots, kidnapping, aliens and reasonable Christmas gifting tips. The regulars are all wondrous throughout, playing very different aspects of their characters, and, madly, Janet walks away with it.

"We were worried she'd push back on some of the lines, but she really went for it. If you've ever wanted to hear a *Blue Peter* presenter swear, then you're in for a treat!

"Janet agreed to it because, of all wonders, she worked with Paul Clayton back in the day and he took her out to lunch and talked her into it. We don't deserve that man." **VORTEX**

TORCHWOOD AMONG US 3



■ RELEASED: JULY 2023
■ FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

ORDER NOW: bgfn.sh/anger 

THE FIFTH DOCTOR,
ADRIC, NYSSA AND
TEGAN CAN HEAR...



LONDON CALLING

BIG FINISH'S range of **Doctor Who** audio novels continues with its fifth release, *Prisoners of London*. And, like the first release in this range, it was written and performed by Adric actor Matthew Waterhouse, and is accompanied by fantastic sound design.

The range is overseen by producer David Richardson, and he was delighted to commission Matthew to write another audio novel.

David says: "The commission for *Prisoners of London* happened almost immediately after I'd read Matthew's script, *Watchers*. Matthew is terrific at writing character and world building – elements which I think these audio novels can explore far more deeply than a full-cast play because of the word count and running time.

"I find myself just falling into his prose and languishing in it. The listener gets to live in that fully realised world for the duration of the novel, and it's a really immersive and rewarding experience. Thankfully Matthew loved writing *Watchers* so needed little persuading. The only brief was to write a story for this Fifth Doctor team – the rest was up to him."

Watchers was well received by listeners. Matthew tells *Vortex*: "I was delighted that people enjoyed it. What I'm reaching for in my writing is the 'texture' of Classic **Who**, that 'feel' one might call '**Doctor Who-y**-'! It's hard to define but you know it when it's there. They can be very different, but the best serials as I remember them all had these things in common – a distinctive blend of science fiction content with

a spooky, gothic atmospheric.

"Off the top of my head, take two television episode examples – *City of Death* and *Logopolis*. They are very different pieces from writers with very different sensibilities, but both outstanding stories of their kind, drenched in that mysterious ingredient of '**Doctor Who-y**ness'! That's what I'm trying to capture, that texture.

"Each new piece has its own specific challenges and I'm not sure the problems become fewer because of having written fiction before. Apart from *Prisoners of London* being, obviously, another **Doctor Who** novel, *Watchers* really has very little bearing on it, except perhaps to the extent that I wanted it to be different. And, of course, a **Doctor Who** serial has its own built-in



I'M CERTAINLY TRYING TO ENRICH THE RELATIONSHIPS WHILE KEEPING THEM ABSOLUTELY IN THE SPIRIT OF THE CHARACTERS WE ALREADY KNOW.

MATTHEW WATERHOUSE

Above: Matthew Waterhouse

rhythms which are always there. The cliffhangers, for example, dictate certain shapes to the narrative.”

IN PRISONERS of London the Doctor, Adric, Nyssa and Tegan land in London, 1982 – just as the air stewardess has been hoping for, but she shouldn't count her chickens...

... *The Palace is home not to a Queen but to an Emperor! The familiar soldiers in busbies are robots. There is not just one Tower Bridge, there are four! There are 1950s police boxes on every street corner. And no-one has heard of Heathrow...*

But the TARDIS is not wrong. It is London 1982, no doubt about it. As the Doctor tries to work out what's happening, he is accused of trying to assassinate the Emperor; Adric and Nyssa are kidnapped; and Tegan is sentenced to life imprisonment on the Moon. As if this was not enough, there is something fearsome waiting underground which will change the lives of every Londoner forever. All in London, 1982.

Matthew explains: “Well, in varying ways all four of the TARDIS crew wind up as prisoners of London. And London has

a big secret which is going to change life in the city forever.”

How did the writer find capturing the characters of the Doctor, Adric, Nyssa and Tegan in print? *Vortex* suggests these are voices which have been living with Matthew for many years.

Matthew points out: “The main thing is not to confuse the actors with the characters, which sounds pretty obvious but...! So I was thinking very much of Adric, Nyssa and Tegan as fictions rather than Sarah, Janet and myself.

“Of course there's more room in a novel for character work than in a four-part TV serial, so I'm certainly trying to enrich the relationships while keeping them absolutely in the spirit of the characters we already know.

“So the question I'm always asking is, from what we know of them, how might they react under certain given circumstances? Writing fiction is very consuming so I've lived with them all quite a lot recently.”

David adds: “Matthew's readings are sublime on both novels. They sound effortless (though I know that's far from the case) and really

rich – he brings such life to all of the characters and finds exactly the right tone for the Doctor. You can really hear Tom in his reading of the Fourth Doctor, and Peter in his Fifth.”

Looking to the future, David adds: “We're just about to record the January release which is a little different to what we've done before. I think that's all I'm allowed to say, sadly!” **VORTEX**

DOCTOR WHO PRISONERS OF LONDON



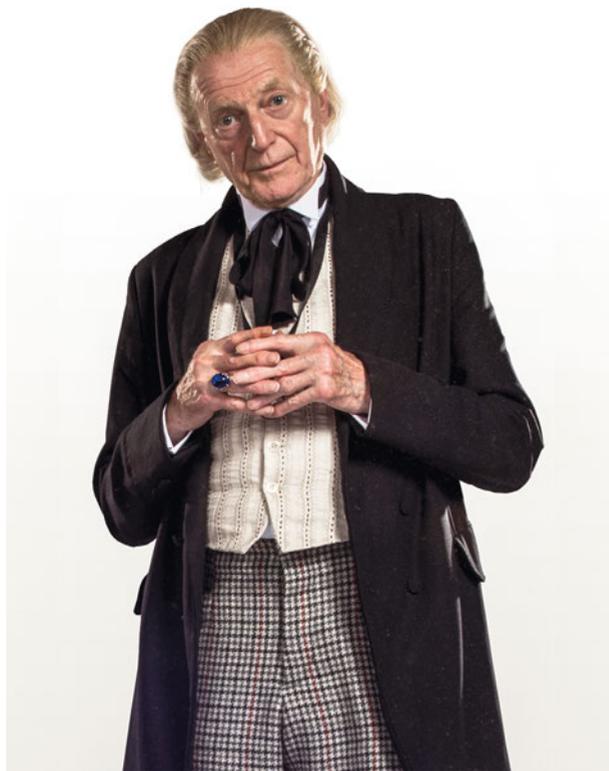
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FIRST? CLASS!

I'm aware that you have some plans for David Bradley's First Doctor, and since his stories are some of my absolute favourites from Big Finish, I'm thrilled to know that you're doing more with him. You've said that your plans for him are rather special. Might you be talking with Jared Garfield and Lily Travers to reprise their brief roles as Ben and Polly in *Twice Upon a Time* for a new age of **The First Doctor Adventures** with Bradley?

ELI SNYDER

Nick: I can reveal that we're not currently planning to have those characters return, but the plans for the First Doctor are rather special (he says, repeating himself!).

TIME FOR MORE?

Is there any possibility of a continuation of *Jeremiah Bourne in Time*? It was my favourite of the **Big Finish Originals** range, and Nigel Planer's book of it is printing soon so I'd love to hear more of that story.

LOUISE WADE

Nick: No plans at the moment, Louise. It wasn't a huge commercial success for us, which we were rather sad about because Nigel's scripts are superb.

DARK DIMENSIONS

This October it will be four years since Big Finish last released something for the **Dark Shadows** range, and there's been little in the way of updates on the website. As a diehard fan of both Big Finish and **Dark Shadows**, I hope you can tell us that the two still have a future together. Will there be more **Dark Shadows** or is the licence in jeopardy?

MICHAEL MCGINLEY

Nick: There are plans for more Dark Shadows, Michael, but the COVID-19 pandemic sadly had a disproportionately large impact on the creative team behind it. Fingers crossed for good news before too long.

POST HASTE

I have been listening to the digital release of **Once & Future: Past Lives** a couple of times over the last couple of days and it's such fun! Light and breezy but with the clear beginnings of grander things to come, I am already so happy that I pre-ordered the whole event because I can't wait to hear what happens next! As an Australian fan who pre-ordered the physical special edition bundle, though, the CD literally cannot arrive fast enough, and as someone who enjoys the physical element of putting a CD into the player I feel like I'm missing a part of the experience. When can Big Finish add an express mailing option for shipping because I'd use it in two heartbeats?

FELIX HADLER

Nick: I'll certainly talk to our brilliant warehouse friends about this, Felix, but I imagine that cost, for customers, is the major concern prohibiting this at the moment.

VORTEX



BIG FINISH RELEASE SCHEDULE

Please note that Big Finish is currently operating a digital-first release schedule. The mail-out of collector's edition CDs and vinyls will be delayed, but all physical purchases of new releases will unlock a digital copy that can be immediately downloaded – or played on the Big Finish app – from the release date.

FOR FULL DETAILS AND UPDATES VISIT:
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A Genius for War (STANDARD EDITION)

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Among Us 3 (BOX SET)

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TBA (BOX SET)

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TBA (BOX SET)

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TORCHWOOD TBA (74)

SEPTEMBER 2023

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(SPECIAL EDITION)

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The Martian Invasion of Planetoid 50
(STANDARD EDITION)

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VOTEX

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FINISH OF STORIES

A LIFE NEVER LIVED

TIMESLIP

THE TIME BARRIER HAS OPENED AGAIN SPELLING TROUBLE FOR LIZ, SIMON AND THEIR FRIENDS...

ALSO INSIDE

ONCE AND FUTURE

A GENIUS FOR WAR: WILL DAVROS HELP THE TIME LORDS WIN THE TIME WAR?