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VORTEX

IT'S STORY TIME!

1001MGHTS

FIFTH DOCTOR PETER DAVISON TELLS TALES!

PLUS!
STARGATE SERIES THREE
CHRISTMAS WITH DORIAN GRAY
AND DARK SHADOWS
DARK THOUGHTS FROM MARC PLATT

BC WE LOVE STORIES



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EUENTS and autographs

All guests appear subject to work commitment:

SNEAK PREVIEWS AND WHISPERS



DOCTOR WHO: THE COMPANION CHRONICLES – THE SCORCHIES

ou think you know what Katy Manning can do? You ain't seen nothing yet... After wowing us for years as Iris Wildthyme and Jo Grant, in March Katy will be taking on a host of bizarre characters (while playing Jo) in **Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles** – *The Scorchies*. And, to add to the challenge, she'll be performing songs in this musical **Doctor Who** story.

"'Challenge me' – that's what Katy always says when we discuss her upcoming **Companion Chronicles**," says producer David Richardson. "I think she's just about forgiven me for this challenge!"

In the story, the Doctor and Jo are investigating a Saturday night puppet show called **The Scorchies**, only to discover that these bizarre singing puppets are actually invaders from another dimension...

"This was an amazing production to work on – Katy and her co-star Melvyn Hayes rehearsed for two weeks before the recording, and came in and blew us away with their performances. The music and lyrics, written by Richard Fox and Lauren Yason, are outstanding. Believe me – you'll have these songs in your head for weeks after listening to this story."

CREDITS:

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EDITORIAL

ell, well, well, ho, ho, ho... It's that month when we get all
Christmassy. And how are we doing that? Well, there are
going to be some Christmas podcasts. That's the plan, at
least. Podcasts packed with special guests like... er, Paul Spragg!
And David Richardson. Oh... not sounding very special, is it?

But hold on, there's Jason Haigh-Ellery! Yes, the CEO of Big Finish and my co-executive producer. He's our Father Christmas, you know. He makes all our dreams come true, and he'll be featuring in an office-based podcast for the first time since about Christmas two or three years ago. Don't miss it. It promises to be at least mildly amusing.

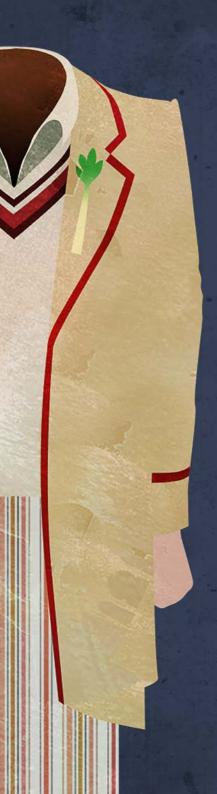
Then there'll be Trevor Baxter and Christopher Benjamin, you know, Jago and Litefoot themselves, with director (and Bernice Summerfield) Lisa Bowerman. Yes, it's all beginning to sound... well, a bit like Christmas. And maybe even Ken Bentley will be along! Or even Alan Barnes. No, this cannot be, surely!

And as a special Christmas treat right here, Paul Spragg has suggested I tell you all about my remote writer's retreat in Dorset... or rather, my home. He thinks it would be interesting for me to tell you about how that all works and the process of writing. That's what he thinks. What will you think? Read on...

I get up in the morning, usually because my son is calling out, 'Mummy, I need you!' I answer a million or so emails and check that Big Finish is running as smoothly as possible, then I walk almost exactly seventy paces down the road from my front door to the local library - where they have no wi-fi and I can write, uninterrupted by emails, tweets, Facebook messages or my lovely son Ben asking, 'Daddy, will you come and play/take me for a walk/watch a DVD/play football with me?'. I go back home (that long, long seventy-pace journey!) for lunch with Ben and my wife Steph. Steph asks how much I've written. If I haven't written much, I say, angrily, 'I don't know! That's not how it works! Don't ask me things like that!'. If it's gone well, I tell her exactly how much I've written, in terms of page count, word count and episode count, exuding a sickening pride. I answer another million emails and check Big Finish is still running smoothly. Then I finish lunch, watch the news on BBC1, then go back to the library for the afternoon. At about 3pm, when I'm really stuck into it, I suddenly hear, 'Hello, Daddy!' because Steph has brought Ben to visit me. I'm happy of the break. Then, off they go, and I carry on until about 6.30pm, when the library closes. The other day, they shut it and then realized I was still sitting there. Lucky they noticed. Imagine, I might have had to spend the night there.

Anyway, that's the story of my writing process. I left out the allnight writing and last minute rushing. But I just assumed everyone already knows about that, right?

NICK BRIGGS



FIVE TALKING

FIFTH DOCTOR PETER DAVISON EXPRESSES
HIS JOY AT A SUCCESSFUL RUN ON STAGE, A
CAREER RUNNING BACKWARDS AND FINALLY
BECOMING AN 'AND'

Hello Peter. This month you're in 1001 Nights. Are you familiar with the concept?

■ You mean as in 1001 Arabian Nights? Well, I was from my childhood, yes, but I don't think I've gone back to it since then. So only very vaguely. It's one of those things, you know exactly what it is but I can't recall ever really reading it, except maybe in a very basic children's form.

Now, we know from past experience that you have trouble remembering recent Big Finish stories, so instead, how's your new son-in-law, David Tennant?

■ I'll knock him into shape over the course of the next couple of years; everything will be all right. Make sure he knows his place. [laughs] He's fine! He's working a lot. But it's nice to see him because their daughter [David's with Peter's daughter, Georgia Moffett], Olive, she's about a year-and-a-half now and she's just coming out into her own, and he's clearly devoted to her. It's nice to have them around from time to time.

So Georgia isn't finding this weird yet, having both a father and a husband a former Doctor?

■ No, I don't think she is, really! I think it's part of the reason why they got on so well to begin with, that she wasn't at all fazed by him being the Doctor because she grew up with it, so she was very calm and very

casual about it. It is a little weird, when you sit and you think about it! When I gave my speech at the wedding, I expostulated that clearly, somewhere down the line, she ended up marrying her own father. But we didn't want to go into that.

No one has embraced **Doctor Who** quite the way you have, have they?

■ That's true, yes! There's the beginning of some kind of dynasty going on here.

Did you ever envisage all of this coming out of one show?

No, not at all! I remember thinking, 'Ooh, we could be doing conventions for a few more years' but you just have no idea, of course. Because videotape was in its infancy, I had no idea that everyone would have several different versions of every single story you did. That it would still be around in that way was not a thing that you thought was possible.

"I'LL KNOCK [DAVID TENNANT]
INTO SHAPE OVER THE COURSE
OF THE NEXT COUPLE OF YEARS;
EVERYTHING WILL BE ALL RIGHT."

Sarah Sutton (Nyssa) was saying you've been back round old locations.

■ They're re-releasing *The Visitation* with added extra bits.

They could call it The Revisitation.

■ That was one of the lines, actually, that we gave poor Mark [Strickson, Turlough] who wasn't in *The Visitation*, but who was acting as a kind of host and asking us questions. One of the lines they gave him at the end was, 'I hope you enjoyed revisiting *The Visitation'*. We went down to various locations, Janet [Fielding, Tegan], Sarah and myself, and the house where we filmed, the manor house, and we went to Black Park, which is where we did the filming for the woods – Black Park being the BBC's standard location for country filming. And on the last day of the filming, when we were way behind, there was miraculously an air traffic controllers strike, and the whole of Black Park went quiet and we were able to do an

enormous amount of stuff in one day. Normally, you could do it in three-minute blocks before anther jet flies over.
Not common in seventeenth century England.

Wasn't that also the scene of the most well-known **Doctor**Who outtake? Oh no, that was *The Awakenina*, wasn't it?

■ *The Awakening*, yes. You're getting your medieval romps confused.

Never mind, I can correct that in the edit so I seem more intelligent.

■ Don't correct it! It's fun to make a fool of yourself. I've spent a whole career doing it!

For ages it seemed to be the only **Doctor Who** outtake; it was all anyone ever showed.

■ It probably was! It was pretty spectacular when it happened, because we had jumped off the cart and we



Malcolm Tierney and Teddy Kempner



Alexander Siddig

had run through the lych gate and we were standing on the path beyond out of shot. And then we heard these cries and we turned around to see the horse and the cart and the lych gate all coming towards us in one great mass, so we had to literally dive out of the way of this thing. It was quite exciting!

You won a Golden Egg from Noel Edmonds for it.

■ Yes, the Golden Egg Award! You're right! It was, I think, a very spectacular clip. I did the Multi-Coloured Swap Shop as well, the Saturday morning show. I think I even sang a song, funnily enough, on Multi-Coloured Swap Shop once.

And I'd like you to recreate that moment now.

■ Fortunately, I think that tape has never been seen. It's probably been wiped. It's one of the few things I hope has been wiped from the BBC library.

Speaking of which, you were recently giving your thoughts on the sale of TV Centre in a documentary.

■ I think it's a terrible shame, and indeed, to move the BBC from London is a terrible mistake as well. Because like it or not, and much as we like to say we have to diversify and decentralise, London is a pretty essential part of the business. Not to have Television Centre there... I mean, not much stuff was done in the studios, so I understand that point of view, but there were several day-to-day programmes that were made there and I think they suffer enormously from being moved, and I don't know quite why they've done it.

It is absolutely iconic. And it is confusing and it's very difficult to find your way round, much, oddly, like Broadcasting House is as well, a labyrinth! And yet there's something quite wonderful about it. I was very nostalgic about it. It's my history of television, you know? When I first went there I was about, I think, thirteen years old, on a school trip... it's a shame.

You've now finished your run on stage in the **Legally Blonde** musical. How was it?

■ I loved doing it, I loved being surrounded by the young cast. I was, by a long way, the oldest member of the cast, and a good proportion of the cast were very attractive ladies, who saw me, sadly, as a kind of avuncular figure rather than the centre of their universe – but nevertheless they were a very nice bunch of people and I enjoyed it



"I ENJOYED [LEGALLY BLONDE] RIGHT TO THE END BUT I JUST FEEL THAT IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS, IT BECAME TOO MUCH OF A JOB."

immensely! I think probably I stayed in there a bit too long; I was in it for two-and-a-half years, and I think two years is about the limit. I enjoyed it right to the end but I just feel that in the last six months, it became too much of a job. Maybe that was because I knew I was leaving, I don't know. I love doing musical theatre. They look after you very nicely, because I think they're used to a much higher calibre of people in musical theatre.

Oh, come on, you were playing the guitar earlier.

■ They tend to help you much more than just actors in plays, I think, because in musical theatre you have a lot of people who, shall we say, crave attention in perhaps the way ordinary actors don't. They have to cater for that, so if you're lucky enough to just be an ordinary actor thrown into a musical, you get grouped in with that if you're high enough up the scale. But I had a great time doing it. I seem to have, in the last ten years or so, found a little niche in musicals. I can hold a tune. I'm no great shakes as a singer, but I think the trend now is to use actors who can sing a bit rather than singers who can act a bit, and that suits me absolutely fine.

My first introduction to musical theatre was playing Amos in **Chicago**, and I followed Nigel Planer in doing that. And since then, Nigel, when he was in **Hairspray**, came round and said, 'You ought to do this part, Peter,' and then when I did **Legally Blonde**, he kept ringing me up, going, 'Are you leaving yet?' So there's a certain level of part; can't be too big, can't be too musical-oriented – but those parts generally aren't – that I think I can play in various shows, and they have a similar kind of character coming up in shows that are coming to the West End so I'm hopeful that people will take a chance on me again. I'm tremendously dedicated, really!

Nigel did play Oz in Wicked...

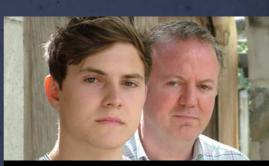
■ That's what I mean; that's exactly the kind of part I play. So my idea is that whichever way round it works, I should follow him around various musicals or he can follow me around various musicals. Had I left **Legally Blonde** and it had carried on, I would have said to Nigel, 'I'm leaving'. He would have been very good.

You've also been doing some more radio, as I was in the audience for the pilot of Big Finish writer Eddie Robson's comedy show, **Welcome to Our Village – Please Invade Carefully**.

■ They've commissioned four episodes. I think it has potential; I look forward to that. Katherine [Parkinson] is great. And Julian [Rhind-Tutt], he was really good. I just pop in and out of it, but it's nice to be there. I've always with no problem, without any intention at all, managed to straddle that whole area of comedy and drama to a certain extent. Not at the far end of both. I'm not in the alternative comedies thing, and I'm not in the high prestige end of the drama thing. But I've always managed to go from one to another, so that's great.



Kim Ismay and Debbie Leigh-Simmons



Oliver Coopersmith and Christopher Luscombe

"I'M NOT IN THE ALTERNATIVE COMEDIES THING, AND I'M NOT IN THE HIGH PRESTIGE END OF THE DRAMA THING. BUT I'VE ALWAYS MANAGED TO GO FROM ONE TO ANOTHER, SO THAT'S GREAT."

You've even had your shirt off in Miranda.

■ That's true! And not only my shirt either! But less of that. [laughs] I knew a couple of people on it and knew [director] Juliet May and Miranda [Hart, writer and star] a bit and they just rang me up and said, 'Would you be interested in doing this?' And I think Miranda's great and fantastically funny, so it was very nice to work with her on that. I'm sort of doing what I never did before; I went from nothing to doing series television and I always said when I was being interviewed earlier in my career that I never did the bits and pieces that I used to see other people doing and was quite envious. Popping into things, doing a little character here, a little character there. And I now appear to be doing that. I'm doing everything back to front!

I went straight from doing stage into serious television, with All Creatures Great and Small, Doctor Who, A Very Peculiar Practice, but now I'm doing popping in and out. I'm doing a series in the autumn of Law & Order again, in which I'm graduating to the 'and'. I've been aware of this for some time; they say, 'It's Law & Order with such and such, such and such, such and such... and Peter Davison. Robert De Niro now, or Al Pacino, quite often does 'and'. So I think I'm in good company. I 'very kindly agreed to appear and raise the status of the programme by appearing in it, and so consequently we're gonna go "and"'. 'With' is not so good, you see. And I'm too old for 'introducing'.

There's a US show called **Raising Hope** which credits 80-something Cloris Leachman as 'introducing'.

■ Really? She must have demanded that! Actually, I might do that... VORTEX



DOCTOR WHO: 1001 NIGHTS

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STARS ALEXANDER VLAHOS AND NICHOLAS BRIGGS DISCUSS A LITERARY UNION FOR THE HISTORY BOOKS: DORIAN GRAY AND SHERLOCK HOLMES IN THE CHRISTMAS CONFESSIONS RELEASE

What can you tell us about **The Confessions of Dorian Gray**: Ghosts of Christmas Past?

Alexander Vlahos: In the last episode of series one [The Fallen King of Britain by Joseph Lidster], Dorian has a throwaway remark that he once met Sherlock Holmes. I guess this is that story! Dorian has his portrait stolen from him and needs the help of the illustrious detective. It's a real fun adventure with all the best aspects of the Dorian and Sherlock franchises, blurred into one hourlong special!

How did it feel to bring these two iconic characters together?

Nicholas Briggs: It was a very different vibe. But then again, Tony Lee's cleverly set it after our **Sherlock Holmes** release *The Adventure of the Perfidious Mariner*, in which Watson goes to visit the retired Holmes in Sussex. This is part of Holmes's return to London. Dorian is a mystery in himself for Holmes. A mystery he never fully solves, so he has to kind of pigeonhole Dorian as

something unknowable. There's an interesting conflict here for Holmes, who likes to find rational explanations for everything.

And how did it feel to be working with each other on the day?

AV: I was a little nervous, to be honest. Nick is such a huge part of Big Finish. I was apprehensive of having to 'do' my Dorian alongside his iconic Holmes. But during the day Nick was great and such fun to have in the studio. It was nice to have so many scenes opposite him and just enjoy every second of listening to these two iconic literary characters collide!

NB: Alex is such a strong performer, and he's really, for obvious reasons, the driving force in these dramas, so it was interesting to sort of trespass in his world but still behave as if it were the world of Holmes... and the world of Briggs. It was really rewarding acting with him. I do so much stuff where I'm running the show, it's lovely just to relax and concentrate on the acting. I love to be

"IN ALL HONESTY, I'M SO PROUD OF HOW WELL THE CONFESSIONS OF DORIAN GRAY HAS BEEN RECEIVED BY THE LISTENERS"

able to trust a director and Scott [Handcock] really puts performers at their ease with a blend of good humour, trust and a simple directness. He has an excellent feel for what he wants and what will work in a scene, and that's very rewarding to work with.

AV: And it was so nice to have familiar faces within the ensemble cast. Rupert Young does a great turn as Moriarty - it was so nice to work with him on this, compared to the muddy forests and chainmail of Merlin. I've known Richard Nichols for a while and Rebecca Newman is a fellow Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama graduate so it felt like one big happy reunion.

How do you feel about headlining a Christmas special?

AV: Never really thought about it until you asked this question - so thanks for that! Um, gosh. I suppose I'm sharing the headlining aspect, aren't I? That makes me feel a little better.

NB: I was honoured to do it. There's something so archetypal about Holmes, and that, mixed with the supernatural aspect of Dorian, makes for a very Christmas Special sort of feel. A coming together of various elements to make something even more exciting. That feels like Christmas to me.

AV: In all honesty, I'm so proud of how well The Confessions of Dorian Gray has been received by the listeners - if it all ends now, I'd be over the moon with this being my last story. Everyone is in for a treat! Though from what I can gather, another encounter looks like it could be on the cards - although Sherlock may not accept this impossible creation so warmly the next time. Maybe they just meet up for a brew and play chess? Wouldn't be a very action-packed audio, but why should they be? Break the mould, I say! Chess and tea all the way!

What do you most enjoy about Christmas?

AV: That feeling it puts inside your tummy. It's inexplicable but I'm sure people put it down to being



Alexander Vlahos



'Christmassy'. As you get older, I think, you learn to appreciate Christmas in a different way. This year I'll be spending it in Stockholm with my girlfriend, so I'm looking forward to a change of scenery.

NB: I'm not a great fan of Christmas. It's largely become a commercial thing - says the man who's putting out a Christmas special! But I will enjoy it very much this year, because my son is three-and-a-half years old now, so for the first time he will understand that it's a 'special' time of year. Christmas is the most fun when viewed through the eyes of children. We've just bought our lovely fake Christmas tree and Ben's already asking if it's Christmas yet! VORTEX

GHOSTS OF CHRISTMAS PAST IS AVAILABLE THIS MONTH FOR DOWNLOAD FROM WWW.BIGFINISH.COM CLICK FOR MORE INFORMATION

A Very Marley Christmas

Lizzie Hopley reveals what's in store in her Christmas Dark Shadows adventure, and James Goss says a tearful goodbye to the range...

So, what's A Collinwood Christmas all about?

It's a spooky but hopefully heart-warming story featuring two loners – Jamison Collins and gypsy Ivanka Romano. Jamison is a virtual recluse, shut up in Collinwood with his two children following his wife's death. Ivanka is a gypsy – childless, spurned by her tribe and living in the Old House. The story pitches the two against each other – first as reluctant neighbours, then as a desperate team to fight an invasion of ghosts from the past, present and future.

What was the inspiration behind it?

To give us a nice Christmassy feel, the story draws from Dickens' A Christmas Carol. Jamison is our Scrooge figure, a stubborn man who has cut himself off from family and friends but whose miserly heart is nevertheless injured and crying out for love. Through Ivanka's reluctant attempt to redeem him, he is forced to confront his past, present and future. However, her gypsy spells conjure up much more than they bargained for! Moo-ha-haaaaa!!

You also star in the audio as Ivanka Romano. What can you tell us about her?

I've adored Ivanka since playing her in the wondrous *The Blind Painter* and *The Crimson Pearl*. She's headstrong, funny and impulsive and nothing is ever dull when she's around. Fortunately, the great minds behind the **Dark Shadows** audio series were keen for her and her wild

accent to return! In this story, we get right to the heart of the woman and her effect on Jamison is deeply intriguing...

Are you a fan of **Dark Shadows** the television series?

I adore the TV series! The acting is far braver than you realise at times. It's good old-fashioned heightened gothic frolicking, and who doesn't love that? It's an honour to be a part of the legend – there's plenty of heightened gothic frolicking in our audios too. Each audio adventure is a great little horror story with some fabulous plots, ideas and ingenious new characters encountering old favourites. A perfect blend.

You've done a lot of work for Big Finish over the years. What else have you got coming up?

I'm lucky to be part of the Christmas telly scheduling this year as I'll be appearing in the Call the Midwife Christmas special. I think we're head to head with Downton Abbey so it'll be fun to be part of the viewing battle. As long as I get more hits than the Queen's speech, I'll be happy. I'll also be filming for Luther this winter – a very different beast to Dark Shadows so it keeps me on my toes!

A COLLINWOOD CHRISMAS IS AVAILABLE THIS MONTH ON CD AND DOWNLOAD FORM WWW.BIGFINISH.COM CLICK FOR MORE INFORMATION Dear Joe,

It's not you, it's me. I don't know what finally tipped me over the edge - whether it was the vampire curse that forced me to feed on the women of Collinsport, the way that every time it rained, zombies would rise up from the sea, or perhaps it was just that, whenever I disagreed with you, you'd sentence me to an hour in Count Petofi's pendulum chamber.

Whatever it was, I'm off. It's been a blast. While working on **Dark Shadows**, we've raised the dead on at least five occasions, trapped souls in mirrors and on gramophone records, and killed people with hemlock, zebra and gypsy curse.

I'm afraid I leave behind a fair amount of unfinished business. What will become of Herr Moloch's horde of nazi vampire werewolves? What is Nicholas Blair planning on doing with Colin Baker's body? And will troubled lawyer Tony Peterson finally get it together with that wig-wearing witch Cassandra?

We've been through a lot together since we first arrived in Collinsport, fresh off that train. We've managed to stretch the definition of a two-handed audiobook - we've done one with a cast of dozens and one where Colin Baker shouted at himself magnificently. We've employed some brilliantly exciting actors, we've brought back some amazing characters, and we may even have made a few fans of Big Finish's Doctor Who range go 'Oh, all right then, I'll give this a try'. Plus we've got to work with the Reverend Trask, quite the most deliciously evil character ever invented.

We've recorded plays in the deserts of Arizona, in the plushness of LA, in the wilds of Shepherd's Bush and over the quixotic magic of Skype. We've even recorded a tiny bit of a play in Davy Darlington's bedroom, but we're not going to let on what bit as otherwise the forums will be full of people saying, 'Oh, I knew it! I knew it!'.

We've lived through the excitement of **Dark Shadows** becoming a movie and the surrounding madness of it. We've shown a Doctor Who clips of Magda the Gypsy, and we sent W Morgan Sheppard to Hell. We've maimed Nicola Bryant, we've melted Terry Molloy and we locked Roy Thinnes in a supernatural love triangle. Amber Benson sang, the Dark Lord danced and I got fired from the part of a schoolgirl.

I'm really not sure that there's much else to do, really. There's milk in the fridge and a severed head on the radiator. Oh, and a one-handed man was looking for you. He said you owed him something.

Anyway, must dash. I'm off to throw myself from Widow's Hill. Maybe this time I'll land on a sailor.

The key to Collinwood is under the mat. Look after the old place. And, whatever you do, don't go into the ballroom after dark.

Kiss kiss,

James

A LITTLE BIT THOR PRODUCER PAUL SPRAGG TEASES THE SECOND HALF OF STARGATE SG-1: SERIES THREE

'd like to be able to claim it was my idea to use the Asgard in the second **Stargate** box set trilogy, but I'm not sure it was. On hearing the finished stories, though, I don't think we could have ever considered anything else.

After featuring Ba'al (the superb Cliff Simon) in our first box set, it was important to use similarly iconic characters in the second. Outside of team SG-1, the Asgard are the bedrock of the **Stargate** universe. They're one of the first alien races the team encounters, way back in season one of **Stargate SG-1**, and one of the few which sticks by us poor, simple humans as we blunder around the galaxy, getting into trouble and annoying System Lords and the Ori. They rarely complain about having to bail O'Neill, Daniel, Carter, Teal'c, Mitchell or Vala out of trouble – indeed, the one-time leader of SG-1-turned-General O'Neill even ends up with an Asgard ship named after him. And, of course, the Asgard are the archetypal aliens

 the 'greys' of legend – and they're lovely. While the System Lords styled themselves as a variety of different gods to lord it over others, the Asgard were the basis for Norse mythology, and far more benevolent.

Now, you can't have the Asgard without Thor. He was the first Asgard SG-1 encountered and the most supportive across the run of the show. And as he's voiced by Michael Shanks, it seemed a shame not to ask our star if he'd mind doubling up. Thankfully, he was happy to do it, as he's always rather enjoyed being the cheeky little grey alien. But what of the other Asgard? We'd seen others on the show, most nice, some malevolent. In episodes of **Stargate Atlantis** set after the stories in this box set, we'd seen their future: turning violent and dangerous in a quest to survive at any cost. We needed a hook. Something new to do with the Asgard. Something which bridged their two extremes of behaviour. But to tell you what that was would spoil one of the many twists and

turns in these stories; you'll have to listen and discover for yourself. Trust me when I say you've never heard the Asgard like this before – especially in one particularly unsettling case!

Daniel and Vala (once more played by the inestimable Claudia Black) are best when they're out of their comfort zone, forced to rely on their wits rather than the back-up of Stargate Command. So after their introduction in the first box set's *Infiltration*, Daniel, via a spot of light kidnapping, gets to meet Vala's former 'associates' Zoder and Wellan – once more with Keto along for the ride.

"OUTSIDE OF TEAM SG-1, THE ASGARD ARE THE BEDROCK OF THE STARGATE UNIVERSE"

It adds a frisson of danger having these untrustworthy characters around, as they're more likely to cut and run when danger comes calling than they are to assist. Can any be redeemed?

There are three very different stories here. Peter J Evans was keen to do an outer space epic for his tale, Excision, and it's an intriguing, mysterious entry in the 2001: A Space Odyssey mould, marking Peter's first trip into the audio medium, having previously written books. Second story Duplicity, by Richard Dinnick, contrasts nicely by

being lighter in tone with hints of Star Wars, but also picking up on elements of Excision and building on them. Finally, Sharon Gosling's Time's Wheel is an exercise in wonderful cruelty, with the watch-phrase amongst the writers when we gathered to 'break' the stories and decide what would happen in each being, 'What horrible thing can we do to Daniel next?' Sharon's the former producer of this range, has written Stargate books and audios before, and knows the show better than most. She was the obvious choice to provide a powerfully emotional and epic climax to both this trilogy and the third series of Stargate adventures, and Michael Shanks is on particularly superb form delivering some really meaty material for Daniel. Be prepared to be baffled, tricked and shocked, and keep some hankies on hand as no one comes out of this adventure unscarred. There's one twist in it I particularly love, and not just because I suggested it. It's incredibly simple - well, it did come from me - but I think it works absolutely beautifully.

If you're a **Stargate** fan, I hope you enjoy this latest dip into the franchise. We've pulled out all the stops to make something different and surprising, but still quintessentially **Stargate**. Thanks once again to all the people who made it possible, from our brilliant stars and superb production team to the incredibly supportive Karol Mora at MGM, who's been fantastic and speedy during the approvals process. Whether the future of the franchise remains in our hands or someone else's after this, let's hope it isn't the last we hear from this endlessly entertaining and much-loved series.



STARGATE SG-1: SERIES THREE — PART TWO

Abducted by some less than savoury characters, Daniel Jackson and Vala Mal Doran are caught up in the investigation of a strange object in space. What does it do, who created it and why does it seem so familiar?

As they discover more about the object, Daniel and Vala realise that they're taking on an enormously technologically advanced threat bent on rewriting the very foundations of the universe. Can they stop the disaster that's about to occur, or is life as they know it about to change forever?

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'd been waiting a long time to write a Fourth Doctor story. Admittedly, I'd sent several Tom Baker storylines to the Who production office at the BBC in the late failed to meet. David wanted som

to the **Who** production office at the BBC in the late Seventies/early Eighties. But *Fires of the Starmind* and *The Drennorye Thesis* are not going to see the light of day – if they ever actually counted as **Lost Stories**, which I suspect they do not, they would still be better off staying lost. And anyway, I sent in storylines for Peter Davison, Colin Baker and Sylvester McCoy too before anything actually got commissioned. I've made up for those since, but even in book and short story form, I've never actually touched on the Fourth Doctor. I might even have been a bit scared of him.

Then Tom Baker was suddenly and wonderfully available again. And [producer] David Richardson, the

most patient person in the charted universe, emailed with some very specific requests for a story, which I entirely failed to meet. David wanted something dark and small scale, but the story I had in mind refused to resolve out of being a vast epic.

So we shelved that idea and went for another small scale story, and it's that reliable old chestnut a Base Under Siege story, with a small band of guest characters and a very big monster indeed.

Stormcrow didn't start out as the 2012 Christmas story. It doesn't feature turkeys, tinsel or reindeer at all, although it does have something that lands on the roof. The story was originally meant as part of the main run of the Fourth Doctor and Leela series. It's also a standalone story, not connected to any ongoing story arc, and so it

got moved out on its own. As befitting Christmas, it's a sort of creepy ghost story with ghosts who maybe don't exist at all. And the almost obligatory great cast too – thanks Nick!

The classic Fourth Doctor story that's closest to Stormcrow is Image of the Fendahl, and I'd also been re-

"IT DOESN'T FEATURE TURKEYS, TINSEL OR REINDEER AT ALL"



Tom Baker, Mandi Symonds and Jonathan Forbes

watching Nigel Kneale's 1972 TV ghost story **The Stone Tape**, both with a feeling of supernatural darkness in a 'real' setting. But in the latter, I found myself reacting against its predominantly male cast, who are deeply misogynist in a very Seventies way. I'm sure that's deliberate on Nigel Kneale's part, but as a result, it's why the staff at the besieged observatory in *Stormcrow* are mainly women.

The telescope station at Mount McKerry is like a miniature version of the Mauna Kea observatory on the Big Island of Hawaii. It's deliberately an optical not a radio telescope, and the mountaintop has that sense of isolation that comes when the clouds are below you.

Stormcrow is one of those stories about what scares me – they always say write about what you know about, which isn't always helpful with science fantasy. But in this case...

3.30 in the morning is the time when you are at your lowest metabolic ebb. It's the dark sleepless time when anything you are worried about seems about five times worse than it actually is. But suppose there is something else that feeds on you at that low point... literally preying

on your mind. How would you even know? It's one of my obsessions with how much we, as humans, have forgotten or simply never noticed.

The best sleepless night I know is the one invoked by the grotesque and guilt-ridden Clytemnestra in Richard Strauss's tumultuous opera *Elektra*. She talks (sings!) about the terrible, unknown something that drags itself over her in the night; the yellow torchlight that still grins under the door when she thought it was dawn; the tiny demons with sharp beaks that drink her blood in the dark. Strauss's music is both gruesome and terrific in several senses of the word. There's certainly some of that in *Stormcrow*, but no singing, I promise.

I spent some time trying to work out how to write for the Fourth Doctor. What is it that's different? He's still the Doctor – they all are – but Tom's Doctor is somehow more all-encompassing and expansive, almost carefree, even in adversity. Yes, we all remember him having doubts about committing genocide on the Dalek race, but that uncertainty doesn't happen very often. Maybe that's why I wanted him to suffer a sense of crisis in this story and that doubt puts poor Leela in great danger too. Louise Jameson plays Leela with such a brilliant sense of wonder. She's both naïve and wise – a complete joy to write as a character.

But in the end, it was pointless trying to analyse the Fourth Doctor/Tom. Once his voice is in your head, the Fourth Doctor writes himself.



NIGHT OF THE STORMCROW IS AVAILABLE FREE TO DOCTOR WHO MAIN RANGE SUBSCRIBERS WHOSE SUBSCRIPTION INCLUDES 1001 NIGHTS, AND WILL BE AVAILABLE TO BUY SEPARATELY IN DECEMBER 2013. CLICK FOR MORE INFORMATION

CRACKING THE CODES

What has been happening to the production codes of late? They are often wrong. This is causing headaches for us code followers and debates are often lively on the forums (not a bad thing, I guess) on where stories are set. A simple answer would be a handy feature on the website that arranges the audios in a chronological order. I appreciate you guys are probably far too busy to compile such a thing but I'm sure there are fans out there who would provide the info for free - just the TV stories and the BF audios; forget about the books and comic strips as this would cause too many headaches. It would be great to have an official guide for reference.

There are people on the forums who laugh at us chronology buffs and say 'does it really matter?' I suppose it doesn't in the grand scheme of things – the audios can just be enjoyed for what they are – but I liken it to stamp collecting. Some collectors have their stamp albums arranged in order of issue or even the watermark number, others have theirs in any order and are not concerned by such trivial matters but both ways can be just as valid and enjoyable as the other – it depends on the individual. Give us a guide, Big Finish – you know you want to.

James Bell

Nick: For me personally, James, the phrase 'it doesn't matter in the grand scheme of things' hits the nail on the head. I have to confess that I was in favour of losing the production codes altogether. Previous to my becoming executive producer, these production codes were used as the codes for the actual CD releases, which was a nightmare when we came to getting CDs repressed, as the pressing plants (who, of course, weren't **Doctor Who** buffs) had no way of easily finding the masters since, to them, the codes made no logical sense whatsoever. But I was advised by people more sensitive to the needs of

the 'collectors' gene', that we should retain the codes. I was happy to do so, because I appreciate that it takes all sorts to make a world and we want as many of our listeners to be as happy as possible. The trouble is, sometimes, when you're dealing with a concept like Doctor Who, the whole issue of exactly when things take place in the Doctor's timeline sometimes becomes unclear. And this has led us into some trouble with the story codes. I always avoid tying my stories down to particular dates when possible, because I like to leave all possibilities open. But that's just me. Your idea for something on the website put together by listeners is a rather intriguing one, and we shall look into this.

DALEKMANIA!

I have some questions for you fantastic people! Will I need to know a lot about the Lucie Miller adventures to enjoy Dark Eyes? I know what happened in To the Death, but is that enough? Also, you speak of writing competitions. Are high-school students from Australia eligible for entry?

I love classic **Doctor Who**, and I think Daleks are... incredible. Big Finish has given classic characters a new lease on life and I love it. And if your answer to my second question is yes, I can't wait to give writing a go (I want to be a writer)!

Thank you, thank you, thank you.
Especially for all the Dalek stories. (All hail the Dalek Empire!)

James Macaronas

Nick: Glad you love **Dalek Empire**, James! No, you don't need to know about Lucie Miller to enjoy *Dark Eyes*. When we do our writers' opportunities, anyone can enter. Anyone.

A GOOD PLACE TO START

Thanks for the 'jumping-on points' recommendations in your podcast. I just listened to *Jubilee*, and am about to start *The First Sontarans*.

You might also recommend a few of your stories from the Big Finish for a Fiver. In particular, the I, Davros series is an excellent self-contained, one-off story for anyone who liked Davros from the classic series. For someone who just wants to dip their toes in, the fourth part stands on its own very well as a prequel to *Genesis of the Daleks*

I also would recommend as a good jumping-on point the second of the **Unbound** series, *Sympathy for the Devil*, with David Warner and Nicholas Courtney. This is a good introduction to the 'what if' premise of the **Unbound** stories.

1im Hall

Nick: Jim, that's a good idea. I might add *Sympathy...* Glad you found the jumping on points useful. Anyone else tried these?

BUNDLES OF JOY

Last year I treated myself to the **Doctor Who** special releases bundle. This means that over the year I have had the joy of seeing you announce details of things like *Love and War*, **UNIT**: *Dominion*, *Dark Eyes* and Sixth Doctor meets Jago & Litefoot and knowing that they were already sorted.

Now that you are announcing specials for 2013 like **Counter-Measures 2** and **Vienna**, please let us all know if we should order them individually or if you are doing the same sort of subscription bundle for 2013?

Andrew Turnbull

Nick: Thanks, Andrew. We have no plans for another special subscription bundle involving the two productions you mention, so they can be ordered separately and safely in the knowledge than no better deal is going to supersede them.

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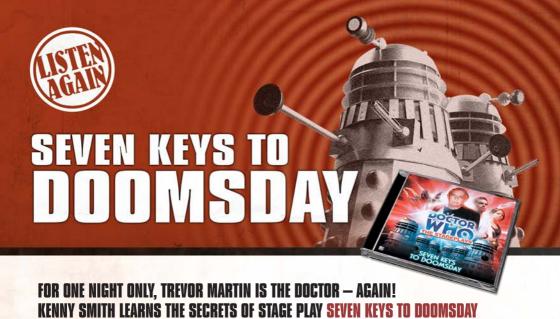
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ritain has a wonderful tradition every December of going to the pantomime: a theatre show with larger than life characters, over-the-top moments, plus plenty of thrills and spills along the way. What better way is there to get into the festive spirit than by giving the Seven Keys to Doomsday a spin?

Adapted by Terrance Dicks from his own 1974 stage play, it brought Trevor Martin back to the role of the Doctor, to face off once again with the dreaded Daleks.

Director John Ainsworth recalls: "Before I was offered the chance to direct Seven Keys, I don't think anybody else at Big Finish was seriously considering having Trevor as the Doctor. I wasn't meant to be involved in the stage plays at all but I expressed such an enthusiasm for the project and had such strong opinions on how it should be done that [line producer] David Richardson invited me to be involved. I was very keen that Trevor should play the Doctor again in our version of Seven Keys."

Trevor Martin remembers, "I was approached by the director, John Ainsworth, to see if I'd like to do it. I didn't know him, but he told me he had seen me in something, so we met up and he put it to me, and I leapt at the chance."

Also in the cast was Charlie Hayes – daughter of Wendy Padbury, who had originally played the new companion, Jenny.

John says, "I could have asked Wendy Padbury to play Jenny again, but having decided to go with a new supporting cast it quickly occurred to me that Wendy's daughter Charlie would be a good choice. She was the right age for the part but, obviously, there was still a nice connection to the original production as well."

Charlie says, "I told Trevor who I was when I first met him, and he took a moment to digest the information – he was lovely. It was great, and really nice to do."

Trevor adds, "It was tremendous working with Charlie Hayes. It was a great bit of casting, bringing in the daughter of the girl who played it in the original play, Wendy Padbury. We got on terribly well."

John says, "I didn't liaise with Terrance [Dicks] at all, prior to the studio recording. Terrance came along to the studio recording and his first words were, 'I'm interested to see what you've done with it'. I explained that I had done a bit of script editing and, of course, as a script editor himself, he completely understood. He sat with me for the entire recording, following the action in the script and being ready to discuss any points as they arose. He never once raised any concerns about the changes that I'd made. He sent me a lovely email a few days later saying that it had been a new and fascinating experience for him and had opened his eyes to what can be achieved with sound alone.

"Trevor sent me a note after he'd received the finished CD saying that 'it was a strange but enjoyable feeling doing it again after thirty-four years'."

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Doctor Who: 1001 Nights (168, Fifth Doctor and Nyssa)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: The Child (7.06, Fourth Doctor) Doctor Who: The Sixth Doctor Specials 2: The Voyages of Jago & Litefoot -

Voyage to the New World

Dark Shadows 32: A Collinwood Christmas

Stargate SG-1: Series 3 Box Set 2 (Three full cast adventures)

The Confessions of Dorian Gray: Ghosts of Christmas Past (download only)

JANUARY 2013

Doctor Who: The Wrong Doctors (169, Sixth Doctor and Mel) Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures: The Auntie Matter

(2.1. Fourth Doctor and Romana)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: The Flames of Cadiz

(7.07. First Doctor, double disc)

FEBRUARY 2013

Doctor Who: Spaceport Fear (170, Sixth Doctor and Mel) Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures: The Sands of Life

(2.2, Fourth Doctor and Romana)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: The House of Cards

(7.08. Second Doctor)

Gallifrey V (Three full cast adventures)

Blake's 7: The Liberator Chronicles - Box Set 3

Blake's 7: Warship (Full cast drama) Blake's 7: Warship (Novelisation)

Vienna: The Memory Box (Full cast drama)

MARCH 2013

Doctor Who: The Seeds of War (171, Sixth Doctor and Mel)

Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures: War Against the Laan

(2.3, Fourth Doctor and Romana)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: The Scorchies (7.09. Third Doctor)

Jago & Litefoot: Series Five Box Set Big Finish Classics: Treasure Island

APRIL 2013

Doctor Who: TBA (172, Fifth Doctor)

Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures: The Justice of Jalxar

(2.4. Fourth Doctor, Romana, Jago and Litefoot)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: The Alchemists (7.10, First Doctor)

Bernice Summerfield: New Frontiers Box Set

Bernice Summerfield: New Frontiers tie-in book (title tba)

MAY 2013

Doctor Who: TBA (173, Fifth Doctor)

Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures: Phantoms of the Deep

(2.5. Fourth Doctor and Romana)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: The Apocalypse Mirror

(7.11, Second Doctor)

Blake's 7: The Liberator Chronicles - Box Set 4

Blake's 7: Lucifer by Paul Darrow

Blake's 7: Lucifer audiobook (Read by Paul Darrow)

JUNE 2013

Doctor Who: TBA (174, Fifth Doctor)

Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures: The Dalek Contract

(2.6. Fourth Doctor and Romana)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: Council of War (7.12, Third Doctor)

Graceless 3 - Box Set

JULY 2013

Doctor Who: TBA (175, TBA)

Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures: The Final Phase

(2.7, Fourth Doctor and Romana)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: TBA (8.01, Doctor TBA)

Counter-Measures: Series Two Box Set

AUGUST 2013

Doctor Who: TBA (176. TBA)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: TBA (8.02, Doctor TBA)

Blake's 7: The Liberator Chronicles - Box Set 5 Iris Wildthyme: Series Four Box Set

SEPTEMBER 2013

Doctor Who: TBA (177, TBA) Doctor Who: TBA (178. TBA)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: TBA (8.03, Doctor TBA) Doctor Who - The Lost Stories: The Dark Planet (4.01, First Doctor)

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