

WWW.BIGFINISH.COM • NEW AUDIO ADVENTURES

VORTEX



GRACELESS

ABBY AND ZARA RETURN FOR A FINAL SERIES!

DARK SHADOWS

BENEATH THE VEIL

HAVING A KILLER TIME IN COLLINSPOORT

MERVYN STONE

THE AXEMAN COMETH

THE UNWILLING DETECTIVE COMES TO AUDIO!

PLUS! DOCTOR WHO

NICK BRIGGS: INSEPARABLE FROM THE DALEKS?

ISSUE 52 • JUNE 2013

BIG FINISH | WE LOVE
STORIES

JOIN US TO CELEBRATE THE
50TH ANNIVERSARY OF
DOCTOR WHO

50-5-50

25/26/27 OCTOBER 2013

THE COPTHORNE HOTEL, NEWCASTLE, ENGLAND

PETER PURVES BONNIE LANGFORD ANNEKE WILLS
WILLIAM RUSSELL COLIN BAKER WENDY PADBURY
JANET FIELDING SYLVESTER McCOY BARRY NOBLE
SHANE RIMMER PETER DAVISON AND MORE TO BE ANNOUNCED SOON

**BOOK EARLY TO MAKE SURE OF YOUR PLACE AT
THIS SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY EVENT OF A LIFETIME**

**BOOKING AND FURTHER DETAILS AVAILABLE AT
www.tenthplanet.co.uk**

**BIG
FINISH**

WELCOME TO BIG FINISH!

**WE LOVE STORIES AND WE MAKE GREAT FULL-CAST
AUDIO DRAMA AND AUDIOBOOKS YOU CAN BUY ON CD
AND/OR DOWNLOAD**



Our audio productions are based on much-loved TV series like **Doctor Who**, **Dark Shadows**, **Blake's 7**, **Stargate** and **Highlander** as well as classic characters such as **Sherlock Holmes**, **The Phantom of the Opera** and **Dorian Gray**, plus original creations such as **Graceless** and **The Adventures of Bernice Summerfield**.

We publish a growing number of books (non-fiction, novels and short stories) from new and established authors.

You can access a video guide to the site here: bit.ly/Xf1oAD

SUBSCRIBERS GET MORE AT BIGFINISH.COM!

If you subscribe, depending on the range you subscribe to, you get free audiobooks, PDFs of scripts, extra behind-the-scenes material, a bonus release and discounts.

WWW.BIGFINISH.COM  **@BIGFINISH**  **/THEBIGFINISH**

FULL CAST AUDIOBOOKS ON CD AND FOR DOWNLOAD

JAGO & LITEFOOT

Starring CHRISTOPHER BENJAMIN and TREVOR BAXTER

**SERIES 5
OUT NOW!**



**INCLUDES BONUS CD
WITH AN EXTENSIVE
BEHIND THE SCENES
DOCUMENTARY!**

VICTORIAN VALUES, SWINGING SIXTIES.

ALSO AVAILABLE



  @bigfinish

SNEAK PREVIEWS AND WHISPERS

DOCTOR WHO: TRIAL OF THE VALEYARD

A treat for our lovely main range subscribers – who receive a free one-hour full cast **Doctor Who** story in December – this one confronts many of the threads left dangling by the fourteen-part *The Trial of a Time Lord* from 1986. Colin Baker is back in the Time Lords' court room, but this time it's the Valeyard – an enemy who represents his own darker side – in the dock and standing accused by the Inquisitor. Michael Jayston and Lynda Bellingham return to their TV roles for what is largely a three-handed play.

What is the true nature of the Valeyard? What secret does he hold? And will he bring down the Doctor as fate catches up with him? For now, all these secrets must remain concealed...

"What a treat this was to record," says producer David Richardson, "with three of the nicest actors we've ever had through the doors at Big Finish. And the script, by Mike Maddox and Alan Barnes, is a real page-turner. Not to be missed!"

AVAILABLE TO SUBSCRIBERS IN DECEMBER 2013

CREDITS:

Managing Editor: Jason Haigh-Ellery

Editor: Paul Spragg

Executive Producer: Nicholas Briggs

Line Producer: David Richardson

Design: Mark Plastow

Web Services: Hughes Media

BFP Administration: Alison Taylor, Charlotte Baker,

Frances Welsh

Publisher: Big Finish Productions Ltd.

EDITORIAL



Well, this is embarrassing. Apparently I'm now in charge of *Vortex*. You write one editorial saying how much you love this little magazine and suddenly – kapow! – you're running it. For those who haven't heard the moment it happened, take a listen to the second May podcast. And if

you're not a regular podcast listener, why not give one a try?

I think it's important that Big Finish has a face (although on audio that can be a bit tricky) and aside from this magazine, the podcast fills that function. It allows us to interact with you, our listeners, answer your questions, take praise and listen to criticism. It gives us the chance to explain why, where and how we do what we do, and provides a platform for us to say thank you for your support, give some hints (and clips) of what's coming up, and – and I think this is the most important aspect – lets us mess about a bit. Workdays can be pretty full-on with so many productions in various stages, so taking a break to have a laugh and be silly is vital. Everyone should try it, even if you're not recording it for a podcast. Take a moment out of your day to have a bit of a giggle.

Speaking of time out, I had a couple of days off recently and went down to Devon with my girlfriend, Nat, to visit my mum and stepfather. Under strict 'no work emails' orders, it was a lovely relaxing long weekend, visiting a pony sanctuary that was hidden from our SatNav (a Tourist Information centre rescued us) and The Big Sheep, a working farm with shows demonstrating the work of sheepdogs, horse whispering and the art of shepherding ducks. Silly, fun, and the journeys gave me a chance to play an ongoing game of Yellow Car (you're never not playing Yellow Car). It stems from brilliant Radio 4 comedy series **Cabin Pressure**, and if you want to join in on your future journeys, the rules can be found on YouTube. That should sort out your giggle moment for the day.

PAUL SPRAGG



GRACE NOTES

IT'S THE FINAL INSTALMENT IN THE STORY OF ABBY AND ZARA IN **GRACELESS III**. WE ASKED WRITER SIMON GUERRIER HOW IT WOULD ALL PAN OUT

Hi Simon. This month sees the release of the third and final series of *Graceless*. And you've written them all. How does that feel?

■ Hello! I'm really very proud of *Graceless* – but I think of it much more as a collaborative effort, working with producer Mark Wright, director Lisa Bowerman and our stars Ciara [Janson, Abby] and Laura [Doddington, Zara] to make something a bit different and special. It's been a great delight to work on and people seem to like what we've done. So I feel good.

Why bring it to a close?

■ I always had an ending in mind, which was first hinted at in series one, when the Grace tell our heroes, Abby and Zara, that they would one day choose to die. I knew what that would be and how it would play out, more or less... Back then we had no idea there'd even be a second series, it was just

wishful thinking, teasing the audience (and my producers) that there were more stories to tell.

But I also like the idea of a definitive ending. My **Companion Chronicles** trilogies – the Sara Kingdom one of *Home Truths*, *The Drowned World* and *The Guardian of the Solar System*, and the Steven and Oliver one of *The Perpetual Bond*, *The Cold Equations* and *The First Wave* – had felt really satisfying to do and seemed to go down well. And I didn't want to outstay our welcome. Plus, I think a finite run made the series more attractive to BBC Radio 4 Extra when they were looking to buy it for broadcast.

How much pressure did you feel to provide a satisfying conclusion?

■ The first two stories in this box were pretty much business as usual: agreeing an outline with Mark, Lisa and executive producer Jason Haigh-Ellery, and then ploughing

through the writing without getting distracted by Twitter and biscuits. There's always pressure: does the story make sense? Will anyone care about the characters and what happens to them? Is it the right number of words, with scenes no longer than three pages (so they'll fit on the stands in the recording studio)?

"I THINK A FINITE RUN MADE THE SERIES MORE ATTRACTIVE TO BBC RADIO 4 EXTRA WHEN THEY WERE LOOKING TO BUY IT FOR BROADCAST."

But the last one was much harder, partly because it ties up so many threads and things, and partly because it needed to feel especially epic. Mark very wisely made me rewrite a lot of the first draft to concentrate on what's really important – which I won't say here as it's a spoiler. He's very good at giving me plenty of freedom to try things, and then reining me in when it doesn't work.

Even in the studio we were changing the emphasis of things or underlining aspects to make it work more effectively. Fraser James – who plays Marek in the series – had a great note from one of his children which we were able to address, and there's a whole bit of the very last scene that we worked out with the cast in the studio. See? It really is collaborative!

What are the positives and negatives of developing all of these characters solo?

■ It's odd: this has felt like one of the least solo things I've ever written, because I knew who I was writing for in advance and there was lots of back and forth. It's very daunting before a series has been written: there's 30,000 words to bash out, and the three stories need to feel distinct from each other and the rest of the series. But it's also very exciting and I've been allowed tremendous freedom, with a really good working relationship with everyone. I can't think of any negatives.

How much inspiration have you had from the actors, producers and others on the direction the story should go?

■ Oh, that's a good question. Um... I think generally I came up with the direction of the story, but everyone's had their chance to chip in. The most obvious example of cast dictating a story is bringing back Brondle and Wing, who

Below: Ciara Janson (Abby) and Laura Doddington (Zara)

Inset: Lisa Bowerman (Archive/Director), Ciara Janson, Tim Bentinck (Albert), Laura Doddington and Geraldine James (Chi)



appeared in series two. I missed the recording of their first story, but later when I heard

the finished version I absolutely loved how Michael Cochrane and Joanna van Gysegem brought the characters to life. So I suggested to Mark that they should return – and he was delighted.

Is there anything you're sad not to have had the chance to do? What are you most proud of?

■ We talked for a bit about doing an animated version, along the lines of the amazing **Bernice Summerfield: Dead and Buried** short film. There were a whole load of boring technical reasons why that didn't happen, but because we had to work out how to tell a **Graceless** story visually, I had fun thinking what teleportation would look like. I'd also had an idea for a story about an 18th Century gang who investigate strange



Fraser James (Marek)

phenomena – sort of Torchwood but led by Mary Wollstonecraft. One day I'll work that into something.

As for things I'm proud of... I'm really pleased that it worked well enough to warrant three series. And there's getting to write for some of my heroes, such as David Warner, Derek Griffiths and Geraldine James. But I'm proud of the whole atmosphere of working on the series; it's been good fun and we've made something we can all be proud of.



GRACELESS III

WRITTEN BY: SIMON GUERRIER
DIRECTED BY: LISA BOWERMAN
OUT: THIS MONTH!

Once upon a time there were two sisters. They were created by beings called the Grace. Both sisters had magic powers. When they were together, they could do anything. Go anywhere and when. Reach into people's minds, even influence their thoughts.

They tried to be good. They tried to do what was right. But even when they tried their hardest to help people there were unintended consequences.

They still did terrible things. So many people still died. The sisters lost people they loved. There was a man... They thought they'd lost him forever.

There are lots of stories about the two sisters. But that story – their last story, about the day they chose to die... Those who knew what really happened are all dead.

Except for one. A man. Living by the sea. And he promised never to tell...

AVAILABLE ON CD AND DOWNLOAD FROM
BIGFINISH.COM

You and your brother Tom have also been making some excellent short films; how can others see them?

■ Thank you! Three of our short films are up online for you to watch for free at <http://simonguerrier.blogspot.co.uk/search/label/film> The comedy **Wizard** stars David Warner as Merlin, working in a call centre alongside Big Finish luminaries Lisa Bowerman, Lisa Greenwood and Matthew Sweet. Another comedy, **The Plotters**, also stars lots of Big Finish alumni and is playing in Picturehouse cinemas around the UK. **Revealing Diary** is a spooky one that stars Ciara and Laura from **Graceless**.

Our first short film **Cleaning Up** – which stars Mark Gatiss and Louise Jameson – isn't up online but has been playing film festivals for the last year, winning awards and getting us into some interesting meetings with production companies and things.

And you're hoping to take **Cleaning Up** to the next stage and make a full-length film. How can we help?

■ Easy! **Cleaning Up** will shortly be available to buy from the Big Finish website. You can either buy the film on its own or a version packed with extras, all for just a few pounds. Any profits we make from the sale will go directly into a fund for making a **Cleaning Up** feature film. We're hoping it will help us pay a development producer to come onboard the project. So spread the word, tell everyone you know, but most importantly: buy our excellent and award-winning film and in the process help us make a Big Finish movie!

What other projects are you scribbling away at?

■ I am in the midst of writing some more stuff for Big Finish which I don't think I am allowed to talk about just yet. I've also got an original sci-fi novel sitting in the to-read pile of a literary agent. And I'm writing jokes for kids' magazine *Horrible Histories*. **VORTEX**

VORTEX MAIL

MARK OF NATURE

I've just finished listening to the completely excellent *Eldrad Must Die!* and the CD extras on it have been superb. I was particularly taken with Mark Strickson's account on his work and his knowledge of the natural planet, I could have listened to that all day. He has such an enthusiastic voice, it makes it such a joy listening to him. Could it be possible for Big Finish to get some natural world documentaries from him released, talking about the animals and insects he loves in that unscripted fashion? Keep up the amazing work you do, this year is certainly a cracker...

Patrick Lockyear

NICK: Thanks, Patrick. We'll talk to Mark about doing audio natural world documentaries, but I fear there would be quite a limited market for them. Still, nice idea. Hmm...

LET'S GET PHYSICAL

My partner and I are huge fans of Big Finish, have every *Doctor Who* from the start, subscribe, buy *Companion Chronicles* and many other audio lines, books, etc and attend events where Big Finish is selling.

We are distraught to learn the *Blake's 7* book *Warship* is being published only as an e-book! *The Forgotten* and *Archangel* sit very elegantly on my bookshelf but it looks as if BF has ceased publishing physical books. On calling Big Finish, a lady informed us 'people buy e-books these days'. We think this is a big pity and you will miss a lot of sales. Having just bought *Big Finish Companion Volume 2*, it will also be a huge disappointment when *Volume 3* is available purely as an e-book. Needless to say, we will not be buying it in that form. What a huge shame.

Tony Shaw

NICK: There are no plans to stop producing physical books. If we do

Volume 3 of the *Big Finish Companion*, it will be a physical book too.

WHERE THE DEVIL?

When I took advantage of the Ice Warrior sale I realised that there have been no Silurian stories since *Bloodtide*, which was a hell of a long time ago. Not only that, there has never been a *Doctor Who* Sea Devil story since Big Finish started.

Are there plans for any Silurian or Sea Devil stories at some point in the future? You could always kill two pigeons with one stone and combine them in a story, as they tried to do in *Warriors of the Deep* back in 1984.

I realise there are legal issues regarding the Beeb and the creators of those creatures. I just hope they are not insurmountable.

You all have a hell of a lot on your respective plates this year, but I hope you will consider doing something with them at some point in the future.

I'll leave you in peace now!

Paul Stevenson

NICK: You're right, there are always rights issues with this kind of thing. We did have a plan, a while back, to do a 'Silurians in space' story, but we had to pull that because the BBC turned out to be planning a Silurian return. And now the TV series has featured a 'Silurians in space' story – so that's the end of that! We have no plans currently.

INCIDENTALLY

I am a really big fan of your audio plays and have been delighted to have been able to expand my collection with your recent bargain offers. These have also introduced me to Peter Davison's plays, as I normally opt for Six, Seven or Eight (only due to financial constraints, I can only buy so many!).

This leads me to my reason for writing: I have just finished listening to *The Elite*,

which I very much enjoyed. For me, the best bit was actually the incidental music; it was absolutely spot on for the Fifth Doctor's era and really sold the idea of this as a 'lost' story from his TV run. Very well done to the team!

On a side note, I have recently listened to the rerun of *The Cradle of the Snake* on Radio 4 Extra and listened to *Dark Eyes* for the second time. Both are utterly absorbing and demand repeat listens. Again, well done Big Finish!

Thank you all for your brilliant work and long may it continue!

Louise Beaton

NICK: Thanks, Louise. Glad you liked them all.

GOOD GOLLY MISS...

I am a long-time subscriber (started when *Sirens of Time* was first released), and the only time I have written to Big Finish in the past is for subscription matters, so this is a bit of a change of pace for me. I just wanted to tell you how pleased I was with the *Dark Eyes* story, and especially with the Doctor's companion Molly. She is one of the most refreshing companions that has appeared in any *Doctor Who* story, whether on audio or video. I hope I can persuade you to make her a permanent companion in future Eighth Doctor stories, as I'd hate such a fun, charming and feisty character to have come and gone so quickly. Please, more Molly!!!

Also, I really enjoyed the *UNIT: Dominion* story too, and would love more appearances by Alex Macqueen; what a delight he was in this special role!

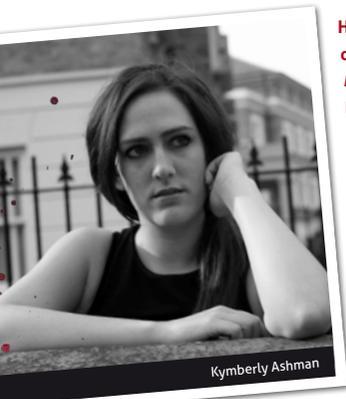
Randy Hoffman

NICK: I think we can more or less oblige on both scores, Randy.

GOT SOMETHING TO SAY? WRITE TO: FEEDBACK@BIGFINISH.COM

DEVIL WOMAN

BENEATH THE VEIL WRITER **KYMBERLY ASHMAN** EXPLAINS HOW SHE GOT INVOLVED IN THE MYSTERIOUS WORLD OF **DARK SHADOWS**



Kimberly Ashman

Hello Kym. So what can you tell us about *Beneath the Veil*?

■ *Beneath the Veil* is about an English couple, Alfie Chapman and Emma Finney, on a fun-filled trip around America which quickly turns into a horror story. I really wanted to focus on Collinsport from the perspective of outsiders, to create a story that anyone

can listen to, whether they know *Dark Shadows* or not. There's a real sense of community in this year's series; you really get to know and care about every character, which makes it all the more fun when they start dying.

The story features the return of Eve from the television series. But she's also called Danielle. Or something. It sounds a bit confusing!

■ Ha! No, it's not confusing. Basically, Danielle Rogét is the character; Eve is a reincarnation of her. Eve was brought to life by Nicholas Blair using Danielle's life essence. Eve, played by the fantastic Marie Wallace, is a very dark, mysterious woman and so much fun to write for.

The play sees the residents of Collinsport threatened by a serial killer. Is that a subject you're interested in?

■ Oh yes! My dissertation was on the mythology of the 'serial killer'. I find it all fascinating. I'm basically Alfie... which might unnerve anyone who listens to the play.

Like your previous story, *Dreaming of the Water*, this is something of a psychological drama.

■ Yes, yes it is. It's great to have the fun story and the scary scenes and so on but it's those dark moments between the characters that really interest me. *Dark Shadows* is such a fun series so it's tempting to dive straight into the action, but by giving the characters some depth and pushing the dialogue a little deeper you can expose far more, which gives the actors a lot more to play with. I love writing a scene where a character is forced to admit something, to face up to something that delves into that darker side of humanity.

Last year was your first story for Big Finish. How did you get involved? What's your background?

■ I've always been interested in writing but until last year I'd never written anything longer than a ten-minute script. I was encouraged by a friend of mine to pitch for *Dark*



DARK SHADOWS



DREAMING OF THE WATER

Kym's first story for *Dark Shadows* was *Dreaming of the Water* – a story that was very well received by the fans.

"It's basically a two-hander about Sebastian Shaw, an astrologer from the original series who disappeared after taking Maggie Evans to Windcliff Sanitarium. I had a lot of fun fleshing out the character of Sebastian, giving him a past and filling in the gaps between his final appearance in the TV series and his residence in Windcliff several years later. Whilst I was very excited to write for the infamous Kathryn Leigh Scott, the highlight of it all was Christopher Pennock tweeting at me, saying how much fun he'd had at the recording. He's such a dynamic and energetic actor, I'm so glad I had the opportunity to bring him back to the series and I can't wait to see if he returns!"

DARK SHADOWS

Shadows and so I sent in a treatment and was very fortunate to be selected to write for the series.

So was it difficult? Was there much pressure being a new writer?

■ It was, initially, terrifying – but then it was straight down to work. My initial pitch was for an entirely different story but the first thing I learnt was that things can change very quickly so you've got to be quick to adapt. It's actually something I was really surprised by, the turnaround from script to release. You wouldn't think it possible in such a short space of time but the team works so hard. With *Dreaming of the Water* being my first full-length script I'm sure I made many, many mistakes. But thankfully James [Goss] and Joe [Lidster, producers] were very patient and I learnt a lot from them both.

There's been a lot of talk recently about a lack of female writers, especially with regards to writing for sci-fi and fantasy. Any thoughts?

■ I think it's something that will be debated in any industry but, so far, I've not found it to be an issue. I'm the only female writer on this series of *Dark Shadows*, although, despite several demanding requests to Joe, I'm yet to get any special treatment.

So what's next for Kymberly Ashman?

■ With my graduation from Goldsmiths University looming, I'm looking forward to the chance to focus more on my writing, I'm in the process of founding my own script-to-stage company and I've recently taken part in a few play-writing competitions. I'm just keen to keep on at it, really. I've plenty more stories to tell, I'm sure.

And finally, why should someone buy this story?

■ Because it's fun and scary and a great introduction to the world of *Dark Shadows*! **VORTEX**

BENEATH THE VEIL IS OUT THIS MONTH AND AVAILABLE ON CD AND DOWNLOAD FROM BIGFINISH.COM





A MEETING WITH MERVYN

MERVYN STONE ENGAGES IN A REVEALING AND DISTURBING TÊTE-À-TÊTE WITH PAUL SPRAGG ABOUT NEW VIXENS FROM THE VOID AUDIO THE AXEMAN COMETH

It's early on Friday morning, and I can't believe that I will soon be sitting down with Mervyn Stone at a café somewhere near Tottenham Court Road tube station.

There's building work outside so I hope my dictaphone copes with the rumble.

Mervyn arrives, and before he even lays his head on the table, I am struck by the power of the presence of the man. How on earth could this single individual be partially responsible for coming up with probably the second greatest BBC-made ensemble-led fifty-minute episodic science

fiction television series broadcast on a weeknight of all time? It seems almost enough that he's allowed me to be in his vicinity for these precious minutes. It was almost a shame to wake him.

Hello Mervyn, I'm so pleased you could do the interview for us.

■ MS: Delighted. Where's the coffee?

It's coming.

■ Good.



THE AXEMAN COMETH

WRITTEN BY: NEV FOUNTAIN
DIRECTED BY: PATRIC KEARNS
OUT: THIS MONTH!

"Dear Mervyn. If you want to prevent a murder, then you must attend the recording at the Sounderama studios on Thursday. Signed: a friend."

VIXENS FROM THE VOID IS BACK!

After twenty-five years, the popular leather-clad astroerotic sci-fi television show is returning!

Well, sort of. Actually, some devoted *Vixens* fans have got the licence to do some audios on CD featuring the original cast, and they've invited Mervyn Stone to write an episode. But that's not the only thing he's been invited to do. He's also been invited to solve a murder.

He arrives at the studio, and who should he find recording her autobiography in the very next booth? Only the TV boss who cancelled *Vixens from the Void* twenty-five years ago.

No prizes for guessing the murder victim...

AVAILABLE ON CD AND DOWNLOAD FROM
BIGFINISH.COM

Now, can I ask you where you get your ideas from?

■ Are we starting the interview without the coffee?

Well, as we're sitting here...

■ Okay. You want to start talking without coffee. That's interesting.

So where...

■ Well I'll try anything once.

Where do you get your ideas from?

■ Coffee.

What inspires you as a writer?

■ Coffee. Look. I think our coffee's ready.

I don't think they're ours. I think they came in before us.

■ Where's your initiative, man? God... [Mervyn gets the coffees, and we resume the interview.]

So, can we talk about *The Axeman Cometh*?

■ Oh. Must we? I hoped we'd be talking about my novel.

We can talk about your novel too if you like. When's it coming out?

■ No, it's too late, the moment's passed. You had your chance. Let's talk about *The Axeman Cometh*.

How did *The Axeman Cometh* come about?

■ Well, I was approached by these fans, who wanted to make these audio plays of *Vixens from the Void*. I thought it was the most ridiculous idea I'd ever heard.

Right...

■ As far as I can see. These fans get together with other fans to write and perform on these CDs, and then other fans buy them and then those fans who bought them get involved and then they write them and appear on them too, and then they sell them to more fans, and they hope there's enough fans left not involved in writing them and performing in them to buy them.

Okay...

■ It's like a pyramid scheme. They'll probably all get arrested by Interpol next week.

Er...

■ Isn't it the most ridiculous thing you've ever heard? Sorry, what magazine are you with again?



MERVYN STONE

Vortex.

■ Never heard of you. Is it an American thing?

We're Big Finish. We're distributing your CD. We make audio stories of cult television: Doctor Who and Blake's 7 and other classic shows.

■ Oh... well, 'ridiculous' is what I thought initially, until we started talking money, and I found them the most conscientious, enthusiastic and creative people I've ever worked with. Anyway, they asked me to contribute a script and I said yes.

It must have been quite difficult to find time to write, given your busy schedule.

■ Oh yes! It was rather! [laughs] Oh, you're serious? Yes, well, lucky for me, I already had a completed script called *Gorgs Almighty* in my desk drawer, one I had originally written for series eight, and as series eight didn't happen, because *Vixens from the Void* was axed by the head of serials at the time – not that I'm bitter, you understand – it's never seen the light of day. It's the story of what the apelike Gorgs did on Chevron after their robot masters the Styrax left the planet. How they formed a community, chose their leaders and eventually commanded a spaceship.

Sounds fascinating. Did you find it difficult to adapt the script to audio?

■ Well, here's the interesting thing. I re-read my script, and the first twenty minutes I just had this tribe of Gorgs grunting unintelligibly at each other and howling and waving sticks and beating each other's brains out, a bit like the start of **2001: A Space Odyssey**. You've seen **2001**?

Yes, it's a great movie.

■ Well, I wouldn't say 'great'. Anyway, I sat down, and I started to make changes, and then I looked out of the window and saw the sun shining and people drinking in the pub across the road, and I had a sudden revelation. I realised something amazing.

Yes?

■ I realised that my story had too much power and integrity to sully it by changing it, so I left it as it is.

So there's just... grunting? For about...

■ Twenty minutes, yes. All I've done is taken out the stage directions. The boys were a bit worried about it, but I told them I knew what I was doing. I congratulated them on their bravery.

It doesn't sound very... radio to me.

■ Well, what do you know?

Well, I...

■ If you did your research, you'd discover a lot of radio. Did you ever hear my **Inspector Wistful Arrives** series for Radio 4?

Before my time, I'm afraid.

■ You can still hear it, you know. The BBC released it on cassette once, on their Crimes Against Drama range. I've asked these audio boys if we can make more episodes, and they said fine, they'll release it on CD as long as the **Vixens** cast agrees to guest in it. They said it would help the sales.

I'll keep an eye out.

■ They asked if Roger Barker could play Inspector Wistful, and I said, 'God no, I'd like an actor if that's all the same to you!' [laughs] Don't put that bit in. I'm not sure what this has got to do with *The Axeman Cometh*. I'd completely forgotten about the script once I'd sent it off... One does when one has so many projects on the go...

And then I got this anonymous letter telling me to attend the recording of *Gorg Almighty*. Well, the letter didn't tell me as such, it impressed on me that I should go if I wanted to prevent a murder.

Hold on: a murder?

■ That's what the letter said. Well, I couldn't resist, could I? So I paid them a visit, making sure I got there in the morning, before lunch. They do lovely lunches, I'm told. And I couldn't believe what happened when I got there. One thing led to another and then hey presto, here I am sitting talking about *The Axeman Cometh*, waiting to be bought another coffee.

Oh, I'm sorry. Big Finish only authorises one coffee per interview.

And before I know it, Mervyn is gone from my life, lost in the crowd, and I'm left alone in the bustle of the café, buzzing with unanswered questions and listening to a fight brewing between customers and staff about someone not getting their coffees. I'm wondering if the screams as the Barista's head is forced under the frother and sprinkled with cinnamon could be some kind of apt thematic juxtaposition to the restless and raging genius that is Mervyn Stone. Or is that just the caffeine talking? Who can say? **VORTEX**

THANKS TO NEV FOUNTAIN FOR SETTING UP THIS INTERVIEW.

FULL CAST AUDIOBOOKS ON CD AND FOR DOWNLOAD



BBC
**DOCTOR
WHO**

PETER DAVISON · JANET FIELDING · MARK STRICKSON · SARAH SUTTON

A NEW TRILOGY OF ADVENTURES!

ELDRAD MUST DIE!
OUT NOW!

THE LADY OF MERCIA
OUT NOW!

PRISONERS OF FATE
OUT JUNE

 @bigfinish

 /thebigfinish

WWW.BIGFINISH.COM

**BIG
FINISH**

BBC, DOCTOR WHO (word marks, logos and devices) and TARDIS (word marks and devices) are trade marks of the British Broadcasting Corporation and are used under licence. BBC logo © BBC 1996. Doctor Who logo © BBC 2012. Licensed by AudioGO. Eldrad created by Bob Baker and Dave Martin and used under licence.

BBC



**NICHOLAS BRIGGS IS THE DALEKS.
AND WRITES THE DALEKS.
AND THIS MONTH HE'S IN CHARGE
OF THEIR LATEST ENCOUNTER
WITH THE FOURTH DOCTOR.
WE FOUND OUT MORE...**

CONTRACT BOUND

So Nick: big finale time. What can you tell us about *The Dalek Contract/The Final Phase*?

■ I can tell you that I actually cried buckets when I listened to them. Not very manly, I know. And a trifle self-indulgent, since I wrote and directed them. But the fact is that Alistair Lock has done such an amazing job at making them sound exactly like productions from the 1970s that I got hit by a huge wave of nostalgia. The score he's composed sounds exactly like Dudley Simpson's work for *Genesis of the Daleks* – which, to be fair, is precisely what I asked for. So really, I'm just thrilled that Alistair was talented enough to OBEY ME! Sorry, getting carried away there. The character is taking

me over! But yes, it's a big finale with all sorts kicking off. Most of the questions are answered, but not all! It sets up something for the future. The nicest thing for me is that we were able to get Romana to a point where she clearly wants to continue travelling with the Doctor. Mary Tamm made a point of telling me how much she loved these scripts, which was lovely to hear at the time, and it's become something of a treasured memory for me now.

You first used the villainous Cuthbert in the Audio Visuals series; what's different about him now? Will Audio Visuals fans have a head start on knowing who and what he is?

■ Everything you need to know about Cuthbert so far is in *The Sands of Life*, *War Against the Laan* and this Dalek finale. The essential character of Cuthbert, originally played by Barry Killerby in the Audio Visuals plays, is the same, right down to his liking chips. In fact, I develop that, with the addition of brown sauce – one of my weaknesses... I love brown sauce! Get me some now! Ahem, anyway...

What I've added to Cuthbert is a real mystery about who he is. There are many answers yet to come. But all you need to know for now is that he's the head of a galactic corporation known as The Conglomerate and his business empire is tied up in the governments of a thousand worlds. He's not an out-and-out villain. He does many good things; but essentially, he's the worst kind of acquisitive capitalist. He will do whatever it takes to make a profit for his organisation and if he can cover it up, he doesn't mind how bad the consequences are.



Tom Baker, Nicholas Briggs and an unfeasibly long scarf

What has David Warner added to the role?

■ That's the other ingredient I've added to Cuthbert: casting David Warner! He brings a real sense that this character is

a powder keg that might blow at any moment. He's just such a brilliant actor. The moment he opens his mouth, nuances flow forth and suddenly something that could have been just a stock villain gains extra dimensions.

How were Tom and Mary to work with on this story? Is Tom settling in well two series in?

■ Well, of course, some of this was recorded before and during the first series we did with Tom. So a lot of what you're hearing here is his earliest work. People are always asking me what Tom's like to work with. Everyone's heard the old stories of him getting ratty and short-tempered on set in the old days. Tom talks about them too. So people always want me to tell them stories of terrible rows or of Tom throwing the script to the ground, likening it to whippet poo or something. But frankly, Tom is having a lovely time and is a joy to work with. We did exchange a few tense words about one little bit in this... I won't give it away, but he

"MARY TAMM MADE A POINT OF TELLING ME HOW MUCH SHE LOVED THESE SCRIPTS... IT'S BECOME SOMETHING OF A TREASURED MEMORY FOR ME NOW."

had to do a different kind of thing for a scene and was quite uncomfortable with it. Oh, I'll tell you. Basically, he has to sound like a Dalek. He wanted me to do it for him. But I said it kind of had to sound like him doing the voice. He was a bit reluctant to start with. But when he did it, it was great! Mary was as fun as ever. It's true to say that we already knew she was ill, so we had to be careful not to wear her out. But I must say that she was so determined to do this. She was certainly up for doing more.

You've written many a Dalek story now; as their voice on audio and TV, do you feel a certain responsibility towards them, and doing them justice?

■ I've never thought of it like that. I suppose I have, perhaps unjustifiably, some proprietorial feelings towards them. They've been so important to me since childhood really. And doing them for Big Finish, then the TV series, has made them a huge part of my life. I feel I know them really well, so, frankly, I'm always dying to tell more Dalek



stories. I have an infinite number of them stored away somewhere in the darker recesses of my brain. The way to do them justice is to make them as evil as possible. Make sure the story is about them and what they're up to. Don't just use them as generic bad guys. Make it about the evil of the Daleks. See what I did there? That's my favourite Dalek story, by the way... *Evil*. I'll die a happy man if I ever get to see that one for the third time – I saw it both times it was broadcast!

Will there come a time when you've had enough of Daleks or do you have a raft of ideas already prepped for them in the future?

■ I don't envisage such a time. They're just such fun to write for. They say write about what you know... and by jingo I know these critters!

Your Doctor Who book *The Dalek Generation* has come out recently; what was that like as an experience, and what could you do with the Daleks in that medium that you hadn't before?

■ It was a really interesting experience. There was hell in there. It was a new thing for me to do. I found it daunting that what I wrote would be, literally, the last word in what the audience had to go on to enjoy the book. I'm used to everything I write being taken away, directed, sound designed and filled with scary music. Suddenly, it was just my words and anything that they could spark in the readers' imaginations. That really scared me for a good while. Then I just got over it, entered the imaginary world I inhabit when I write anything, and enjoyed telling my story. If you love telling stories, there's nothing better than being given permission to tell one. Editor Justin Richards gave me the permission! The main thing I could do in this medium – and this isn't going to surprise anyone! – was describe them, their voices and the way they exterminated people. That was great. I could talk about the shape of them, the sound of them, the power of them. That was loads of fun.

How was it writing for the Eleventh Doctor?

■ I'm a big fan of Matt Smith's Doctor. I think he just gets better and better and I dread the day he leaves. If I get the chance, I will strongly advise him to stay on forever the next



time I see him. I think he has such a beautiful instinct for the part. And when I admire someone's performance, I often find myself sort of imagining what it would be like to inhabit that performance. I've had to 'do' the Eleventh Doctor several times in AudioGo audiobooks I've read, so I really feel I have Matt's Doctor voice and character in my head. And my

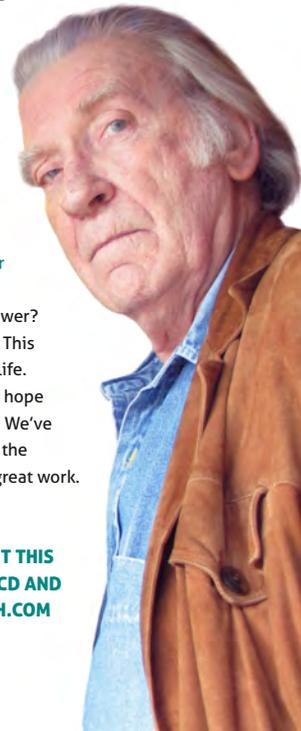
“THEY SAY WRITE ABOUT WHAT YOU KNOW... AND BY JINGO I KNOW THESE CRITTERS!”

son Ben makes me watch his episodes far more times than any normal adult would. That's right, I'm blaming Ben! It's not me at all. No, no, no... So I relished the opportunity to bring the Eleventh Doctor alive. I was bringing him forth from that imaginary, fully functioning, three-dimensional model of his personality that I already have in my head!

Writing for and directing great actors, sound designing, overseeing multiple ranges of new Doctor Who: best job in the world?

■ Short answer? Yes. Long answer? Yeeeeeeeees! I love what I do. This is the most fun I've had in my life. I hope I can do it forever. And I hope nothing ever changes about it. We've got it just right at Big Finish at the moment. Great people doing great work. I'm loving it. **VORTEX**

THE DALEK CONTRACT IS OUT THIS MONTH AND AVAILABLE ON CD AND DOWNLOAD FROM BIGFINISH.COM



**BIG
FINISH**

BIG FINISH · WE LOVE STORIES



BBC

**DOCTOR
WHO**

WWW.BIGFINISH.COM [@BIGFINISH](https://twitter.com/BIGFINISH) [f /THEBIGFINISH](https://facebook.com/THEBIGFINISH)

BBC, DOCTOR WHO (word marks, logos and devices), TARDIS, DALEKS, and K9 (word marks and devices) are trade marks of the British Broadcasting Corporation and are used under licence. Dalek image © BBC/Ferry Nation 1963. The Daleks created by Terry Nation and used under licence. BBC logo © BBC 1996. Doctor Who logo © BBC 2012. Licensed by AudioGO.

LISTEN AGAIN...



THE DESTROYER OF DELIGHTS

KENNY SMITH DROPS IN ON THE HUNT FOR THE *KEY 2 TIME* AND FINDS OUT HOW THE GIRLS WHO WOULD BE GRACELESS ARE DOING

The glamorous **Graceless** girls return for their third and final series this month, with more danger and drama across time and space.

Although Abby and Zara are more commonly thought of these days as leading a series in their own right, it shouldn't be forgotten that they originally started off in the main range **Doctor Who** *Key 2 Time* trilogy.

Before she was Abby, the character was known as Amy, and Jonathan Clements took her to the land of the Arabian Nights for her second story, *The Destroyer of Delights*, the middle part of the trilogy which began with Simon Guerrier's *The Judgement of Isskar* and ended with *The Chaos Pool* from Peter Anghelides.

Jonathan admits he was given a short brief: "Historical. That was it. I was free to do whatever I wanted as long as it began with Simon's last scene and got the Guardians off-stage in time for the beginning of Peter's."

And he was pleased with Ciara Janson's portrayal of the Doctor's companion. "Ciara played Amy exactly as I had wanted her to, which was an extremely tall order. Amy is a very unstable character, very gullible. Her willingness to soak up the attitudes of whoever she is with is a kind of

disintegrative disorder, but Ciara managed to do that by going deep, deep down into a very basic place."

Director Lisa Bowerman recalls: "*Destroyer* was a fun, if manic, day of recording. I was given a very tight schedule to do this one. I do remember it was a bit like herding cats with the cast... but we got it all done in the end. The Eastern theme worked well. I'm aware of the Marmite opinions on how the Guardians were treated, but I really thought this episode was tremendous fun, and a little bit of a romp – and should be treated as such! We had a great cast. David Troughton, Jason Watkins, David Peart, Bryan Pilkington, Jess Robinson and Paul Chahidi, not to mention my old *Survival* compadre Will Barton, and BF stalwart Toby Longworth.

"Then, of course, we introduced the two Tracers. I think they were both brilliantly handled by Laura and Ciara. I'd not worked with Peter Davison before, but he really is so easy to direct – aim him at the microphone, and that's pretty much it... just don't expect him to go back on any script pages after the event; he'd never have made his way through the mountains of discarded script on the booth floor!" **VORTEX**

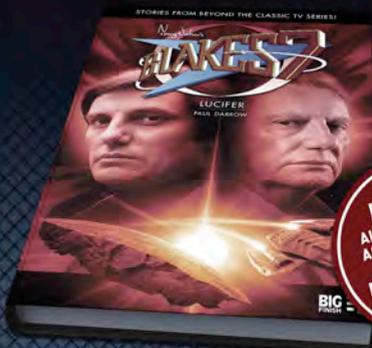
BRAND NEW AUDIOBOOKS AND NOVELS FROM BIG FINISH



PREPARE TO BE
LIBERATED



THREE BRAND
NEW STORIES:
**PROMISES,
EPITAPH AND
KERR**



LUCIFER
ALSO AVAILABLE
AS AN AUDIOBOOK
READ BY
PAUL DARROW

THE LIBERATOR CHRONICLES: VOLUME 4
LUCIFER: ORIGINAL NOVEL BY PAUL DARROW

ALSO
AVAILABLE



WWW.BIGFINISH.COM

[@BIGFINISH](https://www.facebook.com/bigfinish)

[/THEBIGFINISH](https://www.facebook.com/thebigfinish)

Blake's 7™ © B7 Enterprises Ltd 2013. All rights reserved. Blake's 7 wordmark and logo are trademarks of B7 Enterprises Ltd and are used under license. Based on the original television series BLAKE'S 7 created by Terry Nation.

THREE FULL CAST AUDIO DRAMAS



Bernice Summerfield

STARRING LISA BOWERMAN

NEW FRONTIERS

"S.O.S. EMERGENCY. PLEASE SEND... AN ARCHAEOLOGIST?"



WWW.BIGFINISH.COM

