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# DARK EYES 4



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#### **Sneak Previews** & Whispers



#### The Companion Chronicles The First Doctor Box Set

IG FINISH fans were disappointed when it was revealed in 2013 that the Companion Chronicles were coming to an end. John Dorney's Second Chances (release 8.12) looked to have finished off the range when it came out in June last year.

Thankfully though, the series is set for a highly-anticipated return in June 2015, with a new four-disc release, featuring tales from the era of the First Doctor. Further volumes are in the works, with a Second Doctor box set in preparation.

Producer David Richardson says that peoplepower played a massive part in the series making a comeback, as the intention had been to finish the series, which consisted of 12 releases a year.

He explains: "The Companion Chronicles were ended and laid to rest last year, but a good format never dies. We actually underestimated the strength of the following for them, but I stand by the decision to end the monthly range - it would have been hard to maintain the quality as the years went on.

"So the new box set format is perfect, and this one offers four choice stories featuring in turn Susan, Vicki and Steven. It's good to have them back." VORTEX

#### Editorial

Greetings Earthscum! Isn't it nice to be back? Apparently, it's 30 years since I was last plotting to see you all on your knees pleading for your lives. How time flies!

Of course, Terrahawks should have run a lot longer you know. I remember our last series in 1986 - we were going from strength to strength. Everybody was geared for a new series - Ninestein had had a facelift especially for the series after viewers complained he was scarier to look at than me - but I had to drop the bombshell.

Over lunch with Gerry Anderson one day I said: "Gerry, I'm going to leave the series." Of course, this devastated him. "But you can't leave now," he protested. "You're a global mega-star. We've sold the series to 63 countries." It's true I was well known. Zelda was to the 80s what Cathy Gale was to the 60s. You know I was the first leading female character to totally wipe out a Mars colony? Alas, despite a subsequent fulfilling career

in adverts, and brief runs in Dynasty and EastEnders, to the public I was always going to be their Evil Queen of the Planet Guk". So when Big Finish called me up and asked if I'd be interested in reprising the part I was delighted.

So here I am - back in action. Things have changed a bit in 30 years of course, but the old family spirit remains the same. It was lovely to see Ninestein again and renew my promise to destroy him. I do hope you purchase, and enjoy, this new series of Terrahawks, Earthscum, for your own sakes. Because if you don't, I assure you that I will have you obliterated.

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Managing Editor: Jason Haigh-Ellery	Marketing Consultant: Kris Griffin
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Editor: Kenny Smith Zelda: Evil Queen of the Planet Guk	Web Services: Hughes Media
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Executive Producer: Nicholas Briggs	BFP Administration:
••••••	Miles Haigh-Ellery, Cheryl Bly
Line Producer: David Richardson	& Alison Taylor
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Design: Mark Plastow	Publisher: Big Finish Productions Ltd.
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# EYES

The award-winning **Dark Eyes** series comes to an end this month, with the release of the fourth and final box set. Kenny Smith discovers how it all came together.

HERE'S NO denying that Dark Eyes has been one of Big Finish's greatest successes in recent years. The first series, written by Nicholas Briggs, was awarded the BBC Audio Drama award for Best Online or Non-Broadcast Drama, and the subsequent series have had a higher profile as a result. And now – sob! – it's the end, but the moment has been prepared for.

Paul McGann and Nicola Walker are back to face the Daleks, Sontarans and the Master, in the fourth and final

series, which encompases four adventures, A Life in the Day, The Monster of Montmartre, Master of the Daleks, and Eye of Darkness.

Dark Eyes 3 was written entirely by Matt Fitton, but this time around, he shares the creative duties with John Dorney. So how does Matt cope with the expectations of another epic box set, especially one that concludes the Dark Eyes series? He laughs: "It's best not to think about that!

"Series one won an award, the second went down well, and the third one, people really seemed to like. All I try to do is write the best stories I can – and I'm really pleased with what I've done in **Dark Eyes 4**.

"With it being the last one, in my mind, I wanted to bring in elements from all of the **Dark Eyes** stories. After we said goodbye to Molly at the end of **Dark Eyes 3**, it felt right to go back and meet Kitty Donaldson, from the first series. We've also brought back the Dalek Time Controller, and the Master from the third series – and then we've had to make it all fit together.



#### Dark Eyes 4

STARRING: Paul McGann, Nicola Walker, Alex Macqueen, Nicholas Briggs, Barnaby Kay, Rachael Stirling, Sorcha Cusack, Dan Starkey, Susannah Harker, David Sibley, Beth Chalmers, Charlie Norfolk, Derek Hutchinson, Alex Wyndham, Blake Ritson, Camilla Power, John Dorney.

WRITTEN BY: John Dorney, Matt Fitton DIRECTED BY: Ken Bentley RELEASED: THIS MONTH!

#### A LIFE IN THE DAY

The Doctor and Liv return to post-World War I London, where the Doctor meets Kitty Donaldson and Liv strikes up a friendship with her brother Martin. But what mysterious force is hunting them?

#### THE MONSTER OF MONTMARTRE

The Doctor and Liv's investigations bring them to Paris, where a monster stalks the streets.

#### MASTER OF THE DALEKS

The Master and the Dalek Time Controller have forged an alliance. History hangs in the balance, and this time the Doctor can't help...

#### EYE OF DARKNESS

It's the endgame. Truths will be revealed, and a hero will make the ultimate sacrifice. **VORTEX**  "They are a bit different – it's not so much a connected arc, but they all fit in with the bigger picture. This time, we've got Daleks in a club that is like the Moulin Rouge – I just love the image of it, so it was great to get the chance to do it in the big finale, and tie everything up with a proper full-on Dalek story, which was something I hadn't done before. It's been a great experience, and I wanted to make this the best I possibly could."

Matt was pleased that the final series became a collaborative process between himself and John Dorney. "After I'd written **Dark Eyes 3**, all by myself," explains Matt, "we were talking about how to round it all off with the fourth series. I had a plot in mind, but we also decided to bring in another writer for it. I think producer David Richardson and myself both independently thought of John Dorney. He'd always let it be known to me he was keen to write for the Eighth Doctor, so I was really pleased when he

"I don't think I'd ever made it a secret that I wanted to do an Eighth Doctor story."

said yes. It's really easy with Dorney, as we're used to working with each other – one of the first things I did when I joined Big Finish was work with him on **Counter-Measures**. We make suggestions and have story ideas, and we incorporate them, to make sure everything is all tied up.

"It's always good fun working with him, and we divided the episodes up. The original ideas for parts one and three were quite vague, so he took those and he ran with it."

And John himself admits: "I don't think I'd ever made it a secret that I wanted to do an Eighth Doctor story, because I hadn't done one before.

"The first audio I had released, *Solitaire*, meant I'd sort of done one, as it was an Eighth Doctor story without Paul McGann in it, but I was really keen to write a full-cast one, so I could complete my set of Big Finish Doctors. So, when David got in touch, it was nice to be offered it. The process was an absolute joy, as there was such a strong outline in place, of what was going to go in there. It also allowed me to do my own thing as well."

**HE SERIES** begins with *A Life in the Day*, by John, in which the Doctor and Liv return to post-World War I London, where the Doctor meets Molly O'Sullivan's old associate, Kitty Donaldson. "David gave me a brief," says John. "I had to get some romance for Liv in the first story. Kitty was part of the brief – it was interesting to work with her, because she doesn't know the Doctor, we know about her background in **Dark Eyes**, so there's still plenty of things to work with. We

#### Dark Eves 4

#### "Alex Macqueen is one of those actors you think you can write for, but he'll never give you the line the way you thought you'd written it."

had some ideas about her and her relationship with Molly, which hadn't been mentioned much in Dark Eyes, so I accordingly played around with that. It's always great to work with Beth Chalmers as well. She's a lovely lady, and an excellent actress."

The Doctor and Liv's investigations bring them to Paris for The Monster of Montmartre, by Matt, where a monster stalks the streets, before three foes collide in one adventure -Master of the Daleks, by John, as the Master and the Dalek Time Controller forge an alliance – and there's Sontarans to be dealt with too

"Master of the Daleks was an interesting one," reveals John. "There's the Master, the Daleks and the Sontarans in that. It might sound a bit crowded, and it was a tricky one. coming up with the plot to encompass them all, but it was a lot of fun to do. It was exciting, as I love writing for the Sontarans, and it's fun to write for the Daleks. The great thing about them is, you know Nick's going to be voicing them, and if you've put in anything that isn't quite right, he'll change it and make sure it's appropriate."

With guest stars Alex Macqueen as the Master, and Dan Starkey as the Sontarans, director Ken Bentley was delighted to work with the pair. Ken says: "Alex Macqueen is constantly exploring while he works. He's playing a gift of a part and he's absolutely wringing it dry. He sees every line as an opportunity and it's amazing to sit back in the studio and watch him play with the lines. Twisting them and bending them. He's one of those actors you think you can write for, but he'll never give you the line the way you thought you'd written it. It's an exciting process to be part of.



"Dan Starkey is brilliant. I've not worked with anyone who has the vocal control he has. He's such a lovely actor to work with and to spend time in the company of, then he gets behind a microphone and just launches himself at the script. He knows the lines and he knows what to do with them. And he knows his Doctor Who. He pitches everything he does perfectly."

Then it all comes to a thrilling conclusion in Matt's Eye of Darkness, where truths will be revealed, and a hero will make the ultimate sacrifice...



#### THE AWARD-WINNING DARK EYES

WINNER: BEST ONLINE ONLY AUDIO DRAMA (BBC AUDIO DRAMA AWARDS)

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID: "People's history, fantasy and high drama. The winning entry was outstanding in every respect: a complex, gripping narrative made visible through three-dimensional characters in believable relationships, some fine acting, and a superbly orchestrated soundscape which never overdoes the atmospherics or signposting of changes in time and place. Above all, it manages its historical and fantastical elements seamlessly and, for a brief period, time is suspended for the listener."

STARRING: Paul McGann, Ruth Bradley, Peter Egan, Toby Jones, Tim Treloar, Laura Molyneaux, Natalie Burt, Ian Cullen, Jonathan Forbes, Alex Mallinson, Beth Chalmers, John Banks, Nicholas Briggs WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY: Nicholas Briggs RELEASED: November 2012

**EN, NOW** directing his second series, has thoroughly enjoying his participation on **Dark Eyes 4**. He jokes: "Just as I've got used to working on **Dark Eyes**, it's over! So much was established by the first two box sets that taking over halfway through has been more a case of simply keeping it heading in the right direction, rather than bringing anything new to the table.

"Although the **Dark Eyes** story grew organically with each box set, Matt and Nick had a clear idea of what to do with it in terms of content, and the characters had already been well established by the cast, so really my role was about

#### "Just as I've got used to working on **Dark Eyes**, it's over!"

as relaxed as it gets for a director. Everybody involved in the production is a joy to work with, and I was confident they all knew what to do. In many ways taking over directing duties on **Dark Eyes** was more about establishing myself as part of the team so we could determine what to do next. It's been a privilege to help bring **Dark Eyes** to an end, but it's been even more exciting to be part of the team responsible for what happens next."

Ken says that one of the biggest challenges with this series was getting hold of its stars: "Scheduling around the various availabilities of such a high profile and extremely busy cast is always a challenge. We record a lot in a short amount of time, but it's important to me that everybody feels relaxed and has plenty of time to do work they're proud of. I'm not particularly scientific or mathematically adept, but I take pride in being able to wrangle a schedule into shape, however impossible it seems at first."

Ken particularly enjoys working with Paul McGann and Nicola Walker. He says: "Paul's a perfectionist, in the best sense of the word, and I have a lot of respect for that. You can see when he's working that he's hearing everything he's doing and he wants to keep doing it until it's right. There's a decisiveness in the studio when I work with Paul. He knows when he's happy with a take and it means we can all be clear about what it is we're trying to achieve. I like that sort of clarity.

"Nicola's just too lovely for words. She's chatty, fun and charming in the studio and she has a thoroughly effortless process which all combines to make it easy to take for granted just how magnificent an actor she is. Every day she's in the studio I keep having to remind myself I'm lucky enough to be working with Nicola. She's amazing." How does Ken think the fans will feel about these final four **Dark Eyes** adventures? He says: "We've tried to do something fresh with the final box set. It's a lovely set of contrasting and complimentary stories and we pulled out all the stops to cast this box set, so I hope they feel we've delivered an exciting box set worthy of being the series finale. Bringing an end to a series that's been so warmly received is an unusual responsibility. Had I been one of the originators of the series I'd feel more bullish about finishing it off. Despite the fact I've worked on half the series I still feel a responsibility, not just to the listeners, but also to Nick



and to everybody who started the journey off. I'm proud of the work we've done on **Dark Eyes 4** and I hope everybody – those involved in the production of all four releases, and the listeners – feels a sense of satisfaction and resolution with the final box set."

John adds: "Dark Eyes 4 is very exciting, as it's got lots of surprises in it. Browsing the forums, I see people are looking at the synopses, they are always hunting for clues about what's going to happen. They've all missed one – they can't see the wood for the trees! It's a good finale, and it will come together really well. That said, I've only read Matt's synopses, not the full scripts, because I want to come to it afresh myself, and listen to it as a fan. I know roughly what will happen – I just don't want to know everything line and detail!"

Producer David Richardson concludes: "I'm fiercely proud of **Dark Eyes 4**. It's notoriously hard to come up with a great ending to a story that has been so well received, but – and I may be biased here – I think John Dorney and Matt Fitton have done it. I often measure a story on whether it thrills me, makes me laugh and makes me cry, and **Dark Eyes 4** does all of this in spades. It's one that I shall listen to time and again." **VORTEX** 

ELEVENTH

#### KENNY SMITH TALKS TO THE WRITERS OF THE LATEST VOLUME OF BLAKE'S 7 – THE LIBERATOR CHRONICLES

HREE NEW tales from the Blake's 7 team will be down and safe this month, with the release of the 11th volume of Liberator Chronicles. Starring Paul Darrow, Jan Chappell and Michael Keating, with Alistair Lock, John Leeson, Anthony Howell, Anthony Byrne, Louise Jameson and Samantha Béart, producer Cavan Scott and directors Lisa Bowerman and Louise Jameson have brought together a talented group of performers and writers.

The set kicks off with *Brother*, by Nigel Fairs, featuring the return of Auron scientist Gustav Nyrron, from the earlier **Chronicles**. Recalling his brief from former producer David Richardson, Nigel says: "It was about two years ago, I think, but I suspect David asked me to write one for Nyrron and Avon and left it as open as that. There's still a whole section of Nyrron's story yet to be filled in (it's alluded to in *Brother*)

so I would love to write that at some point! I love writing for Nyrron, particularly as he's played so well by Anthony Howell, whose voice utterly melts me every time I listen!"

Avon's distrust of everyone is a fascinating part of his character – is it as much fun to write? "I found it really difficult writing for Avon, to be honest," admits Nigel. "I'm not very good at the witty 'one liner' style of dialogue – I prefer more naturalistic stuff. People don't generally stand around in real life delivering witty or cutting one-liners to each other, do they? Well, not the kind of people I mix with! I did try to see through the icy facade that Avon puts up, try to understand why it was there in the first place – I hope I succeeded to an extent."

By having actors like Anthony Howell and Paul Darrow, Nigel is happy knowing his work will be magnificently brought to life. "I wouldn't say that having brilliant actors necessarily helps you push the characters forward as a writer – the characters will go where they need to go – but it is a nice feeling to know that the lines will be acted well.

"And when you've written for a particular actor a few times, you learn their rhythms. For example, Lou Jameson and I are co-writing a play that we'll be performing later in the year, and, as we've both written for each other in the past (and know each other's styles well), the lines are coming effortlessly."

HE SECOND play on the set, *Poison*, by lain McLaughlin, features a mystery onboard Federation freighter *Antares*. It's the writer's second **Blake's 7** play, having written February's full cast release *Ghost Ship*. Iain says: "Producer Cavan Scott and I swapped some ideas. None of them came to anything – one of mine was pretty similar to something that's already underway. I had been writing **Sherlock Holmes** and a mystery series set in ancient Egypt, so it helped get my brain thinking in **Blake's 7** mode. I watched some episodes and listened to some audios to really get my head in that mindset. **Blake's 7** has a special place in

#### "DAVID ASKED IF I WOULD BE INTERESTED IN WRITING A SEQUEL TO MISSION TO DESTINY, WITH JOHN LEESON... AND ABSOLUTELY I WAS."

my heart. It was something I watched with my dad. There were other shows we watched as a family, but that was different. It was just him and me watching it. He admired Servalan in a way I didn't understand until a bit later! Getting to write for **Blake's** 7 brought back some very happy memories.

"Both of the **Blake's 7** scripts I've done have been very much Vila stories. Early on we talked about this being about Blake but after more discussions with Cav, it changed pretty quickly to Vila again! I was asked to use one other character, a young woman... That made me think of putting Vila into a position a long way out of his comfort zone and putting him into a mission that was more heroic than he'd enjoy... and maybe a hint of Vila as the romantic hero. Well, a little bit heroic. Vila was my favourite character on the show when I was young. I understood him much more than the others. It also helps that Michael Keating is brilliant. "With the first **Blake's 7** I did having been quite enclosed on the *Liberator*, I fancied doing something bigger with this one – something huge... so I went for it with the last act. The first draft had a different shape than the final version. It started with Vila and Jance in fairly terminal trouble then flashed back to show how they got into the mess – and then it carried on, showing how they got out of it. Nice idea but



Above: Michael Keating

it didn't quite work so we made it more linear." He adds: "Poison was written pretty quickly. A story had fallen through and Poison filled the gap. Every time I started to write the script, I put on the Alice Cooper track Poison. The only downside of that was that I realised how long ago it was a hit and I started to feel very old!



**SCAPE FROM** Destiny, by Andrew Smith, is the third story in the set and a sequel to the seventh episode of Series A, *Mission To Destiny*.

When the Liberator receives a distress signal from a planet it once helped save, Cally and Vila journey to a civilisation on the brink of collapse. There, they encounter Pasco, once again played by John Leeson. Andrew recalls: "David asked if I would be interested in writing a sequel to Mission to Destiny, with John Leeson... and absolutely I was.

#### Blake's 7

"By the time I wrote the storyline, Cavan had taken over as producer, with Justin Richards script editing. "I was working on it in January last year, but it didn't go to the studio until October, and I was delighted when I found out, around August, that Louise Jameson was going to come onboard to direct it." Andrew enjoyed having the chance to write for the return of an original guest character from the TV series, having recently reignited his love of the series. "When first approached to write a **Blake's 7** a couple of years ago, I rewatched all four seasons to get re-immersed in the show and the universe. I had forgotten just how many signature words/

#### "THERE'S LOTS OF ROOM THERE TO ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT MORALITY AND ETHICS, WHICH CAN OFTEN BE QUITE NEBULOUS"

phrases they have – 'Down and safe,' 'Standard by seven,' 'Information,' as well as 'spatials', and there's an awful lot of continuity there that's grown, and it's all there in your head!

"In the opening TV episodes, the setup for **Blake's 7** was a group of characters, including former rebel Blake, on their way to imprisonment on the penal planet Cygnus Alpha, when they come across an abandoned, impressive ship that they christen the *Liberator*. Using that ship they take their fight (reluctantly in some cases) to the Federation.

"They're either convicted criminals, or come from a criminal background, so there's lots of room there to ask questions about morality and ethics, which can often be quite nebulous. With **Blake's 7**, there's a lot of layers.

"In Escape From Destiny, Pasco is going through a trauma – people have died, his family are under threat, and it's a very dramatic thing that's happened to him. His wife and daughter are in danger, and it's impossible to tell who the enemy are – is it the government of Destiny, or is it the Federation? It's interesting stuff to play with.

"Hopefully, after listening to this audio play, listeners may want to revisit the TV episode *Mission To Destiny* – or even search it out for a first viewing."

Andrew praised the work of his director Louise Jameson, directing her old **Doctor Who** co-star John Leeson. "In studio," says Andrew, "Louise did a great job when we recorded in Kent, and we had a good laugh too.

> "Cavan and I mentioned to Louise how Terry Nation had a habit of putting the word 'Space' in front of his characters of rank, to get 'Space Captain' and so on, so on the day, we decided I was the Space Writer, Cavan was the Space Producer, and Louise was Space Director!" VORTEX



### The Liberator Chronicles Volume 11

#### BROTHER

Auron scientist Gustav Nyrron is back aboard the *Liberator*, on his way home. But Avon doesn't trust him, and soon a drugged Nyrron wakes to find himself in Avon's clutches on a devastated world. In this desert, their pasts are waiting for them... and a devastating truth that will shake their very beliefs to the core.

#### POISON

Federation Freighter Antares is a ship with many secrets. Why is it making regular runs to a heavily guarded frontier world? Why is the hold out of bounds? And who is watching the crew's every move? Events take a dangerous turn when two new recruits come on board. Will Jance and Voss survive their very first mission together?

#### ESCAPE FROM DESTINY

When the *Liberator* receives a distress signal from a planet it once helped save, Cally and Vila journey to a civilisation on the brink of collapse. There, they encounter Pasco, a scientist Cally first met years ago. The Federation is closing on Destiny – but should Vila and Cally stand in the way this time?

STARRING: Paul Darrow, Jan Chappell, Michael Keating, Alistair Lock, John Leeson, Anthony Howell, Anthony Byrne, Louise Jameson, Samantha Béart

WRITTEN BY: Nigel Fairs, Iain McLaughlin, Andrew Smith

DIRECTED BY: Lisa Bowerman, Louise Jameson

RELEASED: THIS MONTH!



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BBC

THE REIGN OF

### Expect the unexpected! Human Kenny Smithstein investigates the return of the Terrahawks!

N THE 1980s, fans of Gerry Anderson and Christopher Burr's hugely popular puppet series Terrahawks learned the catchphrase of the lead character, Dr Tiger Ninestein – "Expect the unexpected." That saying proved to be ironically true in April last year, when Anderson Entertainment and Big Finish announced the return of the series, with a deal to produce an audio series of eight brand new episodes.

For the uninitiated, **Terrahawks** is set in the near future, where a team of brave heroes – Tiger, Mary Falconer, Kate Kestrel, Hawkeye and Hiro – defend the Earth from their base in the *Hawknest*. Their arch-nemeses are Zelda, her son Yung-Star, sister Cy-Star and nephew It-Star, who are based on Mars. They launch a series of raids upon the Earth using an array of alien creatures – the shape-changing MOID (Master Of Infinite Disguise), Sram with his thunderous roar, and the time travelling Lord Tempo.

The Terrahawks possess some fantastic vehicles – the Battlehawk, Hawkwing, Treehawk, the Terrahawk and Spacehawk – and are aided by Hiro's mechanical creations, the Zeroids, led by Sergeant Major Zero.

Overseeing production on the series is Gerry's son Jamie. He recalls: "I had a chat with Nick Briggs at BritSciFi – a sci-fi convention in Leicester in 2013 and we became chummy over the next few months. 'Wouldn't it be nice to do **Thunderbirds** with Big Finish,' was a regular



#### Terrahawks: Volume One

In the not too distant future, the Earth finds itself under constant threat from Zelda, a blood-thirsty android who, along with her fiendish family and monstrous creations, has established a base on Mars. The only thing standing between this evil queen and her quest for the ultimate annihilation of mankind are the Terrahawks – an intrepid band of heroes led by the stern but fair clone, Doctor Tiger Ninestein.

After a considerable period of down time, the Terrahawks once again find themselves called into action when Zelda initiates a brand new campaign of destruction and devastation. Facing up against terrifying time travellers, fraudulent financial fiascos, sickening stand-ups, and deadly doppelgangers – their new adventures could prove to be the Terrahawks' most challenging missions to date!

#### EPISODES:

The Price is Right • Deadly Departed A Clone of My Own • Clubbed to Death No Laughing Matter • Timesplit 101 Seed • Into the Breach

STARRING: Jeremy Hitchen, Robbie Stevens, Denise Bryer, Beth Chalmers

WRITTEN BY: Jamie Anderson, Stephen La Rivière, Andrew T. Smith, Terry Adlam, Chris Dale, Mark Woollard, Gerry Anderson DIRECTED BY: Jamie Anderson

RELEASED: April 2015

conversation, but we knew it wasn't available at that point because of the new **Thunderbirds** series, and ITV's desire to keep the focus on that.

"We decided to meet for lunch near Euston Station, and discovered the restaurant I'd booked was closed, and we ended up walking around for a while. We eventually found a strange little restaurant that served sprouts. Nick was thrilled – he's a big fan. I had been emailing Christopher Burr, who owns the rights to **Terrahawks** and we manage it for him, and I said to Nick over lunch: 'What about an audio series of **Terrahawks**?' From the other side of a chalice of Brussels sprouts Nick said, 'Alright!'

"Nick admitted he didn't really know it that well, but knew it had its own fan base." Jamie continues: "It's **Captain Scarlet** meets **Red Dwarf**, as it has the darker feel of **Captain Scarlet**, but it also has the comedic aspects of **Red Dwarf**. The great thing was, with the characters and the comedy,



Above from left: Denise Bryer, Robbie Stevens, Beth Chalmers and Jeremy Hitchen

they give it a unique identity, and we've been able to develop and explore that for the audios.

"Zelda is the most identifiable character that everybody remembers. She caused thousands of children to have nightmares and to wet the bed as they were growing up! The set up isn't necessarily the most exciting thing, but it's the adventures and situations they get put into that really make it. I was always such a fan of **Terrahawks**, and it's really nice to be able to bring it to audio. It has sat gathering dust for such a long time, it's been brilliant to be able to create brand new stories, and to put in some back-story. I'm really excited about it."

**HE NEW** series kicks off with *The Price is Right*, written by Jamie. With the prospect of budget cuts and a spot inspection looming over their heads, the Terrahawks intend to showcase themselves to the best of their ability. A surprise attack from Zelda, however, gives them a bigger chance to demonstrate their worth than originally bargained for.

There's plenty of nods and winks to the audience, though – look out for a reference to there not being an attack from Zelda for 30 months, and

#### "In my old age, I've rather become Zelda, so perhaps it's appropriate for me to come back!"

"In the end, we went with 101 Seed. It was a happy time. What was really nice was, I wrote The Price is Right, and then picked up 101 Seed, and it was nice to see how much stylistic content was shared between the two scripts. The dialogue and style of exposition were very similar, and that was really reassuring. It was a good fun story, and it wasn't too difficult to adapt.

"It was one of the later scripts, with the stronger sense of comedy and silliness that the series had developed in its later original episodes, so it was nice to be able to

come to it, we've rounded it off slightly without detracting from dad's original work."

ITH A couple of exceptions, the original cast have returned to play the parts once again – Jeremy Hitchen as Ninestein, Hiro and Hawkeye, Robbie Stevens as Space Sergeant 101, Hudson and Yung-Star, Denise Bryer as Zelda and Mary Falconer. Windsor Davies, the original voice of Sergeant Major Zero, has since retired from acting, prompting Jeremy to take on the part – and it's a brilliant recreation.

Jamie admits he feared that getting Denise Bryer – now 87 – to play her roles again was initially a worry. He explains: "I was expecting Denise to tell me to get lost. Initially she said, I'm such an old lady now... I'm not sure I'm up to it nowadays.' But she was lovely about it. We told her we couldn't do it without her, because she was so wonderful, and we promised we would pick her up, take her to the studio, she would be properly fed and watered, and we would take her back home again.

"She thought about it, and then told me, 'In my old age,

I've rather become Zelda, so perhaps it's appropriate for me to come back.' And then she did the iconic Zelda laugh!

Above: Denise Bryer

it feeling more like 30 years. Jamie said: "There's parody and self-referential stuff in that first episode. The idea was to demonstrate what **Terrahawks** was all about, whilst mocking the info-dump episode trope. Nick suggested we had an info-dump episode, they are always quite naff, but because it's **Terrahawks**, there's a lot of humour about the way we do it, and bring it into the audio medium."

The series continues with *Deadly Departed* by Stephen La Rivière and Andrew T Smith, A Clone of My Own by Andrew T Smith and Stephen La Rivière, Clubbed to Death by Stephen La Rivière and Andrew T Smith with Jamie Anderson, No Laughing Matter by Terry Adlam, Timesplit by Chris Dale, 101 Seed by Gerry Anderson and adapted by Jamie Anderson, and Into the Breach by Mark Woollard.

Episode seven, 101 Seed, particularly leaps out, as it was written by Gerry Anderson, and now Jamie has adapted it for inclusion as an audio. Work had begun on the proposed fourth TV series of **Terrahawks**, for which this episode was originally devised. Jamie explains: "We had a look at the existing scripts, and there were two-and-a-half of them. One of them was unfinished, and another was something that couldn't really be adapted for audio. We tried very hard, but because it featured MOID, he isn't a character that would mix suitably well with audio.

#### Terrahawks

Ship designation: Terrahawk Function: Command control craft Crew: Dr 'Tiger' Ninestein, Captain Mary Falconer

Ship designation: Treehawk Function: Spacehawk service shuttle Crew: Hiro

Ship designation: Battlehawk Function: Heavy transporter Crew: Zeroids

Ship designation: Hawkwing Function: Atmospheric Interceptor Crew: Kate Kestrel, Hawkeye

Ship designation: Spacehawk Function: Advance orbital warning and defence station Crew: Hiro. Zeroids "David Graham, who was Parker in **Thunderbirds**, once said that she was without doubt one of the most talented actresses he had ever worked with, and was just amazing. I may have used that line to butter her up! Having got Denise, who was the one I was most worried about, I was then able to go to Jeremy and Robbie, who are still very friendly – they're best mates after 30 years, and they said, 'Let's do it!' We tried to get Windsor, but I got a message back from his daughter saying, 'Thanks for asking, but he's now retired.'

"Luckily, though, I'd heard Jeremy telling a few stories about Windsor and doing his fantastic impression, and since he seems to play every other character in **Terrahawks**, I knew he could do it! In episode six, *Timesplit*, there's a couple of scenes where it was just Jeremy, playing Zero, Ninestein, Hiro, two versions of Hawkeye, and Lord Tempo – and he had five pages of just talking to himself!"

One newcomer to the *Hawknest* is Beth Chalmers, a Big Finish regular, who has taken over from the late Anne Ridler as the voices of Kate Kestrel and Cy-Star. Jamie says: "Nick had suggested Beth, as she's very versatile with her voice. I spoke to her, and she said, 'Oh, I loved **Terrahawks**, I remember it really well,' and then we got her doing Cy-Star and Kate impressions. It was a much easier process than I thought it was going to be – and it was great fun."

Getting the original voice actors isn't the only treat in store – Jamie and the team were able to locate copies of the original incidental music which was specially composed for the show, and this too features in the stories, adding to the authentic feel: "We had to get the music and sound effects together," he says, "which were not as readily available as I'd hoped. We had a couple of tapes that we were told were the music and effects tracks. On having them transferred, they turned out to be dialogue only. On the plus side, I've now got a great bit of wildtrack recordings, of Windsor Davies being the Sporilla, saying, 'Scene 13, Sporilla is angry,' and then doing bizarre groans and gurgles!

"Eventually, we came across a couple of two inch tapes, and other bits and pieces, and Mark Ayres very kindly cleaned up the old effects tapes. Some of the material had been transferred from a one inch tape to a VHS, and then copied to another VHS, which had added quite a buzz to them, unfortunately."

One of the sound effects located was the distinctive bleep made by the Zeroids when they're speaking. Jamie laughs: "It's nice that they came up with these literal audible speech mark noises for the Zeroids, otherwise it could have been difficult to identify they were robots. It's almost like the original sound designers knew it would be good for audio drama!" **VORTEX** 

#### KENNY SMITH TALKS TO THREE MEN BEHIND THE RISE OF THE DOCTOR'S JET POWERED RECURRING ENEMIES

ONSIDERING THE Rocket Men were created as a one-off adversary for the First Doctor in a **Companion Chronicle**, they've not done too badly. *The Rocket Men*, by John Dorney, was released in August 2011, to critical acclaim. Ian Chesterton recounted his adventure on Platform Five, a floating city in the sky of the planet Jobis, where he, Barbara, Vicki and the Doctor met the group, led by Ashman.

Steven Taylor told of his encounter in November 2012, in *Return of the Rocket Men*, as another faction, led by Van Cleef, raided a remote frontier planet before being foiled by Steven, the Doctor and Dodo.

This month, John Dorney returns to write for his creations once more, as the Doctor, Leela and K9 meet Shandar, King of the Rocket Men, in a full-cast play for the first time.

Each of these plays opens with the question, "When do you know...?", and the man who's commissioned each of these plays has been producer David Richardson. *Vortex* has to ask him one particular question. When do you know... that something like *The Rocket Men* is popular? David says: "I didn't really, I just trusted my own instincts because I liked them. I think if you can see the potential in bringing something back, and they've been in a story you love, then it's generally a good idea to commission a sequel. Actually, two sequels... The Rocket Men

come with their own specific world, and it's one that is getting bigger every time they come back. Basically I just say to John Dorney 'Write me something', he does and it is great."

What is it about the Rocket Men that David thinks has captured the imagination of the fans? "What's not to like about villains that fly around with jet packs?", he grins. "That feeds right into our imaginations... Also John and Matt Fitton have delivered some fantastic scripts with lovely twists and turns. The original *Rocket Men* story is one of my all time favourite productions. Howard Carter did the most gorgeous, rousing score. It's a story I revisit just for pleasure."

HE ROCKET MEN was written by John Dorney, and featured William Russell as Ian Chesterton. He reveals his starting point for the story was: "Sci-fi. David had initially suggested a Nostradamus story, which ended up going to Richard Dinnick before becoming Rasputin. But I was mindful that the stories we'd done with Ian at that point – Farewell, Great Macedon and The Transit of Venus – were both historicals with famous figures and I wanted to veer away from that – particularly as that felt a more natural fit for Barbara than Ian to me.

"So I started looking for sci-fi tropes that would have influenced the writers of the period. And the old **King of the**  Rocket Men serial leapt out. It also gave me another aspect I wanted. Early Who is remarkably brave – the ambition of something like *The Web Planet* (which I adore, although I know that's not a widely held opinion) is jaw-dropping, even if the realisation isn't always perfect. So I wanted something they might have just about attempted to pull off."

HE PLAY was a huge success with all involved, garnering critical praise, so it made sense to revisit the Rocket Men. With John Dorney unavailable due to work commitments, the writing chores were taken on by Matt Fitton. He recalls: "I found the original email from David in December 2011 – he basically asks for *Return of the Rocket Men* with Steven, Dodo and the First Doctor, read by Peter Purves, with the main villain as the second voice. That was it. As John Dorney was pretty busy at the time, they came to me. This meant that Dorney would be my script editor on this as it was a sequel to his original.

"I had a few different ideas to begin with (some of which may see the light in other forms one day!) but I knew I wanted to have some villain narration too – I even checked back through the **Companion Chronicles** to see if there was a precedent. I think *Ferril's Folly* was the first I found. That was another stipulation of David's, the lead Rocket Man had to be a really nasty piece of work. So once I settled on my Western theme, I ran with that.

"I was aware it had a lot to live up to, and fairly early on I decided I wanted to pick up on the thematic impetus of *The Rocket Men*. "When do you know?', is such a genius opening – I decided to steal it! In a way, John's is a straightforward story told in an inter-layered fashion, while mine is a complex set of events told in a more linear style.

"I knew fairly early on what Steven's realisation would be: the fact it was Dodo, the timeframe, it all slotted into place. There's a very handy fade to black before the final scene of *The Gunfighters* and the lead-in to *The Savages* where I wanted it to fit. It's about Steven realising it might be time to move on." HIS MONTH, we encounter the Rocket Men for the third time, but John Dorney reveals that we can expect future encounters with the group as well. "The thing I find bizarre about the Rocket Men," says John, "is that I've created a recurring villain – or rather, a recurring group of adversaries, which is something **Doctor Who** hasn't done before, albeit every time the Doctor meets them, they are different, with a different leader – I created these recurring adversaries without actually trying to. It was an accident, really.

"But what's not to like – having a bunch of guys flying around with rocket packs, and looking for trouble?

"Matt did the second one, and we've worked out how far the range of the Rocket Men can go – so far we've had *The Rocket Men, Return of the Rocket Men*, and now *Requiem for the Rocket Men. Requiem* might be the third of the stories to be released, but there's still a few stories we've not told with them yet, and it's probably the fifth, in terms of their time-line and continuity. There's a line in *Requiem for the Rocket Men* where one of the characters lists their previous encounters with the Doctor, and lists the names of four of their leaders, so limagine the others will turn up at some point."

As well as encountering the Rocket Men, the Doctor also has another headache to contend with – in the form of his old rival, the Master.

"One of my ways of coming up with plots is looking at reversals – what if things are the other way round, or what if something in real life happens the other way?

"It's not always going to be the Doctor arriving somewhere, finding out the Master is already there, and stopping him. This time it's the Master stumbling into one of the Doctor's adventures. I'd been trying to find an angle that was a bit different, so what if you have the Doctor and Master swapping around, so it wasn't a traditional story.

"Once I came up with the idea, of the Master arriving and trying to stop the Doctor, I was quite excited by that, and it gave me a lot of the structure as well. Structurally, it's very much the Master trying to out-think the Doctor."



#### REQUIEM FOR THE ROCKET MEN

STARRING: Tom Baker, Louise Jameson and John Leeson

The Asteroid – notorious hideaway of the piratical Rocket Men. Hewn out of rock, surrounded by force-fields and hidden in the depths of the Fairhead Cluster, their base is undetectable, unescapable and impregnable.

In need of allies, the Master has arranged to meet with Shandar, King of the Rocket

Men. But the mercenaries have captured themselves a very special prisoner – his oldest enemy, the Doctor.

What cunning scheme is the Doctor planning? How does it connect with Shandar's new robotic pet? And just what has happened to Leela? The Master will have to work the answers out if he wants to leave the asteroid... alive...

RELEASED: THIS MONTH!

Ahead of this month's Main Range release, *The Entropy Plague*, Kenny Smith braves a CVE and looks back at *The Invasion of E-Space*!

THE INVASION OF

HE DOCTOR'S latest sojourn in E-Space continues in the monthly range this month, as he, Turlough, Tegan and Nyssa bid to escape to N-Space in *The Entropy Plague*. This year's Fifth Doctor series of adventures isn't the first time that Big Finish have ventured through a CVE, as the original TV E-Space trilogy was expanded by another adventure in October 2010 – *The Invasion of E-Space*, by Andrew Smith. Although Andrew is now a Big Finish mainstay, this was his first Doctor Who play since writing his original 1980 story on TV, *Full Circle*.

"I met Andrew at a convention," says producer David Richardson, "we got on very well, he told me how much he loved Big Finish and I asked him to write a **Companion Chronicle**. Then it seemed a great idea to go back to Season 18 and give him another crack at a story for the Fourth Doctor, Romana and Adric."

Although not active in **Who** writing circles, Andrew had stayed loyal to his favourite TV series over the years, including the Big Finish range.

He said: "It wasn't too hard to adapt to writing for an audio medium, as I'd done a lot of work when I was a professional radio writer, although that was mainly comedy. The process of writing remains taxing, though, whether audio or visual. At the same time it's both liberating and restricting, because this would be expensive to do on TV now, so working on audio is a nice – cheaper! – medium.

"Very early on, I settled on the idea that it would be two storylines, and it would be Romana talking about her experiences just in case she didn't come out of the other end of it."

The story features the Farrian Raiders breaking through from one universe to another, with their tiny

teleport pods. Andrew said: "It's an idea I'd had for a few years. It's simply a coin-sized disc that could go anywhere, it could be dropped in a bank vault, go under your bed or whatever, and then the monster can turn up wherever it is. It was nice to be able to use it."

Andrew is, by his own admission, someone who always over-writes his plays, and always needs to prune them back. He admitted: "When I was writing it, I knew it was coming in too long. The first draft of it is pretty much what you hear, and all I had to do was cut some stuff down, with a couple of little things here and there, like a scene in the TARDIS. It wasn't taking out huge chunks, just editing it down, and I think it works better because of that. It's much tighter." **VORTEX** 

#### DATA BANK:

STARRING: Lalla Ward (Romana), Suanne Braun (Marni Tellis)

WRITTEN BY: Andrew Smith DIRECTED BY: Lisa Bowerman

**RELEASED: October 2010** 

Trapped within E-Space, the Doctor, Romana and Adric are searching for a Charged Vacuum Emboitment – the gateway back to our universe. It's like looking for a needle in a haystack...

Then, by pure chance, a brand new CVE rips into being. Its makers are The Farrian, a warlike race who possess the technology to break into E-Space. But they have come to invade and plunder this new territory, and the riches of the planet Ballustra are their first target...

# **VORTEX MAIL**

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#### A NOVEL IDEA?

I enjoyed The Highest Science – a very fun adaption of the book and just how I always imagined it would sound in my head! It got me thinking, with the Eighth Doctor's **Dark Eyes** spectacular series due to finish in March, perhaps you could adapt some of the Eighth Doctor novels? There are some great books that would lend themselves to audio adaption. I'm sure there was even one with Professor Litefoot in, so that would provide a great rangecrossover opportunity!

#### Si Hunt

Nick: No plans to adapt Eighth Doctor novels, but we do have a fantastic new set of stories with the Eighth Doctor about to go into the studio. Very exciting stuff...

#### SCRIPTS

I see that with the Doctor Who main range that you have access to a download of the scripts. Is there any intention of making available a download of the scripts of some of the other ranges such as Jago & Litefoot? Also, I used to purchase the script books that you released for Doctor Who and Dalek Empire - is there any intention of resurrecting this type of publication? And finally, I see that you have recently released a tie-in novel for Blake's 7 - are there any thoughts about releasing or commissioning novels featuring spin-off characters such as Jago & Litefoot or the Counter-Measures team or perhaps even a short story anthology featuring these

characters along the lines of The Worlds of Doctor Who audio release? Lee Turner

Nick: We have discussed downloads of other scripts. Leave that with us. We no longer have a licence to publish Doctor Who related books, so script books are out of the question now, I'm afraid. So this means that tie-in novels are not possible either.

#### ANOTHER NOVEL IDEA?

If I beg quietly (or loudly?) would Big Finish consider doing the New Adventures, the Eighth Doctor novels, and the Missing Adventures? I mean, I guess there wouldn't be time to do all of them, so I didn't want to ask but heck, I'll ask anyway – would Big Finish consider doing all the New Adventures? Charles Mento

**Nick:** No plans to do all that, Charles (The rights are not available for some of them). But I would never rule it out.

#### THE DOCTOR WHO UMBRELLA

I have a quick question regarding range crossovers: given the announcement of the upcoming **Worlds of Big Finish**, I feel one can assume from Big Finish's perspective that the **Sherlock Holmes** and **Dorian Grey** ranges are part of the broader **Doctor Who** umbrella continuity, as are **Bernice Summerfield**, **Iris Wildthyme, Graceless**, and **Vienna**. Unless I'm mistaken the Dorian Gray character has also appeared in the **Dark Shadows** range, so my question is whether or not Big Finish has an official policy on **Dark Shadows** being part of the **Doctor Who** umbrella reality, or is this simply a character coincidence? No matter what, much success with 2015's upcoming and very exciting projects!

#### Chris McKeon

Nick: Cheers, Chris. I realise this will sound like blasphemy to some, but, you know, it's all fictional. Which fictional world it all belongs to is entirely up to individuals and we don't have a firm policy on it. I shall now duck for cover.

#### QUESTIONS

Having just finished **The Fifth Doctor Box Set** and **Dark Eyes 3**, and soon to be listening to *The Ewilons*, I thought I just had to write in to congratulate you on your excellent productions. I've been a fan of Big Finish for a good few years now, and I absolutely love what you've been doing with **Doctor Who**. I have a few questions for the future though:

1.Will Trey be popping up in any Doctor Who productions any time soon? 2.Will Raine Creevy be returning? She's a great companion and I'd love to hear her again – I think she'd be great with the Eighth Doctor.

3. Will you adapt the **New Adventure** *Cold Fusion*? It's one of my favourites, and with two Doctors and a host of companions, it would be great on audio! **William Atkinson (15)** 

Nick: Cheers, William, glad you like our stuff. The answer to all of your questions is that we have no plans, but would never rule any of this out. I keep saying that, don't !?

#### Coming up...

### **RELEASE SCHEDULE** New and forthcoming audio releases

#### **MARCH 2015**

Doctor Who: The Entropy Plague (197, Fifth Doctor, Tegan, Nyssa and Turlough) Doctor Who – The Fourth Doctor Adventures Reauiem for the Rocket Men (4.3, Fourth Doctor, Leela and K9) Doctor Who – Short Trips: Time Tunnel (5.03, Download only) Doctor Who: Dark Eyes 4 (Eighth Doctor) Blake's 7: The Liberator Chronicles - Box Set 11 Blake's 7: The Classic Audio Adventures 5: Devil's Advocate (Full Cast) Blake's 7: Lucifer Revelation: Audiobook of Novel (Read by Paul Darrow)

#### APRIL 2015

Doctor Who: The Defectors
(198, Seventh Doctor and Jo Grant)
Doctor Who – The Fourth
Doctor Adventures: Death Match
(4.4, Fourth Doctor, Leela and (9)
Doctor Who – Short Trips:
The Ghost Trap (5.04, Download only)
Blake's 7: The Classic Audio
Adventures 6: Truth and Lies (Full Cast)
Terrahawis Yolume 1 (Full Cast)
Jago and Litefoot: Series Nine Box Set

#### MAY 2015

Doctor Who: Last of the Cybermen (199, Sixth Doctor and Jamie and Zoe) Doctor Who – Short Trips: The King of the Dead (5.05, Download only) Doctor Who – The Fourth Doctor Adventures: Suburban Hell (4.5, Fourth Doctor and Leela)

Doctor Who – Novel Adaptations
Damaged Goods / Well Mannered War
(Special Edition)

Doctor Who – Novel Adaptations The Well Mannered War (Fourth Doctor) Doctor Who – Novel Adaptations Damaged Goods (Seventh Doctor) The Worlds of Big Finish: Box Set Blake's 7: Book 7: Lucifer: Genesis (Paul Darrow)

Dark Shadows: Panic (45)

#### **JUNE 2015**

Doctor Who The Secret History
(200, Fifth Doctor, Vicki and Steven)
Doctor Who – The Fourth Doctor
Adventures: The Cloisters of Terror
(A., Fourth Doctor and Leela)
Doctor Who: The First Doctor
Companion Chronicles – Box Set 1
Doctor Who: Short Trips The Sisters
of Serenity (5.06, Download only)
Doctor Who: The New Adventures
of Bernice Summerfield: The Triumph
of Sutekh
Survivors – Series 2 Box Set (Full Cast)
Dott Shardia (A6)

#### JULY 2015

Doctor Who: We Are The Daleks
(201, Seventh Doctor and Mel)
Doctor Who – The Fourth Doctor
Adventures: The Fate of Krelos
(4.7, Fourth Doctor and Leela)
Doctor Who – Short Trips: Dark
Convoy (5.07, Download only)
Counter-Measures – Series 4
Box Set (Full Cast)
The Avengers – The Lost Episodes:
Volume 4 (Box Set)
Dark Shadows: In the Twinkling of
An Eye (47)

#### AUGUST 2015

Doctor Who: The Warehouse
(202, Seventh Doctor and Mel)
Doctor Who – The Fourth Doctor
Adventures: Return to Telos
(4.8, Fourth Doctor and Leels)
Doctor Who – Short Trips:
Foreshadowing (5.08, Downlead only)
Charlotte Pollard: Series Two Box Set
The Omega Factor:
Series 1 Box Set (Full Cast)

#### Dark Shadows: Deliver Us From Evil (48)

SEPTEMBER 2015

Doctor Who: Terror of the Sontarans (203, Seventh Doctor and Mel)
Doctor Who: TBA (204, Sixth Doctor and Constance)

#### Doctor Who: The Sixth Doctor - The Last Adventure (Special Edition)

Last Adventure (special Edition) Doctor Who – The Early Adventures: The Yes Men (2.1, Second Doctor) Doctor Who – Short Trips: Etheria (5.09, Download only) Dark Shadows: Tainted Love (49) Big Finish Classics: The Wonderful Wizard of Oz

#### OCTOBER 2015

Doctor Who: TBA
(205, Sixth Doctor and Constance)
Doctor Who – The Early
Adventures: TBA (2.2, Second Doctor)
Doctor Who – The Third Doctor
Adventures: Box Set
Doctor Who – Short Trips:
The Way of the Empty Hand
(5.10, Download only)
Jago & Litefoot: Series 10 Box Set

Dark Shadows: And Red All Over (50)

#### NOVEMBER 2015 Doctor Who: Planet of the Rani

(206, Sixth Doctor and Constance) Doctor Who: Doom Coalition (Eighth Doctor) Doctor Who - The Early Adventures: TBA (2.3, Second Doctor) Doctor Who - Short Trips: The Other Woman (5.11, Download only) UNIT: The New Series: UNIT: Extinction (1.1, Kate Stewart) Blake's 7: The Liberator (Kate Orman and Jonathan Blum) Blake's 7: The Liberator Chronicles - Box Set 12 Survivors - Series 3 Box/Set [full Cast] Dorian Gray: Series Four

#### DECEMBER 2015

Doctor Who: TBA (207, TBA) Doctor Who – Short Trips: Black Dog (5.12, Download only) Doctor Who – The Early Adventures: TBA (2.4, TBA) The Confessions of Dorian Gray: The Spirits of Christmas











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