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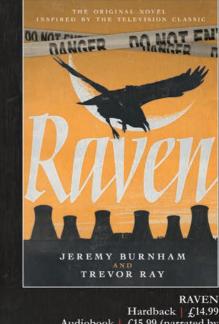
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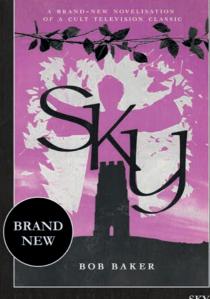
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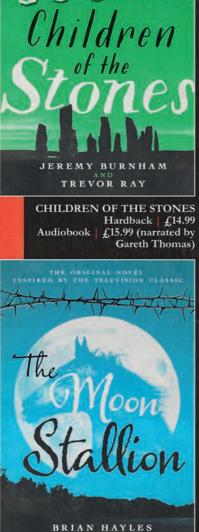
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Sneak Previews & Whispers

Charlotte Pollard: Series Two

Executive producer and writer Nicholas Briggs previews the second series of Charlotte Pollard.

hen the first series of **Charlotte Pollard** ended, our Edwardian adventuress had managed to escape from the implacable Viyrans and was heading off into the unknown. For those of you who haven't caught up with those adventures yet, and only know of Big Finish stalwart Charley Pollard as the companion of the Eighth or even Sixth Doctor, it's time to get up to speed!

When she parted company with the Eighth Doctor, believing him to be dead, she found herself flung further back in the Time Lord's timeline, travelling with the Sixth Doctor – and all the consequent spacio-temporal tautology! When her time was over with dear old 'Sixie', Charlotte found herself trapped in the employ of the Viyrans – a race whose unswerving mission is to rid the cosmos of all traces of an ancient explosion of viruses.

In series one of **Charlotte Pollard** she made several attempts at escape through a strange entity known only as the Ever and Ever Prolixity. It took her to some strange places, but ultimately it teamed her up with a rogue Viyran, who appears to be helpful but has an unknown agenda and a young would-be adventurer – who's never had a real adventure in his life! – Robert Buchan. Outwitting the Viyrans and the ruthless corporate ambitions of Robert's unscrupulous father, Bert, Charley and Robert make a last dash for freedom.

They set off in a capsule into the Ever and Ever Prolixity – and they have no idea where they're going. This new series brings them right down to Earth, but an Earth which is changing rapidly. Why and how have they crash-landed in the London Underground? Who are the Identical Men? And why is human behaviour starting to change in startling and unexpected ways?

Charley, Robert and their Rogue Viyran friend must find out if they are the solution or the cause. **VORTEX**

Charlotte Pollard series two is out in August

Editorial

ASSUME that the majority of Big Finish listeners are fans of cult TV and film and many of their friends share the same interest. I know that is the case with me!

Way back in 1995, myself and a couple of friends travelled down from Glasgow to Great Yarmouth, for the *Cult TV* convention. The way my brain seems to be wired is that it's good at absorbing trivia and I can recall the looks on my friends' faces when I started spouting useless facts related to **Terrahawks** (For those interested, I astounded* them with the acronyms for MOID, ZEAF and HUDSON). You see, I am and always have been, a huge



fan of Gerry Anderson and Christopher Burr's cult 1980s puppet show. I was just the right age when it came out on TV, as I was nine in 1983 and my poor parents, already struggling to keep up with my childhood loves of **Doctor Who** and **Star Wars**, suddenly found I had a new interest. What's not to like about a team with super vehicles, hidden underneath a house, assisted by innovative robots, whilst defending the Earth from aliens?

I had the action figures from Bandai – which were shockingly cheap-looking when compared to the likes of **Star Wars** figures, the vehicles (I accidentally snapped the wheels of my *Battlehawk* and cried for days when my dad couldn't solder them back on...) and had a Sergeant Major Zero football.

When I learned Gerry Anderson was signing copies of his official biography in early 1998, I travelled through Edinburgh and took my Zero with me to get autographed. He's still sitting up in my loft, safely packaged away, with that precious signature on the back of his head.

So I think you get the picture. I love **Terrahawks** – and you should too. The audios are so authentic to the original series and are just perfect recreations of a TV classic. Go on, you know you want to...

KENNY

ISSUE 74 • APRIL 2015

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* I say astounded. I think the correct word is BORED.

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The chances of anything coming from Mars are a million to one... but still they come! Kenny Smith meets the last hope for planet Earth – the Terrahawks!

R TIGER Ninestein and his team are back to defend the Earth from attacks from Mars, led by the evil Zelda, queen of the planet Guk, in the first series of Gerry Anderson and Christopher Burr's classic puppet series from the 1980s, **Terrahawks**.

Three of the original series cast, Jeremy Hitchen, Denise Bryer and Robbie Stevens have returned for the eight new episodes. Produced by Gerry's son Jamie, the stories perfectly capture the fun and menace of the original series, which began in 1983 and ran for 39 episodes. But get ready for some surprisingly adult stories, proving once and for all that **Terrahawks** isn't just kids' stuff.

Jeremy Hitchen, who plays Ninestein, Lieutenant Hiro, Lieutenant Hawkeye, Sergeant Major Zero and Zelda's nephew It-Star, reveals: "I think we are all thrilled to be involved. It was a really big surprise.

"It had actually been rumoured to myself and Robbie, as we were invited to be guests at AnderCon, just after Gerry had passed away and it was a big fundraiser for dementia. It was a great event and a chance to get to speak to everyone – we were talking about **Terrahawks** and **New Captain Scarlet**. Jamie had said to Robbie and I there might be some new **Terrahawks** and told us if anyone mentioned it to us, we had to act surprised!

"We were approached officially a couple of weeks later and I was a bit surprised because these things are never a done deal, as there's always hearsay and rumour. But I was really thrilled, because it was a very important show for me

Terrahawks

"Once a month I was sloping off to Bray Studios to save the planet! It was a very weird thing!"



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

in terms of playing so many people in it. It was a springboard for me into the commercial world – it was fantastic.

"Terrahawks had a good following and I was very proud to be part of it. I was about 21 or 22 and there I was, working with Windsor Davies and was stepping into a place that was rather surreal. At the time, I was selling advertising space for *The*

World of Computers and Technology and once a month I was sloping off to Bray Studios to save the planet! It was a very weird thing.

"It's where I felt I should be, as I loved it and had a lot of fun. We would rehearse two shows and work out the other characters and the great thing was we were given a completely open forum. We would work out who would do what and afterwards we would go to the bar. I would be there with Windsor and I would try to keep up with him, which was a foolish thing to do... and then go back. You could never tell in the final recordings!"

OBBIE STEVENS, whose characters include Space Sergeant 101, HUDSON, Yung-Star and Stew Dapples, says **Terrahawks** has never gone away from his life. "People keep reminding me that it's out there!", he laughs. "After I had done it, there was a period where it seemed to have all subsided and there wasn't a big deal about it, it came and went. But as I've got older, people I ended up working with say, 'Oh, you worked on **Terrahawks**...' and I say, 'Yes,' and they'll then go on to tell me it was a huge part of their childhood.

"I know what it's like, because when I was a child, it was **Thunderbirds** and everyone loved it. It stays with you, so you can imagine how flattered I was when I was asked by Gerry Anderson if I'd like to work on **Terrahawks**.

"It's a great feeling, when one of your great heroes wants you – someone who brought things like **Thunderbirds** and **Captain Scarlet** into your childhood. Gerry always had the last say in casting, so I was honoured to be working for him.

"He would let the people do their own thing – he was very easy to get on with from our perspective, as actors. You could experiment and mess about and I know it meant a

> lot to Gerry, going back to doing puppet animation. I don't know if **Terrahawks** ever delivered what he wanted it to, or if it met the expectations he had, but over the years its impact has stayed with so many.

"It was my first proper voice-over job after leaving drama school. It meant a lot to me as it was my first paid job and working on those two series was quite important. That's why I'm really pleased to have gone back to do these for Big Finish and working with Jeremy and Denise again."

ENISE BRYER brings Zelda, Mary Falconer and the female half of It-Star to life. She is still as brilliant at the age of 87, as she was all those years ago. Zelda has definitely improved with age – she's now 180! Robbie agrees: Denise is still terribly good. She's 80-something now, but she looks amazing, she's totally together and her Zelda is better than ever! I was actually thinking, before we got the call about the Big Finish series, 'Wouldn't it be nice to meet up again with Denise?

"I really didn't know if it would work properly on audio, but that's not for me to judge. If the fanbase wants it – and Jamie is pretty astute – then who am I to argue? The audios were great – we had a lot of fun doing it and I've heard a bit of the first one. It's very authentic-sounding, with the music and effects and it takes its time to get to the action as everything is introduced. At first, I kind of couldn't believe they were going to do it all again, after all this time and the number of years that have passed, as a lot of water has gone under the bridge.

"We sadly lost Anne Ridler a few years ago and Windsor Davies has retired to France and never been seen since! So, it was down to myself, Denise and Jeremy.





Above: Denise Bryer, Robbie Stevens, Nicholas Briggs, Beth Chalmers, Jamie Anderson and Jeremy Hitchen

"Ninestein was, at the time, based on Jack Nicholson!"

"Jeremy became a great friend and we've stayed in touch over the years. I'll ring him after a few months' absence and we can pick things up just where we left them off. It's great to have a big old catch-up, as he's wonderfully funny and a hugely talented guy."

RRAHAWKS: VOLUME ONE

BIC 11 10

reveals: "Yung-Star was a bit of a worry and I did speak to the writers to say, 'You can't give Yung-Star long paragraphs of speech, as he's better doing the odd bit here and there.'

"The original voice came about when we were in the studio and Gerry said. 'We need to have a voice for a new character. Yung-Star,' which they were introducing with Cy-Star after the first few episodes. He asked if anyone had any ideas.

"Since Jeremy and I were doing all the male voices, apart from Sergeant Major Zero, it was down to us. I did my Dalek voice, saving 'Exterminate,' and Gerry just whipped round. like a cartoon character and asked, 'Who did that?' I told him it was me and Gerry asked if I could sustain it and do some more - and so Yung-Star was born!"

Robbie can also lay claim to being the voice of the world's first sat-nav, as he voiced Ninestein's Rolls-Royce, HUDSON (Heuristic Universal Driver with Sensory and Orbital

> Navigation, fact fans!). "Ah, good old HUDSON!" smiles Robbie. "He's got a couple of lines in there, but he's not the most dynamic character!"

Jeremy's versatility was pushed to the limits with one particular scene, in which he played a plethora of people. He laughs: "There were one or two moments where I was voicing five or six characters! I love it though, because it's the ultimate voiceover challenge - where you have to do the various voices in the one scene and not break it and have

to swap - you're always switching, switching, switching - it's very good, though and was great fun. The atmosphere in the booths with all of us was great.

NE NEWCOMER to the Hawknest is Beth Chalmers. She has taken on the parts of Kate Kestrel and Cy-Star, which were played by the late Anne Ridler, who sadly passed away in 2011. Thankfully, Terrahawks wasn't a new concept for Beth.

Beth laughs: "Oh, God, yeah - I really remembered it and being freaked out by it actually. My sister and I used to watch it all the time. We watched it more than all the others, like Thunderbirds and Captain Scarlet - it's definitely the one I have the strongest memories of. I really remember the look of Zelda - she was terrifying! Then, when I met Denise... Oh, she's just the coolest woman in the world! I can't believe she's 87. She dresses amazingly and is a very lovely woman, with so much energy. She's great - an inspiration."

Having played Raine Creevy alongside the Seventh Doctor in the Lost Stories and numerous parts in a variety of other plays for Big Finish, the vocally versatile Beth

ITH A small group of actors, the cast dug deep with

their inspirations for voices. Jeremy says: "Ninestein was, at the time, based on Jack Nicholson. I was being interviewed on Capital Radio by Graham Dene, as I'd been recording impressions of celebrities for answerphone messages. At the time, Gerry was on his way to Bray Studios in his car and had the radio on. He then got on the phone to Capital and asked them for my number. I had been a big fan of his shows when I was younger and then I got this call, saying, 'Hello, it's Gerry Anderson...' I didn't believe it at first.

"I went along and did the audition and Gerry said, 'Can you do it as Bogart?' I did it, but Gerry felt he wanted someone with a bit more authority and that's where Tiger was born. When I went to see One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest and I loved it, with Jack Nicholson, Danny Devito and Christopher Lloyd – I tried to be Jack Nicholson for the next 15 years!

"I had forgotten what a few of the voices were like and I had to revisit the DVDs. Hiro and It-Star were guite easy to recapture. Hiro's really, really fun to do."

Zelda's son Yung-Star, with his memorable gurgling voice, has been revived by Robbie. Vortex can confirm that Robbie needs no special equipment to do the character! He

MARS ATTACKS! MEET ZELDA AND HER FAMILY



ZELDA

CONQUEROR OF MARS. EVIL ANDROID QUEEN OF THE PLANET GUK.



YUNG-STAR

SON OF ZELDA. RUDE, GREEDY AND STUPID. MOSTLY HARMLESS...



CY-STAR SISTER OF ZELDA

VAIN AND SELFISH. WEARS A WIG.



IT-STAR Son of CY-Star. Genderless.

GENDERLESS. Split Personality.

STAY ON THIS CHANNEL: TERRAHAWKS 10 CODES:

- ►► 10:10 AFFIRMATIVE
- ▶ 10:20 LOCATION
- ►► 10:30 STAND/STANDING BY
- ►► 10:40 BATTLE STATIONS!
- ▶ 10:50 LAUNCH CLEARANCE
- ►► 10:90 MAYDAY!
- ▶ 1:0 TOP SECRET



was recommended for the series by Nicholas Briggs. "Nick rang me," recalls Beth, "and said, 'I'm having a coffee with Jamie Anderson and would you be interested in doing **Terrahawks**?' and I said 'Yes, of course.'

"Jamie and I went for lunch and chatted about it. It wasn't a case of persuading me to do it, as I just assumed it was happening. It was all done so easily and the new show was a foregone thing. Before we finished, I said to Jamie, 'Tell me when you are going to start recording it,' and I was surprised when he said, 'We're doing it in three weeks!'

"Luckily, I wasn't busy then and was able to do it. I have to say, though, at the start, I did wonder, how can you do a puppet action show as an audio series, as you're missing out the bit everyone knows, but the stories are great. The characters are so memorable, really strong and the voices really conjure up the visuals.

They've really pushed the stories and they really work."

"How can you do a puppet action show as an audio series?"

Beth went away to do her research on the series, to capture the essence of the characters. She explains: "I remember Kate Kestrel – she was really, really cool, but I hadn't realised how deep her voice was. Anne Ridler also did Cy-Star, which was fun to do.

"Jamie gave me copies of the series, so I went home and watched them and the memories all came flooding back. I don't do impressions and at first, I did think, 'How am I going to do it?' Kate was always so incredibly laid back. These stories we've done are high-energy and when we did them, I tried to inject a bit more energy into her, to give it more urgency. On audio, if I'd played her as she originally was, she could have come across as a bit too laconic!" Robbie adds: "We've been joined by Beth Chalmers, who I'd worked with before and she absolutely nailed it as Kate and Cy-Star, as well as the incidental characters. She's great."

EREMY – WHO, along with Robbie recorded voices for the CGI series New Captain Scarlet – believes Terrahawks has something unique about it which doesn't feature in other classic shows from the Anderson stable. "The humour is the one thing that sets Terrahawks apart from all of Gerry's other shows," says Jeremy. "There's not too much humour in Thunderbirds or Captain Scarlet, but when you've got characters like Stew Dapples and Sheriff Bull, talking about 'coming round the bend and passing Brown Water,' there's a few jokes there for the older audience.

"New Captain Scarlet was a fabulous show – there were great scripts in there, which were really, really deep and it was not as successful as it should have been because it was given such a bad time slot and was buried away."

With the **Terrahawks** box set out this month, which contains an extensive range of fantastic extras, the cast can't wait to hear all of the finished episodes.

Beth adds: "I'm really looking forward to hearing it – Robbie and Jeremy are fantastic at the voices and we have a great bunch. When you hear Robbie doing the Yung-Star voice, it's revolting! It's done without any special treatment and

you always assume it was done later, but he does it there and then. It's fantastic!" Jeremy concludes: "We've done eight new episodes and it would be great if we could end up doing 80 or more." VORTEX

Kenny Smith discovers that everyone on season nine of Jago & Litefoot is...



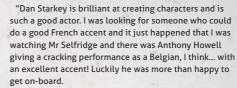
HE MASTER-solvers of miraculous and mysterious machinations are on a maritime mission in their ninth series. Henry Gordon Jago and Professor George Litefoot's latest escapades find them all at sea, literally!

The intrepid duo have embarked on a cruise. It's supposed to be a relaxing break, but as usual, it isn't too long before there are terrors to be faced and mysteries to be solved!

Christopher Benjamin – the fantastic Jago – is delighted to be back and adds: "I can't see an end to it at all, unless we pop off! We're just recording series 11 now and we're still enjoying it." "It's amazing, isn't it?," adds Lisa Bowerman – the director who also plays barmaid Ellie in the adventures. "The whole series has a momentum of its own now.

"When we started, I don't think we ever thought this far ahead to be honest. I knew there would be more after we got to series six and then every time we had amazing feedback and the reviews came in and were so good, there was no reason not to do another.

"Producer David Richardson and script editor Justin Richards have come up with great ideas and mixed it up – this time, they're on-board a ship, which is a brilliant idea. It's taking them out of their natural environment but still managing to maintain that air of mystery."



"We've also got the wonderful Miranda Raison and her French accent is amazing – as well as a couple of others we threw at her on the day.

"I was also delighted that we got Sarah Badel. I'd actually doubled for her many years ago in a production of Stoppard's **Night & Day** (when I was in the youth theatre at the old Thorndike in Leatherhead, they used to use us for extras parts in the main house productions.) I've always been a huge fan of her work – she's a truly great actress. To get her in the studio was a great privilege.

"I can't see an end to it at all, unless we pop off!"

"And then there's Mr Warner. Because of his age and experience, his character is closer to Jago and Litefoot's and that dramatically creates a great dynamic between them all. There was also a good deal of reminiscing in the green room – as most of them had acted in theatre around the same time!"

"If you have got well-established actors, who are perhaps a little on the mature side, the audio medium is just perfect for them. Most older experienced actors love radio and audio, in terms of wanting to keep working, but not particularly keen on theatre or TV anymore. We can keep them on their toes, but they don't have to learn their lines, they can sit down if they want to and it's a great opportunity to act without having to commit large chunks of their life to other projects. The material is also very good, so there's lots to get stuck into and that's also very satisfying."

REVOR PARTICULARLY enjoys the chance to get into the studio and meet other actors in the green room. He explains: "One of the reasons I keep doing these is because one gets to meet really clever people. I'm 82 now, but

I do enjoy getting to meet the actors who are younger and more operative in the theatre than I am, so it's lovely to

Above : Trevor Baxter, Sarah Badel, David Charles and Christopher Benjamin

> For Christopher, it's always a pleasure to return to the Moat Studios for a new series of Jago & Litefoot. He explains: "I always enjoyed the part in the first place. It was one of the nicest

roles I had on telly in those early years. It was lovely coming back and meeting Trevor again and we've struck up quite a rapport.

"The scripting is so good – it's a brilliant team of writers, who are varied, but they absolutely understand and love the characters, it's just such a pleasure to do.

"I don't work very much these days, partly out of choice, so it's a real pleasure to go into the studio and do more Jago & Litefoot. It's quite a social gathering, as we get to meet old friends all the time. I was delighted to work on the newest series with an old friend of mine from RADA, who I last met nearly 50 years ago."

B RINGING IN strong guest casts for the series has become something that is now expected of director Lisa. Series nine features the talents of a host of actors familiar to Big Finish fans, including Dan Starkey, David Warner, Miranda Raison and Anthony Howell.

Lisa says: "We always complain when we're watching TV that we don't see enough different actors, but sometimes, you have to go with actors you've worked with before, who you know will be perfect for a particular part. When you've got good actors, it would be silly not to use them.



Jago & Litefoot



Above: Christopher Benjamin, Miranda Raison, Trevor Baxter and David Warner

still be able to hear all the news and lovely talk that goes on between the recordings.

"Our guest casts are always so marvellous – they always have such wonderful interpretations of the characters and that's what makes it such a joy." Christopher points out: "It's very much a company feeling we have with these – the writers come in and we have Howard, who does the music, coming in to say hello. The producer David Richardson is always there and Lisa, who directs, is just wonderful. Not only is Lisa a marvellous director, she's a great actress too, plaving Ellie.

"She's one of the few directors I can take notes from. If she suggests something, then I know it will be right – I trust her completely. When she's in the control room, she knows what it sounds like and knows what she's doing. Then there's Toby, who owns the studios. He sits there, pulling all the levers, as well as being a first class chef."

"Lisa is so spot-on as a director," agrees Trevor. "If there's anything as little as an inflection being off, she's straight onto it. We always have a very good day – we have a lot of fun in the green room and in the recording booths. We work very quickly to get an episode recorded in a day, you have to work hard and concentrate.

"Actors love talking and laughing and there's an energy that gets created. We like to carry that through when we go back into the booths and when we come back to the green room, we're still exuberant and that carries on, re-energising us. It's so very different from filming, which is technical and can make you feel quite nervous. It's so boring having to wait for everything to be set up and with audio, the only thing that's needed technically is to adjust the height of your microphone! There's no hanging about."

Trevor is also keen to praise the various scribes involved on the series. He says: "They use very good writers – they all know the characters of Litefoot and Jago and it's very, very rare when I will suggest in studio that something I've been given to say doesn't seem to be in character. Most of the time you just never have to alter a word. It's all so beautifully done.

Jago & Litefoot Series nine

The Flying Frenchmen

by Jonathan Morris Jago and Litefoot embark on a cruise. It's supposed to be a relaxing break, but what terrors lurk in the mysterious fog?

The Devil's Dicemen

by Justin Richards Arriving at Monte Carlo, Jago is keen to try his luck at the famous casino. But if he's not careful he could lose a lot more than just money.

Island of Death

by Simon Barnard & Paul Morris Arriving at a beautiful island, Jago and Litefoot discover evidence of a missing expedition. Can they discover what happened to the ship's crew – before it happens to them?

Return of the Nightmare

by Justin Richards

There is a murderer loose aboard the ship. If Jago and Litefoot can solve the mystery of the strange fog and return to London, will that make matters better, or far worse?

DIRECTED BY: Lisa Bowerman

RELEASED: This month!

"That makes life very easy – it's all been tailor-made for myself and Christopher. When you're in studio, it's just like going out in a suit which has been very well cut. It gives you that extra confidence. Doing these plays has been a revelation really, to find there's so much there. I did enjoy the original all those years ago, but it's opened up the scope of the characters and given us all of this extra background, which is quite incredible for something that was just a six-part story."

"When you're in studio, it's just like going out in a suit which has been very well cut. "

And Lisa chips in: "We're very lucky with our writers. I think it helps that the characters Robert Holmes created in Jago and Litefoot are so strong and the actors' performances are so clear. All of the writers have not only managed to capture their qualities every time, keeping them consistent, but also developed them as well – without ever losing their believability."

ITH SERIES nine set on-board a boat, rather than their usual haunt of Victorian London, it's a different setting for the intrepid pair. While Jago and Litefoot may sound as though they're enjoying a life on the ocean waves, it's definitely not for the leading men! Christopher admits: "I'm not mad about it – I suffer from travel sickness very often and so I have to be quite careful.

"The thought of being stuck on a boat and not being able to go walking – no, it's not for me. It's too claustrophobic. I like to be able to get out and have a stroll on Hampstead Heath every day. On a boat, all you'd do is walk around and around the deck. It would be too boring for me, I'm afraid."

> Trevor agrees: "I'm not really that keen on travel by boat, I have to admit. It's not something I have chosen to do in the past." After nine series, Jago & Litefoot is still going strong and shows no sign of ending. As well as their exciting adventures, there's still plenty more to learn about

the characters themselves. "There's lots of things which are alluded to, but others are not said," says Trevor. "You wonder what those experiences and moments were, what form did they take and while you can spell things out most of the time, there are others where it is better to leave it to the listener to decide.

"It's always amazing what comes out about people when they have passed away – and even when they're alive, sometimes – when you think they are living such forthright lives, but then you discover all sorts of odd and strange things about them. When the scripts are this good, you can explore all these things."

With the duo having travelled forward to the 1960s, Christopher hopes there's going to be more adventures out of the Victorian era for the duo. "I loved the time travel, when we went to the 1960s," he says. "That was great fun for us to do.

"I'd love it if we could do that again and travel to meet William Shakespeare at The Globe. I don't know how that would go, but it might be good fun. It would be interesting to do, because there's so much potential there."

ALKING TO Christopher and Trevor, there's a clear mutual admiration and respect for one another, which adds to the truthfulness in their relationship. Lisa says: "They are amazing – they're excellent company in the studio and good friends out of the studio as well. I know they even go out to the odd exhibition together. They really look out for each other – Chris helps Trevor along and vice versa. They rib each other mercilessly.

"They really are the perfect double act, in and out of character. 24 carat theatrical gold."

"A lot of our relationship is sort of taken for granted now," says Christopher. "Jago and Litefoot are very close, as friends and Trevor and I are good friends. We don't see each other that much outside of the studio, although we might go to an art gallery and have lunch afterwards, but we are great chums. I always look forward to doing more."

A highlight for Trevor is hearing how the finished plays sound. He explains: "I always listen back to them – I say to Christopher, 'I always get an enormous amount of pleasure from them,' as I always wonder if I could be better. He always tells me, 'I haven't listened to the latest one yet...'

"The amazing thing for me is the work they do after we've finished in the studio. What Howard Carter does is just amazing. It's wonderful what he does in post-production. Howard always impresses me as we don't have any effects put in at the time, so we're just playing the scenes with the basic dialogue.

"There's always little things in there that you would never have expected, like a thunderstorm or doors opening, people shouting and such like. He provides all of that and I like to think of him as being the scenery!" VORTEX As Big Finish builds up to the 200th Doctor Who monthly range release, it's time to mix things up a little, as Kenny Smith discovers...

TAKEN FOR

UPERHERO MASHERS are toys with different parts of various comic book greats, like Spider-Man, The Incredible Hulk and Captain America, allowing children to pull them apart, then stick them back together again, however they wish. The audio equivalent of that begins this month with *The Defectors*, part of the run-up to the release of the 200th monthly Big Finish Doctor Who audio.

The concept is simple – take a classic companion team from the early days of the series and place a later Doctor beside them.

Script editor Alan Barnes explains: "For some time, I'd been thinking it was a shame we couldn't make more use of the first three Doctors' companions in the main range.

"Continuity permitting (or even not!), we can always have the Fifth, Sixth or Seventh Doctors meeting up with friends they said 'goodbye' to years before... but there have been a fair few *School Reunion*-type stories now and they're great, but I couldn't help wondering: can't we do something different? "Then I thought: what if the Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Doctors turned up bang in the middle of earlier, unseen adventures – standing in for their 'proper' selves, who have gone AWOL for some reason or other...? Locum Doctors, if you will! And that's what we've done!"

The series begins this month with *The Defectors* by Nicholas Briggs, which unites Sylvester McCoy's Seventh Doctor with the Third Doctor's companion Jo Grant (Katy Manning). Katy was delighted with the central concept of the play.

"I love seeing how good old Jo reacts to the other Doctors," she admits. "The great thing about playing the character of Jo is how well she pairs off with any of the Doctors. She knows about regeneration, because she's seen two other versions in *The Three Doctors*, so it's never going to be a massive shock for her. Jo just accepts that it's the Doctor and muddles along, whatever he looks like.

"As a character, she would lay down her life for any of them. She thinks of the Doctor as her best friend and would do anything for him."

"Katy is, guite frankly, a force of nature, so it's quite a fullon job looking after her!"

The legendary Terrance Dicks (prolific Doctor Who author and script-editor) has always said that he never had any problems writing for the different incarnations of the Doctor, saying the Doctor is always the Doctor. Was this the case for Nick, when it came to fitting the Seventh Doctor into the early seventies era?

> "I think in many ways Terrance Dicks is right about that," agrees Nick, "but when you do something like this, you really discover the differences between the Doctors. The essence of this story is the Seventh Doctor trying to work out what the Third Doctor would have done. Eventually, Jo kind of takes on the Third Doctor role. as she's quite suspicious of this strange. 'other' Doctor who's replaced the Doctor she knows and loves."

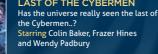
The core of the story is how differently Sylvester McCoy's Doctor acts, compared to Jon Pertwee's incarnation. Nick said: "It was the whole crux of the story and his acting differently really set up a nice dynamic between him and Jo Grant."

ATY WAS delighted to act alongside another incarnation of the Doctor: "Oh, Sylvester wonderful, wonderful Sylvester," laughs Katy. "I toured with him years ago in Australia and New Zealand. I've known him for a long time. He's great fun, an absolute sweetheart and such a lovely man.

"Working with him as the Doctor is another I can chalk off my list - I worked with Jon. of course and with Patrick in The Three Doctors, with Matt Smith in The Sarah Jane Adventures and also with Peter Davison and Colin Baker when I've played Iris Wildthyme for Big Finish.

"He was one of my missing links, so it was good to be with him in the studio. It was a big surprise when I was

Coming up after The Defectors...



OUT MAY!



THE SECRET HISTORY

The Doctor finds himself plunged back into history... in more ways than one. Starring Peter Davison, Maureen O'Brien and Peter Purves

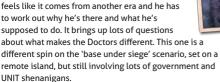
OUT JUNE

AND THE DEFECTORS



VORTEX MAGAZINE PAGE 15





S WELL as Katy, Richard Franklin also

appearing as Captain Mike Yates. Writer

adds authenticity to the period

Nicholas Briggs says: "The challenge is to put

vour displaced Doctor into an adventure which

Above: Sylvester McCoy and Katy Manning

"It wasn't so much difficult to write, as an exciting challenge. First of all, I had to find a way to do a 'typical' Third Doctor story without the Brigadier or Benton, since we've sadly lost the lovely Nick Courtney and John Levene has made it clear that he's not interested in working with us again. Once I'd come up with the idea of someone trying to remove the Doctor from the relative safety of his UNIT HQ lab, I was inspired by the island of terror sort of scenario.

Doctor Who: Katy Manning

told I'd be working with him, but still very nice too. I've done rather well with the number of Doctors I've worked with and with Sylvester, I just love his take on the Doctor. I've got a lovely photograph of him, sitting wearing his scarf and it's incredible how he can hold his phone in his hand and be so busy on it, while chatting away... he's a busy boy! When I think of Sylvester, I always smile. They're all wonderful and bring their own personalities to the role, which is terrific. There isn't one actor that's played the Doctor who isn't a joy to be around."

Nick reveals there's a great dynamic between Sylvester and Katy in studio. He smiles: "I know and love them both very much. They are in their own unique ways both chaos machines. Pages of script keep being lost, paper is flying everywhere and both of them are fond of entertaining everyone in the room. Katy is, quite frankly, a force of nature, so it's quite a full-on job looking after her. She's absolutely brilliant, though. I think I hardly gave her a note. She knows Jo and simply delivers the goods. It was interesting seeing her and Sylv interact. I think it works really nicely."



OR SOMEONE who was once reluctant to play Jo Grant again, Katy admits that she loves being in studio for Big Finish, whether as her iconic **Doctor Who** character, or as trans-temporal adventuress Iris Wildthyme. She says: "I've been back doing Jo for a few years now. When David Richardson originally asked me, I thought, 'What would be the point?' But I'm so glad I said yes. I loved her being paired up with Iris and it's a wonderful trio – Jo, Iris and the Doctor.

"She's a great character to bring back – a tough little cookie who's a little bit wacky, but incredibly loyal and comes with no agendas. She's just Jo!

"There's nothing hidden about her, as what she says is what she does. She's a very 'in the moment' kind of girl. She's just a joy to play, as she just reacts to everything which is thrown at her. I like to tackle everything I do with the same energy and put it into every character I'm playing, but I have a huge fondness for Jo.

"I just love doing voice work – I really adore it – and it's great having the chance to work with so many wonderful people in the studio."

The new trilogy is something that fans are eagerly anticipating, to hear how the later Doctors work with earlier companions, but one person who won't be listening to the finished plays is Katy. She says: "I have to admit, I don't listen back to them. There's times when I've heard bits and pieces and they sound fantastic, but I'm a little scared about hearing myself.

"I'm very intense about getting things right and I don't like the idea of hearing something I've done and then wanting to change it. Once something has been made, there's no chance of going back. I'm my own worst critic.

"I know what I'm capable of and because we've got such little time, I don't want to think I've done something that's less than 100 per cent of what I can do. It has been said that when you get older, it gets a little harder to get your old voice, but when the moment comes, I like to think I've found Jo's voice again and I can put all of my energy into bringing her to life again." **VORTEX** "I like to think I've found Jo's voice again and I can put all of my energy into bringing her to life again."



Doctor Who: The Defectors

O GRANT is shocked to find most of her colleagues are missing. Then she discovers that the Doctor has inexplicably changed. But there's no time to worry about it, as she and her misplaced Time Lord friend are whisked to the mysterious Delphin Isle on a matter of national security. There, they encounter a disturbingly odd form of local hospitality and learn of a highly classified incident that took place during the Cold War.

Why exactly have they been brought here? And what is the truth concerning the bodies in the harbour and the vast project being undertaken beneath a cloak of secrecy?

STARRING: Sylvester McCoy (The Doctor), Katy Manning (Jo Grant), Richard Franklin (Captain Yates), Neil Roberts (Captain Cornelius), Barnaby Edwards (Commander Wingford), David Graham (Shedgerton), Rachel Bavidge (Europan Leader), Jez Fielder (Europan)

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY: Nicholas Briggs





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AVON CALLING

The final instalment of Paul Darrow's thrilling trilogy, *Lucifer: Genesis*, will be published in May and Xanna Eve Chown caught up with Paul to find out more...

UCIFER HAS been following the adventures of the older Avon as he battles the Quartet – the tyrannical heir to the Federation. What lies in store for Avon? What will we find out about his murky past? And why do some of the stories about his past that we think we know seem a little... different?

So, Paul, we've reached the end of the *Lucifer trilogy: Genesis*. It's interesting that the last instalment is named after the first book of the Bible. How did you go about naming the books?

■ The allusive names are simple. The overall title, *Lucifer*, invites the reader to decide which **Blake's 7** character is closest to the devil. *Lucifer* and *Revelation* constitute my take on what happened to Avon – the character I know most about – after the series. *Genesis* refers to Servalan's – and Avon's – rise to different sorts of 'power'. *Genesis* is also a kind of a conclusion if you like. Perhaps a contradiction!

Did you have all three books planned out when you began writing about the older Avon's adventures, or did things evolve as you wrote?

■ The idea of a trilogy came about as I was writing Lucifer, the first book. I felt I had a lot more to write! I had some basic ideas, but the narratives seemed to take upon themselves lives of their own. You've created some very memorable characters to sit alongside the familiar faces from the world of Blake's 7 – and they are mostly villainous! Do you have a favourite?

■ I have no particular favourite, but Malachi Doyle is a character I should like to develop – maybe! (Note: Malachi Doyle is the tutor and guardian of the Empress of China, the woman who holds ultimate power over the peoples of Earth.) I very much enjoyed making up names and selecting locations. Science fiction allows considerable leeway.

There are definitely some very memorable locations in Genesis: A futuristic Chinese imperial garden, an icy moon, Servalan's mansion... Do you enjoy thinking up these exotic places or do you prefer writing the action sequences? As it happens, whilst I enjoy action sequences and can visualise them, I tend to prefer writing dialogue. I chuckle when I come up with what I think is a cool line!

In Genesis, we re-visit some of Avon's adventures on the Liberator – events that readers will remember from the original TV series... But, things aren't always as they seem. In fact, some of the stories in Genesis are a bit different from what the reader may expect. What is happening here? The books, though written in the third person, are really memories – Avon's memories – except when Avon does not feature; then, there is straightforward narrative, my take on

Extract from Blake's 7 - Lucifer: Genesis

now had fallen, blanketing the gardens, and no birds sang, but that did not deter the Empress. Wrapped in sable furs, and accompanied by Sun Huang, she stepped daintily along a path that unseen servants had cleared for her.

'What do we know of the terrorist who speaks our tongue?' she enquired.

'As it happens, my Empress, after some research, we know a great deal.'

'Enlighten me, if you please.'

'He is an unlikely terrorist, insomuch as he is better described as a talented criminal, at the highest level.'

'Not so talented - he was unable to avoid being caught out and imprisoned.'

'There is that, of course, but I am reliably informed that he was betrayed to the authorities by a loved one.'

'Ah, love is blind to duplicity. Or so I am told.' 'He stole vast sums from the Federation's coffers and they are not, as far as I am aware, recovered.'

'How did he do this?'

'He was, and I would think still is, expert in the manipulation of computer technology. He sought out and located secret funds of the Federation elite and... deprived them of them.'

The Empress laughed.

Sun Huang merely smiled. 'Avon – that is his name – escaped imprisonment and fate has thrust him into the company of the terrorist known as Blake. Although, Blake prefers to be acknowledged as a fighter for freedom.'

'Oh dear, so many of those come to a sticky end,' said the Empress, shivering slightly. 'However, before they do so, they can be an irritant.'

'Avon, I would suggest, is not interested in anyone's freedom except his own.'

'Ah. Single minded self-interest is admirable.'

'Quite so. Avon is capable of resorting to violence, should he deem it necessary. His philosophy would seem to be: Do unto others as they would do unto you, but do it first.'

Again the Empress laughed. 'I think I would like this gentleman.'

Lucifer: Genesis is out in May in hardback and as an eBook.



"Lucifer, invites the reader to decide which **Blake's 7** character is closest to the devil."

what might have happened with regard to Servalan and etcetera. Therefore, there may be – and certainly are – some 'revisions'.

So the books show us Avon as an older man, looking back at his adventures on the *Liberator* – and find that time has altered some of his memories?

■ We all distort memories to suit ourselves, do we not? Avon's memories might only be accurate as far as he is concerned – or prefers!

In Genesis, we meet Avon at three very different stages of his life: as a young man, then later on the *Liberator* and finally as an older man. Do you think he stays the same character throughout?

■ I see the character of Avon – and other characters for that matter – developing naturally – through time and with, or without, the benefit of 'experience', making mistakes and recovering from them.

The one relationship that Avon maintains, throughout everything, is with Orac. In some ways, Orac seems to become more than just a computer in these books. Is that right?

■ My idea was that, as Orac seems to become more human, Avon becomes more machine-like. Soon, perhaps, machines and humans may merge. Who knows?

What has it been like to write for the older Avon?

■ Because I am older, it was interesting imagining an older Avon. I very much enjoyed writing the books and I hope that enjoyment communicates to any readers and, perhaps, increases their enjoyment.

And will we be seeing more from him in the future?

I would very much like to write more about Avon as I see him. We shall see! VORTEX

DOUBLE DE CRIME CHRONICLES

OUISE JAMESON is undoubtedly one of Big Finish's most versatile assets. A master of her craft, she directs, she writes, we know she can act – and not only as Leela. Amongst others, she has also appeared in Survivors, the forthcoming The Omega Factor, Blake's 7 and three Big Finish Drama Showcase releases. One of her most challenging roles was for the Judge Dredd Crime Chronicles range, in Double Zero, by James Swallow.

DOUBLE

The **2000AD** range is one which is often overlooked by fans of Big Finish and unfairly so. The series stars Big Finish veteran and man of 1000 voices Toby Longworth as Judge Dredd, who features in the majority of the series, with Simon Pegg (Star Trek's new Mr Scott) as Johnny Alpha in Strontium Dog.

Big Finish's 2000AD series ran for 18 full-cast plays (or rather, 17 full cast and one starring Toby Longworth as, well, everyone...), plus four other releases, the **Crime Chronicles**. Following on from the template of the **Doctor Who Companion Chronicles**, these feature Toby alongside one other actor – and of particular note is *Double Zero*, the first audio appearance by Psi-Judge Cassandra Anderson.

Producer John Ainsworth recalls: "For various reasons, we had been forbidden to use Judge Anderson in the original, full-cast plays, so it was good to be able to have her in one of the **Crime Chronicles**.

"As luck would have it, Louise Jameson was in Manchester performing a play, so I offered her the role of Anderson. We had a good time recording this one and I think Toby and Louise enjoyed working together."

The play was written by James Swallow, who enjoyed the experience of bringing Anderson to life. He explains: "John said he wanted to do a Judge Anderson **Chronicle**,

"You can tell when an actor is really getting their teeth into a part – and Louise was great."

which we never did in the full cast plays and he said we were going to get Louise Jameson to play her.

"I was really disappointed that I couldn't be at the recording as I would have loved to have been there. I was told she was going to do it in a Sam Spade-esque style of voice performance and she then comes out with this amazing voice, which has the right level of wry humour. She just made the character work.

"It's Anderson telling you about these events and it places her in a situation she hadn't been in before, relieving her of her psychic powers and she becomes a regular street judge.

"You can tell when an actor is really getting their teeth into a part – and Louise was great. You can have an idea in your head of how a character will sound and then the actor goes in and blows away all your preconceptions, changing how you thought of them.

"Louise played Cassandra Anderson in a unique way and it just works with a whole new perspective, which wasn't the way I was writing it and that's all in John's direction too and the sound design is fantastic too, giving it a black and white feel. I'm really proud to have been part of it." **VORTEX**

Judge Dredd: Crime Chronicles – Double Zero is available from bigfinish.com for just £4.00 on CD and £2.99 on download!.

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PIECES OF EIGHT

After listening to To The Death, I have actually completed what I set out to do with Big Finish since I started collecting in 2012; collect and listen to all Paul McGann/Eighth Doctor audio CDs to date, from Storm Warning all the way up to Dark Eyes 3. I've even got the subscriber special The Four Doctors, a download version of Living Legend and an alternate appearance from McGann in Klein's Story/Survival of the Fittest. I just want to say thank vou for so many hours of audio pleasure and that I've enjoyed so much more of Big Finish's ranges and Doctors along the way as well! I look forward to all future appearances of the bewitching Paul McGann.

Thank you, Big Finish and keep up the good work!

IAN MANNING

Nick: Cheers, Ian. Paul's done some great work for us and all the writers, directors, sound designers and musicians have been brilliant. And there's more to come, with **Doom Coalition**.

DOCTORS IN THE MIX

It's always fun to have different Doctors interact with each other in an adventure, but with so many Doctors in *The Light at the End*, it was hard to have the Doctors' personalities interact as effectively as they do in adventures such as *The Sirens of Time*. Has there been any thought to have a series of **Doctor Who** adventures pairing up different Doctors? The Fourth Doctor was mainly paired with the Eighth Doctor in *The Light at the End*, so it would be nice to see the Fourth Doctor team up with each of the other existing Doctors or even the earlier incarnations which are now voiced pretty convincingly by other actors. Thanks for all the great adventures – I don't know how I used to get through the 40 minute drive to work and back without Big Finish!

TIM LAWLIS

Nick: The idea of doing 'multi-Doctor' stories is always incredibly popular and hotly anticipated, but in my experience it's always difficult to deliver a great adventure. Expectations are always so incredibly high. I also think that these sorts of adventures are special because they only happen very rarely.

JUST WILLIAM

I wanted to say that Doctor Who Big Finish stories are making me very happy and although I'm not a native English speaker (and so I don't understand word by word) I enjoy them very much, I listen to them mostly during pauses at work and it always helps me to gain back my sanity when I get angry with other people. I listen mostly to Fifth Doctor stories and recently from the First Doctor era. Also your anniversary story The Light at the End was marvelous and a true celebration (yes I know it's rather long ago, sorry!) Anyway I wanted to say how I love your stories from the First Doctor era – whether it was Lost Stories, The Companion Chronicles or last year's new The Early Adventures

– especially all those with William Russell, but it seems there will be no audio with him this year – is it true?
Will there be some more in the future?
HANKA J, Czech Republic
Nick: We certainly have plans to do more with William Russell. Really glad to hear you're enjoying these, Hanka.

SEEK, LOCATE, DESTROYERS!

I have just listened to *The Daleks: The Destroyers* from the Second Doctor Box Set, which was the pilot for the Terry Nation Dalek series that was never made and thought this was excellent. It finished, as I expected, on a cliffhanger set up nicely for the series. I was wondering if you had considered making the series yourselves with the same characters, done in the same way as this one.

TREVOR WALLIS

Nick: Now there's an idea. Just imagine. No plans to do this, but I would never rule it out.

HOW MONSTROUS

I was just wondering if there was going to be a **Doctor Who** story, which hosts the Cybermen and Sontarans. The Daleks and Cybermen clashed in the TV episode *Doomsday* and the Daleks and Sontarans were in *The Five Companions*. I think it would be great if the Cybermen and Sontarans were to meet.

BENJAMIN STANLEY

Nick: Sounds like a fun idea. No plans to do it at the moment, but... Hmmm... You've got me thinking...

Coming up...

RELEASE SCHEDULE Forthcoming audio releases

APRIL 2015

Doctor Who: The Defectors
 (198, Seventh Doctor and Ja Grant)
 Doctor Who - The Fourth
 Doctor Who - The Fourth
 Doctor Adventures: Decith Match
 (4.4, Fourth Doctor, Leela and K9)
 Doctor Who - Short Trips:
 The Ghost Trap (5.04, Download only)
 Blake's 7: The Classic Audio
 Adventures 6: Truth and Lies (Full Cast)
 Terrahawks Volume 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 Damaaed 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
(4.6, 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)
Dort Shadows: The Curse

of Shurafa (46)

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 (Fuil Cast) The Avengers – The Lost Episodes: Volume 4 (Box Set) Dark Shadows: In the Twinkling of An Eye (A7)

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 Leela)
Doctor Who – Short Trips:
Foreshadowing (5.08, Download only)
Charlotte Pollard:
Series Timo 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: Criss-Cross (20/ Sixth Doctor and Constance) Doctor Who: The Sixth Doctor – The 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) Doctor Who – The Third Doctor Adventures: Box Set Dark Shadows: Tainted Love (49) Big Finish Classics: The Wonderful Wizard of Oz

OCTOBER 2015 Doctor Who: Planet of the Rani (205, Sixth Doctor and Constance) Doctor Who – The Early
Adventures: TBA (2.2, Second Doctor)
Doctor Who – Short Trips:
The Way of the Empty Hand
(5.10, Download only)

Doctor Who: Doom Coalition (Eighth Doctor)

Jago & Litefoot: Series 10 Box Set
 Dark Shadows: And Red All Over (50)

NOVEMBER 2015

Doctor Who: Snowblind
(206, Sixth Doctor and Constance)
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: Book & Mediasphere
(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 - The Novel Adaptations: Theatre of War (07 Seventh Doctor, Ace and Bernice)
 Doctor Who - The Novel Adaptations: All-Consuming Fire (08 Seventh Doctor, Ace and Bernice)
 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

JANUARY 2016

Doctor Who: TBA (208, Fifth Doctor)
Doctor Who – The Fourth Doctor
Adventures: Wave of Destruction
(5.1, Fourth Doctor and Romana II)
The Prisoner: Volume 1 Box Set
The Avengers – The Lost Episodes:
Volume 5 (Box Set)











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