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# VORTEX

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ISSUE 87 • DECEMBER 2015

## DOCTOR WHO: READY FOR WAR!

JOHN HURT COMES TO BIG FINISH TO REPRISÉ HIS ROLE AS THE BATTLE-WEARY TIME LORD... JUST DON'T CALL HIM THE DOCTOR!

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# Sneak Previews & Whispers



## Doctor Who: The Tenth Doctor

**H**E'S BACK – and it's about time! After notching up a string of TV hits including **Broadchurch**, **The Escape Artist** and **Jessica Jones**, David Tennant is back in the Big Finish fold, and it's time to get really excited, because he's playing the Doctor. Again!

David featured in a number of Big Finish plays before he became the Doctor, and he was delighted to be back in the studios in October, to record three new adventures alongside Catherine Tate as Donna Noble.

It's been a decade since David last recorded a Big Finish play, and producer David Richardson says: "I find it hard to believe that it's a 10 year gap for David.

"He swept back into the role like he'd never been away - I was gobsmacked by the energy he brought to it. He's a nuclear reactor amongst actors – firing away so vividly... It was such a privilege to produce his return as such a popular Doctor."

And David R reveals David T and Catherine had a blast. He adds: "They were two great friends, having fun recreating these roles. And I think it felt so special for all our guest actors, just to be there appearing with them in this landmark release. The Tenth Doctor and Donna are back – and it's going to be a thrilling ride!" **VORTEX**

# Editorial

**W**ELL, LET'S be honest, fellow Big Finish fans – who saw this one coming? The War Doctor – appearing in four box sets from Big Finish – starring John Hurt. I'll say it again, because it still seems hard to believe... The War Doctor – appearing in four box sets from Big Finish – starring John Hurt.

It's the kind of thing that we **Doctor Who** fans dream of when we come up with lists of fantasy series we'd like Big Finish to do (though no one wants to know about **Bandril Empire**, and I can't guess why...).

I'm sure we've all got our own visions in our minds of how the Time War would have looked (for me, the **Nightmare Child** is a vast being, made up of stars, always changing colour and moving together, while controlled by a malignant intelligence in league with the Daleks), so it's going to be fascinating hearing just how it's all brought to life.



The **Only The Monstrous** set comprises three adventures, but it's definitely not the Doctor we're used to – a man who is insistent that he is most definitely not the Doctor. He won't do the things we expect him to do, because this is a Doctor who will make the decisions that his previous – and indeed, successive – incarnations wouldn't. And to have the eternally fabulous **Jacqueline Pearce** and **Carolyn Seymour** in there too... oh! Heaven! Or is it hell?

Let the war commence...

KENNY

ISSUE 82 • DECEMBER 2015

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Line Producer: **David Richardson**

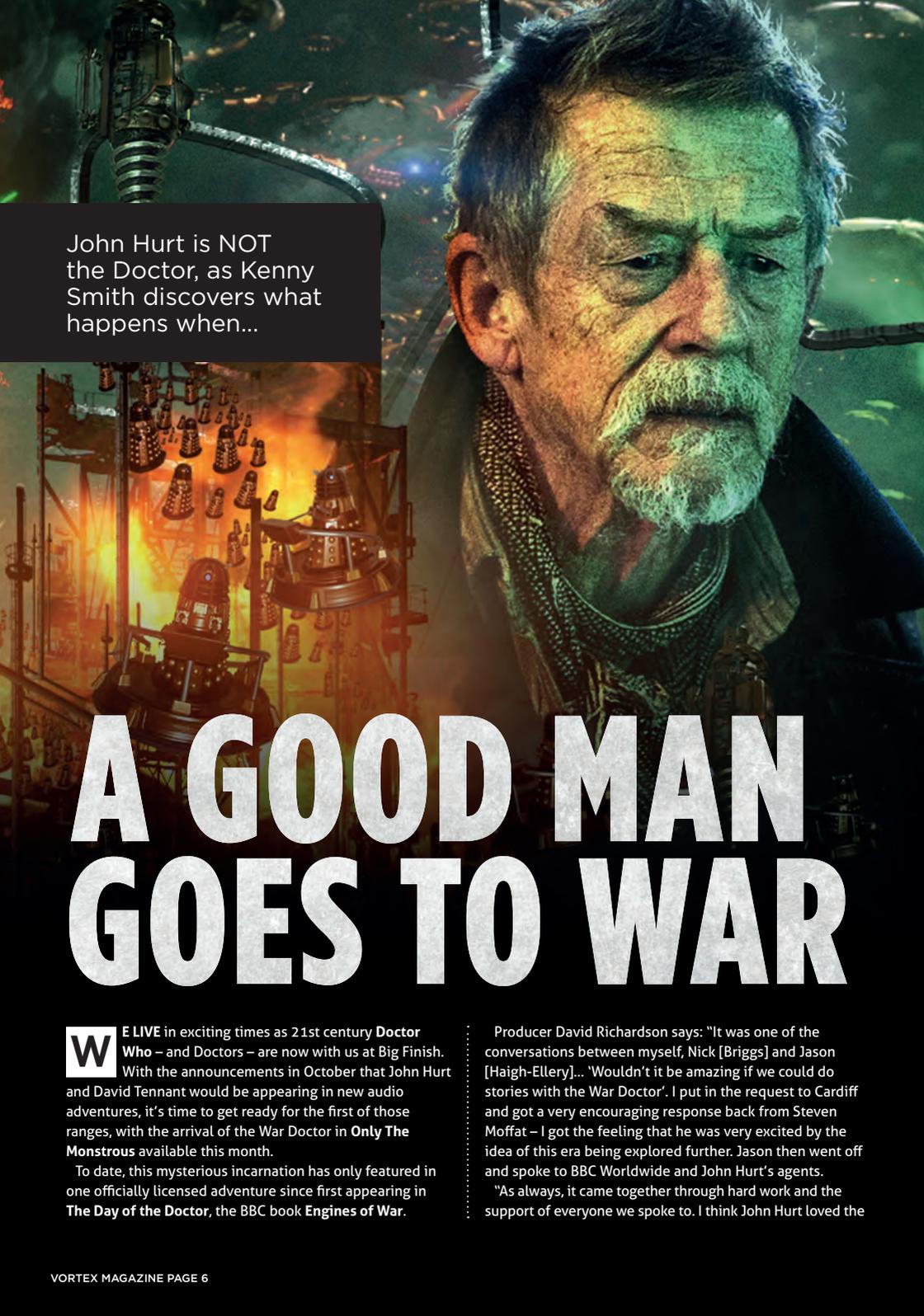
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John Hurt is NOT the Doctor, as Kenny Smith discovers what happens when...

# A GOOD MAN GOES TO WAR

**W**E LIVE in exciting times as 21st century **Doctor Who** – and Doctors – are now with us at Big Finish. With the announcements in October that John Hurt and David Tennant would be appearing in new audio adventures, it's time to get ready for the first of those ranges, with the arrival of the War Doctor in **Only The Monstrous** available this month.

To date, this mysterious incarnation has only featured in one officially licensed adventure since first appearing in **The Day of the Doctor**, the BBC book **Engines of War**.

Producer David Richardson says: "It was one of the conversations between myself, Nick [Briggs] and Jason [Haigh-Ellery]... 'Wouldn't it be amazing if we could do stories with the War Doctor'. I put in the request to Cardiff and got a very encouraging response back from Steven Moffat – I got the feeling that he was very excited by the idea of this era being explored further. Jason then went off and spoke to BBC Worldwide and John Hurt's agents.

"As always, it came together through hard work and the support of everyone we spoke to. I think John Hurt loved the



## Doctor Who: The War Doctor

With the Time War raging between the Time Lords and the Daleks, enveloping all of time and space in the conflict, the Doctor knew he could stand on the sidelines no more. To that end, he renounced his name and pledged to do what was necessary to bring about peace.

But the fire of a war so vast and fierce is not easily extinguished. Its strategies, its betrayals, its sheer devastation will severely test the Doctor who knows he can be the Doctor no more.

And as the battlefields seem to stretch on for eternity, he will face new and terrifying, unthinkable dilemmas... For, in this unrelenting Time War, no one is left untainted. And, perhaps, no one except the truly monstrous can survive its ferocity.

### THE CAST

**John Hurt** (The War Doctor), **Jacqueline Pearce** (Cardinal Ollistra), **Lucy Briggs-Owen** (The Nursemaid), **Carolyn Seymour** (The Slave), **Beth Chalmers** (Veklin), **Alex Wyndham** (Seratrix), **Kieran Hodgson** (Bennus), **Barnaby Edwards** (Arverton), **Mark McDonnell** (Traanus) **John Banks** (Garv), **Nicholas Briggs** (The Daleks)

**WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY:**  
Nicholas Briggs

**OUT THIS MONTH EXCLUSIVELY  
FROM BIG FINISH!**

**COMING SOON ON GENERAL  
RELEASE**

idea of returning to this role – I got the impression he had a wonderful time making the 50th anniversary special.”

Writer, director and executive producer of the series Nicholas Briggs adds: “It was around the time AudioGO had gone bust and we were starting to talk to the BBC about extending the remit of our **Doctor Who** licence. David, Jason and I felt very strongly that the War Doctor should be part of our proposal. So it’s been on the table as an idea for a long time.”

unwillingness to return to **Doctor Who** or do audio. But then, both those things turned out not to be true. He loves doing audio work, specifically drama, and I found out from Steven Moffat that he loved being ‘a Doctor.’”

**W**ITH A new universe of possibilities opening up to Big Finish and with the Time War now accessible to storytelling, there was a host of options available to Nick about where to set the new series. He explained: “We knew it



Above (left to right): David Richardson, Beth Chalmers, John Banks, Jacqueline Pearce, Kieran Hodgson, Carolyn Seymour, Nicholas Briggs, Mark McDonnell and Alex Wyndham

With an actor as popular and busy as John Hurt, did Nick think, in his heart of hearts, he would be interested in the idea of returning to the part of the Doctor who fought the Time War? Nick grins wryly: “Life at Big Finish has taught me that anything is possible. I didn’t think it was highly likely, especially when I was asked to read the **Engines of War** audiobook. I took that as a sign that John had turned that down – but who knows, maybe they didn’t even ask him.

“But anyway, I suppose I thought that this might have indicated John’s

would be set in the Time War, so ‘war stories’ were our starting point, which as some people out there might know, are some of my favourite things.

“I’m a child of that generation when war films were on the telly all the time. My parents had lived through the air raids in World War Two and spoke about it extensively – it was a national trauma which lived on in people’s psyche. My father had done National Service and served in Egypt. My grandparents had told me war stories throughout my childhood. My

# Doctor Who: The War Doctor

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Above: Jacqueline Pearce

mother's father had fought on the northwest frontier during the First World War while my mother's mother helped look after the troops returning from France. She had seen the most appalling injuries, which is why as Chamberlain announced that another war with Germany was starting in 1939, she burst into tears while the rest of the family were just stunned.

"That story of a lady who was, in my experience, very strong and upright, suddenly crumbling at hearing a few stuffy words on a radio set has stayed with me... It contrasted with all the gung-ho excitement surrounding war – which I suppose I genuinely

felt – and always grounded me to the true human cost. So, I knew I wanted to write as many of the War Doctor stories as possible."

Was there any thought of picking up directly after the events of *Night of the Doctor*, with the new Doctor finding his feet? Nick says: "Not on my part. I'm very keen not to lock things down and join up continuity. On the one hand you risk the TV series contradicting what you've written at some point – because although we have to check with them, they don't check with us – but also, I think it's a creative dead-end to leave no space for new stories. On a practical note, it would hardly have been credible for John to play a younger

**"I'm very keen not to lock things down and join up continuity... You risk the TV series contradicting what you've written at some point."** Nicholas Briggs

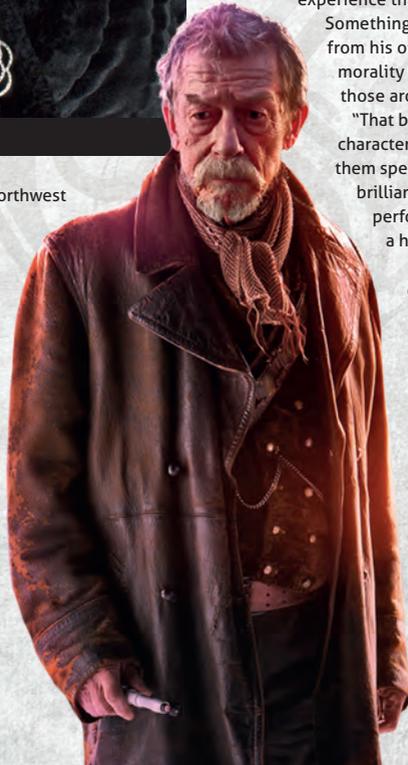
version of himself. He has a beautiful, craggy voice that absolutely speaks of decades, perhaps centuries more experience than that."

Something that sets the War Doctor apart from his other incarnations is his different morality and a more ruthless attitude to those around him.

"That bit was no problem at all! If a character exists firmly in my mind, I just let them speak. And thanks to Steven Moffat's brilliant writing of him and John's amazing performance, it was instantly easy to get a handle on him."

With John Hurt's incarnation only having appeared in one full adventure on TV, akin to the Eighth Doctor from the *TV Movie*, did Nick find them similar in that respect? Nick was one of the first writers for the Eighth Doctor with *Sword of Orion*, back in his first season of plays in 2001.

He explains: "It felt easier with the War Doctor, because his character arrived fully formed on TV as a weary, bitter warrior who had committed some of the worst crimes of the war. The Eighth Doctor in the *TV Movie* is





Above (left to right): Kieran Hodgson, Beth Chalmers and Alex Wyndham



Above: Carolyn Seymour

a bit more fluffy and fun, and I would say that most of his personality has been defined by what we and Paul have done since."

**A**S WELL as John Hurt's world-weary warrior, the War Doctor series sees him encounter a number of Time Lords who are co-ordinating their efforts in the Time War, specifically Jacqueline Pearce – an old friend of Sir John – as Cardinal Ollistra. Nick says: "We did think it would be fun to have someone we knew and someone we knew was a friend of John's in it. It was a happy coincidence that both he and we are familiar with Jacqueline.

"It also coincided nicely with her returning to England after a long time away. We knew this during the writing, and I immediately spotted that Cardinal Ollistra would be perfect for her. After that, I started making sure it was even more perfect for her!"



Making a welcome return to Big Finish is Mark McDonnell, who plays the villainous Traanus.

Big Finish devotees who have been there since the start will remember Mark appeared in the fourth

monthly range release, *The Fearmonger*, with Sylvester McCoy and Sophie Aldred. He also led the cast in the first two series of the spin-off *Dalek Empire* series, as well as taking the lead in *Cyberman*.

Mark reveals: "I got an email from Nick, out of the blue, saying, 'I might have something for you, but I can't tell you anything about it.'

"I didn't know what to think, at first – I was wondering if Big Finish had got David Tennant at that point! Nick gave me the dates and it just so happened I had a week off, it was in the week before I started doing a lunchtime theatre gig. When I spoke to him, I said, 'Go on, give me a clue,' but he told me, 'Honestly, I can't!'

# Doctor Who: The War Doctor

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**“We had the headphones on, and when you hear a voice coming through saying, ‘Hello, it’s John Hurt’, it gives you a bit of a thrill.”**

Mark McDonnell

“I then got the script sent through, and when I opened it up and saw the War Doctor was in it, it made sense why there was all the secrecy! I play a sword wielding alien warrior leader who is generally unpleasant and murderous!”

“The first-ever Big Finish I did was *The Fearmonger* and Jacqueline Pearce was in that. It was fantastic to see her again. It was good to see Barnaby Edwards again – I hadn’t seen him in something like seven years, back when we did *Cyberman*. I told him how long it had been and he said, ‘No way!’ – it really didn’t seem that long.”

**W**ITH A new leading man, the production team of Nick and David, as well as the supporting cast, were delighted with the studio sessions for **Only The Monstrous**.

Nick says: “John was very upbeat. He didn’t want to be called, Sir John. He didn’t object to it, as some of the other actors would say, ‘Hello, Sir John’ and he’d just laugh. I don’t get the impression he wants any bowing and scraping. He

was keen to do more takes. Some actors want to move on quickly and can get irritated by working a bit harder, but there’s none of that with John Hurt. He’s always keen to do another take.”

Mark McDonnell adds: “John was absolutely lovely – a really nice man. He gave a fantastic performance – people are really going to love it.

“We had the headphones on, and when you hear a voice coming through saying, ‘Hello, it’s John Hurt’, it gives you a bit of a thrill.

“I’d asked Nick beforehand about which accent to use and he told me, ‘Not the Scottish one.’

“John was interested in this and he asked me about it, so I explained I’d grown up in Bolton, but moved to Scotland when I was 18. He then said, ‘My mother did the opposite,’ as she’d been born in Glasgow then moved to Bolton. I’ve no idea if it’s true, but it was really nice!

“At one point, I had a couple of lines, but I suggested that I felt they might work better if I put them the other way around and Nick said, ‘Okay, why not?’, then I had John saying ‘Oh yes, that’s nice, much better!’.

“John really seemed to embrace it.” Nick continues: “What I really enjoyed about working with John is the fact that he’s so clever. I’d put in lots of throwaway remarks and I suppose I worried that John might not have my sense of humour or might not understand what I was getting at. But he just got it. He never asked what was going on or why he was saying this or that. He’s a really good, classy actor who



**“Visualising the Time War was pretty straight forward, I also got to unleash my inner Ace and destroy some Daleks. That’s always fun!”** Tom Webster

does his homework and is, frankly, rather inspired. The cast all worked really well together. Carolyn Seymour also knew John. They hadn’t seen each other for about 40 years, but they were delighted to be able to chat again.”

**H**ANDLING THE sound design and music for this series is Howard Carter, who has been working overtime to get the plays ready for release this month.

He reveals: “It’s absolutely thrilling to be involved with this project. To have the opportunity to take a character who was introduced so recently and create a whole new world for him on audio is both a huge privilege and a responsibility. It’s exciting to be able to bring the War Doctor’s story to Big Finish, but also hopefully introduce Big Finish to a whole new swathe of **Doctor Who** fans.

“As we’re telling the War Doctor’s story for the first time we have the opportunity to create his world from scratch. And as there are no real limitations to what we can realise on audio we’re really going for it.



Above (left to right): John Banks and Mark McDonnell

“The general trend with the Big Finish audios has been to create soundscapes and scores that are as cinematic and epic as possible, but it’s also important to retain a degree of intimacy and intensity that does the stories and the performances justice. Hopefully all the fans (old and new) will approve!”

Creating the visual look for the new series is cover artist Tom Webster.

He smiles: “This was so exciting. When David Richardson asked whether I’d do this one, I had to read the email about three times to make sure that I wasn’t imagining it. Never in a million years did I think that John Hurt would be the first new series Doctor to arrive at Big Finish. Oh, and we get a lovely quadrilogy of box sets too, as if all this wasn’t exciting enough already. So yes, to say it was a welcome surprise would be an understatement! I was hugely grateful to be given the chance to illustrate this absolute humdinger of a release!

“I actually think that visualising the Time War was pretty straightforward. I knew I wanted a solemn looking War Doctor and plenty of destruction. I also got to unleash my inner Ace and destroy some Daleks. That’s always fun and it did make it easier. I really wanted it to have continuity with BBC releases like *Engines of War* whilst staying true to the look of other Big Finish releases, like **Doom Coalition**. It’s just such a blast being able to visualise a whole era of the Doctor’s history that has never been seen before!”

Mark said: “The quality of these plays is so high. As a fan, I’m absolutely dying to hear these now!”

Nick adds: “It’s actually incredibly exciting for me when I stop to think about it. It’s mostly been the most concentrated period of writing I’ve had in ages. I’m always writing, but this was intense! And because of the subject matter, it was quite a dark place to go. But, as I say, bizarrely it is right in my comfort zone as a writer. War, dark secrets. Betrayals. Dastardly deeds. Yes, I’m in my element here.” **VORTEX**



Kenny Smith is feeling festive and is...

# DREAMING OF A GRAY CHRISTMAS

**C**HRISTMAS IS a time of joy and celebration for many, and for others, it can be the toughest period of the year. For Dorian Gray... well, it would be rather dull if it was a straight-forward day if he got up, opened some presents, went out to meet some friends for dinner, watched some TV, then fell asleep in front of it after drinking a bit too much... Knowing his luck, he's more likely to find a decapitated head in a box, discover his friends have been murdered, find himself being drawn into a horror movie, and someone poisoning his drink.

This month marks the release of *The Spirits of Christmas*, comprising two hour-long festive episodes, pitching Dorian against a slew of festive horrors.

Producer Scott Handcock says: "There's something peculiarly gothic and claustrophobic about Christmas. I'm not entirely certain why that is, but the festive season somehow lends itself to the macabre. Maybe it's the fact the nights draw in, the air grows cold and the world seems so much less inviting? What else could survive out there but ghouls and phantoms?! In that sense, it's a perfect fit for Dorian – he's lived through over a century's worth of Christmases after all. This is just our glimpse at a single one of them! Part of the joy of *Dorian* is we can tell any manner of story, in any location, at any point in time from his conception. The only difficulty is working out how to whittle all the ideas down!"

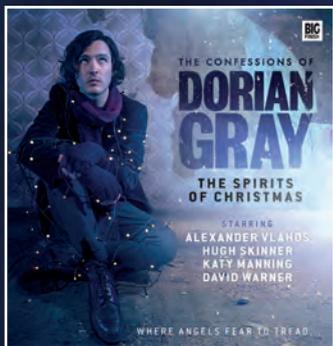
**T**HE FIRST story in the set is *Desperately Seeking Santa* by Tim Leng. In December, 2015, when an intruder breaks into his home in the dead of night, Dorian Gray is more than a little surprised to discover that Santa Claus himself is trying to kill him.

Scott says: "*Desperately Seeking Santa* was a story I'd had in mind for some time – though originally it wasn't Christmassy at all. Rather, Santa was a clown and it would have formed the basis for my *Dark Shadows* tale *Speak No Evil*, had it not been for the fact it was deemed too horrific for that range!

"Suffice to say, Santa is not all that he seems; David Warner imbues him with gleeful menace; and we have some lovely little moments and cameos. And I'm very grateful to Tim Leng for stepping in and writing the recording script from my breakdown. He thought I'd have to rewrite, but he absolutely nailed it. It's a lot of fun!"

Tim says: "When he gave the story to me he also handed over a six page outline that included scene breakdowns and even little snippets of

# The Confessions of Dorian Gray



## The Confessions of Dorian Gray: The Spirits of Christmas

DESPERATELY SEEKING SANTA  
BY TIM LENG

December, 2015. When an intruder breaks into his home in the dead of night, Dorian Gray is more than a little surprised to discover that Santa Claus himself is trying to kill him. Can he track down Father Christmas before the big day - or is the slay ride only just beginning?

ALL THROUGH THE HOUSE  
BY ALAN FLANAGAN

Christmas Eve, 2015. When Dorian and Toby check into a mysterious hotel, nothing is quite as it seems. Ghosts of the past are trapped in the present, threatening their future - and nothing can ever be the same again...

### CAST

Alexander Vlahos, Guy Adams, Sophie Aldred, Tom Allen, Samantha Béart, David Blackwell, Lisa Bowerman, Jacqueline King, Bruno Langley, Tim Leng, Colin McFarlane, Katy Manning, Sarah Owens, Sakuntala Ramanee, Miles Richardson, Laura Riseborough, Hugh Skinner, Bianca Stephens, David Warner, Gabriel Woolf

DIRECTED BY: Scott Handcock

OUT THIS MONTH!

dialogue. He also made it clear that he was happy for me to put my own little spin on the story, so there are certainly some places where I deviated from his plan to add a little more depth and horror and to expand on what he'd sketched out. As for making it spooky, when you're told to write a story about

sequence of disaster movies, all centred on a hotel in Kensington. Like the first story, it has a weirdness that I don't think we'd ever tackle away from Christmas. But it works, it's creepy and pays off a few plot strands for loyal listeners, whilst being a proper romp in its own right."



Above (left to right): Alexander Vlahos, Hugh Skinner, Katy Manning and Scott Handcock

## "DORIAN GRAY IS MORE THAN A LITTLE SURPRISED TO DISCOVER THAT SANTA CLAUS HIMSELF IS TRYING TO KILL HIM!" Scott Handcock

a decaying murderous Santa made out of other people's body parts it kind of writes itself!"

**T**HE SECOND story in the festive set is *All Through the House* by Alan Flanagan. It's Christmas Eve, 2015 and when Dorian and Toby check into a mysterious hotel, nothing is quite as it seems. Ghosts of the past are trapped in the present, threatening their future - and nothing can ever be the same again...

Scott says: "*All Through the House* is one of the most demanding **Dorian** dramas we've ever tackled in terms of sound design and energy. It's effectively a disaster movie - or

Writer Alan, who has written for the Big Finish **Dark Shadows** series, says: "Scott had the bones of an idea and we knew there were certain parts of the ongoing story we had to hit, but once I got my hands on it I kind of went a bit mad. I love writing for radio because there's literally nothing you can't do - being chased by dinosaurs costs the same as having a cup of tea. So I really just ran with this idea of a hotel with a different type of chaos on every floor.

"I kind of have to bow at the altar of our sound designer at this point because I threw everything into the script - explosions, floods, wolves, excessive opening and closing of doors... everything." **VORTEX**



# THE DIMENSION WRITERS

The printed page comes to life again this month as two more classic **New Adventures** are given the full-cast treatment...

**L**OVE AND War, *The Highest Science* and *Damaged Goods* have all been acclaimed Big Finish adaptations of popular **New Adventures** novels, and this month they're joined by another two releases.

Justin Richards' *Theatre of War* – notable for introducing Braxiatel into the greater **Doctor Who** multiverse – and Andy Lane's *All-Consuming Fire*, have been brought to life by Sylvester McCoy, Sophie Aldred and Lisa Bowerman, resuming their roles as the Seventh Doctor, Ace and Professor Bernice Summerfield.

Not only is Bernice Summerfield series regular Miles Richardson back as Irving Braxiatel, the releases also bring together Big Finish's own Sherlock Holmes and Doctor Watson pairing of Nicholas Briggs and Richard Earl into the **Doctor Who** universe.

The plays have been produced by Cavan Scott, who explains why these two books were chosen: "*Theatre of War* introduces Irving Braxiatel. It was just too tempting. Benny and Brax together for the first time? Well, the first time for Benny at least! Lisa and Miles are so good together with so much history. To hear them meet for the 'first' time was fascinating.

"With *All-Consuming Fire*... well, fans have been asking for Andy's brilliant book since we started adapting the **New Adventures**. And we have our own resident Great Detective in the form of Nicholas Briggs. Plus, I love Sherlock Holmes as much as I love the Doctor. At the time of recording I was writing my first **Sherlock Holmes** novel for Titan Books – *The Patchwork Devil*, out April 2016 blatant plug fans! – and it was a strange meeting of worlds."



## Doctor Who: All-Consuming Fire

The Library of St. John the Beheaded contains the most dangerous books in all creation so when some of them are stolen who else should the Vatican call but Sherlock Holmes?

Immediately, one of the possible suspects seems more suspicious than others. He has no traceable background, refuses to give straight answers and hides behind a pseudonym.

However, Holmes and his loyal friend Watson soon realise this suspect is also their greatest hope: war is brewing and an Old God is rising, to save humanity they need the Doctor as much as he needs them.

### CAST

**Sylvester McCoy** (The Doctor), **Sophie Aldred** (Ace), **Lisa Bowerman** (Bernice Summerfield), **Nicholas Briggs** (Sherlock Holmes), **Richard Earl** (Doctor John Watson), **Hugh Fraser** (Sherringford Holmes), **Anthony May** (Baron Maupertuis), **Aaron Neil** (Tir Ram), **Samantha Béart** (Mrs Prendersty), **Michael Griffiths** (Ambrose), **Guy Adams** (K'Tcar'ch)

WRITTEN BY: **Andy Lane**

ADAPTED BY: **Guy Adams**

DIRECTED BY: **Scott Handcock**

OUT THIS MONTH!

**B**RINGING *THEATRE of War* to audio is Justin Richards, who has adapted his own 1994 novel. When he was asked to adapt it, the writer admits: "It was a bit of a surprise, but I was happy to revisit it.

"Braxiatel has gone on from strength to strength, as I've written for him many times since over the years and so have others, but it's always really nice to come back and revisit him."

Did Justin have an idea in mind about how he would bring the book to life? "I had an idea about how I would do it to start with, but it didn't quite work out that way! At first, I thought it would be pretty easy to do

or so for the adaptation. Instead, I went back to my original outline, which I had also kept, took those and started from scratch to write a new audio play.

"Whenever I got to a scene that was more difficult, I went back to the book, so it was in my mind as I wrote the audio version."

**A**NDY LANE was the original writer of *All-Consuming Fire*, which was released by Virgin in June 1994, a month after *Theatre of War*.

He says: "I deliberately chose not to adapt the book into a script myself, although I was asked, because I



Above (left to right): Hugh Fraser, Sylvester McCoy and Nicholas Briggs

as I still had the original text files and it would just be a case of turning it from prose into an audio play. It soon became apparent it wasn't going to be quite that simple. I also had the additional issue of the original story starting without Benny being in the TARDIS, so that had to be rewritten for the audio.

"The structure of a novel is very different to an audio play, there's an awful lot more in the novel than you can fit into an hour-and-a-half

knew I would be too precious about it – I would want to keep everything, including those little bits of research I'd put in and all the business that's fun, atmospheric and humorous but has little to do with the story."

Cav selected Guy Adams to adapt *All-Consuming Fire*: "Cos he's brilliant, simple as. And he knows his Holmes. Really knows it. He's even played Holmes on stage.

"Adapting these novels is a tough gig. They were never constructed



**“My memory of [All-Consuming Fire] was vague... My memory is useless like that, I’m forever re-reading things and being surprised by them. My brain is terribly pro-active when it comes to emptying its recycling bin to free up storage.”** Guy Adams

to be performed. I knew that Guy was creative and insane enough to attempt it – and he’s done a cracking job.”

Guy says he was familiar with the original book: “I read it when it first came out (as I did all the **New Adventures**) and I had a copy on my shelf. My memory of it was vague but then, that’s normal. My memory is useless like that, I’m forever re-reading things and being surprised by them. My brain is terribly pro-active when it comes to emptying its recycling bin to free up storage.

“I read it straight through first, just for fun and to get a sense of the whole. Then I went back and started to reshape it a little, making all the difficult decisions.”

Cavan admits he has sympathy for the writers who are working on the adaptations, because of: “The amount of characters. Most individual chapters would break the budget of your average **Doctor Who** audio. Also, there is a lot of dialogue to cut.”

As well as adapting the play, Guy also appears in *All-Consuming Fire*. He says: “I enjoyed every single bit of the process, up to and including, going into the studio to play my starring role as Surd the mute”. Let me tell you right now, it takes skill to play mute on the radio. That’s the kind of

acting talent that’s hard to find, no wonder the lovely Scott Hancock asked me.

“The pleasure of Big Finish is the collaboration. I write the script and then I get to work with the producer (Cavan Scott) and the script editor (Joe Lidster) to make the script better. They were both lovely, restrictive or indulgent in all the right places.

“Then you get to hear those words brought to life. Working with Sylvester McCoy and Sophie Aldred (there was a 12-year-old Guy Adams that wouldn’t believe that for a moment), the masterful Lisa Bowerman who I’ve been fortunate enough to work with before and adore. Then Nick ‘The Pipe’ Briggs. He actually solved a couple of murders on the way to the studio, that’s how natural he is as Holmes. And Hugh Fraser. Hugh. Fraser. Hugh. ACTUAL. Fraser. A room filled with heroes. Bliss.”

**B**OTH OF the plays have been directed by Scott Hancock, who was responsible for the first two of Big Finish’s **The New Adventures of Bernice Summerfield** sets with Sylvester, Sophie and Lisa. He says: “I do remember reading some of the books



## Doctor Who: Theatre of War

Years ago, an archaeological expedition came to Menaxus to explore the ruins of an ancient theatre. All but one of the team died. Now the only survivor has returned, determined to uncover the theatre's secrets. But then the deaths begin again.

The Doctor, Ace and Benny meanwhile find themselves caught up in the very real events of Shakespeare's greatest play. When they finally reach the theatre on Menaxus, the Doctor begins to realise that the truth about the planet may be far stranger than anyone imagined.

With Benny doing research at the Braxiatel Collection, the Doctor and Ace head straight into an interplanetary war...

### CAST

**Sylvester McCoy** (The Doctor), **Sophie Aldred** (Ace), **Lisa Bowerman** (Bernice Summerfield), **Miles Richardson** (Irving Braxiatel), **Kirsty Besterman** (Lannic), **Richard Vranck** (Gilmanuk), **Ed Stoppard** (Fortalexa), **Bryan Dick** (The Exec), **Ramon Tikaram** (Marlock), **Gus Brown** (Krane), **Milo Twomey** (Jorvik)

**WRITTEN BY:**  
Justin Richards

**DIRECTED BY:**  
Scott Handcock

**OUT THIS MONTH!**

when I was a kid. Weirdly the cover to *Parasite* still sticks out in my mind above most of the others! So I have a vague recollection of most of the stories, but have to confess I didn't re-read them when I came to direct

something that works for the current audience. We've been extremely fortunate in having writers who know what works in audio and how to strip those original stories back for a modern audience."



Above (left to right): Guy Adams, Sylvester McCoy, Cavan Scott, Nicholas Briggs and Lisa Bowerman

## I have a vague recollection of most of the stories, but have to confess I didn't re-read them when I came to direct the new adaptations.

Scott Handcock

the new adaptations. "I considered it back when we did *The Highest Science*, but they're such different media, with different requirements, I've always felt it's more important for me, as a director, to deliver

Scott had his own highlights from the plays. "I love working with Miles. He was my Henry Wotton in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, and of course I've worked with him as Braxiatel in **Bernice Summerfield** and **Gallifrey**. He absolutely knows the character inside-out and is enormous fun to have in a recording studio, particularly when he's sparring off Lisa Bowerman as Benny. "Nick and Sylvester have obviously known each other for a great number of years, so they already have an established relationship and shorthand. There's a huge fondness and familiarity between the pair of them as people and as actors, which adds a lovely dynamic to their performances as Holmes and the Doctor." **VORTEX**





Kenny Smith prepares for something new and innovative with a...

# MARS LANDING

**B** RITICALLY-ACCLAIMED radio drama is given a special release by Big Finish this month, with the release of B7 Media's acclaimed dramatisation of Ray Bradbury's **The Martian Chronicles**.

Big Finish and B7 Media have had a successful partnership with the production of the **Blake's 7** audios, and now they have teamed up again for a CD release of **The Martian Chronicles**, which was originally broadcast on BBC Radio 4.

It stars Derek Jacobi as Captain Wilder and Hayley Atwell as Spender, who as the leaders of an exhibition to Mars are tasked with a secret mission. The adaptation recently won the Silver Award for Best Drama Special at the 2015 *New York Festivals International Radio Program Awards*. Alistair Lock was also nominated for Best Sound Designer at the 2014 *Radio Production Awards*.

The release was produced by Patrick Chapman – writer of **Companion Chronicle** *Fear of the Daleks* – and directed by Andrew Mark Sewell. Patrick tells *Vortex*: "Growing up, my own SF touchstones were **Blake's 7**, **Doctor Who** and Ray Bradbury. I still love them all today and have read

**The Martian Chronicles** in particular several times. It has always seemed to me that this epic tale would make a wonderful radio drama. As well as this, B7 Media has a history of producing **Blake's 7** in widescreen audio, so as a project this was a natural fit for us.

"Early in 2014 I proposed **The Martian Chronicles** to Andrew Mark Sewell for our BBC Radio 4 pitches and he immediately saw the potential for a great radio drama. Radio, being unlimited in scope and imagination, was the perfect medium in which to create the vast and surreal world of Bradbury's Mars. Our adaptation gives the story modern production values while staying true to the sensibility of the original. We were pleased that our drama kicked off **Dangerous Visions**, a season of SF plays on Radio 4, adapted from classics of the genre."

How much work was needed in the adaptation from the novel? "Bradbury's book is a connected series of short stories," explains Patrick, "which he wrote in the 1940s and collected in 1950. There's a linear thread throughout but some editions are missing certain stories, or to be



## The Martian Chronicles

When the first expedition to Mars mysteriously disappears, Earth sends a second to find out what happened. But the real mission is classified. And only Captain Wilder knows the truth...

Spender, an anthropologist on Wilder's crew, attempts to prevent the colonisation that she believes will eradicate the last of an ancient people living on Mars. But to what lengths will she go?

As the honourable but duty-bound Captain Wilder tracks the now rogue Spender into the Martian mountains, the future of this ancient planet is at stake.

Meanwhile, Earth itself teeters on the brink of its own global catastrophe as the very survival of humanity hangs in the balance.

### THE CAST

Derek Jacobi (Captain Wilder), Hayley Atwell (Spender), Anna Madeley (The Lawyer), Mark Lewis Jones (Hathaway), John Altman (Parkhill), Zoë Tapper (Evie), Jonathan Rhodes (Biggs), Dean Harris (Thompson), Ryan Sewell (Young Wilder), Rachael Naylor (Pluto Survey Officer), Jacob James (Soldier), Robert Lock (Prison Officer), Melissa Aston-Munslow (Miss Edwards), Owen Sewell (Robert), Polehampton Junior School (Mayflower Rocket Kids)

WRITTEN BY: Richard Kurti and Bev Doyle (story by Ray Bradbury)

DIRECTED BY: Andrew Mark Sewell

OUT THIS MONTH!

more accurate, later editions added some. Which means that **The Martian Chronicles** follows several people's stories over a number of years, most of them set in this fantastically imagined world of Mars, but the whole is not as tightly cohesive as something planned as a novel from the start.

an allegory of the settlement of the Western Frontier in the United States. Bradbury's view on the subject is ambivalent, and that comes across in the contrasting viewpoints of Wilder and Spender.

"Speaking of whom, in the original book, Spender is male, and in our



Above: Sir Derek Jacobi in the studio...

That's the beauty of the book, and what gives it the quality of a fable.

"For our adaptation, we found a compelling narrative in the stories that feature Captain Wilder and his crew, taking them through an arc that begins before the colonisation and ends long after it. Wilder's story gave us the focus for a great hour-long piece, with a strong story that refracted the themes of the book through the experiences of complex characters.

"There's real moral argument here, on the value or otherwise of colonisation. When is it right, and when is it wrong? That was the principal question that Bradbury was asking in the book. His **Martian Chronicles** are, among other things,

version, the character is a woman, played wonderfully by Hayley Atwell. As well as this, the characters were originally American but here, most of them speak with British accents. We made these changes as part of our updating of the material, as we wanted to reflect the fact that such expeditions in the future will be multinational with a better gender balance than those imagined in Bradbury's time. This approach also reflects the universal nature of the story, with its themes that resonate with people wherever they are.

"Our writers, Richard Kurti and Bev Doyle, are past masters at bringing major literary and genre works to the screen – they've adapted Terry

## Heading here

Pratchett for Sky, for example – and they brought their screenwriting experience to this radio drama, to widen the picture, as it were, and give us a muscular narrative that was both intimately character-based and cinematic. In other areas of the production too, we approached **The Martian Chronicles** as if adapting it for the movies. It really does have the feeling of a movie on radio. Our director Andrew Mark Sewell, sound designer Alistair Lock and music composer Imran Ahmed, as well as studio manager Wilfredo Acosta, all came together to build the remarkable sound-world of Bradbury's Mars, and give it an immersive reality."

There has been a great reaction to the radio broadcast, both from listeners and critics, as Patrick says: "It was lovely to receive the Silver at the 2015 *New York Festivals' World's Best Radio Program* awards and we're glad that our show got glowing reviews too. We were delighted for all the cast and crew and the writers, who did such a fantastic job."

Having been broadcast on Radio 4, **The Martian Chronicles** is now available as a CD and download from Big Finish. Director Andrew says: "Over the years Big Finish has become synonymous with the very best in fantasy and science fiction audio drama and we're delighted that

**"It was lovely to receive the Silver at the 2015 New York Festivals' World's Best Radio Program awards..."** Patrick Chapman

**T**HE **MARTIAN Chronicles** has an outstanding cast, with the accomplished Sir Derek Jacobi and Hayley Atwell in the leading roles.

Patrick says: "The cast were all excellent and creatively engaged with the material. It was a thrill to work with them for me and for Andrew, who directed **The Martian Chronicles** beautifully. With such a large cast of characters, we were glad to get everyone on our list for the various parts. Among our principals, Sir Derek Jacobi is no stranger to **Doctor Who** fans whether on TV or indeed in Big Finish. In our drama, he did a marvellous job portraying Wilder's conflict – he's a good man bound by the rules, and faced with an impossible choice.

"Hayley Atwell was compelling as Spender, his antagonist, who is trying to do the right thing in protecting Mars from human colonisation, but is using methods some would find objectionable.

John Altman gives an excellent turn as Parkhill, a gruff everyman character, representing the worst traits of humanity – he's just out for himself, not seeing the bigger picture, or his responsibility to respect the world the Martians left behind. Sir Derek told me that he loves radio, as it gives the kind of intimacy to the performance, that you don't get on a film quite as much. He said yes to Wilder because of the quality of the script, which was a true compliment to our writers."



Above (left to right): John Altman and Zoë Tapper  
Inset: Dean Harris

they'll be releasing our award-winning dramatisation of Ray Bradbury's classic fable of Martian colonisation."

Big Finish executive producer Jason Haigh-Ellery adds: "**The Martian Chronicles** is a legendary sci-fi book, which has been turned into a fantastic award-winning production by Andrew and his team at B7 Media – I'm

delighted that Big Finish will be able to bring this classic story to a wider audience around the world."

Patrick concludes: "We at B7 Media think Big Finish are indeed ideal to bring **The Martian Chronicles** to a whole new audience beyond Radio 4. We admire their work and have of course collaborated with them very successfully on **Blake's 7**. The Big Finish audience, and we hope everyone, will very much enjoy **The Martian Chronicles**, an epic space adventure from the mind of Ray Bradbury." **VORTEX**

# LOVE AND WAR

Two more adaptations of popular 1990s **Doctor Who** novels arrive this month, but Kenny Smith turns the clock to the original audio book



**A** DAPTATIONS OF the *Virgin New and Missing Adventures* novels from the 1990s are a regular part of Big Finish's output these days. It's hard to believe that it's now three years since the first of these, *Love and War*, was released.

Originally it was done as a one-off to mark the 20th anniversary of the book's publication and the debut of Bernice Summerfield. Director Gary Russell says: "It was an honour – a great story and a great chance to do something fun for Benny's anniversary. I was wary about doing more book adaptations – it was why I quickly dropped them back in 1998 and moved into original Benny stories.

"To me, Big Finish was a chance to do stuff unique for the audio market, I was never keen on doing adaptations (hell, I was against us doing *Shada* back in 2003). When David Richardson suggested *Love and War* I was only interested because it was Benny's anniversary – as a one-off it was a nice, unique thing to do. Now the adaptations are commonplace, I tend to look at it as the spearhead for something that came later."

Responsible for turning the printed work into a play was Jacqueline Rayner, who had adapted several of the original Benny-centric novels for Big Finish.

She admits she was: "Slightly nervous as I hadn't adapted anything for ages – hadn't even done much scripting for

ages. Plus it was *Love and War*! Quite a responsibility, I didn't know if I could do it justice.

"But I felt genuinely honoured to be asked to do it. And thrilled too, it was like going back to those exciting early days of Big Finish, working with Paul, Gary and Lisa again. Except I had to adopt a completely different tactic to the first Benny stuff – there we'd been trying to use the books as a springboard for our own vision, here I needed to capture the essence of the book itself as much as I could.

"It was easier than the early ones in some ways – e.g. I was allowed a much bigger cast! My main problem was trying to capture something of Paul's lyrical prose in the script. He has such a distinct voice and that's what makes his books stand out so much."

Gary adds: "It was fun to cast – Jac wrote a good, narrowed-down, achievable script from a very complicated and deep and clever novel. I knew who I wanted for Christopher (Ela Gaworzewska I had auditioned and cast in a project for the BBC via York University) and Ace's mum Audrey (my love for Maggie Ollerenshaw is paramount – and Davy Darlington had been nagging me for years to find a role for her) straight away – the rest was down to myself and Scott Handcock to sift through our contacts and find. Bernard Holley I have known since I was 12 when we worked together on **Phoenix and the Carpet** for the BBC and James Redmond was someone I have admired for years and when I knew he was available, he ticked all the boxes for Jan straight away."

The play was released to great acclaim, and Jac concludes: "I was certainly pleased that people – on the whole – didn't think I'd mangled the book too much in the adaptation process. I'm proud that Benny is still going strong after all these years, a testament to both Paul's creation and Lisa's portrayal, and it was lovely to pop back into her world again." **VORTEX**

**Love and War** is available now on CD and download from [bigfinish.com](http://bigfinish.com).

# RELEASE SCHEDULE

Forthcoming audio releases.



## DECEMBER 2015

- **DOCTOR WHO: YOU ARE THE DOCTOR (AND OTHER STORIES)** (207, Seventh Doctor and Ace)
- **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: THE WAR DOCTOR: ONLY THE MONSTROUS** (Box Set, The War Doctor)
- **DOCTOR WHO – SHORT TRIPS: BLACK DOG** (5.12, Download only)
- **DOCTOR WHO – THE EARLY ADVENTURES: THE ISO5 NETWORK** (2.4, Second Doctor)
- **TORCHWOOD: ONE RULE** (1.4)
- **THE CONFESSIONS OF DORIAN GRAY: THE SPIRITS OF CHRISTMAS**
- **PATHFINDER LEGENDS – MUMMY'S MASK: SHIFTING SANDS** (2.3)
- **THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES** (Full Cast)

## JANUARY 2016

- **DOCTOR WHO: THE WATERS OF AMSTERDAM** (208, Fifth Doctor, Tegan and Nyssa)
- **DOCTOR WHO – THE FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: WAVE OF DESTRUCTION** (5.1, Fourth Doctor and Romana II)
- **DOCTOR WHO: THE DIARY OF RIVER SONG** (Box Set)
- **DOCTOR WHO: THE CHURCHILL YEARS** (Box Set)
- **DOCTOR WHO: SHORT TRIPS: GARDENS OF THE DEAD** (6.01, TBA, Download only)
- **TORCHWOOD: UNCANNY VALLEY** (1.5)
- **THE PRISONER: VOLUME 1 BOX SET**
- **THE AVENGERS – THE LOST EPISODES: VOLUME 5** (Box Set)
- **PATHFINDER LEGENDS – MUMMY'S MASK: SECRETS OF THE SPHINX** (2.4)

## FEBRUARY 2016

- **DOCTOR WHO: AQUITAINE** (209, Fifth Doctor, Tegan and Nyssa)
- **DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: THE LABYRINTH OF BUDA CASTLE** (5.2, Fourth Doctor and Romana II)
- **DOCTOR WHO: THE WAR DOCTOR: INFERNAL DEVICES** (Box Set, The War Doctor)
- **DOCTOR WHO: SHORT TRIPS: PRIME WINNER** (6.02, TBA, Download only)
- **TORCHWOOD: MORE THAN THIS** (1.6)
- **VIENNA SERIES 3** (Full Cast)

- **PATHFINDER LEGENDS – MUMMY'S MASK: THE SLAVE TRENCHES OF HAKOTEP** (2.5)

## MARCH 2016

- **DOCTOR WHO: THE PETERLOO MASSACRE** (210, Fifth Doctor, Tegan and Nyssa)
- **DOCTOR WHO – THE FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: THE PARADOX PLANET** (5.3, Fourth Doctor and Romana II)
- **DOCTOR WHO: DOOM COALITION 2** (Eighth Doctor)
- **DOCTOR WHO: SHORT TRIPS: WASHINGTON BURNS** (6.03, TBA, Download only)
- **PATHFINDER LEGENDS – MUMMY'S MASK: PYRAMID OF THE SKY PHAROAH** (2.6)
- **TORCHWOOD: TBA** (2.1)

## APRIL 2016

- **DOCTOR WHO: TBA** (211, Fifth Doctor)
- **DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: THE LEGACY OF DEATH** (5.4, Fourth Doctor and Romana II)
- **TERRAHAWKS: VOLUME 02**
- **DOCTOR WHO – THE NOVEL ADAPTATIONS: NIGHTSHADE** (Seventh Doctor and Ace)
- **DOCTOR WHO: SHORT TRIPS: TBA** (6.04, TBA, Download only)
- **BLAKE'S 7: THE LIBERATOR CHRONICLES** (Box Set 12)
- **THE AVENGERS – STEED AND MRS PEEL: THE COMIC STRIP ADAPTATIONS** (Volume 1)
- **TORCHWOOD: TBA** (2.2)

## MAY 2016

- **DOCTOR WHO: VAMPIRE OF THE MIND** (212, Sixth Doctor)
- **DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: GALLERY OF GHOULS** (5.5, Fourth Doctor and Romana II)
- **DOCTOR WHO – THE TENTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: TECHNOPHOBIA** (1.1, Tenth Doctor and Donna)
- **DOCTOR WHO – THE TENTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: TIME REAVER** (1.2, Tenth Doctor and Donna)
- **DOCTOR WHO – THE TENTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: DEATH AND THE QUEEN** (1.3, Tenth Doctor and Donna)
- **DOCTOR WHO – THE TENTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: VOLUME 1** (Ltd Edition Box Set, Tenth Doctor and Donna)
- **UNIT: THE NEW SERIES: SHUTDOWN** (2.1, TBA)
- **DOCTOR WHO: SHORT TRIPS: TBA** (6.05, TBA, Download only)
- **GALLIFREY: ENEMY LINES** (8, Romana II, Leela and Ace)

- **TORCHWOOD: TBA** (2.3)
- **BIG FINISH CLASSICS: DRACULA**

## JUNE 2016

- **DOCTOR WHO: TBA** (213, Seventh Doctor)
- **DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: THE TROUBLE WITH DRAX** (5.6, Fourth Doctor and Romana II)
- **DOCTOR WHO: SHORT TRIPS: TBA** (6.06, TBA, Download only)
- **DOCTOR WHO – THE COMPANION CHRONICLES: THE SECOND DOCTOR – VOLUME 1** (TBA)
- **SURVIVORS – SERIES 4: BOX SET** (Full Cast)
- **TORCHWOOD: TBA** (2.4)

## JULY 2016

- **DOCTOR WHO: TBA** (214, Seventh Doctor, Mel and Ace)
- **DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: THE PURSUIT OF HISTORY** (5.7, Fourth Doctor and Romana II)
- **DOCTOR WHO: SHORT TRIPS: TBA** (6.07, TBA, Download only)
- **THE NEW COUNTER-MEASURES: SPECIAL**
- **TORCHWOOD: TBA** (2.5)
- **THE AVENGERS – THE LOST EPISODES: VOLUME 6** (Box Set)

## AUGUST 2016

- **DOCTOR WHO: TBA** (215, Seventh Doctor, Mel and Ace)
- **DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: CASUALTIES OF TIME** (5.8, Fourth Doctor and Romana II)
- **DOCTOR WHO: SHORT TRIPS: TBA** (6.08, TBA, Download only)
- **SHERLOCK HOLMES: THE SACRIFICE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES** (Box Set)

## SEPTEMBER 2016

- **DOCTOR WHO: TBA** (216, Seventh Doctor, Mel and Ace)
- **DOCTOR WHO: TBA** (217, TBA)
- **DOCTOR WHO: THE WAR DOCTOR: TBA** (Box Set, The War Doctor)
- **DOCTOR WHO: SHORT TRIPS: TBA** (6.09, TBA, Download only)
- **GRACELESS: SERIES 4** (Box Set)
- **DOCTOR WHO: THE EARLY ADVENTURES: TBA** (3.1, TBA)

# VORTEX MAIL

## GIFTED?

I have been a subscriber for 10 years now and have enjoyed countless hours of pleasure listening to Big Finish audios (and podcasts... I am always trying to plug your product to others, particularly (but not exclusively) young **Doctor Who** fans who are not aware of the classic Doctors and companions. I hand out copies of *Vortex* to interested parties. However, I feel you are remiss on a great publicity and marketing aspect of Big Finish. I recently went to your website to see if I could order a gift certificate for a young fan but lo and behold, could not find this on your site. I feel sure there are a lot of Big Finish fans who would consider a gift certificate for friends or family. I often read in *Vortex* about those who have limited resources in ordering your audios and bet they would love for friends or relatives to surprise them with a gift for the holidays, etc.

### Ernie Kiel

*Nick: This is an idea we must revisit. We did it in the past, with one of our former website designs. We received many demands for gifting, but when we introduced it, not one person bought a gift certificate. So that's rather put us off the whole thing. That said, we are going to look at it again.*

## LIFE SAVERS

This is not an enquiry but rather a note of thanks. Last year I had unexpected emergency quadruple by-pass surgery. A year later I am

doing much better but as a result of that experience I have had to change my life style both in terms of diet and daily exercise. I need to make sure I exercise everyday if I want to stay healthy, but like most people I find the daily hour on the treadmill or bicycle path tedious and boring. Thanks to Big Finish I have something to look forward to during those hours of exercise. I have been able to maintain a more or less constant exercise schedule since my surgery largely by discovering Big Finish. Just a note of thanks because it seems you all do this as a labour of love and might like hearing appreciation from a sincere fan. And I am sure I am not the only person whose health has benefited in part by having your audiobooks and plays give them something to do with their minds as they work to maintain their bodies. You are literally life savers.

### Vernon Schubel

*Nick: That's great to hear, Vernon! And very glad all is well with you now. A lot of people tell us they listen to our productions while doing exercise. We're very glad to be a healthy option!*

## THE OLD GODS ARE THE BEST!

Two episodes in on **The Omega Factor** and *The Old Gods* is amazing. Best hour of anything from Big Finish I've heard this year. Phil Mulryne is one talented writer. More from him and lots of it. Please. Also Nick, excellent job on *The Fate Of*

*Krelos*. I think it is my favorite script of yours for the Fourth Doctor range. A great change of pace. Moody with a real sense of dread running all through it. Excellent job folks and as always, thanks so much.

### Nathan Gervais

*Nick: Cheers, Nathan. Phil is a great talent as both at writer and actor. We look forward to working with him again and again.*

## LAYOUT THE CAST!

I'm sure everyone knows by now that the CD booklet in the main range has been diminished because of costs, but I personally would prefer a picture of the featured cast rather than a 'coming soon' feature. I know writer's notes and cast photos appear on the BF website now, but I like having physical copies in front of me rather than staring at a screen.

### Ian Manning

*Nick: We'll monitor opinion on the booklets. It's quite important for us, promotionally, to make sure that anyone buying the CD knows what's coming next. We'll have a look at the layout, though.*

## EMAIL US AT:

feedback@bigfinish.com and remember to put 'Vortex Mail' as the subject...

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BBC

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