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THE WAR DOCTOR: INFERNAL DEVICES

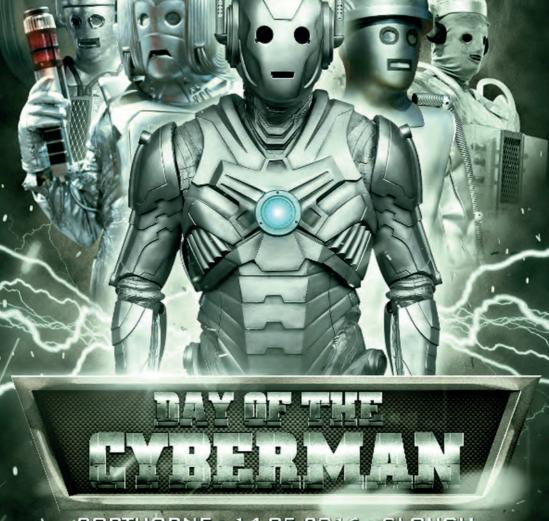
BEHIND-THE-SCENES ON SERIES TWO OF THE WAR DOCTOR!

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Sneak Previews & Whispers



Writer John Dorney previews **The Avengers** – *The Comic Strip Adaptations* Volume One, due for release in April...

TEED AND Peel are back! Not every Avenger out there requires a hammer or an indestructible shield to fight crime. Not every Avenger needs body armour or a shrinking suit. Some of them are happy with just an umbrella, a brolly, a glass of champagne and a fine line in haute couture.

Steed and Peel are back in four glamorous adventures. From protecting the life of a foreign prince in a familiar locale to foiling the schemes of a criminal mastermind; from uncovering the sinister secret behind a high fashion façade to marauding Vikings hunting nuclear bombs in Norfolk, nothing is beyond the reach of our heroes.

It's been a joy bringing back these most iconic of Sixties legends, and with Julian Wadham as John Steed and Olivia Poulet as Emma Peel we couldn't have found better actors to bring them to life once more. The wry touch, the unflappable charm – everything you could want from **The Avengers** is here. No matter how unusual the crime that needs to be stopped by these most special of special agents, they manage it all with grace, ease... and in the most stylish manner imaginable. Steed, Peel? You're needed... **VORTEX**

Editorial

S IT really just a couple of months since Sir John Hurt brought the War Doctor back to life? I'm sure I'm not the only one who enjoyed hearing that amazing voice, bringing the world-weary warrior to Big Finish.

What's really pleasing to hear from everyone involved is how much he has embraced the part once again, considering it was only a few weeks' work in an amazing career spanning decades. And he seems to have a real passion for being the Doctor who isn't the Doctor – which bodes well for the future.

We go from the present to the past this month, with the release of **Carnacki**: *The Ghost Finder*, which is performed by Dan Starkey, and produced by Scott Handcock. I've always enjoyed a good ghost story since I was a wee boy and really can't wait to hear these plays. At present, I'm driving to work in the dark, and coming home when there's not too much light either, so listening to these is something I can't wait for, especially with Big Finish's legendary high-quality sound design and music. (I still remember jumping the first time I heard that scream in *Scherzo*!)

Scott's shown with the **Dorian Gray** range that he knows his horror, and Dan has a fantastically versatile voice, so to hear some period horror, from over a century ago, is something I await with bated breath. I only read **Frankenstein** and **Dracula** for the first time last summer whilst in Lanzarote, as well as a lot of Poe, so am really enjoying some scares from another era. With that in mind, I'm eagerly anticipating Mark Gatiss' turn as Dracula in May.

There's just so much to look forward to, as ever. Big Finish certainly make my journeys to and from work pass with interest!

KENNY

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THE CONTRACT OF CO

Kenny Smith goes behind the scenes of the second War Doctor box set...

OT ON the heels of Only The Monstrous comes Infernal Devices, the second box set of War Doctor adventures, starring Sir John Hurt. After the first trilogy of adventures was released in December, it's not been too long a wait for the second batch of tales set during the Time War.

Script editor Matt Fitton says: "It's really exciting to get the War Doctor. Series two was commissioned straight after series one, and a few days later came series three and four. What's interesting is to see how far we can go with him, as we have to keep an element of the Doctor who we know, but he doesn't want to encourage that part of himself. He's got to do things that aren't him and it's a very fine line to tread." PPEARING AS Cardinal Ollistra throughout the War Doctor adventures – as well as the forthcoming The Eighth Doctor: The Time War set – is Jacqueline Pearce. Jacqueline says: "It's great to be back. I've always loved working with Big Finish, so it's a joy to come back and do some more.

"It's especially lovely to come back and be working with John Hurt – especially as we've got more to do. He's very different as the Doctor.

"It was lovely to see him again when we were back in the studio – we had a lot of laughs. We first met many years ago, at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts, although John was the year ahead of me. My first job when I left RADA was with him, then we didn't see each other for something

The War Doctor



like 15 years. We did White Mischief in Africa, and had been very close ever since. After that, we've been inseparable. He's taken on the part with great relish and is throughly enjoying it."

With Jacqueline forever being linked with the incomparable Servalan in Blake's 7, she's enjoying the chance to play another female leader in Ollistra, especially as she is a character with more heart.

She says: "Oh, yes, definitely - I think so. I certainly played her that way - I didn't want her to be a repeat of Servalan.

"Initially, I felt the characters were quite similar, as both were very strong women who were in charge, but for me, there's more than enough differences between them to make her interesting, from my point of view - and the listeners' as well."

HE NEW box set begins with Legion of the Lost, by John Dorney. Having written for all of the other Doctors currently available to Big Finish, John's delighted to have a crack at writing for Sir John.

John Dorney says: "He's very interesting as a character - and you know you need to write a script worthy of that actor. It's terribly exciting, particularly as an actor myself. It's interesting learning about what's so specific about this

"I've read what some people have said online, but I don't think the character is a bloodthirsty maniac." John Dorney

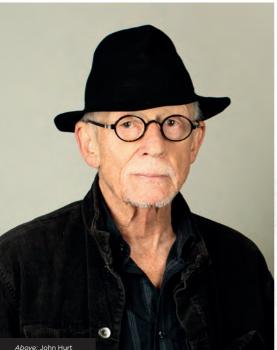
character, what's his raison d'etre. He's something of a blank slate and a lot of people are bringing their ideas of what they think, to the table.

"I've read what some people have said online, but I don't think the character is a blood-thirsty maniac. In The Day of the Doctor, he's disliked by the other two for operating The Moment, but the instant they discover he didn't do that, they are suddenly fond of him. They aren't disgusted by anything else he did.

"Everybody has their own interpretation of who the War Doctor is and what they want him to be. There will be aspects I've written, which others will disagree with." For his take on the Time War, John did his research.

"I rewatched a lot of episodes with Time War mentions in them." he explains, "and worked out what we had learned and what had been said about it. We know the Time Lords resurrected the Master, and found that to be an interesting

The War Doctor



bove: John Hurt

aspect. That got me thinking – what's the process that happens here?

"I didn't want to go into too much detail, though, about how Rassilon turns up later on, but I took that as a starting point and exploring the side of things where the Time Lords have become more unpleasant. We learned in *The End of Time* the Time Lords have been just as bad as the Daleks and wanted to explore aspects of that. I didn't particularly want to use the Daleks, as not everything in a war will involve direct conflict with the enemy. There are other aspects that were worth exploring,"

He adds: "I was able to go along for the morning of the recording, and to have John Hurt and David Warner performing my work was quite special."

ERHAPS PHIL Mulryne is better know to Big Finish devotees as an actor first and foremost, but he showcases his writing skills in *A Thing of Guile*. When he was first asked to write for the series, Phil admits: "It's very exciting that Big Finish now has the ability to work with the new series, especially as John Hurt is such a legend, and we're getting to work with other amazing actors, like Jacqueline Pearce. For audio, John has such an amazing voice and everyone knows what a great actor he is.

His voice really is unique.

"I went back to watch *The Day of the Doctor* – which was so helpful in terms of seeing John Hurt in action. But I was also aware that the War Doctor in our box sets hasn't quite reached the point of despair that the Time War will eventually drive him to, when he decides to use the Moment to destroy the Time Lords. The writers I was working with also pointed to some of the colourful descriptions of the Time War that pop up in, for example, *The End of Time*. So I also went back to watch those episodes for inspiration."

How did Phil find writing for a less moral Doctor, when we know how he'd normally react? "I think all the writers are aware that 'the Doctor' is still in there, buried inside somewhere – no matter what this 'War Doctor' goes through and how much he denies the name. He does what has to be done. But he doesn't have to like it. I think that's why, when the Tenth and Eleventh Doctors turn up in *The Day of the Doctor*, the War Doctor is more than ready to have hope restored to him. I think 'morally weary' might be a better way to describe this Doctor than 'less moral' – and it was actually freeing and exciting to experiment with a grittier tone than might normally appear in **Doctor Who**."

Phil teases: "Matt had been thinking of how the Time War

"The Time War created the 'War Doctor', so what might the Daleks have on their side...?"

Phil Mulryne

had created the 'War Doctor', and so what might the Daleks have on their side...? In the end, he didn't use that, and that worked with what I had in mind. I asked him if I could take it, and do something different with it. It was a very collaborative process, with us all exchanging emails."

He adds: "It's always fun for me hearing my plays being recorded, especially as this is going to be a third of the final product. What Big Finish does amazingly well is the sound design and music, and when all the effects are added, that will really bring it to life. I can't wait to hear how it all sounds."

NFERNAL DEVICES comes to a close with *The Neverwhen.* Matt Fitton explains the background to his story: "When we first heard about the Time War on TV, we got these wonderful lines about some of the horrors in it, like 'The Could Have Been King and his Army of Meanwhiles and Neverweres', and I wanted to explore something along those lines. I wanted to find a word for something that hadn't been used before, but echoed that kind of warfare.

"It's an almost nightmarish scenario that you can't quite pin down, so that was my starting point. We see versions of the Time War – The Day of the Doctor is Steven Moffat's take

The War Doctor



The War Doctor: Infernal Devices

In the midst of the Time War, Daleks and Time Lords bring to bear all the weapons they can find, unleashing untold devastation. But if just one of these infernal devices can provide an advantage — however small — that could mean victory.

While the Daleks experiment with new ways of waging war, Cardinal Ollistra seeks out arcane and mysterious armaments of her own. And she will have the assistance of Gallifrey's greatest warrior – regardless of whether he is willing to help.

As both sides think the unthinkable, the consequences for the universe could be catastrophic. But the Time War must be won, at any cost...

CAST: John Hurt (The War Doctor), Jacqueline Pearce (Cardinal Ollistra), David Warner (Shadovar), Jamie Newall (Co-ordinator Jarad), Zoë Tapper (Collis), Robert Hands (Captain Solex), Oliver Dimsdale (Commander Trelon), Laura Harding (Navigator Valis), Barnaby Kay (Commander Thrakken), Jaye Griffiths (Daylin), Tim Bentinck (General Kallix), Tracy Wiles (Commander Barnac), and Nicholas Briggs as the Daleks.

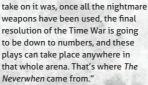
WRITTEN BY: John Dorney, Phil Mulryne, Matt Fitton

DIRECTED BY: Nicholas Briggs

OUT THIS MONTH!

Left to right: David Richardson, Jacqueline Pearce, John Hurt and Nicholas Briggs

on the Daleks attacking Gallifrey, and then there's Russell T Davies' more nebulous references, those weird esoteric concepts. My



Matt – who has now also written for all of the Doctors currently working for Big Finish – continues: "It's an absolute dream come true, getting to do these.

"What's so rewarding is to see how John Hurt has embraced the whole thing – he loves that he's the Doctor, or rather, 'not the Doctor'. In fact the War Doctor shouts at people who call him that!



"He's just enjoying the whole thing, while the casts he's been given are fantastic. I'm so pleased with just how amazing

Jacqueline Pearce has been – some people might think on paper the character could be a version of Servalan, but there's so much more to Cardinal Ollistra.

"She's someone who is doing what she has to do, the right thing, to save Gallifrey and win the war. She's not doing it for herself.

"She also has a very interesting relationship with the Doctor – he's not someone she can control, but she enjoys the challenge, and I think she does like him, for all the trouble he causes her."

Jacqueline adds: "It would be fantastic if these were just the start of something that's going to be long-running." **VORTEX** Vienna and Jexie are back, as Kenny Smith is taken for a...

VIENNESE UHIRL

AN A leopard really change its spots? That's the main question being posed with the third season of Vienna, Big Finish's exclusive series featuring the universe's most glamorous bounty hunter.

Producer Cavan Scott says: "Vienna is still trying to go straight! She's opened up a new security business with her partner Jexie and is trying not to kill people – unless she really, really, really has to."

Having first appeared in Jonathan Morris's **Doctor Who** monthly range story, *The Shadow Heart*, Vienna – brought to life by Chase Masterson – was given a pilot episode, *The Memory Box*, for her own spin-off, which has since led to a first, second and now third series of adventures.

With Vienna continuing to thrive, Jonny says he is: "Absolutely delighted and incredibly proud, and hugely grateful to everyone who has bought the first two series and to Big Finish for taking a risk on it. They make it look easy and assured but they are a company that thrives on trying out new ideas and finding new talent.

"The character, I hope, is interesting, quite contradictory in a way, with layers and complex motivation – and Chase captures all that, she makes her three-dimensional and makes Vienna tough whilst playing it with a lightness of touch, And the stories are original, humorous, no-holdsbarred science fiction, mind-bending, a little provocative, and very different from Big Finish's other ranges – they don't have any other ranges about hired killers."

Chase – who returned to Big Finish in series three of **Survivors** late last year – has been a strong champion of the series. What is it about Vienna that she adores so much?

Breaking into a killer smile, Chase beams: "So many things! I love that Vienna has stories that are extremely relevant to our world. In our three seasons so far, we've had stories about hypocrisy in religion, privacy, shallowness in people and in media, child soldiers, the emptiness of social climbing, and more – all set against a fun, fast-action sci-fi backdrop, with hilarious, cheeky dialogue.

"Big Society is a mad, frenetic romp which wouldn't seem out of place in 2000AD..."

Cavan Scott



Vienna: Series Three

SELF IMPROVEMENT by Ian Potter

BIG SOCIETY by Guy Adams

IMPOSSIBLY GLAMOROUS by Steve Lyons

CAST: Chase Masterson (Vienna Salvatori), Samantha Béart (Jexie Reagan) Terry Molloy (Glospan), Elizabeth Morton (Constanza), Stephen Fewell (Tom McQueen), Bernard Holley (Chairman Sweet), Richard Dixon (Jonah Hall), Sophie Aldred (Kensington Fox), Dan Bottomley (Drew Mulligan)

DIRECTED BY: Scott Handcock

OUT THIS MONTH!

"I'm really enthused to be working with such accomplished actors, who always deliver fun, interesting performances in ways you could never predict. It's a blast being in the studio with everybody. And Samantha Béart is a fantastic addition to the cast. She and her character Jexie play off Vienna's sassiness in a super-fun way, and there is an element of friendship that we're exploring that is lovely and rare for Vienna, who is generally a loner.

"And who doesn't love smart, kick-ass women? So yes, our audience can relate to these inspiring, heroic women and to these stories. What's not to love?"

HE THIRD series begings with Self Improvement by Ian Potter, in which Doctor Ludovic Glospan has made a scientific discovery that could change the galaxy forever, and Vienna Salvatori and Jexie Reagan are hired to keep Glospan's secret safe. Jonny says: "It was wonderful fun because I got to do three fun things -I got to choose some writers - Guy Adams who is fairly new to Big Finish, or was at the time, and Ian Potter and Steve Lyons who have done great work in other ranges and should do more stuff. Secondly, I got to work with them on coming up with stories; I sketched out the storyline of the three episodes and suggested some locations. And thirdly, I got to tinker and polish with their scripts, which they were kind enough not to get angry about. So that's three fun things and I didn't have to do the exhausting, difficult thing of actually writing my own story. It's important for me that Vienna has a life beyond being a J Morris creation, to see other writers develop the character and take her in exciting new directions that I would never imagine."

Cav adds: "Self Improvement by Ian Potter takes her to a remote planet where Professor Glospan (Terry Molloy) has made a remarkable scientific discovery. He hires Vienna and Jexie to protect it, but things go very, very wrong. This sends our courageous duo off out into space and straight into *Big Society* by Guy Adams. Following the trail of the stolen secrets, they discover a planet that has fallen on hard times only to become the setting of an *Apprentice*-type TV show. The only difference with this version is that you don't get fired, you get dead. Even the buildings are out to get you."

IG SOCIETY by Guy Adams is the second adventure, in which Tom McQueen is set to win The Selection and become Chairman Sweet's new business partner. However, another candidate has entered the process, a candidate by the name of Vienna Salvatori...

Producer Cav explains: "Guy's story is a mad, frenetic romp which wouldn't seem out of place in 2000AD and stars Stephen Fewell as Tom McQueen and the wonderful Bernard Holley as Chairman Sweet."

The final tale in this set is *Impossibly Glamorous* by Steve Lyons. Vienna used to dream that she had an impossibly glamorous life, and then one day she met someone who made her dreams true – now she has a new mission, to help you become the person you always wanted to be. Even if it kills you.

"Everything wraps up in Impossibly Glamorous by Steve Lyons," says Cav, "which takes place on London. Not the city, but the planet. Sophie Aldred is amazing as Kensington Fox, a business woman with beauty on the brain, while Dan Bottomley teams up with Jexie as hapless Drew Mulligan, a victim of eternal bad luck. As for Vienna – well, you might be surprised..."

Chase adds: "It's about finding what's real in a world full of pretty-but-empty offerings and shallow images, many of which society expects us to conform to. As an actress, I find it especially fun to unmask that, and I think we all can relate. We want to be seen, and loved, for who we are, rather than some image we copy and pretend to be. In this episode, written by Steve Lyons, Vienna and Jexie take down a lot of the pretenses the world seems to insist on. In a fun way, of course. Always fun." **VORTEX** Big Finish are bringing some classic stories to life, as Kenny Smith goes on the...

bost

GHOST WATCH

N RECENT years, Big Finish has adapted legendary texts for audio, such as The Phantom of the Opera, Frankenstein and The Wizard of Oz. This month sees the release of Carnacki, the occult detective who was created by William Hope Hodgson, and featured in six short stories published between 1910 and 1912.

Producer/director Scott Handcock is responsible for bringing the plays to life, which are performed by Dan Starkey as Thomas Carnacki, with Joseph Kloska as his associate Dodgson.

Carnacki: The Ghost-Finder features the stories The Gateway of the Monster, The House Among the Laurels, The Whistling Room, The Horse of the Invisible, The Searcher of the End House and The Thing Invisible.

Scott reveals: "These stories have been around for over a century, and yet very few people seem to have heard of them. I hadn't myself until a few years ago, but then like everyone else, I instantly fell in love with them.

"William Hope Hodgson conjures up a world somewhere between Conan Doyle and MR James: Carnacki himself is a supernatural investigator who travels the country debunking supposed hauntings, deploying the very latest gadgets in order to do so. It's wonderfully atmospheric and ahead of its time, whilst at the same time playing to the conventions of both detective and ghost stories from the period. The stories themselves are full of charm and dread, with Carnacki serving as a ready-made narrator as he recounts his tales. It was an irresistible proposal – and one Big Finish agreed to let me tackle!"

Finder

Dan says: "Scott had mentioned it to me a while before we did them, and I was really interested.

"I was aware of the Carnacki stories, through a pretty tenuous connection – Andrew Cartmel had done a **Doctor Who** novella (*Foreign Devils*, published by Telos in 2002), years ago.

"I also knew he was a member of the League of Extraordinary Gentlemen (the comic book series co-created by writer Alan Moore and artist Kevin O'Neill), so I had a rough idea of who he was.

"It was very interesting going through the stories. It's like Sherlock Holmes, but with added ghosts. Some of them are great ghost stories, but some of them are people pretending to be ghosts.

"The prose style is very Edwardian, but what I found really fascinating when I was doing them in the studio, was how they change. After the first couple of stories, all of a sudden the prose becomes a lot better in the way it's punctuated, and it's far better to speak.

"For me, horror taps into our psyches on a very personal level, and audio engages with an individual audience member unlike any other medium."

Scott Handcock

was an obvious choice for our Carnacki. He's a fantastic actor, not to mention one of the the best audiobook readers out there, so I knew he could tackle all the challenges we threw at him."

Dan admits there was a difference between performing comtemporary prose, to that written over a century ago: "It's more of a challenge, as the language is a lot denser that what we have today. I also found the Irish characters in one story are written very deliberately in 'stage Irish' as



Above: Dan Starkey

Carnacki: The Ghost Hunter

A brand-new collection of readings featuring William Hope Hodgson's supernatural detective, Thomas Carnacki

WRITTEN BY: William Hope Hodgson

PERFORMED BY: Dan Starkey (Thomas Carnacki) and Joseph Kloska (Dodgson)

DIRECTED BY: Scott Handcock

"It's amazing how effective a good editor can be on the actual prose!"

What led Scott to cast Dan? He reveals: "Carnacki sits in that strange limbo between basic audiobook and enhanced reading. In terms of the sound design, we very quickly realised adding effects to this release would distract from Hodgson's language, so we wanted actors who could command the language and bring it to life, and Dan Starkey would have been heard in the theatre or music hall of the period, so my reading tried to reflect that without I hope being too embarrassing!

"I'd like to think I have a good ear for accents, but you have to have a lot of respect for what is given to you, and work with it."

Scott is no stranger to horror as the creator of Big Finish's **Confessions of Dorian Gray** series, as well as being producer of **Frankenstein** – what does he think makes a good horror story?

Rubbing his chin, he says: "Do you know, I've worked on so many horror series and releases for Big Finish, and I don't think anyone's asked me that before!

"I think there's a definite difference between horror and terror. Terror's a very specific moment, borne out of shock, that I tend to associate with slasher films. It's an adrenaline rush. It's a rollercoaster, and adrenaline rush, but I'm not sure it's necessarily horror. For me, horror taps into our psyches on a very personal level, and audio engages with an individual audience member unlike any other medium, keeping things remarkably intimate.

"The best horror stories don't play their cards too early – they allow the atmosphere to breathe, the dread to build – and sometimes they won't show their hand at all. That kind of ambiguity is terrifying, not being able to provide a reason for what you've witnessed... which is what makes **Carnacki** unique. You get to enjoy all the tropes that come with the very best kind of horror story, before Carnacki offers a rational explanation. Though sometimes even he isn't always convinced by them..."

Kenny Smith heads for Cardiff, and learns that with Torchwood, there's always...

MORE, MORE, MORE!

HE FIRST Big Finish season of **Torchwood** comes to a close this month – but don't worry, series two begins in March! With Captain Jack Harkness, lanto Jones, Gwen Cooper and Rhys Williams, as well as Yvonne Hartman, having tackled the Committee, it's time to find out just what has been going on in the background in *More Than This*, by Guy Adams.

Gwen, played, as ever, by Eve Myles, encounters one of her toughest foes yet – Roger Pugh, planning officer for Cardiff City Council!

Producer James Goss explains: "*More Than This* sees Gwen's attempts to re-start Torchwood edge a little closer. She's come back to Cardiff and is trying to get their base rebuilt. "There's just one problem – and that problem is Mr Pugh from the planning department. So, Gwen decides to show him exactly why the world needs Torchwood.

"The idea was suggested by Matt Nicholls, who looks after **Torchwood** for BBC Worldwide. He's lived in Cardiff a long time and came up with the brilliant idea of Mr Pugh, who represents the real world – in the five years since Torchwood has been shut down, they've been forgotten, and the alien menace has gone underground. So, when a woman turns up in your office demanding to open a secret base in Cardiff Bay, how are you going to react?"

Guy reveals his brief was: "Gwen meets Mr Pugh, head of council planning, to negotiate for the construction of a new base of operations. Given my previous work with





Torchwood: More Than This

Gwen Cooper has triumphed against impossible odds before, but now she's finally met her match: Roger Pugh, Planning Officer for Cardiff City Council.

Mr Pugh doesn't believe the world needs Torchwood. Gwen sets out to prove him wrong. For Mr Pugh, it's a day that'll change his life. If he can survive it.

CAST: Eve Myles (Gwen Cooper), Richard Nichols (Roger Pugh), Guy Adams (Coachman) with Tom Price (Sergeant Andy)

WRITTEN BY: Guy Adams

DIRECTED BY: Scott Handcock

OUT THIS MONTH!

Above left (left to right): Eve Myles, Guy Adams and Richard Nichols Above right (left to right): Eve Myles and Richard Nichols

both producer James Goss and script editor Steve Tribe, they clearly knew I was just the man to bring out the inherent thrills and shocks of a story about local council bureaucracy.

"Writing for Gwen is just wonderful. She's a bundle of warmth my script, under the direction of the ever-wondrous Scott Handcock was like hiring Michel Roux to open a bag of crisps for you, I was terribly lucky." How did it feel for Guy, writing the season finale? He smiles:" At the time I didn't realise it was, which is

"They clearly knew I was just the man to bring out the inherent thrills and shocks of a story about local council bureaucracy!" Guy Adams

surrounded by an outer-casing that's as hard as nails. 'I say,' you'd think, while she threw you over her shoulder and then encouraged carpet burns onto your face with the skilful application of her booted-foot, contrary to current experience, this woman's brimming with heart, she really wants the best for the world."

"And Eve is just the most brilliant actress. I spent the entire recording day in doe-eyed awe. Richard Nichols got his fair share of the same lovestruck stares, the gentle, soulful richness he brought to Pugh was just amazing. Having them speak probably just as well as then I'd have got carried away and put another couple of explosions in. Love an explosion on audio, they're cheap but impressive.

"They'd also painlessly pass the inspection of Pugh's colleague, Gwyneth Williams in Health and Safety."

James adds: "Guy's script is a delight – it starts off very funny and then becomes more poignant. Eve gives it her all, and it's a great way to end our first batch of business, with Gwen Cooper keener than ever to prove that **Torchwood** is back in business." **VORTEX** It's back to the early months of 1983 with the **Doctor Who** monthly range, as Kenny Smith encounters some...

FRIENDS REUNITED

ANET FIELDING is now very much back in the swing of things as Tegan Jovanka, having come late to the party with Big Finish.

Since July 2010, she has regularly been appearing alongside her old fellow TARDIS travellers, Peter Davison, Sarah Sutton and Mark Strickson.

She says: "It's good fun to see old friends, like Peter, Sarah and Mark. I was an agent representing actors and I thought, and I still do, it was highly inappropriate for me to be also working as an actor, it just seemed ridiculous, so I used to say no. Also, I'd stopped acting so it just seemed wrong.

"Gary Russell was badgering me to do one for ages. He just kept going on and on and on and on and on and on... and then I did one and had a good time. "And then, I suppose, you want to have more of a good time. Tell you what, you spend a lot less time in make-up!"

Janet is currently featuring in the monthly range trilogy, which started last month with *The Waters of Amsterdam*.

Script editor Alan Barnes reveals the thinking behind the setting: "We're jumping back to the end of *Arc of Infinity*, at the moment Tegan rejoins the Doctor and Nyssa on their travels – literally to that exact moment, in Amsterdam in the spring of 1983," says Alan.

"What's quite startling about the gap between Arc of Infinity and Snakedance, I think, is there's virtually no mention of Tegan's time away – and of course, in the interim, the Doctor and Nyssa have shared a huge

story interesting is that Tegan has just spent a year or so away from the Doctor, she's picked up her old life and decided to put it down again! She's not the same person she was when she left; after travelling in time and space, ordinary life has lost its appeal.

"I usually write stories that are quite plot-driven, where it's about the mechanics of switching bits of the story on and off. *The Waters of Amsterdam* is much more of a character-led story, the plot takes a back seat because I wanted to make sure I had time to properly explore the characters'

relationships and dig a little deeper. Tell a more grown-up story!"

Janet continues: "We've had a good mix with the stories. Here, we're not being limited by the budget, which is great.

"It's good to be doing these now, and make up for lost time. It's lovely, catching up. We're phenomenally rude to each other, which is great. It's been a bit odd not having Mark around, but we still have a good laugh."

HIS MONTH sees the release of Aquitaine. Alan continues: "The second story is the monthly range debut of the writing team of Simon Barnard and Paul Morris, who've come up with Aquitaine – after the name of the colossal spaceship the TARDIS lands on next. They're answering a distress call from the ship's computer: its entire crew has gone missing, and it can't remember why! This one's got a bit of a Silent Running feel, we think."

Paul says: "We didn't labour the point that this was Tegan's very first journey back into space (not least because some listeners may wish to slot *The Elite* into that position). But we do hint at a new-found enthusiasm for the lifestyle that she once couldn't wait to give up; from

Above (left to right): Janet Fielding and Sarah Sutton Inset: Peter Davison

"GARY RUSSELL WAS BADGERING ME TO DO [AN AUDIO] FOR AGES. HE JUST KEPT GOING ON AND ON AND ON AND ON AND ON AND ON..." Janet Fielding

number of Big Finish adventures that Tegan's not been privy to! So there's an emotional gap to fill, as much as a chronological one."

AST MONTH saw the first story as the Doctor, Tegan and Nyssa resumed their adventures, right after their defeat of Omega, in an adventure written by Jonathan Morris.

Jonny says: "Back when I started doing the Big Finish stories, I would re-watch a companion's TV stories, just to make sure I would capture their voice and idioms. I tend not to do that now, as I know the characters so well and have internalised all the actors' voices. What makes this her early awe at the sight of black hole HE0450-2958, to her gung-ho approach to the search for the lost crew. She's even, under pressure, moved to express her complete faith in the Doctor (though not to his face, obviously. She is still Tegan.)"

Simon adds: "Aquitaine is in many ways quite a dark story. It's about the various unpleasant things that happen to the inhabitants of that ill-fated vessel when it strays too close to an unstable black hole. It's also about the three time-travellers who come to their rescue, and the unpleasant things that happen to them as well. At its heart, though, it's about a Time Lord's unlikely friendship with a robot butler who likes tea even more than he does."

OUNDING OFF the trio of tales is *The Peterloo Massacre*. Alan explains: "*The Peterloo Massacre* is another pure historical by Paul Magrs – although unlike his earlier *The Lady of Mercia*, this one's got no comedic elements whatsoever. Obviously, it's set in Manchester in 1819, when a workers' protest at St Peters' Field was brutally crushed by the authorities. It's a particularly bleak, harrowing moment in British history, and it's fair to say, this is a particularly bleak and harrowing play."

"AT ITS HEART, AQUITAINE'S ABOUT A TIME LORD'S UNLIKELY FRIENDSHIP WITH A ROBOT BUTLER WHO LIKES TEA EVEN MORE THAN HE DOES." Simon Barnard

Paul reveals: "I love TV costume dramas and characters caught in the wheels of historical circumstance, and I like those **Doctor Who** stories in which we see our friends against a backdrop that's partially familiar. I like learning about history I don't know yet, and doing it through the eyes of time travellers is great fun."

It's lucky that Paul enjoys learning about history, as he had to research the events of the play.

He explains: "I knew the bare facts. I'd read a little already, but when I was commissioned and set about constructing the story, I spent quite a lot of time in Manchester Central Library. Besides the facts of the historical events, as a



Above (left to right): Janet Fielding and Sarah Sutton



Above (left to right): Nina Sosanya, Danusia Samal, Gerald Kyd and Harry Myers



Doctor Who: Aquitaine

Today should be much like every other day for Hargreaves, the computer consciousness that co-ordinates daily life aboard the spaceship Aquitaine, stationed on the outer fringes of a black hole. Water the plants, run the diagnostics, cook the Captain's breakfast; then tidy the plates away, rotate the ship, clean the windows of the observation deck. When at last the day's work is done. Hargreaves will dim the lights in the sleeping quarters. But no-one will sleep aboard the Aquitaine tonight. Because the Aquitaine's crew is missing

But today will be different. Today, a space/time ship called the TARDIS will materialise in the botanical section, bringing the Doctor, Nyssa and Tegan aboard the Aquitaine. Together, they'll seek to discover the truth of what happened to Hargreaves' crew... if only the ghosts will let them.

CAST: Peter Davison (The Doctor). Sarah Sutton (Nyssa), Janet Fielding (Tegan), Matthew Cottle (Hargreaves), Harry Myers (Dr Sergei Akunin), Nina Sosanya (Captain Anna Maynard), Gerald Kyd (Lt Maurizio Savinio), Danusia Samal (Lt Freya Jenninas)

WRITTEN BY: Simon Barnard and Paul Morris

DIRECTED BY: Ken Bentley

OUT THIS MONTH!



Above (left to right): Peter Davison, Janet Fielding, Sarah Sutton and Jamie Anderson



writer you want the small, telling details and a hint of some of the personalities involved, so that you can start coalescing them into characters, settings, and threads through the actual history. You can start turning history into plot as you get on with that reading. The startling thing is that Manchester Central Library is more or less on the very site of the Peterloo Massacre.

"I try my best with the factual side, and burrowing my way into the story. I must stress that all errors are my own, and they are bound to happen. I'm no historian – I write stories about people I hope you'll care for: that's the only way I have of bringing history to life. In a way, writing historical fiction is very audacious - and turning an historical disaster into what is essentially an adventure story is a chancey business. But, flawed as it inevitably will be, I want this story to inform and educate the audience just enough to make them aware of these terrible events, and perhaps inspire them to find out more about it."



WO OF the three plays are directed by Jamie Anderson, fresh from his success with Terrahawks last year.

Janet had a great time working with him, and reveals: "Jamie had t-shirts made. I may have been overselling the fact that I'm being made into a cultural icon - there were some photographs tweeted. Mine said Cultural Icon, Sarah's said 'I'm lucky enough to know a Cultural Icon,' and Peter's said 'Shut up Janet'! We are enormously fond of each other!

"In some ways, we do get on better than we did back then. I suppose that's true, as the older you get." VORTEX

AXO

THE FEAST OF AXOS

It's 45 years since the original transmission of *The Claws of Axos*, so Kenny Smith turns back the clock to their Big Finish debut...

XONS ARE a bit like buses. You wait ages for them to appear in a second story, then they feature in two stories at once!

FULL CAST AUDIO DRAMA

Despite being one of the Third Doctor's most memorable foes, the Axons had never appeared in officially licensed **Doctor Who** spin-offs, since the vampire from space had dug its claws into the Earth in Jon Pertwee's second season – until their Big Finish return in February 2011.

And then the *Doctor Who Magazine* comic strip pitched the Eleventh Doctor and Amy Pond against them at virtually the same time in *The Golden Ones*!

Written by Mike Maddox, he says: "I think *Claws* is pretty much the perfect Pertwee story. Oil refinery, Master, dayglo orange monsters, Jo, Benton, Brig, lots of soldiers running around..."

A real coup for the story was the return of Bernard Holley as the voice of Axos, perfectly recreating the part he had first played some 40 years previously. Bernard said: "It was completely out of the blue. I have a separate voiceover agent who rang me and said 'I've got a couple of days work for you.' I didn't ask her what it was, and just had it in my diary. When it got closer to the date, I rang up and asked what it was all about, and they said it was a remake of something I'd done in 1971."

How did Mike find writing for the Axons, especially knowing Bernard would be back as the voice of Axos?

"Thing is, they don't want much out of life. They want to feed. That's pretty much it, really. They're willing to play us along, but at the end of the day, they want to have us all for lunch. "I thought Bernard was brilliant, just amazing. What a privilege to work with someone like that."

"The scene where Evelyn gets lost in space is the most favourite thing I've ever written. Ever." Mike Maddox

Working with Big Finish gave Bernard a chance to renew an old acquaintance. "Colin Baker was lovely – I've known him for years and been to his house. We used to have famous New Year parties every year, which he came to – I've known him from round the blocks for years."

Mike admitted the script altered during the writing process. He explained: "All scripts change along the way and anyone who says otherwise is fibbing. I know some writers might fight their editor and producer over every full stop and comma, but I'm pretty much the evil opposite of that. These things are all collaborations."

Companion Thomas Brewster is at his best in *The Feast* of Axos, as it's hard to tell if he's playing games or is really selling out the Doctor to Axos.

Mike said: "It's quite fun, writing someone like that. I still don't know what he was up to. Not sure he does either, really. He's making it up as he goes along, looking for the best deal. I reckon."

How did the writer feel about the finished release? "Again, delighted. The Axons sounded squashy, Bernard was brilliant, and that scene where Evelyn gets lost in space is the most favourite thing I've ever written. Ever." **VORTEX**

VORTEX MAIL

REFLECTIVE

As the wind howls outside, it's a fitting accompaniment while listening to the latest **Doctor Who** main range offering, *Shield Of The Jötunn*, I find myself in a reflective mood, for this latest adventure is the last in my current subscription. I've enjoyed my subscription to the full, which includes the downloadable scripts for each story. It's been great seeing how these brilliant productions take form on the blank page. I've heard you occasionally run story competitions. Are there any in the pipeline for listeners to enter?

With the year drawing to a close, I think of the wealth of material I've experienced from Big Finish in 2015. Highlights include the full run of Eighth Doctor Adventures (all the way through to Doom Coalition), Old Sixie's The Last Adventure and of course the jovial japes and loquacious lingo of Jago & Litefoot. Then there's the news of future developments - audio adventures with the War Doctor, along with the return of David Tennant and Catherine Tate. Evidence more than any that the BBC has total faith in how Big Finish handles one of their most beloved brands. So as my subscription draws to an end, I find fitting words from the good Doctor to describe my thoughts on Big Finish - one day I shall come back. Yes, I shall come back. How does next month sound? David Cook

Nick: That sounds just fine, David. But you kept me on the edge of my seat, there.

LOVING 24

Thank you so much for the recent Seventh Doctor and Mel trilogy. I'm sometimes painfully aware that I'm in the minority but Season 24 is one of my favourite series of **Doctor Who**. I was 14 when it was shown on TV and the energy and freshness of the stories really caught my imagination. The trilogy felt very authentic, helped a great deal by spot on performances from Sylvester and Bonnie. *We Are The Daleks* and *The Warehouse* in particular had the strong supporting characters, vibrant settings and clever and funny scripts that make Season 24 so much fun. 14-year-old me would have loved them! Glad to see Bonnie will be working with Sylvester and Sophie later this year! Can't wait!

David Steel

Nick: Doctor Who is a very broad church, David. Certain 'orthodoxies' have built up over the years. They are all spurious. The good thing about the series is that you can love which ever bit of it you love the most. No judgements from me at all. I mean, I love Revenge of the Cybermen. (Ducks for cover!)

NOVEL IDEA

Just a quick note to thank everyone at Big Finish for a fantastic last 12 months, with some fantastic releases, and for the anticipation of the biggies coming later this year, especially the Tenth Doctor plays. You've given us some nice big surprises in the last few months – I hope there's more pleasant shocks in store for 2016! While I'm on. can I ask if Big Finish are considering doing more novel adaptations, beyond the unannounced three-disc release revealed last year? I've loved them all so far, especially Love and War, Damaged Goods and All-Consuming Fire. **Billy Johnston**

Nick: No huge announcements planned for 2016 as yet. But we're ever hopeful. We're just hoping to catch our breath.

A BIT OF SIX

I would like to offer some feedback on The Prisoner extract I've listened to it twice and have enjoyed it so much both times! I enjoyed the mixture of original and new, modernised elements of the village and the soundtrack very much, as well as the additions to original TV dialogue. However, the most enjoyable part for me was Mark Elstob as Number Six. I'm thrilled with the way he plays the character and am looking forward very much to the release of the remainder of the story and the other three installments so I can hear more of audio Six! Now I know that I did the right thing when I pre-ordered several months ago, and I'd been a bit apprehensive since I adore the television series. Many thanks for such a high quality production and for the awesome choice of actor to play Number Six!

Caroline Mills

Nick: Naturally, Caroline, this is music to my ears. Casting Number Six was a really difficult task. As with all, hopefully good decisions, the answer was sort of staring me in the face. I'd worked with Mark 20 years before and bumped into him on a train about a year or so previously. He suddenly popped into my head! Not on the train, obviously. That would be weird.

EMAIL US AT: feedback@bigfinish. com and remember to put 'Vortex Mail' as the subject...

Coming Up...

RELEASE SCHEDULE Forthcoming audio releases.

FEBRUARY 2016

DOCTOR WHO: AQUITAINE
 (209 SFIIN Doctor, legan and Nyssa)
 DOCTOR WHO - FOURT HOCTOR ADVENTURES:
 THE LABYRINTH OF BUDIA CASTLE
 LABYRINTH OF BUDIA CASTLE
 LABYRINTH OF BUDIA CASTLE
 LOUTOR WHO: THE WAR DOCTOR:
 NIETRAL DEVICES (Box Sci. The War Doctor)
 DOCTOR WHO: START TRIPS: PRIME WINNER
 GLO, Such Doctor, Downlead only
 LOACL, Such Doctor, Doctor, Bownlead Only
 LOACL, Such Doctor, Doctor, Doctor, Bownlead Only
 LOACL, Such Doctor, Doctor, Bownlead Only
 LOACL, DOCTOR, DOCT

MARCH 2016

DOCTOR WHO: THE PETERLOO MASSACE
 (210, Fifth Doctor, Tegan and Nyssa)
 DOCTOR WHO - THE FOURTH DOCTOR
 AVVENTURES: THE PARADOX PLANET
 (5.3, Fourth Doctor and Romana II)
 DOCTOR WHO: DOOM COALITION Z
 (Eighth Doctor)
 DOCTOR WHO: SHORT TRIPS: WASHINGTON
 BURNS (6.0, 55, Seventh Doctor, Download only)
 PATHFINDER LEGENDS – MUMMY'S MASK:
 PYRAMID OF THE SKY PHAROAH (2.6)
 TORCHWOOD: TBA (2.1)
 CALL ME JACKS (In conversation withh
 Jacquehe Pearce)

APRIL 2016

DOCTOR WHO: AND YOU WILLOBEY ME
 (21), Fifth Doctor)
 DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES:
 THE LEGACY OF DEATH (5:4, Fourth Doctor and
 Romana II)
 TERRAHAWKS: YOUMF 02
 DOCTOR WHO – THE NOVEL ADAPTATIONS:
 MINGTISHADE (5:exenth Doctor and Ace)
 DOCTOR WHO: SHORT TRIPS: THE CURSE OF THE
 FUGUE (6:0A, Eighth Doctor, Download only)
 BLAKES 7: THE UBERATOR TRIPS: THE CURSE OF THE
 GWS Set 12)
 THE AVENGERS – STEED AND MRS PEEL:
 THE AVENGERS – STEED AND MRS PEEL:
 THE AVENGERS – STEED AND MRS PEEL:

TORCHWOOD: TBA (2.2) JAGO AND LITEFOOT: SERIES 11 (Box Set)

MAY 2016

DOCTOR WHO: VAMPIRE OF THE MIND (212, Sixth Doctor) DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: GALLER VOC GHOULS (5.5, Fourth Doctor and Romana II) D DOCTOR WHO – THE TENTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES:

Technophobia (11, Tenth Doctor and Donna) Doctore WHO – THE TENTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: TIME REAVER (12, Tenth Doctor and Donna) DOCTOR WHO – THE TENTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: DEATH AND THE OUEN (13, Tenth Doctor and Donna) DOCTOR WHO – THE TENTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: VOLUME 1 (Ltd Eiltion Box Set, Tenth Doctor and Donna)

UNIT: THE NEW SERIES: SHUTDOWN (2.1, TBA) UDIT: THE NEW SERIES: SHUTDOWN (2.1, TBA) UDCTOR WHO: SHORT TRIPS: THIS SPORTING LIFE (6.05, First Doctor, Downlead only) CALLIFRE: ENEWY LINES (8, Romana II, Leela and Are) URCHWOOD: TBA (2.3)

BIG FINISH CLASSICS: DRACULA

JUNE 2016

LOCCOR WHO: THE TWO MASTERS
 (2)5, Seventh Doctor)
 Doctore WHO - Follorth Doctor Adventures:
 THE TROUBLE WITH DRAX
 (5,6, Furth Doctor and Romana II)
 DOCTOR WHO-SHORT TRIPS: TBA
 (6,6, TBA, Download only)
 DOCTOR WHO - THE COMPANION CHRONICLES:
 THE SECOND DOCTOR - WOUME1 (TBA)
 SURVIVORS – SERIES 4: BOX SEI (Full Cast)
 TORCHWOOD: TBA (2, d)

JULY 2016

DOCTOR WHO: TBA
 (2)4, Seventh Doctor, Mel and Are)
 DOCTOR WHO - FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES:
 THE PURSUIT OF HISTORY
 (5.7, Fourth Doctor and Romana II)
 DOCTOR WHO: SHORT TRIPS: LOST AND FOUND
 (6.07, Second Doctor, Download only)
 THE NEW COUNTER-MEASURES: WHO KILLED

TOBY KINSELLA? 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

LOCTOR 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 TIMPS: TBA (6.09, TBA, Downlead only) GRACELSS: SENES 4 (Box Set)

DOCTOR WHO: THE EARLY ADVENTURES: TBA (3.1. TBA)

OCTOBER 2016

DOCTOR WHO: TBA
 (218, Sixth Doctor and Constance)
 DOCTOR WHO: DOOM COALITION 3
 (Eighth Doctor)
 DOCTOR WHO: THE EARLY ADVENTURES: TBA
 (3.2, TBA)
 DOCTOR WHO: SHORT TRIPS: TBA
 (6.10, TBA, Download only)
 LICHARIOTE POLLARD: SERIES 02 (Box Set)
 JAGO AND LITEFOOT: SERIES 12 (Box Set)

NOVEMBER 2016

DOCTOR WHO: TBA
(2)9, Sixth Doctor and Constance)
DOCTOR WHO: SHORT TRIPS: TBA
(G.1, TBA, Download only)
DOCTOR WHO: THE EARLY ADVENTURES: TBA
(G.3, TBA)
SURVIVORS - SERIES 5: BOX SET
(Full Cast)
THE AVENGERS - STEED AND MRS PEEL:
THE GRAPHIC NOVEL
THE COMIC STRIP ADAPTATIONS (Volume 2)
UNIT: THE NEW SERIES: TBA (3, TBA)









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