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TORCHWOOD IN MARCH



"We knew there was an infestation of Angels in New York" DAVID RICHARDSON





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Managing Editor: Jason Haigh-Ellery Editor: Kenny Smith Executive Producer: Nicholas Briggs Line Producer: David Richardson Design: Mark Plastow Marketing Consultant: Kris Griffin Web Services: Hughes Media BFP Administration: Miles Haigh-Ellery. Enyl Bly, Alison Taylor and Brenda Smith Publisher: Big Finish Productions Ltd.

### EDITORIAL

ITHOUT ANY Doctor Who on television last year, Doom Coalition has been rather special for Big Finish fans. A bit like an extended season of the TV show, its 16 episodes have all had a linking theme running in the background. Sometimes it's obvious, and at other times you barely know it's there.

The epic nature of the story has really thrilled me. I've had ideas in my head about where it was going to go and been totally wrong-footed – right from the start by the Eleven!

Very often for Vortex I'm able to read scripts in advance of talking to the writers and production team, but producer David Richardson has kept this one under wraps, making me anticipate each volume of **Doom Coalition** more and more eagerly. John Dorney's Absent Friends (Doom Coalition 3.1) recently won a 2017 BBC Audio Drama Award. I first heard the play when I was at Legoland in Windsor and there were moments which brought a real lump to my throat. Having lost both my parents, John's writing felt very personal and I completely related to where it was coming from - just magnificent. I've particularly enjoyed the villains of the set - especially the Eleven. When I was interviewing Mark Bonnar for this issue. I discovered that when he was a wee boy he lived just a mile away from my house! With the release of series four, Doom Coalition is ending. I just hope it's not the final time we meet characters like Caleera and the Eleven. You can never have too many 'good' Time Lord villains! KENNY

### SNEAKPREVIEW Jago & Litefoot

HE OLD tradition tells us that the number 13 is unlucky – we can but hope that's not the case for Henry Gordon Jago and Professor George Litefoot.

Jago and Litefoot – the everpopular Victorian vanquishers of villainy – are back next month for their 13th box set of adventures, which pits them against a plethora of perils.

This time someone from the future has arrived in London on the trail of a renegade, which leads to the pathologist and theatrical impressario. It begins an adventure that takes the pair into unknown territory, and an encounter with two people they should avoid at all costs.

Producer David Richardson says: "I'm fascinated by the paths we take in life, and by how one minor decision can change our own personal histories.

"In series 13, something from the past comes back to haunt Jago and Litefoot, and sets in motion a chain of events that reveals what might have been."



The stories in the box set are The Stuff of Nightmares by Paul Morris, Chapel of Night by Jonathan Barnes, How the Other Half Lives by Matthew Sweet and Too Much Reality by Justin Richards. VORTEX

### IMPENDING









### Kenny Smith prepares for the end of the Eighth Doctor's latest series of adventures...

ITH A name like Doom Coalition there was always going to be an element of death and destruction. This was definitely the case at the end of the last series when the Doctor (Paul McGann), Liv Chenka (Nicola Walker) and Helen Sinclair (Hattie Morahan) were left trapped in an escape pod as the members of the coalition came together to take over Gallifrey.

This month we rejoin our heroes for four new adventures, *Ship in a* 

Bottle, Songs of Love, The Side of the Angels and Stop the Clock, which conclude the epic 16-part tale.

Producer David Richardson, who came up for the format for the series with director Ken Bentley, says: "We ended **Doom Coalition 3** on a big cliffhanger, and we all agreed that we didn't want it to be resolved easily. So my brief to the writers was that the first episode of **Doom Coalition 4** should just be a three hander, centred on our regulars who are trapped with no escape. Purely selfishly, I wanted to hear just Paul, Nicola and Hattie performing for an hour! The task was given to John Dorney, and of course he has done a magnificent job. This claustrophobic chamber piece is full of character and drama and event, even though it's only three people in a room. It's one of my favourite episodes from the entire run."

This box set was a tough one for John, who has written both the opening and concluding stories in the set, with Matt Fitton tackling parts two and three. John explains: "What's been very nice is to be given

### **DOOM COALITION 4**



Above: Paul McGann and Hattie Morahan

a brief which fits the things you want to do down to the ground. This was an interesting one to write as I had thought at the end of series three that Matt would be writing the opener of series four. I'd written the cliffhanger thinking someone else would have to work out how to resolve it! Then, two weeks before I got the brief, I was told I was down ONGS OF Love brings an end to the involvement of River Song in Doom Coalition, as Alex Kingston finds her character has been left to fend for herself against a bunch of power-hungry plotters hell-bent on destroying the universe. David says: "Episode two really belongs to River Song – it's her sole entry in this box

### **GG PURELY SELFISHLY, I WANTED TO HEAR JUST PAUL, NICOLA AND HATTIE PERFORMING FOR AN HOUR! 33** DAVID RICHARDSON

to write this one, so ended up having to do the resolution myself!

"I gave myself a checklist of what I wanted to be in it. For the resolution, it had to be a little bit science fiction but not technobabble. It's relatively straight-forward, it had to be something that the listener might be able to work out for themselves.

"The Doctor, Liv and Helen have to evaluate who they are – where they are in terms of the story and their attitudes towards the situation which they are in."

set (fear not, we have plenty of plans for River elsewhere!), and it's time for her to make a big contribution to the story. River's on Gallifrey, she's in league with the Doom Coalition, and everything is still lost. Matt Fitton starts to move pieces into place, as we nudge towards the finale."

Matt explains: "Series four is the end of the whole 16 episode arc. As we've gone on, the briefs have become more linked to the overall storyline Ken and David had panned out. Songs of Love ties up River Song's involvement in the whole **Doom Coalition** story – starting right where she ended up stuck with the bad guys at the end of box set three.

"It's a great chance to take her back to Gallifrey so she can explore that part of her heritage. There's a lot of it she's very unaware of, since it's always been an unreachable part of her past."

The action continues in *The Side* of the Angels where, as well as the Weeping Angels, another old rival of the Doctor arrives on the scene. Rufus Hound is the Meddling Monk – and we see the rise of Ollistra, who has become a key figure by the time of the **War Doctor** series.

David explains: "There's no quiet before the storm as far as episode three is concerned, as forces gather in New York ahead of the Doom Coalition's apocalyptic plans. I wanted to have the Weeping Angels in here, because... well they feel so dark and apocalyptic. They're exactly the sort of thing you'd expect to drop in for the end of days!

"And what a joy to have Rufus Hound back as the Meddling Monk, and he has some great scenes opposite Mark Bonnar as the Eleven.



### **DOOM COALITION 4**

And there's also a hint of things to come... we have an earlier incarnation of Cardinal Ollistra (played by Carolyn Pickles) from the **War Doctor** series, and the return of Veklin (Beth Chalmers). We are a long, long way off from the Time War – but **Doom Coalition** has felt its overtures."

Matt continues: "I was asked to bring in another possible member of the Coalition, who could be on either side. We had various discussions before we settled on the Monk. He's very self-serving and will do whatever is best for him. With that, we've got the ongoing Eleven story, as he wants to track the Doctor down. By the end, the Monk has decided whose side he's on.

"We also decided to have Ollistra in there, to be part of the resistance. I really liked the idea of her playing a part, strengthening her power base for the future.

"And then there's the Angels. In a way, the whole idea was sparked off by something Paul McGann had said in the green room at a previous recording, as I think he'd been watching a documentary about Robert Moses, the city planner who was the architect of the 20th century New York skyline. Moses had a reputation for making deals and building for the benefit of businesses, sometimes to the detriment of the people.

"We knew there was an infestation of Angels in New York, so it seemed a good opportunity to include them as well."

ND SO it comes to Stop the Clock, by John Dorney - the 16th and final part of the Doom Coalition story. The end of the universe is at hand and the Doctor and his friends have one hour to save eternity.

John admits: "Before I started, coming to this one was a bit intimidating. I wanted to see



Above: Emma Cunniffe and Mark Bonnar

### **G** I WANTED TO HAVE THE WEEPING ANGELS IN HERE... THEY'RE EXACTLY THE SORT OF THING YOU'D EXPECT TO DROP IN FOR THE END OF DAYS. **J** DAVID RICHARDSON

how Matt had placed everything before I began. You're finishing off an epic story, but really it's not that different from finishing off any other story. In this case, there's just been a lot more happening – you just hope you can pitch it right.

"Like I did with the cliffhanger at the end of series three, I was very keen that the solution to everything was drawn from the characters and the relationships they have had throughout the previous episodes – I didn't want any technobabble.

"It's got to be about the protagonists – it took a while to

get all the pieces into the right places and find roles for everyone, so they all had something to do. It was like *Crucible of Souls*, times 10! There's a lot of recurring characters coming back and I wanted to give them their moment in the sun."

There was a personal treat for John in this series, in writing for the Eleven played by Mark Bonnar.

He grins: "T've known Mark Bonnar for about 20 years, but this was the first time I'd had the chance to properly write for the Eleven. He'd only had a cameo in *Scenes From Her Life.*" Mark says: "I'm absolutely thrilled to be back. There's a part of me that just wants to keep going and going with him, he's such good fun.

"In this series, it was a slightly different situation because the Eleven is not the most powerful person in the room at certain points, which was very interesting to play, as he likes to be important!

"I wasn't in the third series, so it took me a wee while to get the voices back in my head, so I had a listen to what I'd done before. It didn't take long to get it back though. You can be half way through a scene, and then number Seven will come up again, and I have to dial into him. It's a good challenging part. He's a real joy to play, but he's terrible on the vocal chords!"

Ken reveals that **Doom Coalition** has given him one headache: "Scheduling recordings has been something of a challenge! It's our own fault for casting such talented actors who are always in very high demand. But I can't imagine these roles in the hands of anybody else. The cast have made these characters their own, and in developing the series we all responded to the cast and what they were doing in creating and expanding the roles.

"The series is what it is not only because of what we'd planned and what the writers have written, but also because of how the cast have responded to the scripts and the choices they've made in the studio. It's been a joy to work with them."

Mark's been delighted by the feedback fans have given him.

He reveals: "It's lovely when people follow you on Twitter and give you a shout out, to say how much they like him. That's really nice, when you get feedback from people who say they like you and what you're doing."

Ken agrees with Mark about the positive feedback: "The highlight for me has been the response from listeners. We planned the series to be a puzzle – a story that would unravel

### DOCTOR WHO: THE EIGHTH DOCTOR DOOM COALITION 4



### OUT MARCH! CD/DOWNLOAD

SHIP IN A BOTTLE SONGS OF LOVE THE SIDE OF THE ANGELS STOP THE CLOCK Written By: John Dorney, Matt Fitton Directed By: Ken Bentley

### CAST

Paul McGann (The Doctor), Nicola Walker (Liv Chenka). Hattie Morahan (Helen Sinclair), Alex Kingston (River Song), Mark Bonnar (The Eleven), Robert Bathurst (Padrac), Emma Cunniffe (The Sonomancer), **Rufus Hound (The Meddling** Monk), Beth Chalmers (Veklin), **Carolyn Pickles (Cardinal** Ollistra), Olivia Poulet (Jerasta), Vince Leigh (Volstrom/Matrix Keeper/Computer), Sasha Behar (Presidential Aide/Tessno/ Ladonne), Ronni Ancona (Joanie Carrington), Alex Beckett (Alekall)



over a long period of time. Because of the release schedule it was going to be 18 months between the first and last episodes. That meant engaging listeners and delivering satisfying storytelling that kept them hooked, despite the fact they had to wait six months between box sets. I was really proud of the feedback we got with each release. That's the reason we do this job, to entertain listeners."

LTHOUGH THE series is coming to an end, David says: "I don't think Doom Coalition will be the end of the story for some of these characters. I do doubt, however, that we'll go straight back into this kind of long-haul storytelling again very quickly. I think it's time for something slightly different for the Eighth Doctor and his companions. A change of pace. But those discussions are for another day..."

Looking to the future, Matt adds: "The Eighth Doctor with Big Finish has always felt, to me, like an ongoing Doctor.

"Even though we've had *The Night* of the Doctor, that's still a long way away – and it's still a long while before he even reaches the Time War." **VORTEX**  Kenny Smith speaks to the Big Finish team who had a night to remember at the BBC Audio Drama Awards 2017...

# FREADS AND FAMILY

IG FINISH had a night to remember on January 28th, after receiving some recognition at the 2017 BBC Audio Drama Awards.

Two Big Finish stories were nominated for an award in the Best Online or Non-Broadcast Audio Drama category, with **Doctor Who**: *Absent Friends* (by John Dorney, the opening instalment of **Doom Coalition 3**, starring Paul McGann, Hattie Morahan and Nicola Walker) and **Torchwood**: *More Than This* (by Guy Adams, starring Eve Myles, Richard Nichols and Tom Price). A third nomination was **Baker's End**: *The King of Cats*, by Paul Magrs.

The judging panel selected Absent Friends as the winner, delighting the whole Big Finish team. John tapped into personal emotions when writing the play, using the idea of having one last phone call to a loved one, having recently lost his father, Robert.

He said: "This was a big award and I had a lot of personal investment in the story, so I was quite nervous about it for that reason. I'm glad it connected with people and the reaction from everyone in fandom has been very kind. That's very pleasing."

Big Finish managing director Jason Haigh-Ellery said: "I am very grateful to the BBC Audio Drama Awards for recognising the amazing work that the team at Big Finish have done not only on the award-winning **Doctor Who**: *Absent Friends* but also the nominated **Torchwood**: *More Than This*. I am so pleased that John Dorney's wonderful



writing was recognised, especially as it meant so much to him."

Executive producer Nicholas Briggs adds: "I'm so proud to be working with great people. John Dorney's script was very moving. Ken Bentley's guidance spot on. David Richardson and Matt Fitton as producer and script editor, so wise to cultivate such a script.

"Benji Clifford's sound design was superb and Jamie Robertson's music sublime. And a brilliant cast! It's a win for all these lovely people."

David says: "What a night! Bumping into so many friends like Katy Manning, Annette Badland... and as we were nominated in a category where everyone was a colleague and friend it meant that whoever won, there'd be reason to celebrate. I'm especially pleased



Richardson, John Dorney and Ken Bentley • Opposite: John Dorney

it was Absent Friends though, for John's sake, because he poured everything into the script - his heart and soul, his grieving and sense of loss for his late father. And everyone responded to that - the brilliant cast, Benii Clifford and Jamie Robertson on sound design and music, and Ken directing.

"After the ceremony we went out for a lovely meal, and I made sure to thank Jason for always

series for stories that Doctor Who rarely has the time to explore.

"We knew as soon as John delivered the first outline that this was unlike any other Doctor Who play we'd made at Big Finish, so I'm chuffed to bits the judges recognised that in the resulting production."

Sound designer Benji Clifford continues: "The second I read the script I knew I was working

### **FE** THIS WAS A BIG AWARD AND I HAD A LOT OF PERSONAL INVESTMENT IN THE STORY... JJ JOHN DORNEY

trusting us and letting us just run free to create. I think he allows the best to shine from people, and his respectful and kind nature permeates the whole company. Big Finish's success, the awards and acclaim, all comes down to him."

**IRECTOR KEN** Bentley was proud of the success, having helped conceive the Doom Coalition series.

He explains: "One of our primary goals was to allow room in the

on something really special. It's proper Doctor Who mixed together with some really deep emotional moments and heavy decisions. The most important thing for me was to make it sound as good as it read on paper, I knew I was handling something really special. It was a joy to work on."

And composer Jamie Robertson adds: "I think everyone wonders what would happen if you got a phone call from someone long gone. What would you say? I think John Dorney did well in pouring his heart in to the emotions of the stories, it really paid off.

"A fine example of how to do audio drama... to its best.

"For the music I think it needed to complement the story without overpowering it which is very easy to do. In subtle moments often less is more. Hopefully it worked and the BBC Audio Drama award helped reflect this result."

O HAVE two plays reach the final three in the awards was an outstanding achievement for Big Finish. More Than This writer Guy Adams says: "Being nominated, and loitering until the finish line for More Than This was just lovely. And a well-deserved nod to the performances of Eve, Richard and Tom as well as the direction of Scott Handcock, the sound design of Neil Gardner, Blair Mowat's gorgeous music and the guiding hands of James Goss and Steve Tribe. Just wonderful.

"In fact the only thing that made me uncomfortable was the possibility that it might beat Absent Friends, because - purely in script terms - it didn't deserve to. Don't get me wrong, if it had won I would have danced around John Dorney, poking him and poking him until he cried, but inside I would have been cross because I liked his words more than mine."

Producer James Goss concludes: "I never dreamed when we started the Torchwood range just over a year ago that we'd walk off with the DWM awards, let alone that Scott and I would find ourselves cheering on Guy Adams at the BBC Audio Drama Awards.

"We didn't win - no one stands a chance against Dorney - but given the quality that was clearly on display at the Awards, even to be in the final three was quite something." VORTEX

Kenny Smith discovers more about the return of the Edwardian adventuress...

# CHARLEY'S WAR

**IG FINISH** has been blessed with many wonderful, original character creations over the years, but few have stood the test of time as well as Charlotte Elspeth Pollard (Charley to her friends).

For new arrivals to the Big Finish party, this is the 'Charley' mentioned by the Eighth Doctor in *The Night of the Doctor*, just before he regenerated. Stowing away onboard doomed airship the R101, Charley saw her life change beyond all recognition as she joined the Doctor on his adventures in time and space. All good things come to an end, and the Doctor and Charley parted company in *The Girl Who Never Was.* And then they met up again, except this time, it was the Sixth Doctor's TARDIS she boarded. Leaving the Doctor's side once again in *Blue Forgotten Planet*, she stepped out on her own – and into the **Charlotte Pollard** spin-off series – working as an emissary for the mysterious Viyrans.

We last heard from Charley in 2014, as she and her new friend Robert Buchan (James Joyce), as well as a Rogue Viyran (previously Michael Maloney, now played by Dan Starkey), headed off on new adventures, but as we rejoin them, the trio have been cast adrift and brought right down to Earth – an Earth which is changing rapidly.

In four new tales, Embankment Station, Ruffling, Seed of Chaos and The Destructive Quality of Life, they discover that deep beneath the Earth something is stirring.

The series has been written and directed by Big Finish executive producer Nicholas Briggs.

Nick admits that Charley having her own adventures wasn't

something he had initially thought of. He explains: "That was seriously never on our minds. It was (former producer) Gary Russell's idea to write her out. He commissioned Alan Barnes to write the script which turned into *The Girl Who Never Was.* This all happened when Gary was leaving. In fact, the first serious conversation about a story that Alan and I had was concerning *The Girl Who Never Was.* Alan was having a lot of trouble with the storyline and unofficially asked for my advice.

"Then, when Gary left, Alan and I worked quite closely on it. But it's very much his work, and he was very careful not to close the door on Charley. He, as indeed I do, has a very special place in his heart for Charley. Alan is sort of responsible for the nature of the character, which all the rest of us took the lead from. And it was indeed Alan who asked me if we could bring

**I** YOU KNOW, I'M NOT DONE WITH CHARLEY YET. SHE'S TOO GOOD TO LET GO... **J** Alan Barnes

> her back with the Sixth Doctor. He said something like, 'You know, I'm not done with Charley yet. She's too good to let go', and that's just how I felt after *Blue Forgotten Planet*, when she left the Sixth Doctor, and Jason (fellow executive producer, Jason Haigh-Ellery) was certainly of that opinion too. I



Above (left to right): Pippa Haywood, Nicholas Briggs, Glen McCready, James Joyce, India Fisher, Deirdre Mullins, Kieran Hodgson, Dan Starkey and Ashley Kumar



wanted to create something very special for her, having adventures on her own, and I'd set up something quite conducive to that in *Blue Forgotten Planet*.

"But then I found I didn't have the time to do it, so ultimately, for the sake of getting something done, I gave way to the great ideas of Matt Fitton and Jonathan Barnes." He continues: "Charley was working for the Viyrans in the first series of



Charlotte Pollard. They're a race who have a kind of pathological determination to wipe out viruses in the universe. We don't know who they are or how they were created – but they are potentially catastrophically dangerous.

"Charley manages to get away from them, with the help of a Rogue Viyran. But her escape plan is rather reckless, and we join her about three seconds later in series two, when

### CHARLOTTE POLLARD

everything is going horribly wrong! She ends up on 'present day' Earth."

**OR ACTRESS** India Fisher, recording the first series seems like a lifetime ago but it remains in her memory for a particular reason.

She laughs: "The first series will always be very clear in my mind

of university. So it felt a bit like a homecoming."

It's taken a wee while to get to the second series, and India reveals she had no idea what was going to happen beforehand. She explains: "I knew that Nick wanted to write another one and whenever we saw one another he would say, 'I will get round to it, I promise'. He had

same story, you really get to know the characters. The relationship between Charley and Robert blossoms... in more ways than one. Ahem! I never thought I'd see the day when Miss Pollard succumbed to her baser instincts. But about time too. Her character is so much more rounded (or is that just me!) - she's become a woman.

CHARLOTTE POLLARD

CHARLOTTE POLLARD

E-BANK

### CHARLOTTE POLLARD: SERIES TWO

### OUT MARCH! CD/DOWNLOAD

Written and Directed By: Nicholas Briggs

PART 1: EMBANKMENT STATION PART 2: RUFFLING PART 3: SEED OF CHAOS PART 4: THE DESTRUCTIVE QUALITY OF LIFE

#### CAST

India Fisher (Charlotte Pollard), James Jovce (Robert Buchan). Dan Starkey (Rogue Vivran), Deirdre Mullins (Naomi Davies), Kieran Hodgson (Woking), Ashley Kumar (Rab), Rachel Atkins (Minister), Pippa Haywood (Prime Minister), Colin McFarlane (The Identical Men), Karen Henson (Madeline), Gary Turner (Captain Warwick), Ben Crowe (Sergeant Hunter), Glen McCready (David

mainly because I was extremely pregnant. I think I gave birth 10 days later. But apart from having to sit down the entire time it was an incredibly joyous week's recording. I was obviously excited and terrified at having my own series. Would people like it, would people want to hear about what Charley was doing without the Doctor?

"But the scripts were brilliant and as always the cast Big Finish got were amazing. James and I hit it off instantly, sharing an equally puerile sense of humour. And of course it was gorgeous to be working with Michael Maloney again and Anneke Wills, as my mum. And bizarrely the lovely Jacqueline King turned up, who I had worked with when I was a lowly understudy straight out

**MHENEVER WE** SAW ONE ANOTHER NICK WOULD SAY, 1 WILL GET ROUND TO IT, I PROMISE'. JJ

INDIA FISHER

a definite idea of where he wanted to take the series, and I think now that we've all finally been allowed to delve into the mind of Mr Briggs. we're the richer for it! I think it's brilliant having a four parter of the

"It was extremely sad Michael couldn't continue as the Rogue

Shillingford/Gelrasian/Guard/Proto-

Vivran/Donald Predko/Soldiers).

Helen Goldwyn (Lysette Allegro)

Viryan but Dan was fabulous taking up the role."

Nick adds that series two features: "So many contradictions. Charley's stranded, but ends up making an incredible journey. She's in her comfort zone, but sort of completely lost. She has friends, but is surrounded by enemies. It turns out there's some sort of purpose to her travelling. but it seems distinctly random and inexplicable. Bottom line. she finds she's at the centre of something disturbing happening on Earth. In common with a certain time traveller of her former acquaintance, she kind of gets blamed for everything."

HERE'S A great chemistry between India and James Joyce as Robert. Nick agrees: "Jonathan Barnes created Robert Buchan, the would-be adventurer. He's a bit of a wimp, but he's finding his feet in this series. He's like the rest of us, a bit pathetic under pressure, but eventually learns some good life lessons. James is very good at that

FROM THAT VERY FIRST SCENE IN THE R101 SHE JUMPED OUT OF THE PAGE FULLY FORMED. I HAVE A LOT TO THANK ALAN BARNES FOR.

INDIA FISHER



sort of thing. He has a great 'everyman', 'normal bloke' quality about him, but there's also something extraordinary about the way he expresses himself. He's a smart and very funny actor, like India.

"So the two of them work together excellently. I thought they would, so yes, it ultimately made it very satisfying to write for the two of them, and encouraged me to develop their relationship in new and interesting ways. And yes, I certainly do have great confidence in them both as actors. I can hear them speaking as I write their lines. The only times they deliver them slightly differently to the way I'd anticipated, they're actually talented and very, very funny – I'm still laughing at what we got up to. We really got on as a cast, and on the final day I was truly sad to leave. Bring on the next one!"

What does India think, if she'd been told back in 2000 that she'd still be playing Charley 17 years later?

"Obviously I'd have laughed heartily in disbelief. But I'd have been chuffed.



doing them even better."

James says: "Working with India is a dream. We had so much fun off mic as well as when we were working. She's lovely and funny, and because she's so well prepared and professional it gives us plenty of time to be silly and enjoy ourselves. Although I should mention the other members of the cast too, all super As I am. From that very first scene in the R101 she jumped out of the page fully formed. I have a lot to thank Alan Barnes for. Who doesn't want to time travel, leap around space battling Daleks and Cybermen? And now I get to fly my own ship, and pretend I know what I'm doing when clearly I haven't the faintest clue. All traits she learnt from the man himself." VORTEX Kenny Smith discovers what lies in store in the next run of **Torchwood's** monthly range...

### OUT OF THE

**INCE THE** first series of Big Finish's **Torchwood** monthly releases got underway, there's been a real buzz about them. The fans have taken them to their hearts, and just as importantly, so have the cast.

The audio series has brought together all aspects of the **Torchwood** world, connecting Yvonne Hartman's Torchwood One operation with their better-known counterparts in Cardiff, as well as various other characters from the Institute's past and future.

It's been a labour of love for producer James Goss, as the series enters its third monthly batch of releases, James says: "We're back and we're really excited! We've had a hoot celebrating **Torchwood's** 10th anniversary and bringing back Yvonne, but I've missed doing the monthly range. We've worked really hard on this batch."

James admits he's been pleased with the way **Torchwood's** dedicated fans have reacted to not only the likes of *Outbreak* and *Before The Fall*, but the first two runs of monthly plays.

He admits he is: "Ecstatic. I keep saying this, but when we started this, I was really nervous. I felt like it was just me who loved **Torchwood** (you can tell I hadn't looked at Tumblr!), and the best thing about the audios was suddenly being plugged into this fierce, amazing fan base who've championed everything we've done.

"Have you seen them on the Internet? Someone published a link to a pirate audio, and the fans immediately shouted at them till they took it down. It's amazing. They're SO on Torchwood's side."

HIS MONTH sees the start of the new run with the release of Visiting Hours. David Llewelyn's script reunites Kai Owen with Nerys Hughes, as Rhys Williams visits his mum Brenda in hospital. It's a combination the fans have been wanting more of since Something Borrowed on TV. How much fun was it to be working on that one? James laughs: "Enormously fun – it was a

### TORCHWOOD

royal command from Russell T Davies ('Bring back Nerys Hughes!') and so we did so in a heartbeat and she was utterly delightful. Spending a day in a studio with Kai and Nerys was great – proper Welsh royalty – very professional, very talented, very, very naughty."

April sees the release of *The Dollhouse*, with a whole new branch

episode of **Charlie's Angels** – but it's also a very clever comment on those times and its attitude towards women. But its serious message is covered in a tonne of alien fighting and explosions."

The Dollhouse is Juno's first contribution to the worlds of **Torchwood**, to the delight of the award-winning fiction and non-



Above: Kai Owen and Nerys Hughes

### **THE BEST THING ABOUT THE AUDIOS WAS SUDDENLY BEING PLUGGED INTO THIS FIERCE, AMAZING FAN BASE!** JAMES GOSS

of Torchwood to meet in 1970s Los Angeles. James continues: "Torchwood's an incredibly wide universe and we're setting out to explore it (well, every now and then). Juno Dawson gives us *The Dollhouse* – it's a riot, and a headtilt. What if there was a branch of Torchwood in LA in the 1970s? It's a big, bold, riot of period noise – almost like a tape-recording of an fiction writer. In terms of her brief, Juno explains: "There really wasn't one beyond 'please don't write a boys' own all-guns-blazing testosterone fest'. I was originally asked to take part in a different project – details of which you'll get soon enough, I'm sure, but while we were waiting for that to come together, James asked me to pitch some historical **Torchwood** adventures." Going by the cover and advance publicity material, it's easy to imagine *The Dollhouse* is kind of a **Charlie's Angels** set-up, but with more aliens and innuendo.

Juno laughs: "That's about accurate. I love **Charlie's Angels** although I feel it was always quite at odds with its own feminist sensibilities. This was a chance to do three Torchwood operatives in 1977 and they just happen to be very capable women."

How much fun was it writing an audio play, compared with a novel? She adds: "It was my first attempt! Then again, I've always enjoyed writing dialogue so I figured I'd take to it. What I found hard was setting the scene. You have to be pretty clever about letting the listener know where the characters are without starting each scene 'well, here we are in the diner' and the like!"

May's release, *Corpse Day*, as Burn Gorman makes his first appearance in a Big Finish **Torchwood** tale as Owen Harper. He says: "It took so long. Burn's been so busy, in different corners of the world, and it took a while to make sure we were speaking to the right set of agents for him. When we found the right one, she said, 'We'll get him for you, but it'll take a while' – and she was right.

AMES GOSS has written

"Burn was more than worth the wait. Our first recording with someone always has a bit of a first date feel to it, but the **Torchwood** cast have without fail made us feel lucky and privileged that they want to spend time with us.

"Burn was so much fun – we paired him with Tom Price, and they got on like a house on fire. Burn was quick to point out that he'd never properly been in a scene with Tom before, but immediately it's an interesting pairing. Thanks to Burn and Tom, *Corpse Day*, is a



### **THE TORCHWOOD CAST HAVE** WITHOUT FAIL MADE US FEEL LUCKY AND PRIVILEGED THAT THEY WANT TO SPEND TIME WITH US. **J** JAMES GOSS



### TORCHWOOD: VISITING HOURS

### OUT MARCH! CD/DOWNLOAD

Written By: David Llewellyn Directed By: Scott Handcock

### CAST

Kai Owen (Rhys), Nerys Hughes (Brenda Williams), Karl Theobald (Mr Tate), Ryan Sampson (Mr Nichols), Ruth Lloyd (Nurse Brown), Stephen Critchlow (Dr Fletcher) really special release. The first edits came through the other day – I think it'll surprise some people. Tom Price was delighted to get back in character as PC Andy Davidson, and team up with Burn.

He tells *Vortex*: "It was great fun to do. Burn is such a lovely guy. He's very funny and it was so good to see him. He was really keen to do **Torchwood** again – it's got a special place in all our hearts.

"We didn't have that many proper scenes together when we were doing the TV series and that's what's great about the audio series – it gives us a chance to delve in.

"You can put characters together who were never really with each other on TV – it's a great idea, putting these ideas in the melting pot. The wonderful thing about the audios is you can go back and rediscover characters who have died, or even introduce characters who were never cast in the TV series – like Samuel Barnett as Norton Folgate."



**OM IS** overjoyed to be working on the audios, as are the rest of the regular cast members, John Barrowman, Eve Miles, Naoko Mori, Gareth David-Lloyd and Kai Owen.

"The great thing about doing the **Torchwood** audios," says Tom, "is we're introducing more and more people to this crazy world. It's not growing as fast as it did on TV, but people are really getting into it.

"It's a great job. No one is going to sack you, and there's not a big faceless executive ready to tell you everything you can do. You can suggest doing a line differently. **Torchwood** has always been very playful – and has a massive sense of fun, because it's from Russell T Davies.

"It's got a tremendous sense of humour, and often at its own expense. I'm so thrilled that **Torchwood** still lives on – when we do it, it doesn't feel like work.

"At first, I thought I'd be in it for a couple of episodes, then it became four and I was nearly killed off at the end of the first series.

"It never really occured to me that I'd be doing it all these years later – I was only about two or three years into my career at that point. I didn't think **Torchwood** would linger on!"

James agrees: "There's no sense of a group of people saying, 'Oh, we're one big happy family', while wincing. John's clearly having a ball, especially when he's with Gareth, Eve and Kai – they are eye-watering, Naoko's determined to get it right, and Burn is just so happy to be back in character. You immediately want to throw more stuff at all of them."

The remainder of the run promises more thrills and spills James adds: "The rest of the season sees Toshiko taking on the Internet (as only she can); Ianto in a psychological thriller; and Gwen on a road to nowhere." VORTEX

### **LISTENAGAIN** Doctor Who: The Mahogany Murderers



worked very well as a pilot. The groundwork had already been laid and we hoped we could follow it up with at least another **Companion Chronicle**. Then one day Jason Haigh-Ellery just said to me, 'How do you fancy doing a set of four **Jago** & Litefoot plays?"

Trevor Baxter, still going strong as Professor Litefoot, says: "It's all been tailor-made for myself and Christopher. When you're in studio, it's just like going out in a suit which

Kenny Smith investigates the investigators...

### HE CIRCUMSPECT

circumstances by which those Investigators of Infernal Incidents came to be cajoled and coaxed into co-starring in a spin-off serialisation of stories specific to the salubrious sleuths are spectacularly precise.

David Richardson, producer of the Companion Chronicles range, had hit upon the idea of reuniting the characters of Henry Gordon Jago and Professor George Litefoot from the 1977 Doctor Who story The Talons of Weng-Chiang. The Mahogany Murderers was written by Andy Lane and recorded in September 2008.

The play was directed by Lisa Bowerman, who felt there was plenty of potential in the characters. She says: "When Christopher and Trevor first opened their mouths, I thought

### **GENERAL CHRISTOPHER AND TREVOR FIRST OPENED THEIR MOUTHS, I THOUGHT 'THIS IS GOOD'. JU** LISA BOWERMAN

'This is good' – and I'm pretty sure David had it in his mind that it potentially had some legs."

While directing the **Chronicle**, Lisa had the chance to play the minor character of barmaid Ellie, who worked in the Red Tavern. She said: "I was very, very glad that I was asked, and David gave me the gig. Ellie literally fell into my lap on the day as we needed a female voice and (obviously!) I was there. I just did something that I thought wouldn't sound like Benny!"

The play was released in May 2009 and proved to be the hit of the season with fans delighted by the return of not just such loveable characters but also the ebullient actors who brought them to life. David adds: "When we first read Andy Lane's script, we thought it has been very well cut. It gives you that extra confidence.

"Doing these plays has been a revelation, really, to find there's so much there. I did enjoy the original all those years ago – it's opened up the scope of the characters and given us all of this extra background, which is quite incredible for something that was a six-part story."

The Mahogany Murderers has an open ending as Dr Tulp makes his escape. Justin Richards, who was to script edit the Jago & Litefoot spin-off, could see the direction the new series should go in based on what was effectively a pilot episode. He says: "There was the unresolved story of Tulp and this first season follows on directly from The Mahogany Murderers." VORTEX

## THOROUGHLY

Get ready for more scares from the creator of THE OMEGA FACTOR, as Kenny Smith discovers the audiobooks of two of his novels...

**F YOU'RE** a fan of **The Omega Factor**, the chances are you'll enjoy the new audiobook versions of series creator Jack Gerson's novels *The Evil Thereof* and *The Fetch*. *The Evil Thereof* (first published in 1991) and *The Fetch* (1993)

were given the Big Finish treatment after Jack's daughter, Natasha, loaned producer David Richardson copies of the books to show him examples of her dad's other work. Ahead of the release of the

Ahead of the release of the second **The Omega Factor** 

series from Big Finish in April, the novels are being brought to life on audio by Barnaby Edwards and Carolyn Seymour.

Producer David Richardson says: "When we started working on **The Omega Factor**, Natasha kindly lent me her copies of *The* 



### THE FETCH

#### Read by Carolyn Seymour

Alistair Matheson is forging an ambitious path in Government, until an encounter with a man who looks exactly like him throws Alistair's ordered world into chaos.

As this doppelgänger crosses his path time and again, a series of events are set in motion with increasingly disturbing consequences.



### THE EVIL THEREOF

### Read by Barnaby Edwards

Researching an article about old, unsolved murders, reporter Eric Braden finds himself in rural Warwickshire, investigating the horrific death of a local lothario, whose body was surrounded by pagan symbols.

As Braden delves deeper, encountering hostility and denial at every step, he soon realises that something unimaginably dark still resides here, waiting to be released... Helen Goldwyn was utterly spot on in her direction and guidance. I also don't think I've ever giggled as much during a

recording.

BARNABY EDWARDS

Fetch and The Evil Thereof as examples of the kind of stories her father wrote. The books were a new discovery to me and within a few pages I was wondering, 'Why has no one ever done these as audiobooks?' And so we have, and it's great to think that these stories have been given a new lease of life for a new generation. Our two brilliant readers – Carolyn and Barney – do a magnificent job of leading us through these dark, unsettling mysteries."

Natasha says: "My dad was always really proud of these books and because they've been out of print for a while, I thought David might be interested in having a read of them.

"I'm really pleased he enjoyed them, and can't wait to hear how the finished versions sound." Set in the 1980s, *The Fetch* sees Alistair Matheson forging a quietly ambitious path in Government, until a brief encounter with a man who looks exactly like him throws Alistair's ordered world into chaos.

he Evil Thereof features newspaper reporter Eric Braden trying to come up with a sensational article about old, unsolved murders in rural Warwickshire, investigating the horrific death of a local lothario, whose body was surrounded by pagan symbols. Eric's journey sees him learn that something unimaginably dark still resides there, waiting to be released...

Barnaby says: "I'm a total sucker for what's been dubbed 'Folk Horror' – books by Dennis Wheatley and Anthony Horowitz, films like **The Wicker Man** and **Blood on Satan's Claw**, dark folksongs of witches and elves by Steeleye Span – so I was thrilled to be asked to narrate *The Evil Thereof.* Right up my street!

"I've narrated a fair few audiobooks in my time and the challenge is always to pace the story and give it highs and lows. With a mystery story you have the added complication of how much to give away and when. But I was in the safest of hands: Helen Goldwyn was utterly spot on in her direction and guidance. I also don't think I've ever giggled as much during a recording. VORTEX

The Fetch and The Evil Thereof are released for download in March. Both titles are available for pre-order from bigfinish.com.

### **VORTEXMALL** Email: feedback@bigfinish.com and remember

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

### FITTING TRIBUTE

Kudos to Joshua Wanisko for his fine **Short Trip**, *Forever Fallen* – a fresh and wellconstructed take on the **Doctor Who** villain, and a fittingly memorable story in memory of the much-missed Mr Spragg.

### Matthew Griffiths

**Nick:** Thanks, Matthew. I have to say that it was a pleasure and a privilege to perform it.

### VERY A-PEEL-ING

I've finished the second set of **The Avengers** with Emma Peel. Is there any chance of doing more? I know the comic adventures have ended but what about adapting the many novels out there? What about original Peel (or dare I ask, Tara) **Avengers** adventures? In any case, really enjoyed it. Also, I received *Cold Fusion* – love it! Please do more of the *New Adventures* novels and especially keep using Matthew Waterhouse! **Charles Mento** 

Nick: Thanks, Charles. No news on more Mrs Peel or **The Avengers**. But we'd love to do more. There aren't any more novels planned, because sales are modest. But we will continue to have Matthew Waterhouse feature as long as he wants to continue. Did you hear that great **Short Trip** he performed for us? A Full Life by Joe Lidster. Superb work.

### LET ADAM ADAMANT LIVE!

I'm loving **Counter-Measures** and I keep on thinking of the one person they could find/discover and start

off on his own adventures is none other than Adam Adamant. Just think of the possibilities. If not the Counter-Measures team then what about Bernice Summerfield? David Campbell

Nick: We'd love to do Adam Adamant Lives!, but the BBC don't seem to be able to untangle the detail of who exactly owns the rights.

### **BRING BACK DAAK**

It's now been 10 years since **Dalek Empire** came to an end. I was wondering if you could look into the possibility of doing a boxed set that will bring Abslom Daak to the audio medium. *Doctor Who Weekly/ Monthly* created the potential for a great ongoing series in 1980, introducing him first in *Abslom Daak – Dalek Killer*, before giving



him a team in Star Tigers later in the year. Regrettably, nothing became of the series before it was wrapped up in a Seventh Doctor strip at the end of the decade. Expanded adaptations of those two stories would be ideal material for the first two discs, with new adventures delivering on the promise of such a great set-up in the last two. Even if such a series doesn't continue beyond just one boxed set, it'd still be a massive treat for the many classic comics fans, and introduce a brilliant character to a new audience. Not only that, it'd be a great tribute to his creators, Steve Moore and Steve Dillon, as both died at tragically young ages in the last couple of years. Paul Castle

Nick: I was just thinking about a possible Dalek Empire 5 this morning... Hmmm. I think if we did Abslom Daak, that'd have to be separate. Quite an attractive idea. Who would you cast?

### ADRIC GOING FOURTH?

With Matthew Waterhouse now a regular at Big Finish I was wondering if you'd considered a **Fourth Doctor Adventures** season featuring the young native of Alzarius alongside the dulcet tones of Tom Baker. There's probably not a lot of time between *Warriors' Gate* and *The Keeper of Traken* but if anyone can find a way, the writing talent available to Big Finish can. **Willie Rodney** 

*Nick:* Oooh, it's a very tempting thought. No plans as yet, though.

### **COMINGSOON** Forthcoming audio releases



DOCTOR WHO: ZALTYS

(223, Fifth Doctor, Adric, Tegan and Nyssa)

DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: THE SILENT SCREAM (6.3 Fourth Doctor, Romana II and K9)

DOCTOR WHO – SHORT TRIPS: THE JAGO & LITEFOOT REVIVAL (Act One Tenth Doctor, Jago and Litefoot)

DOCTOR WHO: DOOM COALITION 4 (Box Set)

CHARLOTTE POLLARD: SERIES 2 (Box Set)

TORCHWOOD: VISITING HOURS (13)
PATHEINDER LEGENDS – CLIRSE OF THE CRIMSON

THRONE: ESCAPE FROM OLD KORVOSA (3.3)

HG WELLS: THE FIRST MEN IN THE MOON (2)

THE FETCH: AUDIOBOOK

THE EVIL THEREOF: AUDIOBOOK

### APRIL 2017

DOCTOR WHO – MAIN RANGE: ALIEN HEART / DALEK SOUL (224, Fifth Doctor and Nyssa)

DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: DETHRAS (6.4, Fourth Doctor and Romana II)

DOCTOR WHO – SHORT TRIPS: THE JAGO & LITEFOOT REVIVAL (Act Two Tenth Doctor, Jago and Litefoot)

DOCTOR WHO – PHILIP HINCHCLIFFE PRESENTS: THE HELM OF AWE (3, Fourth Doctor and Leela)

DOCTOR WHO – SPECIAL RELEASES: SPARE PARTS (LIMITED VINYL EDITION) (Fifth Doctor and Nyssa)

THE OMEGA FACTOR SERIES TWO JAGO & LITEFOOT: SERIES 13 (Box Set)

TOPCHWOOD: THE DOLLHOUSE (1/D)

DAN DARE: THE AUDIO ADVENTURES: VOLUME TWO (Box Set)

PATHFINDER LEGENDS – CURSE OF THE CRIMSON THRONE: A HISTORY OF ASHES (3.4)

#### MAY 2017

DOCTOR WHO – MAIN RANGE: VORTEX ICE / CORTEX FIRE (225, Sixth Doctor and Flip)

DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: THE HAUNTING OF MALKIN PLACE (6.5. Fourth Doctor and Romana II)

**DOCTOR WHO – SHORT TRIPS: FALLING** (7.05, The First Doctor, Polly, Ben, Download only)

DOCTOR WHO: THE NINTH DOCTOR CHRONICLES

UNIT - THE NEW SERIES: ASSEMBLED (Box Set 4, Kate Stewart and Osgood)

TORCHWOOD: CORPSE DAY (15)

PATHFINDER LEGENDS – CURSE OF THE CRIMSON THRONE: SKELETONS OF SCARWALL (3.5) HG WELLS: THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME (3)

DARK SHADOWS: DREAMS OF LONG AGO

#### **JUNE 2017**

DOCTOR WHO – MAIN RANGE: SHADOW PLANET/ WORLD APART (226, Seventh Doctor and Ace)

DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: SUBTERRANFA (6.6. Fourth Doctor and Romana II)

DOCTOR WHO – SHORT TRIPS: HOW TO WIN PLANETS AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE (7.06, Fourth Doctor, Sarah, Harry and The Monk)

DOCTOR WHO – THE COMPANION CHRONICLES: THE FIRST DOCTOR VOLUME 2 (11.0, First Doctor, Vicki, Steven, Ben and Polly)

SURVIVORS: SERIES 6 (Box Set)

THE LIVES OF CAPTAIN JACK

TORCHWOOD: \_CASCADE\_CDRIPTOR (16)
PATHEINDER | EGENDS - CLIPSE OF THE CRIMSON

THRONE: CROWN OF FANGS (3.6)

#### JULY 2017

DOCTOR WHO – MAIN RANGE: THE HIGH PRICE OF PARKING (227, Seventh Doctor)

DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: THE MOVELLAN GRAVE (6.7, Fourth Doctor and Romana II)

**DOCTOR WHO – SHORT TRIPS:** FLASHPOINT (7.07, Eighth Doctor and Lucie)

DOCTOR WHO – THE THIRD DOCTOR ADVENTURES: VOLUME 3 (TBA)

DOCTOR WHO – CLASSIC DOCTORS NEW MONSTERS: VOLUME TWO (Box Set)

TORCHWOOD: TBA (17)

HG WELLS: THE ISLAND OF DR MORFAU (4)

### AUGUST 2017

DOCTOR WHO - MAIN RANGE: TBA (228, TBA)

DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: THE SKIN OF THE SLEEK (6.8, Fourth

Doctor and Romana II) DOCTOR WHO – SHORT TRIPS:

THE BRITISH INVASION (7.08, Second Doctor, Jamie

TORCHWOOD: TBA (18)

THE PRISONER: VOLUME TWO (Box Set)

BIG FINISH CLASSICS: HAMLET

SEPTEMBER 2017

DOCTOR WHO – MAIN RANGE: THE SILURIAN CANDIDATE (229, Seventh Doctor) DOCTOR WHO – MAIN RANGE: TIME IN OFFICE (230, Fifth Doctor and Tegan)

DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: THE THIEF WHO STOLE TIME (6.9, Fourth Doctor and Romana II)

DOCTOR WHO – SHORT TRIPS: A HEART ON BOTH SIDES (7.09, Eighth Doctor and Nyssa)

DOCTOR WHO – THE EARLY ADVENTURES: TBA (4.1, TBA)

HG WELLS: THE TIME MACHINE (5)

#### OCTOBER 2017

DOCTOR WHO – MAIN RANGE: TBA (231, TBA)

DOCTOR WHO – SHORT TRIPS: ALL HANDS ON DECK (7.10, Eighth Doctor and Susan)

DOCTOR WHO – THE EARLY ADVENTURES: TRA (4.2 TRA)

DOCTOR WHO – THE EIGHTH DOCTOR: THE TIME WAR (Box Set)

DARK SHADOWS: LOVE LIVES ON

#### NOVEMBER 2017

DOCTOR WHO - MAIN RANGE: TBA (232, TBA)

DOCTOR WHO – SHORT TRIPS: MEL-EVOLENT (7.11, Sixth Doctor and Mel)

DOCTOR WHO – THE EARLY ADVENTURES: TBA (4.3. TBA)

UNIT - THE NEW SERIES: TBA (5)

SURVIVORS: SERIES 7 (Box Set)

HG WELLS: THE MARTIAN INVASION OF EARTH (6)

#### DECEMBER 2017

DOCTOR WHO – MAIN RANGE: TBA (233, TBA) DOCTOR WHO – SHORT TRIPS: O TANNENBAUM (7.12, First Doctor and Steven)

DOCTOR WHO - THE EARLY ADVENTURES: TBA (4.4, TBA)

THE NEW COUNTER-MEASURES: SERIES 2 (Box Set)

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