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EDITORIAL

ISSUE 98 • APRIL 2017





E ALL like being a bit scared, now and again, don't we? I was a little young to see Philip Hinchcliffe's time as a **Doctor Who** producer on TV (my first definite **Doctor Who** memory is episode six of *The Invasion of Time*), but years later, thanks to the power of video (my family had a Video 2000 before we had a VHS!), I was able to discover his era in all its glory.

This was **Doctor Who** at its more daring, pushing the series into a new darker direction, bringing in the tropes of classic horror films,

to form a special unique blend.

Two of my absolute favourites from this time are *The Robots of Death* and *The Talons of Weng-Chiang*, with the wonderful Louise Jameson alongside Tom Baker.

Over the years, people have said how lovely Louise is, and I can testify that, 100 percent, it's true. She's always happy to chat to *Vortex*, so what a double boost (for me) to be able to talk to her about not just her new **Philip Hinchcliffe**Presents release, but also the second series of **The Omega Factor**.

The first Big Finish run was fantastic (with Phil Mulryne receiving a deserved nomination for the BBC Audio Drama Awards 2016), and if you've not heard them, they're a fantastic set of four stories, investigating the unexplained.

And yes, they're scary too... ideal listening before bedtime... **KENNY**

SNEAKPREVIEW

Producer Ian Atkins previews the Time War **Short Trips** which will be released in September and October this year...



THINK to most of us at Big
Finish, there's only one
Doctor Who – it's all in the

same universe, the same continuum... and if you take a 'Time War' at its most literal (as described in *Night of the Doctor* or *The End of the World*) then it would touch upon so much of that.

"There's nowhere to hide, no remote sheltering place, no safe past time: we're all on the front line as the universe burns. So when I was commissioning the 2017 **Short Trips**, I was thinking: that's got to include the Doctor's old friends, hasn't it?"

A Heart on Both Sides by Rob Nisbet brings a post-Terminus Nyssa (Sarah Sutton) – a good soul, just trying to help – and a hospital ship into the fray, while the Eighth Doctor is beginning to wonder if there's anyone good left anymore – including himself.

Eddie Robson's All Hands on Deck looks at Susan and her complicated relationship with her grandfather – which was involved enough before he was someone at war... There was something wonderfully cyclical about Carole Ann Ford reading this: someone who was there at the start, and she's here taking part in our marking the very events that mean life will never be the same for the Doctor again... VORTEX



THINK there's something about The Omega Factor that most people can connect with," says Louise Jameson. "There are people who say, I'm not religious but...' Or the ones who say, 'I don't believe in an afterlife, but...' And then there's the 'I don't think there's anything out there, but...' and then they tell you about something odd that's happened to them.

"A few years back, I had an operation where I died on the operating table. I did have that experience, of seeing the white light and seeing my mother who had died. There was such a sense of peace

and surrender about it, but I knew I couldn't go as I had my children to look after – and then I was back in my body. It could have been the drugs or whatever, but it was so real to me because it was such a very strong emotional experience.

"I've had an out of body experience, and I think everybody has something like that at one time or another. There's got to be something else out there and people are fascinated by that."

That, she believes, is part of the reason why the first Big Finish series of **The Omega Factor** was such a success. For the uninitiated,

the series picks up from the original BBC Scotland show created by Jack Gerson, following the exploits of Department 7, a top secret organisation that investigates the paranormal. Anne Reynolds (Louise) now runs the operation, and for three decades their enigmatic nemesis Omega has been silent. Her old friend Tom Crane left the department over 30 years ago, but now his son Adam (John Dorney) is drawn into Department 7.

Producer David Richardson says: "It was lovely to go into the second series of **The Omega Factor** with a sense of confidence. When we did the first set, we didn't really know if we were going to make it work – reimagining a TV series that lasted for one season nearly 40 years ago, and without one of the lead actors.

"But the decision to keep it authentic to the original while moving it on paid dividends. Series one sold well, and can't say it either!). Roy Gill makes an unforgettable debut in this range with *The Changeling*, in which Adam goes to prison. Louise Jameson delivers her best script for Big Finish so far (and that's among fierce competition) with *Let the Angel Tell Thee*, and Matt Fitton rounds the box set off with *Awakening*, which should leave people reeling."

doing series one, it was still a surprise for me. You never want to hope too much for something, in case it doesn't happen, but I was delighted when David asked if they could do more.

"I was really pleased to be able to come back and be Morag again – and this time I even get to play a grumpy Scotswoman in another episode!"

Director Ken Bentley adds: "The Omega Factor is probably best described as a metaphysical thriller. It isn't horror. It sometimes uses some of the tools of horror, but the series has a particular identity that's unlike anything else we've worked on. When we produced the first box set we spent a lot of time learning how to create the right sort of tension on audio. Nick Briggs and I talked a lot about the score, and we watched a lot of horror films to hear how they used sound and music. I think we'd already benefitted from producing Survivors, which taught us a lot about how to recreate real-world scenarios rather than purely fantastical story worlds. But the biggest lesson from producing the first The Omega Factor set was, for me, pace. Learning to slow down. You just can't rush fear!"

CC IT WAS TURNING HEADS WITHIN THE INDUSTRY, AS WELL AS WITH OUR LISTENERS. JJ DAVID RICHARDSON



importantly it was nominated for Best Online Drama at the BBC Audio Awards. It was turning heads within the industry, as well as with our listeners.

"For series two, we're setting in motion a storyline that we'd actually discussed at our very first writers meeting (in a bar in Paddington station no less!) at the start of series one. I'm really delighted with this set of scripts. Phil Mulryne (who wrote our award-nominated episode *The Old Gods*) delivers another scorcher with *Somnum Sempiternum* (no, I

Equally delighted with this second series is Natasha Gerson, the daughter of series creator Jack, who also appeared in the original TV series as Morag.

Natasha tells Vortex: "I was absolutely thrilled when David told me they wanted to do some more. It was a real boost. It came at exactly the right time for me, as I felt 2016 was a really dreadful year for everyone involved in the arts – it's not been a good time.

"Even though there had been such a good feeling when we were

S OMNUM SEMPITERNUM by Phil Mulryne opens the new set. It's fair to say that

his last **The Omega Factor** play went down quite well! Did that boost him ahead of writing this?

He smiles: "Well, I hope people liked it. I certainly loved writing it! And the story was then a finalist in the BBC Audio Drama Awards 2016 which was a huge privilege. But I'd have been desperate to come back to the series anyway, after setting up the world in that first box set. I love the stories this series and these characters allow us to tell."

What is it about the series that people have enjoyed most, in your view?

"I don't know... hopefully being intrigued and scared! We want compelling, genuinely unsettling stories, grounded by realistic characters and believable relationships. And I think horror can work fantastically well on audio. The series is a 'reboot' of a (really olning the writing 'cast' for series two with the second story, *The Changeling*, is Roy Gill, a familiar name to listeners of the Big Finish Confessions of Dorian Gray series. He says: "Matt Fitton heard the episodes I'd written for Dorian Gray, and wondered if I'd like to do something 'dark and twisted'

stalking the corridors of Tollmire – but who or what is the Changeling? My episode goes to some dark places – I hope we'll have the listeners on the edge of their seats..."

OUISE JAMESON shows off her versatility in the third story of the set, *Let the*



■ OUT APRIL! ■ CD/DOWNLOAD

Written By: Phil Mulryne, Roy Gill, Louise Jameson, Matt Fitton Directed By: Ken Bentley

THE OMEGA FACTOR Series Two

SOMNUM SEMPITERNUM
THE CHANGELING
LET THE ANGEL TELL THEE
AWAKENING

CAST

Louise Jameson (Dr Anne Reynolds), John Dorney (Adam Dean), Natasha Gerson (Morag), Camilla Power (Dr Jane Wyatt), Alex Tregear (Kate), Alan Cox (James Doyle), Richenda Carey (Sarah Maitland), Gunnar Cauthery (Edward Milton), Hugh Fraser (Anthony Archer), Alan Francis (Alasdair Reiver), Ben Fox (Graham Stocker)

scary) classic series. But as a reboot set in the present day, it's easy to jump into even if you've never even heard of or watched the original **The Omega Factor**.

"Script Editor Matt Fitton drove for more of a series arc in this box set. Department 7 is being funded properly for the first time in decades as it investigates the paranormal. But the sinister Omega organisation – which has been in the shadows for years – is starting to make some moves. I had the idea for the specific story in my episode, but there were plot strands to be set up – which only reach their full significance at the end of the box set...!"

for **The Omega Factor**. How could I resist an invitation like that?"

Roy lives in Edinburgh, where
Department 7 is based. He admits:
"I've written a few things set here
now, including two Young Adult
novels and my first **Dorian Gray**. It's a
very rich location in terms of history
and landscape and myth. There's
lots to work with! Ironically, my **The**Omega Factor episode isn't really set
in Edinburgh at all, but rather in a
spooky old prison on the outskirts,
and in a small Scottish town as well.
Maybe if they ask me back I can try for
something closer to my doorstep?"

Previewing the play, Roy teases: "Adam Dean goes to prison – and his cellmate is a man with a violent past. There's something unnerving Angel Tell Thee, by writing it.

She reveals: "Anne has developed over the years we didn't see her in **The Omega Factor**. We're over 30 years on and I'm not being asked to play her as she was back then – I'm playing her as she is now.

"She has more experience of life under her belt, as have I, and I can bring that to Anne. In my script, there's a little love interest there for her.

"It was something which was interesting to explore – writing for someone in their late 50s or early 60s and opening them up to all the scenarios that might expose them to.

"I enjoyed that, writing about falling in love, which is an



Above: Louise Jameson and John Dorney

amazing emotion when it happens
– but of course, this is **The Omega Factor**, so there's something
dangerous going on.

"It's very Anne-centric, but it was so fascinating to investigate an older woman's vulnerabilities."

Natasha adds: "Louise is just so good at everything she does. She's really inspiring. When we first met up in the studio, it really did feel like we'd last been in the studio only a few weeks beforehand – all the years just melted away.

"I wasn't surprised at all when they told me she was going to write one as she's so brilliant. Her episode was great. And John Dorney is perfect as Adam. You really believe he's Jimmy Hazeldine's son, even though he isn't! They have a lot of similar qualities to them and that was a great piece of casting."

The series concludes with Awakening by Matt Fitton.

With **The Omega Factor** having an eerie feel to it, how does Ken go about creating a suitably scary atmosphere in the studio, to bring the stories to life?

He explains: "One of the key components in dramatic storytelling is pace. Action is generally fast. Tension is often much slower. That moment when someone is alone in a large empty house late at night and they think they hear a noise.

FIRE AT THE MOMENT. HE'S PRODUCING SOME OF THE BEST SOUND DESIGN I'VE HEARD.

KEN BENTLEY

They call out 'Hello?'. And it's the silence that follows that creates tension. That long pause during which we all listen out for an answer, hoping that a ghost isn't going to leap from the shadows and scare us out of our wits.

"In many ways recreating that sense of atmosphere during a recording is an entirely mechanical exercise. We're recording during the day in a brightly lit studio with plenty of support from our colleagues. It's almost impossible to generate a scary atmosphere in the studio. But we can make what we record sound scary by making sure we pay very close attention to the detail and pace of the storytelling."

He adds: "Steve Foxon has done the sound design on series two and it sounds magnificent. Steve is on fire at the moment. He's producing some of the best sound design I've heard. You would think that creating the sound for a series set in the real world would be easy, but actually it's very hard.

"On audio if you rush or fudge any aspect of real life it instantly sounds fake and takes you out of the story. Steve's work on this box set really is amazing." **VORTEX**



HERE'S A bit of a change to the usual format of the Doctor Who monthly range stories coming up. Rather than one four-part story per release, we're getting two two-part plays instead.

Script editor Alan Barnes says:
"The double-bills in April to June
came about because, er... well, we
all quite liked the idea of doublebills, really! Each consists of two
two-part adventures, each by a
different author, one on each of the
two discs; and each, hopefully, has
a very different style and tone to its
companion piece – there should be a
nice contrast between the two.

"First, in April, we've got the Fifth Doctor and Nyssa in Alien Heart / Dalek Soul – the first by Stephen Cole, the second by Guy Adams. Alien Heart is about a species of weird spider-like monsters linked to the systematic destruction of planets, and Dalek Soul is a particularly bleak piece set on the Dalek-occupied world of Mojoxalli.

"May features Lisa Greenwood as Flip reunited with the Sixth Doctor, in two adventures set before her (apparent) exit in Scavenger. Vortex Ice by Jonny Morris is a brainscrambling conundrum of a story set in a diamond mine; then Ian Potter's Cortex Fire, like its title sortof suggests, is about an epidemic of spontaneous human combustion on a distant planet.

"Finally, in June, there's the return of another of Big Finish's dearly departed companions – it's Hex, back with the Seventh Doctor and Ace in *Shadow Planet / World Apart*. The first, by AK Benedict, has them at a far-out therapy centre, getting some very alternative medicine; then the second, by Scott Handcock, in which the TARDIS travellers find themselves marooned somewhere very inhospitable indeed."

A

LIEN HEART sees Stephen Cole return to Big Finish – and he's no stranger to this



pairing, having written for them in the fourth Big Finish monthly release, Land of the Dead. He explains: "The Fifth and Nyssa are one of my favourite pairings anywhere, so yes, I remember hoping that I would be asked, even all those vears ago! I think we all take Big Finish slightly for granted now, and the quality of their productions, but that was there from the get-go-if you listen to those earliest stories, the absolute commitment and passion that went into the making of them right across the board, that set an incredible standard."

Steve had no problem with the two-part story format. He adds: "The advantages of having two episodes on audio is that you go flying through the plot which makes it easier to support a small cast and you can rattle through the various narrative payoffs at speed with no sagging – plus you are honour bound to make your only cliffhanger count."

With Dalek Soul, how did Guy Adams enjoy writing for Peter Davison and Sarah Sutton?

"I grew up with the Fifth Doctor and Nyssa, lovely friends on cold weekday nights. I was so pleased knowing the space I had allowed me to experiment a little, I couldn't have written a story like this in a traditional main range release."

HE SIXTH Doctor and Flip are back on their travels in May, with Vortex Ice by Jonathan Morris, the man who originally created Flip. He says: "I love writing for her. She has a very strong, clear personality and a distinctive voice. "The interesting thing about writing a two-parter is that it lets you tell different types of stories. Some story ideas might not

much story... I tend to write long and trim back anyway but in this case I came in with an episode two that had more explanations and actions that it could support, and with only two episodes there was nowhere left to put all the extra stuff. Alan's brilliant script editing solution was about making episode one pacier so it could take a bit off the front of episode two. A life saver"

and Hex are reunited for Shadow Planet by AK
Benedict, and World Apart by Scott
Handcock. Scott says: "The Seventh
Doctor and Ace have always been one of my favourite TARDIS teams, and I clearly remember Hex's debut in The Harvest. Given Big Finish's success with Evelyn, it was terrifically exciting to have another original companion introduced, and Philip Olivier instantly gave

HE SEVENTH Doctor, Ace



him such an affable, engaging charm. He fitted in perfectly with the established dynamic, assisting when he was needed, challenging the Doctor when he wasn't.

"World Apart could well have been a much bigger, more sprawling adventure, but the two-part format allowed us the opportunity to bring it back to basics, keep the plot relatively straightforward, and really focus on the characters." VORTEX

Doctor Who: Alien Heart / Dalek Soul is available this month on CD and download.

CC DALEKS ARE STRANGE THINGS TO WRITE FOR REALLY... JJ GUY ADAMS



Above (left to right): Ken Bentley, Nicholas Briggs, Sarah Sutton and Peter Davison

to finally write for them. Not that I show it, of course, once again I've taken childhood heroes and made life miserable for them!

"The biggest challenge was probably the Daleks. Daleks are strange things to write for really because they're the brick wall you smash characters against. Writing for Daleks is like writing for bad weather, giving dialogue to a devastating storm. The story I pitched fitted two parts perfectly – it really couldn't have stretched further – so the length wasn't a problem. It was a blessing really,

be sufficiently complex to sustain two hours but can be told in a perfectly-formed one-hour plot. And *Vortex Ice* is a story that could only be told in two episodes. The complexity is under the surface; it's deceptively simple, but may reward a second listen."

The other story is Cortex Fire by Ian Potter. He says: "Writing it was a bit fraught really! I had two scripts on the go, both quite grim and the real world seemed to be going to hell in a handcart at about the same time, so I wasn't laughing my head off. Worse, I had far too



Kenny Smith heads to the most northern point of Scotland to find the latest Philip Hinchcliffe Presents release is...

AWESOME

T'S FAIR to say that the vast majority of Doctor Who adventures which are set on Earth take place in the United Kingdom. You could take that further and say they take place in England. You could be specific and say they tend to be in and around the greater London area. Helm of Awe, the fourth Philip

Hinchcliffe Presents tale, is definitely different, firmly bringing the TARDIS to Scotland. You may have thought *Terror of the Zygons* took place in the north of Caledonia, but *Helm of Awe* heads even further up, to the most northern point of the British Isles, the Shetland Islands. The TARDIS materialises on the Isle of Bothness

and the Doctor and Leela find themselves at the old Norse fire festival of Up Helly Aa.

However, an artefact invested with mysterious powers has been stolen, with something ancient, evil and alien lurking.

Philip, producer of **Doctor Who** for Tom Baker's first three seasons, presented his writing partner

Marc Platt with a detailed 14 page outline. Marc says: "Philip is always very clear over what he wants. He had a story in mind set in the Shetland Islands, which linked the annual Viking fire festival Up Helly Aa to the Shetland Bus, a secret wartime operation that ran weapons and refugees across the North Sea to and from Norway. And there are aliens as well!

"Philip seems to have adopted me as his writing partner, which is a deeply special thing for me. I love working on his story

AC PHILIP SEEMS TO HAVE ADOPTED ME AS HIS WRITING PARTNER, WHICH IS A DEEPLY SPECIAL THING FOR ME. 33

MARC PLATT

Scottish location. It was full of good ideas, but they were taking the focus away from the heart of the story. I tried relocating some of it to Edinburgh, but in

the end, even that got jettisoned. There was also a lot of research to do on this one, and that's always good for throwing up new ideas. I was fishing about



Above (left to right): Tom Baker and Philip Hinchcliffe



Above (left to right): Tom Baker and Jane Slavi

ideas because they are always rich with possibilities. But the key is always 'what would Bob Holmes (Hinchcliffe's script editor) do?' If I wander too far from Philip's plans (it has been known), he firmly, even apologetically, hauls me back. But he is also very open to new thoughts. The meetings where we bounce ideas back and forth are always great fun.

"This particular story had an entire episode set in London before we even reached the main



for the right story tone until I remembered how many of Philip's TV stories had links to horror films. So *Helm of Awe* has stylistic hints of **The Wicker Man** with its isolated island community, even if the story is very different. **SPOILERS:** No one gets burned alive and there's no Christopher Lee in a dress. Sorry about that!"

Louise adds:"At one point, I had to do a very loud war cry, and I think I nearly deafened the poor sound engineer!



Above (left to right): Philip Hinchcliffe, Ewan Bailey, Joanna Vanderham, Tom Baker, Fleur Hinchcliffe David Rintoul, Kieran Bew, Jane Slavin and Chris Porter • Below: Tom Baker

many layers, so much character.

These really could be soundtracks from televised stories. Philip and Marc have been a dream pairing."

Looking at Helm of Awe, David reveals: "It's a really rich and mysterious story set in a location that's never been explored before in **Doctor Who**, to my knowledge. Essentially it's the story of a family, and how it lost its way. In fact, if I had one important note when I read the scripts it was 'keep the focus on the family'."

Director Ken Bentley concurs:
"I really enjoy working on the
Philip Hinchcliffe Presents series,
it's amongst the most satisfying
work I do for Big Finish. I think
he and Marc are coming up with
some of the best stories and



HARD TASKMASTER, BUT EVERY TIME, HE AND MARC HAVE COME UP TRUMPS. J. LOUISE JAMESON

Normally, before we do a scene, it's the sort of thing I would flag up, but I didn't on this occasion.
"The poor man!"

RODUCER DAVID
Richardson has been delighted with the reaction to the first three releases in this series. He reveals: "These have been a joy for me to work on. It's been interesting because it's been a very different role for me – normally I'm very creatively involved as a producer, but by and large I didn't feel that was appropriate on these productions. I largely sat back and went with

"It's also been enjoyable to work with such scale, particularly on the six parters – The Ghosts of Gralstead and The Genesis Chamber had so

Philip's vision for the stories.

scripts we record. I've always been a fan of Marc's writing. His work has the scale, attention to detail, and sensitivity to character that Philip's ideas demand."

Marc continues: "Despite having always quite fancied going to the annual Viking fire festival, I haven't ever been to the Shetlands. So I did the next best thing: I went on Google Earth Street View and had a virtual drive round the islands. It's a wild, rugged and beautiful place, and yes, the lack of trees is the first thing Leela notices. There are splendid videos of Up Helly Aa on YouTube as well.

"The historical aspect of the story also needed an amount of research: everything from Norse mythology to the right noise for fishing boat's engines and its Engine Order Telegraph system."



PHILIP HINCCLIFFE PRESENTS DOCTOR WHO The Helm of Awe

■ OUT THIS MONTH! ■ CD/DOWNLOAD
Written By: Philip Hinchcliffe
Adapted By: Marc Platt
Directed By: Ken Bentley

CAST

Tom Baker (The Doctor), Louise Jameson (Leela), Joanna Vanderham (Joanna Renwick), David Rintoul (Professor Angus Renwick), Jane Slavin (Peggy), Ewan Bailey (Davy McTavit), Kieran Bew (Murdo Jamieson), Chris Porter (Nardos), Fleur Hinchcliffe (Young Angus Renwick)

Louise Jameson has thoroughly enjoyed working on the series, with stories originated by her boss when she first played Leela.

She reveals: "I think Philip is quite a hard taskmaster, but every time, he and Marc have come up trumps.

"Philip takes it very seriously, as if we are going to film it to air on television – he's so commited to it. He wants to make sure that every 'i' is dotted and every 't' is crossed.

"Philip is still very proud of his time on **Doctor Who**, and I think he wants to make sure anything that has his name attached to it lives up to his very high standards."

And Marc admits he's loved hearing Tom Baker and Louise bring these plays to life.

He grins: "They are amazing, aren't they? Both of them are so energised – totally committed to the stories and their characters, and so much fun. And then Philip turns up too and it's like a party. They started doing all this 40 years ago and their work remains as fresh and joyous as ever. I feel very blessed to be part of it."

IT'S POSSIBLE WE MAY DO MORE. WE'VE LEFT IT OPEN, AND LET'S SEE IF PHILIP HAS MORE IDEAS. J DAVID RICHARDSON

Y HAVING a play set in Scotland, it meant Ken had to find actors from north of the border.

He says: "Casting audio always starts with the voices. This story is set on a remote Scottish island, so I needed a cast who could give the story world authenticity. But the play also required some tricky doubling-up with Scandinavian accents. That sort of doubling isn't always easy, but luckily Scottish and Northern European accents have some similarities, so thankfully there are a few actors out there who can do both.

"What I always try to do is mix actors we've worked with before with actors new to Big Finish. I hadn't worked with Joanna Vanderham before and she's great as this Joanna. I'm not brilliant at remembering names, but I promise that isn't why I cast her! Definitely an actor I'll cast again.

"Doing the sort of work we do at Big Finish can make it a little tricky to cast very young actors, so we tend not to write roles for children. But Philip recommended Fleur Hinchcliffe (you might spot the family connection!) who was utterly brilliant. A real pro. She took the whole thing in her stride and I could tell that the rest of the cast adored working with her."

Looking to the future of Philip Hinchcliffe Presents, David adds: "It's possible we may do more. We've left it open, and let's see if Philip has more ideas. If he does, then yes of course we'll be back in the studio." VORTEX



PARTS OF THE

FAMILY

A SECOND BIG FINISH CLASSIC RELEASE GETS A VINYL VERSION THIS MONTH...

F EVER a Big Finish story felt right for a vinyl release, then it's Spare Parts. Set on Mondas, the Fifth Doctor and Nyssa meet the Hartley family and discover that Earth's long-lost twin has developed at a different rate. While spare part surgery is the order of the day, the people still travel on trams and – presumably – still have record players.

Writer Marc Platt was delighted when he was told his 2002 play was getting a re-release. He grins: "It feels a bit like getting an award! The vinyl does seem right though. The whole story was deliberately set back in that era because that's where **Doctor Who** began. Even 1963 still felt like the 50s. Now I have an image of Dad Hartley dragging out his old-style gramophone. The other great thing is Tom Webster's beautiful new cover. The hard light, the harsh colour and the horse are just how I imagined the story."

How does he feel knowing that something he wrote for Big Finish over 15 years ago, is still so beloved all these years later?

Marc says: "I still get letters of appreciation. At the time, I wrote what felt right for the situation, using a lot of quality story ingredients thrown up by all the old Cybermen stories. But it also works because producer Gary Russell nudged me in the right (darker) direction, but still let me have my head as to the detail of building that beleaguered world. Then he did a great job directing a fine cast and production team.

"The whole thing, cast and story, gelled in the studio. When we recorded the homecoming scene, Gary and I turned to each other with dropping jaws and knew we'd got something special."

Accompanying the story is a brand-new special 'making of' documentary, which has been put together by Martin Montague.

He says: "In order to understand how something came to being, I



DOCTOR WHO: SPARE PARTS Limited Vinyl Edition

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OUT APRIL!

Written By: Marc Platt Directed By: Barnaby Edwards

Peter Davison (The Doctor), Sarah Sutton (Nyssa), Sally Knyvette (Doctorman Allan), Pamela Binns (Sisterman Constant), Derren Nesbitt (Thomas Dodd), Paul Copley (Dad), Kathryn Guck (Yvonne Hartley), Jim Hartley (Frank Hartley), Ann Jenkins (Mrs Ginsberg), Nicholas Briggs (Zheng/ Cyber Voices/Radio Announcer/Citizen/Nurse), Alistair Lock (Minister/ TV Commentator), Gary Russell (Philipott/Nurse)

think it's always important to set the scene for when it was produced. So, firstly I wanted to remind the listener that when Spare Parts was released in July 2002, **Doctor Who** had been off air for a long time with what seemed like no hope of coming back and Big Finish was the only new **Who** in production. It was also interesting to note that the approach

special – and, well, it's the Cybermen isn't it?! I can only speak for myself here, but as a child reading about them in the target novelisations and seeing them in *Earthshock* when I was 10, they scared me the most. Out of all the monsters in the history of the series, these were the ones where it could be any one of us under the tin foil and plastic.

WE'D NEVER HAD A GENESIS OF THE CYBERMEN STORY.

MARTIN MONTAGUE

to the audios has subtly changed over the years: Gary Russell was keen to produce brand-new serials, made for the year of release, rather than today when there is more of an ear towards making serials that sound authentic to a specific era of the TV show."

What does Martin think it is about *Spare Parts* that made it so popular with fans?

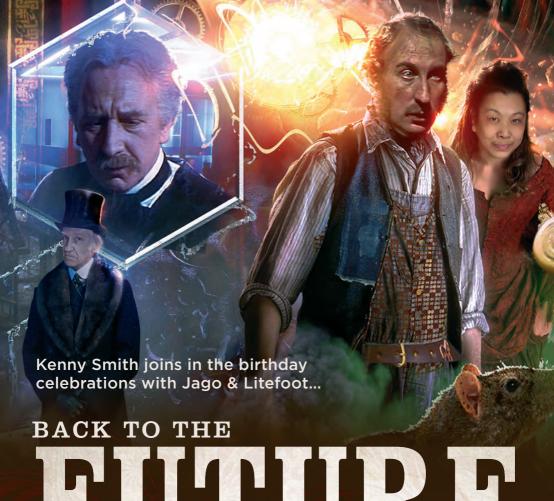
He pauses, then replies: "At the time of release it was unusual for an old enemy to make an appearance in the audios, so this felt truly "And that's the central concept of Marc Platt's script: Mondas is heading to a frozen hell and if the population wants to survive, they all have to unwittingly become 'the monster'. And Marc did the clever thing of focusing on an ordinary family which really highlights the loss of humanity.

"But beyond that, there was such a huge mythos attached to these monsters that people just wanted to know more – or they want to HEAR acted out what they already know. As fans, we'd seen a *Genesis of the Daleks* story on TV but never had a 'Genesis of the Cybermen' story. How did they become what they are? Well, we all knew the back story from the short paragraph that appeared on back of the Target books, but we wanted to hear this as a drama. And Marc and the team didn't let us down – the whole thing plays out like a tragedy."

Executive producer Nick Briggs, who voices the Cybermen in the story, reveals: "Spare Parts is just one of those stories that people always recommend to Big Finish newcomers. It was a stand-out story for so many reasons. It's our 'Genesis of the Cyberman' story in some ways. It goes back to their origins on Mondas. And we all love a good 'origins' story.

"It's also a lovely script from Marc Platt, with great work all round by director Gary Russell, Gareth Jenkins and Russell Stone on sound design and music, and a superb cast – particularly Paul Copley.

"And now, here it is on vinyl, with the Peter Davison, Peter Howell theme on it for the first time! Back in those days, we didn't use eraspecific themes for some reason. But that's now been corrected on this re-release." VORTEX



FUTURE

HIS YEAR marks 40 years since Henry Gordon Jago and Professor George Litefoot were first created by Robert Holmes. The Talons of Weng-Chiang was orginally broadcast from late February 1977, with the Fourth Doctor and Leela encountering the duo as they foiled Magnus Greel's exploits in Victorian London.

Christopher Benjamin and Trevor Baxter have been bringing their wit,

charm and skill to Big Finish since 2009, firstly through Companion Chronicle The Mahogany Murderers, and since 2010, their own spin-off series of adventures. Producer David Richardson explains: "Every time we sit down to plan a Jago & Litefoot box set, we try and think of an interesting hook - something different that we haven't done before.

"So that was the basis again for series 13. But, importantly, it's being released not long after the 40th anniversary of their appearance on TV in The Talons of Weng-Chiang. What a milestone! So, ves, there a few homages to Talons in this set. Don't expect a return of Magnus Greel - that's not on the cards - but I like stories that are about consequences, and in some ways series 13 is about the consequences of Talons. Or perhaps, in another way, it's not about consequences at all..."

HE STUFF of Nightmares by Paul Morris begins the latest series.

Paul says: "The brief for this story was probably the most specific I've had yet on Jago & Litefoot. The idea that they would be caught up in the investigation of a ruthless time agent searching for Magnus Greel was presented to me, and that takes up about half the story; but that still left me the other half to do what I wanted with. I took the overall theme of the set as

time period, late Victoriana. I'm drawn back to it time and again in my work.

JONATHAN BARNES

him back then. He's playing the wonderfully named Harry Hypno."

NEWCOMER to the series has written the second story, Chapel of

Night. Jonathan Barnes, who has written **Doctor Who, Sherlock Holmes** and HG Wells adaptations, says: "Oh, I love this time period, late Victoriana. I'm drawn back to it time and again in my work – in my novels and in the scripts that I've been lucky enough to write for Big Finish. There's something so rich about that era – close enough to our own time to be perfectly recognisable while also possessing a profound quality of strangeness. I feel very much at home in that world of hansom cabs and swirling pea-soupers."



Above (left to right): Jamie Newall, Christopher Benjamin, Trevor Baxter and David Warner • Right (left to right): Trevor Baxter and Christopher Benjamin

an opportunity to do something I'd been hoping to do for a while – look at our heroes in different contexts and from different perspectives. Only in a very small way here, but if I get the chance I'd like to push it a bit further."

Director Lisa Bowerman adds: "We've got one of my favourite actresses, Carolyn Pickles, who I had in for **Graceless**. We've also got Abi Hayes, who has been 'on my list' for a little while.

"And we have the wonderful actor, Tony Turner, who was in the recent National Theatre production of *This House*. My brother happened to be in a previous production of it at the National Theatre a while ago, and I spotted

work with somebody who I've admired for so long. He really matched up to my expectations!"

OW THE Other Half Lives marks the welcome return of Matthew Sweet to Jago & Litefoot. He says: "The 1890s are a pretty fertile period – richly and resolutely Victorian, but with that

day-before-yesterday feel. I was talking about this a few weeks ago with the writer Sarah Perry, who wrote the marvellous 1890s-set novel The Essex Serpent. She says that she chose to set her book in the decade because in terms of transport and communication, it is so close to ours. So it has a strong sense of proximity – and if you're constructing a story in this period, everybody can conduct their business as swiftly and efficiently as the protagonists of a story set in our present day."

Lisa says: "For episode three, I was looking for someone to play a Londoner of Chinese extraction, and it just so happens that I knew someone who would fit the part like a glove – Lucy Sheen. She plays Xiu Xiu and was someone I'd been looking to cast for a while, so when this part presented itself, I knew exactly who I wanted. I was lucky she managed to fit the recording round her filming Call The Midwife...it would have been hard to find someone else who so perfectly fitted the bill."

ORTEX CAN'T say too much about Too Much Reality by Justin
Richards, for fear of revealing spoilers, but Lisa reveals: "I was really pleased we could bring back some old friends for the last story in the set. We've got David Warner back as Luke Betterman and Jamie Newall as Aubrey – but not in the way you might expect them! It's always a pleasure to work with them."

But David adds: "It saddens me to say that this is my last series as producer of Jago & Litefoot, but the brilliant Ian Atkins will be taking over from series 14. I agonised long and hard over the decision, particularly as it would mean giving up working with Trevor Baxter and Christopher Benjamin, two actors I have



JAGO & LITEFOOT Series Thirteen

- OUT THIS MONTH!
- CD/DOWNLOAD

Written By: Paul Morris, Jonathan Barnes, Matthew Sweet, Justin Richards Directed By: Lisa Bowerman

THE STUFF OF NIGHTMARES CHAPEL OF NIGHT HOW THE OTHER HALF LIVES TOO MUCH REALITY

CAST

Christopher Benjamin (Henry Gordon Jago), Trevor Baxter (Professor George Litefoot), Lisa Bowerman (Ellie Higson), Conrad Asquith (Inspector Quick), Abi Hayes (Agent Cara), Carolyn Pickles (Dr Hilary Standish), Tony Turner (Harry Hypno/Sergeant Delaney/ Dr Logan), Teresa Banham (Mrs Bartholomew/Angelica), Oliver Lansley (Jack Ridpath), Jeff Rawle (Toby Brokesmith), Lucy Sheen (Xiu Xiu), Phoebe Thomas (Hannah Price), Oliver Jackson (Dicky Twist), David Warner (Dr Luke Betterman), Jamie Newall (Aubrey)



Above (left to right): Christopher Benjamin, Oliver Lansley, Trevor Baxter, Jeff Rawle and Teresa Banham

admired all my life, and two friends who fill my working days with joy and laughter."

Lisa concludes: "I think David's now told all the stories he wanted to with Jago & Litefoot, and this series ends with a cliffhanger for Mr Atkins to sort out! David's time on the series has been so brilliantly inventive and productive. The success of this series is, in no small way, down to his vision." VORTEX

LISTENAGAIN

Dalek Empire IV: The Fearless



It was back to the beginning for **Dalek Empire IV**: The Fearless!

ATCHING OLD films and
TV can often prove an
inspiration for writers and
stories, but for Big Finish, it inspired
a whole series.

Nicholas Briggs reveals that when he watched a **Doctor Who** DVD, his enthusiasm was fired up, resulting in **Dalek Empire IV**: The Fearless.

He admits: "I really thought I'd finished after three series. But then I watched the DVD of *The Dalek Invasion of Earth* which had been restored and has new effects. It was old Dalek stuff but it looked like it had been shot yesterday. That suddenly reinvigorated me!"

Nick initially admitted he thought about continuing the **Dalek Empire**

story where it had been left. He says: "I did toy with that idea, and David Tennant told me (on the set of *Rise of the Cybermen*) that he'd love to come back and play Galanar again. But I could see that Russell T Davies might have other ideas and that David would be far too busy anyway.

"So I went back to the idea I'd originally had for **Dalek Empire III**, which was to go back to the beginning, but see it from another perspective."

Instead of going forward, Nick found a way to tell a new story in the same setting by delving back into its own history. He also found a way to link it to the new TV series by bringing in Noel Clarke, who had played Rose Tyler's on-off boyfriend Mickey Smith, as the lead character, Salus Kade.

Nick says: "I wanted to work with Noel. He and I had struck up a great friendship on **Doctor Who** and he was very keen to help me. This is what I could offer him. A starring role in his own audio series. So I wrote it for Noel.

"Noel was there right at the beginning. And we had a great time. He did a superb job. Really pushed it to the limit and also had some input into the storyline. He was keen to eliminate any softness from the character. I gave him the storyline and he said, 'Nah, nah, nah...' about a couple of elements – and he was right! And I changed them."

Nick had a different take on this series. "I decided to make it a war story about warriors, in battle with the Daleks. Noel wanted to play a really bad-ass, mentally scarred character. He wanted to be terrifying. So that was really my brief. The fictional world of the first series of **Dalek Empire** was the ideal backdrop for that."

By setting the fourth series during the events of series one, it meant that bringing back the character of Susan Mendes, played by Sarah Mowat, wasn't so difficult for Nick to do.

Sarah adds: "It was a few years later that I got a call from Nick to ask me to come back for the series with Noel. The TV series had been going for a bit by then so I wondered if this audio series would have a different feel as a result but it was as ambitious and thrilling as ever and I was delighted that the Daleks were willing to do audio appearances as well... Noel played a brilliant action hero leading man which made a change from me and Gareth Thomas!" VORTEX

VORTEXMAI

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

FAREWELL TO THE WAR DOCTOR

I'm writing to say how sorry I was to hear of the loss of the great Sir John Hurt. He was a wonderful actor who I've admired for years, thanks to his classic performances such as Aragorn, Hazel in Watership Down, Kane in Alien and his stellar performance in The Elephant Man. I was thrilled beyond belief when he became one of the Doctors during the 50th anniversary celebrations, and even more so when he agreed to continue playing the War Doctor for Big Finish. He is truly a great loss to the acting world and all I can



say is that he was one of the best. I am grateful also to Big Finish for giving us the War Doctor stories that you did. Thank you. In addition to his other roles, he will always be the Doctor. If I may, I do have one question also. Now that Peter Capaldi has announced that he's leaving **Doctor Who** at the end of this year, will Big Finish be able to do stories with him as the Twelfth Doctor, once the Thirteenth Doctor's era has begun in the TV series? Simon Hendy-Ibbs

Nick: Thanks for your thoughts on the wonderful Sir John. With regard to whether or not Big Finish will be

making stories with any Doctors from any eras, it's all down to rights negotiations with the BBC and whether an actor is willing and available.

CD REISSUES?

I've recently been listening to the 1-50 range of Big Finish's **Doctor Who** range. My personal favourites are Master, Jubilee and Spare Parts (love the Cyberman voices in that one!). I was just writing to say thank you for the amazing content and I was also wondering if we may see official Big Finish reprints that aren't the special vinvl editions? I really would like to have all the Big Finish plays on CD without having to pay a fortune on eBay! Adam Osborne

Nick: Cheers, Adam. This is certainly something we'll look into.

EIGHTH WONDER-FUL

Thanks to you, Big Finish, the Eighth Doctor is my favorite classic Doctor. And now that the last boxset of Doom Coalition is out, I want to know: where are you taking the Eighth Doctor next? Will he change his outfit to the one he was wearing in The Night of the Doctor? Will he go back to use his first sonic screwdriver? I'm so curious!

Anderson Esteem Lopes

Nick: One day, the answers will be out there for you. But I probably won't reveal them in Vortex Mail. Mind you, you never know...

KEEL-ED OVER?

Thank you, as ever, for all your marvellous audio dramas. I'm

loving the Steed and Keel Avengers remakes - I'm about half way through them. The performances are superb and I love the stories. It feels like I'm being transported back to my childhood when 1960s TV programmes were still routinely repeated on network TV. Being able to fill what turns out to be a huge gap the show's history has given me a new appreciation of The Avengers as a whole. Given the number of old Avengers novels floating around out there and that Dr Keel showed up in the novel Too Many Targets, are there any thoughts about perhaps adapting any of the books or creating a few new stories about Steed and Dr Keel alongside the now-complete remakes? Dominic Husband

Nick: There are delicate rights negotiations around The Avengers, but we agree that it would be great to do more. We're not quite certain of what the future holds for us on that score, though. But we're ever hopeful.

COMIC STRIPPED?

A couple of issues ago, in Doctor Who Magazine, a commenting person suggested a comic strip adaptations line of **Doctor Who** audios. Could we ever listen to an audio version of The Good Soldier or Sub-Zero? Philip Scholes

Nick: I can't resist saying 'just imagine'. It's very tempting. In the case of Sub-Zero, there are so many great story ideas there. But the story logic would have to be severely updated and augmented, I feel.

COMINGSOON

Forthcoming audio releases



APRIL 2017

DOCTOR WHO - MAIN RANGE: ALIEN HEART DALEK SOLIL (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)

TORCHWOOD: THE DOLLHOUSE (14)

DAN DADE: THE AUDIO ADVENTUDES: VOLLIME TWO (Rox 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)

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 / IRLD APART (226, Seventh Doctor and Ace)

DOCTOR WHO - FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES:

SUBTERRANEA (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)

PATHFINDER LEGENDS - CURSE OF THE CRIMSON THRONE: CROWN OF FANGS (3.6)

JULY 2017

DOCTOR WHO - MAIN RANGE: THE HIGH ICE 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:

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

TORCHWOOD: THE OFFICE OF NEVER WAS (17)

TERRAHAWKS: VOLUME 3

HG WELLS: THE ISLAND OF DR MOREAU (4)

AUGUST 2017

DOCTOR WHO - MAIN RANGE: THE BLOOD

FURNACE (228, Seventh Doctor, Ace and Mel)

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

DATE (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

DOCTOR WHO - SHORT TRIPS: A HEART ON

BOTH SIDES (7.09, Eighth Doctor and Nyssa)

DOCTOR WHO - THE EARLY ADVENTURES: THE NIGHT

WITCHES (4.1, Second Doctor, Jamie, Ben and Polly)

CAPTAIN SCARLET AND THE MYSTERONS: 50TH ANNIVERSARY BOXED SET

CAPTAIN SCARLET AND THE MYSTERONS:

CAPTAIN SCARLET AND THE MYSTERONS-SPECTRUM FILE 2

CAPTAIN SCARLET AND THE MYSTERONS:

HG WELLS: THE TIME MACHINE (5)

OCTOBER 2017

DOCTOR WHO - MAIN RANGE: THE BEHEMOTH (231, Sixth Doctor, Flip and Constance)

DOCTOR WHO - SHORT TRIPS: ALL HANDS ON DECK

(710 Fighth Doctor and Susan)

DOCTOR WHO - THE EARLY ADVENTURES: THE OUTLIERS

(4.2 Second Doctor, Jamie, Ren and Polly).

DARK SHADOWS: LOVE LIVES ON

NOVEMBER 2017

DOCTOR WHO - MAIN RANGE: THE MIDDLE

(232, Sixth Doctor, Flip and Constance)

DOCTOR WHO - SHORT TRIPS: THE INGENIOUS GENTLEMAN

ADRIC OF ALZARIUS (7.11, Fifth Doctor and Adric)

DOCTOR WHO - THE EARLY ADVENTURES: THE MORTON

LEGACY (4.3. Second Doctor, Jamie, Ben and Polly)

DOCTOR WHO - THE EIGHTH DOCTOR: THE TIME WAR (Rox Set)

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: STATIC (234, Sixth Doctor, Flip and Constance)

DOCTOR WHO - SHORT TRIPS: O TANNENBAUM

(712 First Doctor and Steven)

DOCTOR WHO - THE EARLY ADVENTURES: THE WRECK OF THE WORLD (4.4, Second Doctor, Jamie and Zoe)

THE NEW COUNTER-MEASURES: SFRIES 7 (Box Set)

DARK SHADOWS: SHADOWS OF THE NIGHT BIG FINISH CLASSICS: JEKYLL AND HYDE

JANUARY 2018

DOCTOR WHO - MAIN RANGE: TBA (234, TBA)

DOCTOR WHO - FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES:

SERIES 7A (7A. Fourth Doctor, Leela and K9. Box Set)

DOCTOR WHO - FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: THE SONS OF KALDOR (7.1, Fourth Doctor, Leela and

K9 Download Only)

DOCTOR WHO - FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: THE CROWMARSH EXPERIMENT (7.2, Fourth Doctor, Leela and K9. Download Only)

DOCTOR WHO - FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: THE MIND-RUNNERS (7.3, Fourth Doctor, Leela and K9.

DOCTOR WHO - FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES:

THE DEMON RISES (7.4, Fourth Doctor, Leela and K9. Download Only)

DOCTOR WHO - SHORT TRIPS: THE AUTHENTIC **EXPERIENCE** (8.1, Sixth Doctor and Peri)

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