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Sneak Previews & Whispers



The Confessions of **Dorian Grav**

HERE'S GOING to be eight shades of Gray this November. The fourth series of The Confessions of Dorian Gray will see Alexander Vlahos return as Oscar Wilde's famous creation, for eight new tales of the supernatural.

Producer Scott Handcock reveals: "It seems like only vesterday we started work on that very first, experimental series of Confessions - and now, we've started work on the fifth and final series. But before then, in the winter months. we have series four - and a Christmas special to look forward to!

"And what a series awaits! We've a whole host of new writers, locations and threats, spanning the breadth of the twentieth century. There's romance, comedy, lots and lots of dread... not to mention banshees, sea monsters, avenging entities and a couple of very human stories thrown in for good measure.

"Plus, we've a lovely cast. Anthony Howell, Ayesha Antoine, Jacob Fortune-Lloyd, Jacqueline King, Bruno Langley, Yasmin Bannerman, Aaron Neil, Deirdre Mullins are just some of those joining the fold to face off against Alexander Vlahos's Dorian and the results are nothing short of electric. (Did I mention David Warner as Santa Claus this Christmas? Because if I didn't, well, it's happening!) Oh, and we've finally managed to pair him up against Paul McGann in The Diary of River Song! (He assures me Dorian will always be his first love, mind.) So thanks to everyone who kept on pestering about that on the podcasts.

"Until then, however, prepare for some of the most ambitious Confessions to date... Things will never be the same." VORTEX

Editorial

HE THING that frustrates me most about writing Vortex each month is not being able to do as many face-toface interviews as I'd like to.

Much as I'd love to be down at the studio sessions for every play that's featured in each issue, logistics dictate that, sadly, I can't do that. I'm based up in Glasgow, some 400 miles away from London, so by necessity, I'm doing my interviews either over the phone or by email.

So this month, it was a real treat to be able to meet up with the lovely Natasha Gerson, from The Omega Factor, Natasha's based in Glasgow, so after a 15 minute walk from my office. we sat down to have 'a wee blether'. (Translation - a little chat, for you non-Scots).

I didn't know much about The Omega Factor before listening to the new Big Finish audios, despite them being set in Scotland. I did see a wobblevision, seventh or eighth generation VHS copy in the 1990s, but didn't recall too much about it.

But this new series on audio - wow! With the plays having been released a little earlier than planned, chances are you'll have heard them and know just how damn good and spooky they are. John Dorney reminds us just how good an actor he is (if you've not heard him as Alexander the Great in Farewell. Great Macedon, give it a go!) and Louise Jameson is her usual, wonderful self, showing just versatile she is - Dr Anne Reynolds is a million miles away from Leela.

I'm off now to get The Omega Factor TV series on DVD...

KENNY



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FACTORED IN

Kenny Smith discovers there's something strange going on, in and around the streets of Edinburgh!

ARY WHITEHOUSE hated The Omega Factor," laughs Natasha Gerson. "She thought it was 'thoroughly evil'. There was an episode involving a girl who was supposed to be possessed – that got her, more than anything. My dad was thrilled about that!"

Natasha has two hats to wear with regards to **The Omega Factor**, which has been revived by Big Finish for a new audio series this month. Not only did she appear in the 1979 BBC Scotland television series as Morag, she is also the daughter of its creator, Jack Gerson.

The Edinburgh-based drama has been dubbed a precursor to **The X-Files**, **Medium**, **Supernatural** and **Sea of Souls**, with bits of **The Prisoner** thrown in for good measure.

Starring James Hazeldine as journalist Tom Crane, Louise Jameson as Dr Anne Reynolds and John Carlisle as psychologist Dr Roy Martindale, **The Omega Factor** ran for 10 episodes. Tom discovers he has psychic powers, which brings him to the attention of Dr Reynolds and the team at Department 7 and he agrees to join them as he wants revenge on rogue psychic Edward Drexel (Cyril Luckham), who caused his wife's death in a car accident. Producer David Richardson explains: "I know Louise very well and it was something we had chatted about occasionally. Then one day I stopped chatting and actually looked into the rights, tracking down Natasha Gerson, the daughter of series creator Jack Gerson.

"We chatted on Facebook and Natasha said yes pretty much immediately. I later discovered it was because she'd looked at my profile, saw some photos of me with my cats and thought anyone who likes his cats that much must be a decent person worth dealing with!"

Natasha adds: "I had an email from David Richardson, who was wanting to know if they could use my father's creations. **The Omega Factor** was always one of my dad's favourites, as he was really into the supernatural and was really disappointed it came to an end. While he was still alive, it came out in DVD but, sadly, it never took off to get that second season.

"I just know he would have been thrilled by this, with a new series on audio."

The Omega Factor



Above: John Dorney, Louise Jameson, Alan Cox and Sandra Voe

RIGINAL STAR Louise Jameson was delighted when she was told Big Finish had the rights to the series. She laughs: "I suppose you could say it was The X-Files but without the budget! It came about two years after I started in Doctor Who and I remember all the headlines at the time were about interest in TV from the 1970s and 80s now. I have to admit, I was surprised, but very pleased. I'm really glad they've let me play Anne at my own age – this way, I'm not trying to sound like a 27-year-old again and running around in a leotard! It's nice to be able to use the full voice again – when I'm playing Leela, I have to cut out some

"I suppose you could say it was **The X-Files** but without the budget!"

'Louise is playing the Doctor now', as I was Dr Anne Reynolds.

"I'm really sorry it only lasted for one series. It really did deserve to do more than that... we expected it would be at least two or three series.

"When we were making the TV series, the cast were hanging about 24-7. We made music together, we gave up smoking together – it was a really good team and I loved that six months.

"I was really thrilled when David Richardson first mentioned it to me, I always enjoyed **The Omega Factor**. David told me there's so much more of the lower register out of my voice and play her a little higher than my normal speaking voice."

Natasha was cast as Morag in the original series after auditioning under another name, so no one would spot the family connection. She says: "When I think back to the original series, it was the best of times. Those days were just great. I didn't do a great deal, to be perfectly honest, but I did learn a lot.

"The whole cast were just wonderful and we had such great fun I know my dad did too. We used to have **Omega** Factor badges and t-shirts.

The Omega Factor

FROM BEYOND by Matt Fitton THE OLD GODS by Phil Mulryne LEGION by Cavan Scott THE HOLLOW EARTH by Ken Bentley

Over thirty years have passed since Tom Crane left Department 7, a top secret organisation that investigates the paranormal.

Anne Reynolds now runs the operation and for three decades their enigmatic nemesis Omega has been silent.

But that peace is about to be shattered. When Crane's son Adam is drawn into Department 7, the past quickly catches up with Anne and her team...

DIRECTED BY: Ken Bentley

STARRING: Louise Jameson, John Dorney, Alan Cox, Sandra Voe, Natasha Gerson, Tracy Wiles, Terry Molloy, Camilla Power, Kate Bracken, Georgie Glen, Hilary Maclean, Derek Hutchinson, Laura Dos Santos

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The Omega Factor



Above: Laura Dos Santos, John Dorney, Louise Jameson, Derek Hutchinson and Tracy Wiles • Inset (left to right): Louise Jameson and John Dorney

"We all feed off each other's creativity and enthusiasm."

"I remember dear old Cyril Luckham used to call me his 'little sausage' – I was a little bit chubby back in those days! He was a great, a real gentleman and he helped me a lot. I adored Louise and Jimmy Hazeldine – they were just so kind and good fun."

CRIPT EDITOR Matt Fitton enjoyed getting the new series together. He says, "Essentially, we take the set up of a top secret government department that investigates the strange and uncanny, with a view to using it to gain an understanding of this 'Omega Factor' – with life beyond death.

"We've taken that initial set-up and moved it up to the present day. Louise's character has carried on and become head of Department 7 and we get a chance to explain what's happened to her in the intervening period. That way, people can come to it fresh and won't have to know the old TV series. **The Omega Factor** is a great framework in which to tell scary stories, in an X-Files kind of set-up."

In the Big Finish revival, John Dorney, who is playing Tom's estranged son, Adam Dean teams-up with Dr Anne Reynolds. David explains: "The way I work on anything is to get the team together, if possible, and brainstorm ideas. For **The Omega Factor** we met in a noisy bar in Paddington train station, after a day's recording at The Moat. These kinds of meeting are vital I feel – they're adrenalin-charged, hugely creative and they throw out loads of rich ideas that coalesce into a series plan. It never ceases to amaze me how we all feed off each other's creativity and enthusiasm until something tangible is formed. With **The Omega Factor**, we came up with all the ideas, not only for one box set, but well beyond that – if the series continues of course..."

Getting original cast members involved was key for David. "Without a doubt. The idea was that the new

> Omega Factor be built very firmly on the foundations of the old. This is a continuation of the story, admittedly decades later. Lou and Natasha are intrinsic parts of that developing story... and quite rightly too."

Matt explains the series set-up involves the arrival of a new character, who acts as the audience's eyes and ears: "Partnered with Dr Anne Reynolds we have John Dorney coming in as Adam, the estranged son of Tom, James Hazeldine's character,

the journalist in the original series. Anne sees a spark in him and the pair become friends."

David continues: "We thought of John for Adam and then moved on. Ridiculously, even though I knew he was perfect for the role, I was worried it was too easy – we'd written it and then cast someone we knew very well. Surely we had to look around? Then after months of looking around, we came back to John because he was absolutely perfect. Actually, he is extraordinary in this series. He's a brilliant actor anyway, but that tends to be overlooked at Big Finish sometimes in favour of his superb scripts. But **The Omega Factor** allows him to take centre stage and show everyone what he can do – and he can do extraordinary things."

John was delighted to be cast as Adam, as most people tend to think of him first and foremost as a writer for Big Finish. He says: "I'm always very excited to be acting as I've been concentrating on the writing side for a while now and sometimes, people forget what I can do. To be honest, it was a huge surprise to be asked, as I hadn't thought I'd be on anybody's radar for it. David emailed me the offer and it was a bit of a jaw-dropping moment – saying yes was a nobrainer. Of course I was going to do it – why wouldn't I?

"It was great to get back in front of the microphone in the studio. Most of the stuff I've done for Big Finish haven't been huge parts, so at first, it was a bit odd coming in and being one of the leads. That means you're in the recording "I'm always very excited to be acting as I've been concentrating on the writing side and sometimes, people forget what I can do!"

JOHN DORNEY

booths more often, when you're a guest you don't tend to have as much to record, so you get to spend more time outside and socialising in the green room.

"As a main character, you're in about 50 per cent of each episode, which is more physically demanding and there's also an awful lot more pressure at the same time. Before you know it, the afternoon's gone, but you pull through it." Lou adds: "We had the lovely Jimmy Hazeldine and now we've got John Dorney playing his son. They are very different characters, but both very lovely!"

HE FIRST series from Big Finish features four tales in the box set, From Beyond by Matt Fitton, The Old Gods by Phil Multyne, Legion by Cavan Scott and The Hollow Earth by Ken Bentley. Ken has also directed all four episodes. He recalls: "It was an interesting recording. Mostly everything we do at Big Finish is actors playing roles they're very familiar with. This time both leads were pretty much new to their roles.

"Louise hadn't played the character for some time and, since we were bringing the story into the present day, a lot of water had flowed under her character's bridge. John was creating a role for the first time, so we spent more time discussing these characters than we had on anything else l've worked on, figuring out who they were and how they should be brought to life on audio." Morag returns in *Legion* and it was a tremendous experience for Natasha. She says: "Working with Big Finish was just great fun and I was sorry I was only in for one day. I spoke to them afterwards and have asked them about wanting to come in and do more – I really hope I can get back in for another one sometime. I love the way they work, as I hadn't done any radio for quite a number of years. It's great – you get to meet everyone first and it was so much better than I'd expected, you go in with your script into your own little box, have a read through and then record.

"In the new Big Finish play, Morag screams and has finally found her voice – she's a complete, raving nutter!"

Lou was especially delighted to see her old co-star. "It was lovely to see Natasha again, as we'd worked on the original TV series together. She's very, very good."

Natasha continues: "Louise hasn't changed a bit – it's such good fun. We met up for lunch in London beforehand and had a good chat about **The Omega Factor**.

"I have to say, Louise did a great job with reading the audiobook last year – she had a tough time of it because there were so many male characters. I've watched all of my dad's telly, but hadn't read any of his books, so it was great hearing Louise reading it. It was lovely to hear it."

The Omega Factor promises to be something different from what Big Finish usually produces. Ken said: "Unlike theatre, film or television, audio drama is often a solitary experience. The Omega Factor embraces this and aims to give the listener a more sensory, visceral and thrilling experience than anything else Big Finish have produced."

David agreed: "I think it's going to be brilliant. Just as with **Survivors** we set out to make a very adult drama, with **The Omega Factor** we set out to make a very scary and atmospheric supernatural thriller. Listen to it late at night, in the dark and on your own!"

"I really can't wait to hear what the finished plays sound like," admits Louise. "I absolutely loved doing it and I just love working for Big Finish, full stop. They will fit work around my schedule, which is so rare." Natasha concludes: "I just hope everyone likes it and it really takes off."

The Omega Factor: Audiobook of the Novel



Written by JACK GERSON Read by LOUISE JAMESON

Journalist Tom Crane is having nightmares. Researching a series on the occult for his Sunday newspaper, he disturbs dark forces that change his life forever.

Beset by inexplicable and terrifying events, Crane becomes entangled with

Dr Anne Reynolds and the affairs of Department 7, a secret government unit.

As occult powers range against him, he must unlock the potential of his own mind to survive. Together, Tom Crane and Department 7 must confront... The Omega Factor.

OUT NOW ON CD AND DOWNLOAD!

KATY MANNING AND KENNY SMITH ENJOY SOME.. HAPPY THYSE SOME. HAPPY THYSE SOME.

T'S VERY exciting – I love the new set up," admits a bubbly but exhausted Katy Manning. It's easy to think Katy's talking about the **Third Doctor Box Set** (more on that next month), but actually, we're discussing the return of trans-temporal adventuress Iris Wildthyme, in Wildthyme Reloaded.

For the uninitiated, since 2002, Katy has brought Paul Magrs' eccentric creation to life for Big Finish, travelling through time and space in her double-decker bus.

The new series consists of eight, thirty-minute episodes, which sees Iris take on extraterrestrial werewolves, ancient oracles, haunted planets... and even the dreaded Scorchies! One of the biggest changes sees a change of sidekick for Iris, as David Benson, who has been her sidekick Panda, isn't around in this new box set.

"I miss my Panda!" Katy says. "I love dear David Benson and I missed not having him around, but sometimes you do need to change things to freshen it up. I'm sure we've not seen the last of Panda, as Iris will always go back for him.

"It's a great idea to put Iris with different companions and now I've got dear Captain Turner (Geoffrey Breton), so it's a whole new dynamic again. It's like changing Doctors and companions – it helps keep things fresh and moving forwards. That's the secret."

Iris Wildthyme: Katy Manning

"IF SOMEONE'S HEARD AN IRIS PLAY BEFORE, THIS NEW SERIES WILL DEFINITELY NOT BE WHAT THEY EXPECT!"

> "I think it works terrifically well for Iris, as she can have a whole adventure, far quicker – badda bing, badda-boom! It's a great idea and it's really changed things."

"The storylines are just so good. As with anything that's been running for a while, the more you do, the more you enjoy them. If someone's heard

an Iris play before, this new series will definitely not be what they expect!"

AUL HAS enjoyed the collaborative process with Scott on crafting the eight new adventures. "Scott and I worked for about 18 months

together on my first Radio 4 play, a couple of years ago. "He's great to work with and more Iris seemed like a good thing to work on together next.

"It's nice to work with Scott and it all seemed like it went very well. But my involvement was all writing and reading and editing. Writing is so hard! I think there's a broader range of settings and kinds of stories. There are more of them in one series and with the shorter episodes, they are punchier and more succinct."

"And," says Katy, "we have such great writers. I was really chuffed when Big Finish told me Iris was coming back, as she's been about on audio for 13 years now. I just love playing her.

"She's a character who I've always tried to not make onedimensional and I've tried to put in little bits of pathos in

Above: Geoffrey Breton and Katy Manning

OR THE uninitiated, who is Iris? Iris's creator Paul Magrs says: "Iris is your favourite slightly crazy auntie, who could get away with saying the most terrible and hilarious things at just the wrong moment. She can travel anywhere in her double-decker bus and get involved in any kind of story. Time, space and genre have absolutely no hold on her. It's ten years since she first got her own series with Big Finish and she's never been more fabulous."

New producer Scott Handock agrees: "Iris is big, bold, brash and utterly bonkers – a bit like the mad aunt you only ever meet at family weddings. In short, she's a lot of fun. She enjoys adventuring and saving the world, but she can also be fallible. And the fact she has a massive heart only makes her all the more endearing. She's always striving to do her best for a universe that isn't always on her side, but she'll never let the odds against her get her down – and her new adventures showcase every facet!"

Katy is delighted with the eight new plays. She says: "It's really interesting, as Scott has learned his craft from Gary Russell, as he was there at the very beginning and now, here he is, producing it, in a new half-hour format.





"WHEN I GET INTO THE STUDIO, IRIS JUST TAKES OVER! SHE INHABITS MY BODY AND I'M CONE!"

there. There's so much going on in that head of hers, all the time. Paul Magrs created such an extraordinary character when he came up with Iris."

HE NEW plays are written by James Goss, Nick Campbell, Mark B Oliver, Roy Gill, Hamish Steele, Cavan Scott, and Scott and Paul.

Scott stresses: "The joy of Iris, like her creator, Paul Magrs, is she's never restricted by one particular genre. The new series pitches her headlong into all manner of different adventures: we have a big old musical escapade with the ever-popular Scorchies, a traditional murder mystery with an Iris twist, heartfelt conversations in a London bar courtesy of Magrs himself, not to mention haunted houses, supermarket oracles, space casinos, phantom planets and an extraterrestrial werewolf in Belgium!

"I think I'm safe to say that no two episodes are alike and the new dynamic that Iris shares with Captain Turner – and that Katy and Geoffrey Breton had in studio – gives this entire series a brand-new energy all its own!"

Talking of Captain Turner, how would Paul describe him? "He's dashing and bemused and he comes from the time of Jane Austen. He's a kind of nineteenth century Harry Sullivan, but even sexier. He's a character I had almost forgotten about, but in planning this season, Scott reminded me of this character from the first-ever **Doctor Who** story I published, back in 1998 in the first Short Trips collection from BBC Books.

"Captain Turner appears in *Old Flames* alongside a slightly different, rather naughtier version of Iris, the Fourth Doctor and Sarah Jane Smith. There is a BBC Audio reading still available and, if you can track it down, you will hear *Old Flames* performed by Nicholas Courtney. It is a fact known by only a handful that the first person ever to play Iris Wildthyme on audio was Nick Courtney. When I told her that, a couple of years ago, Katy Manning was very amused."

Scott adds: "He's a British army captain from the eighteenth-century – full of bluster and bravado and the stiffest of upper-lips – making him a brilliant foil for Iris. Obviously, we were all a little cautious about losing Panda – as played by the brilliant David Benson – but we had a taster of the new dynamic in **The Worlds of Big Finish** and all agreed it allowed us to do new things with Iris. The difficulty with Panda is he could sometimes restrict the stories and, being a talking stuffed toy, he was always the most out-there character by default.

Iris Wildthyme: Katy Manning



Iris Wildthyme: Wildthyme Reloaded

Join trans-temporal adventuress Iris Wildthyme for a series of eight brand-new half-hour episodes as she travels through time and space aboard her trusty double-decker bus, accompanied by her new friend Captain Turner!

COMEBACK OF THE SCORCHIES

DARK SIDE

ORACLE OF THE SUPERMARKET

MURDER AT THE ABBEY

THE SLOTS OF GIZA

HIGH SPIRITS

AN EXTRATERRESTIRAL WEREWOLF IN BELGIUM

LOOKING FOR A FRIEND

DIRECTED BY: Scott Handcock

WRITTEN BY: James Goss, Nick Campbell, Roy Gill, Mark B. Oliver, Hamish Steele, Cavan Scott, Scott Handcock and Paul Magrs

STARRING: Katy Manning, Geoffrey Breton, Ian Hallard, Chris Rankin, Nicola Bryant, Lisa Bowerman, David Warner, Charlie Hayes, Toby Longworth, Tracey Childs, Stephen Fewell, Lizzie Hopley, David Blackwell, Scott Handcock

OUT: THIS MONTH!



Above: Katy Manning as Iris Wildthyme!

"Captain Turner, conversely, allows Iris to reclaim centre-stage, whilst grounding her in some of her most madcap adventures yet! And obviously I can't heap enough praise on the wonderful Geoffrey Breton who grabbed the role of the Captain with both hands and really embraced the spirit of Iris Wildthyme!"

HE PRODUCTION team and their leading lady are confident that the new series of Iris is something that everyone should try.

Scott explains: "Wildthyme Reloaded is very different from previous Iris series. The joy of Iris is she's existed in so many formats. She's appeared alongside the good Doctor in books and audios, had her own series of novels and short stories, not to mention Big Finish's audio adventures. She's travelled all over the multiverse with all manner of different people and this was just an opportunity to showcase her in a whole new light!

"Unlike past series, we're embracing the half-hour duration this time round. It's a format I really enjoy as it allows you to keep stories really focused, which is particularly useful with anything comedic as you don't end up killing the joke which can sometimes happen if you have to stretch it out over an hour. It also means we get twice as many stories in the same amount of time – so Iris gets involved in all manner of strange adventures, with even stranger characters in a host of different settings."

And Katy adds: "I feel very privileged to play Iris – I love her, she's delicious! When I get into the studio, she just takes over! She inhabits my body and I'm gone! When I come to do Iris, it reminds me of why I love acting – there's no vestiges of me at all.

"The new set is an absolute must. Until you try it, you can't possibly know what it's like. We're always getting new people coming onboard and once they had, they'll tell you, 'Why didn't I listen to this before?'

"You need to hear Iris to fully understand her – and once you 'get' her, you'll find her warm, funny and wonderful. We have great guest actors and great stories – and with a new friend at her side, it's got to be heard."

Katy concludes: "What's really amazed me – and to be honest, most things amaze me, even waking up in the morning – is how much Iris has taken off in America.

"She's got a pretty big cult following there now and when you go to conventions, you can see people dressed up like her.

"Iris has now been around for a long time and always had a good following, so it will be interesting to see how this new series goes." **VORTEX**

BETTER THE DEVILYOU KNOW

Kenny Smith is afraid to leave a carving knife around when it's time for Christmas dinner in Collinsport...

HRISTMAS IS a happy time, for loved ones to get together and celebrate the good times. Except, of course, when it's Christmas in Collinsport. This month's **Dark Shadows** release, *Deliver Us From Evil*, explores what happens when a man with the son of the Devil in his head and his ex-werewolf ex-girlfriend meet a young British serial killer and his possessed-by-an-18th-century-serial-killergirlfriend. At Christmas.

Co-producers Joseph Lidster and David Darlington set the scene: "Following on from *Bloodlust*, we knew we wanted to concentrate on moving the **Dark Shadows** story forward but we'd left two threads dangling from earlier releases – what happened to serial killers Alfie and Danielle from *Beneath The Veil*? And what happened to **Dark Shadows**' twisted take on Romeo and Juliet, Cyrus and Sabrina from *The Enemy Within*?

"Long-term listeners will know that Sabrina is Amy Cunningham's sister-in-law and so, a couple of months after the events of *Bloodlust*, the two women meet and Sabrina tells her story... But who could write for four such twisted characters? Aaron Lamont has written for us a couple of times before and he specializes in putting the dark into **Dark Shadows**..." Writer Aaron confirms he is no stranger to the world of **Dark Shadows**. He explains: "In lots of ways I got lucky. I knew James Goss socially and he brought Joe along to see a play I'd written called *Safer* in 2010. It was about an elderly couple who'd boarded themselves up in their flat after the apparent collapse of society – but the situation was actually a little more twisted than that.

"I think the black humour sold it to them, so I got to do The Haunted Refrain and Beyond The Grave – and (breathes a sigh of relief) they both went down very well. Joe lets me play with really dark, nasty stuff because it fits **Dark Shadows**. Basically he thinks I'm evil, so I keep getting employed."

What's the process for writing a Dark Shadows play?

"I got the standard brief from Joe for the first two," says Aaron. "Joe said I had to 'write a *Tales Of The Unexpected* and I'll handle the continuity.' But with this one, he gave me a shopping list – 'You have these characters, these actors and I want this to happen. Go away and do what you do.' So, after a mild anxiety attack and lots of emails to and from Joe, that's what I did. And I got to play with the Son of the Dark Lord as well, so *Deliver US From Evil* has ended up a full-blown **Omen**-



Deliver Us from Evil

Cyrus Longworth - the man who has carried the Son of the Dark Lord in his head since the day he was born.

Sabrina Jennings - the woman who murdered her husband on their wedding night.

Alfie Chapman - the British tourist with a psychopathic streak.

And Danielle Roget - the French murderess who possesses his girlfriend's body.

Unknown to all them, they are caught in a tangled web of the Dark Lord's making, which on this night will bring them together and see the culmination of a diabolical plan stretching back since the dawn of time. Because the Dark Lord has manipulated them all. And all hell is about to break loose.

WRITTEN BY: Aaron Lamont

DIRECTED BY: Ursula Burton and David Darlington

STARRING: Christopher Pennock, Lisa Richards, Simon Kent, Brigid Lohrey, James Unsworth, Stephanie Ellyne, John Askew, Wallace McBride, Ryan Wichert

OUT: THIS MONTH!

style psychological horror – nothing will ever be the same for the characters involved. I also think it's hilariously funny, but then my sense of humour is spectacularly warped."

Prior to working on **Dark Shadows**, Aaron admits he was aware of it without knowing all of its ins and outs. He ever write again. So the whole thing was hard at first. And it's a complex plot. On the one hand, there's Sabrina and Cyrus – both with their own personal (and literal) demons, but essentially nice, ordinary people. On the other, there's Alfie and Danielle – a psychotic Brit and the French



Above: Aaron Lamont, James Unsworth, Brigid Lohrey and Simon Kent

"Deliver Us From Evil has ended up a full-blown **Omen**-style psychological horror."

admits: "I'd heard of it before working on it, but only seen bits and bobs. Now, I know all the audios and half the TV storylines inside out and was on tenterhooks waiting for each episode of *Bloodlust* to arrive – that was just amazing. Joe is determined that I will watch the whole series eventually, but I'm resisting on the basis that I really don't need to develop yet another obsession. And it is compulsive viewing, there's no doubt about that. Welcome to Collinsport, I'll never leave..."

Writing Deliver Us From Evil was a challenge for Aaron. "I hadn't written a word since finishing Beyond The Grave," he reveals, "and was so badly blocked I seriously didn't think I would murderess possessing his girlfriend's body. Something is bringing them all together... Oh, and it's also the Coming of the Apocalypse. I'd lost a considerable amount of hair by draft three, but it's hopefully been worth it."

What was the writer's highlight of the process? He laughs: "Being told that I was sick by everybody who read the finished script. Hearing the Andrew Mongomery song *Waiting For Me* for the first time and bouncing around the room in excitement. Hearing the dialogue edit and realising the cast were delivering astonishingly good performances. Actually, just getting the chance to do it – that's the real highlight."

Jamie McCrimmon in a story with the Fourth Doctor and Leela? How can it be? Frazer Hines talks to Kenny Smith.

HEN you think about it," says Frazer Hines, "Jamie and Leela would get on brilliantly, wouldn't they? They both act first out of instinct, rather thank thinking about it. They both carry knives. They both have their own way of speaking.

A STORY

"They're just really interesting characters."

Vortex can't say too much about the plot of *Return to Telos* without spoiling the surprise of how the Fourth Doctor and Leela, as well as Jamie and Bernard Holley – recreating his role as Peter Haydon from *The Tomb of the Cybermen* – all appear in the same adventure.

Frazer says: "It just shows, with **Doctor Who**, anything is possible. I hadn't seen Bernard for years, as our paths hadn't crossed in that time, but he was as good as ever. "I still think it's amazing they found *The Tomb of the Cybermen* – for years, everyone had said it was the story they had most wanted to see and then it turned up in Hong Kong – amazing.

"Then a couple of years ago, *The Enemy of the World* and *The Web of Fear* were next to show up. It just goes to show, you never know what's out there. I've no idea if they've found any more, but I'm like everyone else on this one -1 live in hope there's more to see."

For Frazer, it's the morning after the night before. He is talking to *Vortex* the day after the opening of the play **And Then There Were None** and he's in a great mood. "There's always a fantastic spirit when you're doing a Big Finish play," he beams. "I've known Louise [Jameson] for years, so it was

Doctor Who: Frazer Hines



Doctor Who: Return to Telos

The Doctor reveals to Leela that they're heading for the planet Telos. And K9 has new masters...

On Telos, in the past, the Second Doctor and Jamie are exploring the 'tomb of the Cybermen'.

Meanwhile, the Cyber-Controller and Cyber-Planner consolidate their plans. Spare parts from Krelos are being used to construct a mighty Cyber army. The Doctor must be captured.

Out of control, the TARDIS tumbles down a chasm and the Doctor and Leela find themselves caught up in full-scale planetary invasion.

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY: Nicholas Briggs

STARRING: Tom Baker, Louise Jameson, John Leeson, Frazer Hines, Michael Cochrane, Bernard Holley, Veronica Roberts, Nicholas Briggs.

OUT: THIS MONTH!

great to be able to catch up with her and be at the same recording."

Writer Nicholas Briggs says there's lots of enjoyment to be had in writing for Frazer as Jamie. He admits: "For me it's huge fun, because Frazer's time on **Doctor Who** was that essential, formative time that all fans experience during one era or another.

"I certainly watched the latter end of the First Doctor's era and had enjoyed it enough to be mortified when William Hartnell's Doctor

> seemed to by dying, but it was Patrick Troughton's time as the Doctor that cemented what was to become a

"Everyone was saying how much like Patrick Troughton I sounded."

"It's an all-out Troughton style adventure, with the sort of added, visual scope that perhaps a *TV Comic* strip or Target novelisation might add. For me it was a total summing up of all the feelings I got from that era. There are plenty of Cybermen in it too! The experience of writing for Frazer to play Jamie was no less filled with that delight."



Above: Bernard Holley and Frazer Hines

lifelong love of the series. And Jamie was a huge, essential part of that.

"So actually writing for part of that era sent tingles of delight down my spine. I confessed to Frazer and Wendy, when they did *Legend of the Cybermen*, that hearing them acting together as Jamie and Zoe actually made me sob with uncontrollable, nostalgic delight. It felt like a slice of my innocent past suddenly coming to life again. Magical. With Frazer having done so many Companion Chronicles over the years, it's strange to think he only made his debut for Big Finish in November 2007, in *Helicon Prime*, a play in the second series of the range. And, of course, his impression of his old sparring partner Patrick Troughton has fast become the stuff of legend.

"The strange thing is," Frazer says, "when Gary Russell was the producer at Big Finish, I never did any of the

Doctor Who: Frazer Hines



Above (and inset): Frazer Hines and Louise Jameson

"I reckon I should be paid double since I'm playing Jamie and the Doctor!"

plays. I was a bit disappointed, as I've been the longestrunning companion, but he said he didn't like mixing up companions with other Doctors.

"Just after Gary left Big Finish and they launched the Companion Chronicles, I was delighted when I got a call asking if I'd come in and do one. Nigel Fairs was directing and I read the first three or four pages. I then did it again, but tried to make the Doctor sound more like Patrick and everyone was saying how much like him I sounded. To be honest, I started doing it for myself, more than anything, to make him sound different from Jamie and it's stuck since then. I've been given more and more to do as the Doctor.

"The voice is always there – with Jamie, I'm playing it a bit higher to sound like I did back then and it needs to be balanced out and brought down deeper for Pat, who was that bit older.

"I think David Troughton played his dad in another play (BBC Audio's **Hornet's Nest** series) and I thought he sounded like Patrick, but when I'm doing it, I think I sound more like Patrick's Doctor."

Frazer has become a Big Finish regular, appearing in a 2010 monthly range trilogy with Colin Baker (*City of Spires, Wreck of the Titan* and *Legend of the Cybermen*), as well as *Last of the Cybermen* in June this year.

But the actor says his favourite play to date came in the form of the Second Doctor Lost Stories boxed set. He admits: "I'd always wanted to do Prison in Space and we had so much fun recording it. What a shame we did The Krotons instead! I think we'd all rather have done Prison in Space – and it's funny to think it was turned into The Worm That Turned for The Two Ronnies!

"When I found my copy of the script, I mentioned it to Jason Haigh-Ellery and he suggested I send it to David Richardson.



It's one of my favourite things I've done for Big Finish." Frazer will be back as Jamie again for four new plays, starting in September, as part of the Early Adventures series - The Yes Men by Simon Guerrier (with Anneke as Polly and Elliot Chapman as Ben Jackson), The Forsaken written by Justin Richards (with Anneke and Elliot again), The Black Hole by Simon Guerrier (with Deborah Watling back as Victoria) and The Isos Network, written by

Nicholas Briggs (with Wendy Padbury as Zoe). Nick admits that being friendly with an actor can inform how he writes for their character. "I've known both Wendy and Frazer for some years now, through all the **Doctor Who** stuff, so I have come to know what suits them. So yes, it does help to know the actor you're writing for. And they're both so good at playing those characters. With Jamie and Zoe, they made them, they define them. So I do hear their voices when I write for them."

Frazer adds: "It's always good fun getting back with Anneke, Debbie and Padders. We see each other now and again at conventions, but it's always a good laugh when we get together again in the studio.

"It's funny how time passes, but we still get on like we used to back in the day. That's another of the great things about Big Finish – you get paid to do some good work, but you meet up with old friends as well.

"I still reckon I should be paid double since I'm playing Jamie and the Doctor!" VORTEX

MEET THE MAKERS

Bringing *Return To Telos* to life this month is musician and sound designer Jamie Robertson



FTER RECEIVING all the necessary files from the studios, I load in the wav files and start the process of Vox editing. This is where we start compiling the correct takes, more often than not, this is the final take, but on some occasions it could be the second or first depending on which the director prefers. This is often written on the script, there are a variety of reasons why this is, for instance the pronunciation on a certain word, or just the general speed of the scene is better on an alternative take.

I go through each and every page of the script; the correct takes and scenes are then all put in order. This will generally be the first time that the story is in the correct script order. So it's quite an honour at times to hear the story first as it should be.

Once dialogue is completed, we then process actors' voices needing effects. Nick [Briggs] does all Cybermen and Daleks in the studio, he is the one who knows best on those!

For the sound FX side, I like to make the soundscapes as epic and cinematic as possible, but of course with releases like **The Fourth Doctor Adventures**, we try to use classic sound styles as well as modern.

Over the years I've had the opportunity to make great sounds, including the Master's TARDIS for the 50th anniversary story *The Light at the End*. I recently brought

this back in the Tom Baker series. The 'Wworp Vworp' sound was actually me taking the classic 'house key up and down a piano string', but this time I played it up and down a guitar and added it to the original to create a more evil sound.

When I finally come to doing the music, having worked on the vox and sound design, I have a clear idea of any themes, stabs and stings I want to do. I used to get notes like: 'You've left a gap', but now I think most directors know 'Aha, Jamie is sticking a musical sting in there'.

I've had it drummed into me to write to the picture, but don't let the music overwhelm unless it's required. Over the years, directors for film and TV, from indie stuff to commercial productions, have asked, "Can you help? The scene's not working and we need music to help it."

But when it comes to the audio dramas, you have to remember that the actors' voices are always the dominant characters in the mix. I always see music as a character within the story. Having created musical themes for characters such as the Fourth and Eighth Doctors, I think it's fun when you listen back to musical suites or soundtrack CDs, you can actually imagine the point in the story where that musical cue was.

You would actually be surprised how much music there is throughout, some can be low drones, others band or orchestral pieces for when we want more emotion or drama etc. Recreating ambiences is something that does need to be attempted, sometimes you can recreate, other times you may need to re-sample things. For this, I have to thank Nick and also Martin Montague – I swear over the years he's remade tons of FX from every sci-fi series going!

It is still fun – I've loved working on **The Fourth Doctor Adventures.** As a composer you can develop themes and continue them on in the series. Tom Baker's series has had some fun stuff this past year and having a look at the scripts for the next, I can't wait to get rolling on them...

The other fun side of things is for me to drop in little themes, especially the last scene of *The Fate of Krelos* – I was itching to do that scene! (Careful Jamie – don't want to give any spoilers to those not at the series finale yet, but I've been waiting to use that theme again for a long time...) **VORTEX**

FIND AND REPLACE

Kenny Smith digs outs his flares and travels back to the 1970s...

ATY MANNING is vocally versatile – we all know that. The differences between Jo Grant and Iris Wildthyme couldn't be starker and there are times when it's hard to believe that sweet, innocent Jo and the worldlier Iris, are brought to life by the same actress.

To date, Jo and Iris have crossed paths twice, the first of which came in *Find and Replace*, in September 2010, in Paul Magrs' **Companion Chronicle** that was a perfect tribute to all that was great about the Jon Pertwee era of **Doctor Who**.

Producer David Richardson sums it up succinctly: "It's a love letter to the Pertwee era and a story about the power of nostalgia.

"I think this is one of Katy's finest hours (among so many fine hours...) She plays both Jo Grant and Iris – both parts recorded as live in the studio – and then delicately leads us by the hand into the emotional territory of episode two. I think it's impossible to listen without shedding a few tears."

Bringing together Jo and Iris was Paul Magrs, the creator of the trans-temporal adventuress. He explains: "It was an idea I'd always wanted to try out and so did Katy – so it was a wonderful convergence. She's so great, I knew she could do anything like that. In the end she surprised even me – by recording them all in real time, note perfect."

The story is poignant and the emotion of the older Jo meeting the Doctor is just heartbreaking, with the words serving as a message not just from Jo to the Doctor, but from Katy to Jon Pertwee.

Paul said: "Precisely. Katy knew exactly what it was all about straight away. So did everyone involved. It's an especially charmed moment. It's the older Jo telling her Doctor – I could never forget you. Even if my life depended on it, I wouldn't forget you. You can't make me forget you. That wouldn't be fair. It's kind of me responding to what happened to poor Donna on TV."

Katy too was delighted with the play. She reveals: "I'd done a couple of **Companion Chronicles**, but after that, I felt I'd done enough and didn't want to do any more. I



"It's a love letter to the Pertwee era and a story about the power of nostalgia."

didn't want to do them without Jon. As a mother of twins, it's strange having one without the other and that's how I felt about Jo and the Doctor. But then Paul Magrs came up with this brilliant script, *Find and Replace* and everything changed. At the back of my little head, I had wondered what it would be like if Jo were to meet Iris.

"By bringing them together, it's something I know Mr Pertwee would have appreciated, as another voice actor. Jon would have loved wonderful, wacky Iris. The script really just lifted me, so in a way it gave me another chance to work with Jon as I was playing him. To add in Jo and Iris was just a great experience. I can honestly say, hand on heart, that it's my absolute favourite thing of all time. It really opened a door for me – it's something I felt really happy with and in some ways it felt like completion for me, knowing that I could play Jo without Jon being there in person." **VORTEX**

Find and Replace is available now on CD and download from bigfinish.com.

VORTEX MAIL

KLEIN, ALL KLEIN

I wanted to know if Klein will come back soon and if she could meet another Doctor (even one before Sylvester).

Thank you for all the wonderful stories. VICTOR BRUNERIE

Nick: Well, there's a continuity nightmare to set our minds reeling. I certainly wouldn't rule it out, but we have no plans for this currently. Tracey is blooming marvellous in the part, though, isn't she?

A CHANGE OF IDENTITY

I am writing about the **Early Adventures** I purchased at a convention. I don't think I'll buy another. I love your **Doctor Who** ranges and buy as many of the main range as I can. I was branching out with the early Doctors and found the fact that you refuse to recast that role very annoying. If these were the only adventures available, it might be different but you have many other stories I give a higher priority.

I listen to Dark Shadows and adjusted to a new Barnabas. I don't know Sapphire and Steel from TV but I love that you recast. You also have new actors in The Avengers. What makes Doctor Who so special? I hope you take this letter in the spirit it was intended. I mean no disrespect to the actors who have passed on and would not be writing if your policy was consistent. I would not agree with it but I would understand it.

JUSTINE LAVALLEE

Nick: I absolutely see your point, Justine, but it's a sensitive issue for many people and I feel we must respect that. That said, we have more or less recast the Third Doctor. True, the actor who plays him in our upcoming release, Tim Treloar, does do the narration as well, but in many ways that's a device by which those who are uncomfortable about recasting the Doctor can 'allow it', by thinking, Ah well, he's the narrator speaking the Doctor's lines. But for the most part, Tim is simply playing the Third Doctor in full cast drama. And in many ways, Peter Purves or Frazer Hines, for example, are playing the First and Second Doctor respectively in these adventures. So in a way, it is a recasting, but they're also taking on their companion roles too. But I would never rule a change of approach out.

SARAH JANE ADVENTURES

I am a long time fan and have many of your plays. I loved it when you did the **Doctor Who** Lost Stories and now with your **UNIT** stories and **Torchwood**, it seems to be a good time to send you this email.

For a long time, in fact from the moment I heard of Elisabeth Sladen's passing, I thought that somehow those last three stories of **The Sarah Jane Adventures** should be completed – *Meet Mr Smith, The Thirteenth Floor* and *The Battle for Bannerman Road.* With the cast, you could do as you have done in the past in the **Companion Chronicles** with the Doctors who are not still with us. **TOM CRAMES**

Nick: We currently don't have any plans to do this, Tom.

MONSTER MANIA

I was wondering if a series with the Second Doctor featuring Frazer Hines as the Doctor is on the cards, as he's brilliant doing Patrick Troughton's s voice. As Tom Baker has his own series with Leela, it would be great to hear the Second Doctor have a series.

When I was at the Comic Con last year which you attended in Cardiff, I was talking to a woman outside the hall waiting to listen to the Big Finish interview that day and what's strange about it was, she didn't know anything about the productions! I kindly told her what you've done over the years and that many old monsters and past Doctors are in the stories, which are the same as on TV but no visuals. She sounded interested and said she would look up the audios on your site. I hope she becomes a fan like myself. ANDREW MacFETTERS

Nick: Thanks for the marketing work, Andrew! Very much appreciated. Frazer is, of course, playing the Second Doctor in the **Early Adventures**. Worth checking out.

MORE GERRY?

Are there any more Gerry Anderson adaptations planned? I would love to hear continuations of UFO and Space: 1999. Also, will there be any more 2000AD stories? IAN SUTHERLAND

Nick: lan, we would love to do adaptations of these series and others by the great Gerry Anderson, but currently ITV are not offering them for licensing. No current plans for more **2000AD**. Although they were popular with those who listened – and I think they represent some our best work – they weren't runaway successes in terms of sales, which admittedly did surprise us. It just goes to show...

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

Coming up...

RELEASE SCHEDULE Forthcoming audio releases.

AUGUST 2015

Doctor Who: The Warehouse
(202, Seventh Doctor and Mel)
Doctor Who – The Fourth Doctor
Adventures: Return to Telos
(4.8, Fourth Doctor and Leela)
Doctor Who – Short Trips:
Foreshadowing (5.08, Download only)
Iris Wildthyme:
Wildthyme Reloaded (Box Set)
The Omega Factor:
Series 1 Box Set (Full Cast)
Deliver Us From Evil (48)
Blake's 7: Book 8: Mediasphere
(Kate Orman and Jonathan Blum)

SEPTEMBER 2015

Doctor Who: Terror of the Sontarans (203, Seventh Doctor and Mel) Doctor Who: Criss-Cross (204. Sixth Doctor and Constance) Doctor Who: The Sixth Doctor – The Last Adventure (Special Edition) Doctor Who – The Early Adventures: The Yes Men (2.1. Second Doctor) Doctor Who – Short Trips: Etheria (5.09, Download only) Doctor Who – The Third Doctor Adventures: Box Set Torchwood: The Conspracy (1.1, Captain Jack Harkness) Dark Shadows: Tainted Love (49) ■ Big Finish Classics: The Wonderful Wizard of Oz This Is Colin Baker (Colin Baker Interview)

OCTOBER 2015 Doctor Who: Planet of the Rani (205, Sixth Doctor and Constance) Doctor Who – The Early Adventures: The Forsaken (2.2, Second Doctor) Doctor Who – Short Trips:

The Way of the Empty Hand (5.10, Download only) Doctor Who: Doom Coalition 1

- (Eighth Doctor)
- Torchwood: Fall to Earth (1.2)
- Jago & Litefoot: Series 10 Box Set
- Dark Shadows: And Red All Over (50)

NOVEMBER 2015 Doctor Who: Shield of the Jötunn

(206, Sixth Doctor and Constance) ■ Doctor Who – The Early Adventures: The Black Hole

(2.3, Second Doctor)
■ Doctor Who – Short Trips:
The Other Woman

(5.11, Download only) UNIT: The New Series: UNIT: Extinction (1.1, Kate Stewart) Torchwood: TBA (1.3) Survivors - Series 3 Box Set (Full Cast) Blake's 7: The Liberator Chronicles - Box Set 12 Dorian Gray: Series Four

DECEMBER 2015 Doctor Who: You Are The Doctor (And Other Stories) (207 Seventh Dector and Ace) Doctor Who – The Novel Adaptations: Theatre of War (07 Seventh Doctor, Ace and Bernice) Doctor Who – The Novel Adaptations: All-Consuming Fire (08 Seventh Doctor, Ace and Bernice) Doctor Who – Short Trips: Black Dog (5.12, Download only) Doctor Who – The Early Adventures: The ISOS Network (2.4, Second Doctor) Torchwood: TBA (1.4)

The Confessions of Dorian Gray: The Spirits of Christmas

JANUARY 2016 Doctor Who:

The Waters of Amsterdam (208, Fifth Doctor, Tegan and Nyssa) ■ Doctor Who – The Fourth Doctor Adventures:

Wave of Destruction (5.1, Fourth Doctor and Romana II)

Doctor Who: The Diary of River Song (Box Set) Doctor Who: Short Trips TBA (6.01, TBA, Download only) Torchwood: TBA (1.5)

The Prisoner: Volume 1 Box Set The Avengers – The Lost Episodes:

Volume 5 (Box Set)

Charlotte Pollard: Series Two Box Set

FEBRUARY 2016 Doctor Who: Aquitane (209,Fifth Doctor, Tegan and Nyssa) Doctor Who - Fourth Doctor Adventures:The Labyrinth of Buda Castle (5.2, Fourth Doctor and Romana III) Doctor Who: Short Trips TBA (6.02, TBA, Download only) Torchwood: TBA (1.6) Gallifrey: Enemy Lines (6. Romana II, Leela and Ace)

Vienna Series 3 (Full Cast)

MARCH 2016 Doctor Who: The Peterloo Massacre (210, Fifth Doctor, Tegan and Nyssa) Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures: The Paradox Planet (5.3, Fourth Doctor and Romana II) Doctor Who: Doom Coalition 2 (Eighth Doctor) Doctor Who: Short Trips TBA (6.03, TBA, Download only)

A PRIL 2016 Doctor Who: TBA (211, TBA) Doctor Who – Fourth Doctor Adventures: The Legacy of Death (5.4, Fourth Doctor and Romana II) Terrahawks: Volume 02 Doctor Who – The Novel Adaptations. Nightshade (Seventh Doctor and Ace) Doctor Who: Short Trips TBA (6.04, TBA, Download only) The Avengers – Steed and Mrs Peel: The Comic Strip Adaptations (Volume 1)

MAY 2016 Doctor Who: Vampire of the Mind (212, Sixth Doctor) Doctor Who – Fourth Doctor Adventures: The Gallery of Ghouls (5.5, Fourth Doctor and Romana II) UNIT: The New Series: TBA (1.2, TBA) Doctor Who: Short Trips TBA (6.05, TBA, Download only)











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