



ANOTHER OF BIG FINISH'S ORIGINAL SERIES IS ON ITS WAY

MURDERED TO DEATH

"I WOULD SUM up *Shilling & Sixpence Investigate* as Agatha Christie meets *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* with a hint of Wilde," says director Samuel Clemens. "A sprawling murder mystery epic. Be sure to keep your ears pricked up for all the juicy details that are woven through it."

Vortex is intrigued. Out for release in September as part of the Big Finish **Originals** range, *Shilling & Sixpence Investigate* takes place in a quirky, dark world where nobody is quite whom they seem.

Starring David Warner and Celia Imrie, these tales are based on a series of murder mystery plays written by Nigel Fairs (the man behind the much-missed Big Finish **Tomorrow People** and **Sapphire & Steel** ranges) which have been running for over 20 years.

Based in Cornwall, *Shilling and Sixpence* have four cases to solve in eight episodes, each re-written

by Nigel Fairs: *The Missing Year* and *Dark Shadows*; *In the Silent Dead of Night* and *A Very Messy Business*; *An Appointment with God* and *The Dying Room*; and *The Face of an Angel* and *The Black Widow*.

Nigel tells *Vortex*: "**Shilling & Sixpence Investigate** is based on a 'murder mystery soap opera' I've been writing since 1996. It started as a monthly dining experience, and has developed into monthly episodes which my theatre company performs in a variety of venues including a jailhouse, a castle and on a steam train. They're always based in a Cornish village, Morlington Hill, and at the moment are set in 1941.

"We get avid followers of the story who come back month after month to find out how their favourite characters are doing – or if they're still alive – or now a murderer!"

"Desmund Shilling (played by David Warner) is an English

teacher who arrives in the village in the first episode. He sees life through the prism of the boys' school that he worked in for many years before taking on the position at Morlington School for Girls, once Morlington Castle.

"The headmistress of the school is the no-nonsense Lavinia Sixpence, played by Celia Imrie. She often locks horns with the local police (Detective Inspector Cribbage, whom I play, and Sergeant Salt, played by Max Day), thinking (usually correctly) that she and Desmond are far more capable of solving the various crimes that happen around the village."

"David I adore, and will always work with given the opportunity. He is literally a theatre legend – his Hamlet was the defining Hamlet of a generation and I know that it was his casting that swayed the wonderful Celia

Imrie to take the job. I've always wanted to work with her, and she was as wonderful as you would expect. Hilarious in the lighter stuff (they both are) and utterly heartbreaking in the darker bits.

"Part of my pitch was that I could use my regular theatre casts – Abi Harris, Max Day, Radley Mason and Beckie Crinnion – all of whom are very fine working actors and feel like family. Into that heady mix I was delighted to add Lisa Bowerman, Matthew Waterhouse and Louise Jameson, all sublime. Everyone understood and ran with the style of the series, and I'm hoping people will love it and want more! Especially as I've dropped in a few tasty teasers to

enough to be able to direct one of my father's plays, *Strictly Murder*.

"When the play came to The Rose Theatre, Kingston, Nigel came to see it and was very complimentary about the production and said then that he'd like me to direct an audio drama he had been writing for Big Finish. That was the first time I learnt of **Shilling & Sixpence Investigate**."

Having heard more, Sam was keen to get involved. He continues: "I was immediately attracted to the incredibly catchy and intriguing name – **Shilling & Sixpence Investigate**. It already sounded like a well established series that had been running for years on television. One



Above (l-r): Radley Mason, Samuel Clemens, Rebecca Crinnion, David Warner, Abi Harris, Celia Imrie and Nigel Fairs

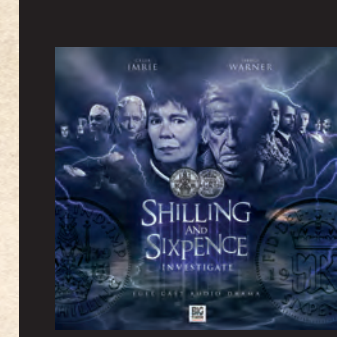
the story arc of the second season and ended the first on a massive cliffhanger, *Dynasty*-style!"

SAM CLEMENS – whose late father Brian was an acclaimed TV writer (*The Avengers*, as well as numerous stage plays) – was delighted to come onboard as director.

He says: "I became involved with the series because of Nigel Fairs. We had worked together on a stage version of *Wait Until Dark* at the Brighton Emporium in 2016 and really clicked. We kept in touch and last year I was fortunate

conjured up thoughts of **Sapphire & Steel**, **Midsomer Murders** or any Agatha Christie mystery, and I knew I wanted to be a part of it purely from the title alone! Once Nigel explained to me the origin of the piece and that it had 21 years of material behind it, I knew it was going to be fantastic. It is so detailed and beautifully complex, and Nigel writes so well – I felt I had hit the jackpot.

"Nigel was quite far into the process of producing when I came on board and after a few discussions of who he thought would be fantastic in the title roles, I totally



BIG FINISH ORIGINALS SHILLING & SIXPENCE

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▶ Director Samuel Clemens

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▶ Cast Celia Imrie, David Warner

THE MISSING YEAR
DARK SHADOWS
IN THE SILENT DEAD OF NIGHT
A VERY MESSY BUSINESS
AN APPOINTMENT WITH GOD
THE DYING ROOM
THE FACE OF AN ANGEL
THE BLACK WIDOW

agreed and we were so lucky to get our first choices. I think Celia and David make a glorious team. You can hear the chemistry of a new dynamic duo being born. It just felt so right and they bounce so wonderfully well off each other."

As previously mentioned, Nigel has set things up for a second series – and there's no end in sight for this investigating pair. He grins: "Desmund and Lavinia are unique to this series, but I've written over a hundred Morlington Mysteries, plus there's a new one every month! The world is growing and growing constantly, and I love it!" **VORTEX**