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FRONTIER IN SPACE



SPACE – THE final frontier, as someone once said. But... is it... really?

Humanity may well travel away from Earth in the future, but surely that's just the beginning rather than the end?

This concept is at the heart of **The Human Frontier**, the latest **Big Finish Original**, an epic science fiction series about exploration – not just of space but of the

human condition. What is good about us? What is bad about us?

Executive producer Nicholas Briggs, who devised this series, is no stranger to developing adventures without a certain Time Lord, having previously created the unique and critically-acclaimed **Dalek Empire** series, which featured the mutants from Skaro.

Vortex asked Nick to sum up what **The Human Frontier** is about. He

says: "It's about two different kinds of humanity coming into contact with each other: a culture-clash of people from hundreds of years apart coming face to face. It's also a love story, a story of a struggle for power and a bit of a murder mystery too. It's a futuristic adventure with all the science fiction trappings, but it's a very human drama at its heart.

"I've always been fascinated by how our society, our assumptions

Genevieve Gaunt (Daisy Bailey)



Peggy Lunkuse (Anna Swift)



discovering a 'colony' of people from 300 years ago. Imagine how we'd differ from them in so many ways."

Vortex suggests that there is an element of 'risk', for want of a word, in creating a series from scratch, unlike writing for the Doctor, **Dalek Empire**, or even reimagining **The Prisoner** or **Space: 1999**.

Nick grins: "Well, I suppose it is a risk. You're really putting yourself out there creating everything from scratch. You're saying, 'This is what I think a good story is'. But in a way, it's no more of a risk than saying, 'You know that favourite thing of yours that you hold so dearly? This is my version of it!'. So you could argue that it's easier to write your own thing, as you're not trying to capture

and how ultimately people change. I'm fascinated by old films and old TV series, particularly the ones that don't stand the test of time. The reason they now seem horribly out of date or offensive is that the everyday assumptions of the people who made them have changed in some crucial way. Different ideas and approaches fall out of fashion, mostly for good reasons! But I find it fascinating to see outmoded ideas being presented as 'normality' when, as you watch them, you're screaming, 'No! Ugh, that's horrible'.

"And that got me thinking about what would happen if the society of today were truly able to meet the society of yesterday? And since I love science fiction and the way it can deal with ideas in a purer sense, without people falling into a contemporary, issue-based argument, I decided to transpose this idea of the past meeting the future, and vice versa, into a science fiction context.

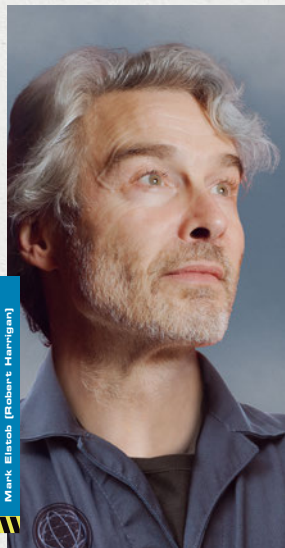
"So we have two sets of colonists, both setting out for a particular planet. One lot take the long route in secret, sleeping for 1,000 years on the way. The other lot set off hundreds of years later, at hyper-speed. So, when the sleepers wake up as they approach the planet, the hyper-speed bunch have been living there for 300 years already – and they weren't expecting the sleepers to turn up because they didn't know about them! Imagine us now,

LOW GRAVITY
PRESSURE SUIT MUST BE WORN



WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THE SOCIETY OF TODAY WERE TRULY ABLE TO MEET THE SOCIETY OF YESTERDAY?

NICHOLAS BRIGGS



Mark Elatob (Robert Harrigan)

the essence of something that other people created and the audience already feels they own in some way."



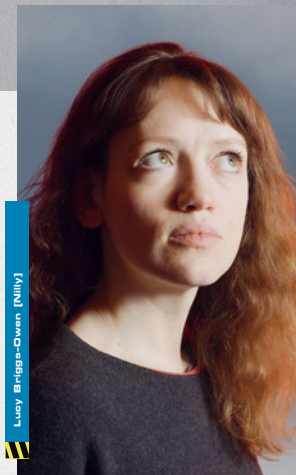
THE KEY of this new series is in the title, 'Human'. Nick reveals the main people at the heart of it: "There are four leading characters, I suppose. Exographer Anna Swift, who is our way into the story, although it becomes about many other people as it goes along. She's in a junior role, gentle and emotionally fragile, but incredibly determined and strong too.

"Then there's Commander Daisy Bailey, who's in charge of the ship *The Human Frontier*, setting off into space with 1,000 potential colonists in cryogenic suspension. She's an idealist with a lot of strength. We also have the ship's augmented reality artificial intelligence called Nilly, which is implanted in every crew

LOW GRAVITY
PRESSURE BUT MUST BE WORN



COMING UP WITH A DESIGN THAT DOESN'T REALLY SOUND LIKE ANYTHING THAT'S GONE BEFORE, BECAUSE **THE HUMAN FRONTIER** IS VERY MUCH ITS OWN THING, HAS HAD ITS STUMBLING BLOCKS. IAIN MEADOWS



Lucy Briggs-Dwan (Nilly)

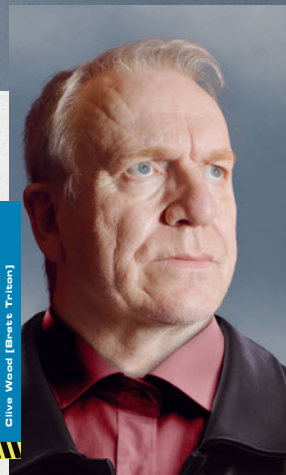
member's head. Nilly's been designed to be more human than human, but there are ultimately questions of how that affects the people she's implanted in.

"And the fourth is Brett Triton, the president of the planet Triton, who seems to be a villain but he's a man trapped by the system he's inherited: the past rules him.



Nicholas Briggs (Candrick)

"Actor Pepter Lunkuse plays Anna. She was a recommendation from fellow Big Finish director Scott Hancock – and what a recommendation! Breath-taking performance. Genevieve Gaunt plays Daisy – I've worked with Genevieve before. She's an incredible actor with an enormous emotional and



Clive Wood (Brett Triton)

vocal range, and she just delights in her work.

"I'd worked with Clive Wood once before, and of course have admired his large body of work from afar for years. He has a tangible strength in what he does, and gives total commitment to every part he plays – totally my kind of actor. He's brilliant as Brett Triton.



“Lucy Briggs-Owen plays Nilly... Well, I told her ages ago that she has to be in everything I direct. Of course, that isn't actually practical, but the way she transforms herself into characters and totally believes what she's doing is so utterly delightful to witness that I get her into anything I can.”



HELPING TO bring The Human Frontier to life with music and sound design is

Iain Meadows. Nick explains: “I insisted on Iain Meadows because of the great working relationship we've struck up over **The Prisoner** and **Space: 1999**. He has the amazing ability to create weird sci-fi soundscapes convincingly, but also excels in the very detailed, personal foley sound work too. He has a great sense of drama and timing.

“Iain is also a writer so he understands all the nuances of a scene and will bring so much to it that isn't in the script. And he's just a nice, lovely, sensitive, caring

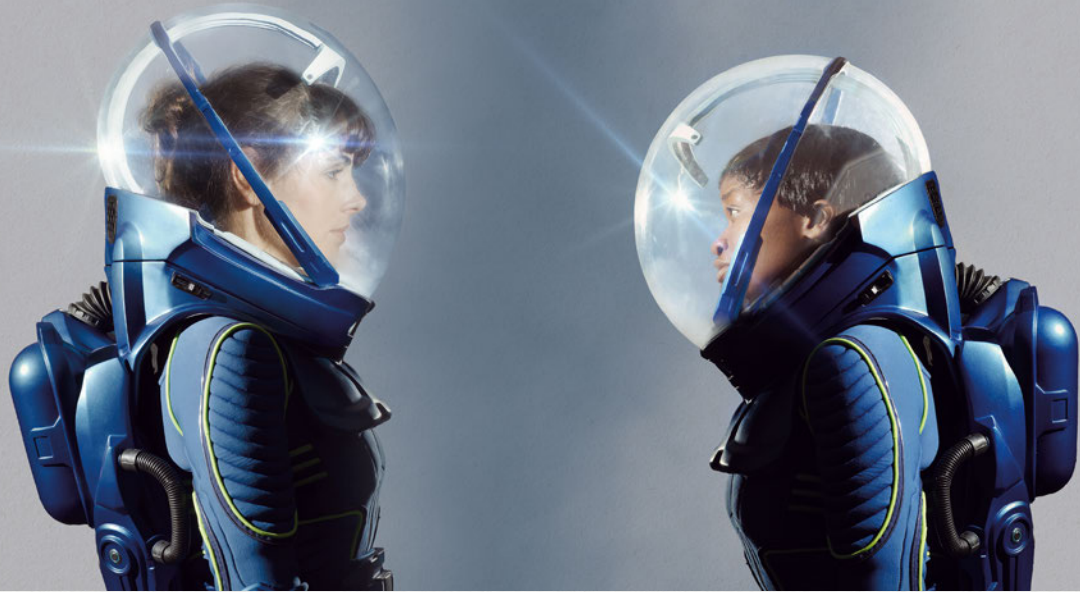
bloke who I have great chats with. I'm doing the music because it's one of my greatest loves. I actually composed and recorded the theme before we even went into studio. I think, actually, even before I finished the script! I was stuck on the writing one day so I composed the theme to dislodge the logjam in my mind. Luckily, it worked.”

Iain enjoys working with a blank canvas, compared to a previously established soundscape. He says: “I think any sound designer loves a blank canvas because it allows you such freedom to play. It's a world that you're creating (following what's on the page of course) but in terms of that creation, the sound of it, the rules are yours and there are no limits – you can let your imagination run free. In this case, Nick has written some very vivid and absorbing scripts with concepts and places that I could see so clearly in my mind, and I hope I've done them justice! But that's the beauty of Nick's writing – as you read, you

can see it and hear it all. The trick is to then try and create the sounds to match and then tweak with Nick to get the world absolutely right.”

How difficult is it to create an off-world environment, but at the same time create something we can recognise? Iain replies: “It is a bit of a challenge. I suppose you have to assume that an alien world might follow the same sort of physics and chemistry as our own, and so far with things like the discovery of water on Mars and the general make up of planets that could be colonised one day, those rules do seem to apply.

“So then it's thinking about subtle differences. I didn't want to go too far because we're still dealing with humanity who has to be able to live in the environment. But with some of the environments, if you listen carefully, there are little differences that make it 'alien'. I think if you examine most sci-fi, the assumption is that the worlds we would be able to live on or would want to



live on, would be pretty similar to Earth, so it's a good thing to bear in mind – things need to be familiar enough for humanity to cope with. A bit like when you get into a hire car – familiar but different!"

Iain concedes there have been some challenges in creating this new

creatures before – they sprang from Nick's imagination and I hope that people will enjoy them! Nilly, with all her quirks was also something that I wanted to sound unique and I think we have her sounding unlike anything else you will have heard in terms of artificial intelligence.

me it's beyond exciting. I felt such joy and fear simultaneously. I'm not one for white-knuckle rides but I've done a couple, and this felt rather like that. The experience in the studio was fantastic. Everyone picked up on the amount of emotion I had invested in this, and all of them kind of ran to my aid, fully supportive. Our great producer Emma Haigh was also there at every moment to help. It was one of the most heartening experiences of my life so far." **VORTEX**

NO ONE CAN DISAGREE WITH YOU BECAUSE NO ONE HAS EVER MET THESE CREATURES BEFORE...

IAIN MEADOWS

series, however. He says: "I think any sound designer loves a blank canvas because it allows you such freedom to play. It's a world that you're creating... the rules are yours and there are no limits – you can let your imagination run free. Nick wrote in a life form that is quite alien and that required some thought about how it would sound when it vocalised its presence, and that was enormous fun! This whole project has just been the most immense fun! As I said before, the rules are yours, so how do aliens sound? No one can disagree with you because no one has ever met these

"Nilly and the alien creatures both come from animal life here on Earth, so from that point of view, it has been a great experience to make them into something very different. One of the my cats was roped into providing some sounds for Nilly, and then Nilly's functions were built up from some simple little beeps that became something else entirely. I'm quite a fan of Nilly because she's rather soothing when she gets going in terms of her operational sound – you feel quite relaxed in her presence."

Nick concludes: "A phrase I overuse, but it is true, is that for



BIG FINISH ORIGINALS

THE HUMAN FRONTIER

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