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VORTEX



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TIMESLIP

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COMING SOON

MISSY 2!



"OH MISSY, you're so fine, you're so fine you blow my mind, hey Missy!"

The Twelfth Doctor's best frenemy is back this July for her second volume of mayhem and destruction in **Missy Series Two**. With a smile on her face, the errant Time Lord causes havoc in *The Lumiat* by Lisa McMullin, *Brimstone and Terror* by Roy Gill, *Treason and Plot* by Gemma Arrowsmith and *Too Many Masters* by John Dorney.

Producer David Richardson says: "As a production team we had such fun recording this set (I can't pretend to actually call this 'work') and we are begging to do more, not least because it would give us the opportunity to interact with Michelle again,

a performer who was clearly placed on this planet just to make people feel happy."

Missy herself, actor Michelle Gomez, adds: "I absolutely love working on these audio adventures. Across the board, everyone has loved the opportunity it's given them to keep Missy in their lives, so that's been really heartening, sweet and lovely. It's a phenomenal privilege. I'm so thrilled and happy that I still get to keep Missy alive with these wonderful stories. She is naughty and not at all nice, but I quite like her."

This series also sees the return of the Meddling Monk played by Rufus Hound, and Strax the Sontaran played by Dan Starkey. **VORTEX**

TIMESLIP
TIMESLIP
TIMESLIP

EDITORIAL



I ALWAYS like to think of myself as being young – and once upon a time, I was! I joined the Glasgow **Doctor Who** group in January 1990, and was one of the youngest people there. When I say youngest, the others were only three or four years older than me, but I felt young.

Anyway, as I got to know the members of the group, I heard about all sorts of TV series other than **Doctor Who** that they had watched growing up. I already knew about the Gerry Anderson shows, which were regularly repeated, but there were other programmes they talked about that piqued my interest such as: **The Avengers, The Prisoner, The Champions and Randall and Hopkirk: Deceased**. I eventually caught up with these as they were released on videotape by ITC, and I loved them all.

One show, however, that I never saw was **Timeslip**. I heard it talked about, and recall seeing reviews in old issues of *Doctor Who Bulletin*, but this was one that got away and slipped from my mind, ironically, as time went by.

So when I learned that Big Finish had the rights to make audio dramas of the series (I saw the scripts piled high in the office during a visit last year), I was rather intrigued and sought out the original episodes. Sadly, the colour videotapes had been wiped, but monochrome film prints survive. I watched the first episode, then the second – and was hooked. And now, I cannot wait to hear the audios... I'm sure I'm not alone. **VORTEX**

Kenny



BEHIND THE TIME BARRIER

ANOTHER CLASSIC BRITISH SCI-FI SHOW ARRIVES AT BIG FINISH...



FIFTY YEARS ago ITV aired **Timeslip**, a new children's television series, which saw a pair of youngsters venture through a time barrier into new and exciting adventures.

Over the course of 26 episodes, Simon Randall and Liz Skinner travelled to different historical periods in alternate pasts and futures. Encountering the dangers that the pursuit of science can present to the world, they also met versions of themselves and family members.

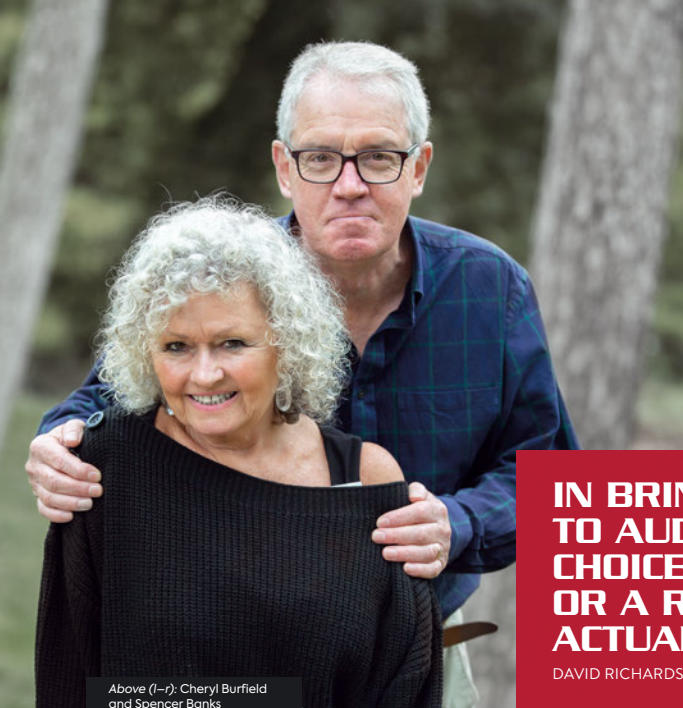
Although it was a show made for children it had a grown-up approach in its subject matter, one of the factors why it is still remembered and loved by adults 50 years later.

This May and June the original lead actors, Spencer Banks and Cheryl Burfield, will reprise their roles as Simon and Liz in two brand new feature-length audio adventures.

Producer David Richardson says: "It's been my dream to make **Timeslip** since I joined Big Finish over 12 years ago. In fact, I chatted to Spencer about the idea

a few years back but at that stage we were not able to get it off the ground. Wind forward to 2020 and here we are with two six-part stories in post production.

"**Timeslip** was a science fiction series broadcast as part of ATV's children's schedule, but its tone was remarkably mature and it was ahead of its time in terms of the themes it encompassed. I'm sure it was the first time that a story about global warming had been told on TV, and the same goes for cloning and longevity treatments. Most importantly, it was a show



Above (l-r): Cheryl Burfield and Spencer Banks

IN BRINGING THE SERIES TO AUDIO I HAD TWO CHOICES: A CONTINUATION OR A REBOOT. AND ACTUALLY I CHOSE BOTH!

DAVID RICHARDSON

way that **Doctor Who** never did. It was actually a bit too horrific for a kids' programme. I think they got complaints and it was re-edited.

"**Timeslip** was an unmissable, really good sci-fi adventure.

The thing we've picked up on is that wherever Simon and Liz go, there is a link to them or their families where they encounter past or future members, and even older versions of themselves. In

that centred on its characters, delving into their pasts and futures. I absolutely loved it.

"In bringing the series to audio I had two choices: a continuation or a reboot. And actually I chose both! Liz and Simon are back, 50 years later. We'll find out what became of them, and ultimately follow them on new trips through the time barrier. Plus we introduce an ensemble of characters to take **Timeslip** in new directions, while ultimately remaining faithful to what went before.

"The time barrier has changed location for our audio series. Gone is St Oswald, replaced by the London suburbs of Crystal Palace Park. I used to live in Crystal Palace, in a big old house just opposite the park which I'd regularly walk through. It's the most haunting place – with the ruins of the foundations of the Crystal Palace building sitting among rolling hills of grass. I remember thinking all those years ago that it would be an evocative location for **Timeslip**."



MAY'S RELEASE, *The Age of the Death Lottery* written by Andrew Smith, will be followed by *The War That Never*



Above (l-r): David Richardson, Cheryl Burfield, Spencer Banks, John Dorney and Marc Platt

Was by Marc Platt. Both writers watched the series when it was first aired.

Andrew explains: "I was a huge fan of **Timeslip**, which was broadcast as four interlinked stories. The second story, *The Time of the Ice Box*, is the one I remember the most. It had a cliffhanger that terrified me in a

the past, they also saw younger versions of their parents.

"Marc and I were given the set-up of Spencer and Cheryl playing Simon and Liz as their older selves in 2020. They're joined by two new characters, Neil and Jade, who are young adults from 1982. While we were working on our scripts, Marc and I kept in regular contact,

checking on characterisation, tone and the story points our adventures shared. There's another character from 1982, Sam, who turns up briefly in my story but is a much more prominent character in Marc's.



"AT THE beginning of The Age of the Death Lottery,

Neil and Jade have already travelled through the barrier to another time, and then come through it again into 2020 where they meet Simon and Liz. Simon hears a report about a young couple who've appeared out of thin air on their hands and knees in Crystal Palace Park, and he realises it could be the time barrier he went through in his teens. The circumstances of how the barrier was discovered will be explained which links into Marc's story quite nicely. From that we finish up going through the time barrier to an Earth of the future, where in 2042 it's a police state and there's this thing called the Death Lottery."

Andrew reveals the planning behind his story and its ominous-sounding title: "We were asked to think of a theme, a disaster or



Above: Sarah Sutton



Above: John Dorney

natural threat (which was what the TV series dealt with) and I went with overpopulation which quickly led me to the Death Lottery. Earth is overpopulated and the solution is that everyone in the world has a lottery number. When your number is called, you are put to death, humanely. I put a lot of thought into it, and wrote a lengthy rationale for myself of why people would accept it: what would be the things that would make it work; what would be the situation that would make people think this is a good idea instead of other measures; how would you keep people from running away. I found answers to all of that quickly.

"It's something I think is very credible, that in certain circumstances such as a food crisis which exacerbates overpopulation, people would see they have to go along with it. It's a lovely dramatic device that the Death Lottery becomes a public event with view screens – the British one is broadcast

from Trafalgar Square. People have bracelets that go red or green if their number is selected. There's a bit of a 1984 vibe, to this UK of the future.

"This is a six-part story so is fairly substantial but storylining it was one of the most straightforward things I've ever done. I thought to keep the energy up I would have to really play around with it. I knew what I wanted to do for each episode, and worked out where I wanted to be. I knew particular things I wanted to do in terms of the overall story and the jeopardy I wanted the characters to be in. Each episode has at least one really dramatic thing it has to sell.

I'm very, very pleased with it."

Joining the cast of *The Age of the Death Lottery* is Sarah Sutton, familiar to Big Finish and **Doctor Who** fans as Nyssa of Traken. In **Timeslip** she plays Charlotte Trent, a biology and life sciences lecturer who is also an expert in world overpopulation.

David says: "The part of Charlotte was pretty much written for Sarah. I've worked with her for years and am only too aware that her range as an actor extends far, far beyond playing Nyssa in **Doctor Who**. She is superb as Charlotte – we all sat in the studio control room absolutely mesmerised by her."

Sarah adds: "The younger Charlotte is full of puppyish enthusiasm. She's super-confident and thinks she has the answer to most things. She's great to play. I do like her and I do admire her for being clever. I often play quite smart people which is great because I'm not like that myself!

"In the future, Charlotte's become this person that she doesn't recognise. But I think you can see how she gets from one place to the next. She would disagree, but there's enough there to know exactly how the older Charlotte Trent would come about. She's a slightly more resigned, hard person."

Director Helen Goldwyn adds:

"Straight after I read the *Death Lottery* script, there was an article on the news concerned with world overpopulation and it felt very topical and relevant. These issues are real – if we keep reproducing as we are there's not going to be enough space for everyone – and this takes it up to the worst possible scenario.

"It's very much a series about what if this had happened, or that had happened, like the **Sliding Doors** concept, and Marc's story looks at the notion of what would have happened if the allies hadn't won the war."

Andrew concludes: "While Marc wasn't able to join us for the recording of *The Age of the Death Lottery*, his incredible imagination has dreamt up the wonderful 'alt-past' tale *The War That Never Was*. Events at the end of my story set up Marc's story, and continue into his for the first scene."



MARC TELLS *Vortex*: "It was nearly 50 years ago but I still remember **Timeslip**, although I could only have seen episodes of it during the school holidays. I looked it up again on YouTube and thought it was intriguing and clever. Best of all, it dealt with what were then very futuristic concepts like climate change and cloning, and did it in an imaginative and engaging way without ever talking down to the audience. A bit like **Doomwatch** at teatime. And with the original stars Cheryl Burfield and Spencer Banks

EVERYONE IN THE WORLD HAS A LOTTERY NUMBER. WHEN YOUR NUMBER IS CALLED, YOU ARE PUT TO DEATH... ANDREW SMITH



Above (l-r): Spencer Banks and Cheryl Burfield



Above (l-r): Spencer Banks and Cheryl Burfield



Above: Spencer Banks

on board and still so enthusiastic, I couldn't wait to get started.

“Producer David, who is surely some sort of wizard because he never misses a trick, asked me to do an historical story. But it couldn't be purely historical, and after the multiple alternative futures that appear in the TV series, I didn't think it would be feasible to set it in a straightforward past. David wasn't specific over when the story should take place, but it does feature our villain, Charlotte, played wonderfully by Sarah as you've never heard her before. It's

Charlotte's scheming and causing of mayhem in a very vulnerable world that drives the story.”

Marc especially enjoyed working with Andrew on setting the wheels in motion for his story: “We've had a link for a while as the first two fans who wrote for **Doctor Who** on TV and this was so much fun.

“I'm lucky because character-wise Andrew had to do a lot of the heavy lifting. It's not exactly a reboot of the original **Timeslip** series, it's more what happens 50 years later. Every story in **Timeslip** is a 'what if' story and Andrew is brilliant at grounding

hypothetical situations in reality. He's created two splendid new hero characters in Jade and Neil, and the recurring villain in Charlotte, all of them up and running for when I took over. All I really had to do is set up a few tweaks that would lead into my story – mainly by everyone asking, ‘Can you smell burning?’”

The War That Never Was is a title that intrigues.

What can Marc reveal?

He explains: “It's set in 1953, the year I was born, but things are very different. I didn't want to do another ‘Nazis won the war’ story, so I decided to turn the historic outcome we know only half on its head.

After an extra year of war, it wasn't the European Allies who won, it was the Americans. The UK is in ruins. And into this wreckage steps Charlotte, but she has access to all sorts of information that could be very useful to the locals... at a price.

“I loved writing this story and the recording went rather brilliantly. The whole cast, under Helen Goldwyn's untiring enthusiasm, worked their socks off. And particularly good was that both Spencer and Cheryl felt that it all seemed so right. Not just an homage to the original, but a continuation.”



Above: Dan Hennessy

DIRECTOR HELEN admits that she's a newcomer to the world of **Timeslip**.

She says: "I'd not heard of it until I joined the project, then I sat and watched all of it on YouTube and found it to be rather compelling. It might be slow and black and white, and completely different from what we're used to, but the whole premise is very effective. They set up the storytelling really well in the first couple of episodes."

"It was quite extraordinary to have watched Spencer and Cheryl when they were much younger, then meet them a few weeks later as they are now. They were thrilled to revisit **Timeslip** and have the most fantastic relationship and friendship as well, which was a joy to be around. Being in **Timeslip** changed both their lives quite profoundly, so there were good anecdotes going around. It was a great pleasure working with our leads.

"Spencer and Cheryl were a little apprehensive to begin with, as both of them stopped acting a while ago, but I did my best to make them feel relaxed and enjoy the experience. It was

delightful to see them back in these roles, having that rapport, and having a great day."

Producer David adds: "It really was a privilege to work with Spencer and Cheryl. They were both so excited by the prospect of the series, though perhaps a little nervous about getting back into studio after a few years away from the profession. But by 11 o'clock on the first day their nerves seemed to have gone. It's wonderful to

Who are, you will enjoy seeing its knock-on effect which can resonate through generations."



TIMESLIP WAS a joyous occasion in studio, but unfortunately the production has been tinged with sadness. Marc explains: "Dan Hennessy, who worked as the sound engineer on this series, tragically died suddenly at the start of the year. He was the sort of person that you'd want on any production, full

DAN WAS THE SORT OF PERSON THAT YOU'D WANT ON ANY PRODUCTION, FULL OF FUN AND EXCELLENT PRACTICAL ADVICE, NOTHING WAS TOO MUCH TROUBLE. MARC PLATT

have these characters back and so vividly realised again."

Helen had the responsibility of casting the series' new younger actors, and says: "I wanted a contrast to the expectation – two students who were at the same college – so I thought, let's have them come from completely different backgrounds, because that's how life really is. I wanted Orlando to represent someone from a more monied background, and for Jade to be more down to earth and working class, but they have the same values and are able to connect on the same level."

To those unsure of trying the series, Helen says: "**Timeslip** is an exploration of what could be or what will be, and it's very deep and very relevant for the world we live in now even though it's such an old series. I think if you are interested in the notion of small events changing the course of history, as most people who listen to **Doctor**

of fun and excellent practical advice, nothing was too much trouble. These stories stand as a grand memorial to him." **VORTEX**



TIMESLIP: THE AGE OF THE DEATH LOTTERY
RELEASED: MAY 2020
FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD



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bgfn.sh/lottery



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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)



Pegker Lunekuse (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.

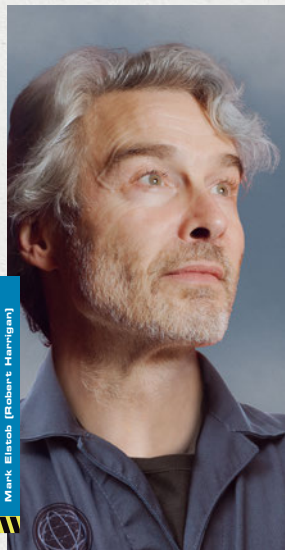
"So we have two sets of colonists, both setting out for a particular planet. One lot take the long route in secret, sleeping for 1,000 years on the way. The other lot set off hundreds of years later, at hyper-speed. So, when the sleepers wake up as they approach the planet, the hyper-speed bunch have 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."



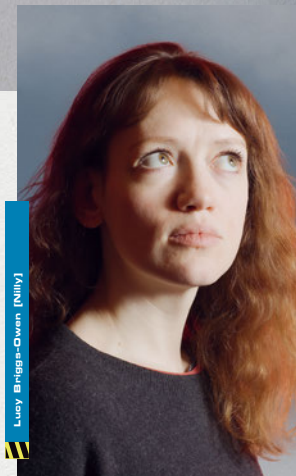
THE KEY of this new series is in the title, 'Human'. Nick reveals the main people at the heart of it: "There are four leading characters, I suppose. Exographer Anna Swift, who is our way into the story, although it becomes about many other people as it goes along. She's in a junior role, gentle and emotionally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

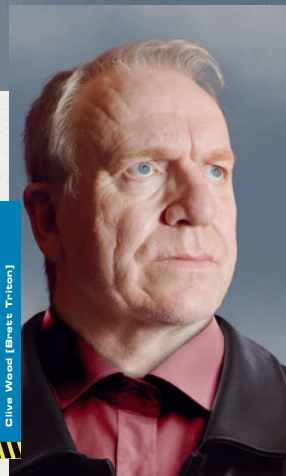
member's head. Nilly's been designed to be more human than human, but there are ultimately questions of how that affects the people she's implanted in.

"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

RELEASED: MAY 2020

FORMAT: DOWNLOAD



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VORTEX MAIL

**MARY, MARY**

In the recent series of *Doctor Who* on the television, the episode *The Haunting of Villa Diodati* featured Mary Shelley, a historical figure that the Doctor has encountered before and had adventures with in four Big Finish stories. And since that episode aired, there were many concerns within the fan community that those audios are no longer considered canon within the main *Doctor Who* timeline whereas the other Eighth Doctor stories are, thanks to *Night of the Doctor* referencing many Big Finish characters being name-dropped by the Doctor before he regenerates. Also I have noticed that in more recent Eighth Doctor releases aka the box sets, Mary Shelley is no longer mentioned and the events are pretty much ignored. What is your take on this issue? **Benjamin Callinicos**

*Nick: There are infinite possibilities in the universe and just because information appears to be contradictory, that isn't necessarily the case. All our story material is presented to the BBC for approval: they don't present their material to us for our approval – they are in charge, we are the licensee. So when they come up with a brilliant story that doesn't quite follow the lines of something that we created years ago which the TV programme makers haven't heard, that's just the way things are. I don't think the makers of TV *Doctor Who* should base their episodes around the stories made by an audio merchandising licensee. And I don't think they should avoid telling the exciting adventures they want to tell just to avoid contradicting something Big Finish has made. In the fullness of time I believe*

it'll all be explained, and one day we'll be able to see how all the stories fit together.

WE'RE ALL DOOMED

Will you ever release the scripts of series other than *The Monthly Adventures*? I'd kill to read some Eighth Doctor, *Torchwood*, or *Gallifrey* scripts. Even if they cost extra, I'd happily pay it. I'd love a *Doom Coalition* book particularly. It could be presented as a big deluxe hardcover, replicating the scripts in A4 format as they would be in-studio. A proper collector's piece. Or it could be paperbacks of selected stories, or even just PDFs included in bundles.

James Hawkins

Nick: We might consider releasing scripts as PDFs for other ranges, James, but making big, deluxe books would require a further licence from the BBC, which is not available.

WEBSITE WONDER

Any chance the recommendations system on the website can be looked at? It feels a tad silly to have a system where the button can be (and sometimes is) pressed by people before a story is released.

Jamie

Nick: I think the criteria upon which people want to recommend stories is up to them. Some people are so excited about an upcoming release that they want to recommend it before it's out. I don't think that's unreasonable.

**STRIPPED FOR ACTION AGAIN?**

I was just wondering if there were any plans for a *Doctor Who* Comic Strips Adaptation Volume 2 at some point?

Scott Fraser

Nick: There are currently no firm plans yet, Scott, although we would like to return to this one day. **VORTEX**



IT'S TIME TO HEAD BACK TO THE EARLY SEVENTIES WITH THE THIRD DOCTOR.

BRIG FINISH

AND CHURCHILL TOO!



UNTIL THE casting of Tim Treloar, Big Finish was limited with regards to telling stories set during the era of Jon Pertwee's Third Doctor. But now many new storytelling opportunities have opened up.

In volume five of **The Third Doctor Adventures** Jon Culshaw stepped into the shoes of Nicholas Courtney as Brigadier Lethbridge-Stewart. And Jon will continue his affectionate recreation of the part in the May 2020 volume six release.

Producer David Richardson tells us more: "The Daleks are back! I remember, as a kid, looking forward to the rematches between the Third Doctor and the Daleks, and that has carried over into my role as producer. The first adventure of **The Third Doctor Adventures**

volume six is *Poison of the Daleks*. It's a great ensemble piece, taking the Brigadier and Sergeant Benton off world, and throwing them into some explosive battles with the Daleks. They have a rather different plan for conquering Earth this time, thanks to the fiendish mind of writer Guy Adams."

Poison of the Daleks is certainly a title that catches the imagination and *Vortex* suggested to Guy that it works on two levels – that there is literal poison in the story, and that the Daleks themselves are poison.

Guy grins: "Let's be honest, the Daleks are poisonous creatures, it's quite an intentional title! I worked my way through a few different storylines before this one was settled on. Unusually for me, I was quite a way away

from the Doctor's story at first.

"When developing a Third Doctor adventure, put yourself in the head of Barry Letts! That's how I approach it. This is more of a Barry Letts thing than Terrance Dicks. Look at the world today and think of what you want to complain about. **Doctor Who** has always been a show that's had a point, whether you agree with it or not – it's always wanted to push a moral standpoint. It's a huge reason why I enjoy **Doctor Who**.

"*Poison of the Daleks* is quite resolutely about pollution and cleaning the air, a very obvious starting point. Pollution was covered in the television episode *The Green Death*, but here we're looking at air pollution. In real life when they investigated the King's Cross area of London with regards



Above (l-r): Jon Culshaw and Katy Manning

Below: Katy Manning



to working on the high speed rail line, they tested to make sure the work wouldn't allow the air quality to drop below what was deemed acceptable – and they found it was already well below what was safe. That's the world we're living in.

"It would have been an important subject to Barry Letts, so why not tell a little story

that makes you think about the next time you draw breath?"

In **The Third Doctor Adventures** volume five, Guy performed in front of the microphone as the Vardans, but he's taken a backstep this time around. He says: "The Pertwee team are great fun – I had the joy of acting with them in the last release, so I feel very comfortable with this group. We're working with John Levene playing Sergeant Benton again in this adventure. It's worth watching him in studio, observing his determination to make sure that he nails every single word. He has such a strong devotion to getting it absolutely right. And Jon Culshaw is great as the Brigadier, as always."



THE SECOND story in this set, *Operation Hellfire* by Jonathan Barnes, is a Big Finish first.

Producer David explains: "We're making our first historical story for the Third Doctor in *Operation Hellfire*, and Jonathan is always one

of my go-to writers for a historical yarn. He gives them such texture and writes them with such passion, and this is no exception. Plus we have some cameo appearances by Ian McNeice as Winston Churchill. It's a World War II story so how could we not include Winnie?"

Jonathan says: "The brief was fairly open-ended – a pure historical for the Third Doctor and Jo Grant. As I had done with my **First Doctor Adventure**, *Last of the Romanovs*, I pitched a few story ideas and

WHY NOT TELL A LITTLE STORY THAT MAKES YOU THINK ABOUT THE NEXT TIME YOU DRAW BREATH?

GUY ADAMS

possible settings to David. He was most drawn to the idea of putting the Third Doctor down on the Home Front in the Second World War.

"I've tried to write the kind of historical adventure which Barry Letts and Terrance Dicks might have commissioned circa 1972. So it's ended up not being an entirely pure historical! There's a sci-fi element of the sort which I think they might have gone for at the time. Essentially, the Doctor and Jo are thrown back in history to the height of the war by a Time Lady who wants them to locate a lost alien artefact. In the course of this mission (undertaken rather grudgingly by the Doctor) they find themselves caught up in the battle to defeat a nest of spies, traitors and black magicians."

As he was writing a period piece, it meant that Jonathan had to do his research, to ensure he was factually correct for the time.

He explains: "I read quite a bit around the period, both books of



Above (l-r): Jon Culshaw, John Levene, Katy Manning, Nicholas Briggs, Elli Garnett, Clive Hayward, Toby Hrycek-Robinson and Tim Treloar

I'M DOING THE MUSIC NOW, AND TRYING TO CAPTURE SOME OF THE MAGIC OF DUDLEY SIMPSON...

NICHOLAS BRIGGS

history and fiction written at the time. The connection between the war effort and the activities of British occultists has always fascinated me. As you'll discover, there's more than a dash of author Dennis Wheatley to all of this too!"

Jonathan also got to write for Churchill, an experience he described as: "Highly enjoyable – and a great treat to write for that wonderful actor, Ian McNeice. Churchill's appearance in this story is a kind of extended cameo. These were the busiest years of his life so he wouldn't have had time to go off

gallivanting with the Doctor. He's more of a shadowy M-style figure here. I also think that my job is to write the character as he appears on TV. He's a more complex figure than this **Doctor Who** story can investigate – the thing here was very much to print the legend!"

Both of these stories were directed by Nicholas Briggs, who also has another involvement in their production. He explains: "Well, I'm composing the music as we speak. I love this era of **Doctor Who**, particularly for its music, so I'm doing the music now, and trying to capture some of the magic of Dudley Simpson is a real stretching challenge, but so fulfilling.

"Working in studio on the stories is always a blast. Tim and Katy Manning make a lovely team, and they are determined to have fun. We've developed a real shorthand communication and I can't wait to give them both a huge hug the next time we meet. Jon Culshaw has also proved to be a superb addition to the group, and I don't think I'll ever tire of listening to his quite uncanny rendition of the good old Brigadier. I loved Nick Courtney to bits and often shed a little tear in remembrance of all the good times

I had with him, so to have Jon doing such a fabulous job as a tribute to Nick is really rather special for me."

Guy adds: "There's a lot of talk about the **UNIT** family. Anyone who's worked with Tim, Katy, Jon and John will tell you that it's very much alive. It's warm and productive and funny." **VORTEX**

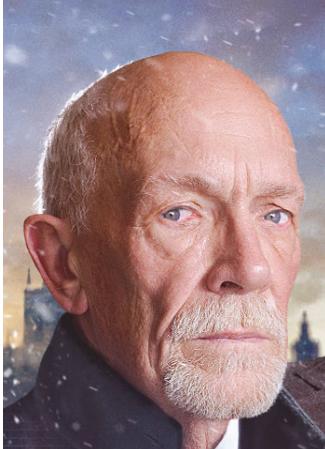


DOCTOR WHO
THE THIRD DOCTOR
ADVENTURES: VOLUME 6
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THE NEW COUNTER MEASURES: WHO KILLED TOBY KINSELLA?



HAVING FIRST appeared in the *Doctor Who* television episode, *Remembrance of the Daleks* written by Ben Aaronovitch, Group Captain Ian Gilmore, Professor Rachel Jensen and Dr Allison Williams were joined by Sir Toby Kinsella thus forming the Counter-Measures team.

They then appeared in their own audio spin-off adventures, until things took an explosive turn. Writer Ben says: "It's the story of my life. I create characters who demand more stories, and then I don't have the time to write them! So I was very happy to allow **Counter-Measures** to be produced by Big Finish. I'm delighted someone is making adventures with them."

At the end of **Counter-Measures** Series 4, three of our heroes, Ian Gilmore, Rachel Jensen and Allison Williams, are killed. Or so we thought...

Producer David Richardson tells us more: "We've always had a long-term plan for **Counter-Measures** – we pretty much knew where it was going before we'd even started writing the third box set. We saw 1960s **Counter-Measures** in black and white and 1970s **New Counter-Measures** in glorious technicolour. *Who Killed Toby Kinsella?* was the bridge between the two eras – tying up the cataclysmic ending of the previous set, and setting up where it would all go next. I'm not sure in the end whether that made any difference to anyone but us on the production team, but we had fun working with that on audio!"

Who Killed Toby Kinsella? begins in December 1973, nearly 10 years since the

Counter-Measures group vanished. Only one of the members is officially alive – until Sir Toby Kinsella is also killed. This is our introduction to **The New Counter-Measures** series, a special feature-length release of two adventures: *Who Killed Toby Kinsella?* written by John Dorney, and *The Dead Don't Rise* written by Ken Bentley.

Ken, who also directed the release, recalls: "We finished Series 4 of **Counter-Measures** long before we started planning what to do next. We knew we wanted to reboot the series, that's why we ended Series 4 the way we did, and we knew they were all still alive. But we hadn't made any decisions about what **The New Counter-Measures** might be."

John adds: "If you look at **The New Avengers**, it's kind of the opposite of what we've done with **Counter-Measures**. **The New Avengers** is a bit more gritty than the 60s **The Avengers** series, and I

WE SAW 1960S COUNTER-MEASURES IN BLACK AND WHITE AND 1970S NEW COUNTER-MEASURES IN GLORIOUS TECHNICOLLOUR.

DAVID RICHARDSON

think with this we've done the reverse. From the word go we always imagined **Counter-Measures** as if it was being shot in black and white so created the world around that – and everyone got what we meant. **The New Counter-Measures** is more like an ITC action drama.

"*Who Killed Toby Kinsella?* is a mix between the style of the **Counter-Measures** we've had in the 60s and what's to come in **The New Counter-Measures**." **VORTEX**

THE NEW COUNTER-MEASURES: WHO KILLED TOBY KINSELLA?

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LONDON CALLING

Prepare for a clash! Vastra, Jenny and Strax are back for more adventures...



THE THREE most unusual residents of Paternoster Row have, over the past year with Big Finish and almost a decade on television, been entertaining us in a plethora of fantastic adventures.

Their first few audio escapades have come under the overarching title of *Heritage*, and now we're about to discover just what has been linking these adventures together in **The Paternoster Gang: Heritage 3**. Producer David Richardson explains: "**The Paternoster Gang** series is about to earn its title as, three box sets in, we discover why it's called *Heritage*. It means different things for each lead character, as aspects of their past come back to haunt them."

Delighted to be back as Jenny, Madame Vastra's beloved human wife, is actor Catrin Stewart.

In her first interview with *Vortex* she admits: "It's been brilliant – I never expected to be still playing her almost 10 years after we first met. What's great about the audios is that these adventures can keep going and going – there's no restriction on what the Paternoster Gang can get up to.

"It's been lovely working with the others again, though it's a bit strange as we get to actually see each other properly when recording audios – face to face. I associate Dan Starkey and Neve McIntosh with their character voices and how we all appear on the telly! But we've done quite a few recordings together and been at conventions since we last appeared on screen, so I'm getting used to seeing the real them.

"It's amazing being a lead actor. I love doing radio, audiobooks and audioplays, as there's a different energy behind them and different challenges. It's great to play with all the possibilities of where the character can go, finding alternate sides to Jenny, and bringing out her attributes in different episodes.

"People have been saying to us for years that they wanted us to have a spin-off series – from before **The Paternoster Gang** was launched by Big Finish. Fans have always been positive about the three of us and we had to keep it quiet when we were told it was going to happen.

"A lot of the camaraderie is in the writing, plus we've also known each other for so long, which must help. We're not meeting on the first day and having to make



Above (l-r): Ken Bentley, Robert Portal, Annette Badland, Robert Fitch, Neve McIntosh, Dan Starkey and Robert Valentine

WE FIND OUT HERE THAT HER PARENTS OWN A TRAVELLING VICTORIAN FREAK SHOW, AND ARE NOT THE MOST PLEASANT OF PEOPLE.

LISA McMULLIN

the chemistry happen. We know each other's characters really well and our different facets, so that helps how we react to things in the moment of recording."



LISA McMULLIN opens *Heritage 3* with *Family Matters*. Having seen Strax encounter other members of his own race, we learn more about Jenny's background in this tale.

Lisa says: "I was given a fairly straightforward brief for this one. Matt gave me the working title 'Family Matters' and asked me to introduce Jenny's family and explore Jenny's backstory a little.

"What can I say about it without giving away too many spoilers? Well, we know a bit about Strax and Vastra's backgrounds and history, but not very much about Jenny's. We find out here that her parents own a travelling Victorian freak show, and are not the most pleasant of people. And she's not best pleased when her mother

rocks up at Paternoster Row. The story explores why she's estranged from them and how it impacts on her relationship with Vastra. There's a little call back to some Vastra/Jago & Litefoot stuff with Jenny's parents' grotesque 'show'.

"The title has a double meaning. It's a story about family affairs and relationships but it's also about how family matters; family is important and Jenny has created her own family with Vastra and Strax that means much more to her than the one she was born into."

Lisa enjoys writing for the leads, and says: "Jenny, Vastra and Strax are a great trio to write for. When you're staring at your computer screen, you can hear their voices in your head. That's a great tribute to the writers who have defined them on screen and to the actors who have realised them.

"It was lovely to write something that was more emotional and domestic – sure, there are aliens

but this piece is really about love in various forms. It's also a thinly veiled attack on the way we like to turn people into objects of ridicule and derision. And how we need to call it out wherever we see it."

Catrin adds: "This is a story where we find out a lot more about Jenny's family as we meet her mum and dad and find out more about her.

"I love that we get to see more of Victorian London, which would have been a good episode on television."



WHATEVER REMAINS

written by Robert Valentine, is the second story in this set and it takes our heroes away from their usual locale. Rob says: "The one-line brief was to come up with a Baskervillian adventure set on the Jurassic Coast. So it was always going to be a particularly Holmesian outing for the gang, and that's reflected in the title.

"The Paternoster Gang head down to Hardy Country to investigate a disappearance connected to a legendary monster. Incidentally, the monster they face is a genuine piece of

Dorset folklore and not just something silly made up by me!

“Writing for the Paternoster Gang was a blast because their characters are so well delineated. However, I realised early on that I had a big question about an unexplored aspect of Jenny and Vastra’s relationship, and obviously this was the chance to ‘give the problem to the characters’ and go ahead and ask it.”

ANY SCENE WITH STONN AND STRAX ARGUING OVER WHO IS THE MOST SONTARAN-Y SONTARAN IS A JOY.

ROY GILL

Rob adds: “This was my very first script for Big Finish (although I’m happy to say it’s not my last) so the whole thing was a big old highlight, really. And I went for a pint with Neve and Dan after the recording, which was ace!”



TRUTH AND BONE by Roy Gill brings this volume of adventures to a conclusion as the Paternoster Gang encounter their rival Sontaran, Silurian and human from the Bloomsbury Bunch once more. Roy says of his brief from script editor Matt Fitton: “It was a little more arc-driven than most and so it’s a bit spoiliery to go into!”

“Vastra, Jenny and Strax receive an invitation to a mummy-unwrapping party – but it’s not just ancient cadavers that are lurking in the shadows... Requisitioner Skark has come to Earth, and Stonn and Strax may soon find themselves drafted back into the Sontaran army!”

Having written for the Bloomsbury Bunch in *A Photographer to Remember (The Paternoster Gang: Heritage 1)*, Roy admits: “It’s loads of fun. Any scene with Stonn and Strax arguing over who is the most

Sontaran-y Sontaran is a joy – and pairing them up perhaps allows them to say things they wouldn’t around their own gang. Tom has an existing connection with Jenny too and it was interesting to build on that for this episode, and to see more of him opposite Vastra.

“We have a slightly truncated Bunch in *Truth and Bone* – more of a Bloomsbury Duo! – but don’t worry, I have a strong hunch we haven’t seen the last of Vella...”

Roy was delighted with the positive reaction to Vastra, Strax and Jenny’s rivals. He adds that he was: “Very happy because they were always planned to be returning characters. It would’ve been dreadful if people hadn’t warmed to them! I think it helps that underlying the heightened silliness of all their money-making schemes, there’s a strong relationship between them, between Tom and Stonn especially. Thinking back to *A Photographer to Remember* I can hear the actors

reacting to that and playing the emotional moments with sincerity and truth. I think listeners will respond to that too. **VORTEX**



THE PATERNOSTER GANG HERITAGE 3

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VORTEX

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Managing Editor:
Jason Haigh-Ellery

Executive Producer:
Nicholas Briggs

Senior Producer:
David Richardson

Editor:
Kenny Smith

The Big Finish Team:
**Cheryl Bly, Sue Cowley, Emily Davis
Karen Parks, Hannah Peel
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Graphic Designer:
Mark Plastow

Copy Editor:
Stephanie Hornett

Marketing:
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Volume 2: The War That Never Was (BOX SET)

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- **DW • THE MONTHLY ADVENTURES:**
Time Apart (266, FIFTH DOCTOR)
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- **TORCHWOOD:**
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