

THE BIG FINISH MAGAZINE

VORTEX



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THE FIFTH DOCTOR AND THE DREAM CRABS...

IN THE Fifth Doctor Adventures: Dream Team, Peter Davison is joined by Matthew Waterhouse, Sarah Sutton and Janet Fielding as his companions Adric, Nyssa and Tegan as they encounter the alien parasite Kantrofarri in a two-part tale by Lizzie Hopley.

A protected wonder of space is being exploited for 'company away days', but when the Doctor, Tegan, Nyssa and Adric land to challenge the organisers, they fall into a web of perfectly tailored nightmares.

The second adventure in the set is the four-part *The Merfolk Murders* by Tim Foley which takes the time travellers to Scotland.

The Merfolk are a university society discussing murder mystery stories. When a real-life murder occurs, the Doctor's friends encourage him to investigate.

Producer David Richardson tells *Vortex*: "What would it be like to throw the Fifth Doctor TARDIS team into a historical murder mystery in which he gets to play detective? That was the starting point of *The Merfolk Murders*, which may – or may not – have a very subtle link to a Fourth Doctor adventure that's in the works..."

"Writer Tim, as always, excels with a rich character drama, and Lizzie gets to unleash her wild imagination with the Dream Crabs as they imperil the Doctor, Tegan, Nyssa and Adric in a story that only features the lead actors..." **VORTEX**

THE FIFTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES DREAM TEAM

- RELEASED: APRIL 2024
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EDITORIAL

I WOULD imagine that most Doctor Who fans will remember exactly where they were when they saw each regeneration. I recall being in my childhood home living room when Tom Baker's Fourth Doctor

regenerated into Peter Davison's Fifth, and I was there too for Sixth Doctor Colin Baker regenerating into Seventh Doctor Sylvester McCoy. I first saw the TV Movie with Eighth Doctor Paul McGann at a friend's in Edinburgh after a midnight HMV opening. Ninth Doctor Christopher Eccleston became David Tennant's Tenth Doctor in the first flat I owned, and all of the others since then I've seen in my present home.

But the Fifth Doctor's regeneration is the one that most sticks in my mind because of where I saw it. I was a member of the 138th Glasgow Scout Group and was in the Cubs. That day, in March 1984, we were on a visit to Cambuslang Fire Station, and in the corner of the room was a TV. Our visit coincided with the action just before the regeneration, so I got to watch it in a room packed full of firefighters and other Cubs!

What also stands out was that I had to get close to the TV screen to see it (I didn't realise just how short sighted I was at the time) and being told to get out of the way by others. And thus the Sixth Doctor arrived – once seen, never forgotten!

I've been lucky enough to get to know Colin quite well over the years. My daughter Katy was particularly impressed when we went along to a Comic Con in Glasgow which Colin was attending, and he proclaimed loudly: "No! I am not speaking to anyone called Kenny today!"

There's no doubt about it – Colin Baker IS the Doctor! **VORTEX**

Kenny

For the Sixth Doctor, a double dilemma just isn't enough! To mark 40 years of Colin Baker in the TARDIS, it's going to get a lot more difficult than that...



YOU'LL NOT HEAR NOTHING LIKE THE

MIGHTY QUIN

“YOU WERE expecting someone else...?” And with those words, the Sixth Doctor first arrived on our screens on 16 March 1984 – 40 years ago!

There's no doubt that Colin Baker's Time Lord has become one of the most beloved of all the incarnations through his work for Big Finish. He's gone on adventures

with his television companions Peri (Nicola Bryant) and Mel (Bonnie Langford), and a host of original companions created for audio starting with Evelyn Smythe (the late, great Maggie Stables), Constance Clarke (Miranda Raison) and Flip Jackson (Lisa Greenwood).

To commemorate this ruby jubilee, Big Finish has a special release

lined up with *The Quin Dilemma*.

Six adventures await – *The Exaltation* by Jacqueline Rayner (with Mel), *Escape from Holy Island* by Chris Chapman (with Peri), *Sibling Rivalry* and *Children of the Revolution* by Robert Valentine (with Constance and Flip), *The Thousand Year Thaw* by Chris Chapman (with Peri) and *The Firstborn* by Jacqueline Rayner.



Above: Colin Baker

Writer and producer Jac says: "I think I asked if I could do a 40th anniversary story almost as soon as I took on the job – it was a milestone that just had to be celebrated. How incredible is it that the Sixth Doctor is still going strong four decades after his debut?"

"Our job with this release was to show just why dear ol' Sixie is so beloved by Big Finish fans, and why he's endured for so long. Of course, the main answer to that is Colin but I wanted to shine a light on what he brings to **Doctor Who**.

"The title is clearly an homage to the TV episode *The Twin Dilemma*, but this is two and a half times better... and in terms of Doctors, four times better. Yup, we end up with no fewer than four Sixth Doctors! I don't know if Colin's forgiven me yet for basically making him talk to

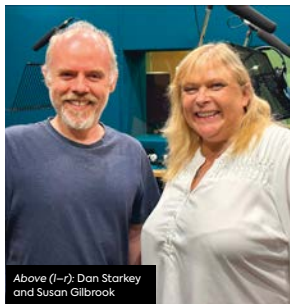
a masterclass in audio acting!)"

Script editor Robert Valentine adds: "With Jac being the mastermind behind the overarching plot, it made sense that she would write the first and final episodes. We therefore needed a writer for the second and fifth stories, and Chris Chapman was our first choice. He's a fantastic writer who loves the Sixth Doctor, and we were delighted he said yes. That left the third and fourth episodes to me – the centre of the sandwich. Or the jam at the middle of the Victoria sponge, if you will!"

The Quin Dilemma opens with *The Exaltation* by Jac. She says: "A multi-author project can be a blessing or a curse, it depends on how well you gel. Rob and I love working together, and it's fun to bring someone else into the mix. We worked with Mark Wright for the *Purity* conclusion and on *Quin* it was Chris – they

I DON'T KNOW IF COLIN'S FORGIVEN ME YET FOR BASICALLY MAKING HIM TALK TO HIMSELF FOR MOST OF AN EPISODE...

JACQUELINE RAYNER



Above (l-r): Dan Starkey and Susan Gilbrook

himself for most of an episode (we also had Jonnie Broadbent playing five quins, Dan Starkey playing many Sontarans and Sue Gilbrook being multiple aliens, all having to keep numerous voices and characters straight while having conversations with themselves... it was basically

both really get the Sixth Doctor.

"It's lovely when other people run with your ideas, taking them into places you would never have thought of yourself, and then add their own marvellous ideas into the mix.

"I happily grabbed the plum job of opening and closing the story. The Doctor and Mel's visit to Arunopal and their team-up with one-off companion Zita (the fabulously funny Carrie Quinlan) in episode one sets up the premise. We then follow the various awful Quins as they turn up at different points in the Doctor's life in Chris and Rob's stories, and then we head back to Arunopal for episode six's conclusion (and the meeting of all the Doctors and companions)."

EPISODE TWO is *Escape From Holy Island*. Writer Chris says:

"I've written five Sixth Doctor stories which have already been released, and there are a couple more in the pipeline, so I feel

very close to Colin's Doctor. I really enjoyed writing for Colin and Nicola in **The Monthly Adventure** *Plight of the Pimpernel*. Jac and Rob had registered that so asked if I'd like to write the Doctor and Peri stories for this set.

"I've been wanting to tell a story about Lindisfarne and its sacking by the Vikings in the 8th century. I used to live up in the north-east and did a lot of filming around Northumberland – and always

and steaming across the North Sea towards Holy Island..."

There's a familiar character in the TARDIS too. Chris explains: "The other thing that Jac and Rob mentioned was that they wanted to link into as much of Colin's era on telly as they could. So Herbert (aka H.G. Wells) from the TV episode *Timelash* is back! He is one of the more joyful parts of that story.

"I thought for this that he should already be with the Doctor, and the

quite a bit, as I really wanted to celebrate her character within the context of the story itself.

"Sontarans are huge fun. Apart from Strax, this is the first time I've written anything for them. But where Strax is a lovable idiot, I'm very happy that here I'm getting to depict the Sontarans as the belligerent, war-obsessed – but still very funny – maniacs they are in the classic series.

The effervescent Lisa, recovering from long COVID returns to Big



Above: Dan Starkey

I'M GETTING TO DEPICT THE SONTARANS AS THE BELLIGERENT, WAR-OBSSESSED – BUT STILL VERY FUNNY – MANIACS THEY ARE IN THE CLASSIC SERIES.

ROBERT VALENTINE

loved visiting Lindisfarne. There's an account in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle which talks about the sacking of Lindisfarne by the Vikings, and what was really interesting about that is it talks about dragons flying in the sky! And I thought, 'Well, that's a **Doctor Who** story, isn't it? That sounds like a classic **Doctor Who** set up – so what really happened?'

"I was thinking, 'Wouldn't it be fun to drop the listener into the middle of the chaos of Lindisfarne, while something awful is clanking

assumption is he's returned from a previous adventure and now he's completely out of his depth. So we get a nice contrast of Season 22 Peri having pretty much learnt her companion craft compared to Herbert who's terrified and bamboozled."

EPISODES THREE and four, *Sibling Rivalry* and *Children of the Revolution*, have been written by Rob, and feature not only Constance and Flip but also the Sontarans.

Rob says: "I absolutely adore writing for Flip and Constance, it was such great news to be told that Lisa would be back with us. I think that comes across in these episodes

Finish after several years to reprise her role as Flip. She says: "I didn't know the Doctor and Constance had gone on other adventures on their own until I came back! But, in all seriousness, I just couldn't physically play Flip at that time.

"It's been quite a long journey in terms of my health, but when Big Finish decided to do this big Colin Baker special, I was ready. It felt like it was a good time to come back with a great story to jump into.

"Before we went into the studio, I didn't know how my body was going to react. It's the first thing I've done in three years and I've come to it from a point where I could hardly walk – I virtually spent a year in bed



Above (l-r): Jonnie Broadbent and Lara Lemon

or only pottering around the house. I didn't expect the reaction I had got to the studio. I've been playing Flip for a decade now so I wasn't nervous, but as I walked through the door a wave of emotion came over me and I burst into tears! I think that it was because, professionally, it was great to be back working.

"After the first scene I was absolutely fine – it was like riding a bike. Flip is almost an extension of me when I was younger, so it's quite easy to find the character again. It felt really good to pick up a script, be creative and find the funny again!"

THE FIFTH episode written by Chris is *The Thousand Year Thaw* featuring Peri. Chris says: "As *Escape from Holy Island* is an action-packed romp I thought that gave us the chance to do something a bit more intimate, more of a heart to heart with *The Thousand Year Thaw*.

"The idea for this one started with

a chat I had travelling in a black cab with Nicola during the filming of our location documentary for the the **Doctor Who** Season 22 Blu-ray box set. We were talking about Peri and why she stayed with the Doctor after having an awful experience in *The Twin Dilemma*. Our feeling was that this was definitely an active choice by Peri, even if the TV show didn't really explore that.

"So I thought I'd turn that notion into a story! *The Thousand Year Thaw* sees the Doctor and Peri visit the frozen planet of Zycros, hoping to enjoy the sights of its famous thaw, but then it all goes horribly, horribly wrong."

THE FIRSTBORN by Jac concludes the set and we discover that the troublesome Quins have succeeded in their quest – a little too well. Multiple Doctors congregate on Arunopal bringing with them a terrible threat to reality... are you ready for all the Sixth Doctors? The recording sessions brought a lot of smiles to cast and crew.

Jac explains: "This set was such fun to do, and what a joy to have Colin, Bonnie, Nicola, Miranda and Lisa together. Along with our brilliant guest stars, I'm told we set the record for most actors in studio for a Big Finish, ever!"

"I was a bit self-indulgent with the casting for these adventures, bringing in a number of actors whose work I adore, and then I got a bit worried that it was becoming less 'Happy Birthday Sixth Doctor' and more 'Special Present for the Producer'! But obviously I have impeccable taste in actors, so everyone benefits! In a couple of cases the actors were also big **Doctor Who** fans, and seeing incredibly successful artists going a bit giddy about being in a **Doctor Who** audio is just the best!"

SEEING INCREDIBLY SUCCESSFUL ARTISTS GOING A BIT GIDDY ABOUT BEING IN A DOCTOR WHO AUDIO IS JUST THE BEST!

JACQUELINE RAYNER


Lisa tells *Vortex*: "Colin came into the studio for my second day, so we had a little party for him. It was quite the reunion – we had a big cuddle!"

Rob adds: "Jac brought in champagne and a 40th birthday cake she'd decorated as the Sixth Doctor's costume which delighted Colin – and the rest of us. It was magical!" **VORTEX**

THE SIXTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES THE QUIN DILEMMA



■ RELEASED: MARCH 2024
■ FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

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MONSTER MASH

20TH CENTURY TIME LORDS ENCOUNTER MORE 21ST CENTURY CREATURES...

THERE'S SOMETHING

rather glorious about classic series Doctors encountering monstrous creations from the new series. The Seventh

Doctor and the Sycorax, the Sixth Doctor and the Judoon, the Fifth Doctor and the Weeping Angels, the Fourth Doctor and the Vashta Nerada or the Eighth Doctor and the Dream Crabs from

the **Classic Doctors New Monsters** volumes 1–3, for example.

The fourth release in the **Classic Doctors New Monsters** range, *Broken Memories*, continues in that vein pitting the Fourth, Sixth,

Seventh and Eighth Doctors up against foes we're very familiar with.

Producer David Richardson says: "As I write, the edits for these new adventures have been popping up on my computer. We recorded



Above (l-r): Finty Williams, Patterson Joseph and Bonnie Langford

They have their odd moments, they might send each other up a bit, but there is real affection and respect, and when you're watching or listening that's what brings you in, that's what keeps you interested, the feeling of being with old friends."

Invasion of the Body Stealers brings the Doctor together with a species he encountered twice on TV in the Christmas specials of 2015 and 2016.

Jonny explains: "Harmony Shoal are, or were, the villains of two Twelfth Doctor TV episodes, *The Return of Doctor Mysterio* and *The Wedding of River Song*. Now, in those stories we see them at two different

THE MAIN THING ABOUT THEM IS WHAT THEY ARE – WHICH IS A BUNCH OF DISEMBODED ALIEN BRAINS...

JONATHAN MORRIS

them all three or four years ago during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic when social distancing was in place. They become a bit of a blur so listening to them now is like encountering the stories for the first time – and I'm enjoying them enormously. There's so much to love here. A brand-new adventure for the Fourth Doctor and Sarah Jane. The Sixth Doctor and Mel firing away on all cylinders. A city on a far-away world which both the Seventh and Eighth Doctors will visit... and then we have an array of new series monsters as the icing on the cake."

Invasion of the Body Stealers by Jonathan Morris is an adventure of particular note – given which beloved **Doctor Who** characters it unites on audio for the first time at Big Finish.

Jonny says: "This is the first chronological story with the Fourth Doctor and Sarah Jane Smith, which is a bit of an honour. I wasn't aware of this, or didn't properly realise this, when I wrote the story because I was just so happy to be able to write for them



Above: Jennifer Saayang

at all! They are the legendary team.

"From their run of stories on television, all the classics we've watched again and again, what I think people really love about that era is the Doctor and Sarah themselves – their relationship. Because that is what comes across, they are friends.

points in their history, first as space mobsters and then a sort of religious cult worshipping King Hydroflax. But the main thing about them is what they are – which is a bunch of disembodied alien brains – and what they do – which is they take people over by removing their brain and plopping one of their own brains in, usually leaving a very pronounced scar. The gimmick is that Harmony Shoal are living brains that go around stealing other bodies as a disguise and as a way of taking over planets.

"With this story, I've gone to a point in their history a few hundred years after *The Return of Doctor Mysterio* where Harmony Shoal are in hiding. Mobsters on the run from the Earth empire but with plans to install themselves, quite literally, as the heads of that empire.

"THE WAY Harmony Shoal operate is quite grisly. In the TV stories you see them opening up skulls but because there's no blood and guts, and no pain, it's viewed at a child-friendly level.



Above: Colin Baker

I LISTENED
TO COLIN
AND BONNIE
RECORDING
THE QUEEN
OF CLOCKS
AND I JUST
FELL IN
LOVE!

JACQUELINE RAYNER

You could imagine a **Torchwood** episode with Harmony Shoal where people would be screaming in agony and there would be blood spattered up the walls! But in **Doctor Who**, it's more about the suspense, the sense of menace but which always has humour behind it. Harmony Shoal open up heads like in a *Tom and Jerry* cartoon – the horror comes from taking a silly idea very seriously."

Jonny particularly enjoyed having to mix the different storytelling styles of two very distinct eras.

He explains: "The interesting thing for me about this story is that it's time travel, sort of, with monsters from the 2010s travelling back in time to be in an adventure in the mid-1970s. You then have a mix of styles with slightly knowing, self-referential monsters in a story which in other respects feels like part of the early Tom Baker era.

"And because *Invasion of the Body Stealers* is a two-parter, it's told

with the economy of a modern adventure. Basically, it has the same amount of plot as a 90-minute story but boiled down to under an hour. And it was fun to fill in a bit of a gap with Harmony Shoal and hear some backstory from them – though of course they could be lying. Always bear that in mind!"

Johnny adds: "One highlight of writing this was that I finally got the chance to write a scene which I came up with over 30 years ago. Back in 1987 or 1988, I wrote a **Doctor**

Who story – a full script which I sent in to the production office at the BBC – all about aliens taking over a space hospital. Sadly, that script is now lost to posterity but the one bit of it I remember, which was my favourite bit, was a scene where the Doctor X-rays a human patient and says, 'look at their brain'. And the person he's with says, 'what about it?' And the Doctor says, 'That's not a human brain. They've got an alien brain in their head!' So when I was working out this story, I realised I could use that scene! That's the thing with us writers. Nothing is ever wasted, nothing is ever properly thrown away. Everything gets used and has its moment – eventually!"

THE QUEEN of *Clocks* by Jacqueline Rayner pits the Sixth Doctor and Mel against the Clockwork Droids, first seen on TV in *The Girl in the Fireplace* with links to the TV episode

Deep Breath.

The time travellers find themselves encountering the Queen of Guyenne (played by Finty Williams), her handmaiden Annette (Jennifer Saayeng) and her royal clockmaker, Harbolt (Paterson Joseph) in a castle which is a blend of the old and the new – and under threat from droids which are trying to break in.

This script is particularly significant for Jac as it led to her becoming the producer of **The Sixth Doctor Adventures** at Big Finish.

She says: "This is the story that started off my new journey with the Sixth Doctor. I was asked if I'd be interested in the producer role for the range and senior producer David Richardson kindly let me shadow him to see what went on from a producer's point of view.

"Now, and I hope Bonnie Langford will forgive me for saying this, I never felt a huge connection with Mel back in the day (absolutely not a reflection on her performance, it's important to add), but I listened to Colin and Bonnie recording *The Queen of Clocks* and I just fell in love!

"They are so good together – they have such a spark, such a connection. And I knew there and then that I was going to take on the producer's job and try to give them something special to showcase

their friendship – and that’s why the whole *Purity* releases began.

“I was so grateful that both Colin and Bonnie were up for it. Oh, and that was also the day on which Mel shot up the ranks to become one of my absolute all-time favourite companions. (Wouldn’t life be



Above: Sadie Miller

boring if we didn’t change our minds sometimes along the way?)”

DAVID K Barnes is the writer of the box set’s concluding stories, which both feature the Silents but with different Doctors in *The Silent Priest* and *The Silent City*.

David recalls: “I was asked to write a pair of linked stories about the Silents that the Doctor experienced in reverse order (so the Eighth Doctor is in the first story and the Seventh Doctor is in the second). I liked the idea of the Seventh Doctor investigating the fallout from a future Doctor’s adventure without knowing it and, without giving anything away, both Doctors have different motivations for being involved...”

“We open in the city of Sunset, a formerly glamorous holiday destination now riven by criminal factions and their violent feud. In the midst of this terrible situation the Eighth Doctor, fatigued from the Time War, seeks out a church where an old friend resides. The thing is, he

can’t remember anything about his friend, only that he always feels much better after having visited... When a churchman is murdered, the Doctor is embroiled in a desperate hunt for a hidden treasure that could bring peace to Sunset, or doom it forever...”

“The consequences of this adventure



Above: Timothy Bentinck

**I COULDN'T
LOSE THIS
IMAGE OF
A BATTLE-
SCARRED
DOCTOR
SEEKING
OUT A
SILENT TO
DISCUSS HIS
PROBLEMS...**

DAVID K BARNES

are explored in *The Silent City*. When a wealthy industrialist is kidnapped openly on the streets of Sunset, the Seventh Doctor follows a lead to track him down – but the police can’t remember who they are looking for,

and the Doctor soon realises there’s a much larger conflict being waged here. The Silents have come to Sunset...”

David had a real challenge when writing for the Silents, with their ability to wipe people’s memories of them as soon as they look away.

He explains: “When tackling the Silents, I began with the idea of them as their religious order. How did they operate? I couldn’t lose this image of a battle-scarred Doctor seeking out a Silent to discuss his problems, and so I placed that at the centre of my story. In cinema, religion often pairs up well with crime and noir. Both stories are loosely inspired by two particular favourites, *The Maltese Falcon* and *Dr Mabuse, the Gambler*, mixed up with the British noir of *Brighton Rock*. So expect lots of twists, excitement and colourful personalities but also a spark of darkness burning brightly through the whole thing. And it wouldn’t be *Doctor Who* without something utterly bizarre underpinning it. In some ways these are the strangest scripts I’ve written for Big Finish.

“I also loved contrasting the two Doctors. Their approach and methods are very different. The Seventh is more cerebral while the Eighth is more personal, led by his hearts, but when faced with an appalling injustice they have the same fire inside them, and they’ll keep getting themselves into trouble. Also, there’s a bit where the Seventh Doctor – the great cosmic manipulator with a million schemes – gets kicked out on his backside into a puddle, which makes me laugh. Ahem!” **VORTEX**

CLASSIC DOCTORS - NEW MONSTERS
BROKEN MEMORIES



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The Sixth Doctor and Charlotte Pollard are drawn into the Sontaran-Rutans conflict...

CHARLEY'S WAR

BIG FINISH'S celebration of 50 years of the cloned warriors continues in the third adventure in the **Sontarans vs Rutans** series, *Born to Die*.

Previous releases include adventures with the Eighth Doctor plus his companions Charlotte Pollard and C'rizz, and the Third Doctor with Sarah Jane Smith. And now we're going back to the period where Charley found herself alone in the far future,

separated from the Eighth Doctor before being rescued by the Sixth Doctor – which led to an interesting relationship as the partners in time got to know one another. Colin Baker and India Fisher reprise their roles in *Born to Die*.

When a trip to the planet Taxodon goes wrong the Doctor finds himself with mere hours to prove himself innocent of murdering a Sontaran.

As more die, the Doctor and Charley need to uncover the cause

and why the Sontarans are even on this planet... if they have time.

Joining Colin and India is an esteemed guest cast which features Dan Starkey as low ranking Sontaran, Skole, who is tasked with accompanying the Doctor, Skein played by Jon Culshaw (the commanding Sontaran in charge of the Sontarans on Taxodon) and Trax played by Christopher Ryan (a field major conducting Knox hunting parties).



Above (l-r): Christopher Ryan, Jon Culshaw, Dan Starkey and India Fisher

Born to Die has been written by Tiegian Byrne, a name which may be familiar to Big Finish listeners through her acting credits in **Rani Takes on the World** or as Runa in the most recent pair of **The War Doctor Begins** box sets.

This adventure marks Tiegian's Big Finish writing debut after being recruited by script editor John Dorney. John explains: "Tiegian and I were both on a writing course a few years ago, and I'm always keeping an eye out for experienced writers who might be interested in contributing to Big Finish audios."

"There's something more added by getting an actor involved in the scripting process – they know the right dialogue to use and find words which are sayable, which is not necessarily something everyone can do for audio."

"So I asked Tiegian to see what she could come up with for the Sixth Doctor adventure. And she got the Sontarans too! It's always exciting bringing in someone new and seeing what they have to offer; it was good fun to work on."

Tiegian confirms: "John emailed and asked if I would be interested in writing for Big Finish. I had already recorded various **Doctor Who**

ONE DAY, I
TURNED TO
JOHN AND
SAID 'CAN I
JUST MAKE UP
A PLANET?'

TIEGIAN BYRNE

audios as an actor, and I thought it would be great challenge to join the team as a writer. So I sent across a few samples and before I knew it we were chatting storylines!

"John basically said, 'The story needs to be the Doctor, his companion, a Sontaran and a Rutan on a planet.... whatever happens is up to you.' And that was it. It was completely open for me to play with and explore."

"It was definitely a challenge. There were a lot of **Doctor Who** 'laws' and previous storylines which I honestly had little idea about. And I really knew nothing about the Rutans. However, it was the perfect excuse to watch lots of old **Doctor Who** episodes and

listen to Big Finish box sets.

"I started watching **Doctor Who** as a teenager and Christopher Eccleston was the Doctor at the time, so going back and watching the classic doctors was so much fun. Writing for Colin opened up a whole new world."

"I loved the freedom and creativity involved writing *Born to Die* and, even more so, finding ways for the story to work alongside the other episodes in the range. John and the writers were so supportive and helpful, it was an absolute joy."

Vortex asks Tiegian to sum up what happens in her script. She says: "The Doctor and Charley visit the planet Taxodon. They come across a Sontaran military base and all hell breaks loose."

Tiegian also had an unexpected highlight when writing her adventure. She reveals: "I was struggling to decide where to set *Born to Die*, every location I considered just didn't work or clashed with someone else's story in some way. One day, I turned to John and said 'Can I just make up a planet?' And he just shrugged and said, 'Obviously!' The next day I messaged him about Taxodon, and he said it sounded good. He was so blasé about the whole thing!

"I honestly couldn't believe it was so easy. I'd made up a planet! And later I found out that it also features in Lizzie's episode. To have created something that will forever be part of the amazing world of **Doctor Who** is just awesome!" **VORTEX**

SONTARANS VS RUTANS
BORN TO DIE



■ RELEASED: MARCH 2024
■ FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

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The Fourth Doctor is about to meet an old friend – and a new one!

ONCOMING STORM

OVER THE past few years, through **UNIT: Nemesis** and **The Seventh Doctor Adventures**, we've encountered Surgeon Lieutenant Harry Sullivan (Christopher Naylor) and UNIT secretary Naomi Cross (Eleanor Crooks), out of time and looking to get back home.

And now, we're going to find out just what happened to the pair in the four-part **The Fourth Doctor Adventures** *The Storm of the Sea Devils* and the two-part **The Fourth Doctor Adventures** *Worlds Beyond* featuring the return of the Doctor's nautical nemesis.

Storm of the Sea Devils has been written by David K Barnes. *Harry*

Sullivan is supposed to be on holiday. But his arrival in Calcutta is intercepted by UNIT staff member Naomi Cross. Local villagers have reported sightings of 'devils' in the swamps...

David was delighted to get to write this adventure: "Tom Baker simply is the Doctor! I love them all deeply, but Tom Baker was my Doctor, the first I ever saw. I was watching UK Gold television repeats at my mother's encouragement and *Robot* episode two began my lifelong obsession. If my 9-year-old self could only have known that more than 20 years later I'd be writing for that same actor – I mean, gosh, the mind positively boggles.

"And of course it was TV Season 12

that made me a devoted viewer with Sarah Jane Smith and Harry. So I was especially delighted to reintroduce Harry in this adventure – he's such a decent, funny man. He arrives for a holiday in India, but then UNIT picks him up and sends him off to the middle of the Sundarbans mangrove forests to investigate mysterious goings-on at a newly built hotel. He probably thinks he'll get to be a cool undercover action hero but it turns out that the Doctor is at the hotel having a chat with the villain – and the Doctor immediately blows Harry's cover without realising it!"

David was given the honour of introducing a new companion. He explains: "Of course, as well as



Above (l-r): Christopher Naylor, Tom Baker and Eleanor Crooks

reintroducing Harry, I was asked to write the first adventure for Naomi. Neither had appeared in other Big Finish stories when I wrote this, but I knew Naomi was to be a UNIT operative who was desperate to get her first 'away mission'. She was capable and confident but inexperienced and, crucially, she needed to have some intrinsic qualities that would make the Doctor want to invite her aboard the TARDIS.

"I really enjoyed writing the dynamic between them. I think I defaulted to a kind of 'sliding scale of responsibility'. Harry is the exasperated stickler for the rules who hopes Naomi will follow his example, but she keeps drifting towards the Doctor's anarchic attitude to everything!"

David adds: "I like to begin my scripts with an image and for this one it was a wealthy businessman keeping a Sea Devil in his swimming pool. How would a senseless act lead to a domino effect of tragedies – and how could it be stopped? In this story, we have a female Sea Devil, injured and imprisoned, who's furious at her captors but knows how the inevitable reprisals could so easily get out of hand when her brethren rescue her. The businessman, Ramesh Kamal, believes he has

It made our 46-year-old selves actually squeal with delight – and for quite some time!

ROBERT KHAN

everything under control but his wife Amita has seen another Sea Devil out there in the swamps..."

WORLDS BEYOND has been written by Robert Khan and Tom Salinsky. *The Doctor, Harry and Naomi arrive at a luxury resort world where custom-made holidays are provided for every visitor. All seems idyllic... but every paradise must have a snake... mustn't it?*

Robert says: "The Fourth Doctor was 'the Doctor' for us both, so the thought of being able to write for him – and work with him – was something that would have made our 6-year-old selves squeal with delight. In fact, it

made our 46-year-old selves actually squeal with delight – and for quite some time! Sorry about that, Tom.

"Harry was also an absolute joy to write for. And in these episodes there was a chance for him to out-doctor the actual Doctor. Never before (we think!) has the Doctor been given a sick-note for vortex-related stress. And to introduce a whole new companion to the TARDIS interior was also fantastic. But how do you make a new companion's awe at the TARDIS fresh? So we decided to make Naomi decidedly unimpressed. And to be fair to her, there's no flat-screen TV and the swimming pool is miles away!

"The brief was pretty wide. It needed to carry on smoothly from the brilliant Sea Devil four-parter that preceded it, and as our script was a two-parter it should – in the words of maestro script editor John – best start with a 'quiet hook'. And that hook quickly developed into the Doctor and the gang desperately needing a holiday after a brush with those watery demons.

"A lot of research went into this, not least reading a number of biographies of Alan Turing who features in this adventure. Probably the best is Andrew Hodges's *The Enigma* but there are others besides. It's always slightly tricky writing for a person who actually lived, but this version of Turing certainly passed his own test.

"The main highlight? Surely the Doctor meeting – and playing chess with – Alan. Something that would make even the Fourth Doctor squeal with delight!" **VORTEX**

THE FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES STORM OF THE SEA DEVILS



■ RELEASED: MARCH 2024
■ FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

ORDER NOW: bgfn.sh/storm 

There's a special collection of stories coming up in the **Torchwood** monthly range...



THE IANTHOLOGY

THE TORCHWOOD monthly range continues with a trio of tales featuring Ianto Jones – written by Gareth David-Lloyd, the actor who portrays him. They are, if you will, an Ianthology (a term devised by producer James Goss)! Get ready for adventures set during Ianto's days at Torchwood One and an encounter with "Disco" Jones.

Gareth tells *Vortex* how this trio of tales came about. He explains: "It all started last summer when I said to James that I had an idea for a script, and he said he'd some thoughts too so would I mind having a look at those as well.

"James suggested a few starting

points and I chose a pair of them. (I assume they were James's ideas but I don't actually know!)"

Tube Strike, the first story in this trilogy, will be released in March.

Building work on the London Underground has disturbed a nest of Weevils. The ravenous creatures are hunting for flesh. Can Torchwood One contain the feast?

Gareth says: "For *Tube Strike*, 'Weevils on the London Underground' was the starting point I was given and I took the ball and ran with it from there. It's a comedy horror romp, I suppose, and I really enjoyed writing it. I lived in London for five years so I know the Tube environment quite

well. Also, I'm a big fan of films like *An American Werewolf in London*, which has got a great scene in the Underground and I couldn't help tip my hat to it in *Tube Strike*.

"James also suggested I watch *Death Line*, a 1970s film with Donald Pleasence. It basically involves Victorian Tube workers who got stuck down there and have gone feral over the years. They've since procreated and become cannibals living underground. I loved it, and it was nice to write a homage to those type of classic horror films. Ianto and Tommy go to investigate – they've got such a great dynamic which has developed over the last few **Torchwood One** box sets – and

this was the perfect opportunity to put them in a claustrophobic situation and see where it went.”

MISSING MOLLY is April's release. *Molly went missing from the estate 12 years ago. Ianto remembers it as he lived just round the corner. Only, Molly's come back. Ianto's just as interested as her parents in what happened to her.*

Gareth continues: “*Missing Molly* is the second idea which came from James's briefing. It basically said: ‘A girl went missing years ago, comes back and Torchwood investigates’.

“There were a few ways we could



I'M A BIG FAN OF FILMS LIKE *AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON*, WHICH HAS GOT A GREAT SCENE IN THE UNDERGROUND AND I COULDN'T HELP TIP MY HAT TO IT...

GARETH DAVID-LLOYD

was about time that we made him a three-dimensional character and really looked to who he was and at the reasons Ianto is so affected by him.

“I think there was only one mention of him in the **Torchwood** TV series, in *From Out of the Rain* where Ianto mentions his father with fondness, so I wanted to dig out the positives as well as negatives.

“Ianto creates an opportunity in *Disco* to find out who his dad was before he knew him. He is described by old friends as the life and soul of the party. That takes Ianto by surprise as he only knew him as quite a tragic figure. Ianto's interest is piqued and he wants to meet this version of his dad that people have such fond memories of.”

VORTEX



Above (l-r): Gareth David-Lloyd, Timothy Bentinck, Kay Bridgeman, Robert Rackstraw and Derek Elroy

have gone with it, but in the end we thought it would be great if we made it quite a quiet script as far as action goes, and make more of the human drama. We look at how things and people in Molly's life unravel rather than focus on the nature of what or who she really is.

“It's very much focused on people rather than sci-fi which was really refreshing although it's quite sad. It deals with loss and remembrance, and the different ways people deal with grief. Some cling on to it and some try to avoid it. That being said, I hope there are moments where listeners will smile as well as cry.”

DISCO WILL be released in May and delves into Ianto's family background as we get to meet his father, who was briefly mentioned once on television.

It's 1987 and “Disco” Jones is still dancing. Life and soul, bab, life and soul. Wednesdays is darts at The Merry Miller, Thursdays – shove ha'penny at The Boilermakers, Fridays played by ear, and Saturdays it's the Disco at Cinderella's. So who is Tom and why does he want to build a fence with him?

Gareth says: “*Disco* has been a long time coming. Ianto's dad has been this nameless entity so far who seems to have been quite a negative force in Ianto's life. So I thought it

TORCHWOOD TUBE STRIKE



■ RELEASED: MARCH 2024
■ FORMAT: CD/DOWNLOAD

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The Twelfth Doctor
returns in a new box
set of three exciting
chronicles...

NOBODY DOES IT BETTER

THERE'S A bit of a parallel between **Doctor Who** and the James Bond films. Both were huge successes on screen in the 1960s. A variety of talented actors have played the leading part with memorable supporting casts. Stories have moved with the times. Iconic theme tunes, etc.

You Only Die Twice, the third volume of **The Twelfth Doctor Chronicles**, sees Jacob Dudman using his vocal talents for the part of the Time Lord in three new full-cast adventures – *Sunstrike* by Georgia Cook, *Never The End Is* by Ben Tedds and *You Only Die Twice* by Fio Trethewey.

Jacob is joined once again by Bhavnisha Parmar as newly-promoted Time Agent Keira Sanstrom. Producer Alfie Shaw tells *Vortex*: “The Doctor is swept back into the world of agent Keira Sanstrom and this time he’s been inducted into the Time Agency. *You Only Die Twice* has a mini-series structure, like the one we used in the previous box set *Timejacked!*, with three distinct adventures that lead directly into each other. “We’re within Season 10 of the television series, after *The Lie of the Land* for all us timeline buffs, and events are weighing on the Doctor. The dynamic following *Timejacked!*

has been reversed – the Doctor now has doubts creeping in whereas Keira is the more confident of the pair.

“One of the things I’ve tried to do with both this and the run of **The Eleventh Doctor Chronicles** is to showcase some of the authors that are newer to Big Finish. In this set, we’ve got three great writers with the superb – seriously keep an eye out for him going forward – Max Kashevsky as script editor.

“Georgia has written two wonderful scripts for **The Eleventh Doctor Chronicles** and Jacob is such a fan of her brilliant work that inviting her to contribute to this set was an obvious choice.

"I've been trying for ages to get a full-cast script from Ben. Fortunately everything lined up this time and we were able to make it happen. It's a joyously creepy piece.

"Fio is one of the Twelfth Doctor's biggest fans and has proven his firm grasp of the character. It was

we've succeeded! Putting the Twelfth Doctor in any kind of secret agent scenario is always going to be fun.

"The biggest joy of these projects is getting to collaborate with so many talented creatives, working with Alfie, Max and the other writers to weave an arcing story across the set,

no absolution. Once, he made a deal, and at last the Devil has Ben was the winner of the Paul Spragg Writing Opportunity in 2019 and recalls: "My idea and entry were very last minute so I was utterly flabbergasted to get an email from Alfie telling me I'd won. I was so gobsmacked I couldn't find the



Above (l-r): Clare Corbett, Bhavnisha Parmar, Jason Nwoga, Jacob Dudman and Robert Daws

QUITE DIFFERENT TO THE HORROR AND GHOST STORIES I'M USED TO WRITING.

GEORGIA COOK

a delight to give him a chance to write a full-cast adventure for one of his favourite incarnations."

SUNSTRIKE OPENS the set. *The Quartermaster's clients have conquered millions of worlds. His weapons have ended billions of lives. But his private resort has the sort of security system that only trillions of credits can buy. Not even the Time Agency can bring the Quartermaster to justice. Which is why Keira's enlisted a new recruit. The Doctor has faced many villains, but this time, he'll have to become one...*

Georgia says: "Alfie and Max wanted something very Bond-esque in tone for this first episode – quite different to the horror and ghost stories I'm used to writing. They wanted to create an undercover space adventure with disguises and an evil lair to infiltrate. And without giving too much away about the plot, I think

and hearing the actors bring their characters to life. I hope the listeners have as much fun with it as we did!"

NEVER THE End Is is the second adventure in the set. *come to collect. Every day, pilgrims seek absolution at the Basilica of Mariazell. Like the painter who sees impossible things.*

Or the stranger who remembers people she's never met. Or the Time Agents trapped in the town that time forgot. But Christoph Haizmann will have

right words to accept until the next day! When I was later invited to the recording, I had to skive off college to make it but even then there was still a part of me that thought I was being pranked. Walking into The Soundhouse studio was when I finally stopped doubting it was happening!

"I was watching a livestream of President Biden's inauguration (doesn't time fly!) when Alfie rang me about this story. We were discussing his notes on my most recent **Short Trip, Inside Story**, and Alfie then said that he'd pencilled me in for a **Twelfth Doctor Chronicle** if I was up for it? As if I wouldn't be! Drafting my first full-cast audio and getting to write for Jake again was an offer I couldn't refuse."

What was Ben given in his brief from Alfie? Ben tells **Vortex**: "I always knew I had the Twelfth Doctor and the superb Keira, but I pitched the core last-day-of-a-time-loop concept as one of my ideas when the box set

was originally due to go in a different direction. As plans changed, I was asked to hone it to lead more smoothly into Fio's terrific third episode which is when I brought the story of Christoph Haizmann into the mix. "Gothic and folk horror fans, this

but I was very happy to be given the challenge.

"I was already listening to this series as I've always loved the Twelfth Doctor and I've tended to gravitate to any extended universe stuff with him in it. This was the first Doctor I'd written for

this Doctor, there wasn't even a hint of melancholy. It was simply a great set of recording days."

Alfie adds: "What you often get at the end of a scene is that one of the actors adds a joke. While often funny, they are usually not really



Above (l-r): Nicholas Asbury, Georgina Beeble, Jacob Dudman, Bhavnisha Parmar, Jack Forsyth-Noble and Richard Braine

IT'S GROUNDHOG DAY MEETS THE EXORCIST SET IN 17TH-CENTURY AUSTRIA.

BEN TEDDS

one's for you! It's *Groundhog Day* meets *The Exorcist* set in 17th-century Austria. Not only do the Doctor and Keira find themselves plunged into the occult story of a historical artist, but their interference wrecks the equilibrium of a time loop keeping a long-forgotten evil at bay. Expect scares, infernal bargains and an obligatory murderous mob..."

VORTEX CAN'T tell you too much about the plot for *You Only Die Twice*, apart from "This time, it's personal..." Writer Fio says: "I was asked to write for this box set ages ago. The possibility floated between text messages so I'd been eagerly awaiting the time when Alfie sent me the word we were ready to work on *You Only Die Twice*! I wasn't going to write the third story at first,

with *A Song for Running* in the **Short Trips** range, so he's always going to have a special place in my heart.

"The brief changed a lot before we came up with this finale. To sum up the story without giving anything away is a tough one. Everything has imploded in this episode and we all know that the Doctor still has to save the day. We've got some great villains back, which were incredibly fun to write for. To summarise *You Only Die Twice* with one word: Epic!"

ALFIE RECALLS the studio sessions were: "Really lovely. Director Lisa Bowerman pulled together a fabulous guest cast – as she always does – and we had fun. Even though it was the last **The Twelfth Doctor Chronicles** box set and Jacob's last performance as

appropriate to make it into the final piece. However, in this adventure, Clare Corbett as Carmella added a line that made us all crack up. And it was so in character that we've kept it in the final production." **VORTEX**

THE TWELFTH DOCTOR CHRONICLES YOU ONLY DIE TWICE



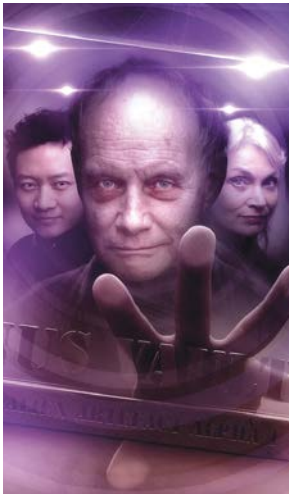
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DOCTOR WHO MASTERMIND



feature any recognised television companions, it did mark the return of actors Daphne Ashbrook and Yee Jee Tso. With the **Doctor Who** TV Movie characters of Dr Grace Holloway and Chang Lee unavailable, Daphne and Yee Jee were cast as UNIT's Ruth Masterson

IT'S LOVELY WHEN A PLAY COMES TO LIFE, WHEN YOU HEAR YOUR OWN WRITING BEING PERFORMED SO WELL.

JONATHAN MORRIS

and Charlie Sato facing off against... well, the clue's in the title!

Jonny explains: "*Mastermind* is a little different from a normal **The Companion Chronicles** adventure because, as the title suggests, it's a story all about the Master and not one of the Doctor's traditionally-defined friends. The story is also a follow-up to my earlier audio adventure *Tales from the Vault* featuring the characters of Ruth and Charlie. You don't need to have heard the earlier audio to understand this one, but I'd encourage you to buy it anyway!

"I was first offered the choice of Ruth and Charlie meeting either Davros, a lone Sontaran or the Master. Having recently written a Davros story but not having

done a Master story before, I leapt at the chance, pitching a *Silence of the Lambs*-type set up.

"As part of working through the *Top Hundred Movies You Have to See of All Time Before You Die*, I'd watched the various *Godfathers* and *Goodfellas*, and I tried to recapture the feel of those films into my story along with bits of *Paradise Lost* (to add a touch of literary class, the Master identifying with the figure of Satan)."

Jonny adds: "This was one of the best recording sessions I've been to because the actors were all on top form, particularly Geoffrey Beevers who was charismatic, captivating and terrifying as the Master. It's lovely when a play comes to life, when you hear your own writing being performed so well."

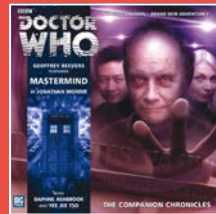
Of the decision to end the series in its previous form, David explains: "Releasing to a monthly schedule is hard work. The knowledge that every month you have to have a production ready to go, and it has to be of a really high quality. I was very proud of the standards on **The Companion Chronicles** and I never wanted them to drop - I was worried that they might if we kept on trying to deliver 12 per year." **VORTEX**

THE COMPANION Chronicles was a fantastic range which provided an opportunity for actors who had accompanied incarnations of the Doctors who are no longer with us, to tell new tales. Before Stephen Noonan, David Troughton and Tim Trelor stepped into the Doctor's shoes, this was how Big Finish created adventures from the earliest days of **Doctor Who**.

The first two seasons comprised four stories each, but **The Companion Chronicles** expanded to a monthly release when David Richardson took over as producer.

Mastermind by Jonathan Morris opened the eighth and final series of the range. Although it didn't

THE COMPANION CHRONICLES MASTERMIND



- RELEASED: JULY 2013
- FORMAT: DOWNLOAD

ORDER NOW: bgfn.sh/mind



VORTEX MAIL



AUDACIOUS AUDACITY

I've developed the habit of saving Eighth Doctor releases for December and the recent and perfectly-timed *Audacity* and *In the Bleak Midwinter* sets did not disappoint. *Twenty-Four Doors in December* was probably my overall favourite story but for me the absolute highlight was *Audacity* herself. She was brilliantly written and made an excellent foil for the Doctor and Charley, and it's clear from the bonus material that Jaye Griffiths is completely engaged with her character and with the stories; a joy to hear. *Audacity* could well be my favourite Big Finish original character since Flip Jackson.

DAVID STEEL

Nick: Cheers, David, Jaye is brilliant, isn't she? I remember directing her with Sir John Hurt back during the original *The War Doctor* box set releases. She really geeked out over his role in *Alien!*

MAGNIFICENT SEVEN

I am a massive fan of your *Blake's 7* range and between my Mrs and myself, we have bought every single one of the releases and love them all. I must thank you for giving *Blake's 7* new life but more importantly ensuring that your releases feel like they are part of the TV series and fit in nicely. I've been on board ever since the very first *The Liberator Chronicles* release. Are you planning any further *Blake's 7* releases? Also, I bought the *Origins* novelisations box set and absolutely love it. Normally your books come with a digital version, so will a digital version of this set be made available? I love them and will read them often, but seeing as they were a premium purchase for me, I really don't want them to suffer from too much wear and tear. And are you considering any future novelisations of the TV series i.e. Series B?

STEVE LODGE



Nick: There are some further plans for *Blake's 7*, Steve, but they're under wraps at the moment. No news on a digital release of *Origins* as yet.

CHRONICLING THE PAST

I was always a big fan of **The Companion Chronicles** range at Big Finish, especially for the First and Second Doctors. The monthly range was wonderful, and then the box sets kept up those incredibly high standards. I was wondering, is there any possibility that this great range could return and we could have more stories with Susan, Vicki, Steven, Jamie, Polly and Zoe?

'VORTISAUR'

Nick: *The Companion Chronicles* will definitely be back, *Vortisaur!*

THANK YOU

I just wanted to write into *Vortex* to say how much I enjoy reading it every month, and more often than not it entices me to try and sample ranges which I didn't think I would be interested in. And thank you for all the amazing releases, with so many great stories with something to suit every mood!

I had a tough time during the holidays with a family bereavement, so having Big Finish stories to lift my mood was much appreciated.

ROBERT H.

Nick: Thanks, Robert, so sorry to hear about your loss. *The stories we love are often a great comfort during difficult times, aren't they? I know that from personal experience too. Glad you're enjoying Vortex. Kenny Smith does such an amazing job as editor, with a certain Stephanie Hornett (Mrs Briggs) doing a great job of copy-editing, and of course all the lovely design work by Mark Plastow.*

VORTEX



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THE BIG FINISH MAGAZINE

VOCOTEX

ISSUE 180
FEBRUARY 2024
BIG FOR THE LOVE
OF STORIES



YOU ONLY DIE TWICE

NOBODY DOES IT BETTER THAN THE TWELFTH DOCTOR...

THE FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES

STORM OF THE SEA DEVILS

THE FOURTH DOCTOR IS ABOUT TO MEET AN OLD FRIEND – AND A NEW ONE!

