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PAGES!

Nigel Fairs
and the acid
bath murders

Janet Fielding
on rejoining
the TARDIS crew



DARK SHADOWS

Nicola Bryant • Matthew Waterhouse

Writers and stars unravel the darkness!

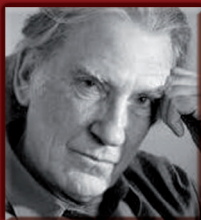
PLUS! Beth Chalmers introduces The Lost Stories' new companion

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EDITORIAL

Well then, since comedian, singer and actor Mitch Benn (he of the legendary **Now Show** on Radio 4) has totally blown the news of the Eighth Doctor's new companion in his personal podcast, I guess there's no point being secretive about it any more. It's Mary Shelley! Yes, remember she appeared not so long ago in the Eighth Doctor special release *The Company of Friends*, in which Paul McGann's Doctor had an adventure with four different companions, each in one of four separate adventures? Remember how much everyone particularly loved the episode featuring Mary Shelley? Well, for a long time now we've planned that after the Eighth Doctor and Lucie had reached the end of their adventures, we'd jump back (or is it sideways? No, it's back!) in time to see what happened with Mary and the Doctor. We asked actress Julie Cox if she'd like to reprise the role, and she welcomed the opportunity with great enthusiasm. And so... yes, we've recorded a whole three-story mini-season of Doctor and Mary adventures. I shan't reveal



any more just now... we'll leave that to Mitch and his tweeting. Or, more preferably, *Doctor Who Magazine*.

So here I am, having only just finished work on the studio recordings of the aforementioned Eighth Doctor adventures, and aside from being on the very brink of going into studio with Tom Baker (next Friday!), I'm hard at work on the second series of **Sherlock Holmes** audios. Not only am I Holmes, I'm also the producer and director, although I will have my trusty assistant, the almost-legendary Ken Bentley, on hand to keep an objective ear open. Richard Earl will once again be joining me as Dr John Watson, and we're assembling a great cast of Big Finish stalwarts to really give the series some style. Alan Cox is guest starring as Professor Moriarty, with Terry Molloy featuring too. Then, of course, we had to have Beth Chalmers and John Banks back! Look out for an upcoming studio report in a full issue. Right... where's my magnifying glass?

Nicholas Briggs

SNEAK PREVIEWS AND WHISPERS

Doctor Who: House of Blue Fire

A creepy tale from horror novelist Mark Morris, in which two young women – Sally Morgan and Rachel McMahon – find themselves as guests in a tumbledown country hotel. But these visitors to Bluefire house have no idea where they are, who has summoned them or why they are required to wear a plastic wristband with a designated number... Timothy West guests as Soames, while director Ken Bentley ramps up the chills...
(Out September 2011)

Doctor Who – The Companion Chronicles: The Memory Cheats

Wendy Padbury stars alongside her daughter Charlie Hayes in this sequel to last year's *Echoes of Grey*. Written by Simon Guerrier, the story finds Zoe long after her time with the Doctor, unable to remember her times in the TARDIS and now targeted by the mysterious Company. Jen (Charlie Hayes) has evidence that Zoe has travelled through time and space, but surely that's nonsense. Isn't it?
(Out September 2011)

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BIG FINISH DAY CONVENTION



Discover more about the upcoming event which will see a wealth of Big Finish talent take to the stage and the signing tables!

You might have noticed – depending on where you are in the world – that we like to pop up at **Doctor Who** conventions. Jason Haigh-Ellery, Nick Briggs and Lisa Bowerman are frequent guests at events in Los Angeles and Chicago; David Richardson – because he hates long-haul flights – usually only makes it so far as Glasgow or Newcastle.

We tend to pop up at most events organized by Derek Hambly and Tenth Planet Events – hopefully we may have met you recently at Act III over Easter, and we're planning to be at Dimensions in Newcastle in November. But recently Derek presented us with an idea: he'd run a one-day convention dedicated to everything Big Finish does, from **Bernice Summerfield** to **Doctor Who**, **Dark Shadows**, **Sapphire and Steel**, **Jago and Litefoot**, **Mervyn Stone**, Rob Shearman's short stories, **Highlander**, **Stargate**... the whole catalogue. And there would be a large array of guests.

That 'large array of guests' has snowballed into something enormous – Derek now has over 50 guests, ranging from actors to producers, script editors, writers, directors and sound designers. If ever you've wanted to get some CDs signed, then June 11 in Barking is the day to do it!

Headlining the day for us is Colin Baker, the wonderful Sixth Doctor. Colin will be there for a panel and CD signings... and for something else that's unique to the event. Because in 2012 the Sixth Doctor will be getting a new companion, who we have yet to announce. We're planning to keep the character and actor secret until the day itself – so you can meet him or her, get an autograph and attend an interview panel!

In a big scoop, Derek has invited the legendary David Warner – star of **Star Trek V**, **Star Trek VI**, **Titanic**, **Tron**, **The Omen** and many more – David's film career is very impressive indeed. He's also a friend of Big Finish, having played Steel in our **Sapphire and Steel** audios,



Left to right: Toby Longworth, Katy Manning, David Warner, Colin Baker and Lisa Bowerman

and been heard in numerous other productions including **Bernice Summerfield**, many **Doctor Whos** and **Graceless**.

Other actors signing on the day will be Katy Manning (**Doctor Who**, **Iris Wildthyme**, **Gallifrey**), Beth Chalmers (Raine in **Doctor Who: The Lost Stories** and Mrs Hudson in **Sherlock Holmes**), Duncan Wisbey (Dr Sacker in **Jago and Litefoot**, and many **Doctor Who** audios), Toby Longworth (many **Doctor Who** audios and the new **Highlander** box set, plus Toby played a Slitheen in **The Sarah Jane Adventures** on TV), Lisa Bowerman (**Bernice Summerfield**, **Jago and Litefoot**), James George (numerous **Doctor Who** audios) and John Dorney (who's featured in and also written many popular stories, and is script editing **The Lost Stories** and **The Fourth Doctor Adventures**). And there are more yet to be announced.

The Big Finish production team will be there: Jason Haigh-Ellery, Nicholas (Voice of the Daleks) Briggs, David Richardson, Paul Spragg and

Frances Welsh, along with Gary Russell, who masterminded the **Doctor Who** range before leaving to become a script editor on the TV series.

There's a long list of writers attending: Scott Andrews, Peter Anghelides, Jason Arnopp, Richard Dinnick, Nigel Fairs, Paul Finch, Nev Fountain, William Gallagher, James Goss, Simon Guerrier, Steven Hall, Scott Handcock, Gary Hopkins, Joseph Lidster, Steve Lyons, Paul Magrs, Jonathan Morris, Marc Platt, Justin Richards, Nigel Robinson, Marty Ross, Cavan Scott, Rob Shearman, James Swallow and Mark Wright.

Directors are represented by John Ainsworth and Ken Bentley; sound designers by Howard Carter, Richard Fox, Steve Foxon, Jamie Robertson, Toby Robinson and Lauren Yason, while Jamie Griffiths – who compiles our CD extras – will be there too.

In short, it's going to be the biggest gathering of Big Finish personnel ever! And the list is growing every day... More details can be found at www.tenthplanetevents.com. Hope to see you there!

In the Shadows

The horror anthology series returns in a new series of Dramatic Readings. Here's a guide to what's coming up...

JONATHAN MORRIS

May's *The Blind Painter* by Jonathan Morris is about a terrible supernatural bargain made by a talentless painter. It stars Roger Davis (**Alias Smith and Jones**) and Nicola Bryant

So, tell us about *The Blind Painter*.

The Blind Painter is about a character from **Dark Shadows** called Charles Delaware Tate. The title gives away a little bit of the premise. He can still paint but he's now blind, so the mystery of the story is first of all telling us how he got his great artistic gift which made him a legend throughout the nation, and secondly how he lost his sight.

Can you describe **Dark Shadows** in a nutshell?

Before starting work on this, I was aware of the name of **Dark Shadows** and that it was this American cult gothic series. One of the strong things about the show is that you can watch a couple of episodes and you get what **Dark**

Shadows is. It's an American take on British gothic horror from the 19th century.

Who is Charles Delaware Tate, apart from being the best-named character ever?

When we begin the story, Charles Delaware Tate is a struggling artist living in a tenement in New York and he absolutely adores great art. He feels he has it within him to be a great painter and, unfortunately, the only thing that's holding him back is his own tragic lack of talent. He'll do anything, absolutely anything, he'll pay any price in order to be the painter he wants to be. You get this Faustian tale with elements of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* in there as well.

Is this a gothic holiday from your normal work? It's always nice to do something different.

Doctor Who does take up quite a lot of my time now – which is lovely – but it's always nice to go somewhere else and do something which has a slightly different tone to it. It's a chance to write in a different style and be a different type of writer.

NICOLA BRYANT

Nicola Bryant, aka **Doctor Who**'s Peri, also debuts in **Dark Shadows** with *The Blind Painter*, as mysterious benefactor Eloise Verinder

Had you heard of **Dark Shadows** before?

Yes, I'd heard of it, but I couldn't recall ever seeing an episode. So I immediately went searching through YouTube and found some pretty strange footage. I was certainly intrigued, and I couldn't wait to get the script.

Would you say **Doctor Who** and **Dark Shadows** are similar?

Like **Doctor Who** it thrives on a small budget to create a claustrophobic atmosphere. You can almost imagine one of the earlier Doctors ringing the bell at this mysterious house and being one of the guests. Of course, if they did, he'd have to sort everything out...

Can you describe your role of Eloise?

Not wanting to give the plot away, I would describe Eloise as a classic femme fatale from the archives of either Philip Marlowe or **Tales of the Unexpected**, and she certainly has some interesting and, indeed, unexpected layers. As with all femme fatales she has the power to bewitch our young hero, and she certainly seems to possess some dark, magical qualities.

Is it fun playing someone different to Peri?

It's fun to play any part that's well written, that stretches you as an actor and gives you something to get your teeth into. Peri is a very reactive character most of the time, as is the nature of all the companions. She is a feed for the Doctor. Eloise is very proactive. She is the one with the power, she therefore drives every scene she is in. I'm not saying she's a better character than Peri, but it's enjoyable to be seen in a different light.

You've directed for Big Finish and have acted in a number of different roles for them. Is there anything else you'd like to do?

Do you mean for Big Finish, or in life generally? As for Big Finish, I have so much fun working for them I would practically agree to do it full time!

Can you briefly describe *The Blind Painter* for **Doctor Who** fans?

I think a lot of **Doctor Who** fans have an appetite for the strange and mysterious. They like well-told thrillers which conjure up suspense, not just from situation but also from intriguing and compelling characters. I believe my trailer would read as follows; "In a world of paint and brushes, one man has a brush... with Destiny. They say a picture can paint a thousand words... but what if one of those words was "Horror"?"



Nicola Bryant as the very proactive Eloise

MATTHEW WATERHOUSE

Matthew Waterhouse makes his Big Finish debut in June's *The Creeping Fog* by Simon Guerrier, a two-handed tale of terror set in London during the Blitz, co-starring David Selby (**The Social Network**). Matthew tells us a bit more...

When did you first hear about **Dark Shadows**? While I was in **Doctor Who**, I was a fan of the American writer Harlan Ellison, who mentioned **Dark Shadows** in his book of TV reviews, **The Glass Teat**. That's where I first heard of it. I remember thinking what a cool title it was. (Incidentally, I wonder if someone at Dan Curtis Productions was a jazz fan, because there is a 1947 song featuring Charlie Parker called *Dark Shadows*. Not everyone knows that. 'Dark shadows haunting me, nothing but misery...!') I didn't see any actual episodes until I moved to the US, where it was in re-runs at some hellish hour, 5am I think. I liked it immediately.

Would you say **Doctor Who** and **Dark Shadows** are similar – shows loved by their fans but wonderfully baffling to outsiders?

I think the studio-bound styles are something a modern viewer can either enter or they can't, but if they can, both **Who** and **Shadows** have an addictive quality. A lot of modern TV is bland. No one could accuse Tom Baker or the extraordinary Grayson Hall of blandness!

The serial format, with its intense cliffhangers, is an integral part of both. Both programmes were the big childhood 'scarers' in their respective countries. **Doctor Who** was notorious for causing sleepless nights, and **Dark Shadows** must have been the genesis of countless nightmares. In fact, I have met people whose parents forbade them from watching **Dark Shadows** as children.

Both programmes seem to have been able to get away with stuff that other programmes wouldn't dare to have touched! The old **Doctor Who** was a science fiction melodrama with gothic undertones, whereas **Dark Shadows** was an extreme gothic melodrama with undertones of science fiction. People unfamiliar with **Dark Shadows** might be surprised to hear that there is a lot of time travel in it.

Can you describe your part of John Cunningham in *The Creeping Fog*?

He looks after a rather down-at-heel London museum during World War II. Though in some ways quite bumbling, he is intellectually adventurous. Like most characters in gothic fiction, he is something of an obsessive. His museum is the most important thing in the world to him and, with bombs falling all around him, he lives in constant fear that it will be destroyed. By inviting David Selby's character, Quentin Collins, into the museum at night, he is doing Quentin a favour. But it becomes clear that he wants a favour in return...

The whole piece is played under the threat of bombing, so there is tension throughout, but there are quite a few light comic moments. John is obsessed with making cups of tea at moments of high drama! But he is more than he appears to be. Apparently light remarks have a sinister undertone, so the listener suspects there is more to John than just an unworldly museum curator. Even those endless cups of tea have a point to them! He is friendly, but there is steel underneath.

Very early in the story, he says under his breath that Quentin 'should be afraid' – apparently of bombs, but perhaps of something else also... John certainly has his secrets.

Matthew Waterhouse – a familiar face, but new to Big Finish!

What was the recording day like?

It was great fun to do but genuinely intense. The piece is a two-hander, so it's important that the actors work well together. David Selby is a fantastic actor, intense, responsive, exciting. I loved working with him. The director, Darren Gross, decided that when I was playing an intense scene I sounded a lot like Colin Baker, so this became a useful directorial shorthand for more or less intensity: 'More Colin Baker! Less Colin Baker!'

Can you briefly describe *The Creeping Fog* in a way that'll tempt a **Doctor Who** fan?

I hope **Doctor Who** fans will give this a listen. I think it will appeal to anyone who likes earthbound **Doctor Who** adventures, say *The Talons of Weng-Chiang* or *Spearhead from Space*, or likes the Sherlock Holmes stories or that **Avengers** episode set in fog-filled London. It's scary and laden with atmosphere in the tradition of gothic stories and the climax is amazing. Also, it's a good introduction to the whole **Dark Shadows** phenomenon. People should not worry about finding themselves baffled by impenetrable soap opera convolutions – the story fits perfectly into **Dark Shadows** continuity but it doesn't require any previous knowledge. It is pretty much self-contained. All you need to know is that a strange, wandering American turns up in war-torn London in 1941!

DARK SHADOWS FOR BEGINNERS

Stop, **Doctor Who** fan, don't turn that page – here's why you should fall in love with **Dark Shadows** immediately!

Seen the show about a werewolf sharing a house with a ghost and a vampire? Forget **Being Human**, you're talking about **Dark Shadows**, the cult daytime US soap that ran from the mid Sixties to the early Seventies (in **Doctor Who** currency, that's from *The War Machines* right up to *Colony in Space*).

Why is it cool now?

Because Tim Burton is making a film of it right this minute, starring Johnny Depp and Helena Bonham-Carter. So this is your chance to jump on the bandwagon early, so that next year you'll be able to say, 'Well, Burton's take is all very well for newcomers, but Helena is no Grayson Hall...'

I beg your pardon, what's a Grayson Hall? Larger-than-life and game-for-anything, Matthew

Waterhouse is right to say Grayson Hall is the Tom Baker of **Dark Shadows**. The cast played several different characters – and the Oscar-nominated Hall excelled as the icy, vampire-loving scientist Dr Julia Hoffman but also quite happily slapped on the fake tan and beads to play Magda Rakosi, the devious gypsy fortune-teller... sometimes in the same episode.

Excuse me, how can that happen?

Dark Shadows tells the saga of the Collins family across a three hundred year period (not forgetting the parallel dimensions). So it wasn't unknown for one character to leave a note for another to find in a library book a hundred years later, causing them to nip back through time to solve a cliffhanger.

Cool. So it's just like *The Big Bang*, but without a fez?

There are a lot of fezzes in **Dark Shadows**, actually. Fezzes are cool. Especially when worn by Aristide, the sinister assassin with his portable pendulum torture chamber.

Who is Johnny Depp playing in this film, then?

Barnabas, the cursed vampire. By cursed, we mean that his brilliant plans often end up with him in a roomful of corpses, tutting sadly, 'Well, I had no choice...' Put it this way – if Barnabas asks for your help, you're safer spending a day with Jack Bauer. In the original, he was played by the amazing Jonathan Frid, the William Hartnell of **Dark Shadows** – delivering a performance of unique power, but also with a similarly individual grasp on his lines. Reshoots were almost unheard



of, so when Jonathan Frid walked through the closing credits on his way home... that stayed in.

Any other interesting characters?

There's Quentin the werewolf, who is also sometimes a ghost and sometimes an immortal wanderer – he's played by David Selby, who was in **The Social Network**. Then there's Pansy Faye, the clairvoyant ghost of a showgirl who possesses a vicar's daughter.

Crikey.

Yes. It's all go in Collinwood. You may think Boston's all about clam chowder and posh coffee, but in **Dark Shadows** anything can happen. Ghost ships appear from the sea, and the nice new owners of the antique shop may just be the embodiment of the Great Old Ones From Before Time.

Pity, as there was a nice casket in their shop window I fancied the look of... Don't open that casket! It contains the Severed Hand of Count Petofi, a devious necromancer who has wandered the world looking for his missing limb and

isn't afraid to make pacts with demons, witches and gypsies in order to achieve his goals. His complicated plans are so gloriously convoluted he makes the Master look straightforward. Put it this way: Count Petofi could exist in several different times, possess a whole household, order a nice wine and cheat at **Angry Birds**. All with one hand.

I've only just got my head around the exciting new developments in the Cartmel Masterplan. I'm not sure I've got the space for a new audio drama series. Isn't **Dark Shadows** all a bit impenetrable?

Not at all. The full-cast series is very much a new beginning for the Cursed House of Collinwood, and the Dramatic Readings are more like a self-contained gothic horror anthology series.

What have I got to look forward to in the new series then?

A murder-mystery with a witch detective, pacts with the devil, ghosts in the fog, a school beset by demons, an evil priest among the damned and a pretty woman chased by wolves and vampires.



DARK SHADOWS DRAMATIC READINGS: THE NEW SERIES AT A GLANCE

The Blind Painter (May)

Nicola Bryant co-stars in Jonathan Morris's story of possession, pacts and very bad painting.

The Death Mask (May)

A haunted house murder-mystery romantic comedy, in which a society witch must solve a series of bizarre killings.

The Creeping Fog (June)

Matthew Waterhouse gives a stunning performance alongside David Selby in this story of a museum in the London Blitz by Simon Guerrier. It's creepy! It's atmospheric! It's really rather chilling.

The Carrion Queen (June)

On a battlefield, a witch and a villainous vicar have been given one final chance at

redemption. Can they perform a selfless act in front of the Dark Lord himself?

The Poisoned Soul (July)

In which Roy Thinnes (**The Invaders**, **The X-Files**) plays an innocent schoolmaster trying to solve a series of supernatural attacks on the inhabitants of a girls' school. He's not helped by the fact that the Headmistress is possessed by a cockney clairvoyant chanteuse.

The Lost Girl (July)

In which the soul of a woman called Josette revisits her tragic life to find out how she became damned.

And finally, look out for another very special release later on in the year for **Dark Shadows'** 45th anniversary, as well as this year's full-cast audio drama. It's all go at the House of **Dark Shadows**...

NEW AUDIO TALES OF HORROR FROM BIG FINISH

DARK SHADOWS



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State of the Reunion

Janet Fielding reacquaints herself with Sontarans, the delicious food at Moat Studios and interviewer Paul Spragg, with a large helping of dry wit...

Hello Janet. Today you've been working with Sontarans. Well, actors playing Sontarans anyway...

I did a **Jim'll Fix It** with them many years ago [*In a Fix with Sontarans*, also featuring Colin Baker], so I feel like I'm one up on the other three who have, in fact, never encountered the Sontarans before. So I'm a little more knowledgeable than they are on matters Sontaran generally. They're a bit like an anarchist manifesto in a way, it's what happens if you're too rigid about following the rules.

You've been working with some of Big Finish's favourite actors too.

It's sweet! It's very nice. It's a nice atmosphere. I'm very fond of the people; Toby [Hrycek-Robinson] here at the sound studio always does a very splendid lunch. I can't do too many of these a year because if I do I'll get like the size of a house. Certainly a small bungalow.

We stopped referencing the lunches in these pages, but as several listeners have complained, it's good to mention them again. You'll be pleased to hear, listeners, that the high standards are being maintained and indeed, I came in this morning and Toby had decorated the studio for Christmas.

Christmas is the only time Mark Strickson's really free. And he's already done his work and headed off again, hasn't he?

Yeah, he has. He's doing a load of wildlife filming about the desert in the Middle East over the next few years, so that'll be interesting, to see what happens there. He'll be based halfway between New Zealand and the Middle East and here, which is bizarre.

Before he left, Mark even had a bit of romance as Turlough. How did he do?

I don't know, darling, I wasn't allowed in studio for those bits; it was a closed set!

Are you still happy with Tegan's development as a character?

Yeah, I think so. They're doing well. Tegan's quite lucky because there's always a bit of wit to Tegan, she's got a dry sense of humour so that's always fun.

You're even getting a few more Australianisms to perform.

Australia's not as far away as it used to be. I'm not a **Neighbours** watcher. I sometimes watch **Home and Away** but in the last couple of



years Dad has started watching **Home and Away**; my brothers and I are a little concerned about this, but it's quite funny.

Have things changed since you were in studio this time last year?

For a start, last time I think I had a cold. A very, very bad cold, so at least I didn't have that. I fell very heavily on my back on the ice, so that wasn't fun. But it doesn't affect one's voice, so that's fine. I'm now looking forward to Christmas, getting that organised. I have a suitcase of the world's smelliest cheeses to take out to friends. I am going out to spend Christmas with some friends; there'll be a rent-a-child, obviously, you need children at that time of the year. There'll be three generations of us in a largeish, rambling country house. Bit traditional; last year there was a bit of snow on the ground.

As you've brought up cheese, are your co-stars also maturing year on year?

No, of course they're not! They're getting old; I would hardly say they're maturing, myself included. I enjoy it, because one has a good time. I'm not an actor any more. I really couldn't do these while I was agenting; that would have been quite wrong. But now that I'm no longer agenting, it's not really such a problem for me. When I was that side of the business, it created difficulties, it wasn't really appropriate.

The previous year Peter Davison was taking great delight in insulting everyone. How is he this time? Reasonably well behaved. Could improve, of course. Sarah's always quite well behaved. Mark was reasonably well behaved. I, of course, was best. That goes without saying. But they're used to that. They don't like to admit it, but they know it in their heart of hearts.

Doctor Who: *Kiss of Death* is out this month

I was wondering now the new series has done the Silurians if Big Finish had any plans to do another Silurian story (maybe the prelude to *Frozen Time*). *Bloodtide* is my favourite Big Finish audio and it would be nice to see the classic Silurians back.

I'd just like to say how much I am enjoying the main series **Doctor Who** releases this year, apart from the lack of Silurians of course! Some very strong storylines, looking forward to the rest of the releases. Keep up the good work, I think Classic **Who** is in very safe hands.

Adrian

Nick: Cheers, Adrian. No specific plans for Silurians at the moment, but it's certainly something we want to do.

Hi. I am so happy that I received the *Four Doctors* audio special as part of my renewed **Doctor Who** monthly subscription! With specials, however, they are not numbered like the monthly releases. I am OCD where I like to have my **Doctor Who** audios in Big Finish's chronological order. (Trying to have the audios in the Doctor's chronological order would be next to impossible, I think!)

If possible, could you please let me know between which **Doctor Who** monthly releases *The Four Doctors* special audio was released? And between which **Doctor Who** monthly releases the *Devil's Whisper* special audio was released?

I notice that Colin Baker has the repeated honour of doing the next **Doctor Who** anniversary audio (the 150th audio, to be precise). I'm very happy for Colin, as I thought he did an excellent job with the 100th audio. I was curious, however, if either Peter Davison, Sylvester McCoy, or Paul McGann were jealous of Colin's anniversary honours? I ask this because I know how competitive all of the Doctors are of one another.

Speaking of the Doctors, if possible, could you please consider making a behind-the-scenes audio where all of the Doctors debate — with perhaps Nicholas Briggs as the moderator? Maybe even get David Tennant as the moderator? I would be awestruck and honoured if Tom Baker could be convinced to join this debate as well. As a long-time

fan of **Doctor Who** (I'm 42 in April, and I watched **Doctor Who** on my local PBS station in the States.), I would love to hear all of the Doctors give their thoughts and insights into their Doctor.

Lastly, which I mentioned before, do the Doctors have a wish list of any companions — including ones they have not had an adventure with — they want to be with in a future audio? If Big Finish got the Sixth Doctor and Jamie together, I know that Big Finish can do anything!

After **Doctor Who** audio 150, I look forward to the next 50 audios and what awaits us for **Doctor Who** audio 200!

Michael Koo

Nick: Hi Michael! I think I'll leave other listeners to work out that chronology for you. I don't think the Doctors are that competitive. And I certainly can't conceive of a time when we'd be able to get them all together in one place! But that would be fun. I don't think the Doctors have a wish list of companions... Mind you, I've never asked them. Hmmm.

Just wanted to say I'm encouraged to hear Tom Baker is going to do some Big Finish. Hoping to get them if I can raise the money.

Oh, what the heck — I'm going to ask. Have you guys ever thought about using a Draconian as a companion for one of the Doctors? Sure, I know — humans need to be the major companions. I have no problem with that.

But a little mix and match now and then wouldn't hurt, I think. Think of the plotlines/character stuff you could do with a stuffy Draconian and a human female companion. If Earth is a problem, just have the Doctor give him/her some sort of holo-bracelet that gives off a human image and go on with it. (If not a Draconian, maybe some sort of shape-shifter... Lucie's aunt is a Zygon isn't she? Maybe she's kinda bored hanging around Earth...)

Not really sure why I asked you this, and it's all up to you, of course, but I just wanted to throw the idea out there. No offence was meant... and I really am looking forward to the Tom Baker stories.

Greg Gick

Nick: It's an interesting idea. I seem to remember that Gary Russell once had a plan

for a Zygon companion, which was potentially rather exciting. We're all looking forward to the Tom Bakers!

This isn't an enquiry but is very much a mighty thank you. I have just finished listening to *To the Death* and so need a proper, protracted sit down. I genuinely got goosebumps, a lump in my throat and my eyes became overly moist. I shall really miss Lucie as played by the phenomenal Sheridan Smith.

Paul Reynard

Nick: Naturally, I'm biased, but I had pretty much the same experience as yours every time I had to listen through to give notes to our sound designer, Andy Hardwick. It was also very emotional in the studio. We shall miss Sheridan. We all loved her dearly.

Hello! It is great that that we will at last hear Tom Baker in Big Finish audio productions. I'm sure that with the talent of your cast and quality of Big Finish productions it would seem impossible to get any better.

The companions' tales and recollections are wonderful and fill the void for past Doctors, but... the voice of Sean Pertwee would be fantastic for a Third Doctor series. I'm sure your brainstormers have had these thoughts but as a fan I thought a Fourth Doctor series was an impossibility but you managed that. I will continue to hope that it may yet happen.

Mark Gardner

Nick: Hmmm. There's generally a lot of resistance to the Doctor being recast.

Just a quick word of praise for *The Feast of Axos* — highly enjoyable!

The news on the Tom Baker stories sounds very interesting — but is K9 really not going to appear?!? Surely he will make a return to the series; are you looking at making *The Killer Cats of Ghen-Sing* as a Lost Story? Like most people I have always wanted to know more about that tale — fingers crossed your answer is yes...

Martin Edmonds

Nick: No plans for *Killer Cats*, I'm afraid. But K9 will return with Mary Tamm's Romana.

Drama SHOWCASE

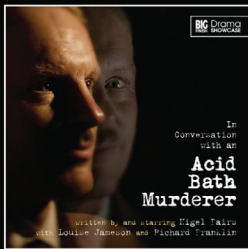
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Written by & starring Nigel Fairs
with Louise Jameson and Richard Franklin
Out: May 2011



UNINTELLIGENT DESIGN
Written by & starring Geoffrey Beavers
with Toby Meador & Daisy Ashford
Out: June 2011

The Acid Test

The multi-talented Nigel Fairs introduces his entry into the Drama Showcase: *In Conversation with a Acid Bath Murderer*



Nigel Fairs plays the part of John George Haigh, the acid bath murderer

Hi Nigel. How did you first become aware of the story of the Acid Bath Murderer?

I first became aware of John George Haigh when I was teaching drama back in the late Eighties. One of my students lent me a book about him by David Briffet. It was interesting but because Briffet is an ex-police officer, a lot of it was about how Haigh's case was investigated and how he was 'brought to justice'. I was more interested in how he got to be a murderer in the first place.

What is it particularly that fascinates you about the case?

What fascinated me was Haigh's upbringing. His parents were upstanding members of the Plymouth Brethren, a God-fearing couple that protected him from the 'sins of the world' by building a huge wall around their house, not allowing John's mind to be 'infected' by newspapers, books (apart from the holy books of course), wireless sets and sports – his father called them all 'the instruments of the Devil!' Haigh's solitude, that peculiar, terrified view of the world and the conviction that he was something unique, chosen by God or Fate to be a killer – this man was crying out to have a play written about him!! Then, of course, you get onto the fraud, the manner in which he got rid of the bodies, his claim that he was a vampire...

Apparently there are even a few weird similarities between you and Haigh...

Yes, another thing that struck me about him was his geography – every place he lived in

or worked in or got his victims from had some echo in my life: Wakefield, Leeds, Horsham, Crawley, Brighton... all places I've lived or worked in. I wrote two versions of his story and it was only after we'd started rehearsing the second that I discovered that my grandfather had hired him a car and that my great-grandfather had put the shackles on him in Lewes Prison!! The peculiar resonances didn't stop there. We'd just toured the play in 1999 when my friend Richard told me that his aunt used to take tea with Haigh in the Onslow Court hotel (where he lived at the end of his life) and, had he not been arrested, she would have been his next victim! Then last year I was about to start rehearsals for the latest stage version when I fell off my bike and woke up in the hospital with an identical scar to his... how spooky is that?!

This isn't the first form of *Acid Bath Murderer*, how has it changed between stage and audio?

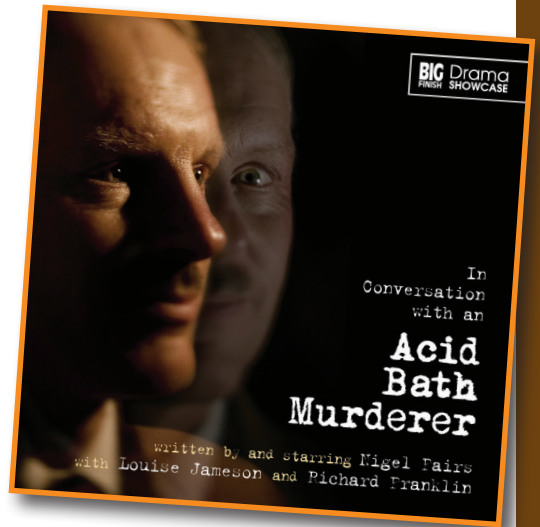
The most recent stage version is a two-hander – we're performing it at the Brighton Festival in May and then touring it in October of this year – so the audio version is actually closer to the original, inasmuch as it's full cast. On stage there's just me (as Haigh) and Suzanne Procter as his fiancé and two of his victims. What the audio version does so nicely is to bring the focus right down to Haigh, so we really feel we're getting inside his head. Lou Jameson's direction really helped us focus on that.

You've written, directed, acted, sound designed and composed, often on the same story; what's your favourite discipline?

Really I'm an actor at heart; I do the other things to support myself financially between acting jobs! Though of course there's never a huge amount of money in any of the jobs I do – but a little bit of everything helps to pay for the food and the Rioja! I'm so envious of people who are just actors and manage to make a living. They're so passionate. Mind you, I'm passionate as well, particularly about my work. And for the rest of the time I wander around being a bit silly and smile a lot.

Your director was a hard taskmaster, we hear...

Lou, as I've said, is a superb director and she shares my passion for truth. She never lets you get away with anything and yet is one of the most generous directors I've ever worked with. So many of them prefer the sound of their own voice to those of the cast, at the expense of the piece. Lou listens and cares about the work as much as I do. At the moment she's directing me in a new musical version of a play



I wrote in 1997, **Honeymoon from Hell** (I want to convince David Richardson it would make a superb audio play, by the way!). I thought I knew the character inside out; in one rehearsal she'd helped me to understand him on such a deeper level, just by asking me what exactly he was thinking at a particular point and what he wanted from the other characters. All basic stuff but vital.

Louise has been something of a muse for you, having inspired you to write a trilogy of Leela stories. What can you tell us about the next one?

Yes, I can honestly say that getting to know Lou has changed my life, for the better. I really do believe she is my soulmate – I can't think of another way to put it – and that finally everything is starting to make sense now. Sounds a bit deep I know, but it's how it feels. The Leela plays are, strangely, a reflection of that kind of journey and revelation – there are three trilogies in my head and *The Child* is the first of the second trilogy. At the end of the *Time Vampire* trilogy, Leela was reborn; *The Child* explores that rebirth whilst also taking a look back at one of her adventures with the Doctor, but through a child's eyes. I'm very excited about it, and I'm hoping that we can use one of the kids from the Sunday Drama College, which Lou runs in Tunbridge Wells. So often we get to the end of the sessions or rehearsals and I think, 'I wonder if they know how lucky they are, to be taught by Louise Jameson? I would have killed for that opportunity when I was a teenager!'

Drama Showcase: In Conversation With An Acid Bath Murderer is out this month

Looks Like Raine...

Familiar to fans from countless audio appearances, we present brand new companion Raine, aka Beth Chalmers, in conversation with Paul Spragg

Hello Beth. Introduce us to Raine.

She is self-made; not in a money way, but she didn't know her mother, she discarded her father, she's climbed out of her economic surroundings, she's made herself. So her education, the way she speaks, she's quite controlled and composed because this is how she's chosen to be. She's not a product of her upbringing, this is what she wants. And the reason she's doing safecracking, the reason she's quite hard, and she likes the sort of lifestyle and she's good at this sort of thing, is because she has had to be. She's driven by the need to be independent, and survival. It gives her a feeling of superiority over people I think. Or maybe that's just me...

You're in the final stages of playing Raine in the **Lost Stories** as we speak; what have your highlights been?

The best thing in the world was being able to play my mother, Raine, the Russian diplomat in *Thin Ice*, which we did third, just before this one [*Earth Aid*]. So I already kind of knew who Raine was; I'd met Raine, become her, but then to become the mother was a bit like having



free character research. Giving birth to myself was something I'd not done before. I had to give birth to myself whilst being possessed by an Ice Warrior which involves some grunting that I wasn't ready for.

So I was a baby at the end of that, and then wheel on back to the first one we recorded where Raine is discovered, becomes part of the Doctor's world, and discovers him in a safe. It was quite fun just to be incredibly cool, and then your cool is taken away from you when you open a safe and the Doctor's in there. She is launched from being all cool and fabulous and safecracky into a world she doesn't know where also it's established that you've got the Doctor, and Ace. So she becomes the new girl, which takes away her self-control slightly and takes away her composure.

Ace and I, it's a subtle battle that we're having. I'm slightly pulling rank over her with my classic education and my socio-economic superiority and she's a London girl who doesn't care. I try to look down on her but I can't really because she can kick some butt and knows her stuff and the Doctor thinks she's brilliant. So it's vying for the Doctor's affection and trying to find my place in this trio. I go from, 'I'm all cool and in charge and composed and debonair', then I get thrown into this new world where I don't know what's going on, I'm the new girl, I'm trying to find my place, and then by the end I'm making some snarky comments to the Doctor. I've found my place and I'm finding myself again and it's when she says, 'Thanks for that, Doctor, it's quite refreshing you not knowing what you're talking about. It's not reassuring but it's quite refreshing' that she's back to being herself again; she's funny and she's sarcastic.

You've played countless roles in assorted Big Finish audios.

Yes! Which I love. I have got to play some really cool things. I got to play a woman in a vase once. What was she in? [*Time Reef* – Ed] Lady Vuyoki. Nicholas Farrell. I was just incredibly damning and he was in love with me. I just had to go, 'Oh, do go away'. That was great fun.

Do you feel you've arrived now you're playing a companion?

Yes! All these times I've been here and watched other people. Also I've done fifteen parts in each thing; the automated elevator or the computer voice or whatever. and it did feel like, 'Now I'm going to play with the big boys.' It means I sit here and the outside artists, the actors come in for their two days on an episode, I lord it over them. I know



Girlfriend/boyfriend or daughter/father: on audio you can be both! Beth with Ricky Groves

when lunch is. I know where the loos are. I can make myself a cup of coffee. I'm here every day!

Have you been welcomed by Sylvester McCoy (The Doctor) and Sophie Aldred (Ace)?

They sit on the other side of the room and don't talk to me. [laughs] They really have been welcoming, and it's quite nice to hear about their times in the Eighties when they were doing their stuff, hearing about all the stories and how it all was back then. They've never made me feel like the new girl.

Have you had much input from writer/script editor Andrew Cartmel?

I've looked to him for approving nods or him recoiling in horror and slamming the door and leaving the room – 'Oh, right, not that then.' But no. He's been in the room quite a lot, I've chatted to him a lot and you don't want to be a needy actress do you: 'Is that how you want me to do it? Would you like something different?' They'll let me know if they want; he will tell Ken [Bentley, director] and Ken will tell me, 'Can you not do it like that? A bit better please'. Which was Sophie's direction to me this morning: 'Better acting'. So I haven't asked him but I know he's around and I trust he would say either directly or via Ken if I was doing the wrong thing.



Have you done much action stuff? Safecracking is a very gentle profession.

It's quite genteel. Walking through grain was quite tiring; a little bit of running. I didn't get to wear a spacesuit, that was quite upsetting, but I can really empathise with that. You think, 'Ooh, I'm on a spaceship and you want me to go [somewhere]. Please can I put a spacesuit on? They all wear spacesuits! Every time you see people in space they wear spacesuits; they look fun! And they float around and it all looks really cool! All I'm doing is wearing my normal clothes and charging through some grain. It's not really as glamorous as I think Raine was hoping.

Would you come back for more **Lost Stories**?

Yes! I'll turn up for anything! I'll turn up just for lunch! I might just turn up and see who you've cast and try and oust them. Oh yes, I'd love to, absolutely. I'd be sad not to return and thrilled to do so.

Is there a role you'd still like to play?

Well, I've played a man, I've played a genie, I've played a Russian woman, I've played a safecracker, I've played a warrior... I'm not sure if there's anything. Angela Bruce played a part in one [*Animal*] and Ingrid Oliver is playing Baraki; they're very forthright women in charge. But I think I've played one of those. No. There you go. I'm done. I'm out! Bit more of everything, please. Just keep it coming. Keep it coming. A lot of ass-kicking, some funny lines, there we go. Bosh.

Doctor Who: *Crime of the Century* is out this month



Sophie Aldred and Sylvester McCoy with Beth Chalmers

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FORTHCOMING RELEASES

MAY 2011

Doctor Who: *Kiss of Death* (147, Fifth Doctor/Tegan/Turlough/Nyssa)

Doctor Who - The Lost Stories: *Crime of the Century*
(2.4, Seventh Doctor, Ace & Raine)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: *Ferril's Folly*
(5.11, Fourth Doctor)

Doctor Who - Short Trips: *Volume 3* (2 CDs, various readers)

Drama Showcase 3: *In Conversation with an Acid Bath Murderer* (Nigel Fairs)

Dark Shadows: 15 - *The Blind Painter* (Roger Davis, Nicola Bryant)

Dark Shadows: 16 - *The Death Mask* (Jerry Lacy, Lara Parker)

JUNE 2011

Doctor Who: *Rat Trap* (148, Fifth Doctor/Tegan/Turlough/Nyssa)

Doctor Who - The Lost Stories: *Animal* (2.5, Seventh Doctor, Ace & Raine)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: *The Cold Equations*
(5.12, First Doctor)

Jago and Litefoot: *Series 3 Box Set* (Four full cast adventures)

Drama Showcase 4: *Unintelligent Design* (Geoffrey Beevers)

Dark Shadows: 17 - *The Creeping Fog* (David Selby, Matthew Waterhouse)

Dark Shadows: 18 - *The Carrion Queen* (Lara Parker, Jerry Lacy)

JULY 2011

Doctor Who: *Robophobia* (149, Seventh Doctor)

Doctor Who - The Lost Stories: *Earth Aid* (2.6, Seventh Doctor, Ace & Raine)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:

Tales from the Vault (6.01, First, Second, Third and Fourth Doctors)

Dark Shadows: 19 - *The Poisoned Soul* (Nancy Barrett)

Dark Shadows: 20 - *The Lost Girl* (Kathryn Lee Scott)

Everyone's Just So So Special by Robert Shearman (Special Leatherbound, Leatherbound and Hardback)

AUGUST 2011

Doctor Who: *Recorded Time and Other Stories* (150, Sixth Doctor and Peri)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: *The Rocket Men* (6.02, First Doctor)

Doctor Who - Short Trips: *Volume 4* (2 CDs, various readers)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: *The Specials Box Set*
(The Three Companions, The Mists of Time, Freakshow)

Dark Shadows: 21 - *The Crimson Pearl*

SEPTEMBER 2011

Doctor Who: *The Doomsday Quatrain* (151, Seventh Doctor)

Doctor Who: *House of Blue Fire* (152, Seventh Doctor)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:

The Memory Cheats (6.03, Second Doctor)

Bernice Summerfield Box Set 1: *Epoch*

OCTOBER 2011

Doctor Who: TBA (153, Eighth Doctor and Mary Shelley)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:

The Many Deaths of Jo Grant (6.04, Third Doctor)

Doctor Who - The Lost Stories: *The Elite* (3.1, Fifth Doctor, Tegan and Nyssa)

Sherlock Holmes: *The Final Problem/The Empty House* (2.1)

NOVEMBER 2011

Doctor Who: TBA (154, Eighth Doctor and Mary Shelley)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:

The Child (6.05, Fourth Doctor)

The Big Finish Companion: Volume 1 by Richard Dinnick (hardback)

Doctor Who - The Lost Stories: *Hexagora* (3.2, Fifth Doctor, Tegan and Nyssa)

Sherlock Holmes: *The Reification of Hans Gerber* (2.2)

DECEMBER 2011

Doctor Who: TBA (154, Eighth Doctor and Mary Shelley)

Doctor Who: Subscriber Special (Doctor TBA)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles:

TBA (6.06, Doctor TBA)

Doctor Who - The Lost Stories: *The Children of Seth* (3.3, Fifth Doctor, Tegan and Nyssa)

Sherlock Holmes: *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (2.3)

Graceless: *Series 2 Box Set*

JANUARY 2012

Doctor Who: TBA (155, Sixth Doctor and TBA)

Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures: TBA (1.1, Fourth Doctor and Leela)

Doctor Who - The Lost Stories: *The Fourth Doctor Box Set* (*Foe From the Future* + TBA; Fourth Doctor and Leela)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: TBA (6.06, Doctor TBA)

Sherlock Holmes: *The Tangled Skein* (4.4)

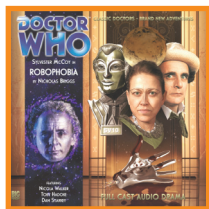
FEBRUARY 2012

Doctor Who: TBA (156, Sixth Doctor and TBA)

Doctor Who - The Fourth Doctor Adventures: TBA (1.2, Fourth Doctor and Leela)

Doctor Who - The Companion Chronicles: TBA (6.07, Doctor TBA)

Bernice Summerfield Box Set 2: *Road Trip*



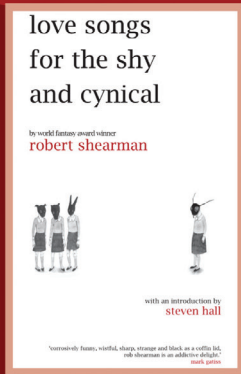
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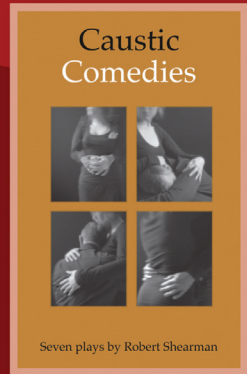


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