

# VORTEX



**DORIAN GRAY**

## GETTING LOST

WE DISCOVER SOME MISSING CONFESSIONS...

**RIVER SONG**

## ON THE FRINGES

THE PROFESSOR SKIRTS THE EDGES OF THE DOCTOR'S PASTS...

# TWENTY

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# COMING SOON

# EDITORIAL



## DOCTOR WHO THE **EARLY** ADVENTURES

**T**IME LORDS meet as the sounds of the sixties return this autumn in two stories comprising the sixth series of **The Early Adventures**.

Fresh from the success of last year's *The Dalek Occupation of Winter*, writer David K Barnes returns for the first adventure, *Daughter of the Gods*. It will bring together two very different seasons from the black and white television era of **Doctor Who**, as the First and Second Doctors encounter one another for the first time.

Peter Purves reprises his role as Steven Taylor and takes on the mantle of the First Doctor, joined on this adventure by Katarina played by Ajjaz Awad. Their world then collides with Frazer Hines as the Second Doctor and Jamie, with Wendy Padbury playing Zoe.

David says: "Contrasting the fun and frolics of the Troughton years with the darker days of the late

Hartnell era was something I wanted to get my teeth into, with the Daleks providing their customary threat."

The series' second story, *The Home Guard* by Simon Guerrier, features the Second Doctor and Jamie journeying together with Polly played by Anneke Wills and Ben Jackson played by Elliott Chapman.

Arriving during World War II things are not as they should be – and as if it couldn't get any worse, the friends encounter the first incarnation of the Master, played by James Dreyfus.

These two adventures in the sixth series of **Doctor Who – The Early Adventures** will be released in November 2019.

**Short Trips** producer Alfie Shaw will succeed David Richardson as producer of **The Early Adventures** range from 2020 onwards, with two stories being released each year. **VORTEX**

**T**HIS MONTH is rather a special one for Big Finish. It's hard to believe but it's been 20 years since *The Sirens of Time* – the very first **Doctor Who** audio created by the company – was released. And I can proudly say that I bought *The Sirens of Time* in 1999 – and I've still got my copy now! And how things have changed since then. For those who are new (or newer) to Big Finish, you may not know that *The Monthly Adventures* were the only **Doctor Who** releases at that time from Big Finish – and they were initially released every two months. Happily demand meant that the range soon became monthly, and it's not stopped since then.

Then came **Dalek Empire**, the first **Doctor Who** spin-off series, before things snowballed. And now we've got lots of fantastic ranges to choose from: **The First Doctor Adventures; The Companion Chronicles; The Early Adventures; The Third Doctor Adventures; The Fourth Doctor Adventures; Jago & Litefoot; The Lost Stories; Counter-Measures; The New Adventures of Bernice Summerfield; The Eighth Doctor Adventures; The War Doctor; The Tenth Doctor Adventures; Doctor Who Unbound; Gallifrey; Cyberman; The Diary of River Song; UNIT; Jenny: The Doctor's Daughter; Torchwood...** and more yet to come.

This month we celebrate 20 years of **Doctor Who** at Big Finish with a very special story, *The Legacy of Time*, bringing together many of the characters we've come to know and love in a six-part adventure. It's time to party! **VORTEX**



# PLENTY IN TWENTY

## THE LEGACY OF TIME

- Released: July 2019
- Format: CD and download

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**T**IME TRAVEL is a curious thing. It seems that the last 20 years have taken forever to pass, yet at the same time they've gone in the blink of an eye. This year marks 20 years since former producer Gary Russell announced the release of *The Sirens of Time*, the very first **Doctor Who** audio CD from Big Finish Productions. Who would have thought that a fifth of a century later we would still be here to mark the special occasion? Nicholas Briggs, the writer of *Sirens*, and Jason Haigh-Elery, the co-producer, remain familiar names at Big Finish and are both executive producers on a special new release.

Below (l-r): Georgia Tennant and Peter Davison



“THE DOCTOR HAS NEVER BEEN AND NEVER WILL BE, COOL. WHATEVER HE MIGHT IMAGINE!”

GEORGIA TENNANT

**T**he *Legacy of Time* is a six-episode adventure, being released this month in a celebratory box set.

Producer David Richardson grins: “We announced *The Legacy of Time* just months ago but actually work started on it years ago. I remember, back in the mists of time, approaching Nick and Jason with a proposal for Big Finish’s 20th anniversary **Doctor Who** story – a six hour epic, starring six Doctors, all based around a central conceit which is at the heart of what you’ll hear.

“Once we were commissioned, script editor Matt Fitton began assembling the writers and our first recording days were spread between June and September of 2017 – that’s when we took episodes one, two and six into studio. Episode four followed that December, episode five in the January of 2018 and then we finished up with episode three in the summer of 2018. So recording was spread well over a year – and then there was a myriad of pick up sessions and inserts.

“*The Legacy of Time* is a celebration in every way, and there might

just be the odd surprise and punch the air moment in there.

“This set of stories celebrates the past in ways I can’t really say without revealing spoilers. And it also celebrates the future. There are certainly two characters in there who will be a big part of a future Fourth Doctor script, one not even announced yet. ‘Will the Doctors meet?’, I hear you ask. ‘Listen to the trailer’, I reply!”

Matt Fitton continues: “David emailed me and said this is what he would like to do. He had the initial concept of what’s behind the whole story, which seeded the idea of different events taking place throughout the Doctor’s lives. We then worked out which Doctors we would place with which guest characters and companions.”

**A**ppropriately, *Lies in Ruins*, the first story in the set, features the character who helped get Big Finish up and running – Professor Bernice Summerfield played by Lisa Bowerman. Benny encounters

another professor of archaeology, River Song – oh, and the Eighth Doctor is in there too!

Writer James Goss says: “Bernice Summerfield meets River Song. Is there a more exciting idea? Big Finish’s first legend meets its newest legend. Two different generations of fandom have grown up loving a different time travelling archaeologist, and ever since 2008’s TV episode, *Silence in the Library*, they’ve been dying to know whether a meeting between the two of them would be all-out war, cocktails at dawn,

or just an icily polite comparing of diaries and Top Trumps cards.

“They’re two great characters who dominate the Big Finish pantheon. Can Big Finish cope with two time travelling archaeologists? It sure can.

“I think it’d be cheap and lazy to have them either as best friends or fighting like two cats in a sack. It’s something more interesting. We discover that the two have – history – together. Each thinks they’re the most important person to the Eighth Doctor but it turns out there’s something more pressing going on in his life.

“It’s a story about appearances and being what’s expected of us rather than what we actually feel – which sounds a bit self important, sorry. But what it basically means is that this isn’t quite what it appears.”

Matt adds: “What’s great is that we have Benny in the first story meeting River and the Eighth Doctor. And I wanted Benny to be pivotal in the final story, as she is the means by which **Doctor Who** came back – so it’s nice to bring that aspect in.

“James has done a brilliant job of meeting and subverting expectations with that – we

didn't want it to just be a kind of face off and trowels at dawn!

"It's great to have them deal with the issues and problems they find as the Doctor isn't quite what they expect him to be, and they don't expect who he's with either, so it's fun to have that meeting and then having to deal with it together, in their very different ways."

## “BERNICE SUMMERFIELD MEETS RIVER SONG. IS THERE A MORE EXCITING IDEA?”

JAMES GOSS

**W**E MOVE back an incarnation for the second story, *The Split Infinitive*, by John

Dorney, which sees the Seventh Doctor and Ace encounter their old friends from the Counter-Measures team: Group Captain Gilmore, Professor Rachel Jensen, Allison Williams and Sir Toby Kinsella.

John says: "Working on **Counter-Measures** has been a big part of my life over the last few years so I was very pleased when I was asked if I could write something that would bring them to the Big Finish **Doctor Who** 20th anniversary release.

"I went off and started thinking. I got an idea relatively early on – but spoilers! It's good fun, it's a little bit crazy."

*Vortex* asks John to reveal something about the events of the tale, but – after giving us a brief outline – we agreed it's best not to repeat it! John explains: "It's a secret, but it's got the Doctor and Ace joining the Counter-Measures team who encounter a new menace which they've never faced before. There's an awful lot going on.

"When I was working on the script, I felt there was something missing. It took a long time to figure it out. I had the idea, I knew what I wanted to do, but I never quite got it pulled



Above (l-r): Sylvester McCoy and Paul McGann



Above (l-r): Alex Kingston and Lisa Bowerman

Below: Tom Baker



“IN SOME WAYS THE FOURTH DOCTOR’S SEVEN SEASONS AREN’T JUST THE ONE LONG ERA BUT **SEVERAL DIFFERENT ONES.** GUY ADAMS

into shape, and in my head part of the difficulty with the logic of it was that I felt it wasn’t quite unique enough for an anniversary release, so I started thinking about what I could do to make it more special. I ran through a few things in my head, and worked it out. I won’t give it away, but there’s ‘a thing.’”

**F**ROM THE 1980s TARDIS crew we head back to the seventies – not just for us as listeners, but for UNIT’s 21st century staff Kate Stewart and Osgood as well.

*The Sacrifice of Jo Grant* by Guy Adams brings us Tim Treloar’s Third Doctor with Katy Manning’s Jo Grant – as well as the new UNIT team.

Guy says: “It was great fun to do, it was an obvious step. I’d written for Jo Jones previously in *Tidal Wave* in a **UNIT** box set, and it was lovely to be able to bring forth that slightly older version of Jo. I really enjoyed writing for her.

“A big part of it is to do with Jo mourning the loss of her Doctor and as much as we know that the Doctor lives on, he is still different.

How would you feel if a loved one went away but then they came back, looking different, acting differently, and even though you had shared memories it would feel as if they had died?”

“It was very interesting to write a story where Jo would get to meet her Doctor again, when she has come to terms with his ‘death’, and also bringing modern UNIT into it as well as period UNIT.”

Guy adds: “It’s a story that people will hopefully think has a lot of heart. Jo gets to talk to her Doctor, and Kate is wondering if she might get to talk to the person she misses the most.”

**W**E HAVE a reunion of actors who originally appeared in the eighth **Doctor Who: The Monthly Adventures** story, *Red Dawn*, for the fourth story of this set in *Relative Time* by Matt Fitton.

Peter Davison introduced his daughter Georgia Moffett for her first acting job in *Red Dawn*. Now, Georgia is back reprising her TV role as Jenny, the Doctor’s Daughter.

Matt says: “The Doctor runs into

his future offspring and Jenny is extremely excited! She kind of recognises him. In a way we have her running on Time Lord instinct as they have that connection. She’s convinced of who he is, but he isn’t quite so sure of who she is.

“The story deals with that. Will he be persuaded that this crazy, headstrong thief – when he comes across her she’s actually trying to steal a spaceship – is something to do with him?”

“There’s that nice tension between what a parent expects of a child and a child expects of a parent. The Doctor wants to appear to be much cooler than he is – he’s not just an old fuddy-duddy, or ‘great-great-great-great grandfather’, as she calls him. Jenny, equally, wants to show herself to be more capable and responsible than he thinks she is. There’s a great building of trust and a rapport between them throughout the story, culminating in a very tense version of a parent-child driving lesson!”

*Vortex* asks Georgia Tennant how she found working with her dad again in a Big Finish story after almost 20 years?

She laughs: “Well, I have seen him quite a bit in the interim so it was just another Monday really!”

“It was nice feeling a little more bedded in to the world this time. **Doctor Who** has always felt like his gig and I think the first time it felt a little ‘bring your daughter to work day’. I now feel like I have earned my place so I’d say, on the whole, this time round was much more fun and collaborative.”

“I WAS TRYING TO RECREATE THE APPROACH TAKEN BY THE EARLY DAYS OF **BIG FINISH**.”

JONATHAN MORRIS

However, she’s not keen on revealing too much about what happens: “You don’t catch me out that easily! I’m far too steeped in the tradition of **Doctor Who** to be distributing any spoilers.

“Needless to say it’s the meeting that Jenny has been waiting for, and the meeting this version of the Doctor never knew he hadn’t had yet!”

With Matt having described the Doctor as trying to play the ‘cool dad’, what does Georgia reckon to this description? She adds: “The Doctor has never been and never will be, cool. Whatever he might imagine! That’s part of his charm. The same goes for my actual dad, incidentally!”

Matt reveals that the villain for the story is a Big Finish creation from recent times. He says: “Also thrown into the mix we have the Nine with a companion of his own – who may pop up at another point, in a timey-wimey way.

“In the vortex something has happened and they are in a piece of cauterised time, cut off from everything else and the danger is increasing. The Doctor and Jenny try and find a way of saving people from it, while the Nine sees an opportunity to make a really big steal.”



Above (l–r): Anna Hope, Colin Baker and India Fisher



Above (l–r): Louise Jameson and Lalla Ward

**W** E MEET a Doctor, a companion and an old associate of theirs in *The Avenues of Possibility* by Jonathan Morris, as we encounter the Sixth Doctor, Charley and DI Patricia Menzies. Jonny, whose first Big Finish story, *Bloodtide*, was released in July 2001, was delighted to be involved in the Big Finish **Doctor Who** 20th anniversary release. He’d written for the Doctor and DI Menzies back in January 2011 in *The Crimes of*

*Thomas Brewster* – how did he find coming back to them?

He admits: “It is a strange feeling because usually with these things I’m either trying to write a story as it would be told now, or to replicate the approach taken in the 1970s or 1980s. But this was neither. I suppose I was trying to recreate the approach taken by the early days of Big Finish. It’s been going long enough to qualify for nostalgia! But I also wanted it to reflect the later





period, and the present... so it's kind of a mélange of different eras. Which may have unconsciously been my starting point for the story.

"It was a particular thrill to write for Charley as I hadn't done so before, and never expected that I ever would. I was and remain a huge fan of the character and, in particular, those first two series of Charley with the Eighth Doctor, when that was the big, new, official series."

Jonny was handed a brief by Matt Fitton, but can't say too much about it for fear of spoilers.

He grins: "I can't really tell you anything as it would give away all the surprises! I'd say it's a 'celebrity historical' where the celebrities are Henry Fielding and his brother John. The title refers to the idea that at any given point in time there are a number – an infinite number – of potential futures leading off from it, rather like alleyways leading off a street.

"My idea was, what if they were literally alleyways? That would be a way of bringing together past and future, by making the story about the future crashing into the past. It's a celebration of the past, a chance to re-meet old friends, but like all good **Doctor Who**

stories while there's light on top, there's a darker side underneath.

"One other thing I was keen on was that the story should pay tribute to those people who were a big part of Big Finish who are no longer with us. So that's why the villain is named Stables, after the lovely Maggie Stables."

**T**HE EVENTS of the previous five stories are somehow linked, and the man tasked with pulling these various strands together in the final story, *Collision Course*, is Guy Adams.

As well as the Fourth Doctor, Leela and Romana, there was plenty for Guy to work with. He admits: "I always love writing for Tom and Louise. I've worked with Lalla before but I hadn't written for her, so it was marvellous to finally be able to do that.

"In some ways the Fourth Doctor's seven seasons aren't just the one long era but several different ones, and not only do you find you are writing for those to try and capture them, you also have Tom bringing a modern performance to it as well."

As well as giving the Fourth Doctor an adventure in this set, Guy had a new experience of concluding an

ongoing story. He explains: "This is the story that brings everything together. To have been able to write a piece that was both emotional and also tie up the whole box set, that was a bit of a challenge.

"A number of times I've written the middle stories in box sets, and then poor Matt Fitton has to come in and tidy it up after I've taken all the toys and thrown them out of the toy box!

"In this case I had to to resolve all of this, but thankfully conversations were had with David and Matt at the start, so at least I had an idea where we were going."

Director Ken Bentley has been responsible for five of the six episodes, with Helen Goldwyn taking charge on *The Avenues of Possibility*.

How did Ken enjoy being involved in a special release like this? He admits: "I was very honoured to be asked to work on *The Legacy of Time*. There are some actors I rarely get to work with at Big Finish and this was a great opportunity to work with them all.

"It was a logistical mountain to climb. Availability is something we always struggle with at Big Finish and trying to get everybody recorded across so many different episodes was quite the jigsaw puzzle." **VORTEX**



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# River Song

## OF TIME

**RIVER SONG** TRAVELS BACK INTO HER HUSBAND'S PAST TO FOUR OF HIS OLD ADVENTURES...

### THE DIARY OF RIVER SONG

- Released: August 2019
- Format: CD and download

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**T**O DATE River Song has encountered the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Doctors with Big Finish. She's also met four incarnations of her husband's

deadliest Time Lord rival, the Master.

This time however, for the sixth series of **The Diary of River Song**, her time travels take her somewhere a little different.

Producer David Richardson explains: "The working title of this box set was 'Fringes'. I pitched it to script editor Matt Fitton as four stories in which River lands on the fringes of classic **Doctor Who** adventures – and from there we just had to work out which ones.

"It was a really exciting process, there are 26 years of the classic series to choose from, after all. But I suppose we were drawn to the

landmark of the very first story, *An Unearthly Child*, and adventures that I felt were classics: *The Web of Fear*, *Carnival of Monsters* and *The Talons of Weng-Chiang*.

"For the first episode, River arrives in the David Bradley version of the timeline... and it's of course very possible that David might make a small appearance himself, even though the story is primarily focused on Susan, Ian and Barbara."

The encounter takes place in *An Unearthly Woman* by Matt Fitton. Matt says: "River's on the fringes of classic **Who** adventures. The first one is *An Unearthly Woman* where, as you might expect, she's at Coal Hill School. If there were such a thing as a River TV series, and having established the **An Adventure in Space and Time** crew, this is what you would do if you were going back to that period. You would use the cast of Jamie



Above: Alex Kingston

Glover, Jemma Powell and Claudia Grant as Ian, Barbara and Susan.

"We have River as a supply teacher – before such a concept exists – at Coal Hill, keeping an eye on Susan for some reason.

"There's one story for each of the first four Doctors. With the first one, it's lovely to see River appear at the very beginning of **Doctor Who**. In the first scene we have her interacting with a policeman on Totters Lane!

"For the other stories it's a chance to use scenarios which are known and where there's room for manoeuvre. It was great to have those episodes of *The Web of Fear* come back and this is a way of opening up that story a little bit more."

The second story of the set, *The Web of Time* has been written by John Dorney, and brings River to a deserted London. David says: "We were delighted to secure Ralph Watson to reprise the role of Captain Knight in *The Web of Time*. This is a prequel to *The Web of Fear* – the Doctor, Jamie and Victoria haven't even arrived in London yet – and River meets a man she knows is doomed to die."

Matt agrees: "How brilliant to get Captain Knight – Ralph Watson – back to reprise his role. It's set just before the events of the TV episodes kick off."



Above (l-r): Christopher Benjamin and Alex Kingston

When we join the story the Yeti are already in London. John explains: "The invasion has already happened when the story starts. We've been very careful in terms of the stuff that Candy Jar Books are doing with their **Lethbridge-Stewart** series. We're technically a different universe but it's still best to try to avoid covering the same territory and telling the same story.

"It's set at some point during the initial stages of the occupation of London. The brief was basically *The Web of Fear* revisited, but I was keen to pitch specifically for Captain Knight because I was always rather fond of the character. He features heavily in the first few episodes,

“IN CARNIVAL OF MONSTERS, THE DOCTOR FORGOT TO CHECK THE RECYCLE BIN OF THE MINISCOPE...”

GUY ADAMS

and it's a rounded, entertaining performance from Ralph Watson.

"I always found Captain Knight's demise to be rather sad as he had no option but to go out, he was pretty much marked for death – literally.

"So when I got the opportunity to write this, and learned that Ralph is still acting, it was the perfect chance to bring him back. I enjoyed writing for him – I watched *The Web of Fear* episodes over and over again to capture his voice."

**P**EEPSHOW TAKES River into the 1970s era of **Doctor Who** as she is on the outskirts of the Jon Pertwee favourite, *Carnival of Monsters*.



Above (l-r): Ken Bentley, Clive Wood, Alex Kingston, Dan Starkey and Guy Adams

“THE THING THAT PLEASES ME, FAR MORE THAN IT SHOULD, IS THAT I’VE BEEN ABLE TO FINALLY USE ROBERT HOLMES’S WORKING TITLE FOR **CARNIVAL OF MONSTERS**... GUY ADAMS

rather than just listen to it being recorded, was wonderful. Sometimes you have to pinch yourself.”

**W** E GO from one Robert Holmes classic to another, with a prequel to *The Talons of*

*Weng-Chiang* in the form of *The Talents of Greel* (a cheeky nod to the story’s working title of *The Talons of Greel*), written by Paul Morris. David explains: “It was a joyous but actually bittersweet occasion to welcome Christopher Benjamin back as Henry Gordon Jago for *The Talents of Greel*.”

“Christopher was overjoyed to be working with Alex and they have many wonderful and hilarious scenes together, but we would glance over to the empty chair next to the studio door and think of dear departed Trevor Baxter who kept us so happily entertained through years of **Jago & Litefoot** recordings.”

Angus Wright once again plays Magnus Greel (which he previously played for Big Finish in *The Butcher of Brisbane*), while Nicholas Goh plays Li H’Sen Chang and the villainous ventriloquist’s doll, Mr Sin.

Writer Paul was delighted to bring two larger than life characters together, in River and Jago. He beams: “For me the only thing more fun

David says: “It was fun to place River in the miniscope for *Peepshow*, caught up between Sontarans, Ogrons and Drashigs while – elsewhere and unseen – the Third Doctor is dealing with Inter Minorian officials. This is such a great romp, and Alex and our guest star Clive Wood invested the recording with tons of energy. This episode just flies!”

Matt adds: “It’s a story which had a world with another world inside it – there’s lots of things happening inside the Miniscope and the Doctor might have missed them. This allows River to play with that.”

“In knowing the Doctor, she’s been looking through his diaries, looking for opportunities for things she can steal! We know how mercenary she can be. We’ve seen in the TV Christmas special, *The Husbands of River Song*, just what she does get up to when the Doctor isn’t around. She’s treasure hunting and having fun basically, using her

husband’s diary as a cheat sheet!”

Writer Guy Adams says: “In *Carnival of Monsters*, the Doctor forgot to check the recycle bin of the Miniscope so there were other specimens inside the machine, and he didn’t realise they were there.

“River arrives as she is simply after a battery and the only place to get one is from a Miniscope... a rather hostile Miniscope.

“The thing that pleases me, far more than it should, is that I’ve been able to finally use Robert Holmes’s working title for *Carnival of Monsters* and it will appear on the disc. He was a genius. He was told that *Peepshow* was far too rude a title to use and to be able to appropriate it was brilliant! Hopefully people will enjoy it.

“It was great fun writing for River and the characters she encounters. Not only was I able to write it, I was also able to act in it as well. To be asked to come into studio and actually work with Alex,

than writing for one larger-than-life character is being able to create a new pairing. I particularly love writing affectionate but slightly combative relationships, such as that between Churchill and Madame Vastra. River and Jago turned into another such pairing, with Jago alternately entranced and infuriated by the pushy big-haired woman who has inveigled her way into his theatre. River is at her most Doctorish here, hot on the trail of a villainous scheme, yet knowing that the time is not yet right to bring Jago fully into her confidence – something that adds to both of their troubles.”

Paul has written for Henry previously in the **Jago & Litefoot** series. But he says: “This isn’t the



Jago (in all senses) who we really only see in episode one of *Talons*, before the Doctor and then Litefoot begin to enlarge his horizons.

“This story takes place shortly before *Talons of Weng Chiang* – in fact it ended up being much closer

Gordon Jago as we first met him, before he got involved in any unusual, otherworldly adventures. Having him run up against River Song was just irresistible.

“What I really wanted to do was take River and put her on



Above (l-r): Alex Kingston and Ralph Watson

## “WHAT I REALLY WANTED TO DO WAS TAKE RIVER AND PUT HER ON STAGE – AND HAVE ALEX KINGSTON SING A SONG...”

MATT FITTON

first time I’ve had to write for Jago on his own. In *Jago and Litefoot Forever* the sad circumstances behind Trevor’s passing gave me the tricky challenge of keeping the Professor off-screen while feeling ever-present. By contrast in *The Talents of Greel*, George’s absence isn’t something that I needed to tread carefully around; this is Jago before he ever met the professor; he’s the extravagant, ebullient, and occasionally rather put-upon manager of a busy London theatre. It was a treat to explore that slightly rougher version of

than I had originally planned, which I think adds to the fun. With the benefit of recasting (including the return of Angus Wright’s superb Magnus Greel) we can explore more fully just how these characters ended up where they were in *Talons*, picking up on clues from that story (and also from certain **Jago & Litefoot** tales including one of my own where I briefly thought I’d written myself into a corner!).”

Matt adds: “It was fantastic to be able to have Christopher Benjamin back. We get Henry

stage – and have Alex Kingston sing a song, an old music hall-type number, as part of the story.

“Usually, all the music gets done after the recording but in order to have Alex and Christopher singing, we needed a tune for this music-hall style number. Paul Morris and I wrote some lyrics and we brought Howard Carter in early so we had something we could play to the cast and have them sing along. I think it’s worked out rather nicely.”

Director Ken Bentley found that there were no problems bringing the modern sensibilities of River Song into four classic era **Doctor Who** stories.

He says: “We’ve been dropping new series characters into classic stories (and vice versa) for so long now that for me the classic and new series have merged into one! So much of **Doctor Who** has changed over the years and yet so much is exactly the same. Mixing the classic and new series is surprisingly easy to do. It’s all time travel after all!” **VORTEX**



WE ALL THOUGHT THAT **DORIAN GRAY** HAD NO MORE CONFESSIONS TO SHARE WITH US... BUT WE WERE WRONG!

# GRAY DAYS

## THE LOST CONFESSIONS

- Released: August 2019
- Format: Download

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**D**ORIAN GRAY is a very special series when you look back over the history of Big Finish. The first original series to be released by Big Finish – initially as an online exclusive – producer Scott Handcock was inspired by Oscar Wilde’s classic story of hedonism and corruption. **The Confessions of Dorian Gray** imagines a world where Dorian Gray was real, and it was his friendship

with Oscar Wilde that spawned the notorious novel.

Starring **Versailles’s** Alexander Vlahos, five series and a number of special releases were produced over the next four years until the series finally wrapped. But you just can’t keep a good man down!

*Vortex* asks Scott, did he really think that it was the end for the series when the last release came out? Scott grins: “In a word, yes. We thought long and hard about when to end **Dorian**, and how we’d go about it. Alex and I were always quite good at that.

“We’d talk a lot outside of recording sessions about what was coming up, and where we could take the character, then both had a moment where we said to the other, ‘Should we call it a day?’ Not because we were bored of the character, don’t

get me wrong, but because we didn’t want to outstay our welcome.

“I think we both felt it was better to end on a high and leave people wanting more... plus, of course, it meant we could work together on other things like *Hamlet*.”

Alex adds: “It was our decision. It wasn’t suggested by Nicholas Briggs, Jason Haigh-Ellery or any other powers that be. It always felt like we ended our **Dorian** journey the way we wanted – so bringing him back again had to be on our terms.”

Having jointly agreed to end **Dorian** as a series, the actor and producer were also in accord when it came to doing more with Dorian. Scott continues: “It came about because Alex and I wanted to work together again but every time something came up that suited his casting, he wasn’t available! We



Above: Alexander Vlahos

wanted with them. The first thing I knew I wanted to do was present them as short novels, with chapters, titles and mini-cliff-hangers at the end of each section; each chapter leaving the listener eager to come back for more. I'd grown up reading novelisations – I have particularly fond memories of reading James Khan's novelisation of *Return of the Jedi* on holiday on the beach back in 1983 – so to be given the opportunity to adapt three unused **Dorian Gray** scripts into novelisations was a dream come true. Growing up I collected novelisations – both film and TV – and I still have that extensive collection sitting on the bookshelves next to my writing desk. Obviously I read one or two just before starting work on these **Dorian** novelisations... purely

“IT CAME ABOUT BECAUSE ALEX AND I WANTED TO WORK TOGETHER AGAIN... I GOT A SENSE THAT ALEX STILL LOVED THE CHARACTER.” SCOTT HANDCOCK

joked that it was never like this doing **Dorian** (though obviously that was because we worked around him), and we also joked about doing more – maybe slip **Dorian** into a **Doctor Who** adventure? None of which was serious but I got a sense that Alex still loved the character. But he had been very firm that he didn't want to play the role again.

“I knew Alex was interested in tackling audiobooks so asked whether that angle might appeal. So rather than playing the role in a full-cast drama, in this release Alex narrates adventures that were never made, which also meant we didn't break our rule about continuing the story...”

**A**ND SO in 2019 we discover **Dorian Gray: The Lost Confessions**. Scott Handcock explains: “The adaptations are of three unmade scripts. The first two were written back in 2010 – two years before Big Finish came on board – when I'd envisaged the series in a very different format.

“In that sense, it's been interesting going back and reminding myself

how different the series could have been, and yet equally spotting all the similarities and embryonic ideas that fed into the **Confessions** series.”

Scott Harrison, who adapted the scripts for audiobook format, says: “Scott sent me three full-length full-cast scripts that he'd written very early on in the development of the **Dorian Gray** series. The first two were actually double length – running for 60 pages or so – and quite different to the format that would eventually be established in **The Confessions of...** audios (one was even written from another character's point of view, presenting **Dorian** as a shadowy, often unlikeable schemer). I knew from the moment that I read them that Scott had written something wonderful and they really needed to be shared with the **Dorian Gray** fans.

“Adapting them into audio novelisations was enormous fun especially as Scott had given me a free hand to do pretty much what I

for research, you understand!”

Alex admits he was slightly surprised to be asked to perform these tales: “A little bit as we'd both thought long and hard about ending **Dorian**. It weighed heavily on us as we knew it was well loved by the Big Finish audience. I was asked – I think it was in a text message – saying there were three unused scripts and would I consider doing them – on my own, as a form of narration. Enough time had passed for me to miss **Dorian** and his universe again... so of course I said yes.”

Scott Handcock continues: “Aside from the fact we recorded in Cardiff instead of London it was honestly like we'd never stopped! We worked together closely for many years, and Alex and I still have that shorthand which is hugely useful when you're working on something as dense as an audiobook reading like this. But even then, the process was much the same. **Confessions** has more narration than people realise, so directing Alex

reading prose rather than acting in situ was actually something we were both surprisingly familiar with!"

Alex laughs: "It was incredibly lonely. I'm used to a nice big cast! A chatty green room! Banter! Frollicks! But this time... well it was just me. Approaching these stories meant I had my work cut out – even more so than usual! Having to prep different voices, accents, characters and speech patterns – usually I just focus on Dorian and hope the other cast are bringing their 'A' game! Ha!

"It was a case of endurance and stamina. It's just you and a microphone. Very different from the Dorians of the past, but I think it benefits them because it's giving the listener a different perspective."

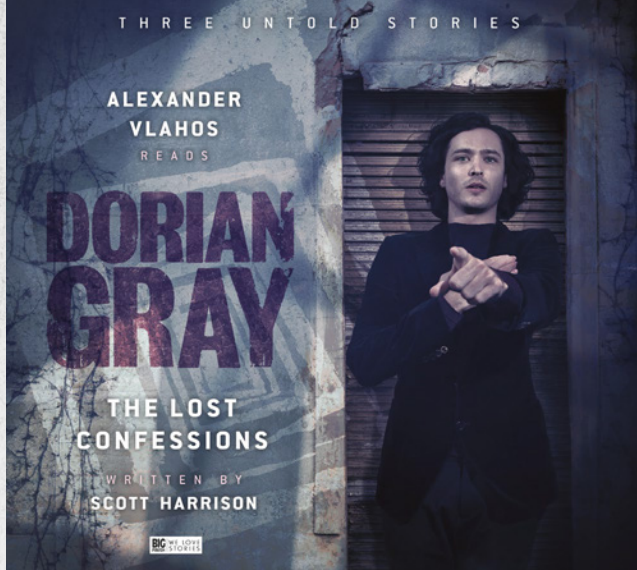
**T**HE BRAND-new readings begin with *Last Man Standing*, set in France in 1915. After being dispatched on a top-secret mission

“THERE IS POTENTIAL TO TAKE THOSE LOST STORYLINES AND KEEP DIPPING BACK... SCOTT HANDCOCK

with his comrade, Jonathan Roberts, Captain Gray finds himself lost in the wastes of No Man's Land searching for a concealed German outpost. As both men venture further from the trenches, they soon discover forces greater than King and Country.

The second story, *There Are Such Things...* is set in England, 1930. Father Victor Merriman is confused when a bedraggled young man locks them both inside his own church on a dark and stormy night. The man claims not to be locking them in but rather to be locking something out: something that has haunted Dorian Gray for over a year now, ever since the engagement of Milly Lloyd.

And the third story of the set, *The Last Confession* is set in the future. Since his experience at the Brigadoon



Hotel, Dorian Gray struggles to come to terms with having a soul; and worse, having lost his soulmate. Travelling the world he hopes to lay some demons to rest... and perhaps even confront the biggest one of all.

Scott Handcock says: "The first story set during the First World War features a gas attack reminiscent of a scene in *The Prime of Deacon Brodie*, which I think I gave Roy Gill because I'd enjoyed writing it in this story so much.

"The second story actually uses a church confessional as part of the framing device, which was a slightly more literal version of the format that the series would become.

"The third script is the original **Confessions** finale written in 2015 which gives the series a very different ending. I know some fans didn't enjoy *Ever After* as a closing episode, so this sort of provides an alternative fate for those who want it.

"And Scott Harrison had free rein to adapt the original scripts, bolstering them for prose, and actually tweaking a lot of elements to suit his own ideas."

Was Scott Harrison pleased to be able to add an extra three adventures to the **Dorian** canon? He smiles:

"I was there at the very beginning having written the second episode of the first series of **Dorian Gray**, so to be involved in these last three audio episodes is very exciting, and feels somehow fitting. It's fascinating to be able to present these three 'lost' stories on audio at last and let

everyone glimpse adventures that they never knew Dorian had – or weren't supposed to know he'd had. We've also sprinkled in a few sly references and cheeky nods to adventures of the past along the way, so it all ties up, it all ends...

satisfactorily. It's been a very exciting adventure travelling with Dorian and Scott and Alexander, and this is a wonderful epilogue to their legacy – I feel very fortunate to have been allowed to have been part of that."

**S**O, IS this the final, final end for Dorian? Or could there be more 'lost' scripts to come? Scott concludes: "I definitely don't think we'll do any full-cast releases again but Alex and I both enjoyed the readings, revisiting this alternative continuity of stories that didn't quite make it: either because they were envisaged for a format that wasn't pursued, or didn't quite fit the tone of the particular series we were making that year.

"Looking back, the writers submitted loads of ideas – sometimes more than we needed – so there is potential to take those lost storylines and keep dipping back into the could-have-been world of Dorian at least for another couple of volumes. But I suppose that depends on if people want to hear more..." **VORTEX**

Please note: **The Confessions of Dorian Gray** contains adult material and is not suitable for younger listeners.



# VORTEXMAIL

WRITE TO: [FEEDBACK@BIGFINISH.COM](mailto:FEEDBACK@BIGFINISH.COM) USING VORTEX MAIL AS THE SUBJECT



## MAKING A BOOKING

Outside of the Big Finish The Inside Story book and the two Big Finish Companions which cover some of it, are there any other books that detail the last 20+ years of Big Finish? Are there any in the works?

**Peter Dillon-Trenchard**

*Nick: There are certainly some in the works, Peter.*

## NEBULOUS THINKING

Is there any chance of Nebulous getting the Big Finish love and attention?

**@MarcusScarman**

*Nick: Very little chance, sadly. I did speak to Baby Cow about it years ago but they seemed keen on releasing it elsewhere. As far as I know that hasn't happened yet though.*

## ON HER TODD?

Having just rewatched *Kinda* on the season 19 box set, have

you ever thought of the Fifth Doctor bumping into/visiting Todd again? There was definitely a connection or possibly hint of a romance between them... and Nerys Hughes has worked at Big Finish hasn't she?

**Carl Jackson**

*Nick: We've no plans for Todd at the moment, Carl, but it's a fun idea, and as you know we do a lot of fun ideas... so, I'd never rule it out.*

## OH VIENNA!

Will there be another series of Vienna starring the incomparable Chase Masterson?

**@PloppyLeChien**

*Nick: There isn't another series planned at the moment.*

## A TRIBUTE TO PAUL

As this year marks the 20th anniversary of *Doctor Who* at Big Finish, will the Paul Spragg Memorial Opportunity enable

two winning entries (similar to when five went on to be produced as subscribers' *Short Trips*)?

**Andrew Hsieh**

*Nick: That's not in our plans, Andrew, but it's true to say that we sometimes do end up commissioning stories from writers who weren't selected as the Opportunity 'winner' – the standard of entries is always so high.*

## MAGNIFICENT SEVENTH

Our favourite TARDIS team is the Seventh Doctor, Ace and Benny. Any plans for more adventures with this triumphant triumvirate?

**The Sisterhood of Karn**

*Nick: No plans at present but we have all of space and time before us, so anything could happen...*

## DARK THOUGHTS

Have you guys ever considered remaking *The Dark Dimension*?

**Antonio Amaral**

*Nick: The Dark Dimension was never actually made, Antonio, so it wouldn't be possible to 'remake' it! My understanding is that it only nearly happened because of some clever 'footwork' when those trying to make it happen told various BBC departments that it was happening... but everything came unstuck when those departments asked for a budget code, because there wasn't one! This may not be accurate, but it's what I've been told. Also, the story concentrates on the Fourth Doctor to the exclusion, largely, of the other Doctors. At the time, Peter, Colin, Sylvester and Jon made no secret of the fact that they disapproved of it and wouldn't be involved. **VORTEX***



# ACT OF WAR

## TIME WAR: VOLUME THREE

- Released: August 2019
- Format: CD and download

 **ORDER NOW AT:**  
[BGFN.SH/BLISS](http://BGFN.SH/BLISS)

**S**OFAR this year at Big Finish we've had the Eighth Doctor face his deepest, darkest terror in *Ravenous 3*, and this month there are some more relaxed, fun adventures with Lucie Miller. Then in August we jump forward in *The Eighth Doctor* –

## WE REJOIN THE EIGHTH DOCTOR AND BLISS AS THE STAKES RISE ON THE TEMPORAL CONFLICT...

*Time War 3* as the Doctor continues in his mission to avoid the conflict between the Time Lords and the Daleks, with his friend Bliss back at his side.

Looking at this set, script editor Matt Fitton reveals: "There's not an arc as such. The stories run into one another: they are a consequence of what comes before. There is something of a theme – we touch on the idea of alternative timelines and parallel universes, so within

the Time War the idea that barriers between realities are breaking down."

We return to the Time War in the first story, *State of Bliss*, which was written by Matt himself. He explains: "What kicks it all off is *State of Bliss*. I wanted to do a Bliss-centric story. The character appeared in the first Time War set but wasn't planned to be a companion until later on. Over the course of the last couple of sets we've got to know Bliss gradually. Jonathan Morris wrote the story



Above (l-r): Paul McGann and Wendy Craig

in **Time War 2** where she tries to go home but finds her homeworld is completely different because it's been changed by the war.

"I wanted to pick up on that and explore a bit more about where she comes from, who her friends and family were, and how she's really connected to the Doctor.

"This gives her a bit more background and we have hints from the Time Lords and Ollistra saying there's something odd about her and her timeline is corrupted. We see part of that in *The Lords of Terror* in **Time War 2**, but we dig into that a bit more in *State of Bliss*."

**T** HE **FAMISHED** *Lands* by Lisa McMullin, is the second adventure in this set.

Lisa tells *Vortex*: "I had to create a self-contained story that looked at the Time War from a different perspective and could end with the Doctor reconnecting with Gallifrey. I wanted to look at how war affects life away from the battlefield.

"The Doctor and Bliss land on a planet whose supply routes have been cut off by the war. The people are slowly starving to death so scientists

are looking into synthetic nutrition – artificially created food sources.

"And it's gone horribly wrong. The government then covers up and exploits the mistake, making a decision to sacrifice most of the population in order to save a few."

Lisa, writing for the **Time War** series for the first time, was delighted to be able to work on the relationship between the Doctor and Bliss.

She explains: "I really like this pairing. Bliss isn't a wide-eyed space tourist – she's already been through the mill with the war so they feel much more like equals than is sometimes the case with the Doctor and his/her friends.

"We're slowly getting the Eighth Doctor to that place in TV mini-episode, *The Night of the Doctor*, where he decides he has to take a different approach. It's enjoyably sad to confront him with people that see Gallifrey as an enemy.

"In this episode, he lands on a planet that is affected by the war in a different way – there's no fighting but people are dying nonetheless. The Time War is just a whisper on the wind, a rumour – and the Doctor realises that he's not seen as a saviour, he's considered a threat."

**T** HE SET'S third story, *Fugitive in Time*, is written by Roland Moore and features a guest star who delighted Paul McGann. Producer David Richardson reveals: "Wendy Craig plays a mutated mad scientist. Why has **Doctor Who** waited 56 years for that?! Needless to say, Wendy is amazing as Shonnath, last of the Hellixzara, and threw herself into the role.

"Her casting came about as I'd been chatting to Paul McGann and he mentioned how much he admired Wendy. I replied, 'We've worked with her a few times recently – let's

## “WENDY CRAIG PLAYS A MUTATED MAD SCIENTIST. WHY HAS **DOCTOR WHO** WAITED 56 YEARS FOR THAT?!” DAVID RICHARDSON

try and get her in for this! Wendy read the script and loved it, and two weeks later was in a recording booth making her **Doctor Who** debut."

Roland says: "My brief was to write an adventure which would be a mission that the Doctor accepted (under duress) from the Time Lords, following on from the events in *The Famished Lands*. And I also knew what Matt wanted in the final scene of mine – but I can't reveal any details of that other than it's a shocking moment.

"The Doctor and Bliss are forced to accompany Tamasan on a mission to a planet called Thellian. There is a rumour that the planet may be the hiding place of the last of the Hellixzara. This piques the Doctor's interest because the Hellixzara were deleted from existence by the Time Lords. How could one of them have survived?

"The answer could be of vital importance in the Time War.



Above (l-r):  
Ken Bentley, Michael Jayston,  
Adèle Anderson, John Dorney,  
Tracy Wiles and Rakhee Thakrar

“ IF YOU GO TOO FAR ONE WAY YOU WILL MAKE HIM INTO **THE WAR MASTER**, AND IF YOU GO TOO FAR IN THE OTHER DIRECTION, YOU WILL HAVE **THE WAR DOCTOR**. ”  
JOHN DORNEY (ON THE VALEYARD)

Unfortunately, the Daleks have also heard the rumour...”

Like Lisa, Roland had fun writing for our hero and his friend. He continues: “I loved writing for the Doctor and Bliss. The relationship is different and I think the Doctor responds to Bliss’s can-do attitude. Even when she is facing some bleak moments of her own, Bliss responds with stoicism most of the time. And Rakhee Thakrar, as well as being brilliant, is one of those rare actors who can say technobabble dialogue and make it sound totally natural as if she’s lived in that world all her life.”

**A FAMILIAR FACE** from the past arrives in the Time War with the concluding story in this set – *The War Valeyard* by John Dorney. Michael Jayston returns once more as the distillation of all that is dark in the Doctor. John says: “We originally had another story planned for this slot but we needed to shift things around as it might have clashed a little bit with some of the ongoing **War Master** stuff, and that gave us an opportunity to set up where we were going.

“There was a suggestion that we could use the Valeyard, which was quite an interesting thing. My first thought was, how do you make this story work, because if you go too far one way you will make him

into the War Master, and if you go too far in the other direction, you will have the War Doctor.

“You have to think about what is different and unique about the Valeyard, and I took it from there.

“One of the things I found interesting is there’s a lot about the question of identity with the Valeyard. In contrast to the War Doctor, he refuses his name and there’s a degree to which the Valeyard is an aspect of that.

“I wanted to play on elements of identity – that’s probably all I can say about it!”

And on working with Michael Jayston, director Ken Bentley adds: “It’s always fun to work with actors who created iconic characters. They know them inside out and they know how to play them. It’s a treat to sit back and watch them bring them back to life so effortlessly.

“There’s more complexity and more continuity in the **Time War** series than anything else we work on I think. Not that we knowingly avoid either in other ranges, but there’s something about the Time War that demands a certain concentration from the planning and writing to the playing and post-production.”

Sadly since the last Eighth Doctor **Time War** series was recorded, Jacqueline Pearce, who played the scheming Cardinal Ollistra, has passed away.

But her memory won’t be forgotten, as Matt adds: “There’s still a sense of Ollistra pulling strings behind the scenes. We know she will come back with the War Doctor. It’s nice to keep the memory of her in there. She still has an influence of what the Doctor is up to, from afar – she still has an iron in the fire.” **VORTEX**

# FOREVER AVON

Shortly before this issue of *Vortex* went to press, the sad news reached us that Paul Darrow, known to most as Avon in **Blake's 7**, had passed away. To say that all of us at Big Finish were shocked would be an understatement.



**P**AUL'S ASSOCIATION with Big Finish began in December 2004 when he guest-starred in the **Doctor Who** The Monthly Adventures release, *The Next Life*, and then, more significantly, when he co-starred with David Tennant in **The Adventures of Luther Arkwright**, released in March 2005. Paul also published his autobiography – entitled **You're Him, Aren't You?** – with Big Finish in 2006, which he subsequently narrated for release as an audiobook.

In 2012 Paul returned to the role of Avon for **Blake's 7: The Liberator Chronicles** and went on to star in over thirty original audio dramas. Producer, John Ainsworth, paid tribute to Paul: "I have to confess that when I was first asked to take

over as producer on **Blake's 7** for Big Finish, I was a little nervous about working with Paul Darrow. He was a larger-than-life figure and in my mind I was a little intimidated by him. I needn't have worried, of course.

"Paul loved to make jokes, chat and tell his many stories about film stars and the theatre. 'I love show business,' he often used to say, and I think one of the reasons we got on was that, most of the time at least, I would know the films and actors he was talking about – as well as laughing at his jokes, even when they were really bad."

**“IN THE END, ALL I WANT – WHAT ALL ACTORS WANT – IS TO BE REMEMBERED FOR SOMETHING. I DO NOT MIND BEING FOREVER AVON.”** PAUL DARROW

**P**AUL DARROW'S most recent recording session took place at the end of May 2019, when *Vortex* took the chance to ask him about his indelible association with Avon over 40 years after his debut in the BBC TV series. "It's the curse of the popular TV show, isn't it? There's the old quote, which is quite funny, from **Saturday Night Fever**. John Travolta's character is talking to a girl who wants to be an actress, and she says, 'I want to be like Laurence Olivier. Have you heard of him?' And the line is, 'Yeah, he's the guy who does the Polaroid ads.' Which was true. Larry Olivier did do Polaroid ads in America but if that's all you're ever remembered for

when you're Laurence Olivier, it's a bit sad.

"My friend, John – Sir John Hurt, as he became – died and the press said, 'Best remembered for something coming out of his stomach in **Alien**'. Well, you know, not really! He did **Midnight Express** and **The Elephant Man**, of course. John did a lot of good movies, and stage work, so he worked with a lot of interesting people."

**P**AUL REMAINED ambitious to the end, and even had his eye on a couple of plum roles in future Big Finish productions: "**The Picture of Dorian Gray!** I wanted to do that! In fact, I asked if I could do it! Not to play Dorian Gray but to play Lord Henry, which I'd always wanted to do. I thought it was a one-off thing but it became a series. 'How do you do a series about

Dorian Gray?' I thought, but there you go. Big Finish could pull off **'Hamlet: The Series!'**"

Even so, Paul was not one to shy away from the association he knew he would always have with Avon: "Well, I won't have any say over it once I'm dead! I'm not sure what happens after you die and I can't promise to do an interview after I've gone, so I won't be able to tell you then. But it's possible that there'll be someone sitting up there going, 'You b\*\*\*\*\*s, I did other work, you know!' But nobody hears you. It doesn't really matter. "In the end, all I want – what all actors want – is to be remembered for something. I do not mind being forever Avon." **VORTEX**

# THE LATEST RELEASE IN THE BIG FINISH ORIGINALS IS THE MOST EPIC IN SCALE YET...

## TRANSFERENCE

- Released: August 2019
- Format: Download

 ORDER NOW AT:  
[BGFN.SH/SAM](http://BGFN.SH/SAM)

psychotherapist is – that even if their client said they had murdered someone the therapist was not necessarily duty bound to report it to the police, so long as they judged that this person would not commit a similar act again. And that was the conversation that ignited

**Transference.** Sam Ross was born.

“I started by writing a one-page brief for what the series was about, introducing Sam, her client Keith, and the world they inhabit. I also sketched out very roughly the beginnings of the story and where it might head in the first episode, which I shared with the script editor Matt Fitton, who gathered together the writers.”

The twisting tale of

**Transference** is told over eight hours, brought to life by four writers: Jane Slavin, Andrew Smith, Roland Moore and John Dorney. David says: “Our first writers’ meeting was essential

over the recent death of her sister), and her client, Keith, who tells her he has killed someone.

Jane explains: “I felt honoured to be on this thriller team: a great combination of weird brains that enabled us to concoct something out of the ordinary. Writing the first two episodes gave me a chance to plant seeds and create personalities that the other writers would have to run with, and I knew their expertise was such that anything I felt for them would be brilliantly followed up.

“Also, I had no idea where episode eight would end up but I knew how I wanted to get there. I wrote for Alex and Warren in particular but my favourite relationship was the friendship between Paul (Robert Whitelock) and Sam. The love between them is profound, like siblings.

“The first two episodes centre around the catastrophic grief Sam is experiencing since the death of

# PSYCHO

**I**T SEEMS as if Ken Bentley and I have been chatting about doing some kind of audio thriller for years”, says **Transference** producer David Richardson. “We’ve often spent the time walking into work talking about how great it would be to do something along the lines of **The Killing** or **Bodyguard** or **Broadchurch**, just for audio. I mentioned this to Nick and Jason a while ago and came away with a commission to develop an eight hour series!”

Executive producers Jason Haigh-Ellery and Nicholas Briggs were taken with the concept which David then developed. David continues: “I was chatting to a friend about the nature of counselling. He was saying how confidential the work of a

because it allowed us to take the foundation and then just throw ideas and directions out there. I’d started the ball rolling but I had no idea of the end destination, and I’d delivered something sketchy that needed to be honed and developed by Jane, Andrew, Roland and John.

“They each wrote storylines for their episodes, which we reworked to make sure that everyone was on the same page, and then they got underway on scripts.

“It doesn’t ever run out of steam or rest on its laurels. **Transference** has a fantastic momentum, and is packed with twists and turns.”

**J**ANE SLAVIN has written the opening two episodes in which we meet psychotherapist Samantha Ross (who is grieving

her sister, the impact this has on her work as a psychotherapist, and her new client named Keith. Her grief may well be clouding her skills regarding Keith, which perhaps is just what he wants. I think it’s funny as well as being a thriller and I hope everyone else gets this too.”

**T**HE THIRD and fourth episodes have been crafted by Andrew Smith who brings Paul more into the events. It’s appropriate for Andrew to be writing for Paul, a police officer, as Andrew himself spent many years in the Metropolitan Police.

Andrew says: “Jane had done the set-up for the series in her two opening episodes, establishing the characters and the mystery. The theme for my two episodes was investigation; in particular trying to

A man and a woman are standing in a city at night. The man is on the left, wearing a black leather jacket over a dark t-shirt. The woman is on the right, wearing a dark blue button-down shirt under a dark jacket. She has voluminous, curly blonde hair. The background is a blurred city street with bokeh lights.

# THRILLER

(qu'est-ce que c'est?)



“IT DOESN'T EVER RUN OUT OF STEAM OR REST ON ITS LAURELS. TRANSFERENCE HAS A FANTASTIC MOMENTUM...” DAVID RICHARDSON

find out more about the history of one of our characters. To that end we have a detective, DC Paul Aitken, who features quite strongly in my stories.

"Paul is a long time friend of one of the main characters, Sam, and he helps her out unofficially – getting himself into trouble in the process, overstepping the line legally."

Having had a lengthy police career, did Andrew ever encounter anything like this?

"I didn't come across a case like this in my police service, but there is another incident from my early career that I've used in this box set. It was in 1985 when I was on a drugs raid in Brixton. We'd been watching these heroin dealers, a pair of Glaswegians as it happened, for over a week. They tried to stop us coming through the door to the room



Above (l-r): Alex Kingston and Robert Whitelock

“ PLOTTING THE SERIES WAS GREAT FUN. IT WAS LIKE AN **INTRICATE JIGSAW** THAT WE HAD TO ENSURE WORKED FROM EVERY CHARACTER'S POINT OF VIEW. I REALLY ENJOY THAT SORT OF THING. ROLAND MOORE

they were in, and I found myself stuck as I forced my way through the door while someone was putting his weight into it to keep it shut. I was halfway through, and pinned to the wall by this door, unable to come in or go out, and then I saw the guy behind the door had a carving knife and his hand was twitching while he was trying to work up the nerve to stab me. Happily he had a change of heart and decided to drop it.

"Listeners will come across a scene very similar to that early in episode three, when Paul finds himself in the same situation."

**C**ontinuing events, Roland Moore is responsible for episodes five and six. He says: "Plotting the series was great fun. It was like an intricate jigsaw that we had to ensure worked from every character's point of view. I really enjoy that sort of thing.



**Transference** was like a dark game of 'consequences' where we knew the start and the ending, but had to work out the journey in-between.

"After the first meeting we developed our synopses for the episodes and then Matt edited them with a view to how well they fitted together. And then we had another meeting and ironed out anything that needed ironing out."

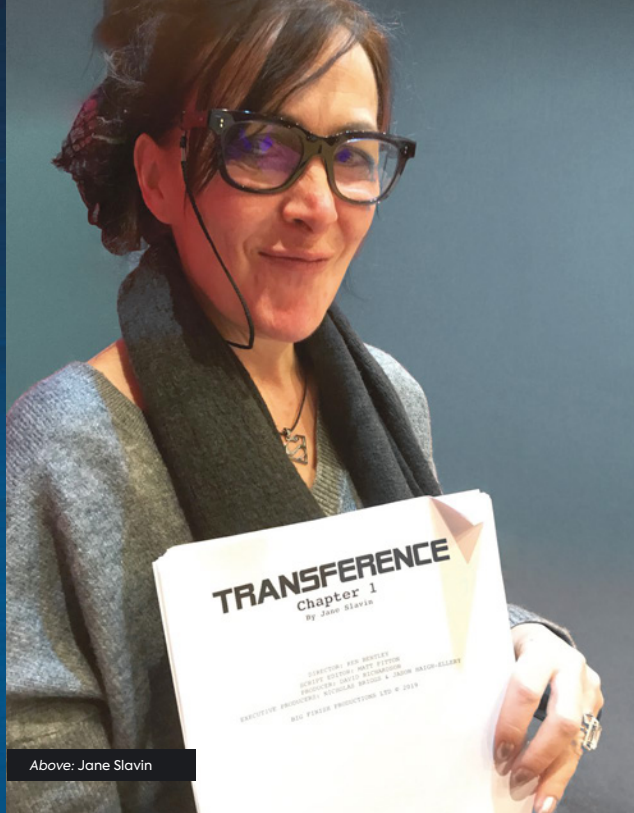
Discussing the events of each episode of **Transference** is difficult without giving away spoilers, but Roland can reveal: "I wrote parts five and six – and they take place a few weeks after the end of part four. Sam is in a new location, clearing her head by the sea and working in a café that belongs to an ex-boyfriend. She's trying to come to terms with the massive events that happened before (no spoilers), but the past is about to catch up with her. These episodes are near the end of the series and the tension ramps right up. And part five contains one of my favourite cliff-hangers!"

The series concludes with episodes seven and eight, both of which were written by John Dorney.

As the writer of the final two episodes it meant that he was left with tying up the loose ends and bringing sub-plots together for the finale. John admits: "There were times when I found the other writers were writing me into a corner! Then again, there were times when I was writing myself into a corner!"

"I had a reasonably good idea of





Above: Jane Slavin

where episode seven was going to go based on discussions from the original meeting. I was also very keen to make sure I paid off what had been started earlier in the story and draw those strings together in a way that worked.

"At one point I was a bit stuck and then had a meeting with the other writers. We battered ideas around and figured out how to end it. I'd gone in with a rough idea of how it could work, then we fixed some things in that meeting, then I realised they wouldn't work so went back to my original idea!

"Having the last two episodes meant I had to wait back a bit till the earlier scripts were done. I had some plans and the other writers were happy to accommodate these and feed them into their earlier episodes.

"There was plenty of emailing back and forth and sharing ideas."

**T**ranscference boasts a cast that any TV series would be proud to have. Alex Kingston takes on the title role of Sam, whilst her client, Keith,

is played by Warren Brown. Also amongst the cast is Wendy Craig playing Barbara – Sam's mother, and Robert Whitelock plays Paul – Sam's best friend.

David says: "Our lead actors were actually brought onboard before a word had been written. In fact, Warren asked me, 'What's the series about?' and I'd had to say at that point, 'I don't really know!'

"I'm grateful for the faith that he and Alex put in us – that they waited patiently to see what emerged, and then embraced the final scripts so readily. Alex said to me, 'Gosh, when you said it was about a psychotherapist I expected it to be quite contained – to be just two people sitting in a room. But this is really exciting!'

Vortex is also impressed by the cast, and Ken laughs: "The cast is a bit good isn't it?! The style of the play determined the casting. And it isn't just the leads I'm excited about. There was some quite complex doubling to do and there are a number of actors we're lucky enough to work with regularly

who are vocal chameleons. It was great to give actors I admire the chance to work on something new and very different.

"**Transference** is a real departure in style from anything else we've done at Big Finish, and we all felt that. From the planning and writing through to recording and post-production. It's been a journey of discovery."

**A**s Big Finish's biggest single release it's meant a lot of hard work – but also pleasant experiences – for the production team.

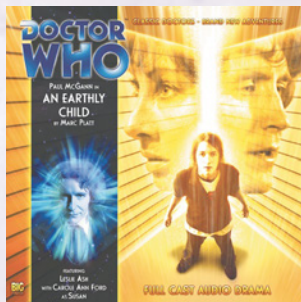
John says: "When I was able to read all eight scripts from beginning to end, I got a sense of how it all worked, and it was remarkably like a page turner – in script



Above: Alex Kingston

form. It's very gripping, despite it being insanely complex!"

And David concludes: "When we sent the studio masters to Steve Foxon to add the sound design, he began editing scene by scene without reading the whole script. I was absolutely delighted when he admitted that he was gripped by the whole thing and thought it was brilliant!" **VORTEX**



## DOCTOR WHO AN **EARTHLY** CHILD

AS SUSAN PREPARES TO MEET RIVER SONG IN **AN UNEARTHLY WOMAN** (IN *THE DIARY OF RIVER SONG SERIES SIX*), WE TURN BACK THE CLOCK (OR IS IT WIND IT FORWARD?) TO MEET HER IN **AN EARTHLY CHILD**.

**T**HE STORY was originally released as a The Monthly Adventures subscriber special in December 2009, reuniting Paul McGann's incarnation of the Doctor with his granddaughter – and introducing a new member of the family.

Written by Marc Platt, he recalls: “The brief was simple: bring back Susan 20 years after she has been left on Earth by the Doctor, and now she has a teenage son – the Doctor's great-grandson – so quite a lot of baggage to sort through. Otherwise, I could do what I liked. Alan Barnes described the Doctor's new grandson as ‘a sort of earthly child’ in his very first email, and I thought, That’s it, that’s the title, right from the start.

“A lot of new history needed filling in and it seemed far too simplistic to imagine that life on a planet decimated by the Dalek occupation would get back to normal easily. The people are in trauma, so restoring confidence and hope are just the start before they can even think about the technology. So much

for heading out to the stars, it's the new Dark Ages.”

Did Marc find it difficult to convey the emotion for the Doctor and Susan's reunion?

He admits: “Not too difficult on Susan's side, her heart is always on her sleeve. There's a load of resentment and loss that she's been bottling up for 20 years. Her relationship with David Campbell was cut short too, so all her hopes and fears are invested in her son, Alex. But he, of course poor kid, has rebellion in his genes. It goes with the family.

“And then the Doctor turns up, being a bit furtive, sneaking around preparing the ground for the inevitable reunion, which is probably a symptom of his own guilt. But he's also perplexed and emotionally thrown by having a new relation. After years of coping with other people's problems on a grand scale, he's not quite sure what to do when facing up to a few personal problems of his own.

“So the final reunion comes as a sort of emotional explosion – complete joy,

anger and embarrassment all rolled into one.”

After *An Earthly Child* there were no indications that Susan and Alex would return – but they went on to play a major part in the fourth season of adventures for the Eighth Doctor and Lucie Miller in the 2010 release, *Relative Dimensions*.

Did Marc have any idea this might happen?

Marc explains: “Well by its nature *An Earthly Child* contributes something fairly fundamental to the bedrock of the Doctor's history so that perhaps made it less of a surprise. And then I was asked to reintroduce Susan and Alex in the Christmas story, *Relative Dimensions*, so I got to hang on to them for a bit then! But I never figured out (and Nicholas Briggs and Alan Barnes never told me) where it was heading...” **VORTEX**

**DOCTOR WHO: AN EARTHLY CHILD** IS AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD NOW AT THE SPECIAL PRICE OF £2.99

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"I have never understood why it should be necessary to become irrational in order to prove that you care. Or indeed why it should be necessary to prove it -- at all."

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