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THE BIG FINISH MAGAZINE



GRACELESS

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AND LAURA DODDINGTON
ARE ALL ALONE IN TIME AND SPACE**

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EDITORIAL

Well, the **Doctor Who Live** tour is in its final stages. What can I tell you? Has the magic worn off? Am I tired and jaded about the whole thing? Of course not! I mean, it's a shame that the girls have got the tops on the Daleks now. No matter how exciting the Daleks are, they're never going to beat the sight of our lovely ladies pointing their arms out in front of them and making 'talkie' movements with their hands in time to my dialogue. And then, of course, there's Churchill... Conductor Ben Foster loves that bit. I have a bit of improvisation with him, and he's really building up his part. Did I tell you he once tried to bribe me with a bottle of champagne for the Dalek to mention his name at the Proms? Well, naturally, I was happy to do that without accepting the bribe! And don't think I've spent all this time swanning around the UK without keeping in touch with Big Finish. I've been writing scripts, approving

storylines, listening to sound design and music... Most recently, I've been listening to *The Four Doctors*, which is shaping up beautifully, with Steve Foxon working on some great music, and *Lucie Miller* and *To the Death...* which are quite harrowing. Andy Hardwick has done some brilliant work on those.

And it won't be long before I should get on with more **Sherlock Holmes**. I'm afraid **Doctor Who Live**, joy that it is, has really messed up my Big Finish schedule, so the second series of **Sherlock Holmes** adventures won't be happening until next year now... but hopefully within the first six months. Ah, sounds like I've set myself a deadline there.

Right... where's that cigar? I'm about to go on stage in Cardiff - the very heart of **Doctor Who!**

Nicholas Briggs

SNEAK PREVIEWS AND WHISPERS

Doctor Who - The Crimes of Thomas Brewster

The Doctor's past (and possibly a bit of his future) comes back to pay a visit in this thrilling adventure by Jonathan Morris. Travelling with his trusted companion Evelyn Smythe (Maggie Stables), the Time Lord meets one Detective Menzies (played by Anna Hope, and previously seen in *The Condemned* and *The Raincloud Man*) before reuniting with disgraced former companion Thomas Brewster (John Pickard). The line-up of familiar faces does battle with the terrifying Terravores, while the brilliant David Troughton pops up as the dangerous Gallagher. And, hidden away in this story in plain sight, is something that will become very significant later on. All will become clear in 2012!
Out January 2011

Doctor Who: The New Eighth Doctor Adventures - Lucie Miller

Four series in Lucie finally gets a story named after her, as her turbulent relationship with the Eighth Doctor comes to a head in the first half of an apocalyptic tale written and directed by Nicholas Briggs. Susan (Carole Ann Ford) and the Doctor's great-grandson Alex (Jake McGann) are back, and as everything begins to unravel the Daleks are back on the scene - and nothing can stop them... *Lucie Miller* is the penultimate episode of the **Eighth Doctor Adventures**. Jaws may be dropping by the time this is all over...
Out February 2011



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THIN ICE



David Richardson heads behind the scenes on Season 27...

In the past year I've had two Brilliant Ideas. The first was to cast Beth Chalmers as Raine Creevy, the Doctor's young new companion in the second season of **The Lost Stories**. The second was to cast Beth as Raina, a Soviet operative and – not coincidentally – Raine's mum in the first of those stories.

Welcome to the Moat Studios on August 30 and September 1, and we're recording *Thin Ice* by Marc Platt, a story that was originally meant to be shown on telly back in 1990. But Season 27 of **Doctor Who** never happened, and the show went into hiatus for sixteen years. Wind forward to 2009 and Big Finish's first series of **Lost Stories** starring Colin Baker has been a big success. So here we are with a second run, making those four stories for the Seventh Doctor that never were...

Thin Ice was planned as a pivotal story by producer John Nathan-Turner and script editor Andrew Cartmel. It has Ice Warriors. It sets in motion events and introduces characters that will have an impact through the rest of the season. And it features the Adjudicator, an individual who has plans for Ace...

So here we are in Soviet Russia in the late 1960s, where wheeler-dealing Markus Creevy (Ricky Groves) has arrived for a clandestine meeting with his secret girlfriend Raina, watched over by the sinister Felnikov (John Albasiny). Get used to these characters – you'll be seeing some

of them again in the following story, *Crime of the Century*, where we'll join their lives 20 years down the line.

Ricky is a lovely guy, really relishing his chance to be in **Doctor Who** and, despite being a big star from **EastEnders** and **Strictly Come Dancing**, it's hard to persuade him not to do the washing-up at lunchtime. John Albasiny is lovely too; he's studied Russian and he's lived in Moscow, so despite being perfectly English, he's brilliant in this role. Not only can he deliver a magnificent accent, he's willing and able to tutor the other actors playing Russian characters on exactly the right pronunciation. And then there's Beth, who can turn her hand to anything, and during the course of this story she has to – it all happens to her!

Sylvester and Sophie, too, are in their element. They're fascinated by *What Would Have Been* – it's fun just listening to them chatting between takes, discussing this course that their characters have taken beyond their final TV outing, *Survival*. Marc's script has some really dramatic and challenging scenes for both of them – and they truly deliver some stunning work.

Scheduling this production has been... difficult. We recorded *Crime of the Century* months ago, because it was the first script available. This one is set before it, and it features five of the same actors – every one of them extremely busy people. So for months *Thin Ice* has been on and off, off and on, as we (I say we, I mean me) tried to hook everyone up to the same dates. And then it happened – a window opened in which we could get the story in, and then record the final story *Earth Aid* the following week.

Making this 'Season 27' has been a truly satisfying experience. It's been great to work with Andrew Cartmel and see his untold masterplan unfold. It's been a joy to spend more time with Sylvester and Sophie, and then watch a new companion take her first steps into the TARDIS. Take my word for it: cat burglar Raine Creevy is going to steal your heart...

Doctor Who: The Lost Stories - Thin Ice is out in April 2011



Left: Looks like Raine. Beth Chalmers joins Sylvester McCoy and Sophie Aldred aboard the TARDIS.

Below: John Albasiny, Ricky Groves and Beth Chalmers



AMAZING GRACELESS

Tracer twins
Ciara Janson and Laura Doddington
talk to David Richardson about their very own
spin-off from the *Key 2 Time* trilogy, *Graceless*

We first met Abby (then Amy) and Zara in the *Key 2 Time* trilogy, where we learned they were living Tracers, one good, one not so good, who are tasked with helping to locate the Key to Time. How have things changed for their solo outing? Ciara Janson (Abby): It's a bit of a twist really. We've sort of swapped identities, which is quite exciting.

Laura Doddington (Zara): We're a lot more mature than we were when we were in *The Key 2 Time*, so there's not the innocence with either of us. Although Zara was quite evil, there was an innocence about that that was just naïve really.

CJ: She's more worldly now; we're just kind of like actual human beings now.

LD: But with extra powers.

CJ: Special powers!

LD: Yes, special powers.

CJ: Nice magical powers.

LD: So they've kind of developed as creatures, which is nice, because obviously we didn't really have a relationship together in *The Key 2 Time*; it was almost a battle between us all the time. We didn't like each other. But now we do!

CJ: There's endless love forever between the two sisters.

Was it important for you, coming back, to be doing something different?

LD: Yeah, it's really nice that we get to do stuff together a lot more in this, because we're quite good friends now, but it means we're not fighting each other. There's not so much evil in this story; we're more fighting for the good and trying to make up for what we've done in the past.

CJ: It's just lovely to be back together again and obviously when we did *The Key 2 Time* we'd just met each other as well, so we didn't have that chemistry between us. But now, it's just lovely. Although our characters are swapping in these series. Abby becomes bad and evil-ish, learned from my sister, obviously, so it's nice we get to do both things.

LD: They're much more complex characters now for us to play. There's a lot more to battle with because they've got a conscience; even though what you do in story one, which I won't give away, is quite terrible, it's not that she's evil or that I've become good, it's much more complex, which is really nice.

You became friends very quickly.

CJ: We didn't really have any choice! [laughs] Yeah, we did, and then we got to do the conventions and things. Going away together as well, we just became even closer.

LD: We did Chicago TARDIS and we did Gallifrey in LA, and we actually, because we got on so well, went out to LA for Gallifrey a week early and had a week together holidaying, and hired a beast of a car together that we drove around in playing *Single Ladies* really loudly out of the window.

CJ: Yeah, we did! It was so lovely!

LD: But the conventions are a really interesting thing because I'd never really heard what they were like or been to any and they're massive! They are really big events; to the point where the really big one, Gallifrey, so many people are there and we kind of got lost a lot of the time. It was like, 'Where do we go?'

CJ: It was quite daunting, wasn't it? It wasn't scary as such, but I had no idea that **Doctor Who**, especially the audiobooks, had such a big following and there was so much going on, so many people who just knew everything about it. It was actually quite unbelievable. We were getting asked questions that to be honest we didn't know a lot of the answers to, but it was mad, wasn't it? So many people. But they were lovely. Everyone was so welcoming; especially because we'd never been there before, to any conventions, and they just seemed really happy to have us there.

LD: A lot of them were saying 'Welcome to the family' and there's that really warm American thing which I don't think we get over here of that kind of, 'Welcome to the States'. You're welcomed with open arms; you're British, and 'Come back, we want to see you again!' They're really lovely, really nice. We went, 'Yeah!'

CJ: 'Get us another series!' It worked!

LD: The plan is, hopefully, [to go] out to Orlando if neither of us has anything else jobwise; as long as we're not having to perform on the boards. 'Just get the understudy on, love!' [laughs] I'm really looking forward to it, mainly because we can go to Disneyland!

CJ: I know! And hopefully get brown, I've been told. It's gonna be nice weather.

LD: And it's run by a really lovely guy, Jarrod Cooper, who I know quite well. We were invited on a cruise – Ciara couldn't do it because she was working – which went round the Caribbean, which is kind of like a convention but on a much smaller scale, so you're with the fans all the time. Jarrod came on that with me, so I know him quite well. He's a really lovely guy. He runs Hurricane Who over there; I think they meet once a month, this group of guys, and I went along to one of the meetings and it was great! They were so welcoming and so lovely and just

so knowledgeable! It's amazing. Jarrod and I were talking quite a lot about it and I said I find it amazing how much information the fans retain. You can mention an episode from 1982 and they will tell you exactly what happened in it, who was in it – actors who are doing something else now, not necessarily the Doctor or the assistant, just people in it.

CJ: They know absolutely every single detail.

LD: And he said, 'Yeah but it's like football fans in England; football fans know everything about the history of football and I said, 'Yeah, I guess.' I don't have something like that in my life so I found it quite difficult to comprehend, but I guess it is just like that.

Of course, for you guys it's a few days' work quite a while ago. Did you have problems remembering it?

LD: Yeah, a little bit we did.

CJ: It's quite weird because especially doing *The Key 2 Time*, we recorded it out of sequence, so a lot of the time we didn't really know what was going on in the story as such, so that was quite weird, to be doing it like that. Even with some of the stuff we were speaking about, because it's very **Doctor Who**-based, if you're not a big fan of **Doctor Who** or don't know a lot about it, then at first it's quite alien to you. But I picked it up and – I say understand, I'm sure I didn't understand it fully – got a grasp of it quite easily. So coming back and doing stuff like this, it's so much easier to comprehend.

LD: Yeah, you're coming in with a lot more knowledge to the way that things work.

CJ: You've gotta do your research as well; it kind of prepares you for that. You think, 'I've got to know what I'm talking about here, obviously!'

From left: Ciara Janson, Fraser James and Laura Doddington



LD: In LA, actually, because it had been just under a year since we'd recorded them, we actually brought the discs with us and we listened to them in the car just to kind of refresh in our minds exactly what happened. Because Ciara's right, we recorded it out of sequence so there was this thing of going, 'And then what did you... Let's find it!'

CJ: It was brilliant though, it was like a little resource! We went, 'Yes! We know what's going on!'

LD: 'We understand!'

What was your reaction when we asked you back?

LD: Really excited.

CJ: Yeah, I was quite chuffed actually; people have obviously taken to the characters and wanna hear more from them. And excited, obviously, to see Laura again!

LD: It's such a fun thing for an actor to do; audios and radio and all that is so fun because you get to really play without exposing yourself.

CJ: That's true, it's such a different experience from being on camera and anything like that because you're on your own in a little booth, no one's really looking at you, and you can just get on with whatever you want to do; like you say, you're not exposed at all, you can just get on with it. It is a lot of fun.

LD: And if you do something that's wrong it doesn't matter. Just go back and do it again: 'Sorry about that, that was terrible, I'll just go back and do it again!' Which is really nice. And of course, I have to mention this: the lunch. That's one good thing about coming back.

CJ: And the puddings.

LD: Yes. And the puddings.

Graceless is out this month

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CIARA JANSON & LAURA DODDINGTON



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Calling in from Wembley Arena with news of the upcoming **Short Trips**, it's executive producer and occasional Churchill Nick Briggs!

Before heading off on the **Doctor Who Live** tour, you were working on the first audio **Short Trips**. What made BF switch from books to audio?

Well, the BBC issued an exclusive licence to Random House to do the **Doctor Who** books, so that meant that we could no longer publish our **Short Trips** short story collections. The range had never been explosively successful, so it wasn't much of a loss for us. However, the **Short Trips** books were very valuable to us in terms of giving new writers an outlet for their work. It was our best way of discovering great new writers. For example, Eddie Robson came up through the **Short Trips** route. So I thought it was important to continue **Short Trips** in our primary medium: sound. It's an investment in talent for the future, and, of course, another way of telling stories for all eight of our Doctors.

THE BRIGGS ISSUE

What's in store in the first collection?

Every collection contains one story per each Doctor's era, read by an actor relevant to that era in some way. So, in order, we have William Russell, David Troughton, Katy Manning, Louise Jameson, Peter Davison, Colin Baker, Sophie Aldred and India Fisher. I pop up at one point too. But not as a Dalek. There's a really lovely First Doctor story about the rise and fall of an entire civilization, rather touching. The Second Doctor story is really 'out there'. I still haven't worked out exactly what it's about. The Third Doctor one is a sweet little yarn involving a bicycle. The Fourth Doctor story is rather dark and alien. The Fifth Doctor story involves a whale in a context you'd never guess... seriously. The Sixth Doctor story is a 'don't interfere' sort of a yarn, with much wit. The Seventh Doctor story is a strange alien on Earth type of tale. And the Eighth Doctor one is another 'out there' story about an alien witch – it's well crazy, readers! I had initially intended these productions to be cheap and cheerful, concentrating simply on the narrative with virtually no sound design. Then I gave the sound design duties to Martin Montague, and he's turned them into rich, multi-layered soundscapes, so I had to do a lot of work to match him on the music. I've tried to at least give a flavour of each era's type of music, but haven't followed that too slavishly.

There's a mixture of writers both old and brand new on the **Short Trips**; how has this affected the end product? We hear there's even a piece by someone called Colin Baker...

It means there's something for everyone. There's some really crazy stuff in there. And, of course, the short story is a very specific form. You can't just truncate a full length **Doctor Who** story into a few hundred words. You have to find a new slant, a new way in to the story. Many of them start from the point of view of incidental characters and build the Doctor and companions

in later. A really good example of this is the Second Doctor story in the first volume.

The Doctor and Zoe hardly feature at all, but they are a sort of constant, haunting presence throughout the story. And it was lovely to work on Colin's story with him. I think he was surprised by how vocally demanding some of his phraseology was. It is a very different thing writing for the spoken word.

What adjectives would you say best describe the stories on offer?

New, challenging, surprising, rewarding. And genuinely touching in some places.

You mentioned you've been composing music for these stories; how do you decide what each one should sound like?

I've always been overly preoccupied with the music on **Doctor Who**, so I have a good instinct for the kind of music that was used in each era. The first two Doctors were the hardest to pin down, because those eras had no particular style throughout. Directors would opt for different options, more often than not using stock music, but also using specially composed, very abstract stuff. So for the First Doctor, I kind of imagined that I was composing useful stock music. The Second Doctor stuff was far more Radiophonic Workshop noise, which I enjoyed, although I did allow myself a few tuneful moments. For the Third Doctor, I went hell for leather for early Dudley Simpson electronic stuff. You know, the kind of thing you were hearing in the *Terror of the Autons* season. Then for the Fourth Doctor, I did the Leela era Dudley Simpson, with lots of woodwind and tapping drums. For Peter Davison's story, I used my Yamaha DX7, which although not exactly the right keyboard for that era, was around at that time, and has many sounds similar to those used by Peter Howell, Roger Limb and Malcolm Clarke. I went with that approach

again for Colin Baker, but erred more towards the Malcolm Clarke style. I did a few orchestral stab nods to Keff McCulloch for the Seventh Doctor and followed that up with a far more modern style for the Eighth Doctor, using some crashing electric guitars for the exciting bits. I feel that the Eighth Doctor era music has really been defined by Big Finish, so in a way that lets me do whatever I'd like.

Have you ever got halfway through and realised the music is utterly wrong?

Often. I quite often go back and take out a lot of music. That happened a couple of times with this. You get caught up in the musical progression, then suddenly realize that the sound design and narrative is actually achieving it and is best left alone. I didn't want to swamp these with music. I wanted it to be more about the words.

Was it more difficult or more liberating to come up with something different for eight stories?

It was actually quite liberating to move from one story to the next, having a complete rethink about your approach. It freshened it up a bit for me. I do love doing music. It's one of my personal, moany little tragedies that being executive producer means I don't have enough time to do more music and sound design for Big Finish. But I really, really, really mustn't complain. I mean, I'm doin' Doctoro, and that's great!

Thanks Nick. Now quick, go, you're needed on stage...

Doctor Who - Short Trips: Vol #1 is out this month



SHEAR GENIUS

The multi award-winning Rob Shearman tells us all about his new script collection, *Caustic Comedies*.

Hello Rob. How are you feeling, flush off the award-winning success of *Love Songs for the Shy and Cynical*? Do you have any space left on your mantelpiece?

The awards are very odd-looking things, actually. There seems to be almost a direct correlation between the amount of pride I take in an award and how unsettling the design of it may be, and how much it therefore terrifies my cat. The British Fantasy Award, for example, is a really strange one – I think it's of a strange horned female devil (I'm guessing female, because the breasts are quite prominent), who's holding out in her hands a large cabbage with an eye in it. I love that award. I have no idea what it's supposed to represent. But whenever Nero misbehaves (and he misbehaves quite a lot), I get it off the mantelpiece and threaten to clobber him with it. One glance at that cabbage and he calms down. Or hides. Either way.

I'm honestly amazed by the attention *Love Songs* has received. It's always such a humbling joy when you find yourself nominated for an award – principally because it gives you the excuse of searching out the books you're competing against, and realising just how good they are. That we've bagged *three* of the things is extraordinary. The Edge Hill Reader's Prize is for literary short story collections, so that one meant a lot to me because it made me feel properly posh. The Shirley Jackson Award is a big international prize for dark fantasy, so I found myself competing with truly scary things by Chinese and Japanese writers,

really weird, eerie stuff. And the British Fantasy Award means a huge amount to me, because the fantasy/weird fiction community in this country has been so very welcoming and kind to me since I began writing short stories a few years ago.

This month we're putting out *Caustic Comedies*; tell us what it consists of.

Ah, well, this is me going right back to my roots! For about ten years, before I wrote books, before I wrote *Doctor Who*, I worked pretty much exclusively for the theatre. And I wrote several dozen stage plays – quite a few of which were quite widely acclaimed, and staged around the world. So it's been enormous fun for me to go back to my stage writing days and select seven of the plays that were the best received, and the funniest, and the oddest. There are strange fantasy comedies written for Alan Ayckbourn; there's a cruel and controversial dystopian play all about fascism and Christmas decorations that won me lots of notoriety back in my twenties; there's a curious sci-fi piece written for the National Theatre. Hopefully they'll be lots of fun to read.

We hear there's a special treat for people who pay for the swanky leatherbound edition. Oh, the swanky edition is... swanky! All the plays are properly introduced by me in little essays that explain what I was up to, and tell anecdotes about nearly dying on a beach in Scarborough, or being offered drugs by my chauffeur in Los Angeles. And, as far as I can remember, all the anecdotes are actually *true*. There are photographs from the original productions, glimpses of the handwritten first drafts, even pictures of me as a young fresh-faced writer back before my cheek pores had the maturity to grow a beard. And each play is illustrated by a bold and somewhat disturbing cartoonist, who uncannily captures the caustic tone of my black comedy exactly. All big and coffee table sized and leathery. [*He means the book, readers, not the cartoonist.*]

How long has it been since you last revisited these plays? Did you discover anything new about them while putting the book together? It's been the strangest thing. It really has. During the time of writing and rehearsal on a premiere production, you think, live and breathe these plays. But after the press night, after you hand it over to the audience really, you have to move away. So sometimes I'll go and see a revival of one of my plays, maybe written some fifteen years or so before, and in the interval I honestly won't be able to remember what happens next.

I remember *writing* these plays – but not necessarily what I wrote. So reading them all back, all these years later – the earliest was written in 1992 – is really rather frightening actually. I find them at times extraordinarily revealing about the sort of person I was back then, this rather shy and cynical man who was amazed he was making a career at writing at all, and expecting any moment someone would tap him on the shoulder and tell him he was a fraud. (I still feel that now, actually. But I have the beard to protect me these days. It's all about the beard.) It was like looking back at someone I once knew very well, but have lost hold of somehow, and am not always sure I like very much.

What does writing a play give you that writing a book, a TV episode or radio doesn't? I think, rather shamelessly, I always write for an audience. I love to hear an audience laugh. Or gasp. Or just fall uncomfortably silent – anything that gets a reaction! There's nothing else like live performance for that. There's no pretence to it. You can always hear the honest reaction of people enjoying your stuff – or sometimes, very palpably, and acutely painfully, not enjoying it one little bit. It's why I like giving readings at events now I write prose as well, I just want to get that immediate feedback. You're somewhat

protected by television and radio and books – people tell you after the event whether they liked it or not. (And if they didn't, they politely keep it to themselves.) There's no such distance with theatre. It's wonderful. And brilliant. And quite shaming, sometimes.

Would you like to see these plays performed up and down the land (if they ask your permission first)? Oh, absolutely! That's the idea. The joy of theatre too is that you leave enough room for new productions to reinterpret what you've written, and come up with their own versions of it. I love seeing revivals of my old plays. I love the fact they're absolutely never the same thing twice. It keeps them alive. My memory is appalling now I'm in my forties, so I know that even though I've been reading the proofs for these plays of mine, I'll have forgotten the details of them again within a few months – I want to be at lots of different intervals of lots of different productions wondering what on earth happens next...!

Caustic Comedies



Seven plays by Robert Shearman

What's next for you?

Well, the next big thing is my third short story collection, out from Big Finish in April. It's a big, bold bruiser of a book, called *Everyone's Just So So Special*, and it's (hopefully) pretty funny and quite scary. I'm just polishing off my edits on it now, and I feel very proud of it. It's still at the stage where it all just belongs to *me*. I can't wait to release it on to the world. And to see what everyone makes of the children's magic show where all the kids get up to perform their own very special tricks, or the woman who keeps each year's previous self hidden away in her attic, or the girl who falls in love with the sky above her house, or the kitten that hunts only for endangered species, or the aeroplane that's fuelled by faith, or the woman who marries a camel...

Caustic Comedies is out this month in hardback and leatherbound editions. The paperback edition is out in April

Here's To You, Mr Robinson

Nigel Robinson reveals what's in store in the upcoming *First Doctor Box Set* and looks back at his favourite *Who* era

Hi Nigel. You've done some adapting work for the *First Doctor Box Set*. What did that entail? I script-edited the two stories for a listening audience rather than a viewing one. Some things which work well on TV don't necessarily work for the audio medium, and your main task is to keep the listener's interest and involvement at all times, especially as he or she doesn't have the 'distraction' of the visual.

One task was to maintain a consistent interaction between [William] Russell and Carole Ann Ford even when they're not voicing their own characters. So you'll hear, for instance, that in the scenes where Hephaestion or Iollas are major players then it's Carole Ann who is providing the narration; where Cleitus or Antipater are to the fore then it's Russell's voice you hear. That provides for variety; I was very wary of writing too many scenes which were too long and featured just one voice.

Since neither of the stories was produced for TV there was no visual reference so it was, of course, up to me to create an atmosphere and to describe Alexander's camp and the Hanging Gardens of Babylon as well as the Ishtar Gate. Fortunately we know how most of the major characters looked from classical accounts of their lives, Babylon is well documented in historical records, and I've seen a magnificent reconstruction of the Ishtar Gate in the Pergamon Museum in Berlin.

Tell us a little bit about what we can expect from *Farewell, Great Macedon* and *The Fragile Yellow Arc of Fragrance*.

Farewell, Great Macedon is a superbly scripted story by Moris Farhi focusing on the last days of Alexander the Great and the assassination attempts and power struggles leading up to it. It's a historical in the grand tradition of *Marco Polo*, with a host of well-rounded characters, every single one of whom is based on an

actual historical figure. *The Fragile Yellow Arc of Fragrance* is a charming tale of unrequited love, which spotlights Barbara, arguably the best companion the series ever had.

Your name has been synonymous with early **Who** since your superb Target novelisations of *The Sensorites*, *The Time Meddler* and others. What so attracts you to this era?

William Hartnell is my Doctor, and has been my favourite ever since Saturday 13 March 1965 when I first remember watching the programme (although I'm sure I must have seen earlier episodes). And never since has the show offered us such a rich variety of stories as this era did, from traditional science fiction to gripping historicals, from suspense to comedy, and from whimsy to all-out adventure. And the Doctor as portrayed by William Hartnell was a one-off, a crotchety anti-hero who mellowed into a loveable and reliable grandfather figure, albeit with a will of steel. You'd never get away with a leading character like that in any successful TV show produced today, when the lead always has to be this handsome and athletic young man of action.

What did you make of William Russell and Carole Ann Ford in studio?

I went along for one day and it was quite strange – after all, these were two of my childhood heroes, people I'd grown up with. Carole Ann I think I may have met briefly at a convention a long time ago and she was lovely. But the fanboy in me was rather nervous about meeting William Russell for the first time – he is Mister Chesterton, after all! He's also a delightful person and a real gent. Listening to Russell and Carole Ann acting together once again, along with John Dorney, who put in such a wonderful performance as Alexander, was spine-tingling. Who would have thought that, almost fifty years later, we would still be going on exciting new adventures through space and time with Ian Chesterton and Susan Foreman in that old blue box?

You've dipped into the past before with the **Companion Chronicles**, firstly with the rather unusual one-hander *The Stealers from Saiph*. At what stage did it become a solo act?

It was always intended as a solo act right from the start – I think David Richardson wanted to try something slightly different from the normal two-handers. To give the piece some variety I included quite a few female characters and different nationalities to allow Mary [Tamm] to use as many different voices and accents as possible. (She also did a pretty good Tom Baker!) I thought the 1920s setting suited the first version of Romana very well too.

You've more recently written *The Emperor of Eternity*, which reunited Deborah Watling and Frazer Hines on audio. How did that differ from *Stealers*?

The obvious difference was that *Stealers* was essentially just a narration, whereas *Emperor* was much more of a fully-fledged script with two different voices.

Both *Stealers* and *Emperor* were set in the past, but it's the latter I count as a true 'historical' as all the characters apart from the TARDIS crew were real people from that era – just as they were in most of the show's early adventures set in the past.

Do you have a weakness for historical adventures?

Absolutely, and this probably comes from my love of the Hartnell period when we had so many splendid stories like *The Aztecs*, *Marco Polo* and *The Massacre*. The

past, as someone once said, is another country, and the Court of Kublai Khan can be just as alien as a Silitheen get-together down Raxacoricofallapatorius way. I always thought the pseudo-historicals were a bit of a cop-out (although I love *The Time Meddler*!), and **Doctor Who** doesn't necessarily need a Monster of the Week to be exciting, funny and scary.

Doctor Who: The Lost Stories - The First Doctor Box Set is out this month



RHYTHM & VIEWS

John Dorney discusses his roles in the *First and Second Doctor box sets*

Hello John. While people may know you as the writer of *Solitaire* and *Echoes of Grey*, you've been making a big splash acting in Big Finish releases recently...

I've been working as an actor professionally a little bit longer than I've been doing the same as a writer, so it's nice to be able to use both my careers for Big Finish.

I played the character of Henry in the October Seventh Doctor story *A Death in the Family*. Henry is a decent chap who we meet in the White Rabbit pub, but more than that I cannot say. I turn up as a variety of other parts elsewhere in the story as well, getting to do an outrageous variety of accents. And I was delighted to be killed by Ian Reddington in the first episode.

After that, I'm appearing in the two stories making up November's *First Doctor Box Set*, *Farewell, Great Macedon* and *The Fragile Yellow Arc of Fragrance*. In the former I play Alexander the Great himself, in a play about a conspiracy to kill him in ancient Babylon. It's a glorious epic in the mould of *Marco Polo*, with a wonderfully unique tone. It's simultaneously of its era and unlike any other **Doctor Who** story. A real corker. And in the latter play, I'm the character Rhythm, an alien from the planet Fragrance who develops a potentially fatal connection to Barbara. They're both totally original scripts and I was delighted to be given the chance to be involved with them – especially being able to work with Carole Ann Ford and William Russell, both of whom are still as brilliant as they were forty-five years ago. It was a rare privilege.



Along with Nick Briggs, you've adapted Terry Nation's US Dalek pilot for the *Second Doctor Box Set*. Was that fun to do?

It was a joy. Nick had started work on the first half, and that gave me a template to work from, so I just had to continue on in the same vein. The original script is a highly visual, action-packed romp, which presents some obvious problems to the adapter (the last scene, as written in the original, is completely impossible to make work in audio, for example, and I needed to find a way to present the same effect aurally). But it's also joyously old fashioned, so I was able to revel in some lovely pulpy dialogue and melodramatic descriptions. Writing about Daleks crunching burnt corpses under their bases as they glide amongst undulating carnivorous plants is the sort of stuff you dream about as a teenage fanboy!

It was also a lovely studio day to attend as well – I got to do understudy Daleks for the day as Nick was away, and found a new appreciation for his skill in creating the definitive voice. Everyone should have a go at it just to see how hard it is, and marvel at how he manages to make them so perfect over and over again. And I knew both of the male guest stars for the day – Alan Cox and Chris Porter, terrific actors with cracking voices – which made it more of a reunion than a job.

Doctor Who: The Lost Stories - The First Doctor Box Set is out this month. **Doctor Who: The Lost Stories** - The Second Doctor Box Set is out next month

Hi Big Finish peoples! Just wanna say that I have been a Big Finish fan for years and years but your latest Seventh Doctor offering has raised the bar soooooo much. Good Lord, it's brilliant!!! *A Death in the Family* is, in my mind, the best yet and I can't wait for the concluding story. The trailer sounds really scary. More like this please and I hope Big Finish goes on and on raising the bar. I can't wait.

Keith Goldsbrough

Nick: Cheers, Keith. Steven Hall is a very special writer and we were very pleased to work with him. And I thought Ken Bentley and his cast did a fantastic job.

I am a regular listener, and I keep hearing about the fantastic stuff happening on the Facebook page. As I don't have Facebook, I seem to be missing out. Would it be possible for some of the content, such as the videos, to appear on the Big Finish website?

Steve

Nick: Not on Facebook? I was like that once, but I succumbed, mainly because of Big Finish. But yes, we'll look into putting our frivolous videos on our site.

Just a quick suggestion and query, both suggesting, and then wondering why, you haven't done an audio regeneration story for Colin Baker's Doctor. Something in the vein of Gary Russell's *Spiral Scratch* novel would be much appreciated, where ol' Sixty gets a chance to die the heroic death. Thank you so much for your work.

Taylor Nielsen

Nick: Wouldn't this contradict established continuity?

You've got squillions of excellent stuff to choose from! Where does a person of limited finances begin? Any suggestions?

Loved the Katy Manning podcast!

Used to sit about five inches from the TV when she gave those flawless

performances with Jon! We all cried buckets when she left at the end of *The Green Death* way back when! Could you pass on my regards to her at all, and thank her for all those wonderful, wonderful memories?

Anthony Williams

Nick: I cried too at the end of *The Green Death*. . . Ah, the innocence of youth. Probably the best place to start is a six-month subscription to the main range. Or maybe start with a special offer reduced subscription from our very first release, *The Sirens of Time*.

RE: *Creatures of Beauty*: holy %!#\$, that story was amazing. Whose idea was it to include elements of horror porn? It was fantastic, and a wonderful departure from the regular story. As soon as I finished it I listened again. The people on that planet are so screwed!

Robert Konigsberg

Nick: I can't remember putting any porn in! But my idea was to find a new way of telling a story, to make it exciting, even though we knew from the start that the Doctor and Nyssa would survive.

I have a quick question: it's very interesting to see that you are now selling the audiobooks of the new series. Do you have any plans to also sell those which are currently only available for download as opposed to on CD? If you do, you'll have an order from me quicker than you can say 'click here'!

Just listened to **Jago & Litefoot** I by the way (behind the times as usual) and loved it. Also thought Nick was brilliant in his Nottingham Play. . .

Jonathan Bryden

Nick: Glad you enjoyed **Murdered to Death** at the Theatre Royal Nottingham. If anyone missed it, we're doing it again in February 2011. As for Audiobook downloads. . . we have no plans to do this as yet, but we'll keep looking into it.

I was wondering: do you have any plans for having Sara Kingdom appear as a companion on one of the monthly series? Her stories in the **Companion Chronicles** are the only ones I really enjoy as they have a creepy/spooky ghost story appeal to them and can't praise them enough. I have recently listened to the third chapter.

Gez Cleary

Nick: Sara Kingdom has worked brilliantly in **The Companion Chronicles**, but we have no plans to introduce her to the main range. She is, of course, appearing in the **Lost Stories Second Doctor Box Set** in *The Destroyers*.

Just finished *A Death in the Family* – very impressive!

In the last magazine you said you were open to persuasion. . . so. . .

1) Could we please have some more Geoffrey Bayldon **Unbound** stories with Carole Ann Ford – they are some of the best releases you have ever done: more please.

2) A Season Two for **UNIT** with Nicholas Courtney as their scientific advisor.

3) A **Companion Chronicle** for Dodo Chaplet.

Fingers crossed!

Martin Edmonds

Nick: I'm afraid we currently have no plans for the Geoffrey Bayldon **Unbound Doctor**, Dodo Chaplet or **UNIT**. Sorry to disappoint!

Just finished listening to *The Book of Kells*: nice surprise to see the return of the Meddling Monk, but then I had to pick myself off the floor after hearing the ending! Can't wait for the next story; can't we have weekly instead of monthly? Gonna feel like a long wait till the next story!

Cheers from Down Under,
David Goodram

Nick: If you fell on the floor with that one, you'd better get a very thick carpet or a crash mat for *To The Death*. . .

FORTHCOMING RELEASES

NOVEMBER

Doctor Who – *Lurkers at Sunlight's Edge* (141, Seventh Doctor/Ace)
Doctor Who: The New Eighth Doctor Adventures – *The Resurrection of Mars* (4.06, Eighth Doctor and Tamsin)
Doctor Who: The Lost Stories – *The First Doctor Box Set* (2.1 – *Farewell, Great Macedon & The Fragile Yellow Arc of Fragrance*)
Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles – *A Town Called Fortune* (5.05, Sixth Doctor)
Bernice Summerfield – *Year Zero* (11.3)
Graceless – Box Set (Abby & Zara, 3 episodes)
Doctor Who: Short Trips – *Volume 1* (2 CDs, various readers)
Caustic Comedies – *The Stageplays* by Robert Shearman (Hardback & Leatherbound editions)

DECEMBER

Doctor Who – *The Demons of Red Lodge and Other Stories* (142, Fifth Doctor/Nyssa)
Doctor Who – *The Four Doctors* (Fifth, Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Doctors; Main Range subscribers only)
Doctor Who – *An Earthly Child* (Eighth Doctor, Susan and Alex; available to buy for the first time)
Doctor Who: The New Eighth Doctor Adventures – *Relative Dimensions* (4.07, Eighth Doctor, Susan and Alex)
Doctor Who: The Lost Stories – *The Second Doctor Box Set* (2.2 – *Prison in Space & The Daleks: The Destroyers*)
Bernice Summerfield – *Dead Man's Switch* (11.4)
Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles – *Quinnis* (5.06, First Doctor)

JANUARY 2011

Doctor Who – *The Crimes of Thomas Brewster* (143, Sixth Doctor/Evelyn)
Doctor Who: The New Eighth Doctor Adventures – *Prisoner of the Sun* (4.08, Eighth Doctor and Tamsin)
Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles – *Peti and the Piscos Paradox* (5.07, Fifth Doctor, 2 discs)
Jago and Litefoot – *Series 2 Box Set* (Four full cast adventures)
Highlander – *Series 2 Box Set* (Four enhanced readings)

FEBRUARY 2011

Doctor Who – *The Feast of Axos* (144, Sixth Doctor/Evelyn)
Doctor Who: The New Eighth Doctor Adventures – *Lucie Miller* (4.09, Eighth Doctor, Lucie and Tamsin)
Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles – *The Perpetual Bond* (5.08, First Doctor)
Doctor Who: Short Trips – *Volume 2* (2 CDs, various readers)
The Big Finish Companion – *Volume 1* by Richard Dinnick (hardback)

MARCH 2011

Doctor Who – *Industrial Evolution* (145, Sixth Doctor/Evelyn)
Doctor Who: The New Eighth Doctor Adventures – *To the Death* (4.10, Eighth Doctor, Lucie and Tamsin)
Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles – *The Forbidden Time* (5.08, Second Doctor)
Gallifrey – Season 4 (Box Set)
Love Songs for the Shy and Cynical – Audiobook (read by India Fisher, Toby Hadoke and Jane Goddard)

APRIL 2011

Doctor Who – *TBA* (146, Fifth Doctor/Tegan/Turlough/Nyssa)
Doctor Who: The Lost Stories – *Thin Ice* (2.3, Seventh Doctor and Ace)
Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles – *The Sentinels of the New Dawn* (5.10, Third Doctor)
Mervyn Stone 1: Geek Tragedy by Nev Fountain (Paperback)
Mervyn Stone 2: DVD Extras Include: Murder by Nev Fountain (Paperback)
Mervyn Stone 3: Cursed Among Sequels by Nev Fountain (Paperback)
Caustic Comedies – *The Stageplays* by Robert Shearman (Paperback)

MAY 2011

Doctor Who – *TBA* (147, Fifth Doctor/Tegan/Turlough/Nyssa)
Doctor Who: The Lost Stories – *Crime of the Century* (2.4, Seventh Doctor and Raine)
Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles – *Ferri's Folly* (5.11, Fourth Doctor)
Doctor Who: Short Trips – *Volume 3* (2 CDs, various readers)

JUNE 2011

Doctor Who – *TBA* (148, Fifth Doctor/Tegan/Turlough/Nyssa)
Doctor Who: The Lost Stories – *Animal* (2.5, Seventh Doctor and Raine)
Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles – *The Cold Equations* (5.12, First Doctor)
Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles – *The Specials Box Set* (*The Three Companions, The Mists of Time, Freakshow*)

JULY 2011

Doctor Who – *TBA* (149, Seventh Doctor)
Doctor Who: The Lost Stories – *Earth Aid* (2.6, Seventh Doctor and Raine)
Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles – *TBA* (6.01, TBA)

AUGUST 2011

Doctor Who – *TBA* (150, Doctor TBA)
Doctor Who: The Companion Chronicles – *TBA* (6.02, TBA)
Doctor Who: Short Trips – *Volume 4* (2 CDs, various readers)

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