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ISSUE 81 • NOVEMBER 2015



UNIT: EXTINCTION PLASTIC ATTACK!

KATE LETHBRIDGE-STEWART, OSGOOD AND THE UNIT TEAM COME TO AUDIO - AND THEY'RE BRINGING SOME AUTONS ALONG WITH THEM!

PLUS!

JAGO & LITEFOOT

A VISIT FROM STRAX
THE INTREPID DUO ACQUIRE
AN UNEXPECTED GUEST!

DORIAN GRAY

IMMORTAL TALES
THE CONFESSIONS OF
ALEXANDER VLAHOS!

DOCTOR WHO

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Sneak Previews & Whispers



Doctor Who: The War Doctor

THERE WAS once a man with more blood on his hands than any other, a man who would commit a crime that would silence the universe. And this man who ended the Time War was the Doctor.

This is the series the fans of Big Finish have been clamouring for – the untold story of what happened in the Time War, and how the Doctor, who was not the Doctor, played his part in the conflict between the Time Lords and the Daleks.

How difficult was it to develop the idea of a Doctor who doesn't act like the Doctor, for the series which starts next month?

Producer David Richardson says: "I think it's an exciting opportunity rather than a difficulty. This is **Doctor Who** with a lot of the rules taken off the table. He's the Doctor who isn't the Doctor... and yet he carries the memories of everything the Doctor was. There's so much to play with there. So much to explore. Oh just you wait until box set four..."

Getting John Hurt involved proved to be a real coup for Big Finish. David adds: "He was utterly wonderful. Not just the amazing actor that we know he is, but also so much fun. I really felt he was an ordinary chap who engaged with all the other cast members, cracked jokes, laughed at other people's jokes, joined in with the fun and enjoyed the whole sense of team work. There was no sense that this was a movie star coming to play on audio for a few days – he was utterly committed, absolutely loved the script (and said so many times) and relished being back in **Doctor Who**. What a star. What a lovely man." **VORTEX**

Editorial

SO, IS anyone excited by this month's releases? Thought so! At last, Big Finish have been allowed to play in the sand box of 21st century **Doctor Who**, as **UNIT**'s Kate Stewart and Osgood, as well as Strax, make their debuts on audio.

I love Strax – Dan Starkey has done a brilliant job in bringing him to life, and creating a Sontaran we can all love. It's easy to think of him as just being comic relief, but there's far more to him than that.

What I particularly love is the idea of bringing Strax together with Henry Gordon Jago and George Litefoot. It's a mouthwatering prospect – I can't wait to hear what alliterative description Jago will have for him! And given Strax's intolerance of the human race, just how will he get on with our favourite investigators?

And then there's **UNIT**... I've been a fan of Big Finish's previous two **UNIT** series, but creating a new series with the sensibilities of the new TV series, with storytelling pace, snappy dialogue and a bit of heart, is very appealing.

I've had a real soft spot for the gorgeous Ingrid Oliver for years (I was on the edge of my seat, cheering her on when she was on the **Great Comic Relief Bake Off!** And then she won star baker – yay!), and I don't need to say a word about Jemma Redgrave. She's been brilliant in everything I've seen her in.

But don't forget there's other releases this month too – I'm a huge fan of **The Confessions of Dorian Gray**, and eight new horror stories arrive this month in the fourth series. It's hard not to like him, thanks to Alexander Vlahos' tremendous performance.

And then there's series three of **Survivors** – after the shocks of the last season, I can't begin to wonder what horrors await our heroes...

KENNY

ISSUE 81 • NOVEMBER 2015

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UNITY IS STRENGTH

Be excited — be very excited, as Kenny Smith learns how 21st century *Doctor Who* came to Big Finish!

THERE'S SOMETHING apt about the Autons appearing in the first Big Finish series to feature officially licensed elements of 21st Century *Doctor Who*. After all, they and their Nestene creators were there when the show returned on TV in *Rose*. Robert Holmes' creations haven't featured in many Big Finish plays, but the only way is up for the plastic population this month as UNIT bid to prevent a new Nestene invasion. Jemma Redgrave and Ingrid Oliver star as Kate Stewart and Osgood, who are joined by a new supporting cast for the audio series.

Producer David Richardson reveals: "UNIT came about from our efforts to begin making audio series tying into the post-2005 series of *Doctor Who*. Kate Stewart and Osgood are such loved and successful characters — they made such

an impact that it actually seems they have been in far more episodes than they have. Both Jemma and Ingrid were thrilled with the prospect — taking centre stage in their own audio series.

"Our starting point was to take these two superb characters and their world that Steven Moffat had created, and embellish it with new recurring characters of our own, and kick off with an explosive first box set. The key was when Ken Bentley suggested something we could do with the Autons that was new and different. Suddenly everything clicked — that became the lynchpin of *UNIT: Extinction*."

Director Ken Bentley continues: "We produce quite a few ranges that have to fit a certain style, so we're all used to creating and recreating different series styles.

"And the new series is a style of storytelling we're all — makers and listeners alike — very used to these days. Quick, inventive and fun storytelling is all over film and television, and wisecracking banter is everywhere from the biggest Hollywood blockbusters to some of the best British comedy, so I think we were all on familiar ground going into this one. It's always a good challenge to create a new series, but I think we all knew precisely what it needed to be."

Jemma says: "I was offered an episode of **Doctor Who**, for *The Power of Three*, by Chris Chibnall. I had an idea about who this character was because I'd watched **Doctor Who** as a child and I remembered the Brigadier.

"But I'd no idea that she might be an ongoing character – or have her own ongoing audio series! It's been brilliant – she's the gift that keeps giving!"



Above and inset: Ingrid Oliver

"I THINK THE FANS LOVE THE COSPLAY ASPECT OF OSGOOD. WE'VE HAD A BIT OF FUN WITH HER OBSESSION WITH THE DOCTOR." Ingrid Oliver

And Ingrid adds: "I love the character of Osgood. She's incredibly sweet and quietly brave in a world of very brave people. There's a complete lack of cynicism. She's excited by science in a science fiction story – that's a very lovely character to play, because she's excited by everything."

What is it about Kate and Osgood that appeals to the fans so much?

David says: "I think Kate is determined, practical, clever and kind, and Osgood loves the world of the Doctor. They both have elements of ourselves, and things we aspire too. And I think the fans love the cosplay aspect of Osgood. We've had a bit of fun with her obsession with the Doctor.

WITH THE new series formatted, David and Ken recruited Matt Fitton and Andrew Smith as the writers for the stories.

David says: "It's an Auton invasion of Earth told on a huge scale, and with cutting edge technology. It's got everything from industrial espionage to massive battles in the Mongolian desert and a full scale invasion of London!"

Matt smiles: "We've got it all brought up-to-date, with the base in the Tower of London. We've seen the military-led **UNIT** earlier in the new series era, and then Kate comes in to lead with science and that's what we've focused on – our stories are very much in the era of the Eleventh Doctor, between *The Power of Three* and *The Time of the Doctor*, and there's so much scope to play with there.

"David and Ken had worked out the broad outline for the series – not just Osgood and Kate – but wanted the **UNIT** team to have its own regulars.

"We've got Captain Josh Carter, who's a bit of a loose cannon – someone Kate has spotted and brought through the ranks. We also needed a global trouble-shooter, and so Sam Bishop was created, and we knew Warren Brown would be playing him. The other thing we needed was a high-ranking military officer, so we came up with Colonel Shindi to be the liaison for Kate.

"Ken was the one who came up with the idea of the plastics supremo, the industrialist creating technology through the Nestene Intelligence, and the journalist who gets on to the story – they all came fully formed.

"The broad outline we had to run through the stories is an industrial espionage beginning, leading to a global danger, and it fell to myself and Andrew to put that through a story arc."

Andrew adds: "There's elements of the story that people will recognise, not just from *Rose* and *The Big Bang*, but there's elements that hark back to *Spearhead From Space* and *Terror of the Autons* – even something simple such as a line like, 'Destroy... Total destruction!'

"It was a great experience working on these. And they felt different from writing Big Finish stories in the classic series era. The intention was to always make it more eye-catching – on audio – and the two words Matt and I were always being told were 'wit and pace!'

"There's an awful lot in these four episodes, as they move along from location, to location, to location. It's a rollicking



UNIT: Extinction

great adventure with a worldwide setting – taking us to Bangkok and the Gobi Desert, as well as back in the UK, as the invasion gets closer.”

WITH THE scripts written and given official BBC approval, it was time for the stories to be brought to life in studio. Ken says: “On most of our productions what we’re creating needs to feel familiar. We

what it was we were trying to achieve, and it was fun seeing everybody slotting into the same groove and pushing the story in the direction it needed to go in. Jemma and Ingrid clearly enjoy working together, and both have a great sense of humour. The atmosphere in any company is established by the leads, and they’re both fun and welcoming to everyone they work with. It made for a really enjoyable recording.”



Above (left to right): Steve John Shepherd and Ramon Tikaram
Inset (left to right): Tracey Wiles and Jemma Redgrave



Above: James Joyce

“SINCE WE HAVE TWO FEMALE LEADS I WANTED THE SOLDIERS TO HAVE A NATURAL AND GENUINE RESPECT FOR THE WOMEN THEY TAKE THEIR ORDERS FROM.”

Ken Bentley

know when we’re getting it right because we know what it should feel and sound like.

“What I particularly like about it is seeing a new company of actors bonding and taking ownership of their series. Jemma and Ingrid play these roles on TV, so we all knew



Joining the established TV team are new **UNIT** regulars Warren Brown as Lieutenant Sam Bishop, Ramon Tikaram playing Colonel Shindi, with James Joyce as Captain Josh Carter. Ken continues: “One of the things I felt was important was

to create a strong team of characters to populate the series on audio. I wanted it to instantly feel like an established and capable team of troubleshooters. With their differences (conflict is the stuff of drama) but at the same time it had to be plausible that these people could save the world. I wanted the soldiers in **UNIT** to be smart and capable.

“And since we have two female leads I wanted the soldiers to have a natural and genuine respect for the women they take their orders from. They’re soldiers,



UNIT: Extinction

UNIT — Earth's first line of defence. And UK Chief Kate Stewart ensures that science leads the military response to alien threats.

When Scientific Advisor Osgood tracks a meteorite, it appears to herald a new invasion. Meanwhile, tech billionaire Simon Devlin prepares to go global with a revolutionary new product — but he has other deadly secrets.

As danger spreads, UNIT troubleshooter Sam Bishop is despatched to Mongolia in a race against the enemy. But is it already too late?

The Nestene Consciousness and its army of plastic Autons is rising and only UNIT stands between the human race and total extinction.

WRITTEN BY: Andrew Smith and Matt Fitton

DIRECTED BY: Ken Bentley

CAST

Jemma Redgrave, Ingrid Oliver, Warren Brown, Ramon Tikaram, James Joyce, Steve John Shepherd, Karina Fernandez, Tracey Wiles, Derek Carlyle and Nicholas Briggs

OUT: THIS MONTH!

but it's important they come across first and foremost as three dimensional characters.

James Joyce is delighted to have joined the **UNIT** team: "He's a great character to play. I've done quite a few Big Finish plays, playing all kinds

"And Ramon Tikaram, who plays my superior officer Colonel Shindi, is just great. It's a very happy team.

"I like to do a lot of preparation before we go into the studio, which makes the whole recording process a lot more fun when you know it, so you go in and out and get it done.



of parts, so it's really nice to have something where I'll have a returning part. I'll be there as long as they want Josh!

"You could say he's a bit of a maverick, but he gets results. He's not one to be told what to do. He's effective and in command — he's someone who will listen to his superiors, but doesn't always follow the direct chain of command and do what's best.

"What Big Finish is great at doing is bringing together people who are lovely, and it's honestly a pleasure to work with them, and to sit and chat — the green room is always full of great stories. You couldn't ask for a better cast.

"I often write notes to myself, because you won't necessarily be recording the scenes in the right order. In one scene you could be fighting, and in the next, you could be sitting in a chair, so I'll remind myself what I was doing in the previous scene so I know where I am."

Andrew concludes: "I've done a dozen or so stories for Big Finish, and was always a little nervous on release, hoping people would like them. With **UNIT** I feel very confident that it's going to go down very well. I've played just my part in it — the whole thing has an exciting, epic genuine new series feel that I'm sure will be popular and people will love it. **VORTEX**



GRAY AREA

Kenny Smith learns there's lots going on in the new series of Oscar Wilde's immortal character...

MOVE OVER, Christian – there's still only one Mr Gray in town. There's not enough room for more than one hedonistic, thrill-seeking, hard loving gentleman with that surname. Dorian is back this month for a fourth series of *The Confessions of Dorian Gray*, which will see Alexander Vlahos return as Oscar Wilde's famous creation, for eight new tales of the supernatural.

The third series marked a change in the style of the stories, but this time, the structure is reverting to the tried and tested formula of the first couple of years. Producer Scott Hancock says: "Series four goes back to the kind of *Dorian* stories we told in series one and two, exploring periods of Dorian's life across the breadth of the 20th century.

"There's no arc this time around – we flit about all over the place – so what we have are eight original half-hour tales, embracing everything and anything *Dorian*. For those who like monsters, we have more monsters than ever before. But we also have a couple of stories that have nothing whatsoever to do with the supernatural. And there's one particular story [*The Living Image*] that challenges Alex and I in a way I don't think I'd have ever attempted previously."

For Alex, does it feel 'easier', for want of a word, coming back to Dorian for each new series? "I wouldn't say it's easier," he replies, "as I know Scott and the writing team are busy scheming and planning new challenges for Dorian, which in turn means bigger challenges for me.

"I love playing Dorian Gray – but he is an intricate, complex and, more often than not, a very dark person to portray, so there is a fair bit of psyching myself up before a recording session. That's definitely not easy. But working with the team – Scott, Toby [Hrycek-Robinson], David Llewellyn, Neil Gardner and James Dunlop – is a joy. Slotting into Mr Gray's shoes is helped when you have such a fantastic team behind you."

The series has attracted some great guest stars in the past, and it's the same for the fourth run.

Scott reveals: "Everyone responds in a different way to the recording process, so it's tough to single anyone out, as everyone's brilliant and really rises to the challenge of the *Dorian* series. We've lots of actors who are new to Big Finish this time around – many of whom I've had back since – and that's always a nice experience as a director. Each and every one of them hits the ground running and never lets up. That's great!



Above: Alexander Vlahos

“THERE’S NO ARC THIS TIME AROUND – WE FLIT ABOUT ALL OVER THE PLACE.” Scott Handcock

“It was a joy to have Yasmin Bannerman in, playing a long-term love-interest for Dorian, as that’s not really a dynamic we’ve ever explored before in the half-hour dramas. We always see them at the beginning rather than midway through, so establishing the ‘couple’ was enormous fun. By the end of the day, you’d really believe they’d been together for years.

“And Anthony Howell’s performance in Roy Gill’s opening episode still takes my breath away. He and Alex are simply electric. The pair of them really honour what is an intelligent, character-driven script, and it’s lovely to give Anthony something different after *The Avengers*’ Dr Keel!”

Alex adds: “I must say I was really excited when Scott told me that Jacqueline King would be in series four. It was a true delight to work alongside her, she adds some real heartfelt nuance to Xanna Eve Chown’s brilliant *Banshee* episode. And like Scott said, it’s difficult to single people out as they’re all so talented, but Katherine Pearce’s performance in *Freyja* was a masterpiece, a down to earth take on an old classic fable. We’ve always been spoilt with our guest cast.”

Scott reveals the fourth series has a great mix of stories. “It’s a tough one to talk about because, first of all, there are eight

stories, which takes time to run through, but also they’re so concise and tightly-plotted, you’re always in danger of giving something away. But there’s lots of stuff to get excited about this series.

“We have more of our typical supernatural shenanigans, but also monsters – including banshees, werewolves, trolls and creatures from the depths! We travel all over the world, venturing over to Sweden, Iceland, Greece and the Emerald Isle...

“The first and final stories have nothing whatsoever to do with the supernatural, and are possibly two of the most emotional stories we’ve told as a result. And the final story also features what I consider to be Alex’s finest performance so far in the series (and he’s set a pretty high bar for himself in the past).

“Behind-the-scenes, we also have a brilliant set of writers on board – so brilliant, in fact, that I decided not to contribute a script this year, and instead just sat back to let better people have a go. And they did! Returning to the *Dorian* fold are Roy Gill, James Goss, Xanna Eve Chown and David Llewellyn, whilst our new writers consist of George Mann, Mark B. Oliver, Matt Fitton and Sam Stone – for whom this is her first Big Finish ever!”

Alex was pleased with the variety of stories in the new season. “In bringing back the old format of season one and two, by delving into more untold Dorian confessions, it offered us an opportunity to let Dorian travel the world a bit. Getting the scripts through and seeing all the places he gets to go, all the amazing people he encounters and seeing, yet again, the trouble he gets himself in is the best part of my job. I never grow tired of it. I’m always very blessed with Dorian scripts, but season

four has everything. You’re all in for a treat!”

What does the future hold for *Dorian Gray* at Big Finish? Scott reveals: “Well, the future’s closing in now. I don’t think it’s a secret that Alex and I – whilst recording series four – mutually decided the next would be our last. There was a lovely lunchtime spent treading on eggshells, then much relief when we realised we were both on the same page!

“But there’s still so much to come before the end. There’s series four, of course, plus a two-hour Christmas special in December which follows on from the events of series three, and is the most Christmassy kind of horror you can ever imagine... then in 2016, we have the fifth and final series comprising four hour-long episodes.

“I’m writing the finale as we speak, but we already have the first three in, and I really can say we’re ending on a high. The opening episode especially is one of the darkest scripts I think we’ve ever seen. But it’s nice to still be surprised after all this time...” **VORTEX**

The Confessions of Dorian Gray: Series Four is available this month on CD and download from bigfinish.com



THE STRAX OF THE MATTER

Kenny Smith gets on the trail of finding out how Henry Gordon Jago and George Litefoot met their new associate...

WHAT HAPPENS when three old acquaintances of the Doctor, from two very different eras, come face to face? That's what we're about to find out this month in **Jago & Litefoot & Strax**, which brings together the Fourth Doctor's old friends, with his 21st century series acquaintance Strax the Sontaran.

It's a match-up the fans have been wanting to hear for years – what led to its creation? Producer David Richardson reveals: "I suggested the idea to our friends at Cardiff, and the response came back that Steven Moffat was very happy for us to do this, and he even suggested the lovely idea that a dazed Strax should confuse Litefoot and Jago with Jenny and Vastra.

"That was a great starting point, and it fires up some terrific humour in the script."

Handling the script was Justin Richards, who is no stranger to either the Victorian vanquishers of the vile, played by Christopher Benjamin and Trevor Baxter, or the Sontaran nurse, brought to life by Dan Starkey.

"It's an obvious one to do," he agrees. "Jago, Litefoot and Strax. It's such an obvious match-up."

"Finding Strax's voice wasn't too hard, as I'd already written for him a couple of times in prose – in the novella *Devil in the Smoke* which is now available as part of the **Summer Falls** anthology, and in the novel *Silhouette* – so I knew the character fairly well. Hearing



JAGO & LITEFOOT & STRAX

The Haunting

Strax, the Sontaran butler to Victorian investigator Vastra and her wife Jenny, suffers a disorienting attack and mistakes the two Victorian investigators Jago & Litefoot for Jenny and Vastra and moves into Litefoot's home.

Together, they are on the trail of a creature that is stealing brains, which may or may not be linked to a haunted house in London...

WRITTEN BY: Justin Richards

DIRECTED BY: Lisa Bowerman

CAST

Christopher Benjamin, Trevor Baxter, Dan Starkey, Carolyn Seymour, Lisa Bowerman, Conrad Asquith, Stephen Critchlow

OUT: THIS MONTH!

Dan read the audiobook version was fantastic."

Dan, who enjoys the chance to play Strax without having to undergo hours of make-up, concurs: "I thought it was a lovely idea, bringing together people the Doctor met in the classic series, and in the modern. The Doctor's met a lot of people on his travels, and having spent a bit of time in 19th century London, it was

"What's interesting is that I occasionally, very occasionally, suggest lines could be tweaked for Strax, but with Justin, they felt absolutely right. It's also right that this story has a different dynamic for Strax, as he's not just there for comic relief. It's nice to have a change, where he uses his initiative more and has his own investigations. It's nice to have that. There's a bit more value



Above (left to right): Trevor Baxter, Dan Starkey and Christopher Benjamin

"When you've got Christopher, Trevor and Dan you're going to get great performances, and they really are absolutely brilliant." Justin Richards

inevitable that some of his mates would start coming together!

"It's a good story. Justin Richards knows both **Jago & Litefoot** and **Strax** very well, as he's script editor on the **Jago & Litefoot** series and has written quite a few plays. He's also written for **Strax** in books, so he was definitely the best man for the job.

added, as you get to know more about him as a character."

UNLIKE UNIT: *Extinction*, which is entirely set in the world of 21st century **Doctor Who**, Justin had the unusual challenge of marrying together the sensibilities of the new series, with an element of the

Jago & Litefoot & Strax

classic. Were there any differences in his writing style as a result?

"There was an element of that, but it wasn't too much of a distraction. I did get notes on the original version, saying it has to move a bit quicker than usual. Jago and Litefoot work well as they complement each other. They

Before the recording, Christopher and Trevor were shown clips of Strax, so they understood who they would be playing off against.

Dan says: "They were very complimentary – I think they quite enjoyed seeing what modern prosthetics can do! I've been watching a few **Doctor Who** repeats on



Above (left to right): Christopher Benjamin, Trevor Baxter, Dan Starkey
Inset: Christopher Benjamin

"This play has more of the pace of the modern series, with a touch of the classic, and it's nice to bring them together."

Dan Starkey

are totally different characters, and they work well because of their differences. When you add in a third character, who's completely different again, it's a very nice mix.

"You always know when you've got Christopher, Trevor and Dan you're going to get great performances, and they really are absolutely brilliant. I'm really looking forward to hearing the finished version."



Horror recently, and something occurred to me that I'd never really thought about before. When you're looking at these actors playing monsters and other characters wearing prosthetics in the 1970s and 80s, they're very restricted because the masks were so

rigid, compared to what we had now.

"So much of what they do is in the vocal performance. You don't get to see Michael Spice's face when he's playing Magnus Greel, and you don't think about that because what he does with his voice is amazing. It's such a good vocal performance.

"Just listen to Geoffrey Beevers as the Master – it's so silky in *The Keeper of Traken*, and now he's doing it for Big Finish.

"This play has more of the pace of the modern series, with a touch of the classic, and it's nice to be able to bring them together.



Above: Trevor Baxter, Carolyn Seymour and Christopher Benjamin

"When I did my first Sontaran story on TV, *The Poison Sky*, I was given a note by the director to speed it up. I was playing it like a classic series Sontaran, but was told to be more business-like."

IT'S BEEN a busy couple of months for Dan in the Big Finish schedule, as he co-wrote the recent Seventh Doctor release *Terror of the Sontarans*.

He says: "It was interesting listening back to it. I tried to forget about

things when I listened back to it, but I kept remembering several bits!

"I was very pleased with how it turned out. This afternoon, I was watching an episode of *Silver Nemesis* and *The Greatest Show in the Galaxy*, and really enjoyed seeing the Seventh Doctor. Before I started writing, I did

"When I did my first Sontaran story on TV, *The Poison Sky*, I was given a note by the director to speed it up. I was playing it like a classic series Sontaran." Dan Starkey

my homework and went back to watch season 24, just to get the feel of the time.

"I'd like to think it's a decent homage to the period, where you have a big, serious Sontaran experimental facility, which is potentially very grim, but then you have the larger than life characters in the supporting cast."

With Strax having joined up with George and Henry, fans are now wondering if there's any chance of a full Paternoster Gang spin-off series.

However, Dan cautiously says: "That's the thing – everyone asks me about that at the appearances I do – 'Will there be a spin-off series?'."

"If it doesn't happen on TV, then I'm sure an audio series would be fantastic, if it were

to happen. Nothing's been said, but audio would be a great medium for it, especially as we wouldn't have to spend so long in make-up and get up at half-past four in the morning! Most actors and actresses I know love working on audio because of that. I can't speak for the other members of our team, but I know I would love to do it, but it's not up to me if it will happen or not."

VORTEX





I'M A SURVIVOR

KENNY SMITH MEETS ACTOR JOHN BANKS WHO PLAYS DANIEL CONNOR IN **SURVIVORS**

“I’VE PLAYED such a variety of creatures and humanoids with Big Finish,” says John Banks, “especially in *Doctor Who*, and I never quite know what to expect or who I’ll be playing next. In my first *Doctor Who*, *Paper Cuts*, with Colin Baker, I thought my character was so fantastic – he deserved a spin-off series of his own – and then you turn a couple of pages and he’s dead!”

John, who plays Daniel Connor in the third Big Finish series of *Survivors*, continues: “From that moment onwards, I’ve been very careful about turning the pages of the script, always looking for my imminent demise or ‘the noble sacrifice’ and that’s especially true with *Survivors*! The constant sense of life’s fragility and the jeopardy that we all face is there for everybody involved and therefore the tension remains incredibly high throughout.

“When you listen to series one and hear Terry Molloy, you know his character could have gone on to be developed beautifully and then he’s gone.”

The part of Daniel was especially written with John in mind.

Producer David Richardson reveals: “We actually created the character for John. When we got the *Survivors* licence, I decided it would be good to give John his own lead role in something – he’s played so many character parts for us over the years he has earned it. He’s an astonishing talent, and he carries that talent lightly – and so fitted in so well with the existing TV cast. Carolyn Seymour, in particular, adores him.”

So far, Daniel has survived the global disease outbreak, escaped from the community ruled over by James Gillison, and avoided being eaten by cannibals – not the kind of things that journalists have to do every day.

John has been pleased with the incredible journey his character has been on: “From the conversations I had been having with David about the series and my character Daniel Connor, I had a reasonably clear idea of at least how his story would begin. Essentially Daniel was to be a journalist, who has come across a huge news story which he thinks will be beneficial to his career.

“Of course things change very quickly and instead of a journalistic scoop, he finds himself plunged into the most challenging set of circumstances he has ever faced. Like the other survivors, he discovers that he has lost just about all of the things in his life that have been familiar up to that point, and that the life he has known has gone forever.

“He is then compelled to go off into unfamiliar territory, meeting people he wouldn’t normally have met or spent time with, and he just has to get on with it. He has no experience or expertise in the new world, and suddenly finds for example, that he has to learn to shoot and work on a farm, things that are completely alien to him.

“I spoke to David for quite a long time before series one started, and every time we spoke, I got more and more excited about it.

“To have previously played so many ‘supporting’ roles with Big Finish, it was lovely when they gave me the opportunity to play an ongoing role with huge scope for character development. It was great that they wanted to develop Daniel, and I have loved talking to David about him. We had spoken over several months before recording began.

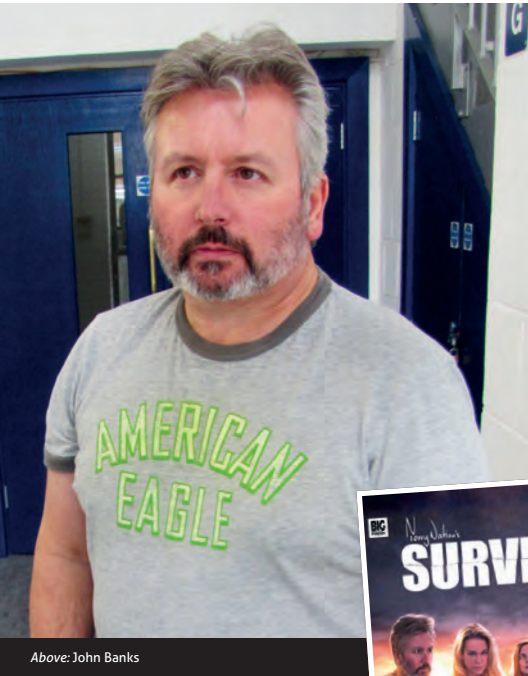
“What’s been really great is how they’ve managed to weave the newer characters in with the originals from the TV series.

It was a privilege to see the original cast come together again and of course to work with them on such an iconic series.

"When you bring actors together, even if they haven't seen each other for quite some time, the intervening years just seem to disappear.

"When actors turn up at Moat Studios to work with Big Finish for the first time, I am sure all of us have had the same thoughts and wondered, 'What's it going to be like?', but any worries you have very quickly disappear – it's always a lovely day in the studio."

There's no denying that the **Survivors** series has had a huge impact on Big Finish fans, which John has experienced



Above: John Banks

for himself. He explains: "It's such a privilege being involved. The first series was great, cleverly interweaving the old and new elements.

"From the people I've spoken to at Big Finish conventions and online, it's clear that a lot of the fans are up for something that's more adult in its tone and content. The storylines are very mature, especially in series two, which went to some extraordinarily dark places.

"Horrific things do occur in series three as well. The new series has some incredibly callous and bullying characters.

There's fresh impetus in series three and perhaps a greater sense of movement and adventure.

"I think the big difference from series two is the pace of series three, and series one as well, come to think of it. We're really able to explore adult themes, in the broadest sense.

"What I've really enjoyed about series three is getting back into the urban landscape – it's always fascinated me. The TV series really didn't address what life was like in the cities, as it was mainly in a rural setting.

"I enjoyed the opportunity to take the story back into the city and having the chance to find out what happened in London, with decaying buildings and feral children running around.

"WHAT I'VE REALLY ENJOYED ABOUT SERIES THREE IS GETTING BACK INTO THE URBAN LANDSCAPE – IT'S ALWAYS FASCINATED ME." John Banks

Sometimes, being out in the countryside can perhaps feel a little bit safer."

As an actor, John has very quickly developed a real love for **Survivors**. He smiles: "I've got a passion for it – but it's a shared passion. The energy for the whole series comes from the writing – it's just been so good.

"With Big Finish, we're used to fantastic orchestral scores, with amazing sound effects. One of the great things about **Survivors** is the sound design, which defines the audio


landscape so effectively. Here, we have something that's so pared down and minimalistic, it's like the TV series. I'm sure that's been a real challenge for both Nick Briggs to create the music and for Neil Gardner and Benji Clifford to create the overall sound design.

"Yes, I do feel passionately about **Survivors**; from the outset I thought David's original concept for the series offered fantastic opportunities and challenges. I am grateful to him and to Big Finish for having the courage to produce such a series and for giving me the chance to play such a fascinating character as Daniel Connor. For anyone who has not heard

Survivors yet, I can assure them that it is not just a slightly darker version of **The Good Life!**"



Survivors: Series Three is available this month on CD and download from bigfinish.com



We first encountered Mrs Clarke in *The Last Adventure*, but that left Kenny Smith wanting to know more about the Sixth Doctor's new companion...

CONSTANCE CRAVING

TIME TRAVEL is a wonderful thing – last month saw the Sixth Doctor gain a new companion in the form of Leading Wren Constance Clarke. Thanks to the wonders of scheduling, Constance actually made her debut in *The Last Adventure*, released in August, giving a tantalising introduction to the newcomer in the TARDIS.

Colin Baker has been joined by Miranda Raison – the former *Spooks*, *Silk*, *Vexed* and *Doctor Who: Daleks in Manhattan* and *Evolution of the Daleks* star – and she's delighted to have become a *Doctor Who* regular.

"The idea of coming in as a companion had been gently floated," reveals Miranda, "and they asked if it was something I would be interested in doing. I said, 'Absolutely.'

"I'd done one with Colin a few years previously, *The Wreck of the Titan*, and he was absolutely lovely.

"They told me my character would be a Wren, very much a strong feminist, living in a male world and working at the Bletchley Park site. This is a world where women aren't taken seriously, but they still have a lot to say. She's not an

annoying kind of 'Stop, everyone, and listen to me,' sort, and she doesn't back down easily."

Producer David Richardson adds: "I suggested to Nick Briggs and Alan Barnes that we should create a companion role for Miranda. By that point, Miranda had done a number of guest roles for us, and made it clear how much she adores working at Big Finish. And she's so lovely to have around, besides being so brilliant and endlessly castable.

"So I passed the idea to Nick and Alan, they got very excited, and Alan went away and worked up the character of Constance. We always knew it was possible that Constance could make her first appearance (in *The Last Adventure*) before her introductory story, which was quite a fun prospect."

Miranda continues: "They've always been really welcoming, the Big Finish boys, and going in to work with them is always a pleasure. All of the Big Finish shows I've been involved with have been tremendous – not just *Doctor Who*, but things like *Jago & Litefoot*, *Survivors*, and so on,



Above (left to right): Miranda Raison, Colin Baker and Siobhan Redmond
Inset: Miranda Raison

“You can come in and play a robot in one play, play someone Eastern European in the next, or a 1940s cypher Wren in another.”

Miranda Raison

and I've worked with some tremendous people, like Tom Baker, Colin Baker and David Warner.

“When I worked with David Warner, I didn't know he was going to be doing it. He's someone I would have given my eye teeth to work with! This is the man who actors of a certain age say gave the most extraordinary Hamlet they've ever seen – and there we were, chatting and having lunch.

“He was fantastic – he's got no ego at all.”

Miranda particularly enjoyed the chance to sink her teeth into a character from the past. “I like most periods in history,” she says, “and there's not one that I particularly like more than others, but there's something about the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s which I find so exciting.

“The 20s, 30s and 40s as eras of emerging female emancipation provide such vivid characters which is why they're such wonderful periods to play rather than the regency women who walk arm in arm around lakes with Darcy types and gossip behind fluttering fans at a 'ball'.

“The Big Finish writers know how to draw their characters so well – the writers they choose are so great. You can really imagine the character, what she's wearing, how she looks, what her make up's like – you feel you've got to know the character, from the writing.

“Everything you need is there in the script – it does all the make-up and wardrobe work for you, with the script. That makes such a huge difference when you're bringing a character like Constance to life.”

Constance has joined the Doctor on his travels, but a mystery still remains, over the fate of her missing husband Henry Clarke, a British agent during the war.

Miranda laughs: “I myself know nothing about what's happened to him to him. I don't know if it's something supernatural or alien, if he's just missing in action, or involved in some way with the British spying network. I honestly don't know!

“I'm really looking forward to finding out, and I think we've already heard enough to keep us interested. It's interesting for me, not knowing – I

don't ask too many questions!”

One gentleman in Mrs Clarke's life, however, is the Doctor, and Miranda loves working with Colin Baker.

“Colin is just so nice! He's just such a lovely family man – he comes in, and he's very open and warm.

“He's always willing to play around and he's got an awful lot of energy. If there's ever anything he's not happy with in his own performance, he will ask if he can go back and do it again, because he feels he can do it better.

“He really cares – it means so much to him, and it's lovely, as an actor, to work with people like that. It's really contagious.”



T HIS MONTH sees Miranda appear in the third series of *Survivors*, as well as Constance's second *Doctor Who* story *Planet of the Rani*.

“*Survivors* was surprisingly dark,” admits Miranda.

“I didn't know much about it beforehand and I thought

Miranda Raison

“Survivors was surprisingly dark, I thought it would be in the same roaring adventure style of other shows.”

Miranda Raison

“Big Finish assume you will be able to do what they ask of you. They don’t ask me if I can do a certain accent they will just tell me who the character is and what sort of voice/accent they want and assume that I’ll be able to get on with it. I love that.

“Big Finish are just such an easy bunch, and everyone gets on so well. During the break, you can sit and do a crossword or chat, and socialise.



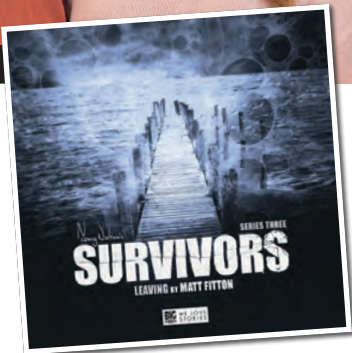
Above: Colin Baker and Miranda Raison

it would be in the same roaring adventure style of other shows.

“It wasn’t what I expected and it was quite a surprise, as it’s something so different. I really enjoyed it, as there’s such a variety with Big Finish.”

In the meantime, Miranda is already looking forward to her next role with Big Finish, whether as Constance, or in another series. She adds: “You can come in and play a robot in one play, play someone Eastern European in the next, or a 1940s cypher Wren in another.

“As actors, our job is to do, within reason, whatever is asked of us.



That’s what I really like – I can’t stand all that posturing that you sometimes get in other places.

“Big Finish will employ people they like working with, and people who get on with each other.” **VORTEX**



Doctor Who: Shield of the Jötunn

2029 AD. In the desert of Arizona, billionaire philanthropist Dr Hugo Macht is trying to save the world from climate change. But his great project to “scrub the sky clean” with nanoatomic machines grinds to an unexpected halt when his diggers break into something unexpected: a Viking burial barrow containing eight corpses, a mysterious shield, an even more mysterious inscription... and a yet more mysterious traveller in time and space, known only as the Doctor.

And that’s not even the strangest part of Dr Macht’s day. Soon, it’ll begin to snow. Soon, the Doctor and his Girl Friday, Mrs Constance Clarke, will come face-to-face with an ancient horror in the blizzard. A Frost Giant, in need of a new body. In need of flesh...

WRITTEN BY: Justin Richards

DIRECTED BY: Lisa Bowerman

CAST

Colin Baker, Miranda Raison, Michael J Shannon, Nell Mooney, James Carroll Jordan, Ryan Forde

OUT: THIS MONTH!

BRAVE

NEW TOWN

Kenny Smith thought the Nestene's servants had gone forever – he Auton know better...



AUTONS AND Nestenes make a welcome return to Big Finish this month, for the launch of **UNIT: Extinction**. However, Big Finish haven't been ones to trip the plastic fantastic too often in years gone by, with the Autons having made their audio debut in 2008, in the **Eighth Doctor Adventures**, in Jonathan Clements' *Brave New Town*.

Paul McGann's Doctor and Sheridan Smith's Lucie Miller find themselves in a town, where every day is the same, in September 1991.

It's a fascinating and very different take on the Autons, from their television appearances over the years, but are still very recognisably the Nestene's creations.

Series script editor Alan Barnes explains: "Jonathan worked out something marvellous and very different, and I really love the image of them being effectively stranded for two decades in a Russian state."

The episode has the feel of a Diana Rigg **Avengers** episode, with strange goings on in an otherwise normal town.

Jonathan concedes: "It feels very much like an **Avengers** story to begin with. I was asked to pitch a storyline, and 'preferably one that involves UNIT and/or Autons.' There was no attempt to pastiche **The Avengers**, although now you bring it up, I see that I have!

"Alan came back to me and said the thing that really leapt out at him was the term 'Autonomous Autons' from

"THERE WAS NO ATTEMPT TO PASTICHE THE AVENGERS, ALTHOUGH NOW, I SEE THAT I HAVE!" Jonathan Clements

my original pitch. And then I remembered something that I have been sitting on for years. The idea that the Aral Sea is drying up, and that as it dries up, patches of land that were formerly isolated islands are now being joined to the mainland. And some of those patches of land are abandoned bio- and chemical-warfare testing grounds. What might escape? And I thought, what if Autons escape? But in that case, what would they be doing there...? This story was born from the random collision of three more pieces of data."

Having directed Jonathan's play *Immortal Beloved* in the first season of Eighth Doctor and Lucie adventures, co-executive producer of Big Finish, Jason Haigh-Ellery returned to direct this play.

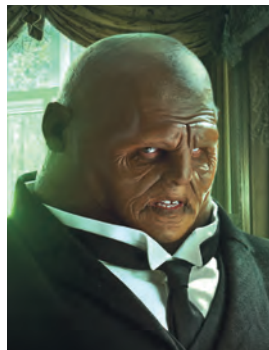
Jason adds: "I'm a huge fan of Jonathan Clements, I think he's a fantastic writer – so I did push for this story. There was the added bonus of the Autons of course – and the way Jonathan made them sympathetic was wonderful. I was casting it in my head as I was reading it. A real page turner, as they say."

When asked what Jason felt was at the real heart of the script, Jason continued: "That at the end of the day, all creatures (synthetic or otherwise) believe in community and being together. The scene where Sally and Jason Taylor get back together at the end as 'father and daughter' is brilliantly written and very well acted and sort of sums up the story in a way." **VORTEX**

Brave New Town is available now on CD and download from bigfinish.com.

RELEASE SCHEDULE

Forthcoming audio releases.



NOVEMBER 2015

- DOCTOR WHO: **SHIELD OF THE JOTUNN** (206, Sixth Doctor and Constance)
- DOCTOR WHO – THE EARLY ADVENTURES: **THE BLACK HOLE** (2.3, Second Doctor)
- DOCTOR WHO – SHORT TRIPS: **THE OTHER WOMAN** (5.1), Download only
- UNIT: THE NEW SERIES: **UNIT: EXTINCTION** (1.1, Kate Stewart)
- JAGO & LITEFOOT & STRAX: **THE HAUNTING**
- TORCHWOOD: **FORGOTTEN LIVES** (1.3)
- SURVIVORS – SERIES 3 **BOX SET** (Full Cast)
- THE CONFESSIONS OF DORIAN GRAY: **SERIES FOUR**

DECEMBER 2015

- DOCTOR WHO: **YOU ARE THE DOCTOR (AND OTHER STORIES)** (207, Seventh Doctor and Ace)
- DOCTOR WHO – THE NOVEL ADAPTATIONS: **THEATRE OF WAR** (07 Seventh Doctor, Ace and Bernice)
- DOCTOR WHO – THE NOVEL ADAPTATIONS: **ALL-CONSUMING FIRE** (08 Seventh Doctor, Ace and Bernice)
- DOCTOR WHO: THE WAR DOCTOR: **ONLY THE MONSTROUS** (Box Set, The War Doctor)
- DOCTOR WHO – SHORT TRIPS: **BLACK DOG** (5.12, Download only)
- DOCTOR WHO – THE EARLY ADVENTURES: **THE ISOS NETWORK** (2.4, Second Doctor)
- TORCHWOOD: **ONE RULE** (1.4)
- THE CONFESSIONS OF DORIAN GRAY: **THE SPIRITS OF CHRISTMAS**
- PATHFINDER LEGENDS – MUMMY'S MASK: **SHIFTING SANDS** (2.3)
- THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES (Full Cast)

JANUARY 2016

- DOCTOR WHO: **THE WATERS OF AMSTERDAM** (208, Fifth Doctor, Tegan and Nyssa)
- DOCTOR WHO – THE FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: **WAVE OF DESTRUCTION** (5.1, Fourth Doctor and Romana II)
- DOCTOR WHO: **THE DIARY OF RIVER SONG** (Box Set)
- DOCTOR WHO: **THE CHURCHILL YEARS** (Box Set)
- DOCTOR WHO: SHORT TRIPS: TBA (6.0), TBA, Download only
- TORCHWOOD: **UNCANNY VALLEY** (1.5)
- THE PRISONER: **VOLUME 1 BOX SET**
- THE AVENGERS – THE LOST EPISODES: **VOLUME 5** (Box Set)
- PATHFINDER LEGENDS – MUMMY'S MASK: **SECRETS OF THE SPHINX** (2.4)

FEBRUARY 2016

- DOCTOR WHO: **AQUITAINE** (209, Fifth Doctor, Tegan and Nyssa)
- DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: **THE LABYRINTH OF BUDA CASTLE** (5.2, Fourth Doctor and Romana II)
- DOCTOR WHO: THE WAR DOCTOR: **INFERNAL DEVICES** (Box Set, The War Doctor)
- DOCTOR WHO: SHORT TRIPS: TBA (6.02, TBA, Download only)
- TORCHWOOD: **MORE THAN THIS** (1.6)
- VIENNA **SERIES 3** (Full Cast)
- PATHFINDER LEGENDS – MUMMY'S MASK: **THE SLAVE TRENCHES OF HAKOTEP** (2.5)

MARCH 2016

- DOCTOR WHO: **THE PETERLOO MASSACRE** (210, Fifth Doctor, Tegan and Nyssa)
- DOCTOR WHO – THE FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: **THE PARADOX PLANET** (5.3, Fourth Doctor and Romana II)
- DOCTOR WHO: **DOOM COALITION 2** (Eighth Doctor)
- DOCTOR WHO: SHORT TRIPS: TBA (6.03, TBA, Download only)
- PATHFINDER LEGENDS – MUMMY'S MASK: **PYRAMID OF THE SKY PHAROAH** (2.6)
- TORCHWOOD: TBA (2.1)

APRIL 2016

- DOCTOR WHO: TBA (211, Fifth Doctor)
- DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: **THE LEGACY OF DEATH** (5.4, Fourth Doctor and Romana II)
- TERRAHAWKS: **VOLUME 02**
- DOCTOR WHO – THE NOVEL ADAPTATIONS: **NIGHTSHADE** (Seventh Doctor and Ace)
- DOCTOR WHO: SHORT TRIPS: TBA (6.04, TBA, Download only)
- BLAKE'S 7: **THE LIBERATOR CHRONICLES** (Box Set 12)
- THE AVENGERS – STEED AND MRS PEEL: **THE COMIC STRIP ADAPTATIONS** (Volume 1)
- TORCHWOOD: TBA (2.2)

MAY 2016

- DOCTOR WHO: **VAMPIRE OF THE MIND** (212, Sixth Doctor)
- DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: **GALLERY OF GHOULS** (5.5, Fourth Doctor and Romana II)
- DOCTOR WHO – THE TENTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: **TECHNOPHOBIA** (1.1, Tenth Doctor and Donna)

- DOCTOR WHO – THE TENTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: **TIME REAPER** (1.2, Tenth Doctor and Donna)
- DOCTOR WHO – THE TENTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: **DEATH AND THE QUEEN** (1.3, Tenth Doctor and Donna)
- DOCTOR WHO – THE TENTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: **VOLUME 1** (Ltd Edition Box Set, Tenth Doctor and Donna)
- UNIT: THE NEW SERIES: **TBA** (2.1, TBA)
- DOCTOR WHO: SHORT TRIPS: TBA (6.05, TBA, Download only)
- GALLIFREY: **ENEMY LINES** (8, Romana II, Leela and Ace)
- TORCHWOOD: TBA (2.3)

JUNE 2016

- DOCTOR WHO: TBA (213, Seventh Doctor)
- DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: **THE TROUBLE WITH DRAX** (5.6, Fourth Doctor and Romana II)
- DOCTOR WHO: SHORT TRIPS: TBA (6.06, TBA, Download only)
- THE COMPANION CHRONICLES: **THE SECOND DOCTOR – VOLUME 1** (TBA)
- SURVIVORS – SERIES 4: **BOX SET** (Full Cast)
- TORCHWOOD: TBA (2.4)

JULY 2016

- DOCTOR WHO: TBA (214, Seventh Doctor, Mel and Ace)
- DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: **THE PURSUIT OF HISTORY** (5.7, Fourth Doctor and Romana II)
- DOCTOR WHO: SHORT TRIPS: TBA (6.07, TBA, Download only)
- THE NEW COUNTER-MEASURES **SERIES 1** (Box Set)
- TORCHWOOD: TBA (2.5)
- THE AVENGERS – THE LOST EPISODES: **VOLUME 6** (Box Set)

AUGUST 2016

- DOCTOR WHO: TBA (215, Seventh Doctor, Mel and Ace)
- DOCTOR WHO – FOURTH DOCTOR ADVENTURES: **CASUALTIES OF TIME** (5.8 Fourth Doctor and Romana II)
- DOCTOR WHO: SHORT TRIPS: TBA (6.08 TBA, Download only)
- SHERLOCK HOLMES: **THE SACRIFICE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES** (Box Set)

VORTEX MAIL

MORE COMPANIONS?

I love the **Companion Chronicles** and am so delighted to have them back in your new box sets. I know you're concentrating on the eras of the first two Doctors at present for these, but I was wondering if there are any plans to do another set featuring the Big Finish companions who have since left the Doctor, such as Erimem, Charley, C'rizz and Brewster? I'd really love to hear a new adventure with Lucie Miller – if you can ever get hold of Sheridan Smith again! After all, there was a reference in one of the stories to her and the Doctor meeting the Axons.

James Stewart

Nick: It's a nice idea, James, but we don't have any plans to do it any time soon.

MORE DALEK?

I just finished listening to **Dalek Empire III**, and I want to express my gratitude to the truly ingenious Nicholas Briggs. You created their very very beautiful and exciting atmosphere. I love characters, the music design (ooh, main theme – the beloved) and David Tennant! In short, this is one of the best works based on **Doctor Who**, with which I'm familiar. So I want to ask a question, are there any plans, or at least dreams about the resumption of range? My second question relates to the wonderful news that you can finally involve in your audio a bit of the new series. We've all

heard **Gallifrey** led by Romana in your audio range. We've all seen Gallifrey led by Rassilon in *The End of Time*. And, I think, many would be interested to know what happened between these periods. How do you feel about this idea?

Dmitry Kuklin

*Nick: We're talking about plans for a new series of **Dalek Empire**, Dmitry. But have you ever heard **Dalek Empire IV**?*

DEAD DUCK?

Can't wait for the audio adaptation of Virgin's *All-Consuming Fire*! With that in mind, and in the light of the **Steed and Mrs Peel** box sets announcement, I don't suppose you've considered adapting the two **Avengers** books co-written by Patrick Macnee himself (*Deadline* and *Dead Duck*)? Maybe even the ultimate **Avengers** team-up *Too Many Targets* by John Peel and Dave Rogers as well?

Simon Darley

*Nick: Hi Simon, there may be some rights issues with the **Avengers** adaptations you're talking about. I'm currently working on adapting one of those comic strips, though. Glad you're looking forward to **All-Consuming Fire**. It was great fun to do.*

CONNECTIONS

I have just finished listening to *Return to Telos*. Another excellent Fourth Doctor adventure. I always enjoy Cybermen stories and with Frazer Hines' voicework, Patrick

Troughton lives again! I love the device of connecting the story with a classic TV script. I would like to see this again especially with the Pertwee classic *The Sea Devils*.

S.J. Upex

Nick: Oooh... just imagine!

FINAL NOBLE SACRIFICE

Just wanted to drop a note to thank you for giving the Sixth Doctor a proper regeneration story. I know it couldn't have been easy to get Colin to step away from the idea that he's the only true Doctor (and considering how he left the show, it's easy to understand why he would cling to that). I also know, that it's the dignity and life that you've given his Doctor over the years that opened the door, and as a fan, of both his original run and all the wonderful stories you've done with him at Big Finish, I can't tell you how wonderful it felt to be with as he made his final noble sacrifice to save us all.

Craig Fernandez

Nick: Thanks, Craig. It was my aim from the outset that the Sixth Doctor should sacrifice himself in a noble cause.

EMAIL US AT:

feedback@bigfinish.com and remember to put 'Vortex Mail' as the subject...

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