

Verity's tune is way out— of this world!

VERITY LAMBERT, 28-year-old BBC-TV producer, walked into the BBC's Radiophonic Workshop and said: "I want a new sound . . . way out and catchy." It was wanted, she said, as the theme music for a new Space fiction serial she was producing.

Desmond Briscoe, 38, electronics expert in charge of the workshop at Malda Vale, London, told her: "Then we want Ron Grainer to write it for us."

Australia's Mr. Grainer, one of Britain's busiest composers—he wrote the themes for *Malgret*, *Steptoe and Son*, *TW3*, and *Panorama*—was consulted.

He went to work at his Putney home and three weeks later came back with the required noise written on music manuscript paper.

Mr. Briscoe and his team looked at the notes and went to work . . . without using a single musician or musical instrument. They did it all by electronics.

UNCANNY

This, then, is the secret behind the uncanny title music heard at the start and close of the BBC's new "Dr. Who" Space serial on Saturday afternoons.

Nothing quite like this as a title tune has been heard before on TV. It is a noise with rhythm and melody which continually pulsates in a weird, fluid, and uncanny way—although the actual theme lasts only one minute 44 seconds.

"I'm delighted with it," says producer Verity, who joined the BBC in June to work on the "Dr. Who" project.

"It's just what I had in mind."

Verity in TV since she was 20, began as a £6 15s.-a-week short-hand-typist for Howard Thomas, Managing Director of ABC-TV.

She progressed to becoming a production

by
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assistant, working on such series as "Tempo," and "Armchair Theatre." There was also 18 months in New York on the pay-roll of David Susskind, American TV producer.

Now she is a fully-fledged producer with "Dr. Who" as her first production. The programme is scheduled to run indefinitely and already a noise which only existed in her head is rapidly becoming the most talked-about TV theme.

TECHNICIANS who put Verity's tune together used three basic pieces of electronic equipment: an oscillator, a "white noise" generator, and another machine similar to an electric guitar.

Each device produces electric currents which, put on a loudspeaker, become sounds. Such sounds are then tuned to the correct pitch and the result is a pure note.

In turn, these notes had



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to be treated. For one thing, the wobbly effect is produced by something called a "wobulator," which does just that—wobbles the tone. The "white noise" generator produces a hissing sound like steam from a kettle.

"We had to see the introductory film and then fit the sounds to what was being shown on the screen," explains noise expert Briscoe. "It was the passing cloud effect on the screen that inspired 'the white noise,' or hissing sound.

"The melodic sound you hear comes from the electronic oscillator and the rhythm sound is provided by the machine like an electric guitar."

ON TAPE

Once the noise had been produced it had to be put on tape. For this, as well as tape machines, filters and echo chambers were used—all controlled by a master mixing desk. "Pretty complicated," admits Mr. Briscoe, "but it worked."

The BBC set up their Radiophonic Workshop in 1958. Other achievements—all the odd noises heard in the *Goon* shows on sound radio, and the weird effects heard in the two *Quatermass* series on BBC-TV.

But this is the first time electronics have been used to produce a recognisable tune that's way out and catchy. Listen for yourself at 5.15 today.