

That Doctor Who Sound

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As part of the 50th anniversary celebrations of the TV series *Doctor Who*, *Into The Music* focuses on it's equally famous and enduring musical theme and the BBC Radiophonic Workshop that created it.



IMAGE: DAPHNE ORAM, ONE OF THE CO-FOUNDERS OF THE BBC RADIOPHONIC WORKSHOP

This Workshop is legendary and has had a significant impact on subsequent generations of musicians working across different musical genres, from beats and electronic music to mainstream pop and rock. It was set up in 1958 to create sound effects and music for radio and TV, including the landmark *Doctor Who* theme, and in these early years, prior to the development of synthesizers, the small team worked with tone generators and early magnetic tape technology to create a new vocabulary of sound.

They were working at the same time as some of the key university based contemporary

electronic music studios on the continent and in the USA, but this small unit's primary focus was on underscoring radio and TV programs rather than creating new music compositions and as such, they pioneered the use of electronic music in the media. It's worth also noting that a significant number of women were employed in the Workshop, including Delia Derbyshire, famous for creating the sound of the *Doctor Who* theme, Daphne Oram who co-founded the Workshop, Glynis Jones and Elizabeth Parker.



YouTube: Delia Derbyshire demonstrating how she worked

Throughout its near forty year history, the Radiophonic Workshop created thousands of hours of music and sound effects - everything from children's television programs, TV intermission signals, scoring nature documentaries, like Attenborough's *Life on Earth*, to *Doctor Who*'s forerunner, the alien hunting, rocket-building, Professor *Bernard Quatermass*.

Generations of kids all around the world heard these strange electronic sounds and the impact that this had, has taken some years to unfold, and often in the most interesting ways!

That Dr Who Sound explores some of these interesting relationships and looks at the unusual group of talented women who created soundscapes and compositions in the Workshop; we also trace the mystery of Pink Floyd's disappearing *Doctor Who* theme,

the talking walls of Bush House and how Genesis of the Daleks inadvertently assisted the birth of techno.

The program features music by Pink Floyd, Belbury Poly, Pet Shop

Boys, Howlround, Peter Howell, Dalek I, Ray Cathode, the Delia Darlings, and Model 500, as well as original interviews with workshop members, music writers, and the 'descendants' themselves—musicians creating music in the spirit of the workshop.