

= Captain Scarlet and the Mysterons =

Captain Scarlet and the Mysterons , often referred to as Captain Scarlet , is a 1960s British science fiction television series produced by the Century 21 Productions company of Gerry and Sylvia Anderson , John Read and Reg Hill . First broadcast on ATV Midlands from September 1967 to May 1968 , it has since been transmitted in more than 40 other countries , including the United States , Australia , New Zealand and Japan . Characters are presented as marionette puppets alongside scale model sets and special effects in a filming technique that the Andersons termed " Supermarionation " . This technology incorporated solenoid motors as a means of synchronising the puppet 's lip movements with pre recorded dialogue .

Set in 2068 , Captain Scarlet presents the hostilities between Earth and a race of Martians known as the Mysterons . After human astronauts attack their city on Mars , the vengeful Mysterons declare war on Earth , initiating a series of reprisals that are countered by Spectrum , a worldwide security organisation . Spectrum boasts the extraordinary abilities of its primary agent , Captain Scarlet . During the events of the pilot episode , Scarlet acquires the Mysteron healing power of " retro metabolism " and is thereafter considered to be virtually " indestructible " , being able to recover fully from injuries that would normally be fatal .

Captain Scarlet , the eighth of ten puppet series that the Andersons produced during the 1950s and 1960s , was preceded by Thunderbirds and followed by Joe 90 and The Secret Service . In terms of visual aesthetic , the series represented a departure from Thunderbirds on account of its use of non caricatured puppets sculpted in realistic proportions . Re run a number of times in the UK and purchased by the BBC in 1993 , the 32 episode series has entailed tie in merchandise since its first appearance , from dolls to original novels and comic strips in the Century 21 Publications children 's magazine , TV Century 21 .

In comparisons to Thunderbirds and other earlier series , Captain Scarlet is generally considered " darker " in tone and less suited to child audiences due to stronger on screen violence and themes of extraterrestrial aggression and interplanetary war . The transition in the puppets ' design has polarised critical opinion and drawn a mixed response from former production staff , although the series has been praised for its inclusion of a multinational , multiethnic puppet cast and its depiction of a utopian future Earth . Having decided to revive the series in the late 1990s , Gerry Anderson supervised the production of a computer animated reboot , Gerry Anderson 's New Captain Scarlet , which was broadcast in the UK in 2005 .

= = Plot summary = =

In the pilot episode , a team of Zero X astronauts investigate the surface of Mars in 2068 after unidentified radio signals emanating from the planet are detected on Earth . The source is discovered to be an extraterrestrial base , which is attacked and destroyed when the explorers mistake a harmless sensor device for a weapon . The inhabitants of the settlement , the Mysterons , are sentient computers that form a collective consciousness . They are the remnants of the original Mysteron race , extraterrestrial life forms that originated in a galaxy other than the Milky Way and maintained their colony on Mars for 3 , 500 years before abandoning the planet at the turn of the 20th century . Possessing partial control over matter , the Mysteron computers draw on their power of " reversing matter " to rebuild the complex before vowing revenge for the unwarranted aggression .

Reversing matter , also described as " retro metabolism " , allows the Mysterons to re create the likeness of a person or object in the form of a facsimile that is under their control . This ability is used to conduct a " war of nerves " against Earth , in which the Mysterons issue threats against specific targets (from world leaders and military installations to whole cities and continents) and then destroy and reconstruct whatever instruments are required (whether human or machine) to execute their plans . The presence of the Mysterons is indicated by two circles of green light (the " Mysteron rings ") that trail across scenes of destruction and reconstruction . Although the Mysterons are able to manipulate events from Mars , their actions on Earth are usually performed by

their replicated intermediaries .

The primary agent of the Mysterons , Zero @-@ X mission leader Captain Black , is killed and reconstructed during the encounter on Mars . Before the events of the pilot episode , Black held a senior officer rank in Spectrum , an international security organisation inaugurated in 2067 that mobilises all its personnel , vehicles and other resources in response to the threat posed by the Mysterons . The Spectrum Organisation is directed from Cloudbase , an airborne headquarters stationed at a height of 40 @,@ 000 feet above the Earth 's surface , and has a presence in all major cities . The organisation employs operatives of many nationalities , of whom the most senior hold military ranks and colour @-@ based codenames , are posted to Cloudbase , and answer directly to the commander @-@ in @-@ chief of Spectrum , Colonel White . Cloudbase is defended by the Angels , a squadron of five female pilots named Destiny (squadron leader) , Harmony , Melody , Rhapsody and Symphony , who fly the Angel Interceptor fighter aircraft . In addition , the organisation incorporates a fleet of Spectrum Pursuit Vehicles (SPV) hidden in secret locations around the world .

Captain Scarlet becomes Spectrum 's foremost weapon in its fight against the Mysterons after the events of the pilot episode , in which the Mysterons threaten to assassinate the World President as their first act of retaliation . The original Scarlet is killed in a car accident engineered by the Mysterons and replaced with a Mysteron reconstruction . However , when the Scarlet duplicate is shot by Spectrum officer Captain Blue and falls to his death from a tall structure , it returns to life with the consciousness of its human template restored , and is thereafter free from Mysteron control . Scarlet 's ex @-@ Mysteron body possesses two remarkable abilities : he is able to sense the presence of other Mysteron duplicates in his vicinity , and if he is injured or killed , retro @-@ metabolism restores him to a state of top health . Now able to deploy suicidally reckless tactics to thwart Mysteron threats , Scarlet repeatedly braves the pain of death in the knowledge that he will recover to face the Mysterons once more .

While Scarlet and Spectrum defend Earth against the threat from Mars , it is found that Mysteron reconstructions are particularly vulnerable to electricity and that they are detectable on X @-@ rays , to which their biology is impervious . Consequently , two anti @-@ Mysteron devices , the " Mysteron Gun " and the " Mysteron Detector , " are developed to aid Spectrum . A three @-@ episode story arc charts the uncovering of a second Mysteron complex under construction on the Moon , its destruction by Spectrum , and efforts to negotiate with the Mysterons on Mars via a crystal power source , salvaged from the complex , which is converted into an interplanetary communication device . A failed attempt at satellite surveillance of the Martian surface , aborted military conferences and the sabotaged construction of a new space fleet hinder Spectrum 's plans to return to Mars , and the organisation is unsuccessful on two occasions in apprehending Captain Black . The penultimate episode of the series depicts a Mysteron assault on Cloudbase with the use of armed spacecraft , which is ultimately revealed to be a nightmare dreamt by one of the Angel pilots . The finale is a flashback episode that ends inconclusively with regards to the war between Earth and Mars and the fate of Spectrum and the Mysterons .

= = Production = =

When talks to find an American broadcaster for Thunderbirds fell through in July 1966 , production for the series ' second season ended with the completion of just six episodes at the behest of ITC financier Lew Grade . Having overseen Gerry Anderson 's work since the creation of Supercar in 1960 ? and going on to buy his production company , AP Films , during the making of Fireball XL5 ? Grade was enthusiastic for Anderson 's programmes to be transmitted abroad , in the lucrative American market , and decided that a new concept would do more to attract potential bidders than a second season of Thunderbirds .

As a result of the cancellation , Anderson was required to come up with an idea for another Supermarionation series . He had once been inspired by the thought of creating a live @-@ action police drama in which the hero would have unexpectedly been murdered halfway through the series and replaced by a new lead character . Now giving fresh consideration to this idea , Anderson

resolved that a selling point for his new series could be a character that can be killed at the end of each episode and resurrected by the beginning of the next . This , coupled with contemporary theories about the possibility of life on Mars , led to the idea of an interplanetary war raging between Earth and its neighbour and a worldwide security organisation being called on to defend human civilisation . After further thought , Anderson decided that " Scarlet " would make an unusual codename for this organisation 's " indestructible " agent who can come back to life , while " Blue " could be his partner 's designation . From this , Anderson reasoned that all the personnel should have colours for names so as to form the whole " Spectrum " of colours , and decided that someone called " White " should be the leader of the Spectrum Organisation , much in the same way that white light is composed of , and can be broken down into , the colours of the spectrum .

Intrigued by the often @-@ heard phrase " life as we know it " , Anderson wanted to set the aliens of his new series apart from the conventional extraterrestrials of 1960s television and cinema . He therefore worked from a basis of " life as we don 't know it " , and made the Mysterons that were to feature in the series a race of sentient computers as opposed to organic lifeforms , although this is not explicitly stated in the television episodes . The initial intention was that the original Mystron civilisation came from another galaxy . Having established a settlement on Mars in the distant past , they fled the planet centuries later , abandoning their computer complex .

Contemporary recollections of the Second World War proved to be an inspiration for a number of design aspects . For instance , Anderson recalled that RAF pilots had found it difficult to counter German attacks during the Battle of Britain , since taking off from the ground meant that it took considerable time to intercept the enemy . He therefore made Spectrum 's headquarters an airborne aircraft carrier called " Cloudbase " . The Mystron rings were inspired by an advertisement for the Oxo line of food products , which included an image of the brand name sliding over a frying pan and the outline of a woman 's body .

= = = Writing = = =

With a provisional series title of The Mysterons , Anderson and his wife , Sylvia , wrote a pilot script in August 1966 . This differed significantly from the final draft of the pilot episode . Initially , it was decided that the Mystron duplicate of Captain Scarlet would be artificially resurrected by an advanced Spectrum computer rather than reviving naturally , and that thereafter he would no longer be truly human but a " mechanical man " akin to an android . Another early ambition was for each episode to feature a guest star voiced by a well @-@ known actor of the day . To this end , the role of the World President in the pilot episode was originally intended to be voiced by the American @-@ born actor Patrick McGoohan .

With Anderson serving chiefly as executive producer , the majority of the writing input for Captain Scarlet was provided by Tony Barwick , who had previously written for the short @-@ lived second season of Thunderbirds . Originally given the role of script editor , Barwick went on to pen 18 of the 32 episodes himself , and was also often required to make substantial changes to other writers ' work . While discussing his approach to writing episodes in a 1986 interview , he drew parallels between the premise and characters of Captain Scarlet and those of Thunderbirds , suggesting , for example , that Spectrum was similar to International Rescue and that the character of Captain Black was like the earlier recurring villain from Thunderbirds , The Hood .

= = = Filming = = =

After a two @-@ month pre @-@ production period lasting from November to December 1966 , filming for the pilot episode , " The Mysterons " , began on 2 January 1967 , with a budget of £ 1 @. @ 5 million for the 32 @-@ episode series . At an average cost of £ 46 @, @ 000 per episode , or £ 2 @, @ 000 per minute , it was the most expensive Anderson production to date . A month before , Anderson and his team had dropped the name " AP Films , " since Arthur Provis was no longer working alongside Anderson on a full @-@ time basis , and renamed their company " Century 21 Productions " . Many of the directors for earlier Anderson series , such as Alan Pattillo , David Elliott

and David Lane , had either left AP Films or were involved in the production of Thunderbird 6 , the second Thunderbirds feature film , at the time that Captain Scarlet was being produced . Although Desmond Saunders and Lane were available to direct the first and second episodes , while veteran AP Films director Brian Burgess also contributed , the Andersons needed to transfer some of the more junior production personnel to replace the outgoing staff . To this effect , Alan Perry and Ken Turner were promoted from the camera operator and art departments . Directors drafted in from outside AP Films were Peter Anderson , Leo Eaton and finally Robert Lynn , who had worked as an assistant director on the 1958 Hammer films Dracula and The Revenge of Frankenstein .

The Slough Trading Estate in Buckinghamshire had served as Anderson 's production base since the filming of Stingray in 1964 . To accelerate production on earlier Supermarionation series , pairs of episodes had been filmed simultaneously on separate sound stages , a practice that continued for Captain Scarlet . Some filming coincided with the production of Thunderbird 6 , which was recorded on a separate puppet stage and released in July 1968 . Editing rooms , post @-@ production offices and a preview theatre were housed in a separate building on the Slough Trading Estate ; the crew collaborated with the Standard Telecommunication Laboratories at Harlow in Essex on the technical and electronic side of the production .

A third unit , headed by Derek Meddings and his assistant Mike Trim , handled special effects and miniatures and was tasked with creating all the permanent sets and models to be used from the pilot episode , such as the Cloudbase interiors and scaled @-@ down Spectrum Pursuit Vehicles . A design innovation for this series meant that the noses of the miniature vehicles would " dip " when stopped , to imitate the sudden application of brakes and deceleration on a real @-@ life vehicle . The miniature of the Cloudbase exterior , which ran to six feet (1 @. @ 8 m) in length , proved to be too heavy to be held up with strings and was instead supported by a metal pole . To transfer the Mysteron rings from script to screen , the production team acted on the advice of producer Reg Hill , who suggested that a transparency be made that could be panned across the puppet sets using a slide projector .

By the time the series started broadcasting on ATV in September 1967 , principal photography had been completed for the first 20 episodes . In general , turnaround for completing all the puppet shots for each episode was two weeks or 11 working days . It was originally predicted that shooting would be wrapped within eight months , but filming overran until late October due to the demands of the Thunderbird 6 shoot . While production on the next Supermarionation series , Joe 90 , began in November it was not until early 1968 that the last episodes of Captain Scarlet were edited and completed for broadcast .

= = = Music = = =

Music for Captain Scarlet was composed by Barry Gray , an innovator in electronic music , who had scored all the Supermarionation series preceding it . The opening title sequence theme , " The Mysterons " , was rendered electronically and accompanied by a staccato drum beat to introduce the lead character of Captain Scarlet . This seven @-@ note beat was also used to link scenes within episodes , and to cut to advertisement breaks , for which it was accompanied by a zooming image of the Spectrum logo as designed by Tony Dunsterville of the art department . On the subject of the beat , Anderson recalls , " When I went to the recording session , I heard the drum beat he had come up with and I thought , ' Christ , is this all he could produce ? ' Looking back on it , however , I can see that what he came up with worked very well . "

The closing credits theme , " Captain Scarlet " , underwent significant change after the completion of the first 14 episodes . The first version had been mainly instrumental , with the words " Captain Scarlet ! " sung in time to the aforementioned staccato drum beat after which a vocoded repetition of the words " Captain Scarlet ! " provided by Gray himself would be heard . This was then revised as a song performed by a London @-@ based pop group The Spectrum , assembled by RCA Victor as an imitation of the American band The Monkees , who happened to share their name with the organisation that appears in Captain Scarlet .

The seven @-@ note beat is now used during " The Through the Window " on Q Radio .

In addition to the main theme , Gray scored incidental music for 18 episodes of Captain Scarlet between March and December 1967 . Musical accompaniment for the remaining 14 episodes was achieved by re @-@ using these completed tracks as well as music from previous Anderson productions such as Thunderbirds . In composing his incidental music , Gray made extensive use of two contrasting , yet similar , themes to illustrate Spectrum and the Mysterons . In their notes to the soundtrack release , Ralph Titterton and Tim Mallett suggest that the music is dominated by a " military feel " , with an emphasis placed on percussion , brass and wind instruments , by contrast to the full orchestral sound of the Thunderbirds score . With the exception of the four @-@ note Myseron motif , Gray generally restricted his use of electronic synthesisers , including an Ondes Martenot , to space sequences , preferring traditional instruments for Earth @-@ bound action . Captain Scarlet 's motif , heard in both versions of the end credits theme and the incidental music , is a melodic variation on the Myseron theme , emphasising Scarlet 's history as an ex @-@ Myseron .

Awarding the soundtrack CD release a rating of four stars out of five , Bruce Eder of the website AllMusic describes the collection of theme and incidental music as " a strange mix of otherworldly ' music of the spheres ' , late @-@ 50s / early @-@ 60s ' space @-@ age pop ' , ' British Invasion ' beat , Scottish folk @-@ inspired tunes , kids @-@ style ' Mickey Mouse ' scoring , martial music , light jazz , and light classical " , and singles out both " Cocktail Music " , from " Model Spy " , and the piano track , performed by Gray , from " The Inquisition " , for particular praise . In his BBC Online review , Peter Marsh opines that the darker tone of the music is reflective of Captain Scarlet as a programme featuring realistic puppets and death , frightening alien villains and " no laughs " , stating that " dissonant vibraphone chords shimmer under hovering , tremulous strings contrasted with urgent , militaristic drums and pulsing brass ? driving the action ever onto its climax (and , no doubt , a big explosion) . "

On 8 October 2015 , Fanderson released a 3 @-@ disc set exclusively for club members . It contains music either written for , or used in , all but three episodes (" The Heart of New York " and " Treble Cross " contain no original music and the cue recordings for " Traitor " are lost) .

Captain Scarlet soundtrack releases :

= = Puppets = =

Supermarionation , a technique in which the movement of the marionette puppet 's mouth is electronically synchronised with character dialogue , had been formulated by Gerry Anderson for Four Feather Falls in 1960 . Until production for Captain Scarlet , the head of the puppet had been disproportionately large in comparison to its body , as the head contained a solenoid that formed the key component of the lip @-@ synch mechanism . The production team was not able to scale up the body to match the head , as this would have made the puppets hard to operate and have necessitated a proportionate scaling @-@ up in the size of the puppet sets . Since Gerry Anderson had expressed frustration with this caricatured design during the production of earlier Supermarionation series , and wished that the puppets would more accurately reflect human biology , before production commenced on Captain Scarlet the producer , Reg Hill , and his associate , John Read , designed a new type of puppet in which the solenoid was instead placed inside the chest , to permit a head of realistic proportion . The costume designer for Captain Scarlet was Sylvia Anderson , who was influenced by the work of French fashion designer Pierre Cardin , in particular his 1966 " Cosmonaut " collection , in designing the Spectrum uniforms .

After test @-@ sculpting in Plasticine , the puppet heads were moulded on a silicone rubber base and made using fibreglass . At heights ranging from 20 to 24 inches (approximately one @-@ third life @-@ size) the next @-@ generation puppets were no shorter than their predecessors . For previous series , puppet eyes had been sized out of proportion to the heads , but as part of the realistic look introduced in Captain Scarlet , the eyes of production personnel were photographed and the images scaled down for attachment to the eye sockets . As had been the case for earlier series , a number of alternative heads displaying a range of expressions were created for main character puppets , including " smilers " , " frowners " and " blinkers " . Since episodes of Captain

Scarlet were filmed in pairs , one on each of the puppet stages available at the Century 21 Studios , duplicates were made of the " expressionless " template of each main character . For the pilot episode , an " agony " head was specially sculpted for the Captain Scarlet puppet for a brief reaction shot of Scarlet 's Mysteron double being shot by Captain Blue .

The increased realism of the puppets meant that their mobility was significantly reduced , ironically leaving the new design less lifelike than Anderson had hoped , as he recalls : " Suddenly , all the movements had to be as realistic as the puppets and that made it difficult for the puppeteers to animate them . " To minimise the amount of movement required , the puppets were made to stand on moving walkways or sit at moving desks : for example , Colonel White 's desk on Cloudbase is seen to rotate , while Lieutenant Green is seen to operate the Cloudbase main computer from a sliding chair . Puppeteer Jan King recalls :

The Captain Scarlet puppets were not built to walk . They were too heavy and not weighted properly anyway ... It is virtually impossible to get a string puppet to walk convincingly on film unless it is a very caricatured puppet . In Captain Scarlet , if a puppet had to move off @-@ screen , it was done in a head @-@ and @-@ shoulders shot ? the floor puppeteer would hold the legs of the puppet and then move the puppet physically out of shot at the right time , trying to make the body and shoulders move as if the puppet were walking .

The " under control " puppets described by King were stringless and controlled from the waist . One resulting advantage was that a puppet could be moved through a doorway without necessitating a break in the shot . For shots displaying characters such as the Angels seated in aircraft cockpits , variations of the " under control " design , comprising just a head and torso , were manipulated by levers and wires positioned underneath the set . This development of Supermarionation would be named " Supermacromation " when Anderson returned to puppetry in the 1980s with his later production , Terrahawks .

= = = Revamp puppets and likenesses = = =

Before Captain Scarlet , supporting character puppets had been specially sculpted in clay as and when episodes required them . The guest parts in Captain Scarlet , however , were filled by a permanent " repertory company " of over 50 puppets made to the same standards of workmanship as the main characters . Known as " revamp puppets " or " revamps " , these puppets appeared on an episode @-@ by @-@ episode basis , cosmetically altered for each role in aspects such as hairstyle and hair colour . An initial intention was for each episode to include a " guest star " puppet , to be sculpted on , and voiced by , a known public figure , but this idea was abandoned due to budgetary constraints . Both main character and revamp puppets from Captain Scarlet appeared in Anderson 's final two Supermarionation series , Joe 90 and The Secret Service .

The likeness of the Captain Scarlet character has , since his first appearance , been attributed to Francis Matthews , who voiced Scarlet in the series , Cary Grant and Roger Moore . Ed Bishop later claimed that Captain Blue had been modelled on his likeness , but sculptor Terry Curtis states that he made the puppet to resemble himself and simply added a blond wig when he learnt that Bishop was to voice Blue . Curtis , a James Bond fan , based the appearance of Captain Grey on Sean Connery and Destiny Angel on Ursula Andress , Connery 's co @-@ star in the 1962 Bond film Dr No . Meanwhile , the character of Lieutenant Green was sculpted on its voice actor , Cy Grant ; Rhapsody Angel on model and actress Jean Shrimpton ; Melody Angel on singer and actress Eartha Kitt ; and Harmony Angel on actress Tsai Chin .

= = Casting and characters = =

The regular puppet cast of Captain Scarlet was the largest of all the Anderson Supermarionation series . While earlier productions had emphasised the benefits of futuristic technology , for Captain Scarlet it was decided to develop and deepen the cast of characters . Further to the enhanced realism of the puppet design , voice roles for Captain Scarlet were , as opposed to Thunderbirds and other predecessors , also intended to be less caricatured . Anderson biographers Simon Archer

and Marcus Hearn note that , between Thunderbirds and Captain Scarlet , a proliferation of English @-@ accented voices altered the sound of the Supermarionation production and its impression on the viewer .

Francis Matthews , voicing Captain Scarlet , had previously turned down offers for voice @-@ acting on Thunderbirds . Matthews claims that Gerry Anderson went to great lengths to get him to sign on to Captain Scarlet because of the skilled Cary Grant impression that he had once used for a radio programme , and indeed the English actor based the tones of Scarlet on Grant 's Mid @-@ Atlantic accent . In contrast , Anderson claims in his biography that the impression was Matthews 's choice at audition , and that whilst it was not what had been intended for Captain Scarlet , the production team nevertheless elected to use it . Matthews 's filmography prior to Captain Scarlet included the Hammer films The Revenge of Frankenstein (1958) , Rasputin , the Mad Monk (1966) and Dracula : Prince of Darkness (1966) .

Matthews 's co @-@ star in Dracula : Prince of Darkness had been Charles Tingwell , who was chosen to voice Dr. Fawn , the Cloudbase chief medical officer . Tingwell , who had provided voices for the second season of Thunderbirds and its first feature film , Thunderbirds Are Go , had initially been recommended to the Andersons by Ray Barrett , a fellow Australian actor who had worked on Stingray and Thunderbirds . However , due to theatre commitments , Tingwell could only contribute to the first 12 produced episodes of Captain Scarlet . Also departing after the completion of " Shadow of Fear " was the voice of Captain Grey , Paul Maxwell , a Canadian actor who had voiced the character of Steve Zodiac three years earlier in Fireball XL5 .

Cy Grant , a Guyanese actor selected for the role of Lieutenant Green (Colonel White 's assistant and Cloudbase 's main computer operator and public announcer) , had been known to the Andersons for singing topical calypsos on the current affairs programme Tonight . His casting influenced the decision to accept Edward Bishop as Captain Blue (Captain Scarlet 's friend and mission partner) , as Bishop recalled in an interview recorded in 1995 : " It was just that a girl in my agent 's office happened to be on the ball . She represented this black actor by the name of Cy Grant and Gerry and Sylvia wanted to use him ... And the girl said , ' Oh , by the way , Mr Anderson , we 've just taken on a new , young American actor ' ? shows you how long ago it was ? ' a new American actor , name of Edward Bishop . And we know how much you like American voices . Would you like to meet him as well ? ' He said , ' Okay , send him out . ' So I went out and auditioned and got the job . "

Donald Gray , who had found himself typecast after appearing in the lead role in Saber of London , a detective series , was having to resort to voice work to support his acting career . The South African actor was selected for three regular roles : Colonel White , Captain Black and the Mysterons . After his mind is hijacked in the pilot episode , Black speaks with the same voice that the Mysterons are heard to use when transmitting threats to Earth . For his portrayals of Black and his Mysteron masters , Gray 's voice was electronically deepened , by running the tape at high speed whilst he was recording his lines and playing it back at normal speed , to produce a haunting effect .

The voice of Captain Ochre was provided by English @-@ born Canadian , Jeremy Wilkin . Having served in the role of Virgil Tracy during the second series of Thunderbirds , Wilkin remained to voice Ochre for the subsequent production . The character of Captain Magenta , meanwhile , was voiced by Gary Files . Another Australian actor , Files was a fresh addition to Century 21 Productions , and was cast for a number of roles in the second Thunderbirds film , Thunderbird 6 , before progressing to the role of Magenta for Captain Scarlet . Like Files , Welsh actress Liz Morgan was new to the Anderson productions and voiced the regular characters of Destiny Angel , the lead pilot of the Spectrum Angel fighter squadron , and one of her subordinates , Rhapsody Angel .

Sylvia Anderson , the voice of Lady Penelope from Thunderbirds , voiced Melody Angel , while Canadian actress Janna Hill was given the part of Symphony . The character of Harmony Angel was voiced by Morgan for five episodes before being replaced by Chinese actress Lian @-@ Shin about one @-@ third of the way through the recording sessions . Although Lian only provided the voice of Harmony for one episode , " The Launching , " she received billing for 20 episodes .

Supporting character voices were performed by Anderson , Files , Hill , Maxwell , Morgan , Tingwell and Wilkin . Completing the supporting cast were American actor David Healy and British actor

Martin King . Canadian Shane Rimmer , who had performed the voice of Scott Tracy in Thunderbirds and its films , made a number of uncredited contributions in addition to writing for the series . Fellow Canadian Neil McCallum , who had provided the voice of the character of Dr Ray Pierce in Thunderbirds Are Go , can be heard in four episodes , though he was not credited . Six members of the voice cast would continue their association with the Andersons after Captain Scarlet . Healy would voice the character of Shane Weston in the penultimate Supermarionation series , Joe 90 , while Files would voice Matthew Harding on The Secret Service . Wilkin , Morgan and King were all given small roles for these final two Supermarionation series , while Bishop appeared as SHADO Commander Edward Straker in Anderson 's live @-@ action series , UFO , which was transmitted in the United Kingdom from 1970 .

= = = Voice recording = = =

Character dialogue was recorded on a fortnightly basis , with lines for up to four episodes taped at each session , at the Anvil Films Recording Studio at Denham in Buckinghamshire . Each actor , regardless of the size of their contribution , was paid 15 guineas (£ 15 15 shillings) per episode with repeat fees . The cast were not given the opportunity to tour the Century 21 studios in Slough until all their work was finished and therefore had no visualisation of their characters during the recording itself . This was to the regret of Liz Morgan : " We all said that we wished we had seen the puppets before doing the dialogue , as it would have been helpful to have something physical to base the voices on . I knew that Destiny was French and that Rhapsody had to be frightfully ' Sloaney , ' but that was about it . "

= = Titles and credits = =

All Captain Scarlet episodes , with the exception of the pilot episode , incorporate two sets of opening titles . The first of these sequences displays the title card and the primary production credits . The camera moves forward through the scale @-@ model set of a run @-@ down , night @-@ time alleyway , forming the point @-@ of @-@ view shot of an unseen assassin , who turns a corner only to meet his death at the gun barrel of Captain Scarlet . The two seven @-@ letter words " Captain Scarlet " gradually appear in time with the seven strikes of the Captain Scarlet staccato drum beat composed by Barry Gray . This opening sequence is accompanied by a voice @-@ over from Ed Bishop , which states , " The Mysterons . Sworn enemies of Earth . Possessing the ability to recreate an exact likeness of an object or person . But first , they must destroy ... Leading the fight , one man fate has made indestructible . His name : Captain Scarlet . " The sequence is intended to demonstrate Scarlet 's indestructibility , with the assassin 's machine @-@ gun bullets having no effect on their target .

A number of variations of the voice @-@ over have been used . Bishop 's introduction to the pilot , which is unique to that episode , runs : " The finger is on the trigger . About to unleash a force with terrible powers , beyond the comprehension of Man . This force we shall know as ' the Mysterons ' ... This man will be our hero , for fate will make him indestructible . His name : Captain Scarlet . " A little @-@ used alternative version runs : " One man . A man who is different . Chosen by fate . Caught up in Earth 's unwanted conflict with the Mysterons . Determined . Courageous . Indestructible . His name : Captain Scarlet . " Later prints feature an additional voice @-@ over by Donald Gray , warning : " Captain Scarlet is indestructible . You are not . Remember this . Do not try to imitate him . " This served both to establish the background to the series and to warn child viewers not to risk their safety by copying Scarlet 's actions . It was either placed after the alternative " One man ... " voice @-@ over or used in isolation , such that no voice @-@ over by Bishop was heard .

From the second episode onwards , a secondary opening sequence runs immediately after an initial teaser : as the Mysterons announce their latest threat against Earth , the " Mysteron rings " pass over the primary puppet cast in a number of environments to demonstrate the aliens ' omnipresence . Meanwhile , the characters ' Spectrum codenames are flashed up on @-@ screen . The Mysterons

invariably begin their threat with the words , " This is the voice of the Mysterons . We know that you can hear us , Earthmen . "

The end credits sequence was originally intended to feature images of printed circuit boards and other electronic components , to reflect the Andersons ' early conception of the resurrected Captain Scarlet as being a " mechanical man " . In the completed sequence , the end production credits are superimposed on a series of ten paintings , which depict Scarlet in moments of extreme danger . In earlier episodes , these images are accompanied by the instrumental version of Barry Gray 's Captain Scarlet theme music ; in later ones , this is replaced by the lyrical version sung by The Spectrum . The paintings were produced by comic artist Ron Embleton , who would later illustrate the adult comic strip " Oh , Wicked Wanda ! " for Penthouse magazine . In 2005 , the Animation Art Gallery in London released licensed limited editions of the paintings signed by Francis Matthews , the voice of Scarlet .

In Japan , the original opening credit sequences were replaced with a montage of action clips from various episodes , accompanied by a unique theme song performed by children . This version is included in the special features of the Captain Scarlet DVD box set .

= = Broadcasts = =

Captain Scarlet officially opened on British television on 29 September 1967 , in the late @-@ afternoon slot of 5 @.@ 25 pm , in the ATV Midlands region . Viewing figures for the pilot episode , " The Mysterons " , were promising at 0 @.@ 45 million . Five months earlier , on 29 April , the series opener had been given a late @-@ night test transmission in the London area . After the start of the Midlands broadcasts , London and Scotland followed on 1 October , with the Granada , Anglia , Southern , Westward and Channel areas all televising the series by the end of the month . However , it was not until the start of 1968 that the series was being broadcast all across the nation . In the Midlands region , the ratings averaged 1 @.@ 1 million . In 1968 , Captain Scarlet was also screened in more than 40 other countries , including Canada , Australia , New Zealand and Japan . In the United States , the series was transmitted on first @-@ run syndication . Meanwhile , only six episodes of the series were transmitted in the Netherlands .

Repeat runs have varied greatly according to region . While Granada , HTV and Tyne Tees continued to broadcast the series into 1972 , the Midlands received four colour re @-@ runs from 1969 to 1974 , while in other areas , such as Yorkshire , it was not repeated at all . All 32 episodes were purchased by ITV for broadcast on Saturday mornings between 1985 and 1986 , with broadcasting in segmented form on the ITV Night Network in 1987 . A BBC commission led to the series ' first simultaneous network broadcast on BBC2 starting on 1 October 1993 . On this occasion , the pilot episode attracted an audience of four million , high enough to award it third position in the BBC2 ratings chart for the week of transmission .

Digitally remastered , the series resurfaced on BBC Two in the autumn of 2001 . On this occasion , the episode schedule needed to be re @-@ arranged at short notice to avoid offence in the immediate aftermath of the September 11 attacks . The second episode , " Winged Assassin " , in which the Mysterons destroy and reconstruct a plane to assassinate a world leader , and the third , " Big Ben Strikes Again " , in which London comes under threat from an atomic device , were held back and replaced with the fourth episode , " Manhunt " , due to parallels between the plotlines and events in the real world . In the week after the attacks , the Captain Scarlet section on the Carlton website was also temporarily removed .

= = Reception = =

While Thunderbirds had run for two series , Lew Grade 's unexpected cancellation of the production led Anderson to assume that there was no possibility of Captain Scarlet lasting for more than one . In Anderson 's words , " I didn 't expect it to continue . I simply went to Lew and asked , ' What 's the next thing you want us to do ? ' " .

Captain Scarlet has generally been viewed as much " darker " in tone compared to Gerry Anderson

's earlier science @-@ fiction programmes , as Andrew Billen noted in New Statesman when its remake was broadcast 2005 : " Whereas Thunderbirds was about rescuing people , Scarlet was about damnation , the soul of a resurrected man being fought for between Captain Scarlet and the equally indestructible Captain Black . It was Anderson 's Gothic period . " The horror factor of the Mysterons has been recognised , with the depiction of the extraterrestrials giving the series a ranking of 82nd in Channel 4 's 2003 list programme 100 Greatest Scary Moments . Simon Wickes of the TV Century 21 website asserts that serious writing of the scripts is ultimately due to the realism of the new , accurately @-@ proportioned puppets , and that this aesthetic change also answers for the heightened realism of the series ' scale models .

Parallels have been drawn between Captain Scarlet and the Cold War . Historian Nicholas J. Cull interprets the " war of nerves " between Earth and Mars as a reflection of the strain on international relations during the 1960s and likens the " enemy within " scenario of Martians taking physical control of humans to the plots of such films as Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1956) . According to Mark Bould , the series " seemed in tune with a decade of civil disobedience and anti @-@ imperialist guerrilla wars " ? a view supported by Rebecca Feasey of the University of Edinburgh , who has written that it is one of a number of series that " exploited the fears of 1960s America by presenting civil disobedience and the potentially negative impact of new technologies . " Since 2001 , comparisons have been made to the September 11 attacks , as well as the ensuing War on Terror .

To other reviewers , Captain Scarlet remains a " camp classic " that , in Bould 's opinion , relates well to other Anderson productions due to a common depiction of " a utopian future benefiting from world government , high technology , ethnic diversity , and a generally positive sense of Americanisation . They articulate the commonly made connection between technological developments and economic prosperity . " He also states that Captain Scarlet espouses " Euro @-@ cool consumerism " . The concept of world government is common to Anderson 's work and was inspired by his thoughts on the matter at the time : " I had all sorts of fancy ideas about the future ... we had the United Nations and I imagined that the world would come together and there would be a world government . " Peter Wright , on the series ' depiction of technology , notes the " qualified technophilia " that it shares with Thunderbirds .

Since its first appearance , Captain Scarlet has been criticised for its filming , which has been considered too static due to the problem of moving the Supermarionation puppets convincingly . The return to a 25 @-@ minute episode format , as had been the case with series preceding Thunderbirds , has been blamed for a perceived drop in quality of storytelling and a lack of subplots . Concerns have also been raised about the development of the characters : in a 1986 interview , script editor Tony Barwick described Captain Scarlet as " hard @-@ nosed stuff " that lacked humour , stating , " It was all for the American market and to that extent there was no deep characterisation . [The characters] all balanced one against the other . " To Jeff Evans , writer of The Penguin TV Companion , it is " more detailed " ; he explains : " The agents were given private lives and real identities , and were furnished with other biographical data . "

Science @-@ fiction author John Peel considers Captain Scarlet inferior to Thunderbirds , arguing that although the special effects had improved , it was to the detriment of the scriptwriting . He compares this schism to the disappointing reception to Steven Spielberg 's Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom (1984) following the success of Raiders of the Lost Ark (1981) : " Anderson made the same mistake that George Lucas made , assuming that if the effects were praised in Thunderbirds , the public wanted a show with more effects . " Peel also finds fault with the nature of Scarlet himself , suggesting that the use of an " indestructible " hero made the conclusions to the episodes too predictable . Furthermore , he expresses a concern that Scarlet , who is often seen to risk his life in a bid to thwart Mysteron plots , served as a poor role model to a target audience of impressionable children .

Seen as a cult series by some critics , Captain Scarlet ranked 33rd in a 2007 Radio Times poll to determine the greatest science @-@ fiction series of all time . Despite concerns that it is not a true " children 's " series on account of its " dark " tone and violence , it appeared in 51st position in the 2001 Channel 4 list show 100 Greatest Kids ' TV Shows . Judging Captain Scarlet next to its

immediate predecessor , Thunderbirds , Gerry Anderson 's own verdict is unambiguous : " Nothing was as successful as Thunderbirds . Captain Scarlet and the Mysterons was very successful , but once you 've had a smash hit , everything tends to look less successful in comparison . "

= = = Puppets = = =

Turning his attention to Sylvia Anderson 's costume design , Bould praises the " commitment to fashion " evident throughout the Anderson series , singling out the design of the Spectrum Angel uniforms . The realistic design of the new puppets has been praised by Vincent Terrace and criticised by others . Certain members of the production staff had the impression that they lacked the charm of the earlier generation of puppets due to the authentic proportions that were now being used . Director David Lane 's initial thoughts on a prototype , sculpted by head puppet @-@ maker John Brown , were , " it was as if there was a little dead person in [the box] ... because it was perfect in all its proportions it just looked odd . " Brown remembers placing the prototype next to the Lady Penelope puppet from Thunderbirds and gauging the response from colleagues : " When they saw it , some people were horrified by the difference . Some didn 't like it , some did . " Commentators have noted that facial expression was sacrificed in favour of a realistic design , a result on which Terry Curtis remembers :

The changes of expression on those puppets had to be perfect and in no way exaggerated like the old ones were . I remember when [fellow puppet designer] Tim Cooksey did Colonel White , he had a lot of trouble doing different expressions as the face was just so realistic . I had a similar problem with Captain Blue . I remember I did a Blue " smiler " head and people could hardly tell the difference between that and the normal one .

Sculptor John Blundall has called the new puppet design " ridiculous " , criticising Anderson 's attempts to make the puppets appear more lifelike on the basis that " We always try to do with puppets what you can 't do with humans . " Expressing a preference for the design Thunderbirds era , Blundall agrees that the transition from caricature to realism was at the expense of " character and personality " , asserting that " If the puppet appears completely natural , the audience no longer has to use its imagination . " Anderson states that he pushed for the reshaping of the puppets to please viewers , deeming it not " a case of moving to a new technique , but more a case of incorporating new ideas with existing methods . " Evans praises the new puppets , describing them as " perfect in proportion " and commending the fact the electronic circuitry was now in the puppets ' bodies .

Summing up Captain Scarlet as " better puppets , bigger action and a huge step backwards in stories " compared to Thunderbirds , Peel disputes the claim that the next generation of puppets mark a failure on the part of the series , arguing that the increased realism could not have deterred an audience familiar with the previous design . Although to his mind the characterisation was less endearing , Peel suggests that it is an over @-@ emphasis on the visual , at the expense of characterisation , that truly accounts for the reduced credibility of Captain Scarlet .

= = = Race , gender and symbolism = = =

During its 1993 UK repeat run , Captain Scarlet attracted attention with regard to the black @-@ and @-@ white dualism debate for its use of the codenames " White " to designate the head of Spectrum , Colonel White , and " Black " for the villainous Captain Black . Defending the series against the accusations of racism and political incorrectness , Anderson pointed out that Lieutenant Green , Melody Angel and Harmony Angel are among the heroes of the series in spite of their African and Asian backgrounds . Green is the only male black character to be given a substantial role in any series produced by Anderson .

In academic works , the diversity of the Spectrum personnel in terms of both race and gender has been viewed highly . Bould praises the series for its " beautiful , multiethnic , female Angel fighter pilots " and " secondary roles played by capable women . " In an interview conducted in 2003 , Anderson confirmed that a conscious effort was made to feature ethnic minorities : " ... I think people who make television programmes have a responsibility , particularly when children are watching

avidly and you know their minds can be affected almost irreversibly as they grow up . We were very conscious of introducing different ethnic backgrounds . "

Guyanese actor Cy Grant , who voiced the character of Lieutenant Green and believed that Captain Scarlet had positive multicultural value , discussed the allegorical nature of the series . According to him , Christian symbolism was heavily implied , with Colonel White assuming the role of God , opposed by the Devil in the form of Captain Black and descended by Captain Scarlet , who serves as a Christ allegory ; moreover , Cloudbase represented Heaven and was guarded by its own fleet of Angels . Grant has also lionised Green as an African trickster hero . On dualism , he argued , " the ' darkness ' of the Mysterons is most easily seen as the psychological rift ? the struggle of ' good ' and ' evil ' ? of the Western world as personified by Colonel White and his team . Dark and light are but aspects of each other . Incidentally , green is the colour of nature that can heal that rift . "

= = Other media = =

Since the 1960s , the TV series has been supplemented by tie @-@ in merchandise , example products ranging from toy dolls to a driving @-@ themed video game , released for the PlayStation 2 platform in 2006 . The ATV game show The Golden Shot , presented by Bob Monkhouse , adopted Captain Scarlet as the theme for its 1967 Christmas special . Broadcast live on 23 December , the programme featured guest appearances from Francis Matthews and " The Spectrum " , who performed their latest single , " Headin ' for a Heatwave " .

= = = Audio episodes = = =

To complement the TV episodes , Century 21 released five further Captain Scarlet stories as vinyl record EPs , each running to approximately 21 minutes , and starring the original voice cast , in 1967 . TV Century 21 script editor Angus P. Allan wrote Introducing Captain Scarlet , Captain Scarlet and the Mysterons and Captain Scarlet of Spectrum , while Captain Scarlet is Indestructible and Captain Scarlet versus Captain Black were scripted by his assistant , Richard O 'Neill .

The first of the audio adventures , Introducing Captain Scarlet , is set during the dénouement to the pilot episode , The Mysterons . The plot mainly focuses on a military conference investigating the events of the episode , with the inclusion of audio flashbacks to provide exposition . At the conclusion to the adventure , it is revealed that the Mysteron duplicate of Captain Scarlet has returned to life and that Scarlet 's loyalty to Spectrum can be restored with the aid of the advanced computer that featured in the Andersons ' pilot script for " The Mysterons " .

= = = Books and comics = = =

In the late 1960s , three tie @-@ in novels were published under the pen name " John Theydon " , a pseudonym for author John William Jennison , titled Captain Scarlet and the Mysterons (1967) , Captain Scarlet and the Silent Saboteur (1967) and The Angels and the Creeping Enemy (1968) . As implied by its title , the third novel places the focus on the Spectrum Angels as the primary protagonists . Later , in 1993 , Young Corgi Books published four novelisations , targeted at children , based upon the original series episodes " The Mysterons " , " Lunarville 7 " , " Noose of Ice " and " The Launching " .

Captain Scarlet also formed the basis of three comic strips drawn for the weekly children 's comic , TV Century 21 . Spanning 17 issues (numbers 141 ? 157) from September 1967 to January 1968 , the strip adventures were written by Angus P. Allan with artwork by Ron Embleton , and were titled We Will Destroy Unity City , We Will Destroy the Observatory Network and We Shall Make Earth a Planet of Silence . Following the end of the TV series , the comic continued the story of the Captain Scarlet universe , with later strips revealing that the Mysterons deactivate their Martian complex and relinquish their control over Captain Black , while Scarlet himself leaves Spectrum to make use of his powers in the fight against Earth @-@ bound criminals and threats . The Mysterons ultimately re @-@ awaken , prompting Scarlet and Spectrum to resume their struggle .

A manga adaptation of the series , titled Captain Scarlet , ran in the Japanese Shōnen Book anthology from January to August 1968 . Century 21 published annuals based on the series between 1967 and 1969 , while the original Captain Scarlet comic strips were reprinted in the 1968 and 1969 editions of TV21 Annual . Further annuals , published in 1993 and 1994 by Grandreams , coincided with the BBC2 repeats of the TV episodes . In 2002 , Carlton Books released a new edition to accompany the digitally remastered broadcasts that had started in 2001 .

== Home video ==

In the United Kingdom , Carlton Video commercially released the series , as both eight separate volumes and as a " Complete Series Box Set " , from September 2001 to March 2002 . Presented with the same remastered video and audio quality that was introduced for the BBC Two repeats of 2001 , the box set incorporates a ninth tape including The Indestructible Captain Scarlet , a special programme that describes Spectrum , the Mysterons and the events of the TV series . Earlier releases , marketed by PolyGram and " Channel 5 " , had numbered the episodes in an order different from that of the 1960s broadcasts and , in the case of the first two volumes , had added to them with the insertion of footage specially filmed for the ITC Captain Scarlet compilation films of the 1980s .

Since September 2001 , Captain Scarlet has also been available in five volumes on PAL Region 2 DVD , also marketed by Carlton , with a new Dolby 5 @. @ 1 Surround Sound sound mix to complement the original mono track . Special features for these releases include audio commentaries with Gerry Anderson for the episodes " The Mysterons " and " Attack on Cloudbase " , the five audio episodes from 1967 , behind @-@ the @-@ scenes production photos , information about original ITC advertising and merchandise , and 1960s TV spots . As with the VHS releases , the five DVD volumes have also received a box set edition , which incorporates a bonus sixth disc including Captain Scarlet S.I.G. (a behind @-@ the @-@ scenes documentary produced and presented by Gerry Anderson) and five sets of alternative opening credits .

The special features of the four @-@ disc NTSC North American Region 1 edition of the box set , released by A & E Home Video in 2002 , are mostly similar to those of the Region 2 version , with the additions of a text @-@ based " Introduction to Captain Scarlet " and DVD @-@ ROM content . In 2004 , Imavision unveiled a French @-@ language edition of the box set aimed at the Canadian market . The set is also available in Japan on Region 2 (as six discs) and Australia on Region 4 (as five discs) .

On February 10 , 2015 , Shout ! Factory , through their deal with ITV , re @-@ released the complete series on DVD in America through Timeless Media Group containing the 2 Gerry Anderson commentaries , 3 Spotlight on Captain Scarlet featurettes , and a never @-@ before @-@ seen interview with Gerry Anderson about his early career .

VHS releases (UK)

DVD releases

Blu @-@ ray release

== Video games ==

== Later productions ==

Distribution rights to much of the ITC Entertainment catalogue have been transferred since the 1980s , initially to PolyGram Entertainment , (or " PolyGram Television ") then Carlton International in the late 1990s after a partial sale to the BBC in 1991 . In 2004 , Carlton International merged into Granada International , the current rights holder , which in 2008 was renamed ITV Global Entertainment , a division of ITV plc . Theatrical release rights are held by Metro @-@ Goldwyn @-@ Mayer (MGM) . In addition to other projects , Gerry Anderson announced plans for a live @-@ action film adaptation of Captain Scarlet in 2000 and again in 2002 during the production of

the Thunderbirds film released in 2004 , but the idea has not been developed since .

= = = Compilation films = = =

In 1980 , the New York offices of ITC , under the supervision of Robert Mandell , combined episodes from the original series to make two compilation films for American audiences , with the aim of reviving transatlantic syndication sales . This became common practice for Anderson productions during the 1980s , with made @-@ for @-@ television films comprising episodes of Stingray and Thunderbirds airing to US cable audiences under the generic promotional banner of " Super Space Theater " . On 24 November 1988 , the second Captain Scarlet film , Revenge of the Mysterons from Mars , was broadcast as the second episode of the American television series Mystery Science Theater 3000 , from Minneapolis , on station KTMA .

= = = CGI test film and series = = =

In 1999 , Gerry Anderson supervised the production of a short computer @-@ animated test film , Captain Scarlet and the Return of the Mysterons , to explore the possibility of updating a number of his 1960s Supermarionation series for a 21st @-@ century audience . The working title was Captain Scarlet ? The New Millennium . Produced in London by the Moving Picture Company , the film features Francis Matthews and Ed Bishop reprising the roles of Captains Scarlet and Blue . Made using a combination of Maya 3D computer graphics software and motion @-@ capture technology , the plot commences a few years after the Mysterons end their hostilities against Earth , but the reappearance of Captain Black sets the stage for a revival of the war with Mars . Although the film has yet to receive a home video release , it was publicly screened at a Fanderson convention in 2000 and at a science lecture in 2001 .

Plans for a full CGI Captain Scarlet television series to follow the test film finally resulted in Gerry Anderson 's New Captain Scarlet . A reboot of the original series , this was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on the Saturday @-@ morning CITV programme , Ministry of Mayhem , from 12 February 2005 . Produced by " Anderson Entertainment " and the " Indestructible Production Company " , the animation used to create the series is billed in the credits as " Hypermarionation " to acknowledge the 1960s puppet technique , Supermarionation .