

= Nebulous =

Nebulous is a post @-@ apocalyptic science fiction comedy radio show written by Graham Duff and produced by Ted Dowd from Baby Cow Productions ; it is directed by Nicholas Briggs . The series premiered in the United Kingdom on BBC Radio 4 . Set in the year 2099 AD , the show focuses on the adventures of the eponymous Professor Nebulous , director of operations for the eco @-@ troubleshooting team KENT (the Key Environmental Non @-@ Judgmental Taskforce) as they combat various catastrophes and try to set the world back on the right path following a worldwide environmental disaster known as " The Withering " . As well as being a parody of a number of famous science fiction programmes , including Doctor Who , Quatermass and Doomwatch , Nebulous is considered a cult radio programme , attracting a number of guest appearances from famous actors .

There have been three series of Nebulous ; the first was broadcast between 6 January and 10 February 2005 . The series was well received by critics , and a second series was broadcast between 5 April and 10 May 2006 , with a third series commissioned by the BBC which began broadcasting on Thursday , 15 May 2008 at 23 : 00 BST . The first series was released on compact disc on 5 February 2007 by BBC Audio . Since 2009 all three series have been broadcast on BBC Radio 7 . Duff has also announced that he is planning to make an animated series of Nebulous .

= = Production = =

= = = Development = = =

The development of the series began with the production pilot episode , written by Graham Duff and produced by Baby Cow Productions in March 2003 . The episode , which eventually became " Night of the Vegetarians " , featured much of the final cast , but with a number of differences : a different actor played Rory , and Sir Ronald Rolands was voiced by Duff , while Gemini originally had two voices : a female voice played by Julia Dalkin , and a male voice by Nicholas Briggs . Malcolm Boyle - who wrote the Nebulous theme and edited the pilot - had written an entire original score for the show . However , due to BBC radio budget limitations , this was not used in the completed series . Nicholas Briggs had also originally created a very deep , realistic soundscape , similar to those he had created for the Big Finish Productions Doctor Who audioplays , but was advised that " it 's likely the listener will have distractions and will not listen to it more than once ; therefore , the soundscape must be totally accessible from any point in the episode " , toning down the sound effects to match the series ' comic nature .

= = = Recording = = =

The Moat Studios in London record Nebulous in stereo , with each half @-@ hour episode typically taking one day to record , including read @-@ through and rehearsal . Nicholas Briggs produces the sound , using a combination of synthesised effects from a Roland SH @-@ 101 and foley sound effects . Briggs also carries out the studio editing in order to bring the 30 @-@ minute episodes down to the 28 minutes mandated by the BBC to allow time for radio trailers between programmes .

= = Plot = =

= = = Setting = = =

Set in the year 2099 , the series depicts the Earth as very different from today . Following a number of environmental disasters , such as " the Withering " ? which resulted in the loss of a great deal of human knowledge including the vacuum cleaner and fire (although the latter came back fairly

quickly) ? and a " Cattle @-@ clasm " that killed off most of the livestock , the Earth has been reduced to a wasteland separated between " Withered Zones " and the remaining inhabitable areas . The Withering shifted the Earth into a new orbit , resulting in disruption to the seasons and a reformed calendar . Every day of the week is now 25 @-@ hours long except for Thursday (which , due to time anomalies , has not occurred in over a decade) , while the change in the length of the year led to the creation of new months such as Janril , Febtober , and Marchuary . In addition , the dreary season of Hamble was created , which is permanently dark , cold and drizzly . The Withering resulted in vegetarians , pigeons and gays becoming endangered species , and completely wiped out tarts .

The Earth 's geography is also radically altered . A new mountain range was formed in Britain by a day @-@ long ice age , and the Earth now has twelve and a half continents . Many locations have been displaced and reduced to islands , including Oxford University and the London borough of Deptford , which is now in the Indonesian Ocean as a part of the Cockney Islands . The solar system is equally altered : Jupiter has been deep fried by Harry Ramsden 's , Mercury and Neptune have been knocked together , and there was an initiative to destroy the Moon , which according to the show was deleterious to the nightlight industry .

Religion also exists in the Nebulous universe . Pieced together following the Withering , theologians conclude that there were four true deities : the evil twins Yin and Yang , Feng Shui the destroyer , and merciful Bod , based on the children 's television programme Bod , the theme tune of which has become a hymn , sung in Gregorian chant . Bod is analogous to God , hence the commonly used phrase " Oh my Bod ! " .

= = = Storyline = = =

Nebulous follows the adventures of the eco @-@ troubleshooting team " KENT " (the Key Environmental Non @-@ Judgemental Taskforce , named after the English county of Kent) . The group is directed by Professor Nebulous toward the goal of restoring a natural balance to Earth . However , they are woefully under @-@ funded ; KENT was forced to open a laundry to supplement funds . There is at least one other eco @-@ troubleshooting team based in England , but despite their common goals they have a less @-@ than @-@ hospitable view of each other . LOUGHBOROUGH (the Legitimate Organisation Undertaking General Humanitarian Business Operations Requiring Optimum Unconditional Global Harmony , named after the Leicestershire town Loughborough) is run by Professor Nebulous ? ex @-@ love interest , Doctor Erica Flazenby . By comparison to KENT it is over @-@ funded and well @-@ equipped , with bazers , black helicopters and info pills , which provide the user with information by ingestion .

Nebulous both parodies and pays homage to several well known science fiction programmes and films in both its setting and plotlines , often incorporating several different elements within a single story : Professor Nebulous himself is similar to Bernard Quatermass , a British scientist who led a research group and fought aliens in the classic science fiction serial The Quatermass Experiment and its sequels . KENT itself is based partly on the Department of Measurement of Scientific Work , nicknamed " Doomwatch " , the eponymous organisation from the BBC science fiction television programme Doomwatch , and partly on the Doctor Who Organization " U.N.I.T " , otherwise known as the " United Nations Intelligence Taskforce " . The second episode of series one , " The Lovely Invasion " , is a direct spoof of the Doctor Who episode " The Claws of Axos " , while " The Deptford Wives " takes both its name and premise from The Stepford Wives (and also borrows from Jurassic Park) . From the first episode of series 3 onwards , this also began to include the recent Doctor Who spin @-@ off Torchwood and the ITV series Primeval , with references to " baby dinosaurs falling through a hole in time " and " the sheer amount of paranormal activity in the Cardiff area alone ... starting to threaten the Earth 's plausibility shield " . Episode 6 of that series also parodied the tendency in British sci @-@ fi for attempts to take over the world to start in Britain , with the chief villain (played by Tenth Doctor actor David Tennant) stating " Funnily enough , that 's a tax thing , " as well as one of the Ninth Doctor 's nicknames , " the oncoming storm " (with Nebulous known as " the oncoming drizzle ") .

= = Cast = =

Mark Gatiss ? Professor Boffo Nebulous

Rosie Cavaliero ? Paula Breeze (assistant to Nebulous)

Graham Duff ? Rory Lawson (assistant to Nebulous)

Paul Putner ? Harry Hayes (researcher for KENT)

Graham Crowden ? Ronald Rolands (Minister with Unusual Portfolio)

David Warner ? Doctor Klench (Nebulous ' arch @-@ rival)

Julia Dalkin ? Nebulous 's mother , Gemini (KENT 's resident supercomputer)

Matt Wolf ? Nebulous 's father

Following positive reviews and high listening figures , the second series was able to attract a number of guest appearances from well known actors , including Peter Davison , Steve Coogan , and Kate O 'Mara . The third series featured appearances from Julia Davis and David Tennant .

= = Reviews = =

Reception to Nebulous was generally positive : a reviewer from The Times described the first series as " a winning blend of Doomwatch , Quatermass and British silliness that has cult written all over it " , while the second series was described as " cool and cultish " . However , The Daily Telegraph was more guarded , comparing the show to " Hitchhiker 's without the philosophy or Red Dwarf without the energy " , going on to say that show is " funny , but not seriously so " . A reviewer for Doctor Who website UnitNews also initially expressed concerns about the level of jokes in the show , but later claimed " I should have been more patient because when they did arrive , coinciding with the introduction of the character Harry , they were relentlessly funny " .