

TALKING 'BOUT MY REGENERATION

Matt Smith reflects on his final days as the Time Lord and reveals his Hollywood hipster ambitions

MATT SMITH is sitting in a rather glorious BMW on his way to the ExCeL Centre in London's Docklands. He's sporting a neatly cut crop, wearing jeans and a jumper from ACNE, a leather jacket from D&G, a scarf from Marc Jacobs and some slightly alarming socks.

As the car gets closer to the gleaming glass and grey steel hall playing host to thousands of fans – marking their hero's 50th birthday at the three-day *Doctor Who Celebration* – the current incarnation of the last living Time Lord looks more like his next big role: Patrick Bateman in *American Psycho*. Which way is he going to play it when meeting the fans? He laughs. "You just have to be yourself. Whatever that is nowadays..."

He can be forgiven for his confusion. This Christmas, when he hands over the sonic screwdriver to Peter Capaldi, he'll be leaving the Doctor in the best of health – a pain-racked regeneration notwithstanding. On air in over 50 countries and counting – it's on three channels in the USA – the show has a global audience

of some 77 million. When he was cast, as the youngest actor ever to play the part, newspaper headlines were mocking – "Doctor Who?" In the UK, at least, he's answered that question.

Since he announced he was hanging up his Tardis keys earlier this year, however, he's gone for roles so different from the good-hearted saviour of the universe that you assume he's making a Daniel Radcliffe-style statement: "Don't think I'm just the Doctor." He's already filmed Ryan Gosling's directorial debut, *How to Catch a Monster*, and tabloid shots from the set showed him lifting weights like a marine, his much-loved floppy fringe razored off.

THIS MONTH HE'S on stage at the Almeida Theatre in *American Psycho*, a London stage-musical version of Bret Easton Ellis's bestseller about a powerful Wall Street banker who moonlights as a serial killer. "It's a bizarre challenge, especially as I've never sung before," Smith explains. "I thought, why not give it a stab... foolishly. I mean, it's not like other musicals – which is why I took it. It's difficult and challenging."

We're conducting this exit interview the day before his barnstorming performance in the 50th birthday episode. He only has what remains of the year as the official Doctor. While we're talking, you can almost feel him moving on.

What's it like playing the Doctor? "Everything changed. It's all consuming – and that affects the rhythm of your life. Now, however, it's settling down a little." What can we expect from the Christmas episode? "I can't tell you. It was a great shoot – a sad one for me, but I think it'll be a fitting send-off and a fitting introduction for Peter."

Any regrets? "None. I think if I was going to >



SHORT BACK AND SIDES

A newly shorn Matt Smith with Jenna Coleman at the *Doctor Who Celebration* at London's ExCeL



BLIPP THIS PAGE
Unlock behind-the-scenes video to RT's cover shoot, the 11th Doctor's covers gallery and episode guide!
INSTRUCTIONS:
SEE PAGE 21

< choose to spend a couple of years in anyone's body, why not live it as the Doctor? He's going to have more fun than almost anyone else alive."

The rest of the team is going to miss him desperately. "You will not find anyone with a negative story about Matt," the show's writer Steven Moffat tells us. "The producer, Marcus Wilson, gets him on set as quickly as possible because the crew literally works faster when he's there. He's the life and soul, greeting the guest actors like the perfect host, even when he's feeling broody, unhappy, tired or sulky."

Moffat thinks Smith is the most successful actor yet when it comes to capturing the enormous age of the Doctor. "Matt is a youthful envelope but he has an old soul," he muses. "In real life Matt is very cool. The Doctor would like to think he's cool, but he isn't. The Doctor probably thinks he can hang out with Matt and go to the same clubs, but I don't think Matt would have him along on a night out."

CERTAINLY, SMITH is looking to make some cool choices. He'd love to do a movie with *12 Years a Slave* director Steve McQueen or *Morvern Callar* director Lynne Ramsay – who shoot cutting-edge, offbeat, disturbing films. He'd also like to direct, having tried his hand for Sky Arts' *Playhouse Presents*. In January, however, it's "back to the drawing board – the auditions, the life of an actor," he puts on a slight American drawl, "because that's the life we choose."

He tells us this as the car waits at traffic lights

"Benedict Cumberbatch and Matt are fascinating actors but they'll never play James Bond"

STEVEN MOFFAT

near the convention centre. While he's talking, a man walks past wearing an impressive Tom Baker scarf. Smith checks it out then winds down the window: "Hey mate... over here... nice scarf!"

The man smiles sheepishly at his friend in a Captain Jack jacket then realises who it is. He dashes over, stunned and gabbling, but can't seem to make up his mind whether to ask for a photo or an autograph. "Hey man, quick," Smith urges, hanging out of the window as the driver puts the car in gear. "He's going to leave, mate," but the man is almost frozen in shock. It's not often, after all, that the actual Doctor admires your Doctor costume. "Oh dear..." Smith is stricken as the car starts to move. "We gotta go, dude... bye... see you later." He flops back on his seat. "That was weird."

The moment shows the fans' devotion to Smith. Will that help with his cool young movie star ambitions? Some people aren't sure. "In >

THE DAY I MET PETER CAPALDI



Years ago I went on location for the second series of Armando Iannucci's blood-drawing satire, *The Thick of It*. A bland corporate training centre in the middle of nowhere was doubling for Westminster's corridors of power, but it was alive with an effervescent cast and crew who were, incidentally, the most delightful, welcoming bunch of people.

Hanging around waiting for breaks in filming, I was giddy with excitement... I was about to meet my filthy-mouthed hero, Malcolm Tucker!

I eventually spent ages talking to the man who crafted this most brilliant, vicious comedy creation, Peter Capaldi. He was great – clever, charming, not at all filthy-mouthed – and I later watched some filming. I get a bit embarrassed and self-conscious seeing actors doing actor-y things, but observing Capaldi mutter and pace as he morphed into Tucker before going into a nuclear rant in front of the cameras was a proper pleasure. Ah, I thought, so *that's* how it's done.

Capaldi has a vivid, multilayered back-catalogue and not just as an actor. As a writer he won an Oscar for a short film, he directed the mordant BBC4 comedy *Getting On*, and he co-wrote and starred in the same channel's lovely little docu-spoof gem *The Cricklewood Greats*. I can watch him in anything. He was the

only character who kept me involved in BBC2's lifeless and now defunct news saga *The Hour* and I am unfeasibly excited that he's the new Doctor. I never really bought into Matt Smith; he was too puppyish for me, but that's a generational thing. He's young, I'm not, fair enough. But, like William Hartnell and Patrick Troughton, both of whom I loved as a kid, Capaldi will be my Doctor, someone with depth and gravitas, who actually looks as if he's lived that adventure in space and time to its fullest.

Admittedly I've fallen away, on and off, from *Doctor Who* over the years. Come on, it's hovered on or around TV for five decades and it was a huge part of my TV upbringing as a (very) small child, everyone's allowed to grow up and move on while still dipping their toes back in every now and again. But my interest, and I hope my devotion, have, like the Doctor, regenerated. **Alison Graham**

Dalek-builders

May I congratulate you on your excellent *Dr Who* Special. The articles, photos, and especially the Terry Nation Dalek story with the twist in the tail, were excellent.

The Dalek construction plans will have no doubt

inspired many a school to build their own Daleks. Who knows, the country could be invaded by an army of school Daleks! Ah, but we'd be safe, as we'd have Dr Who to protect us! Your Special has certainly made the year for *Dr Who* fans. A rather sad year due to the untimely death of the Master, alias Roger Delgado. But I hope that in 15 years' time, in 1988, you will publish another Special to celebrate 25 years of wandering in time with the Doctor.

Peter Capaldi (aged 15)

Glasgow



Dalek-builders at Highbury Grove School



LOOK WHO IT IS

In 2008, Peter Capaldi (far left on the RT cover) played Pompeian Caecilius, his first *Doctor Who* role. Above: a letter he wrote to RT as a teenage fan in 1974



COVER OF THE CENTURY!

The Daleks help *Radio Times* conquer the Professional Publishers Association Awards. This striking gatefold cover from May 2005 has been voted Cover of the Century. Designed by RT's art editor Paul Smith, it marked the return of the Daleks after 17 years in the week of a general election

◁ the UK we love to talk up how big *Doctor Who* is in America, and it's definitely bigger than it's ever been," says PR guru Mark Borkowski. "But it's not on primetime television over there – so millions of Americans have never heard of him. He's entirely at the mercy of the scripts he chooses – America is all about what's hot now."

A couple of years ago Borkowski worked with a young British actor – equally young, equally well known on TV – who made a big splash when an

"If there was a God, I'd ask for my money back"

MATT SMITH

equally hot American director selected him as his lead in a new movie. "I was getting five or six calls a day, he was interviewed by everyone and he was offered tickets to the American Open tennis when we were over in New York for the premiere," he recalls, refusing to name the actor in question.

"But the film was badly reviewed – not a turkey but not a hit. As soon as the first *Variety* review appeared online, the phone calls stopped. Literally went dead. He had a week to go before the American Open and he couldn't get anyone to even answer his emails about the tickets he'd been promised. He was devastated."

Does Smith fear such a rejection? "Of course," he shrugs. "If you criticise my performance, in the papers or an audition, I can try to convince myself it's the character you don't like or the interpretation. The truth is it's me you're criticising. It leaves you exposed. That first 30 seconds in the room at an audition – no actor is beyond that."

Looking for precedence, it's tempting to compare Smith's chances with the careers of David Tennant and Benedict Cumberbatch – both made a stab at Hollywood after playing quirky, supersmart men in TV shows penned by

Moffat (to a US casting director the Doctor and Sherlock could almost be the same role). Tennant returned to Blighty and *Broadchurch*, while Cumberbatch has two big films lined up for 2014.

Steven Moffat is sure of Smith's success. "Benedict and Matt are both fascinating actors – they're never going to play James Bond, they're not leading men, they're not Brad Pitt," he explains. "They'll always choose the interesting script over the glamorous part. But that's good. Stars tend to have very short careers, while Ian McKellen will be working until he's 80, and they have that quality."

SMITH THINKS HIS footballing experience will help – he played for Nottingham Forest and Leicester City youth teams until injury steered him into acting. "I'm a firm believer in the parallels between sport and acting," he explains. "Practice is important. Frank Lampard practises sprints his entire career. An actor might work on his voice. But then it's about expression in the moment – preparation and dedication are fine, but you have to deliver spontaneously."

It being the time of his passing as the Doctor – of a little death no matter how the soul of his character lives on in another body – we feel it appropriate to ask if he's had any profound existential thoughts as a result. Does an on-screen death teach you what's important in life? Is there a point to our existence? He thinks for a moment. "That question starts off on the wrong foot... I think the point is the endeavours we make towards the discovery of our existence through art or love or family. They are at least the things that make us realise we exist."

He's declared himself an atheist, but if there was a God and they met – what would he like to say? He laughs. "If there was a God, what would I ask? I'd ask – can I have my money back?" And he bids a warm farewell as the ExCeL swallows him up, moving on into his unwritten future – with no Tardis and no option of ever coming back. *Stephen Armstrong*

NOW BLIPP THE COVER FOR EXTRA TREATS!

This issue of *RT* has hidden *Doctor Who* treats. Use your smartphone or iPad to unlock the extra content



- Matt Smith's special video message to RT readers
- Access behind-the-scenes footage of RT's exclusive photoshoot
- Access a complete episode guide to all the 11th Doctor's adventures
- See all of Matt Smith's RT *Doctor Who* covers



EASY TO INSTALL: STEP 1

Download the free Blippar app onto your smartphone or iPad. Blippar is available on all Apple and Android phones. Open the Apple App Store or Google Play, depending on your device, search for Blippar and follow the simple instructions on how to install the app.

STEP 2

Open the app, and point your phone or iPad's camera over the cover and on page 17. Fill your screen with the page and wait for a second. Blippar will recognise the page and offer you the chance to watch the extra content.

BLIPPAR IS COMPATIBLE WITH ALL IOS PRODUCTS (FROM IPHONE 3 UPWARDS), ANDROID SMARTPHONES AND BLACKBERRY AND WINDOWS PHONES.

