



Whovians Unite! *Doctor Who* Fans Gear up for 50th Anniversary Celebration

By Shantella Y. Sherman
WI Assistant Editor

Little did executives at BBC One know when they broadcast the first episode of *Doctor Who* on November 23, 1963, that the collective imaginations of millions of viewers would gravitate toward the *madman with a box* and eventually make common references to Cybermen, the TARDIS, and fish fingers & custard.

The backstory on *Doctor Who* is pretty simple: A time lord (traveler) steals a ship and sets off on an adventure to discover the universe. Known only as “The Doctor,” the time lord is able to regenerate rather than die, possesses a lone sonic screwdriver as a weapon, and travels in a space ship that masquerades as an old police callbox known as the TARDIS (Time and Relative Dimension in Space).

With an ability to travel in time and space, the Doctor picks up human traveling companions along the way – somehow, inevitably placing himself in the crosshairs of various timelines.

As the character regenerates, the actor portraying the Doctor is replaced, introducing both a new actor and a new incarnation of the traveling time lord. A clever design of the executive producers and writers, with each new Doctor, the



Matt Smith, David Tennant, the 10th and 11th Doctors will share the screen with John Hurt as another incarnation of the Doctor in the upcoming BBC special The Day of the Doctor. Freema Agyeman (“Martha Jones”) and Alex Kingston (“River Song”) will not appear in the special, but remain two of Doctor Who fans’ most loved co-stars. / Photos courtesy of BBC America

show is reinvigorated and audiences are glued, once more to television screens, learning the personality, style, and *doctor-isms* of the new guy.

The basic storyline never changes; however, with careful precision, lead writer Steven Moffat, has been able to weave complex meta-narratives into intricate storylines and position common objects into aliens

Take the episode *Blink!*, which introduces a species of alien that are swift and deadly and who survive by turning into stone the moment someone looks at them. Who hasn’t gone into a garden, cemetery, or museum packed with statues and thought for certain one moved? Moffat fuses science with superstition to conjure up childhood fears

in adult viewers. Concepts like life existing outside of temporal spaces and things existing “exactly where you don’t want to look, where you never want to look ... The corner of your eye,” have made the *Doctor Who* franchise wildly successful.

“*Doctor Who* can reinvent itself and has to reinvent itself every few years. Most shows age,

most shows get tired, [and] most shows get predictable especially a show, which like *Doctor Who* is a little bit similar with every story. A new Doctor, a new companion, a new story – it becomes an ancient tradition but also a brand new shiny thing. No other show can combine those two virtues at the same time,” Moffat said.

The 50th anniversary special, *The Day of the Doctor*, brings together for the first time, three different Doctors – Matt Smith, David Tennant and John Hurt. Moffat said audiences will witness different aspects of the same character.

“What you have to go for is the fact that they’re at different places in their lives so if you met yourself 5 years ago you wouldn’t exactly be meeting yourself – you’d be meeting somebody a bit different who has not had the same experiences and your current preoccupations. It’s the same character but not the same character.” Moffat said.

The 75-minute anniversary special *Day of the Doctor* airs on BBC America, Saturday, Nov. 23 at 2:50 p.m. ET, at the same time it premieres in the UK to avoid spoilers. In the interim, BBC ON DEMAND offers the last seven seasons of the series in their entirety. **WI**

/Courtesy Photo



Informer Whovians Reveal

In the five decades since Doctor Who was introduced to television audiences, 11 actors, a host of companions, and countless villains have tagged along. Some villains, like the Cybermen and Daleks have been around almost since the show's inception and can still be counted among the show's scariest or most beloved bad guys. And some companions proved as endearing as the Doctors themselves. In an informal *Washington Informer* survey, Doctor Who fans weighed in on their favorite Doctor, episodes, companions, and villains. Here are some of the responses.

Charles Day, 38, Tour Bus Driver, Upper Marlboro, Md.

Favorite Episode: *I am not a sci-fi fan, but there was something about the storylines that lassoed me. I think the first episode I watched was with the Adipose ("Partners in Crime"), which I laughed through, hysterically. Imagine the fat on your body being able to separate from you and run off down the street? The fact that the creators of the show made the "villains" look like little cute marshmallows, was genius. I was hooked after that, so it's my favorite.*

Favorite Doctor: *David Tennant, who was cool personified.*

Favorite Companion: *That's hard; I liked them all. I loved Rose Tyler, but got a little weepy once she tried finding her way back to him.*

Favorite / Scariest Villain: *Those relentless Daleks*

Ada Yates, 26, Waitress, Silver Spring, Md.

Favorite Episode: *"The Impossible Astronaut" / "Day of the Moon." No spoilers, but really I couldn't imagine how the Doctor would escape his own death.*

Favorite Doctor: *Matt Smith was my first Doctor, so he is my favorite.*

Favorite Companion: *Even though she is technically not a companion, River Song is the Doctor's equal in so many ways and in others, she completely stomps him. I love their chemistry.*

Favorite / Scariest Villain: *The Silence, because it freaks me out to think that something could be chasing me that I cannot remember is after me every time I turn away from it.*

Sherelle Simmons, 40, Intake Nurse, Northwest D.C.

Favorite Episode: *"Blink!"*

Favorite Doctor: *David Tennant is the only Doctor for me. He was funny and charming, but could also flake out and become impassioned by different situations. Tennant played against Catherine Tate really well.*

Favorite Companion: *Toss between Martha Jones and Donna Noble.*

Favorite / Scariest Villain: *The Weeping Angels terrified me. It's been years but I can still not walk by a statue without suspecting it moves as soon as I take my eyes off of it. In historic cities like D.C., it is a terrifying concept.*

Adrian Aragona, 66, Retired Pilot, Fairfax, Va.

Favorite Episode: *Three-way tie between "The Pandorica Opens," "Big Bang," and "Rose"*

Favorite Doctor: *Tennant was my first Doctor, but Matt Smith grew on me. I am a romantic, so the episodes with River Song were wonderful.*

Favorite Companion: *Amy Pond because I like that they followed her time with the Doctor from her childhood until the end of her episodes. The whole Amy-Rory-Melody storyline that unfolded as Amy traveled with the Doctor kept me guessing. Those were intriguing scripts.*

Favorite / Scariest Villain: *My favorite villains were the Vashita Nerada; some people say I eat like that! The scariest for me were the Weeping Angels.*

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