

TITANIC PAIRING
Exclusively for RT, Kylie Minogue and David Tennant echo the *Titanic* movie shot – watched over by a new alien, the Host

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Two icons collide – pop diva **Kylie Minogue** and **David Tennant's Doctor**. They reveal all to RT about a match made in the heavens

DOCTOR WHO Christmas Day BBC1

On Christmas Day, barring last-minute changes, Kylie Minogue will be at home in London – for the first time – watching her *Doctor Who* debut, “hiding behind the couch” and celebrating with a gay man, Will Baker, who, when we meet at her management’s office in a converted west London church, is currently her most intimate male confidant.

As her creative director, Baker’s responsible for transforming Kylie into a vamping, sequined sexpot dressed in PVC and fishnet stockings – a far cry from gauche and greasy mechanic Charlene in *Neighbours* back in 1986. “Willy is also entirely responsible for me doing *Doctor Who*. He goes to conventions. It’s slightly sad,” she laughs, as she does frequently. She’s 5ft 11in of sparkling energy, indomitably stoic, almost too relentlessly chirpy to be true.

A much admired icon – even though many sneer that she warbles

Doctor Who goes back to my roots as an actress. At the read-through I tried to look cool, but was petrified. Then, on my first day of filming, I realised I was in my spiritual home. I’ve a lot of affection for Astrid – she’s a waitress [on the *Titanic*], a dreamer, alone, and wants to travel. Perhaps that’s like me when younger, but I had opportunities, and she’s still struggling.”

Growing up in Melbourne, Australia, she was at first overshadowed by sister Dannii, who’s three years younger and starred in a talent show. “I was jealous because she was expressing herself, and I wanted to perform, too. I went into *Neighbours* at 16, was probably a good actress at first, but I did dodgy movies like *Street Fighter* [1994]. Everyone makes mistakes, and I’ve made enough.”

Her career hit a trough in the 90s, but was resurrected by the number-one hit *Spinning Around* in 2000 – helped by gold hot pants worth 50p that Baker found in her wardrobe during a costume crisis. They accentuated her famously pert bottom. Today, she’s more demure, but equally frugal – trousers and a £4 white shirt from Oxfam.

Obviously, breast cancer, diagnosed during her 2005 *Showgirl* tour, changed her, yet she was inspired to return with a vengeance. “I was angry at being knocked down when I was touring and felt fighting fit. Terror takes time to get over. There was no choice but to resurrect my career while resurrecting myself.

“I recognise what I might have lost, but I have a glass-half-full attitude.” One possible loss is no children of her own. “There are options,” she says. “I hated that word ‘options’ when it was first mentioned. After what I’d gone through, that wasn’t an answer I wanted, but now it’s my reality.”

She’ll be 40 next May. “I always felt I’d come good at that age. I’ve started horse riding again and recently went out in Windsor Great Park. I’m trying to embrace the English countryside.

“One day I’ll say to Will, ‘We’ve got to tour again’. Working >

“At the read-through I tried to look cool, but was petrified”

Kylie Minogue

vacuous songs like “a cat trapped in a dustbin” – she’s uneasy about interviews. “I normally go home feeling I’ve been robbed.” Understandable. Part of her appeal is to remain enigmatic in spite of apparent openness, so that even an anodyne bat-squeak of a comment about her private life convulses the tabloids. “I enjoyed fame at first, but didn’t realise how successful I’d become. Most days photographers are outside my house.”

Her singing career began as an invented pop star, she agrees. “I’m proud I managed to survive, and now I do different things as well.” She’s a perfumier (Darling), lingerie designer (Love Kylie), children’s author (*Kylie: the Showgirl Princess*), is planning a soft furnishings label and promotes jewellery. “I’ve a low boredom threshold and jump at opportunities.

PHOTOGRAPH BY WILLIAM BAKER. IMAGE MANIPULATION BY IAN MCKINELL



Who's on board?



Doctor at sea?

◁ hard is part of who I am, but it's tiring so I have to check myself. You don't sit around and suddenly feel better. Being on stage is so thrilling – instant and honest. I have a strong gay following, perhaps because I have a dramatic, self-deprecating quality. I'm confident at times, but an inherent part of being a performer is insecurity. There's a constant challenge."

Kylie is an apt name: it's Aborigine for boomerang. She's been unlucky in love – starting squeaky clean with Jason Donovan (her co-star in *Neighbours*), then renegade INXS singer Michael Hutchence who joked he "corrupted" her, and Olivier Martinez ("the Frenchman", as she now calls him), who left after helping her through chemotherapy.

"Am I lonely? It's OK. I'm not in a mad rush. I've been a serial monogamist, going quickly from one relationship to another. A bit of breathing space is good." So now you can have lots of relationships? "Are you asking me on a date?" Shameless and childish, but I can't resist: "You should be so lucky." I anticipate a withering glare, but her bland good nature is unruffled and tinkling laughter fills the rafters of the church. She's off – a valiant trouper whose giggles, you hope, don't mask too much inner sadness. **Andrew Duncan**

And don't miss *Doctor Who Confidential: Kylie Special* (Christmas Day BBC3); *Kylie Minogue's Christmas Special* (Christmas Day Radio 1); and *Re-X-Amining Kylie* (Boxing Day Radio 2)

David Tennant tells RT how Kylie got the *Who* crew in a spin

Everyone got very twittersy here when we heard that Kylie was coming," says David Tennant. "At planning meetings, there were all sorts of members of the art department explaining why they had to be on set. Because she's a legend in her lifetime, isn't she? The very prospect of Kylie coming in got everyone very overexcited.

"Then she arrives and is refreshingly normal and fun and easy and none of the things that I suppose a big pop diva has the right to be. She just gets on with it and is lovely to have around.

"I don't want to speak for her, but I think she quite enjoyed being part of a team. I imagine it must get quite exhausting being your own brand. When she came, she was just part of the gang, which hopefully was a nice thing for her to do."

And you don't have to wait long to see Kylie in *Voyage of the Damned*.

"The Doctor and Kylie's character, Astrid, a waitress on the *Titanic*, find each other quite quickly," Tennant told us in our exclusive Christmas preview two weeks ago. "He helps her out and she ends up helping him out, and very quickly they become inseparable.

"It's a sort of disaster movie, which, as we're talking about a sinking ship, is what you'd expect. It's got a bit of *The Poseidon Adventure*, a bit of *Titanic*, a bit of



Doctor Who and a bit of *The Towering Inferno*.

The cast includes Geoffrey Palmer (see below), Clive Swift and Bernard Cribbins. "In the tradition of disaster movies, it becomes quite a tight little band; a gang of us were together pretty much the whole four or five weeks of shooting. And, again following the tradition of great disaster movies, you get to see life on all social levels aboard intermingling; people having to get along – or not – as the situation gets worse.

"Obviously, there has to be some sort of monster. It wouldn't be *Doctor Who* on Christmas Day if there wasn't something to freak you out. They're all new. They don't have a name, but they're referred to as 'the Hosts'. There's a blankness to them that's definitely creepy. But all the scarier is what's behind them..." **Nick Griffiths**



ON THE HEAD Bannakaffalatta played by Jimmy Vee is just one of the *Titanic's* passengers. Vee has been various other *Who* aliens including the Mox of Balloon

This is your captain speaking...

Geoffrey Palmer couldn't resist the role of the *Titanic* captain in the *Doctor Who* Christmas special. "I don't want to work an awful lot at my age [80]," he tells RT, "but I want to work with someone I like, and David Tennant's a terrific actor, and this is a super script."

Geoffrey's son Charles has directed four recent *Doctor Whos*. "When I was offered it, he said,

'Oh God, I wish I'd been directing it'. That's my only regret. That would have been fun."

And Palmer Senior has acted in the series before – in *Doctor Who* and the *Silurians* (1970) and *The Mutants* (1972, right). "I don't think I met the monsters. But the fan club thing is extraordinary. I still get letters: 'Will you sign this?'; 'What did you think of your

part?' I've no idea what the part was! From my point of view then, it was just a job. I was bringing up kids."

But he'll be tuning in this Christmas. "The family are coming to us, so I know the boys [grandchildren Billy, eight, and Tommy, five] will want to watch it. And I'll watch it, too, I'm sure." **NG**





Companion pieces

Doctor Who companions **Billie Piper** and **Catherine Tate** may not be time-travelling this Christmas, but they're still keeping busy



THE SHADOW IN THE NORTH Sunday 30 December BBC1

Billie Piper

So you're back as sleuth Sally Lockhart in Philip Pullman's *The Shadow in the North*.

Yes, like *The Ruby in the Smoke* last year, it's set in Victorian London, so it's all quite dirty and dark and mysterious. I have to say it's not a bundle of laughs, but the love story between Sally and Fred [JJ Feild] is progressing, and she's grown up – she's now a working woman in her own right. She and Fred come across this odd Scandinavian businessman who's working on a super-weapon.

Is Sally anything like Rose Tyler in *Doctor Who*?

Sally's a ballsy, forward-thinking woman, like Rose. There are also similarities to *Doctor Who*: *Shadow*'s action-packed, I'm always running around, and I've got a serious quest on my hands.

With this, *Mansfield Park* and *Secret Diary of a Call Girl*, you've had an exhausting year.

It's been quite relentless. Spending so much time on set you get confused about what's real and what's not! You need to go home, make toast and chill out – or you'll go crazy.

Will you watch *Doctor Who* this Christmas?

Yes, but it's a nightmare as my mum's the biggest fan ever. She found it really hard watching last year's special [in which David Tennant's Doctor lamented the loss of Rose]. She was like, "It's such a shame!" I won't watch it with

Mum again. She just makes me feel bad about not being in it!

But you're coming back for a few episodes next year...

Doctor Who's been a big part of my life and I've missed it since the day I left. I think people felt that [my last episode] was left unfinished. I think everyone likes the idea, including myself. And also I love David.

Billie Piper was talking to Benji Wilson

THE CATHERINE TATE CHRISTMAS SHOW Christmas Day BBC1

Catherine Tate

Nothing says "Merry Christmas" as much as killing off your most popular character, namely Lauren!

Yeah [laughs]. I just want to say, no-one's recovered a body! There's always room for her to step back out of a shower two years down the line.

Why have you chosen to send her on a potentially fatal canoe trip?

I didn't know how to top the Prime Minister sketch [Comic Relief 2007]. You can't just go, "Christmas pudding, am I bovvered?", can you? I'm delighted the way the whole thing's gone, but I've got to move on. If I just keep dressing as a schoolgirl, saying, "Am I bovvered?", I can't blame people for thinking that's all I do.

It must be a hoot working with Kathy Burke, who plays Nan's daughter Diane.

It was brilliant. When we were thinking

who we could have to play the daughter, there was really only one person. We didn't think for a minute we'd have a chance, but she wanted to. I was delighted. She's an idol of mine.

There's an awful lot of swearing between Nan and Diane...

I know! I don't know how this Christmas special got so depraved, because it isn't what I set out to do. Obviously, you want to have a rhythm to the script, and a climactic aspect when you're topping each other, and mirroring each other, because I wanted Diane to be her mother's daughter.

And Bernie [the Irish nurse] gets to snog George Michael at the ward Christmas party. How did George get involved?

He did a concert for NHS nurses [in 2006] and asked me to go on as Bernie, because he really liked the show. I asked if he'd do something for my show and he said "yes". [The singer also said "yes" to Ricky Gervais, see p270.]

Is it true that this is the final *Catherine Tate Show*?

You've been reading the tabloid press. What I can definitely say is, I don't have any plans to do another series next year, but I've never said I'll not do this again.

It takes a long time to do a series, and I've done one every year for the past three years. You don't want stuff to get stale.

Any plans for 2008, besides returning as companion Donna for series four of *Doctor Who*?

No, it's all very fluid.

Catherine Tate was talking to Martin Aston

