Deep breath, then dive in

There's a new Time Lord in town, and he's set to make his mark on 'Doctor Who.'

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When Steven Moffat titles an episode 'Deep Breath,' he isn't kidding.

For a program known for its harum-scarum pace and keep-up-or-shut-up iconography, the Season 8 Saturday premiere of BBC America's 'Doctor Who' opens slowly—even with the T.rex—and radiates a newly modern self-consciousness, albeit dressed in Victorian garb. And for fans wondering how the series will accommodate the Doctor's regeneration—

from 8-year-old Matt Smith to 58-year-old Peter Capaldi, the answer is Very Directly Indeed.

But first, that deep breath, which, after all the hoopla surrounding the iconic show's 50th anniversary last November, certainly seems in order. Especially since, along with a new Doctor, Moffat has ordered up a new look for the opening credits (more clockwork than fiery cloud swirl) and the interior of the TARDIS.

For those just joining the 'Doctor Who' universe, TARDIS stands for Time and Relative Dimension in Space. It's shaped like the blue British police box and is the Doctor's main form of transportation.

That's me trying to fall in with the premiere's obvious [See 'Doctor Who,' DE]
A changed Time Lord set to up the sci-fi ante

"Doctor Who," from 4D, embraces post-anniversary newswomen. The episode opens with Strax (Dan Starkey), that adorably cranky Sonobian, narrating the Doctor's regenerative life span in the form of a video entry, with his own hilarious editorializing. Behind him, series notables Madame Vastra (Neve McIntosh) and Jenny Flint (Clara Stansfield) attempt, once again, to save Earth's destruction.

"By the goddess, are you blogging?" Madame Vastra asks Strax with incredulousity, when she catches sight of the screen to which Strax directs his explanation of how there have been 12 Doctors. Maybe he adds, mimicking the actual blogosphere debate, "Well, technically it is." Having viewed dozens of the three amateur clips from Victorian London where a TARDIS is packing the Thames, he经过多年的androids — the Doctor wanders ragged and mad, a spindly last trying to remember why everything seems at once so foreign and familiar. Whispers are able to answer some of his questions, but the Doctor's concern with his new stage heralds a deeper understanding of who, exactly, the Doctor is, and who he isn't.

"You thought he was young?" Madame Vastra admonishes Clara when she seems unable to separate the lines and hair: "Your gentleman friend, your lover? He has seen stars fall to dust. You might as well float on a mountain rage.

And there it is, right up front, what so many previous episodes have danced around. The Doctor is a Time Lord, more than 2,000 years old. He has saved humanity countless times but he has also killed and lamented and destroyed. He has for thought he had destroyed his own planet for the good of the universe.

He has loved and lost and, more importantly, become and left. Each and everyone of his companions. Even the beloved Rose (Billie Piper), once a mortal, has settled into a mortal illusion, while River Song (Alex Kingston), the Doctor's "wife," was reduced to a bit of computer memory that he didn't want to see anymore.

"I'm not your boyfriend," this new Doctor tells Clara, himself reducing to dust the starry-eyed daydreams of multitudes.

The original Doctor may have been an old man, just as the original "Doctor Who" was an educational children's show, but the modern incarnation has taken the romance of the last living Time Lord quite literally. Tennant's Doctor especially was a high IQ dream date, seducing companions and breaking their hearts.

To save complete reputation, Smith's Doctor took aboard a couple, Amy (Karen Gillan) and Rory (Arthur Darvill) whose love story, often triangulated by the Doctor (whose heart clearly belonged to Amy), served as painful reminder of what an ageless being cannot have: a long-term relationship with a mortal.

Not this time around, no. Or, at least, so it would seem. For all the running and understated commentary about the new Doctor's face, Capaldi is an attractive man, if quite a change from Smith. Still, behind his furrowed brow and tendency to complain roll new and existing storms, which may tilt the tale away from love and longing and back to adventure.

Either way, this Doctor is truly something else again.