In just 13 weeks Matt Smith has made us forget all about David Tennant. How did he do it and what's next for Saturday night's boy wonder?

Matt stoops to conquer

"Sexy? The Doctor's a bit bumbly, isn't he? He doesn't really know what to do with women"
He's happier discussing the Doctor, although even here, there's a careful objectivity — a civil shrugging off of credit. "People ask me, 'Who do you think your Doctor is?' and I'm reluctant to think of it in those terms, because it's still a work in progress." Steven Moffat, who's just the most brilliant writer - told me when I first met him that the interesting thing, the defining thing, about the Doctor is that he never quite knows what's going to come out of his mouth in any given situation. His thoughts just combust spontaneously. I've tried to harness that brain-to-mouth rapidity.

"I mean, you could think about it for ever, but how do you play the most charismatic man in the universe? It's a real challenge. If you play him consciously charismatic, he instantly loses the charisma. Of course, really charismatic people don't have to do a thing. They just are. I'm still finding my way on that one, but I like to think it gives me something creative to play with."

Certainly, Moffat's scripts present a less cocksure character than previous incarnations, a Doctor who is more seeker than cosmic fixer. "I'd like that to be true," says Smith. "Hopefully, we see him in the white heat of danger, flying by the seat of his pants. He's also funny and he has great courage and this enormous intellect, but all the great Doctors have had that. As a character, he kind of 'belongs' to everyone. Everyone has their own identity for him. Mine is probably different, but I've become a real fan. I know it sounds very polite, but I like to think it's genuine. "That's a section of my life I'd rather not talk about."

The Critics' Verdict

"He's quirky without being irritating; he's likeable, witty and bursting with joie de vivre"

Alison Graham Radio Times

"I was genuinely expecting a backlash, simply because David Tennant had been so popular. But I've been astounded by how well Matt has been accepted as the Doctor, particularly by DWI's readers. The overwhelming response seems to be that Matt has naturally captured the Doctor's character, more quickly than any actor since Tom Baker."

Tom Spilsbury, editor Doctor Who Magazine

"Wonderfully mercurial."

Andrew Billen The Times

"He leaps like a stag, his speech is set to fast-forward and his face seems to open like an accordion, as the tumbling forelock and long chin take off in different directions. Even allowing that the world is going to end in 20 minutes, you do feel he could simmer down a bit."

Nancy Banks Smith The Guardian

Matt on Matt "I think my strongest episodes are in the second half of the series. In terms of consistency as well. Yes, definitely. It's lovely to hear people saying positive things. It was much worse when they were going, 'Who is this person? Why've they cast him? Oh my God, he looks about four years old!'"

What Matt did next

Far left: stepping out with Daisy Lowe in Palm Springs in April. Left: savouring the homosexual demi-monde of 1930s Berlin in Christopher and His Kind. Below: with ex-Bond girl Eva Green in the movie Womb

EX SCENES WITH former Bond girl Eva Green in Womb (a sci-fi movie shot last year, as yet unreleased here) he embraced with equal enthusiasm. "Oh, it was very difficult, obviously, having to kiss Eva all the time," laughs Smith. "I learned a lot about control from working with her, because Eva, as an actor, is very still and I tend to be very kinetic. Eva has real style and I have the most immense respect for her."

Having, as it were, got his hand in with a Bond girl, would he fancy a crack at 007 himself? "I don't think I'm handsome enough," says Smith, cheerfully. "I think I'd make quite a good, young Bond villain. It would be kind of nice, though," he admits, "to be the actor who's done both...."

Ofers of new work, it's to be assumed, are not lacking, but if Smith has designs on Hollywood, or any kind of five-year plan, he's keeping them to himself. "I'll shoot the next series of Who and then take it from there," he says.

And anyway, surely the Doctor's way cooler than James Bond - he's funnier, for a start, he's a time traveller and he's 907 years old! "Come on," says Smith, allowing himself the briefest flash of glad, unguarded triumph. "It doesn't get better than this!"

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