MY PRESENTS...

Past & future!

Showrunner Steven Moffat unwraps a new Tardis – and a new companion

Doctor Who
Christmas Day 5.15pm BBC1

AT THIS TIME of year, traditionally, a lot of people will be speculating, at length, about the true meaning of Christmas. So let’s get that out of the way right now. It’s about presents.

Yep, presents. And presents (as the Doctor would say) are cool. Presents are how we say we love each other in ways that aren’t only deep and heartfelt, but fiscally measurable. It’s that once-a-year opportunity to spend time with your family and know exactly where you rank in their affections by raiding the bins for price tags.

It’s also about the Doctor Who Christmas special. And the Doctor Who Christmas special is about this conversation between me and producer Marcus Wilson.

Steven Moffat: “Marcus, there are leaves on those trees!”

Marcus Wilson: “That’s because it’s summer!”

SM: “No, it’s Christmas.”

MW: “In real life. We shoot the show in real life.”

SM: “Can’t we get rid of all the leaves?”

MW: “We’d need an ecological catastrophe.”

SM: “Why wasn’t this foreseen?”

MW: “We can remove them post-production.”

SM: “Oh, OK.”

MW: “And Steven? Last year you wrote a whole Christmas special about trees.”

SM: “That was probably quite difficult, eh?”

MW: “Now that you mention...”

But never mind last year! What presents do we have for you this time around?

Well, first of all we have Richard E Grant as this year’s villain, snarling into Matt Smith’s face. Oh, how has it taken us so long? Surely this man was born to make evil plans and conquer worlds? Actually, Richard and Doctor Who have a history. Many years ago, I wrote a Doctor Who sketch for Comic Relief, and Richard made a brief appearance as the tenth Doctor. This was long before David Tennant, long before the show came back; I thought it was the only chance I’d get to write for the Doctor – funny how things work out.

Richard admitted at the time he knew nothing about the show. I remember him standing next to a Dalek bewildered at what it could possibly be (he’s caught up since). And after Comic Relief, he appeared (sort of) in an animated adventure by my old pal Paul Cornell, as the ninth Doctor, long before Christopher Eccleston. So finally, he’s on the show for real and, I think you’ll agree, it’s been worth the wait.

We’ve got the brilliant Tom Ward as this year’s villain, snarling into Matt Smith’s face. Well, it’s not a spin-off, but here they are again: the Victorian reptile detective, brave and beautiful maid and the world’s only Sontaran nurse. What could possibly go wrong?

What else? Well, only a brand-new Tardis (see page 33). Same old police box, of course, when you open those magic blue doors... well, can say no more. Except that when you have a genius designer like Michael Pickwoad, and an opportunity like the Tardis, you’d be mad not to bring the two together. On Christmas Day the Doctor will usher you into a brand-new world one, I suspect, that looks a lot like the inside of Michael Pickwoad’s head!

But the best of present of all? The Doctor has a new friend. Jenna-Louise Coleman steps aboard the Tardis and turns the Doctor’s world upside down in a whole new way. Like Christmas, Doctor Who has certain, never-changing traditions. And like Christmas, those traditions are the best part. As a child long ago, and as writ in black and white, my favourite part is the “It’s bigger on the inside” moment. How many times have we seen someone stumble into the Tardis, turn wide-eyed and say those immortal words? How many ways are there to do it? Well, nearly 50 years and I don’t think we’re in danger of running out... I hope you enjoy the latest version.

And I know you’re going to enjoy Jenna. We’ve seen her already, of course, back in September. As Oswin, in Asylum of the Daleks, she not only died but had been turned into a Dalek. Dying on your Doctor Who debut, that ought to be a sure sign you won’t be returning. Unless you’re Alex Kingston as River Song, who died in David Tennant’s Library adventure in 2008. Or Dan Starkey as Strax, now I think...
but 106 editions

Who - IA year ago
historian Ralph Montagu found two long-

Phew, eh? Bet you're glad I cleared that up.

I is playing a completely different character. Oh,
(report to YouTube immediately!), a little scene

just slam the Tardis doors and refuse to come out

that young face, ready to cry in a heartbeat.

tow of sadness: those ancient eyes staring out of
waving insanity, has always had a strange under­

HELP US FIND MISSING CLASSICS
A year ago RT's historian Ralph Montagu found two long­
lost episodes of 1960s Doctor Who - but 106 editions
starring William Hartnell and Patrick Troughton
(left) are still missing from the BBC archive.
Now RT is launching a campaign to find
them. If you have any information, email
lostwho@radiotimes.com. You can
read the full story at
radiotimes.com/lostwho

NEW TARDIS EXCLUSIVE!
Since the Doctor was last on our screens, he's
remodelled the Tardis control room, which will be
fully unveiled for the first time on Christmas Day.
The new, darker look has been designed by Michael
Pickwoad. The lighting unit (right) is adorned with mysterious
symbols from the Time Lords' Gallifreyan "alphabet".
This is the third design since Doctor Who relaunched
in 2005. Both earlier versions were by Edward Thomas;
the classic 1963 original was designed by Peter Brachacki.

Jenna-Louise Coleman
...on Clara
She's a mysterious but down-to-earth girl
from the Victorian era, with similar traits
to Oswin in that she's feisty, resourceful and
up for adventure. She's not intimidated by the
Doctor and finds him amazing and ridiculous
in equal measures. She meets this guy and is
incredibly interested in him and wants to know
more: he has answers that she wants. She's on
the chase for him, on her own mission.

Matt Smith
...on his future
We've got Doctor Who's 50th anniversary
coming up in November 2013, and one assumes
there'll be another Christmas special after that,
and I'd hope to be part of it. I take each year as
it comes. All good things come to an end, but
my mum is aghast at the thought of me ever not
being the Doctor. The show is the star and will
continue without me. I'm committed to it next
year and will sit down with Steven Moffat and
see where we go from there. I've no immediate
plans to leave. I'm around for a whole year
and that's a long time.

...on some (surprising) influences
When I started as the Doctor, I watched loads of
Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em, loads of Peter
Sellers and loads of Blackadder - and some­
where betwixt the three lies my Doctor. I love
how grumpy but brilliant Blackadder can be.
Frank Spencer is slightly unaware of how
ridiculous he is and I think the Doctor is too.
Clouseau and Blackadder have massive egos
and the Doctor has a massive ego. Frank
Spencer is kinder and gentler.

Interviews by Gareth McLean

MR FROSTY
Richard E Grant
as Victorian
misanthrope
Dr Simeon

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Merlin Sat 22 Dec, Christmas Eve BBC1
In the last-ever episodes, can Merlin
save Arthur from Morgana's clutches?

Mr Stink Sunday 23 Dec BBC1
Hugh Bonneville stars as a tramp
who befriends a lonely girl.

The Dumping Ground Fri 4 Jan CBBC
Tracy Beaker may have gone but life in
the care home goes on in this superior
children's drama.

Prince of Persia New Year's Eve BBC1
Jake Gyllenhaal and Gemma Arterton
star in the sand-and-time-travel
blockbuster.