MUST-SEE TELLY

Downton Abbey: The Sixth and Final Series

Exclusive Interview!

Look! Who's Back!

The Time Lord and Clara Face Deadly Old Friends as Doctor Who Returns

Plus: Strictly's Georgia May Foote + The X Factor: Boot Camp + Graham Norton
EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

THE EXTERMINATE FACTOR

With Daleks, Missy and Game of Thrones' Maisie Williams, the new series of Doctor Who is unmissable Saturday-night telly.

There's great news for Doctor Who fans when it comes to the Doctor, his companion Clara and the fantasy drama's latest series: "These are the times they will always remember..."

That's the promise of the show's executive producer Steven Moffat - which is frankly a bit of a relief after the amount of time the Doctor and Clara spent falling out with each other the first time round.

"What I like about this current version is that it feels like their friendship hasn't just happened," says head writer Steven, who has also penned this season's opening two-parter, The Magician's Apprentice and The Witch's Familiar. "It has been earned. They really knocked heads last series because Clara was challenging the Doctor on things he never usually gets challenged on. But I think that's often true of your strongest friendships - you have all your arguments and then you make peace. You know exactly how much of an a**hole the other person is so you don't need to comment on it any more."

FATHER TIME

There's no doubt that Peter Capaldi's Doctor has been a far grumpier soul than the likeable David Tennant and Matt Smith versions, but that doesn't mean the man himself hasn't been having the time of his life in the part.

"I suppose with the brilliant David and the brilliant Matt we had the sort of palatable version of the Doctor," says Steven. "Although underneath those lovely men he was still a selfish, egotistical b*****d. But the interesting thing with Peter is that he's our first family-man Doctor [Peter has a daughter, Cecily]. None of the others from the revamped series [Christopher Eccleston, Tennant and Smith] had kids at the time they played the part.

"Also, having had a longer career already than his predecessors, Peter is at that point where he thinks: 'This doesn't happen to you every day.' Even when he was [The Thick Of It's] Malcolm Tucker, he didn't get this."

As a lifelong Whovian himself, Steven knows that with great power comes great responsibility - especially when you're dealing with people's childhood heroes.

"Matt Smith once said: 'Wouldn't it be awful if you met the Doctor when you were eight years old and he wasn't nice to you?';" he reveals. "God, you'd think about that on your deathbed. You do carry the responsibility of being the Doctor for the rest of your life - you always have to be lovely."

Steven can vividly remember the time as a young lad in the 70s when he queued up in Glasgow for the fourth Doctor Tom Baker's autograph - although he didn't know it then, he was in illustrious company.

"I queued for many hours in John Menzies," he laughs. "Years later I discovered that somewhere else in that queue was a very young David Tennant. And it gets even better.

I told this story to Peter, who then said: 'Oh, I was there but I arrived too late. It was all over.' David and I were in the queue like proper little fanboys, but Peter - being somewhat cooler than us - came tumbling through the door much later, wondering where everyone had gone!"

It's Doctor Who's devoted fans who have kept its flame burning through all the ups and downs since it first appeared on screens more than 50 years ago. And Steven still believes that the show has a few tricks up its sleeve - as tonight's opener demonstrates, with the Doctor once again pitted against two of his biggest foes, Missy and the Daleks.

"I am hoping we're going to be able to spring a couple of surprises with this first episode," he says. "I think most people realise now that you're only reducing the entertainment value with spoilers. It's a nice feeling when you
**STARK CHOICE**

One very big surprise that has delighted fans is the news that Game Of Thrones favourite Maisie Williams (who plays Arya Stark in the fantasy epic) is to guest-star in two episodes later in the run.

"I think it was huge when we announced Maisie," says Steven. "For the fan community, of which I am a part, that’s a very big deal. I don’t want to give too much away about her character, but I should emphasise — as I don’t want people building themselves up for something else — that she is not some kind of mystery woman and she’s not from the past.

She plays a totally new character." Steven has talked about how this latest series is "the Glory Years" for the Doctor and Clara. But as the man at the helm of both Doctor Who and Sherlock, how does he feel about being at the heart of two such successful shows, and can he imagine life without the Doctor and Holmes?

"Well, that day will come," he reflects. "It’s becoming harder to remember what my life was like before this. I was doing all right. I knew Doctor Who would be huge because it was already huge before I took it over, but then Sherlock started only a few weeks later. So at that point I realised, much to my surprise, that I had two ridiculously popular things on my hands.

"A part of me thought: ‘How the hell am I going to cope?’ And sometimes the answer is: quite badly. But these will be the days that I will remember for the rest of my life.”

**NEW DRAMA SERIES**

**MICHELLE GOMEZ RETURNS AS MISSY**

"I am surprised to be back so soon because obviously I, er, exploded! And yet here I am."

"As a woman of a certain age, Missy is a real gift. I’m not playing third monkey to such-and-such who is having a far more successful career than me. I get to have a lot of fun."

"The reaction from the public to Missy has been really warm and positive."

"There have been a couple of times where I couldn’t resist scaring the bejeezus out of a 12-year-old boy. On one occasion in New York, where I live, I found myself with one reaching for the last copy of Doctor Who magazine. He said: ‘Tonight, we’re going to find out who Missy is. You look really like her.’ I said: ‘I AM.’ That made him drop the magazine!"

"Her dance partner Giovanni Pernice has been dubbed an "Italian stallion", but ex-Coronation Street star Georgia May Foote insists she won't be struck by the Strictly curse.

"It’s nothing to worry about," vows the actress, who played Weatherfield’s Katy Armstrong. "I’m in a very happy relationship so I don’t think it’s fair when people say that. My hunk is at home. Sean [Ward, who plays Corrie’s Gail’s Logan] is just excited I’m doing this. We had a lovely, romantic holiday to Gran Canaria [before Strictly launched]. Everyone called me orange but I was like: ‘No! It’s an actual holiday tan — not a spray tan.’"

With Sean at the heart of Corrie’s live episode this week and Strictly starting, the nerves are kicking in for the couple. "It’s the same adrenaline rush for us both," smiles Georgia. 24. "I’m so proud and I’ll have a little champagne party to watch him."

**WATCH IT! Doctor Who**

**BEST FOOT FORWARD**

Georgia May Foote is ready to shine on Strictly

watch the telly and get a proper surprise."

She and Giovanni already have their own Twitter following — #TeamGG — and he appears to be lapping up the attention.

"He’s a typical Italian, always saying: ‘I’m so beautiful!’ I tell him: ‘Get over yourself, Gio-vain-i!’ “laughs Georgia.

"But he’s a very good teacher. He’s so strict, I have to tell him off for showing off at me. I ache everywhere. He just says: ‘You’re not doing it right.’ I’m like: ‘I know! I’m not a dancer.’

"We’ve not got an easy first dance. I’ve gone from not dancing at all to a really difficult one. The standard seems really high this year. [Ex-Corrie star] Natalie Gumede [2013 Strictly runner-up] sent me a message saying: ‘Good luck — it’s the best thing ever, so enjoy it.”

Despite being written out of Corrie in March, Georgia doesn’t rule out a return. "I was ready to go, but never say never," she smiles. "For now, it’s all about Team GG!”

**WATCH IT! Strictly Come Dancing Friday 9pm BBC1**

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**Get together in April this year**

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