



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

John Barrowman, a Joliet native, is in "Captain Jack," a new BBC TV show.

## Get ready world ... John Barrowman has his own TV show

# Getting Jack



By Annie Alleman  
STAFF WRITER

When he was a kid, John Barrowman's spelling grades suffered because of "Doctor Who."

It paid off in the end, though. Barrowman has been given his own "Doctor Who" spin-off on the BBC Three channel in England.

"Sunday nights I would stay up and watch PBS, and that's always why I failed my spelling tests Monday morning and be bleary-eyed in school," he said, laughing heartily.

He was able to chat recently before taking the London stage in the production of "A Few Good Men." He plays Jack Ross (Kevin Bacon's role from the 1992 movie), and Rob Lowe is a co-star.

"Doctor Who," one of England's most popular TV shows ever, has been remade this year.

"'Doctor Who' has become one of the most successful TV shows the BBC ever aired, and luckily enough I'm a part of it," Barrowman said. "Because of the popularity of the character I played, Captain Jack, they've given me a spin-off series, and I start filming in March. I'm very excited — they bought the entire series' first year, so I'm really, really excited about that. To be given my own science-fiction drama show, that's really cool."

### His own TV show

The show is called "Torchwood" (an anagram of Doctor Who) and stars Barrowman as Captain Jack Harkness.

"It's what they call an urban drama, set in the present day U.K.," he said. "It's about a task force of four people, led by myself, solving unsolvable crimes. It's gonna be kind of an 'X-Files' y type of sci fi thing. Where 'Doctor Who' has time travel, my character in 'Torchwood' is the only one who comes from the future. I have special powers and all of this alien technology to assist me. None of the people know why I have these capabilities."



Bev Holt poses with her best pupil from JT West, John Barrowman. She continues to be his accompanist as he pursues his career in London and America.

Barrowman doesn't have to use an accent to play this role, either. Captain Jack is American.

"That's also very cool — an American given his own TV series on the BBC," he said. "In a nutshell, Captain Jack is a 51st-century time-traveler and a bisexual — he flirts with men and women. It's the first time a major drama in the U.K. has had a character like this (that's been) so widely accepted and so popular. It's not a salacious thing — the bisexuality is never mentioned, but if you're an adult you will see he flirts with both men and women."

"In one sequence of myself, the Doctor and Rose — we are saving the earth from annihilation, and I kiss them both farewell," he said. "It's the first time ever in the history of 'Doctor Who' a man had kissed the Doctor. It created quite a stir."

### Hooked on 'Who'

As a kid growing up in Glasgow, Scotland, Barrowman would watch "Doctor

Who" every Saturday night at 7 p.m. When he moved to Joliet, he discovered a "Doctor Who" marathon that started at 11 p.m. Sundays on PBS. Hence the poor spelling grades.

"One of the great things is, all the villains and monsters I remember as a kid, we created them in the current series," he said. "So I got to battle all the monsters I was so afraid of as a child. This happening to me, being involved in 'Doctor Who' and 'Torchwood' — it's like dream I had as a kid, and now I'm starring in the damn show."

In the last episode of the current series of "Doctor Who," Captain Jack is left on a satellite 2,000 years in the future, as the Doctor had to take Rose to save her.

"So Jack has to get back to earth," he said. "He comes back in the present day and creates Torchwood. Once 'Torchwood' is finished, I'll go back into 'Doctor Who' — I'll be doing two major series at the same time. It blew my mind."

He doesn't know if "Doctor Who" and "Torchwood" will be shown on BBC America, but he does know that they won't be shown on PBS this time around. The show is edgier than normal television; nudity not shunned, he said.

"In fact, in one of the episodes on 'Doctor Who' I am naked, and that's not so outrageous," he said. "So it is edgier. That's why I think it would be better for the cable networks in the U.S."

He won't be in the second season of "Doctor Who," which returns in April, but will return after season one of "Torchwood."

"That's the other thing that's exciting — I'm going from a family viewing show to more of an adult-type show," he said. "The writer of the British version of 'Queer as Folk' is the creator of 'Torchwood'."

### 'The Producers'

If you're not planning a trip across the pond anytime soon, take heart. You can see

# JACK

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Barrowman on the big screen in the upcoming Mel Brooks-penned movie, "The Producers." He plays the head Nazi Storm Trooper, a role offered directly to him by Mel Brooks himself.

"I front the whole number 'Springtime For Hitler,'" he said. "The whole movie culminates to that finale. When Susan (Stroman, director) and Mel rang me and asked if would like to be involved in it, Mel said, 'There's no dialogue in it, but I want your voice in this number.' So I said yes — if the whole movie culminates in that point, I'd be stupid not to do it.

"I have bleached-blond hair, striking blue eyes, and I sing in the most campy voice imaginable," he said laughing. "This film so spectacular and lush, it's unbelievable. Matthew (Broderick) and Nathan (Lane) are just incredible."

"The Producers" opens Christmas day in the United States.

Barrowman won't be able to come to America for "The Producers" premier, as he is performing in "Pantomime," a traditional English Christmas show through January.

When he's not working in TV or movies, Barrowman still enjoys performing his cabaret show. He occasionally gets the chance to fly in his former mentor and current musical director, Beverly Holt. Holt met Barrowman when she was the accompanist at Joliet West High School. They even performed to a sold-out house in London. They also performed on July 7, 2005, the day of the bombings in London.

"We were the only show in London that performed that evening because I was determined not to let what happened shut us down," he said. "I was going to perform for the people who came."

They took the show to Belgium and Austria, and they plan for her to return in the new year to record some tracks for a new album.

He's also just finished recording "The Sound of Musicals" for the BBC, he said.