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## BEST BETS

**ATLANTA OR BUST:** The Olympic Torch sojourns through Colorado Springs, and Memorial Park is the focal point. The torch will be in town in late afternoon and evening, park entertainment starts at 1 p.m.

**MADRIGAL FOR MOM:** Once you've recovered from Mother's Day Brunch, see the Collegium Musicum perform 17th-century madrigal comedies at Colorado College, 3 p.m., free.

**JAZZ AFFAIR:** The Pikes Peak Jazz and Swing Society's monthly soiree starts at 3 p.m. At the Le Baron Hotel, I-25 and Bijou Street. \$6, \$4 for JASS members.

# BACK FROM THE PAST

## Movie brings time-traveler to the present

Knight-Ridder Newspapers

It's probably fitting that Paul McGann, who Tuesday makes his debut as the eighth "Doctor Who," is from Liverpool.

Not only were four more famous Liverpoolians once guest stars on the long-running BBC series that inspired Tuesday's movie, they performed "Ticket to Ride" in a 1965 episode, but the fanfare in Britain that greeted McGann's casting is reminiscent of the fuss that once accompanied the Fab Four's every move.

There was "a huge brouhaha" when the announcement was made in December, recalled McGann in a phone interview. "I was surprised I was in Canada at the time," getting ready to shoot the two-hour movie that airs on Fox. Relatives, he said, sent him copy of the front-page editorials that heralded the choice, one McGann himself still doesn't completely understand.

"I wouldn't have approached me to play Doctor Who," said the actor, whose past work has mostly been in feature films ("Alien 3," "The Three Musketeers") and the London stage. And the prospect of a possible five-year commitment (Tuesday's movie is a pilot) was "kind of scary," he said.

McGann, 36, was only a toddler when "Doctor Who," the chronicles of a renegade Time Lord who travels through space and time, premiered on the BBC in November 1963. While he might not have considered himself a Whovian, he was familiar with the series.

"In Britain you couldn't really miss it," he said. "Everybody's seen it. Even if they're not fans, it's as common as the news."

And taken just as seriously.

A minor scandal erupted during the filming in Vancouver, McGann said, when a London newspaper got hold of a daily plot summary. In one scene, McGann's co-star, Daphne Ashbrook, who plays the latest of the Doctor's female companions, Grace Holloway, is supposed to hit the Doctor over the head. "It's OK, she's possessed at the time."

The plot summary, McGann said, read, "Grace bonks the doctor," which in Canada is fairly innocuous, but in Britain it means the noble art of lovemaking.

Oops.



Paul McGann, right, stars as The Doctor, who battles The Master (Eric Roberts, left) to save the universe in "Doctor Who," which airs Tuesday on FOX.

"Within 48 hours, this had made the papers in Britain," and fans, he said, were not amused.

The Doctor is famously celibate, a choice with which McGann agrees.

"The Doctor's a child," he said. "I think sex is out of place for this character. There are bigger things to think about, there are more burning passions."

McGann's own favorite Doctor was the first, William Hartnell.

"He was very tall and he had this shock of white hair," and he was "really stern, a cantankerous old bugger,"

he said, adding it was "the short-tempered, less easy-going side of the character that I think might be worth reinstating."

While McGann admits to some worries about typecasting, "I have a family" and playing the Doctor could be "steady work," he said.

At least one former James Bond might not agree.

As McGann's predecessor, Sylvester McCoy (who appears as Doctor No. 7) "kindly remarked to me, 'You could be the George Lazenby of Time Lords, famous for two hours.'"

## This primer gets you up to speed

Knight-Ridder Newspapers

"Doctor Who"  
Who?

Unless you're already a Whovian, weaned on PBS reruns of the BBC series and doomed to wander the Internet forever in search of fellow travelers, you may want to bone up on some facts and figures about the renegade Time Lord from the planet Gallifrey, who travels through space and time in the phone booth-like TARDIS.

■ Number of years "Doctor Who" played on the BBC: 26, starting in 1963. Tuesday's movie, which also will be shown on the BBC later this year, will be the 695th installment of the series.

■ Number of actors who've played the Doctor: eight, including Paul McGann, who Tuesday is passed the baton by No. 7, Sylvester McCoy, who dies on the operating table and is regenerated as McGann. The others were William Hartnell, Patrick Troughton, Jon Pertwee, Tom Baker, Peter Davison and Colin Baker.

■ Longest tenure for a Doctor: Seven years, by Tom Baker.

■ Number of hearts pumping blood through the Doctor's body: two (He also has a bypass respiratory system — whatever that is — and a body temperature of 60 degrees.)

■ Number of lives granted a Time Lord: 13. Like the Super Mario Brothers, Doctor Who can take a licking and keep on ticking.

■ Estimated worldwide audience for "Doctor Who": 110 million. It's been seen in more than 80 countries.

■ Number of "Doctor Who" stories to have been novelized: more than 150.

■ Age of Doctor Who on his next birthday: 953.

■ Lives remaining: Four.

■ Favorite snack: Jelly Babies.

■ Meaning of TARDIS: Time And Relative Dimensions in Space. The TARDIS, which on the outside resembles the blue boxes once used by London's Metropolitan Police, is considerably bigger on the inside.

■ Some Internet sites where Whovians gather: rec.arts.drwho and rec.arts.drwho.info.