



Photos by Adam Gordon/Daily Pennsylvanian

Geoffrey Wynkoop dressed as Dr. Who (left) and one of the men who played Dr. Who, Colin Baker (right)

Dr. Who

Area fans honor longest-running drama series

By MARC LOINAZ

Hundreds of *Dr. Who* fans filled the lobby of the Philadelphia Centre Hotel on Saturday to see Tom Baker and Colin Baker, the most popular actors to play the series' title role.

The doors of the hotel ballroom opened promptly at 10 a.m. to welcome the visitors to the convention celebrating the longest running drama series in television history. An hour later, Colin Baker, the current Doctor, conducted a lively question and answer discussion with the fans.

Colin Baker, the sixth Doctor in the series' history, just finished taping the show's 23rd season in Britain.

Baker said that he would like to continue to star in the series, but added that he is not sure if he will ever act for American television.

"I think the fact that I'm here is not sufficient inducement to the producers of the big television companies to employ me as an actor over here," he said. "We haven't really smashed through the network barrier. Until that happens, I'll have to bask in the obscurity of the British Isles."

Before he got the leading role, Baker said he watched the longest running science fiction series whenever he could.

"I would do my best to watch it," Baker said. "I wouldn't say I was a fan in the sense

that I would go around staying in other people's houses seeing their videotapes."

Tom Baker, who previously played the Doctor for seven years, also received a rousing welcome when he relieved his successor on stage. As the most popular Doctor in the series, Tom Baker said he remembers when he started as Dr. Who.

"My favorite moment of *Dr. Who* was when I got the job. . . especially after I'd signed the contract," he said.

When asked if he would ever play the Doctor again, Baker replied that the chances are very poor.

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"I'm entirely finished with *Dr. Who*," Baker said. "On the other hand, you may ask 'If you're entirely finished with *Dr. Who*, what are you doing coming over to America and talking about *Dr. Who*?' "

"[One thing is that] I adore the fans for all they've done for me," he added. "American fans have worked quite hard to promote me and [to] do the best they possibly can for [the series]."

"The other thing is... [that] there's always a kind of mad hope in America that somewhere out there in disguise... is a representative for Steven Spielberg or George Lucas," Baker continued.

Convention guests were very enthusiastic, dressed in fan club t-shirts, buttons, *Dr. Who* coats and replicas of the long scarves that were the trademark of Tom Baker's Doctor.

Many fans said they came to see Tom Baker because he rarely makes public appearances.

"I came to see Tom Baker because he usually doesn't come to these things," said Joe Singler, a *Dr. Who* fan for the last three years.

Meanwhile, Thelma Peterson, a *Dr. Who* fan from Wilmington, Delaware, said she likes "the character as Tom Baker created him because he's whimsical and has an air of mystery about him."

"As an actor, I rate him up there with Sir Laurence Olivier," Peterson added.

The British science fiction series is the story of a renegade Time Lord from the planet Gallifrey.

According to David Smith of Trenton, the show's fantasy element is its most attractive feature because "it's easy to relate to from the youngest kid to the oldest man."

Smith added that "[the acting] is far better than in most of the action or adventure shows you see in this country."

"It's escapism from the real world



Adam Gordon/Daily Pennsylvanian

Keith Sewell, an avid *Dr. Who* fan, at the convention

for half an hour a day," said Scott Glenn, a high school student who runs a fan club called "Whovians of the Lehigh Valley."

Geoffrey Wynkoop, an enthusiast from Plymouth Meeting, said he likes the show's "nice touch of time travel and the idea that things will eventually work out."

"The human race has a tenacity for survival," Wynkoop added. "That's kind of a nice idea."

Tom Beck, who represents "Prydonians of Princeton", a fan club with approximately 750 members, said he likes *Dr. Who* because "the Doctor doesn't take himself too seriously."

Meanwhile David Cranmer, a *Dr. Who* fan from Mt. Holly, New

Jersey, said he feels "the special effects are pathetic on the show."

"I like the acting and the writing and all that," Cranmer added.

The eight-city, 10 performance tour was organized by Excalibur Corporation.

Excalibur Director Norman Rubenstein said that the tour serves two purposes.

"Number one, we want to obviously make money if we can," Rubenstein said. "Number two, PBS stations in this country have been hard hit both by the presidential and congressional cutbacks, by the changes in taxes. They're desperate for money and they're desperate for money to keep *Dr. Who* on the air."

"We have raised a very great deal of money on this tour for PBS and that's very good for *Dr. Who*," he added.

According to Excalibur Representative Mark Newsom, the company was formed "to produce conventions for *Dr. Who* and *Blake 9*."