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DOCTOR WHO

NEW DOCTOR! NEW SERIES!

**TV
GUIDE**

April 2-April 8

WIN
A TRIP TO BRITAIN
TO THE SET OF
DOCTOR WHO

EXCLUSIVE REPORT

From the fantastic
set of *Doctor Who*

- The new stars
- A new look
- And outraged fans

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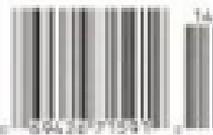
A surprise
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**JOEY'S
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ISSUE

ISSUE



THE DOCTOR IS IN

Are diehard fans ready for a modern **DOCTOR WHO?**

BY BRENDA HAMPTON

The Doctor is back on Earth.

After an absence of nearly a decade, Doctor Who's time-travelling TARDIS lands back on television. But, a lot has changed since the good Doctor left.

"This is a chance for a brand-new start," says Doctor Who head writer, producer and diehard fan Russell T. Davies. "The new series will be fun, exciting, contemporary and scary - a full-blooded drama that embraces the Doctor Who heritage as well as introduces the character to a modern audience."

But with numerous changes from past seasons, the new series appears to be aimed at the new audience - something that might offend the large, already-existing Doctor Who fan base. After debuting in 1963, Doctor

Who became a cult hit that averaged over 13 million viewers at its peak. Though those numbers flared off towards the series' end in 1989, a TV movie was produced in 1996 and the show continues to draw huge numbers in syndication. And, the devotion of viewers doesn't end there.

Doctor Who fans are so passionate about the series that they've kept a monthly magazine alive during its extended absence. True enthusiasts continue to read Doctor Who books (130 original stories have been published since 1997) and listen to Doctor Who radio dramas. In fact, an annual Doctor Who convention takes place in L.A. (this year's was in February and next year's is already scheduled). These fans are not look-



Christopher Eccleston (Present)



Sylvester McCoy 1987-1989



WHO'S WHO?

Christopher Eccleston (Doctor Who)

Born: 1964, Lancashire, England

What he's done before: He first came to film fans' attention as Derek Bentley in the 1991 Brit Pick Let Him Have It and in *Shadowlands*. Since then Eccleston has played opposite Nicole Kidman in *The Others*, with Cate Blanchett in *Elizabeth*, and in came in sixty seconds with Nick Cage. His last TV role was as a scientist in *The General* comedy.

Billie Piper (Martha Jones Tyler)

Born: 1982, Swinton, England

What she's done before: After studying in theatre school, Piper landed several TV commercials and a spot in an episode of *The Beckenders*. But when scouts for Virgin Records spotted her, she was signed to the label as a budding pop star. Her first single, "Because We Went On", propelled Piper to No. 1 on the *Bill* hit charts. Her follow-up single, "Mysterious", also hit No. 1, the reinvigorated her acting career with a string of critically acclaimed roles in projects such as *The Canterbury Tales* and *Delta and the Dawn*. Now she's the young and quirky Martha to Doctor Who. — *Chris A. Lee*

ing for a "brand new" show. But, as a producer of the successful but sensitive series *Glee as Folk* (British version), Davies is no stranger to controversy – a good thing, because the changes to *Doctor Who* are destined to stir some up.

In fact, so many things are different from the original series it's easier to say what isn't – the Doctor's worse enemy, the Daleks – and even then, the evil robots have received minor makeovers.

But is change really such a bad thing?

"*Doctor Who* has a remarkable fandom, which has kept the show alive while it's been off-air," says Davies honestly. "I'm sure they'll have the time of their lives – but equally it's the new audience I can't do without." ■



Colin Baker 1984-1986



Peter Davison 1981-1984

Previous seasons of *Dr. Who* air
Mon.-Fri., 2 a.m. ET, BBC Kids

Neil Gorton, the man responsible for creating the show's ghosts and goblins, agrees: "I think the initial reaction [of *Doctor Who* fans] will be joy and despair in equal measure. But, by the end, they'll all love it.

"We're not making [the new show] for the fans - we're making it for everybody."

That's the biggest difference. No longer just for sci-fi geeks, *Doctor Who* has something for the whole family - action, humour, science and not to mention an attractive cast.

"I think good drama attracts everyone," explains Christopher Eccleston, who brilliantly fills the Doctor's shoes wearing a modern, sexy black leather jacket. "A lot of sci-fi can feel arrogant, so we'd like the audience, young and old, to connect with the series."

And they will. Women will gasp at the intense and witty Eccleston while pretty pop-princess-cum-actress Billie Piper, who plays the Doctor's sidekick, Rose, is eye candy for the men. Kids will be captivated by the show's sleek style and fast pace, made possible by special effects company The Mill (Glaston, see sidebar).

Another twist, however, is the relationship between the Doctor and Rose: it is at the heart of the show as they travel the universe - an attempt by Davies to add more feeling (and a little less science) to the series.

"While the Doctor is alien, Rose is human," explains Piper thoughtfully. "She is the viewer's eyes and ears, and she experiences a world that I think secretly we all wish existed."

Add Davies: "Chris and Billie fill the show with great emotion - all the awe, wonder, fun and fear you'd expect. I think sci-fi can be a little nerdy sometimes, but not this show."

"From the moment they meet, the Doctor and Rose

"MILL"ION DOLLAR EFFECTS



ghosts and monsters and aliens, all right! With the help of Europe's only Doctor-obsessed special effects company, The Mill, *Doctor Who* is back on the small screen. And now anything is possible.

Doctor Who is the first TV series for the Mill. The company's long list of big-screen credits includes *Lord of the Rings*, the *Harry Potter* films, HBO's *Band of Brothers* and *Glaston*, for which the company worked on *Scar* in 2005. But TV is a whole new experience.

"If you look at shows like *Buffy* and *Smallville*, you visit the same environment - or the same special effects - time and time again," explains Billie Piper of The Mill, adding, "The TARDIS takes the Doctor everywhere."

"For *Glaston*, we produced 100 visual effects shots over seven months. For *Doctor Who*, we're producing about 100 shots every four to five weeks."

With such a large quantity for the small team of 30 to produce, it takes approximately one month to complete an episode. But Piper promises the amount of work doesn't influence its high standard.

"You can never ask a writer to write scenes that they think might be achievable in visual effects. Everything can be done."

are soulmates," he continues, getting more excited as he talks. "They understand and complement each other. And together they have fun."

Doctor Who is fun, particularly for new viewers. But one fact may need time to warm to this change in focus and the changes to the show's more traditional elements.

But again, change can be for the better. Though the Doctor's beloved time-travelling machine has not been mimicked after past versions, the TARDIS (which



Tom Baker 1974-1981



Jon Pertwee 1970-1974



Clockwise from right: past Who Peter Davison, Jac Purvis, and Tom Baker



ENEMIES EXPOSED

Don't worry: the Daleks are back - just with a few 21st-century upgrades.

"When you have a villain who's as motivated and hot, it really helps define your characters and get your heroes at their very best," says Nicholas Briggs, the man behind the voice for the Doctor's old foe. "The goal was to make them instantly recognizable, but be the best Daleks you've ever seen. Instead of going to a prop store and seeing what you could find, we've designed something for every aspect of [the creature]."



DALEKS BEFORE AND AFTER

- Formerly car indicator lights, the side head lights have been modernized.
- The head panel now has lines on it.
- The end of the arm features a designed probe - instead of the sink plunger (above) used before.
- The head is moved by radio control instead of manually (although someone sits inside to move the creature's arms and guns).
- Mesh has been placed over the front opening and the operator inside wears black tights over his head, in hopes of preventing a glimpse inside.
- Finally! Flowers will use the self-creature that drives the Doctor! Series had a clear idea of its appearance, but unfortunately it's top secret.

stands for Time And Relative Dimensions In Space, of course) is bigger and better - with the height, width and look of an original Police Call Box (the original emergency phones used in Britain by hobbies before walkie talkies). The outside door now leads directly into the control room, instead of the black void seen in past seasons.

"I made a conscious effort not to look at the old series that much," says production designer Edward Thomas. "You'll always have the diehard fans. They'll love the show for just being *Doctor Who*. My priority is the new audience."

And that is the approach to the series. The eerie theme song which used to send children hiding behind their couches has received a minor tune-up from musician Murray Gold (which Davies describes as "brilliant"). And a more family-friendly format has been introduced - the original four or six 15-minute episode storylines have been replaced with 13

45-minute single shows - which means viewers can miss an episode and still tune in the following week.

But it seems not all fans are happy - numerous suggestions to the logs have sparked threatening emails to cast and crew.

Yet despite its differences, fans old and new should give the good doctor a chance. With everyone behind the show being a major *Doctor Who* fan (Davies, Gorton and Thomas all say working on the show is their "dream job"), the *Doctor Who* tradition is in good hands. And a wider audience just might ensure the Doctor keeps traveling in the future. **B**



Patrick Troughton 1966-1969



William Hartnell 1963-1966