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"WHY DID I GIVE THESE PEOPLE NAMES FIVE  
SYLLABLES LONG?" - LOIS McMASTER BUJOLD

# SFX

## DOCTOR WHO IS BACK!



**WES CRAVEN**

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THE SANDMAN IS DEAD -  
LONG LIVE NEVERWHERE!

**"I thought  
I was going  
to look like  
a tosser"**

The new Doc, Paul McGann



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*The new Who*

BEHIND THE SCENES

# ALL CHANGE

DOCTOR WHO HAS BEEN THROUGH A FEW REGENERATIONS IN ITS TIME, BUT NEVER ONE AS SIGNIFICANT AS THIS. AS FANS WAIT BREATHLESS FOR THE NEW US TV MOVIE, **GARRY JENKINS** TALKS TO CAST AND CREW, INCLUDING THE NEW WHO HIMSELF, PAUL MCGANN, ABOUT THE TRIALS OF BEING A TIME LORD...

**T**he good citizens of Vancouver are used to the weird and the wonderful unfolding on their doorsteps. Canada's West Coast capital is, after all, the spiritual home of Mulder and Scully. But on a brutally cold January night, in a dirty, rubbish-strewn alleyway in the heart of the city's bustling Chinatown, the semi-lit silhouette of a blue, London police box is drawing curious glances from the locals...

The faces of the few who stop to investigate grow even more perplexed when they're filled in on the news that their city is playing host to a series that pre-dates *The X-Files* – currently filming a few miles away – by a good 30 years. You can imagine the ensuing conversation, an exchange straight out of a bad Benny Hill dream...

"It's called *Doctor Who*."

"*Doctor Who?*"

"That's its name, *Doctor Who*..." etc. etc.

In the third of a century since he first materialised on our television screens, the Doctor's oddball, sonic screwdriver-wielding magic may have cast its spell in some of the farthest flung corners of our planet – he's big in Brazil and Zimbabwe, for example – but to the inhabitants of this particular corner of Canada, many of whom are recent arrivals from Hong Kong, he's still a distinct nonentity compared to Jackie Chan, Bruce Lee and the martial arts heroes on the window posters of the neighbourhood video stores.

Not for much longer, however. At least if the group of well-insulated figures pacing up and down at the other end of this windy alleyway have anything to do with it. If producers Philip Segal and Pete Ware, and English director Geoffrey Sax, can pull it off, *Doctor Who* will soon not only be big in this part of Vancouver, but the world over, familiar to everyone from Eskimos to Red Indians. Global domination, like it was back in many of the episodes in the original series, is the name of the game. Soon, everyone will be



A behind-the-scenes look at the scene immediately prior to the regeneration.

**"To me, Paul's a cross between Patrick Troughton and Tom Baker. Those two for me solidified the alien quality of the character, with a lot of whimsy and humour. And a lot of fun."**

**Philip Segal, executive producer**

humming that old, electronic theme tune: du-du-du-dumb, du-du-du-dumb, du-du-du-dumb, du-du-du-dumb...

Perhaps. If things go to plan. At the moment, they're certainly not going to budget...



FOR MORE THAN 30 YEARS, DOCTOR *Who* has been one of the UK's great institutions, as quintessentially English as leaves on the line and Lady Penelope, cricket and

Commander James Bond. But just like Bond, the famous Time Lord's been out of commission for most of the '90s, where he was once considered to have run out of steam in the age of the World Wide Web.

Now, however, he's back. Vancouver is the setting for a \$5 million new *Doctor Who* adventure being made as a co-production between







"We have to protect the integrity of the franchise. That's why the BBC was so unhappy with the show in its later years, because it was written down to; it became silly. If you do cross that line then you shouldn't do it. We are not crossing that line."

Philip Segal, executive producer



Universal Television and BBC Worldwide. And just as Bond returned at the wheel of a German BMW, equipped with an Irish accent, so the Doctor has rematerialised, complete with a new set of multinational modifications.

Paul McGann, the eighth Doctor in a line begun so memorably by the late William Hartnell, is an Englishman, albeit one with the unmistakable glint of Emerald Isle mischief in his darting green eyes. But there's a distinctly American flavour to the rest of the cast, hardly surprising given that the first story of the decade is set in San Francisco on New Year's Eve, 1999. Eric Roberts, the brother of Hollywood star Julia, is portraying the Doctor's nemesis The Master, while Michelle Pfeiffer look-alike Daphne Ashbrook is Dr Grace Holloway, the latest "companion" to hitch a ride in the Time Lord's TARDIS.

Those of you fretting already at the Americanisation of our best-loved science fiction series need not lose too much sleep, though. As executive producer Phil Segal is at pains to point out, this is definitely *not* an American *Doctor Who*. "We have to protect the integrity of the franchise," he explains. "That's why the BBC was so unhappy with the show in its later years because it was written down to; it became silly. If you do cross that line then you shouldn't do it. We are *not* crossing that line."

In Segal, it seems, *Doctor Who* has found as safe and protective a pair of hands as it could have found anywhere in Hollywood. Born in Southend, the former casting director and literary agent has a passion for The Doctor and an encyclopaedic grasp of the series' history that would shame the most devoted of *Whovians*. You suspect he probably knows the Gallifreyan for "franchise." He certainly seems to have a "Seal of Rassilon" fixation, as the famous swirly pattern from the Doctor's homeworld of Gallifrey is, at Segal's request, plastered just about everywhere in the new TARDIS, from the walls to the ornate feet at the bottom of the new central control column.

But, bizarrely, Segal may not stay on board as producer if the TV movie does spawn a series. Even as writers, allegedly including Terrance

**"I wasn't scared of Daleks. Go on, show us a Dalek that ran upstairs..."**

Paul McGann, actor

Dicks (script editor on the original *Doctor Who* during the Pertwee years), are in preliminary talks about further scripts, Segal has admitted that a series would probably be overseen by another producer. It might have something to do with his perfectionism pushing the pilot over budget by \$1 million. He's refusing to be drawn on the subject.

Which is a shame, because if anyone could pull off the high-wire act of blending the traditional values of *Doctor Who* with the Hollywoodesque elements vital for success on network American television it was Segal.

The casting of Paul McGann is yet further evidence of his intent to remain as faithful as possible to the feel of the original series. At 36, McGann is younger than any of the previous Doctors, admittedly, but his features are also more familiar to international audiences, thanks to successful parts in the likes of booze-sodden classic *Withnail and I*, Alan Bleasdale's Establishment-rattling TV series *The Monocled Mutineer* and the curiously creepy medical thriller *Paper Mask*, McGann will also bring a touch of the scallywag Scouse into the TARDIS; he'll be more John Lennon than Jon Pertwee.

"I thought it was important to have a hero that was a little more accessible to a broader audience," explains Segal. Strangely enough, it was one of McGann's less successful roles, in the City yuppie drama *Dealers*, that persuaded the producer that this was his Time Lord. "There was an incredible sparkle in his eyes," remembers Segal. "I've seen mad scientist looks and celebrity looks, and I've seen a lot of talented people who wanted to do this show. But McGann had something else..."

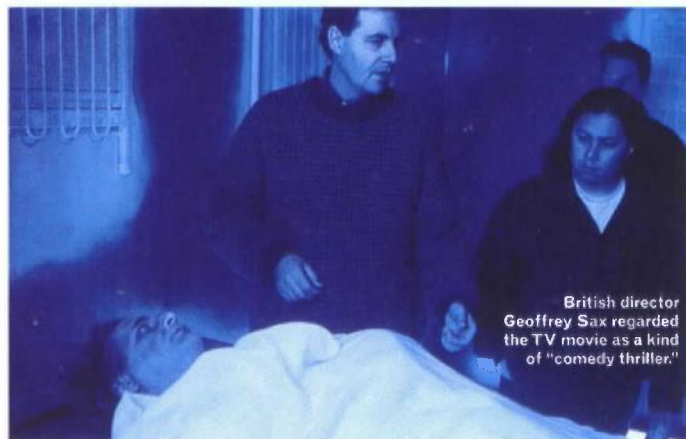
"To me he's a cross between Patrick Troughton and Tom Baker. Those two for me solidified the alien quality of the character, with a lot of whimsy and humour. And a lot of fun," he says. "I think that Paul really is the epitome of those two characters. And I think this is going to make him a big star in the United States."



IN THE WARMTH OF A HOTEL ROOM THE NEXT MORNING, PAUL MCGANN is behaving more like the down-to-earth guy he is than a megastar-in-waiting. He's deep in thought about where he would venture in time and space if he were given the keys to the TARDIS... Suddenly, he snaps into life, eyes as bright as Anfield on a wet Wednesday night. "I would like to

## THE Director GEOFFREY SAX

ACCLAIMED BRITISH TV DIRECTOR GEOFFREY SAX REVEALS WHAT DREW HIM TO THE DOCTOR'S BOLDEST TV MOVIE.



British director Geoffrey Sax regarded the TV movie as a kind of "comedy thriller."

One of the most respected film-makers in British television, Sax has an impressive CV, from ITV comedies like *The New Statesman* (for which he won a BAFTA award for Best Comedy) to popular BBC dramas like *Lovejoy* and *Bergerac*.

So his *Doctor Who* is clearly going to be flavoured with a healthy pinch of ingredients drawn from his earlier work. In fact, Sax is convinced that blending humour with high-tech action is the key to resurrecting The Doctor.

"I hope it's something that will keep people on the edge of their seats but also make them laugh," he explains.

Paul McGann and Daphne Ashbrook, who plays his companion, Dr Grace Holloway, have been a major asset in Sax's search for comic subtlety. "The first thing we shot was in Grace's apartment. I rehearsed it a day or two before and I knew as soon as I got up to the set with them that the chemistry between the two was extraordinary. She has got this great comic timing."

And Sax knew from the beginning that the most difficult element would be making audiences on both sides of the Atlantic happy.

"We have to assume the majority of the audience has not seen this character before," he explains. "You

have to keep to the traditions, but also set some new rules. When I worked on the script that's what I worked on, making sure it worked for both audiences without it being a mid-Atlantic compromise and a mess."

Nevertheless, the script is filled with moments that will be familiar to *Who* fans – the voice of the Daleks at the very beginning, for instance. "To those who know, it will raise a smile," he says, "to those that don't it's simply some alien being. But it still makes sense dramatically to both audiences."

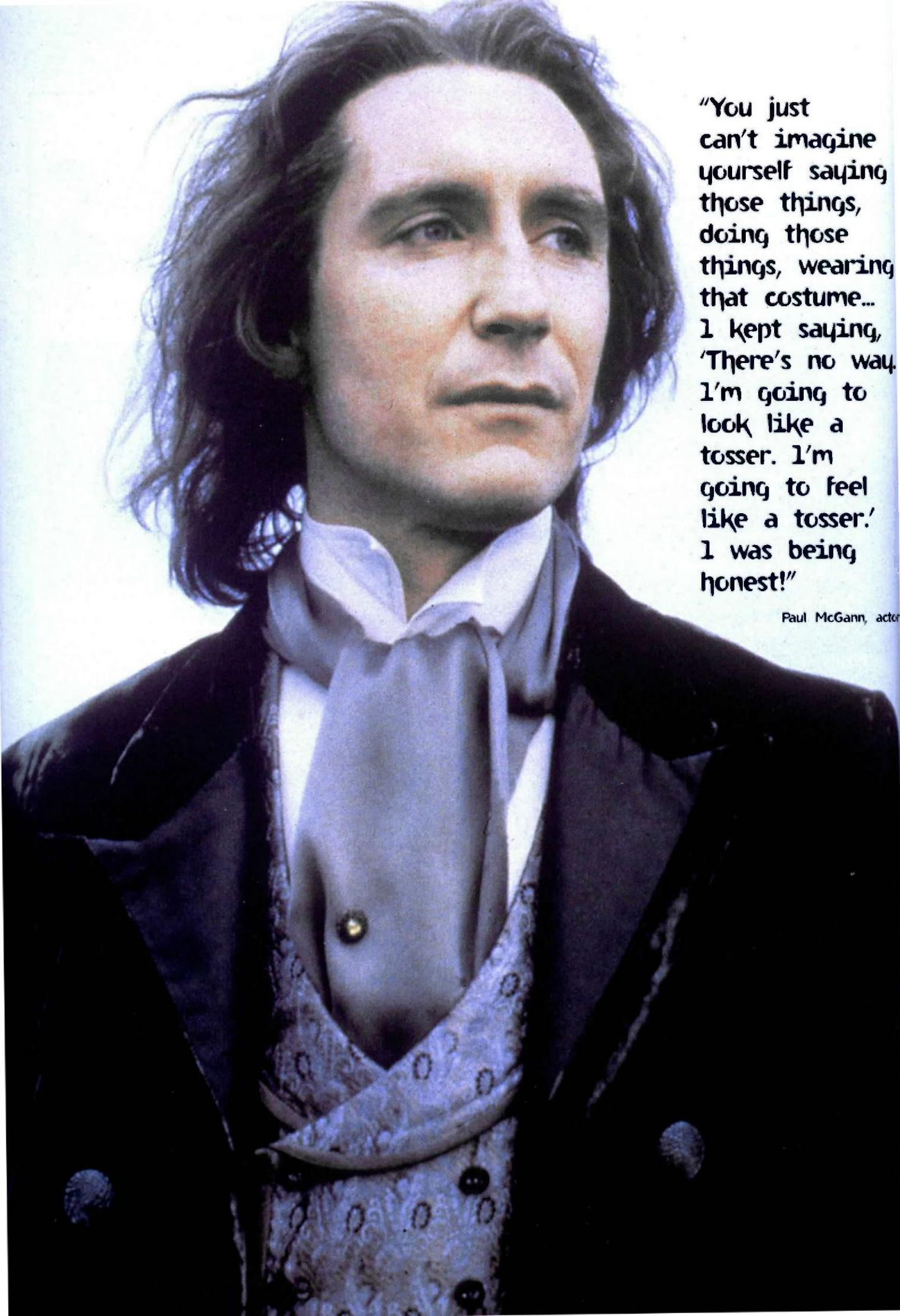
For all the gentle comedy Sax hopes to evoke, there's no escaping the fact that for many the film will stand or fall on the quality of its action and special effects. The director admits he's had most fun working on the film's more spectacular scenes... "It's important it's fast-paced. So I always try to keep the camera moving," he says.

There are many ambitious set-pieces too, from shoot-outs and car chases to the apocalyptic showdown between The Doctor and The Master too. Sax makes no secrets where he draws his inspiration from: "I often think, 'How would James Cameron or Steven Spielberg do this?' They are the sort of people who weave magic into films... If I had \$50 million to make this, how would I do it? Then it's a case of how can I make it look like I had \$50 million!"

**"I hope it's something that'll keep people on the edge of their seats, but which will also makes them laugh..."**







"You just can't imagine yourself saying those things, doing those things, wearing that costume... I kept saying, 'There's no way. I'm going to look like a tosser. I'm going to feel like a tosser.' I was being honest!"

Paul McGann, actor



# THE Designer

## RICHARD HUDOLIN

AMERICAN PRODUCTION DESIGNER RICHARD HUDOLIN REVEALS HOW HE'S BRINGING WHO INTO THE '90S.

**Y**ou start doing your research," bemoans designer Richard Hudolin, "and you suddenly realise, 'Oh my God, they've handed you the Crown Jewels and expect you to do something with it!'"

But if giving the new *Who* movie a distinctive, futuristic look by dressing up Vancouver locations was a hard task, designing a new version of the series' trademark TARDIS was an even bigger challenge...

Viewed from the outside, the famous time machine is an authentic replica of the original, recreated from original BBC blueprints.

But the cozy familiarity presents a stark contrast to what lies inside...

On a cavernous sound stage, Hudolin has created a set that's part Jules Verne, part HG Wells and part Bram Stoker. The interior is a Victorian gentleman's reading room and a monument to the magpie habits of a time traveller. Next door, the cloister room – home of the Eye of Destiny – has the appearance of a vast, sinister Gothic cathedral.

Hudolin's previous credits offer plenty of clues to his influences. As well as being art director on an impressive range of movies (*TimeCop*, *K2*, *Stakeout* and *Little Women*), Hudolin has also worked on television series, including *Sherlock Holmes Returns* for CBS and *Dracula* for the Famous Players TV station in Canada.

At the heart of the room stands the familiar control console, with its distinctive crystal column. But the chamber itself has been re-designed to convey the idea of infinity. "Between the cloister and the control room, the idea was to have a 'Möbius strip,' with no inside, no outside, and lots of things going on," explains Hudolin.

"The producer Phil Segal said we could do anything we wanted. He told us to treat the original as a starting point, but not to feel restricted. If you want to create a feeling of space and infinity then you don't need walls or



Richard Hudolin's sets were designed with the director's ideas for lighting in mind.

rooms; you need areas, with all The Doctor's things around him."

His previous experience on science fiction movies helped with some of his ideas. "I did a film years ago called *HyperSapien*, with Harry Lange, the production designer who worked on *2001*," explains Hudolin. "That fell into the sphere where you're mixing reality with what is the future."

The sheer size of the set is also reminiscent of the work Hudolin did on *Superman III*, where he assisted award-winning designer Terry Ackland Snow. "When you work with those kind of people you get a sense of scale. The TARDIS has got a 24-foot ceiling, because Pete Ware [one of the show's producers] asked how big we could make it, and I said 'I'll take it as high as it will go. Because you need grandness. You can't put The Doctor into a cubby hole.'"

He was encouraged by English director Geoffrey Sax. "He wanted it to be very theatrical," reveals Hudolin. But he also designed the set so it would complement Sax's plans to use atmospheric lighting. "A lot of the set is designed to help the director of photography. As the rotor starts to work on the console there's this blue light that casts a glow," he explains.

Hudolin admits reinventing the TARDIS has been one of the most enjoyable challenges of his career. He's well aware, however, how critical *Who* fans will be about his work. "I was not scared by that," he says. "That's part of the fun of it. In the end it's design. There's no right or wrong."

**"Producer Phil Segal said we could do anything we wanted. He told us to treat the original as a starting point, but not to feel restricted."**

The new, Gothic-style TARDIS console room is designed to look extremely cavernous.

go back to 1959, which is when I was born, and when Shankly took over at Liverpool," he says excitedly.

"I would like to go back and shake his hand. He came in and it all started. He told everybody what was going to happen. Maybe he wasn't the Messiah, maybe he was John The Baptist. Let's get Biblical! Do you know he was offered the job at Anfield in 1952 and he turned it down?"

He goes on, the bit between his teeth, determined not to be knocked off the ball, a conversational Ian Callaghan: "Guess why? They wouldn't let him pick the team! The board picked the team in those days. But he was offered the job again seven years later – and he took it. The first thing he did was sort out the toilets at the Oakfield Road end. The second thing he did was make us the world's best football team. Good old Bill."

McGann has been in Vancouver now for over a month. He admits he was lost at first, slightly overwhelmed by the prospect of playing a character he grew up with in Liverpool in the '60s and '70s. "*Doctor Who* is like the BBC equivalent of Ambassador to the United States. It's big. It's a big thing," he enthuses.

The fact that he's so full of beans this morning can probably be attributed to three factors – the copious amounts of coffee he's been drinking, the news I've just imparted about Liverpool's midweek win over Aston Villa, and the fact he's now feeling completely at ease with a role that could transform his life.

"When it was first mooted last year and I went over to see the casting agent in Los Angeles, I kept saying to myself, 'I don't want to do this – I thought Eric Idle was going to do it.' And I turned it down. I said, 'This is daft; I can't do it.' That must have been a year ago," he explains. "You can't imagine yourself saying those things, doing those things, wearing







"There is no greater character, in its myriad possibilities. This is a go-anywhere, come-from-anywhere figure."

Paul McGann, actor





The Doctor is dead. Long live the Doctor! Doctors seven and eight come face to face. In the original script, McCoy had a much larger chunk of the plot than he eventually got.

that costume... I kept saying, 'There's no way, no way. I am going to look like a tosser. And I am going to feel like a tosser.' I was being honest!"

By the time he'd agreed to take the role, he'd just finished making the SAS movie, *The One that Got Away* for ITV and was playing a rather different kind of role on stage. "The last character I played before this was Jesus. The characters you're doing tend to dictate the kind of mood you're in," he explains.

That other-worldliness only made Philip Segal and his producer Peter Ware even more convinced they had the right man for the role. "Philip kept saying, 'I know you don't think it's something you might entertain, but...,'" he laughs. McGann, however, stuck to his guns. "There was no pressure. It's easy to say no to something. Easy."

The producers' master-stroke, however, was showing McGann the "bible" they'd put together for the production, a directory of *Doctor Who* from his origins to his enemies, his previous incarnations – as well as the adventures they envisioned for his future. "He said, 'Look at this.' They gave me the bible. It looked like some monks had done it in Dunstan in about 890AD. It gives you the whole story about where *Doctor Who* comes from and about his father on Gallifrey..."

By now, Segal's enthusiasm for the project was becoming infectious – and McGann was hooked. For the first time he began to realise that he may actually *enjoy* playing the part. "As far as Phil is concerned," he explains, "there is no greater character, in its myriad possibilities. This is a go-anywhere, come-from-anywhere figure."

"It was then I began to think, 'I suppose it is right.' And I generally tend to work on the principle, 'Will I have a laugh doing it?' 'Will I be able to do it in the right spirit?' There are actors who can manufacture to perfection – that's a gift – but I can't do it. I've got to believe in what I'm doing, and have a hoot doing it. If I don't believe in it, it looks rosey. So I decided, in the end, it would be a hoot... And it is a hoot!"



SEVERAL STORYLINES WERE CONSIDERED FOR THE FIRST ADVENTURE.

"I think Phil Segal wanted to do one where the Doctor goes off in search of his father," explains director Geoffrey Sax. "He lands in the middle of World War II, goes to the British Museum and finds a message in a sarcophagus. He then goes back to Egypt in the time of Ramases and ends up chasing his father all over the world in different time zones. His father is a Time Lord too. I think that would be a great one to do."

There was also talk of pitting The Doctor against the Daleks. "The problem with the Daleks is that they have to be able to do things that they couldn't do when we were kids. We had some drawings of new Daleks done, but it was financial in the end. If the franchise is successful I'm sure they'll feature," explains Segal.

In the end, writer Matthew Jacobs came up with a story involving The Doctor and his auld enemy The Master. While transporting his remains back to their home planet of Gallifrey, The Master slips loose and forces the TARDIS down to Earth, San Francisco, on the edge of the millennium, 31 December 1999.

Fans should have no problems with the storyline. Nor should they complain about the sfx, which will finally bring The Doctor screaming and kicking into the age of computer-generated graphics and matte-paintings.

Of course, there will be no escaping the wrath of the hardcore *Whovians* at some point. "We are not going to make everyone happy," A

# THE Master

## ERIC ROBERTS

PLAYING THE DOCTOR'S ARCH ENEMY IS A RIGHT LAUGH, AT LEAST ACCORDING TO ACTOR ERIC ROBERTS...

**E**ric Roberts was just a typical 18 year old RADA student slumming it in London when, in 1973, he first cast eyes on *Doctor Who*...

"I just loved it. It was really fun, really cheesy," he recalls. When, late last year, word got to him that Universal Television were working on a new movie version of the same show, he told his agent to move – and fast.

"I offered my services," he explains. The Oscar-nominated actor, whose stormy black looks have never left him short of bad guy offers, had never forgotten the most sinister of all the Doctor's enemies. "The first time I saw the Master, he was a big, black, glob with eyes," he laughs. "He was the all-foreboding evil force. I said: 'If you're doing *Doctor Who*, I would love to play somebody crazy. I would love to play the Master.'"

Fulfilling his wish in Vancouver has, he admits been "a blast." In Matthew Jacobs' screenplay, *The Master* has materialised in America on New Year's Eve, 1999 and plans to wreak a little millennium mischief...

Roberts confesses that his first two weeks in his latest evil guise has once more reminded him of the old truism about the bad guys being more fun.

"Absolutely more fun. You get to carry weapons, you get to wear great

suits. And you've always got a way with the babes," he admits.

On the face of it, the Atlanta, Georgia raised Roberts and the Liverpudlian McGann don't appear to have much in common. But in fact, both actors went to the same drama school. "It turned out we'd had all of the same teachers!" says Roberts.

Since he graduated from RADA, Roberts' career has been a roller-coaster ride. His debut movie, *King of the Gypsies*, alerted Hollywood and in the mid-'80s *Runaway Train*, with Jon Voight, won him an Oscar nomination. But in latter years he has had to live in the shadow of his little sister, Julia.

His latest movie, an AIDS drama called *It's My Party*, has once more pushed him back into the limelight. However, his main priority at present is to have fun on set. "In my 20s, even my early 30s, I was always in a hurry to find that good script. But there's no hurry. I'll keep looking and when it shows up I'll be thrilled," he says.

Roberts is understandably reluctant to reveal *The Master's* fate at the end of the movie. But he says he'd love to appear in a new series: "I like Paul's work so much that if he wanted me back on it I'd show up in a minute."

Julia Roberts' brother Eric takes over from Roger Delgado and Anthony Ainley in the role of the Doctor's nemesis, *The Master*.



"You get to carry weapons, you get to wear great suits. And you've always got a way with the babes..."





"I think it's part of the '90s. Yes, the Doctor is a bachelor, but he's a creature of habit, and of love and passion too."

Philip Segal, executive producer, on that kiss







The crew get ready to shoot a scene with the newly-regenerated Time Lord. It was not the first that McGann had to shoot; no, that involved Daphne Ashbrook and a certain kiss...

Segal concedes with a shrug. But if there's one element guaranteed to set the crustier members foaming at the mouth it's the revelation that – shock, horror! – the Doctor enjoys his first serious screen kiss. Yes, McGann and Ashbrook will be seen in not just one, but several screen clinches.

"I think it's part of the '90s. Yes, the Doctor is a bachelor, but he's a creature of habit, and of love and passion. He is passionate about what he is and what he does," Segal protests. And anyhow, he adds, sex is not an entirely new addition to the series. Remember the Amazonian, chamois-leather clad Leela (Louise Jameson) during Tom Baker's reign? "There was lots of sex appeal there," he offers...



PAUL MCGANN WAS FOUR YEARS OLD WHEN DOCTOR WHO WAS FIRST broadcast on 23 November 1963. William Hartnell will always remain the definitive Doctor as far as McGann is concerned; he reminded him of two terrifying figures in his childhood. "We had this cruel but fair master at school with white hair. He was an enormous man. Seddon his name was. He was desperate that we would never forget him. Everyone loved to hate him. He was the one who used to dish out the cane," he recalls.

"His hair looked premature. We used to ask, 'Sir, how did you get your white hair?' And he would say: 'Because I was a rear turret gunner.' He looked like Bill Hartnell – he was scary. That was partly down to the fact that, to me, he was part Seddon and part the Hack's man."

The Hack's man?

"Remember the cough sweets Hack's? Bill looked like the bloke on the wrapper who was about to explode into the world's biggest sneeze," he says, laughing.

More importantly, McGann reckons Hartnell had the air of a master of the universe, a genius who could float through time and space at will. "He has hung out with Mozart. He's a genius. But where he comes from he's a bit of a young upstart, a maverick. He left and slammed the door. With Hartnell you believed it all."

Other Doctors paled in comparison. "They were not high church," he says, once more lapsing into another of his religious metaphors. The Catholic imagery continues as the actor goes on to explain why the Yeti were the creatures most likely to send him diving behind the McGann living room sofa. "I wasn't scared of Daleks. Go on, show us a Dalek that ran upstairs," he explains. "But the Yetis scared me. What it might have been, looking back, was that we were – are – Catholic boys and at that time in the mid-'60s we were in church almost every day. There was one of these sacred heart statues there. His shirt or robe is drawn back and there, exposed, is his heart. It's the size of a heart and it's quite graphic. Sometimes it might have a crown of thorns around it. And the top of the heart is made to look like Golgotha with a crucifix in it. Scary stuff for a seven year old..."

But the worst is yet to come. "I remember kneeling there, looking at the beating heart of Jesus, and the next thing, the Yetis are on," he remembers. "And what happens? The Yeti's chest opens up and there's this beating heart. A red throbbing heart! [It's actually a silver ball, but why point that out while McGann's in full flow? – Ed] It comes out and goes down the hall. That did it for me. I was going, 'Aaahh!'"

It's an image that never quite left him. "Even ten years ago, when I finally ended up going to the Himalayas, I was lying there on the first night and thinking, 'Ooooh Yetis!'" McGann leans forward, an extra

## Grace Holloway DAPHNE ASHBROOK

ACTRESS DAPHNE ASHBROOK, ALIAS THE DOCTOR'S NEW ASSISTANT, ON WHY SNOGGING A TIME LORD ISN'T EASY...

**S**cience fiction is not a line of work alien to Daphne Ashbrook. Among her many TV credits is the pilot of CBS television's UFO-abduction series *Intruders* back in 1992 and an appearance in *Deep Space Nine*.

*Intruders* even stimulated a real-life interest in the unexplained. "During *Intruders*, I got into the whole thing and met a lot of people who claim to be abductees," she explains. "I started collecting clips of film. But I don't believe it is fiction. I believe it's real."

One thing Ashbrook did have a problem believing, however, was the existence of an incredibly successful genre TV series which she'd never even heard of.

"I wasn't familiar with it at all," she admits, feigning embarrassment. But then she found herself cast as The Doctor's new assistant, Dr Grace Holloway – and with only two days to

For Ashbrook, the daughter of theatrical parents, working with McGann has made a pleasant change from the formula froth of American shows like *Falcon Crest*, all talking heads and pouting close-ups: "I'm not used to having an opportunity to work with an actor. It's all about the camera in America." And of the *Who* experience, she enthuses: "I'm having the best time I have ever had."

The prospect of being a part of another science fiction production also fascinates her ("This is all up my alley") – and now she is fully aware of *Doctor Who* and its infinite appeal, Ashbrook is adamant she would have no hesitation in accepting an invitation to voyage inside the new TARDIS: "I would be a perfect companion." Ask her which moment in time and history she'd like him to transport her to and her reply comes quick-as-a-flash: "I want to be here when the aliens arrive..."



prepare herself to join the *Who* production in Vancouver!

"I still haven't seen any [of the old series]. To know about all that other stuff – for an actress I'm not sure that would actually help me."

The relationship between the two Doctors is set to generate the hottest debate when the film airs on this side of the Atlantic. Grace stirs up feelings that have remained dormant in the Time Lord for hundreds of years. In fact, their first romantic moment came almost as soon as she arrived on set in Vancouver.

"It was right at the beginning and we were a little shy of each other," she remembers. "I would like to have been a little more comfortable, I just didn't know him. It was weird – 'Hello, nice to meet you... Let's kiss!'"

She knew McGann through *Withnail and I*. "But I haven't seen much else of his," she says. She is convinced, however, that he will win *Doctor Who* a completely new set of followers: "Women will go crazy for him."



Daphne Ashbrook plays the Doctor's latest companion, Dr Grace Holloway.



Holloway doesn't follow the Doctor into the TARDIS at the end of the story, but could return, says Ashbrook. She does a mean Dana Scully impression, too.

"It was weird – 'Hello, nice to meet you, let's kiss!'"







Welcome to the streets of San Francisco, 31 December 1999. It's tough out there as the Doctor finds out to the cost of his seventh incarnation. And so it begins again...

twinkle in his eye, and drops his voice to a whisper. "It was probably a semi-religious experience."

His humour is infectious and natural, so too is his down-to-earth demeanour. He often self-censors any lapses into the language of "luvviedom" by apologising for sounding like "a desperate thesp."

Ever since he burst on the scene in the wonderful *Withnail and I* – recently re-released – he's been one of the more interesting actors at work in this country. In films from *The Monocled Mutineer* and *Paper Mask* to Ken Russell's *The Rainbow*, he's conjured up an air of appealing edginess and dangerous energy. As Doctor Who, you sense he might take greater risks than any of his seven small-screen predecessors.

To a certain section of the population, he'll always remain one of the McGann brothers – his brothers Mark, Steve and Joe are all successful actors – but Paul himself has done nothing to dissuade that view, and recently starred with his siblings in *The Hanging Gale*, the BBC drama set in famine-ravaged Ireland in the mid-19th century.

Predictably, there'll be two sides to the celebrity *Doctor Who* will bestow on him. The price of fame he's not looking forward to is the one dished out by the tabloids. "For someone who is awkwardly private like me it will be difficult," he admits. But coping with the series' vast legions of fans will be something he'll grow into, he suspects.

Meanwhile, Sylvester McCoy, the previous Doctor, is offering plenty of support. He's already terrified his long-time friend with tales of his experiences amid the most obsessive of *Whovians* – "McCoy was at a convention in Texas once and someone asked him, 'Aren't you afraid of being shot?'" laughs McGann – but he's equally aware of the affection fans have for the character. "A couple of days after I was given this gig, this guy wrote to *The Independent*, a top *Whovian*. He was saying you are going to have to brush up on your so-and-so-calculus and astrophysics because you are going to have to waffle on about this for years to come!"

He admits, however, that playing the Doctor full-time will not be easy. "For me, McCoy is really gifted – he can go to these things and act soft and give them what they want," he confesses. "He's an entertainer. I'm not like that. Still, I'm sure you'll find me doing readings soon enough!"

However, he's unsure how long he might want to play the role: "They've got me on a contract to do this movie, then everything is contingent on whether it gets picked up," he says. "Everyone's chuffed that it is going well, but the viewers might hate it. Who knows?"

"I am only just realising now the depths of people's feelings about the show," he adds, another rascalion grin spreading across his face. "Some people will love me; some will hate me. It's like being an MP or Stan Collymore. Which is fair play..."

*Doctor Who* is being released on video in this country soon after it airs in America on 14 May. The BBC are mooting the last weekend in May as a possible UK airdate, though this is subject to change at the 11th hour.

"I would like to go back to 1959, which is when I was born, and when Shankly took over at Liverpool!"

Paul McGann, actor

# WILL THE Doctor SURVIVE?

ONE ELEMENT OF THE ORIGINAL SERIES THE NEW DOCTOR WHO MOVIE WON'T BE ABLE TO EMULATE IS THE CLIFFHANGER EPISODE ENDINGS. SO HERE'S SFX'S TRIBUTE TO THE BEST AND WORST OF 26 SEASONS OF SUDDEN CLOSE-UPS, COLLATED BY PAUL CORNELL...

## THE BEST...

### THE DALEKS (1963), episode one

Original companion Barbara has some sort of orgasm at the approach of what appears to be a rubber sink plunger.

### THE DALEK INVASION OF EARTH (1964), episode one

A Dalek rises out of the Thames and induces a fit of overacting in William Hartnell. But what was it doing there?

### THE TOMB OF THE CYBERMEN (1967), episode two

The Cyberleader points to the humans and says: "You belong to us, you will be like us," which sounds like the opening line of a Village People song.

### THE MIND ROBBER (1968), episode one

The TARDIS explodes, and the console, (and Zoe's bottom), spin off into space, with Zoe and Jamie clutching onto it.

### THE INVASION (1968), episode six

The Cybermen march down the steps of St Paul's Cathedral. Those steps lead to the Thames. Is there something down there we should know about?

### THE GREEN DEATH (1973), episode three

A Freudian giant maggot creeps up on Jo Grant as she considers her sexual feelings for Professor Jones.

### THE DEADLY ASSASSIN (1976), episode three

Goth holds Tom Baker's head underwater. And holds it. And holds it. And Mary Whitehouse gets in a tizz.

### THE CURSE OF FENRIC (1989), episode three:

Professor Judson has been possessed by Fenric. "We play the contest again, Time Lord!" he growls. Villains still say "Time Lord" like we would say "Bum Face."

## AND THE WORST...

### THE MOONBASE (1967), episode two

A cyberman stumbles to his feet off a bed where he's pretending to be a sick crewman. And they expect us to believe nobody noticed?

### THE UNDERWATER MENACE (1967), episode three

Professor Zaroff throws his head back like something out of an Andrew Lloyd Webber musical, and cries: "Nothing in ze world can stop me now!"

### INVASION OF THE DINOSAURS (1974), most of them

Episodes one, two, and five end with a rubber T-Rex appearing in front of the Doctor and roaring badly.

### PLANET OF THE SPIDERS (1974), episode two

At the end of a dull chase, our heroes catch up with Lupton's craft, only to discover that, er, he's not in it. Ho hum.

### THE STONES OF BLOOD (1978), episode one

Romana's walking across a large, flat, moor, with no cliffs in sight, then suddenly falls down a vertiginous cliff-face above a boiling sea. Serves her right for walking backwards, really.

### THE FIVE DOCTORS (1983), episodic version, episode three

The Master walks down a flight of stairs. Roll credits!

### THE TRIAL OF A TIME LORD (1986), episodes one, four to eight and 11 to 13

Colin Baker pulls a funny face as he's threatened with something slight and incomprehensible.

### DRAGONFIRE (1987), episode one

The Doctor (Sylvester McCoy), for no adequately explained reason (except that no other cliffhanger seems imminent), climbs off the edge of a cliff and hangs there. Is this an in-joke?