

# 'Who' just what U.S. nets ordered

By **SAM THIELMAN**

Who's been a success story for two networks at the same time?

Absolutely.

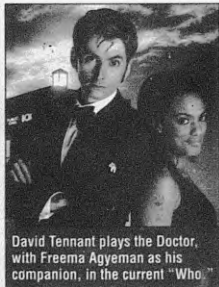
"Doctor Who," the venerable British sci-fi series begun in 1963 on the BBC, has been raising profiles for both of its American broadcasters, the Sci-Fi Channel, which premieres the show, and BBC America, which runs "Dr. Who" a season late but broadcasts the originals of the "Torchwood" spinoff.

The show's most recent creative masterminds are "Queer as Folk" creator Russell T. Davies and BBC Wales Head of Drama Julie Gardner, who revived the aged franchise after a long hiatus and have shored up its popularity in the U.K. and here. Now, Sci-Fi has inked a deal to start airing the show's fourth season in April.

"Bringing the show back was a huge challenge," Gardner admits. "It had to have the wit to engage the parents who were watching, and the fun and the alien monsters and the colors to



English actor Tom Baker played the fourth incarnation of Doctor Who from 1974 to 1981.



David Tennant plays the Doctor, with Freema Agyeman as his companion, in the current "Who."

engage the children."

Brits love aliens, it turns out — the "Doctor Who" Christmas special became last year's second-highest rated show in the U.K., with about 13 million viewers.

Foreign shows are usually high-risk bets for American nets — even Sci-Fi prexy Dave Howe, a UK native, found himself initially skeptical — but it turned out to be the best possible value

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# U.S. cablers high on 'Who'

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for the Sci-Fi Channel's money. BBC has already swallowed the production costs, but Sci-Fi can air it like it would be an original series in the U.S., since no one on this side of the pond has seen the new episodes. Added to that, "Doctor Who" has fandom on its side, with a loyal viewership so fanatical that most of the show's entry on Wikipedia actually appears to be correct.

The show's initial season averaged 1.5 million viewers when the net first aired it — a 44% increase over the same timeslot the year before. It's not expensive, either. Sources put the price of the show — which has risen, mind you — at \$100,000 an episode for the upcoming season.

It's no surprise, then, that the "Who" sale is not a deal BBC America president Garth Ancier would have made. "Doctor Who" was sold to Sci-Fi before I got here," Ancier notes. "If I'd been here, we wouldn't have sold it, to be quite honest."

The U.S. native has led BBC America through its recent growth period: The tiny net is still seeking out subscribers, but grew by 15% from 2006-07 and continues upward. Ancier held on to the "Who" spinoff "Torchwood" — a more grown-up sci-fi show incorporating characters and concepts from the all-ages skein — and the premiere scored big for BBC America.

"It's been our highest-rated show ever," Ancier says. "And because it's not playing on another network first, we get the brand credit for it, which is very important to BBC America in terms of how to be viable to consumers, advertisers and cable operators."

Sci-Fi has taken note: After being headed off at the pass on the more adult "Torchwood" (BBC America gets right of first refusal, though they have to at least match the highest bid), the net snatched up the new kids' spinoff after Ancier passed on it. "The Sarah Jane Adventures" will feature "Who" characters, but target youngsters; Sci-Fi has its premiere set for April, too.

Part of the franchise's success is a plot quirk that allows the titular character, a wandering extraterrestrial known only as "The Doctor," to be reborn ("regenerated," to use Whovian lingo) in a different body that looks like, for instance, David Tennant (the current doctor) instead of Christopher Eccleston (his predecessor).

Thus, actors who suffer from inconveniences like death, boredom, or a desire for too much money can never stand in the way

Adults 18-49

Week 19

Jan. 28-Feb. 3, 2008

	abc	CBS	NBC	FOX	EW	Sci-Fi
<b>Monday</b>	2.05	2.57	2.98	2.26	0.72	1.44
8:00 Dance War	2.57	How I Met Your Mother (R) 2.77	American Gladiators 3.410	Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles (R) (2.26) 2.15	Gossip Girl 0.72	Al Diablo con Guapos 1.95
8:30 (2.57)	2.67	Two and a Half Men (R) 3.49 (3.710)	4.011	(0.72)	0.61 (1.95)	1.95
9:00 State of the Union		State of the Union (Not rated)	State of the Union (Not rated)	State of the Union (Not rated)	Aliens in America 0.72	State of the Union (Not rated)
9:30 (Not rated)						Cristina (0.92)
10:00						0.82
10:30 Samantha Who (R)	1.13	Rules of Engagement (R) 1.76	The Office (R) 1.44			
<b>Tuesday</b>	1.44	2.05	3.28	9.924	0.92	1.84
8:00 Just for Laughs (R)	1.44	NCIS (R) 2.05	The Biggest Loser 2.67	American Idol 10.226	Reaper (R) 0.62	Al Diablo con Guapos 2.15
8:30 Just for Laughs (R)	1.33 (2.05)	2.15 (3.38)	2.87 (11.028)	11.929 (0.62)	0.62 (2.25)	2.25
9:00 According to Jim	1.94	The Unit (R) 1.54	3.79	8.821 (8.720)	One Tree Hill 1.23	Passion 1.74
9:30 Carpoolers	1.33 (1.53)	1.53	4.310	8.620 (1.33)	1.43 (1.74)	1.64
10:00 Boston Legal (R)	1.33	48 Hours Mystery 2.36	Law & Order: SVU 3.08		Aqui y Ahora 1.54	
10:30 (1.34)	1.34 (2.46)	2.57 (2.98)	2.76		(1.44)	1.34
<b>Wednesday</b>	2.98	1.95	2.67	8.923	0.51	1.85
8:00 Wife Swap	2.26	Old Christine (R) 1.34	Deal or No Deal (R) 2.06	American Idol 9.426	Crowned 0.62	Al Diablo con Guapos 2.16
8:30 (2.26)	2.36	Old Christine (R) 1.44 (2.36)	2.67 (10.126)	10.627 (0.61)	0.51 (2.36)	2.46
9:00 Lost (R)	3.38	Criminal Minds (R) 2.25	Law & Order: Moment of Truth 2.87 (2.819)	8.020 (0.31)	One Tree Hill 0.41	Passion 1.84
9:30 (3.38)	3.28 (2.25)	2.36	Criminal Intent (R) (2.36) 2.46	7.619	0.31 (1.84)	1.74
10:00	3.39	CSI: NY (R) 1.95	Law & Order 3.28		Don Francisco Presenta 1.54	
10:30	3.49 (2.05)	2.16 (3.18)	3.19		(1.44)	1.34
<b>Thursday</b>	5.314	2.36	2.87	3.28	1.44	1.74
8:00 Lost clip show (R)	4.915	CSI: NY 1.76	My Name Is Earl 2.26	Are You Smarter Than 2.88	Smallville 1.54	Al Diablo con Guapos 2.16
8:30 (5.013)	5.213 (1.95)	2.05	The Office 1.95	5th Grader? (3.18) 3.49	1.74 (2.26)	2.36
9:00 Lost	6.779	CSI (R) 2.77	The Celebrity Apprentice 2.87 (3.38)	3.48 (1.33)	Supernatural 1.33	Passion 1.74
9:30 (6.777)	6.817 (2.77)	2.87	3.49		1.23 (1.74)	1.64
10:00 El Stone (P)	4.412	Without a Trace 2.36	3.28		Amas Casa Desperadas 1.34	
10:30 (4.011)	3.710 (2.36)	2.47	3.811		(1.33)	1.23
<b>Friday</b>	1.34	1.65	2.06	2.06	1.44	1.96
8:00 Grey's Anatomy (R)	1.14	Ghost Whisperer (R) 1.86	1 vs. 100 1.86	Bones (R) 1.45	WWE Smackdown 1.34	Al Diablo con Guapos 2.07
8:30 (1.13)	1.03 (1.86)	1.86 (2.05)	2.27 (1.55)	1.55 (1.44)	2.17	2.37
9:00 Desperate Housewives (R)	1.03	Moonlight (R) 1.44	Friday Night Lights 1.95	House 2.37	1.54	Passion 1.65
9:30 (1.03)	1.03 (1.54)	1.54 (1.96)	2.06 (2.47)	2.68	1.54 (1.75)	1.75
10:00 20/20	1.85	Numbers (R) 1.65	Las Vegas 2.06		Familia P. Lucie 1.95	
10:30 (2.06)	2.26 (1.55)	1.75 (2.16)	2.26		Retro P. Lucie 1.65	
<b>Saturday</b>	1.96	1.24	1.44	2.27		1.03
8:00 Movie: War of the Worlds	1.55	Ghost Whisperer (R) 0.93	American Gladiators (R) 1.14	Cops 2.07	Sabado Gigante 0.83	
9:00 (1.96)	1.86 (1.03)	1.13 (1.24)	1.44	Cops 2.47	(1.03)	0.93
9:30	2.06	48 Hours Mystery (R) 1.13	Law & Order: SVU (R) 1.34	America's Most Wanted 2.26		1.13
10:00	1.96 (1.13)	1.23 (1.44)	1.54 (2.26)	2.26		1.13
10:30	2.06	48 Hours Mystery 1.44	Law & Order (R) 1.65			1.13
10:30	2.26 (1.44)	1.55 (1.75)	1.75			1.03
<b>Sunday</b>	1.22	0.82	0.82	34.868	1.01	1.12
7:00 Extreme Makeover:	0.71	CBS Reports: 0.41	The Biggest Loser (R) 0.41	Super Bowl XLII: 36.074	CW Now 0.10	Hora Pico 0.82
7:30 Home Edition (R) (0.82)	1.02	Father Son ... (0.41)	0.51 (0.61)	New England 37.374	Aliens in America (R) 0.10	Chavo Animado 1.02
8:00 America's Funniest	1.12	60 Minutes 0.92	0.81 vs. New York Giants 36.171	Life Is Wild 36.171	Life Is Wild 0.10	Los 5 Magnificos 0.92
8:30 Home Videos (R) (1.12)	1.22 (0.82)	0.82	0.71 (37.573)	38.473	(0.20)	1.01 (1.22)
9:00 Movie:	1.12	Shark (R) 0.61	The Biggest Loser (R) 0.82	39.372	Crowned 0.01	1.12
9:30 Meet the Fockers	1.12 (0.61)	0.71 (1.12)	0.92	41.174 (0.20)	1.01	1.22
10:00 (1.43)	1.33	Cold Case (R) 1.02	1.02	Post-game 26.654		1.43
10:30	2.05 (1.33)	1.64	1.53	House 12.931		1.43
	2.36	1.74	2.15	12.932	0.82	1.54

Each ratings point represents 1.31 million viewers in 18-49. Figures in parentheses indicate program average. First-place ratings are indicated by shaded areas. (P) indicates premiere. (R) indicates rerun. Live events listed in Eastern Time. Source: Nielsen Media Research

of the outlandish show's progress. "From a budgetary standpoint, it's a very unique thing to have," Howe says. "And you're also able to bring a new texture to the show with whoever you cast as the Doctor."

Also keeping the latest version going is the current creative team, led by Davies and carefully preserved by Gardner.

"The crew works on 'Doctor Who' for nine months out of the year," says Gardner of her Cardiff-based production. "That team was growing, and I wanted to find a way to keep members together. Now, we can diversify so that they could go work on 'Torchwood,' and then come back and work on 'Doctor Who.'"

"Then they could then go

work on 'Sarah Jane.' They're working on different budgets, but they can cross-reference and be employed year-round."

The next season with Tennant will be the last one for a couple of years at least, since Davies has plans to leave the show. But the current team will produce specials, "Torchwood" and "The Sarah Jane Adven-

tures" in the meantime.

It's unclear how Sci-Fi will deal with the one-offs when they arrive, or how the kid-centric "Sarah Jane" will play on a net with a median age of 43, but then, the original show looked like a risk, too. For now, the gadabout alien seems to have made one of his diest journeys without incident: the trip out of England.