



45
DOCTOR
WHO
YEARS!

SFX gathers a galaxy of stars to tell us what *Doctor Who* means to them. Cue Russell T Davies, Stephen Fry, Clive Barker and more...



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David Tennant shooting Russell T Davies's "The Next Doctor".

You'll never top the Titanic, and you'll never top Killy Minogue, so the worst thing we could have done was cast Danni Minogue aboard the Lusitania!"

Russell T Davies is in flight, minting soundbites. "It's my first interview about this, so you're getting all the new lines!" he laughs.

September 2008. We're deep in a Soho media hole that's just hosted the press push for season two of *The Sarah Jane Adventures*, *Doctor Who*'s short-trousered spin-off. We've found a quiet corner, but we know we're being watched: three small kids are lurking, pen and paper in hand, determined to bag an inky flourish from the big man. A little cycle plays out as we talk: they run in, stare, whisper, scarpers, return, regarding Davies with a sweet, giggling awe. "I'll be there now!" he beams. "It's *SFX* magazine!" It's easy to see him as some skyscraping Welsh Santa, dispensing Saturday magic.

ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS

This year there's a new gift beneath the tree. The latest *Doctor Who* Christmas special—teasingly titled "The Next Doctor"—will embroil David Tennant's Time Lord in a reliably seasonal adventure, complete with wintry, Dickensian trimmings.

"There's a Christmas ghost tale feel about it in certain scenes, certain moments," reveals Davies. "It's just a

THE GHOSTS OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE

With *Who*'s latest Christmas special shooting, Russell T Davies found time to tell Nick Setchfield about the show's past, present and future...

question of keeping it different. And all of our Christmas specials have been very different. We started with an *Independence Day* epic, then we did a screwball comedy with Catherine Tate, then we did the biggest epic you'll ever see—on a television budget! Now it's time to do a smaller, more intimate story—though having said that, the ending is ferociously huge..."

Set on Christmas Eve 1851, this "more character based" caper teams Tennant with *State of Play* star David Morrissey. "It's really having a male as a second lead for the very first time in our era," says Davies. "There's a female character in there—Rosita—but it's really about the two men together. Because that's what we're doing now. For the next specials there are no new companions



Space-Time Coordinates

Navigating the decades with *Doctor Who*

23 Nov 1963
» First episode "An Unearthly Child" airs, the day after the second most important event of the decade: the Kennedy assassination.

5.15

see who



THE FIRST DOCTOR: WILLIAMS APPEARS, PROBABLY AS THE TARDIS'S FIRST COMPANION

30 Nov 1963
» First letter of complaint, as Miss Johnson and Mr Priddy of Wimbledon Park write in to whinge about historical inaccuracies in the depiction of Stone Age Earth. A tradition of pedantry begins.

21 Dec 1963
» The Daleks make their first appearance—or, at least, a Dalek arm does, threatening cardiganed companion Barbara with a good plunging. Dalekmania soon sweeps the nation.



3 Jul 1965
» First glimpse of a fellow member of the Doctor's race as he meets The Meddling Monk in 1066. Luckily he never encounters the Fiddling Priest.



23 Aug 1965
» Release of *Dr Who & the Daleks*, the first of two big-screen adaptations starring Peter Cushing, who plays the Doctor as a dodderly old inventor (think James Dyson with Alzheimer's).



8 Nov 1966
» The Cybermen make their first appearance in "The Tenth Planet," looking strangely like negative-image ministrants in their white masks.



SFX
ACCESS!
Interview
Russell T Davies

"It's probably my last chance to have a pop at the Cybermen..." Russell T Davies

Doctor: I can't tell you anything more than that. If I did, people would have to reason to watch it on Christmas Day. But he is amazing."

It's a title that James Groomer met to create it in the *Chatnoir* Radio Times. But it's another example of Davies in a situation that's more than he can handle. We haven't forgotten that regression that was at the close of "The Siles Earth", just last.

"Honest to God, and no-one will ever believe this, but some of us took that challenge in 'The Siles Earth' that seriously, because we all thought everyone knows he's not supernatural. We just thought it was a great

challenge in the sense of 'How does he get out of that?' So it's exactly that: we all by surprise when suddenly the programme was on. The first O'Clock News! The viewing figures went up to 10.5 million. It was good that week — it went absolutely fucking berserk."

"Chris Chibnall was the lovely man, saying everyone's suddenly realised how much they love David Tennant." They just

took him for granted. And that's because he's got them so up and go, we don't want him to go. We never saw it as treating. We saw it as fun. So the fact that a Christmas special called "The Next Doctor" was already planned (like a whole sequence of events but it is



Meet him and his Doctor in the new Christmas special

to the Doctor: They're all going to be your star of the week — or guest character of the week, because you don't necessarily have to take a star. It's putting the Doctor with different sets of people every week, which is an exciting new format. He's never involved in his own fiction. I know one was "The Deadly Assassin" (a 1973 serial) but that was

a one-off. This is a proper new format, as it goes forward."

Morrison's role is the special one: as a (only) recurring mystery. Some have even pegged him as a backdoor contender to the TARDIS throne, as a strength in our not hiding in the wings. Can Davies elaborate? "No," he grins. "Well, the role in 'The Next

29 Oct 1966

14 million viewers
"ITV" is the first channel to broadcast the *Doctor Who* Christmas special "The Deadly Assassin".



17 Feb 1968

15 million viewers
The first *Doctor Who* Christmas special "The Deadly Assassin" is broadcast on television.

16 Mar 1968

15 million viewers
The first *Doctor Who* Christmas special "The Deadly Assassin" is broadcast on television.



21 Jun 1968

15 million viewers
The first *Doctor Who* Christmas special "The Deadly Assassin" is broadcast on television.



5 Jan 1970

15 million viewers
The first *Doctor Who* Christmas special "The Deadly Assassin" is broadcast on television.

2 Jan 1971

15 million viewers
The first *Doctor Who* Christmas special "The Deadly Assassin" is broadcast on television.



30 Dec 1972

15 million viewers
The first *Doctor Who* Christmas special "The Deadly Assassin" is broadcast on television.

15 Dec 1973

15 million viewers
The first *Doctor Who* Christmas special "The Deadly Assassin" is broadcast on television.



45 DOCTOR WHO YEARS!

Isn't, because we didn't think 'The Doctor' was such a 'thing'." "The Ninth Doctor" also brings a nuance between our right-angled hero and his glowing, amoralistic nemesis, the Cybermen. "We needed a justified enemy," shares Davies. "The central story between David Tennant and David Tennant is so huge that you almost need the shorthand of an accepted nemesis as you don't have to spend 27 weeks going 'Well, they're green, and they attack people, though their skin...'. I think they're brilliant, the Cybermen, and they do new things that we've never seen, then de-brief. And we've never done an established enemy at Christmas, so I thought 'Let's try that. They seemed to fit somehow. I wouldn't have thought of Cybermen if it hadn't been a period piece. It was the first thing I thought of, which was probably an odd usage of Cybermen in the show series. The *Bank Heist*" (1966 William Shatner).



It's Moffat on the left (and the new year) with the Doctor.



Christmas special: 'The Snow Monsters' (he and the girl who became Clara)

with new showrunner Steven Moffat, who's stepping out his own take on the show for the grand rebirth in 2010. "They're planning season five now. There's a priority, really, as whenever we think up something for the

specials we send a synopsis to them. Not even a synopsis, really, just a description. If it was set on Venus I'd say 'As you do, a story set on Venus!' And he would say 'Yes or no to that. It's really simple. Concise email! They've got the greater impetus. They've got 13 episodes to fill. They're not full-throated at the moment and neither are we - we've 'til we think we'd - but it'll get better!'"

"Does he feel vaguely proprietorial?" "No, not at all. I laugh as I love not knowing what they're planning. Much as I love the show, it's a job, and this is just a way of humbling that job."

"I think me and Steven should get together and smoke something called *Principle One*. I'll never be interviewed about you and you'll never be interviewed about me. As our lives will be so much more full!"

Davies dismisses recent tabloid tattle that the specials will be slow. "This, absolutely not. It's just common sense..." and is equally sweeping of all those sniping rumors to that there's a big screen. Who just waiting for the green light: "There's no time to go,

let alone make a blockbuster movie!" But he's enthusiastic about the four adventures that will mark an ending to the show he's resurrected.

"They'll all have different rooms, all with very different locations. They're all an hour long, which is fun. It gives us that Christmas Day shape to five one hour installes a bit - the Christmas Day ones are always bigger. I know I'm describing 'The Ninth Doctor' as more intimate, but it's got great, hilarious action sequences."

WHO GOES THERE?

"We're really going to have a hard time now. We start filming in January so people fans, online - will start to see footage and photos of stuff well in advance. You don't want people seeing things six months in advance - not even live with that, and it's quite exciting. But it worries me that you'll have a year to pick apart all those f*cking details. Publicising them is going to be interesting."

And soon, of course, Davies will be just another viewer, chasing his Saturday fix. "Oh, it'll be marvellous," he smiles. "I'll probably be asked to be the launch of season five - I might refuse to go, of course, in high disgust so that episode will probably be special for me. But after that, I'll have them all to myself, which will be brilliant. Can you imagine? How exciting!"

He walks over to meet his young fan club, standing for the perfect pose. Maybe that's his true sign-off - three wonderstruck kids who want his autograph of a man who's written the reality. The moment that, if nothing else, will ensure a future for Doctor Who. **SW**

After Moffat's death, Steven Moffat returns to the show.



Yes, it's a time of torch-planning for New Who. **Introducing** Davies is abiding the love 2005 specials in parallel

17 Jan 1974

It begins! 20th Century Fox's *Target* television line, *Doctor Who*, and its *Auton* miniseries is introduced. A series of 128 episodes, all featuring the prime "re-creating" concept.



8 Jun 1974

It's the first time the actor who plays the Doctor is named. It's also the first time the name 'Doctor Who' is used in the series.

8 Mar 1975

The first episode of the first season, in which the Doctor is introduced to the Cybermen. An alien of giant size with a glowing chest, he is the first Cyberman to be seen on screen.



May 1976

The Doctor's wife, Susan, is introduced. The first 'real' long enough.



1 Oct 1977

The first episode of the second season, in which the Doctor is introduced to the Cybermen. An alien of giant size with a glowing chest, he is the first Cyberman to be seen on screen.

20 Oct 1979

The first episode of the third season, in which the Doctor is introduced to the Cybermen. An alien of giant size with a glowing chest, he is the first Cyberman to be seen on screen.



25 Oct 1980

The first episode of the fourth season, in which the Doctor is introduced to the Cybermen. An alien of giant size with a glowing chest, he is the first Cyberman to be seen on screen.



21 Mar 1981

The first episode of the fifth season, in which the Doctor is introduced to the Cybermen. An alien of giant size with a glowing chest, he is the first Cyberman to be seen on screen.

