

Debate the issues of the day with other Times readers

THE RIGHT MEDICINE?

What did you think of the new *Doctor Who*? Is the series the way forward for the BBC?

AFTER years of suffering so-called reality shows, mind-numbing makeover programmes and puerile pop wannabe waffle, at last we have a return to the thoroughly entertaining adventure series in *Doctor Who*. It's the best thing the BBC has produced in a long time. Those of us who remember such great adventure series as *The Saint* and *The Avengers* have learnt to appreciate good television. If a 42-year-old children's sci-fi series can knock Ant and Dec off the top of the TV ratings, then I think the rest of the channels had better wake up.

Terry Doyle, Birmingham

Plastic story

WHAT a disappointment. People turning into plastic mannequins may have excited audiences at one time, but in today's world you cannot simply create a slapdash, weak and frankly boring storyline like this. I expected to be wowed by the first episode but was left in a worried state — is this the best the BBC can manage?

Ryan Ayrton,
Halifax, West Yorkshire

The good Doctor

ABSOLUTELY — the new series of *Doctor Who* is the way forward for the BBC. Saturday's episode was clever, with canny casting and witty dialogue. Talent contests and reality shows are undeniably popular, but we've reached saturation point. Something like *Doctor Who* reminds us that television can give us much more intelligent and thought-provoking stuff. Long may the Doctor continue.

Ben Morris,
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Out of time lord

I THOUGHT Saturday's episode fell rather short of previous *Doctor Who* stories. The three-quarter-hour episode was not long enough to introduce a new Doctor and complete the storyline, which finished too quickly. I hope the forthcoming episodes are better, otherwise I shall be voting this *Doctor* a flop.

Tony Britton,
Biggleswade, Bedfordshire

Alienation

I WAS astonished at the favourable press you gave to the latest version of *Doctor Who*. After weeks of anticipation I and two friends settled down to this sacrilege. If there are scores of unemployed actors, how did Billie Piper get cast? Her inability to act is painful to watch. Eccleston is a bold choice for the Doctor, but he struggles with an inane script. They risk alienating all their potential viewers: fame academy fans won't get it.

sci-fi fans will turn off. Bring back *Blake's 7*.

Ruth Barber, King's Lynn

Everything you need

IF YOU want television that's genuinely aimed at all the family, that boasts wit, intelligence, a moral code and super aliens and special effects, and which can pay for itself with fabulous merchandising then yes, *Doctor Who* is the answer.

David A. Jacovelli,
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Stay the course

THE ratings success for *Doctor Who* on Saturday shows that it can still have appeal to a wider audience, beyond the hardcore fans. I think it can continue to be a success for the BBC. In America, expensive science fiction programming is in decline. Shows such as the latest *Star Trek* series, *Enterprise*, have been cancelled because they are not economically viable compared with cheaply made reality TV which bring ratings and revenue. Of course, as a public broadcaster the situation with the BBC is slightly different, but *Doctor Who* must maintain its momentum throughout the first series to ensure a long-term future. So far, I don't think it will disappoint.

Richard Warner, East Sussex

Sexy retro

SATURDAY'S programme struck a fantastic balance between hilarity and tension, sex appeal and stiff alien retro. The script was at times slapstick, but this just added to the fun. Christopher Eccleston is a manic and sexy Doctor; Billie Piper is a beautiful and capable assistant. Well done the BBC.

Rebecca Rogers, Bath

So far so good

YES, we must have a *Doctor Who* for the 21st century and beyond. The BBC have done a good job so far. I await clever, troubling and original stories as time goes on.

Andy Tyler,
King's Lynn

Wit and science

I MUST congratulate the BBC on the impressive job it has done in bringing this classic but elderly series back with such vigour and mainstream appeal. Russell T. Davies is a very talented writer, and the main actors played their roles superbly. *Doctor Who*'s appeal lies, it seems to me, in its distinctively British flavour; a hero who is a man of thought and science, anti-violence and compassion, who never uses guns, pilots a weaponless craft which looks like a police box and uses a wit sharper than Oscar Wilde. The new series seems to retain the feel of the old ones admirably, and was a visual and dramatic *tour de force*. I hope it sets a precedent.

Robert Pope,
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Cut the camp

I DISLIKED this *Doctor Who* just as I disliked the 1996 film flop and most of the series in the 1980s. However, I respect the fact that many enjoyed it and I am glad that the Time Lord's fortunes seem to be waxing again. There was a tiny spark of vintage Doc in the all-too-brief Auton invasion scenes. The programme must avoid the sense of camp pastiche that haunted the show in the 1980s and still dogs the new version, giving way to intelligent production values which underpinned the vintage episodes of the 1960s and 1970s. Overall, it felt more like CBeebies than science fiction.

And let's restore the classic Delia Derbyshire arrangement of Ron Grainer's timeless theme tune.

Name and address supplied

