

# DR. WHO COMES TO AMERICA



Jetting towards the United States is England's longest-running science-fiction television series, **Doctor Who**. There are 72 episodes filled with monsters, intelligent aliens and an array of fantastic special-effects

**By Tom Rogers**

■ The longest-running science-fiction series on TV in England is a kiddie-oriented production called **Doctor Who**. Like most popular media characters, this hero is well-known throughout the world. His program is syndicated in a number of countries, and there are books, toys and other merchandise in abundance. In addition, there have

A strange, demonlike alien confronts Dr. Who





been two specially-made British motion pictures starring Peter Cushing as the intrepid Time Lord. The first of these is **Dr. Who and the Daleks** (1965), and the sequel is called **Daleks' Invasion Earth: 2150 A.D.** (1966). Needless to say, these theatrical releases are very juvenile, and both contain the same arch-enemies: the Daleks.

Our hero first appeared on BBC-TV about 13 years ago and has been going strong ever since. At that time, he appeared as an old man in his sixties (played by William Hartnell), and he was accompanied by a woman — Susan — who referred to him as her grandfather. While lacking traditional superpowers, he had two things going for him: he was a near-eternal Time Lord and he had a "Tardis." First of all, the Time Lords are a highly advanced extraterrestrial race that have the ability to travel through time and space. They can also regenerate their bodies whenever illness or old

Here then, in our never-ending quest to please, is a complete guide to **Doctor Who**. Watch for it in your neighborhood real soon!

age endangers them. A Tardis, which stands for Time and Relative Dimensions in Space, looks like an obsolete British police call box, but it can bend time and space with little effort. On the outside, it appears as though only one person can fit into it, but it is much larger on the inside. This peculiarity is sometimes referred to as being "dimensionally transcendental." In any event, the bad thing about the Tardis is that it is occasionally erratic, in that it can deposit its passengers where they might not want to be.

Whenever the program is about to get a new actor to play the part of the title hero, the regenerative power of the Time Lords is called upon. This was first used during an episode with the ruthless Cybermen. Doctor Who stated that his body was beginning to wear out, then he went into a coma and was transformed into a younger man. The changeling (now Patrick Troughton) not only looked much different, but his personality was also altered. He was completely different, except for his brilliant mind and memories. Later



the High Court found him guilty. However, his moving argument got him a light sentence: exile on our world for an indefinite period. As part of his punishment, they caused another change in his form (now played by Jon Pertwee), and his personality naturally altered, as well. Additionally, the trial caused the Time Lords to change their minds about helping others. From then on, they took an active part in the defense of the universe.

As a result, Who's superiors caused a severe problem when he was confronted by Omega, an evil Time Lord. In order for the hero to deal with this powerful opponent, his race lifted his previous selves from

Dr. Who (Peter Cushing) plots strategy against the evil Daleks in this scene from "Dr. Who and the Daleks." ▼



A Silurian scientist approaches in a suspense-filled scene from "Dr. Who and the Silurians." Jon Pertwee stars as Dr. Who. ▶

on, during a fight against the War Lords, he found it necessary to ask his race for aid. It was at this time that viewers learned more about their hero.

It was the practice of Time Lords to observe the affairs of other worlds, but never to interfere in what they deemed Fate (much like Marvel Comics' **Watcher**). Naturally, Who disagreed with this attitude, and he was therefore a renegade to his people. He believed that it was essential for all good beings to fight against injustice, and in order to do so he stole the Tardis and eventually journeyed to 20th century Earth. When the War Lords were defeated, Who was placed on trial for treason. Although his defense was brilliant,



▲ The newest reincarnation of Dr. Who faces capture at the hands of an alien.

▼ One of the many alien enemies of Dr. Who.



their respective time streams so that all three existed at the same time. Quite unexpectedly, the conflicting personalities began arguing; although this did not prevent them from overcoming their foe, it caused a great deal of aggravation and torment for all involved. This incident caused the Time Lords to release Who from exile, and he took to outer space once again.

During an eventual battle with a race of giant spiders, our hero was afflicted with a deadly alien radiation. He transformed himself into his youngest reincarnation (Tom Baker),

lethal gas, and their metal arms were sufficient to handle their special machinery. Looking like robots, they grew to hate all normal lifeforms, and they vowed to wipe out all such life in the cosmos. Although Who defeated them on their homeworld, they turned up in many more places, during various time periods. Once, for example, they conquered most of our world. While this story was covered during the TV series, it was redone as **Daleks' Invasion Earth: 2150 A.D.** At the conclusion, our eternal hero succeeded in destroying all of his opponents, but there were still others throughout the universe that had to be dealt with.

Thanks to Time Life Television, certain people in the United States have been able to follow the adventures of the third Dr. Who. Not long ago, the company acquired the rights to release 13 serialized stories; this amounted to 72 weekly episodes, filled with monsters, intelligent aliens and an array of special effects. Since this is a syndicate series, it is not available in all parts of the country, so if you are interested in seeing it, but are in an area that is not airing the program, contact your local stations and ask that they put it on. It might prove to be most intriguing.

The rest of this article will deal with the adventures that are available on this side of the ocean. Predictably, I will be sure not to give away any endings, because that wouldn't be fair. According to reports, Time-Life is doing pretty well with this package, and there is a good chance that they will obtain more adventures. Watch for them.

**Ambassadors of Death** (seven chapters). A rocket returns from Mars, but the astronauts are not aboard it. To solve this mystery, Who makes a solo flight into space, boards a huge alien ship, and learns of a plot to start an intergalactic war.

**Claws of Axos** (four chapters). An extraterrestrial spaceship lands on Earth, and its crew of beautiful golden humanoids declare themselves to be friendly. However, Who learns that they are all organically grown parts of the craft itself, which is a living creature called Axos. Its nutrient has been exhausted, and it will remain on our world until its systems have been replenished by

and this is the one that still exists today. He continues to battle evil throughout the galaxy, but now he does it as a more congenial person.

Needless to say, Peter Cushing looks very different from the actors who were cast as Dr. Who on television. Nonetheless, he acquired Tardis for two theatrical adventures that achieved considerable success throughout the world. In **Dr. Who and the Daleks**, he landed on a distant planet and helped the blond, fair-skinned Thals to defeat their merciless enemies. This story, which was based on the very first Who adventure, explained how an atomic war had created the Daleks. Having formerly co-existed with the Thals, the Daleks built mobile metal casings to shield them from radiation. Through the centuries, they degenerated into a grotesque, mutated species that could not exist outside of the artificial housings. They rolled on wheels, were able to fire a

◀ A Dalek captures Dr. Who.

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are all heard here. This album is still available, and should be gotten as soon as possible, along with the London Phase Four soundtrack album for **Obsession** (# SPC-21160). Both **Sisters** and **Obsession** are conducted by Herrmann, which is very fortunate; considering the complex musical "special effects" present in both scores, it is doubtful that anyone else could have produced interpretations of that magnitude. This stuff is even more eerie than the **Twilight Zone** scores of Herrmann.

Alfred Hitchcock is the master of the weird, the far-out. His films are usually combinations of mystery and horror, with strong overtones of fantasy and pure fright. The soundtrack for **Vertigo** is a rarity now, even though it was recently reissued in Japan. Some of **Vertigo** appears on the London Phase Four record **Music From the Great Movie Thrillers** (# SP-44126). Once again, Herrmann conducts the London Philharmonic Orchestra in a

delightful blend of horror that includes music from other of Herrmann's Hitchcock scores (**North By Northwest**, **Marnie**, a specially composed satirical portrait of Hitchcock, and a beautiful portion of the **Psycho** score).

**Psycho** is the most famous of Hitchcock's films, and it may also be the score for which Herrmann is best remembered. To compliment its black-and-white starkness, Herrmann composed music that used only string instruments. He produced irritatingly beautiful music; at times he made his melodies scream. Since the film was released in 1960, appreciators of great music and great films have hoped that Herrmann's score would be recorded eventually. That dream came true shortly before Herrmann's untimely death, when he conducted the National Philharmonic Orchestra for Unicorn Records' 1975 album [record number RHS-336]. The film's introduction, the horrible murders of Marion Crane and

Arbogast the detective are all here, along with Norman Bates' terrifying secret and all the assorted madness that occurs throughout the masterful movie.

Near Christmas, 1976, another gifted film music composer telephoned Bernard Herrmann. Herrmann's wife answered the phone, and informed the caller her husband was still asleep. She attempted to awaken him, but she could not; Bernard Herrmann had died in his sleep that night. He had become a part of that vastness he had re-produced in musical terms so beautifully, so many times during his career. It's sad to think of Herrmann as a part of the past, especially since his music will always be a part of the future. Despite the fact that Herrmann's music is now a finite quantity, the recordings of that beautiful music will continue to be issued for many years to come, and will continue to be listened to; probably for many centuries, in many places. ●

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absorbing all living energy and leaving behind a dead sphere.

**Colony in Space** [six chapters]. While colonists and mineralogists feud for land rights on a bleak planet 500 years from now, "The Master" [an evil Time Lord] schemes to gain control of a doomsday machine that is hidden in the ruins of an ancient city. Who is determined to prevent him from using this weapon to blackmail the entire galaxy.

**Curse of Peladon** [four chapters]. Sometime in the future, the Galactic Federation is a union of all intelligent life in the immediate universe. They send a delegation to the remote and primitive planet of Peladon to consider admitting it into the organization. Someone attempts to sabotage this conference, and Who becomes involved in the intrigue when his Tardis makes an accidental landing near the scene and is mistaken for the delegate from Earth.

**Daleks** [four chapters]. Rebel humans return from the 22nd century, where they are slaves to the dreaded Daleks, in order to change history and avert the alien conquest. Who must combat his old enemies and also convince the

rebels that they, themselves, are going to cause the catastrophe they have come back to prevent.

**Demons** [five chapters]. When an archeological team cuts through a prehistoric barrow to the tomb beyond, they unleash terrible forces. Consequently, The Master, together with a coven of witches, calls forth the demon Azal. Although the villain wants to be ruler of the world, Azal is thinking of destroying it, altogether. Who, in his attempts to overcome the demon and its redeemer, is nearly burned at the stake.

**Inferno** [seven chapters]. A drilling project releases a gas that turns humans into Primords, and at the same time it threatens to explode the planet. Who travels through the space-time continuum to a world parallel to ours, and just a few hours ahead of it, where Doomsday does indeed arrive.

**Mind of Evil** [six chapters]. A machine that "executes" criminals by extracting the evil particles from their brains is discovered to contain an alien parasite that feeds on crime. Behind this insidious plot to amass evil is Who's arch-enemy, The Master, who plans to provoke a global war in which he will emerge the only victor.

**Mutants** [six chapters]. Who and his assistant are transported hundreds of years into the future to

Skybase One, a giant space station in orbit around the planet Solos, on which a mysterious plague of mutations is turning the inhabitants into strange monsters. The Time Lord discovers that the megalomaniac Marshal, who controls Solos, is oxygenizing the atmosphere; this will make the sphere suitable for Earthlings, but unfit for native Solonians. As the aliens rebel against Skybase, Who and an exiled scientist seek the cause and cure for the mutations.

**Sea Devils** [Six chapters]. The title creatures are a lizard-like race of intelligent beings that once ruled Earth. A colony of them is revived on the seabed near the island of The Master. When ships begin to vanish mysteriously, Who investigates and learns that his foe is developing a machine that will revive Sea Devil colonies all over the world. With their help, The Master hopes to take over the planet.

**Silurians** [seven chapters]. Energy generated by a nuclear reactor resurrects the Silurians: intelligent reptiles that evolved millions of years before mankind. In hibernation to avoid extinction, they now emerge to reclaim the globe that they regard as rightfully theirs.

**Terror of Autons** [four chapters]. The Master arrives on our world and allies himself with the Nestenes,



who are aliens bent on invading Earth with an army of plastic Autons. Who must thwart them and other sinister plastic weapons devised by his most persistent foe.

**Time Monster** [six chapters]. Who and a companion follow The Master through time to Atlantis. It is there that the villain plans to seize the Crystal of Kronos, which would give him power over time itself. Naturally, such a situation could very well bring about the end of the entire universe. ●

## MATINEE SCI-FI

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pany rocketed to Mars in order to stop a devastating Nitron Cannon. Lo and behold, Ming was back from the dead, and serving [but waiting to command] the Queen of Mars. [Serial villains usually had titles like "Emperor of the Universe," "Ruler of the World," and other grandiose misnomers.] As one might expect, not the queen's blackmagic, the Clay or Tree People, futuristic weaponry, nor anything else was able to stop Flash for long. By the conclusion, the Nitron Cannon was silenced, Earth safe, the angry Red Planet in the hands of allies, and Ming was dead [or, so it seemed]. Although this effort was considerably inferior to **Flash Gordon**, it had its moments.

Next came **Buck Rogers** [1939], which was based on a successful comic strip that had poor artwork and was badly written. Owing to its popularity, though, Universal made a 12-chapter serial based on this character, starring Buster Crabbe. While **Flash Gordon** closely followed the strip's storyline, **Buck Rogers** deviated enormously. Gone were the Mongol hordes that had conquered the planet, and in their place was a criminal organization. A teenager named Buddy was thrown in for viewer identification purposes, and, while action was fast-paced and somewhat silly, deaths were almost non-existent. Aside from **Captain Video** [later, folks], this production probably sported the greatest number of science-fiction devices—from teleportation chambers to mind-control helmets, spaceships, invisibility machines, and many other mind-boggling goodies. Finally, with the help of the inhabitants of Saturn, Buck and the Hidden City, rebels saved the day and gained control of

the world. Although Buck never returned to the screen, Universal Television is considering doing a live-action weekly series [during the early 1950s, there was a cheap, short-lived program based on the character]. Hopefully, it will be a lot better than the serial.

**The Phantom Creeps** [1939] contained the ugliest-looking [eight feet tall!] robot I have ever seen—and I've seen them all. This tin cutie was controlled by mad Bela Lugosi, who was out to rule the sphere. Unfortunately, this effort lacked superheroes, aliens, and a futuristic look, but it proved to be rather entertaining because of its atmospheric style. In the final chapter, the robot was blown up and the villains suffered the same fate.

The final part of the trilogy, **Flash Gordon Conquers the Universe**, was released in 1940. This time around, the costumes and sets were quite lavish, and the designer stuck to the comic strip's basic designs. Anyway, our hero and his friends were back on Mongo in this fitting conclusion to the saga. Naturally, Ming was back in action—and somehow restored to his throne—but in time goodness prevailed and the evil ones were vanquished.

In addition to the usual SF elements, this serial was the only one of the three to contain robots—nasty, exploding ones, at that. Due to the success of **Star Wars** and **Close Encounters of the Third Kind**, Dino diLaurentis has announced that he will be making a multi-million-dollar theatrical movie about "what's-his-name," in the near future. Let's pray that he does a better job with this than he did with **King Kong**. Incidentally, there has already been a German-made TV show and a porno motion picture (**Flesh Gordon**) about Flash.

A masked do-gooder called Copperhead [because he wore a copper mask] challenged **The Mysterious Dr. Satan** [1940], a robot-builder of ill repute. By employing common criminals and a bank-robbing robot, Satan succeeded in acquiring a lot of money and killing off a number of enemies before the defender of justice zonked both the villain and his metal toy.

Another mechanical contraption, the Metalogen Man, turned up in **The Monster and the Ape** [1945]. Although he was built by a benevolent scientist, the robot was stolen by

criminals who used the thing for nefarious purposes. They also had a pet ape [6 feet tall!] that did their bidding, but who worked for bananas. As in all other serials, the goodguys got the upper hand in the end and turned the tables on their foes.

Mars sent an invader to do us in, and this human-looking chap caused a great many problems in **The Purple Monster Strikes** [1945]. Later on, a female alien joined him, and together they possessed locals and hired criminals to pave the way for an invasion. By the finale, the woman had fallen off a cliff and the male was blown up while taking off in his spaceship.

**Brick Bradford**, another comic strip hero, made it to the big screen in 1947. With the help of his formidable Time Top, he and his companions traveled to other ages and distant worlds in order to defeat their evil opponents. The funniest scenes took place on the Moon, where the dumbest-looking outfits were fashionable. Needless to say, this was not a classic.

Another alien arrived on Earth in 1948, but this time he was somebody special: **Superman**. The opening chapter revealed his origin on Krypton, subsequent adoption by the Kents and his move to Metropolis. Later on, after taking a job as a reporter with the **Daily Planet**, he tangled with the villainous Spider Lady. This tough gal came equipped with kryptonite, a reducer-ray, and other assorted sundries. Despite all of her power, though, the Man of Steel prevailed.

Another super-hero, **King of the Rocket Men**, debuted in theaters in 1949. Wearing a bullet-shaped helmet, a control box and a set of rockets, he was able to fly without burning off his legs [miraculous!] His opponent was known as Dr. Vulcan, and had developed a Decimator that he eventually used to destroy most of New York City. Arriving a little late to save the unfortunate residents, the good guy stopped his enemy from harming anyone else. In case anybody is interested, stock footage from **Deluge** was used in the final chapter.

"What's-his-face" returned in **Atom Man vs. Superman** [1950]. Arch-foe Lex Luthor was secretly the Atom Man, and under this guise he used his scientific brilliance to terrorize the country. Not only did he create a teleportation booth that