

TOMB EXHUMED



MORRIS BARRY directed three Doctor Who stories; the two Cybermen stories *The Moonbase* and *The Tomb of the Cybermen*, and *The Dominators*. His first chance to see *Tomb of the Cybermen* since its first broadcast was at BBC Video's Press preview. It was there that Morris Barry discovered that part of an interview he had conducted for BBC Video's Cybermen special release was at the beginning of the tape: "Well, they did warn me right at the last minute that they were going to stick on a bit of me — looking very old and weepy — and seeing your face about four feet high on a big screen, it's a bit shattering. However, I thought the quality of the [*Tomb*] picture, and the sound particularly, was marvellous."

Cast Problems

Morris Barry had previously seen the two surviving episodes of *The Moonbase* and so was able to compare his two Cybermen stories. "After all these years I can sit back and think, you know, somebody directed that at one time but it wasn't me, and I can criticize it, I think, quite dispassionately. And I felt that I did better that way [in *Moonbase*], directing-wise. But it didn't have such a big cast."

"You see, *The Tomb* had an enormous cast really, because there were three lots of people. When you've got so much action and so much running about, you've got to be spot on — you've really got to work bloody hard to get your shots right, for a start. Quite apart from directing the actors — I thought the performances were quite good. I loved Patrick Troughton. It's very interesting to see it after all these years."

On the whole, the story stood the test of time well, apart from some rather obvious effects, but in the rush of making the programme there's often not much you can do. "There isn't really, because always with the *Doctor Whos* you had very little money, and I think the Design department did so marvellously with what they'd got. The only sound thing which I disliked about *The Tomb* was that it was so good you could detect that those steps



The Cybermen emerging from their tombs is a classic *Doctor Who* sequence

Photo: BBC



The Cybermats, a metallic lifeform controlled by the Cybermen

Photo: BBC

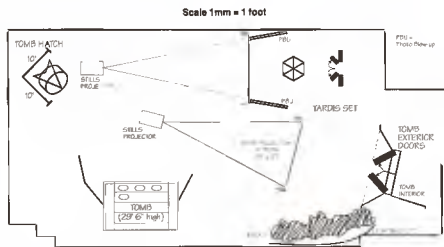
Myrris Barry Photo: BBC



The cover of the BBC Video



Main picture: One of the newly awoken Cybermen pierces its way out of its 'cocoon' Photo: BBC



Schematic representation of Ealing Film Studio 2, used for the filming of *Tomb of the Cybermen*. Note that the TARDIS set consists of two photo blow-up walls and a projected picture of the scanner area

were simply hardboard or something like that and when the Cyberman broke through what should have been a metal thing it was obviously plywood. But I think they did marvellously.

"You see when a director comes to *Doctor Who* you've got so much back-up

from other people — you've got Design, you've got Special Effects (Visual Effects as they call it nowadays) and a whole multitude of people, and if you don't know how to do something, as I didn't in *The Moonbase*. [In that] the Cybermen had a [laser-type] gun and it had to deflect or be

seen to deflect over the Moonbase and so I said, 'How the bloody hell do I do that?' and they said, 'Oh, don't worry about that, just tell the labs to do it, and they did. And so I just sent off the film and the labs came back with the whole thing. Actually, it's not very obvious, it's all over in a flash, but you do see the beam go away in perspective and then go up.'

Film and Sound

Some of the Tomb interiors, the Tomb main entrance and, surprisingly, the TARDIS interior were shot on film. Does Morris Barry prefer this medium?

"Oh, yes. I think everybody likes film because you've got a chance to have another go. Mind you, of course you can nowadays do re-takes in the video studio. We could do a certain amount of re-takes there — not a lot. If something really disastrous went wrong you'd probably reshoot the whole scene again, you wouldn't just insert, you know, a couple of shots, as one could on film."

Both his Cybermen stories used library music which often only just bordered on the melodic. "When you do one of these

Morris Barry and a member of the production team inspect one of the Tomb sets



series you go into it and they say, 'We've always used this, that and the other and the producer always takes on that sort of thing'. And the thing I didn't like about *The Moonbase* was the background music, or noises. It was far too loud — far too loud. I felt that it was all right on *The Tomb*.

This would have been a particular problem in *The Moonbase* as a point was made as to how noisy the Gravitrone was. "That is precisely what I mean. I was worried about the background noise in *The Moonbase*. But I remember distinctly saying to Sound, 'Do we have to have all this the whole time?'" and they said, "Yes, yes, it's traditional with the programme, you've got to have it". And so I said [grudgingly], 'All right'."

Pace

In analysis, not a great deal really happens in *Tomb's* story, yet the pace does not seem to slacken. "Yes. I like to think that was due to me. Because the thing I was glad to see in both *Moonbase* and *Tomb* was that it had plenty of pace and it got on with the job, we didn't hang about. And I think that is essential for this type of programme. The trouble is that I tended to put an awful lot of shots in and when you start — I mean, I plan all these things beforehand — when you actually play them, they go like mad. And the camera operators have a helluva job because they think, 'Oh, ****, it's Morris again and he puts in more shots than you can possibly manage.' I think you've really got to push yourself on these sort of Sci-Fi things."

"I think I agree [that not a lot happens]. Even now, having seen it again, I don't think I know what the plot was really. I felt it was very complex because you had three lots of people; Cybermen, Doctor Who's lot and this other lot."

Pulling out the Stops

"As I've said so often before, you've got to pull out all the stops with *Doctor Who* and those types of programmes. Try and vary your shots a bit. Make them interesting, and so on. But as with all television, I don't think you should ever draw attention to your wonderful shooting, no matter how bloody marvellous you think your shooting is. 'The play's the thing', you know, not the camera work at all."

"I think I must have had difficulties to a certain extent with a big set; but then we had a lot of people compared with the other two *Doctor Whos* I did. And they kept on bouncing back... We talk about a tight two-shot, you know, with two people in it, nice and tight. I like to get in

Tomb of the Cybermen Reviewed

Non *Doctor Who* fans must be wondering what all the fuss is about. Surely this is just, after all, yet another old black and white story being released on video.

The Tomb of the Cybermen comes from a period of *Doctor Who* which essentially no longer exists, except on audio recordings. So over the years some of the stories have gained an almost mythic status, and *Tomb* is one of those stories. Thankfully it does stand up to its reputation. It is a story with a *Quatermass*-like atmosphere of gloom, doom and the fear of an alien menace.

The story concerns an Earth expedition looking for the remains of the Cybermen, who vanished some time ago. The Doctor arrives on the planet Telos just as the tombs of the Cybermen have been uncovered. The remainder of the plot deals with the power struggles of the humans and the growing menace of the Cybermen as they are woken from their long sleep. That really is the whole plot, but the parts that form it are all gems. The atmosphere of the story is very well maintained and there is no moment where you start looking at your watch. This story is an attention-grabber.

On the whole, the production works well. Thankfully, there are only two moments where the effects are poor. The direction is interesting and dynamic and the basically simple sets used to the full. The cast acts their socks off, and Patrick Troughton gives an excellent performance. This is a *Doctor* at his best.

So if you want to see an excellent example of Sixties drama, a classic *Doctor Who* story, then this is a tape to buy.

Now for the video itself. Unfortunately, it starts off with an 'interview' with director Morris Barry. It is unfortunate, because he looks like he has been held against a wall at gunpoint and told to say something to the camera, or else... It is quite off-putting, and really not worth the 'exclusive introduction' banner across the video cover. Also, this piece would make much more sense at the end of the video, after you'd seen the story, but I suppose that problem only arises the first time you watch the video.

The cover itself is at best only fair. The artwork looks like a touched-up photograph, although I'm told it isn't, and the use of silver writing a nice thought, but probably wasted. Of particular annoyance to *Doctor Who* video collectors will be the fact that the logo on the spine is the wrong way around, making the spine stand out like a sore thumb on the shelf amongst all the previous releases.

For fans of *Who*, the worst aspect of the tape will be the hypocrisy of the blurb. This states that the story was 'lost' and 'missing', when everyone knows that it was the BBC's video-recording section who wiped the original video recordings, and then Enterprises themselves who destroyed all remaining film copies. Tsk, tsk!

Laughably, all this self-congratulation by BBC Video will be lost to the general buying public, who couldn't care less whether or not this story has just been found. To them, the story will be just as rare as, say, the first Dalek story, or almost any other release. I wonder, therefore, if they will be prepared to pay £12.99 for 'just another old black and white *Doctor Who* story'?

Finally, a very quick note that on the inside of the video cover is a welcome list of BBC Video *Doctor Who* releases which also lists the adversaries in each story. Pity they didn't get someone better informed about *Doctor Who* to write it.

as close as I can. But when you have five people you cannot have one shot on every person who says their line. You've got to put them in a long shot and this I think I didn't like when I saw it the other day. There was one where I had about five people in a shot and the Doctor was apparently sitting down, and the chap at the end turned to look out of shot and we didn't know who he was looking at until later on, and that was bad on my part, but how I could have done it otherwise I don't know... Pull back and there's a 6-shot but then you wouldn't see anybody, you'd be so far away. It's difficult."

And that's probably the understatement of the year...

Jan Vincent-Rudzki

The Cybermen are defrosted

