



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO WHO!

WORDS DARREN SCOTT



miserable, rainy day in central

London is nothing new for this particular journalist, but it's not every day you turn the corner onto Trafalgar Square and see the TARDIS hanging in the air.

GT is on location for The Day of The Doctor, the 50th anniversary special episode of the world's longest-running (and best) sci-fi show, Doctor Who.

The Eleventh Doctor, Matt Smith, is hanging from the bottom of the famous Police Box, while Clara Oswald (Jenna Coleman) peers out from the door. The time machine has been kidnapped by – well, we're not going to give any spoilers away, even if we did actually manage to discover any (we don't).

But it's out there that classic monsters the Zygons and Daleks are returning, as well as David Tennant and Billie Piper as the Tenth Doctor and Rose. Plus, the 75 minute episode, going out on the actual anniversary of Saturday 23 November, also stars John Hurt as The Doctor (no, we don't know how either).

Matt's taking dangling above London in his bow-legged stride.

"Tom Cruise does all his own stuff doesn't he? I think because it's 90ft they're panicking. I'm harnessed in!"

As well as being simultaneously broadcast around the world at the same time – AND in cinemas throughout the UK – the episode also boasts another first for the show.

"My chin in 3D," Matt beams, jutting it out. "I think it's about time.

Frankly I think it's exciting. I think this show was born for 3D. The TARDIS in 3D looks brilliant."

Jump forward (sadly in real time, and not a TARDIS) a few weeks and GT is in Cardiff, home to the massive studios where Doctor Who is filmed. We're taken on the set of the newest TARDIS – a complete 360 degree set for the first time in the show's history – and allowed to play with the console and to run around. Inner geek so far placated. Then we're taken to visit two somewhat ambiguous but vast sets – a 'space barn' (which basically looks like a normal barn, but will presumably be in space) and a warehouse (whether or not it's in space, it still looks like a warehouse). Not much going on or being given away here so we're off to find a Time Lord or two.

Now, we're known for keeping our cool, hanging out with Daleks and what-not, but when TWO Doctors walk into the room in costume, well. Sorry. There's a shriek that needs to come out.

What's the dynamic between the two Doctors? David Tennant: It's... well it's... How would you describe it? They're slightly combative, they're slightly competitive, but I think they quite enjoy being in each other's presence as well.

Matt Smith: Yeah, they sort of get on, and then they don't get on, and then they get on. It's like two brothers that are sort of evenly matched fencing a lot, isn't it?

David: Or a conversation with your own conscience, I suppose.

Matt: Yeah, yeah, that's a good one.

Is there TARDIS etiquette? Matt: Well, there may or may not be more than one TARDIS.

David: That's true. But we're not saying which TARDIS we were on.

Matt: And so therefore, what laws apply depends which TARDIS you're on, doesn't it?

What are you most excited about seeing on the screen? Matt: The Zygons are back, but I think for me

it's about the meeting and going 'oh it's you,' 'oh it's you,' that's the bit that really I love doing. But there's loads. You've got all sorts of things that are going to look great in 3D, Trafalgar Square, dangling down – that'll work. You've got a great entrance... David: Thank you very much, love. **How does the scale and ambition compare to some of the other big episodes?** David: I think what really works with this is the script is very story led, rather than fill it with things that make people go 'oh it's a special anniversary lovely birthday thing.' I mean, that's all in there but, actually, what Steven [Moffat, writer] has come up with is a way of moving the story on and actually changing the Doctor's very journey. And that's, I think, in a way not what you might expect. It could just be a big sort of celebration but it's a lot more than that. Matt: And I think the scale of it is one of the biggest we've ever done, you know? I mean, having David back, having Billie back, it sort of sprinkles a bit of fairy dust on it for that. But then also I think things



Matt Smith

like 3D and cinema release... it's as big as we've gone in a number of directions, really.

You said the Zygons were a favourite of yours? David: Well they're a design classic, the Zygon, aren't they? I mean they've hardly been touched since the 1970 design, and they're great to have around, they're just big and great to squeeze... Man, that big head of latex, you can just sink your teeth into...

Matt: Chew on a sucker!

David: YEAH! Chew on a sucker!

What's the campest thing about working on Doctor Who? Matt: The campest thing? Probably us two. David: It is! Yeah, out-camping each other!

Matt: Literally. With John Hurt just moving his eyes...

David: When we do scenes with John we do sort of go... I look at him and I just feel I'm pulling the biggest faces in the world.

Matt: The campest thing about Doctor Who... It's a good question...

David: I mean, Doctor Who as an idea is ludicrously camp isn't it, really?

Matt: Well, you can get away with being quite bold.

David: Yeah, it's...

Matt: Look at the way we're dressed...

David: But it's... Doctor Who has a tone unlike anything else and it has a scope for the camp and the melodramatic...

Matt: John Barrowman's up there, isn't he, surely?

David: He can be a little Captain Jack himself.

Matt: He's not that camp, no, no, it's true.

David: But, yeah, I suppose there's something camp about it and yet it doesn't feel... You can invest in it... Well, that's why it's survived 50 years because it's not really like anything else.

Matt: It's not without weight and gravitas. ■

Doctor Who is on BBC One, Saturday 23 November

