

Doctor Who

4-PAGE SPECIAL

The Doctor and Clara are back for more out-of-this-world adventures



The Doctor

will see you now

Peter Capaldi on heading to a strange planet, facing the Daleks and revealing the monsters he'd most like to welcome back

NEW SCI-FI

Doctor Who

Saturday, BBC1 HD, 7.40pm

In a Cardiff studio someone is sitting in the darkness, gurgling into a microphone. You don't have to be a die-hard Whovian to recognise the strangulated vocals. It's a Dalek in full, throaty extermination mode. And not just one of them, either. Left, right, centre – the whole studio is crawling with them.

Welcome to the first episode of *Doctor Who*, back on our screens this week for a very eventful ninth series. Virtually everything on a new *Who* series comes pre-loaded with top secret status, and this one is no exception.

But what we can say is that showrunner Steven Moffat has delivered an unusually far-reaching and ambitious story for the two-part series opener, with a plot that features the return of Missy, Michelle Gomez's fantastically fun female Master, and rips into some of the show's most iconic mythology.

Not least because it involves the Doctor's greatest enemies...

EXTERMINATE!

'It's good to have the Daleks back, and so many of them, too,' says Peter Capaldi, still bubbling with fan-ish enthusiasm about the developments when we meet later, off set.

'I don't know if you saw those sets? They had a lovely 1960s feel about them. It reminded me of the *Doctor Who* movies. And to have a whole pile of Daleks in a room, it was very exciting.'

Series nine picks up some time after the events of last year's Christmas special. The Doctor is still coupled-up with companion Clara (contrary to expectations, Jenna Coleman agreed to sign up for another run last year), though he's proving surprisingly hard to track down as the new series opens.

Capaldi says his somewhat grumpy Doctor is in a lighter frame of mind than before – watch out for his hilariously over-the-top entrance for evidence – but serious problems are around the corner.

'I think the Doctor's moving on a bit,' he explains. 'He's embracing the present. Of course he knows that things can often end in great distress, but rather than focusing



Are these mercenary aliens friend or foe?



The Daleks are back with a vengeance

on that I think he has decided to have a good time.

'But that doesn't mean he's not aware that darkness will fall. You can't have a good time on *Doctor Who* for too long...'

A flashback at the start of the first episode soon reveals what might be preoccupying him. Many hundreds of years ago, he came face to face

frightening it is in places. Could it be that the series is also getting darker this year? Possibly, hints Moffat.

'I suppose in some ways it is,' he says, when we catch up later. 'I mean, I've always felt that our darkness is a bit *Scooby Doo*. But *Doctor Who* is supposed to be scary. It does high comedy. It does low comedy. It does romance. And it

does scary. And when we do scary, we really go for it.'

Speculation about plot twists is one of the perennial pleasures of *Doctor Who*; the internet is always awash with fan rumours about what will happen next. To some extent Capaldi says he's in the same boat, in that Moffat and co often

hold back the finer details from him during filming.

'This year in particular they have kept me in the dark,' he admits. 'Some of it comes up through gossip, or because people have to put costumes together and so on. The crew generally walk around with scripts, which I don't see.

'In the two years that I've been doing the show, Steven has given me an evening where he takes me through the whole series. But in this instance I don't know what's happening at the end. And I actually quite like that.'

THE MONSTER CLUB

As a lifelong fan of the show, Capaldi also likes to feed the producers with helpful ideas from time to time. Particularly when it comes to resurrecting old monsters.

'I usually like to pick the most obscure ones – like the Chumbeys,' he laughs. 'I'd also like to see the Demons because they were a little bit black magicky. I'm also on a crusade for the Mondasian Cybermen. I think we could render them with clear masks to hold their flesh in place. I think they'd be quite terrifying.'

Even after two years in the Tardis, he adds, the novelty of filming with monsters hasn't worn off. 'There's a very warm, honeyish feeling you get when you walk into a room full of Daleks, or when you see the Zygons,' he smiles.



'There's a warm feeling you get when you walk into a room full of Daleks or Zygons'

with a mysterious young boy on a war-torn planet. So who exactly is the boy?

That identity will be revealed and it's connected to a very sinister figure who is hunting the Doctor in the opening scenes.

One noticeable aspect of the first episode is how genuinely

Enter the Mysterious Planet

How do you create a complete alien world, from scratch, on a TV budget? That was the puzzle facing design guru Michael Pickwood when Steven Moffat unveiled his plans for series nine.

Without giving too much away, the first two stories take us to a planet that has been debated many times in the show's 50-year history, but rarely seen.

'Daunting!' laughs Pickwood, when we ask how he felt about the project. 'Because what this world looks like has rarely been defined. You only ever see it in some comic strips in [old] magazines, and even then it's very unspecific.

'The exteriors were shot on a volcanic mountain range high up in the middle of Tenerife,' he explains.

'We wanted to film somewhere that was exotically strange. Tenerife has these very dark rocks, and sand

Tenerife stands in for the exteriors of the alien planet



that is very yellow. It looks very particular.'

Back in Cardiff, Pickwood supplemented the desert shots with a futuristic city and a control room, partly built in the studios, whose corridors were modelled on ones in William Hartnell's era.

The team even built a tiny version of the interiors

– complete with remote-controlled mini monsters.

Pickwood is happy with the results. 'I think there would be scope to do more [with the planet]. You never know, it might have to feature again...'



Production designer Michael Pickwood

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