

## TV Review: Beloved ‘Doctor Who’ Returns with Stellar Series Premiere

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on September 1, 2012 - 11:34am

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CHICAGO – The good doctor is back in the TV office as “Doctor Who” returns tonight, September 1, 2012 for a five-episode run in which two characters will say goodbye and we will transition into the next phase of one of the most influential sci-fi shows of all time. Can “Doctor Who” survive without Amy and Rory? Can a show that has always adapted to change do so yet again? Of course. As long as the writing remains this impressive and consistent.



Television Rating: **4.5/5.0**

How is it that “Doctor Who” can adjust its cast and tone so often and still remain creatively potent? It’s all about personality. As I watched the stellar premiere, “Asylum of the Daleks,” I was struck by how unique and instantly identifiable the world of “Doctor Who” has been for decades. Especially in its current reboot phase, the creators of “Doctor Who” have maintained a consistency of storytelling and vision that can be adjusted no matter who is in front of the camera. It never feels like “Doctor Who” is sacrificing its vision to appeal to a lowest common denominator or focus group. It is only loyal to its own history and its devoted audience, one that’s sure to be satisfied with a series 7 premiere that makes nods to the show’s past while also looking to its future.



Doctor Who  
Photo credit: BBC

The biggest nod to the past in the series 7 premiere of “Doctor Who” is right there in the title — “Asylum of the Daleks.” In the opening scenes, the Doctor (Matt Smith), Amy (Karen Gillan), and Rory (Arthur Darvill) are kidnapped by the Dalek Parliament and taken aboard a ship above a planet that is revealed to be the title of the episode — a spinning orb of the Daleks that were deemed crazy and uncontrollable. There’s a human shipwrecked on the planet sending a distress signal of classical music. Naturally, the concern is simple — as the Doctor says, “*If something can get in, everything can get out.*” They send the Doctor, Amy, and Rory in to determine the source of the signal before the entire

asylum is shut down permanently.



“Asylum of the Daleks” (which was written by the brilliant reboot show showrunner Steven Moffat and actually represents the writer’s first attempt at crafting a story for the legendary characters) reportedly features a visual incarnation of every Dalek from the long history of “Who” but it’s no mere ode to the iconic villains that still charmingly look like trash cans with flashlights taped to them. It’s a wonderful script with a spectacular series of twists in the final act that will leave “Who” fans smiling. The actual planet is built up as such a place of sheer lunacy that the art direction after the Doctor and his bickering partners get there is a bit of a letdown. I wanted a bit more creativity to the design of the Asylum but it’s a minor complaint.

All complaints I could levy at “Asylum of the Daleks” are minor. The massive hit (numbers for the show’s airings on BBC America keep rising every year) has lost none of its confidence, creativity, or, most importantly, personality. The show has such style, confidence, and sense of character that it’s easy to see why viewers have been so loyal to it for years. We’re only getting “Doctor Who” for one month this year (it will be on five episodes — every Saturday in September) but it’s going to be a fantastic month for sci-fi fans.

*“Doctor Who” stars Matt Smith, Karen Gillan, and Arthur Darvill. The Series 7 premiere was written by Steven Moffat and directed by Nick Hurran. It premieres on Saturday, September 1, 2012 at 8pm CST.*



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