

TV Review: BBC America Reboots Another Classic With ‘Demons’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on January 2, 2010 - 1:17pm

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CHICAGO – If you’re not watching BBC America, you’re not watching some of the best television available to you. A noticeable pattern in much of the network’s programming has been a number of series that reimagine or reboot classic character or series types like “Robin Hood,” “Primeval,” “Being Human,” and “Doctor Who”. The latest attempt to inject new life into something familiar is the entertaining winter diversion, “Demons”.



Starring the great Philip Glenister (“Life on Mars,” “Ashes to Ashes”), “Demons” is a modern take on the legend of “Bram Stoker’s Dracula” but also clearly inspired by more contemporary demon hunters of recent television. From the writers of “Hex” and “Merlin,” “Demons” is not quite as perfect as some recent BBC America offerings, coming off a bit too predictable and sometimes off in its juggling of tones, but it is a perfectly suitable slice of entertainment for the next six Saturday nights.



(l to r) Ruby (Holliday Grainger), Luke (Christian Cooke), Rupert (Phillip Glenister) and Mina (Zoe Tapper)
Photo credit: Sony

Glenister stars as a straight-talking American named Rupert Galvin. (Why they cast such a recognizable British actor as an American is confusing. It’s like casting James Gandolfini as a Brit.) Galvin has returned to the life of his former demon-killing partner’s son, Luke Rutherford (Christian Cooke of “Doctor Who”) to encourage him to pick up where dear old departed dad left off. It turns out that Luke is the last remaining descendant of Van Helsing and one of the few people with the skill to stop the forces of darkness.





Luke (Christian Cooke) and Rupert (Phillip Glenister)

Photo credit: Sony

Assisting Galvin and Rutherford on their quest is Mina Harker (Zoe Tapper), a blind concert pianist who happens to be the world's foremost authority on the evil always threatening to take over our world. As Galvin explains to Luke, there are more rats in London than people and you're never far from one and yet you rarely see them. Such are the forces of darkness. They're everywhere; just out of sight.

In the first episode, "The Office" star Mackenzie Crook appears as the villainous Gladiolus Thrip, a vampire trying to eliminate the Van Helsing line. As with most premieres, the debut of "Demons" has a lot on its plate - introduce the characters, have a stand-alone adventure, set things in motion for future episodes - and the odd blend of action, horror, comedy, and teenage drama doesn't quite gel, resulting in a series that often feels insufficiently scary, funny, or action-packed because it's trying so hard to be so many things at once. Glenister and Tapper are good but it's not until episode two, once Luke has committed to joining the cause, that Cooke starts to look comfortable in his role.

Ultimately, "Demons" plays more like a fun syndicated Saturday afternoon show than anything to compare to a similar program like "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" or even the more tongue-in-cheek "Primeval" or just-plain-brilliant "Torchwood". Saturday nights are so devoid of quality programming that "Demons" could easily be what you're looking for but if it's your first foray into the work of BBC America, you should know that it's far from the best they have to offer. Having said that, with the amount of quality on this network, even a so-so BBC America show is better than what's airing opposite it on most networks.

'Demons' premieres on BBC America on Saturday, January 2nd, 2010 at 8pm CST. It stars Philip Glenister, Christian Cooke, Zoe Tapper, and Holliday Grainger. It was created by Dean Hargrove.



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