



PREVIEW

Doctor Who: The Celestial Toymaker (Animated)

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Director: Bill Sellars
Production Company: BBC
Producer: Innes Lloyd
Production Assistant: Snowy White *
Assistant Floor Manager: Elisabeth Dunbar *
Script: Brian Hayles, Donald Tosh
Script Editor: Gerry Davis
Studio Lighting: Frank Cresswell
Film Camera: Tony Leggo
Film Editor: Bob Rymmer
Costumes: Daphne Dare
Make-up: Sonia Markham
Designer: John Wood
Title Music:
Ron Grainer with the BBC Radiophonic Workshop
Title Music Arranged by: Delia Derbyshire *
Incidental Music: Dudley Simpson
Choreography: Tutte Lemkow *
Studio Sound: Alan Fogg
Special Sound: Brian Hodgson
Cast:
William Hartnell (*Dr Who*)
Peter Purves (*Steven*)
Jackie Lane (*Dodo*)
Michael Gough (*Toymaker*)
Campbell Singer (*Joey/King of Hearts/Sergeant Rugg*)
Carmen Silvera (*Clara/Queen of Hearts/Mrs Wiggs*)
Peter Stephens (*Knave of Hearts/Kitchen Boy/Cyriel*)
Reg Lever (*Joker*)
Beryl Brahman, Ann Harrison, Delia Lindon (*dancers*)
UK 1966
4x25 min

* uncredited

Courtesy of BBC Studios

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The making of 'The Celestial Toymaker'

Brian Hayles would write many *Doctor Who* stories and is best remembered for creating the Martian Ice Warriors and the planet and civilisation of Peladon. But his first pass at writing a script for the programme wasn't so successful. In early 1965 he submitted a story outline titled *The Dark Planet* which was rejected by the production office. He came up with another idea, a fanciful notion of an alien toymaker from another dimension that fared much better – given the nod by story editor Donald Tosh and producer John Wiles, he was commissioned to develop the treatment as a series of scripts, going by the simple title *The Toymaker*. Hayles originally envisaged the alien menace as another Time Lord, though this idea was eventually played down to the point where it barely registers at all.

Tosh came up with the idea of The Doctor and The Toymaker locking intellectual horns over a round of The Trilogic Game, which was briefly considered as the title for the serial, though it eventually became *The Celestial Toymaker* by the time Hayles handed in his completed scripts. Unfortunately, when Wiles and Tosh saw what he'd come up with, they started to worry about the number of special effects needed, many of which would be unachievable on the budget they had. A rewrite was called for, but Hayles had started work on *United!* (1965-1967), a twice weekly drama about a second division football team that he'd co-created with Anthony Cornish (many *Doctor Who* writers and directors would work on the series) and was unable to spare the time to do the new versions. Tosh decided to rewrite them himself, though Hayles would retain his writing credit.

Meanwhile, Tosh and Wiles saw the fairy story-like setting as a way to solve what they saw as a problem. William Hartnell was becoming increasingly frail, and he and Wiles had failed to hit it off, so tentative plans were laid to use the uniqueness of the story's setting as a way to replace him, having The Doctor turn invisible for a couple of episodes before reappearing played by a new actor in the final moments of the last episode leaving audiences on a cliffhanger. The higher-ups at the BBC were having none of it, however, and vetoed the plan, leading to Wiles' decision to leave *Doctor Who* in early January 1966. Having completed his rewrites of *The Celestial Toymaker*, Tosh also decided that the time had come to move on and set off for a delayed honeymoon in mid-January, and Innes Lloyd took over as producer in February with Gerry Davis becoming script editor shortly thereafter.

Lloyd and the serials assigned director Bill Sellars soon ran into his first problem – two characters named George and Margaret, who would be seen playing games with companions Steven and Dido. Hayles had taken the names from the play *George and Margaret* written in 1937 by Gerald Savory, now the Head of Serials at the BBC. The story revolved around the imminent arrival of the two characters but they never actually turn up and Hayles thought it would be fun to actually have a George and Margaret on screen in *Doctor Who*. Savory initially agreed to the idea, but with the start of production just a month away, he changed his mind and asked for the characters to be cut from the scripts.

IN PERSON & PREVIEWS

Busting the Bias presents Special People + Q&A
with director Justin Edgar and actors Dominic
Coleman & David Proud

Sat 2 Mar 15:50

Funday Workshop: Robot Dreams

Sun 3 Mar 10:15

Funday Preview: Robot Dreams

Sun 3 Mar 12:00

Preview: La Chimera

Sun 3 Mar 17:30

Preview: Origin

Mon 4 Mar 17:50

Preview: High & Low – John Galliano

Mon 4 Mar 20:40

Kinoteka Polish Film Festival Opening Night

London Premiere: Green Border Zielona granica +
Q&A with director Agnieszka Holland

Wed 6 Mar 19:00

Woman with a Movie Camera International

Women's Day Preview: Banel & Adama + Q&A

with director Ramata-Toulaye Sy

Fri 8 Mar 18:10

Woman with a Movie Camera International

Women's Day Preview: Elaha

Fri 8 Mar 20:45

TV Preview: Inside No. 9: The Final Series + Q&A

with Reece Shearsmith, Steve Pemberton and
executive producer Adam Tandy

Mon 11 Mar 18:15

Mark Kermode Live in 3D at the BFI IMAX

Mon 11 Mar 18:15

TV Preview: Mandy + Q&A with Diane Morgan

Tue 12 Mar 18:10

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But Campbell Singer and Carmen Silvera had already been cast in the roles
and with Hayles and Tosh now too busy to work further on the scripts, Davis
was told to do whatever was needed to make the scripts work. He hit on the
idea of retaining Singer and Silvera and casting them as various couples
encountered in The Toymaker's realm, including a pair of clowns, the King and
Queen of Hearts, and pantomime characters Sergeant Rugg and Mrs Wiggs,
giving them a third character played by Peter Stephens – the Knave of Hearts,
a Kitchen Boy and the Billy Bunter-like schoolboy Cyril. These and other
changes made to make Steven and Dodo more prominent and to save on the
budget (previous story 'The Ark' went significantly over budget) dismayed Wiles
and Tosh who objected loudly to the alterations.

But it was too late now, and filming began on 2 March 1966 where the Trilogic
Game was shot at the BBC Television Film Studios in Ealing, London.
Recording on the main episode began on 18 March and continued on
subsequent Fridays at the Riverside Studio 1 in Hammersmith. New material
was shot for the images that appeared in The Toymaker's 'Memory Window,'
but also flashbacks to earlier adventures appeared, marking the first use in
Doctor Who of older footage (episode recaps aside), specifically scenes from
The Daleks' Master Plan (1965-1966) and *The Massacre of St Bartholomew's
Eve* (1966). Problems continued to dog the production. William Hartnell went
on holiday for two weeks (hence that idea of him turning invisible), leaving
The Doctor largely absent from the middle of the serial and the character of
Cyril annoyed the estate of author Frank Richards, who had created Billy
Bunter in 1908. They wrote to the BBC following the broadcast of the third
episode to complain that Billy would never be as cruel as Cyril and their mood
can hardly have been helped by an ad lib by actor Stephens in which he notes
that although his name is Cyril, his school friends call him 'Billy'. At the start of
the next episode, a BBC continuity announcer reassured viewers that Cyril was
merely 'Bunter-like'.

Audiences didn't react well to the serial. The BBC's Audience Research Report
stated that 'over a third' of them 'actually disliked it' with some of them
dismissed it as 'ridiculous rubbish.' Subsequent generations of viewers were
denied the chance to make up their own minds about the serial as all four
episodes of the serial were wiped by the BBC, though audio recordings and
production stills survive (no 'tele-snaps' were taken for this serial). In 1985, The
Australian Broadcasting Corporation were conducting an audit of its film
archive and found a 16mm film print of the final episode, *The Final Test*. In
2023, The Toymaker, now played by Neil Patrick Harris, appeared in
The Giggle, the third episode in the 60th anniversary specials and early the
following year, an animated version of *The Celestial Toymaker* story using the
original soundtrack, was released on DVD and blu-ray.

Kevin Lyons, eofftv.com