Want To Know How The New Series Happened?

Doctor Who viewers might believe they've seen every photograph, read every interview, know every fact about the latest incarnation of BBC TV's science fantasy series, but this book will set out to show them just how much they've missed. With pre-production drawings and paintings, countless behind-the-scenes candid shots, comments and opinions from everyone involved, The Inside Story sets out to be exactly that. The insiders scoop on the how, why, who and where of all things Doctor Who.

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My Personal Review:
Now that the new Doctor Who series has established itself as something of a success, one can expect a wave of books to come out cashing in on that success--novels, monster guides, glitzy reference books, and so on. And after all, why not? But while "Doctor Who: The Inside Story" at first glance appears to be part and parcel of this wave, in fact it's quite a bit more substantial and informative as well as thoroughly enjoyable.

It's the "Inside Story" on two levels. First of all, it covers the making of the show (first two series/seasons and a foretaste of the third, that is) in great depth and detail. The deliberations behind the show's revival are revealed, the responsibilities of the many people responsible for the show's creation are described, and the manner in which the show is actually produced by this team--both overall and episode by episode--is fleshed out enough to satisfy all but maybe the most fanatical fan's curiosity. The rationale behind certain aspects and characteristics of the show in general as well as particular stories is also touched on in a satisfying manner. All of this comes complete with facts about cast & crew, studios & filming locations and all of that good stuff as well as superbly lavish illustrations, the most interesting of which (for me, anyway) are the early concept designs. Some
the initial ideas for the new Cybermen, for instance, are particularly arresting, some very much anime-inspired and some much more cybernetically ghoulsh than the final version. Anyway, the book is very much enjoyable and informative both visually and verbally.

Secondly, though, all of this is told through the words of the insiders themselves. The author himself (Gary Russell) is on the script-editing team, and he pieces together the whole story through extensive interviews with and quotes from the producers, writers, directors, actors, and the many brilliant folks in charge of costumes, sets, and make-up, to say nothing of the special effects artists/technicians/magicians. All of this is weaved into a comprehensible narrative (though keeping track of all the names gets a bit daunting sometimes), certainly, but make no mistake, this is no unofficial guide. A few tense, snippy moments are alluded to and the account seems honest enough rather than contrivedly PR, but the overall tone is extremely celebratory and enthusiastic. Which also means that all the heart and soul, the loving care that goes into the creation of this wonderful show is unashamedly, unabashedly indulged in, and it's a bit infectious, actually--a few times I started feeling a bit petty for nitpicking this or that episode. Well, colder and more objective analysis will be the task of others all in good time, but the initial joy, wonder, and fun of the show is captured right here, and that in a manner that only contributes to the documentary quality of this fine book as a whole.

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