

= Joe 90 =

Joe 90 is a 1960s British science @-@ fiction television series that follows the adventures of a nine @-@ year @-@ old boy , Joe McClaine , who starts a double life as a schoolchild @-@ turned @-@ superspy after his scientist father invents a device capable of duplicating expert knowledge and experience and transferring it to a different human brain . Equipped with the skills of the foremost academic and military minds , Joe is recruited by the World Intelligence Network (WIN) and , as its " Most Special Agent " , pursues the objective of world peace and saving human life . Created by Gerry and Sylvia Anderson and filmed by Century 21 Productions , the 30 @-@ episode series followed Thunderbirds and Captain Scarlet and the Mysterons .

First broadcast in the UK between September 1968 and April 1969 on the ATV network , Joe 90 was the sixth and final of the Andersons ' productions to be made exclusively using the form of marionette puppetry termed " Supermarionation " . Their final puppet series , The Secret Service , used this process only in combination with extensive live @-@ action filming . As in the case of its antecedent , Captain Scarlet , the puppets of Joe 90 are of natural proportions as opposed to the more caricatured design of the characters of Thunderbirds .

Although not as successful as Century 21 's previous efforts , since its inception , Joe 90 has been praised , among other aspects , for the level of characterisation of its smaller puppet cast and the quality of its model sets and special effects . Critics have interpreted Joe 90 's spy @-@ fi theme and the choice of a child character as the protagonist as either a " kids play Bond " concept or an enshrinement of children 's powers of imagination . Points of criticism range from the violence depicted in a number of episodes to the absence of female characters , which is interpreted either as the inevitable result of the series ' composition as a " boy 's own adventure " or as being tantamount to sexism .

As for its earlier productions , Century 21 launched a number of merchandising campaigns based on Joe 90 , which included toy cars and comic strips featuring the continuing adventures of Joe McClaine . Syndicated in the United States in 1969 , re @-@ broadcast in the UK during the 1990s and released on DVD in most regions in the 2000s , the idea of a live @-@ action film adaptation of Joe 90 has been considered more than once since the 1960s , but without further development .

= = Plot = =

Joe 90 is set in the near future . The timeframe is most commonly stated to be 2012 and 2013 ; various other sources point to an undetermined year in the early 21st century , while the official scriptwriters ' guide states that the year is 1998 . Based on visual evidence , the events of " The Unorthodox Shepherd " occur in 2013 .

Nine @-@ year @-@ old British schoolboy Joe McClaine is the adopted son of Professor Ian " Mac " McClaine , a computer expert . Outwardly , the McClaines are a simple father @-@ and @-@ son pair , who live in an antiquated Elizabethan @-@ style cottage overlooking Culver Bay in Dorset , and are waited on by their housekeeper , Mrs Harris . Yet residing in a secret underground laboratory is Mac 's latest invention , the " BIG RAT " (Brain Impulse Galvanoscope Record And Transfer) , a machine capable of recording knowledge and experience from leading experts in various fields and transferring it to another human brain . At the heart of the design is the " Rat Trap " : a spherical , rotating cage in which a subject is seated during the transfer of " brain patterns " .

Sam Loover , a family friend and an agent of World Intelligence Network (WIN) , persuades Mac to dedicate the services of Joe and the BIG RAT to the organisation : Joe will become a WIN operative with a difference , the unlimited possibilities offered by the BIG RAT serving as an invaluable tool for completing missions . After requisite knowledge and experience has been transferred , and provided that Joe is wearing customised glasses containing hidden electrodes (a portable storage device for brain impulses) , he is able to carry out missions requiring proficiency in ? among other disciplines ? flying fighter aircraft , spaceflight , performing advanced neurosurgery and piano .

Since a boy would never be suspected of espionage , Joe 's innocence is as useful an asset as the BIG RAT , and he comes to be regarded as WIN 's " Most Special Agent " . Reporting to Shane

Weston , the commander @-@ in @-@ chief of WIN 's London Headquarters , Joe is also equipped with a special briefcase , which externally appears to be nothing more than a school case but which secretly contains an adapted handgun and transceiver . There is some inconsistency as to why Joe is assigned the codename " 90 " . Contemporary series publicity stated that , in the pilot episode , Joe enlists in WIN as its 90th London @-@ based agent . However , in the episode " Project 90 " , reference is made to the BIG RAT being documented in WIN 's " File Number 90 " , from which Joe 's designation is explicitly stated to originate . The series ends with a clip show episode , " The Birthday " , in which a selection of Joe 's missions are presented as flashbacks at a surprise party on the day that the character turns ten .

Like antecedent series , plot elements of Joe 90 include hi @-@ tech gadgetry , rescue operations , secret organisations and criminal or terrorist threats to world security . An example of the advanced technology demonstrated is Professor McClaine 's " Jet Air Car " : a multiple @-@ configuration land- , sea- and air @-@ based vehicle built prior to the events of the series . The in @-@ joke of " WIN " , the abbreviated form of " World Intelligence Network " , is similar to that of " WASP " , the acronym for the World Aquanaut Security Patrol that appears in Stingray .

In the fictional universe of Joe 90 , the Cold War ? significant at the time of the series ' TV debut due to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 ? has ended , and a world government has been established . WIN is the successor organisation to MI6 , the CIA and the KGB , all of which have been merged in the formation of the global network . Although the pilot sees Joe hi @-@ jacking a Russian jet fighter to expose the secrets of its construction to the West , the storyline is ultimately revealed to be a speculative fiction posited by Weston as an example of the espionage that Joe would have to perform if he were to join WIN . The plot twist , in particular the revelation that Russia and the West are allies in the future , is praised by academic Nicholas J. Cull for its " progressiveness of spirit " , and for exemplifying Anderson 's " [taking] an end to the Cold War as a given in his work . " Anderson was motivated by what he perceived as a " duty to the rising generation to avoid perpetuating Cold War stereotypes " , once stating that he " tried very hard not to put [his] ten cents into creating World War Three . "

Despite the existence of a global government and intelligence organisation , the nations of Earth are still politically divided into Western and Eastern blocs ; here , Cull argues , Joe 90 is similar to other Anderson series in that it " unashamedly capitalized on the Cold War cult of the secret agent whose skills defend the home from enemies unknown . " The recurring antagonist of WIN and Joe is the non @-@ aligned " Eastern Alliance " , which dominates Asia and appears in the episodes " Attack of the Tiger " and " Mission X @-@ 41 " . Meanwhile , villains in " International Concerto " , " Business Holiday " , " Arctic Adventure " and " The Professional " speak with Slavic accents . " Arctic Adventure " and " Attack of the Tiger " combine the threat from the East with the hazards of nuclear technology : in the former , Joe must recover a stray atomic warhead from the ocean floor while avoiding enemy submarines , while in the latter , he is tasked with destroying an Eastern nuclear device that is about to be launched into Earth orbit . By contrast , an episode that presents the benign aspects of such technology is " Big Fish " , in which Joe labours to remove a defective nuclear submarine from the territorial waters of a Latin American police state .

= = Production = =

Following Captain Scarlet and the Mysterons , Joe 90 was purposely conceived and developed to be a different kind of Supermarionation series , placing the narrative emphasis less on action , advanced technology and visual effects and more on characterisation and plotlines subscribing more to the spy thriller genre than science fiction . Co @-@ creator Gerry Anderson explained , " The show majored on its characters , which I thought were all very good . The puppets had become so lifelike , I now strongly believed that they could carry the action without the usual massive assistance from futuristic hardware . " Explaining his inspiration for the series , Anderson remembered his pre @-@ Supermarionation days when he served as an assistant editor for such films as The Wicked Lady , handling recording tape on a daily basis . While pondering on the blanking and re @-@ use of such tape , Anderson made a connection to the human brain 's

electrical activities , explaining , " I read somewhere that the human brain is controlled by electrical impulses and how thoughts are stored electronically . I started toying with the story potential of a process that would allow the recording of brain patterns and transferring them to another brain . I was really likening it to magnetic recording , where material could be stored or transferred to another tape . " When it came to naming the lead character and , from that , the name of the new series , Anderson recalled that on one of his earlier productions , Fireball XL5 , the surname " Ninety " had been an early proposal for Colonel Steve Zodiac , and selected it for the new schoolboy protagonist .

Commissioned by ITC financier Lew Grade in the autumn of 1967 , with pre @-@ production completed in October while the final episodes of Captain Scarlet were still being filmed , principal photography for Joe 90 ran from 13 November 1967 to mid @-@ August 1968 using two puppet stages at the Century 21 Studios on the Slough Trading Estate in Berkshire . The average shooting period for each episode was two weeks , as had been the case with the previous series . The script for the pilot (titled only in production documentation as " The Most Special Agent ") was written by Anderson and his wife , Sylvia , as was the custom for every new puppet series that the couple developed in the 1960s . Before the concept of WIN was devised , Joe was to have become the " Most Special Agent " of the CIA . Most of the other episodes were written by Tony Barwick , with Shane Rimmer contributing six scripts . Rimmer was hired to write for Joe 90 while co @-@ writing a book with Barwick , who initially offered him a two @-@ script contract (they were filmed as the episodes " Splashdown " and " Big Fish ") . Since he was occupied by post @-@ production on the second Thunderbirds feature film , Thunderbird 6 , and the development of his live @-@ action film , Doppelgänger , Gerry Anderson was unable to fulfil the producer role as he had done for Captain Scarlet , and instead passed the responsibility to Reg Hill and David Lane . Lane recalls that , in his role as producer , he was " responsible for looking at the scripts , the effects , the puppets , the whole thing really " . He found support in Anderson 's long @-@ serving collaborator Desmond Saunders , who directed the pilot and served as production controller for the rest of the series . Other directors for Joe 90 included Leo Eaton , Alan Perry and Ken Turner , all of whom had contributed to Captain Scarlet , and Peter Anderson , who was promoted from his earlier position as assistant director to replace the outgoing Brian Burgess and Robert Lynn .

A Christmas @-@ themed episode , " The Unorthodox Shepherd " , featured location filming to an extent unprecedented for a puppet @-@ based Anderson series . The Secret Service , the Andersons ' next production after Joe 90 , developed the hybridity further with the incorporation of extensive footage of live actors in long shot , intercut with scale puppet sequences .

= = = Design = = =

Keith Wilson and Grenville Nott superseded Bob Bell as heads of the art department and built the interior of Culver Bay Cottage from a design by Mike Trim . Anderson remembered his satisfaction with the cottage set : " The interior , with its beams and lovely soft furnishings , was really beautiful . " The construction of the BIG RAT model , meanwhile , was entrusted to the newly formed incorporated company Century 21 Props (or Electronics) , which was responsible for the various gadgets that appeared in the series and was based in Bourne End in Buckinghamshire .

Although mostly occupied with Thunderbird 6 and Doppelgänger , Derek Meddings briefly reprised his role as head of special effects to construct Professor McClaine 's Jet Air Car . The design concept was a disappointment to Anderson , who commented : " The car looked like no other piece of hardware we had had previously but I was wary of canning it as I feared I might be becoming stereotyped . Maybe the whole thing was becoming a bit narrow ; all the ideas were becoming similar . " Stephen La Rivière , writer of Filmed in Supermarionation : A History of the Future , views the Jet Air Car as an update of Supercar , the vehicle that appeared in Anderson 's 1961 series of the same name , but agrees that while the Jet Air Car is the " star vehicle " of Joe 90 , it is visually unappealing in comparison to the " beautiful , sleek design of its predecessor . "

= = = Puppets = = =

The Supermarionation puppets featured in Joe 90 are of the more accurately proportioned kind introduced for Captain Scarlet , and which would also be used for the Andersons ' final puppet series , The Secret Service . Simultaneously , the drive for enhanced realism across all major design aspects which started with the preceding series continued for Joe 90 . Main character puppets from Captain Scarlet were re @-@ used for Joe 90 with the exceptions of the Captain Scarlet and Captain Blue marionettes . Few new puppets were constructed , the only notable exceptions being Professor McClaine (sculpted by Mary Turner) , Joe (sculpted by Tim Cooksey) , and Mrs Harris .

The Joe puppet was the first child marionette to be made as part of the new generation of Supermarionation puppets introduced for Captain Scarlet , for which the sculpting team were careful to achieve realistic proportions for the body of a nine @-@ year @-@ old boy . The puppets of Sam Looover and Shane Weston had each made several appearances in the previous series , but for their regular role in the new series a variety of alternative heads were created from the " expressionless " templates ? including " smilers " , " frowners " and " blinkers " ? and the Shane Weston puppet was re @-@ wigged . Many of the recycled " revamp puppets " , used to depict supporting characters for Captain Scarlet , were also duplicated with darker skin colours to portray characters from a range of ethnicities . Further to these requirements , the use of two shooting soundstages necessitated the duplication of all the " expressionless " main character puppets to avoid conflicts over resources between the two filming units . As in the previous series , " under control " puppets , manipulated by levers from below as opposed to wires from a gantry above , feature in Joe 90 .

= = = Music = = =

The opening and ending theme and incidental music of Joe 90 composed by Barry Gray , who was responsible for music on other Anderson series . Episodes of Joe 90 start with either a cold open (the first Anderson series to do so) or the main title sequence , which sees Joe sitting in the BIG RAT 's " Rat Trap " and receiving transferred knowledge from the machine . The sequence is accompanied by Gray 's opening theme , which is dominated by the notes of guitarist Vic Flick , known for performing lead guitar in the recording of the " James Bond Theme " for Dr. No (1962) . In Anderson 's biography , What Made Thunderbirds Go ! , the Joe 90 theme is described as a " dizzying piece of psychedelic pop art that could have been produced only in the late Sixties . " The closing credits are superimposed over images of objects such as Joe 's BIG RAT spectacles , his WIN badge , and also his briefcase , gun , and transceiver ; while the concepts for these images were photographic , the final versions were augmented with airbrush artwork .

In addition to the themes and tracks for the pilot , " The Most Special Agent " , Gray composed incidental music for 20 additional episodes of Joe 90 . Music for the Joe 90 episodes was recorded between 18 January and 27 September 1968 , starting with the titles and the pilot in a session at the London Olympic Sound Studios and ending with one of the final instalments , " See You Down There " at CTS Studios . Scores were also recorded at Gray 's residence in Esher , Surrey .

Gray 's compositions for Joe 90 occasionally required the hiring of guest talent . The piano music featured extensively in the episode " International Concerto " was performed by Robert Docker (the human hands seen in the close @-@ up shots of Joe 's playing belonged to Gray 's son , Simon) . " Lone @-@ Handed 90 " includes a recurring harmonica , played by the Canadian musician Tommy Reilly .

A CD of the Joe 90 soundtrack , running to 28 pieces , was released by Silva Screen Records in 2006 . Awarding a rating of 3 @.@ 5 stars out of five , AllRovi reviewer William Ruhlmann comments that the scores are " not great writing " , but adds that Gray 's work was " perfectly adequate , if not inspired . " Previous releases include a 45 rpm gramophone record , Title Theme from the ATV Series Joe 90 , also featuring various incidental music .

= = Voice cast = =

In comparison to Captain Scarlet and the Mysterons , Joe 90 features a smaller cast , voicing just

five regular characters . Like Captain Scarlet , the series has been viewed as more " English @-@ sounding " , the Andersons abandoning their stipulation dating from the production of Thunderbirds that the puppet cast be American and thus dispensing with the established format of their series ' principal character being a " square @-@ jawed , fair @-@ skinned male with a Mid @-@ Atlantic accent " . Instead , in a manner similar to the Captain Scarlet , Joe 90 focuses on the strong American supporting characters of Sam Looover and Shane Weston .

Len Jones as Joe McClaine , a nine @-@ year @-@ old adoptee who balances schoolwork with missions as a spy for the World Intelligence Network (WIN) , using the aid of knowledge and experience captured by a brilliant invention , the Brain Impulse Galvanoscope Record And Transfer (BIG RAT) . For realism , Joe is voiced by child actor Jones rather than an actress as had usually been the case for the representation of younger characters on earlier Supermarionation series . On the subject of female casting , Gerry Anderson recalled , " ... it always sounded rather odd to me . It never sounded like a real little boy ... With Joe 90 , I suggested finding a British kid and making him repeat the lines parrot fashion . That 's what we did with Len Jones . His performance was only adequate , but at least it sounded authentic . "

Rupert Davies as Professor Ian " Mac " McClaine , Joe 's adoptive father and inventor of the BIG RAT . At the time of production , Davies was well known for acting the leading role in the 1960s TV adaptation of the Maigret novels , and was the most distinguished actor yet to contribute to an Anderson series . Experiencing typecasting as a result of his earlier role as the fictional French detective , voice acting provided Davies with the opportunity to broaden the horizons of his career . In Gerry Anderson 's biography , What Made Thunderbirds Go ! , Simon Archer and Marcus Hearn credit Mac 's " warm yet distinguished " English tones as a " perfect counterpoint " to the American voices of the characters of Sam Looover and Shane Weston .

Keith Alexander as Sam Looover , a long @-@ time friend of Mac and Deputy Head of WIN 's London offices , whom Joe affectionately calls " Uncle " . Australian actor Alexander had provided voices for the second Thunderbirds film , Thunderbird 6 , as a replacement for actor Ray Barrett . During the 1960s , he provided the voice for another puppet character , Topo Gigio , on The Ed Sullivan Show in the United States .

David Healy as Shane Weston , the commander @-@ in @-@ chief of WIN 's London Headquarters and Deputy Head of the international organisation , who has a penchant for feeble jokes . Healy , an American actor resident in the United Kingdom , had voiced supporting characters in Captain Scarlet , and was often contracted to play transatlantic characters in British television .

Sylvia Anderson as Mrs (Ada) Harris , the McClaines ' long @-@ suffering housekeeper , who is unaware that Mac and Joe are members of an intelligence organisation . Anderson , whose voice had first featured in the 1961 series Supercar , was best known for voicing the character of Lady Penelope in Thunderbirds and its two feature films . (The reason for the choice of the name " Ada Harris " is unclear ; whether it was a coincidence or by deliberate choice , the name is also that of the protagonist of author Paul Gallico 's Mrs. ' Arris novels .)

Supporting characters were voiced by Alexander , Healy and Anderson as well as earlier Anderson contributors Gary Files , Martin King , Jeremy Wilkin , Shane Rimmer and (for one episode , " Viva Cordova ") Liz Morgan . Rimmer and Morgan , however , are not credited in the closing titles . Files recalls that he felt honoured to be asked to rejoin the Andersons for another production following Captain Scarlet , and that he was " tickled pink " to be performing with Davies , adding , " I hated the way that so many so @-@ called producers wouldn 't meet his eye . He was Maigret forever , you see , in their eyes . " Morgan , meanwhile , explains how she was contracted for her single voice role in Joe 90 : " They needed a voice , they called around and everyone else was out shopping . So they called me in . "

= = Broadcasting = =

In the United Kingdom , the starts of the regional broadcasts were staggered , with Joe 90 premiering on ATV Midlands and Tyne Tees in late September 1968 and moving on to LWT , Southern and Anglia shortly after . The series reached the Harlech and Channel regions in

November and finally Granada on Christmas Day , although the first episode to air was the Christmas @-@ themed " The Unorthodox Shepherd " rather than the pilot , " The Most Special Agent " . Granada was one of several regions to broadcast the series under the alternative title The Adventures of Joe 90 . Although the series was re @-@ run several times in various regions during the 1970s , it was not transmitted in the Yorkshire region until 1981 , when it was secured by ITV for a syndicated run . In the United States , Joe 90 was broadcast in first @-@ run syndication in 1969 .

Joe 90 was later purchased for early @-@ morning network transmissions on BBC1 in 1994 . Rights holder PolyGram cleared the programme for broadcast on the condition that the " zooming " Joe 90 logo in the title sequence be replaced with a new static version to distinguish it from the logo for the American G.I. Joe toy brand , which , PolyGram believed , appeared too similar . The videotapes used for broadcast were 16 mm transfers of the 35 mm film and were edited for timeslot constraints , with the cold open re @-@ arranged where applicable so that the titles now opened each episode , and the closing credits minimised to permit a BBC Children 's presenter to read out viewer birthday cards . A separate 1994 run on Nickelodeon made none of these alterations to the 1960s material . With Thunderbirds and Captain Scarlet and the Mysterons , the series commenced a run on the UK Sci Fi Channel in 2009 .

For Joe 90 's original run , in some regions the end of the title sequence incorporated a zoom @-@ in shot of Joe 's WIN glasses accompanied by a voice @-@ over provided by actor Tim Turner , stating , " These are Joe 90 's special glasses . Without them , he 's a boy . Wearing them , he 's an expert . " This short speech , intended to warn child viewers not to put themselves at risk by imitating Joe 's exploits , has been erroneously attributed to Keith Alexander on the Joe 90 Region 2 DVD box set , on which it is a special feature .

= = Reception = =

In an episode guide to the Anderson TV series , science @-@ fiction writer John Peel questions Mac 's ethics in " experimenting on " Joe to further the development of the BIG RAT . On the subject of Joe as a secret agent he remarks , jokingly , " Presumably there are no child labour laws in the future ! " La Rivière 's attention is drawn to one of Mac 's lines at the end of the pilot , in a scene that he considers " amusing " ; the professor 's admonition " Don 't come crying to me if you get hurt ! " represents his preparedness to " abnegate all parental responsibility " towards his adoptive son . Observing the series ' subscription to " wider themes in Cold War culture " , Cull likens the BIG RAT 's powers to brainwashing , but concludes that it is a fundamentally " benign " technology . The more violent style introduced in Captain Scarlet and the Mysterons is sometimes evident in Joe 90 : in " Hi @-@ jacked " , Joe kills an enemy with a grenade , while in " Project 90 " , Professor McClaine is menaced by a drill poised to pulverise his head . On the subject of violence , episode director Desmond Saunders comments : " There was an unpleasant side to it which I never really understood . There was something about it that was very strange and sinister . "

On the other hand , producer David Lane praises the series for its increased humour following the dark tone of Captain Scarlet and sees Joe 90 as much more family @-@ orientated in comparison to its forerunner , summing up the series as " a great little programme . " Anthony Clark of the British Film Institute commends Joe 90 for more effective characterisation than Captain Scarlet , and also compliments the quality of its scripts and Barry Gray 's musical score . La Rivière underlines a connection between the child protagonist and the theme of espionage , writing , " The premise that drives Joe 90 taps into the fantasy indulged by most boys that they , even at nine years old , can be James Bond . " Writer John R. Cook agrees with La Rivière 's points on audience self @-@ identification , describes the series as a " wish @-@ fulfilment fantasy " and suggests that the character of Joe is a mirror image of the target child viewer . Comparisons have been made to later franchises with child protagonists who are in fact operatives for intelligence agencies , such as Robert Rodriguez 's Spy Kids films , and Anthony Horowitz 's Alex Rider novels .

La Rivière noted the intimacy of the series and the predominantly male voice cast and characters , suggesting that Joe 90 is " very much a Boy 's Own adventure . " Out of the 30 episodes , only ten

feature appearances from female characters , a fact which La Rivière attributes to the increased demands on Century 21 for its feature film productions , Thunderbird 6 and Doppelgänger . Peel suggests that the female absence leaves Joe 90 , with many other Anderson productions , inferior to previous Supermarionation effort Thunderbirds , in which the character of Lady Penelope has a primary role in several episodes . Grouping Joe 90 with the earlier Supercar and the subsequent The Secret Service , Peel concludes , " It is hardly coincidental that these tend to be the least @-@ loved of [Anderson 's] series ; he had , after all , ignored half of his potential audience . " For Peel , this return of the " standard Anderson sexism " is only one aspect of deterioration between Joe 90 and previous productions . Peel challenges La Rivière 's asserted " kids play Bond " theme , writing that , " being a somewhat nerdy kid with glasses and brain implants was not really thrilling . "

Peel 's view was contested by Anderson 's and Cull 's belief that the series , with its bespectacled main character of Joe McClaine , can increase the self @-@ confidence of young viewers who wear glasses : " Suddenly they were proud because they had something in common with Joe 90 . " Since the series ' first appearance , the epithet " Joe 90 " has become a popular term of endearment for both children and adults with glasses reminiscent of Joe 's (such as snooker player Dennis Taylor) . During UK repeats in the 1990s , similarities were drawn between Joe and then @-@ Prime Minister John Major , also known for wearing large spectacles . Jeff Evans , writer of The Penguin TV Companion , criticises the plot element of the glasses , writing , " Joe simply dons a pair of scientific glasses , making him look like the class swot than a secret agent . "

Cook reads further into the concept of child empowerment in Joe 90 , writing that the series creates a " technological utopia " around youth , remarking , " Through the character of Joe , his brain hardwired at the start of each episode into the BIG RAT supercomputer , the young are shown to be literally at one with technology . " He adds that the instant access to brain patterns that the BIG RAT affords to Joe may be interpreted as heralding the development of the Internet over a decade after Joe 90 was produced . With his intellectual horizons broadened , Joe becomes the manifestation of homo superior , yet his youthfulness grants him the power to change the fraught political world in ways that no adult could due to the limitations of their imagination . In this respect , Cook holds up Joe 90 as a precursor to the 1970s television series The Tomorrow People , which also concerned ideas of human transcendence in children . This idea , Cook says , was evident in the title of Joe 90 itself : " no longer is he a nine @-@ year @-@ old boy but instead his status and capacities have been multiplied tenfold to transform him into agent ' Joe 90 ' , his name an appealing futuristic echo of the then distant year of 1990 . "

Ultimately , Joe 90 has proven to be less successful than previous series made by Anderson . In the Anderson @-@ related book , Supermarionation Classics , the model work and scripts are praised , but it is conceded that the series " failed to arouse more than a passing interest with some Anderson fans . " Stephen Hulse refers to Joe 90 as " clearly the most child @-@ oriented of the latter Anderson Supermarionation series " and " technically accomplished " , but " one of the Anderson stable 's lesser series " . However , its spy @-@ fi theme led on to the final Supermarionation series , The Secret Service , which too features an unconventional secret agent (a vicar , Father Stanley Unwin) and an intelligence organisation with a contracted name (BISHOP , an acronym for " British Intelligence Service Headquarters , Operation Priest ") .

= = Adaptations = =

In 1981 , a compilation film of the Joe 90 episodes " The Most Special Agent " , " Splashdown " , " Attack of the Tiger " and " Arctic Adventure " , titled The Amazing Adventures of Joe 90 , was created under the supervision of Robert Mandell of ITC Entertainment 's New York offices . Intended to boost American syndication sales , The Amazing Adventures of Joe 90 is one of a number of composite films of Gerry Anderson productions , which were released both to stations and on home video under the promotional banner of " Super Space Theater " . Material for " The Most Special Agent " was re @-@ edited to remove the framing sequences set at Culver Bay Cottage and WIN Headquarters London , with the result that Joe 's fictitious mission to steal the Russian prototype fighter appears to be a real assignment for the nine @-@ year @-@ old WIN agent . Despite each

of the episodes in this compilation receiving a U certificate from the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) , The Amazing Adventures of Joe 90 was rated PG .

From the 1980s , the distribution rights to the ITC productions belonged to PolyGram Television . Subsequent sales were made to Carlton International in the late 1990s and finally Granada International which , through a merger with Carlton International in 2004 , now forms ITV Global Entertainment , a division of ITV plc . During the 1990s , the possibility of a live @-@ action film adaptation of Joe 90 was mooted by PolyGram . The idea re @-@ emerged in the 2000s , when in 2003 the magazine Variety reported that a film version was in the planning stages , to be produced by Disney . However , to date , the film proposal remains to be developed . In 2005 , Anderson said of negotiations with Granada , " We have regular meetings and although they are very polite and very nice , nothing ever happens . "

When I Love the ' 70s , ' 80s and ' 90s , three British pop culture nostalgia programmes , were broadcast on BBC Two in 2001 , a set of Joe 90 @-@ themed " trailers " were filmed to precede instalments of the last of these series . In each of the three previews , the character of Joe is depicted entering the BIG RAT 's " Rat Trap " to receive the brain pattern of a 1990s household name , from Oasis bandmember Liam Gallagher (representing 1990) to comedian Vic Reeves (1991) to the character of Garth (portrayed by Dana Carvey) from the 1992 film , Wayne 's World . On leaving the " Rat Trap " , Joe has assumed the identity of each BIG RAT subject and acts and speaks using their mannerisms . Edited versions of the trailers missing the BBC Two voiceovers and logos are included as special feature material on the Region 2 release of the Joe 90 DVD box set .

= = Merchandise = =

Authentic 1960s associated media for Joe 90 included a Century 21 Toys range comprising friction @-@ drive and battery @-@ operated versions of Professor McClaine 's Jet Air Car and Sam Loover 's futuristic saloon . Also available were Joe 's WIN briefcase (complete with replica gadgets and pistol) and his WIN badge (reading " Most Special Agent ") . Joe 90 was also given its own weekly comic , Joe 90 Top Secret , which ran for 34 issues and narrated the TV episodes in strip form , while also including strips based on the TV series The Champions and Land of the Giants . In September 1969 , Joe 90 Top Secret merged with the established Anderson tie @-@ in TV21 (previously titled TV Century 21) , which then came to be known as TV21 and Joe 90 . After a further 36 issues , Joe 90 strips were dropped from the comic and the new title discontinued in favour of the original TV21 .

The 1990s were marked by a considerable interest in old TV series from the 1960s and 70s ? Joe 90 was one of those that was among the repeats and was also the subject of a strip series in the Funday Times section of The Sunday Times . Strips from Joe 90 Top Secret were reprinted in a new publication , Joe 90 , which was launched to tie in with the 1994 BBC re @-@ runs but which also , after just seven issues , merged into a related comic , on this occasion Fleetway 's Thunderbirds . Other Joe 90 print media include 1968 and 1969 Joe 90 annuals from Century 21 Publishing and two short paperback novels , Joe 90 and the Raiders (by Tod Sullivan) and Joe 90 in Revenge (by Howard Elson) , published by May Fair Books .

= = = VHS and DVD = = =

In the United Kingdom , the earliest home releases of Joe 90 in the 1980s were controlled by " Channel 5 " , later re @-@ branded as " PolyGram Video " . Released in an eight @-@ volume series and re @-@ packaged in 1992 , the set included " The Most Special Agent " , " Splashdown " , " Attack of the Tiger " and " Arctic Adventure " in their re @-@ edited forms from the 1981 compilation film The Amazing Adventures of Joe 90 , which itself received three video releases both in PAL and NTSC format between 1981 and 1986 . The 1980s and 90s VHS releases used 16 mm prints , which were of a quality poorer than that of the original film .

In September 2002 , a DVD box set of all 30 Joe 90 episodes , sourced from a digital remaster of 35 mm film prints , was released in Region 2 by Carlton . The five component discs were also

released individually at intervals between September 2002 and January 2003 , and the episodes were also marketed in a new five @-@ volume VHS package . A North American set from A & E debuted in July 2003 before a Region 4 version appeared in October . A French @-@ language release of Joe 90 ? Agent Très Spécial (English : Joe 90 ? Very Special Agent) hit the Canadian market in 2004 . With these DVD releases , the component episodes of The Amazing Adventures of Joe 90 were made commercially available in their unedited form for the first time .