

DON'T MISS!

MEDICAL MARVELS

CASUALTY 1909

BBC1 9pm

Following on from last year's three-part *Casualty 1907*, we're once again journeying back to The London Hospital at the start of the last century, as the staff cope with the huge pressures of their work and all the new developments in medicine.

"There've been advances with anaesthetic this time round," explains Sarah Smart, who plays Ada Russell. "That's interesting, looking at the controversy which surrounded it. Being a pioneering bunch, the hospital staff realised anaesthesia was a specialist thing, so they got specialists in to do it. People were dying on the tables."

Another brewing controversy in the drama – based on real people and cases – is the fight for the rights for working women.

"It was a proper man's world, and the surgeons were top-notch," shares Sarah. "But the nurses were so capable – in this day and age, they'd be the surgeons themselves. They were more than capable of doing everything the doctors did, but just weren't allowed. My character tries to become a bit more hands on in her work – and gets away with it a bit, too!"

In fact, Ava's new duties in this fresh run put her right at the heart of the action.

"She goes from being the head of Wellington Ward to the receiving room," Sarah reveals. "That's where people come in with their ailments – so it's quite dangerous at times, and really intense and kind of scary. They turn up with blood and guts spilling out everywhere – it's a bit of a sight, as you can imagine!"