

BLUR
MAGICAL
REUNION

PASSION PIT
KINDRED
SPIRITS



UNDER the HAMMER

Chris Hemsworth reveals the family man behind the mighty Thor

COVER STORY

WITH FRIENDS
LIKE THESE ...Singing to a
different tuneKevin McHale graduates from *Glee* to hang out with screen legend Dustin Hoffman, writes **Neala Johnson**

As a schoolkid, Kevin McHale's extra-curricular activity was ... a pop group.

"I'd do school in the morning and afternoon, then at night we'd go to a recording studio, then when I got to high school we went on tour."

But it turns out "music was just the gateway drug", McHale says. His real addiction? Acting.

And the Texan's only acting class? Six seasons as guitar-slitting, paraplegic performer Artie Abrams on *Glee*.

"I got *Glee* a year out of high school. By the end of it, I'd been

in high school for nine years or something," he laughs. "When you do 121 episodes, your character is going to have big moments, small moments and everything in between. So we were constantly challenged; every week was like school."

Now he's graduated — the final *Glee* episode aired March 20 in the US — McHale can't wait to see what acting has in store for him.

"It goes from moments of terror, of 'Oh my God, what am I going to do?', to 'This is really exciting,'" he admits. "I got a taste of it last year when I did *Boychoir* — it was the first time I'd done a film and I saw the light at the end of the tunnel, you know? I knew *Glee* was ending the next year and I was like, 'OK, maybe I can do this.'"

As far as first movies go, *Boychoir* was a doozy.

The indie is a tale of triumph over adversity about an underprivileged boy who winds up in a prestigious choral school.

McHale plays the junior instructor. Hanging out with him in the staffroom? Oh, only conductor Dustin Hoffman,

principal Kathy Bates and No. 2 choirmaster Eddie Izzard.

"I definitely felt like I was thrown into the deep end of the pool without knowing how to swim," McHale laughs. "It was intimidating to say the least. I was just trying to take it all in."

"There's Dustin Hoffman and Kathy Bates sitting across from you, they're referencing old movies they've done, you've seen every single one and here you are in a scene with them ... The whole time I was just hoping I wasn't screwing it up."

There was a moment when McHale knew he must be doing OK.

"I definitely felt like I was thrown into the deep end of the pool without knowing how to swim"

"I had met Dustin a week before, but it was my first day shooting with him, and the director was like, 'Dustin has asked that you be added to all of his scenes'. I'm like, 'OK, either he's bored and lonely, or maybe I'm doing something right'. I wasn't sure what it was. Either way, I was staying, happily."

Now free to pursue whatever comes his way — "None of us did much during *Glee* because our schedule was absurd" — McHale, 26, has been tripping to London where he's hosting a panel show, *Virtually Famous*.

The surprise offer came his way after a UK producer was impressed by his guest spots on the US version of improv show *Whose Line Is It Anyway?*

As for his acting ambitions? "I've done bits of everything, so I'd like to keep doing that. I'm not going to say no based on genre ... unless it's horror. In the beginning of *Glee* we were all getting offered horror movies. I was like, 'I can't even watch them, let alone be in one.'"

SEE BOYCHOIR OPENS TODAY

Chris Hemsworth is flying high in Hollywood, but he couldn't do it without his family and base in Australia, writes **Tiffany Bakker**

Last year, Chris Hemsworth was kicking back watching *Guardians Of the Galaxy* (2014's monster Marvel hit about a band of ragtag occasionally not-so-super superheroes), when a thought struck him about his own godly on-screen alter ego, Thor.

The dude with the big hammer needed to lighten up. "It made me realise that I definitely wanted to have more fun with Thor," says Hemsworth, down the line from Los Angeles.

"I thought there was a bit of humour in the first *Thor* film, and then we went way too earnest in the second one."

"*Guardians Of the Galaxy* was a really good lesson in what audiences want to see. It showed that people buy into these fantastical worlds through humour, not some godly God that no one can relate to."

Thor, of course, is back in the latest *Avengers* film, *Age of*

Ultron, the sequel to 2012's box-office busting *The Avengers*.

Hemsworth reckons Joss Whedon — he of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Firefly* fame and the writer/director behind *Ultron* — totally nailed the balance for *Avengers* fans wanting to see the usual fantastical elements of their beloved superheroes, while adding in the minutiae of what makes them human as well.

"Joss wants to understand



Zac Brown and Hozier hang out with Hemsworth at Byron Bay Blues Fest.

what makes people tick and to get to the heart of these characters," says Hemsworth. "So to have these larger than life personalities, and to have someone who wants to ground them, is what's impressive about him and, ultimately, what makes these films work. He's looking at the smaller details, which we can all relate to."

In *Age of Ultron*, Thor and his pals Iron Man (Robert Downey Jr), Captain America (Chris Evans), Black Widow (Scarlett Johansson), The Hulk (Mark Ruffalo) and Hawkeye (Jeremy Renner), are up against Ultron, a rampaging AI-type robot (voiced by James Spader) who has been created by Tony

Stark, but who goes completely berserk on a misguided quest to save mankind by destroying it.

This time around, 31-year-old Hemsworth felt much more at ease on the star-studded set.

"For me, the first film was very much like the first day of school. I had this crazy nervous energy, worrying about getting to know everybody, whereas this one felt like a high school reunion, and catching up with old mates," the Australian says.

"There was an ease to it, which is a luxury, because most of the time you have to force or fake an emotion with other actors. But this was easy. We were very fortunate."

Of course, the one-time resident of Summer Bay will gladly tell you that he's been fairly fortunate himself over the past few years.

To get a good gauge on his massive popularity in the US, you need look no further than his ascendance to *People* magazine's Sexiest Man Alive title in 2014. In the grand scheme of celebrity in the United States, this is considered a very big deal indeed.

Hemsworth, though, wants to be thought of as more than just a bit of beefcake.

He credits director Ron

IN A 2016 FAR FAR..

Star Wars: Rogue One now has more than a star in Felicity Jones. It has a plot: Rogue resistance fighters unite for daring mission to steal the Death Star.



Chris Hemsworth wants his Thor to have a sense of humour again; (below) Hemsworth and wife Elsa Pataky have moved back to Australia.

Joy from a pit of despair

Passion Pit's Michael Angelakos has become a spokesman for mental health, writes **Cameron Adams**

Depending on how you listen to Passion Pit, they're either making euphoric indie pop or subversive twisted pop.

Passion Pit's frontman Micheal Angelakos loves the fact that some people don't delve into his trademark of dark lyrics delivered in a sky-high voice over joyous pop melodies.

"That's my favourite part of it all," Angelakos says. "That's how it translates in a live setting. People are dancing and crowd surfing as I'm singing about some pretty dismal stuff!"

"That's an amazing way to deal with all that pain. I felt so alone going through all the things I've written about. So I'm completely combating it by going on stage and embracing the audience and having the audience embracing me. It's like group therapy almost."

Touring the last Passion Pit album, 2012's *Gossamer*, was overshadowed by Angelakos revealing he had bipolar disorder after he cancelled some key shows.

Since then he's been working with and speaking out for mental health groups and being a role model by continuing to do his job, including making new album *Kindred*.

"I just don't see why it has to be such a big deal to be open about it," he says.

"It's just another type of illness people deal with. I've got amazing notes from fans, other artists and people in the media from people appreciating what I did. And I didn't even know what I was doing. I was just being honest. Now it's turned into something where I'm speaking up more consciously and trying to help get some change. Trust me we're living in the dark ages when it comes to mental health."

Angelakos admits he has to get into character to make a Passion Pit album.

"I need a lot of energy to make a Passion Pit record," he says. "It's a very particular sound and style of production. It's a very taxing lyrical process. It's not my go-to style, which is something I like about it. It's a character, it's a version of me. It's a pretty interesting challenge assuming the role."

"I have to utilise this hyper-energy pop to make sense of these issues I'm dealing with, that's inherently me tapping into this younger version of myself. It's like I'm in a time machine."

That's how I'm able to pull this off."

He thinks of Passion Pit as musical theatre — but more Sondheim than Lloyd Webber.

"Musical theatre is about playing a character, singing through a narrative. I'm an opera nut. There's so many histrionic elements in Passion Pit it makes sense to describe it as musical theatre."

"I don't have a problem with writing really personal lyrics so long as it's through this very theatrical project."

"It allows me to make sense of it and be that honest. I'm not hiding behind anything. I'm openly saying this is me, this issue is mine, but there's something about utilising this very theatrical world that allows me to be super honest. I'm not painting myself in the nicest light, but it makes more sense and it's artistically very liberating. It's fun to sneak in something dark."

HEAR KINDRED (SONY) OUT NOW

FULL INTERVIEW heraldsun.com.au



EAM

"There's something about this role that throws me right back into that period of my life, and it's a nice reminder of not to take things too seriously and to just have fun."

Indeed, Hemsworth credits the birth of his three children (three-year-old daughter India Rose, and twin one-year-old sons Tristan and Sasha) for prompting a nostalgia for his own childhood.

"All of the useless garbage that I worry about — things that don't really matter — and you think, 'God, when I was a kid it was about, what's for lunch? Or, what special power does my pretend character have?' It would be nice to keep that simplicity — the world would be a much better place if we kept some of that."

On a side note, the recent death of cricket legend Richie Benaud has also left him feeling sentimental.

"I was chatting with a mate of mine, and we were saying, 'God, how many summers did we spend with Richie over the years?' It just took me back."

Hemsworth's kids have changed him in other ways, too.

"It sounds like a cliché, but all of a sudden you care about something else more than yourself, which has been a very good thing for me," he says with a significant snort.

"I had been very selfish for a really long time. And it's refreshing for me that my focus and my motivations are about someone else and not my own selfish needs."

Hemsworth adds that he and wife of almost five years, Spanish actor Elsa Pataky, recently made the decision, for the sake of their kids, to base themselves permanently in Australia. The family bought a sprawling beachside property at Byron Bay in late 2014.

"We were living in California and it just wasn't conducive for the lifestyle that we wanted with kids," he explains.

"Los Angeles is tricky to get around, there's paparazzi to deal with, and I had this feeling that I just wanted to move back to Australia. My wife loves it, and I thought, that's where I want my kids to grow up — that's the world I want them to be a part of, because that part of the world is such a special place."

So far, despite the gruelling long-haul flights ("Three kids on a plane is not always fun"), the Hemsworths are loving it.

"It was the best decision we made," he says, "because it's the first time in years I've felt like I have a home again."

"For 10 years, I've had no base and led a pretty nomadic existence. Since we moved back, I feel much more grounded, and I like that."

SEE AVENGERS: AGE OF ULTRON OPENS TODAY



This one felt like a high school reunion, and catching up with old mates"

A MORE RELAXED CHRIS HEMSWORTH

ward with changing industry audience perceptions about what he's capable of by casting him as race car driver Ken Keselov in 2013's *Rush*. The film his performance received was a breakthrough for Hemsworth.

Ron's kind of a genius, and it brings something else out in me that I'm thankful for," says Hemsworth. "It's nice to be able to live up to my own expectations." Hemsworth and Howard Schultz capitalise on their relationship by reuniting

for *In The Heart of the Sea*, the true story of the sinking of the *Essex* whale ship which inspired Herman Melville's literary classic, *Moby Dick*. The film will be released in December.

Hemsworth had to drop a tonne of weight for the role.

"It was exhausting," he says. "In fact, losing the weight for that film was more exhausting than putting on the weight for Thor."

Speaking of Thor, Hemsworth is happy to keep swinging that hammer "as long as anybody wants me to".

He still gets a kick out of the character because "it's playing make-believe, it's living out childhood fantasies, playing dress ups and being a superhero."

"For me, personally, I've spent a lot of my time trying to get back to being a child, because they were the most carefree years and the most honest years."

