



Icon for Hire
The actor jokes he's not choosy about roles at this point in his career: "I'll take anything!"

Anthony Hopkins: 'I Try Not to Act My Age'

THE 86-YEAR-OLD OSCAR WINNER STAYS YOUNG AT HEART THANKS TO A BUSY SCHEDULE—AND NEWFOUND SOCIAL MEDIA FAME
By ERIC ANDERSSON

Sir Anthony Hopkins knows the secret to staying young: Just flop the two numbers in your age, and no one will be the wiser. "I'm 86. So I've reversed it. I'm 68, really," he says with a twinkle in his eye and a smile crossing his lips. The two-time Oscar winner pauses before adding, in his elegant Welsh accent, "I feel like I'm 68."
In fact, Hopkins keeps a schedule like a man who's 28. "I try not to act my age," he explains. This year alone the esteemed actor appears in three movies, including the

newly released drama *Freud's Last Session*, in which he plays father of psychoanalysis Sigmund Freud. He also recently wrapped the thriller *Locked*, channeling his wicked side as a man who traps a would-be thief in his car. "I'm so lucky to be working at my age," continues Hopkins, who seems surprisingly nonplussed that he's offered roles even though he just won his second Best Actor Oscar for *The Father* three years ago. "They still seem to send me scripts, and I think, 'Well, good.'"

An Unstoppable Legend



The Silence of the Lambs (1991)
Hopkins says he "enjoyed" playing cannibal Hannibal Lecter and calls costar Jodie Foster "very laid-back, very cool."



Nixon (1995)
Hopkins (with Joan Allen) starred as the 37th President in director Oliver Stone's biopic. He earned a Best Actor Oscar nomination for his performance.



The Two Popes (2019)
The drama explored the relationship between retired Pope Benedict XVI (Hopkins) and Pope Francis (Jonathan Pryce).



The Father (2020)
At 83, Hopkins (with Olivia Colman and Imogen Poots) became the oldest person to win an acting Oscar for his role as a man in his twilight years.



Freud's Last Session (2023)
Set in England at the dawn of World War II, the drama shows Freud (Hopkins) in an extended conversation with writer C.S. Lewis.



Even if he weren't in demand, Hopkins would have plenty to do. The prolific painter and music composer has recently added social media stardom to his skill set, gaining a new generation of fans who may have never seen *The Silence of the Lambs'* Hannibal Lecter boast about dining on another man's liver with fava beans and a nice chianti. (That performance earned him Oscar No. 1 in 1992.) To his more than 8 million combined followers on TikTok and Instagram, he shares videos of himself goofing off. There he is dancing the rumba in his kitchen to "Mambo Italiano," dangling chopsticks from his chin or wiggling his tongue (à la Lecter) while stirring red sauce.

His wife of 20 years, Stella, 67, and niece Tara Arroyave initially talked him into it. "I'm slightly reluctant," Hopkins admits. "I say, 'Oh no, not again.' But I do something silly because we need humor. We need a laugh in life. For good reason, I guess. Life is tough. The world is a savage place, but life has its beauty."

If Hopkins sounds philosophical, it's for sev-

'I look at my life and think, "How did this happen?"'

eral good reasons. Stella is working on a documentary about his life; he's currently writing his own memoir; and as atheist Freud in *Freud's Last Session*, he debates the existence of God with C.S. Lewis (played by Matthew Goode). Says Hopkins: "I was fascinated by the argument between the believer and the nonbeliever."

Hopkins doesn't think his own trajectory would be possible without a higher power.

"I look at my life and think, 'How did this happen?'" Born in southern Wales to Richard and Muriel, who ran a bakery together, Hopkins says he was the "school dummy" and so directionless his father was in "despair." His dad's sadness spurred him to action as a teen. "I said, 'One day I will show you, both of you,'" he recalls.

Within 10 years, after studying at the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama, Hopkins was serving as an under-



An Influencer at Age 86!

Hopkins (dancing on TikTok in 2022) says he's happy to "surf the wave" of the internet fame he's gained as a result of the self-described "silly" antics he posts (like lip-synching to Frank Sinatra). He also shows his serious side, sharing stories of his sobriety.

study for Sir Laurence Olivier at London's Royal National Theatre. But Hopkins's own distinguished career as a stage actor was nearly derailed by alcoholism. "I was drinking myself to death," he says matter-of-factly. "One day I had a moment of sheer fright. I got some help. That was 48 years ago."

At the time, he remembers a voice in his head telling him, "You can start living"—and he has taken that to heart since. Proud of his nearly five decades of sobriety, he fills his days with what brings him joy: working, of course ("It keeps me alive. I love activity," he says) and spending time with family, including Stella. The secret to his happy marriage? "Just say yes," he quips. (Hopkins has a daughter, Abigail, 55, from his first marriage to actress Petronella Barker.)

Hopkins's circle is small, but he likes it that way. "I'm very much a loner. I have very few friends," he says. "I'm not antisocial. I'm friendly, but I don't seek out. ... I enjoy solitude. I know that sounds morbid, but I do enjoy it."

The peace and quiet give him time to think about the past and contemplate the future. "I'm aware of my mortality," says Hopkins, who favors an early bedtime and no longer eats sugar. "To be realistic, I know that if I have a few more years of work in me, I can do it," he says. "I've just had a medical checkup. I'm in good shape."

Overall he feels a sense of gratitude for the good, the bad and everything in between. "I'm just fortunate," says Hopkins. "I went through ups and downs and depressions and despair and anger and all that stuff, but gradually the last few years [I've been] thinking, 'Well, I'm still here.'"

His Other Half
Hopkins and Stella (in 2022) met more than two decades ago when he was shopping at an antique store where she worked.

