

= Ian McKellen =

Sir Ian Murray McKellen , CH , CBE (born 25 May 1939) is an English actor . He is the recipient of six Laurence Olivier Awards , a Tony Award , a Golden Globe Award , a Screen Actors Guild Award , a BIF Award , two Saturn Awards , four Drama Desk Awards and two Critics ' Choice Awards . He has also received two Academy Award nominations , four BAFTA nominations and five Emmy Award nominations .

McKellen 's work spans genres ranging from Shakespearean and modern theatre to popular fantasy and science fiction . The BBC states his " performances have guaranteed him a place in the canon of English stage and film actors " . His most well known film roles include Gandalf in The Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit trilogies and Magneto in the X @-@ Men films .

McKellen was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1979 , was knighted by Elizabeth II in 1991 for services to the performing arts , and made a Companion of Honour for services to drama and to equality in the Queen 's 2008 New Year Honours . He has been openly gay since 1988 , and continues to be a champion for LGBT social movements worldwide . He was made a Freeman of the City of London in October 2014 .

= = Early life = =

McKellen was born on 25 May 1939 in Burnley , Lancashire , the son of Margery Lois (née Sutcliffe) and Denis Murray McKellen , a civil engineer . He was their second child , with a sister , Jean , five years his senior . Shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939 , his family moved to Wigan . They lived there through the war and his early childhood . They relocated to Bolton in 1951 , after his father had been promoted . The experience of living through the war as a young child had a lasting impact on him , and he later claimed that " only after peace resumed ... did I realise that war wasn 't normal . " When an interviewer remarked that he seemed quite calm in the aftermath of 11 September attacks , McKellen said : " Well , darling , you forget ? I slept under a steel plate until I was four years old . "

McKellen 's father was a civil engineer and lay preacher , and was of Protestant Irish and Scottish descent . Both of McKellen 's grandfathers were preachers , and his great @-@ great @-@ grandfather , James McKellen , was a " strict , evangelical Protestant minister " in Ballymena , County Antrim . His home environment was strongly Christian , but non @-@ orthodox . " My upbringing was of low nonconformist Christians who felt that you led the Christian life in part by behaving in a Christian manner to everybody you met . " When he was 12 , his mother died ; his father died when he was 24 . Of his coming out of the closet to his stepmother , Gladys McKellen , who was a member of the Religious Society of Friends , he said , " Not only was she not fazed , but as a member of a society which declared its indifference to people 's sexuality years back , I think she was just glad for my sake that I wasn 't lying anymore . "

McKellen attended Bolton School (Boys ' Division) , of which he is still a supporter , attending regularly to talk to pupils . McKellen 's acting career started at Bolton Little Theatre , of which he is now the patron . An early fascination with the theatre was encouraged by his parents , who took him on a family outing to Peter Pan at the Opera House in Manchester when he was three . When he was nine , his main Christmas present was a wood and bakelite , fold @-@ away Victorian theatre from Pollocks Toy Theatres , with cardboard scenery and wires to push on the cut @-@ outs of Cinderella and of Laurence Olivier 's Hamlet .

His sister took him to his first Shakespeare play , Twelfth Night , by the amateurs of Wigan 's Little Theatre , shortly followed by their Macbeth and Wigan High School for Girls ' production of A Midsummer Night 's Dream , with music by Mendelssohn , with the role of Bottom played by Jean McKellen , who continued to act , direct , and produce amateur theatre until her death .

When he was 18 years old , McKellen won a scholarship to St Catharine 's College , Cambridge , where he read English literature .

= = Career = =

== Theatre ==

While at Cambridge McKellen was a member of the Marlowe Society , appearing in Henry IV (as Shallow) alongside Trevor Nunn and Derek Jacobi (March 1959) , Cymbeline (as Posthumus , opposite Margaret Drabble as Imogen) and Doctor Faustus . His first professional appearance was in 1961 at the Belgrade Theatre , as Roper in A Man for All Seasons , although an audio recording of the Marlowe Society 's Cymbeline had gone on commercial sale as part of the Argo Shakespeare series .

After four years in regional repertory theatres he made his first West End appearance , in A Scent of Flowers , regarded as a " notable success " . In 1965 he was a member of Laurence Olivier 's National Theatre Company at the Old Vic , which led to roles at the Chichester Festival . With the Prospect Theatre Company , McKellen made his breakthrough performances of Richard II (directed by Richard Cottrell) and Marlowe 's Edward II (directed by Toby Robertson) at the Edinburgh festival in 1969 , the latter causing a storm of protest over the enactment of the homosexual Edward 's lurid death .

In the 1970s and 1980s McKellen became a well @-@ known figure in British theatre , performing frequently at the Royal Shakespeare Company and the Royal National Theatre , where he played several leading Shakespearean roles , including the title role in Macbeth (which he had first played for Trevor Nunn in a " gripping ... out of the ordinary " production , with Judi Dench , at Stratford in 1976) , and Iago in Othello , in award @-@ winning productions directed by Nunn . Both of these productions were adapted into television films , also directed by Nunn .

In 2007 he returned to the Royal Shakespeare Company , in productions of King Lear and The Seagull , both directed by Trevor Nunn . In 2009 he appeared in a very popular revival of Waiting for Godot at London 's Haymarket Theatre , directed by Sean Mathias , and playing opposite Patrick Stewart . He is Patron of English Touring Theatre and also President and Patron of the Little Theatre Guild of Great Britain , an association of amateur theatre organisations throughout the UK . In late August 2012 , he took part in the opening ceremony of the London Paralympics , portraying Prospero from The Tempest .

== Popular success ==

McKellen had taken film roles throughout his career ? beginning in 1969 with his role of George Matthews in A Touch of Love , and his first leading role was in 1980 as D. H. Lawrence in Priest of Love , but it was not until the 1990s that he became more widely recognised in this medium after several roles in blockbuster Hollywood films . In 1993 he had a supporting role as a South African tycoon in the critically acclaimed Six Degrees of Separation , in which he starred with Stockard Channing , Donald Sutherland , and Will Smith . In the same year , he appeared in minor roles in the television miniseries Tales of the City , based on the novel by his friend Armistead Maupin , and the film Last Action Hero , in which he played Death .

Later in 1993 , McKellan appeared in the television film And the Band Played On , about the discovery of the AIDS virus , for which McKellen won a CableACE Award for Supporting Actor in a Movie or Miniseries and was nominated for the Emmy Award for Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Miniseries or a Movie . In 1995 , he played the title role in Richard III , which transported the setting into an alternative 1930s in which England is ruled by fascists . The film was a critical success . McKellen co @-@ produced and co @-@ wrote the film , adapting the play for the screen based on a stage production of Shakespeare 's play directed by Richard Eyre for the Royal National Theatre , in which McKellen had appeared . As executive producer he returned his £ 50 @,@ 000 fee to complete the filming of the final battle . In his review of the film , Washington Post film critic Hal Hinson , called McKellen 's performance a " lethally flamboyant incarnation " , and said his " florid mastery ... dominates everything " . His performance in the title role garnered BAFTA and Golden Globe nominations for Best Actor , and won the European Film Award for Best Actor . His

screenplay was nominated for the BAFTA Award for Best Adapted Screenplay .

He appeared in the modestly acclaimed film Apt Pupil , which was directed by Bryan Singer and based on a story by Stephen King . McKellen portrayed a fugitive Nazi officer , living under a false name in the US , who is befriended by a curious teenager (Brad Renfro) who threatens to expose him unless he tells his story in detail . He was subsequently nominated for the Academy Award for Best Actor for his role in the 1998 film Gods and Monsters , wherein he played James Whale , the director of Show Boat (1936) and Frankenstein .

In 1999 McKellen was cast , again under the direction of Bryan Singer , to play the comic book supervillain Magneto in the 2000 film X @-@ Men and its sequels X2 : X @-@ Men United and X @-@ Men : The Last Stand . While filming X @-@ Men McKellen was cast as the wizard Gandalf in Peter Jackson 's three @-@ film adaptation of The Lord of the Rings (consisting of The Fellowship of the Ring , The Two Towers , and The Return of the King) . He received honors from the Screen Actors Guild for Best Supporting Actor in a Motion Picture for his work in The Fellowship of the Ring , and was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor for the same role . He also provided the voice of Gandalf for several video game adaptations of the films . On 10 January 2011 it was officially confirmed that McKellen would reprise the role of Gandalf in the three @-@ part film adaptation of The Hobbit .

On 16 March 2002 , he hosted Saturday Night Live . In 2003 , McKellen made a guest appearance as himself on the American cartoon show The Simpsons , in a special British @-@ themed episode entitled " The Regina Monologues " , along with the then UK Prime Minister Tony Blair and author J. K. Rowling . In April and May 2005 , he played the role of Mel Hutchwright in Granada Television 's long running soap opera , Coronation Street , fulfilling a lifelong ambition . He narrated Richard Bell 's film Eighteen , as a grandfather who leaves his World War II memoirs on audio @-@ cassette for his teenage grandson .

McKellen has appeared in limited release films , such as Emile (which was shot in three weeks following the X2 shoot) , Neverwas and Asylum . He appeared as Sir Leigh Teabing in The Da Vinci Code . During a 17 May 2006 interview on The Today Show with the Da Vinci Code cast and director , Matt Lauer posed a question to the group about how they would have felt if the film had borne a prominent disclaimer that it is a work of fiction , as some religious groups wanted . McKellen responded , " I 've often thought the Bible should have a disclaimer in the front saying ' This is fiction . ' I mean , walking on water ? It takes ... an act of faith . And I have faith in this movie ? not that it 's true , not that it 's factual , but that it 's a jolly good story . " He continued , " And I think audiences are clever enough and bright enough to separate out fact and fiction , and discuss the thing when they 've seen it " . McKellen appeared in the 2006 series of Ricky Gervais ' comedy series Extras , where he played himself directing Gervais ' character Andy Millman in a play about gay lovers . McKellen received a 2007 Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Guest Actor - Comedy Series nomination for his performance . In 2009 he portrayed Number Two in The Prisoner , a remake of the 1967 cult series The Prisoner . In 2013 , McKellen co @-@ starred in the ITV sitcom Vicious as Freddie Thornhill , alongside Derek Jacobi . The series revolves around an elderly gay couple who have been together for 50 years . On 23 August 2013 the show was renewed for a six @-@ episode second series which began airing in June 2015 .

In November 2013 , McKellen appeared in the Doctor Who 50th anniversary comedy homage The Five (ish) Doctors Reboot . He reprised his role as Magneto in X @-@ Men : Days of Future Past , released in May 2014 ; he shared the role with Michael Fassbender , who played a younger version of the character in 2011 's X @-@ Men : First Class . In October 2015 , McKellen appeared as Norman to Anthony Hopkins ' Sir in a BBC Two production of Ronald Harwood 's The Dresser , alongside Edward Fox and Emily Watson . In 2017 , McKellen will voice Cogsworth , the Beast 's loyal butler , who was cursed into a pendulum clock , in a live @-@ action adaptation of Beauty and the Beast .

= = Personal life = =

McKellen and his first partner , Brian Taylor , a history teacher from Bolton , began their relationship

in 1964 . Their relationship lasted for eight years , ending in 1972 . They lived in London , where McKellen continued to pursue his career as an actor . For over a decade , he has lived in a five @-@ story Victorian conversion in Narrow Street , Limehouse . In 1978 he met his second partner , Sean Mathias , at the Edinburgh Festival . This relationship lasted until 1988 . According to Mathias , the ten @-@ year love affair was tempestuous , with conflicts over McKellen 's success in acting versus Mathias 's somewhat less @-@ successful career . Mathias later directed McKellen in Waiting For Godot at the Theatre Royal Haymarket in 2009 . The pair entered into a business partnership with Evgeny Lebedev , purchasing the lease on The Grapes public house in Narrow Street .

McKellen is an atheist . In the late 1980s , McKellen lost his appetite for meat except for fish , and so mostly excludes it from his diet . In 2001 , Ian McKellen received the Artist Citizen of the World Award (France) .

He has a tattoo of the Elvish number nine , written using J. R. R Tolkien 's artificial script of Tengwar , on his shoulder in reference to his involvement in the Lord of the Rings and the fact that his character was one of the original nine companions of the Fellowship of the Ring . The other actors of " The Fellowship " (Elijah Wood , Sean Astin , Orlando Bloom , Billy Boyd , Sean Bean , Dominic Monaghan and Viggo Mortensen) have the same tattoo . John Rhys @-@ Davies , whose character was also one of the original nine companions , arranged for his stunt double to get the tattoo instead .

He was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2006 . In 2012 , McKellen stated on his blog that " There is no cause for alarm . I am examined regularly and the cancer is contained . I 've not needed any treatment . "

He became an ordained minister of the Universal Life Church in early 2013 in order to preside over the marriage of his X @-@ Men co @-@ star Patrick Stewart to his then fiancée Sunny Ozell .

McKellen was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Letters by Cambridge University on 18 June 2014 . He was made a Freeman of the city of London on Thursday 30 October 2014 . The ceremony took place at Guildhall in London . McKellen was nominated by London 's Lord Mayor Fiona Woolf , who said he was chosen as he was an " exceptional actor " and " tireless campaigner for equality " . He is also a Fellow of St Catherine 's College , Oxford .

= = Activism = =

= = = LGBT rights campaigning = = =

While McKellen had made his sexual orientation known to fellow actors early on in his stage career , it was not until 1988 that he came out to the general public , in a programme on BBC Radio . The context that prompted McKellen 's decision ? overriding any concerns about a possible negative effect on his career ? was that the controversial Section 28 of the Local Government Bill , known simply as Section 28 , was then under consideration in the British Parliament . Section 28 proposed prohibiting local authorities from promoting homosexuality " ... as a kind of pretended family relationship " . McKellen became active in fighting the proposed law , and , during a BBC Radio 3 programme where he debated Section 28 with the conservative journalist Peregrine Worsthorne , declared himself gay . McKellen has stated that he was influenced in his decision by the advice and support of his friends , among them noted gay author Armistead Maupin . In a 1998 interview that discusses the 29th anniversary of the Stonewall riots , McKellen commented ,

I have many regrets about not having come out earlier , but one of them might be that I didn 't engage myself in the politicking .

He has said of this period :

My own participating in that campaign was a focus for people [to] take comfort that if Ian McKellen was on board for this , perhaps it would be all right for other people to be as well , gay and straight .

Section 28 was , however , enacted and remained on the statute books until 2000 in Scotland and 2003 in England and Wales . Section 28 never applied in Northern Ireland .

In 2003 , during an appearance on Have I Got News For You , McKellen claimed when he visited Michael Howard , then Environment Secretary (responsible for local government) , in 1988 to lobby against Section 28 , Howard refused to change his position but did ask him to leave an autograph for his children . McKellen agreed , but wrote , " Fuck off , I 'm gay . " McKellen described Howard 's junior ministers , Conservatives David Wilshire and Dame Jill Knight , who were the architects of Section 28 , as the ' ugly sisters ' of a political pantomime .

McKellen has continued to be very active in LGBT rights efforts . In a statement on his website regarding his activism , the actor commented that :

I have been reluctant to lobby on other issues I most care about ? nuclear weapons (against) , religion (atheist) , capital punishment (anti) , AIDS (fund @-@ raiser) because I never want to be forever spouting , diluting the impact of addressing my most urgent concern ; legal and social equality for gay people worldwide .

McKellen is a co @-@ founder of Stonewall , an LGBT rights lobby group in the United Kingdom , named after the Stonewall riots . McKellen is also patron of LGBT History Month , Pride London , Oxford Pride , GAY @-@ GLOS , The Lesbian & Gay Foundation , and FFLAG where he appears in their video " Parents Talking " .

In 1994 , at the closing ceremony of the Gay Games , he briefly took the stage to address the crowd , saying , " I 'm Sir Ian McKellen , but you can call me Serena " : This nickname , given to him by Stephen Fry , had been circulating within the gay community since McKellen 's knighthood was conferred . In 2002 , he was the Celebrity Grand Marshal of the San Francisco Pride Parade and he attended the Academy Awards with his then @-@ boyfriend , New Zealander Nick Cuthell . In 2006 , McKellen spoke at the pre @-@ launch of the 2007 LGBT History Month in the UK , lending his support to the organisation and its founder , Sue Sanders . In 2007 , he became a patron of The Albert Kennedy Trust , an organisation that provides support to young , homeless and troubled LGBT people .

In 2006 , he became a patron of Oxford Pride , stating :

I send my love to all members of Oxford Pride , their sponsors and supporters , of which I am proud to be one ... Onlookers can be impressed by our confidence and determination to be ourselves and gay people , of whatever age , can be comforted by the occasion to take the first steps towards coming out and leaving the closet forever behind .

McKellen has taken his activism internationally , and caused a major stir in Singapore , where he was invited to do an interview on a morning show and shocked the interviewer by asking if they could recommend him a gay bar ; the programme immediately ended . In December 2008 , he was named in Out 's annual Out 100 list .

In 2010 , McKellen extended his support for Liverpool 's Homotopia festival in which a group of gay and lesbian Merseyside teenagers helped to produce an anti @-@ homophobia campaign pack for schools and youth centres across the city . In May 2011 , he called Sergey Sobyenin , Moscow 's mayor , a " coward " for refusing to allow gay parades in the city .

In 2014 , he was named in the top 10 on the World Pride Power list .

= = = Charity work = = =

In April 2010 , along with actors Brian Cox and Eleanor Bron , McKellen appeared in a series of TV advertisements to support Age UK , the charity recently formed from the merger of Age Concern and Help the Aged . All three actors gave their time free of charge .

A cricket fan since childhood , McKellen umpired in March 2011 for a charity cricket match in New Zealand to support earthquake victims of the February 2011 Christchurch earthquake .

McKellen is an honorary board member for the New York and Washington , DC based organization Only Make Believe . Only Make Believe creates and performs interactive plays in children 's hospitals and care facilities . He was honoured by the organisation in 2012 and hosted their annual Make Believe on Broadway Gala in November 2013 . He garnered publicity for the organisation by stripping down to his Lord of the Rings underwear on stage .

= = = Isaac Theatre Royal , Christchurch = = =

While in New Zealand filming The Hobbit in 2012 , McKellen announced a special New Zealand tour " Shakespeare , Tolkien , and You ! " , with proceeds from the shows going to help save the Isaac Theatre Royal , which suffered extensive damage during the 2011 Christchurch earthquake . McKellen said he opted to help save the building as it was the last theatre he played in New Zealand (Waiting for Godot in 2010) and the locals ' love for it made it a place worth supporting .

= = Selected credits = =

= = = Stage = = =

Much Ado About Nothing , Royal National Theatre , Old Vic , London , 1965
Trelawny of the ' Wells ' , National Theatre , London & Chichester Festival , 1965
The Promise , West End ; Broadway , 1967
Edward II (in title role) , Edinburgh Festival & West End , 1969
Hamlet (title role) , UK / European Tour , 1971
'Tis Pity She 's a Whore , UK Tour , 1972
Dr Faustus (title role) , Royal Shakespeare Company , Edinburgh Festival & Aldwych Theatre (London) , 1974
King John , RSC , 1975
Romeo and Juliet (as Romeo) , RSC , Stratford @-@ upon @-@ Avon & London , 1976
The Winter 's Tale , RSC , Stratford @-@ upon @-@ Avon , 1976
Macbeth (title role) , RSC , Stratford @-@ upon @-@ Avon & Young Vic (London) , 1976 ? 1977
The Alchemist , RSC , Stratford @-@ upon @-@ Avon & London , 1977
Every Good Boy Deserves Favour , RSC , Barbican Arts Centre (London) , 1977
Three Sisters , RSC , UK Tour , 1978
Bent , (as Max) Royal Court and Criterion , London , 1979
Acting Shakespeare (as Himself) , Copenhagen , 1980
Amadeus (as Salieri) , Broadway , 1980
Coriolanus (title role) , National Theatre , 1984
Wild Honey , National Theatre , 1984 (& Broadway , 1986)
The Cherry Orchard (as Lopakhin) , National Theatre , 1985
The Duchess of Malfi , National Theatre , 1985
The Real Inspector Hound , National Theatre , London & Paris , 1985
Othello (as Iago) , RSC , London & Stratford @-@ upon @-@ Avon , 1989
Richard III (title role) , National Theatre , world tour , 1990 & US tour , 1992
Uncle Vanya (title role) , National Theatre , 1992
Peter Pan (as Mr. Darling / Captain Hook) , National Theatre , 1997
An Enemy of the People , National Theatre , 1997 & Ahmanson Theatre (Los Angeles) , 1998
Present Laughter , West Yorkshire Playhouse (Leeds , England) , 1998
Dance of Death , at the Broadhurst Theatre (New York) in 2001 . At the Lyric Theatre (London , England) in 2003
Aladdin , (as Widow Twankie) Old Vic , 2004 & 2005
The Cut , Donmar Warehouse , 2006
King Lear by William Shakespeare , (as Lear) , Courtyard Theatre , Stratford @-@ upon @-@ Avon , 2007 ; New Zealand , 2007 ; New York (Brooklyn Academy of Music) , 2007 , Minneapolis , 2007 , New London Theatre (West End) , 2007 ? 8
The Seagull by Anton Chekhov , (as Sorin) , Courtyard Theatre , Stratford @-@ upon @-@ Avon , 2007 ; New York (Brooklyn Academy of Music) , 2007 Minneapolis , 2007 , New London Theatre (West End) , 2007 ? 8
Waiting for Godot by Samuel Beckett , (as Estragon) , Theatre Royal Haymarket , London , 2009

and 2010 ; Comedy Theatre , Melbourne , Australia , 2010 and Fugard Theatre , Cape Town , South Africa , 2010

The Syndicate by Eduardo De Filippo , Chichester Festival , 2011

No Man 's Land and Waiting for Godot (double bill) , Broadway , 2013 ? 2014

Letters Live , Freemasons Hall , 2015

No Man 's Land , Wyndham 's , London , 2016

= = = Filmography , awards and nominations = = =

= = = Music = = =

In 1987 , McKellen appeared reciting Shakespeare while the Super Rock group The Fleshtones improvised behind him on Andy Warhol 's Fifteen Minutes which ran on MTV .

Vampire in the music video " Heart " by Pet Shop Boys

The man who 's " falling out of reach " in the music video " Falling Out of Reach " by Guillemots

Appears on the Scissor Sisters track " Invisible Light " from their 2010 album " Night Work " , reciting a passage regarding the " Invisible Light " of the title .

Appeared as himself alongside George Ezra in the latter 's music video for " Listen to the Man " . Whilst Ezra is singing his song , McKellen joins in and lip @-@ syncs Ezra 's voice .

= = = Audiobooks = = =

Audiobook narrator of Michelle Paver 's series Wolf Brother , Spirit Walker , Soul Eater , Outcast , Oath Breaker , and Ghost Hunter , as well as a version of Homer 's The Odyssey .

= = = Other work = = =

A friend of Ian Charleson and an admirer of his work , McKellen contributed an entire chapter to For Ian Charleson : A Tribute . A recording of McKellen 's voice is heard before performances at the Royal Festival Hall , reminding patrons to ensure their mobile phones and watch alarms are switched off and to keep coughing to a minimum . He also took part in the 2012 Summer Paralympics opening ceremony as Prospero .