



When a hair-do made the news

AS well as the hits, Michael Bolton was always famous for his hair. And he admits it made world news when he chopped it all off.

"It was very funny because it was scary," the singer says.

"I've had long hair since I was a kid, since I was about 12. And the Beatles and the Stones had come over, the British invasion, and this kind of revolution and rebellious thing was in the air.

"I remembered thinking, I can't go back. You can't just grow it back – it's six months or however long it takes. I thought, what happens if I don't like the look? And they got me this guy who cut hair for Brad Pitt and Tom Cruise. So they were assuring me, if they fly this guy out to movie sets, he's not going to mess up your haircut. He's just going to look at your face, your bone structure, your cheeks and say, 'OK here's how you're going to look best in my opinion'.

"And I was just feeling this for about a year and a half leading up to it. I was just feeling like making a change. And the funny part of it... well, first of all, the next morning I walked into the bathroom of the hotel I was staying at – that's my life, hotels – and I walked in and looked in the mirror and said, 'wow I definitely made the right decision'.

"And a few months later, I was in London doing press for an album that was released and it was coming over the wire that I had just cut my hair. And on the wire back then, before email and texting of any kind, it was world news. So you would hear about a coup in a



country somewhere, in Uganda or some place, and a couple of other things, and all of a sudden, 'Michael Bolton has cut his hair', which is kind of hysterical if you think about it.

"The long-haired kid who wanted to sing for a living was now in the world news because of a haircut.

"Now I'm very content with my hair and every time it starts to get a little unruly, I think it's time to get in there and chop it off."

Sally Browne

that put your life in perspective so quickly, because they're just normal people who have extraordinary circumstances to contend with, and it really kind of shakes you to your core and makes you quiet and makes you think about what's important to you.

"At the end of the day it's the people we love. Everything else can fall away.

"I say that I don't have a single favourite letter or experience with fans as much as the last one. The last one was a young girl who's confined to a wheelchair, whose father brought her to two shows. They say 'my daughter's a really big fan of yours it would be great if you could meet her' and you don't

great it is to be able to make it happen for them."

Understanding the power of celebrity, he never hesitates to lend his face or voice to worthy causes, including setting up the Michael Bolton Foundation in 1993.

"We leave that kind of work to doctors and healers and the people who are day-to-day heroes. Social workers who work for not a lot of money, but every day they're taking care of families and trying to get people from a tough situation into a good situation and get families on their feet again and really do the day-in day-out work. Those are the unsung heroes to me."

It's they who deserve the accolades and awards.

While Bolton has a serious side, it may surprise some that he also has a keen sense of humour.

On a US talk show he recorded a spoof video advertising "the Michael Bolton School of Michael Bolton", making fun of his style of singing. And in his school days, as well as being the long-haired music lover, he was the prankster in class.

"(I was) funny. Unruly. Rather rebellious, but I had to find the humour in everything. Everything. Which got me in trouble. So my parents would have to come into school and calm people down. I got good grades in school but I just had a hard time taking things seriously and I haven't changed much in that respect. I would always find something funny about something a teacher said. I just had the inclination to point it out from time to time. It works nowadays."

It's an attitude that has served him well on the journey of life, raising kids (now adults) and going through relationships (he's now single again, ladies).

He's even part way through writing a book on his experiences.

"There are a lot of things I've wondered about, if I could ever put on a regret list, and I'm not big on regret. I think it's a serious waste of really valuable time – ha! – but in general that long journey has really paid dividends in a lot of ways, internal and external. It's an interesting story."

One World, One Love is out now. Michael Bolton performs at QPAC on May 26. Bookings qtx.com.au or 136 246.

I never look back with regret at the 18 years it took to have my career as an artist start... when it finally happened for me, I had developed as a songwriter

know until you read a little further and you finally meet them and you see that what's going on is the father is facilitating the most important positive experience of his child's life at that moment, and it just rocks your world.

"It rocks you and your consciousness.

"It makes you focus and makes you understand how grateful you are that your kids are OK. And what you would do if you were the father in that situation. And how

"When you hear someone say, 'I really love what you do,' that is a great thing. I never get tired of hearing it. I never want to stop hearing it, but I think because of that when you get the really intense 'this is my story, do you think Michael would have a few minutes before or after the show to see me, or my wife or my child', whatever it is, that's the deep stuff. The things that you can do with that are pearls, shining moments along the way. I'm grateful for it all."

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