

Masked roles keeps Perlman anonymous

Although Ron Perlman is one of television's biggest stars few people would recognise him in public.

And it seems Perlman has had his greatest success in film when he masks his face.

Perlman plays Vincent — the Beast — in the top rating *Beauty And The Beast* (tonight at 8.30pm on Channel 2).

Even before Perlman struck the acting big-time with Vincent, two of his previous starring roles also involved his face being heavily masked.

In his first starring

motion picture role in the Academy Award-winning, *Quest for Fire* he played a heavy-browed caveman.

For this part he spent eight months filming barefoot and almost naked in the frozen bogs of Scotland portraying a pre-historic Ulam tribesman.

Later in *The Name of the Rose* his face was again buried — this time beneath the grotesque features of the facially deformed and hunchbacked monk, Salvatore.

Perlman has no hang-ups about having to mask his own identity for the

role of Vincent.

He says Vincent is infinitely more human than most of the normal people around him.

The make-up for Vincent takes hours to apply in a routine that Perlman says is so demanding that he had to exercise and stay in top shape "just to get through the day".

He credits the show's staff with making the transformations as painless as possible.

"They have developed a whole group of new glues for me because I can't take spirit gum," he says.

"They've been very helpful and supportive to me on this."

Perlman's co-star Linda Hamilton, who plays Catherine Chandler, also helps to make his life behind the make-up easier.

"She's very bright and talented. We have a great relationship, terrific to work with. It would be impossible to do this without that."

Perlman himself is an intelligent, well-read, easy-going man who talks as knowledgeably about poetry as he does about sports.

In fact, he has released an album of poetry, called *Love and Hope* on Capitol Records in which, in the character of Vincent, he reads works by such authors as Shakespeare, Shelley and Lord Byron.

Perlman is married to fashion designer, Opal Stone and has a four-year-old daughter, who hasn't quite made the connection between daddy and this abstraction (Vincent).

Perlman is glad that his celebrity status is not an issue for her.

"When she has her little friends over, even if they watch the show, they just ignore me. It's great the way kids are in their own little world."

The fame of being 'the beast' has brought him offers to work with some of the finest directors in film.

"Yes, I have had offers from Francis Ford Coppola and other top directors but I've had to turn them down. I couldn't do anything on the break (in the filming of *Beauty And The Beast*) this year because it was so short. There is nothing I would want more in the world than to make a film with Coppola."

In tomorrow night's episode of *Beauty And The Beast*, when Michael (Bill Balvert), a boy from the underground community, decides to attend a college Above, he must again face the pain he left there years ago as well as deal with the feelings that Cathy awakens in him.



Ron Perlman (pictured here without his makeup) stars as Vincent, the powerful man/beast whose fearsome appearance belies his noble spirit and compassion in *Beauty And The Beast* on Friday 8.30pm on Channel 2.