

“Three months later you haven’t landed another acting job yet, that \$10,000 for four weeks has now had to stretch out over four months, you are back on skid row and eating beans on toast for dinner. Things are looking bad if you don’t get anything this month. You realise that being a poor starving actor is no fun.

“Then just as you are about to go under, another acting role comes your way, and so it goes on until you become well know enough to be one of the few actors that makes enough money to live a normal life with a decent pay and a good lifestyle.”

Hardship is part of being an actor, he tells me. “It takes guts and determination. It does not take sitting around a coffee shop telling everyone you are an actor.”

Stevens is refreshingly direct and he certainly has that self-confidence I associate with Australians. He admits that his physique has made him ‘cocky’, even down to the boast about being the “World’s Biggest Action Hero.”

How does he justify this claim? Apparently it came down to semantics.

“I want to work on big productions, I want to be the world’s first truly international movie star”

“Several years ago when I owned a small computer store a close friend and brilliant business man advised me to advertise that I was the biggest computer seller in Australia. His reasoning was that I would get more people in the door .If they questioned how I could be a bigger seller than one of the big chains I would ask them to name one computer salesman bigger than me. Therefore I was the biggest computer seller in Australia. Even at my smallest around this time I was still seven foot and a fit 285lbs.”

Now he is hoping to become big box office. He says: “There has not been a good action hero since Stallone and Schwarzenegger in my opinion. These guys are real hero types, they look it, they act it, they are it. Looking at their careers and lives they live the fantasy. Arnold continues on successfully in politics, Stallone is still in shape and making movies at 60. These guys are heroes off the screen as well as on the screen.”

So, given the success he has had already, how far could he go? The very top, is his answer.

“I plan on doing a succession of ‘A’ grade movies that are hits at the box office, then using this to travel the world and work in all the major movie markets. I want to work on big productions in India, in China, in Korea, Japan, France, the Czech Republic – I want to be the world’s first truly international movie star.”

The most recent developments in his career show that he is on the right track. When we



■ **MOVIE-MAKER: Conan Stevens in make-up from two of his films. Find out more about the Mensan actor at www.conanstevens.com**

spoke for the last time he had just finished filming Chandu Chowk to China, the first attempt by Warner Brothers at a Hindu film. He had had bit parts in two other movies. More significantly, he was up for the part of a Turkish strongman in Jean-Claude Van Damme’s new movie and was growing a beard for it. And for possibly his most demanding role yet he was going to cast for a straight acting role as an East European gangster in a new Australian film. Not only that, he was planning to co-write and produce a new film as a vehicle for himself.

Stevens does not see himself as inferior to his strongman heroes. As he sees it, if a bodybuilder from Austria can make it to Hollywood and the Governorship of California what’s to stop a seven foot former wrestler from Australia from getting to the top.

One thing I observed in all our conversations is that Mensa was mentioned only occasionally. Although he seems proud to have passed the test and places this fact first in a list of miscellaneous attainments on his CV, I get the impression that he joined to prove to himself and others that brains and brawn could go together.

And that’s a point he’s certainly proved...

