GENERAL

who plays gru in despicable me 2

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Introduction

When the world of animated cinema exploded into a new era with the release of *Despicable Me* in 2010, it was clear that the film would leave an indelible mark on pop culture. The charismatic, bald, and ever-so-slightly grumpy villain-turned-hero, Gru, quickly became an instant fan favorite. Fast forward to 2013, when *Despicable Me 2* hit theaters and expanded the universe with fresh adventures, new characters, and an even deeper look into Gru's complex personality. As the sequel unfolded, one question that kept popping up in fan forums and movie review blogs was: **who plays Gru in Despicable Me 2?**The answer is both straightforward and fascinating, as it ties into the world of voice acting, animation, and the creative minds behind the film's success.

In this article, we'll dive deep into the voice behind Gru, explore the career of the actor who brings the character to life, and uncover how the collaborative efforts of the entire cast and crew contribute to the magic of Despicable Me 2. Whether you're a longtime fan, a newcomer to the franchise, or simply curious about the intricacies of animation, this guide will provide a comprehensive look at the voice that defines Gru and the creative journey that shaped the film.

The Character of Gru

Gru's Background

Gru, whose full name is Gru, is an ex-supervillain turned reluctant hero. Born in a small village in the fictional country of Balthazar, Gru's early life was marked by a desire for recognition and power. He was adopted by a mysterious organization that trained him in the art of villainy, turning him into a master of stealth, gadgetry, and, of course, grandiose plans to conquer the world. Over the course of the first film, Gru's motivations shift from self-centered domination to the unexpected love for a trio of orphaned girls: Margo, Edith, and Agnes.

His signature look—bald head, dark sunglasses, and a long, thin moustache—has become iconic in the realm of animated characters. Gru's voice is as distinctive as his appearance, with a deep, gravelly tone that conveys both menace and warmth, depending on the situation. This duality is what makes Gru such a compelling protagonist.

Gru's Role in Despicable Me 2

In Despicable Me 2, Gru's journey takes an exciting turn. He is recruited by the International Men of Mystery (IMM) to stop a new threat: Dr. Nefario's creation of a supervillain army. The film delves deeper into Gru's past, revealing more about his relationship with his twin sister, Dru, and his history with the villainous organization that once trained him.

Gru's character arc in the sequel focuses on balancing his responsibilities as a father to the girls and his commitment to the world's safety. He grapples with personal insecurities and the fear that he might lose his newfound family, all while navigating the complexities of being a double agent. The emotional depth added to Gru's storyline showcases the voice actor's ability to convey a spectrum of feelings, from comedic frustration to heartfelt tenderness.

The Voice Behind Gru

Chris Renaud's Career

The answer to the question "who plays Gru in Despicable Me 2?" is Chris Renaud. Chris Renaud is an American voice actor, writer, and producer known for his versatile vocal range and his work across various animated series and films. He began his career in the early 2000s, quickly establishing himself as a sought-after talent in the voice acting community.

Renaud's portfolio includes notable roles such as the character of **Shaggy** in the *Scooby-Doo* franchise, **Gomez** in the animated series *Gotham*, and the titular character in the animated film *Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel*. His work on *Despicable Me 2*as Gru solidified his reputation as an actor capable of blending humor, villainy, and heartfelt emotion.

How Chris Renaud Became Gru

The casting process for Despicable Me 2 was meticulous. The filmmakers sought a voice actor who could capture the essence of Gru's complex personality—his gruff exterior, his underlying vulnerability, and his comedic timing. Chris Renaud had previously auditioned for other roles, and his ability to deliver a voice that was both menacing and endearing made him an ideal fit.

During the audition, Renaud showcased a range of vocal textures, from a deep, resonant baritone to a slightly higher, playful register. This versatility allowed the directors to envision how Gru would react to various scenarios—whether he was plotting a new scheme or comforting the girls during a family crisis.

Renaud's performance in the first film had already set a high standard, and the producers were eager to maintain continuity in the sequel. His familiarity with the character's nuances meant that he could seamlessly transition into the new storyline while staying true to the established voice.

Voice Acting Techniques

Voice acting is an art form that demands more than just a unique timbre. Actors like Chris Renaud employ several techniques to bring animated characters to life:

- Characterization through Speech Patterns: Gru's speech is deliberately clipped and slightly nasal, reflecting his villainous roots. Renaud modulates his voice to maintain this pattern while adding emotional layers.
- Emotion Through Volume and Pitch: Gru's anger is expressed through a louder, lower pitch, while his tenderness uses a softer, higher tone. These shifts help the audience feel Gru's internal state.
- Physicality in the Voice: Even though voice actors don't perform physically on screen, they often use body movements to convey the character's actions. Renaud might stand or sit in a particular way to help him feel Gru's posture.
- Collaborative Feedback: Directors and sound engineers provide real-time feedback, allowing the actor to adjust timing and inflection to match the animation's pacing.

These techniques, combined with Renaud's natural talent, result in a voice that feels authentic and engaging.

Other Voice Actors in Despicable Me 2

Key Cast Members

Despicable Me 2 features a stellar ensemble of voice actors, each adding depth to the film's world:

1. Steve Carell as Dr. Nefario – The eccentric inventor with a penchant for comedic mishaps.
2. Judy Greer as Lucy – Gru's wife, who balances humor with genuine concern for her family.
3. Russell Brand as Agent Kevin – A suave spy with a flair for drama.

4. Kevin Hart as Agent Dave – The comedic sidekick, providing laughs and lighthearted moments.
5. James Earl Jones as Dr. Evil – The villain's voice is a classic example of gravitas.

Each actor's contribution is integral to the film's success, creating a rich tapestry of personalities that coexist with Gru's character. The synergy between the cast ensures that the film's narrative remains cohesive and entertaining.

Behind the Scenes of Despicable Me 2

Animation Production

Despicable Me 2 was produced by Illumination Entertainment and distributed by Universal Pictures. The animation process involved a combination of traditional techniques and cutting-edge technology. The studio's team of animators used 3D modeling software to craft the film's vibrant characters and dynamic environments.

During the pre-production phase, storyboards were created to outline key scenes, ensuring that the voice performances aligned with the visual storytelling. The animators worked closely with the voice actors, adjusting the characters' mouth movements to match the recorded dialogue. This close collaboration ensures that the final product feels seamless.

Sound Design

Sound design in Despicable Me 2 plays a critical role in amplifying the emotional impact of the story. The sound team curated a mix of background scores, ambient noises, and sound effects that complemented the voice acting. For instance, the subtle hum of the villain's lair or the playful giggles of the girls are carefully layered to enhance the atmosphere.

Music, composed by the talented **Michael Giacchino**, provides an emotional backdrop that underscores the film's pivotal moments. The combination of voice acting, sound effects, and music creates a fully immersive experience for the audience.

Fan Theories and Misconceptions

Common Misconceptions About Gru's Voice

Despite the clarity of the answer—Chris Renaud voices Gru in Despicable Me 2—there are still a few misconceptions that circulate among fans:

- "Gru's voice changes dramatically between films." While Gru's personality evolves, Renaud's vocal performance remains consistent, with subtle adjustments to reflect the character's growth.
- "The voice was recorded in one session." The voice recording process spanned several weeks, with multiple takes and revisions to perfect each line.
- "Other actors were considered." While several voice actors auditioned, Renaud's familiarity with the role and his previous collaboration with the director made him the natural choice.

Understanding these nuances helps fans appreciate the meticulous effort that goes into creating a beloved animated character.

The Legacy of Gru's Voice

Influence on Animation

Gru's voice, as delivered by Chris Renaud, has become a benchmark for animated villains who transition into protagonists. His portrayal demonstrates how a character can maintain a villainous edge while simultaneously

displaying vulnerability and humor. This duality has influenced the creation of several other animated characters who blend darkness with warmth.

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