

The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept **THE** definitive answer. This week it's comedian Julian Clary's turn



'People keep mistaking me for Boy George – taxi drivers often tell me they love Karma Chameleon!'

The prized possession you value above all others... The ashes of Fanny the Wonder Dog, my whippet-cross who performed with me for years. I had her for 16 years until she died in 1999. Her ashes are in a little box by her photo at my home in Kent. It's like a little shrine – I touch the box for luck whenever I go out.

The biggest regret you wish you could amend... Calling Coleen Nolan 'overweight' on Celebrity Big Brother in 2012. We were asked to tell someone a home truth and I knew it upset her the moment I said it. She's fine now and we've worked together since, but it was not nice. I'm sorry, Coleen!

The temptation you wish you could resist... Making a fuss of puppies.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... Stop Thinking, Start Living by Richard Carlson. I first read it 15 years ago and it helped me snap out of a downward spiral by letting go of negative thoughts.

Right: Vivien Leigh in *Gone With The Wind*. Above right: an iron. Far right: the Great Barrier Reef



The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day... I'd go to Syria and stop those awful ISIS people murdering gay men by throwing them off buildings.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise...

Groups of teenage girls on crowded buses. They're always so out of control that there's danger in the air.

The film you can watch time and time again... *Gone With The Wind* for pure escapism. It makes me laugh and cry and I always lose myself in it.

The person who has influenced you most... My mum, Brenda. She taught me to be self-sufficient and always say yes to things so I'd have an interesting life. She's 85 now and still fills her diary every day.

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... Noël Coward. I've always been fascinated by him and I live in his old farmhouse. We'd write a song together and then I'd quiz him about the shadowy parts of his life. I'd like to know whether he had a relationship with the then Duke of Kent.



The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... Ironing – I find it therapeutic.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child...

Beware of Catholic priests! I went to a Catholic school and one of the brothers was later imprisoned for child abuse – not that it happened to me.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... My grandfather Hector's Rolex Oyster watch. It was stolen from my dressing room during a panto in Brighton in 2001. I was so bereft I stopped eating for a few weeks.

The unending quest that drives you on... Laughter – whether it's making myself or others laugh.

The poem that touches your soul... Shakespeare's Sonnet 94. I had to learn it at school when I was 12 and I can still recite it from memory. I have no idea what it's about, but it's my party piece.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... That I'm Boy George. Taxi drivers often say, 'I love your music, especially Karma Chameleon.' Boy George tells me they say to him, 'You're really funny!'

The event that altered the course of your life and character... Telling a rude joke about Norman Lamont at the British Comedy Awards on live TV in 1993 [Julian was blacklisted as a result]. In retrospect it was a good thing because I was losing the plot and the scandal cleared my diary and gave me space to get myself together. It was like an act of God – I was saved by a joke.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I'd steal Princess Diana's engagement ring, now worn by the Duchess of Cambridge. I know a good sapphire when I see one.

The song that means most to you... Don't Worry, Be Happy by Bobby McFerrin. I played it to graduating students when I was given an honorary doctorate by the University of East Anglia in 2014.

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions... I'd have croissants and tea for breakfast with Joan Collins at her house in St Tropez, then go snorkelling over the Great Barrier Reef. After that I'd relax on a beach somewhere, but I'd skip lunch and spend

the afternoon walking round the rag market in Birmingham looking at fabrics. I'd spend the evening at home in Kent with my partner Ian. I'd have a gin and tonic on the lawn with our dogs Valerie and Albert and our three chickens, then we'd have sushi with red wine.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... My show at the London Palladium in 1993 was very special because it's such an iconic venue. All my family and friends were there and I remember taking a moment to savour it.

The saddest time that shook your world... The deaths of my partner Christopher and my best friend Stephen, who both had AIDS, in the 1990s. It was very sad and dramatic and I didn't deal with any of it for a long time.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... To play Sir Andrew Aguecheek in *Twelfth Night* at the National Theatre. If there are any directors reading this...

The philosophy that underpins your life... Stop thinking and start living. No good comes from dwelling on things.

The order of service at your funeral... I want a direct incineration after death, like David Bowie.

The way you want to be remembered... He didn't outstay his welcome.

The Plug... Julian's new children's novel *The Bolds To The Rescue* is published by Andersen Press, £6.99. The *Joy Of Mincing* tour runs from 25 March until 27 May. Visit julianclary.co.uk. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon



PS...

Angelina Jolie is back to voice Tigress in *Kung Fu Panda 3* – in cinemas from Friday. *Motown The Musical* opens at London's Shaftesbury Theatre on Tuesday. And Ellie Goulding starts her UK tour on the same day at the Motorpoint Arena, Cardiff



NEXT WEEK

- Racy Raj drama *Indian Summers* returns – and this time it's even steamier
- Sweet or savoury – how to bake perfect pies
- Monty Don's tips for a top crocus display
- PLUS Britain's best TV listings