

The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it's the turn of tenor Alfie Boe

The biggest regret you wish you could amend... I was invited to sing to Luciano Pavarotti in private in 2002 but didn't have the confidence. I kick myself now because I could have had the most amazing masterclass. He died a year later.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Pastries! I can happily eat four or five almond croissants in a row.

The film you can watch time and time again... The Dad's Army film from 1971. My dad Alf got me into the TV series when I was seven and I love the movie.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day... I'd sit in on a meeting of the executives at my record company. You never know what's being said behind your back in this business!

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... My luggage being lost by airlines. It's happened about four times in the past year alone.

Left: Dad's Army's James Beck and Arthur Lowe. Above right: A Harley-Davidson like Alfie's. Far right: sunset in Hawaii

The prized possession you value above all others... My Harley-Davidson. I've had it two years and it's a beauty. I live in Utah in the US now and love riding it into the desert or the mountains.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... I've never been one for reading, but I made myself read Victor Hugo's Les Misérables when I was rehearsing to play Jean Valjean in 2010. It's astounding. It made me feel the characters' emotions and changed me as an artist.

The person who has influenced you most... My dad. He loved music and shaped my tastes, and I try to emulate how he was with me when I'm with my kids [Grace, six, and Alfie, two]. He died in 1997 from a brain tumour.

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... Elvis. I'm a big fan and I'd love to ride out with him on our Harleys and talk to him about his life and music. Maybe we could do a duet together.

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... Ghost-hunting TV shows. I believe in an afterlife and want to go on a ghost hunt myself one day.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... My first drum kit. It was a three-drum set from 1960. Dad bought it for me when I was 12 as



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The event that altered the course of your life and character... Singing Bring Him Home at the 25th anniversary of Les Misérables at London's O2 in 2010. I got a record deal after that.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I'd hack into the Inland Revenue's computer system and alter my tax bill.

The song that means most to you... Beautiful Dreamer by Slim Whitman. Mum [Pat, now 79] and Dad used to sing it to me in bed. It takes me right back.

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions... I'd begin the day at Hawaii's Grand Wailea hotel with a huge platter of exotic fruit, then make my way to its pastry counter, which is always piled high. I'd relax on the beach with my wife Sarah and our kids, then we'd go skiing in Sun Valley, Idaho. We'd have lunch at the Pioneer Saloon, a Wild West-themed restaurant with sawdust on the floor, swing doors and walls covered with animal heads. I'd have prime rib

a surprise. I sold it three years later for £150 to buy a bigger set. I'd pay thousands to get it back!

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Believe in your decisions.

The poem that touches your soul... A monologue from Henry V that begins 'O, for a muse of fire...', which I had to learn for an audition. It fills you with strength and confidence. I still read it every now then for inspiration, even though I didn't actually get the part!

The unending quest that drives you on... To make my best album. It keeps me striving and improving.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... That I only sing opera. I sing a range of genres, from opera to rock and country, and I especially love Italian folk songs.

steak and a gigantic jacket potato, with a couple of steins of local ale. After a nap I'd nip back to Hawaii to watch the sunset, then take Sarah to Pompeii for a Pink Floyd gig. They'd magically reform just for us, then we'd have dinner with the band and stay up all night jamming.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... When I first saw Sarah in 2003. She was sitting on a bench in the building where I was rehearsing in San Francisco. I said, 'Any idea how I can get a decent cup of tea around here?' and she fell for it! It was love at first sight.

The saddest time that shook your world... My dad's death. He was only 63 and I was 23. Dad was fun-loving, caring but very strong, and was always smiling and singing. I miss him every day.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... I'd love to play a villain in a big Hollywood action movie.

The philosophy that underpins your life... Work hard, believe in what you do and surround yourself with people you can trust, who'll tell you the truth.

The order of service at your funeral... After a traditional service I'll be carried out to Led Zeppelin's Rock And Roll.

The way you want to be remembered... As someone who brought joy to people.

The Plug... Alfie's new album Trust is out on Decca Records and he'll be touring the UK later this year. For tickets visit www.alfie-boe.com. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon



PHOTOGRAPHS: ALAMY; BBC ARCHIVE; ALLSTAR

PS...

Angelina Jolie is spellbinding in Maleficent, Disney's tale of the evil fairy in Sleeping Beauty – in cinemas on Wednesday. Antony And Cleopatra opens at Shakespeare's Globe. And Mariah Carey's new album Me. I Am Mariah... The Elusive Chanteuse is out Monday



NEXT WEEK

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