PAGE 78



We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week: Riverdance creator Michael Flatley

The prized possession you value above The temptation you wish you could all others... A first edition of James Joyce's Ulysses from 1922 with illustrations by Henri Matisse. It's signed by both men and I keep it in the library at Castle Hyde, my home in County Cork.

The biggest regret you wish you could **amend...** Not marrying my wife Niamh 20 years ago! We met in 1993 when she was in Riverdance. Our wedding in 2006 was one of the happiest days of my life.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... Dancing in my show Feet Of Flames at New York's Madison Square Garden in 2000. It was thrilling to be on the stage where so many heroes, such as Muhammad Ali, had performed.

Left: Julius Caesar.

Corvette Stingray.

Above right: a

Far right: some

of Michael's

paintings

resist... Don't resist – cut yourself some slack and enjoy life. The book that holds an everlasting resonance...

Meditations by the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius. So much of what he wrote is still relevant today.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day... I'd stay at home looking in the mirror – it'd make a nice change from what I normally see!

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... People who drive slowly in the fast lane on the motorway.

The film you can watch time and time again... The Mission with Robert De Niro and Jeremy Irons is stunningly shot and has the best soundtrack ever.

The person who has influenced you most... My father Michael taught me self-discipline, hard work and integrity. He died in March aged 88 and I miss him terribly. He was my hero.

The poem that touches your soul... The last page of Ulysses is like the finest poetry. It's timeless and elegant and I've memorised all the words.

The unending quest that drives you on... To do something of greatness that makes the world a little bit better.

Pierce Brosnan stars in thriller Survivor, in cinemas Friday. Holby

City's Hugh Quarshie is Othello at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre,

Stratford, from Thursday. And Florence And The Machine's new

album, How Big, How Blue, How Beautiful is out on Monday



The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again ... A 1968 Corvette Stingray, which I had when I was growing up in Chicago. It was a real beauty, but I had to sell it to pay the rent.

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... Julius Caesar. I'd like to know if he was aware he was going to be assassinated.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child ... Believe in yourself and in your dreams.

The song that means most to you... Yesterday, When I Was Young by Charles Aznavour is about living for today and not letting life pass you by.

The event that altered the course of your life and character... The opening night of Lord Of The Dance in Dublin in 1996. I was fired from Riverdance in 1995 and everybody seemed to abandon me, even though I'd created it. My father said, 'Forget about them, just create a new show.' I finally did it and we got a standing ovation.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it ... To break into Rome's Colosseum at night and dance my heart out would be incredible.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase ... What people think about me is none of my business.

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... I'm a flautist too and I collect antique wooden flutes. I have about 50 and I keep them by the bar at home. I like nothing more than mixing a perfect martini and playing a couple of them.

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions... I'd spend all day with Niamh and our son Michael St James, who's seven. Breakfast would be on the balcony of the Hotel Splendido in Portofino, Italy: espresso coffee for me and two croissants with melted chocolate. Then a Mangusta 130 yacht would power us along

the Amalfi Coast where we'd walk through Ravello – then to Monte Carlo for lunch at Le Louis XV restaurant at the Hotel de Paris. I'd have risotto with fresh truffles and some Château Latour 1982, then we'd relax

'I'm a flautist too and I collect antique wooden flutes. I have about 50 and I like nothing more than to mix a perfect martini and play a couple'

> on the beach at the Reethi Rah hotel in the Maldives. I'd spend the rest of the day playing Lego with my son. In the evening, I'd drink a dry martini at the George V hotel in Paris, then have dinner with Niamh in London: I'd have a pasta starter at Harry's Bar with some Petrus 1990, then head to C London for a veal chop with mashed potatoes and some Cheval Blanc 1990, before finishing with dessert at Mark's Club with a glass of Château d'Yquem 1947. After that we'd go dancing in New York at a place I always keep secret. We'd dance to Fly Me To The Moon by Frank Sinatra.

> The saddest time that shook your world... My father's passing. It shook me deeply. The hardest thing I've ever done was deliver the eulogy.

> The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... To have my new paintings accepted by the art world. My first exhibition is in London in June.

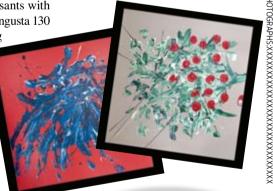
> The philosophy that underpins your life... When the bell rings, get out there and throw your best punch.

The order of service at your funeral... I just want plenty of good Irish whiskey and music, so everyone has a good time.

The way you want to be remembered... As someone who gave every last drop of energy on stage to make people happy.

The Plug... Lord Of The Dance: Dangerous Games is at London's Dominion Theatre, and then touring. For tour dates visit lordofthedance.com.

As told to Rob McGibbon



NEXT WEEK

 Don't miss Matthew Jukes' pull-out guide to his 100 best value summer white wines Monty Don on the herb

- every home should grow
- PLUS Britain's most

detailed TV listings guide

78 weekend

PS...



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