



From top: The Emerald Pool in Dominica, Chekhov's The Seagull, Catherine the Great, a Tiffany gift box, Marvin Gaye, Dom Perignon, The Spirit Of The Beehive, tropical fruit and flamenco dancing

The prized possession you value above all others... My three-year-old dog Maude. She's half lurcher, half Parson Jack Russell and travels with me a lot when I'm on a theatre tour.

The unqualified regret you wish you could amend... Saying mean and catty things. It makes me feel queasy.

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions...

I'd start the day with a platter of tropical fruit by the volcanic Boiling Lake in Dominica with my daughter Mary [28, whose father is actor Bill Nighy] and all my nearest and dearest. We'd have a dip in the Emerald Pool, then fly by helicopter to the Sierra mountains in Ecuador to go skiing. I'd go for lunch in Rome and have fish with champagne risotto and a chocolate desert. After, I'd walk around the Hermitage museum in St Petersburg, then head back to my cottage in Suffolk and cook dinner for my family with a few bottles of Dom Perignon champagne.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Procrastination. It would save me a lot of hassle if I could stop saying, 'Oh I'll do that tomorrow'.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... French Provincial Cooking by Elizabeth David, which a boyfriend gave me when I was 19. It gave me the cooking skills that I still use.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Woman for a day... I'd eavesdrop on the homeless and see what I could do to help them.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... Bad driving. I succumb to road rage myself when I see people in cars behaving obnoxiously. I'm filled with a spontaneous, implacable fury.

The film you can watch time and time again... The Spirit Of The Beehive, a Spanish film from 1973. It's about a girl who befriends a fugitive after the Spanish Civil war. It conjures up images of how I felt as a little girl.

The person who has influenced you most... Mary Davies, who was my English and drama teacher from when I was 13 to 17. She inspired my love for acting. Sadly, she died a few years ago.

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... Catherine the Great. I'd ask her about her favourite possessions in the Hermitage and why she was such a despot!

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



'I love to dance flamenco and salsa – if I'm in a shop and hear music I have to stop myself moving to it'

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 actress Diana Quick

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... Dancing – I've learnt flamenco and salsa. Even in a shop I'll hear music and I have to stop myself moving to it.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... A Tiffany diamond necklace I was given 35 years ago by my then boyfriend Albert Finney. He took me to the store in New York and there in a cabinet was a single necklace waiting for me. He'd set it all up. I was devastated when it was stolen in a burglary in 2011.

The unending quest that drives you on... To feel at peace with myself in understanding why we're here and that I'd done the best I could if life were to suddenly stop.

The poem that touches your soul... So Many Different Lengths Of Time by Brian Patten, one of the great Liverpool poets of the 60s. It's about death and it particularly resonates with me now because I've reached that age, 66, when people close to me have started to die.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... That I'm scary. I'm not sure if it's down to the perception from interviews or the roles I've played, such as judges. I'm actually kind and generous-spirited.

The event that altered the course of your life and character... I contracted Hepatitis A when I was 19. I was in a coma for ten days and it was touch and go. My idea of the world changed afterwards. I suddenly knew I was mortal and I became more measured.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I'd take money from every major corporation and redistribute it to those in need.

The song that means most to you... Sexual Healing by Marvin Gaye.

Hearing it always makes me happy and want to dance.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... The moment Mary opened her eyes after three days of being unconscious in hospital following a car accident when she was two-and-a-half.

The saddest time that shook your world... That accident. We were in a major pile-up in fog on the A12 north of Ipswich. At first she was conscious and was only complaining of stomachache, but when we got to hospital we realised she had severe internal injuries and needed emergency surgery.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... To play fading actress Arkadina in Chekhov's The Seagull.

The philosophy that underpins your life... Try to live each day as if it is the only one. Be here now.

The order of service at your funeral... I'm not religious and all I definitely want is for them to play Listen To The Lion by Van Morrison and scatter my ashes somewhere in Suffolk.

The way you want to be remembered... As someone who could be trusted.

The Plug... Diana appears in The American Plan - first play in the 2013 Ustinov Studio season - at Bath's Theatre Royal, from Thursday until 6 April. www.theatreroyal.org.uk/ustinov

As told to Rob McGibbon

PS...

Rachel Weisz casts a spell as a witch in Oz The Great And Powerful, in cinemas from Friday. Mystery play The Curious Incident Of The Dog In The Night-Time is at London's Apollo Theatre. And Listen to Dido's new album, Girl Who Got Away, out Monday



NEXT WEEK

● All your favourites are back, including Monty Halls, The Day That Changed My Life, On Set With and Alphabet Quiz ● Serve up a mouth-watering Mother's Day brunch ● Plus Britain's best and most comprehensive TV listings