



From top: New York, Jennifer Lopez, Al Jolson, an Art Deco clock, a Gibson SG guitar, afternoon tea at Claridges and Liza in Cabaret

The prized possession you value above all others... My parents' wooden Art Deco clock. It never lost a minute until it suddenly stopped in 1988 at the exact time my dad Jack died – 3.30pm.

The unqualified regret you wish you could amend... That I can't get the four members of Slade to be mates again. I got us together three years ago but it was a disaster and all the old grievances came out, like money and things that were said years ago. We're in our 60s now and it's sad we can't laugh about our amazing 25 years together.

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

Breakfast at Zabar's deli in New York, then shopping in Milan with my missus, Susan. We'd fly to Paris for lunch and visit the museums. Then to London for afternoon tea at Claridge's before cocktails on my boat in Portugal, then New York again for a Broadway musical. After that, my old mates and I would eat a curry in Walsall in the West Midlands, where we grew up. Then we'd go on a bar crawl in New Orleans.

The temptation you wish you could resist... I have never been one for resisting temptation – and it's got me into a lot of trouble.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... The Moonstone by Wilkie Collins (1868), which I read at school when I was 12. It was the first detective novel.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day... I'd sneak into Jennifer Lopez's dressing room and watch her getting ready for a gig. She's talented and has a great booty!

The way fame and fortune has changed you, for better and worse... My mates reckon I haven't changed but, as an extrovert, Susan says I don't consider that some people are shy.

The film you can watch time and time again... Cabaret with Liza Minnelli. I saw it in London in 1972 and loved it so much I went again the next night.

The person who has influenced you most... My dad. He was a window cleaner and an amateur club singer. When I was seven, in 1953, he dragged me on stage at our local working men's club to sing I Believe by Frankie Laine. I loved my first taste of applause.

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... Al Jolson. He was the ultimate performer and the king of Broadway.



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The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... That I'm always dressed in platform shoes and a top hat with mirrors, shouting, 'Merry Christmas!' If I'm not dressed like that, people are genuinely disappointed.

The event that altered the course of your life and character... I toured sleazy clubs in Germany in a band called The Mavericks when I was 17 and learned all about sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll. I went out a boy and came back a man.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I'd steal documents that expose corruption in our Government and the banks.

The song that means most to you... The Girl Can't Help It by Little Richard. I was ten when I saw him perform it and knew then I wanted to be a rock singer.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... Aside from seeing my three children born, it was getting the band's first No.1 with Coz I Luv You in 1971. It gave us the hunger for more.

The saddest time that shook your world... My dad dying hit me hard. He was 77 and had been ill for a while, but it took me a long time to get over it.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... I wish the band had been bigger in America. They weren't ready for us, but it doesn't actually haunt me – it's just rock 'n' roll.

The philosophy that underpins your life... My dad used to say, 'You can only eat one meal and wear one pair of shoes at a time. If you've got that, be grateful for it. Everything else is icing on the cake.' He was right.

The order of service at your funeral... I'd have Al Jolson's Let Me Sing And I'm Happy and all my mates making speeches saying how wonderful I was. I'd leave a humongous tab behind the bar with loads of Guinness.

The way you want to be remembered... As someone who put a smile on everybody's face and a tune in their hearts.

The Plug... Noddy features in Sky Arts at Birmingham Home Of Metal on Sky Arts 1 HD on 31 August. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon

The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept **THE** definitive answer. This week it's Slade frontman Noddy Holder

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... The only thing that gets you anywhere in life is hard graft.

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... Reading about history. I was thinking of being a history teacher before I got into singing.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... My Gibson SG stage guitar, which was stolen at a gig in the 70s. Years later, I got a letter from a singer who was big in the 80s, admit-

ting he stole it. He was in rehab and part of his recovery was to seek forgiveness for past sins. I didn't reply as the guitar was so special I couldn't forgive him. It wouldn't be fair to name him.

The unending quest that drives you on... I have a thirst for knowledge and new experiences.

The poem that touches your soul... I've always been tickled by Spike Milligan's: 'The boy stood on the burning deck/ Whence all but he had fled/The twit!'

PHOTOGRAPHS: ALAMY, BBC, ALUSTAR, REX, DIMITRIOS

PS...

If you've got children to entertain, try *The Smurfs In 3D* – the little blue creatures' movie debut – out on Wednesday. Catch one of the 2,500 events at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. And Morrissey returns to the stage with two London shows this week.



NEXT WEEK

● The brutal story of the Borgias, history's most scandalous family, comes to the screen ● Love The Great British Bake Off? Now try the recipes at home ● Meet our first two National Garden Competition finalists ● PLUS Britain's most detailed TV guide