The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week: The Pretenders’ Chrissie Hynde

The prized possession you value above all others… My white Telecaster guitar, which I bought at the beginning of The Pretenders in 1978. It’s in a box-up somewhere, but I think I should get it out.

The biggest regret you wish you could amend… Not spending more time with my parents. I left home in Akron, Ohio, when I was 22 and never really went back. My father died in 2010 and my mother died three years later.

The temptation you wish you could resist… I gave up smoking and I generally stay away from alcohol, but I probably watch too much television.

The book that holds an ever-lasting resonance… Black Beauty by Anna Sewell. I read it at 11 and it started my love of novels and horses.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Woman for a day… I’d watch the dancer Michael Clark rehearsing. He’s a fascinating talent and I’ve always had a crush on him.


The plot that makes your hackles rise… Barbecues! I sit in my garden in London in summer and the air’s filled with lovely smells like jasmine and then some a****** starts grilling burgers.

The film you can watch time and time again… The Twilight Samurai from 2002. It’s about a man in search of honour and love. It’s very moving.

The person who has influenced you most… Lemmy from Motorhead. I met him in the 70s when things weren’t happening for me. I tried to cry on his shoulder, but he gave me a kick up the ass and got me going.

The figure from history for whom you’d most like to buy a pie and a pint… Vincent van Gogh. I’d sit with him before he started painting so he could tell me what he sees.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child… Don’t worry so much about what people think of you, consider how you feel about them.

The unending quest that drives you on… To write a great song or do something great musically. I think I’ve had a lot more credit than I’m due.

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity… I love the purity and courage of boxing. There’s something noble about it. I used to follow Nigel Benn around the country in the 90s.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again… My white Telecaster guitar, which I lost to drug overdoes [Jimmy Honeyman-Scott, in 1982, and Pete Farndon, in 1983]. I wish they were still here.

The poem that touches your soul... To JS by Tennyson. It’s about the loss of someone and I love how it deals with the natural essence of death.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase… I’ve read anything about myself for decades, so I’m spared knowing what people think.

The event that altered the course of your life and character... Going to see a gig by Mitch Ryder & The Detroit Wheels in Akron when I was 14. It was like a divine intervention in my life.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it… I would murder anyone who had a lot of credit than I’m due.

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions… I’d wake up in a rundown hotel on Copacabana beach in Rio. I’d have a piece of bread and a tankard of strong coffee before walking the length of the beach, passing an apartment I once shared with the architect Oscar Niemeyer and nod to his memory. I’d have a frozen acai berry juice and then hang out with musicians I know there, and then meditate on the rocks by Ipanema beach.

The way you want to be remembered… I wish I’d learnt to paint.

The philosophy that underpins your life… Stick to the plan. It’s not what you wish you could do, it’s what you should do.

The way you want to be remembered… Memories hold you back. I’m happy to fade away as people get on with living.

The Plug… Chrissie Hynde’s autobiography Reckless is out now, published by Ebury Press, £20.

As told to Rob McGibbon

PS…

Keira Knightley stars in adventure thriller Everest – in cinemas on Friday. Mark Rylance plays the King of Spain in Farinelli And The King at the Duke of York’s Theatre from Monday. And David Gilmour’s solo album Rattle That Lock is out Friday