The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week: BGT’s first winner, opera singer Paul Potts

The prized possession you value above all others... The ability to drive! I only passed my test in 2013, aged 42. It was my first attempt – I never got around to learning because I was so disorganised.

The biggest regret you wish you could amend... Not attending an opera school in Italy in 2000 when I was offered a place. I lacked the confidence. But if I’d gone I may never have done Britain’s Got Talent [Paul won the first series in 2007].

The temptation you wish you could resist... Eating red meat. I used to eat out once every few months, but now when I’m touring I’m in restaurants every night and it’s hard not to order great meat.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... The Lord Of The Rings. I’ve read it nine times and I see something new each time.

Below: Simon Cowell with one of his cars. Above right: Bacardi, orange and cranberry. Far right: a camera and Lake Windermere

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day... I’d take one of Simon Cowell’s precious cars for a spin around Hollywood, then drop the keys back in his hands. The look on his face would be worth seeing!

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... Bullying. I put up with lots of it in my youth and it hurts me to see others go through it.

The film you can watch time and time again... Untouchable, a French comedy about a quadrplegic and his carer. It makes you laugh and cry.

The person who has influenced you most... José Carreras. I heard a record of him singing La Bohème when I was 16 and it made me want to sing opera. I’ve performed for him twice now.

The figure from history for whom you’d most like to buy a pie and a pint... Giacomo Puccini. I’d like to ask how he managed to write such powerful music that creates so much emotion in people.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Don’t ignore your problems or they’ll never go away.

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... Photography. I’ve loved it for years and always did what I could with cheap cameras, but now I have great kit. I have 16 cameras, which my wife Julie thinks is a bit much!

The unending quest that drives you on... To be the best I can at all I do – be it singing, as a husband or a friend.

The poem that touches your soul... If by Rudyard Kipling – you’d be perfectly if you managed to live up to it.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... That because I’m fat, I must be ugly. It’s not for me to judge what I look like, but there’s an assumption that fat people are ugly, which doesn’t seem right or fair.

The event that altered the course of your life and character... Getting through that Britain’s Got Talent audition in Cardiff in 2007. I thought it would be the last time I’d ever perform because I’d come to the end of the road with my singing. It was my last shot...

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I’d round up Twitter trolls and show them the impact they have on their victims.

The song that means most to you... Nessun Dorma – the song I sang on BGT. I’ve performed it thousands of times since then but I’ll never tire of it.

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions... I love being in outstanding landscapes alone and photographing them, so my day would begin at 4am by Lake Windermere and wish you could have

The way you want to be remembered... As somebody who just kept going.

The Plug... Paul Potts plays Cavara-dossi in Puccini’s Tosca at Chiswick House and Gardens on 15-16 June. For tickets visit summersessions.co.uk.

As told to Rob McGibbon

NEXt Week

Lorraine Kelly takes us inside the penguin A&E • The Hairy Bikers dish up another serving of healthy meals you can cook in 30 minutes • The best blue flowers for summer • Britain’s most detailed TV listings

‘I wish I was still fit. No one would believe that in my 20s I was 10½ stone and ran cross-country for my county’

Bacardi with orange and cranberry – an 80s throwback! We’d then take the Orient Express – which would be rootless – through the Alps. We’d spend the night in a hotel in Zurich, eating too much Swiss chocolate.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... Singing at Berlin’s Brandenburg Gate on New Year’s Eve 2010 in front of 1.5 million people. I remember thinking, ‘How did this happen?’

The saddest time that shook your world... My life between the ages of 15-17 was sad and distressing. I was suffering abuse from bullies at school and I was sexually abused by a man at my Sea Cadets. But I survived it all.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... To play Rodolfo in La Bohème. I think I could do it well.

The philosophy that underpins your life... Never give up and you will get to where you need to go.

The order of service at your funeral... Want it to be happy – but some opera might get the tears going. I want my ashes scattered on Lake Windermere.

The way you want to be remembered... As somebody who just kept going.

The Plug... Paul Potts plays Cavara-dossi in Puccini’s Tosca at Chiswick House and Gardens on 15-16 June. For tickets visit summersessions.co.uk.

As told to Rob McGibbon

Meryl Streep is the world’s worst opera singer in Florence Foster Jenkins – in cinemas from Friday. A Midsummer Night’s Dream is playing at Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre in London. And Cyndi Lauper’s new album Detour is released on Friday