We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it’s musical theatre star Michael Ball’s turn

The prize possession you value above all others... An oil painting of our Tibetan terriers, Ollie and Freddie, which was a Christmas present from my partner Cathy McGowan in 2014. She commissioned the artist Kim Sears – Andy Murray’s wife – to photograph and paint the dogs in secret.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Second helpings of cheese, wine and bread and butter pudding.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... Watership Down by Richard Adams, which I first read when I was 15. It’s not just about rabbits – it’s about friendship and finding a community in the face of injustice.

The biggest regret you wish you could amend... Not learning to tap dance like Fred Astaire. At drama school I made up a back problem and a heart condition to avoid lessons because they began at 9am.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day... To perform the perfect show. It would be in Broadway, in which a struggling writer gets a gangster to finance his play. It’s magically.

The film you can watch time and time again... Woody Allen’s Bullets Over Broadway, in which a struggling writer gets a gangster to finance his play. It’s stunningly funny and accurate.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... Bad audience etiquette in the theatre, especially mobile phones.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... That I’m always happy. In a professional setting I make every effort to spread happiness, but I have really black periods too and I can be a miserable sod.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... This too shall pass. Some events in life can feel overwhelming, but don’t worry, you’ll deal with it.

The figure from history for whom you’d most like to buy a pie and a pint... Cicero, the Roman philosopher and politician. I’d love to hear about the excesses of ancient Rome and his take on modern politics.

The unending quest that drives you on... To perfect the performance. It probably doesn’t exist, but sometimes you get close when everything clicks.

The poem that touches your soul... Joni Mitchell’s song Both Sides Now is as beautiful as any poem. It’s like an articulate essay on love and life.

Thephoon that you’d most like to buy a pie and a pint... Cicero, the Roman philosopher and politician. I’d love to hear about the excesses of ancient Rome and his take on modern politics.

The person who has influenced you most... Cathy. We’ve been together since 1991 and she’s my soulmate.

The saddest time that shook your world... I was really shaken when the Twin Towers were attacked. It brought home to me how fragile the world is.

The crime you would commit knowing it probably doesn’t exist, but sometimes you get close when everything clicks.

The event that altered the course of your life and character... Having a No 2 hit in 1989 with Love Changes Everything from the show Aspects Of Love. It opened up opportunities that I never thought could happen to me.

The recipe that holds an everlasting resonance... Wine and bread and butter pudding.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could erase... My dog Ollie’s pet tag. He was just a turn, but a top turn. At drama school I made up a back problem and a heart condition to avoid lessons because they began at 9am.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... To be able to get back into the wedding costume I wore as Marius in Les Misérables in 1985.

The philosophy that underpins your life... You can’t please all the people all of the time – but you can try.

The order of service at your funeral... I’d like something grand and over the top, with thousands of people wailing in the street as I’m taken to Westminster Abbey in a horse-drawn carriage.

The way you want to be remembered... He was just a turn, but a top turn.

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions... I’d sail into Cape Town at sunrise with Cathy on a yacht. We’d go back to the 1960s to see Barbra Streisand in Funny Girl on Broadway, then have cocktails with friends at the Don’t Tell Mama piano bar, but this would be in 1990 when it was cool. The day would end at home in London watching a box set with Cathy.

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