

# 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 singer Sophie Ellis-Bextor



'I want to do a course to learn how to stuff a mouse – but only if it died naturally'

**The prized possession you value above all others...** A Blythe Doll from 1972. She has an oversized head with big eyes. I bought her for £300 on eBay 15 years ago – she's worth £800 now.

**The biggest regret you wish you could amend...** Not going to the funeral of a girl at school who died suddenly from a heart problem when we were 18. Loads of other girls went and I should have too.

**The film you can watch time and time again...** Grease. I first watched it when I was seven and loved it. I remember when Kenickie says his condom has broken I asked my mum what that was. She said, 'A medal he got for sports!'

**The temptation you wish you could resist...** I'm addicted to eBay. I think I'm buying treasures, but other people might describe them as junk!

**The book that holds an everlasting resonance...** The Tiger Who Came To Tea by Judith Kerr. My mother [ex-Blue Peter presenter Janet Ellis] read it to me when I was four and I

read it to my boys [Sonny, ten, Kit, six, and Ray, two]. I loved that the little girl was called Sophie.

**The priority activity if you were the Invisible Woman for a day...** I'd stand on stage during a big West End show to watch the actors up close.

**The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child...** Trust your instincts.

**The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity...** Taxidermy! I'm fascinated by anatomy. I want to do a course to learn to stuff a mouse – but only if it died naturally!

**The pet hate that makes your hackles rise...** When people say, 'I'm going to give 110 per cent.' Above 100 per cent doesn't exist!

Left: John Travolta and Olivia Newton-John in Grease, and a stuffed mouse. Above: The Tiger Who Came To Tea. Right: Mickey by Toni Basil



**The person who has influenced you most...** My parents. My dad Robin

took me to my first gig when I was eight – to see Pink Floyd at Earls Court. Mum is a very optimistic person who taught me to look for the positives in life.

**The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint...** The 19th-century American poet Emily Dickinson. I'd ask about the inspiration for her work, but she was a recluse so I doubt she'd want to see me.

**The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again...** Dick Van Dyke's autograph. I got it on a trip to New York aged 14. The box I kept it in went missing during a house move.

**The unending quest that drives you on...** Writing the next song.

**The poem that touches your soul...** Emily Dickinson's Because I Could Not Stop For Death. I'm a bouncy, optimistic person, but this poem makes you think about the darker backdrop to life.

**The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase...** That I always look perfect. People are surprised if they see a ladder in my tights, but while I'm often styled for TV, away from it I'm much more relaxed.

**The event that altered the course of your life and character...** Releasing my song Groovejet in 2000. It was a success and it changed everything.

**The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it...** I'd paint a zebra crossing on a road near my house in west London because it's a nightmare to cross with kids.

**The song that means most to you...** Mickey by Toni Basil. I love the odd choreography and the gurney faces she pulled in the video.

**The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions...** I'd spend the day going to places I've never visited. I'd be with my husband Richard and our sons and we'd wake up in Tokyo. We'd have sushi for breakfast, then wander around the city. After that, we'd arrive in rural Vietnam. We'd see the beautiful countryside, then have a stir-fry with

glass noodles for lunch. Later we'd go to Delhi and see the real India. At sunset we'd head to a beach in Mexico. The kids would play on the sand while Richard and I relax in a cabana drinking margaritas watching the sun go down. For dinner I'd go to J Sheekey in Covent Garden for lobster and chips with champagne. Richard and I would end the day curled up at home watching a DVD.

**The happiest moment you will cherish forever...** When I launched my last album Wanderlust last year. It was a big step because the work was so different and it was my first album not released by a major record label.

**The saddest time that shook your world...** My grandfather, Mike, dying in December last year. He was 83 and died from pneumonia. I miss him.

**The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you...** To play the piano. I gave up at Grade 4 when I was 14. I can play a bit, but I'm quite rubbish.

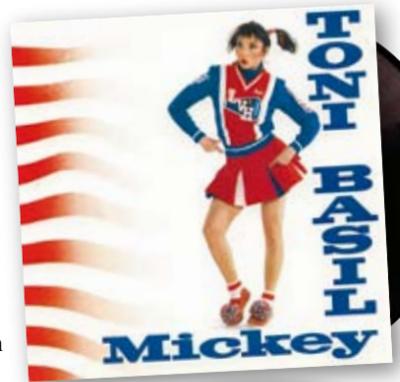
**The philosophy that underpins your life...** Cherish your relationships with friends and family.

**The order of service at your funeral...** I'd like Chopin's Prelude in D Minor played and for my ashes to be scattered somewhere near the Thames.

**The way you want to be remembered...** She wasn't bad at writing songs.

**The Plug...** Sophie Ellis-Bextor has designed Pretty Polly's spring range of tights. Visit prettypolly.co.uk. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon



PHOTOGRAPHS: MARCUS MAVS PRODUCTIONS; ALLSTAR; REX; GETTY

## PS...

Jennifer Aniston shows her serious side in *Cake*, in cinemas Friday.

The deeply moving story of *The Boy In The Striped Pyjamas* is touring from Thursday, starting at Chichester Festival Theatre.

And *The Script* begin their UK tour in Glasgow the same day



## NEXT WEEK

- On the set of Jimmy McGovern's new penal colony series *Banished*
- From plot to plate – Raymond Blanc on our favourite veggies
- Anne Shooter's fabulous chicken and almond filo pie
- Britain's best TV listings guide