

Interview by Isabella De Stefano. Adapted from the traditional Proust questionnaire

1) The principal trait of your character?

Playful and excessively generous.

2) The quality that you prefer in a man?

Dependability.

3) In a woman?

Serenity and good humour.

4) Your principal defect?

Egocentrism and pessimism.

5) Your dream of happiness?

A permanent theophany and universal compassion or: "Fly me to the moon".

6) Regret?

Not having dedicated more time to acting and the stage so as to overcome basic shyness.

7) Last time you cried?

Cannot remember. At times I feel very sad.

8) The encounter that changed your life?

My wife Susanna.

9) Recurring dream?

Always new dreams.

10) The happiest day of your life?

I would not know.

11) The unhappiest?

It may be yet to come.

12) Who would you call back to life?

My mother.

13) Favourite subject at school?

Italian and English Literature.

14) Favourite city?

London/ Rome.

15) Favourite colour?

Orange.

16) Favourite flower?

Orange rose.

17) Favourite drink?

In youth: "Vicious - Virgin". Now:
wine.

18) Favourite dish?

Scottish smoked salmon
on toasted slice of german whole-meal bread
with italian olive oil.

19) First memory?

German submarine emerging off the Italian west coast in 1941.

20) Unlimited funds?

In youth: I would have built myself a yacht.
Now: Funds for a cultural foundation.
Funds at disposal of a microcredit bank.

21) Preferred books?

"Alice in Wonderland", "Alice Through the Looking-glass" by Lewis Carroll. "Narcissus and Goldmund" by Herman Hesse. "Farewell to Arms" by Ernest Hemingway. "The Plague" by Albert Camus.

22) Recent preferred book?

Poetry: "Man and Camel" by Mark Strand.

23) Preferred poet?

William Shakespeare, Giacomo Leopardi, Dylan Thomas.

24) Preferred singers?

Luciano Pavarotti, Frank Sinatra, Mina.

25) Most admired male historical figure?

Frederic II Hohenstaufen ("Stupor Mundi").
Leonardo da Vinci. Winston Churchill. Mahatma
Ghandi.

26) Favourite visual artist?

Giotto, Caravaggio, Vermeer, Picasso, Marcel Duchamp, Magritte.

27) Favourite cult film?

Casablanca, The Third Man, Citizen Kane.

28) Favourite actor?

Charles Lawton, Gary Cooper, Peter Sellers.

29) Favourite actress?

Julia Roberts.

30) Song under shower?

"Ad este fidelis"; "My way", not under the shower but in the bath tub.

31) Would you change something in your physical aspect?

Subtract 40 years.

32) Most hated figure?

The usual: Hitler, Stalin, Mao.

33) Preferred names?

Hildebrand, Jocasta.

34) What character quality do you dislike most?

Arrogance, deviousness, conceit.

35) What would you say if you had the chance of a private conversation with the most powerful man in the world?

I would humbly ask him if he needed some advice.

36) What natural gift would you like to have?

More of a mathematical brain.

37) The best present you ever received?

A motorcycle at the age of 16.

38) How would you like to die?

In serenity, or while sleeping.

39) Favourite hero?

Hamlet.

40) Preferred female figure?

Empress Maria Theresa of Austria.

Mother Theresa of Calcutta.

Au San Suu KYI of (Burma) Myanmar.

41) Character flaws which you are most inclined to forgive?

"Tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner"

Yet I have great difficulty being lenient towards my own shortcomings: struggling high-mindedness

42) Favourite motto?

"Know thyself".