

Offstage with Alexander Dobson

Get to know another side of the principal artists with Offstage, which poses 20 questions to the featured singer. This month, we talk to Alexander Dobson, the powerful baritone singing the role of the hero, Aeneas, in *Dido & Aeneas* on February 7 and 8. *Opera Canada* calls Mr. Dobson “one of the most impressive Canadian baritones of this generation.” Here, he talks to us about his love of the Beatles, bacon, and his recent voyage into veganism.

1. *With whom would you rather be stranded on a desert island with – Lady Gaga or Albert Einstein?*

Einstein would make for good conversation and he'd probably be good at collecting fire wood.

2. *What are the three most-played songs on your iPod?*

“I've Got a Feeling” by the Beatles, “No Sugar Tonight” by the Guess Who, and “Emotional Rescue” by the Rolling Stones.

3. *Are you a cat person or a dog person?*

I had a cat called Gus when I was growing up in Toronto. (Gus was short for Fungus.) No pets since, but I keep my fondness for them, unless I am allergic.

4. *What is your favourite song to sing on karaoke night?*

I am embarrassed to say I have never done karaoke. There are plenty of Beatles songs I know I would enjoy singing if I did go. Maybe someone in Winnipeg can take me out to a good one?

5. *What was the last movie you saw in a theatre?*

Source Code; I thoroughly enjoyed it.

6. *What's your go-to junk food when watching TV?*

Popcorn is always good. I have recently become vegan, so I need to find some substitutes for ice cream. Sorbet just does not cut it.

7. *In which other time and place would you like to live and why?*

It would be fun to live in pre-historic times. Being a caveman in a warm climate would be ideal for me.

8. *What would be on the menu of your last meal?*

Since I am now vegan I feel a bit restricted with what I can eat. I guess if it was the last thing I ate, I would consider chocolate chip cookie dough ice cream, with a few strips of bacon on the side.

9. *What's your favourite reality TV show?*

We don't have a TV in our house, but my wife and I do like to stream TED Talks. They are short 20-minute speeches by the world's greatest minds in all different fields.

Since I do travel a lot, I get the chance to catch up on my TV watching on the road. On my last trip I got hooked on *Jersey Shore*. At first glance, it is a very shallow show, but as I watched more and got to know the people and their lives, I was completely taken by it. Please don't tell my wife!

10. *What's the name of the last book that you recommended to someone?*

The China Study by T. Colin Campbell. It is the main reason for my vegan lifestyle.

11. *Which would you rather drive – a Smart Car or a Mustang convertible?*

Smart Car. If it was hybrid, even better.

12. *Who inspires you?*

My six-year-old son, William. Everyday is a joy and a struggle and we are learning together.

13. *What's the best advice you've ever received?*

"Just sing through it." It applies to so much more than just having mucous in your throat. Sometimes in life you just have to push on through.

14. *What do you do to for fitness?*

I love to jog, especially with my wife, June. Last year she ran the San Francisco half marathon. It was such a joy having our daily runs together in preparation for it.

15. *Which celebrity would you like to have dinner with?*

Paul McCartney. I would love to ask him: who buried Paul?

16. *What's the scariest thing you've ever done?*

That's a hard one. Trying to be a good father and husband.

17. *If you weren't a singer, how would you make a living?*

I always joke with my wife that the only thing I am qualified to do, if I was not a singer, is drive a taxi.

18. *Where would you like to spend your next vacation?*

I am very fortunate with the job I have that I get to visit incredible places. In March, I do a concert in the Bahamas, and this summer I sing at the Carmel Bach Festival in California. My family will join me in Carmel as they did last summer, and this is a very nice family vacation.

I have always wanted to go on a safari in Africa travelling solely by hot air balloon. Not sure if that will ever happen though.

19. *Who was your favourite rock band/pop group when you were a teenager?*

I think from my previous answers it is clear that I love the Beatles.

20. *What's your perfect day?*

Home with my son playing ball hockey, soccer, or just hanging out.