

Offstage with Theodore Baerg

This month, we talk to Theodore Baerg, the booming baritone singing the role of Sergeant Sulpice in our April production of *The Daughter of the Regiment*. When he's not singing on international stages, Mr. Baerg works as a professor of voice, opera and music theatre at The University of Western Ontario. Turns out, Mr. Baerg has a passion for motorcycles and almost chose a career in medicine over music.

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

Lady Gaga, since we could both wear costumes and go nuclear while talking about Albert Einstein. Kidding, of course.

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

How boring is this: I have only opera on my iPod and iPhone so I can listen to the music I must learn or review while I work on other things.



Theodore Baerg (Giorgio Germont) and Yali-Marie Williams (Violetta Valery) in *La Traviata* in 2008.
Photo: R. Tinker.

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

I like Cat Woman but I'm a dog person. We had one for many years and his name was Puccini.

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

I would sing "Anthem" from the musical *Chess*.

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

I usually rent from On Demand and the last one we saw was *Midnight in Paris*, directed by Woody Allen.

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

I usually like to cook something interesting. Most recently: Chinese dumplings.

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

It would be fine to live in Barbados in a great villa. Now, that is, since health care and other things would have concerned me more in the past.

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

Some wonderful Italian food with a great bottle of red wine.

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

I don't like reality TV shows.

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

Pillars of the Earth by Ken Follett.

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

I would rather drive my motorcycle, a Honda Valkyrie, but I would certainly not say no to a Mustang Convertible, even though in real life I drive a VW Jetta Diesel, which is of course much "greener."

12. *Who inspires you?*

All people in the past and present who overcome impossible odds to still really make a big difference in the world, no matter how they were misunderstood, misquoted, or misinterpreted. Gandhi, Jesus, Martin Luther King, Jimmy Carter.

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

From my mother: When you marry, make sure you are really compatible — intellectually, spiritually, physically, and emotionally. I took her advice and married the most amazing lady (a Winnipeg native) and we've been together for the past 26 years.

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

Not enough that's for sure. I used to be a distance runner, but now I do more general exercises.

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

Barack Obama.

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

Getting caught in an undertow when I was snorkeling in Florida.

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

I would have become a doctor when I applied to med school, but decided to take opera contracts instead.

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

Barbados!

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

The Imperials.

20. *What's your perfect day?*

Great late spring weather, when I can go for an early morning motorcycle ride and then come home and have a great breakfast with my wife and spend a few hours working on my gardens.



Mr. Baerg and Kurt Lehmann (Alfredo Germont) in *La Traviata* in 2008. Photo: R. Tinker.