

Mike Leigh

What newspapers do you take? *The Guardian* and *The Observer*.

What foreign languages do you speak? French.

What is your favourite tv programme? *Sergeant Bilko*.

When do you listen to music? When I'm alone.

When was the last time you prayed? 1949.

What was your first thought this morning? I must have a pee.

Do you have a recurring dream? I'm filming on location, and I haven't got a clue what I'm doing.

What is the most common colour in your wardrobe? Navy blue.

What is your favourite meeting place? The Star Cafe, Great Chapel St, London W1.

What is your favourite piece of architecture? St Pancras Station - I love it; I only wish they'd left the old Euston Station alone.

Who do you reveal your innermost secrets to? My wife. (Some of them!)

What makes you feel secure? A hot toddy. (Irish whisky, brown sugar, lemon, cloves and hot water.)

How regularly do you consult your horoscope? Only when I buy the *Evening Standard*, which is not very often.

What do you blame your parents for? My existence.

When did you last visit your parents? I saw my mother last weekend, but my dad's deceased.

You're driving through a hot, desolate expanse. What's playing on the stereo? Muddy Waters.

Which is your city of the nineties? Sydney, Australia.

Do you own a satellite tv dish? No.



Mike Leigh was born in Salford, Lancashire in 1943. During the 60s he trained as an actor at Rada, appearing in several films, and began his playwriting career with *The Box Play* at the Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham. His first film, *Bleak Moments*, won awards for Best Film at both the Chicago and Locarno Film Festivals in 1972. Although he regards himself principally as a film-maker, he has continued writing and directing plays for both tv and theatre, notably *Abigail's Party*, *Goose-Pimples* and *Greek Tragedy*. His latest film, *Life Is Sweet*, is released this month and stars his wife, the actress Alison Steadman

Where do you wish you were living? By the sea.

Where is your favourite holiday destination? Hard to say, I like to vary it.

How has your diet changed in the past ten years? No coffee, no cheese, on the orders of my homeopath.

Do you count the calories? No.

What physical exercise do you

do? Walking about, otherwise none.

Under what circumstances would you use private medicine? I did when I would otherwise have had to wait two years for a hernia operation, but this upset me considerably, not least because my father was a committed socialist and a GP in the NHS.

Would you have a sick parent come to live with you? Yes.

At what age do you want to stop working? I don't.

Do you really need your car? Yes - I'm a film-maker.

What are you doing for the environment? Using lead-free petrol.

What part of this life would you take into another life? My creative activities.

What do you no longer believe in? A world liberated from the cancer of religion.

Who do you respect? Tony Benn, for not compromising.

What would you die for? I find this an irritatingly sentimental question.

What current campaign do you most support? Campaign For Nuclear Disarmament (CND).

Do you own shares? No.

How easily persuaded are you by advertising? Not at all.

What do you now own that you had never dreamt of owning? A computer, though only my children use it.

What is the most amount of money you've spent on an item of clothing? £100 on a coat.

What hi-tech device scares you? The automatic pay-loos in the West End - I've never plucked up the courage to use one.

How much time do you spend each day on the phone? Sometimes too much.

Under what circumstances would you support censorship? In no circumstances.

How much more do you want to achieve? Bigger budget films.

Complete this sentence: If I were dictator for a day... I would empower all politicians to shut up and listen.

How do you personally hope to change by the end of the millennium? I want to have started drawing and painting again. •