

Actor sets sights on singing at NY venue

By Jae-Ha Kim
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Actor and musician Oli Higginson lists Antibes in the south of France among his favorite vacation spots. **PHIL SHARP**

Oli Higginson is an actor based in London who's best known as Footman John in the "Bridgerton" franchise. But he also has the musical alter ego Modern Oli who released the song "People Pleaser" and toured the U.S. before finishing his tour in his Europe this fall.

"(Acting and singing) both arrived at the same time," he said. "From as early as I can remember, I've been obsessed with acting, singing, dressing up, (and) performing. But most of all, (I liked) the weird and kind of shamanic exercise of becoming a character, becoming someone else. Like that line between Norma Jean and Marilyn Monroe, Laurence Olivier and Hamlet, David Bowie and Ziggy Stardust."

This interview with Higginson has been edited for clarity and length.

Q: How was the U.S. leg of your tour?

A: It was utterly incredible. Each place had its own vibe. New York was definitely as chaotic and crazy and wild as I expected it to be, and then some. Los Angeles had such a great atmosphere. We also went for drinks at a local place called The Douglas in Echo Park, which I loved. It was like this fusion of a British pub and an American dive bar.

Q: What is your bucket-list venue that you have yet to perform in?

A: Dare I say Madison Square Garden? I mean, who do I think I am? I saw Billy Joel there once. It kind of feels like the most impos-

sible thing to ever happen. I also love Paradiso in Amsterdam. The National Theatre in London is one of the only places I haven't done a play in, and I'm keen to do something there. Also New York Theatre Workshop feels like a cool rite of passage. Playwrights Horizons (in New York), too.

Q: Where are some places you filmed "Bridgerton"?

A: We are always in a beautiful part of England for "Bridgerton." I've filmed wonderful scenes at the Bridgerton house in Greenwich and at Hampton Court Palace near Richmond. We used to film a lot in the English city of Bath, but now they have built this incredible backlot set out at Shepperton Studios, which is truly a feat of artistic engineering. It is stunning.

Q: Where would you like to go next?

A: I'd love to go to somewhere in East Asia, maybe for a holiday. I'd love to visit Japan. But right now it's full steam ahead with work, and I feel lucky to be able to do this incredible adventure as a job.

Q: What is your favorite vacation destination?

A: I love the south of France, Antibes, especially. The weather, the coastline, the color of the sea, the people, the food, the light there. The jazz festival every summer. It feels like being in a movie.

Q: What was a trip you took as a child that stands out?

A: I have memories of driv-

ing up to Newcastle one very rainy weekend and walking along Hadrian's Wall near Newcastle with my dad when I was maybe 11 or 12. We just chatted and walked through these extraordinary hills and then ate a great big pub meal at the end of the day. I could repeat that trip a hundred times.

Q: If you've ever gone away for the holidays, which was the best trip?

A: My sister used to live for a little while in Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia. We spent Christmas on an island and it was like living in the jungle. A monkey climbed up the side of the hotel through an open balcony door, opened the minibar and tore into a packet of Pringles. True story.

Q: What are your five favorite cities?

A: New York, London, Paris, Vegas and LA.

Q: What is your best or worst vacation memory?

A: I love Prague and had a super cool holiday there until the night before we left. I got this horrible stomach bug and spent most of that last 24 hours bound to the bathroom of our Airbnb. Let's just say it was traumatic for everyone involved. The chaos of my tummy felt like a scourge on the landscape of such a beautiful, sophisticated city. I must go back and make new memories.

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