

**FIRST UP:
ALEXANDRA BURKE**

FIRST MEMORY: The first thing that comes to me is a memory of my mum walking in the house after she'd performed on Top of the Pops.

My mum was in Soul II Soul, by the way. I remember seeing her and thinking how quickly she'd got back after being on the TV. And I remember thinking that I wanted to do the same thing when I grew up. She looked so beautiful and sang so beautifully; I wanted to do that, too.

FIRST ALBUM: The first one my mum ever bought me was one of Michael Jackson's, although I can't remember which. I adored him. He has been a massive, massive influence on my career.

The first one I paid for out of my own money would be Spice Girls. I was a massive fan, absolutely massive. My favourite was Baby Spice. My sister claimed Mel B and so I had to claim someone else. I was the baby, hence Baby.

FIRST BOOK I READ: Roald Dahl, James and the Giant Peach. I remember loving that book and I think I read it three or four times when I was younger. With Roald Dahl books you could really imagine everything so well. I read lots of his.

FIRST SCHOOL: My first nursery was in Tufnell Park in London, and I remember kissing a boy under the table and getting caught. The teacher told me off and when I told my sister, she told me off, too.

Then I went to Copenhagen Primary School, in Islington, and I remember playing kiss-chase with my childhood sweetheart. We're still friends now. All my memories are about kissing, right? It's really bad.

It was at secondary school, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson School for Girls, that I discovered how much I wanted to sing and dance. The teachers really encouraged me to follow my dreams.

FIRST JOB: I've never worked at anything else. I've always sung. I would sing at weddings, funerals, bar mitzvahs, everything. The majority I did for free for experience, but some I got paid for.

FIRST CAR: The first that was my own was a Mini Cooper after I won the show (X Factor) as I always used to drive my mum's car before that. It was actually given to me, which was nice. I gave it back after a year and they sold it and gave the money to charity.

FIRST GIG I WENT TO: The one I remember most about is Beyonce, at Wembley. We won the tickets on LBC Radio. I had to sing Beyonce and I won.

That was before X Factor and it was just crazy, getting to see her live. She's a massive inspiration to me so to then go on to work with her, to perform with her on X Factor... it was just amazing.

FIRST MUSIC ICON: It would have to be Aaliyah. And Aretha Franklin, Gladys Knight and Dionne Warwick. I'm a massive fan of all of those. Stevie Wonder as well. He actually came to our family home, all down to my mum. Music has always been in my life.

FIRST TIME ON STAGE: The first I remem-



ON SONG: Alexandra Burke in *The Bodyguard: The Musical*

MORE PEOPLE

ber is when I was nine, and we were living in Bahrain at time as my mum was performing there. I got on stage with the live band.

FIRST TIME ON TV: Jane McDonald, Star For A Night. I was 12 years old and dying for a singing career. It was hard, of course, only being 12, but a fantastic experience.

FIRST TIME ON X FACTOR: That was when I was 16 and it was difficult as I was just out of school (Alexandra just missed out on the live finals). That was the first time and I think the feedback to go away and get more experience, that was great from Louis Walsh.

I'm so grateful for that now. And so glad I went back!

X Factor is something you need to live and breathe. It's hard work; nothing's handed to you on a plate. You have to be disciplined.

FIRST TIME ON STAGE IN THE WEST END: Was a fantastic experience, something I never thought I'd be able to do. That was with *The Bodyguard* in 2014. It's an amazing thing to be part of and also quite overwhelming. It's an experience that money can't buy. It was an honour.



Beyonce's a massive inspiration to me, so to perform with her on X Factor was just amazing



FIRST TIME I SAW THE BODYGUARD: I was so young so I don't know how old I was, but it's a film I've seen several times. I've always loved it, and the music just makes it for me. I'm so grateful to be a part of this production. And of course, I'm a massive fan of Whitney.

FIRST HOLIDAY ABROAD: That would be Malta with the family when I was very young. I think that was the first, anyway. That's the one I remember. I remember it being a great holiday.

What I remember most, though, is there being a massive spider in the pool. I wouldn't jump in. Even when it was taken out, I still refused to go in there.

FIRST TIME IN LEICESTER: That'll be for *The Bodyguard* this month. And then I'm back with *Sister Act* at Curve. That's a new challenge as well; another film from my childhood.

INFO: Alexandra Burke is starring as Rachel Marron in *The Bodyguard: The Musical*, which is on at De Montfort Hall, Leicester, from Tuesday, March 15 to Saturday, March 26.

She will be back in the city to play Deloris Van Carter in Curve's production of *Sister Act*, from Saturday, July 30 to Saturday, August 13.

www.demonforhall.co.uk
www.curveonline.co.uk