**Interview Questions for Full Speed**

1. To one extent or another, almost all of the characters of Full Speed are dealing with issues of social pressure, be it from parents, friend or society. In the book it’s even suggested by one of the characters (Carla) that most people in society prostitute themselves in one form or another. What made you focus on the issue of social pressure?
2. Parents play an important role in your novel – even if they are often viewed negatively. What are some of the key issue today’s teens and parents face when learning how to develop healthy and loving relationships with each other?
3. If you had to boil it down to a sentence or two, what would you say is the message of Full Speed?
4. Your novel is filled with artists. What role do they play in it? And what are you thoughts on true creativity in an era of pop culture and cultural homogenization?
5. In the first chapter of Full Speed, Markus, the friend of your protagonist, retells the Romantic myth of the Blue Flower. What is the significance of this myth to your novel?
6. There is a scene in your novel where the hero and his girlfriend take LSD. Both before and after, some of your characters seem to be advocating its use. Aren’t you afraid that you are glorifying drug taking? Shouldn’t we be doing the very opposite today? Educating teens on the dangers of drugs?
7. There are a lot of nature scenes in your book. Often its characters seem to pick up energy and connect more fully to themselves once they make it out into the forests and hills. Don’t you think you are exaggerating the contrast between country and city? Do you really feel it is so important for us to get back in touch with nature?
8. The overall impression some readers get from your novel regarding love is a rather cynical one. At one point one of your characters even likens it to a drug, to drinking a cup of coffee. Do you really think love is nothing more than a chemical reaction in the body?
9. Your novel highlights an almost impossible tension in relationships between the desire for security – that is, knowing your partner isn’t going to run off with someone else – and the desire for freedom: freedom to be able to grow and enjoy life without being held back or stifled by your partner. Would you elaborate on this theme for us?
10. Many of your novel’s characters are students. They are mostly outsiders to the academic system, however, and resent it in one way or another. The implication is almost that academia stifles creativity. Do you think this is a fair interpretation of the message of the novel?
11. It would be easy for Christians to get offended by your novel. In it, Christianity and the Church seem to be shown to be more interested in their own power than empowering believers to connect with God. Don’t you think your novel lacks sensitivity and respect for believers? Aren’t comments regarding Christ’s alleged drinking and carousing with prostitutes offensive?
12. Like the protagonist of your novel, Sebastian, you have also lived in Perugia, Italy, and played chess. How much of your novel is autobiographical?
13. Your chess scenes have been described as ‘utterly compelling’ even for people who have little or no understanding of the game. What role does chess play in your novel, particularly with regards to creativity and freedom?
14. In the biographical blurb on your novel’s website, it mentions that you first decided to write after reading a Raymend E. Feist novel in Italy when you were 18. Can you tell us a bit more about your decision to write and why you chose to write Full Speed?
15. According to your estimates, your novel took somewhere between eight and nine years to write. Why so long? What were some of the difficulties you faced? And how would you encourage anyone who is struggling with a book they are writing to keep going?
16. Before turning your hand to writing, you were studying your PhD at the University of Melbourne on a full scholarship. Can you tell us what prompted you to give it away? Is it true that you had the option of deferring your scholarship for a year and then returning to it if you wished to, but instead chose to give it up without the option of ever returning to it? Why?
17. You have said that the two biggest literary influences on you have been Ivan Turgenev, the famous Russian author, and Andrea De Carlo, the contemporary Italian novelist on whom you were writing your PhD. What was their impact on you?
18. Tells us a bit about your decision not to publish your book through a traditional publishing house. What prompted you to start your own publishing house, Intuitive Books? Did you attempt to get your book published by traditional methods first?