

# The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept **THE** definitive answer. This week it's actress and singer Toyah Willcox's turn

**The prized possession you value above all others...** My notebooks. I think very fast and visually and I have to write down an idea right away or it will be lost forever.

**The biggest regret you wish you could amend...** Not learning the piano and guitar when I was really young. The height of a child's learning is before ten, so I missed out.

**The book that holds an everlasting resonance...** Keith Richards' autobiography *Life*. I love how he's lived life to the full on his own terms.

**The priority activity if you were the invisible woman for a day...** I'd steal the fat cats' bonuses and pay off all student loans.

**The pet hate that makes your hackles rise...** Remote controls. Our TV needs *four* and I'm dyslexic, so most of the time I haven't a clue what's happening.

**The film you can watch time and time again...** *Alien*. I saw it when it came out in 1979 and it frightened the life out of me.



Right: David Bowie. Above right: cake. Far right: the Alaskan wilderness

**The temptation you wish you could resist...** I have a habit of needing cake or chocolate when I get an energy dip around 4pm. I wish I could stop.

**The person who has influenced you most...** William Blake. I first saw his drawings when I was 12 and I love that he was driven to live a creative life. He inspired me to express my own creativity.

**The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint...** Hildegard of Bingen, the 12th-century Benedictine abbess. She was a writer, composer, philosopher and Christian mystic. I'd like to know how she did the things she did at a time when men dominated.

**The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child...** Live to live. Don't live to die. And never stop learning.

**The song that means most to you...** David Bowie's *Life On Mars*. I fell in love when I first saw him on TV when I was 12. I sang it at my first professional acting audition aged 17 and I got the job, so I associate it with success.



**The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity...** Designing jewellery and collecting semi-precious stones like topaz and aquamarine.

**The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again...** A tiny crystal heart my father Beric gave me a few months before he died in 2009, aged 88, after a stroke. I kept it in my purse, but it fell out at a petrol station. I really miss it.

**The unending quest that drives you on...** To remain creative in everything I do, from cooking to performing.

**The poem that touches your soul...** *Somewhere Between Heaven And Woolworths* by Brian Patten. It's very simple yet lyrical and full of emotion.

**The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase...** That I'm tall. People expect me to be after seeing me with big hair, padded shoulders, high-heeled boots and a big voice. But I'm only 5ft 1in, so people always say, "I thought you'd be taller!"

**The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you...** To play a psycho alien baddie in a *Star Wars* movie. Oh, and to live till I'm 110.



'People expect me to be tall after seeing me with that big hair, the padded shoulders and high heels. I'm only 5ft 1in'

also like to visit Newfoundland, as I've never been. Dinner would be a lobster salad by Sydney Harbour. I don't usually drink, but I'd have a glass of English champagne, then some green tea.

**The happiest moment you will cherish forever...** Walking with my mother in a forest covered in snow at Lickey Hills near Birmingham when I was eight. At the time I was into the Narnia stories, so the atmosphere resonated deeply. Mum died in 2011 of cancer, aged 81.

**The saddest time that shook your world...** Apart from the deaths of my parents, it was the bad reviews in 2003 of the stage musical *Calamity Jane* I was in. It had been a sell-out in the provinces so no one could understand it. It should have run and run when we got to the West End, but closed after three months.

**The philosophy that underpins your life...** Be positive and see the good in things, and good things will happen.

**The order of service at your funeral...** I want a state funeral with bells ringing across the land! Then I'd love the congregation to do the hokey cokey and for can-can girls to dance down the aisle. I've already bought the plot in Worcestershire next to my parents.

**The way you want to be remembered...** She kept vital to the end.

**The Plug...** Toyah features in *The 80s Invasion Tour* with Paul Young and *China Crisis* from 2-19 March. For tickets visit [tdpromo.com](http://tdpromo.com). ■

As told to Rob McGibbon



## PS...

Max Irons takes the lead in 1930s romantic drama *Bitter Harvest*

– in cinemas Friday. *Black & White Night 30*, a Roy Orbison

live album, is out the same day. And Gary Barlow's musical

*The Girls* opens at London's Phoenix Theatre on Tuesday



## NEXT WEEK

- Christopher Eccleston on the heartache of his father's dementia
- How to perk up pancakes on Tuesday
- Monty Don on the wonder of winter irises
- Britain's best TV guide