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 top of the heap... The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... To play a psycho alien badass in a Star Wars movie. Oh, and to live till I’m 110.

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 - the sort of thing you buy at a petrol station. I really miss it.

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 that big hair, the 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 event that altered the course of your life and character... The day in 1965 when my mother, Barbara, went into labour when we were stuck in traffic on the M5. I was seven and my dad told my sister Nicola and I to look out the window, but I remember the car seat being drenched in blood. The baby died and the experience gave my sister and me a phobia of childbirth.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I’d take the day off work and drive to the beach wherever it is, even if it means I have to get a ticket for being there and have to pay off all student loans.

The order of service at your funeral... I’d like to have a state funeral with bells ringing out at a petrol station. I really miss it.

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

The Phill... Toyah features in The 80s Invasion Tour with Paul Young and China Crisis from 2-19 March. For tickets visit ticketmaster.co.uk.

As told to Rob McGibbon

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

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

‘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 love 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.

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