

MUSIC MAGIC

When I was an infant.

My thoughts were mostly back to front,

So much to learn with purpose

But then so many friends to make, and of course talk to.

So, music then was Mother singing "Leaning on the Lamp Post, a Bicycle Made for Two,

Daisy, Daisy, and later Maria Maria, but also,

Black Dyke Mill Band, Dean Clough Band, Henry Hall' s Orchestra, Teddy Bears Picnic",

Christmas in Halifax so Special Halifax Choral Society the Messiah heard in Parish Church

Which is now a Minster,

Do you See, too much for me to decode or absorb.

What did I love,

Well when I was 8 our school Orchestra evolved.

So exciting, Tambourines, Drums , Recorders,

None of these for me A TRIANGLE was allocated,

Even more disappointing Our Orchestra was to play a Classic,

Tchaikovsky "Sugar Plum Fairy"

Our Teacher was inspired , Note after Note,

Different colours for each instrument was placed on huge paper Newsprint Sheets

Attached to mobile Blackboards at front of Orchestra.

Bar after Bar of crotchets, quavers and our Pianist had a Treble Clef,

Such exciting words, interesting I'm sure but quite incomprehensible,

But then after counting, counting miles of paper on blackboard,

there it was my little Black Dot, and Ting,

The blessed thing did not inspire

But now I sing in a Choir.

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Desert Island Discs – Part 1

Chapter one: Castaway, from The Imaginography of a Would-Be

Thank you, Lauren, that's very kind of you to say.

My first track is *Eight Days a Week*, from *Beatles for Sale*, by *The Beatles*.

Pop Music

My sister bought it in 1964 so it's the first music i was truly aware of. We played the LP all the time. We lived near Strawberry Field and my Scout hut was in the field where Lennon and McCartney first met. I saw Paul at the Birmingham Arena in 2003. I cried when he first appeared on stage. I'm not entirely sure why.

I wish there were Eight days a week – one that wasn't measured in real terms but you could do anything you wanted and stay awake for 24 hours and it wouldn't count against you.

The second disc i'd like to take to the island is *See Emily Play*, by *Pink Floyd*.

Psychedelic Rock

I first heard it when my sister bought it in 1967. I loved it so much i'd play it over and over and over again on our Decca record player, which would gladly play on repeat if you left its arm off.

It was like magic happening in our little bedroom, filling it with sounds from another time, another, distant place.

My third disc is the first single i bought, which was *Take a Look Around*, by *The Temptations*.

Soul Music

I heard it first on Top of the Pops, and i remember how the opening string arrangement caught me off guard. I was lying on the carpet because there was no room on the couch, and i sat up and said i needed to buy it, so i bought it at St John's Precinct that weekend for 45p, in 1971, and i thought that's why they were called 45s. I still have it.

My fourth disc is *Hot Love*, by *T Rex*.

Glam Rock

I heard it first on Top of the Pops, in 1971. It stopped me in my tracks. It had 7 La la la-la-la la verses that went on for nearly three minutes to the end. Pan's People danced behind him and he wore a spangly suit, which immediately became the fashion that spawned the name Glam.

[Continued](#)

Bridge over Troubled Water

First bar and I'm there
stepping through the archway
into Peckwater Quad.

Summer sun glints
off wide windows, gives
the limestone facade

a golden glow, throws
a spotlight over the two of us -
Masters of the Universe.

Banter, nudging, laughter -
applause from the frisbee boys,
and, streaming from the third floor

flung-open window, the song.
I should have pocketed handfuls
of all that was in the air that day.

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Desert Island Discs – Part 2

The fifth disc i'd like to take to the island is *Sylvia*, by *Focus*.

Prog Rock

I heard it first on Top of the Pops, in 1972, from a film of a live concert that looked amazing.

I saw them at the Liverpool Empire in 1974, which gave me chronic tinnitus and temporary deafness, and i got to smell marijuana for the first time.

I bought their album, *Hamburger Concerto* that night, which got me into trouble for wasting my money.

I still love it today.

My sixth disc is *Roxy Music's Street Life*.

Glam Rock

I heard it first on Top of the Pops, 1973, and i remember how intently Bryan Ferry looked at the microphone as he clicked his fingers, as if he was meditating. I was hypnotised. I bought the album, *Stranded*, which had a gorgeous model in a wet dress on the front.

I was going through puberty.

I saw them at the Liverpool Empire in 1974 and i felt a little more grown up.

My seventh disc is the theme from *Tubular Bells*, by *Mike Oldfield*.

Symphonic Rock

My brother brought it home in 1975, and it left a mark on me because Oldfield played all the instruments himself, and he was only 19. I was 15 and i thought that if i was going to do anything with my life it had to be this good. I bought all his albums. He was a troubled soul and i remember sobbing with relief when i saw him many years later, on the TV, and he explained that he was happy and fully recovered.

My eighth and final disc, Lauren, is *Us and Them*, from *Dark Side of the Moon*, by *Pink Floyd*

Prog Rock

I first heard it in 1975 when i bought it for myself. I still play the whole album every few days so i've heard it thousands of times. It's 43 minutes of sacred harmony – a perfect meditation on life.

My luxury item? I'd like to take my *guitar* please, Lauren.

I don't think i'd want to live long without my guitar and the direct connection it gives me with music.

My choice of book to take would be my *Beatles: The Complete Scores*, so i could learn all the songs they've recorded – all the parts including the drums, which i'd beat out on a hollow log and some coconut shells.

The one track i'd save from the waves is *Us and Them*, which i'd play to the turtles and the giant iguana lizards that live on the island.

Thank you, Lauren, it's been a pleasure.

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Desert Island Disc

*If I were a blackbird I'd whistle and sing,
I'd follow the ship my true-love sailed in -*

would be one of mine.

I'd recount how it conjured
pictures of coach-rides home
from Sunday School seaside outings.

Red-faced from sun, wind and ale,
my dad would lead us, full-throated,
through his repertoire: *Green Bottles,*
Sweet Violets, Daisy-Daisy, Tipperary -

and when we were almost home,
when weariness would descend upon us,
he would ring out the blackbird song,
his voice filling the bus with energy -

*and in the top rigging I'd there build my nest -
I'd pillow my head on her lily-white breast.*

I might not tell Lauren Laverne
about the day of Dad's funeral, when
a blackbird hopped in through the backdoor
as Mum was making breakfast -

flew on to a chair and perched, unruffled
for several seconds, before fluttering
back into a sun-filled garden, leaving
the unsung song in May air between them.

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