

Desert Island Desserts

Music and sound of seagulls squawking, fades.....

Lauren Laverne: So, Tom Baker welcome to Desert Island Discs. Er.... [Pause.] You are not Tom Baker the actor, are you?

TB: Dear me no! I've no time for all that malarkey. Learning lines and putting on make-up and such. No, I'm actually a baker. Always have been. Always will be. It's my life. I love baking so much I changed my name to Baker. That way I advertise myself and there's always something to talk about. In fact on the way...

LL: [Interrupting] So how did you get on the show? [Mutters] Another BBC cock-up. [Frantically looking at her notes] So, you have had an illustrious career as a pastry chef I understand?

TB: Yes, indeed Lauren. Like I say it has been my life. I might even call it an obsession.
[a little flustered]. But I know you have many other interests and passions too?

TB: Oh I have! I have never allowed the day job to be all-consuming.

LL: [looking puzzled]. So let's start with your first disc. What is it to be?

TB: Well, as a child growing up in Bakewell in Yorkshire there was a little song that kept popping up on the radio, 'How Much is that Trifle in the Window? 'I loved it then and still love it now.

Music. Music fades.....

LL: So tell me Tom, you come from a large family, what was it like growing up in the North?

TB: Idyllic to be honest. Plenty of Yorkshire Puddings. Ha ha. Dad worked in the kitchens in Wetherspoons and Mum was a stay at home Mum, you know, always cooking. There was always something nice in the oven, like a bun, when we got back from school.

LL: And your second piece of cake, I mean music, what is it to be?

TB: I've chosen 'Sugar Pie Honey Bunch, Can't Help Myself...' by the Four Tops. The memories this brings back...

Music. Music fades.....

LL: [hopefully] So, you went to the local grammar school where you were a bright

student and they wanted you to do physics and Latin but you refused and did domestic science instead?

TB: Yes, it caused a fuss but I was drawn to recipes for delicious sweet things. And I wanted to try them all out and eat them.

LL: [sounding resigned] And your next slice of music?

TB: It just has to be a recording by Dame Nellie Melba, she had a pudding named after her you know.

LL: {a little irritated] Yes I do know.

TB: Peaches, raspberries, icing sugar, a big tub of vanilla ice cream.....

Music. Music fades.....

LL: So you went to catering college and specialised in the dessert course. What else did you do?

TB: Well, nothing really. I had decided to concentrate on sweet dishes and so I learned how to make apple strudel and gooseberry crumble and plum duff and...

LL: [Sounding a little impatient] And your next pie?

TB: Well, I got married at this point and I've chosen the music we played at our wedding for the first dance. It was a Percy Sledge number, 'When a Man loves a Treacle Tart'. I'll never forget it. Magic.

Music. Music fades.....

LL: [Looking bored]. Then disaster struck (it says here in the script)?

TB: That's right. My souffles wouldn't rise and my wife left me. A difficult time.

LL: [Now with resignation] And your next crumble?

TB: I've chosen 'Bridge Over A Troubled Sticky Toffee Pudding'. Sums up the pain of those times

Music. Music fades.....

LL: [With one last attempt to pull the programme back] But your career took a turn for the better when you were approached by a leading cake company to open a bakery in the City of London?

TB: That's right, in Pudding Lane. The customers flocked, they seemed to like what I was making.

LL: [looking at her watch]. And your next chocolate mousse?

TB: It has got to be Queen 'Don't Stop Me Now 'cos I'm Making a Cheesecake'.

Music. Music fades.....

LL: [She has lost the will to live]. Well I am afraid we've run out of pancakes. Just time to ask you about a book to take to the island. I suppose it would be Delia or Nigella or Mary Berry?

TB: How did you know that?

Music rises

LL: [Does not realise she is still recording. Throws down script]. Who the f*** got him on? Someone's going to swing for this. I am not going to let my career go down the pan for the sake of a b****y banoffee pie. Can you make sure next week we get that scientist who got us out of the pandemic or someone who has invented a cure for childhood obesity or something?