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# Thatcher: A Divisive Inspiration For Creatives

**Musicians, artists and comedians used their loathing of Margaret Thatcher's policies to inspire them to make people laugh or sing.**

8:48pm UK, Tuesday 09 April 2013



**Video:** Margaret Thatcher Was An Inspiration For The Arts

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By Lucy Cotter, Sky News Entertainment Correspondent

For a generation of creative thinkers Margaret Thatcher, her personality and her politics were an inspiration.

Her divisive policies inspired loathing in the lyrics of musicians, she was a gift for artists and comedians and she became the most lampooned British politician in history.

The series *Spitting Image* routinely mocked politicians from its first airing in 1984 attracting audiences of around 15 million at its peak and the Iron Lady was its star.

Steve Nallon who was Margaret Thatcher's voice for the show told Sky News her personality translated perfectly on the show.

He said: "You always knew with Thatcher that no matter what situation you put her in you always sort of knew how she would react and that is a gift for a comedian."

The cult show The Young Ones made stars of its cast Rik Mayall and Adrian Edmondson, their humour reflecting the vitriol felt by many living under her tenure.

Many comedians like Alexei Sayle and Ben Elton also made their name during the 80s finding their voice because of Thatcher.

Cartoonist for The Sunday Times Gerald Scarfe says she was a brilliant subject and no politician since has come close to her for providing material.



Billy Bragg says that Margaret Thatcher was his biggest inspiration

"I did not like her policies and I didn't particularly like her but she inspired good drawings and she had a definite personality unlike John Major or Cameron or Nick Clegg today – I can't get hold of them in the same way.

"They don't inspire the same sort of aggressive pictures."

Thatcher was also present in the pop charts. She lent bands like The Smiths and The Specials a political edge.

Billy Bragg called her his biggest inspiration when founded the Red Wedge, a movement of anti-Conservative pop groups.

Following her death the singer has posted a message saying this is not a time for

celebration.

He said: "The death of Margaret Thatcher is nothing more than a salient reminder of how Britain got into the mess that we are in today.

"Raising a glass to the death of an infirm old lady changes none of this. The only real antidote to cynicism is activism. Don't celebrate - organise!"

The cultural commentator Toby Miller told Sky News the former Prime Minister wasn't a fan of the arts but definitely contributed to them during her period in office.

He said: "Margaret Thatcher took a stand very early on against the arts, against cultural funding, against some of the big cultural institutions but she also enraged a number of very young and vibrant songwriters, actors, directors, stand up comedians who saw themselves as representing an arts constituency but also as representing people on the fringes of society."

Last year Meryl Streep won an Oscar for her portrayal of Mrs Thatcher in The Iron Lady and until politics provides another character as unique as her - the arts may well continue to use her as their muse.

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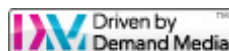


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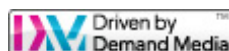
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