

latest

listen

latest

listen

latest

listen

latest

listen

latest

listen

WORLD

Like 277 Tweet 28 Share 0 4 22

Margaret Thatcher's foes turned anger into big business, and a soundtrack for the '80s

10



Rosie Hallam/Getty Images

Mugs bearing the image of former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

Like Jennifer Collins, Kristin C. Moran and 29,050 others like this. [Twitter icon]

SIGN UP FOR OUR NEWSLETTER [Email input] [Subscribe]

Novo Nordisk, since 1923, innovative developer of diabetes treatments and delivery devices. novonordisk-us.com [Novo Nordisk logo]

LATEST STORIES | COMMENTS
1. Life imitates art in natural disaster and financial crisis
2. JC Penney and what's behind (mark) ups and downs of clothing prices
3. Is failure good or bad? How you define it can depend on where you live
4. Have change for a gold bar? Arizona moves toward making gold and silver legal tender
5. Fox and Univision threaten move to cable over Aereo's tiny TV antennas
View complete list »

YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE...
Explore Stories that share this feature's tags
Margaret Thatcher, Britain, Music
1. Margaret Thatcher's legacy: Three things that changed for the U.K.

Subscribe to podcast | Download audio | Embed player | Audio player assistance | Pop-Up Support Marketplace

by Stacey Vanek Smith
Marketplace for Monday, April 8, 2013

STORY

Margaret Thatcher's legacy: Three things that changed for the U.K.

Hating Margaret Thatcher wasn't just a political stance. It became something of an industry. From punk rock to TV and magazine satires, many entertainers and writers profited by

criticizing her policies.

"She diminished a lot of cultural funding. She put the BBC really in her sites," explains Toby Miller, professor of cultural studies at City University in London. In turn, the BBC put Thatcher in its sites, lampooning her in comedies, such as "Friday Night Live" and critiquing her policies in dramas, such as "Edge of Darkness." The BBC hit "Dr. Who" even created a Thatcher-like character, Helen A, ruler of humans on Terra Firma.

"There was a lot of cultural creativity that managed to express what wasn't really getting heard in the mainstream newspapers," Miller says.

And then there was the music.

"No political figure in British politics has inspired quite so many songs that Margaret Thatcher has inspired," says Paul Williams, head of business analysis for Music Week. "She certainly was very inspirational in terms of bringing out an anger."

Williams says the punk movement gained a lot of momentum and global interest because of Thatcher's policies. Thatcher became a sort of anti-muse for The Clash, Elvis Costello and Pink Floyd. Billy Bragg practically made a cottage industry out of hating the conservative prime minister.

1. I'm In Love With Margaret T... NotSensibles Hating Margaret Thatcher...	
1. I'm In Love With Margaret Thatc... NotSensibles	3:39
2. Whine and Grine/Stand Down M... The English Beat	3:47
3. Maggie Chaos UK	1:50
4. Maggie's Farm The Blues Band	3:18
5. Ghost Town The Specials	5:16
6. Kick Out The Tories Newtown Neurotics	3:53
7. The Fletcher Memorial Home Celtic Pink Floyd	4:35
8. Thatcher's Fortress The Varukers	2:19

And it wasn't just British audiences getting the message.

"I can remember being a preteen listening to Pink Floyd's 'The Final Cut' and wondering, who's this Maggie he's so mad at?" says Aram Sinnreich, a professor of media at Rutgers University.

He says during the '80s, cable TV and, specifically, MTV were coming of age, and that put a lot of British music in front of an American audience. "The digital era was just beginning," he says. "You saw the rise of cable TV, especially of MTV and really the globalization of our media infrastructure... Because of that, the vitriolic hatred a lot of musicians had for Thatcher at the time was imported to us."

Sinnreich doubts punk would have become the global movement it did without Thatcher.

"She really galvanized the culture war's troops in England and helped them amplify their message," he says. "It's kind of ironic, because the deregulation that was one of the hallmarks of the politics that Thatcher herself espoused, lead to this explosion of anti-Thatcherist sentiment within the U.S. marketplace and around the globe."

Sinnreich says thanks to that, the anti-Thatcher industry turned into a profitable export.

2. [Margaret Thatcher's economic legacy](#)
3. [Spotify's future streaming plan: Less Pandora, more Netflix?](#)
4. [Can I see your violin's paperwork?](#)
5. [Goodbye Sony MiniDisc, we loved you when](#)

[View Complete List »](#)

WITH GENEROUS SUPPORT FROM...

Marketplace thanks our sponsors for their continued support in the following categories.

SUSTAINABILITY COVERAGE

- [The Kendeda Fund](#)



EDUCATION COVERAGE

- [The Kresge Foundation](#)

THE KRESGE
FOUNDATION

ASIA COVERAGE

- [The Starr Foundation](#)
- [The Henry Luce Foundation](#)

The Starr Foundation



WEALTH & POVERTY COVERAGE

- [The Ford Foundation](#)



GENERAL SUPPORT

- [The John D. and Catherine T MacArthur Foundation](#)
- [Newman's Own Foundation](#)

MACARTHUR
FOUNDATION
NEWMAN'S OWN
FOUNDATION

Stacey Vanek Smith is a senior reporter for Marketplace, where she covers banking, consumer finance, housing and advertising.

Follow @svaneksmith 1,598 followers

[Read More »](#)

Like

277

Tweet

28

Share

0

4

22

10 COMMENTS

[Log In To Post Comments](#)



mememe - Apr 9, 2013

You're missing Morrissey's 1988 "Margaret on the Guillotine," which led the British police to search his home. Too edgy?

Log In

or

Register

to post comments



graubart - Apr 9, 2013

Your comment "Sinnreich doubts punk would have become the global movement it did without Thatcher." doesn't quite fit the timeline.

The emergence and growth of punk - and its export from the UK - occurred during the Callaghan government, not during Thatcher's time in office.

Punk itself emerged from 76-78; by 1979 the punk era was largely over. Even the Clash were putting out rock & roll records by the time Thatcher came into office (Sandinista), not the punk of their first few albums.

So, yes, Maggie "inspired" many UK bands to write songs about her. But the angry political punk music came before she did.

Log In

or

Register

to post comments



e11enb - Apr 8, 2013

Did you really make a playlist of anti-Thatcherite songs WITHOUT a single Billy Bragg song? Not even one?!

Log In

or

Register

to post comments



svaneksmith - Apr 9, 2013

Oh my gosh, you are completely right! We have to fix that.

Log In

or

Register

to post comments



jc and the boys - Apr 8, 2013

Nice playlist. You forgot "Dear Margaret" by The Kinks.

[Log In](#) or [Register](#) to post comments



GeneDebs - Apr 8, 2013

Thatcher's foes turned anger into big business? Really? The last time I checked, the BBC is a public service broadcasting corporation. E.g. like NPR or PRI, they don't make a profit. Punk rock cashed in on Thatcher? The last time I checked, very few punk rockers barely managed to pay for the next safety pin, much less make a profit. (And if you think Elvis Costello and Pink Floyd were part of the punk movement, you probably also classify Abba and Boney M as R&B groups.) More importantly, punks and others didn't hate Maggie -- they hated her government's policies and the destructive effects they had on British life and society. Come on guys, you can do better than this kind of lazy reporting, especially on my NPR-donated dime. Your coverage of Thatcher is so uncritical and just plain mis-informative that it's embarrassing. Jeez.

[Log In](#) or [Register](#) to post comments



pjhinton - Apr 8, 2013

I might also recommend adding to the list the song "70s 80s" by Nightmares on Wax. Although released in 2002, it recalls what things were like for the working class during Thatcher's time in office and makes reference to her by name and by the moniker "Wicked Witch".

[Log In](#) or [Register](#) to post comments



sithere2409 - Apr 8, 2013

Try Martyn Joseph "Please Sir"

And did you REALLY leave out Elvis Costello and Trample the dirt down?

[Log In](#) or [Register](#) to post comments



tao101 - Apr 8, 2013

Wow. I was wondering if anybody would broach this side the Thatcher legacy. Just beginning to understand *American* politics in the 80's, I wasn't going to dwell much on British politics. But there it was, all over the music. I wonder what it says when a business program scoops All Things Considered on something like this?

And you can add Marty Willson-Piper's "Evil Queen of England" and various sketches on "Alexei Sayle's Stuff" (BBC) to your already considerable list.

[Log In](#) or [Register](#) to post comments



nc_beer_wench - Apr 8, 2013

Dead Kennedys - Kinky Sex Makes the World Go 'Round

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bleed_for_Me_%28Dead_Kennedys_song%29

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HVGg_5grOTg

[Log In](#) or [Register](#) to post comments

GET IT HERE:

[Newsletters](#)

[Mobile Apps](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

[Podcasts](#)

[RSS](#)

- [HOME](#)
- [SHOWS](#)
- [BUSINESS](#)
- [ECONOMY](#)
- [ELECTIONS](#)
- [LIFE](#)
- [SUSTAINABILITY](#)
- [TECH](#)
- [WEALTH & POVERTY](#)
- [WORLD](#)
- [YOUR MONEY](#)

MARKETPLACE PROGRAMS

- [Marketplace](#)
- [Marketplace Morning Report](#)
- [Marketplace Money](#)
- [Marketplace Tech Report](#)
- [Marketplace Mid-Day](#)
- [Update](#)
- [ReMarket Podcast](#)

SPECIAL SECTIONS

- [Attitude Check](#)
- [BBC on Marketplace](#)
- [Commentary](#)
- [Corner Office](#)
- [Economy 4.0](#)
- [Education](#)
- [Freakonomics Radio](#)
- [Health Care](#)
- [Euro Debt Crisis](#)
- [Food for 9 Billion](#)

MUST READS

- [Budget Hero](#)
- [Future Jobs-O-Matic](#)
- [The Big Book](#)
- [The Whiteboard](#)

AMERICAN PUBLIC MEDIA

261 S. Figueroa Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012



© AMERICAN PUBLIC MEDIA™

© 2013 | [Terms and Conditions](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)

PROGRAMS

- | | |
|--|--|
| American RadioWorks | BBC World Service |
| Composers Datebook | Marketplace |
| Marketplace Morning Report | Marketplace Tech Report |
| Pipedreams | A Prairie Home Companion |
| The Story | SymphonyCast |
| The Writer's Almanac | More... |

- [On Being](#)
- [Marketplace Money](#)
- [Performance Today](#)
- [The Splendid Table](#)
- [Wits](#)

SUPPORT AMERICAN PUBLIC MEDIA

American Public Media's online services are supported by users like you. [Contribute now...](#)

MORE FROM AMERICAN PUBLIC MEDIA

- [APM Podcasts/RSS Feeds](#)
- [APM Newsletters](#)
- [iTunes U](#)
- [Public Radio Tuner](#)
- [APM Careers](#)
- [About APM](#)