

# Marie Goldman

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POINTS OF VIEW

## Rock legend Suzi gifts one of her prized bass guitars to museum

**D**ON'T tend to get starstruck. At the end of the day, most celebrities are just people doing a job that has put them in the public eye. But sometimes it's hard not to be wowed by meeting someone who has spent almost their entire life - many decades - being at the top of their game and bringing joy, entertainment and inspiration to millions of people around the world.

A few days ago, I found myself in exactly this position when I came face-to-face with a veritable rock legend - none other than the truly amazing Chelmsford resident Suzi Quatro.

It's probably true to say that you will be more aware of Suzi if you are a) of a certain age, and/or b) a music fan, but if you can relate to either of those criteria and aren't familiar with Suzi's work, you could do far worse than spend some time finding out what she has done in a career that spans six decades.

Suzi Quatro first performed as a 14-year-old girl in 1964, and now, at the age of 73, she's still out doing world tours and making music with her many bass guitars.

That's why I got the privilege of meeting Suzi at Chelmsford Museum recently. She has very kindly permanently gifted one of her collection of bass guitars to the museum.

A long time ago, I used to play bass guitar - it conjures up lots of fond memories as the instrument that introduced me properly to the amazing world of music and performance and, as a teenager, I spent hour upon hour every week playing in various bands at school, then at college and in



Suzi's pink paisley Fender bass guitar



Cllr Marie Goldman with Suzi Quatro next to the The Sterling by Music Man bass and jumpsuit on display at Chelmsford Museum  
CLLR MARIE GOLDMAN

other community groups.

When I was asked to choose Chelmsford Museum's Object of the Month, Suzi's pink paisley Fender bass guitar that was held by the museum was the obvious choice for me - something that really spoke to me personally.

But this fabulous, eye-catching bass is now being returned to Suzi's private collection. She calls it her good luck charm and it holds a special place in her heart, having been spotted by her in a music store in the UK just a few days after she had used the exact same model in Nashville while recording a tribute to Elvis Presley with the vocal quartet The Jordanaires and guitarist James Burton.

The Sterling by Music Man bass that

replaces the Fender has a history all of its own. It's a five-string bass that allowed Suzi to reach the extra low notes that were needed during the recording of her 2006 album Back to the Drive.

The bass was a gift to her from producer Andy Scott and now Suzi has made it a permanent addition to Chelmsford Museum's collection.

One of the things that strikes me about Suzi is her continued love of the work she does.

In fact she doesn't call it work at all. She told me she'd never worked a day in her life - she just loves what she does.

I think it's amazing if you are lucky enough to be able to find something that you love so much that you can also make a career out of it, especially if you are able to inspire others at the same time.

Suzi Quatro is quite a pioneer. She was the first female bass guitarist to become a major rock star. She fronted her own band, achieved

chart hits such as the unforgettable Devil Gate Drive, invented her own haircut (Suzi says her hairdresser at first refused to cut her hair in the way she asked, but she insisted and others swiftly followed, all requesting 'the Suzi') and has sold more than 65 million records to date.

That's a remarkable list of achievements and one that I hope will help to inspire others by having one of her precious bass guitars on display at the museum.

For me, that's one of the really important things about museums - it's tempting to think of them as guardians of a long and distant past, but I think they should also remind

us of living history too.

By that I mean objects that remind us of things that are still happening around us and are still part of our contemporary lives, even if the object itself is part of the past.

What I really hope is that people visiting the museum will take inspiration from these incredible objects and artefacts, learn about the people whose histories they are part of, and go on to create their own amazing stories that future generations will talk about, perhaps with just a little smidgeon of starstruck wonder.

If you're in the area, do pop in to Chelmsford Museum and have a look at the beautiful black, five-string bass guitar that now sits proudly on display, alongside one of Suzi's famous leather jump suits.

Keep well and warm.

Marie



Suzi Quatro on Top of the Pops in 1974  
DAVID REDFERN

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