

**CROYDON CHARACTER:** Purley songstress Charlie Savigar is making waves on the country music scene. She tells **Rachel Millard** how an early encounter with Status Quo's frontman led to a passion for guitars and making music

# Rock star Rossi set me on country trip



CHARLIE Savigar's introduction to guitar playing was rather different to the oft-drunken, party-induced strumming enjoyed by thousands of teens.

Then 17, she was an accomplished classical pianist, song writer, sportswoman and head girl of Coloma Convent Girls' School.

But, standing in the home of Status Quo frontman Francis Rossi, who invited her over after she sent him some of her music, the moment trembled with potential.

"He had many guitars," she recalls. "He said to me, 'Pick one.' So I decided purely on the visual side. The aesthetic drew me to the instrument."

And so began a decade-long journey during which Charlie learned to sing and play guitar, fell in love with country music and emerged as one of its brightest new stars.

"The guitar was a foreign instrument to me," recalls the 29-year-old. "Playing it made my voice become the main instrument."



SUPPORTER: Francis Rossi

## FACT FILE

- Charlie Savigar, 29, was raised in Purley and lives in Selhurst
- She played lacrosse for Surrey before settling on music as a career
- She studied music at City University London and Guildhall School of Music
- In August she was endorsed by English guitar strings maker Rotosound Strings – joining a list of endorsees that includes Bob Geldof, Queen and Massive Attack

working with her boyfriend. "But we are both very chilled out. We love it and we believe in it."

Citing American country stars Bonnie Raitt and Shelby Lynne as her biggest musical inspirations, Charlie writes and arranges all her songs.

"I like creating some ambiguity in my lyrics," she adds. "One of my songs is called Save Your Love and the chorus is, 'Why don't you save your love for someone else?'"

"My lyrics are often about relationships, not necessarily my own."

She gave a talk at her former school last year, advising students to stock up on three qualities: perseverance, ambition and self-belief.

"I am a firm believer that nothing is impossible – that is what my mother always told me.

"Aim for the top – then if you only get halfway, you are doing very well."

Finally, she says: "Music for me is like an involuntary thing – I could not live without it."

round now because I can't wait to hear what she's come up with next."

She can be regularly seen and heard playing in London and touring England with her band: drummer Hayden Callow, bassist Alex Lofoco, and her boyfriend, Daren Callow, on lead guitar.

"A lot of people think that must be very intense," she says, of

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