Show Girl

House’s Dr. Cutty relives her pre-med role: teaching teens about AIDS.

April 1, 2008 By Kellee Terrell

In 1989, seven years before the Tony Award-winning, AIDS-themed *Rent* mesmerized New York City, an Off Broadway AIDS musical opened to equally stellar reviews. *Positive Me*, written by Lisa Edelstein (Dr. Cutty on *House*), warns teens that they aren’t exempt from contracting HIV. As the show’s 20th anniversary approaches, and now that half of all new American HIV infections occur among people under 25, Edelstein reflects on her groundbreaking work and its relevance to a 2008 audience.

POZ: You don’t plan to revive *Positive Me*. Would it relate to today’s youth?
Lisa Edelstein: It still has a lot to offer. It was a humorous look at the neurotic reasons behind not having safe sex, the fundamentalist finger pointing and the ignoring of AIDS.

POZ: Were people back then surprised that these messages came from a woman?
Edelstein: Not really. [When] I wrote this play people were of two minds: those who were thrilled anyone was talking about AIDS or those who had no idea what I was making such a big deal out of or why. There were, horrifyingly, many more of the latter.

POZ: *Rent* ends its 12-year run this June. Do you think we’ll see another musical like it again?
Edelstein: Who knows? Unfortunately, there are still enormous issues surrounding this disease, perhaps different from 20 years ago. Art arises out of struggle, so I’m sure someone will have something brilliant to say about it. And maybe it will raise a few eyebrows. One can only hope.

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