Shining Light

Annie Lennox gives voice to those fighting the virus.

June 1, 2009 By Trent Straube

Best known as the Eurythmics songstress, Annie Lennox is also an outspoken AIDS advocate. Her 2007 track “Sing” launched a campaign for African women and children affected by the virus (annielennoxsing.com). We caught up with her while she was promoting her latest disc, *The Annie Lennox Collection*.

I saw your concert in New York, and when you were talking about HIV/AIDS, someone yelled out, “Shut up and sing!”
Oh how rude.

I’m hoping that was a drunken anomaly. Are people receptive to your advocacy work?
About 90 percent receptive. And then you’ve got the “shut up and sing” bunch. But hey, this is who I am, and that’s part of it.

Your platform about HIV/AIDS in Africa has been based on viewing it as a women’s rights issue and a human rights issue.
When it comes to Africa, you have endemic poverty. The women don’t have political rights and don’t know how to organize themselves, and [many people in general] are dying because they can’t get access to treatment. A whole generation of men and women has been wiped out and left millions of orphans.

Do you think that American youth, gay and straight, think that this epidemic will touch them?
No. They haven’t seen people dying. [In the ’80s] people were dying left, right and center. People in music and fashion or anything like that, most of us know people who have died because of AIDS. A friend said in one year she lost 12 friends. Hello, wake up! Boys and girls, do you know where your partner has been? You don’t!

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