AIDS and the Pet Shop Boys

May 12, 2009 By Oriol R. Gutierrez Jr.

I love the Pet Shop Boys. Apparently, so does well-known gay, HIV-positive author and former *POZ* contributor Andrew Sullivan. He interviewed band members Neil Tennant and Chris Lowe for the June/July 2009 issue of *OUT* magazine.

The interview covers their 25 years of making music, including the recent release of their newest album. The interview includes subjects ranging from politics to religion, but I was interested in reading that a few of their songs were directly connected to AIDS.

Here's an excerpt:

Andrew Sullivan: Within your music, also, there is the arc of the AIDS epidemic.

Neil Tennant: There are a lot of songs about the AIDS epidemic.

AS: I guess it started with "It Couldn't Happen Here," right?

NT: My best friend was diagnosed with AIDS in 1986, and that song is a description of a conversation we had. I remembered him saying in the very early days that AIDS was not going to happen in Britain for various

reasons. And we were being a bit complacent about it.

AS: Is it his funeral in “Your Funny Uncle?”

NT: Yes, and it’s the same guy in “Being Boring.” When I grew up in Newcastle my first band was a folk group called Dust, inspired by the Incredible String Band, believe it or not, and he was the other guy in it. There were two girls as well. And then we split up due to musical differences, namely because he wanted to be the Incredible String Band and I wanted to be David Bowie, but “Being Boring” is the description of a party we had, “Your Funny Uncle” is his funeral, and “It Couldn’t Happen Here,” again, was looking back at us as teenagers.

To read the complete interview, click here.

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