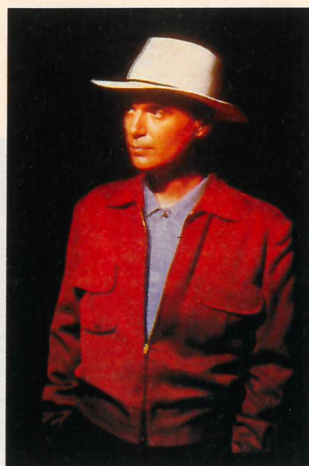




SINEAD O'CONNOR: IRRESPONSIBLE MEDIA



DAVID BYRNE: PRIME MOVER



NENEH CHERRY



THE POGUES

*Sinead O'Connor  
talks to  
Damian Corless  
about her  
involvement in the  
'Red, Hot And Blue'  
anti-AIDS campaign.*

# BLUE

December 1st 1990 is International AIDS Day, a day of fund-raising events, of education and instruction in preventative measures and of compassion for those for whom prevention is now too late. As the planet prepares to take some time out to contemplate the puzzling epidemic which has already condemned millions upon millions to a slow and painful death, it seems all the more remarkable to reflect that on December 1st 1980 no-one on earth had even heard of AIDS.

Despite the best efforts of medical science, AIDS remains very much a mystery disease. Years of intensive research have failed to uncover the origins of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) which debilitates the body's natural defence mechanisms and allows ordinarily treatable infections to invade the system with ultimately fatal results. Perhaps the most insidious

aspect of the disease is that the AIDS virus possesses the sinister ability to disguise itself by constantly altering its appearance. This property has made it very difficult for biologists to develop an effective vaccine against the virus and a vaccine would seem to be the best way of combating AIDS.

Vaccines against viruses are normally made from the protein antigens on the surface of the invading organisms - it's these antigens which trigger the manufacture of the body's protective antibodies. Unfortunately, HIV's ability to mutate its antigens with apparent ease means that a vaccine developed today may no longer work tomorrow. All is not doom and gloom, however, and scientists believe that eventually they will be able to come up with an effective vaccine based on those elements of the viral protein which don't change their molecular structure.





DEBORAH HARRY: DUETTING WITH IGGY



ANNIE LENNOX: SOLO PERFORMANCE

# MOVES

For as long as no cure exists, prevention must be a priority with us all. AIDS is a heterosexual disease, anyone can contract it. The HIV virus is passed from person to person through the exchange of blood and bodily fluids. The most common means of infection is through unprotected sexual intercourse and the sharing of needles by intravenous drug users. The clear message coming out of all this is that the correct use of condoms during intercourse - while not 100% safe - offers a high degree of protection, while the sharing of needles constitutes a virtual act of suicide. Meanwhile, the battle to promote AIDS awareness continues apace. Over the following pages Sinéad O'Connor talks about her participation in the 'Red, Hot And Blue' multimedia campaign and Dr Derek Freedman, a specialist in Sexually Transmitted Diseases, appraises the current situation in Ireland.

## SINEAD O'CONNOR

The 'Red, Hot And Blue' campaign to raise both funds and AIDS awareness came about through a casual discussion between New Yorkers John Carlyn and Leigh Blake in the spring of last year. Enthused with the idea of co-ordinating a fund-raising album, Carlyn approached the estate of famed composer Cole Porter and secured the agreement of Porter's family to waive all royalties on the songs to be used for the project. Blake meanwhile, contacted her long-time friend David Byrne who agreed on the spot to lend his support.

In the intervening eighteen months 'Red, Hot And Blue' has snowballed into a multimedia package incorporating a double album, t-shirts, a range of outfits designed by Jean Paul Gaultier and Rifat Ozbek, plus a collection of



twenty video shorts which will be coming to a TV screen near you on December 1st, International AIDS Day.

'Red, Hot And Blue' is that rarest of beasts, an all-star collaboration which registers highly on the artistic merit scale. Renditions to relish include U2's epic production of 'Night And Day', Tom Waits' bizarre 'It's Alright With Me' and a knockabout destruction of 'Well Did You Evah' by good buddies Deborah Harry and Iggy Pop.

Also prominent amongst the project's contributors is Sinéad O'Connor who weighs in with a version of 'You Do Something To Me'. Sinéad explains that her involvement came about 'largely because my record company Chrysalis was putting out the LP so they approached me. It was the sort of thing I wouldn't even have to consider, I would just do it automatically.'

She explains her decision to cover 'You Do Something To Me', one of the most straightforward love songs on the album, by saying 'John Maybury (Sinéad's video director) liked it. Obviously there was a choice of any Cole Porter song you liked. Everyone was given a list and whatever songs were already chosen were crossed off. We chose from what was left.' So there weren't twenty acts fighting over 'Night And Day'? 'No.'

Although as yet she has had no personal experience of AIDS striking anyone close to her, Sinéad maintains that the disease is now 'a fact of life for all of us. It has been for the last five years and if there's anybody who hasn't noticed that I don't know where they've had their heads buried. We've been warned about it and told how important it is to stop thinking and suggesting that it's limited to gay people and secondly to realise that it's something that affects every single one of us including our babies.'

Asked if becoming a mother made her even more aware of the AIDS menace, she replies, 'No. Even if I wasn't a mother I'd be very aware of the dangers. I think it's almost impossible not to be aware of the dangers in 1990 unless you're a complete idiot.'

One problem which the 'Red, Hot And Blue' campaign may have to contend with is the fact of a public that's becoming increasingly jaded with all-star, fund-raising musical events. Celebrity charity bashes have become so commonplace in recent years that it's reasonable to suggest that the message will be lost on a proportion of people who will simply turn off, dismissing the project as more media hype.

'Why don't they want to know?', Sinéad demands irritably. Ostrich mentality, I propose. 'Well there you go,' she responds, 'I don't have any time for that and I don't have any time for them. The record is not being made for cynical people and I'm shocked that people are prepared to be cynical about it. The fact is, so what if it is media hype? We're using the media in order to educate people and stop them from getting AIDS and anybody who wants to be cynical about that is completely stupid.'

She admits to being particularly concerned about the possible progress of AIDS

through Ireland where the religious controlled education system restricts open discussion on such preventative measures as using condoms. 'I think the whole world has a problem regarding AIDS,' she states, 'but Ireland has a particular problem regarding sexuality in general and the manifestations of that are people becoming pregnant and the whole fact that people are not allowed to have abortions. Plus the fact that homosexuality is looked upon as being something completely disgraceful and the fact that there isn't a lot of sex education or contraception.'

Sinéad recently visited Chile for an Amnesty International benefit concert. How is the strong Catholic Church in South America dealing with the issue of AIDS protection?

'I didn't really have any experience of the Church there,' she responds, 'but I did have experience of the people there which made me think that in particular women in Chile are very strong and very much willing to stick their necks out for what they be-

lieve in. It made me think that if Irish women could see them maybe they could do the same thing.'

In the space of a decade or so a one hundred and eighty degree swing appears to have taken place in the world of pop-stardom. From being the standard bearers of mindless hedonism the rock fraternity seem to have developed a genuine sense of responsibility...

She interrupts, insisting 'That's because there's an irresponsibility amongst the media who go around the place saying, for example, that AIDS records are a media hype. They're being irresponsible which means that we must be extra responsible.'

'The fact that I'm in some way known to people means that I can be of assistance in passing information on to people which the media is not doing, which the media was supposed to do. It means that people like me can be like newspapers or books.'

Is Sinéad O'Connor lumping the entire media together as 'irresponsible'?

'Obviously I can't generalise but the majority of media worldwide that I've seen is very dishonest and exists purely to sell newspapers or get viewers or listeners. It doesn't do an awful lot, I think, to pass truthful information to people and help people. I'm especially disturbed that any media people are going 'round saying the AIDS record is in any way a hype - that's extremely irresponsible. Think of the implications of that...'



***'We're using the media in order to educate people and stop them from getting AIDS and anybody who wants to be cynical about that is completely stupid.'***