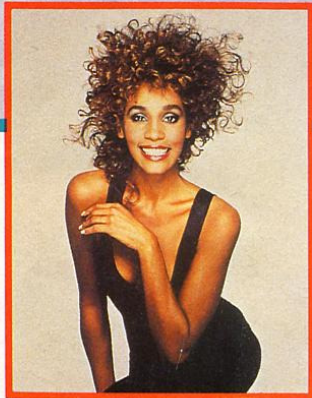


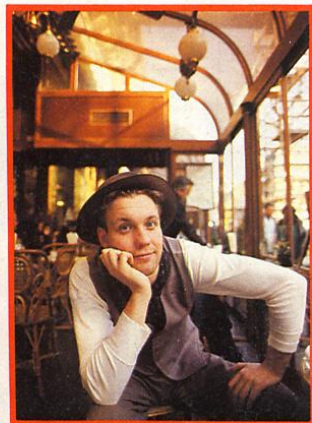
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As **Eurythmics** release their 'I Need A Man' single, **Andy Strickland** travels to Paris to meet **Annie Lennox**



THE PRIVATE WORLD OF

# ANNIE LENNOX



**W**ell, where else would you come to talk to Annie Lennox? Nestled in the back streets of Paris in the fashionable district of Montparnasse is a small, quiet, cosy hotel called, appropriately enough, Hotel Lenox! Not only that, but the Eurythmics star currently resides a mere croissant's throw away in a small apartment which fits in nicely with her love of this wonderful city and her need to stay out of the UK for tax reasons. C'est la vie as they say.

So what is it about Paris that Annie likes so much?

"Well, my life has been incredibly varied with regard as to where I'm supposed to live. Essentially, last year

and the year before, we were touring and staying in hotels, but in between times whenever I got the chance to be here I'd jump at it. I just love this city and I'm very happy to have any excuse to be here.

"I bought a little flat about two years ago and Dave also bought himself a flat here, but it's not a retreat because we're always working here.

"Paris for me is softer, it's a bit kinder, it's a bit more sociable and I enjoy that. I don't know many French people and I don't have much time to form relationships with people but it's just a marvellous place."

**What have you made of the 'Siobhan**

**to replace Annie in Eurythmics' stories in the British papers recently?**

"Oh, I didn't hear about that one! Well there's going to be all sorts of speculation. I could have been the new member of Bananarama I suppose. It's all wonderfully rich stuff for gossip. Because I don't do direct interviews with these papers they look round at other interviews I may have done, perhaps with French papers, and they translate them very badly. When I read some of the quotes like 'Uri is my love now and all I want' . . . Crass, cheap statements that I'd never make but they're there. To be honest I'm a little accustomed to it and now it's more amusing than upsetting though I don't like to be



associated with that type of thing."

The new single, 'I Need A Man', is a very direct sentiment, not as indirect as many of your songs.

"Yes, 'I Need A Man' speaks for itself. It's a very angry song, a very ironic song and it's also very humorous in a violent way. I really enjoyed singing like that for a change. In an ideal world I'd be able to sing in all different kinds of voices because it's such a thrill to have that facility to interpret things.

"That's what I'm very interested in, interpreting ideas rather than just portraying a vocal style. When I sing, and I'm not the best singer in the world, I try to illustrate the song and I use all these different persona rather than just sing conventionally.

"The whole 'Savage' album is sung from a woman's point of view and a rather bitter one at that. 'I Need A Man', that's a very bold thing to say, but at the same time it's saying I don't really need a man at all *and* that I need a *real* man.

"It's like a wolf howling at the moon, howling for all the lonely women, and there are so many of them in their thirties, let's say. Men too. All they want is a good relationship. 'Give me a break, why can't it work, why can't it be good, why is it always falling out?' That terrible frustration. It's about the difficulties between the sexes."

There's such a range of characters in Eurythmics songs, particularly on the last LP 'Savage'. You seem to satisfy the customary pop star acting ambitions within your recording work. "It's very satisfying, yes. You know, when I started to write songs I had no concept of what it meant, I really didn't have a clue. But now, over the years of my experience, I've finally discovered how the whole thing works. If I'd been around 20 years earlier I'd never have had the opportunity to make records and videos so this is a fantastic opportunity, but it's not easy because every time you do something, you really put your neck on the line and you have to learn to live with a tremendous amount of criticism.

"If you're a sensitive person, and I am, it's not an easy life, not an easy cop-out. It is a charmed life to some extent. I've travelled all over the world and I have some money for the first time in my life and I enjoy it. I'd be a hypocrite to say I don't, but it all has its price. You have to live with what you do and to be able to deal with some very awkward situations."

Apart from 'Beethoven' which was an extraordinary song, the songs on 'Savage' seem to have a classic simplicity about them. Is that intentional?

"Well yeah, I think our work is very simple in essence. We use the studio to build layer upon layer rather than write a song and note down all the chords and then record it. Dave has an extraordinary sense of form and I have an ability with interesting ideas and something happens with these sounds and rhythms and I get pictures. It's like a language because you know the listener will understand certain clues and symbols in the music

**"'I Need A Man' . . . It's like a wolf howling at the moon, howling for all the lonely women, and there are so many of them . . . All they want is a good relationship . . . It's about the difficulties between the sexes."**



because of other things they've listened to.

"Good songwriters say something in a way you haven't heard it said before and you identify with it. 'Every Breath You Take' is a classic in my view and it's wonderful that a writer can put that emotion into a pop song for heaven's sake, because it's such a disposable medium. I like that. Anyone can listen to a pop song but they can get so much out of it depending on the intelligence, creativity and the imagination of the process behind it. I mean, the Smiths wrote fantastic pop songs, I like those people who are always on the periphery and don't go into the safe middle ground and I hope that Eurythmics does the same thing. We always follow our instincts to the areas that attract us."

Is Eurythmics as subversive as you'd like?

"Well . . . I think 'Savage' definitely represents the way I feel, the darkness of 'Savage' is very much on a parallel with the darkness within me but then I'm not always like that. I'm a very contradictory character. I know I am. If you try to describe Eurythmics music, you can't. You can't say it's rock music though I know some of our records are in a particular style but then we move away from that.

"It's like using colour on a canvas. I don't want anyone to ever be able to put me in a box and that's why I change a lot.

"I'm just trying to do something interesting. Life as I've experienced it has been a very complex affair. It's not always easy, there's tensions going on between moments when you're calm and at ease with yourself and

**"If you're a sensitive person, and I am, it's not an easy life . . . It is a charmed life to some extent, I'd be a hypocrite to say I didn't enjoy it, but it all has its price."**

other times when it's not like that at all and it's all very threatening. As I said in 'Savage' *'everything is friction, all cynic to the bone'*, and I feel like that sometimes.

"There's this feeling that you want to put it into words and music, into sounds that people will understand because you want to do something relevant that is really good and has quality to it."

So presumably this complexity, this friction, leads to the many different characters, moods and images you portray.

"Yes, that's what I think. I couldn't present myself as just a girl singer wearing the latest fashion. It's more to do with presenting ideas in an interesting and intelligent way than it is to do with saying 'hey, this is my latest look, I wonder what the fashion tabloids will make of it'. I always try to keep the crassness out of things but

it's not always easy."

You described yourself earlier as "not the best singer in the world". How do you really rate your singing?

"I think the feeling that comes through is much more important. I don't want to impress people; you might find singers who are technically brilliant with a wonderful vocal range but they leave you cold. I'll tell you who I think is a great singer. The girl from the Cocteau Twins — she's just, wow . . . I listen to her voice and it's like 'my goodness!'. It's almost like a Siren, it's wonderful.

"The human voice can be produced in many different ways. I've heard these Arabic women and they stand in line and produce this wobble that comes from somewhere and it's terrifying but thrilling at the same time. There's a lot of Arabic and North African music in Paris. I'm fascinated by this."

Do you listen to your own records after you've recorded them?

"Not a lot, but sometimes when I'm doing a radio interview they'll play a retrospective, something from the past and I'm always pleasantly surprised and I'm probably our most severe critic. I think 'oh, that sounds good, that sounds fresh, that's the way I like things to sound'.

"There's nothing in Eurythmics that I feel bad about. If I listen to anything we've done I think it's great. That's not to say I'm not critical of it because there are certain things we've done where I think we should have done this or that differently, but generally I'm very comfortable with the records Eurythmics have made. It's been a wonderful thing."