

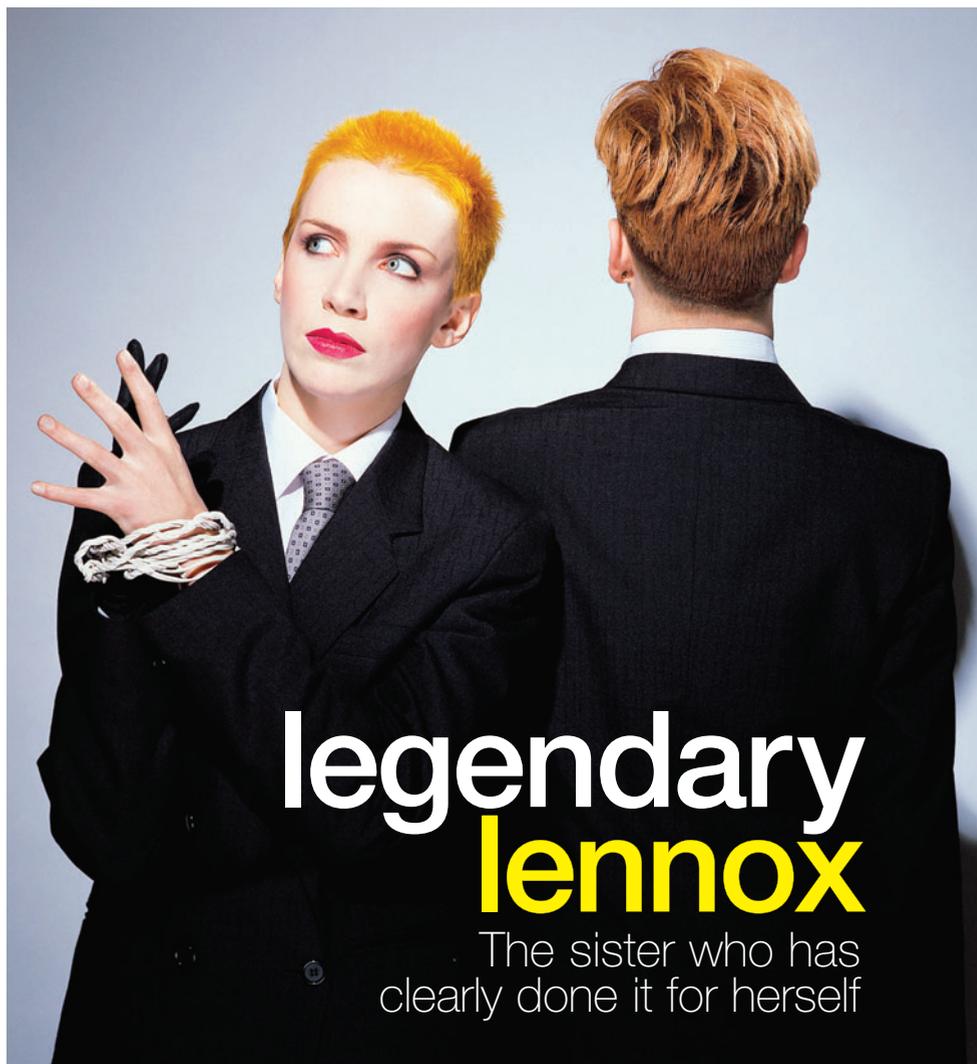
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In the ongoing debate over what “diva” really means (tantrums or tiaras, trend-setters or trailblazers) lies one of pop’s most enduring icons, Annie Lennox. As a successful solo performer and as half of the multiplatinum-selling pop duo Eurythmics, Lennox has consistently challenged the status quo in the most stylish and articulate of ways. Her knack for creating songs, videos and outfits with artistic chutzpah and purpose has inspired the world for more than three decades. With the recent release of two Eurythmics retrospectives—the *Ultimate Collection* CD and DVD (each format holds more than 15 *Billboard* hits) and a new boxed set filled with the band’s best body of work—Lennox chats to *FLARE* on how her sweet dreams are made of risk.

Enduring in pop is no easy feat. What have you done to outlast so many of your contemporaries? Nothing comes without a huge price. Nothing. So whenever I have stretched my neck out I can tell you that I have paid for it in one way or another, whether it be psychically, emotionally or karmically. You can go through a punk phase, a new romantic phase, an electronic phase, a hard rock phase and come back to some pure a cappella, but it is all music. I have always felt that I could almost predict the phases—it was intuitive.

You have declined going on any of the VH1 Divas specials. Why? Oh no, it would have been incredibly inappropriate. When I called my [first solo] album *Diva*, it



legendary lennox

The sister who has clearly done it for herself

was ironic and self-deprecating. It wasn’t that I thought I was a diva—that would be far too straightforward. To put me alongside Whitney Houston and Aretha—those wonderful divas—[is wrong]. I am not a diva in that strictly diva sense.

Since you are so hands-on with your image, does the notion of having a stylist turn you off? As a poorer, younger person, I was the stylist. I responded to things that I saw and said, “Yes, that’s it!” I still abhor anyone telling me who I am. By and large, when stylists come to me, it doesn’t really work. I have to guide it because they don’t know me and they don’t know where I am coming from.

Eurythmics has pushed the envelope in pop music for years. Which designers do the same thing in fashion? I don’t know because I don’t follow fashion. I am kind of informed in my own way, but I am not obsessed with it. I have been given all the offers that you can imagine. Quite a few fashion houses have approached me over the years to be their muse, but I never wanted to take that. I don’t want to represent any particular house or label. Part of me was, like, “Oh, I’d love to,” [but, in the end,] I am not a puppet for the fashion industry—I never was and I never will be. I want my independence. I want my freedom to go against even what I might say from today to tomorrow. —Elio Iannacci



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