

# Stand up for good causes, Lennox urges stars

POP stars who do not use their fame to promote good causes are missing an opportunity, Scots singer Annie Lennox said.

But Lennox, who campaigns for HIV awareness, said artists should not "necessarily" use their elevated status to champion worthy causes.

Speaking ahead of her appearance at the Festival of Politics in Edinburgh, she said: "I don't believe in 'should', but I do feel for myself that, having come to a certain place in my life ... this is very important."

The singer said that choosing to make a difference was her

"calling". She said music had the potential to provide a platform for all issues, adding: "It should be used in that way. The potential is there. It's a missed opportunity if people don't ever use it."

Lennox comes from the same generation of 1980s pop stars as Bob Geldof, Midge Ure and Bono, all of whom have promoted humanitarian causes.

She said today's celebrity-fixated culture made her "a little sad".

She added: "That whole celebrity thing is a bit of a tangled mess. Remember Tony

Blair with his Cool Britannia, asking Noel Gallagher to come to 10 Downing Street? It was a photo opportunity and it made him look good."

In recent years Lennox has established the Sing Campaign to raise awareness of HIV. She is also an ambassador for many international organisations on the issue.

She confirmed yesterday that she would be visiting Malawi in February with former First Minister Jack McConnell in her role as special envoy to the Scottish Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary

Association (CPA). She said: "With this issue it really really helps if you've been to a country that is outside of your own culture and you look people in the eye and you're able to take an abstract statistic that you may have read and personify it with one individual."

Lennox added that she does not back the idea of independence for Scotland. She said: "I understand the sort of desire for Scotland to have its autonomy and its separate identity. But at the same time I feel I don't want to see the breakdown of the United Kingdom."





AMBASSADOR: Singer Annie Lennox has used her music and fame as a platform for highlighting issues important to her. Picture: Steve Cox

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