

DEREK FROST RECOUNTS HIS LIFE WITH HUSBAND JEREMY NORMAN, A MARRIAGE THAT HAS LASTED FOR 44 YEARS

'A story of universal love'

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THE new UK TV series *It's a Sin*, about the early days of the AIDS pandemic in London, has created a massive buzz in both the UK and the US.

And there is no doubt it will do the same when it becomes available in South Africa.

Derek Frost, a new author, who calls himself a "one-book Charlie", said his forthcoming memoir *Living and Loving in the Age of AIDS* will answer the questions so many young people are now asking about the truths surrounding the early years of the AIDS pandemic and all those who died.

According to the UN's global statistics, 32.7 million people have died from AIDS-related illnesses since the start of the epidemic, and 26 million people were accessing antiretroviral therapy as of the end of June 2020.

In his memoir, Frost tells about the love he has shared with his husband Jeremy Norman – a love and now a marriage that has lasted for 44 years.

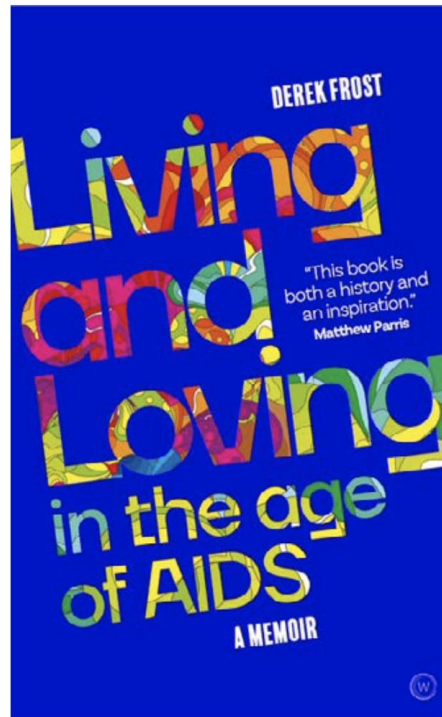
"This is a story of universal love, not just a gay love story," he stresses. "It's about a love between two men that is equal to any other kind of love."

Frost and Norman created the iconic London dance club Heaven, where, as *It's a Sin* relates, so many young people "danced with such joy".

The book is an intensely personal and heartfelt account about the lives of these two men who, despite having created four of London's biggest dance clubs, still regard themselves as rather private people.

"The book details Jeremy's six-year battle to survive AIDS at a time when so many of our young friends were dying; how we helped save many more than 1000 HIV+ lives around the world through the charity we founded called Aids Ark and about the rich journey that describes our intertwined lives," said Frost, speaking from Malta, this week.

Norman tested HIV positive in 1991 when effective medication had yet to become available and when such a diagnosis was effectively a death



sentence. This is the history that so many young people are now clamouring to learn.

"The history of AIDS has not been taught in British schools. Young people seeing *It's a Sin* have been



DEREK Frost and his husband Jeremy Norman continue to help save HIV Positive lives around the world through Aids Ark, the charity they founded in 2002. | SUPPLIED

EXTRACT:

"WITH notable exceptions, surprisingly little of so personal a nature has been written about the Gay Plague, about HIV infection and AIDS. Almost exclusively these records have focused on dying rather than on surviving. As a gay man who experienced what I experienced and who did what I did, I felt it important, imperative even, to add to this thin record; to tell the story of two people who experienced the AIDS pandemic from so central a position; to share how this changed us in ways that led us, through Aids Ark, to help save HIV Positive lives across the world."

amazed that these tragic events actually happened."

He said book is dedicated to 70 of their young friends who died from AIDS prior to the arrival of effective medication.

Frost explained how, in comparison to others, they reacted when Norman was first diagnosed.

"At the time, when newly diagnosed people were told they had perhaps only two years to live, many people cashed in their pensions and savings, withdrew from an engaged life and did their best to live out their dreams. We, on the other hand, just kept working. I had a design business

and Jeremy was very entrepreneurial. Jeremy made a firm decision that AIDS was not going to beat him. Often, however, it was hard to keep to believe in a future, when so many young people were dying around us.

"When the drugs eventually came, we just continued living. We had never stopped," he said.

The author kept a diary for the six years that his husband fought to stay alive and much of what he writes is taken verbatim from it.

During this period he found refuge in yoga and the teaching of the Buddha. After qualifying as a teacher, he started to teach yoga classes at an AIDS hospice and care centre in London.

The couple started their charity, Aids Ark in South Africa in 2002. They resigned as trustees of the charity in 2016, but continue to fund its life-saving work.

"We've developed a deep affection with South Africa going back over many years. We just wanted to help. On more than one occasion we had to find people willing to hide drugs in the boots of cars and travel across borders. Aids Ark has been the great adventure of our lives – an adventure which has taken us, in addition to South Africa – to Uganda, Lesotho, India, Burma, Cambodia, Laos and Thailand," beamed Frost.

"We feel very fortunate to still be alive and well. Giving back in the way that we have, has enriched our lives beyond measure," he said.

Frost, a photographer and a painter said that he will not be writing another book.

"My current big task is to ensure that as many people as possible get to hear about my memoir and read it. Thank you Saturday Star for helping me do just that."

All proceeds from book sales will be donated to Aids Ark.

◆ *Living and Loving in the Age of AIDS* will be available globally through Amazon, Watkins/Penguin Random House and all good book retailers from April 13, 2021.