ELLIE GOULDING JOINS THE McBUSTED BOYS AS DANNY JONES WEDS MODEL BRIDE GEORGIA IN THE HIT WEDDING OF THE SUMMER

ROYAL SPECIAL

KATE AND WILLIAM A NEW JOB AND NEW HOME AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR GEORGE

VICTORIA BECKHAM ‘WHY I’M SELLING 600 TREASURED ITEMS’

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
She traded international pop stardom for a hugely successful career in the world of high-end fashion design. But there’s one role that Victoria Beckham cherishes above all else and will never change and that is being a mother.

Now the 40-year-old former Spice Girl is using her fame and influence to help other mothers: women whose strength and resilience in the face of tremendous adversity left her truly humbled.

Later this month, Victoria, who has sons Brooklyn, 15, Romeo, 11, and Cruz, nine, and three-year-old daughter Harper with her ex-footballer husband David, will sell 600 much-loved items from her personal wardrobe in aid of mothers2mothers, a charity that aims to stop the spread of pre- and postnatal AIDS and HIV. The designer witnessed their work first hand on a visit to Cape Town earlier this year.

Selecting pieces that will strike a chord with VB fans, from the era of Spiceomania right up to her present-day chic, Victoria hopes to raise as much money as possible for a cause she describes as “really life-changing.”

HISTORY IN A WARDROBE
Enlisting the help of her mother Jackie and her sister Louise to blitz her wardrobe of its most saleable pieces, Victoria says the cull brought back some wonderful memories.

“[There were] really, really happy memories, of myself and David, of myself and the children and of different events that I’ve been to,” Victoria tells HELLO! “People have been looking at pictures of me for many years and a lot of these pieces have been photographed and are very recognisable.

“They’re special, well-made designer pieces and I figured that maybe there are some good homes these beautiful pieces can go to. And while we’re doing that, let’s try to make a difference.”

The designs, which include the bespoke white Dolce & Gabbana dress Victoria wore to the 2005 MTV Video Music Awards, will be sold via the website TheOutlet.com, with the money raised going to help prevent the spread of HIV to children.

The vast majority of youngsters affected by the virus live in sub-Saharan Africa and are infected via their mothers during pregnancy, birth and while being breastfed. The real tragedy is that the
‘Selecting the pieces brought back really, really happy memories of myself and David’
‘First and foremost, I’m a mother. I’m a working mum and my kids mean everything to me’

spread of HIV is entirely preventable, with medical intervention reducing the risk of babies contracting the virus from 40 per cent to just two per cent.

Founded by Dr Mitch Besser, the husband of pop star and activist Annie Lennox, mothers2mothers trains women with Aids or who are HIV positive but have given birth to babies free of the virus to teach their fellow female sufferers about the treatment available to them. They are known as Mentor Mothers.

"With the right education and empowerment, no baby should ever be born with HIV and no mother should ever die of AIDS," says Dr Besser.

REMARKABLE WOMEN

Victoria was introduced to the cause through her fashion connections, with US Vogue editor Anna Wintour and designer Diane von Furstenberg among its supporters. "The Mentor Mothers are the most remarkable women I have ever met in my entire life," she says. "After spending just a few days with these women and learning more and more about the charity from Mitch, I wanted to do more: I wanted to raise money and I wanted to raise awareness. I wanted to do as much as I can."

It's not the first time that the designer has rummaged through her closet for a good cause. Last November, she and David sold off racks of their clothes in a London Red Cross charity shop to raise money for typhoon victims in the Philippines. Fans queued around the block to buy them. This latest sartorial sweep by Victoria looks likely to spark even more of a stir. A clear-out of hats, jewellery, shoes and bags means there's something for everyone. As a special treat, ten of the most iconic items will be auctioned off in a special Going, Going, Gone sale. Included in this selection are the fluorescent yellow Roberto Cavalli gown Victoria wore for a pre-World Cup party held at the couple's country house in 2006.

Here, Victoria, who will open her first fashion store in London later this year, takes time out of her busy schedule to tell us more about her bid to help the cause and her special bond with the mothers she met.

Victoria, how did you first get involved with mothers2mothers?

"In February, I was lucky enough to visit South Africa on a project I was working on with Anna Wintour. I met Mitch Besser, the founder of mothers2mothers. I also met lots of the Mentor Mothers — women who are not only Aids or HIV positive but who are mothers who have given birth to babies free of the virus. They mentor other women who have just found out that they carry the virus. They teach them, give them medication and mentor them. They are just remarkable."

How did that lead to the idea for the fashion sale?

"I came back and I thought, 'What can I do to try and help?' I was going through my closet and found lots of really great pieces that I have worn — pieces that have been photographed a lot — and I thought, 'Maybe I can raise some money by auctioning some of these.' We approached The Outnet, part of Net-a-Porter, as we know they have an incredible reputation and a strong database, to help sell the pieces and spread awareness about the sale."

How does a project like this reflect your own personal evolution?

"I started out in the music industry and I'm now in the fashion industry but first and foremost, I'm a mother: I'm a working mum and my kids mean everything to me and that's..."
It’s taken a long time for me to realise I can make a difference and I can spread the word and people will listen to me."

As a mother, did you feel an instant bond with the Mentor Mothers? "When I was in South Africa, I felt a connection to the mothers I met. Wherever in the world you are from, you can’t help but feel that. From the moment I touched down and I started meeting the women, I knew this was what I had to do. Being famous gives you a voice. I can talk about something and people will listen. That’s a huge responsibility, a huge power, and it’s taken a long time for me to realise I can make a difference and I can spread the word and people will listen to me."

How did you choose the fashions? "I was going through my closet and I was looking at a lot of the pieces that I have collected over the years, pieces that I don’t need any more that other people can enjoy."

How did you feel when you were going through them? "I laughed a lot – not just at the clothes, but the hair! The hair has been through some changes, that’s for sure. It brought back a lot of really happy memories, like the dress I wore years ago to the MTV Awards, which was especially created for me by Dolce & Gabbana. This was when David and I were coordinated because that’s what we did in those days. We wouldn’t do it now, but it was fine at the time. The event was so fun – it was in Los Angeles and I remember getting dressed, the hair and the make-up and the beautiful diamonds, and how special I felt when I was putting on that dress. That dress is a one-off. There are no more of those dresses."

Any others that stand out? "The dress I wore for a weekend in Paris with [actress] Katie Holmes. We went to the Chanel show and not only that, we met [designer] Karl Lagerfeld for the first time, which was fabulous. I don’t take any of these things for granted at all. I enjoy every single moment. I’ve been so lucky to experience the things that I’ve experienced and to meet the people that I have met and I want to share that with people. And I hope these outfits will have more fun outings on somebody else."

Interview: Belinda Robey

More than 600 pieces from Victoria Beckham’s wardrobe will go on sale from 20 August. The Going, Going, Gone auction will run from 20-24 August. Register now at theoutnet.com. All proceeds will go to mothers2mothers.