

INSPIRATION: AMY POEHLER



The Girl

This page Jacket
Miu Miu at Matches
Fashion; trousers Gucci
at Matches Fashion.
Opposite page Jumper
Lingua Franca at
Net-A-Porter; skirt
Prada at Net-A-Porter

PHOTOGRAPHS *by* MATTHIAS VRIENS McGRATH
STYLED *by* LUCY WALKER



*She's the comedy genius who specialises in anti BS wisdom.
Amy Poehler takes up space and she is #SorryNotSorry >*

by HELEN WHITAKER

Guide

Try to make one enemy. It's not a success unless there's someone waiting at your car ready to throw down. That's Amy Poehler—Golden Globe winner, best-selling memoir writer, empowering website founder (amysmartgirls.com), all-round comedy queen and woman you'd most like to go to a rowdy bar with—sharing her tips on that *other* thing she's good at: how to host an awards ceremony. She and her longtime comedy partner and friend Tina Fey set the gold standard during their 2013–2015 Golden Globes hosting gig on how to have a room full of A-listers in the palm of your hand, while simultaneously roasting the bejesus out of them.

Keep it moving is always number one, she says.

Everybody is always afraid of how long it's going to be, so keep it moving, keep 'em drinking. If you can get those two things done, you are halfway to success. At the Glamour Awards this year, she's on the receiving end, but that doesn't faze her either. My speech is going to be really long and very rambling. I'm going to talk a lot about politics that I haven't formed a clear opinion on and lean heavily on global warming. Then I'll just throw down the mic, leave—and trip on the way out.

Amy Poehler should be obligatory at every awards ceremony, ever. In fact, all women should be prescribed an hour in Amy's company, because you leave feeling inspired and utterly charmed, and you want to get out there and *do* stuff. *She* certainly is. With her production company, Paper Kite, she's instrumental in nurturing diverse female voices in television and film. *Broad City* and *Difficult People* are both Paper Kite alums, and she has just inked a multi-year deal with Universal for both scripted and unscripted comedy shows.

It's all women in the office and we try to cultivate female show runners, diverse voices and female-driven stories, she says. One is a very selfish reason, which is that those are stories I enjoy watching. There are a lot of stories that haven't been told from the female perspective and I think there's just a lot more unmined territory. So as a storyteller, I think that's exciting. But the bigger picture is that I just enjoy working with women, I always have done. I find, especially right now, in the US, there's a real pull for

making sure that people are represented. She waits a beat. Also, I know so many funny women and I just want to f**k around with them and make funny stories!

Born in Boston to two teachers, Amy kicked off her comedy career in 1990s Chicago when she started doing improv at ImprovOlympic. It's where she was first paired with fellow rookie comedian Tina Fey. Supporting roles in films such as *Blades Of Glory* and *Mean Girls* followed, along with a nine-year stint at *Saturday Night Live*. Her mainstream crossover moment came with her whip-smart weekly Hillary Clinton impressions on *SNL*, followed by playing the beloved, bossy and endlessly positive local council worker Leslie Knope in *Parks And Recreation*. Seeing the ease with which Amy navigates TV, film, writing and hosting, you might think it's in her DNA, but she says this is not the case.

The only way to do comedy is to do years and years of it badly in front of your friends and family, and maybe two other people, she says. For the love of it, and because it's something that you want to do. I can't even imagine what it would have been like to have become a famous actress or something without having all those years of shows that just bombed. You learn so much in those moments about what you're made of and what it means to be part of an ensemble.

Her rise and (prat) falls were documented in 2014's *Yes Please*, a warm, funny, scrapbook-esque memoir she wrote while shooting 14-hour days on *Parks And Rec*. My parents were schoolteachers, so reading was always important, she says. I remember when the book first came and my boys [Amy's sons, Archie and Abel] opened it and played with it. That was major, to have the physical book.

It's not just a title. The principle of yes please—based on the improv rule of yes and—has had a lifelong impact on Amy's career. For the most part, saying yes to things has changed my life more than saying no, she says. But there is an interesting little facet to that yes and statement. In improv, someone says, Here we are at the doctor's office, and you say, Yes, and I can't wait for them to remove my appendix. The and means you're contributing yourself. You can say yes to things, but you also have to contribute to the yes of it.

She took some time off from appearing on screen after wrapping up *Parks And Rec*. I've been getting most of my

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joy [recently] from producing, directing, writing, she says, but I like to act, too, and have the flexibility to do all those things when I want. She makes her return in *The House* this month, alongside old friend and colleague Will Ferrell. (He's one of the funniest people I know, she says. I love performing with him, and when we were on *SNL* I followed him around, hoping he would want to write something with me.) They play parents who open an illegal gambling den in their house to raise money for their daughter's college tuition, and the result is the kind of hilarious kidulthood comedy that makes you glad she hasn't given up acting altogether.

And she's the first person to own her achievements and the hard work that goes into them. She's adamant that *all* women should. We need to be more assertive about I want that, I'm good at that, I'm going to do that and less caught up in the language of Can I do that? I'm bad at this, I'm sorry, she says. Even trying to go the whole day without apologising, not only for stuff you didn't do, but also for being in the way or apologising for X, Y and Z. It's the constant pressure for women to somehow minimise themselves before somebody else does, or to make men comfortable. She gives a wide, mischievous grin. When you stop doing it, it's wild. ●

PREVIOUS WINNERS INCLUDE

Susan Sarandon (2016); *Jordan Dunn* (2015); *Eva Longoria* (2012); *Annie Lennox* (2008)

Little Mix by Sagal Mohammed. Photograph: Alfredo K

THE FANTASTIC FOUR

Shout out to Little Mix, you're really quite the band

Still can't get Little Mix's *Shout Out To My Ex* out of your head? That's probably because you're one of the 95,000 people who bought it in its first week of release and sent it rocketing to No.1. Or maybe you had their album *Glory Days* on repeat and helped it become the fastest-selling album by a British girl group since the Spice Girls' *Spiceworld* in 1997? (Yep, it spent five non-consecutive weeks at the top of the UK album chart, overtaking a best held by Destiny's Child since 2001.)

And the domination doesn't end there: this year Jesy, Perrie, Jade and Leigh-Anne (below, from left) took home their first Brit Award (for Best British Single) and toured with Ariana Grande. It was incredible being in America for three months on a tour bus, says Perrie.

We missed our families, but Ariana is so lovely. She really supported us, even before the tour.

The girls admit that while they do bicker like sisters, they never argue. I think we've got to that point now where we know what makes each other tick, says Jesy. We know when not to be around each other if we're in a bad mood.

Their worldwide arena tour takes them right up to the end of the year, but R&R isn't in Little Mix's vocabulary. Hopefully in 2018 we'll have a new record, new tour, go back to the Brits and wipe it—win even more awards, says Perrie.

PREVIOUS WINNERS INCLUDE

The Saturdays (2013); *Florence + the Machine* (2012, 2010); *Destiny's Child* (2005)



Hair: Kyle Heath at Starwicks Artists. Make-up: Kayleen McAdams at Starwicks Artists. Manicure: Lisa Jochino at Aim Artists. Fashion Assistant: Ariana Welsher