

A multi-GRAMMY® Nominated
Winning Featured Artist

THE KIDS ROCKER/FITNESS GURU

MISS AMY

HER MOST
INTIMATE
INTERVIEW
EVER

By Scott Reese







Photo by Chris Pizzello

Miss Amy and Big Kids Band arrives at the 54th annual Grammy Awards on Sunday, Feb. 12, 2012 in Los Angeles
 Ryan Ross, Alex Otey, Miss Amy, Chris Clark, James Popik

Amy Otey, known as Miss Amy is THE Kids Rocker/Fitness Guru. A multi-GRAMMY® Nominated Recording Artist and GRAMMY® Winning Featured Artist, Miss Amy also serves as an Official Advocate for the President's Challenge Program, encouraging families to stay physically active through her warm engaging manner and positively enriching original music. She is a certified fitness instructor, an acclaimed singer/songwriter with a collection of motivating CDs, and a mom whose programs appeal to families by engaging imagination to foster basic fitness. Her interactive Fitness Rock & Roll™ musical programs focus on the ABC's of fitness skills -- agility, balance and coordination -- while supporting the development of a child's positive athletic identity and promoting a vision for the child to remain physically active into adulthood.

“You can’t help feeling famous walking the red carpet at the GRAMMYS® and performing at the White House Egg Roll event.”

~ Miss Amy

Miss Amy performed as part of the White House 2010 Egg Roll event on April 5, 2010, where the theme was based on the Let's Move! initiative of First Lady Michelle Obama. She was named President's Challenge All-American for September 2010, by the President's Challenge Program.

Shine on Hollywood Magazine is proud to present Amy Otey for “Top Women Entertainment Industry Professionals”. Honoring her success and encouraging families to stay physically active through her music.



How did you go about pursuit of your education and that goal?

For me that path included a BA in Strategic Management, advanced certification in Gerontology and numerous fitness certifications. I am also a certified early childhood music teacher and a President's Challenge Program Official Advocate.

“It's important to learn how to read a contract, write well, communicate well, formulate a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunity, Threats) analysis, network, team build, prepare/execute a budget, take the long project view and be able to break that into bite sized pieces.

Where were you born & raised?

I was born in Charleston, SC, and raised in suburban Kansas City. I've been based in New Jersey and raising my family here since the early 90s.

What inspires you about early childhood?

“I love working with kids! They're curious and confident and always ready to try new things. They're so imaginative! I speak their language. I get them!”

What part did music play in your life when you were growing up?

Music is definitely in my blood. There's no escaping it. My great-grandmother played the piano in movie houses for silent pictures. And her son, my grandfather, directed and acted in musical community theater. My Mom played ragtime piano and liked to sing. I remember long car trips across the Midwest plains with my family. I was always singing in the back seat, doing the harmonies. I started taking piano lessons in third grade, but didn't pick up the guitar until my late 20s, when I found it helped me write music. In high school, I was involved in choir competitions and musical theater. And, after I met my husband, Alex, who's a tremendous musician, producer and arranger in his own right, we started playing in jazz, folk and rock bands right away. We still enjoy doing cabaret and standards together.

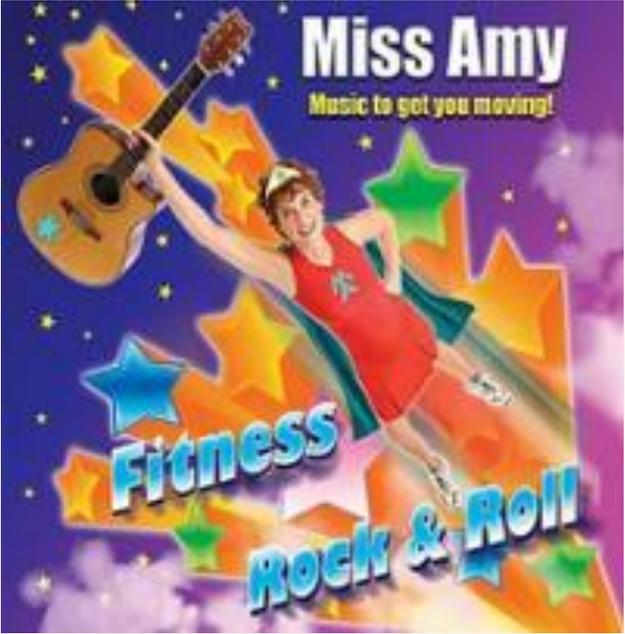
“This is in addition to constantly honing your craft and seeking and soaking in every byte of information you can specific to your niche in the business. Never turn down an opportunity to learn because you never stop growing!”

Who is Miss Amy? How did you get famous?

Miss Amy has been my moniker since I first set foot in a classroom as a teacher. That's what the kids always called me. So it seemed natural to adopt that as my stage name when I began performing for children. Teaching is the linchpin of my performance, because I want the kids to walk away with a new experience, having learned something. You can't help feeling famous walking the red carpet at the GRAMMYS® and performing at the White House Egg Roll event. But, it's really about the 10,000 hours of practicing your craft without the expectation of fame being the outcome. While I was teaching, I worked hard at honing my skills as a musician and fitness professional in yoga, kids and teens fitness, Tai Chi and aerobics. I've never stopped working at any of it.

How did you come up with the Fitness Rock & Roll musical program and why is it important to you?

Fitness and music are my two passions, so it seemed natural to merge them into one program. I was doing this long before the release of the *Fitness Rock & Roll* album.



“I realized early on that children are kinesthetic beings. They can’t help but express themselves through movement. What I do is to give direction in a musical context, so they can not only better express themselves, but learn foundational fitness at the same time.”

My music offers a background for that and gives them the opportunity to experiment and feel confident in movement.

At my live shows I tap into their balance and gross motor skill development.

“The Fitness Rock & Roll album was crafted with this in mind. It’s so important to me to help grow a healthy next generation, because they’re going to be our leaders!”

Do you write all of your own music; where do you draw inspiration from when you write songs and what’s your favorite part about the process?

I usually write the words and music, and then together with Alex, create a final arrangement with full instrumentation. Inspiration? It’s just endless. It’s a smile. It’s a child’s hug. It’s a surprise reaction when learning a new subject. It’s everywhere! Ultimately, my favorite part of the writing process is hearing the final product and presenting that to the kids!

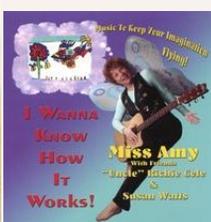
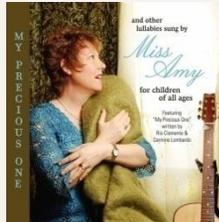
How many albums have you done?

I’ve done five Miss Amy Kids album *Underwater* (2004), playful songs for all ages; *Wide Wide World* (2005), songs about diversity; *My Precious One*(2006), lullabies and other easy listening; *I Wanna Know How It Works!* (2007), songs about science; and *Fitness Rock & Roll* (2011), a fitness concert from start to finish, which was nominated for a Grammy last year. I’ve also contributed to two socially minded album compilations, one of which won a Grammy, *All About Bullies Big & Small* (2011) and *Healthy Food for Thought, Good Enough to Eat* (2012) which earned a Grammy nomination.

Do you have a new album out? Where could we find your music?

Miss Amy is *growing-up* for her next major album release due out by the summer! This work, comprised of mainstream original compositions, is “Off the Map with Miss Amy” and is alternative music, primarily roots/Americana with splashes of country, soul, funk and classic rock. All of our music is available for purchase on **iTunes** and other digital download destinations through **CDBaby.com**. Or just go

to **www.MissAmyKids.com**,
Or **www.OffTheMapBand.com**



You have been nominated and won a Grammy, tell us about your experiences?

“I’ve actually been nominated for a Grammy three times with *All About Bullies Big & Small*, a collaborative project going on to win in 2012, which I am a featured artist on. *Fitness Rock & Roll* was nominated in 2011. And my other nomination was for a compilation, *Healthy Food For Thought*, in 2010, when we were up against Julie Andrews.”



When I told Adam Levine of Maroon 5 during 53rd Grammy rehearsals that there was no way we had a chance against Julie, he just pumped my hand and said, “Amy, never forget: You’re at the ball.” Also at the rehearsal, we were both watching when Mick Jagger, who to me epitomizes fitness and rock ‘n’ roll, blew everybody away with his energy and his level of professionalism. He’s one heck of a performer, and he winked at me from the stage! And, you want to hear something funny? As Adam was leaving the stage after his run-through, we were telling him how much fun it was watching the rehearsal. And, Alex says, “It’s great to watch, when you’ve got moves like Jagger.” And Adam shakes his hand and says, “Yes, you’re absolutely right.” Truly, inspiration is everywhere!

What are your goals and dreams now and what advice would you give to young people today?

I want to continue to inspire the next generation of children and young musicians AND help people to lead healthful lives. And I’m hoping my mainstream release re-enforces this for the young and older adults alike through more sophisticated positive messages.

“My advice to young people is to be FIERCE: Fire, Imagination, Experience, Remembrance, Connection, Education. With that in mind, focus on your dreams.”

The music business is certainly experiencing difficult times now. How do you feel about the state of the music industry?

I feel like it’s wide open with the latest technologies available. Never before have independent artists had so much opportunity.

“There are certainly challenges in distribution, competition and other facets of the business, but overall there are opportunities never before dreamt of.”

Do you think independent labels offer more creative control? Would it be possible for an independent artist to sell millions of albums without changing for the mainstream?

DIY usually isn’t so much “do-it-yourself” as it is “do-it-with-a-small-group-of-likeminded-people.” Is this true?

“Yes, of course the indie labels offer more creative control. And I certainly believe an indie artist can sell millions without “selling out.” Anything’s possible. Gotye, the Lumineers and Esperanza Spaulding are just a few examples of Indies who have been highly recognized.”

“What you say about the meaning of DIY is absolutely true. It does take a team of professionals working together in order to achieve whatever your measure of success is. Nobody does this completely alone. I’m fortunate to be able to surround myself with an excellent team.”

What are the Top 5 Behaviors of “making it” you can advise music artists on that will help them make it in the music business?

- 1) Practice your craft
- 2) Be respectful of other musicians
- 3) Understand that good music takes a team – it’s not just about the lead singer
- 4) Know that nothing’s impossible
- 5) Be true to yourself



Miss Amy & Her Big Kids Band (recorded Fitness Rock & Roll album) L->R: James Popik (guitar, vocals), Andy Janowiak (drums), Miss Amy (lead vocals, guitar), Alex Otey (keys, trumpet, vocals), Chris Clark (bass)



New York Central Park’s Naumburg Bandshell, Miss Amy & Her Big Kids Band, Sept 2011



White House Egg Roll 2010, Washington DC, Miss Amy & Her Big Kids Band



What do you want your legacy to be?

I want to be remembered as someone who did her little part to help shape the next generation with a joy and passion ... rivaled only by Mick Jagger! ♣