

AMANDA RAYMOND

PRODUCTION MANAGER

Age: 33

Job Title: Production manager/head of audio

Employer: Feinstein's/54 Below

Current Projects: Production manager and audio engineer for Jarrod Spector and Kelli Barrett.

Noteable Achievements: MFA from Columbia University

Awards / nominations: Two-time Manhattan Association of Cabaret Awards Nominee



How did you get into this industry?

I started doing production work when I was in the eighth grade. When I went to college, I began as a Music Education major. I found myself spending more time working in the theatre than I did on practicing my instruments (woodwinds) and switched my major to Theatre/Speech Communications after my second year. I did a lot of stage managing in college and went on to get an MFA in Stage Management from Columbia University. That's where I also started production managing and I found myself more drawn to that side of things. Not long after, I started to work on Broadway Cabarets, and drifted towards the world of audio engineering. It's a good combination for me as it brings me back to the music world but keeps me immersed in the theatre world that I've spent so much time in.

Can you name some of your influences within the industry?

Karrie Keyes is a big inspiration. She is such a pioneer for women in audio. Not only does she have an impressive career, but she has also been so generous in helping along and lifting up other women who aspire to be sound engineers in creating Soundgirls (Soundgirls.org). Another of my influences is Kris Umezawa. He's taught me so much and I'm eternally grateful.

What's the worst advice you've heard?

When I started to production manage while I was still

working on my MFA in Stage Management, someone told me that I needed to pick one or the other or people wouldn't take me seriously. The truth is that all of the different (but adjacent) paths that I have taken have given me a really holistic perspective on what it takes to put on a show of any type. When you're a production manager, it's invaluable to know the ins and outs of what every department needs to be getting done to have a successful show. And it's pretty common for the audio engineer to also be the tour manager, or production manager, and frequently in my case, all three.

And the best tips you've been given?

It's a bit cliché, but ask questions about things you aren't sure of. Most professionals are (and should be, in my opinion) happy to share their knowledge. And even if you think you know everything, there's always something new to learn.

What's your favourite thing about the industry you work in?

Collaboration. Building a team of people that complement each other's skills, that you can trust to hold up their end of the process, and that you also enjoy being around.

What are the biggest challenges of the job?

One of the biggest challenges that I face almost daily is the unexpectedness of being a female sound engineer. There truly aren't very many women in audio and people

will frequently assume that any other male in the room is the "sound guy". I get asked a lot if I'm an intern, which as a person in their thirties usually makes me chuckle a bit. I'm fortunate to work with some really supportive men, who are quick to point out that "actually, SHE'S the sound guy". We try to make light of it, but it can get really frustrating when it happens over and over again. The members of the aforementioned SoundGirls are a great source of support when dealing with these particular gender-related challenges.

What interests do you have outside of audio?

I'm really into gaming, both video games and tabletop. My friends and I have a bi-monthly Dungeons and Dragons game event that is a lot of fun and a great way to escape from the inherent stresses that come from working in live entertainment.

What advice would give to someone else – your best tip or trick?

Take care of yourself. Physically, yes, but also mentally. Burnout is very, very real and it's easy in this industry to keep saying 'yes' to gigs and projects and be eternally busy. But days off for yourself are important. Don't forget to take time to do the other things you love as well. And that also goes for finding little moments to breathe during those longer days. If you find yourself getting overwhelmed, it's totally okay to just take a couple minutes for yourself to get re-centered.