



PRODUCTION MANAGER, JOE SANCHEZ

HE'S SPENT THREE YEARS ON THE ROAD WITH RIHANNA AND IS CURRENTLY WORKING WITH QUEEN AND ADAM LAMBERT'S WORLD TOUR. HERE'S A SLICE OF LIFE IN THE PM LANE ACCORDING TO BRITISH BORN, US-BASED, WORLD TRAVELLER JOE SANCHEZ.

I'm always up early. If I'm coming in from an overnight run then I'll drag myself off the bus and head into the venue 15 minutes before the floor mark begins. If I'm coming in from a day off then it's a hotel lobby call and short bus ride in with the riggers, caterers and my Production Stage Manager, Roger Cabot.

I head in and walk to the arena floor where I'll find my Head Rigger Todd Mauger. Roger will already be lining up trucks for load in, so I'll go over to the production office where my Assistant, Jil Aram, is already setting up the office. We review sold map and ticket sales and as soon as the tour Wi-Fi network is up my inbox starts filling up with everything from Asian freight manifests to promo budgets and the need for mandolin strings in Texas... you know the deal!

My crew comes in hourly waves. The lighting and carpentry departments come first, then video, audio, backline, wardrobe and so on. On the Queen and Adam Lambert tour, life is somewhat straightforward. We don't carry backstage furniture as the artists are happy with whatever is there. On Rihanna however, we always carry a truck of backstage furniture and another truck for wardrobe, but that's the pop world... rock 'n' roll bands are great!

Jim Webb, my Show Stage Manager works with the carpenters before taking them over for sound check and show time as Stage Manager. Meanwhile, I'm busy with emails and advancing with the day's schedule. I'll check in with Juliette Slater (Tour Director) as to any updates for the day and spend some time planning those all important budgets.

Equipment is loaded in off the trucks for our routine; kit gets flown in, up and down and out in the same order every day. Once the first week or two of any tour is complete, everything else runs smoother. The load ins and outs speed up and everyone learns their specific role very quickly. Once the production is up and running, I find time to grab a sandwich from catering.

Queen like Jim and I to meet them as they pull into the arena. We'll get a heads up from their security and then wait by the loading dock. Both Roger Taylor (drums) and Brian May (guitar) are great; they're very laid back and respectful of the tour's technical production, which makes our jobs a lot easier.

We walk the band to their dressing rooms and talk nonsense for a bit. Jim gets Queen and Adam in the arena for sound check while I sit with my department heads and go through upcoming shows and rigging plots. As soon as Jim gives the nod that the band are done, I give the go ahead to open the doors. Then the building really starts to come alive!

After Jim has put the band on stage, I watch the opening numbers from the side and walk through the arena to make sure it looks and sounds great from everywhere. Only when the show is underway do I have time to catch up with my other family. I Skype my girlfriend and our baby, but never for long enough!

Soon Jil and I run through logistics for the next day or two before I swing back out to the show and check out another song. I talk to Roger about that evening's load out too. We have a load out map for every show that he draws up and posts. With the bigger (20+) truck shows, you need to be very organised and have the load out finished in 2-3 hours. Once the show has come down, I walk the band to their cars. Queen keep it old school; it's straight into an SUV and they're gone. No one uses stretch limos anymore, in fact the last time I saw one of those I was watching Led Zeppelin's *The Song Remains The Same*.

The various departments head to the buses and grab some after show food, which I avoid. Beer and pizza is a no-go with my early starts... Unless we have a day off. Roger, Todd and I are always the last ones out in any event and I'm vey lucky that I get to work with some of my best friends. They're a group of guys that have been with me on many different tours over the years; we have each other's backs. Like the Mafia. Well, the touring Mexican Mafia that is...

Joe Sanchez