

'Luke Cage' Crew Finds Right Sounds in New York for Netflix's Series



Back in November 2013, Marvel announced it was expanding its [Netflix](#) universe with four new series featuring the so-called Flawed Heroes of Hell's Kitchen — Daredevil, Jessica Jones, Luke Cage, and Iron Fist — with the ambitious initiative culminating in an eight-episode miniseries, "The Defenders." Since the characters live in New York City, Marvel further noted that Gotham would serve as the principal filming location for the entire package.

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Since then, "Daredevil" has become one of Netflix's most-watched originals, "Jessica Jones" is going into season two, and "Luke Cage" is set to premiere. (And a fifth hero, the Punisher, will soon join the fold.)

New York-based sound mixer Joshua Anderson, who has worked on each series, took to the streets of Harlem along with boom operators Gregg Harris and Terence McCormack Maitland and second-unit mixer Julian Townsend to record production audio for "Luke Cage."

"Each series has had its own set of challenges," says Anderson. "'Daredevil'" became

about the city itself, and with [the character's] heightened abilities, it means he hears everything a little more presently than a normal person. On 'Jessica Jones,' we dealt sonically with her inner monologue; and with 'Luke Cage,' the big focus was on the music."

To tackle the dialogue-driven episodes on "Cage," Anderson recorded with boom microphones. "When you look at a comic-book panel, you see characters in the foreground and some in the background," he says "We wanted to preserve that dynamic perspective in the production tracks instead of the uniform perspective you get with wireless microphones."

For the music played at the Paradise Club, owned by Cornell "Cottonmouth" Stokes, the mixers used a combination of pre-recorded and live elements.

"We brought in Avid ProTools operator David Tirolo during our music days, as typically our playback isn't just a play and stop, but finding starting points, speaker mixes, and cue points that put the performers in the best situation they can be," Anderson explains.

Even when shooting 10-plus pages a day, the production team prided itself on recording both on-screen and off-screen dialogue so that post-production could spend more time layering effects.

"It really all starts with Josh," notes supervising sound editor Lauren Stephens. "Despite dealing with the noise of New York City, [his team] delivered beautiful tracks that made our jobs easier."

That meant that re-recording mixers Adam Jenkins and Joe Barnett could spend more time focusing on creator Cheo Hodari Coker's vision for the show.

"Cheo wanted Harlem to have a sense of community — one that's vocally based, rather than an abundance of city sounds like you hear in 'Daredevil,' " Jenkins says. "So instead of filling the empty space between the dialogue with effects, we let the track breathe."