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2023-08-02 Pit Stop with Amy Rubinate.mp3

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DURATION

1h 20m 36s

3 SPEAKERS

Karen Commins

Anne Flosnik

Amy Rubinate

START OF TRANSCRIPT

[00:00:03] Karen Commins

I want to welcome you all to Pitstop the fortnightly mid-week rest area to refuel your drive. I'm Karen Commins. I'm an audiobook narrator and chief cartographer for NarratorsRoadmap.com and your host for Pit Stop. With me in the copilot seat is my lovely friend and award winning audiobook narrator Anne Flosnik, who hosts the Narrator Uplift show here on Clubhouse. How are you this afternoon, Anne?

[00:00:29] Anne Flosnik

Missed my cue. I'm great. Happy to be here.

[00:00:34] Karen Commins

Well, that's okay.

[00:00:35] Anne Flosnik

Yeah.

[00:00:36] Karen Commins

Every other Wednesday. audiobook narrators who have careers beyond narration pull into Pit Stop and they are sure to inspire you to follow all of your interests and use your talents and gifts. I want to let you all know this conversation is being recorded. You'll be able to relisten and catch parts you missed and feel free to comment in the chat and raise your hand in the app if you want to be part of the conversation, because we would love to hear from you. So thanks so much to all of you for joining us. I am super excited to welcome Amy Rubinate to Pit Stop. Amy is an award-winning audiobook director, producer and narrator. Her Los Angeles-based production company Mosaic Audio has recorded and produced nearly 3000 audiobooks for major publishers. Amy casts and directs hundreds of books a year, specializing in directing authors and celebrities. Amy received her MFA in writing for Children and Young Adults from Hamline University, and her first grade graphic novel, Kate and the City of Fire, was just released on Monday. So welcome to Pit Stop, Amy! We're so glad you're here.

[00:01:47] Amy Rubinate

Thank you. I love your voice. I love how you you softened it and made it excited. When you talked about my book, I was like, oh, that's the most wonderful advertisement. Thank you.

[00:01:58] Karen Commins

Well, I am super excited about your book. And in fact, I wanted to have you on this week because to celebrate your book and we will get to your book.

[00:02:07] Amy Rubinate

I appreciate that!

[00:02:08] Karen Commins

We will get there, but we have a few things on your path even before then. So, you know, I noticed that you your degree is in, um, I had it right in front of me speech, communication and rhetoric. And I thought, well, that's an unusual thing. What did you originally want to do with that degree?

[00:02:29] Amy Rubinate

Well, I. Gosh, how did I even find out? I was in, um. Let's see. I was at Srjc Santa Rosa Junior College, and, um, I, I had heard that the drama department department had some flaws at that time, and I was like, I don't want to learn to act badly. So I turned to speech and I heard they. I heard they had because I wasn't I knew that I didn't know enough to parse out like which information was helpful and which wasn't. So I thought, well, okay, I'll wait till I get to the four year college. And right now I'd heard that the speech team was strong. And so I thought maybe I'll focus my attention there. I had done some public speaking in high school. There wasn't a lot. It's not like now where people have forensics teams, speech teams and competitions. I came from a small high school. I'm not sure that stuff even existed then, but, um, you know, I did like there were, there were various civic groups that would host speeches every year and I would do those. And I did a lot of four H presentations for its demonstrations when I was a kid. And, you know, it's like you'd do a speech with a bunch of poster boards and I was like won awards and had a good time doing it and felt a sense of prowess because I was able to use my sense of humor and make people laugh and like, you know, it was that first feeling of like getting an audience in the palm of your hand kind of thing.

[00:03:49] Amy Rubinate

And so I felt that that was an area in which I excelled and and I really enjoyed it. And I mean, one of my favorite things in life is to have people listen to me. So it's so for somebody who likes to talk and has a lot of opinions, it's very gratifying. So I ended up on speech team and I loved it. Just loved it. There was a lot I mean, there were two kind of well, there was there was like speech for like businesses. I can't remember even what that was called. That wasn't at my JC but that was at the four year college that I went to. And it was like, you know, those people would go into teaching soft skills or sometimes hard skills at businesses. But what I really wanted to do was oral interpretation of literature. In fact, that was my sub major. You know, it was like speech communication with an emphasis in oral interpretation of literature. So it's basically like acting with a book in your hand. And so I've never even.

[00:04:47] Karen Commins

Heard of that as a.

[00:04:48] Amy Rubinate

Oh, it's really fun. There's a couple of us, there's a couple of us in the industry who, um. I'm trying to remember his name. It's not coming to me, but there's actually.

[00:05:00] Karen Commins

You didn't know you'd be tested on that today.

[00:05:01] Amy Rubinate

Yeah, there's actually. Oh, Wayne. Wayne Farrell. He was on speech team with me at SRJC and. Oh, wow. Yeah. So it's great. Great training for what we do. I always joked it's acting with a book in your hand because you basically would hold the script and, you know, play all the parts and, you know, I would you know, I think I took what we do Reader's Theater, where you take, you know, different theater pieces and weave them together into a thematic show. Um, I did, you know, poetry and prose. And I did some persuasive speaking and some extemporaneous speaking. So anyway, all of that, it was just so much fun. And I didn't think about it at the time, but it was excellent preparation for being. Narrator Because, you know, you yeah, there was a little bit like dramaturgy. You had to figure out how to parse scripts and figure out the focus and themes and, you know, what emphasis to put where and all of that kind of stuff. You play all the characters. So it really was pretty very specific training for what I did. And so so I would go out every weekend and I'd, I'd like run from room to room. I was always like double booked because I'd do like eight things a week, you know, speeches, a weekend. And then if you went on to the finals, then you'd be doing like eight of those. And it just it was really, really fun.

[00:06:23] Karen Commins

But I remember you used to do a lot of singing and you talked about singing. Oh, say.

[00:06:30] Amy Rubinate

I think you shorted out. Yeah. At that time. Then I went to a cabaret show as Andrea Marcovicci, and it was a big main stage show at the Luther Burbank Center in Santa Rosa. And it was unbelievable. And I was like because I'd been kind of, you know, I did a lot of musical theater. And I was like, oh, you can put shows together thematically with, you know, blending different songs and doing medleys and, you know, creating a story arc within your show. Like, this is what I want to do with my life. But, you know, at that point, you know, cabaret was kind of on the wane. So I had a couple great years in it. And I, you know, I got as far as you can get without becoming actually becoming Michael Bubl . So and then I just sort of couldn't find my way into doing it as a career, which I later realized it really wasn't a career path, you know, So it's more of a labor of love. So then I ended up doing Voice over. And kind of went from there. And then about, I don't know, ten years later, I'm driving around the Bay Area all the time listening to audiobooks and just just like making a frustrating life.

[00:07:39] Amy Rubinate

Wonderful. You know, those times in the car when it's a great, you know, listening to like Grover Gardner or Cassandra Campbell or, you know, all these amazing, oh, Scott Briggs, Simon Vance, Ros Landor, you know, Julia Whalen, all the people who came before me. And I consider myself like old generation now. They were before me. They were the originals, you know, And, you know, a week in the car with them would be life changing. And all of the places I was going to do voice over. And then, you know, it was like, I borrow from Descartes. I, you know, I act, therefore I wait tables. So I would then go to my catering job and then I would go to my like midnight to 2 a.m. job at like the basement of a car dealership filing paper. You know, it was just like, I never have had less than like six jobs. So, I mean, you can look at my producing is pretty much doing six jobs, too.

[00:08:30] Karen Commins

So I see a commonality there.

[00:08:34] Amy Rubinate

Yeah, but but those those times where I could be swept away, you know, and, um, it was like exported. But that's not the right word. Transported by a great audiobook with that. I always call it the alchemy of a great book with the perfect narrator would become like its own art form. And it just really blessed my life. And I was like, Man, I want to do this and I want to give this to other people. And then all of a sudden I was like, Oh, I've kind of trained for this. So that's how I got in.

[00:09:05] Karen Commins

Did you -- I remember you were in Scott Brick's contest. Was that the first? Was that the first big thing that you. Yeah. That how it kind of how you entered audiobooks? Or was there something.

[00:09:17] Amy Rubinate

Scott Brick had this thing called the Share the Experience contest, and I don't recall if it was his thousandth book or if it was his 10th year in the business. But whatever it was, it was a significant milestone. And so he had this really wonderful idea. He's he's such a mensch. He's like really been such a big brother to the generations that have come after him. My mom calls him that fine Irishman because he's you know, he's he's a great storyteller and he's also a kindly person. And he you know, he really wanted to support the people that came after him. And so he did this contest and he thought maybe it'd be 100 people or 50 people or whatever. And it was like 435 or 424 somewhere around there. People submitted and I had just taken a class and met some friends, but I was really just dipping my toe in the water and I thought, well, how am I going to stand out in a sea of middle aged women doing romance? So I thought, well, and at that time I was younger, but but I was like, What am I going to do to differentiate? And I'd done a ton of like talking toys and children's projects, animations, stuff like that. That's kind of that was my bread and butter up in San Francisco as a as a voice actor. And so I, I thought, oh, I'm going to do I really loved Sarah Mlynowski's "Frogs and French Kisses". It was like a little younger teen kind of romance. It was so cute. And, um, gosh, I wish I could remember the narrator right now.

[00:10:49] Amy Rubinate

She was so wonderful. So I just did an excerpt from that as my audition. And I think that it was a good strategic move because it did make me stand out and I knew I could do authentic kid voices and, you know, not just authentic, but also modulated for the audiobook work, right? So it's not cartoony. You take that like 25% back, you still keep the reality of it, the the authenticity of the kid world and the kid voice. But you, you modulate it back a little bit, you turn the dial a little bit down for audiobooks so you have the specificity but not the broadness. And then, yeah, and then I came in, I tied for third with Elizabeth Wylie. Um, yeah, but it was, it was as if I won in what it did for my career. And now no one has ever. No one has ever admitted this. But I suspect that I suspect that Scott petitioned Dan Musselman to give me a shot because very soon after, because the winner got, you know, a job at Random Penguin Random House. Right. But there was I don't think there was any such thing for the the, you know, the other people. So I have a feeling that that there was there was a beautiful, wonderful, generous string pulled for me. And I got my first job doing a middle grade book at PR and then that that was great because I started at PR so I could tell everybody, well, I started at PR and then they'd be like, Yeah.

[00:12:25] Karen Commins

You know, it started at the top.

[00:12:26] Amy Rubinate

So yeah, it really, it really was such a, a door opener for me and, and I'll never forget it. I'll always thankful to Scott. And now he's marrying one of my best friends. So I'm, I'm also loving him for that.

[00:12:44] Karen Commins

Well and I remember I was at I forget which APAC. I think that's where you talked about it but you how you researched publishers because one book is one book and it's how you then parlayed that into an actual narration career. Yeah. So maybe you could talk about that a minute.

[00:13:02] Amy Rubinate

I always say I'm not the best narrator out there, but I'm the best hustler. It was always really good at getting where I was going, just through sheer chutzpah and lack of inhibition and, like, determination. So my my first proper a-pac that year. And in fact, he announced who they announced who won at APEC that year. So I, you know, I'd been kind of practicing with my group of friends. We I always recommend this to people like find your people who are at the same place as you, but like, who have enough experience that you kind of trust their, their both their business acumen and their acting skills. Like so you're not getting, you know, when you get like a peer group of any sort, you want people that you can rely on that you that you believe in, that you think are, you know, equally are good or better than you. And and so we did that. Rachel Fulginiti and I had a small group of people and we would do a, you know, peer group kind of stuff. We were friends. And so we would. Be like, Hey, how's this demo? What do you think? Should I do it in British? People would be like, you know, No, your British accent isn't nearly good enough. Put your best foot forward, you know, like that kind of stuff.

[00:14:15] Amy Rubinate

Or, you know, I think you need to soften it up here or you bled into the character voice, all the stuff that, you know, you have to figure out when you're starting out. And so we really helped each other. And, uh, and then I went to that APAC in New York, and I came, like, ready. There were no opportunities, you know, there were no real given opportunities to perform. So I brought like six scripts with me and thought, Well, if an opportunity opens up, I'm going to be ready. And then when everyone else was going to, I can't remember what it was like the, you know, where the narrator where a select group of high end narrators perform. I was like, I listened because I'd listened to like, I don't know, a thousand books before I started. Like I'd been listening for ten years and I was listening avidly. I was doing like 100 books, listening to 100 books a year because I was driving so much. And um, and I didn't have a TV, so I was listening a lot. Um, so I, so I was like, well, I listened to these people all the time. But if I go to the concurrent class for mic skills. Be someone. Amy, I.

[00:15:29] Karen Commins

Think we lost you. You were saying you went to the concurrent session on mic skills?

[00:15:36] Amy Rubinate

Yeah, my. My alarm went off. Can you hear me now?

[00:15:39] Karen Commins

Yes, we can. Couldn't hear the alarm, but we now can hear you.

[00:15:43] Amy Rubinate

Let me make sure it's turned off. I can never figure out which button is snooze and which button is off. They make the snooze button huge and orange, and then the off button is really tiny and far away. So I always hit the wrong one. And then it keeps, like, annoying me for the next hour. Okay, So. So I went to the mic. It was like how to choose a mic session. And I thought, Well, there's probably going to be an opportunity to perform here. So like, everybody went to this other thing and it was like me and like, I don't know, 30 people in the how to choose a mic class. But I thought, well, if there's going to be an opportunity to get on stage, it's going to be here. So I did. And they were like, Hey, does anybody want to try out the mic? And I was like, My hand shot up. I was like, I will. And then, oh, I.

[00:16:26] Karen Commins

Thought that noise was you mowing people down as you ran to the stage. Yeah.

[00:16:30] Amy Rubinate

Figuratively. Yes, it was. And so aggression has been my friend. Well, we call it assertiveness, you know, but, you know, friendly assertiveness. But but then they were like, oh, shoot, we didn't bring any scripts. And I was like, I have ten of them did So. So I got up there and then Laura Grafton, who was at the time with Brilliance, like scouted me. So I went back to my seat and she was sitting behind and she taps me on the shoulder and gives me a card and she's like, Hey, Amy, this is great. I'd like to work with you. I want to do children's books with you. And then it still took a minute to firm up. So I always tell people, they say, you know, audiobooks are a marathon, not a sprint, but so is an audiobook career. So it still took like nine months between then. I did my job with PR and then I did my first job with brilliance. And then it was it was pretty much smooth sailing after that. Oh, but one thing that I wanted to add to the preparation part was that so I listened to about 1000 audiobooks, and this was in the years when, you know, this was still even before we were on the cusp of going all digital. It was like really CD oriented industry. And so this was back in 2009. So I took maybe my I was going to be my 50 favorites, but ended up being like my 100 favorites. So I took re re borrowed those from the library or from my own collection.

[00:17:52] Amy Rubinate

And I listened to the, you know, the last track where it says who the producer and director are and where it was recorded and who the publisher was. And I made a spreadsheet and I put everybody I wanted to work with. And it was, you know, it was so clear right away. It was like, Oh, I want to work with Grover Gardner. I want to work with Dan Musselman. I want to work with, uh, Elgin, John McElroy, and, you know, and then I also had people I wanted to talk to like I would I had questions for John McElroy. I had questions for Karen Jakosky, who at that point had been Karen Dimattia before. And I'd said to them, like, when I met them, I was like, Hey, why are you abridgments better than the actual book? Like, what are you doing different? You know? Because at that time people were bridging and those were bridges. And so I got information on so, so that was my first foray into starting to understand the industry because I, you know, I still people say I have still people have have people pitch me and they're like, I work with Diane audio. I was like, I don't care who's hiring you through Diane audio Like, who are you actually working for? You're working with Diane Audiobook, who are you working for? You know, and it would be like, and people don't know and I'm like, You need to know that you're doing a book for Harper. You need to know that you're doing a book for Blackstone. That may be the, you know, the company that's producing it or recording it, but where are who who are you working for? Do you know you're producing the client? Yeah.

[00:19:16] Amy Rubinate

And that's the thing is like that information is to me shows me that people have taken the time to understand the industry that they're entering into. They understand who the players are, what they do, how they're doing it, how the pieces all fit together. And that spreadsheet really gave me a leg up in terms of that. And so I approached my first day pack and of course every pack after that as if I were going to be a producer. And because I already had opinions about why certain things worked and why certain things didn't, I was also a casting director for children's toys and games, so I did a lot of directing and casting there, so I already kind of had a foot in that world, and I'd been an executive producer on a regional kids TV show and a script writer for that. It was very small potatoes. It was out of what was now what was then, um, you know, you see East Bay, I can't remember what it's called. No. Hayward, CSU, Hayward, which is now, I think, like CSU, East Bay anyway. So I had a lot of that kind of experience as well. And then I was like an event coordinator for catering company. So I was used to like leading teams and thinking analytically and. It was used to being management as well as talent. And so I just kind of brought that perspective into all my work.

[00:20:37] Karen Commins

Well, that just shows every moment has meaning and you always take whatever you learn with you and it can be applied in other things.

[00:20:46] Amy Rubinate

And my mom was a career counselor and she would always say that, like, everything you've done has led to this. Yes.

[00:20:52] Karen Commins

And going back to you and I talk.

[00:20:53] Amy Rubinate

To people like, Oh, sorry. Go ahead.

[00:20:55] Karen Commins

Well, I was just going to say that going back to your point about the end client, I think people are reluctant to say, I've worked for Harper when it was Dion who actually or Mosaic who actually cast them for that book.

[00:21:07] Amy Rubinate

Well, yeah, but that's the thing is like, I mean, like I've cast I've cast 100 books so far this year. And I was so funny. I was having a really down week and I was feeling bad about myself and like I wasn't accomplishing anything and just feeling .

[00:21:22] Karen Commins

I cannot know why you would think that.

[00:21:23] Amy Rubinate

And I was feeling really stuck. And I moved some books, some books that I'd cast over, you know, I'd moved some lines of spreadsheet over from one the casting spreadsheet to the has been cast spreadsheet. And I was like, Oh, holy shit, I've cast 100 books this year, and I felt so good. I was like, okay, maybe, maybe I had a rough week, but like, look what I accomplished. But, but. So out of those 100 books, I, I cast those and I produced many of them. I directed some of them. But and I will take credit for my part of it when they win awards. But it's important to know that while you were working with me, you're working for the publisher. So I and I have a I try not to take too much credit or too often. And like when there's an award, it's appropriate for me to take credit or when there's something that's really special to me, I'll I'll post about it. But like, it's not my win. It's it's the publishers win and I am a vehicle to make that happen. And so it's just really clear to me, too, that, you know, I serve at the pleasure right. And and I think that's important for narrators to know as well. I always love it, by the way, when they when they do an at Mosaic and an Amy Rubinate like, thank you for casting me. It was so much fun working with you. I always, you know, get a big warm fuzzy when I see that and it makes me happy to get credit. But it's also important to know it's important for if you're going to do that for at Harperaudio or at Tantor or audio or whatever it is to also be on there.

[00:23:00] Amy Rubinate

Because ultimately that's the person who you're working for. Even if even if my company is paying you through our union contract, that's the the ultimate client is the publisher. And so I try to make those distinctions for new narrators. Like, Know, know the chain of command. Know who you're working for. You know, you're at my studio. We may be the only person that you're talking to, but it's important, you know, and you can always look that up if you don't know if it's like a vacuum. When the book comes out, look it up on Amazon and see who the publishers. You can see who the print publisher is. You won't credit that person because sometimes you're not working for the print publisher. Let's say it's, I don't know, some random publisher and say brilliance or podium or whatever is has bought the audio rights and is doing the audio book. That person would be the audio book publisher. So you wouldn't be like at Hachette because they're the print publisher. You look at who the audio publisher is and all that is available on that information is available on Amazon. If you sort by audiobook and that information is available on Audible, if you click through on the click the picture, you know the cover image and you can go through and see that. So but those things are important and it's really is it, it's things like, you know, going to APAC.

[00:24:32] Karen Commins

We lost you again.

[00:24:33] Amy Rubinate

It's relentless. It is off. It has been off, but it's still going.

[00:24:36] Karen Commins

So is your alarm again.

[00:24:39] Amy Rubinate

All right. Can you hear me now? We can. Okay.

[00:24:42] Karen Commins

So you were saying it's like going to APAC and other things. That's.

[00:24:46] Amy Rubinate

Yeah. So, you know, I have certain people who are like, oh, well, I don't go and I don't I don't think that's important. Or, you know, why do I give them my money? What are they ever doing for me? And I always say to people like, what aren't they doing? Like for you? Like, you know, I always I always use the analogy. I say, you know, my husband loves his one of his favorite things to do is to drink with World War two vets because they tell the best stories. So he's a member of the Elks Lodge because that is where they hang out. And so, you know, it's like, do you want this thing go where these people are? You know? And I always think like there's both with APA and with Pan, I hear people like, Well, I'll sign up when I see what they're going to do for me. I'm like, Participate in the process. Be a vocal and proud member of your community. You know, like it's not that much money to join, spend the money, do the thing, go to the thing, meet people, be a part of it, and don't sit around wondering why you're not working. Sorry, that sounded super cranky, but no.

[00:25:47] Karen Commins

But I think that's pretty stellar advice.

[00:25:50] Amy Rubinate

Yeah. I mean, it's to me it's a no brainer, but you'd be surprised how many people are like. I don't know. I think it's just a difference of approach or a difference of perspective. But to me.

[00:26:03] Amy Rubinate

To me, it's.

[00:26:08] Amy Rubinate

Are you still there? Somebody just called me and I had to decline. Oh, okay. Carry on. Sorry.

[00:26:15] Karen Commins

Well, this might be a good time to talk about you moving from narration to producing. So how did it come about that you bought Mosaic?

[00:26:26] Amy Rubinate

Well, I started a so. Okay. So you have to understand the time in which I came up was the last, the very fringe end of the heyday of the, of the old days of audiobooks. It sort of think of it like the studio system where there was like 100 or 200 people doing all the narrating, all the audiobooks, and they were making really good money and they it was like little repertory companies. I don't think it was quite that because they were working for many different publishers. But you know, everybody had their favorites. There were people who'd work with Blackstone constantly doing, you know, whatever, 20 books a year for Blackstone, five for PR or whatever. You know, everybody had their own their own little stable or their own little roster of people that they were their favorites and they would use them over and over again. And so I came in on the end of that, like this is before it was unionized. And I was, you know, I came in with some hubris, I think with this expectation that I was going to earn a certain amount because, like, you know, I would always hear people say, I don't leave my house for less than blah. And and I'd be like, well, well, okay. So I have a minimum of what I make per hour for for voiceover. So I'm going to ask for that. And I have a history proven history of making that. And so I'm going to ask for that for my audiobooks.

[00:27:44] Amy Rubinate

And, and I, I think, I think it helped that I started out with some really, you know, top level publishers like, I think, you know, and so I was able to command a certain amount of money by just negotiating. Well, but then and this was before the union came and then the union came in and, and and I was part of the movement to unionize. We all felt that was important. And and it was a it was kind of a weird, rough, rocky time. You know, people would say, well, you're unionized now. You guys got what you wanted. You have health insurance. So you're at minimum, you know, And so it took a long time for for that water to find its level, right? It was a huge, huge, like societal change in the industry. And so I just worked at Union Union level for, you know, a million years. And and so but that union level went a little backwards for me because, you know, we did have to give a little. And so I was narrating like 60 books a year and to make my nut, you know. And so, um, I'm forever grateful I have some health issues and, you know, those have been taken care of by union health insurance. And I hope that, you know, I make my nut every year until I'm on. Was it Medicare until I qualify for Medicare?

[00:29:10] Karen Commins

We're too young to know the answer to that. So we don't know.

[00:29:13] Amy Rubinate

Yeah, Yeah, we are. It's not that far away, though, for me. But but, you know, so I'm really grateful for that. But it was a it was a clunky transition for me as well. Right? So and I was, you know, I was on the vanguard of people getting home studios. A lot of people were getting sent out. So my first jobs were I was sent out. You know, I was flown to Brilliance in Michigan. And I was you know, I was brought to Penguin Random House in Woodland Hills, and I had directors my first 5000 jobs. Oh. And I was brought to Mosaic, the company I actually I finally bought I was sent there by by Blackstone. And and I won a bunch of my first awards there at Mosaic with Zach Harris, who owned it at the time. So I was a little bit demoralized because I was working way too hard and I was doing some really it was kind of like when 50 Shades of Gray kind of ushered in, um, a lot of like kind of hard core, more sexual stuff. And there was a lot of horror. So when I first came in, I was doing these sweet little children's books and, you know, literary fiction and some memoir. And then suddenly I'm being offered like, you know, 12 year olds ripping each other limb to limb with their teeth because they've become monsters. And I was like, Wow, this is not where I want to live.

[00:30:33] Amy Rubinate

You know, it's fine. A lot of people love that stuff. It is not for me. I have more of an Anne of Green Gables sensibility, So, um, you know, I can be caustic and I can be very, um. I don't know what's the word. Um, you know, I curse a lot, but. But under all of that, I have kind of a whimsical worldview. And so. And which is funny because, like, there's the actor part of me and the writer part of me, and then there's the part of me that has to like, lead a bunch of engineers into battle every day. And so it's almost like split personality. Like I'm a, I'm an Aquarius and a Leo. And when I. Tell people that Leo Aquarius with Leo rising When I tell people that, they're like, Oh, now you make sense to me. Which I don't know all that much about it, but think it's there's two very different kinds of people inside of me. And, you know, they come out based on what the job is. So anyway, so I was pretty disillusioned at that time and I thought, God, I really just want to go back to making art and making people happy. And I remember that feeling that I'd had when I was listening to a great audiobook that, you know, that had something uplifting to offer me.

[00:31:41] Amy Rubinate

And so I started a publishing company, a little indie publishing company. I called it Ideal Audiobooks, and I got some really amazing material and I narrated a bunch of it. I hired people. I was the first. This I'm really proud of. I was the first person to go to the union and say and request a union contract and then say, No, I'd like to give the actors more. And and they Jane told me once at a party that they've used that as the template for every indie that came after me. And I'm like, If that's if I'm going to leave a legacy, that's a pretty good one. So, you know, and but it was hard to make a go of it, You know, I found out later that like, that people would talk to me later because once I became management, management would talk to me and they'd be like, Amy, don't you know? You know, you're you're spending all this money doing your, you know, your 25 books a year or whatever, and then you really should be spending it all on that one big, you know, Hunger Games or whatever that's going to make your it's going to pay for your entire year. But I was doing this out of pocket like I didn't have deep enough pockets. So that business is still chugging on as a labor of love. But I never quite had the infrastructure.

[00:32:45] Amy Rubinate

I didn't want to give up control of it because I wanted to be able to pay people fairly and I wanted to be able to, you know, take care of people. I wanted to try and put people in a studio any chance I could. And I wanted to do all these things that were not perhaps financially feasible. So pretty quickly I realized this was not going to be how I was going to make my living. So, um, it's a labor of love. I still do. Well, I have to narrate actually a book for it tomorrow, a little behind. So it's still doing well, but it's not, it's not a, I would call it not as much of a current thing. So. So, you know, I do maybe two books a year. And so currently. So I bought Mosaic audio from Zach. He had decided that he wanted to move up to San Francisco and become a computer programmer. And I was yeah, I had become an engineer and a director at his studio and I was directing Erin Bennett that day. So I directed all of his, his authors, and then I directed Erin Bennett that day. And I said to Erin, I really want to buy this now. I know how to produce like I can do this. And she was like, Well, let's find a way. And I went to Starbucks to get some stuff. And then I came back and I was like, I figured it out.

[00:34:01] Amy Rubinate

So I pitched. I pitched Zac you know, how I thought I could make it work. And he said yes. And so I moved into his rented house with a with a back house pool house in which he put two booths. And then pretty quickly after that, I realized I, I want a record in commercial spaces like I want I want people to have good air conditioning and I want I want people to have a nice, you know, well-appointed commercial professional space. And so even though we we continued, you know, I still put my friends in there a lot and did that for a while until the pandemic. We really I really wanted a place to put, you know, we had a lot of very high end celebrities coming in. And I wanted a place to put them that, you know, that honored that their stature and, you know, whatever industry that they were in and whether it was, you know, the movies or business or whatever. And I wanted the working narrators to be able to have a good experience. And so that I just kept trying to like better the situation of everybody involved and make it nicer and make it, you know. And that was a little hard for me for a long time because I forgot to make it better for me. And then

[00:35:15] Karen Commins

I remember you said that at an APAC, that you were kind of looking to make a space that you wanted, that that you hadn't been righted.

[00:35:22] Amy Rubinate

That ship. I've righted that ship, but it took me years and and I had one guy step up and really kind of kind of partner with me on the running of it. And then another guy stepped up on doing, you know, a lot of the day to day management. And so I still work like a dog, but it's it's different. It's like I'm doing I'm doing all the casting and I've been able to hire my friend Jessica to help me. She's my casting assistant and helps me a lot with emails and stuff. And she, you know, she's always sourcing people and helping and, you know, I'd be like, okay, I need this person. Can you find them? And, you know, that kind of thing. She's been really amazing and it's been wonderful to be able to work with her. She's been my, you know, my best friend since high school. And so, so so I have some support now. It's still way too hard of work, but it's it's it's manageable. And I have a team of my team right now is amazing. Like just we have a no assholes policy and so it's just if you're a hotshot or you're, you know, not going to be kind to people or, you know, you're, you know, you're going to think your method is more cool. So you're going to use that. Even though we have reasons for users, like there's just no room for that. We don't have time and we want to work with nice people. And so the people that we've kept are just like what I call their good eggs, to use a 50s term, you know, they're like kindly people who care and care about the safety and the mental health of the narrators and like care about the jobs and getting it right.

[00:36:55] Amy Rubinate

And it just feels it feels so good to have. It's just such an amazing core team. But that was part of it too, is after the pandemic, I made it a little smaller, made it a little tighter because we had an A team and a B team before the pandemic, and I was like, This is not how I want to do business. Like I want it to be all 18, but you can't expand too broadly or you have to have layers of like layers of management and you're divorced from your business. And so right now we're in a growth spurt again, Like we just we couldn't. So it was like we weren't taking new clients really, but we were taking but our old clients would like double their output. And so in some cases triple or, you know, in some cases like five more books a year, in some cases like 200 more a year. And so what I was like, how do we, you know, coming around fall last year, I was like, how do we honor and take care of these relationships with these people without becoming too big and too spread out? And so we really just it's taken it's it's been a little bit of a I don't know, I call it Growing pains. You know, the last six months or whatever. We also had three of our studios flooded. So that that was really fun during the the storms. And so it's been it's been really brutal. It's been a tough, tough six months for me.

[00:38:16] Amy Rubinate

But we have been able to honor all of our commitments and we've been able to you know, we've been able to bring everything to a close. We've expanded. We have more studios. We fixed flooded studios. We expanded out. And but still with this like core team and a few carefully chosen new people. So it was it was real rough, but. Just growing pains are always painful. And but it was very I feel so happy with where we are now. And I love our new studios. Can't wait for everybody to come in, though. I mean, there's people in them now, but for all of you and you can always here's a shameless plug. You can always we work with everybody we work with. We even work with some of our competitors who don't live in town. And, you know, we send work to them and they send work to us. And our we work with all of the publishers at least a little bit, you know, and some of them quite a bit. And so if you want to come in, you can ask for that. And you know, if you're local, they can sometimes even if you're not local, because we do remote record. Now, that was one of the the gifts of the of the pandemic is we really created a very robust remote recording program. But we want people to come in. We want them to have that experience like it's so much more powerful to do your work and satisfying to do your work with someone at the helm and listening and, you know, watching out for you. So. Lovely.

[00:39:42] Karen Commins

It sounds like running Mosaic is already 3 or 4 full time jobs.

[00:39:47] Amy Rubinate

Yes. And then produce. I direct.

[00:39:51] Karen Commins

And you're directing this week.

[00:39:53] Amy Rubinate

That's my jobs. A month. Yeah. Yeah.

[00:39:55] Karen Commins

That's why we changed the time today.

[00:39:58] Amy Rubinate

Thank you for that. So fortunate. Was directing in New York. So we started at 7 a.m., so that was helpful. Yeah.

[00:40:04] Karen Commins

When you said that thought, Wow, you're getting up at 7 a.m.. I didn't realize that you were remote directing, so that that helps both of you.

[00:40:12] Amy Rubinate

Totally. And then and then I also cast and and then I still I'm still the CEO. There's a lot I'm doing less of the nitty gritty, like the, the scheduling and stuff. But still a lot of the, you know like, like the AC went out one of our studios like you never want that to happen in the middle of summer but it is a risk when you live in LA. So I had to handle that. And you know, there's just all kinds of things that come up. So I'm still the I'm still the buck stops with me.

[00:40:43] Karen Commins

Well, so you're doing your full full time jobs at Mosaic and then you're being a narrator. And somewhere along the way you said, Hmm, I need to go to Hamline University and get my Master's in Fine Arts. I mean, I don't even know how you fit this in.

[00:40:59] Amy Rubinate

That one had a very specific title, too. It's like a MFA in writing for children and writing for children and young adults. So it was very specific focus. Yeah. So I mean, I was honestly like I worked 18 to 20 hours a day for at least 4 or 5 years, the first easily five years of Mosaic. Then it kind of went down to like 15. And it's kind of at a normal, normal level now most of the time. But I, I was, you know, just shriveling up inside and I thought that and Paul had, you know, stepped up and been helping me. And I thought it was like the first moment I had two hours to, like, you know, to myself. I was like, I have some time. I'm going to go to grad school and study because I'd always wanted to write children's books and I'd always written children's books, but I could never find my way because I hadn't studied writing. I hadn't even studied English in college. I mean, I took a few classes here or there. I didn't know how to write properly, and I always was very hung up by not doing it right. Like it's always been very important to me. Like people would say, Well, why are you killing yourself trying to be a professional performer? Like, why don't you just do do like, you know, community theater? And I was like, from earliest childhood. I remember my mom, there was a woman in our hometown and she was amazing performer. And my mom said, Oh, yeah, she, you know, she had a professional career and she gave it up to marry a doctor. And, you know, and and because.

[00:42:35] Karen Commins

That's what women did.

[00:42:37] Amy Rubinate

Yeah, but but she still was a baller. I mean, she was an amazing woman. And she did a lot for our theater community. So I don't know that in her mind she gave anything up. But in my young brain, that message stuck and I was like, No, I'm going to be a professional. And and it both helped me and harmed me, right? So like, I always sought credibility and getting to the top and getting to that destination where I could be real and taken seriously and make money at it was really important to me to make a living at what I did. But, um, you know, I think I gave up quite a bit too much. I don't think I would change my path because I was always restless. I have ADHD. I was always like seeking the next, you know, emotional high, you know? And I was always seeking this way to express myself and and in the most complete and, you know, satisfying way possible through performance. But I think we give up so much, don't we? So for me, it was like, what can I give back to replenish my shriveled soul? So this was the thing that I wanted to give myself. And, and you know, it's funny. I think about it now, like it felt inevitable. Like. Like this always felt like the thing that I dreamed about and yearned for the performing. But the writing always felt like just who I was. And it felt like, of course, someday I'm going to do this, but I can never figure out how to get there.

[00:44:07] Amy Rubinate

And I really needed some some serious training. And so I went to this one college first and it didn't do it for me. They were really into like being fancy, but they didn't. They they didn't get down in the dirt with me and teach me stuff, you know, as much. It was very presentational. So I switched to Hamlet and the the lights came on and like, you know, the, the, the, the music swelled and I got the experience that I wanted and I learned so much. And I studied with these amazing people, in fact, some of my authors. Have come into my studio and I've been able to direct them. One of my engineers is the son of an author that I went to school with, and he's amazing. We love him. And and so there's been all these and we do the books of so many of the authors that I studied with. And so I'm able to, like, email them and be like, Hey, hey, what did you mean about, you know, a direct line there? You know, we're we're contemporaries now. That was the most amazing thing I said to one of my teachers, like after school, I said, can I, like, hire you to teach me more? And she goes, Amy, you need to understand, you have the same education that we do now, like go out and become our contemporary. And I thought and well, it was a very lovely thing to say. It was still not true. I still have miles to go. But.

[00:45:32] Karen Commins

But don't take credit from yourself. I mean, she's telling you the truth.

[00:45:37] Amy Rubinate

Yeah, it changed the story. It changed the perspective. And. And so it's been just fun to experience, you know, delivering their work and making it happen. And and one of them, um, uh, Alana Kay Arnold came in. I got to direct her in, like, a foreword, and she was so amazing. And, and she'd been one of my favorite teachers. And so. So anyway, yeah, so I learned. And I fell in love with graphic novels. I'd always loved picture books. And I thought I was going to be a picture book writer and a middle grade writer, but I fell in love with graphic novels, middle grade graphic novels specifically, but really all of them. It's such a particular and positive and powerful genre and form. It's like. That you're getting people on the cusp of growing into themselves. And something about the combination of story and visual, you know, together kind of helps them get there. Like I think about Rollergirl, which is one of the first ones that really spoke to me and how I would have loved that as a 10 or 12 year old and how it would have helped me. Um, but, but I had stuff like that as a kid too. We had these we had a lot of like childhood biography books in the library. And my sister and I inhaled them and they really taught us how to be in the world because it's like you look at like, okay, how did Eleanor Roosevelt become Eleanor Roosevelt? What key things in her childhood gave her the strength of character and the fortitude and the inspiration to be who she was as a grown up.

[00:47:11] Amy Rubinate

And so, you know, it was really easy when you look at that, to put the pieces together of like how to use courage and, you know, good sense and kindness and all of that stuff. And so it really taught me how to be a person and it taught me how to be, um, you know, an entrepreneur. And it taught me how to not give up my sense of self. And so I hope to give that back to the kids. So when I was asked to write so this wasn't a traditional writing assignment. So where you write the book, you pitch it to an agent, the agent pitches it to a publisher. The book that I did is for Capstone Press, and they are a it's like a book packager is the the category that they're in. So they come up with a series. In this case, the Girls Survive series. And so it's like girls surviving nine divided by 11. Girls survive. Well, in my case the Great Fire of London in 1666, you know, and they'd say, Hey, we'd like to hire you to write a story about the Great Fire of London.

[00:48:10] Amy Rubinate

And so they'd say, Here's your parameters. She has to be between 10 and 12 and she has to survive on her own ingenuity and resourcefulness. Go. And so I had all the autonomy and creativity of building that story myself, but with some Guideposts. You know, it was it's this many pages. And, you know, you have to have this many panels per page and that kind of thing. So but it was the same kind of style or genre or thing that I grew up with, like how these girls navigate an unfriendly world or a hazardous world and use their wits and determination and resourcefulness and kindness and initiative and inspiration to get through it. And so I feel like I'm carrying on this grand tradition and it feels so wonderful. And also, I love that my first book, I didn't have to really market it. I mean, I am anyway, but like, it's like this is someone else's responsibility. This is work for hire. They paid me well and I got to write a great story that I'm really proud of. And so it feels like a also a middle step. And, you know, going from school to to writing professionally, it's a first foray into that world. And now they've hired me to write a book about Titanic, and I'm midway through that one. Yeah, I'm really excited about them.

[00:49:28] Karen Commins

Oh, that is wonderful. And I wondered how you came up with the the title of it and I mean the whole, the whole. Oh, the.

[00:49:35] Amy Rubinate

City of Fire. Yeah. I mean, it's like. It's like name and the something situation. And I came up with all these titles I wasn't really happy with, and all of a sudden it just like burst into my head like a flame. And I was like, Oh, that's a good title. So I pitched it to them and they kept it. And I was I was like super proud of that because I'm like, That's a compelling title, you know? Yeah. And and that's what it was like. This whole city was on fire and it, you know, it like walls of Flame. And how do you navigate that? How do you get out? Well, and so.

[00:50:04] Karen Commins

It's set in September 1666. That's what was really surprising, that you were choosing this moment in history. And I was wondering, is it was it real?.

[00:50:13] Amy Rubinate

Real for me? Yeah. Oh, it's real. But it's, you know, and so I placed it with, um, you know, someone outside the city so didn't know how to navigate it. So I. And this came to me so easily. And here's the thing also about work for hire. Like, I didn't have to worry about my legacy or if I was doing, you know, if this was the work of my heart or if this was the story I was born to tell or all of that, I didn't have to worry about any of that. My goal was to tell a great yarn in an efficient manner that would draw people in and take them somewhere and give them some, you know, information and so and make them feel something. And so it took away all the stuff that makes you it gives you writer's block and makes you nervous and makes you second guess yourself. And the story just came to me in a flash and I didn't change very much about it, except in my research. I added a chimney sweep. Um, it's I think it's important to have, you know, a boy character, too, you know? And so I gave her, you know, someone to, to journey on this with her. And so, um, you know, some things came out of my research, but.

[00:51:24] Amy Rubinate

The story itself just kind of came to me, fully formed, and it did as well on the Titanic. And it's been interesting. I've spent weeks second guessing myself and thinking I needed to change it. And then I was like, No, this is a good story. It's a good outline. I like like where it's going. You need to trust yourself. And so this has been a real growing experience and learning how to trust myself as a writer. And then I need to apply that to my work like I have. You know, I have a completed graphic novel that I've I stopped pitching to agents during the pandemic, but I need to get back to it. It's about it's set in the gold rush and and I love it and I'm proud of it. And so I need to I need to get back to it. I've learned some things I have I have another rewrite to do and I have I need to get my courage together to go out there into the the big unknown of, you know, pitching to agents and then getting a publisher. But it's a it's a world I want to keep living in, you know, historical fiction and graphic novels.

[00:52:22] Karen Commins

I just updated the pinned link to show to go to your book. Kate and the City of Fire. And I love that it's, you know, it's about a courageous girl and the series is Girls Survive. I mean, I love the whole theme to it.

[00:52:38] Amy Rubinate

Yeah, it's a great series. And they they have a whole series of of prose books. This this is their first foray into this series being in graphic novel. And I think three others came out Gemma and the great flu Paulina and the disaster at Pompeii and ting and the deadly waters. So this is their and they've done graphic novels but not in this particular series. So this is I was kind of kind of fun to be on the vanguard of this new thing for them. Yeah. And to get to do more. So yeah, they liked me. It's always nice to be asked back. And it also speaks to the education I got because they were like, Look, we really like the way you structure these. We think you understand the form, and that really speaks to the quality education that I got at Hamline.

[00:53:27] Karen Commins

Well, in the annals of your Facebook feed, I found on April 11th, 2020, you wrote, "I took a class in writing graphic novels from Jim Higgins at the Society of Illustrators. Oh, yeah. And remembered I used to be an artist." And so I think you were starting to draw. Are you seeing yourself doing the illustrations for future graphic novels you write?

[00:53:52] Amy Rubinate

I really hope so. That's a great question. Yes. This wonderful, wonderful woman. Um, I will read from the back of the book. Um, Alessia Trunfio from Rome, Italy, who did animation, was hired to do the art for this book. And she did a beautiful job. I loved. She she created some little, like, wonderful moments with the animal characters and just really brought it to life. And I'm so proud to have worked on it with her. We've never met, but it's just been really fun. But, you know, I had a great education and background in art. I could easily have become an artist if I'd gone that way. But, you know, I was so desperate to I had so much I felt like maybe this was the ADHD. But also I think it's just frustrated performer. You know, I had so much passion and creativity and love and like something to say that I really just wanted to burst into the world with. And I, I did not think for me that art was the way to do that, like it was going to be performing or it was going to be nothing. And so I just let this all go to the side and I have been working on it again and I can see how like the good training that I got in high school had some really good teachers.

[00:55:15] Amy Rubinate

One was my dad actually, who taught us from drawing on the right side of the brain when I was in his sixth grade class. But yeah, and then I had a great art teacher in high school and I drew all the time. But also one of my close friends was an artist. And so I think also that was like, you know, we each had our own lane, you know, And so like, and she was clearly miles ahead of me. So it just was like. But I think it was more that I just wanted to perform more. And I had, you know, this thing is too hard. You can't be like, Oh, I'm you can be all the things, but maybe not at the same time and not in the beginning, you know? And so I remember going to a cabaret of Udo Lemper, who was just like one of the goddesses of singing. She's a German singer and does a lot of vile Kurt Vile shows, and she just is an international star and in a world that barely exists anymore, she does concerts, cabaret style concerts, but like on main stage shows, like I saw her first at the the San Francisco Symphony and during a Pops show.

[00:56:20] Amy Rubinate

And I remember I was like maybe 20. And I remember reading the program. I still have it. I wish I had it on me. It said, I'm going to totally like overblow it and this is going to be inaccurate. But it was it read something like like, I don't know. And her paintings have recently been shown at the Louvre and someone just created a movie for her to star in and her poetry chapbook. And I mean, it was just like, whatever, like anything you can imagine wanting to do as a creative person. Like she did it at a high level and she was killing it at the one thing I most wanted to do in the world, which was cabaret singing. And I remember reading the program and being like, I went to my my friend and mentor who was my speech coach, and I said to her like, Oh my God, look at this. Look, It's proof. It's proof You can do everything. Look at this. I found it. And she was like, When I read that, I just feel horrible because I'm not doing any of these things. I was like, No, no, no, no. Look, you can do it.

[00:57:18] Karen Commins

And tired. I feel tired hearing all that.

[00:57:22] Amy Rubinate

Oh, God, I just felt inspired. But what I realized is, you know, she had a few years on me and maybe she was more talented and maybe had more resources or whatever it was, how she got there. But now I'm seeing like if you go in waves and phases, you know, it's possible it's going to take me a long time to get where I'm going with art and maybe I will never do my own graphic novels. I don't know. But I at least would like to do my own picture books, which is no less difficult, but is, I think, more accessible to my particular skill set at this moment. So I think that is the thing I'm going to shoot for first and then graphic novels and you never know. It's possible and it's possible, you know? Yeah. Yeah.

[00:58:04] Karen Commins

Well, and you're already doing the things! You're already a narrator You're already a production company owner. You're already a producer. You're now, now you're an author. And we're just wondering what's next?

[00:58:18] Amy Rubinate

Probably the art. What's next for me is, I think, finding a way to do less of the detail work for my business and more of the SEO work because I'm still really immersed in the day to day. I mean, you kind of have to be when you're a small company, So I have to find a way to balance my time. Maybe there's some tasks or duties or categories of thing that I can give up, and then I have to do some real hard work on myself to let go of doing those things. And I don't right now, I can't. I know it needs to happen, but I can envision, can't envision yet how it's going to happen and how I'm going to. You know, you can't run a company totally hands off, right? You have to have a certain level of investment and involvement. And so it's like, how do I navigate that without losing anything, without without sacrificing the quality for my clients, without. But but it needs to happen. That shift needs to happen because I really would love to spend my mornings working on my art and writing my my cozy mysteries and my children's books and graphic novels and then dip into producing, you know, at lunchtime and dip into it in the evening. But right now, that's not possible. So I you know, right now my my art and my writing are coming in the cracks.

[00:59:37] Amy Rubinate

But I can feel I can feel that gap is opening and needs to be filled with that. Like it's. Do you remember? Do you remember Darby O'gill and the little people? Do you remember that Disney movie? No. It's like Darby gets stuck and, you know, he's like, he's kind of a I guess it's a I'm probably not pronouncing this right. I'd have to look it up a wastrel, you know, and a drinker. And he he goes for the leprechaun's pot of gold. And then there's this crisis moment where King Brian of the leprechauns shuts the the cavern, and you see the like the the cave walls shutting and he's going to be stuck there forever, cursed by the leprechauns. And like he's riding his horse frantically and trying to get out. I feel I feel I don't feel trapped. That's not it. But I feel this that sense of urgency of the the the cave door is now cracked open. And I cannot let it shut before I move through it into this next thing. And I have to do that while still retaining this other thing. And so that's for me. I have no idea how I'm going to do it, but I'm going to do it. So that's my big, you know, change that's happening now or that needs to happen.

[01:00:54] Karen Commins

We've almost used all our time with you, and I want to be respectful of it, but I can't let you get away without answering a Pit Stop Hot Seat question. Oh! And since we were just talking about art. Since we were just talking about art, I would like to know if you were a postcard, what would it depict?

[01:01:16] Anne Flosnik

Uh, it would depict a Douglas fir tree. Um, a Douglas fir tree is set in the gold rush.

[01:01:28] Karen Commins

Hm. Maybe an illustration for that book.

[01:01:32] Amy Rubinate

Maybe with a golden retriever next to it. Oh, that would be the tree. Oh.

[01:01:40] Karen Commins

Because I thought this was the illustration or cover art for the book that you said.

[01:01:47] Amy Rubinate

That was just a that was just a really abstract portrayal of who I am in the world and what I'm thinking, stuff I'm thinking about right now.

[01:01:59] Karen Commins

But like I say, I do want to be respectful of your time. Is there a way people can get in contact with you?

[01:02:07] Amy Rubinate

Oh, sure. I mean, if you want to go over, I can go over. I have I just have to do some stuff after. But I'm, you know, or if you need if you would like to extend it, I can extend it. If not, if you if you are a I'm not necessarily available for questions per se on the side. But if people want to pitch to me as narrators, they can reach me at Amy at Mosaic audio.com and they should also copy Jesse casting at Mosaic audio.com and I probably won't reply, but we pay attention and we log this stuff and we we're working on a big database now we're finally I'm like, this is too big now to get to get this is too big now to stay in my head. We need we need a database. So Jesse's been building that all year and we're very near the point where we're going to ask people to self, you know, self submit and all of that. But we just have a few more infrastructure pieces to put in place, but they can reach me at any time there. I don't recommend more often than like once every three months unless you really have something important to tout or need to reach me. But but that's usually a good cycle. Or if you know me really well and you want to do it more often, that's fine too.

[01:03:25] Amy Rubinate

Well, after this hour. Today, I think we all know you pretty well.

[01:03:31] Amy Rubinate

Yeah, I never hold. I don't hold back. It's a gift and a curse. It's lovely.

[01:03:38] Amy Rubinate

But thank you for having me in.

[01:03:40] Karen Commins

Oh, well, I'm just so thrilled we could. And on the week of your book release, what did you do or are you going to do to celebrate?

[01:03:47] Amy Rubinate

Oh, that is a good question. Um, well, I don't have any children, so I took I took a book over to my little neighbor, the neighbor kids, and they helped me celebrate. Everybody was like oohed and aahed and got excited. And their their moms a children's book writer as well. And so she was really she she properly understood the significance. And, you know, I sent one to my mom and my, you know, my auntie and my sister and everybody. And I think I have one in at two different bookstores. And I think I'm going to go in with a friend to each bookstore and like, take a little picture, not nothing, you know, hugely significant. Mostly what I'm going to do to celebrate is write my next book and finish it and send it in. That'll be great. That will be the right thing to do to celebrate.

[01:04:32] Karen Commins

Are you going to go in and sign those books at the bookstore?

[01:04:35] Amy Rubinate

Oh, well, I suppose if they have any, I will offer to sign them. That's a great idea!

[01:04:39] Karen Commins

I think you should!

[01:04:40] Amy Rubinate

That's a good idea.

[01:04:41] Karen Commins

I'm here. I'd just love to sign these, but, in fact, they would probably could do a little promo. Like you could come in on Saturday and people could meet you.

[01:04:51] Amy Rubinate

You never know. Yeah, I my neighbor has a she homeschools and she has a group of homeschoolers and she's like, We'll have you in. So it'll be fun. Um, but oh well, I guess I'm going to book club tonight. Does that count? Well, yeah.

[01:05:07] Karen Commins

Are you taking it for show and tell?

[01:05:10] Amy Rubinate

Oh, I probably should. That's actually a great idea. Yeah, you're right. That's a good idea. Cool. Thank you. You think of all that. You think of all the good things. Yeah.

[01:05:21] Karen Commins

Promotion is the name of the game, girl! You know that! Yeah.

[01:05:26] Amy Rubinate

It's true. Um.

[01:05:29] Karen Commins

But we have kept you long enough, and so it is time for everybody to get back on the road.

[01:05:35] Amy Rubinate

Back to work, back to their narration.

[01:05:37] Karen Commins

Well, not. Thank you for on the East Coast it's it's dinnertime. There's no more work time here. But, uh.

[01:05:44] Amy Rubinate

Love a world in which you get to break for dinner, and then you're done for the day, right? Right. For that world.

[01:05:52] Karen Commins

Well, you can make it happen.

[01:05:53] Amy Rubinate

You know, you guys were so kind to ask me in and to. To offer to celebrate. And you guys know how to, you know, you know how to live it up. So thank you. I appreciate the opportunity to share.

[01:06:04] Karen Commins

I'm just so thrilled you could come and that you could make it this week because it's just it was just perfect timing.

[01:06:09] Amy Rubinate

Yeah. And thanks for changing the time for me. I appreciate that.

[01:06:13] Karen Commins

So happy to do that. So happy we could work that out. And yeah, this recording is going to be available on clubhouse later today and in the near future, probably sometime next week. Oh cool. I'll post it with a transcript on Narrators Roadmap and I'm thrilled to report that as of today, Pit Stop is coming soon to your favorite podcast platforms. So we actually got them launched out into the world the first several of them. So that's pretty exciting.

[01:06:41] Amy Rubinate

Wow, that's really exciting. Yeah. I can't wait to hear more about it. Well, that's very cool. Well, I know you do such amazing things with Narrators Roadmap. We are all so grateful for that. Oh, thank you. You know, it's just so helpful when we have serious narrators who are new, but also when we have non serious people who are like, get rich quick. And we're like, really? Think so? Here. Let's why don't you check this out? And once you've read every single article and watched every single video and coached with a few people, then we'll talk. You know, it's just so amazing. It's kind of really separates the chaff from the wheat, you know? And I send them to you and I send them to Narrator.life. And I say, okay, if you're serious, these are the places you're going to go and this is how you're going to start. But it's so nice not to have to teach every random stranger in an email or a phone call, you know?

[01:07:37] Karen Commins

Well, I appreciate you saying that.

[01:07:38] Amy Rubinate

It's a relief, you know, And it does separate the chaff from the wheat. The people who are really were just dilettante. Looking to make a quick buck are like, oh my God. Yeah. And then the people who are like this, this is exciting. I can't wait to dive in more Then they have an avenue, you know? So it's really. Are you noticing a lot of.

[01:07:59] Anne Flosnik

Are you noticing a big influx of new narrators? Amy, Have you seen any.

[01:08:04] Amy Rubinate

Since Sag-aftra strike? Yeah, that's kind of.

[01:08:07] Anne Flosnik

Soon. I mean, a.

[01:08:08] Amy Rubinate

Couple people I mean, I've had some people want to come in and engineer, but I just, you know, hired a bunch of people. So the timing was off. But, you know, people who are usually in TV or film and then not too many. I have one one celebrity that I've been mentoring because she's very serious. Like she came in the first day and was like, I want to do this for real. And I was like, okay. And she had mad skills. Mara Wilson. She was just really good and I was so lucky. I got to direct her on her first, like five books and, you know, so I said to her, like, You're the real deal. You have been doing the work. You've been putting in the time, your celebrity, but you've also been you've been doing the work you've been putting in the time and your prowess has just grown in leaps and bounds in this particular art form. Like there's you know, now's the time for you to say, I've been here doing the work, you know, because there are going to be a lot of celebrities coming in who do deserve to be here, many of them, but haven't put in the time and who haven't, you know, who haven't had that dedication and that interest up until now. And so I'm like the people who are doing that, who are in that category. Now is the time to like say, we've been here, we're one of you, you know? And I think that's important for them because they, you know, they're for real. They did this. They did their time, you know, And it's going to take everybody else a long time to catch up. To what? To the kind of output and prowess and skill and understanding of the industry is like that all the working narrators have had all these years. So I don't think it's going to be I don't think it's going to be a big. Influx unless this carries on for a long time.

[01:09:54] Anne Flosnik

That's a very interesting perspective, a very valuable perspective.

[01:09:58] Amy Rubinate

I hope it's comforting because I know people worried like, oh God, is everybody going to take our jobs? And I'm just not I'm not seeing I mean, we've always had you know, we're a studio that caters to, you know, high end narrators to authors and celebrities. And so that's been always a very large part of our work. But and, you know, there are many that are amazing, you know, authors I wish I could just hire, you know, they're so good, but, you know, that's not their field. And so but what our job is to get them to a professional level within the first hour, you know. Wow. So inexperienced. Yeah, we're experienced at working with them, but I haven't seen the flood that maybe everybody has been fearing.

[01:10:38] Anne Flosnik

That is very comforting. Yeah.

[01:10:40] Amy Rubinate

Yeah, I hope so. I hope so.

[01:10:43] Anne Flosnik

But things are what they are. And, you know, there are always it doesn't matter what field you're in, nothing ever stays static. So you have to keep up, keep on your game.

[01:10:53] Amy Rubinate

And so true and yeah, yeah, yeah. And I think that's why I think one of the questions that Karen sent me is what do you advise for people looking for change? And I think that was one of your pre questions you sent. And I would say, you know, take your curiosity, take your existing fields or moments or the things that pull you, the things that you feel are missing. The whole reason that I made this transition is because there were things that were missing or broken in the industry. And I saw this possibility. I took a class with Michelle Cobb and I thought, Whoa, there's a path I can fix the things that are wrong. I am empowered to do something about this and create change like and so, you know, Michelle mentored me into doing that. And, you know, um, but it came out of my curiosity. It came out of my dissatisfaction. It came out of my passions and enthusiasm and the particular perspective that I brought to this world. So I'd say to people like, really dig in and explore yourself and follow those little the tickle, the little glimmer of something that's calling out to you. And, you know, think about the things that are dissatisfying to you. Do you have the ability to fix them? How could you fix them? How could you contribute? Or, you know, there's just so many ways in which you can contribute and and bless and benefit the industry that you're in, even if it's just like mentoring new people. There's, you know, there's the has that a mentorship and I believe Pana does as well. Like these are ways that you can give back, that you can solve problems, that you can close gaps that you're worried about, you know, and, and, and those things could turn into a vocation or an avocation or just simply be something that you do to add value. You know, you're there, you might as well add value, you know, beyond what you're doing for a living, you know?

[01:12:52] Karen Commins

So yeah, I saw the casting video that you did for the APA, that was really excellent. Sorry. Anne, I didn't mean to interrupt

[01:13:01] Anne Flosnik

That's okay. No, but Amy has always been so wise. And I mean, the fact that you even thought to reach out to Michele because you were one of the earliest kind of entrepreneurs, I would say, with. Narrator Entrepreneur. You were?

[01:13:19] Amy Rubinate

I was actually well, no, Scott Brick was before me, but I think I was the first to try and start a full on company. Yeah. Yeah. And I knew. I knew, too. Like, I had to get out fast and hard because, you know, Scott Brick had been established before me. But, like, I knew if somebody was going to do this one thing, they had to get out hot and they had to get out fast, you know? And so I made a big splash when I came out. And it really helped me. It helped people perceive me as a producer so that when I made that pivot because I got a lot of press, a lot of good press, good reviews for my books. And initially and so that helped me pivot when I was ready to say I'm a producer, people already perceived me as a producer because I had I had gotten that press. And so I knew that was super important for establishing what I wanted to do, which was to be a producer in the traditional model, which was going away, you know? Mm hmm. And you preserve the days of that model, you know, and, and uphold the, the, the quality and the the gifts that it provided for narrators.

[01:14:26] Anne Flosnik

Yeah, well, I'm full of admiration for you because, you know, like, say, I come back to this the wisdom of the thing because it's fine to have knowledge and can do spirit and all of that. But you have always had a vision and not only do you have a vision, but you have the skill to navigate towards that vision and make that vision a thing. And then the things.

[01:14:49] Anne Flosnik

That training.

[01:14:49] Karen Commins

Skills.

[01:14:50] Amy Rubinate

What a nice way to put it. I think that is true. I think that vision has been a real guiding light for me. Yeah. And a desire, you know, to fulfill it.

[01:15:01] Anne Flosnik

Yes.

[01:15:02] Amy Rubinate

And you been noticing that? Well, you were one of my first friends. We go way back. We do. We do. APAC. APAC of yore. Yes.

[01:15:11] Anne Flosnik

Yes. And bathrooms of yore and and goodness knows.

[01:15:14] Amy Rubinate

Yeah, yeah. All the good conversations are happening. Yeah I know, I know.

[01:15:19] Anne Flosnik

And I remember you telling me about, you know, your idea for your company when it was just a twinkle in your eye.

[01:15:24] Amy Rubinate

Oh, I don't remember that. I love that you remember that? Oh, of course I do. Because.

[01:15:28] Anne Flosnik

Well, yeah, I mean, Lord, if I had any gumption, I should have done something like that.

[01:15:33] Amy Rubinate

But. Yeah, no, it's a hard path, though. It's not. It's funny, I had someone call me and they were like, What should I do to do this? And I was like, Is there anything else you could possibly do with your life? Please go do that. You know, like it was it has been a very hard, hard, painful road. But but also, I think the vision you're right, holding that vision in front of me like a beacon has been the saving grace because I had a mission that I wanted to accomplish. And I think all of my team members are people who hold to that vision of quality and caring and like, you know, taking care of the industry and preserving the quality and preserving the methods. And, you know, it's a craft, it's an art, but it's also a craft. And I think that really helped me get through how tough it was. But don't get me don't get me wrong, it's tough. Like it's it's almost impossible. And, you know, I've had some help along the way. I've had some guides. I've had some moments of, you know, grace where, you know, people have come through for me at the last minute or I've found the path. But it's. I don't know. It was very much the hero's journey with all the pitfalls and, you know, you know, that that trajectory and that arc and how, how, how fraught it was. I felt like I was in, you know, I felt like I was Bilbo Baggins, you know? Yeah. So so I don't recommend it for the faint of heart. No, no, no. And obviously, with all the changes that are being made to like, that path is going to look really different for somebody else. You know, what was.

[01:17:15] Anne Flosnik

Your path in me? Can you give us just a kind of I know you can't tell us every twist and turn, but what was the basic of it? Was it starting first by you had a conversation with Michele or was it something else?

[01:17:28] Amy Rubinate

Um, it. It really just came out of me. I really ruminate on things and I think a lot about and I write a lot about, like, how can I solve this problem? No, it was, I think it's kind of all the things that I said, like just, just worrying over how to fix things that weren't working and how to how to get where I was going and how to how to make things happen that weren't happening. You know, like the inspiration for the for Ideal was there was all these amazing books that weren't being produced at that time. That has changed. And also I really thought I really felt like. Then there was a lot of discontent among the narrators for the type of weird books that we were doing. And I was like, Gosh, I just want to. If the narrator is having a great day with a great book and the proper support, the audience is going to have a great day listening to it. And so it was this sort of feeling of like, if we have a holistic process. Everyone's going to benefit, you know?

[01:18:31] Anne Flosnik

Yeah.

[01:18:33] Amy Rubinate

That was sort of the jumping off point.

[01:18:35] Amy Rubinate

Yes.

[01:18:35] Karen Commins

Well, and I wanted to your point about following your curiosity is part of the reason that Anna and I started doing these clubhouse shows, because there are a lot of people that we wanted to have these good conversations with. And speaking of that, so Ann, who's coming up tomorrow as the guest on Narrator Uplift?

[01:18:56] Anne Flosnik

It' Jess Herring, the Empress and creator of the Audiobook Empire.

[01:19:02] Amy Rubinate

Empress! I love that! I wish I'd thought of that. That's brilliant.

[01:19:10] Karen Commins

Well, you you can be the majesty of Mosaic Audio.

[01:19:13] Amy Rubinate

Oh! Love it!

[01:19:16] Karen Commins

So you're all choked up about it.

[01:19:18] Amy Rubinate

That sounds really fun, you guys. Can't wait to listen. All right, I'm going to have to sign off because I'm going to have a coughing fit soon. So how do I. How do I sign off?

[01:19:29] Karen Commins

Well, I'm going to close the room in just a second, and that will take you off.

[01:19:33] Amy Rubinate

Oh, perfect. Thank you. You do all the hard work I appreciate.

[01:19:36] Karen Commins

Right. Right. So we are ending Pit Stop, and I hope everyone will take another road trip with us on August 16th when we talk with audiobook narrator and singer Erin Bennett. And in the meantime, I hope you all find joy in every journey and live the life of your dreams. Thanks again to Amy Rubinate for this delightful conversation. And congratulations again on your first your first book. But we know more are coming.

[01:20:04] Amy Rubinate

Thank you for celebrating with me.

[01:20:05] Amy Rubinate

And everyone listen to Erin Bennett. She's one of my dearest, oldest friends. And you're going to love everything she has to say because I know I do. Well, that's great.

[01:20:14] Amy Rubinate

Yeah. All right.

[01:20:16] Karen Commins

And thanks again to Anne Flosnik for your questions and great support. And to all of you in the audience for spending your time with us this afternoon. I hope you have a wonderful week, and we'll look forward to seeing you soon.

END OF TRANSCRIPT



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