

Recording
and
Mixing
Live Sound
for

Sean
Beavan

Nine
Inch
Nails
and
Marilyn
Manson

by David
Norman

Photograph by Jennifer Broussard

Currently living in Los Angeles after a short stint in New Orleans, engineer/producer Sean Beavan, most well known for his studio and live work with Nine Inch Nails and Marilyn Manson, is back. This time working on Marilyn Manson's upcoming album. I had a chance to speak with Sean by phone during a break at Conway Recording Studios in California. I found him to be extremely friendly and easy to talk to.

Born and raised in Cleveland, OH, Sean was a typical child with the hybrid small family of Protestant/Catholic parents. I found it pretty amusing that with that type of upbringing Sean would be working with acts like Nine Inch Nails and Marilyn Manson. I guess after all those years of getting your knuckles whacked with a ruler by Nuns takes its toll on you.

Sean got his start playing music in talent shows and then worked himself up to commercial work. He was a multi-instrumentalist (horns, guitar, keys, etc.) but was mostly a bassist/vocalist in most bands that he gigged with around Cleveland.

Beavan attended Ohio University and graduated with a four-year Bachelor of Sciences degree in Communications specializing in Audio. He also earned a Bachelor for Psychology. Sean relayed to me that he worked extensively with mentally retarded people in the beginning of his career and ever since he's been in the music business, he's STILL working with retarded people!

Trent Reznor (vocalist, songwriter, guitarist, keyboardist for Nine Inch Nails) and Beavan met when Reznor's band, the Exotic Birds and Sean's band, The Nation Of One were doing gigs. Sean eventually began mixing several local acts and Reznor asked him if he would mix for his band and some demos they were working on. In return, Reznor would play keyboards on Sean's material and teach Beavan how to use computers along with the technology.

For his work with Marilyn Manson on the new record, Beavan and the band spent the first four months doing pre-production in a house using Pro Tools, an AKAI MPC-3000 and Sample Cell. After that, the band spent an additional month tweaking samples, working on guitar sounds and firming up the arrangements.

Once the band hit Conway Studios, Beavan has been using a SSL 9000 console. He prefers to track on old Neve consoles and then mix using the SSL. On most of his recordings and during his live shows, he uses as he says, "Tons of guitar cabinet simulators!" He uses them on everything, even vocals.

Some of his vocal compression tricks are to use a Drawmer 1176 compressor and pushing in all the buttons. He really likes the distortion and uses one on Trent Reznor's vocal live and in the studio. Beavan says he especially enjoys working with a plethora of equipment and LOVES the way gear sounds under stress. He's educated enough to know how to work his gear, but also enjoys pushing this gear to its limits.

Sampling used on the new Manson album consists of the Kurzweil K-2000, AKAI MPC-3000 and the AKAI 3200. Drums were recorded using a bunch of Neve 1057 mics. The drums were recorded to a 16-track machine and then transferred over. Before the transfer took place, all of the drums were sampled from the tape machine right into the AKAI 3200.

One of the best guitar sounds I've personally heard was the guitar sound on Marilyn Manson's single, "The Beautiful People". Asked how he got this incredible sound, Beavan shared the trick with me. The guitar went into a Roland VG-8 and was then run through regular speaker cabinets and the speaker simulator patch on the Zoom effects module. This signal was then run into an LA Audio and a Pultec EQ. In addition to this, the signal was then run into a Marshall 9001, a Drawmer 1960 comp and the SSL on-board compressor.

Also while he's recording Marilyn Manson's new release (due out later this year), he's also working with Push Records artists, The Kidney Thieves who he strongly believes in and enjoys working with.

Sean Beavan's Studio Rig

Conway Recording Studios - Equipment List For Marilyn Manson's New Album

- SSL-9000 Console • 32 Voice ProTools 1 Gig Rig
- (3) 888's • SMPTE Slave Driver • Opcode Studio 5
- Peavey Filter • MPC-3000 • AKAI S2800 • AKAI S3200 • DrumStation • BassStation • DM5 • DR5
- Yamaha CS1-X • Roland JV1080 • Nord Lead
- Kurzweil K2000 • Kurzweil K2500 • Prophecy
- Waldorf Pullset • (2) Zillm Fires • (3) Zoom 90T0s • (2) JMP 1's • Drawmer 1960 Stereo Tube Compressor • Drawmer DP2 • (2) Mackie 1604
- Mackie 3204

Asked about what he does with his off time between recording and his live work, Beavan remarked that he hasn't had any off time in almost

eight years. The last time that he actually had some time "off", he was in New Orleans putting together Trent Reznor's studio.

On the live sound of things, after cutting his teeth on the Yamaha PM-3000 and 4000 consoles, his console of choice is the Midas XL-4 (56-inputs) with automation which is an absolute necessity for Nine Inch Nails and Marilyn Manson's shows. His other favourite console is the AMEK Langley Recall. He also has TONS of outboard gear.

Beavan's main emphasis dealing with live sound is when he EQs the PA, he will start with the OmniDrive crossovers first. He has up to ten different CDs that he'll use that all have different frequencies of which he references. His main aim is to make the PA sound like a pair of studio monitors. Once he achieves this, his job is that much easier for the samples and everything else to sound like the record.

He loves the Electrotec rigs but his anxious to try the V-DOSC system that it's easily available.

Sean tries to mix the bands to sound like the album. During the actual show, he usually pumps up the guitar in the mix more. Beavan doesn't use a lot of mics during Marilyn Manson's show preferring to use tons of direct boxes and speaker simulators. He's been using the Red Box on Twiggy's (guitarist for Marilyn Manson) guitar rig. In addition to this, he has also used the Rocktron and Zoom cabinet simulators. He's especially sweet on Demeter.

Sean Beavan's Live Sound Requirements

For Nine Inch Nails And Marilyn Manson

- Midas XL-4 FOH Console with Automation
- Lexicon 300 • Eventide H-3000 • Eventide H-3500
- Yamaha SPX-1000 • Yamaha SPX-990 • Zoom 9050 • Roland SDE-330 • TC Electronics 2290
- MX8-Midi Patchbay • (5) Drawmer DS201 Gates
- (5) Behringer Composer Compressors • (5) dbx 166X Compressors • Urei 1178 Compressor
- BBE Stereo Exciter • OmniDrive Crossover

Marilyn Manson has plans to tour Europe in late June doing festivals. I'm quite sure you'll see, or

rather hear, Sean there.

Sean Beavan Production Credits Marilyn Manson

- 1998, New album in progress
- 1997, Remix & Repent
- 1996, Antichrist Superstar
- 1995 Smells Like Children EP
- 1995 Lunchbox EP
- 1994 Get Your Gunn EP
- 1994 Portrait of an American Family Movie Soundtracks
- 1997, Spawn
- 1997, Howard Stern's Private Parts
- 1996, The Lost Highway
- 1997, Rasputina - Remixed with Marilyn Manson
- 1997, Golden Palominos - Remixed with John Van Eaton

Nine Inch Nails

- 1995, "Hurt" live video
- 1995, "Happiness in Slavery" live from Woodstock
- 1995, Further Down The Spiral EP
- 1994, Closer To God EP
- 1994, March Of The Pigs EP
- 1994, "March of the Pigs" live video version
- 1994, The Downward Spiral
- 1993, Broken EP
- 1993, Fixed EP
- 1990, Sin remixes

Prick

- 1995, "You Got Me" b-side

Megadeth

- 1993, Remixed with Nine Inch Nails

Pantera

- 1995, The Great Southern Trend Kill-vocal tricks

PS

David Norman has Tour/Production Managed and/or Mixed FOH for such acts as Arrested Development, Michael Hedges, The Fugees, Diana King, They Might Be Giants, The Neville Brothers featuring Aaron Neville and many others. Having just finished stage managing JazzFest in New Orleans, you can reach him online at David994@aol.com.

