



STEVE WALL

Producer & Audio Engineer, Age 26, gardentone.com

Member since August 2008

3W: What do you do at 3rd Ward?

SW: I run Gardentone, a full-service, professional audio & recording studio for all things music & sound. I run it with heart. I record, mix, & master bands, solo acts, orchestra's, film scores, and pretty much anything else that tickles peoples' ears. Basically, I get to play with a big stereo all day... and make things sound professional, or hopefully better.

3W: How did you discover your talent for engineering?

SW: Music was always an extreme priority for me. Listening, playing, learning and harassing friends with my most recent musical perceptions. It must've been a bit of a nuisance to my folks but they were always supporting and feeding my habit, luckily. I eventually realized that I listened to music differently than most of my friends. I'm always the guy that messes with your car's EQ the second I sit in it. I instinctively reach back behind people's subwoofers and tweak the crossover. I tend to break things down part by part and gravitate towards better sounding records. It took me a long time before I realized that there are people that make this magic happen for a living, and that I should be putting my head down and trying to learn from "the greats." Once I started this journey, good things started to happen. It seemed natural.

3W: Who would be considered "The Greats"?

SW: The great's would include, but not be limited to, Nigel Godrich, John Brion, Steve Lillywhite, Brian Eno, Bob Clearmountain, George Martin, Andy Johns, Geoff Emerick, Eddie Kramer, John Siket, Bob Ludwig, the Lord Alge's, and of course, Scott The Engineer from the Howard Stern Show.

3W: What sort of projects do you typically work on?

SW: Anything involving audio. I worked hard on designing Gardentone to be flexible, yet uncompromising as far as sonic quality goes. That being said, we haven't settled into a "niche," which frankly, I dig. I love mixing it up and constantly challenging all aspects of my engineering & production skills. I also tutor privately, and design/build setups for other interested engineers.

3W: What is your funniest in-studio story?

SW: One that sticks out to me is from about two years ago when I was working in a different studio, before I built this space. Method Man was recording there at the time. I was walking toward the control room and he opened the door with a cloud of smoke behind him. He turned to me glazed, smiling, and said quietly, "Yo dog... where the burritos at?"

3W: Do you make any of your own music?

SW: Of course. It has dwindled a bit because the studio has me working a bunch, but I'm always playing and writing. It's funny; I'm sitting here with all of this fancy gear & mics, yet I record many initial ideas on this little Panasonic cassette recorder that I keep in the control room right in front of me. It's great, ONE button and I'm recording!

For my own songs however, I'll have a friend come in and take over the engineering role. This way I can focus on being in "artist" mode and not think so much about the technical side of things. This is one of my top reasons for recommending the recording studio environment to people. They can spend their time & effort making great performances happen, rather than worrying about their Logic, or Pro Tools sample rate, and scouring Google for someone to tell them what a compressor is.

3W: If your music (or musical interest) was the lovechild of two famous musicians/bands/composers, who would they be?

SW: Dave Matthews and Thom Yorke.

3W: What has been your favorite project so far?

SW: Jeff Taylor. The most amazing ball of insanity. He leaves me, and most people he meets, shaking at the knees. I'm producing and engineering his upcoming record for Rockwood Music Hall Records (Atlantic) and its a f*cking blast. He's an incredible talent that has a knack for the future. After one musical experience with him, you'll realize that you should demand more from the bands you listen to now. This record will melt faces. I'm talking "the german guy @ the end of Raiders Of The Lost Ark" style.

3W: How has life changed since you joined 3rd Ward?

SW: To grossly understate it, my life has changed in the raddest of ways. Love it here. The people, the vibe, the art, the culture, and the actual facilities themselves. Having a facility like this as my "home base" has really given me an edge. Once I finished building Gardentone here, I had a new level of confidence when I was out meeting musicians. I had a place I wanted to show them. I was able to show people that they'd be crazy NOT to do their record here.

3W: Do you have a favorite "3rd Ward moment"?

SW: One of my favorite things around here is when I walk out my door at the end of a session and the art has changed (in the lobby). I spend all day in "audio" and then come out to a "visual" surprise. It makes my brain happy.

3W: Who's your biggest fan?

SW: My wife, Jessica. With the rest of my amazing family right with her. I owe them everything.