

Arts & Entertainment



Laughs and long hours in the control room: (from left) chief audio engineer Mark Gray, Imagine Dragons lead vocalist Dan Reynolds and producer Brandon Darner.

MUSIC

Studio X

A glimpse into the hidden recording studio at the Palms with local band Imagine Dragons

By Carla Ferreira

I'm squeezed between guitar cases on a leather couch in the back of Studio X's control room, trying to make myself a fly on the wall. Although hidden in a sound booth, Dan Reynolds' throaty Modest Mouse-esque vocals still reverberate into the room. The other members of his band, Imagine Dragons, are scattered in various glass-windowed isolation rooms, allowing everybody to see, but not hear, each other. Each separate voice and instrument flows into the control room, uniting sound into music. My eyes come to rest on the mixing console,

which spans the length of the opposite wall. Hundreds of shining knobs and dials blur under my gaze as the distinctively pure sound of Reynolds and his band washes over me.

That purity is the result of the vacuum silence of the Studio at the Palms, which produces an oddly disorienting space where there's no such thing as an echo. Everything in the studio—the geometric shape of its rooms, the absence of corners and parallel lines, the multilayered ceiling, and the springy wood floor—was designed to create and maximize sound quality. For example, the wooden RPG wall panels diffuse sound. And the entire facility floats, physically isolated from the Palms building—a shell inside of a shell, a room sitting on pucks.

At this moment, that sound is the Dragon's catchy new song "Tokyo." They play it over and over again, starting, stopping, tweaking this and that. And even though I've never heard the song before, I find myself humming along.

The Studio at the Palms is the best in Nevada. But when it opened in December 2005, it was intended to

be a mere service for artists staying in the hotel, like an elaborate equivalent to the famous Palms suite with a basketball court. However, according to studio director Zoe Thrall, "It has evolved into a destination studio for artists, providing them with services they can't get anywhere else—from hotel perspective, food and fun."

Occasionally when an artist is in town or playing a show at the Pearl, they pop in and record some tracks. In case the artist packed light, the studio provides everything they could need, from vintage gear to state-of-the-art equipment. (Artists who have played the Pearl then recorded songs at the studio include Lady Gaga, Mariah Carey, Britney Spears, Jay-Z, Maroon 5, John Legend, Usher, Ciara, Mary J. Blige, Chevelle and Hinder.) The studio's also hardwired to the Pearl, allowing for shows to be recorded live with little notice. Live concert recordings can also be sold after shows with a new USB technology called Adara. Reclusive musicians who don't want to use Studio X (or its sister, Studio Y) can record from any room in the Palms, thanks to the studio's technology. Although many techno toys stand ready for visiting artists, the majority of the work done

Continued on Page 78