

## Interview with EveAnna Dauray Manley

First of all many thanks for your time and the answers, our website is very proud to have an interview with a person that has so much to say in the modern history of tubes.

I will ask you a few questions, and you can answer whatever you want, it is not necessary to answer all, feel free to answer what you really want, feel comfortable and enjoy with it.

1. The first question, is how did you land on in the tube pro audio world. You told in some interviews about your father was the owner of Ampeg, then went to California, meet David Manley, and join to his equipment, even marrying with David. But what could you tell us about your first years in such world, that you didn't told in any other interview?? You were surrounded since your birth with tubes and music, what do you remember of your earlier days?

Thank you! I remember loving music at an early age, I think partly due to the nostalgic nature of how music affected me. We moved 6 times before I was in first grade. Each time the move seemed very abrupt to me. My parents would just announce that we were moving to a new town or new state and we would get in the car and go. Any friends I had made would just be abandoned. There was a huge associative power of music for me where I would remember exactly where I was the first time I heard a song, or who I was with. Music really pulled at my emotions from an early age. My parents had a Garrard turntable, probably an SL65, a Fisher 500C tube receiver, and some AR-2ax speakers. I don't remember a time in my life when I wasn't listening to this system, either to my parents' Herb Alpert records or to early 1970's pop music on the radio. Led Zepplin, Chicago, and The Beatles were my favorites when I was 3 and 4 years old.

2. I think that maybe you are one of the persons that know better how David began in that business, so as far as you know... could you tell us the history of David? When did he began manufacturing tube equipments, why he decided to use tubes instead of transistors?? Used his own designs or just redesign old circuits of classical equipments?

David Manley was born in South Africa and owned successful sound and film production studios called Manley van Niekerk (MvN) in Johannesburg in the 1960's. By the late 1970's he was modifying, rebuilding, and reselling LEAK vacuum tube amplifiers and ran a hifi salon out of his house. With Apartheid still in place, and conditions not very favorable in South Africa at the time, David orchestrated a way to get his assets out of the country: he started building two sailboats pumping money into them and then sailed them both out of the country! He made it to Cyprus with one of the boats and sold it. This is the money he used to finance the first Vacuum Tube Logic company in England, and with a name like that, it was no surprise that he was a vacuum tube technology devotee. It is all he knew!

3. After David left Manley, I think that it was hard days, how do you remember that days and how do you achieve to push Manley into the main worldwide recording studios as a reference?

When I met David he was not drinking. I was much too young to understand the fragility of that condition and slowly in the early 1990's he began drinking again until he was completely consumed and out of control with alcoholism and un-diagnosed Bipolar Disorder, as it later became known. He was a whirlwind of explosive emotions when he departed Manley Labs in 1996. I was still quite young and didn't fully understand what was going on. I just knew I was

bearing the full brunt of his raging anger with every contact with him. I finally realized that I did not have to take this anymore and learned that I could HANG UP THE TELEPHONE and not be subjected to this abuse! From then I channeled my own anger into energy to “kick ass” and succeed, because what is the BEST revenge? SUCCESS! I doubled the sales of the company the first year without David Manley.

4. I speak sometimes with Paul Fargo about Manley products and he helps me a lot with one of my equipments, the mini massive. Paul is not the usual lazy customer support, he knows about electronics and you can have a direct tech conversation with him. What could you tell me about Paul? Is it really necessary to have a technical support with great knowledge in electronics?

Paul was initially hired as a tech in the Quality Control department. He had worked for many years for Hughes Aircraft in the semiconductor division and had been a guitar amplifier tech in his spare time. So he knew plenty about vacuum tube circuitry! He soon took over tech support and customer service interface from me. A few years later Paul announced that he wanted to move out of California to Arizona. I was horrified! What would we do without Paul!? But then I realised that with the phone system, emails, and centralized databases, that we could allow him to move and it wouldn't matter if he was working in the state next door or the room next door. Customers would not care if they were shipping gear to California or Arizona as long as the gear got fixed and quickly. Paul has been the very best customer service tech I could ever imagine. He is now getting older and is on the cusp of retiring but fortunately we have all studied his work and methods and so we are training up the next generation of customer support from within the Quality Control Department to continue our tradition of having the best customer service in the industry!

5. You have one of the biggest catalog of tube products for recording studios. Mics, channel strips, preamps, compressor, equalizers, matrix, amps, monitors.... It is the heaven for any tube freak. I'm really impress because some products are really hard to imagine and it seems sometimes to be solutions for personal requests of some studios. How do you do it?? How do you develop so many products? How can you imagine such quantities of solutions to recording industry?

From David Manley's early energy and prolific design we offered a wide front of products from day one. But they weren't always as optimised as they could have been. The refining of these products over the decades is definitely something to appreciate. Remember that now in 1988, this represents 30 Years of the MANLEY brand in production. So many of our famous products have been in production for decades now! What we have been tackling lately is making more affordable versions of our historic evergreen products. This is achieved mainly by modernizing the way the product is built, designing the product to build faster, while still keeping production in America.

6. What are the handicaps designing tube circuits? What is the most difficult to design/achieve with tube products? What are the headaches you usually have with such kind of designs?

Probably the most restricting thing about vacuum tube designs is the current production vacuum tube supply itself. We cannot design a product around a rare tube that you can buy 12 of on eBay. We need to base a design around a tube we can get 1,000's of. With current production tubes only being made in China, Russia, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic, we have limited easily obtainable tube types to design around. The other weakness historically with tube circuits

has been simple power supply design. A few years ago I contracted one of the most brilliant minds on the planet, Bruno Putzeys, then with Hypex, now of Kii Speakers, to custom-design for us a really advanced switched mode power supply specifically for our vacuum tube audio circuits. Gone is all hum! This new supply has all regulated rails that come out at much lower impedance than the older linear designs, it runs at 125 kiloHertz so there is NO 50 or 60Hz hum in the chassis anymore. It is also a very low radiating implementation and rarely requires any additional metal screening. It is really quiet! It also has a Universal voltage primary so it can work anywhere in the world without reconfiguration. But the most important thing is that Bruno designed this power supply for us for superior sound quality and this new technology beats the old supplies in listening tests every time. I am pretty sure that we have the most advanced vacuum tube power supply design amongst my peers in the audio world.

7. From the beginning Manley had two brands: Manley dedicated to tube equipments and Langevin dedicated to transistor equipments. How was the idea to get the rights of the old Langevin brand?? Could you tell us the history of Langevin??

Langevin is a historic brand that dates back into the 1940's. We acquired the brand in the early 1990's from Mark IV Group who was not using it at the time. We made some lovely discrete transistor products under the Langevin marque, the most popular being the Langevin Dual Vocal Combo, or "DVC". Several years ago we decided to end production of Langevin and just focus our marketing efforts on the stronger brand, MANLEY. Keep your eye out though, because we might bring it back soon!

8. Which are you most proudest products? Which is your favorites??

Yes, probably the VOXBOX is the product I am most proud of which I conceived right as David Manley was departing the company. At first I was hoping he would admire it and be proud of me for such a cool idea. But nooooo... the distinctive shapes upset him and actually he was probably just jealous of it, that he didn't think of doing such a cool thing. His ego was quite fragile and he didn't ever really encourage or foster any of us around him to succeed. That I didn't get his approval spurred me on all the more to prove to him that it was a great concept of a high end channel strip and would become an amazing product. It won the 1998 TEC Award, which was the company's first TEC Award. In 2016, its enduring brilliance was recognised as it was inducted into the TEC Award Hall of Fame. Next year, we will update its power supply to our new superior SMPS to carry the product forth for the next 20 years!

9. Your equipments are really expensive if you compare them with other brands, I think that one of the reasons is that you manufacture and assembly all in USA, even winding the transformers. Is it real necessary to manufacture all in USA? What are the advantages and disadvantages of that? Have you ever thought to manufacture parts in other countries to get better prices?

We have traditionally been classified as what you call a "Vertically Integrated Company" which means we do so many processes, and build so many components for our products in-house. Sometimes this gets to be unweildy or unnecessarily expensive for us. For instance, in 1993 we moved the neighboring CNC (Computer Numeric Controlled) machine shop with us to our new Manley Labs building. After a few years we realized that we no longer needed to carry the overhead of programming and running the CNC machine and sold it for like \$100,000 to another machine shop down the street. They still run tons of our faceplates on our old machine! In another case, we had absorbed a printed circuit board fabrication facility and the quality of making the boards by hand was not as good as the more modern methods. We found a very

good quality PCB supplier in China that, yes, was 3x less expensive, AND 3x higher quality. So yes, that is the ultimate goal. If we can outsource a process or a piece AND it is higher quality and at lower cost, I'm not afraid to let it go. Because that is an improvement and we can reinvest those savings into other areas of the company or in our people.

10. It is known that you customized your products for your clients. It is not usual in these days, what could you tell us about that service you offer?

We used to build custom mastering consoles back in the 1990's, but hell, each one took the engineering team offline for months and the amount of work put into the custom design was of course the same as if we were designing a whole new offering for production. I have to be mindful that we do have limited resources with our engineering team and I best keep them on-task of designing new products. So, simple requests are ok. But I can't derail my engineering team for days or weeks to fulfill a more advanced custom request or that ends up more costly than anyone can afford, starting with us!

11. Is there any equipment that you have used and fall in love with it that wasn't designed by your brand? Have you ever thought "damn, it must be designed by Manley"? Could you recommend me any special equipment that sounds really great and it is not part of your brand?

Sure, I mean I admire excellence in technology design, and I wish I had the resources to design so much more than we do. I love all the connectivity and convenience of iPhones. I wish we had the resources to design apps for iOS to control monitor controllers/preamplifiers. I wish we had better digital expertise in-house to make excellent converters again. I love the SONOS products for their ease of use and convenience. I will say that I am super-proud to have partnered with Universal Audio and their Manley plug-in emulations are extremely faithful representations of our analog gear.

12. In my country there is still some disadvantages with the woman and man equality. We are in a long way to have a total equality, but we are in the right way. I want to know the situation in USA, is it difficult to have a corporate being a woman?? Have you ever suffered prejudices working in a men sector???

I usually got more discrimination for being young (when I was young). I'm hitting my 30th year doing this audio stuff at the end of January 2019 so all-in-all I think most folks have accepted by now that I know my stuff and I'm good to work with. I usually answer this question with when I'm working, I'm not thinking about what sex organs I have. I have work to do and I focus on doing my job.

13. You are developing new products, they seems to be an evolution of the old Manley designs, what could you tell us about that new equipments???. In a world where the software is getting more and more in the recording studios, what do you think that the future will be for analog equipment?? Are you thinking in reissue some of your old stuff??

Yes as I discussed, we are actively updating our power supplies for the classic gear and striving to be more efficient with our production techniques so that we can continue to bring high-end products to more people at affordable costs. The UA plug-ins serve as the "demonstration" or even "entry-level" gateway to Manley gear. Many times, people are exposed to the Manley brand by the UA plug-ins. And I'm fine with that of course since they are our partners and have officially licensed the products. Our newest offerings such as the Manley CORE, FORCE, Nu

Mu, and ELOP+ Stereo Limiter/Compressor have demonstrated that we can streamline production techniques and sometimes simplify the product a little bit (compare the VOXBOX to the CORE) and bring the price down significantly, while still sounding world-class. And then the top strata are the legendary classics that were designed cost-not-really-the-object. My goal is to continue to fill in new gaps in the middle tier as this will reach a lot of people. We also are revitalizing our high fidelity products with brand new designs. All of this takes great time, money, and effort! I wish we had a team of 50 engineers to get it all done immediately! Why does everything seem to take forever! I have so many ideas...

Thank you very much EveAnna

Thank you for the opportunity!  
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