

Jack Kreisberg on Showplace Studios

By Jazz Improv

JJ: Jack, can you talk a little bit about your relationship with Showplace Studios in Dover, New Jersey as well as your involvement with it and your vision for the future?

JK: I am the Marketing Director and Producer for their production company, Showplace Record Productions. About ten years ago a mutual friend or mine and Ben Elliot's, told me about the studio and introduced us. At that time I was involved with Bluesleaf Records and we were looking to record artists for the label. Our first was a CD by Steve Guyger, followed by J. Collins, Stringbean and the Stalkers, and Paul Oscher, to name a few. These were the first of many projects that took place in the eight years before I became their marketing director. During that eight-year period, I was the General Manager and Producer of Half Note Records where, in 2001, I received a Grammy for Producer, *Paquito D' Rivera, Live at the Blue Note*. While with Half Note, when the opportunity arose, I used Showplace studios to record artists such as Miri Ben Ari and Mac Gollehon. I also used this studio for mixing and editing on the early recordings for Half Note for several artists such as Yoron Israel, Von & Chico Freeman and Bill Watrous. I realized that this studio was top notch and began recommending it to musicians, managers, producers and some record labels. Realizing that I had brought in some great jazz and blues musicians and labels, Showplace approached me with an offer to work for them, and I accepted. In the past two years that I've been with Showplace, a lot of exciting things have happened. We started the production company, and released three CD's through the label 18 & Vine: Wilson Purdie and Green (Godfathers of Groove), Onaje Allan Gumbs and Sonny Fortune. We have several great projects in the works. In addition to these recordings, I brought into the studio other recording projects with artists such as Ed Palermo Big Band, Bill Warfield Big Band, Bob DeVos, Gene Ludwig, Akiko Tsuruga, Sandy Sasso, Lou Watson, Bill Easley, and the list goes on. About my plans for the future...I guess at this point there's so much to do — but on the top of the list is to bring in more musicians and labels to the studio, and expand Showplace Record Productions.

JJ: How big is the main room in the studio?

JK: The studio is about 25' x 30'. It has a singer's booth, four isolation booths, 56 track capacity, ProTools, two 24-track machines, a large selection of image microphones, a C-7 Yamaha piano, a Hammond B-3, and much more. I think the fact that we still use analog equipment, and the warm sound it creates, is what attracts musicians to our studio. As you know, many recording studios have disappeared a New York City because of the increasingly high rents. Showplace Studios is close enough to New York, and has the best recording facilities, equipment and prices around.

JJ: So you run 2 tracks and a 24 track with a 2 track back up, or something?

JK: No, most times we record on ProTools, however in certain situations, at the clients request, we will record on a 2 inch tape or we record straight to 2 track. We have the capacity to transfer any tape format to digital.

JJ: When you were working with Sonny Fortune on his recording, what kind of input did you work on with him, you know, like the mix, did he have suggestions for you to use?

JK: When we agreed to record his record, Sonny had a concept that we had discussed, and we both agreed that the recording had to be radio-friendly, which means that the tracks can't be too long, the material had to be melodic, and have new arrangements on some standards. We mixed the record together and for most part were on the same page; Sonny has a certain way he wants his saxophone to sound and we accommodated his wishes. Overall, it was a successful team effort and we had fun doing it!

JJ: The studio does jazz as well as rock acts?

JK: When the studio was first opened in 1991, it was specifically geared towards rock and R&B. Through the years, there were many recordings with artists such as Robert Gordon, Savoy Brown, Sheryl Crow, Hubert Sumlin (with Eric Clapton & Keith Richards), Nirvana, Leslie West and Mountain, to name a few. Because of its size and equipment, it lends itself perfectly for jazz, blues and rock.

JJ: So during a recording, you're in the booth kind of producing, right, and why don't you talk about what sparked your interest in this music and how you started getting involved in doing recordings. When we first met, you were with the Blue Note and Half Note records.

JK: I grew up in Israel and was playing in a rock band from the age of fourteen until I was 24. I served in the Israeli army from age 18-20, and then got my first job in the music business with a record company called Hata Klit, which is still in business today. In 1970, I left Israel and moved to England working as a reporter for an Israeli music magazine. I realized that I had a good feel for the music industry, and in 1972, came to the US to start a career in music. My first job was in retail for the chain Harmony Hut. In 1975, I got my break into the industry, with Buddha Records, where I became Director of FM promotion.

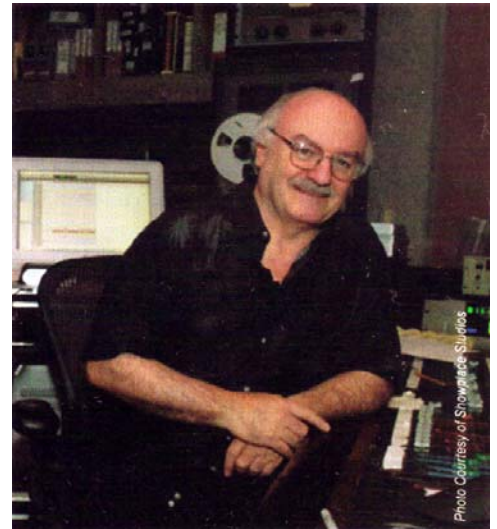


Photo Courtesy of Showplace Studios

In '77, Buddha records were distributed by Arista, and some of their staff was given positions at Arista. I worked there as a special projects manager, overseeing twelve marketing managers for in-store promos, etc. Later on I joined C.T.I. records as their Northeast Sales Manager.

JJ: At that time was Arista doing more jazz?

JK: Yeah. Steve Becker was there, and he started a novice label. There were records by Mike Manieri and Warren Burnhart, the Brecker Brothers, and others. They also had bought the Savoy catalog and Bob Porter was involved with re-issuing the classic Savoy catalog. Around that time, GRP Records started as a production company through Arista Records with artists such as Dave Valentine, Angie Bowfield, and Tom Brown.

JJ: That was a good album with Mike Manieri & Warren Burbnhart. They did a duo and it was great.

JK: I remember working that record. I was working more in distribution at that time, and not doing any production or creative work. That all came later.

JJ: Did you know Danny Bensusan in Israel?

JK: I met Danny and his son Steve in New York in 1997 through a mutual friend. Danny had mentioned that they wanted to start a label and this friend suggested we meet. And a few months later, I was hired as the General Manager for Half Note Records and we started to record Live at the Blue Note. We had no content, and Steve's idea was to record and document some of their up and coming artists, and under-recorded artists. So, Monday nights became the night to record. Between the years 1998-1999,

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For more information on Showplace Studios, visit <http://showplacestudios.com>. To contact Ben Elliot or Jack Kreisberg, call (973)328-4400.