

Bob Fowler's S.S.R. Recording Adds Analog Flare via Toft ATB Console

Saxophonist, Howard Isaacson, walked to work to complete his new CD (Blue Skies, Make Your Mark Music, 2008) at his neighbor's project studio, Bob Fowler's S.S.R. Recording in Galloway, NJ.

Isaacson—and bassist, Andy Lalasis, who plays on the album—are Fowler's neighbors. They took full advantage of what has to be the best studio on the block when Isaacson came to Fowler for additional tracking and sweetening on his album.

"Howard lives four houses away," says Fowler, "and Andy [former bassist with Pat Martino] lives next door."

Fowler put together S.S.R. Recording—which consists of a 15×14-foot control room, a 15×14-foot tracking room and a 12×12-foot drum room—when he built his house 12 years ago. Until recently, he had used a succession of digital consoles. When Toft Audio Designs released its analog ATB console, Fowler was first in line—at least on the East Coast, he says. "There was nothing wrong with the other consoles, but I missed the big warm analog sound."

Apparently, others did too. Fowler has found a niche for sweetening and EQ'ing projects using his Toft ATB24. "The sound of the console's EQ is something that I'm not able to get in the DAW system," Fowler says.

"Bob will confirm this," says Isaacson. "I won't hesitate to remix quite a few times to get the sound I want. We had already put in lot of time on



Howard Isaacson and Bob Fowler in S.S.R Recording Studio

mixing the first four tracks for the album when Bob called to tell me that he was getting a new piece of equipment. Since we had done everything in the box, my first thought was: 'He's getting another plug-in.'"

Fowler had not purchased another plug-in, as Isaacson soon found out. "Our first test was to take one of our final mixes and run it through the Toft," says Isaacson. "I was shocked. The entire sound field opened up. More importantly, the quality of the mix had more depth and body."

After listening to all of the final mixes run through the console, Isaacson said: "That's how I want my sax to sound." Both Isaacson and Fowler decided they had to remix everything using the Toft. Fowler took the existing final mixes that

he'd recorded in the box (which included tracks Isaacson recorded of his saxophone in his home studio), and output them (via a Lynx Aurora 16 AD/DA converter) into the Toft ATB24. "We eventually put all the tracks through the console, in addition to doing some additional tracking through the board as well."

"Bob began to use his outboard gear with the Toft," says Isaacson, "which brought the entire CD into a world of its own."

"After working with this console for awhile," says Fowler, "I'm still amazed that something of this quality is available at the price point."

A self-described "studio rat," Fowler is a veteran gigging bassist in the Atlantic City, N.J., area, and a recording artist with the world beat/contemporary jazz duo Fowler & Branca. He currently serves as the

musical director for Las Vegas-based entertainer Jimmy Hopper and is a front-of-house engineer at the Atlantic City Hilton.

Howard Isaacson's Blue Skies is available on the world wide web at www.HowardiSax.com, as well through CD Baby and iTunes.



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