

## Phil Stout & Schulke Radio Productions

*From Beautiful Instrumentals Discussion Group...*

I've been a member of the [discussion] group for literally hours...and have enjoyed perusing all of the messages, and obviously those that mention Phil Stout and SRP [Schulke Radio Productions]. However I must say that I have been somewhat taken aback by misinformation as it relates to me, SRP, BBC custom recording and certain timelines. It's only natural, with the passing of time for memories to get a bit foggy, but since I was the VP/Creative Director for SRP from it's beginning, please allow me to clarify a few things. It's true that I worked for Marlin Taylor at WDVR, Philadelphia in the mid 60s.

When he left WDVR to program WJIB in Boston, I took over his position as PD [Program Director] and Music Director, and made significant changes to the music content. It is true, to the best of my knowledge, that WDVR was the first FM station to bill a million dollars. However, this first occurred after Marlin's departure. I worked for WDVR until 1967 at which time Jim Schulke, intrigued by WDVR's success, called and asked if I could meet with him regarding the possibility of starting a syndication company to provide what was then known as Beautiful Music to client stations of his rep company Quality Media Inc. Stereo Radio Productions was formed, later to be called Schulke Radio Productions. All of the music provided by SRP was selected and programmed by me. Contrary to any rumor or supposition, Jim Schulke never personally selected a track.

In 1973, both Jim and myself decided that with the dwindling supply of usable music from the major record labels, and with SRP's growing client list, it would be a good idea to investigate doing our own custom recording. The first meetings we had concerning this idea were with Marty Gold and LeRoy Holmes. LeRoy was commissioned for the first sessions, with arrangements by Glen Osser. He elected to do them in London. This decision was made both for cost purposes and the excellent quality of the string players working in London. We did approximately 20 tracks...most of them standards that were not available in beautiful music versions at the time.

As to the subsequent relationship with the BBC...it came about based on my visit to London for the '73 sessions. While there, I noticed that when I turned on the TV set, the BBC ran a test pattern for the early part of the day. Behind it they played some excellent full orchestral music. I called the BBC and discovered that they kept orchestras on staff. When it came to testcard music (as it was known in England), the orchestras recorded titles once, they were used 3 or 4 times and then erased. This was done to keep the orchestras working. Both Jim and I decided that maybe the BBC would like to generate additional income from these tracks by selling them to us for use in the U.S. only before they were erased. We were correct. They told us that the arrangement had to be made with the BBC Transcription Dept. After a few weeks of negotiation, with both Jim and I flying to London, the deal was made. Originally it was for the titles they were recording for testcard use. As the arrangement grew we eventually provided them with the leadsheets of the titles we wanted to have them record. This BBC/SRP relationship lasted for a number of years. Resulting in hundreds of custom tracks, both instrumental and later...group vocals. Orchestras included the BBC Midland Orch., conducted by Norrie Paramor, and Johnny Douglas, Bernard Ebbinghouse, Angela Morley and Neil Richardson among others. The group vocals utilized the Mike Sammes Singers as well as vocalists directed by Neil Richardson. During this period, SRP also commissioned tracks in the U.S. by legendary guitarist Tony Mottola. In 1980, as the BBC

arrangement came to a conclusion (the BBC had decided to eliminate staff orchestras), I went to England and met with a number of conductor/arrangers. Jim Schulke and I decided to commission custom recording tracks from Johnny Douglas, Ron Goodwin, Ronnie Aldrich, David Snell and Syd Dale. Incidentally, the Goodwin and Aldrich tracks were part of the EZ collection recently available through MusicMaker.

I've often been asked what 'system' I used to program quarter hour music segments for SRP. The answer is...I really didn't have a 'system.' I looked for a selection that was a good candidate for opener, and then went from there. The idea was to build a matched flow sound that kept the audience involved and entertained. It would sometimes take a day or a day and half to build 1 hour of music! We wanted to make it the best hour possible. Overkill? Perhaps. But I wouldn't have had it any other way.

I left SRP in 1983 and created a format for the Leisure Market Radio Group called "The Elegant Sound." After a couple of short stints with Studioline in Va. and Churchill Productions in Phoenix, I was one of the first programmers hired by Digital Cable Radio (now Music Choice). I programmed 6 full time channels for them, including Easy Listening. I was unceremoniously let go by MC in the middle of 1994 when a new Director of Content took over, and decided that dollars could be saved by having interns take over a number of channels. Later when that didn't work, they hired Tom Dyback, who owned an EZ CD and record mail order company, to program the EZ channel. When they found out that he was 'working both sides of the street,' so to speak, by also programming for their competitor DMX...they called me and, with a new Director of Content in place, we have resumed our relationship. After purging the Easy channel of a lot of music that just didn't belong there, we are back on track with a very retro, traditional instrumental channel. I also program 4 other full time channels. Singers & Standards, Big Band, Showtunes and Contemporary Instrumentals.

I have also programmed and consulted JazzRadio, Berlin, Germany since 1998. In June of this year JazzRadio won the NY Festival International Programming Gold Medal for Best Jazz station, the Silver Medal for Best Internet Jazz station and the Bronze Medal for best specialist program, Sunday Swing. I'm very proud of what we've done in Germany. Our sound is a mainstream, melodic jazz format. Melody being the key. Our selections are familiar and feature music 24/7 by such artists as Stan Getz, Dave Brubeck, The Four Freshmen, Erroll Garner, Count Basie, etc. We have loads of listeners worldwide at [www.jazzradio.net](http://www.jazzradio.net). It's cool!

Forgive the long winded verbalization. I wanted to use this opportunity to bring many of you up to date on what I've been doing as well as correct a few pieces of info regarding SRP that I've picked up so far while visiting the group site.

With all due respect to Marlin Taylor, and a hello how are you to both him, Walter Powers and other friends out there. I'm pleased to become part of your group. I'd be happy to answer any questions concerning SRP, musical or otherwise.

Phil Stout