

TAM Studio, 1978

From Studio Sound March 1979, Studio Diary – see Chap 17 and stock photo

As London's most recent disc cutting room, we have already been associated with a notable first - the recording at Watford Town Hall of the London Philharmonic Orchestra by Crystal Clear as the first direct-cut to take place on location in the UK. Being one of the few completely independent cutting rooms in the UK, we were able to handle the normally difficult problem of shifting a complete cutting lathe, and within three hours of leaving our own premises had the lathe in place in the Green Room, high up behind the concert platform, and mechanically set up.

As owners of a cutting business we have, in less than one year, become very adept at moving lathes! Originally, in 1977, we had arranged to buy a complete system in the UK, but for various reasons this deal fell through and we were left in January this year with a newly - built facility, brochures' and advertising but no equipment. To try and find at least a basic lathe, we perused the advertising columns in several magazines and the third person that we telephoned was John Southard of Trad Electronic Sales in Watford. His immediate reaction was: "Well I don't have one, but give me a while and I can probably find someone who has one to sell".

Within two hours he called back to ask if we would like to go over to Paris to look at a complete suite! Two days later we were on the night ferry to Paris heading for the Pathé-Marconi (EMI) Studios where we were shown not one, but two, complete systems available for sale. The one that we preferred had been in use up to last September, cutting their classical LPs.

So we not only had a lathe but a system complete with monitors, eq, limiters, spares, all the latest auto facilities -and all within a few days of ringing John. On the ferry back to London we thought all our problems were solved but, no, they were just beginning. The main problem was that everybody that we spoke to was quite happy to carry out whatever job we wanted done (packing, transport, freight agents, insurance, customs) until they discovered what it really was that they had to deal with then, one by one, they decided they did not want to know. You would think that with so much electronic equipment being transported around Europe, getting from Paris to London would be a cinch. Just try it sometime for yourselves when you only have a one-off to arrange and it's outside the usual run of equipment.

So, after three abortive attempts (arrangements made and prices quoted until the agents actually saw the cutting suite) we left Lydd airport (where the latest agent's transport had failed to arrive) in our hired van, drove to Dover, and just caught the ferry in time to arrive in France as it got dark. Our only preparation being a few sandwiches, an RAC tourist map, an address in Paris and advice on how to drive on the right. If you want an interesting experience, try wandering the streets of Paris at 5 am, accosting passing strangers (in English, of course) and attempting to get directions. Eventually we were parked in Pathé's car park waiting for the doors to open at 8 am. By dint of laboured conversation consisting mainly of technical French and English, we had the system stripped down and loaded by noon, the lathe itself being lifted straight into the van by what seemed to be the entire French engineering staff - they couldn't have been more helpful and Anglo-French relations must have been jacked up quite a few notches that day. Until, that is, we arrived at Charles De Gaulle airport to get 'just a minor EEC form' to allow us to clear French customs back at Calais. Three hours of infuriating delay and £40 later we eventually got back on the motorway.

Steaming up the motorway in a long line of artics. obviously making for the same ferry as we were hoping to catch, is quite an experience in a hired van governed down to a maximum of 50 mph, particularly when you're loaded with some very valuable equipment which all the regular transport agents have refused to touch - every bump and overtaking juggernaut is a potential threat. And so to Calais - cooperative Customs and port authorities - we had the magical bits of paper which rapidly disappeared into various file cabinets, and on to another late night ferry. As we ate and drank to make up for lost meals over two days, we were looking forward to Dover at 11 pm and home by 2 am for a quick sleep before unloading. But no, we had passports, but the equipment had none. Not only that, but the Customs lists lacked 'disc-cutting suite' as a classification, and with no classification the form could not be completed; and with no form it could not be stamped; and with no form the van could not leave the compound; despite the fact that it was an EEC transaction, so no duty involved and no immigrants under the floorboards.

That stupid official muddle held us up for over five hours and cost John another £25 to a freight agent who did nothing except spend a few minutes filling up a form that, if incorrectly done, could have left us sitting there for five days or more. Eventually, we did arrive home and unload with no damage whatever.

Within one month of that phone call to Trad, we were completely set up, overhauled, tested and cutting. Not quite yet the end of the story, however. John Southard found another buyer for the second lathe and cutter, and, faced with the same transport problems, asked us to undertake the shifting of the second lathe from Paris to London (Island Records). Experience does not count for much when dealing with officials, but we managed to get into the country in two hours instead of five. John still got taken by the agents though, for the same exorbitant sum.

You can imagine our reaction when Bert Whyte, the recording engineer for Crystal Clear, telephoned a few months later and asked if we would like to rent our lathe out on location to Watford Town Hall in October. We said 'no' but once the idea of participating in the excitement of the first direct-cut on location in this country caught on, we changed our minds, tracked him down in his hotel and finalised arrangements. That included getting supplies and labour locally so they did not have to bring too much with them.

In the event, the recording was every bit as interesting as we had hoped. Ed Wodenjak arranged for Ortofon cutting heads and amplifiers to suit his technique, together with an adaptor to fit our lathe and also arranged for a new Scully lathe to come from Denmark to achieve as many chances of good lacquers as possible. The longest side cut was over 19 minutes, which is a record for a direct-cut of this type and the only disappointment was that Pylal were unable to get lacquers to us in time, so the lacquers used had to be American instead of European.

In only eight months, we have achieved far more than we ever dreamt of in October last year when we originally conceived the idea of setting up our own cutting room. We look forward to many more exciting projects, but hopefully without the involvement of officialdom !

Tam Studio, 13a Hamilton Way, London N3 IAN. Phone: 01-346 0033.  
Tony and Myrtle Batchelor

Background to TAMs interest in disc cutting. (Not part of the SS article.)

Our youngest son Eric whilst still going to the RSM was asked through a friend if he would play trumpet at a Cockfosters school in their production of Noyes Fludde. He asked us if we would give him a lift there and stay to see it in rehearsal, and of course we said yes. While there, we were introduced to the teacher who was producing it and had the idea to ask him if we could bring our tape recorder along to record the actual performance – our son was to be famous! The school was intrigued by the idea, and agreed to us doing it. After the performance later in the week, the teacher said that he had been asked by the head if our recording could be turned into a record for the school to sell. I had to say that I wasn't sure, but I thought that I could ask a friend what might be possible.

As Vic and Rog were professionals they were the friends we could ask about the school recording. They told us that after we edited the tape to ensure clean beginnings and ends for the two sides of an LP record, we would need three more things.

First, take the tape to a disc cutting room to have the master discs made.

Second, take the masters to a factory to have a quantity of pressings done, and,

Thirdly, think about the printed label and cover.

The first we did at their suggestion by going to De Lane Lea at Wembley where we had our first experience of the art. The mastering engineer was Dick and that was the start of many new experiences and friendships. I asked him where he would suggest I found a factory for the pressings, and he suggested a south London firm owned by the fabulously named Charlie Rumble (and son). What a name for the manufacturer of records where the last thing needed was a rumble!

Charlie sorted out getting the label printed so I had to make a design for it – that general design lasted for many years. The cover was simply solved as the school art department wanted to get involved, so I got a supply of blank white card covers from Charlie and the school printed their designs front and back on to paper which they then stuck on to the card. Finally, we put together 500 records for sale to the parents and the whole project was pronounced a great success. I still have one of the LPs complete with cover and Eric and our "recording company" names on it.

Amongst the many ads we read in SS there was one about 8 years later, in 1977, that seemed of particular interest. It was for the sale of a complete disc cutting room in Scotland. The owner was Derrick Marsh who had a business, Dero Records. As we seemed to have done so well with the one record we had made, and as our recording work was now coming on well, we wondered if we could have our very own cutting room. When I rang Derrick he seemed keen on selling to us, and told me that he would pass on his order book to us, which included work for a pressing factory with which he was involved – sounded good! We arranged to take the train to Glasgow where he would pick us up and drive us round the coast to his house.

Duly met, we admired the rugged scenery on the drive there, and then the equipment setup he demonstrated to us. It looked a bit DIY, but was all there and working as advertised. He wanted (if I remember correctly) £ 12,000 for it but offered a deal where he would expect us to do any work he needed at cost, and would accept the major part of the price as a deposit with the remainder to be paid after we had some time to earn. I had already spoken to our friendly bank manager (yes he really was then and since!) so we knew that we could commit ourselves. Derrick said he would have to confirm it as there was a possibility of another buyer, although it did not seem as if he was really interested in that.

When after a few days he telephoned to confirm the deal he suggested a date for collection, after he had finished off a few orders and dismantled the equipment. We agreed, and so I immediately got to work on the garage!!! Our plan was to put the Land Rover out in the cold, move the marquees in to the storage part - plenty of room, just needed rearranging - and then build an insulated room within the outer brick wall complete with floor, electric heating (old storage heaters that our neighbour Jack knew of and others we bought s/h nearby) and nicely decorated. It took a couple of weeks, and when we announced that we were ready, disaster!

Derrick said that he had decided that he could not wait for any money and if we did not pay him the whole amount that very week, then the deal was off. There was no way that we could do that, and anyway, we now distrusted him so much that the equipment no longer seemed such a good buy as it did at first - so what do with our nice new cutting room and the new brochures etc we had got Rog to print for us? In fact, we did two things, neither related to the other.

The first was a job that had come out of the blue a month or so before. This was to record several modern poets reading their own work. We had already gone a long way with it at a friends small private studio a couple of streets away. That was in Rob's mother's house and worked quite well, although fitting in a group of children for one of the poems was a bit difficult! We had also taken a recorder to a poetry reading in London to get some more poets on tape. Now we had to fit in four more who were coming to London for other business, and Rob was not readily available, so this time I fitted up the new room with microphone and talkback from the mobile just round the corner on its parking space, and away we went. Problem solved.

The second was to ask John Southard if he knew of any cutting equipment for sale. The final outcome of that was the basis of the SS article above.

*Here is the photo that accompanied the SS article. It is of the complete Paris system setup in our new facility. Myrtle is previewing the next side from the master tape, while Tony inspects the master cut of the first side.*



*Tam Studio*



Sleeve of Record 1  
CCS7005  
GOULDconductsGOULD  
Sessions at Watford Town Hall  
24<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> October 1978

Front





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## Gould Conducts Gould

Side One  
**Spirituals for Orchestra**

Side Two  
**Foster Gallery**

Crystal Clear  
Records  
CCS 7005

Morton Gould, born in Richmond Hill, New York in 1913, began his musical career as a child prodigy composer-pianist. At the age of 8, he won a scholarship to the Institute of Music. Although he subsequently had extensive formal music training, his early years were spent concertizing as a composer-pianist, and at age 21 he arranged and conducted a series of radio concerts for the Mutual and Columbia networks. Since then Mr. Gould has become somewhat of a "renaissance man" in having composed and conducted extensively in many mediums. He has attained a worldwide reputation as one of America's most versatile composers with such works as "Spirituals for Orchestra" (recorded on this disc), "Latin-American Symphonette," "Interplay," "American Salute," etc. He composed the music for the Broadway hit "Billion Dollar Baby" and the Theater Guild's "Arms and the Gid," and for the films, "Cinerama Holiday" and "Windjammer." His television credits include "F. Scott Fitzgerald in Hollywood" and most recently, the score for NBC's mini-series, "Holocaust." Mr. Gould has also been active in the world of ballet with items now in the standard repertoire such as "Fall River Legend" and "Interplay." He is currently writing a new ballet for the New York City Ballet and a new Broadway musical.

As a serious composer and conductor, Morton Gould has appeared with most of the major orchestras in the world, including the N.Y. Philharmonic, Boston Symphony, Chicago Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, London Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, etc. He has made many recordings of his own and other music, and in 1966 won the NARAS Grammy Award for his RCA recording of Charles Ives' music with the Chicago Symphony.

On this Crystal Clear recording of two of his most dynamic works, "Spirituals for Orchestra" and "Foster Gallery," his performances must be considered "definitive," and with the brilliance and power of the sound, this is an exciting musical experience.

"Spirituals for Orchestra" was composed in 1941, and is generally considered one of Morton Gould's finest works. Though some of this music is rooted in the jazz and black folk idioms, there is no direct use of negro spirituals as such, with only an allusion to "Shortin' Bread" in the "Little Bit of Sin" section. In five movements, "Proclamation," "Sermon," "Little Bit of Sin," "Protest," and "Jubilee," this music runs the gamut of dynamic expression: from the quiet, lyrical beauty of "Sermon" to the terrifying anvil strokes and tympani accents of "Protest" and the tumultuous, swirling, brassy statements of "Jubilee." "Foster Gallery" was composed by Morton Gould in 1939 and was premiered by Fritz Reiner and the Pittsburgh Symphony in 1940. While based on the works of Stephen Foster, with such familiar melodies as "Camptown Races," "Old Black Joe" and "Jeannie with the Light Brown Hair" making their presence obvious, Mr. Gould has not been merely derivative. He has treated Foster's music as folk material and has attempted to return the intensity, emotionalism, sincerity and simplicity of this music, while molding it into an art form of his own. Originally in 13 "movements," for recording purposes, Mr. Gould has created a special suite which highlights both the dynamic and lyrical aspects of the work.

—Bert Whyte

### Supercut Recording Process

The quality of this recording is the result of significant improvements in every link of the recording chain. Special microphones with ultra-fast, low-noise, low-distortion capabilities and a custom-built recording console utilizing fast, sophisticated circuitry were employed. The result is extremely wide and flat frequency response, low transient intermodulation distortion and ultra-fast transient response. No transformers were used anywhere in the signal path to the lathes. Absolutely no equalization, artificial reverberation, compression or limiting were employed. To fully appreciate its wide dynamic range and clarity, we strongly urge you to play back this recording at high volume levels, being careful to pay proper attention to the fusing of your loudspeakers.

Producer: Ed Wodenjak  
Live Mix Engineer: Bert Whyte  
Technical Director: John Meyer  
Disc Mastering Engineers: Tony Batchelor and John Dent  
Equipment Coordination: Frank Dickinson  
Album Design: Ted Cabarga  
Album Cover Art: © 1978 David Singer

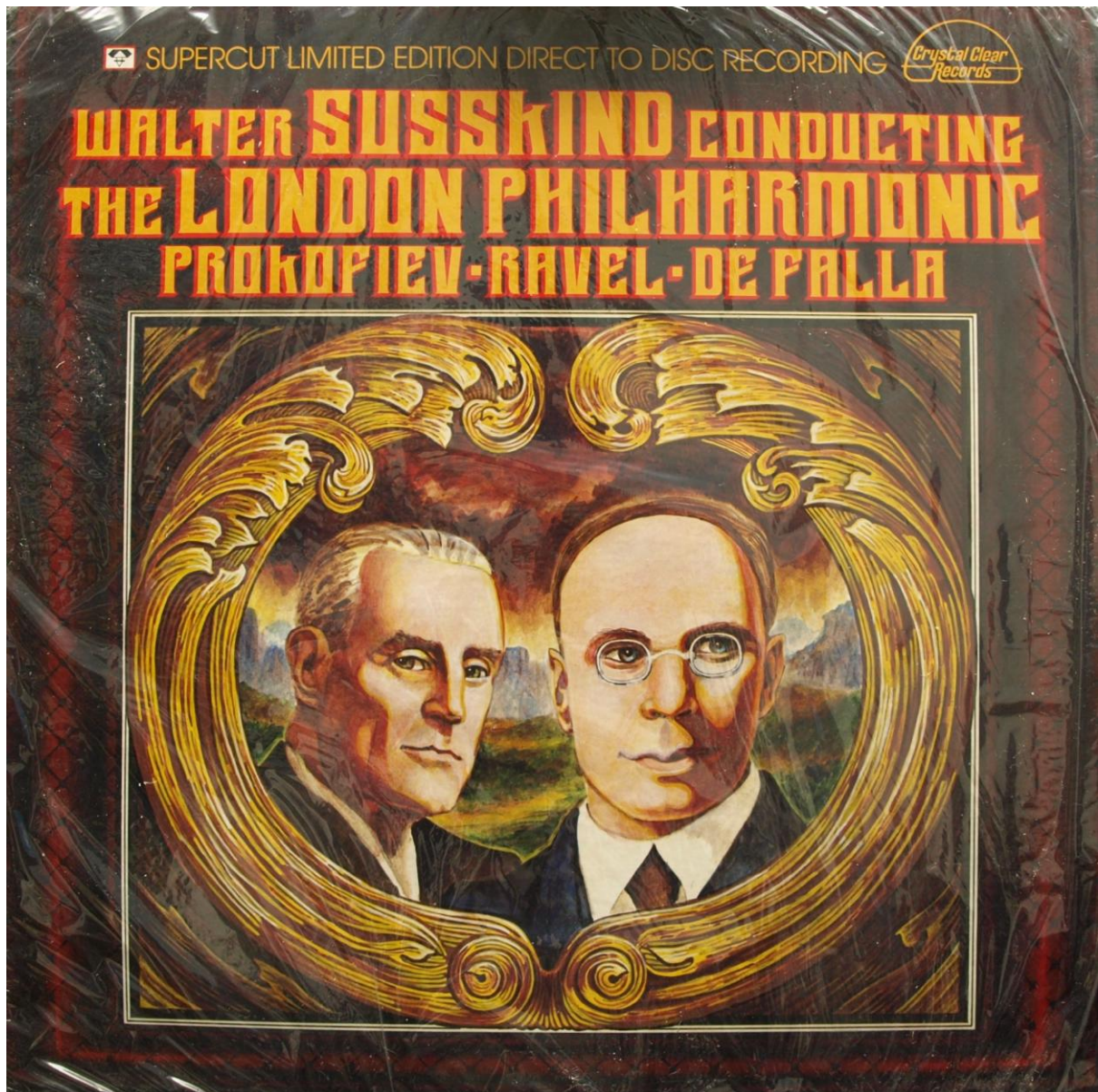
Recorded October 24 and 29, 1978, on location at Watford Town Hall, London, using the Ortofon extended range disc mastering system.

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Sleeve of Record 2  
CCS7006  
Walter SUSSKIND conducting  
The LONDON PHILARMONIC  
Sessions at Watford Town Hall  
19<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1978

Front





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