

Success Story

COMPANY: The Shushybye Company
CONTACT: www.shushybye.com
LOCATION: Los Angeles, CA
KEY CREW: Steve Syatt

by Mitch Gallagher

There are a lot of things you can do with your studio to earn a living: record bands, score films, create sample and loop libraries, or put together jingles and ad spots. There are other possibilities, too: You could, for example, record kids' music.

Kids' music?

But kids these days . . . who the hell understands them and what they want? Well, Steve Syatt and his SSA Public Relations firm, that's who. The firm was responsible for launching children's brand successes you might have stumbled on even if you don't have kids of your own:

Berenstain Bears: The Animated Series, *Pokemon*, and *Bob the Builder* to name just a few from a very long list.

While being the success behind the story was cool, what Syatt *really* wanted to do was direct...his own children's brand. So 15 years ago he began writing bedtime stories and songs about the "Shushies," who live in "Shushyland" and make the dreams kids dream at night. His son and daughter were both the inspiration and testing ground for his ideas.

And Steve's vision of the Shushyland book series and musical entertainment brand is gathering serious steam: A 32-page large format book entitled *Shushybye: Snoozles Saves The Night*

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together with a music CD of original songs is presently seeing a nationwide release. Live reading/music appearances have been conducted in 40 Borders stores in California and Nevada. Licensees, including toy manufacturers, book publishers, and children's bedding and apparel manufacturers, have all signed on. Work on a live action television show has begun, and a



nationwide tour of the Shushybye Dream Band is in the works.

But it took a lot of work to get to this point — writing the book and songs was just the tip of the iceberg. Syatt saved money for five years in a "Shushy Fund" to finance an initial printing of books and CDs, manufacturing plush toys, and creating costumes for performers to wear at live gigs.

And Syatt, to help realize his dream, also built what he calls his "music room" — a well-equipped recording studio — in his house, where the Shushybye CD was recorded, mixed, and mastered. The studio is based around a Digidesign Pro Tools HD3 Accel system with a ProControl, KRK monitors, SSL, Groove Tubes, Avalon, Trident, and PreSonus preamps, dynamics from Universal Audio and Empirical Labs, Apogee converters, Neumann, Blue, Shure, and Octava mics, loads of plug-ins, keyboards, guitars, and more. Steve is particularly proud of his Ampex 1/2" analog deck featuring updates by ATR Services/Michael Spitts.

While the Shushies are the brainchild of Syatt — he conceived the idea, wrote the text, and composed the songs — the production of the products was a team effort, including the contributions of artist/illustrator Frank Caruso, producer/arranger Gerald O'Brien, engineer Robb Zenn, vocalist Michael North, and second vocalist Randi Soyland.

Music plays a central role in the Shushybye success; Syatt composed the songs to appeal to both children and adults. As one parenting publication said, "These are songs you will want to keep listening to after the children are asleep in the car seat."

As we went to press, Steve Syatt told us that he'd been notified that Big Blue Dot, which does forecast surveys for the entertainment industry, placed Shushybye on their top 10 list of children's brands to watch out for in 2005. Proof positive there's nothing childish about using your studio to record music for children. **EQ**

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