

JOHN BARRY

Although nothing has been released since Barry collected his 5th Oscar for his excellent 'Dances With Wolves' score he has, in fact, been very busy. Soon after scoring 'Dances' he began work on the Barbara Streisand movie 'Prince Of Tides'. It is now common knowledge that Barry had a disagreement with Streisand who was said to have questioned every note of music written; and he consequently left the project.

In the latter half of '91 Barry wrote some music for the Peter Yates film 'Year Of The Comet'. He had worked for Yates on 'The Deep' in 1977 and although Barry completed the score for 'Comet' his music was, surprisingly, not used; and the final print opened with a Scottish-flavoured score by Hummie Mann which was recorded for Varese Sarabande. Barry's music was described by his former music contractor, Sid Margo, as "beautiful".

Barry then completed 'Ruby Cairo' for director Graeme Clifford with whom he had worked previously on Frances (1983). This film has yet to open here and should not be confused with the recent 'Ruby' which contained a score by another British composer - John Scott.

Barry was offered the chance of scoring the Ridley Scott version of 'Columbus', now titled '1492' and starring Gerard Depardieu, but decided against it before any music had been written. However, he did compose a 30 second piece for a TV commercial which Scott directed for Kodak who were one of NBC's U.S. sponsors for the Olympic games. The advert was shown repeatedly on American TV during the screening of the Games but lost its impact slightly over here as the Games were screened by the BBC! I must say - and do hope that readers will agree with me - that Barry has written an appropriate theme for a very stylish advert. For those who haven't been fortunate to see the commercial, it depicts a packed, floodlit stadium. Sections of the crowd create colourful images of great sporting moments by holding up cards as the other spectators applaud. At the end of the advert the boards are used to create an image of both the product being advertised (Kodak Gold II) and one declaring Kodak an official sponsor for the Games.

In July Barry was at Abbey Road Studios recording the score for 'Chaplin' which is the latest film from Sir Richard Attenborough and deals with the life of Charlie Chaplin. It is said to be his best score for a long time and is all set for a Christmas release. As if this wasn't enough, Barry recorded an album of his favourite themes (with The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra) at the same studio to include 'Moviola' which was the theme from 'Prince Of Tides'. The provisional track listing also includes: 'Out Of Africa' / 'Midnight Cowboy' / 'Somewhere In Time' / 'Body Heat' / 'We Have All The Time In The World' / 'Born Free' / 'Dances With Wolves' / 'Charlie' / 'Walkabout' / 'Cotton Club' / 'Frances'. The engineer on the session was Shawn Murphy whom Barry used on 'Dances With Wolves'. Readers will be advised of the release date of the CD which will be reviewed within these pages.

Later that month Barry was to have conducted The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in a concert of his own music in Seville. This would have been part of the 'Expo '92' exhibition but unfortunately it was cancelled following a bad accident on stage during an opera rehearsal. It has been re-scheduled for October 1993. The provisional programme included suites from the James Bond films and Dances With Wolves; themes from sixties films such as The Knack, Zulu, Midnight Cowboy & Born Free; as well as more recent works like Body Heat, Somewhere In Time, The Cotton Club & Frances. His most recent compositions, Charlie & Moviola (Prince Of Tides) were also scheduled, but not, surprisingly, The Lion In Winter.

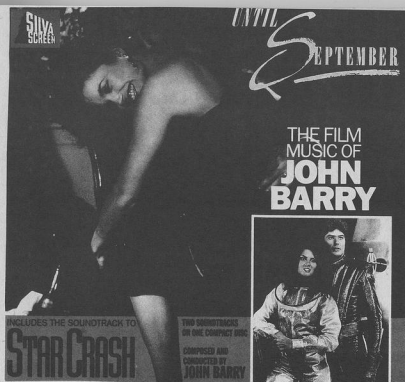
After the Abbey Road recordings, Barry flew back to America to start work on 'The Bodyguard', a film starring and produced by Kevin Costner. Unfortunately, sources close to the composer recently indicated that he has left the project following several changes of Director. He is now engaged on writing the music for 'Indecent Proposal', a Robert Redford thriller.

Finally, the stage musical "Billy", which ran for almost 3 years at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, London, in the mid seventies, has finally been revived after a couple of false starts. A short season recently took place at the George Square Theatre, Edinburgh as part of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. This presentation was by the National Youth Music Theatre Company - with Prince Edward a leading light behind it - and comedian Andrew O'Connor stars in the leading role. Barry and his long-time friend and lyricist Don Black have written two completely new songs - one of which is a duet for Billy & Liz - and are hopeful that a West End run will follow.

That more or less brings us up-to-date apart from some CD releases. Firstly, there's the two 'Ember Years' discs - from the ever-expanding Play It Again - which will be available by the time you read this and are reviewed elsewhere in this issue. The first disc features the music from 'Elizabeth Taylor In London' and 'Four In The Morning' whilst the second contains the album he recorded with Annie Ross ('A Handful Of Songs') and other tracks from the Ember catalogue. The latter includes never-before released alternative takes of 'Zulu Stamp' and 'Monkey Feathers'. Each disc, which is around 60 minutes in length, comes with a 12 page booklet containing colour photos and detailed liner notes.

More interestingly, Play It Again are issuing a collection of songs with lyrics by Don Black who has just written words for Barry's popular theme from 'Somewhere In Time'. The compilation, entitled 'The Don Black Songbook' will include many of the songs Don has written with Barry over the years including 'The Me I Never Knew' and 'Curiouser & Curiouser' from 'Alice's Adventures In Wonderland'; 'This Way Mary', 'Wish Now Was Then' ('Mary, Queen Of Scots'); 'Born Free'; 'Play It Again' ('The Tamarind Seed'); 'I Missed The Last Rainbow', 'Lady From L.A.' and 'Billy' from the stage musical 'Billy'; and a very rare vocal version of the theme from the Sunilk TV Commercial - 'The Girl With The Sun In Her Hair' produced by Black himself. This will hopefully appear in November.

In addition, EMI have released a 19 track 30th Anniversary James Bond compilation in Europe and a limited edition 31 track double CD in the USA



UNTIL SEPTEMBER and STAR CRASH on one CD. (Silva Screen FILMCD 085)

only. The latter includes the main themes from ALL the films to date plus vocal versions of 'Mr. Kiss Kiss Bang Bang' by both Dionne Warwick and Shirley Bassey. There is also a 21 minute suite from 'Thunderball'; a demo of 'You Only Live Twice', with different words and melody from the Nancy Sinatra song - presumably Barry & Bricusse's first attempt at the theme, 'Goldfinger' sung by Anthony Newley and three radio spots. The disc also comes with a booklet containing in-depth liner notes. This is a long-overdue, definitive compilation containing some rarities which collectors have been awaiting for many years.

At the end of November Silva Screen will issue Barry's scores from two Golden Harvest Films produced by Raymond Chow in the late Seventies. These are 'Night Games' and 'Game Of Death'. The former is a romantic score from Roger Vadim's erotic fantasy film released in 1979 and starring Cindy Pickett, Barry Primus and Joanna Cassidy. The latter is the Bruce Lee film from 1978 which features the Barry-composed song 'Will This Be The Song I'll Be Singing Tomorrow' sung by the one of the film's stars Colleen Camp. Other stars were Hugh O'Brian and Dean Jagger. This will be the first commercial release for 'Night Games', although 'Game Of Death' appeared on LP in Japan at the time of the film's release and has since become a collector's item.