

# JOHN BARRY

## The Early Years

BY GEOFF LEONARD AND PETE WALKER

One only has to glance through the sketchiest John Barry discography to appreciate the sheer diversity and quality of his output. Stretching over a career now spanning in excess of thirty years, Barry's musical canon takes many different forms and therefore means different things to different listeners . . . and this usually depends upon the circumstances in which that listener was first introduced to his work. Film enthusiasts will no doubt cite his Oscar winning scores for "Born Free", "The Lion In Winter", "Out Of Africa" and "Dances With Wolves" as his major creative achievements, if this was their first point of entry. Chart aficionados, on the other hand, are likely to point towards Barry's commercial successes with Hit And Miss (adopted as the theme for BBC TV's 'Juke Box Jury') and The Persuaders (the theme from the ITV series of the same name) as his finest moments. Rock 'n' rollers are likely to consider 'The John Barry Seven' as one of the true pioneers of the formative British music scene, while pop historians would probably emphasise his distinctive pizzicato string arrangements for Adam Faith's phenomenal pre-Beatle success to illustrate a definitive John Barry sound. Which ever way you look at it, what one immediately recognises when delving into Barry's back catalogue is it's impressive eclecticism, onto which is stamped a highly individual personal signature.

What this article attempts to do is to outline, chronologically, Barry's entry into the music business, his successful association with EMI Records, right up to his emergence as one of the U.K.'s first independent producers at Ember Records - the era before the film industry beckoned to take Barry out of the pop mainstream. For the purposes of this article, therefore, we shall concentrate almost exclusively on Barry's solo pop music career, touching only briefly on his arranging and accompanying of other artists. Likewise, his cinematic output will only be mentioned where the two careers overlapped.

For young John Barry (Prendergast) music acted as a thoroughly welcome antidote and diversion from the demands of school life. His intense dislike for school (he attended a local public school, St Peters, in his native York) was tempered fortuitously by his association with Dr. Francis Jackson, at that time music master of York Cathedral, who provided Barry with his first formal grounding in music theory and it was he who nurtured his interest in choral and sacred music.

Not surprisingly, Barry left formal education at 15 without any qualifications to his name in order to work full-time for his father, a cinema and theatre owner; which enabled him to play trumpet in a local jazz band, "The Modernaires", during the evenings. Initially, Barry had learned piano but switched to trumpet following a new interest in jazz encouraged by his elder brother, Patrick. At that time, Barry idolised the legendary Harry James and although never entirely happy performing in public, he knew that this was the only way to gain wider public recognition, at least locally. At this stage he'd already decided on a career in film music scoring, having been influenced by composers such as Copeland, Waxman, Korngold and Steiner through the films viewed repeatedly at his father's cinemas.

This tentative entry into a cinematic career was only to last three years before he received his call up papers for National Service. In those days able-bodied recruits were required to serve a minimum of two years, but Barry, exploiting the opportunity of joining a musical regiment, enlisted for an additional year with the famous Green-jackets. In fact, he spent a good part of the three years serving abroad in Malta and Cyprus, and was able to use all his spare time in persuading his colleagues to experiment with all kinds of original arrangements. At the same time he was using his pay to undertake a correspondence course with Bill Russo, then a noted arranger and former member of the Stan Kenton band in America.

On returning to York, Barry continued to develop his compositional skills by sending self-penned arrangements to the top band leaders of the day, notably Johnny Dankworth, Ted Heath and Jack Parnell. Dankworth was very encouraging and apparently broadcast one or two early works, whilst Parnell advised Barry to form a band of his own; advice acted upon one particular evening after a regular stint with The Modernaires. He gathered a number of ex-army colleagues along with a few local friends to form "John Barry And The Seven". The full line-up at this stage was:- John Barry (trumpet and vocals), Mike Cox (tenor sax), Derek Myers (alto sax), Ken Golder (drums), Fred Kirk (bass guitar), Ken Richards (lead guitar) and Keith Kelly (vocals and rhythm guitar). His father was obviously an enormous help during this formative phase, not only on account of his show-biz connections but also to the tune of a £5000 loan - a sizable investment by 1957 standards.

John Barry and the Seven cut a couple of demos in London and sent them to Jack Good the producer of the BBC's new youth programme "Six-Five Special". Perhaps to Barry's surprise they were initially turned down because they were too similar in style to the current regulars on the show - Don Lang and his Frantic Five. Undaunted, the group made their professional debut on Sunday March 17th, 1957, at the Rialto Theatre, York, where they supported Mitchell Torok and Cy Laurie's jazz band. However, their big break came when they were spotted playing at a later Rialto date by a London agent, Harold Fielding, who offered them a summer season with Tommy Steele at Blackpool.

Tireless rehearsals ensued at a nearby 18th century barn in a rigorous effort to make the most of this opportunity. The hard work paid off, for the Seven were so well received in Blackpool that not only did the BBC change their mind about an appearance on "Six-Five Special", but ITV also

snapped them up for their first TV appearance on Teddy Johnson's "Music Box". Their BBC TV debut was transmitted on the 21st September when the group were augmented by the inclusion of John Aris on Vibes.

Following this successful entry into show-business with the Seven, Barry was now anxious to secure a recording contract with one of the major British labels. His agent, Harold Fielding, negotiated with Philips and Decca, but it was EMI who stepped in with the first concrete offer, enabling Barry to sign the Seven to the Parlophone label in September 1957. In those early days the group were known as "John Barry and the Seven" and their first recording, Zip Zip / Three Little Fishes, was issued under that name. Both sides featured Barry himself on lead vocals, but despite creating a lot of interest in and around his home town of York, the record failed to make an impression on the national charts.

Towards the end of 1957, Parlophone decided to release an album featuring many of the acts who appeared on "Six-Five Special" in order to capitalise on the programme's huge popularity. These performances were recorded 'live' in the studio but, naturally, they could only include those artists already under contract to EMI. This meant that the Seven, who satisfied both criteria, were obvious choices and therefore well represented. They contributed 3 of the 15 tracks - all vocal performances and on this occasion sales of the records were encouraging; good news for Barry who had composed 2 of the songs and in doing so received the first of what would be many royalties over the next 30 years or so.

Ironically, the song which was not composed by Barry, Every Which Way, was to become the top side of the band's second single, released in January 1958. Backed by Barry's own, You've Gotta Way, both sides were featured in the film "Six-Five Special", (loosely based on the TV series) which was Barry's film debut. He was amongst a host of celebrities who attended the premiere in London, on 30th March; good publicity indeed, but not enough to translate into hard sales, as the record failed to gain a chart placing in spite of another favourable review in "Record and Show Mirror". This single was incidentally the last to feature Barry as a vocalist as the group decided to rely on the instrumental format from then onwards, both on stage and in the recording studio.

It didn't take Parlophone long to release a follow up, a mere two months to be precise, in the form of Big Guitar, a pounding instrumental composed by Americans Owen Bradley and Frank Derosa, covered by no less than four other artists in the U.K. alone. This blanket coverage was enough to prevent any version making the chart, although doubtless the combined sales figures would have ensured success had only one version existed. Barry, however, shrewdly continued his policy of writing the 'b' side, on this occasion - Rodeo - which was his first recorded instrumental composition. Frank Chacksfield recorded and released his own version for Decca Records.

By now, Barry and his group were London based and the records were beginning to make an impact on the local charts. Back in 1958, "Record & Show Mirror" printed individual top tens based on sales recorded by record shops throughout the U.K., albeit primarily in the London area. The band's

fourth single Pancho / Hideaway registered in a few of these charts without making the all-important national breakthrough. This Latin-American inspired release was the first occasion on which Barry had written both sides. By that time, he was receiving a great deal of attention and encouragement from A & R man Norman Newell who allowed Barry the luxury of experimenting musically in his bid to succeed.

The Seven made regular appearances on British TV during 1958 in particular on ITV's "Oh Boy". (a Jack Good production), on which Barry took the opportunity to plug their latest release Farrago. Backed by Bees Knees, the title of which appeared to illustrate Barry's penchant for "self-mockery", this was certainly the closest Barry came to having a hit record at that point. Once again, several record shops in the London area recorded it as a top ten seller, but despite maximum publicity from EMI, the disc just failed to reach the national charts.

The release of Farrago coincided with the arrival of Vic Flick on lead guitar and we well remembers the number as an integral part of their stage act. To establish his first links with the band, however, one has to backtrack slightly to 1957 at the point when he first joined the Bob Cort Skiffle group, replacing Ken Syckora on guitar. Towards the end of that year and during early 1958, the Cort group were booked as support for Paul Anka on a nationwide U.K. tour. Also appearing, as supplementary backing for Anka and as a name in their own right was the John Barry Seven. Flick and Barry developed a healthy rapport almost immediately and often ate and drank together. Barry was obviously impressed with Vic's guitar playing style, and with his ability to read music, unlike the guitarists then employed in the JB7 line up. He was to remember this meeting later that very year when it became apparent that group personnel changes were necessary once the tour had finished. Subsequently, eight months later Vic Flick received the phone call which effectively changed his life.

ITV were planning another homespun 'rock 'n' roll' show aimed at the youth market, produced by Jack Good, in the shape of "Oh Boy!". The JB7 were recruited not only as performers in their own right, but also as resident 'house' band to accompany other artists on the show. Unfortunately, this wasn't always entirely successful, for although the ex-army musicians could read music, the guitarists couldn't; the result being they ruined so many numbers, they were fired. What's more, it also transpired that most of the original band were not committed enough to tolerate the rigours of constant touring, since conditions in those days were hardly ideal. Accordingly, gradually, with the exception of Keith Kelly, they all drifted away and were replaced by a variety of names who featured in jazz groups from the Leeds and York area of England.

The last of the originals to go was lead guitarist Ken Richards, who returned to chicken farming. It was at this point that Barry approached Vic Flick, then still working with Bob Cort, with the offer to join on a permanent basis. Vic jumped at the opportunity and duly arrived in time to rehearse for an important show at the Metropolitan, Edgeware Road. The Seven were contracted to perform a 20 minute act as well as backing several other artists, including Marty Wilde. The full line-up at this stage was:



John Barry (trumpet), Vic Flick (lead guitar), Mike Peters (bass guitar), Keith Kelly (rhythm guitar), Jimmy Stead (baritone sax), Dennis King (tenor sax) and Dougie Wright (drums). For a very short time they experimented with a female singer, Lisa Page, sister of TV star Jill Day, but this did not prove as successful as envisaged and was not continued.

At this stage, Barry himself was still featuring strongly on solo trumpet both on stage and record, and although Flick became a vital part of the group, it wasn't until 1960 that the guitar took over as the lead instrument. In early 1959, BBC TV introduced their rival to "Oh Boy!" in the form of "Drumbeat". Producer Stewart Morris signed the JB7 to appear in their own right and also to back a variety of other artists, just as in the earlier days of "Oh Boy!". The most discernible difference now was that Barry had at his disposal a completely professional band who were more than capable of undertaking the onerous task of a resident band.

To ensure they secured the booking, Barry decided to introduce piano into the line-up as a means of replacing Keith Kelly, who had decided to attempt a solo career as a singer. Vic Flick put a word in for his then flat mate, Les Reed, a pianist regularly playing jazz in London. Les didn't hesitate in joining the Seven, and, after successfully passing an audition, held at a local Shepherds Bush pub with Reed integrated into the band. The group

embarked on a 22 week run on the new show. Meanwhile, the Seven's own assault on the charts continued with Long John / Snap 'N' Whistle which was heavily promoted on "Drumbeat", fledgling pop weekly "Disc" together with "Record & Show Mirror" expected great things for this latest offering, but in keeping with previous predictions, were proved wrong as chart success once again eluded the band. Parlophone were still spending heavily on promoting the group's records, however, evidencing at this early stage, how highly Barry was regarded. Undeterred by this lack of commercial recognition, the band continued their punishing touring schedule, managing to fit in their final 2 singles for Parlophone during the summer of 1959.

The first of these, Little John / For Pete's Sake featured (for the first time on record) the recent additions to the group, Vic Flick and Les Reed. Both sides were written by Barry and as usual given regular airings on TV and as integral parts of their stage act, without making any obvious impact on the charts. Nevertheless, Little John was voted one of the best instrumental discs of 1959. Barry's last Parlophone release revived the much-covered Twelfth Street Rag which was coupled with a new original composition entitled Christella. Quite why the former was chosen as a single isn't clear, for it had certainly been recorded many times in the past, perhaps better on occasions. Somehow it seemed a perplexing decision to release something so unoriginal at that point in Barry's career. Perhaps his efforts were being channelled more vigorously into his debut Parlophone session as arranger and accompanist to Adam Faith.

February 1960 turned out to be a significant month for Barry. Evelyn Taylor had already taken over the management of Barry himself, and the Seven as well as signing Adam Faith on Barry's recommendation. Now, she arranged a label switch for the JB7 within the EMI group, from Parlophone to Columbia. The move proved to be an almost instant success because only weeks later Barry joined Faith in the top ten with his Columbia debut, Hit And Miss.

He was certainly helped in this respect by a chance airing on the BBC TV programme, "Juke Box Jury", which voted the record a unanimous hit. The presenter, David Jacobs, liked it sufficiently enough to persuade his producer to use it as the show's new signature tune, which guaranteed maximum exposure. It duly replaced Juke Box Fury with effect from the following week and was soon providing Barry with his first hit after nearly 3 years of trying. Rockin' Already was on the flip-side, a very original Barry arrangement of the traditional song, Wioveh. These sides were attributed to "The John Barry Seven Plus Four", the four were actually accomplished session violinists playing in a pizzicato vein - Bernard Monshin, Sid Margo, Charlie Katz and Alec Firman. Sid Margo was later to act as Barry's 'fixer' for film music recording sessions for many years.

Vic Flick recalls the recording session of Hit And Miss as a nerve-racking one. The rhythm section was arranged along one wall of the studio with the string section just in front of him - a daunting experience as they were all watching him with a critical eye! The massive TV publicity was a bonus for Barry, whose "Stringbeat" treatment of this and all Faith's early recordings was the sound of the day, and imitated by many. Having got wind



ABOVE: THE E.M.I. YEARS; left to right, Mrs Mills, Danny Williams, Helen Shapiro and John Barry.

of Barry's arranging sessions for other companies, EMI persuaded him to sign an exclusive three year contract in early 1960. Under the terms of this contract he was expected to cut an album and three singles per year, though by 1962, this was proving difficult to fulfil due to increasing film work.

His film music career was just starting to take off at this time and with the completion of his score for the Adam Faith film, "Beat Girl", he was already hard at work on Faith's second, "Never Let Go", which starred Peter Sellers. Thus perhaps his new single was inspired by a combination of his work on these films and some recent library music recorded for Chappell. The 'a' side, Beat For Beatniks, was virtually identical to a Chappell track entitled Mood Three - except for the absence of a guitar solo, and the flip-side, Big Fella, similarly self-penned and jazz inspired were completely different from anything he'd previously attempted on record.

It drew a rapturous review from the jazz dominated "Melody Maker" whose columnist, Maurice Burman, commented: "I put on the record without a lot of interest and after the first four bars, I nearly fell through the floor! The record is like nothing he has done before - it is modern jazz with a fresh approach, tinged with Kentonism. It stamps John Barry as a first class modern arranger and composer with a daring mind." Praise indeed. But not everyone was so enthusiastic about its chances of commercial success, as it eventually proved. Admittedly it did just about creep into the lower

end of the charts, but didn't score nearly as well as Barry must have hoped after the success of the previous record. It simply wasn't the type of material that the record buying public was used to, so despite good notices, it was largely ignored. Incidentally, this was the first occasion on which Barry issued a record which didn't go out under the name of the Seven. Instead, it went out as "The John Barry Orchestra" although Barry later admitted that he had used the Seven and augmented them with established jazz players such as saxophonist Johnny Scott and trumpeter Dicky Hawdon.

EMI decided next to issue the soundtrack album of the film, "Beat Girl" in order to capitalise on the popularity of Adam Faith and to a lesser extent, the JB7. Barry's music for the film stood head and shoulders above the rest of the production, which palled in comparison. In an interview with "Disc" magazine, Barry commented: "The film score is not all rock. I'd call it more of a jazz score. I've always wanted to get into the film business and was happy when this offer came along. We've also cut an LP from the film on which I use a twenty-piece orchestra. It's all very much on a jazz key".

In another article, Barry revealed how he came to be offered the score. "This is the sort of work I've always wanted to do. Producer George Willoughby has asked me to tackle the job which requires three songs and a complete under-score. There is also a main title theme - Beat Girl. This film writing realises a deep ambition. In the early days of my career with the Seven, I was always on the lookout for my break into movies. Well, the day came when I drove Adam Faith to the studios for the screen-test which led to him landing a lead role in "Beat Girl". They asked me to write the music and I jumped at the chance."

The album - which was the very first soundtrack to be released from a British film - sold appreciably, reaching the top ten and receiving almost unanimous critical acclaim. It was re-issued on LP in 1985 and again on CD only in 1990, coupled with his first studio album, Stringbeat, about which more later.

EMI, ever keen to keep the momentum going, hedged their bets somewhat on releasing Barry's third Columbia single when they combined an overt commercial offering with another example of Barry's jazz tinged film approach. Although Blueberry Hill was the official 'a' side, it's reverse, Never Let Go, received at least as much airplay. The former, taken at a similar pace to Fats Domino's famous version, was dominated by the guitar of Vic Flick, backed by a small string section playing in a mainly pizzicato style with some percussion from Dougie Wright. On Never Let Go, Flick's guitar again took the lead in a theme written by Barry for the film of the same name, although only heard on screen as source music via a cafe juke box. The single managed to nudge into the top 50, but what would have been considered a major achievement in 1957, proved a disappointment in 1960, particularly as yearly polls in the music press put the JB7 as second only to the Shadows in the popularity stakes.

September 9th saw a new release from the Seven, in the shape of Walk Don't Run. This number was composed by American jazz guitarist, Johnny Smith, and originally recorded by The Ventures who achieved great success in the

American charts with their version. Barry saw the opportunity to give a further boost to the career of the Seven by recording his own arrangement which was quite different in style from that of The Ventures. To achieve this individual sound, Vic Flick was required to use a Bigsby tremolo arm attachment, in order to sustain the wavering tremolo effect. As he didn't have one himself, he borrowed a guitar from the other guitarist on the session, Eric Ford. He later felt that the take, subsequently a top ten success, was the one on which he felt he had somewhat over done the tremolo effect!

In terms of chart placing, the Seven's version just pipped The Ventures whilst another version by Rhet Stoller missed out completely. The 'b' side saw Barry once again re-vamping an old vocal, this time the Hank Snow country standard - 'I'm Movin' On. He used an identical arrangement to the one he used on the Hit And Miss recording and the Seven were again joined by 'plus four'. Although obviously similar in style to Hit And Miss, the band often included the number in their live appearances - especially when on tour.

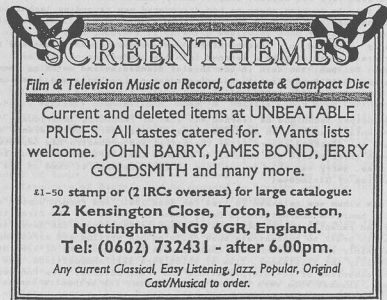
After successfully covering The Ventures' Walk Don't Run, Barry must have thought about covering their follow-up - Perfidia - yet another instrumental version of an old song. In the event, The Ventures had a free run and climbed to number four in the U.K. charts, whilst Barry countered with Black Stockings / Get Lost Jack Frost, both self-penned. Released in time for the Xmas market, it sold well, reaching number 27. The guitar of Vic Flick was once again the dominant feature, and, in Get Lost Jack Frost he displayed a lot of intricacy. The latter seasonally named 'b' side, although credited to John Barry, bore a strong resemblance to When The Saints Go Marching In, a number covered previously by The Seven on many a live date.

Back in the early sixties, singles were released far more regularly than they are today. Therefore, within only 2 months of releasing Black Stockings, the JB7 were busy promoting their next 45 - an interpretation of Elmer Bernstein's Magnificent Seven, with a view, one suspects, of recording a ready-made signature tune. Given this fortuitous coincidence of having number seven in the title of the track and band together with the huge success of the film, this ought to have been a heaven-sent chart opportunity, but a rather uncharacteristic lack-lustre arrangement and performance produced only moderate sales. It is true to say that the competition from American Al Caiola tended to split the sales, but it was noticeable that Caiola's record achieved the higher chart placing - 34 as against 48. This despite The Seven's added bonus of an appearance on the new ABC TV show, "Thank Your Lucky Stars", on the 5th May, which was networked throughout the U.K.

The main problem was that Bernstein's masterful original arrangement was written for full orchestra. As a result the Seven's attempt was bound to sound thin in comparison. Clearly, the full John Barry Orchestra would have seemed a more appropriate proposition for this track. The "b" side, Skid Row turned out to be much more typical Seven material - an archetypal "stringbeat" arrangement written by Barry. The record was Barry's sixth successive top fifty hit and so it came as a major disappointment when the

next release, The Menace, was a complete failure. Coupled with Rodeo, this was arguably the JB7's most complete recording to date, evoking an atmosphere of tension indicative of the theme to a thriller. It was yet another Barry original and showed off the full range and strength of the John Barry Orchestra. The "Record Mirror" admired the guitar work, reverberant and pizzicato backing, whilst the "Melody Maker" reminded the reader that the other side, Rodeo, was a fine up-date of his 1958 recording and reminiscent of a Western film theme.

Barry was now hard at work on his second Columbia album. He'd commissioned tracks from other contemporary composers, one of whom was Jerry Lordan, composer of Apache - a mammoth hit for The Shadows. He came up with Starfire, which also acted as the group's new single. Unlike Apache, the record featured clavichord alongside Vic Flick's guitar work, which was played on the session by Ted Taylor of the Ted Taylor Four. According to Dougie Wright, Barry often used Taylor to augment the sound of the Seven in the studios, along with fellow Ted Taylor Four member, Bob Rodgers, on guitar. "T.W.W.", an ITV station serving South Wales and the West Country, chose Starfire as the theme to their Kent Walton hosted pop programme - "Discs A Go-Go", but even with the extra weekly airing and a massive advertising campaign, the record failed to chart. As the 'b' side, Barry chose the Seven's recording of the theme from the new Terry-Thomas comedy film, A Matter Of Who, a film in which Barry and the Seven made a brief appearance.



## SCREEN THEMES

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Within a few days of releasing Starfire, EMI scheduled the release of a new single by a hitherto unknown act calling themselves "Michael Angelo And His Orchestra". It was by no coincidence that they sounded exactly like the JB7 plus four, because they were in reality the John Barry Orchestra recording under a pseudonym, an apparent attempt by Barry to cash in on his popularity in Italy (where he had rejected an offer of £250,000 from a businessman which would have contractually tied both him and the Seven, for four years).

For Michael Angelo's debut, Barry picked Nino Rota's theme from a new Visconti film entitled "Rocco And His Brothers". The flip-side, Spinneree, was a Barry number named after a cafe he frequented in Cumberland. Whether or not this release harmed the chances of Starfire is impossible to establish, but as neither records were hits, it appears the experiment was a failure.

In November, Barry decided to return to his rock 'n' roll roots by releasing an out and out rocker - Watch Your Step, as the 'a' side of the Seven's next single. This had been a recent hit in America for its composer, rhythm and blues singer Bobby Parker, and it was a track which the Seven had adapted into their stage act at that time. The record was built around the usual solid Vic Flick guitar solo together with more excellent clavoline work from Ted Taylor. As a way of acknowledging the latest dance craze, Barry christened the 'b' side, Twist It, on which guitar and clavoline once again dominated proceedings. Regrettably, on this occasion it appears that Barry completely misjudged the market, as the record sold very few copies, despite Barry himself having recently returned from a trip to America where he had discovered new recording techniques far in advance of those used in the U.K.

As Barry intimated in a "Record Mirror" interview, he was determined to incorporate everything he'd learned into the production of this new release. "I spent two days in Los Angeles discussing and watching recording techniques with Duane Eddy's recording manager, Lee Hazlewood, and some of what I saw and heard, rubbed off."

The principal technique he learned was that of recording individual instruments or artists on separate tapes, so engineers could balance and produce the finished record after the artist and orchestra had departed. Although these skills did nothing to enhance the chart prospects of Watch Your Step, Barry was able to put them to good use when it came to the production of Stringbeat.

This new album was released in time for Xmas 1961, and record buyers were able to hear the characteristic Barry sound in stereo for the first time. Barry had recently handed over the on-stage leadership of the Seven to Vic Flick, in order to concentrate more fully on his writing and arranging, and it certainly paid dividends. He came up with fifteen tracks of breathtaking originality and excitement, five of which were self compositions. The others comprised of re-interpretations and fresh material from contemporary writers, amongst whom were members of the Seven. The orchestra consisted of



the Seven augmented by a twelve piece piece section and Ted Taylor's clavoline. At this juncture it is worth analysing each track in detail, given that this was a landmark in Barry's career.

The opening track harked back to his "Drumbeat" days when backing Adam Faith, and Barry paid his own tribute to the Dick Jacobs arrangement of the Buddy Holly hit, It Doesn't Matter Anymore. On Sweet Talk, Barry updated one of his earliest compositions, Snap 'N' Whistle, in a much improved and fuller form. Clavoline featured strongly throughout, and on particular on a re-working of Pat Boone's latest hit, Moody River. There's Life In The Old Boy Yet, was another up-dating of an earlier recording, previously entitled For Pete's Sake, and was later used by the BBC to introduce their Saturday afternoon sports programme, broadcast on the old Light Programme. A Handful Of Songs, originally a hit in Britain for Tommy Steele, was a special favourite of Barry's and he managed to breathe new life into the song with Vic Flick's guitar particularly prominent.

The first completely new Barry composition, Like Waltz, was also the most experimental. An intriguing bar blues concoction in waltz time juxtaposing guitar and strings with startling originality. The next track, Rodeo, as mentioned earlier, had already surfaced in it's re-recorded form as the reverse side of The Menace. To close side one, Barry turned to his pianist, Les Reed, for the first recorded composition in what became a very distinguished career. Like Barry, Reed had recently become a father for the first time and so named Donna's Theme after her to commemorate the occasion

Side two opened with the Jerry Lordan number Starfire, the curiously unsuccessful single and this was immediately followed by Baubles, Bangles And Beads, a song taken from the show, "Kismet", and based on the themes of Borodin - perhaps a surprising choice but one which fitted in with the overall style and content of the rest of the album. Vic Flick's guitar pyrotechnics were a huge influence throughout the LP and so it came as no surprise to find that Barry also asked him for a written contribution. Vic's own writing debut constituted the excellent Zapata, characterized by a then innovative 'fade-intro' which gradually introduced the listener to the familiar Flick guitar sound, a style which was itself becoming as recognisable as the famous John Barry sound.

In direct contrast to the songs he wrote for Adam Faith, Johnny Worth composed an instrumental number, Rum Dee Dum Dee Dah - a bright and breezy composition on which Barry used high picked strings with clavichord and guitar. Barry then gave Ben E King's Spanish Harlem the full 'Stringbeat' treatment, on which Vic Flick demonstrated his versatility by playing both classical and electric guitars. Tony Osborne was a much admired English writer and arranger behind many a hit record. In fact, it was he who wrote and performed the original theme for BBC TV's "Juke Box Jury", under the pseudonym of "Ozzie Warlock And The Wizards". On this occasion he composed the Latin influenced Man From Madrid, which sounds as it might have been written with this album specifically in mind. Barry showcased his most ornate arrangement on the album's final track, The Challenge, which was arguably its stand out cut, and one which, by its orchestral colourings, hinted at the direction in which Barry was heading - evocative mood music at its very best; a soundtrack to an epic that had yet to be made. A magnificent ending to a marvellous album, which, on release, attracted wonderful reviews throughout the music press. Although the record didn't sell in large enough quantities to register in the album charts, it was, nevertheless a steady seller, prompting re-issues in 1983 and 1990 - the latter release as mentioned previously, on CD only.

Around this time, jazz musician Dave Brubeck made a surprise British chart entry, with colleague Paul Desmond's composition - Take Five. Always on the look-out for new and successful ideas, Barry wrote and recorded Cutty Sark, using the same time signature as Take Five, and writing a most striking staccato brass arrangement to highlight the rhythmic possibilities derived by such a time signature.

However, the British record buying public remained indifferent, as the disc reached only no. 35 in the charts. Yet, it did prove how successful Barry had become in writing distinctive arrangements for, no sooner had he appeared conducting a small orchestra aiming to the record on "Thank You Lucky Stars", than the track in question was adopted by ITV as a signature tune for a current affairs programme, "Dateline London". Strangely enough, the flip-side, Lost Patrol, a much covered Maxwell composition, was also used as a signature tune by the BBC TV regional news programme, "Look North" as well as for an Australian TV series, "The Four Corners" and the record made the top ten there, as The Four Corners Theme.

Once again, EMI issued a single by The Michael Angelo Orchestra within days of the official Barry release. On this occasion Barry coupled another

Maxwell composition, Tears, with Richard Addinsell's theme from the film "The Roman Spring Of Mrs Stone". This record was covered by others, (Johnny Gregory even issued an identical single!). Neither version, however, proved commercially successful. In direct contrast, Barry's next 45 has proved to be one of the most enduring instrumentals ever written, The James Bond Theme.

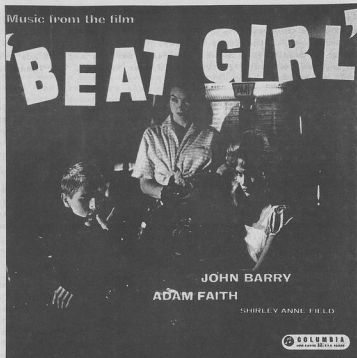
The head of the publishing arm of United Artists Music in London, Noel Rogers telephoned Barry one evening to discuss the possibility of getting him involved in the music scoring for a film then currently in production. According to Barry, he was given only a few days to arrange and record the main theme with his Seven plus an Orchestra. There are many versions outlining exactly what part Barry did play in the composing of the score; a subject which Barry himself first broached during an interview for the N.M.E. in November 1962, shortly after The James Bond Theme entered the British charts. "The composer, Monty Norman, and I, got our heads together and discussed the various aspects of the picture and the central character. So we have the sustained under-tone which establishes Bond's smoothness - plus the repetitious guitar of Vic Flick to stress his driving and forceful nature. In fact, I hope the thirty piece orchestra I've used has succeeded in encompassing all the qualities displayed by Bond."

However, different interpretations have been posited over the course of time. In an interview with author Steven Rubin, Barry is quoted as saying that the film producers were not entirely happy with Norman's original theme which explained why he had been approached at short notice to produce a short workable main title to fit over the opening credits. He went on to say that he had written the tune without seeing even a rough-cut of the film, and based it on an earlier composition, Bees Knees. Several years later he went a step further by stating that although he had been asked to work on Norman's theme, he was convinced that couldn't do anything with it and asked if he could start from scratch. After consulting Norman, publisher Noel Rogers agreed, albeit with a stipulation from Norman that Barry would not get a writing credit - Barry received just £200 for his work whilst Vic Flick and the rest of the orchestra got the usual session fee of around £8! (\*) Barry's version of events was confirmed by the film's director, Terence Young, who commented that Norman originally wanted to use Underneath The Mango Tree as the theme for the whole series.

Norman recently confirmed Terence Young's theory about his initial idea for a theme, but his contribution to the 'writing credit' debate differs crucially from Barry's own interpretation. According to Norman, he rejected his own first attempt but managed to use the piece for one of the film's sequences, which was entitled Dr No's Fantasy on the soundtrack. He then went into the studios to record a fresh composition, for an opinion from the producers. "It was a number that I felt had the right character reference and atmosphere for James Bond. Incidentally, as so often with composers, I had written the main melodic theme two years earlier - in a different context, for an aborted project. It became The James Bond Theme."

(\*) From "On The Tracks" by Fred Karlin and Rayburn Wright





Norman approached John Burgess, an EMI producer, who loved it and suggested John Barry for the orchestration. "I worked with Barry on what I wanted: a rhythmic sustained sound for the opening four bar figure; low octave guitar for my main melodic theme; big band for the hard riding middle section, etc". Norman went on to heap praise on the two Johns for their work on the record. He still believes the original Barry recording to be the definitive sound for the number.

Vic Flick, the lead guitarist on the original session doesn't entirely support Norman's account, however. He believes that producer Broccoli had liked the first few bars of Norman's theme but wasn't too enamoured with its development which explains why it was handed over to Barry for "re-arranging". In fact, it was taken down an octave on Vic's suggestion, after which Barry re-wrote the middle and ending. Nowadays, when asked about the theme, Barry's standard reply is to the effect that if he hadn't written it, was he subsequently asked to write all the others - which seems a reasonable point.

Regardless of whoever wrote it, the finished article remains a classic. It was recorded at Abbey Road Studios with John Burgess producing. He recalls how fastidious Barry was in arranging the orchestra prior to recording, giving special attention to the trumpets in order to produce the sound he wanted. Barry's single was issued on the Columbia label to coincide with



The original cover of "ELIZABETH TAYLOR IN LONDON, one of John Barry's rarest soundtracks, now available once more on 'Play It Again' PLAY 002 - the release of the film, and was a huge success in the U.K. Depending on which chart guide is used, it peaked at either nine or thirteen and spent nearly three months there. The John Barry Seven and Orchestra single was issued only in mono, primarily because in 1962, stereo was still relatively new and confined mainly to Albums. However, a stereo version was made and was included on an EMI compilation album in 1972. EMI have finally woken up to this fact and have included the stereo recording on their James Bond 30th Anniversary CD. However, collectors will need to buy the more expensive double CD to get the Barry version. The Monty Norman recording is on the single CD. Barry coupled The James Bond Theme with The Blacksmith Blues on which he reverted to his policy of reviving big sellers from yester-year; a style more in keeping with the earlier days of the Seven.

The James Bond Theme was still in the charts when Barry's penultimate official Columbia disc was issued. The Lolly Theme was taken from a new film comedy, "The Asporous Prawn" while the 'b' side, March Of The Mandarins, was an obvious attempt at experimentation, using quite different musical textures. Despite being 'hot on the heels' of a hit single, it sank almost without trace and is now very hard to track down.

The Seven's final Columbia release during this period was issued in March 1963, when Barry was already talking to Jeffrey Kruger of Ember Records about a possible move to that label. It was the theme from the popular ITV programme, The Human Jungle, starring Herbert Lom. The theme was composed by Bernard Ebbinghouse and Barry's arrangement was magnificent both in its TV format and as a single, which was slightly different. It really should have done well chart-wise but regrettably, despite much radio play together

with its weekly TV airing, it didn't even make the top fifty. The 'b' side was another experiment - Onwards Christian Spaceman - later adapted for use in Barry's TV score for "Sophia Loren In Rome".

Shortly after this came the surprise announcement that Barry had signed for Ember Records, an independent label set up in 1958 by promoter / impresario Jeffrey Kruger, owner of the London jazz club, "The Flamingo". His coup in capturing John Barry as 'associate producer and creative A & R man' was aimed at enabling his company to be able to compete in a market then dominated by EMI & Decca. Barry was offered complete jurisdiction over the creative input in an exclusive arrangement designed to lead to part ownership in the company. In other words, he was given a virtual carte blanche to initiate any project he so desired with total control over studio, artist, musicians and repertoire - an opportunity to set up a record label as he saw it in his own mind. Ember Records was therefore re-launched in Barry's own vision of how a record company should look and sound - the musical equivalent of an Actor/Manager. He eventually stayed only two years and despite being involved in the production of a number of projects for other Ember artists, his own output was rather limited.

The John Barry Seven travelled in name with Barry to Ember, as records released in their name between 1963 & 1964 testify, but these tended to feature session musicians. The first release, Kinky / Fancy Dance, featured the alto sax of Johnny Scott on both sides. Kinky was in fact a Scott composition, whereas Fancy Dance was a Barry original which was later adopted as the theme for BBC TV's "The Newcomers". Both sides achieved substantial airplay, however, Ember's rather patchy distribution up to that point probably contributed to its relative failure. The follow-up, From Russia With Love / 007 was issued in a picture sleeve and fared much better, peaking at number 39. Indeed, had it not been for three other vocal versions, Barry's effort might arguably have made the top ten. Elizabeth / The London Theme were both based on themes from the TV documentary of "Elizabeth Taylor In London", made by CBS TV and screened on the BBC in Britain. Although the melodies were similar to the titles included on the soundtrack album by The Johnny Spence Orchestra, both Barry versions featured piano solos.

Unlike "Elizabeth", the last of the Ember singles, Zulu Stamp / Monkey Feathers was packaged in an attractive picture sleeve. Both tracks were beat versions of traditional Zulu themes taken from the film, yet, despite selling well, failed to chart. It is also worth adding that Ember also issued an e.p. coupling both of these sides with two Bond titles and then, later, the complete soundtrack album of Zulu.

Vic Flick had been with the Seven since 1958 and led the band on stage for the last two years. However, increasing demands on his time as a session player forced him to quit. Despite giving three months notice of his intention to leave, Barry was unable to find a suitable replacement and the band folded, albeit temporarily. Vic's last performance as a member of the Seven, was at Torquay in August 1963, after which he spent several years around the London recording studios as a much in demand freelance session musician, accompanying all the top names in the business.

He gradually began to concentrate more on writing for TV & films - a field in which he is still involved at the time of writing. Unfortunately for Vic, during his years with the Seven, their A & R manager John Burgess, was under the mistaken impression that Vic was contracted exclusively to John Barry. This misunderstanding prevented Vic from being asked to make records in his own right. However, in 1999 he very nearly emerged into the limelight once again, when he was chosen to play Michael Kamen's theme to the new Bond film, "Licence To Kill", alongside Eric Clapton. Although the theme was recorded and both musicians were filmed performing it on location in London, the producers eventually decided not to use it, preferring instead to commission a song that was subsequently performed by Gladys Knight.

In October 1963, the reformed JB7 made their debut at the Locarno Ballroom, Coventry. Drummer Bobby Graham had taken over the leadership at the request of Barry, who also acted as his new manager. Graham recalls just how difficult it was to get to see John Barry, even at this early stage of his career. All appointments had to be negotiated through Barry's redoubtable secretary, Miss Ackers. At this point, the band consisted of: Graham (drums), Dave Richmond initially - then Ray Styles (bass guitar), Ray Russell (lead guitar), Terry Childs (baritone sax), Bob Downes (tenor sax), Alan Bown (trumpet) and Tony Ashton (piano and vocals).

However, with the departure of Bobby Graham, who, like Flick before him, elected to concentrate on ever-increasing session work, Bown took over as leader with only Terry Childs remaining with him from the Graham led band. Bown was keen to book the new band into a studio and the result was a new single, 24 Hours Ago, the first JB7 vocal since Barry's own efforts 7 years previously. It featured new vocalist Mike O'Neil who doubled on keyboards, and apart from Bown and Childs, the rest of the band were: Dave Green (tenor sax), Stan Haldane (bass guitar), Ernie Cox (drums) and Ron Menicos (lead guitar). 24 Hours Ago leaned a lot towards the style of George Fame with its gritty r'n'b feel - a deliberate ploy according to Alan Bown. The band reverted back to the instrumental format on the flip-side - the sax dominated Seven Faces was an attempt by writers Bown and Keith Mansfield to capture yet update the 'Barry sound'. Unfortunately, this release received only minimal assistance in the way of publicity from EMI and therefore failed to make any impact as a result. Yet another change in title here, with simply John Barry Seven.

This was to be the very last single record made by the Seven, but they continued to tour extensively until early 1966. According to Bown, Barry still took a keen interest in the Seven and would often be watching from the sidelines during one of their concert dates. He particularly remembered such an occasion with Marty Wilde in Paris. Marty had persuaded the band to indulge in all kinds of dance step routines whilst accompanying him - very much as the Shadows had done with Cliff Richard. Barry was furious at what he saw and during the interval he made them all aware, in no uncertain terms, that this was never to happen again!

Part of Barry's agreement with Ember enabled him to make film soundtrack recordings for other labels, and this coincided with the start of his long relationship with the James Bond films. United Artists released both the

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films and the music, and, although Barry had no connection with the Dr. No soundtrack album (which was by Monty Norman), he was responsible for both the soundtrack albums from *From Russia With Love* and *Goldfinger*. Therefore, they found their way onto the United Artist label. The latter film also spawned a single and an e.p. released in Barry's name, while an e.p. emanated from the former, alongside the Ember single already discussed.

Whilst working on the Bond movies, Barry struck up a long-standing relationship with British director/writer and former actor, Bryan Forbes. *Seance On A Wet Afternoon* was the second in a series of six films on which Barry collaborated with Forbes, and a single based on the principal theme was released on the United Artists label. This was not the romantically inclined main title but a variation used in the film during a chase sequence through the London underground. The 'b' side was another self-penned number, *Oublie-ca*, which was later used as source music during another Forbes picture - *"The Whisperers"*. This record sold very few copies as did the final single release dating from the period under scrutiny - a Stateside release featuring Lionel Bart's main title theme from the Robert Mitchum film, *Man In The Middle*, coupled with Barry's own *Barney's Blues*. This also failed completely in terms of a chart-placing. From this point on, Barry concentrated his talents on scoring for films, with only the occasional diversion into TV and the world of the stage musical.

This article written and compiled by Geoff Leonard and Pete Walker. (c) 1992.