

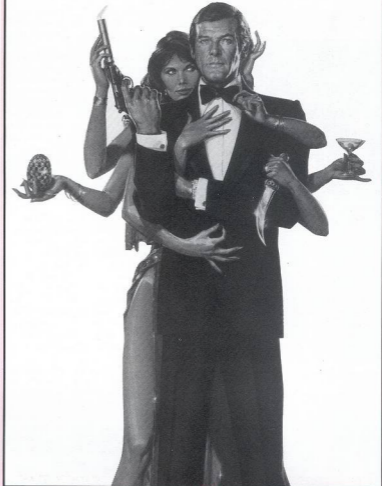
**R**oger Moore's introduction to the role of James Bond heralded a more relaxed and easy-going character. To really ring the changes, the producers opted to give Bond a new sound as well as a new face. All of the Bond films up until *Live And Let Die* (with the exception of *Dr No*) had been scored by John Barry and none of the theme songs since "You Only Live Twice" had had any kind of chart impact.

As a remedy to this, a policy adopted with *From Russia With Love* was re-introduced whereby a leading songwriter penned a theme song whilst a more traditional film composer wrote the background score. In the case of *Live And Let Die*, the theme song was written and performed by Paul McCartney (with his group Wings) and the composer was none other than ex-Beatles producer, George Martin.

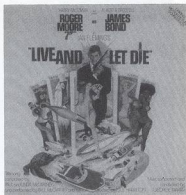
The result provided a strange mixture of styles, as did the film, and while the song became a chart success, the rest of the score was not up to the high standards set by Barry. The music, although well written and performed and highly listenable, operates outside of the action and never seems to integrate itself with the onscreen antics.

The return of John Barry to score *The Man With The Golden Gun* was regarded by many as a hopeful move to ensure a better Bond, and with Christopher Lee as the villain it seemed as though nothing could go wrong. Alas, the film suffered from many weak points but the music tried valiantly to provide a strong background. The main title is a throwback to the halcyon days of *Goldfinger* and Lulu really belts out the title song as if her life depended on it and, at times, seems to be in direct competition with the orchestra as to who can make the most noise. Barry uses the James Bond Theme to good effect in the car-chase and his feel for oriental music that he displayed so effectively in *You Only Live Twice*, is heard during many of the Thailand sequences.

With *The Spy Who Loved Me*, Cubby Broccoli came up with an extremely expensive and lavish film, so the choice of composer was an important one. The enormous success of *The Sting* and *The Way We Were* had



# BOND changes his tune



put Oscar-winning composer Marvin Hamlisch into the musical limelight. As a songwriter he is one of the best around and his contribution to the 10th film in the series contains the perfect match to the glossy spectacle on show.

As a starter, there is the breathtaking pre-credits ski chase. Hamlisch, wisely, took note of the musical origins of this kind of action material and adds immeasurably to the excitement by taking the James Bond Theme and re-shaping it with his own original themes into a pulsating disco dance of danger. The ski chase leads into the main titles and this is where Hamlisch displays his real talent for songwriting. As performed by Carly Simon, with lyrics by Carole Bayer Sager, "Nobody Does It Better" is an extremely stylish romantic ballad that works as a song in its own right as well as a prelude to the

story that follows. The song was nominated for an Oscar, the only music from any Bond film to have this honour.

Hamlisch's sense of humour surfaces in the film when he uses part of the *Laurence Of Arabia* theme for the bumpy truck ride across the desert that Bond and Anya have to undergo to escape from Jaws. The album from *The Spy Who Loved Me* concentrates more on the popular rather than the dramatic music from the film and this is more in line with Moore's interpretation of the character.

Despite the popularity of Hamlisch's score, which for many was a shade too jokey, Bond's musical father, John Barry, was brought back for *Moonraker* and his more dramatic score helped to keep this over-inflated film from becoming too ridiculous. A welcome return to the series was Shirley Bassey, whose previous associations with Bond had been the songs for *Goldfinger* and *Diamonds Are Forever*. Her song is not as good as "Nobody Does It Better," although it does have a haunting edge to it, but the rest of the score more than makes up for this.

The pre-credits sequence, another hair-raising piece of stuntwork, is scored with the James Bond Theme in its original version — pure, simple and so effective. Later, there is a dreamily sensuous piece of music as Bond is lured into the pyramid by Drax's girls. However, the musical highlight is the

long flight to the space-station sequence. Since there is practically no sound, he is given free rein to musically express the vastness and beauty of leaving Earth in a space-shuttle and then seeing the glittering sun-lit space station coming into view. Part of this music seems to be a direct nod to John Williams' *Close Encounters* score and there is even a reference to it earlier where the five-note theme from that film is used as the musical code for opening an electronic door.

The phenomenal success of *Rocky* and its sequel brought the composer of those memorable scores to the attention of Cubby Broccoli and John Barry, unable to do *For Your Eyes Only*, recommended Bill Conti for the job. The first task of any composer assigned to a Bond movie is to provide a song, hopefully, a popular one. The singer, Sheena Easton, then on the receiving end of a lot of media attention, was given an extra boost into the public eye by being filmed singing the song and appearing as part of the main credits. The rest of Conti's score is the most up-tempo that Bond has ever had, with the various chases being driven along with pounding brass and synthesizer effects. The James Bond Theme rears its head from time to time but is really too old for this sort of treatment and retires gracefully after a few bars. The title song was a success although the score itself was not one of Conti's better efforts due probably to the very short amount of time that he was given to complete nearly 75 minutes of music.

Following the pattern of scoring nearly every other Bond, John Barry was back for *Octopussy*, although it sounds as if even he has run out of inspiration for this one. A poverty of musical ideas coupled with a lacklustre orchestration of the James Bond Theme makes this one of the most uninteresting of the scores, and an uninspired theme song doesn't help. Interestingly, "All Time High," with lyrics by Tim Rice, is the first Bond song that doesn't have the film title hidden somewhere in the words. Barry relies too much on his main theme, which isn't strong enough for the credits let alone the rest of the score, and a secondary action theme is overused to the point where it becomes distracting. The whole score is slack and lethargic but then, perhaps Barry is merely commenting on Roger Moore's age!

The series of soundtrack albums from the Roger Moore films offer a mixed bag of sounds and styles and while regular composer John Barry has had only partial success with his scores — certainly not the all time highs he achieved with the Connery series, only Marvin Hamlisch has really come close to capturing Moore's light-hearted approach to the character of James Bond.

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