



C O M P O S E R

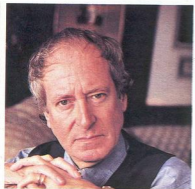
# JOHN BARRY

**I**T'S ONE THING FOR A composer to be pleased with his latest work; John Barry is happy just to be alive. *Dances With Wolves* is his first film score since 1988, when his esophagus ruptured after he imbibed "a health-food drink that proved to be unbelievably toxic," he says. Unable to eat normally for fourteen

months, Barry underwent four major surgeries and, he reports, twice nearly died.

His comeback score is the longest and in many ways the most complex work of his 31-year film career. For the story of John Dunbar, a soldier who joins a Sioux Indian tribe in the 1860s, Barry interwove fifteen separate themes into a virtual symphony, performed by a 91-piece orchestra and a twelve-voice choir.

Louning in the study of his rustic house overlooking New York's Oyster Bay, its walls lined with photographs and autographed scores



by Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Bartok, Mahler, and other composers, the 57-year-old Barry describes how his latest project came about. Kevin Costner, the director and star of *Dances*, first approached him last January, nearly a year before the film's release. "He sent me an assembly of about four hours, from which I started to work on themes," Barry says. "I recorded about twenty minutes of material with just a piano, solo flute, percussion, and some voices, to give the smell and the tone of what the whole score would be. It had the romantic quality that Costner wanted, the Indian themes, the feeling of adventure. And he said, right, go ahead."

Says Costner, "The music choice is the scariest decision of the whole film, because you don't have the skills yourself and you're totally dependent on another." In this case, though, director and composer were completely in sync: "I'm a symphony guy," Costner says. "I like the feel of a big orchestra."

"Though it's a big score, in a strange way it had to be very simple," Barry says. "Dunbar is a simple, decent man, and the story has a kind of purity to it." Barry didn't research the music of the period or of the Indian tribes depicted, preferring to work intuitively. "I approached the whole score from John Dunbar's point of view—his observations of the Sioux tribe," he explains. "As he says in the movie, 'All of the things I've ever heard and ever been told about these people are totally wrong.' And so, musically, it's his assessment of the dignity and graciousness of these people."

Barry entered movies through the back door of British rock 'n' roll in the late 1950s. The John Barry Seven, with Barry on trumpet, backed up vocalist Adam Faith, and when Faith appeared in the movie *Beat Girl*, Barry wrote his first of many film scores.

His most memorable piece of movie music is also one of his shortest: the "James Bond Theme." As Barry now reveals, the producers of the first

Bond film, *Dr. No*, were unhappy with Monty Norman's original score and persuaded him to write an upbeat main-title theme for cash but no screen credit. Since then, Barry has scored twelve of the sixteen 007 outings, including *Goldfinger*, *Thunderball*, *A View to a Kill*, and *The Living Daylights*. He also wrote the moody harmonica theme for *Midnight Cowboy* and the sultry score of *Body Heat* and earned Oscars for *Born Free*, *The Lion in Winter*, and *Out of Africa*.

Feeling "totally new and refreshed" after his recovery and his work on *Dances*, Barry is moving ahead with other musical enterprises. Rehearsals are slated to begin in February for the London revival of his 1974 hit musical, *Billy* (which originally starred a pre-*Phantom of the Opera* Michael Crawford), and he is working on an album based on the John Steinbeck book *Travels With Charley*.

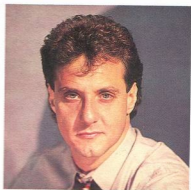
Slimmer and grayer than he was two years ago, Barry is now distanced enough from his illness to be philosophical about it. "George Bernard Shaw said that any artist in his 50s should take a sabbatical—eighteen months to two years off. I did it involuntarily," Barry says with a laugh, "but I wouldn't recommend this method to anybody else."

JON BURLINGAME



PRODUCER

STUART OKEN



OREGO LICHTENFELT/OUTLINE

**T**HE ROLE OF A producer, says Stuart Oken, is to make sure that the people working on a film share a single creative vision. Of course, his definition of "sharing" is tempered by Hollywood savvy. "If I was lucky enough to work with Mike Nichols, I wouldn't be going up to him and saying, 'Hey, Mike, you want to try it this way?'" Oken says. "I would be polite and probably speak when spoken to."

That brand of pragmatism has served Oken well. Since moving to Los Angeles five years ago, Oken, 38, has produced three films—*About Last Night* . . . and the soon-to-be-released *Impromptu* and *Queens Logic*—and is now prepping *Free-jack*, a \$20 million futuristic thriller, for Morgan Creek Productions. Not bad for someone