

Everywhere In Time



A Tribute to John Barry

by Jarrod Emerson

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John Barry shows off his BAFTA Academy Fellowship Award. Initially presented to Alfred Hitchcock in 1971, Barry was the first composer ever to receive this high honor. (12/2/05)
Photo Credit: Vince Maher/WENN/VM1/ZOB/Newscom

Through the spiraling barrel of a gun, a dark suited, fedora-sporting man strolled casually into our line of vision. Pivoting suddenly, he reveals that he, too, has a weapon, and fires first; the screen streams to red. Moments later, screaming horns and hard, rhythmic percussion explode into what has become of the most recognizable compositions in movie music:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E5jjYLsh1V4>

Every incarnation of James Bond, cinema's longest lasting franchise, has had a variation of this melody attached to it in the four decades since. The man who brought us this arrangement? Barry. John Barry. However, the music of 007 is just one block of the late composer's incredible catalogue.

John Barry Prendergast, born November 3rd, 1933 in York, England, was musically inclined from an early age. The son of a theater-owner, Barry took a keen interest in cinema during his youth. Working as a projectionist, Barry said he would often cite what he liked and dislike about films. This exposure to cinema made Barry want to combine his musical and cinema interests, for which fans, like me, are so very grateful.

Over the decades, Barry's work transported audiences to the wilderness of Kenya, delved into the affairs of a corrupt and scheming lawyer, followed the adventures of a Civil War Veteran, took us back in time for love, and into the world of yet another British spy, among others. John Barry possessed the undeniable talent to personify whatever cast of characters he was taking on.

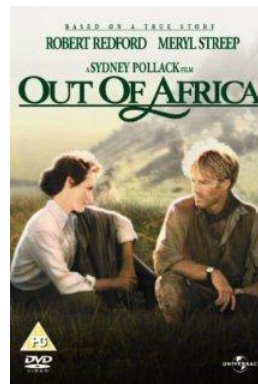
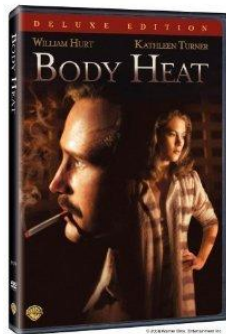
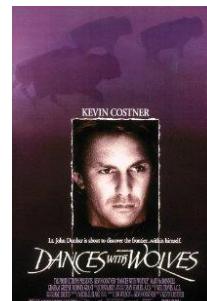
<http://www.films42.com/tribute/ByJarrodEmerson.asp>

Sadly, on January 30th, 2011, Barry succumbed to congestive heart failure in Oyster Bay, New York. Film score lovers, Bond fans, and the entire film community mourn his death.

For this tribute, I watched the following John Barry-scored films:

- *The Black Hole*
- *Body Heat*
- *Born Free*
- *Chaplin: The Movie*
- *Dances With Wolves*
- *From Russia With Love*
- *The Ipcress File*
- *The Lion In Winter*
- *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*
- *Out Of Africa*
- *Somewhere In Time*
- *Walkabout*

**Based on my sample,
I recommend you watch
these six Barry films →**



1). DANCES WITH WOLVES (1990, Directed by Kevin Costner): Civil War veteran “John Dunbar” (Kevin Costner), an unintentional hero after a suicide mission, is promoted and offered an assignment to wherever he pleases. Dunbar requests to be posted at Fort Sedgwick, South Dakota - a remote location where his only neighbors are a Sioux tribe. Though relations are initially rocky, Dunbar rescues an injured member of the tribe, “Stands With A Fist” (Mary McDonnell), prompting “Kicking Bird” (Graham Greene) and “Wind In His Hair”

(Rodney Grant) to extend a hand to him. Despite the language barrier, the lives of Dunbar and the tribe become entwined as he embraces the simplicity of their lifestyle and falls in love with Stands With A Fist, a white woman adopted by the tribe as a child. Meanwhile, he develops a unique connection with a wolf that is always lingering around his post.

Michael Blake originally wrote *Dances with Wolves* as a spec script, and then turned it into a novel before the adaptation was finally given the go ahead with the help of Kevin Costner. Released in 1990, *Dances with Wolves* has been acknowledged as sparking the renaissance in Western films. This high grossing, acclaimed film took home 7 Academy Awards - one of which went to John Barry, who delivers the very best of his latter day scores.

Barry's work here is among his finest. This emotionally epic score further enhances the moving story of a disillusioned veteran, who grows closer to the other side. In addition, Barry's melodies meld beautifully with marvelous South Dakota locations Costner chose for filming. Barry's heavy use of brass enables us to sympathize with Dunbar's search for solitude and comfort in the western frontier. One prime example occurs when Dunbar and the tribesmen hunt and capture a herd of buffalo. Brass segues to racing strings, capturing the romantic feeling of the frontier: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vywSI6SRaf4>

At certain moments, Barry incorporates even more western motifs with the harmonica. A beautiful story brought to life by an intimate, yet grand score.

2) ON HER MAJESTY'S SECRET SERVICE (1969, Directed by Peter Hunt): The sixth film in the long running James Bond series sees Bond (George Lazenby) venture into new territory. Crime boss "Mac Ange Draco" (Gabrielle Ferzetti) offers to assist Bond in tracking down his old nemesis, "Ernst Stavro Blofeld" (Telly Savalas), if Bond will romance Draco's spiteful daughter "Tracey" (Diana Rigg). Bond accepts, and his efforts lead him to the Swiss Alps, where he discovers Blofeld's plans to unleash a global pandemic. Meanwhile, proud bachelor Bond finds himself developing legitimate romantic feelings for Tracey.

On Her Majesty's Secret Service is something of a gem in the series. This unconventional film marked the first time an actor other than Sean Connery had played the agent. Editor Peter Hunt was given the reigns to direct, and deliberately kept the gadgetry and fantasy elements to a minimum, wisely focusing on the love story between Bond and Tracey. And, with this new, unique Bond, John Barry brings in new sounds, creating the best of his twelve Bond scores.

Throughout the score, Barry makes heavy use of the Moog synthesizer, with haunting effect. Another distinction from most Bond films is the opening titles. Instead of the usual flashy song, an epic instrumental plays over the female silhouettes: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FbqQcnybyJI>

As the shadow of Bond runs, the moog synthesizer gives way to French horns, creating a strong opening theme, which unlike many of the series opening tunes sounds just as striking today. The title piece is repeated throughout the film, particularly in the film's many thrilling ski sequences. But Barry contributed a song elsewhere in the film; the beautiful love anthem "We Have All The Time In The World": http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2t_pg2cpps4

Written by Barry (with lyrics by Hal David), the song features vocals by Louis Armstrong and, like the title tune, is as sweet and heartbreaking as anything you'll ever hear in a 007 film. Elsewhere, Barry gives us beautiful breathtaking horns, as playing over footage of the Swiss mountains, as Bond is flown to Blofeld's hideout. As the series reinvented itself for the first time, so too did Barry, giving us a haunting, beautiful and thrilling score that really does make us feel that we have all the time in the world.

3) SOMEWHERE IN TIME (1980, Directed by Jeannot Szwarc): Aspiring young playwright, "Richard Collier" (Christopher Reeve), is approached at the beginning of the film by a mysterious old woman, begging him to come back to her. Pressing a pocket watch into his hand, she departs, and he moves on with his life. Eight years later, Richard is a successful, but lonely playwright. Traveling to the Grand Hotel, Richard becomes transfixed by an old photograph of early twentieth century stage actress "Elise McKenna" (Jane Seymour). Upon researching McKenna's life, he realizes she was the woman who approached him. Obsessed with meeting young Elise, Richard manages to travel, via hypnosis (remember the pocket watch?) back in time to 1912. There he not only encounters lovely Elise, but also her possessive manager (Christopher Plummer), whom he must fend off in order to get close to her.

Somewhere in Time is a simplistic story: one of pure emotion. And it was a unique project for nearly everyone involved. Christopher Reeve had just soared to stardom with *Superman*, and director Jeannot Szwarc had just finished *Jaws 2*. Nearly everyone became involved with this project out of passion, and this is certainly true of John Barry. According to the composer, when approached to do the music he had recently lost both of his parents. The emotional turmoil heavily influenced his scoring, and the results are nothing short of marvelous.

This is one of the most moving of Barry's catalogue. Laden with piano and strings, Barry's music brings out the obsession, romance, and heartbreak of Richard's journey: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rf8C_fkEXqQ

Barry also incorporates Sergei Rachmaninoff's "Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini" into several cues, giving another layer to the love shared by Richard and Elise. The score also becomes occasionally haunting and eerie such as when Richard begins his journey through time. Director Szwarc wisely insisted the film be devoid of special effects, which allows for more dramatic effect from

Barry. Gradually the cue progresses from suspense to beauty, marking Richard's arrival. Like our hero's romance, Barry manages to transcend time with music that is as beautiful and haunting today as it was then.

4). BODY HEAT (1981, Directed by Lawrence Kasdan): This steamy noir stars William Hurt as Ned Racine, an arrogant, lazy Florida lawyer lusting after sexy "Matty Walker" (Kathleen Turner). Playing coy and uninterested at first, Matty slowly stokes the fire of Ned's all-consuming desire, and leads him to believe that she returns his love. The only obstacle in their path is Matty's wealthy, disinterested husband, "Edmund" (Richard Crenna). However, since Matty signed a prenuptial agreement that leaves her with nothing if she divorces Edmund, they conspire to murder Edmund and escape with his money. Of course, not all is as it appears, particularly when it comes to Matty, but Ned comes to that realization far too late.

Lawrence Kasdan's first outing as a director proves a perfect fit for John Barry. Though made in the early 1980s, the film clearly pulls much of its influence from Billy Wilder's *Double Indemnity* (from way back in 1944). And, much like Kasdan's direction, the same film heavily influenced Barry's arrangements. Breaking from his more typical sweeping romanticism, Barry's score pulses with suspense and eroticism, present from the opening titles. Ignited by saxophone and piano, this queue sets the tone for this seductive story. Occasionally, Barry segues seamlessly into strings, especially in moments of suspense, such as when Racine prepares to kill Edmund, and race away through the nighttime fog. This noir story has held up incredibly well, due in large part to Barry's contribution.

5) THE LION IN WINTER (1968, Directed by Anthony Harvey): Based on the Broadway play of the same name, this costume drama tells a story of turmoil within the family of King Henry II (Peter O'Toole) in the year 1183. Katherine Hepburn (in an Oscar winning role) costars as Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine. As the family prepares to celebrate Christmas, Henry is faced with the decision of who will inherit the throne: Richard (Anthony Hopkins), Geoffrey (John Castle) or John (Nigel Terry). Henry and Eleanor disagree over which son shall succeed Henry all the while dealing with the demands of King Phillip of France (Timothy Dalton).

The Lion in Winter drew much acclaim, winning 3 of its 7 Academy Award nominations. This, I am happy to report, was one of Barry's four Oscar Winning scores, and a well-deserved Oscar it was. Throughout the sixties, Barry had become chiefly known for his James Bond scores. *The Lion in Winter* provided the perfect opportunity for Barry to prove himself capable of something completely different.

From the opening titles, which are superimposed over menacing stone faces, Barry makes it very clear that we are not in the debonair, suave world of 007, but

something far darker, more intense. A grand amalgamation of brass, strings and haunting choral chants create a menacing march:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jde-NT7vfn0>

For the rest of the film, Barry gives us elegance, beauty, and an intensity that serve as the icing on the cake of exceptional performances, particularly from O'Toole and Hepburn. Barry's music proves crucial in successfully bringing this powerful piece from the stage to screen. This is a stunning and enduring entry that further proved Barry's versatility as a composer.

6) OUT OF AFRICA (1985, Directed by Sydney Pollack): This sweeping romance is from the memoirs of Danish Baroness Karen Von Blixen. The story begins with the Baroness (Meryl Streep) writing about her days spent in Africa, before flashing back across the years. The Baroness had asked her new husband, "Baron Bror Von Blixen" (Klaus Maria Brandauer) to help her start a dairy farm in colonial Kenya, but the Baron purchases a coffee plantation instead. He moves his wife there, then leaves her to her own devices as he returns to his preferred pastimes of womanizing and drinking. As they grow more distant from one another, the Baroness develops an attraction to big game hunter, "Denys Finch Hatton" (Robert Redford). Their affair is chronicled in the Baroness' writings, along with her attempts to run the plantation.

Out of Africa proved both a critical and commercial success, taking a total of seven Academy Awards, including one for John Barry's music. Here Barry dabbles in his trademark monumental arrangements, as well as traditional African chants and rhythms: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q_fAEdw7ts0

Barry's compositions prove remarkable as he escorts us through intimacy and adventure, and sweeps us off our feet. One particular scene comes to mind in which Hatton takes the Baroness flying; the intense beauty of the sequence is wonderfully complimented by Barry's music. All in all a superb effort from Mr. Barry.

**Not all of Barry's work has aged well...
While certain projects may have been successful or acclaimed
in their time, today they have less of an impact.**

1) THE BLACK HOLE (1979, Directed by Gary Nelson): Disney's 1979 foray into science fiction stars a cast of veteran and character actors alike. In the distant future, Captain Holland (Robert Forster) commands the USS Palomino, along with "Lt. Pizer" (Joseph Bottoms), "Dr. Kate McCrae" (Yvette Mimieux), "Harry Booth" (Ernest Borgnine), and "Dr. Durant" (Anthony Perkins). The crew encounters a black hole, only to notice a stationary ship. The ship's robot V.I.N.C.E.N.T. identifies the ship as the long lost Cygnus. The crew is given the go ahead to dock, when they meet the eccentric "Dr. Reinhardt" (Maximilian

Schell), who announces plans to fly the ship, along with his menacing droid Maximilian and crew of faceless robots into the black hole. However, the crew grows suspicious about Reinhardt's claims, and begins to question his motivation.

In the late seventies, the Science Fiction genre exploded, much like the Death Star in that little film from 1977. Unfortunately, *The Black Hole* can't begin to compare to most. Despite a decent story and a strong cast, the film fails to live up to its potential. The script seems to be unsure of whether it's campy, or serious in tone. Unfortunately, John Barry's score does not help matters.

Like the screenplay, the soundtrack seems to suffer an identity crisis. While Barry brings us a sweeping, almost royal sounding overture, the sound does not seem right for this kind of story, which is far more low-key. The opening titles are mainly the moog synthesizer, but, unlike *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*, these fail to create a rousing theme, instead sounding like a campy, dated soap opera. In other parts of the soundtrack, Barry seems to know what the story demands, but the score is ultimately messy, and many of the film's recurring themes have not held up as timelessly as other films in the genre, like *Star Wars*, *Star Trek*, or *Alien*.

My Bottom Line:

The majority of John Barry's work endures quite well, giving us some of the most breathtaking, emotional and diverse themes in cinematic history.

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Ohio-native Jarrod Emerson has been residing in Chicago for the past four years. He is a graduate of Columbia College Chicago, and is currently enrolled in courses at the Second City Training Center. He has been working with FF2 since 2007, and leaps at any opportunity (or excuse) to see more classic films!

FF2 Editor's Note:

Although we've seen most of the films mentioned in this piece, we saw them before we began FF2, so, alas, most of them are not listed in our database. We are very grateful to Jarrod for going back into the archive to create a personal record of John Barry's most memorable contributions to cinema.