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## John Barry • *Great Movie Sounds of John Barry*

Columbia/[Speakers Corner](#) S BPG 62402  
180-gram LP  
1963 & 1966/2018

Music ●●●●●  
Sound ●●●●●

by [Guy Lemcoe](#) | October 26, 2018

During his fifty-year career, composer John Barry won five Oscars and four Grammys. Among the scores he produced is my favorite, and what I consider his magnum opus, *Dances with Wolves*. Barry's music is characterized by bombast tempered with richly harmonious, "loungy," often sensuous melodies. Added to those are dramatic accents of brass, catchy Latin rhythms and creative use of flute, harp, timpani and exotic percussion (such as the talking drums, which feature prominently in the score from *Born Free*). The Kentonesque brass writing (trumpets reaching for the sky and bass trombones plumbing the lower registers), which helps define the Bond sound, no doubt stems from Barry's studies with Stan Kenton arranger Bill Russo. I also hear traces of Max Steiner and Bernard Hermann in Barry's scores. When he used vocals, the songs often became *Billboard* hits. Witness Shirley Bassey's work on *Goldfinger*, Tom Jones's *Thunderball*, Matt Monro's *From Russia With Love* and *Born Free*, Nancy Sinatra's *You Only Live Twice* and Louis Armstrong's *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*.



Side one of *Great Movie Sounds of John Barry* features a half-dozen Bond-film flag-wavers -- two each from *Thunderball* and *From Russia With Love* and one each from *Goldfinger* and *Dr. No*, best enjoyed with a martini -- shaken, not stirred. Side two highlights themes from other late-1960s films, including *The Chase*, *King Rat*, *The Knack*, *Séance on a Wet Afternoon*, *The Ipcress File* (another favorite of mine) and, last but not least, *Born Free*. Listening to this album took me back over 40 years, when I obsessively read the Ian Fleming novels and rushed to the theater as soon as the next Bond film hit the screen. I am as excited with the music now as I was then.

As for the LP itself, it maintains the high standards set by Speakers Corner, which uses the pressing facilities of the highly respected Pallas Group in Diepholz, Germany. The resulting vinyl is dead quiet, ruler flat, blemish free, and it also sounds *great*. A sticker on the shrink-wrap proudly proclaims "This LP is an entirely analogue production," and it sounds it. Sourced from original master tapes and cut using Neumann cutting consoles, the LP's sound reminds me of pop albums I listened to in the late '60s (in a good way) -- exaggerated channel separation, accentuated midrange, multi-miked to the extreme -- except cleaner, free of artifacts and with much greater dynamic range. There is something special and fundamental about recordings made before the advent of digital bits. Other than frequent manipulation of the sound both in the studio and mixing booth, they sound primal, evoking memories in anyone over the age of 40. This album's artwork and labels are accurate facsimiles of those for the 1966 stereo UK pressing. The LP is protected with a very nice rice-paper-lined sleeve. An eight-page insert, cataloguing Speakers Corner releases, shares space in the sleeve with the record.

If you are a fan of John Barry's film music, you'll want this album because you've never heard it sound better. If you've lived in a cave for the last four decades and are not familiar with this music, grab a copy of this LP and bring yourself up to date. You'll be happy you did. ☺

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