Original Motion Picture Soundtrack

VARÈSE ENCORE

Music Composed by JOHN BARRY
Whether it’s 007’s wailing trumpet, an epic French horn echoing over the Serengeti, or Midnight Cowboy’s lonely harmonica, the music of John Barry is by and large acoustic, orchestral. But Barry began experimenting with electronic music back in the late 1960s. In The Lion in Winter, he used a Moog synthesizer to give the main title’s bass line what he called its “ruthlessness.” And On Her Majesty’s Secret Service (1969), as Jon Burlingame points out in his seminal The Music of James Bond, became the first film score to incorporate the Moog prominently throughout. By the mid-1980s, New Wave synthpop had filtered into film music and composers were experimenting with all-electronic scores. Barry also pushed his musical boundaries electronically, but never completely abandoned his acoustic tendencies.

The idea for Jagged Edge (1985) originated with producer Martin Ransohoff, who wanted to film a courtroom drama examining ethics in the American justice system. Richard Marquand (Return Of The Jedi) was signed on as director and brought along his friend, screenwriter Joe Eszterhas (Flashdance), a former writer for Rolling Stone. The film tackles the thorny issue of a criminal attorney (Glenn Close) who falls in love with her client (Jeff Bridges), a man accused of brutally murdering his wife. The two stars were hot at the moment. During filming, Close, who had recently made the leap to lead roles in Maxie, was nominated for an Oscar for her ethereal supporting work in The Natural and Bridges landed his first Best Actor nomination for playing an alien who clones the body of a dead house painter in Starman.

Jagged Edge was shot in 10 weeks and on a $10 million budget. Marquand “stripped it right down—I like a hard, fast pace,” he said in Variety, but filming out of sequence “makes it hard to hold on to where you are.” To keep the actors from “losing their way” and to maintain the “psychological balance between the characters,” the director worked out a linear “diary” of plot events so everyone knew where they were at all times.
then the intrigue and then it all begins to disintegrate, so the music begins to disintegrate." Over the main titles [track 1], piano and flute (the only two acoustic instruments in the score) play the sweet, simple love theme, a love that Barry deliberately taints by the use of a flatted third in the melody. Royal S. Brown in Fanfare said the “nicely timed blues note gives this ‘sweet’ theme a bit of a kick just when you think it is going to become maybe just a bit syrupy.”

When it came to the synthesizer, Barry admitted, “I’m not good at all that programming.” So the composer enlisted the help of Jonathan Elias, “a very good composer [...] who knows that technology inside and out. He helped me learn some basic techniques about certain textural things, timespan things. I made my own list of points of reference about certain sounds and effects and just came away with a shopping list, for want of a better term, of what I thought would work well — things that would be appropriate for the movie. The rest of it was written pretty much like an orchestral score — low string sounds, brass sounds, and a smattering of synthesizer effects, like clusters and shock chords.” The
synthesizer effects feature most prominently in scenes dealing with the brutal murder [track 1] and revisiting the murder scene [track 4]. The instrument also underscores Marquand’s numerous red herrings such as Teddy’s (Close) encounter with a sleazy, hostile witness [track 8] and Jack’s (Bridges) hollow affection [track 11].

“I especially love the very end of the movie,” Barry said in The Score. By the time the end credits roll [track 13], “everything’s kind of finally resolved, but my music has become totally black and grim. The audience reaction was, ‘Is there going to be a sequel?’ because there’s nothing dramatic at all happening on the screen.” A sequel was in

the works, and Close and Robert Loggia, who earned an Oscar nomination as a foul-mouthed private detective, both liked the script commissioned from writer Bill Phillips. But, no doubt thanks to his new higher profile, Loggia pulled out and the project collapsed.

“I enjoyed that movie,” Barry said about Jagged Edge, “I enjoyed learning more about electronics.” Royal S. Brown praised it as “a truly top-notch score,” but the film was sandwiched in between — and unfortunately overshadowed by — Barry’s latest Bond picture, A View To A Kill, and his superb score for Out Of Africa, which would bring the composer his fourth Academy Award.

The original Jagged Edge soundtrack album was broken up into 13 “parts,” programmed with a two-sided LP in mind. For this Encore reissue, those tracks have been re-sequenced to reflect the film order and marked with Barry’s original cue titles. Marquand, as he did on the original album, should once again have the last word …

— Jim Lochner

John Barry has at the same time such an immense musical range and such a sophisticated ease that he constantly surprises. His score for my bittersweet movie Until September was both generous and deep. Here, with Jagged Edge he not only underscores the horror and the dark boundaries of nightmare with deep pads of electronics, he also takes your breath away with one of the sweetest, simplest tunes you will ever hear.

It is a rare pleasure for a film director to be able to draw a group of loyal professionals around him like a repertory company of high talent. I am honored that John undertook to compose again for me and, of course, thrilled, as you will be, by the music he created.
1. MAIN TITLE (3:53)
2. BURIAL AT SEA (1:37)
3. HENRY STILES IS DEAD (1:15)
4. JACK AND TEDDY AT MURDER SCENE (2:15)
5. LOVE THEME (3:57)
6. TEDDY’S BETRAYAL (Alternate) (1:02)
7. [UNUSED] (1:54)
8. BOBBY SLADE CONFRONTATION (2:24)
9. WAITING FOR THE VERDICT (:40)
10. FREEDOM AND TYPEWRITER (1:51)
11. JACK CALLS (1:16)
12. BYE SAM (1:48)
13. END CREDITS (3:35)

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JOHN BARRY

Produced by John Barry
Executive Producer: Robert Townson
Mastered by Patricia Sullivan