

From: *Shadsfax* Issue 46 (2004) 1–13

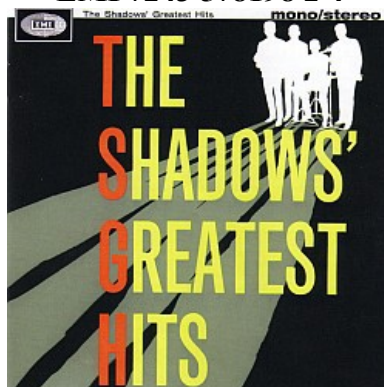
The Shadows' Final Tour was heralded by a blaze of publicity. It also provided a spur to the record companies to mark the event with distinctive releases. The following pages present detailed reviews of those CDs from EMI and Universal which coincided more or less with the start of the tour. There have been four releases from EMI, three of which, proposed, compiled and amply documented by distinguished Shadows authority Rob Bradford, co-ordinated by Tim Chacksfield and remastered by Peter Mew at Abbey Road, furnish at a stroke what many collectors have long been asking for. The solitary Universal release contains a brand-new Shadows number penned by Jerry Lordan, the talent responsible for some of their most enduring hits.

The tour is a UK tour. Even so, it is surprising that overseas concerns have not jumped in with compilations of their own, though the enterprising Magic Records from France plan to revamp the long deleted "Tasty" and "Specs Appeal" albums for a 2CD set (scheduled for early June at the time of writing).

The Shadows

(i) "The Shadows' Greatest Hits"

EMI 7243 578198 2 4



Mono then stereo/ mock-stereo** versions of: *Apache* / *Man Of Mystery* / *The Stranger* / *FBI*** / *Midnight* / *The Frightened City* / *Kon-Tiki* / *36-24-36* / *The Savage* / *Peace Pipe* / *Wonderful Land*** / *Stars Fell On Stockton* / *Guitar Tango* / *The Boys*** / *Dance On!* --- BONUS TRACK: *Quatermasster's Stores*

(ii) "More Hits!"

EMI 7243 578199 2 3

Both Released 26 April 2004



Mono then stereo versions of: *Foot Tapper* (two distinct versions, see below) / *Atlantis* / *Shindig* / *Theme For Young Lovers* / *Geronimo* / *Shazam!* / *The Rise And Fall Of Flingel Bunt* / *Genie With The Light Brown Lamp* / *Mary Anne* / *Stingray* / *Rhythm And Greens* / *Don't Make My Baby Blue* / *The Lute Number* / *The Drum Number* --- BONUS TRACKS: *The War Lord* / *A Place In The Sun*

These two CDs are 2004 digital remasterings of two familiar analogue albums, in both their mono and their stereo (in the case of the earlier of them, mainly stereo) formats: that is, on the one hand, “The Shadows’ Greatest Hits” (mono, June 1963; stereo, August 1971?/ May 1974?: release date discussed later; CD stereo, June 1989/ reissue September 1996), and, on the other, “More Hits!” (mono & stereo both December 1965; CD stereo, June 1989).

Since this new “Greatest Hits” is not an artificially programmed CD (unlike, for example, the 1989 “Greatest” referred to above, or the August 1987 “20 Golden Greats”, which ignored the idiosyncrasies of the vinyl album and offered a set of “standard” cuts), its run of stereo tracks (17–32) actually includes the three *mock-stereo* examples which were featured for the first time on the 70’s stereo LP. These are not labelled as such, or discussed. A reproduction of the back cover of the stereo rather than the mono LP (see last page of booklet) would have made this clear. Anyway, the tracks in question are these:

1

FBI: this is the version used almost universally on CD compilations. A true stereo version had appeared fleetingly early on, on the USA compilation album “Surfing With The Shadows” from 1963. It is hard to believe that its master was sent overseas, as is commonly asserted: after all, for this same album stereo versions, the first of their kind, were also made available for *Man Of Mystery*, *The Stranger*, *The Frightened City*, *Kon-Tiki*, and *Dance On!* , to satisfy a market firmly committed to stereo reproduction years ahead of the British Isles. Masters of these were not allowed to leave the country never to return. Since *FBI* was originally scheduled for release not as a mono single but as a mono/stereo track on “The Shadows” EP issued the month before (January 1961), one possibility is that the stereo version was tucked away with the four stereo cuts for that release. Whatever the truth of this, it has apparently not been sighted since, anywhere. It should be possible if all else fails to obtain a clean copy of “Surfing”, record *FBI* to CD-R with a quality turntable/ cartridge, and process it for CD, avoiding the distortion/ shrillness in the two available CD examples (the one, from France, legitimate, the other, from Italy, only legitimate with a bit of special pleading); but there was no time even to consider such a step for this particular release.

2

Wonderful Land: this track has an almost unbelievably complicated history which Jim Nugent has done much to unravel; it will be documented fully by Les Woosey in the updated *CD Guide* to appear later in 2004.

3

The Boys: it is not known why a mock-stereo version was generated for this release when a true stereo version was there from the start. Maybe somebody took a dislike to the curiously wiry sound of the lead guitar on the stereo, as opposed to the mono, version; if the stereo version had been mislaid, it was soon rediscovered. In any event, this is the third, and by far the best, mock-stereo implementation on CD. It is already to hand (but it sounds dire) on the Australian “The Shadows Favourites” (Australia, September 1988), and on “The Definitive Guitar Album” (Holland, February 1989).

To turn now to a more general look at the background to these two CDs. “The Shadows’ Greatest Hits” was first issued (in mono) in June 1963, and it was quickly followed up with “Cliff’s Hit Album” (again mono only) in July; both stalled at No.2. The Cliff album accurately reflected its title, with no fewer than thirteen Top Five singles represented, while The Shadows, who had only been chart-makers in their own right since July 1960, and had devoted much of their studio time to supporting Cliff, had to move beyond A-singles to fill an album. But the quality of this other

material was outstanding, with listeners and aspiring musicians alike already drooling over such gems as *36-24-36*, *Midnight* and *Peace Pipe*. In the event, it was “Greatest Hits” that proved the more durable by far in chart-terms, with an astonishing stay of 49 weeks as opposed to Cliff’s 19.

“More Hits!” in contrast made no impression on the record-buying public. The Shadows were selling primary albums in quantity around this time, but the impact they had been making of late on the singles charts (still a powerful indicator of success) would have made this particular “Hits” compilation seem unconvincing/ unappealing to all but their dedicated following. It would be interesting to know how many UK copies were shifted of the mono issue, and how many of the stereo (some collectors no doubt will have caught up with the latter on re-release in 1971/1986). It was notable at the time for providing some absolute firsts in stereo, namely *Foot Tapper* (see below), *Shindig*, *Geronimo* [an AV], *Shazam!*, *The Rise And Fall ...*, *Mary Anne* and *Don’t Make My Baby Blue*. A real oddity (presumably an oversight), faithfully reflected on this new CD, was the choice of versions for *Foot Tapper*: the LP/EP version was featured on the mono issue, but the 45-version with arranged ending cropped up on the stereo issue (this could perhaps have been made explicit in the present notes, where we are just told that the two versions were “markedly different”). So we now have a good in-house mono example of the former, previously available legitimately on CD only on the Cliff & The Shadows box set “Die Story” (Germany, October 1988).

Mention of mono brings us to what for many will be the real attraction of these discs, the provision of a whole run of mono tracks in superb sound. There is no lack of punch and immediacy anywhere; those on “Greatest” sound particularly fine to my ears. The claim was made in one of the Shadows Websites in April 2004 that we have on offer here “fifteen [tracks] making their absolute first appearance in the original mono mixes on CD”. This is ten too many: only *Stars Fell On Stockton*, *The Drum Number*, *The Lute Number*, *Stingray*, and *A Place In The Sun* are new to CD in this form. Of these, the biggest catch for collectors will be the fourth, harbouring as it does an alternative version.

What matters much more here, surely, is that these tracks stem directly from EMI UK, and it shows. Of the 27 tracks previously obtainable on CD in mono, a round dozen have appeared only on overseas issues: *Apache* (believe it or not), *Man Of Mystery*, *The Stranger*, *36-24-36*, *Quatermasster’s Stores*, *Foot Tapper* LP/EP version (see above), *Atlantis* (AV!), *The Rise And Fall Of Flingel Bunt*, *Genie With The Light Brown Lamp*, *Mary Anne*, *Rhythm And Greens*, and *Don’t Make My Baby Blue*. The masters used for a very high proportion of these were pretty poor, and some were downright diabolical.

For any self-respecting Shadows fan, then, these discs are surely indispensable: all the more so, because the quality of presentation, and above all, of annotation, places them amongst the very finest releases from the company. The standard achieved by Rob Bradford’s documentation of Shadows and related product has always been superlative, not to say unrivalled: consider his contributions in the field of compact disc to the group’s “EP Collection” series (1990-1993), or to “The Hank Marvin Guitar Syndicate” (1990) and “The Original Hank Marvin” (1998), to mention just a few. These new releases carry on the tradition.

Each disc is housed in a clear tray, the first picking up the well-known motif of the front cover, the second offering a fine colour shot of the Rostill line-up. More importantly, each disc is accompanied by a 12-page booklet. For “Greatest”, three full-page shots aptly represent the three different line-ups (Harris Meehan/ Harris Bennett/ Locking Bennett); it is good to see that one of the three for “More” has Brian Locking, who of course contributed significantly to the collection. But good photos of the group can be found everywhere. Of much greater interest is the fact that both booklets have a two-page introduction setting the respective albums in their historical context, and then three pages of succinct track-by-track analysis. I am entirely at one with Rob in his appraisal of *Quatermasster’s Stores*, his bonus track on “Greatest”. Why on earth wasn’t it there in the first place? A point often aired by the group (repeated to me by Jet Harris two or three Shadowmanias back) was the feeling that it was rather too like a Johnny & The Hurricanes’ number to be given

undue prominence. The comparison with such transatlantic antics in my view does The Shadows a grave disservice.

One point raised needs to be looked at in detail. Rob dates the release of “Greatest Hits” stereo to May 1974, as I did myself in *The Shadows At EMI*. Though I did not discuss the matter there, I should have. Occasionally a date of 1971 has been suggested. In 2003, EMI Archives informed me that this was indeed the date they had for it. On the face of it, this looks conclusive. But I have grave doubts.

For one thing, I cannot find a collector who can reliably recall a release date of 1971, but many who can vouch for 1974, when I myself obtained a copy. For another, a search through music magazines and trade papers for 1971 throws up not the slightest mention of a stereo “The Shadows’ Greatest Hits” (there is plenty of publicity on the other hand for the stereo version of “Cliff’s Hit Album”, definitely issued in August 1971), whereas those for 1974 are full of it: in fact, the LP charted in May 1974, staying in the listings for six weeks and peaking at No. 48, a chart-position that suggests takeup primarily by sharp-eyed Shadows enthusiasts who were allegedly fast asleep in 1971.

It may well be the case that the mock-stereo trio was concocted in the late 1960s or early 1970s with a view to a fairly imminent release, maybe to coincide with the stereo (a thoroughly misleading label, in the case of some tracks) Cliff album. But I suspect that the issuing of the *Shadows’* album was cancelled for 1971 (EMI do not appear to have separate lists of cancelled product), perhaps because the group was out of the limelight at the start of the 1970s, with Marvin Welch & Farrar in full swing in 1971, and only came to life again in 1973/1974.

In the event, two of the new mock-stereo mixes, those of *FBI* and *Wonderful Land*, *did* turn up as large as life, as Les Woosey points out, on the November 1972 UK maxi-single DB 8958. These apart, there is no absolutely reliable evidence to suggest that any of the three mock-stereo tracks appeared on overseas compilation albums prior to 1974, whereas there are examples of these implementations of *FBI* and *Wonderful Land* (*The Boys* in this guise is a true rarity) in the *second* half of the 1970s.

On this basis, I would conjecture that the stereo album was prepared for 1971 release to keep the Cliff issue company, then cancelled; limited use of it was made by EMI UK in 1972, the entire set being made available on a much-publicised and high-profile release in 1974. Subsequently, overseas markets started to make extensive use of two at least of the mock-stereo tracks, to the point where these became the norm in compilations (from the 1980s certainly).

Incidentally, nothing whatsoever can be inferred from the stereo tracks proper, since two of them (the first two in the list below) had appeared in this format shortly after their issue in mono, while the remainder, with the sole exception of *Stars Fell On Stockton*, had been made available by EMI prior to August 1971 (including almost certainly the last in the list, the precise date of which is not quite secure) for collections put together outside the UK:

- 1962: *The Savage, Peace Pipe*, on the January stereo issue of the album “The Young Ones”.
- 1963: those mentioned above in connection with “Surfing With The Shadows”.
- 1969: *Midnight, Guitar Tango*, on the Dutch “The Best Of The Shadows”.
- 1971 (June!): 36–24–36, on the Dutch “The Shadows Story”.
- 1971 (or perhaps late 1970): *Apache*, on the Dutch Cliff & The Shadows “Rock ’n’ Roll Classics Vol.9” — it is amazing, is it not, that this of all tracks eluded the stereo market for so long?

These listings are based on systematic scrutiny by Les Woosey and myself of compilation albums from the 60s/ early 70s (John Panteny and Ulrich Sasu provided invaluable assistance here). Many describing themselves as “Stereo” prove on close inspection to be nothing of the kind; some, from Japan, turn out to be positively hair-raising: but that is another story.

If anyone can throw any further light on this question, please get in touch!

The Shadows
“Complete Singles: As & Bs 1959–1980: 21 Years At The Top”
EMI 7243 578181 2 4 [4CD]
Released 3 May 2004



First four tracks: The Drifters; tracks listed are stereo except: * mono; ** mock-stereo

CD1 (7243 578182 2 3) *Feelin' Fine** / *Don't Be A Fool (With Love)** / *Driftin'** / *Jet Black** / *Saturday Dance** / *Lonesome Fella** / *Apache* / *Quatermass's Stores* / *Man Of Mystery* / *The Stranger* / *FBI*** / *Midnight* / *The Frightened City* / *Back Home* / *Kon-Tiki* / *36–24–36* / *The Savage* / *Peace Pipe* / *Wonderful Land* / *Stars Fell On Stockton* / *Guitar Tango* / *What A Lovely Tune*** / *Dance On!* / *All Day*

CD2 (7243 578183 2 2) *Foot Tapper** / *The Breeze And I* / *Atlantis* / *I Want You To Want Me* / *Shindig* / *It's Been A Blue Day* / *Geronimo* / *Shazam!* / *Theme For Young Lovers* / *This Hammer* / *The Rise And Fall Of Flingel Bunt* / *It's A Man's World* / *Rhythm And Greens* / *The Miracle* / *Genie With The Light Brown Lamp* / *Little Princess* / *Mary Anne* / *Chu-Chi* / *Stingray* / *Alice In Sunderland* / *Don't Make My Baby Blue* / *My Grandfather's Clock*

CD3 (7243 578184 2 1) *The War Lord* / *I Wish I Could Shimmy Like My Sister Arthur* / *I Met A Girl* / *Late Night Set* / *A Place In The Sun* / *Will You Be There* / *The Dreams I Dream* / *Scotch On The Socks** / *Maroc 7* / *Bombay Duck* / *Tomorrow's Cancelled* / *Somewhere* / *Midnight Cowboy* [Hank Marvin] / *Running Out Of World* / *Dear Old Mrs Bell* / *Trying To Forget The One You Love** / *London's Not Too Far* [Hank Marvin] / *Slaughter On 10th Avenue* / *Turn Around And Touch Me* / *Jungle Jam*

CD4 (7243 578185 2 0) *Let Me Be The One* / *Stand Up Like A Man* / *Run Billy Run* / *Honourable Puff-Puff* / *It'll Be Me Babe* / *Like Strangers* / *Another Night* / *Cricket Bat Boogie* / *Love Deluxe* / *Sweet Saturday Night* / *Don't Cry For Me Argentina* / *Montezuma's Revenge* / *Theme From The Deer Hunter* / *Bermuda Triangle* / *Rodrigo's Guitar Concerto* / *Song For Duke* / *Riders In The Sky* / *Rusk* / *Heart Of Glass* / *Return To The Alamo*

May 1995 saw the release of a 3CD set from EMI, “The First 20 Years At The Top”, which offered a high proportion of Drifters/Shadows UK singles: all the A-sides from *Feelin' Fine* to *Heart Of Glass*, with the corresponding B-sides from *Don't Be A Fool (With Love)* to *Jungle Jam* (i.e. stopping at 1973). This new box brings some distinct advantages.

In the first place, it is as certain as anything can be that the new discs will not have problems with their chemical composition: if you have not opened up your “20 Years” set for some years, then put on some rubber gloves before you do! (See *Shadsfax* Issue 29 [2000] 11.)

Second, of course, we have the rest of the B-sides, with the Hank Marvin A-side to a Shadows B-side (*London's Not Too Far*, 1968) and Hank Marvin B-side (*Midnight Cowboy*, 1969) to Shadows A-side thrown in for good measure, though the order in which these are presented mars the otherwise spot-on chronological listing. This is a minor flaw when this set is viewed as a whole, but just for the record, the order of tracks 13-18 on the third disc should be: 13 *London's Not Too Far* / 14 *Running Out Of World* / 15 *Dear Old Mrs Bell* / 16 *Trying To Forget The One You Love* / 17

Slaughter On 10th Avenue / 18 Midnight Cowboy.

Third, a rare alternative version is provided. The set as a whole is typical of Shadows (and many other) singles collections in that it leaves purists to go into a corner and sulk by substituting where appropriate stereo or, failing that, mock-stereo equivalents for the original mono issues (i.e. the majority of tracks now under consideration); However, late on in the proceedings EMI took up the suggestion of sticking to the mono version of *Trying To Forget The One You Love*, on the ground that it constitutes an AV only obtainable otherwise on the 2002 French CD “The Final 60’s”, Magic Records 3930172 (not everybody after all has the resources, space or inclination to collect overseas CDs). Also in mono out of choice are *Scotch On The Socks* (the version popular with clubbers, far preferable to the ineptly raucous stereo rewrite on the 1997 “Abbey Road” CD), and *Foot Tapper*, often employed in compilations, as being markedly superior to the stereo version. It is a pity that a mono *Midnight* was not featured as well: the stereo mix is notoriously unsatisfactory.

Turning to actual stereo specimens, the 1990 stereo *Wonderful Land* is not exactly a perfect choice, since it omits the tom-tom overdub prominent on the original single. But there is room for debate here I suppose. A positive blemish, about which there can be no argument, is the presentation of *Theme For Young Lovers* in its mismastered stereo format: see the review on “Essential Collection” in the next issue, where the error is avoided (on “More Hits”, the original “lead guitar left” has been retained). It would be good if EMI could bring itself to bin this aberration if it is represented by a single master that can easily be seized and disposed of, though it has already escaped to other countries! Finally here, mock-stereo is used for *What A Lovely Tune*, despite the crisper and better focused stereo version being made available in 1997.

Fourth, the older set possessed no documentation, only a folded insert with few lurid colour pics. For this we have a handsome 28-page booklet of high-quality glossy paper with an effective black background, resembling that of “The Early Years” box; in contrast to that however, the discs are not in separate jewel cases with a variety of front covers, but in a hinged case equipped with clear disc-trays at inside-front and inside-back picturing an inner sleeve. The sleeve is represented as housing a vinyl record which reflects the design of the CD labels themselves: neat, if not exactly easy to decipher. To return to the booklet: a few photos are dotted about, but none occupies an entire page. The emphasis is on text, which is surely how it should be given the sheer amount of material that has to be dealt with: no effort is spared to pack the booklet with facts, appraisals and insights on the wide range of singles spanning the years 1959 to 1980.

There are four introductory pages: Rob emphasises how innovative and influential The Shadows/Hank Marvin were, arguing strongly against the impression given by many commentators on the 60’s scene that “The Beatles started it all”. The battery of facts and figures lined up here clearly shows just how misguided such an approach is. Of course The Beatles were phenomenally gifted: not only did they generate feverish excitement as performers, but they very rapidly proved themselves, through Lennon and McCartney, to be entirely in a class of their own as songwriters, while even their various rock-and-roll and R&B covers sounded startlingly fresh and dynamic. But it is equally beyond dispute that they were heirs to a healthy and vibrant British music scene, a scene dominated by Cliff Richard and The Shadows, who could truly be regarded as pioneers and sources of inspiration to an entire generation, and who between them had achieved more in the space of three or four years than most artists achieve in a lifetime. I think it would have been worth emphasising here too (as was done notably in the “More Hits!” booklet) that the advent of The Beatles (and the accompanying new wave) did not see off Cliff and The Shadows by any means: 1963 may have been a year of pop obituaries, but theirs was not among them.

In fact, one element I did miss in this preamble is recognition of some of The Shadows’ more notable achievements beyond the first half of the 1960s and onwards up to 1980, the cut-off point for the present collection. The bulk of the booklet however goes a long way towards filling out the picture: it is taken up with an extensive “Complete Singles Annotation”, which probes more deeply into musicality and background detail than do the notes on the equivalent tracks of the two single

CDs reviewed above. It is hard to see how, in the space available, these finely crafted analyses could be improved upon in any significant way: the few disagreements I have are minor.

In the detailed track-listing on pages 24–27, there are no recording dates provided: a collection of this range and calibre would have benefited from the orientation such dates provide, for the crowded first half of the 1960s especially. Two of the composer credit entries require modification. *Stingray* should, I am sure, be attributed to Guenther Heigel not Claus Ogerman (the self-chosen Americanised form of his name; not Klaus Ogermann), and certainly not to both of them: the topic is discussed at length on my Website. And, as Ray Steer (who is more informative about these matters than any reference book I have come across) pointed out to me, *My Grandfather's Clock* is not “traditional” but was composed in 1876 by American Henry Clay Work, who, for the benefit of collectors of fascinating facts, was a skilled typesetter and toy-inventor!

Postscript

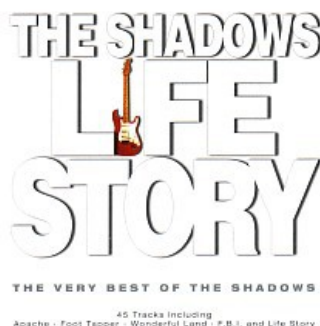
Since we are unlikely to see such a comprehensive coming-together of Shads singles in the foreseeable future, it might be as well to itemise those singles-sides that have still to appear in mono:

(i) On EMI UK CD, five tracks in all: *The Breeze And I / It's A Man's World / Chu-Chi / I Met A Girl* / *Somewhere*.

(ii) On CD full-stop, fourteen tracks in all: *Back Home / I Want You To Want Me / Little Princess / Alice In Sunderland / My Grandfather's Clock / I Wish I Could Shimmy ... / Late Night Set / Will You Be There / The Dreams I Dream / Maroc 7 / Bombay Duck / Tomorrow's Cancelled / Running Out Of World / Dear Old Mrs Bell*.

In addition, the UK mono example of the splendid *The Miracle* (on the Sequel label) could be improved upon. There are two variant versions among these twenty numbers: *I Met A Girl*, and *Bombay Duck*.

The Shadows “Life Story: The Very Best Of The Shadows” Universal Music TV 9817819 [2CD] Released 26 April 2004



CD1 (9817820) *Apache / Man Of Mystery / Shadoogie '83 / Shindig / Wonderful Land / The Rise And Fall Of Flingel Bunt / The Boys / Theme From The Deer Hunter / The Frightened City / Theme For Young Lovers / Dance On! / The Savage / Albatross / FBI / Guitar Tango / Genie With The Light Brown Lamp / Atlantis / Foot Tapper / Don't Cry For Me Argentina / Kon-Tiki / Telstar / The Third Man / Geronimo / Equinoxe (Part V) [album version] / The Stranger / Riders In The Sky*

CD2 (9817821) *Mountains Of The Moon / Moonlight Shadow / You Win Again / Memory / I Guess That's Why They Call It The Blues / Thing-Me-Jig / Life Story / Johnny Staccato / Summer Love '59 / Turning Point / This Ole House / Chariots Of Fire / Crockett's Theme / Midnight Creepin' / Going Home [edited version for single] / Every Breath You Take / Africa / Walk Of Life / Dancing In The Dark [album version]*

When set side by side with the latest EMI issues, this Universal set, designed to tie in with the long-awaited "Final Tour" and very much part of the marketing strategy, obviously needs to be evaluated from an entirely different standpoint. For one thing, the range of material available is confined, with a single exception, to an eleven-year span with Polydor (less than that in fact, since recording was not continuous through the years 1980-1990), and for another, the "classic" tracks which loom large in this collection are not the originals but the so-called "studio remakes" released in 1989.

So there are fewer tracks to draw upon, and many of them are old hits in new dress. At the same time, The Shadows were beyond any serious dispute a supremely polished outfit by the start of the 80s, and much of their Polydor output, whether in the form of group originals or "covers" of contemporary hits, set the highest standards in the genre. In addition, the renditions of their own hit material reflect their mature, fully developed style of playing, approximating quite closely, often very closely indeed, to performances on stage between 1980 and 1990.

CD1 provides a pretty comprehensive reworking of their better-known repertoire from the 1960s and 1970s, supplementing these with interpretations of diverse instrumentals made famous by others, among which Jean-Michel Jarre's *Equinoxe* (Part V, with snatches of Parts VI and VII thrown in for good measure) is perhaps the most striking. *The Third Man* (with a reggae beat, not exactly what you would expect, but that is The Shadows for you) occupies a special niche, as the group's last charting single.

More interest will naturally attach to CD2, with the brand-new *Life Story* from Jerry Lordan: thus the name of the composer who gave The Shadows their first hit has reappeared on what will presumably be their last recording, though it has to be said that, having made it, they appear to have pretty well disregarded it. Critical reaction, as far as I can ascertain from Website comment and personal enquiries, has been mixed, and what compliments there are often come out rather muted. Will it make any kind of lasting impression? I doubt it. Amid the very considerable nostalgia generated by the Final Tour (and how could it be otherwise?), this track is out on a limb, because it does not look backwards. Originally written for piano (which figures prominently in the accompaniment, to fine effect), *Life Story* is an elegant, expressive piece, mellow and punchy by turns, very much in the richly-textured style of the latter-day Shadows — not at all like The Shadows as they were when Lordan's *Apache* first saw the light of day. We can note in passing that the version distributed on the February "Life Story" promo (LS1) has an earlier fade (3m 37s as opposed to 4m 10s).

As for the rest, the (unnamed) compiler has come up with a satisfying blend of group compositions and "covers": the latter are not by any means in my view overshadowed by the former. Dedicated Shadows fans will of course already be the proud owners of every one of these, but most will surely have chosen to add this set to their collections as a matter of course just to have the new track. We may be sure, though, that the commercial success of "Life Story", which entered the Top Ten the moment it was released, has owed more to the public at large, as was the case with a number of the albums put out by The Shadows at Polydor up to 1990.

It remains to look in a bit more detail at aspects of CD2 that will delight trainspotters, infuriate purists and escape the detection of casual buyers, who will not know, and probably would not care if they did know, that certain liberties have been taken to provide a packed programme (not for the first time with Polydor material). Still, this is a bit of a puzzle, because the disc, though long, is not overlong. It clocks in at 73m 02s, hence there is a bit of leeway (as there is with CD1, at 74m 15s), for the once standard 74m limit is quite regularly exceeded by three or four minutes these days; unless, that is, Copy Control Technology, which eats into disc capacity, is going to be applied on overseas issues.

Whatever the cause, what has been done by way of trimming cannot reasonably be regarded as harmless. It is one thing to tamper with fades, taking a few seconds off here and a few there: so, for example, *Africa* is faded at 4m 38s rather than 4m 47s (as on CD1 *Riders In The Sky* goes down from 3m 26s to 3m 20s). It is quite another to replace an arranged ending with a fade as a device for

drastic corner-cutting. With *Johnny Staccato* (spelled *Stacatto*), what you get on the disc falls absurdly short of what the track-listing says you get: billed as 3m 52s, it is taken down to 2m 29s, exactly as it was on the Polytel 2CD “The Shadows: Complete” in 1992.

Then there is *This Ole House*. The count-in, clearly an integral part of the proceedings and not a result of mismastering as with certain EMI tracks from the 1960s, is left out (presumably deliberately, though whoever put together the 1999 Australian 5CD set “The Shadows Complete” made the same cut on a disc with plenty to spare). Worse, the beginning of *You Win Again* has been clipped (presumably inadvertently), throwing the opening percussion sequence out of kilter: a pity, because the sound overall is very forward and bright (as with many of the tracks in this set), a distinct improvement on that of the parent album, “Steppin’ To The Shadows”. Almost as disconcertingly, a second or two has been shaved off the opening notes of *Chariots Of Fire*.

There is no annotation. This is fine, or at least wholly expected, in the case of a round-up of the usual suspect tracks for general consumption, but this CD set offers a unique track to coincide with a momentous event, and nothing of substance is said about either. Let’s hope that, in the less heady years ahead, there is a more informative approach when it comes to reissuing primary Shadows albums from 1980-1990 (never noted for wealth of background information), and even for compilation albums drawing on that period. After all, anyone with the means to put together CDs with a dedicated recorder or a computer drive (that is, an awful lot of people in this day and age) can knock up bare and unadorned selections by themselves with minimal effort and for practically no outlay.

MC