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The Shadows
"With Strings Attached"
EMI 7243 526092 2 2
Released June 2000



The Miracle / Return To The Alamo / Slaughter On 10th Avenue / Autumn / I Can't Forget / A Sigh (Un Sospero) / Theme From The Boys / Granada / Dear Old Mrs Bell / Rodrigo's Guitar Concerto** / Valencia / Poem* / Geronimo / Adios Muchachos / Maroc 7 / Bridge Over Troubled Water** / Blue Sky, Blue Sea, Blue Me / Girl From Ipanema / Spring Is Nearly Here / Guitar Tango / The Windjammer / Wonderful Land [true stereo version] / Classical Gas** / Atlantis / Las Tres Carabelas / The Breeze And I*

The British music press of the early Sixties was nothing if not conservative. As far as I am aware, nobody raised a hue and cry when Norrie Paramor brought Shadows and strings together for a couple of songs on "Listen To Cliff!" in 1961 (*It's You* and *Memories Linger On*). It was quite a different story when he turned his attention to numbers performed by the group in its own right. In the course of 1962 and even 1963, a question repeatedly raised was whether their producer was doing The Shadows (or the record-buying public) any favours in making use of orchestral accompaniments: a typical example is the 1963 article by Derek Johnson of NME quoted in Mike Read, *The Story Of The Shadows*, p. 109.

In fact, the question soon answered itself, with numbers like *Wonderful Land* and *Atlantis* selling in enormous quantities in the UK and overseas. Indeed, 1963 produced something of a bumper crop, with four sides of the four singles (B:A:B:A) and an entire EP ('Los Shadows') given the Paramor treatment (there was no LP that year).

His distinctive contribution is well illustrated by this mid-priced disc, and the arrangements by Brian Bennett and Steve Gray are neatly worked in to give a fuller picture. The only omission of real note appears to be *It's Been A Blue Day* (clearly something had to give: the disc is bursting at the seams, with over 77 minutes of music!). Personally, I would have preferred to have this rather than *Dear Old Mrs Bell*, which I don't think has weathered well at all. On the plus side, five of the tracks included are not that common on CD: *Autumn*, *I Can't Forget*, *Valencia*, *Poem*, *Girl From Ipanema*. However, with this release you get more for your money than good sounds. The collection has been meticulously researched and helpfully annotated, like another EMI Shadows CD which that renowned double act Rob & Tony have breathed on, "The Shadows At Abbey Road". In the booklet there is a brief interview with Brian Bennett; a piece on Norrie Paramor sourced from a 1967 EMI Biography; and notes on recording techniques from Peter Vince. The pics all look a bit familiar, though I don't suppose there can be many knocking around of The Shadows and Norrie enjoying a cuppa in Abbey Road's canteen!

In short, the standards of documentation and presentation make "With Strings Attached" one of the really essential purchases for anyone with a serious interest in the music of The Shadows.

An end-note for the fact-collector. *I Can't Forget* should be credited to the following four composers (note the spelling of the last two): Black (Don) / Mizicke / Morpar / Perfiljeva.

MC