

MAN OF MYSTERY

(Michael Carr)

Shadows: November 1960 A-Single (UK No.5)

Ventures: June 2000 CD (Japan) *Acoustic Rock*



The Shadows thrashed their way through this number with such unrestrained ferocity that, given its title and the atmosphere it originally set out to create, the term ‘taking liberties’ readily suggests itself. There were two distinct versions of the theme that introduced the series of Edgar Wallace Mystery movies put out between 1960 and 1963: one was a sedate, unhurried affair, the other, commoner variant, was a shade brisker (and arguably less sinister-sounding as a result). In fact, in the 60s that accomplished Belgian guitar group The Jokers recorded a relatively leisurely acoustic version (available on CD: *The Jokers Vol.4: Rare Recordings*). But stylistically The Ventures’ version is worlds apart from this, just one of the great production jobs on a superlative album, not ‘acoustic’ in that mannered, weedy, unplugged mode that bedevils the work of many a normally hard-hitting recording artist (see on [21] below). The pace is slowed, the tone is awesomely majestic, the soundscape sweeping, panoramic, the combined forces of Nokie Edwards (lead guitar, an elegant performance), Don Wilson & Bob Spalding (rhythm guitars), Bob Bogle (bass guitar) enjoying subtle background support from David Carr on piano. Could this be an ‘Entry Of The Queen Of Sheba’ for the new millennium? Whatever, the effect is striking and must rank as one of the group’s most imaginative arrangements. “How refreshing it was to hear something I had heard a thousand times before played in a way I had never heard it played” Dave Towers, *New Gandy Dancer* 59 [2000] 27.