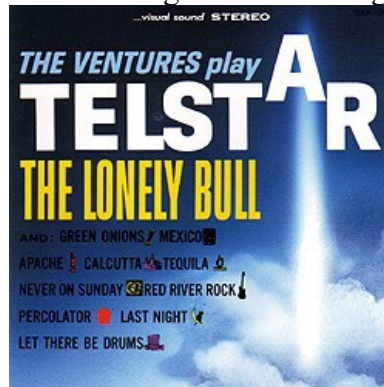


TELSTAR

(Joe Meek)

Ventures: January 1963 LP *The Ventures Play Telstar ~ The Lonely Bull* (US No.8)

Shadows: August 1981 A-Single



The Ventures were quick off the mark with their organ-led cover, over a dozen live performances having since been captured on record: "I heard it in the car in 1962 before it hit the charts and drove straight to the office to begin recording it" (Don Wilson). Whatever may be thought of the *Play ...* album as a whole, this is a carefully measured and powerfully implemented imitation which verges on the positively scary at high volume levels (unlike the original with its limited dynamic range): "... a formidable attempt with harps, celestial sounding guitars, and a huge cinemascope-like organ ...", as Dave Burke fearlessly put it (*Pipeline* 40 [1998] 58). The most recent re-recording likewise (on the 1999 CD *V-Gold*) lacks nothing in dynamism, though I cannot say I care for the organ sound as compared with that of the brighter, sharper Mark 1 version.

The Shadows' guitar-led version which was issued as a lead single in 1981 is dynamic and authoritative, agreeable enough if you have a tolerance for disco rhythms, but of course there is really nothing to match the staggeringly successful if decidedly off-the-wall original from The Tornados with that weird and wonderful clavoline and assortment of extra-terrestrial effects.