

Eric Tomlinson

Recording Engineer

Introduction

Eric Tomlinson has devoted over 40 years to recording music for films. In 1959 he joined the Cine-Tele Sound (CTS) studios where his work largely revolutionised film music recording techniques in the UK. At CTS, Tomlinson recorded music for well-known films including **Zulu**, **Goldfinger**, **The Knack** and **The IPCRESS File** with spectacular results.

In 1968 Tomlinson commercialised the Anvil Films music stage in Denham. It was at Anvil that he continued to develop his world-renowned reputation with recordings for **Ryan's Daughter**, **Star Wars**, **Superman** and **Alien** to name but a few.

In 1980, the expiration of the lease at Denham forced the Anvil team to relocate. Tomlinson saw Abbey Road as a feasible venue and virtually single-handedly saved the historic studio from drastic redevelopment. At Abbey Road he recorded **Raiders of the Lost Ark**, **Return of the Jedi**, **Amadeus** and many others by perfectly capturing nuance, detail and intonation.

Eric Tomlinson has collaborated with many high profile composers including John Barry, John Williams, Jerry Goldsmith, Maurice Jarre, Basil Poledouris and Michael Kamen. He was admired for his ability to quickly obtain a balance and skilfully deliver a live mix during sessions. Musicians enjoyed his easy-going manner and work ethic that ensured that they were satisfied with the sound offered to them.

Without doubt, Eric Tomlinson is one of the unsung heroes of the film industry and, indeed, the wider music community. The engineer contributed to the realisation of Oscar winning scores for **Born Free**, **Fiddler on the Roof** and **Star Wars**. He also recorded music for pop artists including Frank Sinatra, The Carpenters and Queen.

In July 2005 I was fortunate to speak with the engineer and discovered a man of remarkable talent, wit and modesty.

In this document I have endeavoured to present the definitive profile of one of the most prolific and successful music recording engineers of the 20th century. I have also included many previously unpublished photographs that Eric Tomlinson has graciously provided from his own personal collection.

[Updated September 2007]

An Appreciation Of Music And CTS Studios

After completing high school, Eric Arthur Tomlinson wanted to begin a career in the aircraft industry and completed an apprenticeship. *"[I] used to go every day to Hayes and turn left to a company called the Fairy Aviation Company, when I wished I'd turned right into EMI studios – or EMI as it was called at the factory."* The EMI factory in Hayes made the early tape machines and mixing consoles that were utilised at Abbey Road and other studios throughout Europe. The *Beatles* albums were recorded on valve driven REDD and later transistorised EMI TG12345 consoles manufactured at the factory in Hayes, Middlesex.

With *"an appreciation of music"* and no formal electrical engineering qualifications, Eric Tomlinson left a career in the aviation industry and joined IBC Studios, Portland Place, in the late 1950s. At IBC he recorded jazz for Dennis Preston's company called Record Supervision Ltd during the renaissance of traditional jazz in Britain. *"He had most of the jazz artists in England under contract,"* recalled Tomlinson, who made many hit recordings for composer/performer John Dankworth, including wife Cleo Laine's first recording. *"So, we did a lot of jazz and all sorts of visiting Americans and British artists and so on. Then I started film music."* Initially beginning as an assistant, the first film Tomlinson worked on was **John Paul Jones** for Max Steiner, in 1959, before going solo with recordings for conductor Muir Mathieson.



Recording **From Russia With Love** at CTS Studios in Bayswater with composer John Barry

The Cine-Tele Sound (CTS) Studios, located at 49-53 Kensington Gardens Square, Bayswater, London, were housed in a converted banqueting hall that was previously owned by Whiteleys department store. Tomlinson formed CTS in 1959 with technical director John Elliott and manager Peter Kay. The studio offered film music recording in a convenient location within London. *"Up till then the only place to record film music with an orchestra of any size was Shepperton, sometimes MGM when they were not building on the music stage, EMI (ABPC as it was in those days) Elstree. They were the only ones,"* recounted Tomlinson.

Although smaller than some of the other facilities in England, CTS comfortably fit 65 players in its rectangular shaped room. *"It was a very basic studio,"* reflected Tomlinson of the early days of CTS. *"It only had 12 inputs on the desk, very little equalisation (not that I use a lot) and a couple of EMT echo plates and that was about it."*

In America film music was recorded directly to 35mm magnetic film and had been so since 1953 when wide-screen formats such as Cinemascope were first introduced. At CTS, 1/2" tape, recorded on the studio's three-track Philips machine, was the format of choice. *"Nearly everything was done straight to two-track or three-track if there were vocals or something,"* explained Tomlinson. *"I think we used to cut three-track 35mm magnetic film simultaneously in many cases, purely because it was not always easy to synchronise a tape machine with 35mm projected picture. Basically we played back the 35mm but then worked from the tape."*

James Bond And Those Magnificent Men



Eric Tomlinson at the mixing desk at CTS Studios in Bayswater during the early 1960s

During the early 1960s, CTS attracted composers and musicians that weren't necessarily looking to record film scores. It was during this time Eric Tomlinson made many recordings for Annie Ross and Bob Farnon, including *"Great Songs from Great Britain"* with Frank Sinatra.

John Barry entered the film arena in 1962 providing an indelible arrangement of Monty Norman's *"James Bond Theme"* for *Dr. No*. The Bond theme was recorded at CTS on 21 June 1962 with Vic Flick playing his, now famous, Clifford Essex Paragon electric guitar. *"Half the thing was the clapped out old amplifier he used,"* said Tomlinson of another key element to the James Bondian twang. The amplifier

was *"pretty awful by present day standards but had a very, very distinctive sound."*

By 1964, John Barry had added *From Russia with Love* and *Zulu* to his resume, as had Tomlinson for recording them with a clear and spacious sound. In many ways, Barry reached the zenith of his Bond sound with his *Goldfinger* score and its memorable title song belted out by Shirley Bassey. Recorded on 20 August 1964, Tomlinson recalled that there were around 15 takes of the title captured before Barry, ever the perfectionist, was satisfied. *"John was a little bit of 'Mmm. Just do one more. Just try one more. And just try one more,'"* much to Bassey's frustration. The effort was worthwhile as the single and soundtrack album both became chart successes, with the single peaking at number 8 in the U.S. and remaining in the charts for 13 weeks. The single sold over a million copies in America alone, firmly cementing the careers of Barry and Bassey.

Henry Mancini also came to CTS to record *Charade* and *A Shot in the Dark*, amongst others, and helped cement its reputation as the premiere film music recording facility in London. *"When Mancini came over it suddenly took off and we got a lot of people in there and a lot of visiting Americans."*

Curiously, the re-recording mixers at Pinewood, headed by Gordon McCallum and John Mitchell, had an intense dislike of the music coming from CTS. *"I remember when we did Those Magnificent Men in Their Flying Machines with Ron Goodwin and we got a call, they had a car waiting for the first results of the session. And they rang at midday to say 'this music is not acceptable!' Well what can we do? We went on for the rest of the day and went out to see them in the evening where there was a great committee there telling us why it wasn't acceptable. 'There was too much echo. It was too distant. It was too left and too right and too this and too that and too diffuse. It wasn't working with the picture' and so on."*

Over the years Tomlinson would record quite a few scores for Ron Goodwin including both Goodwin and Walton's scores to *The Battle of Britain*. *"Ron said, 'well I've just heard the music score for How the West Was Won and I want my picture to sound as big as that and as wide as that – my soundtrack to sound like that.' And they said, 'That's not really film music they did that just for a gramophone record and stuck it on.' That was their thinking in those days."* A lavish production for 20th Century-Fox, *Those Magnificent Men* was filmed in the 65mm Todd-AO format and released in June of 1965 in 70mm and 35mm formats with 6-track and 4-track magnetic sound, respectively. *"We just argued with them and carried on working the way we did! The proof of the pudding was in the eating, actually. It was alright eventually,"* laughed Tomlinson.



John Barry conducts the orchestra during recording of *From Russia With Love* at CTS in 1963

Clean Music

A great story teller, Eric Tomlinson remembered the results of his instructions to the cleaners at CTS one weekend. *"The studio was looking a little bit dull and needed cleaning up a bit and I said to the cleaners 'can you just sort of clean up the place.' When I came back they had varnished everything. All the woodwork had been varnished. Even the piano had been varnished! The floor had been highly polished."* This was not quite the cleaning that Tomlinson had expected! *"I went absolutely bananas! I went in there and you went 'da, da, da, da, da.' The sound went all around the room, it was awful!"* The inside of the studio diffused sound through lots of wood and acoustic boarding and no longer sounded suitable for recording. The cleaners were hastily called back in. *"For the next two days they had wire wool and scrubbers and cleaned the whole lot off because it would have killed everything."*

Anvil Films Of Denham



Eric Tomlinson at the original Anvil Studios mixing desk from the late 1960s

In 1966 Eric Tomlinson left CTS to join the Anvil Film and Recording Group located in the old Korda Studio complex at North Orbital Road in Denham, Buckinghamshire. John Richards had been Tomlinson's assistant and tape operator/editor at CTS and took over the senior recording engineer role following his mentor's departure.

The Anvil stage was commercialised by film music recording veteran Ken Cameron together with Eric Tomlinson and had dimensions of approximately 65 feet across and 80 feet deep with a 50 foot ceiling. Anvil reminded Tomlinson of the famous Goldwyn Stage 7 where *The Magnificent Seven*, *The Great Escape*, *Spartacus* and *Marnie* had been skilfully

recorded by Vinton Vernon. *"I remember my very first trip to America was to the Goldwyn stage, where all the big musicals had been done, and I was very impressed with it because it was very much like the Anvil that I went to before we modernised it. It was just like that. It was a funny old-fashioned place and not very clean and so on but it had an atmosphere which was really great for that time of scoring."*

Originally the Anvil control room was fitted with an old Westrex mixing console that had few inputs and fixed left, centre and right outputs. No panning or channel redirection was possible with the very basic mixer. *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* was one of many scores recorded on the console before it was replaced by a modern Neve desk that had 24 inputs and 8 grouped outputs. The recording media of choice was three-track ½" and 1" tape together with 35mm magnetic film when necessary. Recordings were monitored through Tannoy "Old" speakers that were in enclosures designed by a friend of Olympic Sound Studios resident engineer Keith Grant. Amplification was via 100 watt Radford amplifiers. The microphone cabinet contained a selection of Neumann, Telefunken and AKG tube condenser microphones, a few RCA ribbons and a series of dynamic microphones.

Eric Tomlinson's approach was to carefully position the Neumann and Telefunken microphones at distances ranging from 2 to 10 feet from instruments and reserve the RCA ribbons for brass. *"I used to record basically a finished soundtrack on three tracks,"* explained Tomlinson. When 8 and 16-track machines came in a three-channel live mix was still made to tracks one, two and three of the recorder. *"I'd split the orchestra down all the other tracks. Four would be violins I, five violins II, six violas, seven cellos, eight basses, nine and ten would be woodwinds and so on. Then in mixing, if they were doing any mixing, they'd either take tracks one, two and three and transfer it to film and that would be it or they'd say 'I wish we had a bit more flute' and you'd just open up track nine a bit more and there was a bit more flute or so on. That was my way of working."*



Eric Tomlinson at the Neve mixing desk at Anvil Studios used to record many Maurice Jarre, Jerry Goldsmith and John Williams scores during the 1970s

Eric Tomlinson - Recording Engineer



Composer Maurice Jarre and engineer Eric Tomlinson

Tomlinson was careful to ensure that the composer was happy with the sound he was presenting. *"It wasn't necessarily my sound it was their sound and one composer would want this and another composer would want something slightly different or radically different. And you had to sort of get inside their mind and satisfy them, which worked."* Maurice Jarre and Eric Tomlinson established a working relationship that lasted many scores and the engineer cited the composer as a good example of adapting techniques to suit both the requirements of the music and the musician. Typically, Tomlinson would use a touch of artificial reverb however *"Maurice Jarre hated it, as he used to call it 'the faucet.' 'Turn off the faucet, Eric. I don't like it,'" laughed Tomlinson, imitating a French accent. "And I would try to enhance the strings with a little bit and he would come in and he would say 'No, too much faucet.' So we had to cool it. He always wanted a drier string sound than I would have normally gone for but that was his choice, he was paying!"*

Maurice Jarre was one of Eric Tomlinson's more frequent clients throughout the 1970s recording acclaimed scores to *Ryan's Daughter*, *The Man Who Would Be King* and *Jesus of Nazareth* at Anvil. *"Maurice Jarre was very interesting because he used to use so many percussion instruments which would demand 20 mikes alone. So I had two mixers brought in sometimes to Anvil and I was running the two."*

Having successfully recorded scores for just about every composer, nothing was quite like the temperament that Bernard Herrmann could unleash. *"He was, sort of, a very aggressive person. [He] didn't like anything [and] said 'I've got better speakers in my kitchen than you've got in this control room!'"* chuckled Tomlinson who recorded *Sisters* for Bernard Herrmann at Anvil in 1973. *"He was a very aggressive, talented, but very grumpy person all the time."*

In 1977 *Star Wars* attracted further interest in Anvil after the phenomenal success of the film and its John Williams score recorded by Eric Tomlinson. *"I remember going to the cinema, not on the premiere but there was a studio showing in the West end of London, and we all stood up and cheered when the opening titles came on,"* recalled Tomlinson of the movie that changed the movies. *"It nearly blew us out of our seats, it sounded magnificent. [We] just sat there drooling [and] taking it all in."*

For a detailed chronicle of the recording of the Star Wars saga music scores please refer to www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Lot/9045/starwars.htm.



Recording *Star Wars* at Anvil Studios in March 1977

Front row: Engineer Eric Tomlinson, film director George Lucas

Rear row: Music copyist Ernie Lockett, composer John Williams, recording supervisor Lionel Newman, film producer Gary Kurtz

Abbey Road and Abroad

In 1980 the lease on the Anvil stage in the Korda Studio complex expired. A developer purchased the site and intended to demolish it soon thereafter leaving the Anvil team without a home. Anvil management looked at the feasibility of reinstating the ABPC / EMI Elstree stage but passed when told that only a 3 to 4 year lease would be granted. *“As it turned out it was just as well because the place was eventually pulled down. There’s a big supermarket there now.”* Desperate to find a venue, the Anvil team looked at various churches and halls before Tomlinson suggested EMI-Abbey Road Studio 1. *“We looked around for other premises and it was my idea that it was maybe the only place we could go to that would be worthwhile. I went down to see the studio and it was not very busy, so I told management back at Anvil and the next thing I knew they’d done a negotiation and formed Anvil-Abbey Road. [Assistant engineer] Alan Snelling and I were directors of it and ran it pretty well the way we wanted.”*



Eric Tomlinson and Maurice Jarre

By the end of 1980 the first film music recording had taken place at Anvil-Abbey Road Screen Sound Studio 1, Maurice Jarre’s score to ***The Lion of the Desert***. Interestingly, technology at Abbey Road was not as sophisticated as Tomlinson and Snelling were used to at Anvil. The mixing desk was an old EMI TG12345 console made by EMI Research Laboratories in Hayes, Middlesex. *“Ergonomically it was crazy, you know, because they’d modified it up to 16-track and the monitor controls were like at each end. And as the desk was about 10 foot long [by] 8 foot wide, if you wanted to turn down something you had to get up, walk over and turn it down and then you’d find that something at the other end of the desk wanted turning up to balance it out. And they were all on rotary pots,”* laughed Tomlinson. *“It was really not a very clever desk. It was not made for high speed working at all. It was basically a big classical desk where you sat in the centre and sat back. Originally, I think it was only a three-track and they modified it up to 16-track.”*

Raiders of the Lost Ark, ***Night Crossing*** and ***The Final Conflict*** were recorded at Abbey Road in 1981 and all share an awe-inspiring sound. However, it was in 1983 that Tomlinson reached an apex of sorts with an immaculate recording of James Horner’s ***Brainstorm*** score, recorded digitally at Abbey Road in September of 1983. *“That was straight to two-track. He’d already done the soundtrack, of course, the film was out and this was just the album. That was my first job with him.”* ***Brainstorm*** is one of those rare recordings that can truly be referred to as *demonstration quality*. The LP and CD from Varese Sarabande boast spectacular staging, transparent imaging and a massive dynamic range. Unquestionably, this album deserves a place in any collection of finely recorded music.

It was actually the quality of the ***Brainstorm*** recording that led to further work with James Horner, including the recording of ***Uncommon Valor*** at The Record Plant Stage “M” at Paramount Studios in America. Paramount’s scoring stage was opened in 1981 after significant remodelling and renovation by executive director Dan Wallin, who also acted as the resident scoring mixer. *“They’d got a brand new [SSL] desk in there and I wasn’t very au fait with it at all. And I know I took the instruction book on the plane to read it and after about the sixth page I put it away and thought ‘oh well, see what happens.’ And it seemed to work all right,”* chuckled Tomlinson.



Eric Tomlinson balances the London Symphony Orchestra on the Neve mixing desk at Anvil Studios during recording of ***Star Wars***

Eric Tomlinson - Recording Engineer



Eric Tomlinson with Canadian composer Victor Davies

The highly creative ***Uncommon Valor*** score featured a large orchestra together with an extended percussion section and a small ensemble of Japanese instruments that included shakuhachi. Although regularly used by many composers, including James Horner, the Paramount stage was not well liked for its suffocating acoustic. *"It was really a big studio but quite dead and boring, [it] didn't offer anything at all,"* reflected Tomlinson. *"They had removable, fold-back screens and all the fold-back screens were on the absorbent side. The first thing I did was turn them around to reflecting screens in various sections and that made a hell of a difference. I turned the screens around and did all sorts of crazy things down there much to the amazement of the staff but it seemed to work so what the hell!"*

Even though the Paramount experience lasted a week it created a lasting impression in more ways than one. A memo to scoring staff shortly after Eric Tomlinson's arrival left him amused as it instructed all staff to wear ties after management found out that he does. Each morning a secretary would provide ties to staff members who forgot, forcing them to wear them over T-shirts if necessary! *"When I went back to The States a couple of years ago I was wandering around MGM, where they had just had a new Neve desk installed, and a guy came up to me and put his arm around me and said 'you were the guy that came and sorted out Paramount with James Horner on **Uncommon Valor!**' He's a percussionist who came in for a playback and it was really nice to be remembered from a musician's point of view."*

Some musicians were in awe of Tomlinson's ability to deliver a finished soundtrack as a live mix. An update on the 1930's comic strip, Dino De Laurentiis' \$35 million production of ***Flash Gordon*** failed to find a real audience and only made around \$27 million back. The score was written by Howard Blake and augmented with songs by rock group Queen. *"Queen were working in Studio 3 at Abbey Road and I was working in Studio 1 and Brian May came down to see how we were getting on and he stood there and at the end he said 'you do all that in one [pass]?' I said 'yeah, they played it through twice and I've heard it.' He said 'I can't believe it! I can't believe it. That would have taken us about three days to do this three minute piece!' Layering and layering this and that. Overdub that and do this and you know."*

Supergirl And Synthesisers

Synthesisers, samplers and other electronic devices have seen an increasing prevalence in film scoring. They are a valuable tool to produce mock-ups of scores for directors and producers to gain an appreciation of the way a score will work with their film. Some composers avoid synthesisers completely, a few augment orchestras with them, and a handful deliver scores entirely via synthesiser.

An appreciator of symphonic scores, Eric Tomlinson believes that synthesisers are *“very good to augment the orchestras but when they start using them completely I just don’t dig it any more.”*



Eric Tomlinson and Jerry Goldsmith
at Anvil Studios in 1979

Electronics have been associated with film scores from as early 1945 with Miklós Rózsa's scores to *The Lost Weekend* and *Spellbound* unleashing the otherworldly tones of the Theremin to audiences. 1951 saw the Theremin return for *The Day the Earth Stood Still* and *The Thing* with the first all electronic score appearing in *The Forbidden Planet*, released in 1956. In the 1960s John Barry incorporated synthesiser bass lines in his scores to *The Lion in Winter* and *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* and musicians Robert Moog and Wendy Carlos worked on pioneering modern synthesised sounds. In the 1970s Jerry Goldsmith was probably the most successful in augmenting orchestras with synthesisers for scores that included *Take a Hard Ride*, *Logan's Run* and *Star Trek – The Motion Picture*. By the start of the 1980s a new industry had emerged with composers such as Giorgio Moroder and Vangelis realising and delivering scores produced exclusively on synthesiser.

It was, in fact, synthesisers that ended Eric Tomlinson's 15 year working relationship with Jerry Goldsmith during recording of *Supergirl* in 1984. *“We had two mixers on there. Alan Snelling was running the mixer out in the studio, balancing the synthesisers and sending me in a two-track mix. And then we were shooting it back out into the body of the orchestra, the studio, the walls of the Walthamstow Hall on to two big speakers. And something got a little bit hot somewhere on route and a bit of smoke came out of those speakers. But that was not the reason.”* Despite this hiccup, the sessions went well with Goldsmith pleased with the results however it was during dubbing at Pinewood that trouble arose. *“Because there were so many synthesisers floating around and squirly sounds the dubbing mixer, Gordon McCallum, said ‘this music is crap. I hate it. It’s absolute rubbish. I can’t sort it out.’ And that got back to Jerry Goldsmith who took it the wrong way. He thought he meant the recording was bad but what McCallum was trying to say was that he didn’t like all these synthesisers when he already had sound effects which were very, very similar to the music and he couldn’t differentiate between the music score and the sound effects. There were just so many squirly sounds going on and he blew his top and started a big inquiry into that.”*



Recording *The Great Train Robbery*
at Anvil Studios in April 1979

Front row: Engineer Eric Tomlinson, composer Jerry Goldsmith
Rear row: Orchestrator Arthur Morton, film director Michael Crichton,
assistant engineer Alan Snelling, music copyist Ernie Locket

Due to existing EMI Classical Division bookings at Abbey Road, *Supergirl* was recorded at a number of venues including the Walthamstow Hall, All Saints Church in Tooting and Abbey Road Studio 1. The constant venue changes necessitated long days as demonstrated by the following entries excerpted from Eric Tomlinson's invoicing notes:

Monday, 30 January 1984 – All Saints Church, Tooting
0900 to 1200 – Setting up equipment for recording
1400 to 1730 – Recording session #1
1830 to 2130 – Recording session #2
2230 to 0030 – Recording session #3

Despite a tentative booking in 1985 for *Legend*, Tomlinson and Goldsmith would never work together again following *Supergirl*. This is despite collaborating on many highly regarded scores

including *The Boys from Brazil*, *The Great Train Robbery*, *Alien*, *Night Crossing*, *Outland* and *Masada* (the album recording). For much of the rest of Goldsmith's career, the composer would utilise Bruce Botnick as his scoring mixer of choice and generally record in America rather than London.

Freelance And The Studios Today



Eric Tomlinson and Basil Poledouris circa 1987

By the end of 1984 the Anvil-Abbey Road alliance had ended and both Eric Tomlinson and Alan Snelling were forced to go freelance. Snelling worked at CTS for a year before working on projects in Europe and New York. Tomlinson continued to record at Abbey Road, Olympic, CTS and elsewhere in Europe, most notably Prague and Munich.

Basil Poledouris and Michael Kamen were Tomlinson's most regular clients during this period with scores that included **Robocop**, **Cherry 2000**, **Farewell to the King**, **Highlander** and **Suspect**. *"I enjoyed working with both Basil and Michael, they were jolly people and very good to work with, very appreciative."*

Today, CTS at Bayswater no longer exists having been converted to a block of flats long ago. The Korda Studio complex was demolished shortly after Anvil's lease ended in 1980. At the end of the 1990s CTS at Wembley also closed its doors owing to redevelopment of Wembley Stadium. Film music recording in the UK is at its lowest level in many years with Abbey Road remaining the prominent film music recording facility in London. *"The funny thing was when we moved to Abbey Road we were actually the salvation of it because they were just about to cut Abbey Road 1 into two and put an underground car park in,"* recalled Tomlinson. *"They were just going to make it into two studios upstairs and a car park underneath, making it into two, sort of, small pop studios. Because there was a big decline in classical music recording and the reason I had to go freelance was that when CDs started the EMI Classical division started re-recording the whole catalog for CD and they completely booked us out."* Although CD was in its infancy in 1984, many record companies were preparing their existing catalogs for conversion to the new format as well as making new digital recordings. *"I did a calculation one day, that even if we could fill all the available spaces we couldn't pay our way to stay there at all. We couldn't pay salaries, couldn't do anything, so we wound it up because they booked us out completely. But we were the salvation, I mean Anvil was the salvation of saving that studio and Ken Townsend, who was the then manager, would back me up on this. He said, 'You know without you there that would have been made into two studios and an underground car park,' which would have been sad!"*

Awards

Star Wars was honoured with an Academy Award for "Best Sound" with Oscars presented to re-recording mixers Don MacDougall, Ray West, Bob Minkler and Derek Ball. Ben Burt was presented with a "Special Achievement Award" for his creation of alien, creature and robot voices. Composer John Williams was awarded an Oscar for his musical score but Eric Tomlinson was left unrecognised for his contribution to the film's stunning aural landscape. *"That has always been a sore point,"* remarked the engineer.

*"The only time I very nearly got an Oscar was on **Fiddler on the Roof** but the Oscar was given to the dubbing mixer Gordon McCallum."* **Fiddler** premiered in December of 1971 in 70mm and 6-track magnetic sound. Gordon McCallum and David Hildyard were presented Oscars for "Best Sound" at the 1972 Academy Award ceremonies and the picture was also awarded a Golden Reel Award for "Best Sound Editing – Dialog."

*"The **Fiddler on the Roof** one really annoyed me because we at Anvil did everything, absolutely everything. We did sound effects, footsteps, dance steps, a lot of the dialog, post synching [ADR] dialog, all the music, all the singing, prepared all the tracks. Did everything all the way, right down the line. And the dubbing mixer got the things all complete and put them up and just ran them. And the editor at that time, Dick Carruth, he said 'sounds fantastic. We haven't had to do a thing' and that was that. I was a bit disappointed."*



A relaxed mood whilst recording **Star Wars**

Front row: Engineer Eric Tomlinson, film director George Lucas
Rear row: Music copyist Ernie Locket, composer John Williams, recording supervisor Lionel Newman, film producer Gary Kurtz

Eric Tomlinson - Recording Engineer



Toasting the success of the **Star Wars** score
John Williams and George Lucas share a drink whilst Gary
Kurtz looks on and Eric Tomlinson enjoys a cigar

Despite missing opportunities to be nominated for Academy Awards, Eric Tomlinson was presented with the “Ballsup Award” by the Distinguished Audio Engineers Federation (DEAF) in 1980 for *“throwing up in the EMI canteen!”* Running from approximately 1976 to 1989, DEAF was formed to raise money at charity evenings for deaf children and raised over £100,000 during this time. *“They had some fun evenings. I was a founder member of DEAF along with Keith Grant, Malcolm Jackson and a couple of others.”* Sadly, despite a worthy cause DEAF is no longer active. *“It was really just a nice night out for engineers and to raise money for charities and things and it suddenly got commercial. Big companies*

booked tables and the engineers couldn’t get in. It became a big advertising ploy. So it was wound up. Keith Grant couldn’t get in. They said, ‘Oh, I’m sorry, no, we’ll let you know if there’s any vacancy.’ He said, ‘Look I’m a founder member!’ ‘Sorry, you should have booked before!’ You know, it just got out of hand.”

The Cinema Audio Society (CAS) recognised Eric Tomlinson in the category “Outstanding Achievement in Sound” for his work on **Aliens** in 1986 and **Robocop** in 1987.

At the 21st British Academy of Composers, Songwriters and Authors (BASCA) awards in 1995, Eric Tomlinson was presented with a Gold Badge Award for his contribution to the film industry. Composer Ron Goodwin wrote the following in the programme notes:

*“Eric Tomlinson and I first met in those heady days when you could have a wonderful night out on a fiver and still have enough money left to pay the fine the next morning. We worked together on some big movies such as **Frenzy**, **The Battle of Britain**, **Those Magnificent Men in Their Flying Machines**, etc and he would always know after the first run-through how to translate what he heard into exciting recorded sound.*

Eric is a highly professional and creative recording engineer who helped to revolutionize film music recording in this country, sometimes to the discomfort of traditionalists who seemed to think the music should sound as if it were coming through several layers of blanket before it reached the audience and totally devoid of any presence of life. He won that battle and it is largely due to the integrity and enthusiasm of Eric and his colleagues that we are able to hear such brilliant sounds in the cinema today. More power to his elbow!”¹

¹ Goodwin, Ron. “Eric Tomlinson.” *Programme Notes*. Gold Badge Awards. BASCA Awards. 1995.

Eric Tomlinson - Recording Engineer

Eric Tomlinson Today

Although Eric Tomlinson doesn't listen to as much music as he used to he enjoys the music of his roots, jazz. *"I still like listening to jazz late at night. Just lie down with a glass of wine or something and listen to various jazz programs, jazz LPs and albums."* Clearly still passionate about music recording, Eric Tomlinson continues to work on smaller projects, including jazz albums, and retains a strong interest in film music recording. *"I'd love to get back and do some more but unfortunately there's a great lack of orchestral work these days and I certainly wasn't interested in getting into the rock scene. I don't like the time spent getting the drum sound and things like that,"* teased Tomlinson.

Eric Tomlinson and his wife Joyangela live in Devon, England.



Recording *Star Wars* with John Williams at Anvil Studios in March 1977

"Eric, with affection and gratitude for so many marvellous recordings" – John Williams ²

"Eric, you've reinstated my faith in 'sound'" – Lionel Newman ³

² Williams, John. Handwritten note to Eric Tomlinson. *Star Wars*. Unpublished photograph. 1977.

³ Newman, Lionel. Handwritten note to Eric Tomlinson. *Star Wars*. Unpublished photograph. 1977.

Appendix A – Eric Tomlinson Must Have Recordings

Over a career that spans some 40 years it is difficult to isolate Eric Tomlinson's "best recordings" when there are so many to choose from! Below, I have presented brief capsule summaries of four Eric Tomlinson recordings that I think should be in every record collection:



Brainstorm by James Horner

A truly immaculate recording, made live to two-track JVC DAS-90 digital at Abbey Road in September 1983. The album boasts a massive dynamic range (in the order of 50 dB), incredible staging and a warm, full-bodied sound. "Lillian's Heart Attack" and "Final Playback / End Titles" showcase the dynamic range, clarity and separation to stunning effect.

Album produced by James Horner
Mastered by Joe Gastwirt 1983



Night Crossing by Jerry Goldsmith

The complexity, diversity and potency of Goldsmith's musical soundscape in **Night Crossing** is nothing short of amazing, as is the recording made at Abbey Road in August 1981. The CD was mastered from the 15 IPS ½" Dolby A encoded three-channel LCR mixes made during scoring. A dynamic album that is large and powerful as well as small and intimate. Nuance, intonation and ambience are superbly captured with a real sense of depth and perspective. As with **Brainstorm**, this recording exhibits a huge dynamic range.

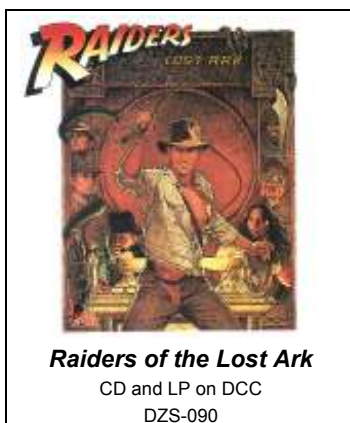
Album produced by Jerry Goldsmith
Mastered by Joe Tarantino 1994



The Knack by John Barry

A perfect example of John Barry's 1960s sound with light and jazzy themes for a swinging London. Recorded live to three-track at CTS Bayswater in 1965, the CD boasts a wide stereo image, punchy brass and just the right amount of artificial reverb. The "Main Title" combines drum kit, improvised electric organ and brass with a theme led by cellos and humming female voices. Some minor dynamic range limiting has been applied for CD presentation.

Album produced by Andrea Troolin
Mastered by Dr. Toby Mountain 1998



Raiders of the Lost Ark by John Williams

A textbook John Williams score and outstanding recording by made at Abbey Road in February 1981. Famed mastering engineer Steve Hoffman prepared the 1995 LP and CD from the original two-track 15 IPS Dolby A encoded mix downs. In June 2005 Hoffman described his approach to mastering the album:

"The tapes needed a bit of 'taming'. I did that with a special vacuum tube insert stage that added much needed 'body' to the music (I thought). Other than that, not much else was needed. George Lucas loved what we did and that made me happy as did Johnny Williams. That was a good thing because our release permit counted on them liking it!"

Album produced by Nick Redman
Mastered by Steve Hoffman 1995

Eric Tomlinson - Recording Engineer

Other notable recordings include *The IPCRESS File*, *The Great Train Robbery*, *Aliens* and *Zulu*. The latter is of particular interest as the film and score are both highly regarded.



Zulu was scored at CTS Bayswater in 1963 and was a pre-Dolby A recording, ie no noise reduction was employed. The RPM soundtrack (catalog no 195) offers the only available true stereo version of the original performance on CD but it is not without several glaring mastering faults.

The left and right channels have been swapped and many tracks have left-right levelling issues that should not be present. Furthermore, the signal has been clipped numerous times during each track. All of these flaws are the result of a careless transfer of the tapes. Thankfully, however, no detectable digital processing was performed during mastering with the wide stereo image preserved. The CD is therefore representative of the tone and vibrancy captured during scoring.

One of Tomlinson's own favourite recordings, the score conveys much excitement with pounding timpani and a wall of brass. Modern re-recordings have failed to generate the same thrills, intensity and rawness. Keith Grant recorded the *Zulu* "stamps" at Olympic Studios and there are some azimuth alignment issues with several of these pieces. (For example, "*Monkey Feathers*" has a 45 μ s error in the left channel.)

Eric Tomlinson - Recording Engineer

Appendix B – Music Recorded By Eric Tomlinson

An incomplete list of Eric Tomlinson's film music recording credits is shown below and arranged in rough chronological order. This information has been sourced from album credits and diary entries. Venue and recording dates are included where confirmed.

Film / Project Title	Composer / Conductor	Recording Venue	Recording Month	Recording Year
<i>Dr. No</i>	Monty Norman John Barry	CTS, Bayswater	June	1962
<i>The Servant</i>	John Dankworth	CTS, Bayswater		1963
<i>From Russia With Love</i>	John Barry	CTS, Bayswater		1963
<i>Charade</i>	Henry Mancini	CTS, Bayswater		1963
<i>Zulu</i>	John Barry	CTS, Bayswater		1963
<i>Never Put it in Writing</i>	Frank Cordell	CTS, Bayswater		1964
<i>A Shot in the Dark</i>	Henry Mancini	CTS, Bayswater		1964
<i>Goldfinger</i>	John Barry	CTS, Bayswater	August	1964
<i>The Knack</i>	John Barry	CTS, Bayswater		1965
<i>The IPCRESS File</i>	John Barry	CTS, Bayswater		1965
<i>King Rat</i>	John Barry	CTS, Bayswater		1965
<i>Four in the Morning</i>	John Barry	CTS, Bayswater		1965
<i>Those Magnificent Men in Their Flying Machines</i>	Ron Goodwin	CTS, Bayswater		1965
<i>Mister Moses</i>	John Barry	CTS, Bayswater		1965
<i>Thunderball</i>	John Barry	CTS, Bayswater	October	1965
<i>The Chase</i>	John Barry	CTS, Bayswater		1966
<i>Born Free</i>	John Barry	CTS, Bayswater		1966
<i>The Trap</i>	Ron Goodwin	CTS, Bayswater		1966
<i>Chitty Chitty Bang Bang</i>	Irwin Kostal Richard M. Sherman Robert B. Sherman	Anvil, Denham		1968
<i>2001 A Space Odyssey</i> (rejected scores)	Alex North Frank Cordell	Anvil, Denham Anvil, Denham		1968
<i>The Avengers</i> (TV)	Laurie Johnson	Anvil, Denham		1968
<i>Oh! What a Lovely War</i>	Alfred Ralston	Anvil, Denham		1969
<i>Battle of Britain</i>	Sir William Walton Ron Goodwin	Anvil, Denham	February	1969
<i>The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes</i>	Miklós Rózsa	Anvil, Denham		1970
<i>Ryan's Daughter</i>	Maurice Jarre	Anvil, Denham	July	1970
<i>Jane Eyre</i> (TV)	John Williams	Anvil, Denham		1970
<i>Fiddler on the Roof</i>	John Williams	Anvil, Denham		1971
<i>Endless Night</i>	Bernard Herrmann	Anvil, Denham		1971
<i>The Barkleys</i> (TV cartoons)	Doug Goodwin	Anvil, Denham		1972
<i>Frenzy</i>	Ron Goodwin	Anvil, Denham		1972
<i>Sleuth</i>	John Addison	Anvil, Denham		1972
<i>Sisters</i>	Bernard Herrmann	Anvil, Denham		1973
<i>High Velocity</i>	Jerry Goldsmith	Anvil, Denham		1974
<i>The Man Who Would Be King</i>	Maurice Jarre	Anvil, Denham		1975
<i>Take a Hard Ride</i>	Jerry Goldsmith	Anvil, Denham		1975
<i>Ransom</i>	Jerry Goldsmith	Anvil, Denham		1975
<i>The Slipper and the Rose</i>	Angela Morley Richard M. Sherman Robert B. Sherman	Anvil, Denham		1976
<i>The Seven-Per-Cent Solution</i>	John Addison	Anvil, Denham		1976
<i>The Message</i>	Maurice Jarre	Anvil, Denham		1976
<i>Star Wars</i>	John Williams	Anvil, Denham	March	1977
<i>Disappearance</i>	Robert Farnon	Anvil, Denham	June	1977
<i>Jesus of Nazareth</i> (TV)	Maurice Jarre	Anvil, Denham		1977
<i>The Boys from Brazil</i>	Jerry Goldsmith	Anvil, Denham		1978
<i>The Fury</i> (album)	John Williams	All Saints Tooting	February	1978
<i>Bear Island</i>	Robert Farnon	Anvil, Denham		1978
<i>Damien: The Omen II</i> (album)	Jerry Goldsmith	Anvil, Denham		1978
<i>Capricorn One</i> (album)	Jerry Goldsmith			1978
<i>Superman</i>	John Williams	Anvil, Denham	July	1978
<i>Who is Killing the Great Chefs of Europe?</i>	Henry Mancini			1978
<i>Quintet</i>	Tom Pierson	Anvil, Denham	October	1978

Eric Tomlinson - Recording Engineer

Film / Project Title	Composer / Conductor	Recording Venue	Recording Month	Recording Year
<i>The Magician of Lublin</i>	Maurice Jarre	Anvil, Denham	February	1979
<i>Alien</i>	Jerry Goldsmith	Anvil, Denham		1979
<i>Meetings with Remarkable Men</i>	Laurence Rosenthal	Anvil, Denham		1979
<i>Dracula</i>	John Williams	Anvil, Denham	April	1979
<i>The Great Train Robbery</i>	Jerry Goldsmith	Anvil, Denham	April	1979
<i>The Empire Strikes Back</i>	John Williams	Anvil, Denham	December	1979
<i>Flash Gordon</i>	Howard Blake Queen	Anvil Abbey Road		1980
<i>Caboblanco</i>	Jerry Goldsmith			1980
<i>The Lion of the Desert</i>	Maurice Jarre	Abbey Road	March	1980
<i>Eye of the Needle</i> (Subsequently recorded in Germany in June 1981)	Miklós Rózsa	Abbey Road	January	1981
<i>Venom</i>	Michael Kamen		February	1981
<i>Raiders of the Lost Ark</i>	John Williams	Abbey Road	February	1981
<i>Outland</i>	Jerry Goldsmith	Abbey Road	March	1981
<i>Dragonslayer</i>	Alex North	Abbey Road	April	1981
<i>The Slayer</i>	Robert Folk	Abbey Road	April	1981
<i>Watcher in the Woods</i>	Georges Delerue		June	1981
<i>Night Crossing</i>	Jerry Goldsmith	Abbey Road	August	1981
<i>Masada</i> (album)	Jerry Goldsmith	Abbey Road		1981
<i>The Final Conflict</i>	Jerry Goldsmith	Abbey Road		1981
<i>Death Wish 2</i>	David Whitaker		October	1981
<i>Guerre du feu</i> (<i>Quest for Fire</i>)	Philippe Sarde		November	1981
<i>The Dark Crystal</i>	Trevor Jones	Abbey Road	January	1982
<i>Britannia Hospital</i>	Alan Price		February	1982
<i>Brimstone and Treacle</i>	Michael Nyman Sting		February	1982
<i>Monsignor</i>	John Williams	Abbey Road	August	1982
<i>First Blood</i>	Jerry Goldsmith		August	1982
<i>The Royal Romance of Charles and Diana</i> (TV)	David Palmer		August	1982
<i>Charles & Diana: A Royal Love Story</i> (TV)	John Addison		August	1982
<i>The Wicked Lady</i>	Tony Banks		August	1982
<i>Amadeus</i>	Sir Neville Marriner	Abbey Road	January	1983
<i>Return of the Jedi</i>	John Williams	Abbey Road & Olympic Sound	January	1983
<i>Été Meurtrier</i> (<i>One Deadly Summer</i>)	Georges Delerue		February	1983
<i>The Keep</i>	Tangerine Dream		February	1983
<i>The Dead Zone</i>	Michael Kamen	Abbey Road		1983
<i>Brainstorm</i> (album)	James Horner	Abbey Road	September	1983
<i>The Dresser</i>	James Horner	Olympic Sound	September	1983
<i>Uncommon Valor</i>	James Horner	Paramount Stage "M"		1983
<i>Supergirl</i>	Jerry Goldsmith	Abbey Road, Walthamstow Hall, CTS, All Saints Tooting	January, January, January, April	1984 1984 1984 1984
<i>The Razor's Edge</i>	Jack Nitzsche	Abbey Road	February	1984
<i>Top Secret</i>	Maurice Jarre	Abbey Road	March	1984
<i>The Philadelphia Experiment</i>	Ken Wannberg	Abbey Road	May	1984
<i>Arc of Triumph</i> (TV)	Georges Delerue		July	1984
<i>Mata Hari</i>	Wilfred Josephs	Budapest	August	1984
<i>Brazil</i>	Michael Kamen	Abbey Road	September	1984
<i>Not Quite Jerusalem</i>	Gian Piero Reverberi Rondo Veneziano	Olympic Sound	October	1984
<i>Mesmerised</i>	Georges Delerue	Olympic Sound	November	1984
<i>Return to Oz</i>	David Shire	Abbey Road	December	1984
<i>Lifeforce</i>	Henry Mancini	Abbey Road	December	1984
<i>Flesh + Blood</i>	Basil Poledouris	Abbey Road	February	1985
<i>D.A.R.Y.L.</i>	Marvin Hamlisch	Olympic Sound	April	1985
<i>Plenty</i>	Bruce Smeaton	Abbey Road & Olympic Sound	April	1985

Eric Tomlinson - Recording Engineer

Film / Project Title	Composer / Conductor	Recording Venue	Recording Month	Recording Year
<i>Lifeforce</i> (one session)	Michael Kamen	Abbey Road	May	1985
<i>Eleni</i>	Bruce Smeaton	Olympic Sound	June	1985
<i>Volunteers</i>	James Horner	Abbey Road	June	1985
<i>Young Sherlock Holmes</i>	Bruce Broughton	Abbey Road	September	1985
<i>Highlander</i>	Michael Kamen	Abbey Road	October	1985
<i>Labyrinth</i>	Trevor Jones	Abbey Road	October	1985
<i>F/X</i>	Bill Conti	Olympic Sound	November	1985
<i>The Right Stuff / North and South</i> (album)	Bill Conti	Abbey Road	November	1985
<i>Haunted Honeymoon</i>	John Morris		April	1986
<i>Aliens</i>	James Horner	Abbey Road	May	1986
<i>An American Tail</i>	James Horner	Abbey Road	June	1986
<i>The Penitent</i>	Alex North		December	1986
<i>Robocop</i>	Basil Poledouris	Abbey Road	May	1987
<i>Suspect</i>	Michael Kamen	Abbey Road	August	1987
<i>Cherry 2000</i>	Basil Poledouris	Budapest		1987
<i>The Adventures of Baron Munchausen</i>	Michael Kamen	Munich Abbey Road		1988
<i>Farewell to the King</i>	Basil Poledouris	Budapest		1989
<i>Batman</i>	Danny Elfman	CTS, Wembley		1989
<i>Arabian Knight</i> <i>(The Thief and the Cobbler)</i>	Robert Folk	Abbey Road	October	1992
<i>The Dark Half</i>	Christopher Young	Munich		1993
<i>In the Army Now</i>	Robert Folk	CTS, Wembley		1994
<i>Twelve Monkeys</i>	Paul Buckmaster	CTS, Wembley		1995

Eric Tomlinson - Recording Engineer

Other recording projects by Eric Tomlinson:

Project Title	Artist	Recording Venue	Recording Year
From Tennessee to Taree	Johnny Duncan		
Great Songs from Great Britain	Frank Sinatra	CTS, Bayswater	1962
Annie Ross Sings a Handful of Songs	Annie Ross	CTS, Bayswater	1963
Stardust	Stephane Grappelli	Anvil, Denham	1973
Christmas Portrait	The Carpenters		1978
Symphony Sessions	David Foster		1981
An Old Fashioned Christmas	The Carpenters	Abbey Road	1984
About Face	David Gilmour		1984
A Kind of Magic	Queen		1986
Skyline Firedance	David Lanz	Abbey Road 2	1990
War: Classic War Film Themes	City of Prague Philharmonic Orchestra	Smecky, Prague	1997