

John Huston's 1975 film of Kipling's *The Man Who Would Be King* was a project he'd been longing to do for twenty years. And watching the film you can see why – it's a brilliant adventure yarn about larger-than-life men doing larger-than-life things. It's one of those films where everything just came together in perfect symmetry. It was a project Huston was born to direct, he had two extraordinary stars in Sean Connery and Michael Caine, a great cameraman in Oswald Morris, perfect costume design by the legendary Edith Head, and the brilliant production design of the great Alexander Trauner. And certainly right up there with all those extraordinary artists was the composer Maurice Jarre, who provided the film with a wonderful score, one of his best, despite the score's brevity.

The film was a hit with audiences and critics and garnered four Oscar nominations – for Art Direction – Set Direction, Editing, Costume Design, and a screenplay nod for Huston and Gladys Hill. Jarre's score was nominated for a Golden Globe.

The Man Who Would Be King was originally released on a Capitol LP. Its first CD release was on Bay Cities back in the early 1990s. That release went out of print in 1993 and has become a pricey collector's item ever since. Since I was an owner of Bay Cities, it is particularly gratifying to be able to bring back *The Man Who Would Be King* to CD on Kritzerland. We've remastered the title and it sounds better than ever.

Rather than pontificate about the film and Mr. Jarre, we hereby reproduce Mr. Huston's original liner notes from the LP, along with an interview with Maurice Jarre about the score. They speak much more eloquently than I could.

— Bruce Kimmel

The Man Who Would Be King is the fulfillment of a twenty year fascination with Kipling's classic, one of the greatest adventure epics ever written. This colorful story of the relationship between Daniel Dravot and Peachy Carnehan – tough and likeable rogues loyal to each other and to their ideals – has high pitch excitement, warm humor and exalting spiritual meaning.

"We are not little men," said Dravot and Carnehan. And they set about proving it. They journeyed to primitive Kafiristan ("the place of Darkness"), a remote region in the Hindu Kush where tribesmen made a practice of cutting off heads of visitors. Dravot and Carnehan went and saw and conquered. And one of them became King. He also became a God; and here lies much of the awesome compelling drama of the motion picture.

Maurice Jarre, whose eighty film scores include two Academy Awards (*Lawrence of Arabia* and *Dr. Zhivago*) and five Oscar nominations, brings his brilliant multi-faceted talents and expertise in both theater and classical music to this unusual provocative film score. Jarre interweaves themes in the Asiatic mode with contemporary sounds –

evoking the motion picture's sense of the exotic, of daring, of gallantry, of mystery. He has gathered musicians from all over the world, playing rare and traditional instruments; and has combined their mastery with that of the National Philharmonic Orchestra in Britain.

The result is music transcending time and space. Music that touches every visual and aural sense. Music that whisks you to the far reaches of your imagination.

Have you ever heard the high peaks on the roof of the world in angry, bragging colloquy as to which is the mightiest?

Have you ever heard Imbra explain that of all the thirty-three gods who govern the earth below and the skies around, He is the greatest God of all? LISTEN.

— John Huston

An Interview with Maurice Jarre by Steven C. Smith

SS: I believe Huston had wanted to make *The Man Who Would Be King* for twenty years.

MJ: Yes; it was the project of his life. I worked with him on two other films – *The Life and Times of Judge Roy Bean* and *The Mackintosh Man* – but he never devoted more time to a film than on *The Man Who Would Be King*. He loved this project, and I think it's his best film.

SS: Did you begin work on it after it had completed production?

MJ: Yes, but John actually invited me to go to Morocco during its filming. But at that time I was scoring the film *The Message* (aka *Mohammad, Messenger of God*).

SS: It's interesting that, although *The Man Who Would Be King* is a long, complex film, there isn't much music, and what there is is rather understated.

MJ: Yes. When we spotted the film, Huston explained that he didn't want too much music; he did not want a big, epic score. It was also his idea to include the song "Minstrel Boy," which Sean Connery and Michael Caine sing. Huston knew what he wanted and seemed to be very keen about what kind of orchestra we should have. He wanted a far-away sound; he told me that he would welcome any kind of ethnic instruments. I suggested to him we have, besides a classical orchestra, some Indian musicians. In London I found three Indian musicians and we brought over a fantastic sarangi player, Ram Narayan, who is probably the Heifitz of his instrument. Also, from the United States, I had Ashish Khan, who is the son of the most famous sarod player. We had a very interesting combination of Indian musicians and classical orchestra, and John and

I were very happy with that combination.

SS: There's an interesting credit on the back of the album: "Indian music written in special notation by Maurice Jarre."

MJ: I had studied Indian music at the Paris Conservatory of Music so I could write for the Indian musicians who don't read the same kind of music as western musicians. At the Conservatory we had to study five ethnic music types; I chose Arabic music, Russian music, Indian music, Japanese music, and music from the southern United States. I didn't know that about fifteen years later I could use all of them – in *Lawrence of Arabia*, *Dr. Zhivago*, *The Man Who Would Be King*, *Shogun*, and *Resurrection!*

SS: The opening track of the album is a robust overture; it's very different from the wistful arrangement of "Minstrel Boy" heard during the film's main titles.

MJ: Yes, the first time the film was presented, that overture was heard before it. John was very enthusiastic about this idea, but theater owners would cut it to allow more time for screenings.

SS: How long did you have to write the score?

MJ: About one month. We recorded it in London, and had about a week to do so. Huston was present at every session.

SS: Were the Indian musicians recorded at the same time as the orchestra?

MJ: Yes. The orchestra was the National Philharmonic, very large. The very proper musicians of the orchestra arrived and saw these six Indian players who had asked specifically to sit on a podium covered with a white sheet, with incense burning around them. I'll always remember the looks of some of the classical musicians; they said, "Oh my God! We're going to be here for two weeks – this guy is crazy to get these two groups to play together!" We had one rehearsal with the orchestra, one with the Indian musicians, I put them together in one take, and it was perfect. The classical orchestra was so stupefied that the others could play with them perfectly on the first take without any click track, that they gave them a standing ovation. It was very touching.

John asked me to score his next picture, but I couldn't do it; I had another commitment. I had heard before working with him that he had been not so nice with some composers, but he was really very nice to me. I think the fact that I was French may have had something to do with our good relationship; he liked French culture, good wine and food.

The Man Who Would Be King is one of the best souvenirs I have of my work with John. It was the project of his life, and I think I was very lucky to be there.