

San Jose State University

Will the Real Saint Stand?: Musical Incarnations of Simon Templar

Brigitte Doss-Johnson

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Dr. Gordon Haramaki

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The imagination and industry of one person has provided work and entertainment to people around the globe in the form of novels, comics, radio, film and music for over eight decades. Since 1928, Leslie Charteris has tantalized audiences with the adventures of Simon Templar, a modern-day Robin Hood. Simon Templar had a trademark in print, a stick figure with a halo, but when he moved into film and radio, he needed a musical calling card. Over the years, both the characterization of Simon Templar and his theme have changed. This paper will look at those changes, analyze the circumstances around the change, and determine which tune represents Simon Templar the best.

I first came across Simon Templar, also known as The Saint, when I watched the DVD of the 1997 movie starring Val Kilmer. I liked the music so much I bought the soundtrack with songs from the bands Moby and Orbital. Orbital's "The Saint Theme" moves along with a heavy electronic beat in a danceable duple meter and a highly addictive tune. At some point I discovered that this movie was a remake of an old television series but the distorted, black-and-white introduction only won a few seconds of my time. With its existence filed away in the senseless facts portion of my mind and while I searched my CD collection for a different film-music topic idea, *The Saint* soundtrack jumped out at me. Sound cues puffed through my consciousness with an amalgamation of tangible treasure and obscure memory: I could compare themes of the same show. Since then, pleasure in digging up exciting details and pain in buying what now amounts to a collection have impacted this academic venture.

First I'll analyze why Orbital's song made such a long-lasting impression. The first three notes entwine into my awareness the way I'll slip my hand into the elbow of someone I like. The tune opens on a G#-D-D#. The short duration of the ascending tritone doesn't alarm or spook because the melody scoops up a half step to the fifth scale degree. The tonic first note is

anacrusis to the stressed, diminished fifth, giving the three notes a sense of admirable quirkiness, of human earnestness that sometimes falls short. The melody continues with a second attempt to climb from the unstressed tonic, but only to the fourth, from which it steps down a whole step to the lowered third, identifying the melody as minor. A curious contention between the ostinato of a descending bass line and the mercurial melody reels in listeners, as proven by its ranking of third on the UK Single's Chart.<sup>1</sup> This theme made me more happy with the movie than if the movie didn't have it. The plot laid out a predictable story with some unrealistic scenes of Simon Templar fooling many people with his disguises.

When I began watching the first episode of the 1962 Roger Moore television series, I kept waiting for The Saint to disguise himself. I watched another handful of episodes spanning the seven years in production waiting for the disguises. In Roger Moore's memoirs, he relates an interchange with Val Kilmer at the Cannes Film Festival. Val admits that he read the original Saint stories after filming and that the movie really screwed up.<sup>2</sup> Though I had to adjust my understanding of Simon Templar, I like the Roger Moore version much better. The Saint is famous. He is known through Great Britain, Europe and the Americas for solving or thwarting crimes. People seek him out when law enforcement fails. As for why he's so wealthy, jet-setting from country to country in sleek suits, the television series never explains. At least the thief part of Simon's livelihood was portrayed in the Val Kilmer movie. This contradiction between lawbreaking and Samaritan acts is reflected in the theme, which to my delight is very similar to the Orbital song with a sly change in meter, very Saint-ish.

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<sup>1</sup> "ORBITAL | Full Official Chart History | Official Charts Company," Official Charts - Homepage, accessed May 17, 2016, <http://www.officialcharts.com/artist/13342/orbital/>

<sup>2</sup> Roger Moore and Gareth Owen, *My Word Is My Bond: A Memoir* (New York: Collins, 2008), Kindle, 138.

I jumped into researching the genius behind the tune. Edwin Astley composed the seven notes that is played when a halo appears over Simon Templar's head in the television series of *The Saint* starring Roger Moore. The producers of the series made by ITV in the United Kingdom from 1962-1969 approached Astley to score the new series. Astley's previous work with other popular British series such as *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, *The Buccaneers*, *Ivanhoe*, and *Danger Man* had established his compositional skills as appropriate, fast, and cheap.<sup>3</sup> In the documentary by Mark Hagen titled *Astley's Way*, Jools Holland interviews Astley's wife Hazel who elaborates on Astley's work method.

"(He) always worked from home when he was writing music but he had to go to the studios first of all to see the films and then they'd measure them ... and he got this cue sheet and he had to write music to fit those. It must have been very frustrating 'cause you couldn't just let yourself go and write a lovely tune because it was all in little bits. Very disciplined."<sup>4</sup>

The six-season DVD set included bonus-feature commentary with Roger Moore, the director, and some actors. They talked about Astley's music library and how every five or six episodes, Astley would come in to watch scenes that needed new or special music. On one of the full-length song albums from *The Saint*, exotic arrangements such as "Ying Tong Piddle Ay Kilt" sent me laughing. Astley's son Gareth wrote more on the Facebook Edwin Astley Appreciation Page in answer to my query regarding the music library.

"My understanding regarding the way the library was compiled was that at the start of a new series my dad would write a theme (start and end credits) and would compile a library of related music to be used by the music editor to

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<sup>3</sup> Richardson Michael, "King of the Cult Theme Composers," Action TV, August 2005, 34.

<sup>4</sup> Mark Hagen, "Astley's Way part 2," YouTube, n.d.<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PnVR6hOMzIw#t=0.898>.

synchronise to each episode after filming. This library would comprise various types of music - chase, mystery, fight, romance, etc. and sequences of differing lengths which would then fit the film images. This meant that a lot of the library could be used several times in different episodes.

When there were occasions when there was nothing suitable to use my dad would be given the cue sheets and would write a new piece. He had a large clockwork clock (about 15" diameter) and can well remember how he used this to time the pieces he wrote for these musical cues. I believe my sister Virginia inherited the clock. I do not know/remember how often there would need to be a recording session for these extra pieces, but I don't think it was that often, and obviously as time passed and the library grew there would have been increasing less need for these extra sessions. The recordings were normally made on the sound stage at Elstree (Associated British Picture Company) where they were able - if required - to project the film that the recording was to be synchronised to onto a large screen behind the orchestra which my dad could see whilst he conducted.”<sup>5</sup>

Astley had a talent for capturing the mood of a scene in the least amount of notes, as demonstrated by Jools Holland's reenactments on his documentary. Roger Moore's portrayal of Simon Templar was of a suave ladies' man, skilled at punches, and famous for solving crimes that eluded normal police departments. With Roger Moore, Simon Templar is clever, wiley, sleek, handsome, sexy, generous, self-sacrificing, and lovable. Astley's theme catches these

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<sup>5</sup> Gareth Astley and Nick Haysom, "Edwin Astley Appreciation Society," Facebook, last modified May 15, 2016, [https://www.facebook.com/groups/edwinastley/permalink/1206933389325359/?comment\\_id=1207398525945512&reply\\_comment\\_id=1230165307002167-ift\\_group\\_comment\\_reply-ift\\_id=1463344413355325](https://www.facebook.com/groups/edwinastley/permalink/1206933389325359/?comment_id=1207398525945512&reply_comment_id=1230165307002167-ift_group_comment_reply-ift_id=1463344413355325).

characteristics in three seconds using the trendy sounds of muted trumpet, piccolo and baritone saxophone.

As I listened to more commentaries on select episodes, I realized that the world of The Saint was extensive. I wanted to learn more about the author and his life. Leslie Charteris was born in Singapore in 1907. His father was Chinese and his mother was English. Leslie was twenty-one when the first Saint book was published. He had been writing since an early age, making pamphlets that he would sell to his family. Since he could not draw, he made some comics about Guy Stickbody.<sup>6</sup> His skill at stick figures would later land him a registered trademark of the haloed stick figure for the Saint. During his childhood, he was raised by Malayan and Chinese nannies.<sup>7</sup> He traveled to many countries as a child. I imagine his exposure to varieties of culture and music helped to feed his creativity and storytelling. So confident was he in his storytelling that he dropped out of college in the first year. Cutoff from financial support from his surgeon father who considered writers as vagabonds, Leslie supported himself by being a boat hand, pearl diver, tin miner, and bridge player – all adventures that can boost his stories.<sup>8</sup> In his personal life, though he was tall and handsome, he felt inferior because of his half Chinese looks. He kept himself as an outsider, a response to being treated as though he were different.<sup>9</sup> One can also see the loner and outsider in Simon Templar. Though infamy followed the Saint and he attracted many admirers, he never settled down or married. Remaining single was a condition Charteris set for Simon Templar in his contracts for the TV series. Afterall, Simon Templar couldn't keep having his escapades and scuffles if he were attached.

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<sup>6</sup> Barbra Paskin, *Leslie Charteris: A Saintly Centennial*, Directed by Barbra Paskin. London: BBC Radio 4, October 7, 2007.

<sup>7</sup> Ron Backer, "The Saint The Robin Hood of Modern Crime," in *Mystery Movie Series of 1940s Hollywood* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co, 2010), 5.

<sup>8</sup> Burl Barer, *The Saint A Complete History in Print, Radio, Film and Television* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc, 1993), 8.

<sup>9</sup> Paskin.

As the years went by, Simon Templar evolved. Pre-WWII, he propelled a gangster-buster persona.<sup>10</sup> This is a quote from Charteris stating the purpose for the Saint.

“We Saints are normally souls of peace and goodwill towards men. But we don’t like crooks, blood suckers, traders in vice and damnation ... We’re going to beat you up and do you down, skin you and smash you, and scare you off the face of Europe. We are not bothered about the letter of the law, we act exactly as we please, we inflict what punishment we think suitable, and no one is going to escape us.”

During WWII, Templar’s role was more hero and leader oriented, thwarting invasions and unmasking plots, endangering himself to save thousands.<sup>11</sup> The 50s produced another kind of Saint where he sought validation and resolution, bringing his readers more into his stories with observations of rebuilding life after the war.<sup>12</sup> New Saint stories became fewer past the 60s, but the regulations of radio and movie played a role in the changing image of the Saint. Radio scripts were able to stay closer to Charteris’ original stories than film. One of the producers of the films said this:

“The very activities and attitudes responsible for the Saint’s popularity were virtually guaranteed to violate every existing movie code and standard. He had knives up his sleeves and a personal code of justice in his mind.”<sup>13</sup>

The early movies from 1938-1953 also see the softening of Simon Templar but when the first TV series was being prepared, producers outlined a show that would be aired during family hour on Sundays. The Saint no longer killed bad guys and the fact that he was a thief by trade

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<sup>10</sup> Barer, 18.

<sup>11</sup> Barer, 18.

<sup>12</sup> Barer, 103.

<sup>13</sup> Barer, 37.

was never mentioned. This left a hole in the plot that didn't explain the level of animosity between Templar and the police in England, France, and New York. The adjustments for television and a new kind of Simon Templar matched what the world wanted. The show became popular and even now has a cult following.

Each episode featured a new, pretty lady that the Saint would help. The Saint was impeccably dressed, had several nice flats around the world with modern furnishings, and a nice car. Men wanted to be like the Saint and women wanted to be with the Saint. As for Roger Moore's visual appeal, not much needs to be said. Some actresses refused to work with him because they felt he was prettier than they were.<sup>14</sup> Bill Osgerby argues how the beginning of America's consumer culture and the idea of leisure went along with the change in the masculine role model. The man to look up to used to be one who worked hard, kept his duties, and was responsible to his family and community. In the 60s, the male role model sought pleasure, opposed conservatism, and became individually qualified.<sup>15</sup> The Saint became a contemporary of James Bond. In the 70s the TV series *Return of the Saint* only lasted one year with a bit too serious of a leading man in the sexually alluring disco era.<sup>16</sup> A *Magnum, P.I.* type Simon Templar was tested in 1987, including moustache sans humor, but was cancelled for poor performance. Two years later, six two-hour TV movies were aired and starred Simon Dutton who was named after Simon Templar, his mother being a long-time fan. For the first time, Leslie Charteris approved of the casting for his beloved Saint.<sup>17</sup> Leslie was eighty-two. Dutton's looks

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<sup>14</sup> Saint, The, directed by Robert S. Baker. (1962; Eugene, OR: Timeless Media Group, 2015), DVD.

<sup>15</sup> Bill Osgerby and Anna Gough-Yates, "So You're the Famous Simon Templar," in *Action TV: Tough Guys, Smooth Operators and Foxy Chicks* (London: Routledge, 2001), 40.

<sup>16</sup> Osgerby, 48.

<sup>17</sup> Gergely Hubai, *The Saint Music* Composed by Serge Franklin (France: Music Box Records, 2016), 2.



were very much like the character Charteris had written.<sup>18</sup> This Saint played more true with the books, bringing back the dark side of the Saint.<sup>19</sup> More will be said on this later.

This chart shows the actors and music composers of Simon Templar.

Doss-Johnson

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<sup>18</sup> Barer, 227.

<sup>19</sup> Barer, 227.

	Actor	Title	Year	Music Director	Theme
1	Louis Hayward	The Saint in New York	1938	Not credited (Roy Webb)	No theme
2	George Sanders	The Saint Strikes Back	1939	Roy Webb	Ornamented "Charteris"
	George Sanders	The Saint in London	1939	Harry Acres	Ornamented "Charteris"
	George Sanders	The Saint's Double Trouble	1940	Roy Webb	Ornamented "Charteris"
	George Sanders	The Saint Takes Over	1940	Roy Webb	Ornamented "Charteris"
3	Terence De Marney	Saint stories BBC	1940	unknown	unknown
	George Sanders	The Saint in Palm Springs	1941	Roy Webb	Ornamented "Charteris"
3	Hugh Sinclair	The Saint's Vacation	1941	Bretton Byrd	Ornamented "Charteris"
	Hugh Sinclair	The Saint Meets the Tiger	1943	Not credited	
	Edgar Barrier	NBC radio	1945	Unknown	Unknown
	Bruce Aherne	CBS summer radio	1945	Leith Stevens	Unknown
	Vincent Price	CBS radio/Mutual BS/ NBC	1947- 51	Not credited	"Charteris" theme
	Tom Conway	NBC	1951	Not credited	"Charteris" theme
	Louis Hayward	The Saint's Girl Friday	1953	Ivor Slaney	
	Felix Marten	Le Saint Mene La Danse	1960	Paul Durand	No theme
	Roger Moore	ITV Series	1962- 69	Edwin Astley	Astley's theme
	Jean Marais	Le Saint Prend L'Affut	1966	Gerald Calvi	"Charteris" theme on piano
	Ian Ogilvy	Return of the Saint	1978- 79	John Scott	"Charteris" theme
	Andrew Clarke	The Saint in Manhattan	1987	Mark Snow	Unknown
	Simon Dutton	The Saint TV movies	1989	Serge Franklin/	"Charteris" theme
	Paul Rhys	BBC Radio 4	1995		
	Val Kilmer	The Saint	1997	Graeme Revell	Astley's theme
	Adam Rayner	The Saint (pilot)	2013	Neal Acree	Astley's theme

I've found that crediting musicians was not detailed until the end of the twentieth century. On IMDB a team of musicians known to have worked for RKO are listed as composers for the Saint films, including Max Steiner and Miklós Rózsa, but the accuracy of the information is questionable and still doesn't clarify who originated what themes.

Music credit on IMDB for *The Saint in New York* 1938.

**Music Department**

Val Burton	... composer: stock music (uncredited)
Will Jason	... composer: stock music (uncredited)
Bernhard Kaun	... composer: stock music (uncredited)
Albert Hay Malotte	... composer: stock music (uncredited)
Nathaniel Shilkret	... composer: stock music (uncredited)
Max Steiner	... composer: stock music (uncredited)

Music credit on IMDB for *The Saint's Vacation* 1941

**Music Department**

Bretton Byrd	... musical director
Marr Mackie	... composer: stock music (uncredited)
Miklós Rózsa	... composer: stock music (uncredited)
Roy Webb	... composer: theme music (uncredited)

Here are screenshots of the Saint movies from 1938-1953. The opening credits of all these movies are on an unlisted YouTube link I've made.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=izeRjWNjyq8>

1938

*The Saint in New York*  
Louis Hayward

No credit for music.  
No "Saint" theme.



1939

*The Saint Strikes Back*  
George Sanders

This is the first movie with the whistle in its early form. At the end of the film where Sanders whistles, it appears as though he may have a ghost whistler.



1939

*The Saint in London*  
George Sanders  
Same theme as previous movie  
but violins have the theme  
accompanied by horns.



1940

*The Saint's Double Trouble*  
George Sanders  
Flutes play the theme  
accompanied by tremolo  
strings and harp.



1941

*The Saint Takes Over*

George Sanders

This theme is the same as the previous movie.



1941

*The Saint in Palm Springs*

George Sanders

The theme on flute is accompanied only by harp.



1941

*The Saint's Vacation*

Hugh Sinclair

The theme loses the ornament on the third note and changes meter. This theme is later pushed by Charteris and has controversy attached to it. It is played by violins with full orchestra accompaniment.

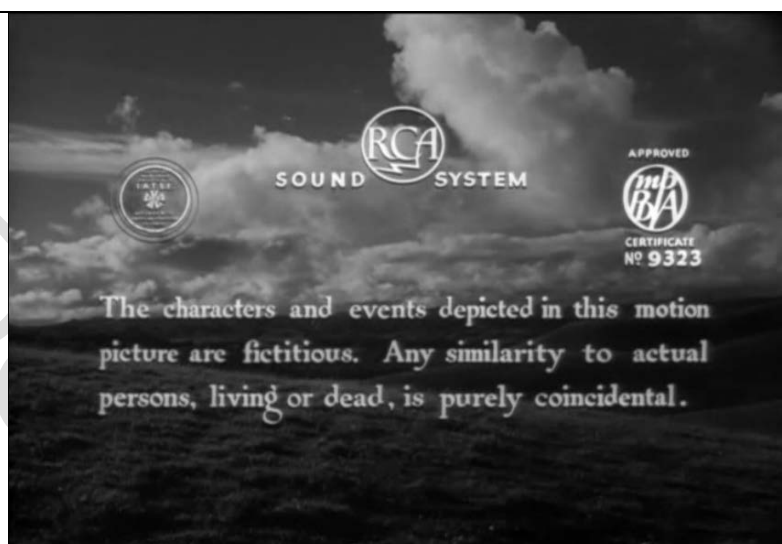


1943

*The Saint Meets the Tiger*

Hugh Sinclair

No beginning or ending credits for music. RKO had Republic Productions release this movie to the US two years after production because they were unhappy with it.<sup>20</sup> The theme is recycled from the 1939 *The Saint Strikes Back* but omits the whistled theme.

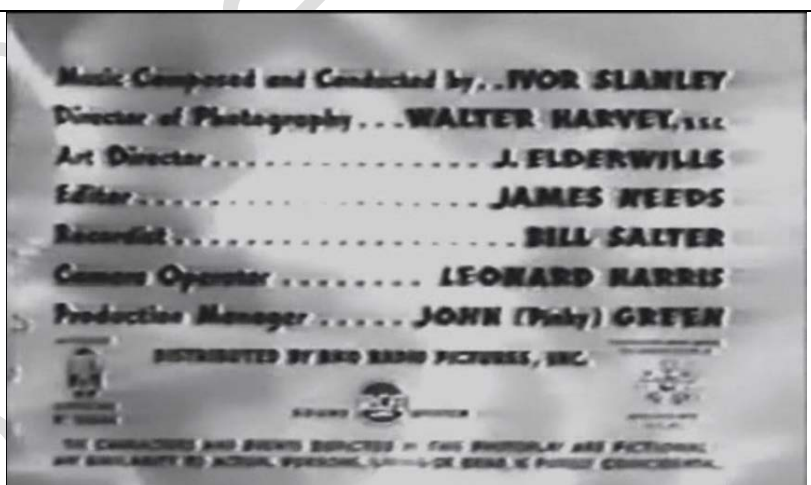


1953

*The Saint's Girl Friday*

Louis Hayward

The theme is played on a reed organ and is the last part of the opening music.



Each decade produced an altered Saint, but before I had compiled the above information, I'll continue the account of my discoveries. Since I had only known two portrayals of the Saint, Val Kilmer's and Roger Moore's, and both used the Astley theme, I wondered how the themes before Astley's fit the character. The first thing I learned was that a "Charteris" theme existed. I found it on a site of old radio archives starring Vincent Price. A lone whistle starts, the next note an octave above and continues, accompanied by steps of hard shoes on hard surface. The

<sup>20</sup> Barer, 23.



whistler's last note seems to land on a quarter tone above target causing me to twist my head.

The theme is repeated by clarinet accompanied by harp and bassoon. This time the last note ends a half step above the starting note.



The presentation of the theme struck me as eerie as if to prepare for a spooky story. The closing credits of the twenty-five minute radio show announced that the music was composed and conducted by Harry Zimmerman. The identity of the whistler was not given though the book *The Saint on Radio* documents the different whistlers through the many radio productions. The first movie to use this exact tune is the 1941 *The Saint's Vacation*, then repeated in the 1953 *The Saint's Girl Friday*. Five movies from 1939-1941 all starring George Sanders have an altered version of the above tune but must have come first. The meter and rhythm is different and with what sounds like an ornament on the third note though the fourth note of the set of sixteenths becomes an important note in the above theme.



To me, the opening ascending octave conjures up a story set in a far-off place or distant time. The tune seems nostalgic, hinting at memories good or bad that people like to retell. The big leap doesn't feel heroic but rather laborious, maybe the accompaniment weighs it down. My immediate aural associations are the first few notes of "Bali Ha'i" from *South Pacific*, the theme

from *Fantasy Island*, and the opening to the original *Star Trek*. All these shows have a mystical quality to them, opposite from the rough and tumble, present-day world of the Saint.

### BALI HA'I

from *SOUTH PACIFIC*

Lyrics by OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN II  
Music by RICHARD RODGERS



The mystical islands of both Bali Ha'i and Fantasy Island set up stories of wonderment, romance and the haunting of unfulfilled wishes. These story elements do not fit the criminal activities of Simon Templar.



From the TV Series "FANTASY ISLAND"  
**THEME FROM FANTASY ISLAND**

Music by  
 LAURENCE ROSENTHAL

**Broadly**

*f* *espressivo*

F6

D $\flat$ 7+/F

F6

FROM THE PARAMOUNT TELEVISION SERIES STAR TREK  
**THEME FROM "STAR TREK"**

WORDS BY  
 GENE RODDENBERRY

MUSIC BY  
 ALEXANDER COURAGE

BRIGHT GALACTIC BEGUINE

C(ADD2) A $\flat$ 13

BE - YOND THE RIM OF THE STAR - LIGHT,

C $\flat_9$

MY LOVE IS WAN - D'RING IN

E $\flat$ 9 $\sharp$ 11 E $\flat$  D6

STAR - FLIGHT. I KNOW HE'LL

The original *Star Trek* built its shows around the fantastic, of shocking the audience in the exploration of far-away places and people, of things as drastically unhuman as the storytellers could get away with. Simon Templar's story is of nitty-gritty real life.

Several years went by where no new radio programs or movies aired the Saint's whistle tune. When Charteris heard the intended theme for the 1962 television series, he was not pleased. Edwin Astley reports his experience with Charteris.

"... Leslie Charteris objected to the Saint theme as he considered it to be a pitch off a tune called 'Blues in the Night' and he was also quite put out because we were not using his tune as he called it ... Charteris accused me of plagiarizing my theme from him and in turn I threatened legal action if he did not stop claiming that I had stolen his work. Later, an American composer claimed to have written the whistling tune for the film and that Charteris had plagiarized it from him!"<sup>21</sup>

In investigating Charteris' claim for "Blues in the Night," I find that he does have a point.

**BLUES IN THE NIGHT**  
(MY MAMA DONE TOL' ME)

WORDS BY JOHNNY MERCER MUSIC BY HAROLD ARLEN

BLUES TEMPO (♩ = ♩♩)

MY MA - MA DONE TOL' ME WHEN I WAS IN { KNEE - PANTS, - } MY  
NAT - CHEZ TO MO - BILE, - FROM MEM - PHIS TO ST. JOE, - WHERE -

MA - MA DONE TOL' ME, - { SON! - A WOM - AN - 'LL SWEET TALK, - } AND  
EV - ER THE FOUR WINDS. - { HON! - A MAN'S GON - NA SWEET TALK, - } AND  
BLOW; - I BEEN IN SOME BIG TOWNS. - AN'

Astley's theme:

G minor ↑A4 ↑m2 ↓P5 ↑P4 ↓M2 ↓m3

"Blues in the Night:"

Bb Major ↑M3 ↑m2 ↓P4 ↑M4 ↑m2 (3x) ↓m6

<sup>21</sup> Richardson Michael, "King of the Cult Theme Composers," Action TV, August 2005, 30.

Astley's theme starts on the tonic, focuses around the fourth scale degree and returns to tonic. "Blues in the Night" starts on the dominant, focuses around the leading tone, stays there for a while, then ends on the mediant above the tonic. The gesture of the ascending minor second on the downbeat of both songs beckons to be compared and are prominent enough that the lower notes that precede and follow the gesture fade in importance but the rest of the melodic line of Astley's theme strays from the triple stagnant repetition of "Blues in the Night."

Astley's son Gareth wrote this on Facebook about his father's work on the Saint theme.

"Unfortunately I never had a conversation with my dad about the reason for the Charteris' claim, however my understanding was that the opening motif was totally my father's composition."<sup>22</sup>

Charteris' claim that Astley plagiarized from him doesn't seem to have any apparent ground unless Charteris had composed more ditties. There would be quite a lawsuit triangle if Astley had copied Arlen and Charteris. If Charteris wrote his theme in 1940, did Arlen copy Charteris for the *Blues in the Night* film released at the end of 1941? Even if Astley's and Arlen's tune could be offsprings of the minor second gesture, I don't see how Charteris' tune could be related, lacking a minor second interval ascending or descending. Was Charteris being cantankerous and grabbing at straws? This makes me wonder why Charteris who protects his intellectual property with tiger claws hadn't registered the tune prior to 1962 and why he hadn't insisted on a clause in the television contract for its use. Charteris had even had a broil with lawyers from CBS in 1945 regarding having his tune whistled at all because it could potentially confuse the audience of another radio program called *The Whistler*. Their other defenses were

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<sup>22</sup> Gareth Astley and Nick Haysom, "Edwin Astley Appreciation Society," Facebook, last modified May 15, 2016, [https://www.facebook.com/groups/edwinastley/permalink/1206933389325359/?comment\\_id=1207398525945512&reply\\_comment\\_id=1230165307002167-ift\\_group\\_comment\\_reply-ift\\_id=1463344413355325](https://www.facebook.com/groups/edwinastley/permalink/1206933389325359/?comment_id=1207398525945512&reply_comment_id=1230165307002167-ift_group_comment_reply-ift_id=1463344413355325).

that they had the concept of whistling a show's theme first and that they had proprietary rights to that device. Charteris' lawyers answered that the whistle had begun with the 1939 movie.<sup>23</sup> CBS backed off. This whistled tune is titled "No Saint Am I" and is listed in ASCAP under two writers, Leslie Charteris and Clarence Wright, filed in 1978.<sup>24</sup> I have been unable to find any information on Clarence Wright.

The four-year run of the black-and-white television series showcased Astley's talent as a limitless arranger and composer. When time came to renew the television contract for the color series, Charteris made sure his theme would be included.

"Charteris also insisted that his Saint theme music, the whistle utilized in the old George Sanders films and in the radio series, be incorporated into the new theme music at the beginning and end of each episode."<sup>25</sup>

I find that for Astley to spend time and creative energy working on Charteris' tune is incredibly forgiving and generous. Music was Astley's love and though it was also his livelihood, the magical arrangements he composed around Charteris' tune goes beyond perfunctory obligation. Professionalism doesn't necessarily warrant ingenuity and so I view Astley's personal expenditures as kind. Astley is not above a little play though. In the closing credits of the color series, when the snazzy Astley tune is interrupted by the sweeping lyrical sounds of Charteris' tune, a little hint of Astley's theme remains, low in pitch and volume.

The halo motif remained Astley's jingle until the last season. At first Astley had turned Charteris' notes into a line that was bouncy, light, and skipping, but a few episodes later, the

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<sup>23</sup> Barer, 75.

<sup>24</sup> "The Saint/Return of the Saint," The Media Management Group, last modified April 29, 2016, <http://www.classicthemes.com/50sTVThemes/themePages/saintThe.html>.

<sup>25</sup> Barer, 134.

weighty, legato returned. My heart sinks when Roger Moore's eyes look up and I hear a stately, lyrical tune. Where's the fun?

Why is Astley's tune so much more appealing to me? Its initial sounds prime me for a titillating story with clever wit, flash, and panache. We learned from Astley's wife that he viewed film footage before composing. Did he play with the interval of the fourth because it's a religious interval, the Amen cadence in reverse? Did he fashion the twelve bars after the blues to utilize the move to the subdominant? The tune seems to invite the listener to journey with a man who tries to do good but overshoots his target (because he knows he really isn't a saint) and lands on the augmented fourth, a predicament he must climb out of toward the fifth. This relentless man then tries again, gets his target of the perfect fourth, but only for a short time because the lowered third ensnares him in the longest note heard thus far before dumping him back to the beginning where he must gird up gumption to go again.

## MAIN THEME FROM "THE SAINT"

An ITC Television Production

By  
EDWIN ASTLEY

Moderato

The musical score is written for piano. It begins with a piano introduction consisting of two measures of triplets in the right hand and single notes in the left hand. The first measure is marked *mf* and the second *f*. The main melody starts in the second measure, marked *f*, and consists of a series of eighth and quarter notes. The score includes various chords and dynamics, with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The tempo is marked Moderato.

Chords: Gm, Bb, Cm, Gm, Bb, Cm, Gm, Bb, Cm, F, Gm

Dynamics: *mf*, *f*

Tempo: Moderato

Themes that begin with a mid-range interval feel more personable than ones that near the octave. Underlying rhythm felt in triplets also add an inviting energy that revs the pulse, increasing the elements for a person to relate to the music and therefore to the character and show. Other examples of themes from shows with characters who desire to do good but can fall short are *The Simpsons*, *Mannix*, *Get Smart* and *Star Trek-The Next Generation*. Each of these shows expand on the human element, of having moments of humility, and of relationships.

FROM THE TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX TELEVISION SERIES THE SIMPSONS

### THEME FROM THE SIMPSONS

MUSIC BY  
DANNY ELFMAN

MODERATELY FAST

C                      C<sup>7</sup>    C<sup>6</sup>                      C(b5)

THE      SIMP - SONS! \_\_\_\_\_

The first three notes of *The Simpsons*' theme are the same as the Astley theme. The Saint is not outwardly dysfunctional as the Simpsons, but he does have hidden angst, trying to make himself better than he is.

THEME FROM THE PARAMOUNT TELEVISION SERIES MANNIX

**MANNIX**

By LALO SCHIFRIN

BRIGHT JAZZ WALTZ

Chords: G6, Dm7, G6, Dm7, Dm7/G, Cmaj7, C6, B7(b5), B7

The *Mannix* theme starts with the same gesture, the second note different by a minor second, and also has a triplet rhythm under each quarter, making it feel like the 9/8 of Astley's theme. *Mannix* is a private investigator and this theme captures the hunt for clues, a close sound and feel to Simon Templar out-sleuthing police detectives.

**GET SMART**

By IRVING SZATHMARY

MODERATELY

Chords: Fm D7 C7, Fm D7 C7, Fm D7 C7, Fm D7 C7, CAUG, BAUG, BbAUG, D7, Fm, D7, C7b9, Fm, Bbm6, Gbm6

This minor second on the third note descends instead of ascends as in Astley's theme but the sound is still a middle-range interval with a quirky adjustment. *Get Smart* as a show contains much of the absurd, but it is highly entertaining. Both of those factors are in *The Saint* television series.

THEME FROM THE PARAMOUNT TELEVISION SERIES STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION

## STAR TREK-THE NEXT GENERATION

By ALEXANDER COURAGE,  
GENE RODDENBERRY AND JERRY GOLDSMITH

BRIGHT MARCH

Star Trek – The Next Generation

*Star Trek – The Next Generation* had a different focus than the original. The stories showed how human aliens can be.

This chart compares the orchestration of Astley's original theme and Charteris' theme as arranged in *The Saint Strikes Back*, and examines the possible implications of sounds by interval, direction, and duration.



<b>INTERVALS</b>	<b>Astley's original theme</b>		<b>Charteris's theme</b>	
	1st	2nd	1st	2nd
<b>Size</b>	A4 or d5	m2	P8	m3
significance	active, needs to go somewhere, seeking	intimate, fine, close, exploratory, insecure	stable, distant, aloof	global, traditional, common
<b>Direction</b>	up	up	up	down
significance	exciting, alert, curious	resolving, stretching, testing	high, dreamy, unattainable	childcentered, stirring
<b>Duration</b>	1/3 of a triplet	1/3 of a triplet	1 beat	1-1/2 beats
significance	quick, friendly, urgent	(same)	emphatic, direct, minimal, square	floating, hovering, draggy, playful
<b>INSTRUMENTS</b>	<b>Astley's original theme</b>		<b>Charteris's theme</b>	
<b>Melody</b>	Muted trumpet		Whistle	
Significance	knarly		whimsical	
<b>Orchestration</b>	Jazz band, saxophones, lower brass, electric or double bass		Orchestral sounds	
significance	trendy, relatable for younger generation, spunky, polyphonic, call and response		traditional, lyrical, melody led, homophonic	
<b>Percussion</b>	ride cymbal and drum sticks, later version full drum set		footsteps on radio, crash cymbals, timpani	
significance	exciting, danceable, internal triplets		ominous, mysterious, heavy drama	

The impression the chart gives is that Charteris' theme is simply old fashioned. Astley and other composers gave the theme more updated sounds, but the theme still seems stately in comparison to Astley's liveliness. Keeping with the interest of updated sounds, Orbital's arrangement of Astley's theme mostly updates it to a contemporary 90s rock sound. Here is another version of Astley's original music.

# The Saint

By Edwin Astley

$\text{♩} = 112$



Version written in triplets, not duple above triple on sixth note of theme.



Last two bars become more prominent in successive versions. Orbital uses it as an ostinato.

Music by  
Edwin Astley

## Capo 2

N.C.

The first system of the musical score for 'The Bird Song' is written for piano. It consists of two staves, treble and bass, in the key of D major (indicated by two sharps) and 4/4 time. The melody begins in the treble staff with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note D, and then a series of eighth and quarter notes: E, F#, G, A, B, A, G, F#, E. The bass staff has a whole rest for the first four measures, followed by a half note D, and then a series of eighth notes: E, F#, G, A, B, A, G, F#, E.

[illegible]

A musical score for the song 'The Rose Tree'. It features a treble and bass staff. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 3/4. The melody is in the treble staff, and the bass line is in the bass staff. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes, with some beamed eighth notes. The bass line consists of eighth and quarter notes. The score is divided into three measures by vertical bar lines.

Kept alteration during the IV part.



Rhythm change on third note of theme and on last note.

During my research I posted questions on the *Leslie Charteris and The Saint* Facebook page where an amazing, musically perceptive fan named Matt Jeffery from Australia gave me insightful information. When I asked him which was his favorite theme, he said he liked the Charteris theme best because the last note doesn't resolve and seems to lead somewhere. He finds the opening octave arresting and I take that to mean breathtaking and dazzling. He reasons that because the Charteris tune has had a longer run and was also incorporated in the films in the 80s, that it must represent Simon Templar more fully.<sup>26</sup>

Serge Franklin who scored the opening credits to six of the 80s movies starring Simon Dutton, reports of his interaction with Charteris:

“Before I started working on the main theme, I got a letter from Leslie Charteris who asked me to incorporate a short musical idea into the show. His

<sup>26</sup> Matt Jeffery, "Messages Matt Jeffery," Facebook, last modified May 18, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/messages/matt.jeffery.33886>.

request was just so polite and so British that I simply couldn't refuse. I was honored."<sup>27</sup>

When a contract doesn't contain details about music, apparently Charteris appeals to the composer directly, this time with honey, not vinegar. Without Charteris elbowing his theme into the inspirational arena of other composers, would it have been chosen to represent the ever evolving figure of Simon Templar? Astley's theme was chosen for the 1997 film and for the 2016 pilot of its own merit, on its power to invoke a stirring emotion. When I asked Matt what song first reeled him into The Saint music, he said Orbital's version. Now we agree.

Since Matt's and my opinion are contrary, viewer subjectivity must be factored into determining which theme represents the real Saint. Does the Charteris theme appeal to men and the Astley one to women? Unless the majority of the audience for the highly ranked Orbital song were women, then that idea has no validity, and besides, my husband prefers Astley's theme. What of the countless cover versions of Astley's theme by jazz groups? I don't know of any cover of Charteris' theme. Can the Astley tune be rated as a general good lick without an association to Simon Templar? Well, yes. So if the tune is too good, is it out of the running in being the halo theme for the Saint? No, the association buoys both the tune and the character. Music triggers memory and a fan's recall about Simon's escapades sets up excitement for more. If this trigger is only a conditioned response, then any organization of sound could qualify to be part of the Simon Templary experience. Charteris' tune has that power too, of course. At this point I realize there would be no debate if Astley's tune were never composed. But since it was, it has brought in more fans and unfortunately showed some weakness on the part of Charteris' theme, that it hadn't made its way into mainstream radio play.

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<sup>27</sup> Gergely Hubai, *The Saint Music* Composed by Serge Franklin (France: Music Box Records, 2016), 4.

Popularity aside, which theme represents the real Saint? That question cannot be answered until the determination of which characterization of Simon Templar is the real one. We must return to the authority of the author. The original Simon Templar had a hard edge in the 30s that was downplayed in the 60s but resurfaced to a certain degree in the 80s. Charteris didn't like the actors for the old black and white films, he said Sanders gave "constipated performances."<sup>28</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Also this is what Charteris said about the storylines in the 60s television series:

"I have to suffer the humiliation of realizing that thousands upon thousands of television viewers who do not read much ... will justifiably assume that my published stories are as trite and plagiaristic as the televised distortions make them out to be ... This is a hurt which I did not allow for in the price that I accepted."<sup>30</sup>

Charteris found his ideal saint in the 80s movies with Simon Dutton. This is Dutton's report:

"He wanted to meet me. I think his seal of approval had to be given, and I was very flattered that it was very deeply given. It was very nerve-wracking when I first met him – he was sizing me up ... but he said I was his image of the Saint, more than anybody else."<sup>31</sup>

The original theme composed by Serge Franklin in 1989 has many minor seconds that fit Simon Templar, but has a mood of worrying and isn't much memorable and for the most part sounds like generic electronic music. The Charteris tune shows up as the last thing on Franklin's

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<sup>28</sup> Backer, 6.

<sup>29</sup> "Burl Barer Interview: THE SAINT," YouTube, April 23, 2008, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LVFvtDmpvY>.

<sup>30</sup> Barer, 133.

<sup>31</sup> Hubai, 2.

theme, ending on the flattened second degree of D minor.<sup>32</sup> I think this is the cleverest, minimalistic nod towards the Charteris tune.



The music for the Dutton series would still come in third behind Astley's and Charteris'. As for the characterization of Simon Templar by Dutton, this is Matt Jeffery's opinion: "To me, the Dutton series was played too straight, I enjoyed the more light-hearted approach of the earlier series."<sup>33</sup>

So Matt champions the Charteris theme and the 60s rendition of Simon Templar. That pinpoints the end of Roger Moore's color series which was still heavily imbued with Astley's music though by this time even Astley's original theme had been transmuted so it is hardly perceivable.

Matt Jeffery said he likes the unresolved note that gives a sense of mystery. Because the arrival to the last note comes from a minor sixth above, it sounds as if the melody modulated rather than was left open. This made me realize I focused on the first sound heard whereas he focused on the last sound heard. Depending on the orchestration, at times there have been a I-V-I cadence on the last note establishing a new key, or it has been a springboard to more music. The Astley theme ends on the same note it starts on which may be "home," both a place to return to and a place to take off from. The ending of both themes can arguably have the same effect.

<sup>32</sup> Dan Taffner, "The Saint 1989 1," YouTube, 1989, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xD0IG81nyP0>.

<sup>33</sup> Matt Jeffery, "Messages Matt Jeffery," Facebook, last modified May 18, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/messages/matt.jeffery.33886>.

A funny circumstance arose when the pilot for *The Saint in Manhattan* aired in 1987. The video wasn't released in the U.S. because it did so poorly. Because Andrew Clarke who played Simon Templar was an Australian star, the video was released in Australia. The original version had Astley's theme but the video release has Charteris' theme replacing instances of Astley's. Matt Jeffery gives insight into the two versions:

“Interestingly they only used the first 6 notes of Astley, missing the resolving note. It's quite amusing the way they've tried to fit Charteris' 8 notes into gaps that were only designed for Astley's 6! There's a bit where Templar gets arrested - they originally played three ascending variations on Astley's theme. The attempt to do the same with Charteris' melody sounds awkward at best!”<sup>34</sup>

Why in the world was this even done? The events pertaining to the Saint music are a mystery of its own. Who really composed the whistle? Why was it changed so often? Why did Charteris wait so long to register the second whistle theme? And why the second one? Why did he accuse Astley of plagiarism? Why wasn't there a music clause in all the filmage he agreed to?

Those questions may never be answered. Another question is how much of any show's success is boosted by the music score? If it could be true that music can add spark and dimension to a film then the opposite would need to be true. Orbital's version of Astley's tune raised the interest level of the Val Kilmer movie. Charteris' tune in conjunction with multiple Saints of different incarnations encloses the character and story into an event of curiosity but not strong enough to engage high interest to possible new fans like me. Astley's tune and Roger Moore's high-class characterization of the Saint came together to be the most popular and longest running version of The Saint.

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<sup>34</sup> Matt Jeffery, "Messages Matt Jeffery," Facebook, last modified May 18, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/messages/matt.jeffery.33886>.



Judging who the real Saint is has included a study in the different incarnations of the character and his themes. There will be a matter of subjectivity in every fan's vote based on loyalty to author, composer, or even which story resonated with them the most. Setting a parameter on the original question would result in hopefully a more agreeable answer. Which Simon Templar portrayal matches his theme the best? To that I answer the 1962 Roger Moore/Edwin Astley collaboration.

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