Music Composed and Conducted by
Brian May

Composer Brian May and director Richard Franklin first came together on the 1975 bawdy comedy, *The True Story of Eskimo Nell*, but had more commercial success and critical acclaim with Franklin's thriller *Patrick*.

Because of the cult interest in May's work, 1M1 records issued a CD of the score for the film, together with his score for *Patrick*. It is now rare and priced in a way that ensures only dedicated Brian May cultists will be interested.

1M1CD1014

1. *Main Title, On The Road, The Icebox, It's The End Of The World, No More Games* 6'19"
2. *Hitch's Theme, Morning Scene* 3'24"
3. *The Chase* 2'52"
4. *Quid Investigates, What's The Matter Buddy?* 2'28"
5. *Quid Inspects Meat* 2'04"
6. *Hallucinating* 3'24"
7. *Final Pursuit* 3'57"
8. *Collision, High Jump* 1'33"
9. *Closing Titles* 2'32"
10. *Hitch's Theme* 3'01"

**Composer Brian May:**

Born 28th July 1934, composer Brian May began life in music studying piano, violin and conducting at the Elder Conservatorium in Adelaide. He joined the ABC in 1957, and formed the
May started to record television underscore, most notably arranging and recording George Dreyfus's score for the ABC goldfields drama *Rush*.

May became interested in composing for feature films, and *The True Story of Eskimo Nell* was his first score. It also marked the beginning of a collaboration with director Richard Franklin, perhaps most successful in the 1977 thriller *Patrick*. In turn, this led to other film scores for producer Antony Ginnane, including *Snapshot* and *Harlequin* for director Simon Wincer, and perhaps most importantly to the score for *Mad Max* (though cultists will have a soft spot for *Turkey Shoot* in 1982).

The story goes that producer Bryon Kennedy and director George Miller were convinced there was no one in Australia who could compose the score for their film, but when they were having dinner one evening with Franklin, Miller asked what Bernard Hermann score was playing on Franklin's stereo.

It turned out that it was May's score for *Patrick*, and so May got the gig. May would also do the score for the second *Mad Max* film, but Universal preferred to go with Jerry Goldsmith when they gave the chance of making *Psycho II* to Franklin (Franklin did stay loyal however and May composed the underscore for Franklin's *Cloak and Dagger*). May also lost to out Maurice Jarre for the third *Max Max*, and turned to writing the score for the TV mini-soap *Return to Eden* in 1986.

May did write a few more horror film scores, but his later titles were not as appealing as his early work.

May had done the score for producer Ginnane's ghost chiller *The Survivor*, directed by David Hemmings, before working with Hemmings again on the *Race for the Yankee Zephyr*, and he would also in the same year do the score for Richard Franklin's *Roadgames* - Franklin had originally been slated to direct *Yankee Zephyr*.

May's wiki is [here](#), but at the time of writing, it failed to mention his first feature film score - an important step in his career. The wiki is also careless with chronology.

There is a sympathetic study of his work [here](#) in the form of an obituary, up at time of writing March 2014.

In a lovely anecdote in a *Cinema Papers* interview, February-March 1985, May foretells something of his own fate:

> … I had a touching evening in which I spent about half an hour with Miklos Rozsa. Just getting back to the song score problem for a minute, (May was agitated about the way feature films had turned to collections of songs for the soundtrack, to generate synergy with music clips and young audiences) this sums it all up in a nutshell. Miklos played for me a couple of his famous scores - he had been very sick, had been in hospital and didn't look at all well, and he hadn't written for some time - and it was just gorgeous stuff. When he finished, he turned to me and said, "What's wrong with my music? They haven't changed love, hate, passion and all these sorts of things, and isn't that my music?" When I agreed, he said, "So why do they now say my music is old hat?" I thought about this and felt sad for days afterwards.

*(Below: composer Brian May)*
(Below: The Age 26th April 1977 and then The Age 2nd May 1977):
Film, TV composer dies of heart attack

By ANDREA CARSON

The Australian composer Mr. Brian May dies of a heart attack in Melbourne yesterday.

Mr. May, 63, composed the soundtracks to many films including *Gallipoli* and the *Mad Max* series.

He won many awards including the Golden Award from the Australian Performing Rights Association.

A turning point for his musical career came when he left Adelaide to conduct the ABC's Melbourne show band.

Mr. May died in the home of his close friend, Mr. Allan Zavod. Mr. Zavod said last night that Mr. May had a wonderful sense of humor and was a brilliant teacher.

"He was a great character, with a big laugh and always so passionate about his music, especially for films," Mr. Zavod said.

Mr. May trained at the Adelaide Conservatorium as a pianist and conductor and moved to Melbourne when he was 35.

He composed more than 30 feature film scores and several television scores for series including *Return to Eden* and *The Last Frontier*.

"His favorite work was *Mad Max*," Mr. Zavod said.

"He loved to write music. Sometimes he would wake at 2am and just start writing, and he would write music all day."

After spending many years in America working on film scores, Mr. May moved to Queensland, where he was involved with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra.

Mr. May is survived by four adult children.
Inspiration to big band broadcasts

Brian May
Composer
Born: Adelaide, 28 July 1934
Died: Melbourne, 25 April 1997, aged 62

'This satisfyingly brassy sound of the ABC Melbourne Show Band blew the cobwebs from traditional popular music on ABC radio and television when, in 1959, Brian May became its arranger, conductor and inspiration.

May, who died last Friday of a heart attack while visiting friends in Melbourne, brought supreme excellence to what became broadcasting's twilight.

The Show Band and its musical director enjoyed spectacular recording success and would provide theme tunes for several TV series, broadcast in its own right, and even gave a somewhat unwanted big band nudge to the launch of the famous Countdown series. The Countdown scream theme was May's.

Big bands had fascinated May before he arrived in Melbourne in 1958 to take over the ABC Melbourne Dance Band. He had joined ABC Adelaide in 1957, a 23-year-old musician who had studied piano, violin and orchestration at the city's Elder Conservatorium.

The ABC soon recognised the potential of its "fine light pianist" and May was asked to form the ABC Adelaide Big Band, a full-blown ensemble that May managed, executive produced Countdown and head of the ABC's Melbourne Variety Unit, remembers as probably the best of the ABC state-based bands.

In Melbourne in 1960, the outmoded image of the ABC Dance Band was abandoned and a new-style 36-piece group was announced.

The ABC Melbourne Show Band and its conductor Brian May made its radio debut on the first Network on 13 March 1960 with singers Arnie and Johnny Huker and Phil Lanham.

The band was heading for a golden age of television variety. Shirrington and May formed a strong partnership, working from adjoining offices in ABC premises in Toone Street, Melbourne. "It's really an audio gag," says Shirrington, referring to the spelling of the street name, "But Brian and I get much fun out of the fact that the building was sandwiched between S & M Furnishings and the Daily Planet massage parlor."

Background music for Australian television had always been taken from records. May changed that, writing and arranging the themes for such programs as Frank and Francesca — his first TV project — Bellbird and Love Story.

The breakthrough was the drama series Bush, set on the 19th-century Victorian goldfields. May's arrangement of the theme by Australian composer George Dreyfus was recorded by the Show Band, quickly reaching the top of the Australian charts, selling more than 100,000 copies — something that only pop groups such as Sherbert and Skyhooks could achieve.

Other successful Show Band albums followed, but May's interests had already turned to film music when he left the ABC in 1984. "The gut reaction as you watch the visuals for the first time is vital, but it sometimes fails," May said. One such moment was with producer George Miller, who rejected May's first ideas for the Mad Max theme. May suggested rock 'n' roll. Miller wanted big symphonic sounds. May agreed. "It proved to work as a strange, dissonant classical score."

Other film themes followed: Tales from the Crypt, Nightmare on Elm Street, Mad Max 2 (Road Warrior) and Gallipoli, among television series, Return to Eden, The Last Frontier, A Dangerous Life and Darling of the Gods.

May leaves a widow and four children.

— Robin Oliver, Sydney Morning Herald

Reg Barlow
Athletics club coach
Born: 22 July 1904
Died: 26 April 1997, aged 92

REG BARLOW had a huge influence in building Melbourne's Box Hill club into one of the strongest athletics clubs in the world.

In the decade or so after the Second World War, when sporting clubs everywhere needed to be re-established, Reg helped get Box Hill on its feet again.

For 30 years he was a club coach, and in that time Box Hill dominated Victorian athletics. From the early '60s to the present day, the club won 27 out of 32 premierships.

At its zenith, Box Hill was possibly the strongest athletic club in the world. The club system does not exist in the United States, and there is no doubt the club from Melbourne's eastern suburbs would have been competitive with any of the English or European clubs of the time.

For most of that period, Reg Barlow was quietly supportive of his more flamboyant and well-known brother, Alan. It was Reg who convinced Alan to become involved in the late 1950s.

In the next few years, the membership grew from 45 to more than 200 as the club flourished.

There was great committee support at the time, but the Barlow brothers provided much of the impetus.

Perhaps reflecting their different personalities, Alan gravitated to the sharp end of the performance scale. He guided the careers of athletes like Graham Crouch, and was an Olympic team coach in 1976.

Reg's influence was more widely spread. Ian Jones, a former top middle-distance athlete, recalls: "In years when Box Hill had over 300 members, Reg knew every one by name."

As an athlete, Reg set many world and Australian veterans' records. He held every Australian record in the 70-74 age group, from 3000 metres to one hour.

Reg's wife of more than 60 years, Thelma, predeceased him by just a couple of years. He is survived by four children — Ken, Nola, Jeff and Lois — and several grandchildren.

— Len Johnson

Obituaries are edited by Peter Schumpeter. Phone: (03) 9601 2595.