music composed by
George Dreyfus

music adviser
Phil Matthews

"Brown Skin Baby"
used by permission of Bob Randall,
End titles arrangement by Robert Gavin, sung by Michele Miles.

"Forever and Ever"
Malia Rosa and Franz Winkler © 1947 Musikvertrieb A.G., Zurich
Robbins Music Corp., New York Australia and New Zealand J. Albert & Son

"Let The Four Winds Blow"/"Country Girl"
The Black Sorrows
"Man Overboard"/"I Write the News"
Do.Re.Mi/Beargarden
"Tell Me"
Samurai Trash
used by permission of Virgin Records Australia

Buddy Williams Records
used by permission of RCA Ltd.

John Williamson Records
used by permission of Emusic Pty. Ltd.

There are some incidental performances by key cast during the film.

Bob Maza (playing Joe) and Malcolm Silva (playing Joe's brother Charlie)
lead a singalong of Brown Skin Baby while the new house is painted green:
And there is some incidental singing around a campfire, with producer Sue Milliken forced to head off to the United States to get the rights to *Forever and Ever* when a couple of unidentified old timers riffed on the tune for the camera.

In the DVD commentary, Sue Milliken notes that the film was made at a time when director Beresford was at his most minimalist in relation to
underscore (he notoriously used only found music in shows such as 'Breaker' Morant).

Milliken feels that The Fringe Dwellers might have benefited from a touch more music, but Ernie Dingo likes the solitary piano's impact and Beresford notes that composer of the underscore, George Dreyfus, adapted the key melody on the piano from Bartok.

Singer Michele Miles (dubbed Millsy in the DVD commentary by Ernie Dingo) sings the song that runs over the end credits. She also appears in the film in the role of Blanchie.

Dingo recalls Miles singing songs on set with a powerful voice that made other attempts at country music sound feeble, or as he puts it, the other singers sounding like "complete idiots".

Director Bruce Beresford says he heard composer Bob Randall's song on the radio and thought it would be a good fit with the film, "and I remember we rang up the composer … and I said, 'oh look I'm making this film, and I'd like to get your song for the movie'. He said 'oh what song?' and I said 'Brown Skin Baby' … he said, 'that's alright mate, you can have it' …

After noting the generosity/approach, so typical of Aborigines, in his DVD commentary, Beresford added "no, no, we want to pay you for it … we had to force the money on to him."

(Below: Michele Miles, who sings the song over the film's end credits. In the second still, she can be seen on the right, with star Kristina Nehm as Trilby centre, and Michelle Torres as Audrena on the left).
Composer Bob Randall can be seen performing the original on YouTube at a link via blog postings here and here (together with the original lyrics), while Paul Kelly writes about the significance of the song at The Monthly here.

Lyrics for the song as they appear in the film:

(Note: the original song was written for a male baby - in the movie it is transcribed to a female baby. Thus the original opening line is “take him away”, which in the movie version becomes “take her away”. Other lines are also changed and dropped - for example, in some versions, in the original the second, third and fourth lines run ..
As a young preacher I used to ride
A quiet pony round the country side
In a native camp I’ll never forget
See the above blog links for other elements in the original lyrics)

The song begins in language:

Yoooweeeeee, yooooowieeee (phonetic)

My brown skin baby they take her away ...

On a mission reserve I'll never forget
A young black mother, her cheeks all wet
Between her sobs I heard her say
One there (?) obscured) taken my baby away
White fella, boss, the baby of mine
Why did they take my baby away?
Yooowieeeeee, yooowwieeeeee (phonetic)

My brown skin baby they take her away...

The child grew up and had to roam
Through this land that she loves so
To find her mother she tried in vain
Upon this earth they'll never met again

Yooowieeeeee, yooowwieeeeee (phonetic)

My brown skin baby they take her away...
My brown skin baby they take her away...

(The music then continues as an instrumental until it concludes at end of titles).

One of the blogs linked to above provides this short CV for Randall:

**Bob Randall, is a member of the Stolen Generations and former Indigenous person of the year. He is credited with bringing to light the issue of forced removal of Aboriginal children from their families, in 1970. His song, "My Brown Skin Baby They Take Him Away," written at the time, is described as an "anthem" for the Stolen Generations.**

**Uncle Bob Randall was born around 1927 in the bush of the Central Desert region of the Northern Territory (NT), Australia. He is a “Tjilpi” (special teaching uncle) of the Yankunytjatjara Nation and one of the listed traditional keepers of the great monolith, Uluru.**

**At about age 7, Bob was taken away from his mother and family under government policy which forcibly removed all half-caste (half-Aboriginal) children from their families.**

**He was one of thousands of Aboriginal children who were placed in institutions throughout Australia and came to be known as the “Stolen Generation.” Like so many, he grew up alone, away from his family, and never saw his mother again. He was taken to a receiving home for indigenous children in Alice Springs, NT, then later was moved to Croker Island Reservation in Arnhem Land where he, like the other children, was given a new identity and birth date.**

**No records were kept of the Aboriginal nation, family name, or identity of the Aboriginal children who were stolen. Young Bob was kept in government institutions until he was twenty when he, with new wife and baby, was banished for questioning white authorities. He moved to Darwin**
and later to Adelaide, South Australia, working, studying, and looking for his family and country of belonging. After many years of heart-wrenching searches, he found his roots and returned to his mother’s country where he lives today at Mutitjulu Community beside Uluru (Ayers Rock).

In 2006, Uncle Bob co-produced and narrated the award-winning documentary, “Kanyini.” “Kanyini” was voted "best documentary" at the London Australian Film Festival 2007, winner of the “Inside Film Independent Spirit Award”, and winner of the Discovery Channel Best Documentary Award in 2006. Uncle Bob continues to write and teach throughout the world, presenting teachings based on the Anangu (central desert Aboriginal nation) “Kanyini” principles of caring for the environment and each other with unconditional love and responsibility.

His tireless dedication calls indigenous people to reclaim their Aboriginal identities and re-gain lives of purpose, so that the relevance of ancient wisdom to modern living is understood.

Uncle Bob Randall is a living bridge between cultures and between world nations, creating lines of understanding so that indigenous and non-indigenous people can live and learn together, heal the past through shared experience in the present, sharing a way of being that allows us, once again, to live in oneness and harmony with each other and all things.

Composer George Dreyfus:

George Dreyfus is a noted Australian classical music performer and composer, who also worked in film and television.

Dreyfus came from Berlin to a boarding school in Melbourne after Kristallnacht, and was followed by his parents in 1940. He studied as a bassoonist, working for J. C. Williamson’s orchestra and then for the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, before leaving to concentrate on composition.

He achieved recognition in television by composing the hummable theme for the ABC television goldfields drama "Rush". Feature film enthusiasts will remember his scores for Break of Day (1976), Let the Balloon Go (1976) and The Fringe Dwellers (1986), but train spotters will most likely fondly remember his work for Film Australia’s short A Steam Train Passes (1974), which excluded any narration, and instead relied on images and music to tell its story of a steam train in action.

Dreyfus has a relatively detailed wiki here, with a number of useful links.
(Below: George Dreyfus as painted by Brian Dunlop for the Archibald prize in 1995)

(Below: George Dreyfus at work c 1980)
Dreyfus' music has also been released on CD by Move, though it didn't include his relatively modest piano work for *The Fringe Dwellers*:
LET THE BALLOON GO * DIMBOOLA * POWER WITHOUT GLORY * RUSH * BREAK OF DAY

The film music of GEORGE DREYFUS

Melbourne Symphony Orchestra  Queensland Symphony Orchestra
conducted by the composer
The release below, an LP released in 1978, includes music from the TV series *Rush, Sebastian the Fox, Power without Glory and Peace*, and the feature film *Break of Day*, but also didn't include his relatively modest and straightforward work for *The Fringe Dwellers*. 
George Dreyfus: bassoon, vocals and percussion; Paul Grabowski: electric piano and ARP synthesizer. Recorded at Sound Source Studio, Melbourne. Recording engineer: Rudi Brandsma; produced by George Dreyfus (all music APRA)