Composer Peter Best:

*Cinema Papers*’ interview:

Peter Best was interviewed in the May 1988 issue of *Cinema Papers*. He talked generally about how he started in the industry, and then more specifically about the movie:

“... I have no musical background - I didn’t even do music at school - but I was always interested in it. I wrote songs while I was still at school that were really dreadful, and were derivative of all the heroes of the day like Duane Eddy. When I left home and came to Sydney I didn’t play music much at all, and then I was out drinking with some of my university mates, and something was on the jukebox that I made disparaging remarks about. Somebody said, “Well if you’re so bloody smart why don’t you do better?” There was a lot of joking conversation around the table about how the Sun-Herald was running a songwriting competition, so I went home and knocked off a few songs - and won! Thought, “Well, if it’s that easy I might as well keep doing it!”

I came out of a background of jingles. Up until a couple of years ago, I guess I averaged more than 200 a year. It’s more lucrative than movies. Commercials are an intellectual exercise and a puzzle to solve. You give them your best shot but you don’t get emotionally involved the way you do with movies. Something like Bliss: everybody who worked on it felt as though they’d been run over backwards by a steamroller when they came out of it because everyone was so dedicated and interested. It was exhausting emotionally. That doesn’t mean you don’t make the same kind of effort on a commercial as you do on a movie. It’s just the emotional dimension that tends to be lacking, or it’s less intense.

I’d done a lot of work for Phillip Adams, and he and Brian Robertson (sic, Robinson) had made a short film called Jack and Jill which, for its time, was very interesting. Phillip asked me
if I’d do some music for that, and I did. He then was producing The Adventures Of Barry McKenzie and suggested me to Bruce Beresford and Barry Humphries. I’d been at university with Bruce, but that wasn’t regarded by him as any kind of qualification for me to be in a position to wreck his masterpiece. So he didn’t want me to do it. Barry didn’t want me to do it, and what happened in the end was that I tried to resign several times. Bruce would have accepted it happily, but Phillip wouldn’t. In the end I actually wrote a song called The Adventures Of Barry McKenzie which I played to Barry Humphries, and he loved it. So that got the pressure off!

Crocodile Dundee was the first film I’ve ever actually gone after, and I didn’t go after it because I knew it was going to be a success or anything like that. They were in Sydney and I was living in Portland. I never go to industry functions or read the industry press and I don’t know anyone else in the industry much, so I was the last person to find out they were making a film called Crocodile Dundee. When I did find out, it was from somebody who said that dozens of people had been approached and asked to submit songs, so I sent a fairly cheeky letter to Sydney saying, “Why have you approached every living and dead composer except me?” I got a phone call to say that they still hadn’t made a decision about it, and they’d keep me in mind. Then six months later they rang me and said would I come to Sydney and talk to them, which I did. And at the end of that day, without anybody really saying anything I found myself with the job …”

“…Normally I get a script, but usually there’s not much point in reading it because once a shoot is over, there are more blue pages than any other colour! Almost invariably you end up with something that isn’t what anybody entirely expected. Sometimes it’s much better and sometimes it’s not. The moment of truth usually comes when you see the first assembly. With Crocodile Dundee, I watched that first rough cut that ran about 2½ hours and I really enjoyed it. I sort of wasn’t expecting to, but I did. And as I worked on it and saw it more and more times, I got more and more bored with it. I’m sure John Cornell won’t accuse me of disloyalty when I say that. There isn’t a film around that you can see 500-600 times without getting a bit bored. I had to keep reminding myself just what my first response had been, and that’s what is valuable. It’s that first time you look at it. That’s the only time most people are going to see it …”

Career:


Best went on score the two Barry McKenzie films, produced by Adams.

Best would become one of the major contributors to the revival of screen music in Australia, with scores for films such as Muriel’s Wedding, the first two Crocodile Dundees and Bliss. He has also had a successful career in the advertising game.

He did several scores for Tim Burstall’s films, starting with the score for Burstall’s The Child episode of the four part portmanteau feature Libido, followed by Petersen and then End Play.

Best had taken a break from composing for the screen after doing the SAFC telemovie The Sound of Love in 1978, but after doing We of the Never Never in 1982, he followed with Goodbye Paradise, the Alex Stitt animation Abra Cadabra, Rebel, The More Things Change …, Bliss, and then in 1986, Crocodile Dundee.

Best subsequently did scores for Muriel’s Wedding, Dad and Dave: On Our Selection and Doing Time for Patsy Cline.
Best has a short (at time of writing) wiki [here](#), and he should not be confused with the original drummer for *The Beatles*.

*(Below: Peter Best)*

*(Below: Best as he appears in the DVD ‘making of’ for *We of the Never Never*)


**LP RELEASE:**

The film’s score was released as a gatefold LP, with artwork:
Paul Hogan is

**CROCODILE DUNDEE**

ORIGINAL MOTION PICTURE SCORE

Paul Hogan is
CROCODILE DUNDEE
Original Motion Picture Score

SIDE 1 “Never Never”
Opening titles
Mick and his mate, Cyril
The walkabout bounce
Goodnight Walter
in the truck
The buffalo
In the boat
Never Never Land
The death roll
Sunset
Nice one Skippy
A walk in the bush
Crocodile
Echo billabong
Would you mind?

Paul Hogan

CROCODILE DUNDEE
Linda Kozolowski  Mark Duvall  David Culp  Michael Lombard and John Melton

Original score by Peter Best
Arranged by Paul Hogan & Ken Shade

Produced by Paul Hogan

Recorded digitally at A&M, Australia, Melbourne
Remastered at Paradise Studios, Sydney

Produced, Composed, Arranged and Conducted by Peter Best
Recording and Remix Engineers: Doug Brady
Mad, Bad and Dangerous vocals by Lisa Edwards and Lindsay Field

SIDE 2 “New York”
Mick meets New York
C’mon baby
Wear
Mad, Bad and Dangerous
Sting by crocodile in wine and silence
The pimp
Stone the crows
That’s not a knife
Oh Richard
The pimp returns
Theme from “Crocodile Dundee”
Overture from “Crocodile Dundee”
LP  EMI EMX 240625 1986 Gatefold
LP  Varese Sarabande (USA) STV 81296 1986
Written, Arranged and Produced by Peter Best
All AMCos
Recorded digitally at AAV Australia, Melbourne and remixed at Paradise Studios, Sydney
Recording and Mixing Engineer: Doug Brady
Best Results Pty. Ltd/Rimfire Productions

SIDE 1:
“Never Never”
1. Opening Titles (1’56”)
2. Mick And His Mate Cyril (0’34”)
3. The Walkabout Bounce (3’12”)
4. Goodnight Walter (0’33”)
5. In The Truck (2’54”)
6. The Buffalo (1’15”)
7. In The Boat (0’50”)
8. Never Never Land (0’57”)
9. The Death Roll (0’38”)
10. Sunset (0’18”)
11. Nice One Skippy (2’55”)
12. A Walk In The Bush (2’45”)
13. Crocodile (1’01”)
14. Echo Billabong (1’10”)
15. Would You Mind? (0’25”)
SIDE 2:
“New York”
1. Mick Meets New York (2'44")
2. G’day (1'49")
3. Yessir (0'08")
4. Mad, Bad And Dangerous (2'31") Vocals: Lisa Edwards, Lindsay Field
5. The Pimp (1'18")
6. Stone The Crows (0'34")
7. That’s Not A Knife (1'34")
8. Oh Richard (2'30")
9. The Pimp Returns (1'30")
10. Theme From “Crocodile Dundee” (4'58")
11. Overture From “Crocodile Dundee” (3'13")

(As with the movie, the US LP release was shorn of Australianisms, such as ‘billabong’ and ‘stone the crows’).