

# BLOOD+THUNDER

## THE SOUND OF ALBERTS

**Premiering Thursday, June 25 at 8.30pm on ABC**

This two-part documentary takes viewers back to the '60s and '70s and charts how Australia got its own rock & roll sound thanks to a life-long bond between two families: the music company Alberts and the Youngs, an immigrant family from Glasgow. Together, they created a sound that would become an inspiration to millions of music fans around the world.

Though very different on the surface, the families were similar where it mattered – a love of music, a refusal to blow one's own trumpet, and a determination to succeed. Their bond was the blood of two families, and the thunder was the sound they produced.

It's a story of incredible accomplishments, and some devastating losses, such as the death of Bon Scott. And it all started at the legendary Alberts Studios.

### **BLOOD + THUNDER: THE SOUND OF ALBERTS** **BLOOD - Thursday, June 25 at 8.30pm on ABC**

When the unassuming Ted Albert finds musical genius within Australia's migrant families in the '60s – Billy Thorpe, The Easybeats, others – he's sure they can create music that will impress the world. He's right, especially due to the Young clan from Glasgow. Australia goes nuts over the homegrown sounds.

Born into the music dynasty J Albert & Son, Ted joins the board in 1962, aged 25, and is determined to create an Australian sound. His first signing is Billy Thorpe & The Aztecs and it's their hit *Poison Ivy* that's at the top of the charts when The Beatles tour the country in 1964 – an extraordinary achievement.



Also in 1963 the Youngs arrive in Sydney from Scotland. In no time at all teenagers George Young, Johannes van den Berg (Harry Vanda), Stevie Wright and others form The Easybeats. All are European immigrants living at the Villawood Migrant Hostel.

With one audition an unlikely life-long partnership is forged between the cultured, reserved Ted and the working class Young clan, which includes eight kids.

The Easybeats wins over Australia with *She's So Fine*, then an overseas deal with United Artists in the US sees them recording at London's legendary Abbey Road Studios. Once George and Harry put

their heads together as songwriters they eventually crack the international market with *Friday on My Mind*. It prompts Ted to start matching their diverse song catalogue with the musical talent under his roof.

Alberts hits flood the charts and not just rock & roll but cracking pop too: Ted Mulry scores with *Falling in Love Again* (1971) – the second of seven top 10 singles he records with Alberts after *Julia* – Alison MacCallum with *Superman* (1972) and John Paul Young with *Pasadena* (1972).



After four years in London George and Harry return to Australia and become in-house songwriters and producers at Alberts. When *Evie* sparks the spectacular rock revival of Stevie Wright in 1974 – at 11.25 minutes, Australia's longest single ever – it becomes the biggest hit single in Australian history.

The '70s also sees two other Youngs – Angus and Malcolm – step up onto the stage and into the Alberts family: blood brothers not just to George, but also to Ted.

**BLOOD & THUNDER: THE SOUND OF ALBERTS** continues Thursday, July 2 at 8.30pm on ABC.

## On-screen quotes from those interviewed:

"Ted just did have this uncanny knack for picking a hit. He listened to a lot of the music that was coming out of overseas so he was very keyed in to what was happening," Jane Albert, journalist, Alberts board member and niece of Ted Albert.

Angry Anderson, lead vocalists Rose Tattoo, songwriter, actor and activist: "One of the things that's notable if you like about the whole Alberts stable in those days was we all had what they called the Australian pub rock sound, that big fat robust guitar sound. And it was very, very difficult to get the intensity of that onto tape ... George and Harry were magicians at that ... No one attacks a guitar like an Australian."

"I just got a new stereo system (when AC/DC were signed) ... I turned it up as loud as I could. I actually cracked the window in my office," Jim Delehant, former vice president A&R, Atlantic Records.

Tony Barber, one-time member of Billy Thorpe & the Aztecs, author, inventor: "This song came out through these huge speakers. The whole office shook. And he said "What do you think?" I said "Ted, you and I both now that we've just listened to an absolute certain number one hit record." And this big smile came out of his face. And it was *Sorry* by The Easybeats."

**Production details:** Screen Australia in associated with the ABC presents a Bombora Film and Music Co., and Beyond Screen production. Narrator: David Field. The series is written and directed by Paul Clarke. Co-written by Alex Barry. Producers: Martin Fabinyi and Stephanie Werrett. Executive Producer Mikael Borglund, Ron Saunders and Paul Clarke.

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