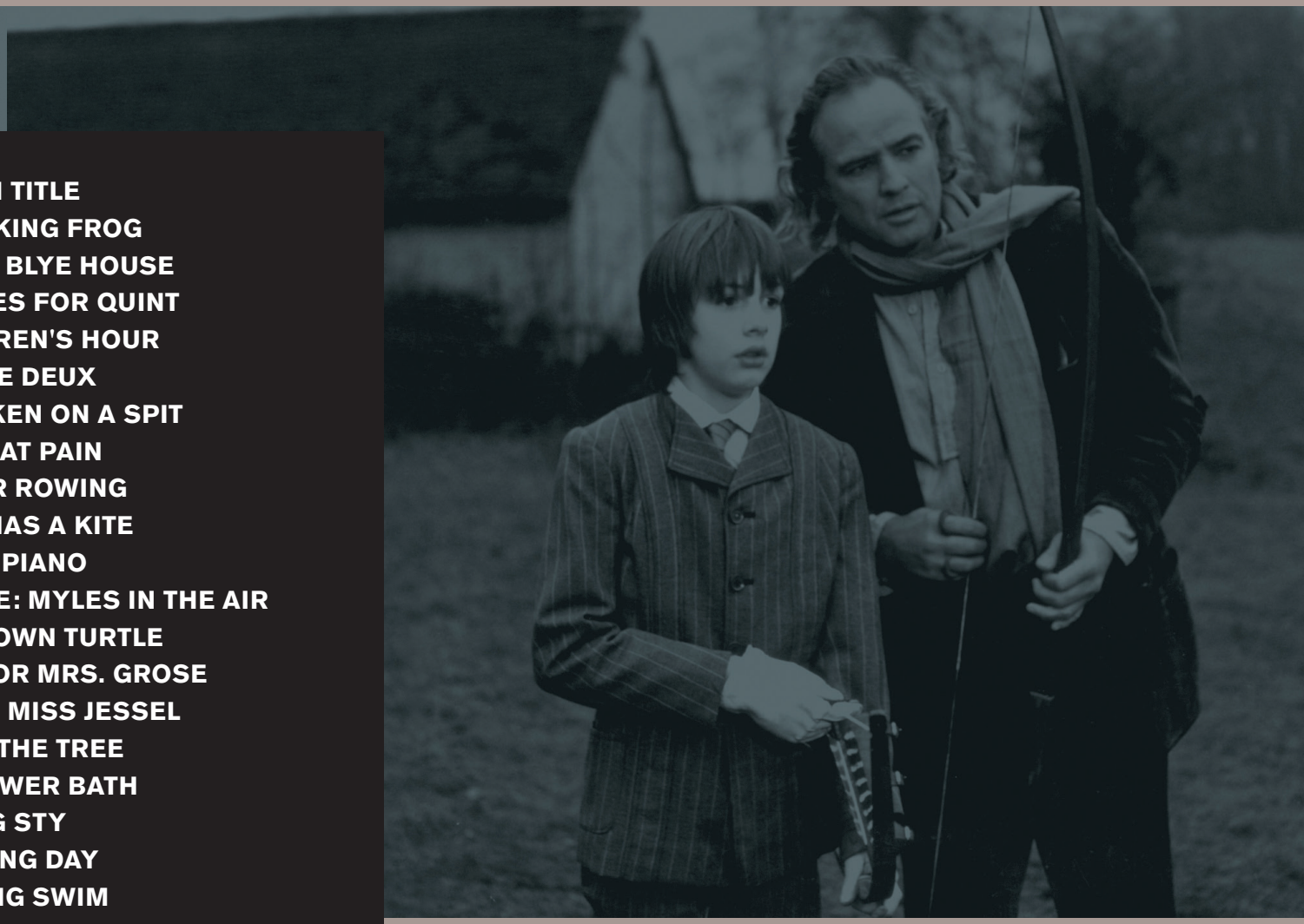
MARLON BRANDO

THE NIGHTCOMERS

STEPHANIE BEACHAM

ORIGINAL FILM MUSIC BY JERRY FIELDING



1 MAIN TITLE
2 THE SMOKING FROG
3 BEDTIME AT BLYE HOUSE
4 NEW CLOTHES FOR QUINT
5 THE CHILDREN'S HOUR
6 PAS DE DEUX
7 LIKE A CHICKEN ON A SPIT
8 ALL THAT PAIN
9 SUMMER ROWING
10 QUINT HAS A KITE
11 PUB PIANO
12 ACT TWO PRELUDE: MYLES IN THE AIR
13 UPSIDE DOWN TURTLE
14 AN ARROW FOR MRS. GROSE
15 FLORA AND MISS JESSEL
16 TEA IN THE TREE
17 THE FLOWER BATH
18 PIG STY
19 MOVING DAY
20 THE BIG SWIM
21 THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS
22 BURNING DOLLS
23 EXIT PETER QUINT, ENTER THE NEW GOVERNESS; RECAPITULATION AND POSTLUDE

MUSIC COMPOSED AND CONDUCTED BY **JERRY FIELDING**

When Marlon Brando arrived in Cambridgeshire, England, during January of 1971, his career literally hung in the balance. Deemed uninsurable, too troubled and difficult to work with, the actor had run out of pictures, steam, and advocates. A couple of months earlier he had informed author Mario Puzo in a phone conversation that he was all washed up, that no one was going to hire him again, least of all to play Don Corleone in the upcoming film version of Puzo's runaway best-seller, The Godfather. Depressed, unwell, and a little desperate for money, Brando had accepted just $50,000 for a month's work in a low-budget UK production called THE NIGHTCOMERS, largely because one of its producers was his friend and former agent, Jay Kanter, and secondarily because there was nothing else on offer. However, a little light was beginning to shine, because between the conversation with Puzo in late 1970 and his trip to England the following January, he had actually managed to film an audition for the gangster epic (not that the executives in charge were all that impressed with the results). The greatest actor of his generation was in decline, and his most recent effort, QUIEMADA, had disintegrated into muddled chaos. So, as Brando reported for work on a large, chilly country estate in the middle of an unkind British winter, the assembled cast and crew held their collective, frozen breath.

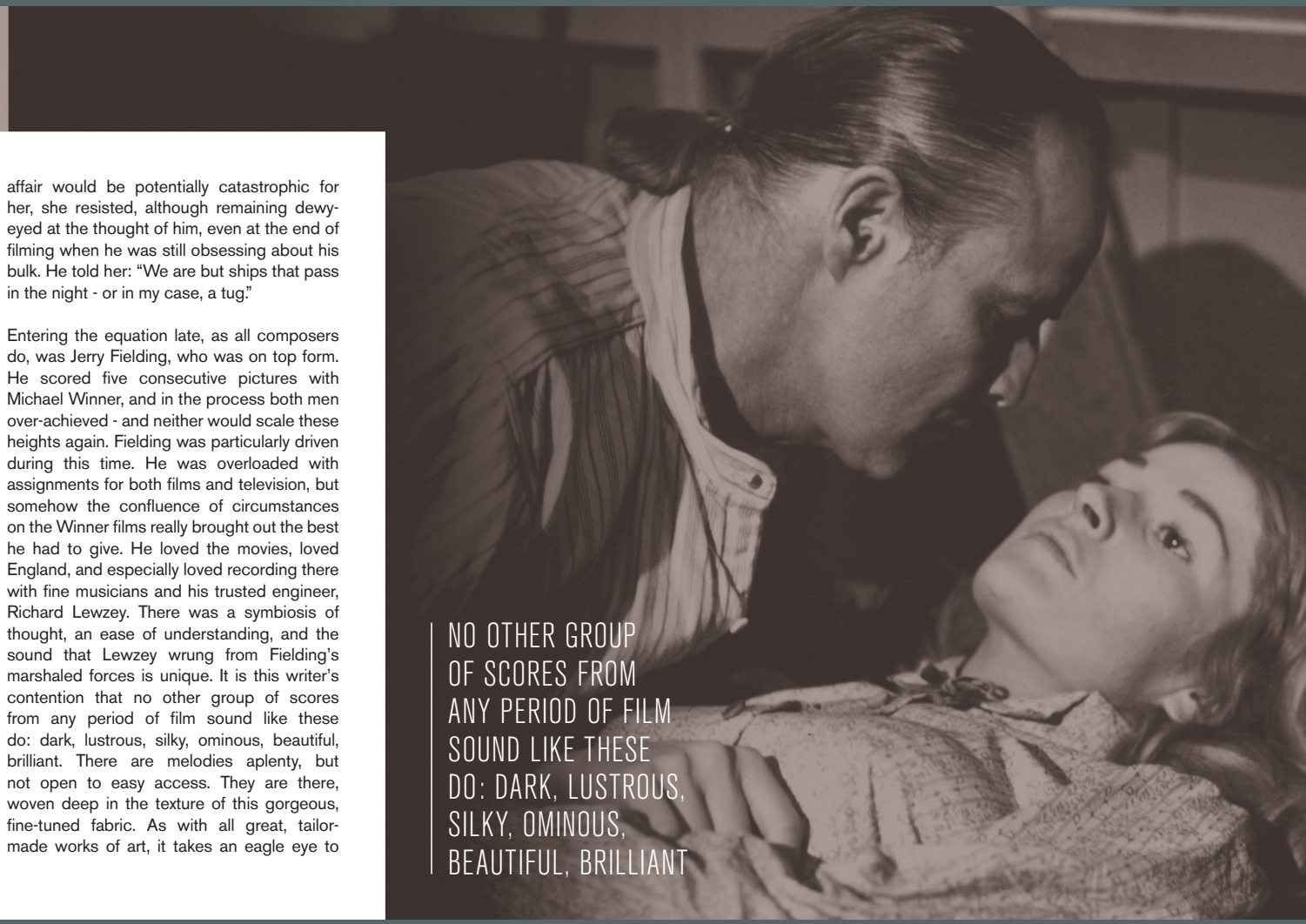
THE NIGHTCOMERS had allegedly come into being because Michael Winner wanted to direct "an art film." Michael Hastings, a well-known London playwright, had constructed a kind of "prequel" to Henry James' famous novel, The Turn of the Screw, which had been filmed in 1961, splendidly, as THE INNOCENTS. In Hastings' new story, we discover what happened to the gardener Peter Quint and the governess Margaret Jessel: specifically how they influenced the two evil children, Flora and Miles, and subsequently met their deaths at the children's hands. Winner's somewhat highbrow project had languished for a few years because no one was willing to finance it. Eventually, the producing triptych of Kastner/Ladd/Kanter came on board, and it was Kanter who suggested Brando for the role of the charmingly malicious Quint.

Winner at this time was extremely sought-after, doing film after film in quick succession, and he was already contracted to shoot CHATO'S LAND in Spain when the money for NIGHTCOMERS came through. In fact, he would have barely five weeks between the completion of principal photography on one, before starting the next. However, determined to work with Brando, Winner forged ahead, knowing calamity would strike if the recalcitrant star lived up to his reputation for creating havoc. Luckily, fortune would smile on both men. Barely two weeks later, Paramount

WE DISCOVER WHAT HAPPENED TO THE GARDENER PETER QUINT AND THE GOVERNESS MARGARET JESSEL

Pictures in Hollywood announced that Marlon Brando had been cast as the title character in THE GODFATHER, marking the legend's return to the big leagues. This was music to Winner's ears, for he knew that Brando could not now misbehave. He wouldn't dare jeopardize the chance-of-a-lifetime comeback opportunity THE GODFATHER represented, and according to many observers, the actor was about as content, playful, and cooperative as one could imagine - the very antithesis of what the company feared. British actress Stephanie Beacham, who plays Miss Jessel, was captivated by the volatile, larger-than-life Brando, and clearly developed a crush. She had many difficult scenes with him involving violent, sado-masochistic sex and considerable nudity, but she was touched by his anxious, and often shy concerns regarding his weight. Although nowhere near as large as he would become in later years, his girth bothered him, and he conspired with Beacham to hide his "pot"; the sex scenes were re-blocked to have her body cover his as much as possible. Only twenty-three at the time, Stephanie gamely struggled to accommodate his needs at the expense of her own vanity, bearing, as she did, the camera's remorseless scrutiny. She told Brando's biographer, Peter Manso, that she wrote in her diary: "Heavens, the sight of Oliver Hardy, as Marlon thinks of himself, in jockey shorts and Wellington boots, just made me die!" Knowing that an affair would be potentially catastrophic for her, she resisted, although remaining dewy-eyed at the thought of him, even at the end of filming when he was still obsessing about his bulk. He told her: "We are but ships that pass in the night - or in my case, a tug."

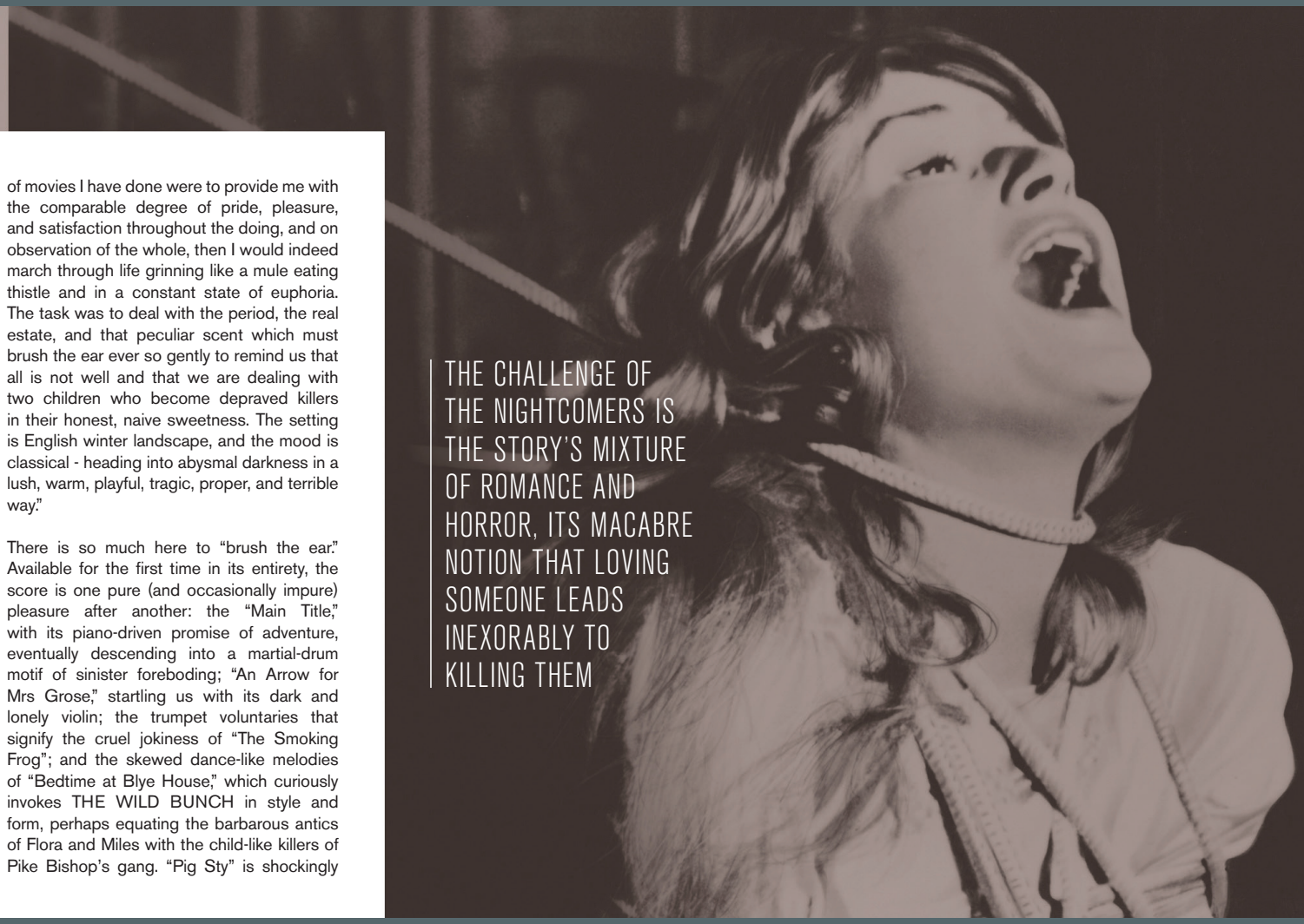
Entering the equation late, as all composers do, was Jerry Fielding, who was on top form. He scored five consecutive pictures with Michael Winner, and in the process both men over-achieved - and neither would scale these heights again. Fielding was particularly driven during this time. He was overloaded with assignments for both films and television, but somehow the confluence of circumstances on the Winner films really brought out the best he had to give. He loved the movies, loved England, and especially loved recording there with fine musicians and his trusted engineer, Richard Lewzey. There was a symbiosis of thought, an ease of understanding, and the sound that Lewzey wrung from Fielding's marshaled forces is unique. It is this writer's contention that no other group of scores from any period of film sound like these do: dark, lustrous, silky, ominous, beautiful, brilliant. There are melodies aplenty, but not open to easy access. They are there, woven deep in the texture of this gorgeous, fine-tuned fabric. As with all great, tailor-made works of art, it takes an eagle eye to



see the workmanship, the craft and detail. And in this illustrious company of scores - in all of Fielding's canon - there is nothing else quite like THE NIGHTCOMERS. It's a one-off; a faux-classical exercise befitting its subject, Debussy-esque, but shot through with the composer's trademark gun-metal sensibilities. There isn't another period film like this in Fielding's career, so we don't know what he would have done in the instance of being handed another, but with the current vogue for literary films with English country settings, it's tempting to imagine one of them possessing the scintillating wrap-around swirl of Fielding's engulfing string-section, appearing as if by magic after dark, coming out to play, as it were, with the impish swagger of demons on the prowl.

The challenge of THE NIGHTCOMERS is the story's mixture of romance and horror, its constant twinning of love and hate, and its macabre notion that loving someone leads inexorably to killing them. Fielding himself commented at length on his work here, to Jay Alan Quantrill, and his words bear repeating: "The assignment was, for me, truly a labor of love - and I caution the reader not to cringe at the use of that well-worn phrase, too often tossed about in desperation in order to camouflage the truth. I really mean it. The job did not pay well and the movie was not a blockbuster. And yet if even the small number of movies I have done were to provide me with the comparable degree of pride, pleasure, and satisfaction throughout the doing, and on observation of the whole, then I would indeed march through life grinning like a mule eating thistle and in a constant state of euphoria. The task was to deal with the period, the real estate, and that peculiar scent which must brush the ear ever so gently to remind us that all is not well and that we are dealing with two children who become depraved killers in their honest, naive sweetness. The setting is English winter landscape, and the mood is classical - heading into abysmal darkness in a lush, warm, playful, tragic, proper, and terrible way."

There is so much here to "brush the ear." Available for the first time in its entirety, the score is one pure (and occasionally impure) pleasure after another: the "Main Title," with its piano-driven promise of adventure, eventually descending into a martial-drum motif of sinister foreboding; "An Arrow for Mrs Grose," startling us with its dark and lonely violin; the trumpet voluntaries that signify the cruel jokiness of "The Smoking Frog"; and the skewed dance-like melodies of "Bedtime at Blye House," which curiously invokes THE WILD BUNCH in style and form, perhaps equating the barbarous antics of Flora and Miles with the child-like killers of Pike Bishop's gang. "Pig Sty" is shockingly



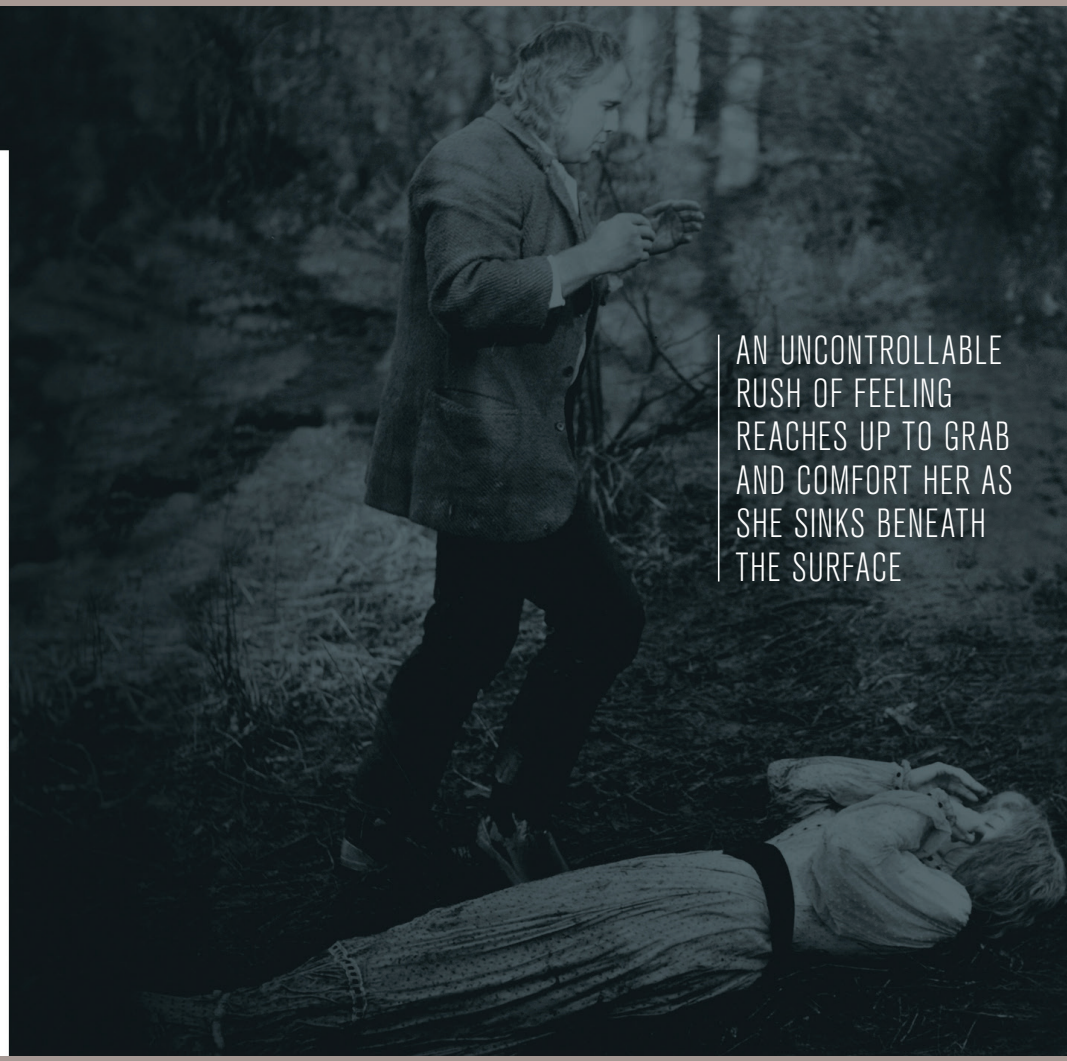
THE CHALLENGE OF THE NIGHTCOMERS IS THE STORY'S MIXTURE OF ROMANCE AND HORROR, ITS MACABRE NOTION THAT LOVING SOMEONE LEADS INEXORABLY TO KILLING THEM

illustrative of the violence inherent in Quint and Jessel's foreplay, and "Like a Chicken on a Spit" / "All That Pain" sensuously lulls us into the calm after the storm of abusive love; here we are reminded of STRAW DOGS and the aftermath of brutal rape. "The Big Swim" eddies around poor Miss Jessel as she fatefully capsizes and drowns on a placid lake, a music-box motif gently tinkling as she loses her way, and her life; a familiar Fielding crescendo intimating an uncontrollable rush of feeling reaches up to grab and comfort her as she sinks beneath the surface. The simple textures of "Through The Looking Glass," with its hellish downward string-slide, ends on a sustained bass piano-note that seems like the end of the world; "Burning Dolls," with its intimations of the horrors now wrought at Blye House, suggests that the place - and its young occupants - are forever changed. This score might not have fattened Fielding's wallet, but it drew from the composer a well of yearning for something pure, something special. And he delivered again, as he always did, in surprising spades.

When all was said and done, the release of THE NIGHTCOMERS was delayed for a year, in hopes of capitalizing on Brando's presumed triumph as Don Vito Corleone. It didn't quite work, as THE GODFATHER also had its release postponed, so THE NIGHTCOMERS struggled to attract an audience and found a mixed response from critics. CHATO'S LAND was already out, and indeed Winner was already on to his next, THE MECHANIC, meaning that 1972 saw three efforts from the director at a theater near you. THE NIGHTCOMERS was accepted into the Venice Film Festival, and the organizers wondered if Brando would attend. "He will if you give him a prize," urged Winner. The Festival pondered, and responded that they had never given a prize under such conditions. Winner pushed: "That's how you'll get him." The festival agreed. Winner called his star. "Would you go to Venice and get a prize?" "No," replied the actor, who by now had much bigger fish to fry.

THE NIGHTCOMERS, though, remains unique in its own unobtrusive way. At a cost of six hundred thousand dollars, it had atmosphere, scenery, an accent-chewing Marlon Brando, a sexy leading lady in Miss Beacham, and a textbook example of no-frills direction from a man who was a genuinely underrated figure in the world of British film. The raconteur/restaurant critic of today really knew his cinematic stuff back then. But most of all, THE NIGHTCOMERS had Jerry Fielding and his music, which went a long way towards marking Michael Winner as a man of singular good taste.

- NICK REDMAN



NO OTHER GROUP OF SCORES FROM ANY PERIOD OF FILM SOUND LIKE THESE DO: DARK, LUSTROUS, SILKY, OMINOUS, BEAUTIFUL, BRILLIANT

PERFORMED BY **THE LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**
CONDUCTED BY **JERRY FIELDING**
ORCHESTRATION **GREIG MCRITCHIE** & **LENNIE NIEHAUS**
ENGINEER **RICHARD LEWZEY**
PRODUCED BY **DOUGLASS FAKE**
ALL TRACKS PUBLISHED BY **SONY/ATV HARMONY UK**
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS FOR SILVA SCREEN RECORDS LTD. **REYNOLD D'SILVA** & **DAVID STONER**
RELEASE CO-ORDINATION **ANNA HARVEY**
DESIGN **STUART FORD**

DIRECTOR **MICHAEL WINNER**
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS **JAY KANTER**, **ELLIOTT KASTNER** & **ALAN LADD JR.**
MARLON BRANDO AS PETER QUINT **STEPHANIE BEACHAM** AS MISS JESSEL
THORA HIRD AS MRS. GROSE **HARRY ANDREWS** AS MASTER OF THE HOUSE
VERNA HARVEY AS FLORA **CHRISTOPHER ELLIS** AS MILES **ANNA PALK** AS NEW GOVERNESS

SILLP1499 LC 07371 MCPS

SILVA SCREEN RECORDS

STUDIOCANAL

℗ 1971 StudioCanal © 2016 StudioCanal under exclusive licence to Silva Screen Records Ltd. All rights reserved.

THE
NIGHTCOMERS
ORIGINAL FILM MUSIC BY JERRY FIELDING