



BETTE DAVIS: HOLLYWOOD REBEL

Dead Ringer

A pair of estranged identical twins reunite after 18 years apart, having both fallen out over the same man. One is wealthy and the other is financially struggling, but any hope of a reconciliation is thwarted when buried secrets begin to emerge. Paul Henreid, Davis' co-star from *Now, Voyager*, directs her in this crime drama, which sees Davis on top form playing twin sisters for the second time in her career (following *A Stolen Life*).

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Contemporary reviews

Warner Brothers are to be congratulated on cashing in on Bette Davis' personal success in *Baby Jane* so quickly and so wholeheartedly. Admittedly the script has the air of being not so much tailored as run off an old, disused assembly-line. It is simply a rehash of Davis situations, and as such – since the actress is in fine professional form – an addict's dream. The dual-identity basis comes from *A Stolen Life*, and does considerably more with it. Then there is the oppressive luxury mansion, superbly re-created down to the legged breakfast tray (*Mr. Skeffington*) and the black, high-necked, hobble-skirted nightgown complete with anti-sag face mask, forging signatures for the use of. There is the Davis kiss, body strained, eyes blazing with blank alarm (*Winter Meeting*); the metamorphosis from slouching frump to *soignée* clothes-horse (*Now, Voyager*); the detailed adaptation of the coiffure; the bold lie to the police (*Marked Woman* or *The Letter*); the silent, staring surveillance of a hated enemy's death followed by the belated cry for help (*The Little Foxes*); the final, self-sacrificing irony (*Deception*), here aided discreetly by a butler inquiring what he should say at Madam's trial. Most importantly, this is a rejuvenated Bette Davis, not a screeching harridan – the slender, straddling legs revered in at least one searching close-up, the mouth outlined in that familiar down-curving slash of defiance, the voice richly emphatic.

Mind you, Bette Davis has never experienced the slightest difficulty in taking melodrama in her stride. And in spite of the intelligence she brings to it, *Dead Ringer* makes only too few demands on her as a serious actress. (Perhaps Damiani's *The Empty Canvas* will give her more scope.) Paul Henreid directs with smooth, impersonal, over-leisurely efficiency; the trick photography is excellent, and André Previn's score celebrates each staircase-ascent with apt occasion. Though one regrets the absence of a co-star like Rains or Mary Astor strong enough for Miss Davis to strike sparks off (striking them off her own doppelgänger proves a shade exhausting after a while), there is a sterling rally of small-part support. Peter Lawford lashes out fearlessly as the lover, Karl Malden is a solid Sergeant Hobbson, and Estelle Winwood's eye-rolling, skeletal matriarch reeks of lavender and creepy piety. As for Thor [the dog], from private golf green to private chapel he bestrides his mistress's lushly carpeted world like a colossus.

***Monthly Film Bulletin*, May 1964**

When our American critic asked about ‘real movies’, he was challenged by a wicked and frivolous chorus of ‘What about *Dead Ringer*?’ Of course this preposterously nostalgic movie is simply a showcase for Bette Davis; and the fact that she has such extravagant fun with her dual role, skipping between seedy poverty on the wrong side of the tracks and upholstered grief in the mansion with the butler and the Great Dane and the private chapel, can be read as evidence of talent running to waste rather than talent fulfilled. The fact remains that a mixture of star quality, professionalism and a kind of zestful lunacy is too integral a part of Hollywood to be thrown on the scrap heap. It probably won’t come again. The news that Crawford, Davis, Astor and Moorehead are assembling for the Hollywood equivalent of an old-school reunion in *Hush ...Hush, Sweet Charlotte* wakens some splendid echoes. Ungenerous though it may be to suggest it, a reunion in 30 years’ time of Sandra Dee, Hayley Mills, Tippi Hedren and Carroll Baker seems unlikely to carry quite the same charge.

Penelope Houston, *Sight and Sound*, Autumn 1964

DEAD RINGER (AKA DEAD IMAGE)

Director: Paul Henreid
Production Company: Warner Bros.
Producer: William H. Wright
Assistant Directors: Charles L. Hansen, Lee White
Screenplay: Albert Beich, Oscar Millard
Original story: Rian James
Director of Photography: Ernest Haller
Editor: Folmer Blangsted
Art Director: Perry Ferguson
Set Decorator: William Stevens
Costume Designer: Donfeld
Make-up Supervisor: Gordon Bau
Miss Davis’ Make-up: Gene Hibbs
Supervising Hair Stylist: Jean Burt Reilly
Miss Davis’ Hairstyles: Florence Guernsey
Music: André Previn
Sound: Robert B. Lee

Cast

Bette Davis (*Margaret de Lorca/Edith Philips*)
Karl Malden (*Sergeant Jim Hobbson*)
Peter Lawford (*Tony Collins*)
Phil Carey (*Sergeant Ben Hoag*)
Jean Hagen (*Dede Marshall*)
George Macready (*Paul Harrison*)
Estelle Winwood (*high church matriarch*)
George Chandler (*George*)
Mario Alcade (*Garcia*)
Cyril Delevanti (*Henry*)
Monika Henreid (*Janet*)
Bert Remsen (*Dan*)
Charles Watts (*apartment manager*)
Ken Lynch (*Captain Johnson*)

USA 1964
115 mins

BETTE DAVIS: HOLLYWOOD REBEL

Of Human Bondage

Sun 1 Aug 12:40; Thu 12 Aug 18:00

Dangerous

Mon 2 Aug 18:15; Fri 13 Aug 21:00; Wed 18 Aug 18:10

All about Eve

Tue 3 Aug 14:30; Sat 14 Aug 20:25; Sun 29 Aug 15:00

Marked Woman

Tue 3 Aug 18:10; Thu 12 Aug 20:40; Sat 14 Aug 14:45

What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?

Wed 4 Aug 14:15; Wed 11 Aug 20:30; Mon 16 Aug 18:00;
Sat 28 Aug 17:20

Jezebel

Wed 4 Aug 20:40; Sun 15 Aug 15:30; Fri 27 Aug 18:00

Hush... Hush, Sweet Charlotte

Thu 5 Aug 14:15; Fri 13 Aug 17:40; Wed 18 Aug 14:30; Sat 28 Aug 20:30

Dark Victory

Fri 6 Aug 14:15; Mon 23 Aug 18:00

The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex

Sat 7 Aug 15:00; Sat 21 Aug 11:40

The Letter

Sun 8 Aug 15:45; Tue 17 Aug 17:50

The Man Who Came to Dinner

Sun 8 Aug 18:20; Thu 19 Aug 20:40

The Little Foxes

Mon 9 Aug 18:00; Mon 16 Aug 20:30; Thu 19 Aug 17:40

The Whales of August

Wed 11 Aug 14:30; Thu 26 Aug 20:30; Tue 31 Aug 18:10

Old Acquaintance

Wed 11 Aug 17:40; Sun 22 Aug 15:30

Mr. Skeffington

Sat 14 Aug 17:10; Sun 29 Aug 11:30

The Star

Sun 15 Aug 18:30; Wed 25 Aug 20:45

Dead Ringer

Fri 20 Aug 17:45; Mon 30 Aug 15:20

The Nanny

Tue 24 Aug 20:45; Mon 30 Aug 12:40

With thanks to Martin Shingler



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