



**EDGAR WRIGHT'S LONDON AFTER DARK**

# Darling

Released in the very middle of the 1960s, this John Schlesinger film also feels like the very epicentre of the scene. Julie Christie's Diana Scott seems like the girl who has it all, but being the life of the party isn't all it's cracked up to be. Just as the sixties were about to hit full swing, this sharp satire reveals the paper-thin reality of cover-story perfection.

**Edgar Wright**

Jaunty, heartless and stylistically nimble right from its knowing primary-school-to-poster-girl opening montage, John Schlesinger's *Swinging London* picaresque has a shrugging confidence and stinging cynicism that have weathered well. The irony-filled gap between careerist model Diana Scott's heartfelt narration and her ruthless bed-by-bed social ascent still packs a punch, even as the film's cruder satirical attempts (a tantrums-and-tiaras charity auction, a cod-Fellini decadent parlour game) have lost theirs.

If *Darling* lacks the warmth of *Billy Liar* (1963) or the emotional heft of *Midnight Cowboy* (1969), its strong suit is its gimlet eye, ever alert to the hypocrisies of the bedroom and Laurence Harvey's career-making boardroom. Frederic Raphael's spiky script dissects Diana's *modus operandi* mercilessly: 'Your idea of fidelity is not having more than one man in bed at the same time.' Yet there's a curious dissonance between Julie Christie's restless Diana, the quintessence of 60s New Womanhood, and the film's class-bound 50s view of London life. Where *Georgy Girl* and *Alfie* are exuberant about the new British youth culture, *Darling* sidesteps it. But Christie's thin-skinned Oscar-winning performance brings pathos to the film's misogynistic morality tale, which extended even to the original knicker-pink poster: 'Shame, shame, everybody knows your name!'

**Kate Stables, *Sight & Sound*, May 2015**

## A contemporary review

One day, someone is going to make a film about a model (or film star, or beauty queen) with a witty, daring and unconventional theme. The heroine will make a great deal of money; she will live playfully and extravagantly; she will marry even more money. The daring and unconventional aspect will be that she isn't noticeably corrupted by all this. But not yet. To suggest that it could be anything but terrible at the top is apparently more than flesh and blood can stand; and the thing that surprises me about a film like *Darling* is that people as thoroughly sophisticated as John Schlesinger and Frederic Raphael should accept the constrictions of so many flatly fashionable attitudes. *Darling* is sometimes clever, often ugly, always self-conscious. But its view of the world belongs to the corridors of Wardour Street. Its disillusionment looks like that of a gossip columnist who has left the party with a monumental hangover, but will still be back next day to see how all the awful people are contriving to amuse themselves.

Apart from star-struck adolescents, who aren't presumably the audience *Darling* has in mind for itself, I believe people in general take a cooler and

more sceptical view of show business and advertising than it suits those involved in these trades to imagine. The great glamour image is an advertising man’s four-colour illusion. To knock the props from under it, by showing the squalid, shabby, unhappy ‘reality’ (or, again, half-truth) below the surface, is, in 1965, an act of daring mainly to those within the charmed circle. And to be disenchanted, in any case, one must first have surrendered to an enchantment.

It goes without saying that a good deal of *Darling* is clever, funny and spitefully accurate. The camera circles and jabs, and the shutter clicks on a freezing moment of self-disclosure. Surprisingly often, however, the filmmakers leave one in doubt about just what value they intend to attach to a scene. Perhaps some modern Savonarola might just pull it off, on his own terms. But that is not the Schlesinger-Raphael method: they are far too knowing, with their snatches of effete dialogue juxtaposed with images of greed and self-satisfaction.

**Penelope Houston, *Sight and Sound*, Autumn 1965**

**DARLING**

*Directed by:* John Schlesinger  
*©:* Appia Films  
*Production Company:* Vic Films  
*Produced by:* Joseph Janni  
*Associate Producer:* Victor Lyndon  
*Unit Manager:* Ed Harper  
*Location Manager:* Mara Blasetti  
*Assistant Director:* Kip Gowans  
*Continuity:* Ann Skinner  
*Casting Director:* Miriam Brickman  
*Screenplay by:* Frederic Raphael  
*Based on an idea by:* Frederic Raphael, John Schlesinger, Joseph Janni  
*Director of Photography:* Ken Higgins  
*Camera Operator:* John Harris  
*Assistant Cameraman:* Bernard Ford  
*Graphic Design:* Ted Southcott  
*Film Editor:* James Clark  
*Art Director:* Ray Simm  
*Set Decorator:* David Ffolkes  
*Wardrobe Designer:* Julie Harris  
*Wardrobe Mistress:* Jackie Breed  
*Make-up Artist:* Bob Lawrence  
*Hair Stylist:* Joyce James  
*Processed at:* Humphries Laboratories  
*Music Composed and Conducted by:* John Dankworth  
*Sound Recordists:* Peter Handford, John Aldred  
*Sound Editor:* Malcolm Cooke  
*Sound System:* Westrex Recording System  
*Made at:* Shepperton Studios

*uncredited*  
*2nd Assistant Director:* Stuart A. Black  
*Script Collaborator:* Troy Kennedy Martin

**Cast**

Dirk Bogarde (*Robert Gold*)  
Laurence Harvey (*Miles Brand*)  
Julie Christie (*Diana Scott*)  
José Luis De Vilallonga (*Prince Cesare Della Romita*)  
Roland Curram (*Malcolm*)  
Basil Henson (*Alec Prosser-Jones*)  
Helen Lindsay (*Felicity Prosser-Jones*)  
Carlo Palmucci (*Curzio*)  
Dante Posani (*Gino*)  
Umberto Raho (*Paolucci*)  
Marika Rivera (*Paris party woman*)  
Alex Scott (*Sean Martin*)  
Ernst Walder (*Kurt*)  
Brian Wilde (*Basil Willett*)  
Pauline Yates (*Estelle Gold*)  
Peter Bayliss (*Lord Alex Grant*)  
Richard Bidlake (*Rupert Crabtree*)  
Trevor Bowen (*Tony Bridges, first husband*)  
Annette Carbell (*Billie Castiglione*)  
Jean Claudio (*Raoul Maxim*)  
Georgina Cookson (*Carlotta Hale*)  
James Cossins (*Basildon charity M.C.*)  
Jane Downes (*Julie*)

*uncredited*  
Hugo Dyson (*Walter Southgate*)  
David Harrison (*Charles Glass*)  
Irene Richmond (*Mrs Glass*)  
Ann Firbank (*Sybil Martin*)  
Tyler Butterworth (*William Prosser-Jones*)  
Angus MacKay (*Ivor Dawlish*)  
Margaret Gordon (*Helen Dawlish*)  
John Schlesinger (*theatre director*)  
Vernon Dobtcheff, Christopher Greateorex  
(*art critics*)  
Brian Moorehead (*Leslie Page*)  
Helen Stirling (*governess to Cesare family*)  
John Woodvine (*customs officer*)  
Jane Pearl (*Jane*)  
Ray Lovelock  
Silvia Dionisio

UK 1965©  
122 mins

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**EDGAR WRIGHT’S LONDON AFTER DARK**

**Passport to Shame (AKA Room 43)**

Mon 18 Oct 20:50; Sat 13 Nov 18:10

**Peeping Tom**

Tue 19 Oct 20:30; Sat 6 Nov 18:20

**Beat Girl**

Fri 22 Oct 20:40; Sun 31 Oct 16:20

**West End Jungle + Look at Life: Market Place**

**+ Look at Life: Rising to High Office**

Sat 23 Oct 20:40; Sat 20 Nov 14:40

**The Pleasure Girls + Look at Life: Members Only**

Mon 25 Oct 20:50; Mon 29 Nov 18:20

**Frenzy**

Wed 27 Oct 20:45; Fri 19 Nov 18:30

**Darling**

Thu 28 Oct 20:30; Sat 20 Nov 13:20

**Bitter Harvest + Look at Life: Coffee Bar**

Fri 29 Oct 18:00; Tue 9 Nov 20:45

**The Small World of Sammy Lee + Look at Life: In Gear**

Sat 30 Oct 20:30; Sat 6 Nov 20:45; Tue 23 Nov 14:30

**Primitive London + Look at Life: Goodbye Piccadilly**

Mon 1 Nov 20:50; Thu 25 Nov 20:50

**Promotional partners**



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