



The Blue Angel: - The Life And Films Of Marlene Dietrich

David Stuart Ryan

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The story of Marlene Dietrich's life is the story of the 20th century.

Author David Stuart Ryan, who wrote the bestselling biography 'John Lennon's Secret', explores the amazing and circuitous route that took her to Hollywood and riches.

At one point in a stellar Hollywood career, she was the highest paid woman in the world.

But to understand the essential Marlene it is necessary to go right back in time to the era of 'La Belle Epoque' when a very feudal and settled order still existed in Europe.

'The Blue Angel' transports you to a glittering world that is all about to disappear in the maelstrom of world war. What emerges from the conflict is a feverish gaiety that seeks to put behind it all the suffering that has taken place.

You are entering the Jazz Age and a Berlin that having suffered hyperinflation decides anything goes. 'Der Berliner Luft' - the Berlin air - is what the locals call it.

This madcap atmosphere was to be recreated by a young journalist - Billy Wilder - when he made the journey to Hollywood. Indeed, the plot for his greatest film, 'Some Like It Hot', drew on his experiences in Berlin, and Billy Wilder was one of the respondents to the author when he came to write Marlene's story.

Others included her musical collaborator for her stage shows, the legendary Burt Bacharach, and her rival for the part of the Blue Angel, Leni Riefenstahl.

Her personal assistant Bernard Hall gave some invaluable insights into her later life.

While her surprising contacts with Adolf Hitler during his rise to power are hinted at in the films of Billy Wilder, who was very much part of the film world in pre-war Berlin, the author reveals just what these contacts were, and the effect they had upon her as she joined the Allied armies re-entering Germany.

Marlene's big break came when she played a vampish nightclub singer of dubious morals, not a million miles away from her own background trying to survive in a world turned upside down.

'The Blue Angel' took her to America and a carefully constructed film star image which embodies all the dazzling wealth and influence of Hollywood at its most powerful and hypnotic.

Yet the more you get into the life of Marlene Dietrich, the greater the mystery becomes. Who was she really?

Only now can the expert analysis of David Stuart Ryan reveal the true Marlene Dietrich, the person behind the image, the human being behind the facade.

Was she indeed the blue angel?

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