**FPB – CLASSIFIER’S REPORT**

**TITLE: Baby Jane**

**GENRE: Gay Drama Horror Thriller**

**CLASSIFICATION DECISION Film : 16HVL**

**CLASSIFICATION DECISION Trailer : 16HV**

**Format : Digital**

**Director : Billy Clift**

**Language : English**

**Cast : Matthew Martin, J. Conrad Frank, Mike Finn Running Time : 97**

**Year : 2012**

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**Synopsis**

Aldrich in directing Whatever Happened To Baby Jane took a pair of screen legends whose well known and public loathing for each other and managed without being killed to fashion a film about a pair of has been performers who live in the same house with their memories, their problems and mutual hatreds.  
  
Bette Davis as Baby Jane Hudson was a child vaudeville performer who like so many child stars was a has been when she became a teen. Not to worry about income because when she became a teen, her younger sister Blanche played by Joan Crawford then became the family breadwinner. But that came to an end when she was crippled in a car crash and it was widely believed that her sister had deliberately used the car as a weapon of jealousy.  
  
So these two with everything and yet nothing in common are bound to the family house and each other. Crawford a prisoner in her wheelchair and Davis a prisoner of her own fantasies as she retreats gradually into her childhood and glory days.  
  
Crawford is seeing how Davis is becoming more and more unhinged and decides to sell the family estate and get Davis into the 1962 equivalent of Happydale. But Davis gets wind of the plan and she makes Crawford a prisoner in her own home and eventually Davis just loses it totally.  
  
The wrap up of shooting must have been a day celebrated by Robert Aldrich on each anniversary the rest of his life. But he got himself a film that's as fascinating as a bloody 20 car pileup on the Interstate. Whatever Happened To Baby Jane got an Oscar for costume design for a black and white film and four other nominations.  
  
One of those nominations was for Best Actress, a then record 10 of them for Bette Davis in the title role. Bette Davis was an actress who could make some mediocre films entertaining when she took the brakes off. Here the role called for the most outrageous kind of overacting and Bette made the most of it. Joan's more subdued role of the victim in this film, good as she was didn't have a chance next to Bette's for recognition. Of course Crawford legendarily took a perverse pleasure in being the honorary acceptor for Anne Bancroft when she won the Oscar for Best Actress for The Miracle Worker in 1962. Truth be told Anne was the Best Actress that year.  
  
Whatever Happened To Baby Jane is such a two woman film that the rest of the cast is just left in the dust. Another miracle occurred when Victor Buono received some recognition with a nomination for Best Supporting Actor as the mother fixated pianist who plays along with Bette Davis when she decides to revive her career. Of course the strange noises and doings in that house eventually creep him out. Buono's scenes are all with Davis and with the scene stealing Marjorie Bennett who's kind of a mirror image of Baby Jane Hudson as Buono's inebriated mother. Just holding his own with these two I'm figuring the Academy figured Buono deserved some recognition.  
  
Bette and Joan, both were destined to be trapped in mediocrity for the most part in roles well beneath their talents. Bette to her credit did escape with such things as an Agatha Christie mystery occasionally and The Whales Of August. But mostly she and Joan did horror flicks because of the impression that Whatever Happened To Baby Jane left on the minds of the movie-going public. Both also got unceremoniously dissed by their daughters in memoirs, Bette not having the decency to die before B.D. Hyman's book came out.  
  
Whatever Happened To Baby Jane is repulsively fascinating.

**Classifiable Elements**

Musical – opening scene, opera setting

Horror

Suspense – music

Violence – Car appears to run into lady against a gate, women killed by being hit in the head with a hammer

Substance Abuse – smoking

Language

**Cumulative Impact (element, sound, lighting, techniques)**

Suspenseful Scary Eerie Music

**INFORMATION ABOUT CLASSIFIABLE ELEMENTS IN THE FILM:**

**Mandatory Classifiable Elements**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **LANGUAGE** | **16** |
| **NUDITY** |  |
| **PREJUDICE** |  |
| **SEXUALLY RELATED ACTIVITY** |  |
| **VIOLENCE** | **16** |
| **SUBSTANCE ABUSE** | **13** |
| **SEXUAL VIOLENCE** |  |
| **HORROR** | **16** |
| **IMITABLE ACTS (IAT)** |  |
| **CRIMINAL TECHNIQUES (CT)** |  |
| **COMPETITIVE INTENSITY (CI)** |  |

**VOLUNTARY CLASSIFIABLE ELEMENTS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **BLASPHEMY** |  |
| **PHOTO/PATTERN SENSITIVITY (PPS)** |  |