

For Immediate Release

## **Unreleased Meat Loaf Film Epic Provides Rare 1980s Experience in Essex**

### **January 25 Screening to Benefit Vermont Music and Film Nonprofits**

BURLINGTON, VT January 5, 2023: An extraordinarily rare screening of the critically admired yet unreleased film *Dead Ringer* starring Meat Loaf is planned for January 25 in Essex. The 1982 film has been shown only three or four times since it was produced 40 years ago. This is a nearly once in a generation opportunity to see the film, inspired by the popularity of a sold-out Vermont International Film Festival screening at a smaller venue in October, 2022. The screening is a fundraiser for two Vermont arts organizations, [Big Heavy World](#) and [The Vermont International Film Festival](#).

Meat Loaf, famous internationally as a bigger-than-life rock star and actor, was responsible for the 'Bat Out of Hell' trilogy of albums that have sold more than one hundred million copies; the first of the series, 'Bat Out of Hell,' remained on the album charts for more than nine years and continues to sell more than 200,000 copies per year. Meat Loaf, who passed away in January, 2022, appeared in more than 50 films, including *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* in 1975 and *Fight Club* in 1999, and performed in Broadway musicals including 'Hair.' Fans of his theatrical musical style; those who'd like to take a dip into a high quality dramatic period piece from the early 1980s; adventure-seekers and cinephiles should consider this to be an unmissable event.

*Dead Ringer* is a comical look at the life of a rock star in the 1980s, taking place as Meat Loaf prepares for a world tour in support of his newest album while facing the pressures of success. Parallel to his story is that of a dead ringer look-alike to the star who is single-mindedly fixated with Meat Loaf's songs, leading to a heart-warming narrative with satisfying complexity.

The film would have accompanied the album that was also titled 'Dead Ringer,' released in Europe in 1982, but legal issues between Meat Loaf, his record company, and songwriter Jim Steinman ensured the film would be unreleased and remain one of American culture's lost treasures. This Vermont screening is

possible through the generosity of the film's director Allan Nicholls, who is lending his authorized personal print of the film, supervised by its original editor, Norm Smith. In a 2022 [interview with Chris Farnsworth of Seven Days](#), Nicholls said, "It's such a cool story. The film... has this big, beating heart at its center. I wanted a storyline that spoke to Meat Loaf's personality, and I think it worked... And he really shows his stuff in this film. He's good." Nicholls' film career includes acting, producing, and frequent assistant direction with nonconformist American film director, screenwriter, and producer Robert Altman.

This benefit screening is made possible by the host sponsor, The T-Rex Theater at The Double E, and with the help of [Higher Ground](#) — and Peter Edelman, Alex Crothers and Michael Jager — supporters of the nonprofit missions of Big Heavy World and the Vermont International Film Festival (VTIFF).

Big Heavy World preserves and promotes the original music of Vermont, serving the State as an independent music development office headquartered in Burlington. Founded in 1996, its community and economic development projects function as a learning environment for young adult volunteers. James Lockridge, Executive Director, said, "Vermont's musicians and filmmakers continuously invest themselves in creating some of the world's highest quality cultural experiences. We are so deeply grateful for the opportunity to share a rare and fun event that also benefits this large community of local artists." Big Heavy World was selected by an international jury to receive the 2020 Music Cities 'Best Global Music Office Award.'

VTIFF presents theatrical screenings of films from around the world throughout the year. The festival's vision of motivating people to become involved in their own communities begins with sharing an understanding and appreciation of cinema as an art form while fostering a sophisticated understanding of world cultures and concerns. Orly Yadin, Executive Director of VTIFF, said, "Cinema is both the most democratic of art forms and theatrical exhibition has the power to bring people together for a shared experience. We are extremely grateful to Allan Nicholls, a long-time supporter of what we do, for allowing us to show his funny and tender film to our community." VTIFF was born from the anti-nuclear movement in 1985, making it the world's oldest environmental and human rights film festival. Its focus today has broadened to embrace a wide spectrum of social issues and a focus on independent art-house cinema.

*Dead Ringer* will be shown at The T-Rex Theater at The Double E in the large-format, 400-seat T-Rex Theater, on a screen that is three stories tall, with 18

amplifiers and 124 speakers providing an immersive sound experience. Allan Nicholls will attend the screening and conduct a Q&A at its end. Showtime is 7PM; admission is \$12.00 General Admission; \$8.00 Student with ID. Tickets can be booked in advance at [www.vtiff.org](http://www.vtiff.org). Essex Cinema is located at 21 Essex Way, Essex, Vermont. The venue is wheelchair accessible. For more information about the venue, see [essexcinemas.com](http://essexcinemas.com).

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