



## Double vision

Montage master Johan Grimonprez clones Hitchcock

02.03.10 - 10:37 am | [Johnny Ray Huston](#) ([/category/author/johnny-ray-huston](#)) | (0)

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The just-reissued Vampires of Dartmore album *Dracula's Music Cabinet* (Finders Keepers) includes a track titled "Hallo, Mr. Hitchcock," in which beloved Hitch silently answers a series of phone calls from a manic, murderous prankster. The track isn't used in Johan Grimonprez's latest unconventional film essay *Double Take*, but it would be ideal material for the movie. Like his fellow Europeans the Vampires, Grimonprez has a fatal attraction to the master of suspense — an exploration of the nature of fear, particularly Cold War fear (and its relevance to 21s century scaremongers), his movie toys and teases its way toward a climax in which the master director meets his doppelganger.

*Double Take's* voice-over narration — co-authored with Tom McCarthy — suggests that such an encounter can only be bad: any man who sees his double, even the great Hitchcock, is doomed. This conceit is really just an element of drama within Grimonprez's masterful many-layered montage. He combines Hitchcock's appearances in movies and on television with footage of vocal and physical Hitchcock impersonators, creating a hall-of-mirrors experience that is frequently funny. More incitefully, he forwards the idea that *The Birds* (1963) has connections to the Bay of Pigs and to terror by air both then and now. If this seems like a ludicrous theoretical stretch, it helps to know that Grimonprez has a wry sense of humor, and that his 1998 movie *Dial H-I-S-T-O-R-Y* still might be the best movie about September 11, 2001, even if it predates that landmark moment by over three years. In other words, Grimonprez is prescient.

He's also rather sweet. *Double Take's* final scenes linger on one Hitchcock impersonator, Ron Burrage, and what seems to be his lifelong male partner. This particular Hitch has a nuanced appreciation of the absurdity of his life and dual identity, which makes his singular mortality all the more poignant. Grimonprez is anything but a sentimentalist, but unlike many filmic theorists, he allows himself to have a heart as well as a brain.

### DOUBLE TAKE

Fri/12, 7:15 p.m., Roxie

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