HOMAGE PAID TO LUIS BUNUEL
SPANISH DIRECTOR WILL MARK 76TH BIRTHDAY

In celebration of Luis Buñuel's 76th birthday next month, The Museum of Modern Art will pay homage to the Spanish director who is considered even today one of the world's most daring and controversial filmmakers. A master of symbolism, unafraid to indulge in the hieroglyphics of his own fantasy, Buñuel will be represented by a six-week program devoted exclusively to those films he made in Mexico or Mexican financed films, produced in the years from 1947 to 1965. During this period, he was largely ignored, though he developed the style that culminated in his later work. Now all 21 films of the Mexican years can be seen in the current program. With the exception of five, all have English subtitles. Over half have never been released theatrically in America.

The Buñuel program begins January 8th and will continue through February 16th. One year in preparation, it was organized by Adrienne Mancia, Associate Curator in the Department of Film, who selected and assembled all the films, including Buñuel's Mexican version of "Wuthering Heights" ("Abismos de Pasion"), made in 1954; "Death in the Garden" (1956) with Simone Signoret, Michel Piccoli and Charles Vanel; and "Fever Mounts at El Pao" (1960), the last film, starring Gerard Philipe, which will be shown in a version dubbed in English.

More familiar films in the series are "Los Olvidados" ("The Young and the Damned," 1950); "El" ("This Strange Passion," 1953); "The Criminal Life of Archibaldo de la Cruz" (1955); "Nazarin" (1959); "Viridiana" (1961); "The Exterminating Angel" (1962) and "Simon of the Desert" made in 1965.

The Buñuel years in Mexico were crucial in his artistic development. Following the director's sensational films made in Paris, "Un Chien Andalou" (more)
(1928) and "L'Age d'Or" (1930), Bunuel was ostracized for being anti-clerical and too esoteric. For the next 19 years -- except for one other film "Las Hurdes" ("Land Without Bread") made in Spain in 1932 -- he was unable to obtain backing for another film.

Meanwhile, during the war, Bunuel had come to America and curiously enough, found work in the Department of Film of The Museum of Modern Art, where, for several years, he was engaged in supervising and editing documentaries for Latin American countries, commissioned by the Committee on Inter-American Affairs headed by Nelson Rockefeller. He also worked on the acquisition of German documentaries for the Museum's collection.

When Bunuel went to Mexico, he was put to work by producer Oscar Dancigers. He was almost 47 years old, and, as Mrs. Mancia points out, he had survived the trauma of the Spanish Civil War and years of frustrated creativity with minor producing and assistant directorial jobs. Now he began his career anew and proved that his imagination had in no way withered; on the contrary, it had become further enriched and he pursued his own obsessions with renewed passion that defied any and all cinematic tradition. He was determined to explore the mythic depths of his own personality with unabashed confidence.

Without the Mexican period the later masterworks of Bunuel may never have been realized. Consequently, Mrs. Mancia feels that an understanding of Bunuel has to cover his entire filmography and include the long-neglected melodramas as well as the low budget comedies he made in Mexico. "Each of the films reveals something of his private obsessions, his incisive observations, his penetrating wit and black humor, his exasperation with human folly and pettiness and his ever-rebellious attitude toward bourgeois morality. Here is an artist attracted and repelled by contradictions and by the reality of (more)
the human condition. His outrage, ironic laughter or sympathetic shrug rise from the spirit of a man struggling to transcend himself."

In Mexico Bunuel rediscovered his direction, declares Francisco Aranda, the Mexican writer and critic, quoted by Mrs. Mancia in her program note: "Not only the idiom and the race, but the physical types, the dry and dusty landscape, the impassioned speech, the attitudes to life and death, the religious problem, the social structure which he attacked, all combined to restore him to conditions in which he could be himself."

The Bunuel program, which will travel to the Pacific Film Archive in San Francisco, was made possible with the cooperation of several individuals and institutions, among them, Jeanette Bello, William K. Everson, Azteca Films, Banco Nacional Cinematográfico de Mexico, La Cineteca Nacional de Mexico, Columbia Pictures, Macmillan/Audio Brandon Films. The schedule follows:

Films will have English titles unless otherwise indicated


- Friday, January 9 2:00
- Thursday, January 15 5:30


- Thursday, January 8 5:30
- Saturday, January 10 3:00


- Thursday, January 8 8:00
- Monday, January 12 2:00

SUSANA. 1951. With Rosita Quintana, Fernando Soler. Courtesy La Cineteca Nacional de Mexico. In Spanish. 82 min.

- Saturday, January 10 5:30
- Friday, January 16 2:00

(more)
   Sunday, January 11  3:00
   Thursday, January 15  8:00

   Saturday, January 17  5:30
   Monday, January 19  2:00

   Tuesday, January 13  2:00
   Saturday, January 17  3:00

   Sunday, January 18  3:00
   Tuesday, January 20  2:00

   Sunday, January 25  3:00
   Tuesday, January 27  2:00

THIS STRANGE PASSION (EL). 1953. With Arturo de Cordova. Courtesy Macmillan/Audio Brandon. 82 min.
   Thursday, January 22  5:30
   Saturday, January 24  3:00

   Monday, January 19  5:30
   Thursday, January 22  8:00

   Friday, January 23  2:00
   Saturday, January 24  5:30

   Monday, January 26  2:00
   Saturday, January 29  5:30

   Thursday, January 29  8:00
   Saturday, January 31  3:00

(over)
  Saturday, February 7 5:30
  Monday, February 9 2:00

  Sunday, February 1 3:00
  Saturday, February 7 3:00

  Friday, January 30 2:00
  Saturday, January 31 5:30

  Sunday, February 8 3:00
  Tuesday, February 10 2:00

  Friday, February 13 2:00
  Saturday, February 14 3:00

  Sunday, February 15 3:00
  Monday, February 16 5:30

  Saturday, February 14 5:30
  Monday, February 16 2:00

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