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VARIETY
**Mujeres al Borde de Un
Ataque de Nervios**
**(Women On The Verge Of A
Nervous Breakdown)**
(SPANISH)

4-10-88

An El Deseo and Lauren Films production. Executive producer, Agustin Almodóvar. Written and directed by Pedro Almodóvar. Camera (Eastmancolor), José Luis Alcaine; editor, José Salcedo; music, Bernardo Bonizzi, production manager, Ester Garcia; costumes, José Maria de Cossío; sound, Guilles Ortión; associate producer, Antonio Llorens. Reviewed at Cine Proyecciones, Madrid, March 28, 1988. Running time: 98 MIN.

Pepa.....Carmen Maura
Carlos.....Antonio Banderas
Iván.....Fernando Guillén
Lucia.....Julieta Serrano
Candela.....Maria Barranco
Marisa.....Rossy de Palma
Paulina.....Kitty Manver

Also with: Chus Lampreave, Yayo Calvo, Lotes León, Angel de Andrés López.

Madrid — The ever-growing cult following, both in and out of Spain, of Pedro Almodóvar should increase appreciably with the release of this often hilarious, irreverent and off-beat comedy, the most coherent the young Spanish filmmaker has limned thus far.

Almodóvar has honed his humor and knows just the right moment for springing nuances, or comic silences, or letting loose the unexpected wisecrack or slap in the face. No need here for sex and drugs and the gay scene (only marginally touched upon in a humorous vein), since the dilemma of a woman on the verge of a nervous breakdown after breaking up with a married man is fascinatingly treated in a comic vein. Almodóvar understands his women, and there always is underlying sympathy for them, even when he turns their personal tragedies into whimsy.

Central character is Pepa, superbly played by the helmer's Muse, Carmen Maura. Using mostly the interior of her apartment as the scenario of the action, Almodóvar introduces her zany girlfriend, then the son of the man who has jilted Pepa, his outraged wife, a second girlfriend, two policemen, a distaff lawyer and a gay taxi driver. All come wonderfully together in a script solid and witty enough to please not only cult followers but wider audiences as well.

Pic winds after an amusing taxi vs. motorcycle race to the airport, where one of the "nervous" women is collared by the police after trying to shoot her husband (who had been Pepa's lover).

Good production values, crisp lensing, fine editing and mock-heroic music all add up to a thoroughly enjoyable film which should do brisk business in all territories, helped by the already considerable reputation Almodóvar has established for himself. Pic was given an "all audiences" classification in Spain.—*Besa.*