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Au Rendez-Vous De La Mort Joyeuse

(At the Meeting With Joyous Death)

(FRENCH-COLOR)

Variety

1-17-73

Paris, Jan. 9.

United Artists release of Telecine-UA production. Stars Francoise Fabian; features Yasmine Dahm, Jean-Marc Bory, Jean-Pierre Darras, Andre Weber, Claude Dauphin. Directed by Juan Bunuel. Screenplay, Bunuel, Pierre Maintigneux; camera (Eastmancolor), Ghislain Cloquet; editor, Genevieve Vaury; art director, Robert Clavel. Reviewed at UA Screening Room, Paris, Dec. 24, '72. Running Time: 82 MINS.

Francoise	.....	Francoise Fabian
Marc	.....	Jean-Marc Bory
Sophie	.....	Yasmine Dahm
TV Director	.....	Jean-Pierre Darras
Clebert	.....	Andre Weber
Cameraman	.....	Michel Creton
Duval	.....	Claude Dauphin
Henri	.....	Renato Salvatori

There may be another Bunuel to contend with in the film picture judging from this sprightly occult romp by Juan Bunuel, son of the noted filmmaker Luis. It is Bunuel Junior's first pic and he has already won the Georges Sadoul Prize for promise and inventiveness.

It is hard enough to start with the name of Bunuel and comparisons, as it is said, may be odious. But since they will be done it might just be said he too likes to use ordinary objects that become strangely malignant, a soiled bit of rope here, and does not like to explain things too much.

But otherwise Bunuel Films will go his own way with an apparent delight in occult happenings and opting to entertain, as does his father, and still leaving a residue of insights, and, in his case, some disturbing resonances in this tale of a haunted house.

Pic could cash in on growing mystical outlooks and orgs abroad as it deals with a girl entering puberty who starts strange things around her as well as intimations she may be possessed of the spirit of a former resident.

Her father, a designer, has bought an unusual looking old country house of Gothic architecture but probably built only 70 or 100 years ago. The mother writes articles on women's lib and there is a little brother. The young girl seems absorbed in her own awakening emotions but paint cans mysteriously turn over or her brother's lead soldiers are destroyed.

One night when the brother is put in her room because he is frightened, she objects and then breaks in on her parents making love as revenge. As the father goes after her the windows of the house are mysteriously shattered. Then a friend is almost killed by wildly moving refrigerators and washing machines and a friend who has a tv show decides to do a program on the house.

It has some shrewd further happenings as the girl shows up, then a brood of orphans led by a priest who had used the house when it was deserted, with the tv men spooked, especially the director who seems enticed by the nubile daughter only to have her turn into a witchlike creature in his arms as he is found writhing in mud after his screams bring in everybody.

It ends in mayhem and everybody driven out as the girl seems to take possession of the house. People can read things into it about youthful narcissism, awakening sexual emotions and children at strange, unresolved odds with grownups.

Pic does end abruptly and may leave too many things up in the air. But Bunuel Films certainly displays a mischievous feel for suspense and the unexpected without too much overinsistence, done with a disarming simplicity. If the protagonists are blocked out with surface characters, it may all be in the eye of this strange little girl entering womanhood. A very promising first pic that makes Bunuel Films a man to be watched.

Mosk.