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Don't Look Now
(BRITISH-ITALIAN-COLOR)

Superior psychological thriller. Bright prospects.

British Lion presentation (Paramount release in U.S.) of a Casey Productions Ltd. (London) — Eldorado Films (Rome) coproduction. Produced by Peter Katz; executive producer, Anthony B. Unger. Directed by Nicholas Roeg. Stars Julie Christie, Donald Sutherland. Screenplay, Allan Scott, Chris Bryant; based on story by Daphne Du Maurier; camera (Technicolor) Anthony Richmond; editor, Graeme Clifford; art director, Giovanni Soccol; music, Pino Donaggio; assistant director, Francesco Cinieri. Reviewed at Odeon, Leicester Square, London Oct. 16, '73. Running Time: 110 MINS.

Laura Baxter	Julie Christie
John Baxter	Donald Sutherland
Heather	Hilary Mason
Wendy	Clelia Matania
Bishop Barbarigo	Massimo Serato
Inspector Longhi	Renato Scarpa
Workman	Giorgio Trestini
Hotel Manager	Leopoldo Trieste
Anthony Babbage	David Tree
Mandy Babbage	Ann Rye
Johnny Baxter	Nicholas Salter
Christine Baxter	Sharon Williams
Detective Sabbione	Bruno Cattaneo
Dwarf	Adelina Poerio

No matter what happens to this crackerjack chiller commercially — and the potential outlook is decidedly good — it should firmly establish director Nicholas Roeg as the latest cult hero, and that on the basis of only three features (he previously made "Performance" and "Walkabout").

For this British-Italian suspense, in which the horror gets to one almost subliminally, as in "Rosemary's Baby", is superior stuff. It can be "read" on two levels: as simply a gripping tale of mysterious goings on in a wintertime Venice or, for those wishing something more substantial, on the much more intricate, involved and involving one dealing with the supernatural and the occult as related to the established patterns of life and society. Word of mouth is likely to be good and, where fully understood, critical acclaim should also be forthcoming. (Par releases in the U.S.)

Right from its shattering start, with its agonizing drowning of a young girl, Roeg sets the pace — and style — of this neatly-made, splendidly-acted and written as well as elnsed thriller. Story itself is a bit of intriguingly offbeat flimsy concocted from a Daphne Du Maurier short story about a young British married couple who shortly after the accidental death — or was it? — of their daughter get involved

in some strange happenings in a wintry Venice where the man is restoring a church. A chance meeting in a restaurant with two sisters, one of them blind and suggesting she's "seen" and spoken to the dead child, sets things moving, with puzzling detail following puzzling detail in a mosaic of mystery which crescendos right up to a twist finale.

But while, as noted, these sharply observed if delicately hinted events weave an enjoyable web of suspense into an intelligently stimulating movie, it's the fillips, visually introduced by Roeg in glimpses and flashes, that make this much more than merely a well-made psycho-horror thriller. And, while interpretations may vary, the director has inserted enough disturbingly fascinating thoughts and hints about the human condition to add to the enjoyment of those who care for more than a mere surface viewing.

The performances are right on the button: Donald Sutherland is (unusually) at his most subdued, top effectiveness as the materialist who ironically becomes the victim of his refusal to believe in the intangible; Julie Christie does her best work in ages as his wife; while a superbly-chosen cast of British and Italian supporting players etch a number of indelibly vivid por-

traits. Notably, top contributions come from Clelia Matania and Hilary Mason as the bizarre sisters who form the film's physical leitmotif; from Massimo Serato as a Venetian Bishop, disturbed by the goings-on but powerless to help; Renato Scarpa as the police inspector who's learned to live with his job's frustrations; Leopoldo Trieste as a harassed hotel manager; and several others.

Roeg, once a top lenser himself, naturally sees that cameraman Anthony Richmond's effects are suited to his mood, which doesn't prevent this albeit frightening glimpse of wintertime Venice from having its own menacing fascination and decadent beauty. Editing too, is careful and painstaking (the classically brilliant and erotic love-making scene which helped get pic a British "X" and is reportedly to be cut by Par in the U.S. is merely one of several examples) and plays a vital role in setting the film's mood, as do the use of color and the choice of all location settings. Production credits are likewise upper case.

Superlatives, by the way, should not distract or make one expect too much too soon. Pic's ultimate, lasting impact comes long after it's ended and the thoughts it has triggered have had time to develop and seize the imagination. —Hawk.