

## Press Information



### Berlinale *Retrospective* 2008: Luis Buñuel and Specials

This year's Luis Buñuel *Retrospective* will commence and conclude at the Volksbühne with two special presentations focusing on Buñuel's famous directorial debut: his silent film *Un chien andalou* (France 1929) is to be screened four times, and each time it will be accompanied live by different works of contemporary music.

On February 9, 2008, *Un chien andalou* will be shown alongside another masterpiece of surrealistic film, Jean Epstein's *La chute de la maison Usher* (*The Fall of the House of Usher*, France 1928), on which Buñuel worked as assistant director. Both films will be presented in restored versions and accompanied live by Dutch musicians Maud Nelissen, Merima Kljuco and Frido ter Beek. With their improvisation, they will provide the proper acoustic environment for the intense and poetic cinematic worlds of Buñuel and Epstein. Composer and pianist Maud Nelissen is one of the most renowned European musicians for silent movies. The French Embassy is supporting the evening, which will be held in cooperation with the Volksbühne.

On February 17, 2008, the Berlinale Kinotag, the 21 musicians of the Spanish *Grup Instrumental BCN216* will approach Buñuel's debut film in three successive screenings of *Un chien andalou* at the Volksbühne. Under the programmatic title *3 chiens*, each composition has its own conception: *Clonic Mutations* by Catalan musician Sergio López, an acoustic "demystification" of Buñuel's classic work, full of black humor; *Szénario* by Mauricio Kagel, a composition for the film from 1981/82; and *Las siete vidas de un gato* by Martín Matalón, a free association of images and sounds. The *Grup Instrumental BCN216* is one of Spain's most successful ensembles for contemporary music and with *3 chiens* it will give its first guest appearance in Germany. This matinee will be presented in cooperation with the Instituto Cervantes, INAEM - Ministerio de Cultura, Institut Ramon Llull and the Spanish Embassy.

In addition to Buñuel's 32 directorial works, the *Retrospective* will present a programme of eight films to introduce his contributions as assistant director, producer and screenwriter. Buñuel worked for the first time as assistant director on Epstein's film *Mauprat* (France 1926), in which he also played two small roles - a monk and a guardsman.

In Spain of the 1930s, when Buñuel was a partner in Filmófono production company, he produced four popular films for which he also went uncredited

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as co-director: *Don Quintín el amargao* (*The Bitter Mr. Quintin*), *La hija de Juan Simón* (*The Daughter of Juan Simón*), *¿Quién me quiere a mí?* (*Who Loves Me?*) und *¡Centinela alerta!* (*Guard! Alert!*). *Don Quintín el amargao* was an extraordinary commercial success, and in 1951 Buñuel made a remake of it in Mexico under the title *La hija del engaño* (*Daughter of Deceit*). During a stay in the USA, he wrote one episode for Robert Florey's *The Beast with Five Fingers* (USA 1946). And although it was not included in the final version of Florey's film, individual sequences in the film were inspired by Buñuel's "bodiless" hand. Years later Buñuel took up this idea again in *El ángel exterminador* (*The Exterminating Angel*, Mexico 1962). Buñuel also wrote the screenplay for the Mexican director Julian Solér's amusing screwball comedy *Si Usted no puede, yo sí* in 1950.

### Specials at the CinemaxX

Besides its comprehensive programme on Buñuel, the *Retrospective* will also present four recent restorations of silent films at special events: Carl Theodor Dreyer's *Die Gezeichneten* (*Love One Another*, Germany 1921) compellingly portrays anti-Semitic pogroms and revolutionary activities in Russia of the early 20th century (restoration: Danish Film Institute). In Robert Reinert's *Nerven* (*Nerves*, Germany 1919), cameraman Helmar Lerski finds disturbing images for the protagonists who have been traumatized by World War I (restoration: Filmmuseum München). The Friedrich-Wilhelm-Murnau Stiftung's restoration of *Schatten der Weltstadt* (Willi Wolff, Germany 1925) has made one of the few surviving films with Ellen Richter - the star of spectacular German adventure movies as well as producer - available to the public again. Another almost forgotten silent film star, Betty Compson, gives a brilliant performance as *Belle of Broadway* (Harry O. Hoyt, USA 1926) in Sony/Columbia's elaborate restoration of the film. Maud Nelissen and Joachim Bärenz will accompany the screenings on the piano.

After the Berlinale, the programme will go on tour: partners in this cooperation are the Österreichisches Filmmuseum Wien, which will present the programme immediately following the Festival; and the Filmmuseum München, which will begin screening the films in March 2008. From February 7 onwards, 3sat will augment the *Retrospective* with the film series "Der Zauber des Surrealen. Luis Buñuel und die Folgen".

Press Office  
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