

"Drummer Girl" loses its beat

By D. Dietrich
Of The Print

Working with a story full of mystery, intrigue, action, violence, and socio-political relevance, the producers of "The Little Drummer Girl" had all the ingredients for a truly epic production. Although all the components can be seen on screen, the movie based upon John le Carre's critically acclaimed best-seller, is a prime example of how the whole isn't necessarily equal to the sum of the parts and in this case it is less.

Starring Diane Keaton as Charlie, le Carre's actress-terrorist-double agent, she is the vehicle through which both sides of the terrorist war between Palestinian and Israeli forces are shown. Keaton is an aspiring American actress in West Germany when she is recruited by Israeli counter-intelligence agents. She is asked to face the consummate acting job by posing as a Palestinian rebel. She is a prime candidate for the job because she has been outspoken about her sympathies to the Palestinian movement already and would be readily accepted. The problem the Israelis have is convincing her that they are the ones working for peace.

It is with the Israeli recruitment scene of Keaton where the film first must overcome a major motivational barrier. After Keaton finds out that she has been tricked by the very movement she is against, they ask her to risk her life for their cause. This is definitely not a minor change of heart to accomplish. Unfortunately the scene does not work and Keaton's character suffers from that point on. Keaton's primary draw to the Israeli side is her attraction to one of the key agents played by the dark and mysterious Yorgo Voyagis as Joseph. One can understand why she is attracted to Joseph but their relationship has not reached an accredited level by the time she gives up her morals for him.

The lead organizer of the Israeli counter-intelligence force is the complex character Kurtz, played by Klaus Kinski (Doctor Zhivago, Nosferatu, the Vampire). Kinski's eccentricity is intense enough to feel authentic but his conversion of Keaton's sympathy is confusing and lacks any justification of her sense of duty to help their cause. Nevertheless, Keaton becomes a key operative in an effort to stop the Palestinian espionage leader Kahlil, a figure of mystery even to the Palestinians.

In her mission, Keaton must pose as Kahlil's younger brother's lover. Kahlil's brother is conveniently executed and Keaton is left to follow a script of their supposed romance, hopefully leading her to Kahlil by convincing others of her devotion to her deceased lover's cause. Her search for Kahlil leads her through London to Greece, to Lebanon and finally back to Germany. The phases her character goes through reflect the complexity of her feelings as she sees



IN THE LITTLE DRUMMER GIRL, Diane Keaton stars as Charlie, an actress turned double agent. While in a Palestinian training camp

the good and evil of both sides and the morality of either destroyed by the carnage of battle. The depth of the role appeared to be too much for Keaton without a clear sense of motivation which is still lacking from the conversion scene.

The complexity of the role seemed overwhelming for even a veteran actress such as Keaton who has accomplishments including an academy award for her lead in "Annie Hall" and a nomination for her performance in "Reds." Without control of motivation her character floundered in an attempt to find consistency. She's got a presence on screen which naturally draws the viewer's attention but when the story calls for her to visit a Palestinian training camp the script begins to read like a Sidney Sheldon novel. It reminded me of a perfume commercial.

Keaton passes her tests with flying colors through most of the film and while the attempt to develop her character is appreciated there are other roles which play more like caricatures. The most blatant example was that of a

she learns to assemble a machine gun without looking.

Photo courtesy of Warner Bros.

matronly yet sadistic German woman named of course, Helga. In contrast to the shallowness of Helga is the ambiguity felt toward Palestinian leader Kahlil (Sami Frey) when he is finally discovered. One of the saving graces of the film is Keaton's relationship with Kahlil giving us a brilliant manifestation of irony in which Keaton becomes devoid of any cause and realizes the horror of what she has been involved in.

The film has a variety of poignant statements to make and despite the Hollywood feel to the direction, the points are not entirely lost. They are however muddled and hit the viewer with much less impact than hoped for from a director of such caliber as George Roy Hill who has shown his skill with film in "The World According to Garp," "The Sting," and "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid." The book held the number one position on *The New York Times* Best-Seller list for sixteen straight weeks. Obviously something went awry in the adaptation.

For entertainment I would recommend the film only on discount nights.

—events—

A slide presentation will be shown Nov. 8 by friends and members of the Environmental Learning Center. The slides will be of trips taken throughout the world. The program runs 7-10 p.m. and is open to the public free of charge.

People interested in learning how to make a variety of wreaths, arrangements and decorations using natural and found materials should sign up for a two week program run in coordination with the ELC Benefit Christmas Tree Sale. Classes are held on Saturdays beginning Nov. 8 and require a \$5 fee.

Sometimes a Great Notion, a film based on the novel by Oregon author Ken Kessey, will be the topic of discussion at the next Oregon Sampler program. The film will be introduced by Oregonian film critic Ted Mahar. The seventh part of the Fall term series will be held Nov. 7. For more information call ext. 454.

Moderator/Discussion Leader Training workshop will be held Nov. 11 from 12:30-3:30. The program is geared to help students learn how to lead discussions without dominating them and to "intervene, interpret and summarize as necessary." For more information call ext. 230.

Holiday gifts can be made in two week Knitting Ski Socks class beginning Nov. 5. The class costs \$14 and will be held on Monday nights 7-10 p.m. Call ext. 230 for details and a supply list.

Contact Dave Buckley in Student Activities if you wish to sell your crafts at the College Crafts Fair Dec. 4 and 5.

