

Movies

Keaton shines in 'The Little Drummer Girl'

By SHAWN BEHLEN
Staff Reviewer

Diane Keaton has done it again — an academy award nomination is in order.

Keaton's latest is "The Little Drummer Girl," which is based on the critically acclaimed best-seller by John le Carre. The film will open Oct. 19, and Keaton's co-stars are Klaus Kinski and Yorgo Voyagis.

The film deals with espionage and international politics, namely the fighting between Palestine and Israel. A confusing and serious subject, but it is handled here with a deft and understanding hand.

Keaton plays Charlie, an aspiring American actress in England who is pro-Palestinian. She attends a lecture by a Palestinian operative, who wears a ski mask to hide his identity, and becomes infatuated with his words and presence. Charlie then travels to Greece to film a wine commercial and runs into the man she thinks may

have been the operative back in England.

He turns out to be an imposter and both he (Voyagis) and the man who hired her for the commercial (Kinski) are Israeli agents. They kidnap Charlie and after a night of question and answer sessions, recruit her as a go-between. She is faced with a reversal of her political beliefs and an enigmatic man (Voyagis), whom she thinks she might love.

The Israelis have kidnapped the real operative, Michel, in an attempt to get at his brother, Khalil, who is the leader of the Palestinian espionage operation. Michel is killed and Charlie takes the role of his left-behind lover in an attempt to get to Khalil, whom she is supposed to stop. She is assigned the difficult task of appearing faithful to both factions.

Charlie approaches the Palestinians, is accepted and taken to a training camp in Lebanon. She passes the training camp with ease and, after proving her



Imposter

Instead of being the wine merchant Charlie (Diane Keaton) thinks he is, Kurtz (Klaus Kinski) turns out to be the leader of Israeli espionage.

reliability, is trusted to meet Khalil.

At this point, Charlie must analyze her beliefs and her actions. The results are surprising.

As Charlie, Keaton is the strongest part of this film. This

is a multilayered characterization of the highest caliber. Charlie's views and beliefs change throughout this film and Keaton makes the switches believable.

As the film starts, Charlie is strongly pro-Palestinian. After the intense questioning by the Israelis, she realizes that it was more a romanticization than a true belief.

Charlie also discovers love during the course of the film, only to see it killed in the end. She is infatuated with the man she thinks is a Palestinian operative, only to find he is an imposter. She falls in love with the imposter anyway, but discovers that the political intrigue cannot be separated from their relationship (what little of one he allows) and that this man's loyalties are highly questionable and ever-changing. A revolution is heavy competition and the man is a true puzzle.

Charlie must also examine her views on life and what is

right and wrong. Terrorism seems remote and likable to her while she is on a stage in England, but when someone's remains are splattered across her face, she cannot ignore the reality.

Another important aspect of Keaton's performance is that she brings moments of humor to situations of great seriousness. Without her light touch (when a fellow agent tells her they must stop kissing and leave because of a lack of time, she replies, "How long can it take?"), this film could easily become too dark, too foreboding and too serious.

The film's other strong point is the direction by George Roy Hill. Transferring a novel of this scope to film cannot be easy. He has had practice with making this type of transfer before on "The World According to Garp" and "Slaughterhouse Five," but had some problems with both of those. This time, however, Hill's film is intriguing and understandable.



In Lebanon

After pretending to join the Palestinian faction, Charlie (Diane Keaton) is taken to a training camp and taught the rules of espionage.

'Another Country' is worth the drive

By SHAWN BEHLEN
Staff Reviewer

With the advent of such successful foreign films as "Chariots of Fire" (Great Britain), "Local Hero" (Scotland) and "Fanny and Alexander" (Sweden), it is no longer just the arty few who go to see these films. They have recently gained new respectability in the United States and rightly so.

A current example of the excellence of many foreign films is now at the Greenway 3 Theater in Houston. I realize Houston isn't really that close, but an opportunity like this should not be missed.

"Another Country" deals with repressed homosexuality at a British boarding school in the 1930's. To be honest, that description didn't just reach out and grab me when I was told

about it either. But don't judge too quickly. A quick, one-line description can't do this one justice. There is just too much subtext.

Rupert Everett, a young British actor, gives a performance of rare distinction as Guy Bennett, the protagonist and hero of the film. He alone is worth the price of admission.

Bennett is a junior at the boarding school and is highly indiscreet about his homosexuality. Of his amor he says, "There is a hollow at the base of his neck which makes me want to pour on honey and lick it off." Statements such as that are not too popular when another student hangs himself after being caught having sex with a schoolmate.

"The school master should have known better than to look in the changing rooms," is the opinion expressed by the rest of the school. "Everyone knows what goes on in there." Obviously, homosexuality is a recognized aspect of the school, but it is certainly not accepted by all.

One reason for that is the power hierarchy of the students. The school is ruled by "the gods" and the prefects. A "god" is the top senior from each of the school's houses and prefects are the second and third. What these people say becomes law and eventually Bennett becomes involved in a power struggle over who will be the next year's elite. His homosexuality becomes his downfall.

This power struggle brings to light other aspects of the school culture. Bennett's roommate, Judd, is a Communist and spurns all school activities as socialistic. He must finally decide whether to give in to school pressure and become a prefect or give up that chance at power and be true to his principles.

One of the others involved in the struggle is the enemy of both Bennett and Judd. He is a militaristic fiend, finding the punishment of Bennett for unseemly behavior a joy and the dilemma of Judd a delight.

The contrast between these three is intense and enlightening. Their motives, beliefs and actions are treated with insight

and respect. They do not come off cheaply in this film and the homosexuality is not used for shock effect. These are real human beings whose lives are being brutally displayed in an attempt to prove a point.

That point is the cruelty of repression. These students are entirely controlled, in every sense of the word, by the school "system." As one student says, "Our parents wouldn't put us in here if they knew what it was like." He receives the reply, "One half of them do — our fathers lived through the same thing." It is a factory that turns out generation after generation of followers.

This film should make you think — it is insightful and bold.