

Arts and Entertainment

Chinese troupe sings, dances, studies



Members of the Chinese Youth Goodwill Mission perform Friday night in the Nebraska Union Centennial Room.

Dan Dulaney/Daily Nebraskan

Beautiful women flitted like fairies, stern warriors battled with swords, young men and women courted each other with song and dance and modern college students sang campus songs and tripped lightly to lively music in "An Adventure in Chinese Songs and Dances."

This week, they're ambassadors. Next week, it's back to the books.

A 14-member troupe, the Youth Goodwill Mission, of college students from Taiwan put on the show. The troupe is one of two touring the United States with the goal of introducing some Chinese culture to Americans. The group which performed Friday night in the Nebraska Union Centennial room is touring colleges and universities in the eastern half of the United States.

Three performers — I-Gean Tasi, Kuei-Yi Wang and Te-Hsing Hu — talked about their tour Friday.

The troupe will perform 25 times in 17 states before returning home. UNL was their 22nd stop. As the tour draws to an end, the performers are ready to go home.

"I'm not homesick. We're too busy to be homesick," Te-Hsing Hu said. "But I'm ready (to go

home)."

The United States has been what they expected, the performers said. They liked the scenery best. They took time out to see Niagara Falls and other sights, but will probably miss some scenery which is not always a treat for us natives.

"Will it snow?" Wang said. "We want to see some snow."

Snow may be a spectacular new sight for the members of the Goodwill Mission, but it may not dazzle them as much as their show dazzles unsuspecting foreigners. It's a very colorful, lively and sometimes intense 90 minutes of non-stop singing and dancing which serves well as an introduction to Chinese culture, the purpose of the mission.

"I think it's been successful," Tasi said.

The performers will return to Taiwan Nov. 4 and resume their studies in such fields as international trade, primary education, international affairs and opera. And they'll be even busier as students than they were as emissaries of their country.

"School already started. We missed one month of classes," Wang said. "We'll have to study hard."

'Drummer Girl' delivers power-packed message

Review by Steve Noble
Daily Nebraskan Staff Reporter

In a country where the average American's analysis of foreign policy is formed by reports on the evening news, "The Little Drummer Girl" delivers a powerful message. The film embraces the values and struggles of two diverse groups in conflict over their promised land, but fails to delve deep enough to provide any real understanding.

The movie's violent tone is set from the opening scene when a bomb planted by the Palestinian Liberation Organization obliterates an Israeli family.

Diane Keaton leads the cast as Charlie, an actress of uncertain distinction, who is involved in a London play. Although she is filled with pro-Palestinian ideas, an Israeli intelligence agency sets her up to fall in love with a mysterious PLO agent. Once she is hooked, he reveals his identity as an Israeli agent and lures her into their group. In a single all-night interrogation session, Charlie is coaxed into disclosing her life story. As fast as you can say "Patty Hearst," this simple brainwashing has caused her to abandon her previous convictions and adopt the cause of the Israelis.

Charlie is soon swept away into a "theater of the real" where she faces her greatest acting challenge. Performing well, she is accepted to train in a PLO boot camp. Meanwhile, the Israeli group is ready to use her in its secret pursuit of an exceptionally dangerous and elusive Palestinian terrorist leader.

It is a credit to Diane Keaton that she can pull off another Oscar-caliber performance in a movie with such an unbelievable plot. Keaton invests in Charlie all her passion and sense of inner conflict to make the character believable. Yet Kea-

ton is restrained and controlled enough in her portrait to allow it to rise above an improbably plot. Because of the writer's and director's obsessions with plot rather than characterization or explanation, the other characters are not clearly defined.

The film, based on a novel by John LeCarre, clings to an intricate story line that only manages to detract and confuse its audience. "The Little Drummer Girl" is preoccupied with trying to keep pace with the novel. In the first 15 minutes, the story globe-trots between five countries. As if the Middle East situation wasn't complex enough, the movie's pace never slows to allow the audience a close look at the characters, countries or groups involved. Except for one brief scene where Israeli agent Joseph tells how the PLO violently killed his father, the heartfelt passion of the Israelis and Palestinians goes unexplained. Consequently, the audience feels as Diane Keaton did during her time in the PLO training camp: confused and struggling to keep up with the action.

Palestinians and Israelis alike will not be pleased over the violent and harsh portrayals of their groups. Neither is shown as a passionate group fighting over a promised homeland. Instead they are seen as hateful groups, victims of their culture who are ready to kill and betray at any cost to achieve their goals. The audience cannot empathize with either group, but is forced to choose the lesser of two evils.

Yet the film does succeed in raising consciousness on several levels. From the PLO training camp to the high-level Israeli agency, the movie gives a sense of urgency to a situation that is hard to relate. This is a land where men wear their war scars like trophies and see warfare as not only a way to survive, but a way of life. The



Photo Courtesy of Warner Brothers

Diane Keaton in "The Little Drummer Girl"

movie also gives insight to the process in which people lose sight of their reasons for conflict. They become hardened and bitter, are reduced to fanaticism instead of logic and lose sight of their priorities because of the essence of their cultures.

Executives at Warner Brothers and local theater managers have been disappointed with the audience response to "The Little Drummer Girl." Although hyped by an expensive advertising campaign, it still grossed a mere \$2.6 million in 820 theaters during its opening weekend.

The low box-office numbers may be caused by the film's audience focus: It is not aimed at the large high school-to college-age audience, which probably would rather see Bill Murray zapping

ghosts than Diane Keaton assassinating Palestinians. Because the idea is hard to relate to, many people may choose to stay away from this film for the same reason they should go. Although it may hurt a little, it could be good for those people. The movie takes place in a different world where a myriad of values, cultures and lifestyles is unveiled. The film gives a glimpse of the Mid-East situation that many people don't understand.

It hurts to be taken into this harsh and intense environment, but it is beneficial to grasp a concept of the passions and values of these people constantly struggling over a war-torn nation.

"The Little Drummer Girl" is now playing at the Plaza 4 Theatres.

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