



Joanna Pacula is Irina, a friend of the three murder victims whose bodies are found in the park, in "Gorky Park."

the movies
Dan Greenberg

Moscow sets scene for thriller done in classic manner

"Gorky Park" is good entertainment, an exciting, fast-paced detective thriller cast in the old mold but polished with a new twist. The setting is contemporary Moscow, the characters Russian.

"Gorky Park" has all the elements of conventional detective movies. It opens with the discovery of three snow-covered corpses. As usual, no clothes, no identification. The unusual twist: no fingerprints, no faces. To prevent identification, their faces have been hacked off.

While that sounds gory, and the idea certainly is, the filming is handled in such a way (brief takes) that it isn't as gross as it sounds.

If one can be offended about that sort of gore, plus seven other murders, then "Gorky Park" is only moderately violent. Because of this violence, the film is rated R. Its sexual component is modest.

THE FILM IS primarily a thriller about people. Undaunted by shadowy threats from the KGB, the hero overcomes incredible odds, extensive corruption and a suspiciously indifferent girl to discover whodunit (and what they done) in the best film-detective tradition.

Naturally, the hero, militia (police) inspector Arkady Renko (William Hurt), has a trusty sidekick, Pasha (Michael Elphick). The KGB is led by the ominous Maj. Priklad (Rikki Fulton). Like all good thrillers, "Gorky Park" has a chief prosecutor, Iamskov (Ian Bannen), big money and a beautiful girl, Irina (Joanna Pacula), who links all the elements.

Since this is Moscow, the mysterious "foreigners" are Americans, fur importer Jack Osborne (Lee Marvin) and New York policeman William Kirwill (Brian Dennehy).

In the golden age of Hollywood, Peter Lorre would have been featured as the nasty little informer-blackmarketeer, Golodkin, very well-played by Alexei Sayle in his first feature film. As a matter of fact, the whole production smacks of Dashiell Hammett and Humphrey Bogart. The fresh, entertaining quality of "Gorky Park" comes with an assist from V.I. Lenin.

The film may picture Moscow and Russian attitudes as Western interests might have them, rather than as they really are. But "Gorky Park" does depict the corrupt underside of Soviet society not generally announced by Pravda. Its sharp dialogue is characterized by the black humor of Eastern-European, anti-Soviet political wit.

THE OMINOUS, ever-present KGB threat also is evident as a fact of Soviet life, one which leads to much of the film's tension and excitement.

Certainly the instant rebuttal the producers received to their request to film in Moscow is indicative of official Soviet displeasure. The producers were undaunted and gathered sufficient information, photographs and artifacts from Russia so that their on-location shooting in Finland and Sweden is highly realistic.

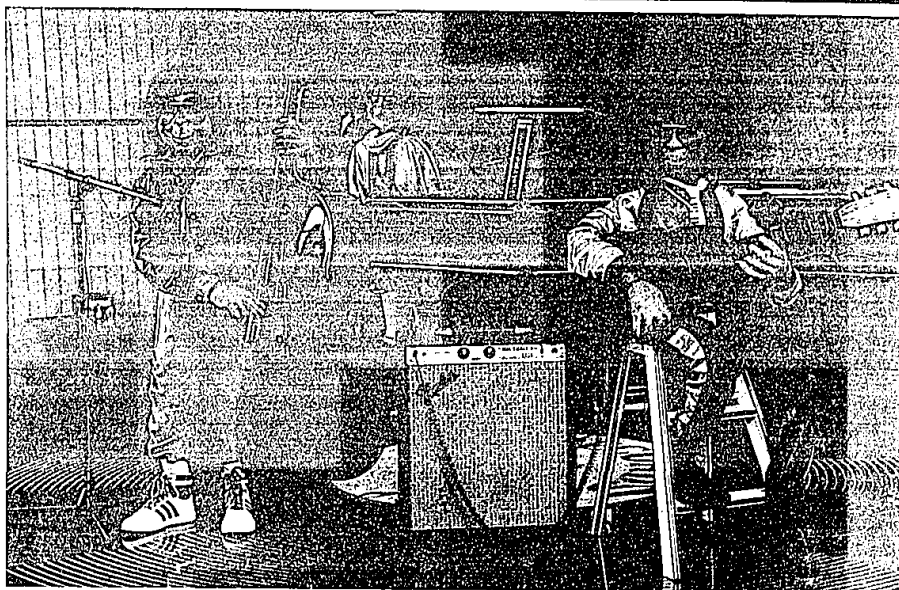
Michael Apted's direction and Dennis Potter's screenplay continually propel the film forward, keeping the audience on the edge of the seat tensely awaiting the next event.

One nice touch is the use of dialect. Rather than the cumbersome, Russian-accented English, which might have turned out comic, the foreign flavor is lightened with a classy but subdued variety of British accents.

The constant bass pounding of the musical score and the realistic, richly detailed photography combine with incisive dialogue, excellent acting and directing to make "Gorky Park" an exciting two hours of film entertainment.



Detective Arkady Renko (William Hurt) and Irina are thrown together in an effort to find the killers.



Robotrons rock, talk

The rock group Family Album isn't a lounge act but entertainment for the kiddies at Chuck E. Cheese's Pizza Time Theatre in Clawson. The trio, made up of three robotrons, sings a mix of old and new songs, talks with the audience and gets the youngsters danc-

ing in the aisles. From a hidden control booth, the characters come to life. The use of advanced electronic technology, computer programs and a microphone allows the operator to speak to the audience through robotrons.

Hall tours offered

New Year's Day hours for tours at Meadow Brook Hall will be 1-4 p.m. on the Oakland University campus near Rochester.

Admission for the New Year's hall tour is \$4 for adults. Senior citizens are \$3 and OU affiliates and children under 13 are \$2.

The historic 100-room mansion, Meadow Brook Hall, was the home of Mrs. Matilda Dodge Wilson, who donated one of the country's largest parcels of land and money for educational purposes.

Knole Cottage, a six-room mini-mansion playhouse nestled in the woods near the hall, also will be open for touring on New Year's Day, weather permitting. Knole Cottage tours are 75 cents per person.

For further information, call 377-3140. Meadow Brook Hall was completed in 1929 at a cost of \$4 million. The hall contains original furnishings and art works.



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