

DARING, HOT AND FORBIDDEN.

one of the most thrilling directorial debuts of this year!

Movie Review

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by Logan Hill

Maryam Keshavarz's "Circumstance" is an edge-of-your-seat thriller with silk-sheet sex; a soap-opera family melodrama with double-crossing siblings; and an exploration of the power of the state in the private sphere. Oh, and it's set in Iran.

But it wasn't shot there. In Iran, sexual scenes are not allowed, female and male actors are generally not allowed to touch each other, and women can't dance, just for starters. So, Keshavarz, an Iranian-American writer-director with family in both countries, shot her film in Lebanon. She introduces a family in the relatively liberal elite of Tehran — a subculture we don't exactly see very often onscreen — but the film doesn't feel weighed down with the burden of representation:

get slightly more heavy) overub Sean Penn's cri de coeurs from "Milk." They go clubbing, slam shots, snort lines, argue about politics, and then shimmy in lingerie some more. Worse, one girl gets caught driving. Alone.

like their home is a sophisticated liberal island, and they're untouched by what's around them. But, of course, that doesn't last. Meanwhile, the son of the family, Mehran (Reza Sixo Safai), begins the film as a rehabbing party boy and finds a severe brand

of faith. This leads hews closer to the hard-rocking, pop-addled Iran of Marjane Satrapi's "Persepolis," and her style seems more indebted to the soapy excess of Douglas Sirk, the warm lushness of Bertolucci, or even Almodóvar's



It's too free-flowing for that, too plot-heavy, too stylish, too romantic, too hot. The first scene is a red-lit fantasy of the women shimmying in a night club. In front of a television playing bootlegged shows, the young women shake their hips just like the kids on "American Idol." Drunk, they overdub "Sex and the City's" orgasmic moans and gasps while giggling about their goofy transgressions, then (when things

Though President Ahmadinejad has declared that Iranian homosexuality doesn't exist, it sure does here. A wry Nikohl Boosheri plays Atafeh, the mildly rebellious daughter of a wealthy family who strikes up a dangerous affair with her bombshell-gorgeous best friend, played by Sarah Kazemy. The two dream of a fresh start in Dubai, where they presume they could love one another in a city with no history. At first it seems

him to become the house Inspector General, installing video cameras to spy on his family's cosmopolitan island.

Iranian filmmakers who cross over into American art houses (Abbas Kiarostami or Jafar Panahi) have become known for intense levels of realism (often featuring untrained actors), bare-bones production values, and spare

kinky talent for mashing up the domestic and the profane, the ludicrous and the weighty. The film, shot lavishly by Brian Rigney Hubbard, moves with a fluid rhythm — and its few stumbles are of the most excusable, over-ambitious sort.



Let no love fall victim to...
CIRCUMSTANCE

R RESTRICTED
Under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian.
SEXUAL CONTENT, LANGUAGE AND SOME DRUG USE

participant MEDIA

DO NOT DISTURB

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