



After hours of hat/hair interface-engineering, KK was ready for the outdoors.



DVD

**DISC DETAILS**

RELEASED: 16 March  
RRP: £19.99

DISCS: 1

ASPECT RATIO:  
2.35:1

AUDIO: DD5.1

EXTRAS: Making Of; Deleted scenes with introduction by director Saul Dibb; Gallery; Trailers; Subtitles; Audio Description

PICTURE: ★★★★★

AUDIO: ★★★★★

**FILM DETAILS**

DISTRIBUTOR:

Pathé

CERT: 12

RUN TIME: 105 mins

YEAR: 2008

DIRECTOR:

Saul Dibb

STARS: Keira Knightley, Ralph Fiennes, Hayley Atwell

OR GET IT ON...  
Blu-ray

FILM ★★★ EXTRAS ★★★

# THE DUCHESS

*If Voldemort married Elizabeth Bennet...*

**"You do get flashes of Voldemort..." says Hayley Atwell in the Making Of for *The Duchess*.**

She's not kidding either - Ralph Fiennes' ice-cold Duke of Devonshire is really quite scary, without ever becoming overdone.

Based on Amanda Foreman's biography, this period drama is no silly bodice-ripper. Keira Knightley is Georgiana Spencer, married off to the Duke as a teenager and the darling of 18th century society. The real Georgiana was an ancestor of Diana, Princess of Wales and much has been made of the parallels between their lives - it was crowded in the duchess's marriage, too.

The Duke doesn't bother to hide his affairs, even when he's boffing Georgiana's friend, Bess (Hayley Atwell). But Georgiana is the wrongdoer in his eyes because he expects two things: loyalty and a male heir. "As a husband, I have fulfilled my obligations but as a wife, you have not." What a charmer. He's allowed to have his cake and eat it, but he puts a stop to Georgiana's love for future Prime Minister Charles Grey (Dominic Cooper).

While *The Duchess* touches on the idea of women's lib, it fails to actually

go anywhere with the wider social issues it raises. But then, Georgiana's far too busy morphing from eager child to fashion icon to fallen woman, via doting mother, druggie gambler and political shaker. It's a hell of a lot to squeeze into 105 minutes. And it's difficult not to wish she would just show a bit more fight, damn it, such is the anguish and injustice of her situation.

The Making Of covers some of the more interesting aspects of Georgiana's life that don't quite make it into the film, such as the extent to which the newspapers of the time hounded her, and, while it contains some of the usual excitable babble from those involved about how wonderful everyone else was to work with, it's still worth seeing. There are also three decent deleted scenes, at least two of which probably ought to have been in the actual film. It's a shame, though, that while the film itself has subtitles and audio description, the extras do not. **Anne Wollenberg**

## FINALWORD

*A compelling costume piece with tight performances, but the plot whips past too fast at times. Extras offer quality but not quantity.*

## AN INTERVIEW WITH... HAYLEY ATWELL



*The British actress on threesomes, research and dining out with Keira...*

**So tell us about Beth Foster, the 'other woman' in *The Duchess*...**

She's a social climber, very ambitious, with a genuine affection for Georgiana and the Duke, which is proven by the fact they spent the rest of their lives together. I also saw her as an arty, sensual woman who had a great sexual chemistry with the Duke and Georgiana and probably a more worldly knowledge of how difficult and harsh reality was compared to the romantic ideals Georgiana has.

**Much is made of Georgiana's parallels with Princess Diana...**

Yes, just to make a link that's not necessarily too obvious when you think about period drama. The themes the film deals with are universal - love and betrayal and passion. The link helps us to see these characters that really did exist and had the same passions and desires. It adds pressure, knowing you're playing the part of someone who lived, but it also means there's more information you can research and find out about the time, which provides a much richer inner life for the characters.

**Do you think modern audiences will identify with Bess's situation?**

I think a huge parallel is the obsession with celebrity. Back then it was more about aristocracy and the class system; the hierarchy now is that celebrity has taken over from aristocracy and the emphasis has shifted. It's a very clear, direct link between then and now.

**Talking of celebrity, how was it working with Keira Knightley?**

We socialised a bit, we had some good dinners, we had a good laugh, we drank wine and we had heated discussions about what we thought of the characters - did Bess have a genuine affection for the Duke and the Duchess? That was great. So, yes. Keira's a girly girl, totally, but she's also strong and sometimes she's a tomboy.