



Gene Kelly and Olivia Newton-John sing a duet, "When- ever You're Away from Me," in "Xanadu."



the movies
Louise Snider

'Xanadu' copies movie musicals in dull fashion

Ever since 1798, when Samuel Taylor Coleridge penned his poem about Kubla Khan's pleasure dome at Xanadu, the name has been a synonym for romantic visions of distant and exotic places. Images of oriental potentates, spikes, silks and jeweled splendor cling to the word.

In 1980, it still suggests a romantic vision, but in the new musical "Xanadu" (PG), the imagery is more pedestrian than princely.

Olivia Newton-John plays Terpsichore, the muse of song and dance. Wearing roller skates, she has descended from Mount Helicon to help make Danny McGuire's dream come true.

Danny (Gene Kelly), an ex-musician who opened a nightclub, then scored in real estate, wants something more out of life. He's tired of being a wealthy beach bum. He wants to open a new establishment and, presumably, go back to being a wealthy nightclub owner.

MEANWHILE, SONNY MALONE (Michael Beck) is sick of his job, painting posters of record album covers. "Assembly-line art," he calls it.

Terpsichore becomes the medium (if a muse can be a medium) for bringing the two together. She inspires Sonny to quit his job and join Danny in making his dream a reality. She also inspires Sonny's love and rekindles Danny's memories of the girl he loved and lost.

All this is pleasant, if not very exciting, not very dramatic and, certainly, not very original. Even with the sounds of the Electric Light Orchestra, "Xanadu" is more eclectic than electric, more derivative than daring. It looks like the spiced remains of a scavenger hunt through film archives.

One familiar feature is the fantasy ingredient — the muse or other immortal who takes a hand in the affairs of earthlings. We've seen this in movies such as "One Touch of Venus" and "Heaven Can Wait," which was the remake of "Here Comes Mr. Jordan," which also had a musical sequel, "Down to Earth."

"Xanadu" has a striking similarity to the latter. In the 1947 film, Rita Hayworth played Terpsichore who came down to earth to help a Broadway producer (Larry Parks) stage a show.

ANOTHER FAMILIAR FEATURE, and one closely allied to the first, is the enthusiastic "Let's put on a show" refrain. It's one we've heard throughout the vintage musicals whether with Dick Powell or Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland.

Should this be too heavy for anyone, there is even lighter entertainment at hand. Remember "Lili," the Gene Kelly-Leslie Caron musical which surprised everyone with an animation sequence? Well, by golly, "Xanadu" has one, too.

It also has dance extravaganzas, the kind Busby Berkeley would choreograph with an overhead camera to reveal a complex pattern of dancers and staging.

So much for borrowings. What does "Xanadu" itself have to offer? Gene Kelly, older but still graceful, hoofs a bit. Olivia Newton-John sings and dances and muses about things. And Michael Beck recites his lines like an actor who reads for a part — and doesn't get it.

The music is both old and new, '40s and '80s. A blow-out-the-jams finale brings the two eras together and demonstrates two things: One, a lot of the inventiveness in movie making today arises from the resourcefulness of the technical experts in lighting, sound and special effects. Two, among performing artists, the dancers, whether individually or in ensemble, whether on film or on stage, continue to set high standards and give distinction to otherwise insipid material.

what's at the movies

NEW RELEASES

AIRPLANE (PG). A picture that takes off. This spoof of all those "Airport" movies is one of the zaniest films around.

THE BIG RED ONE (PG). World War II from the North African campaign through Normandy and Europe as told through the eyes of a combat veteran and four young soldiers.

THE BLUE LAGOON (R). Lush photography but silly story of two shipwrecked youngsters who grow up uninhibited on tropic isle.

THE BLUES BROTHERS (R). A film that's as unoriginal and dreary as it is expensive (very) with one musical scene after another and enough car crashes to make AAA go belly up.

BRUBAKER (R). Serious drama with Robert Redford as reform warden fighting corruption on state prison farm.

CADDYSHACK (R). Chevy Chase and other comics in misadventures of caddies at a stuffy country club.

CHEECH AND CHONG'S NEXT MOVIE (R). Same old tired jokes about marijuana and low riders.

DRESSED TO KILL (R). Horny murder mystery with more than a passing resemblance to Hitchcock's "Psycho."

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK (PG). "Star Wars" sequel unites original cast in continuation of battle against the evil empire.

FAME (R). Lots of young talent in vibrant musical about students at New York's School of Performing Arts.

THE FINAL COUNTDOWN (PG). Kirk Douglas in action drama of a warship that goes through a time warp to the hour before Pearl Harbor.

The House of Hunan offers Chinese food, and provides deli menu as well

When Joe Chue took over the space formerly occupied by Henry's Point After restaurant and deli, he planned to open The House of Hunan and feature strictly Chinese food.

But no matter how hard he tried, former customers still wanted deli dishes, and Chue bowed to necessity. While the Chinese menu of the House of Hunan is available at any time during the restaurant's operation, the menu from the Point After is offered between the hours of 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. daily.

The House of Hunan is located in the Racquette Center at 28400 W. 12 Mile and Northwestern Highway in Southfield. Racquetteball players, dropping in after a game, demanded the deli menu, Chue said, and although he urged them to try the Chinese food, only one or two in a group would, and the rest stuck with pastrami and other such delights.

Chue figures in time he will have them all trying Chinese specialties. For now, Chinese people who come in to dine, as well as other fans of Oriental food, are ordering from the House of Hunan menu.

TWO CHEFS, one American (kept over from the Point After) and one Chinese are kept busy in the kitchens, working side by side, each turning out the orders for their respective clientele.

Besides the usual Cantonese dishes,



Ethel Simmons

Chue is pleased to offer a wide selection of Mandarin dishes, including Szechuan. These hot, spicy foods may require acquiring a taste for them.

Among the Chef's Specialties is Peking Duck, which I dined on last week. The entire was served after our party had tried a Pu Pu Platter of egg rolls, fantail shrimp, barbecue ribs, fried wonton, rumaki and barbeque beef appetizer tray (with a miniature hibachi in the center), sizzling rice soup, and hot and sour soup.

The Peking Duck, China's finest dish, requires 24-hour notice on orders because it must first be marinated. The Chinese waiter, Steve, who served us, amiably described this and other dishes.

For a group of five (a whole duck serves from three-six persons), there was a stack of folded Mandarin pancakes at the side of the large serving platter. With chopsticks, the waiter unfolded each one onto a plate, then spread it with a dark sauce.

ONTO THAT he placed bits of the duck and crispy skin, then folded the pancake. We served ourselves vegetables from the decorative, fancifully cut offerings. Especially attractive was what appeared to be a whole skinless tomato, actually cut into individual portions.

Several beef and shrimp dishes also were tried by the group before the dessert, dramatically served as Sugar Span Banana, Apple and Crispy Rice.

Menu prices are reasonable, and the Chinese food should satisfy those who want to try the unfamiliar, as well as the more unusual dishes. Starred menu items give you a choice of ordering "normal" or "heavily spiced."

ANOTHER CHINESE restaurant-deli combination is at the Rikshaw Inn located in the Orchard Mall at Orchard Lake and 15 Mile roads in West Bloomfield.

David Lum, co-owner and manager,

said his deli has been in operation for a couple of weeks.

Joe Chue of the House of Hunan said that the Rikshaw Inn got the idea for a deli from his restaurant, but Lum denied this. "We got the idea from Toronto (where Lum once worked). We saw the operation at Ginsberg and Wong and got their menu."

The Rikshaw Inn menu is "very diversified," Lum said, with offerings of Mandarin, Szechuan and Cantonese.

"We have a very good deli menu. We have a Jewish chef," he said. The deli menu is served from 11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday-Saturday.

AT THE DRAGON INN in Rochester, Jeng Chen is the new owner. Mrs. Chen was born in Peking, China, and lived in Taiwan before coming to the United States.

"I never tasted chop suey before coming to the U.S.," she said. Chop suey and chow mein have been served in Cantonese restaurants, for the American taste, but she and her husband "wanted to do genuine Chinese food," she said.

Two cooks from a famous Chinese restaurant in Taiwan prepare Mandarin, Szechuan and Cantonese cuisine at the Dragon Inn. The restaurant, downtown at 121 S. Main, has 100 dishes on the menu.

area bluegrass, folk and Irish musicians.

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The event will feature continuous

live entertainment from noon to 9 p.m. All proceeds from the sale of food and spirits will be donated to the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

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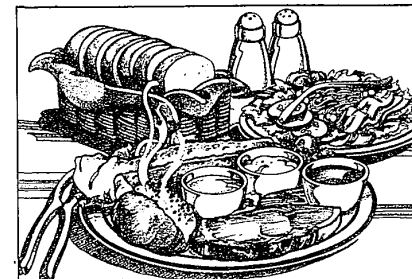
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