



Chu Chu (Carol Burnett) is a wacky dance teacher and one-woman street band in "Chu Chu and the Philly Flash."

the movies



Louise Snider

Poor script dulls comic possibilities for Arkin, Burnett

Alan Arkin and Carol Burnett are two down-and-outers thrown together in what purports to be a comedy, "Chu Chu and the Philly Flash" (PG).

The movie was shot on location in San Francisco, an important fact because the locale is the movie's greatest asset. If it had employed the considerable talents of its stars as effectively as it employed the city's attractions, "Chu Chu and the Philly Flash" would be a winner. As it is, we have a comic fizzle rather than a comic collision of two major talents.

Arkin is the Flash, a former pitcher for the Philadelphia Phillies. He turned to booze when he lost his fastball, and that started a slide from the bullpen to skid row. Dressed in recycled clothing that makes Columbus's raincoat look like the height of sartorial splendor, the Flash is reduced to hustling hot watches on street corners.

That's where he meets Emily (Burnett). She is a dance teacher with two left feet. When she is not giving lessons in her walk-up apartment, she strolls the streets as Chu Chu, a one-woman band.

SHE WEARS or carries with her a metronome which strikes a bongo drum and tambourine, a dime-store monkey wired to the strings of a bass fiddle, a plastic comb which strums a ukelele, maracas stuffed into a halter top, a neck harmonica and a bass drum operated by a foot pedal.

Costuming seems to be the source of comedy in this movie. Chu Chu tilts about in platform shoes of dizzying proportions, sports a Carmen Miranda fruit basket on her head, wears black mesh stockings, a tight print dress, a velvet shawl with sequins and dangling plastic banana earrings. If all the fruit and vegetable baubles on her were real, she could be the site of a Medfly invasion.

The Flash and Chu Chu clash over the same outdoor location, but their rivalry dissipates when a briefcase with stolen government documents literally falls into their hands from a third-floor window.

As they try to figure out how to cash in on this unexpected find, they are pursued by cops and villains. There are some mean-spirited attempts at farce in this movie, and they generally involve a rag-tag mob led by a bully called the Commander (Jack Warden). One of the members of his gang is Ruth Buzzi. She plays a brain-damaged ex-circus performer who acts like a monkey. (That's supposed to be funny?)

While the Flash and Emily try to evade their pursuers, a grudging friendship starts to blossom. As they recount their dubious careers to each other, we get more development of the characters, especially Burnett's character — untalented, ridiculous looking, but feisty.

David Lowell Rich directed the movie from a script by Barbara Dana, Alan Arkin's wife. Perhaps it was written during a family spat, because there is little in it to advance Arkin's career or that of anyone else at this costume party.



The Philly Flash (Alan Arkin) is a former baseball player who finds a briefcase worth millions.

table talk

WHERE DOES the rainbow end? In Hamtramck, of course, especially on the Labor Day weekend, where the city-sponsored Hamtramck Festival continues through Monday.

Media types who attended a recent dinner at Under the Eagle restaurant enjoyed huge, family-style servings of favorite Polish foods. At the party they learned more about the annual festival, which drew 200,000 visitors to Hamtramck last year.

After the presentation, members of the press were given coffee mugs

that say, "The end of the rainbow — Hamtramck."

Under the Eagle, 9000 Joseph Campau, will be represented at the festival where booths sponsored by church parishes, veterans, social and civic organizations will offer ethnic foods.

Festival-goers will be able to sample traditional Polish nalesniki (crepes), duck soup, dill pickle soup, pierogi (dumplings) and kielbasa (sausage).

TWO THOUSAND live lob-

sters will wriggle until they're popped into pots (or broiled) at Chuck Muer restaurants for "Lobster Maine-ia," Wednesday through Sept. 30.

The lobsters are arriving at Detroit's Metropolitan Airport, from Boston, then on to Charley's Crab in Troy, Diggers in Farmington Hills, Charley's Raw Bar and Seafood Restaurant in Detroit's Hotel Pontchartrain, the River Crab in St. Clair, the Gandy Dancer in Ann Arbor and Chuck Muer's in Toledo.

The 2,000 lobsters are expected to be only a few days' supply for the

restaurants, which will feature a special single lobster dinner at \$11.95. The meal includes corn on the cob, redskin potatoes, bread and butter.

Muer said the event in part brings back "the Pine Lake Days of our first Charley's Crab. We created the lobster clam bake bucket out there in 1970, and it was a smash."

A new version of Charley's Bucket is being introduced, as well as something called the Bar Harbor Bucket. Both seafood buckets can be served for the single diner.

— Ethel Simmons

what's at the movies

AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON (R). Strange happenings in London and on the moors in this macabre spoof of horror flicks.

ARTHUR (PG). Dudley Moore is a playboy millionaire in love with Liza Minnelli in this contemporary comedy.

BLOWOUT (R). John Travolta and Nancy Allen star in Brian DePalma's murder mystery centering around the accidental recording of a murder and the cover-up attempts that follow.

CHU CHU AND THE PHILLY FLASH (PG). Most of the laughs are provoked by the costumes in this caper with Alan Arkin and Carol Burnett as two eccentric down-and-outers who find a briefcase with valuable documents.

COMIN' AT YA (R). A Western with a new-old twist — 3-D. Put on the specs and have flaming arrows, bats and rats comin' at ya.

ENDLESS LOVE (R). Brooke Shields and Martin Hewitt are two passionate teenagers who become so obsessed with one another that it drives them to acts beyond reason.

EYE OF THE NEEDLE (R). Adapted from the best-selling novel, this suspense thriller and love story stars Donald Sutherland as "the Needle," the code name for Hitler's top agent in England.

FIRST MONDAY IN OCTOBER (R). Jill Clayburgh is the first woman appointed to the Supreme Court and Walter Matthau is her most persistent adversary in this bright comedy-drama.

MOSCOW DOES NOT BELIEVE IN TEARS. Sentimental romance focuses on three Russian women and looks at their expectations in the 1950s and their lives 20 years later. Won the Academy Award as Best Foreign Film.

RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK (PG). Produced by George Lucas and directed by Steven Spielberg, this action-packed adventure pits Americans against Nazi agents in a race to acquire a sacred artifact that gives its possessor invincible power.

STRIPES (R). "Private Benjamin" from a different perspective. Bill Murray is an Army recruit in this military comedy about the rigors of basic training and woman chasing.

SUPERMAN II (PG). The story continues as Superman struggles to save the earth from criminals who survived Krypton's extinction.

MOVIE RATING GUIDE

- G General audiences admitted.
- PG Parental guidance suggested. All aged admitted.
- R Restricted. Adult must accompany person under 18.
- X No one under 18 admitted.



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