



CAMERATA CHAMBER MUSIC ENSEMBLE

Benji sequel lacks tie-in

A review
By MAGGIE HANNAN
Herald staff writer

Parents who like to take their youngsters to children-oriented movies will find that *For the Love of Benji* lives up to the Disney image of good, clean entertainment with a happy ending.

It does not, however, live up to its billing of being better than the original *Benji*.

Whether or not Joe Camp wrote the original *Benji* I can't remember. He did produce the film and he wrote and produced this film as well. In other words Mr. Camp has an intimate knowledge of *Benji* and his background. Unfortunately he seems to overlook the fact that his audience are not so familiar with his lovable star.

Those who saw the original *Benji*, as my children and I did three years ago, will remember that *Benji* was involved with a pair of youngsters, their father and a chubby lady who looked after

them all. He also had a girl friend.

Maybe others will recall more than that about the characters. I could not in the beginning and I found the lack of background very frustrating because I knew I was missing something I was supposed to have grasped.

Viewers who missed that first film might not feel this same awkwardness. Nor will quite young children who need to know the why behind a situation. Viewers taking children who are old enough to half remember the first film should be warned to check up on who's who before they arrive because Camp doesn't do any explaining in this film.

The original *Benji* cast included Paul and Cindy, their father Dr. Chapman, and their housekeeper Mary, as well as *Benji* and his girl friend Tiffany.

Benji and Mary are the only members of the cast still recognizable after the three years. Cynthia Smith and Allan Fuizat have done what

comes naturally with youngsters and grown up. In fact they have grown so much that they may not even be the same pair of actors.

They are quite believable as a normal, bickering brother and sister pair in their very early teens but their role is very small. The boy's role could quite easily have been cut.

Dr. Chapman, the children's father, has been cut from this film.

The only significant male role goes to Ed Nelson. He pretends to be Dr. Chandler Dietrich, an American scientist on his way to Greece for a scientific meeting of some sort. He is actually an international thief using *Benji* to smuggle information out of the country via a tattoo. It takes quite a while to figure out whether he really is working for the American government and using *Benji* because he has spies to outwit, or if he is just a nasty crook.

The incident where he chloroforms *Benji* and tattoos the secret information onto his leg may well require some explanation to the younger members of the audience because Camp offers none.

The canine cast includes *Benji*, just as cute and quick as ever. Tiffany, who just maintains her status as *Benji*'s girlfriend by appearing in the background a few times, a beautiful brown dog the size of

a Saint Bernard and the color of a Golden Labrador who defriends *Benji*, and a Doberman Pinscher used to portray *Benji*'s enemy.

While the original film won friends for *Benji* because he was able to save his human friends, this time his danger is all for himself right up to the very last sequence. There are many minutes of footage of *Benji* running lost and scared in the unfamiliar city and his confusion and loneliness are portrayed excellently. The effect is spoiled however, by the great amount of dialogue in Greek. Yes, if a film is set in Greece and only a handful of the cast are supposed to be English speaking, it is natural for the rest of the cast to speak Greek.

The trouble is, youngsters get bored listening to people talking all the time and not knowing what they are saying. The conversation may not be important to the plot but it is frustrating none the less to have to guess at what is being said.

Obviously Camp is trying to get across the message that this is a foreign country but a nice full British accent of some sort would have done the trick just as well and still left the dialogue understandable.

All in all, a nice, safe children's movie, but definitely not as all-round entertaining as the original *Benji*.

Ballinafad news

By WINIFRED SMITH
Herald correspondent

Mrs. Lloyd Burt was hostess for the September meeting of the W.I. after July and August being free of meetings.

There were thirteen members and one visitor present. We were happy at this time to add a new member to the roll call.

It is the 25th anniversary of the Ballinafad Branch this fall. A banquet is planned for the October meeting with present and former members being invited to attend.

Mrs. Kirkwood reported on the W.I. quilt set up in her home and said more quilters would be welcome to get the job finished.

Tickets are to be sold on the quilt and it is to be drawn for at a euchre party later.

Delegates to the Area Convention coming up in November were appointed. Mrs. Jesse McEnery is to be alternate District Director if Mrs. MacLean is unable to attend District meetings.

The correspondence included an invitation from Mountain Union W.I. to attend an open house October 19. Mrs. Slessoraitis as convener of family and consumer affairs then took over the meeting.

She asked each one to give a current event of local interest. Mrs. Gwen, agriculture convener gave a short talk and read a poem on plants.

It was now time for Mrs. Slessoraitis to introduce the guest speaker. She was Mrs. Fran Jamieson, a registered nurse from the Halton Regional Health Unit. She talked about the many services which they give including prenatal clinics, meals on wheels for senior citizens living alone, also health clinics for the aged. She explained about them in detail which proved to be very informative.

Mrs. McLean, courtesy convener thanked Mrs. Jamieson and presented her with a gift of a plant. The meeting then adjourned and after the singing of the W.I. Grace, Mrs. Lloyd B. Buckrell and Mrs. L. Marshall assisted by Mrs. Burt and daughter-in-law Mrs. Harvey Burt served a cup of tea with assorted breads and cheese.

We extend sympathy to Mrs. Archie McEnery and family who suffered a bereavement this past week in the death of Donald McEnery, brother of the late Archie, and the last of the McEnery family. He died at the home of his son at Keswick. The funeral is from the Bolton Funeral Home with burial in Erin Cemetery.

Mr. and Mrs. Ernest McEnery have returned home after visiting with their son Billie, his wife and little daughter in Alberta. They also visited other relatives in the Western province before returning home.

Congratulations to Mrs. Rita Shortill, who was 78 years young last week. Her daughter Lillian and son Richard, with his wife Ruth celebrated the

occasion by taking her out to a nearby restaurant for dinner.

On Wednesday, Sept. 7, Mrs. Ruth Shortill entertained in the form of a Linen Shower at her home for about 21 guests. It was in honor of her niece Miss Sharon MacArthur, a bride-to-be of this month.

The corn roast and dance, first event of the season sponsored by the Hall board proved quite successful with a good attendance.

Rev. Stiles was welcomed back to his place in the pulpit on Sunday with a fair attendance at the service.

Mr. Bob Pinkerton presided at the organ and accompanied Mr. Paul Schwartz as he sang a beautiful, inspiring anthem.

Sunday School will resume next Sunday after summer holidays.

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Music series begins

Camerata, a six-piece chamber music ensemble, will present Music from Russia Oct 7 at the first of three concerts in Halton Hills.

Performing in the sanctuary of Holy Cross Church, the internationally acclaimed ensemble will present a selection of works from Cui, Glinka and Arensky.

These will include Russian folk dances for flute, cello, violin and clarinet; five pieces for flute, violin and cello Op 56; Trio Pathétique for cello, clarinet and piano; Trio in D minor for violin, cello and piano Op. 32; and variations on Chopsticks especially arranged for Camerata.

The concerts are an innovative project conceived by musical director Elyakim Tantsig. Supported by a Wintario grant and sponsored by the Halton Hills Arts Council, the ensemble hopes to provide a cultural focus to the community eliminating the need to have to go to larger centres for concerts of the calibre of Camerata.

The second concert will be held Jan. 20 as a World of Winds with selections from the works of Bach, Brahms, Weber and St. Saens.

Soiree Musicale is the third concert scheduled for March 31. It is a popular and highly entertaining concert staged as a rehearsal that might have taken place in Canada in the 1890s.

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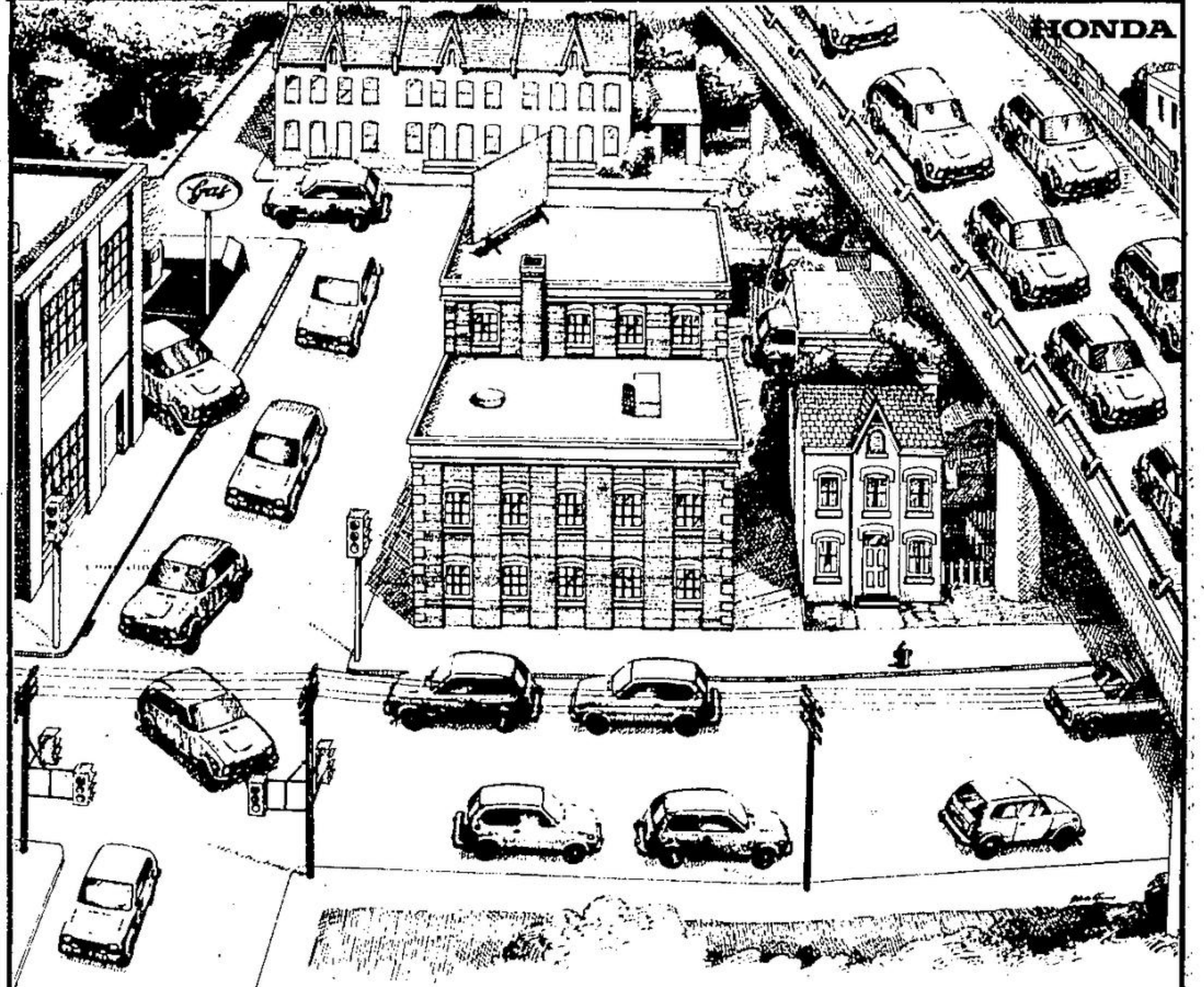
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