

arts

Likeable losers in *Broadway Danny Rose*

Broadway Danny Rose
A film by Woody Allen

Review by Siobhan McRae

With *Broadway Danny Rose*, Woody Allen has returned in part to the light-hearted style of comedy that characterized *Sleeper* and *Bananas*. These films were primarily concerned with getting laughs through Allen's combination of wit and farce; any particular meanings or messages were merely incidental.

That all changed with *Annie Hall* and *Manhattan*. The humour became more subtle and the intent became more serious with a concentration on the exploration of human nature and human relationships. This trend reached its extreme with *Stardust Memories*.

A *Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy* and *Zelig* marked a return to a more obviously comic style, although serious elements remained. Now, with *Broadway Danny Rose*, laughter once again seems to be the top priority.

But *Danny Rose* is not a simple regression on Allen's part. For one thing, it is highly-polished, compact and well-paced in a way that was not even attempted in his earlier films.

As well, there's more to *Danny Rose* than a good laugh. Allen combines pathos with the humour in an almost Chaplinesque manner with the same sort of gentle message that Chaplin favoured—the admirable aspects of the losers of society, the underlying strengths of the underdogs.

Woody Allen, as *Danny Rose*, the small-time theatrical agent, is a selfless, dedicated, eternal optimist. Unlike Allen's usual screen persona, *Danny* has something to believe in. What he believes in are his clients—a pathetic bunch of rejects from the entertainment world, including such acts as a blind xylophonist and a stuttering ventriloquist. *Danny* sees his clients not as



Broadway Danny Rose (Woody Allen) and Tina Vitale (Mia Farrow) having one of their typical bashin' banter before they check into a hotel in a scene from Woody Allen's latest.

freaks but as unique human beings and it is this attribute that he stresses in his eloquent pleas for bookings.

When any of *Danny's* clients become successful they immediately drop him as their manager. *Danny* resents this without any apparent bitterness and one gets the impression that he actually prefers to manage failures.

Although the character of *Danny Rose* can sometimes be

grating, with a tendency toward pushiness and show biz pep talks, overall he is highly likeable and believable.

The storyline of the film centres around a particular client of *Danny's*, a washed-up Italian singer called Lou Canova (Nick Apollo Forte). With the help of *Danny* and a current nostalgia wave, Lou is on the brink of making a comeback. But more than anything else he needs the moral

support of his tough and temperamental girlfriend Tina Vitale (Mia Farrow). It's *Danny's* job to fetch Tina to an important show and his efforts to do so result in the funniest part of the movie as he and Tina are chased by a Mafia hit squad.

It is after this main part of the film that a sadder note creeps in with *Danny* going through hard times both emotionally and financially. However, he perse-

veres, and, when we see him near the end playing host to his clients on Thanksgiving Day with turkey T.V. dinners, we come to realize just how heroic this group of undaunted losers really is.

It is the impression, tinged with pathos, that outlasts the happier ending and gives the added dimension of emotional depth that makes *Broadway Danny Rose* more than just a good comedy.

New books on supply and demand economics

The Truth About Supply-Side Economics

by Michael K. Evans

Basic Books

Fitzhenry and Whiteside
294 pages

The Conservators

by Elliot Roosevelt

Arbor House

Fitzhenry and Whiteside

416 pages, \$25.50

Prescriptions for Prosperity

by Elliot Janeway

Times Books

Fitzhenry and Whiteside

348 pages, \$26.50

The Next American Frontier

by Robert B. Reich

Times Books

Fitzhenry and Whiteside

324 pages, \$22.50

A New Social Contract

by Martin Carnoy, Derek

Fitzhenry and Whiteside

243 pages, \$20.50

Review by Robert Morell

Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.) wrote recently in *The New Republic* that at present the U.S. federal government is consuming a whopping 62% of that country's domestically available credit to fund a budget deficit of close to \$200 billion.

This compares unfavourably with the situation 10 to 15 years ago, when the federal government consumed something like 8% of the available credit.

It's no coincidence that at present the United States has the highest real rates of interest it has ever had: with nominal interest rates at around 12% and inflation around 5% the real rate of interest, which is normally 2 to 3%, is now a staggering 7%.

It's not surprising (since the

U.S. is also in an election year) that a large quantity of economic literature is being published, with each author offering a new variation on an old theme, promising to be the United States' economic saviour.

The diversity of the offerings is also remarkable.

In *The Truth About Supply-Side Economics*, Michael Evans argues that the Supply-side experiment of the Reagan administration was a conceptual move in the right direction, but was implemented incorrectly.

The best thing one can say about *The Truth* is that it is one of the best books available on supply-side economics. It is vastly superior to *Wealth and Poverty*, by George Gilder, and *How the World Works* by Jude Wanniski, both of which provided supply-side economics with its intellectual backbone though they

lacked any semblance of empirical foundation.

The Truth is a much better book because the author recognizes many of the reasons why the Reagan program could not have worked, such as the deficits, the recession, and the general economic conditions.

Evans is arguing that Supply-side economics, the process of encouraging production rather than aggregate demand, would have worked if it had been done properly—certainly a contentious point.

However, he suffers from many of the unfortunate problems which seem to plague American economists, such as the failure to look beyond his own borders for economic solutions.

What Evans, and his colleague Elliot Roosevelt, call socialism the Europeans and the Japanese see

as the necessary role of the state in the twentieth century.

Roosevelt (*The Conservators*), like Evans, also makes a number of errors resulting from ethnocentricity. Had either of them read *What Do Unions Do?*, by their American colleagues James Medoff and Harold Freeman, they would understand the social and economic benefits which are provided by trade unions, and perhaps they would be more tolerant of them.

The Conservators must be considered a grand disappointment, because of Roosevelt's self-indulgence and his inability, despite the length, to even properly define, let alone solve, the problems of the United States economy.

It may be that *The Conservators* is the eighties' answer to the sixties' *Greening of America*, since Roosevelt's book shares the