

# Flick fails to find comedy

'Muslim World' nothing to laugh about

BY SEAN VONLEMBKE  
STAFF WRITER

Writer-director Albert Brooks' new film "Looking for Comedy in the Muslim World" sounds like a documentary, or at least a mockumentary.

Sadly, it isn't.

Instead, Brooks created a movie that sounds great in theory, but one that ultimately gets lost on paper and fizzles out on screen.

In the movie Brooks plays himself, a less-than-quasi-famous comedian who the U.S. government asks to travel to the Middle East in order to study what makes the Muslim world laugh.

The premise appears smart and entertaining — there is limitless material for satire and ample opportunity to explore a community intimately that Americans know too little about.

But the first part of the pitch gets in the way: Brooks plays himself.

Not that there's anything wrong with that. Woody Allen has played a version of himself in every movie he ever made.

For that matter, so has Brooks.

But he doesn't simply write himself into this movie; he writes the movie around himself.

What could have been a biting critique of the U.S. government turns into a showcase for Brooks and his shortcomings as an actor and as a comic.

A prime example comes half-way through the movie when Brooks performs a stand-up routine at a school auditorium in New Delhi.

He goes through a variety of jokes, each received with a bewildered silence from his audience.

Of course, the people in the theater watching the movie laugh, but it is only a quiet laugh of compassion for a kind man, too kind for his own comedy and far past his prime.

Brooks has a sharp wit, but his jabs are only in jest. He is the inventor and the only practitioner of soft sarcasm — he can make fun of anything and everything and do so with such innocence that it doesn't offend anyone and it isn't all that funny.

What exactly Brooks tries to accomplish with this film is unclear. He makes a few com-

**MOVIE REVIEW**  
**'LOOKING FOR COMEDY IN THE MUSLIM WORLD'**

★★

ments about outsourcing and U.S. foreign policy, but his comedy keeps him from being anything but critical about it all.

Yes, he is clever and pleasantly humorous, but it's also worrisome how apathetic he is. Brooks doesn't try to take a stance on anything.

He travels to the other side of the world, looks around, shrugs his shoulders and comes back.

He does teach us something, though.

Toward the end, Brooks performs the same routine he performed earlier, only in a more intimate setting in front of a few Pakistanis who are smoking opium. The routine is a grand slam.

That is not to say that Indians have a bad sense of humor or that Pakistanis are druggies.

It simply shows that Albert Brooks is only funny to people who are jacked up on opium.

Contact the A&E Editor at [artsdesk@unc.edu](mailto:artsdesk@unc.edu).

# Woody Allen's latest film a cinematic ace

BY WILLIAM FONVIELLE  
STAFF WRITER

Woody Allen's "Match Point" is a morality tale without the morality, not so much a struggle of good and evil as the study of to what depths evil will sink.

The result easily could have been "Fatal Attraction, London Style," but in Allen's hands, he rises above the obvious steps of an infidelity story to produce a film that's as captivating and vigorous as it is ethically repulsive.

Not a bad step up for a director who only three years ago was working with Jason Biggs.

As he points out in a shot that admittedly draws too much attention to itself, Allen is channeling Dostoevsky with his biting examination of social class and the extremes of human desperation.

Jonathan Rhys-Meyers stars as Chris, a London tennis pro who falls for his student Tom's sister (Emily Mortimer), only to find himself understandably enamored later with Tom's fiancée, Nola (the luminous Scarlett Johansson).

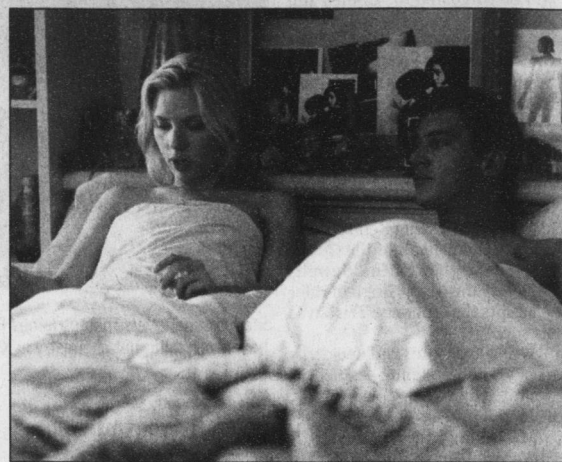
"Match Point" is Allen's first film to be shot in London, and he shoots the city with the same sense of loving detachment that he does New York: breezily filming the landmarks not as landmarks but simply as another spot in town.

He certainly does not display the same economy when filming his leading lady, though.

Has a camera in recent years loved a woman more than Scarlett Johansson?

Bathed in an ethereal light, the screen lingers on her face, and she seductively flirts back with a poise that recalls Grace Kelly.

That is, however, as romantic as the picture gets. While the first three-quarters has the makings of a standard infidelity thriller, something feels a little off, as if Allen were very slowly pulling the rug out from under us.



Chris (Jonathan Rhys-Meyers) and Nola (Scarlett Johansson) prove that it takes two to tango in director Woody Allen's thriller "Match Point."

**MOVIE REVIEW**  
**'MATCH POINT'**

★★★★

Allen cloaks this bulk of the film in a sense of mystery that he doesn't clue the audience in on, and as a result, we are constantly mesmerized without quite understanding why.

It is in the last half-hour where "Match Point" reaches its boiling point, where all the little moments Allen was baiting the audience with finally collide.

His screenplay takes us to places we didn't expect to go or maybe even want to go, and there is no doubt of Allen's complete command of his craft.

"Match Point" is proof that Allen might not have lost his edge, as many of his critics have contended.

Taking a razor's edge to his understanding of human psychology, Allen presents characters who pretend to care about others, only to, in the end, save

their own skins.

The events that transpire are certainly shocking, but what saves the film from imploding on itself is that they are completely believable.

A movie needn't be morally acceptable to be praiseworthy; it only needs to be credible within the context it presents.

"Match Point" follows a logical series of steps up until the final few minutes, during which Allen continues to embrace the sense of nihilism his picture established with a choice that is truly courageous.

It has become the norm at this point to say that "Match Point" is a dynamic return to form for Allen — that is wholly the truth.

Whether it is a fluke or not remains to be seen, but for the time being, he has served up one of the most uncompromising and provocative movies of 2005.

Embrace it while it lasts.

Contact the A&E Editor at [artsdesk@unc.edu](mailto:artsdesk@unc.edu).

**THE Daily Crossword**

By Alan P. Olschwang

©2006 Tribune Media Services, Inc. All rights reserved.

**ACROSS**

- 1 Stately display
- 5 Promenade
- 10 Type of school
- 14 Gen. Bradley
- 15 Jeopardy
- 16 Libertine
- 17 Rational
- 18 Ink ingredient
- 19 Actor Holliman
- 20 Start of e.e. cummings quote
- 23 Glossy fabric
- 24 Ham's brother
- 25 Drenches
- 29 Faces the day
- 33 Oven setting
- 36 Palindromic address
- 38 "Giant" ranch name
- 39 Part 2 of quote
- 40 Part 3 of quote
- 42 Part 4 of quote
- 43 Sharply defined
- 45 Norway's largest city
- 46 \_\_\_ in the belfry
- 47 Serengeti stalkers
- 49 Gossipmonger
- 51 Exploits
- 53 Totally confused
- 57 End of quote
- 63 Medicinal plant
- 64 Colorful mounts
- 65 Stable dweller
- 66 Leslie Caron

**DOWN**

- 1 Military stations
- 2 Nebraskan metropolis
- 3 "Olympia" painter
- 4 Argument's proposition
- 5 Simians
- 6 Thaw
- 7 Make beer or coffee
- 8 Some beans
- 9 Inventor Gray
- 10 Early neonate
- 11 Kerouac book, "On the \_\_\_"
- 12 Continental currency
- 13 Ill-gotten gains
- 21 Lennon's love

SNARLS ARF AMAH  
EASIER LAIT BASE  
RIBCOOKOFF LISP  
FREON APATHETIC  
SHIRR EEO AGA  
JET NEEDLEPOINT  
ODOMETER NEW  
BUSY MAB ETTU  
TAR NOMINEES  
JOSHBECKETT XKE  
UTA BMI INSET  
MOTHEATEN OLLVA  
PORE KIDGAVILAN  
ELAL EEN BEHEST  
DEPP SSA CRUSTS

**ACROSS**

- 22 \_\_\_ incognita
- 26 GPs' org.
- 27 Pugilist's triumph
- 28 Pert
- 30 Thompson of "Family"
- 31 French state
- 32 Utters
- 33 Musical family name
- 34 Comrade
- 35 "Twitching Machine" painter
- 37 5,280 feet
- 40 Northern constellation
- 41 Male progeny

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13  
14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32  
33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52  
53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71

**DOWN**

- 44 Mighty Ducks' home
- 46 Tub accessory
- 48 Substantially made
- 50 Label
- 52 Put in mothballs
- 54 Bart or Flingo
- 55 Unearily
- 56 Vicinities
- 57 Cartoonist Kelly
- 58 Nastase of the nets
- 59 Lacquerware
- 60 Vietnam neighbor
- 61 Actress Bancroft
- 62 Employes

# LOOKING

## for a part-time job or internship?



**UNIVERSITY CAREER SERVICES can help you search the world!**

Register with UCS (<http://careers.unc.edu>) to view on and off-campus job/internship listings and have your resume referred to employers

University Career Services  
Division of Student Affairs  
The Wendy P. & Dean E. Painter, Jr. Career Center  
CB 5140, 219 Hanes Hall  
Chapel Hill, NC 27599  
919-962-6507  
[ucs@unc.edu](http://ucs@unc.edu)



**O.C. MUSIC**

FROM PAGE 5

"And you can't stop that association, no matter what."

**Corporate Co-opting**

Sometimes music's visual association can irreparably alter an artist's image, especially in advertising. One Honda ad campaign used the indie credibility of the Postal Service and MIA, while a famous Volkswagen commercial featured Nick Drake's "Pink Moon."

"It seems a little duplicitous," said Jason Killingsworth, reviews editor for Paste Magazine. "People are thinking, 'This is cool, this is indie. I can trust whoever's using this music.'"

"How do you pry apart 'The O.C.' and Death Cab, and how do you pry apart the Shins and 'Garden State'?" he said. "It's tough, but any artist that's attaching music to a visual runs into that

problem."

But many also acknowledge the beneficial effects of commercial use. Television and advertising can expose bands to new audiences, as the recent indie trend has done.

"All of a sudden, my mother has heard of Nick Drake," said Sean McCrossin, owner of CD Alley on West Franklin Street.

"I think it's great when bands get the exposure," McCrossin said. "I do question as to how they're getting to put on these soundtracks. ... Is there payola going on, or are the people making the soundtracks just liking the music a lot?"

It's a valid question. Payola — the underhanded exchange of airplay for cash or perks — has plagued pop music for years. In 1959 there was scandal involving Dick Clark's "American Bandstand."

More recently, in 2001, Sony BMG admitted to paying for airplay in exchange for on-air con-

*"Why use manufactured music when there's so much good music out there?"*

ALEXANDRA PATSAVAS, THE O.C.

test prizes, station payments and bribes to the programmers.

But music fans have every reason to be hopeful. For each SUV commercial scored to a Jimi Hendrix tune, there are a dozen under-the-radar bands seizing an opportunity to reach new audiences.

"Selling out' is one way to put it, but you're just reaching out," McGerr said. "You can't count on radio to get your music out there anymore."

Contact the A&E Editor at [artsdesk@unc.edu](mailto:artsdesk@unc.edu).

**Join Carolina HOPE as we kick off the spring semester!**

**Our 1st meeting is Monday, Jan. 23 @ 5:30pm in Union Room 3509**

abstinence presentations    support for pregnant    STD awareness    promotion of  
in our community    & parenting women    education    abstinence on campus

**For more info on Carolina HOPE visit [www.unc.edu/hope](http://www.unc.edu/hope)**

## ANNOUNCING LATER HOURS!

### Now open till 11 pm!

Coupon good from 9pm-11pm



**Kathskeller**

A Chapel Hill Dining Tradition Since 1948

**\$5 Off Any Purchase From 9pm-11pm**

Valid through 01/29/06 • Offer not valid with any other promotions, or alcoholic beverages • Must present coupon

Open Daily 11:00am-11:00pm • 157 1/2 E Franklin Street • 919-942-5158