

[ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT]

Anjelica Huston and Woody Allen in *Manhattan Murder Mystery*

in for coffee after a chance meeting in the hallway. The next night, Mrs. House is wheeled out on a stretcher, dead of an apparent heart attack. The following evening, when the Liptons bump into Mr. House in the street on their way to the opera, the new widower seems uncharacteristically cheery. Carol smells a rat.

The rest of the picture revolves around Carol's sleuthing after the truth about Mrs. House's death. While attending a party, she swears she sees Mrs. House passing by on a city bus and immediately swings into action. Mr. House's scheme seems even more bizarre than she had earlier imagined. She ropes in their friend Ted, and even Larry's client Marcia (Anjelica Huston) gets pulled in by the gravity of the mystery. They hatch a scheme to trap Paul House and blackmail him into revealing the truth.

There are some deft directorial touches. Allen pays homage (again) to Orson Welles; there are some wickedly funny lines and gags, and some excitement is generated in a sort of Nick and Nora kind of way. It's not his best, but it is a summer's entertainment and better than a lot of what's playing around town. And then there are Misses Keaton and Houston, who certainly perk up the works.

Manhattan Murder Mystery is playing at Loews 84th Street (at Broadway) and other theatres around town. ☞

'Manhattan Murder Mystery'

Manhattan Murder Mess

BY MARK HALL AMITIN

Film Woody Allen's latest presents the usual suspects, with Allen himself as Larry Lipton, a book editor of monumentally fidgety proportions, wedded for some 20 years to Carol (Diane Keaton). A neighbor in their apartment building dies and Carol is certain there is something foul afoot, and there is.

It is delightful to have Keaton and her ditzzy, whimsical, wide-eyed persona back on the screen. The chemistry between Allen and her is no less magical than in the award-winning *Annie Hall*. What is less magic is Allen himself. Once again, the triple-play artist is director (this is his 26th feature film since his debut in 1969 with *Take the Money and Run*), co-writer (with Marshall Brickman) and star. By now, however, his neurotic nebbish seems a little tired.

In the repertory of players is Alan Alda as Larry, a bumbling, divorced screen writer who has long had the hots for Carol, and the ever-radiant and in her own on-screen words, "sexy as hell," Anjelica Huston as one of Allen's authors.

There are some inspired moments, the expected snappy one-liners, some breathtaking overhead shots of Manhattan and the George Washington Bridge, a little suspense, especially in the last 20 minutes of the film, but it's all undermined by shaky, hand-held camera work (buy this boy a tripod, already!) some sloppy editing, and too much of the improvisational chatter between the leads which once seemed so fresh and now comes across as old hat.

The plot circles around an older couple living down the hall from the Liptons in their East Side building. Mr. and Mrs. House (Jerry Adler and Lynn Cohen) invite Larry and Carol

STATION ONE A SEVENTH AVENUE NEWS
 WOLFGANG PETERLIN TON NEWS

THE WESTSIDER