

DIVERSIONS

Alix Olson back in town

OutWrite's 1999 National Poetry Slam Champion Alix Olson is coming to town for a free show Jan. 22 in Room 238 of Portland State University's Smith Memorial Center. If you're familiar with Olson, you'll be there. If you're not, get your ass to the gig because you've never seen anything like this before.

Olson isn't shy about spilling her mind. Before evening's end, you'll know how she feels about racism, homophobia and oppression in general. You won't be confused about her stance on capitalism after you hear "America's on Sale," and you'll be amused and amazed at her slam musician style. The poet's twisting, tumbling, rhyming rhythm demands your attention.

A New York native, the 25-year-old Olson has been entertaining audiences throughout the United States and the world for several years. She has been featured at an impressive array of venues and events, including Symphony Space with Pete Seeger and Michael Moore, the HERE Performing Arts Festival, the Lambda Literary Conference, the National Lesbian Summit and the Netherlands' International Poetry Festival.

Olson's PSU show is sponsored by the Women's Resource Center and Queers and Allies. She also is appearing 8:30 p.m. Jan. 24 at the Meow Meow Club, 527 S.E. Pine St. It's an all-ages show; bring \$7 to get in.

—Page Morrison



Alix Olson slams patriarchy, homophobia and racism

Erotically tasty

Tired of the current slew of blockbusters at chain-store theaters? A deliciously tense homoerotic thriller from French filmmaker and author Bernard Rapp awaits you at Clinton Street Theater Jan. 25 to 31. *A Matter of Taste (Une Affaire de Gout)*, his second full-length feature, is a reminder of what great cinema is all about.

Bernard Giraudeau (*Water Drops on Burning Rocks*) portrays Frédéric Delamont, a wealthy

businessman with extraordinarily refined and precise dining habits. He finds in young luncheon waiter Nicolas (Jean-Pierre Lorit) the attitude and palate needed to become his personal "taster."

This uncommon business relationship quickly becomes personal, as Nicolas learns his boss not only wishes him to taste his food but to have exactly the same preferences, feelings and desires—for food and otherwise. In a very short time, Nicolas realizes he should bail on the obsessive older man but continues to be excited by his unpredictability and enthralled with the extravagant lifestyle.

Homoeroticism abounds in this tightly written, sadomasochistic game. Even as Frédéric tries to convince Nicolas' estranged girlfriend (why do straight girls keep getting dumped on lately? See: *The Fluffer*) that he's "never fancied boys," he watches and controls Nicolas' every move, which is taboo enjoyment to the younger man. And, of course, the filmmakers were smart enough to cast very fetching leading actors.

Taste is a quietly disturbing little movie.

The seeming simplicity of the matters at hand belies the precision with which the story unfolds. Rapp employs the extradiagegetic tactic of revealing the harrowing conclusion as the film's first scene, which successfully creates 90 minutes of foreboding. And every minute counts.



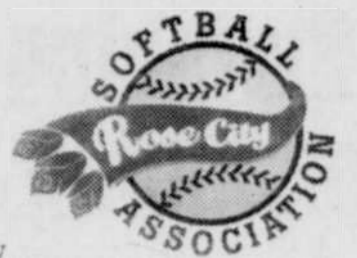
Homoeroticism and obsession mark *A Matter of Taste*

Play ball!

The always active Rose City Softball Association (RCSA) is extra busy this year as the North American Gay Amateur Athletic Alliance World Series is being held Aug. 18 to 25 in Portland. That's exciting news for the sports group as well as queer businesses, as teams and their supporters will be coming in from all over the continent. It's almost like Pride in August.

The World Series week is chock-a-block with activities such as the Miss Gay World Series Pageant, Portland Spirit River Cruise, a Spirit Mountain Casino event, a talent show and, of course, opening and closing ceremonies. Participants will get a chance to visit a variety of Portland-area fields and stadiums.

As you might well imagine, this kind of international event takes a heck of a lot of planning, work and fund raising. To that end, any and all enthusiastic volunteers are invited to contact the



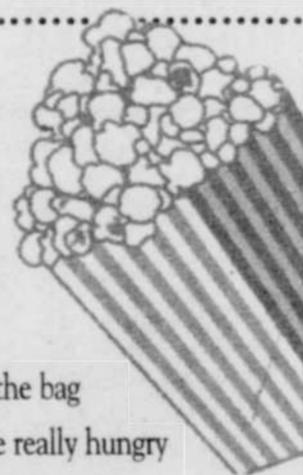
group to see where help is needed. This includes those of you who want to play on or to sponsor a team.

One group specifically recruiting members right now is Team Quest, an athletic and exercise program for people affected by chronic and life-challenging illnesses, including HIV/AIDS. It promotes healthy living and eating but

mostly fun, stressing the only requirement is that people do the best they can.

What's Poppin'?

What's popped and what's flopped, in a theater near you.



ALI

You know what it's like when you return from the video store with the wrong movie? That's how this boxing biopic made me feel. "Wait a minute, I didn't rent *Malcolm X*, *The Hurricane* and *When We Were Kings!*" Yet all three of those movies covered similar material much better than director/co-writer Michael Mann ever could. Great performances are wasted in his narrow yet interminable focus on a life story that has yet to reach its final chapter.

—Jim Radosta

AMÉLIE

Jean-Pierre Jeunet (*Delicatessen*) directed and co-



Who can turn the world on with a smile?

wrote this magical tale of a young woman (Audrey Tautou) whose fanciful imagination leads her to commit random acts of kindness but who forgets to follow her heart along the way. During her adventures the adorable Amélie even turns the head of a butch female admirer.

—JR

A BEAUTIFUL MIND

Russell Crowe gives another Oscar-worthy performance as a brilliant mathematician who overcomes schizophrenia to win the Nobel Prize. Ed Harris plays a government official who needs to borrow this tortured cranium to crack Commie codes, and Jennifer

Connelly is stunning as the supportive wife. Director Ron Howard uses clever techniques to help us understand the couple's suffering.

—JR

THE BUSINESS OF STRANGERS

Stockard Channing and Julia Stiles play, respectively, a middle-aged corporate she-warrior and her mysterious protégé. The two become embroiled in a dubious revenge scheme that opens the door to sparring, solidarity and palpable sexual tension between them. Imagine the misanthropy and mistrust of a David Mamet or a Neil LaBute applied to a more directly feminist theme, and you'll get an idea of what writer/director Patrick Stettner is up to here.

—Christopher McQuain

THE LORD OF THE RINGS

Possibly affected by overhype and ballyhoo, this epic comes off somewhat disappointing. Dialogue is unoriginal, characters are predictable, and three hours is half an hour too much. As a simple adventure story, however, it mostly delivers: beautiful, rolling hills, stunning Middle Earth architecture, big scary half-dead guys in black and extraordinarily cute hobbits. Of course, the effects are mesmerizing (best giant octopus ever), and our friend Sir Ian McKellen is smashing as the wizard Gandolf. If you can get past all the female characters (two) as pale, waifish tokens of goodness and romance, it's worth a matinee.

—Lisa Bradshaw

THE ROYAL TENENBAUMS

Director Wes Anderson (*Rushmore*) twirls

Gene Hackman, Anjelica Huston, Gwyneth Paltrow and Ben Stiller through a lighthearted drama regarding an absentee father's attempt to reconcile with his offspring, who are spending their adult lives recovering from childhood genius. The actors are given unusual, affectionately written characters to work with. But Anderson's attention to detail is the real star; his is a style both precise and unpretentious. As an added bonus, Paltrow is allowed a quick lesbian kiss before the credits roll.

—CM

THE SHIPPING NEWS

Kevin Spacey seems bored in this screen adaptation of E. Annie Proulx's novel, and even good performances from Julianne Moore, Judi Dench (as a proud old lesbian) and Cate Blanchett are wasted in the hands of director Lasse Hallström (*The Cider House Rules*). The film is so blandly ingratiating as to be forgettable.

—CM

VANILLA SKY

Jacob's Ladder meets *The Matrix* in Cameron Crowe's startling romantic thriller. Tom Cruise is a wealthy girl magnet (quite a stretch) who finds true love with charming artist Penélope Cruz only to make a fatal error with his "fuck buddy," Cameron Diaz, which changes his life in ways he, nor the audience, can quite figure out. Is he dreaming, fantasizing or just plain crazy? Amusingly, Cruise delivers the familiar "Look, I'm straight, OK?"—onscreen this time. Occasionally bogged down in sentimentality, but Cruise and Cruz make the sparks fly.

—LB