

film

Cassandra's Dream

Not nearly the masterpiece that is 1989's *Crimes and Misdemeanors* but better than 2005's somewhat overwrought and clumsy *Match Point*, this incisive, well-acted film completes Woody Allen's trilogy of moral fables. The three movies share many of the same elements, and pretty much the same plot, mixing class envy, lust, murder, guilt and the ephemeral nature of fate into a bracing film noir brew. *Cassandra's Dream* tells the tale of two East End brothers who become pawns in a merciless game of rotten choices and horrible consequences. Allen's dialogue has become more and more self-conscious and stilted with the passage of time (do we really need all those references to Euripides, Greek tragedy and the Gods to get the point?), but he can still tell a story with burnished style and punch. The Philip Glass score is haunting, and there are some potent performances from Tom Wilkinson, Claire Higgins and, as the pair of tormented siblings, an understated Ewan McGregor and a ragged, vulnerable Colin Farrell, doing some of his best work ever. A cool surprise. **B+**

—Jon Kretzu

The Counterfeiters

Austrian director Stefan Ruzowitzky scored an Oscar nomination for Best Foreign Language Film with this morally complex true story about a group of Jewish men who secured preferential treatment at a concentration camp by making fake loot for Nazis toward the end of World War II. It's a technically accomplished effort, with impressive acting, sets and cinematography. But as a drama it's never completely engaging, owing to a slow beginning,

some predictable plot twists and an emotionally flaccid denouement. Screens Feb. 9 and 13 at the Portland International Film Festival; for details visit www.nwfilm.org. **B+**

—Stephen Blair

Over Her Dead Body

This surprisingly funny and entertaining romance reminds me a lot of old slapstick comedies. Eva Longoria Parker plays Kate, who gets hit by an ice sculpture and dies on her wedding day. When her fiancé, Henry (Paul Rudd), tries to move on with the help of psychic, Ashley (Lake Bell), Kate tries everything to disturb their new relationship. A guilty pleasure. **B-**

—Yvonne P. Behrens

Shrooms

Five American students visiting Ireland embark on a drug-addled camping trip that devolves into a psychedelic nightmare. One girl has armpit hair; one guy is a testosterone-crazed meathead. They are led by a dark-eyed young mystic who thrills them with scary stories that turn out to be more than stories. Unless, of course, the whole thing is a psilocybin-induced group hallucination. As usual in this type of film, it's difficult to tell whether we're meant to identify more with the gang of unlikable, careless youths or with their feral, deranged executioners. *Shrooms* is part of the burgeoning horror genre of "American youths terrorized in foreign countries" but falls a bit short on intelligence and imagination. Opens Feb. 1 at Living Room Theaters. **C**

—Tony LeTigre



Untraceable was filmed last year in Portland.

Starting Out in the Evening

A multifaceted and engaging film centered around an aging novelist and the fresh-faced grad student who wants to write her Ph.D. thesis on his early books, *Starting Out in the Evening* provides a great showcase for Frank Langella and *Six Feet Under*'s Lauren Ambrose to engage in brainy, hyper-literate flirting and repressed, frustrated desire. Lili Taylor is excellent as the novelist's attention-starved daughter, looking for her own love and inspiration as she heeds the ticking of her biological clock. It's not as dry as it sounds, but the purposefully mannered dialogue keeps this film from feeling completely honest. **B**

—Jemiah Jefferson

Then She Found Me

Helen Hunt stars in her directorial debut as April Epner, a nearly 40-year-old teacher who desperately wants a child before her biological clock runs out. Based on Elinor Lipman's novel, the storytelling is great but turbulent: April's husband

(Matthew Broderick) leaves her quickly after their wedding, her adoptive mother dies, and her biological mother shows up out of nowhere in the form of TV star Bernice Graves (Bette Midler, stunning as usual), but things turn around when she meets divorced Frank (a charming Colin Firth). Quiet but with a good flow, this film has a mix of family drama, romance and humor at all the right moments. Screens Feb. 8 and 11 at the Portland International Film Festival; for details visit www.nwfilm.org. **A-**

—YPB

Untraceable

Gregory Hoblit (*Frequency*) directed this crime thriller that was filmed last year in Portland. FBI agent Jennifer Marsh (Diane Lane, always at her best when playing strong women) needs to track down a cyberspace serial killer (Joseph Cross) who murders his victims with help of the Internet and its users. After a slow start, the movie builds toward the end—quite intense but a little too graphic for me. **B-**

—YPB

2640 ne alberta • 2310 n lombard • 1136 n w lovejoy • 7522 n lombard • 1990 s larch
 503 288 4067 • 503 289 8408 • 503 796 2825 • 503 247 3433 • 503 231 1181