

hillside. Or does she? McDonald brings an eerie *Twilight Zone* feel to this brief but vivid picture of a woman who maybe should be swallowing anti-psychotics instead of flies.

Screens 11:45 a.m. Feb. 8 as part of the program *Short Cuts II: Oregon Made* during the 32nd Portland International Film Festival. For details visit www.nwfilm.org. **A**

—GM

The Oscar Nominated Short Film Program 2009

Death is everywhere among this year's contenders for Best Live Action Short and Best Animated Short, delivering a powerful impact in a brief package. A French bicyclist confronts mortality in "Manon on the Asphalt." A Danish cancer patient clashes with his Muslim hospital roommate because of a painting of "The Pig." And a pair of animated morticians fumble with a runaway coffin in "This Way Up." Opens Feb. 6 at Hollywood Theatre. **A**

—Jim Radosta

Push

This mostly entertaining *ménage à trois* of *The Matrix*, *X-Men* and *Firestarter* tells the story of psychic-powered "special people" running from shadowy government agents. Chris Evans is hunky (but, unfortunately, not shirtless) and Dakota Fanning unrecognizable, but the rest of the cast will be mostly unknown to Western audiences. Shot entirely in Hong Kong, *Push* has a visual style that borrows from Eastern films without relying on any kung fu clichés. The story, meanwhile, is sometimes confusing—the psychic powers leave a lot of variables as to what is true and what isn't—but the film holds together and is never boring. **B**

—Andy Mangels

Slumdog Millionaire

Bollywood meets Hollywood in this epic drama directed by Danny Boyle (*Millions*) about an impoverished teenager who succeeds as a contestant on the Hindi version of *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* As



Were the World Mine, the closing night film at the 2008 Portland Lesbian & Gay Film Festival, opens Feb. 13 at Living Room Theaters. The musical, inspired by William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, was not reviewed by *Just Out*.

the protagonist stuns the host by answering question after question correctly, his against-all-odds life story unfolds in fascinating flashbacks. Truly a delight. **A-**

—JR

Waltz with Bashir

This Israeli film is a strange hybrid: an animated documentary of the Lebanon War of 1982, featuring real interviews with men who served in the war, or rather with animated replicas of those men, following their every tic and facial expression. It's hard to say whether it's more or less disturbing to experience the casual brutality of warfare conveyed through the traditionally innocent medium of animation, but when the film suddenly switches to live footage at the very end, the effect is jarring. A marvelously synced-in soundtrack and incongruous moments of natural beauty and peacefulness recall 1998's *The Thin Red Line*, but *Waltz with Bashir* is a genuine original and comes highly recommended. **A**

—Tony LeTigre

The Wrestler

Mickey Rourke makes the decade's most unlikely—and triumphant—comeback with this raw drama about a washed-up fuck-up, Randy "The Ram" Robinson, as he returns to the ring for one final round before retiring. Director Darren Aronofsky (*Requiem for a Dream*) deserves massive credit for drawing outstanding performances from the entire cast (including Evan Rachel Wood as an estranged daughter who may be a lesbian) and for meticulously illustrating the pains that these performers suffer in the name of entertainment. (Those with squeamish stomachs should keep their eyes shut for about five minutes after they hear the words "staple gun.") **A+**

—JR 10



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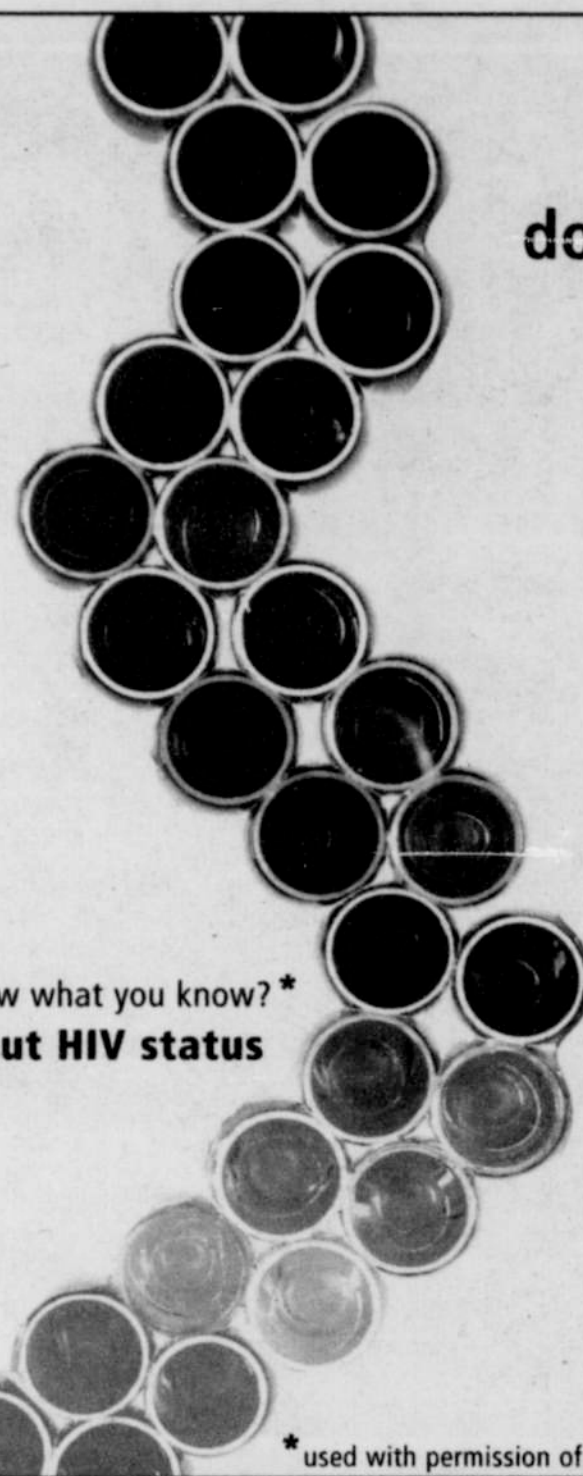
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