**DIRECTOR’S SPOTLIGHT**

**MAD FOR EACH OTHER**

A vivid drama about being bipolar is the fruit of a young director’s exorcising experience

**Touchd With Pite**—named after Kay Redfield Jamison’s book about bipolar disorder and creativity, which helped director Paul Dalio turn his life around—originated as his NYU film school project under the tutelage of Spike Lee and was seen through production by his mentor’s 40 Acres and a Mule Films work. It’s that good!

But before that, Dalio, now 36, went through years of psychological hell that inform every frame of his debut feature. In it, Carla (Katie Holmes, in a bracingly convincing performance) and Marco (a prototypically intense Lake Kirby) meet in a psychiatric hospital, bond over poetry writing, and become each other’s dream enablers—which seems unlikely to end well. If that setup sounds trie or twee, well, fasten your seat belt. Dalio’s script and direction, and the marvelously evocative score he composed for the film as well, are all of a caliber that easily takes us far beyond movie-of-the-week territory. Christine Lahti and Griffin Dunne (again—see opposite page) lend key gravitas as respectively concerned parents of the duo.

As Dalio sees it, the film and the couple’s manic mutual inspiration function as “kind of a metaphor for my own experience. When you first get the disorder, you start out feeling a little bit high.” Then things tend to go south in a big way. For Dalio, it happened while he was staying at the Standard Hotel in Hollywood. When he snapped (“like a lightning bolt to my head”), he spent two months in a psychiatric hospital getting a handle on his condition. His long climb back to self-sustaining and productive way of life was foggy and grueling; he felt poisoned by his DNA and permanently exiled from the Land of the Happy.

“I kept asking my doctor,” Dalio recalls, “Just introduce me to someone who’s happy—who’s bipolar, and on medication, and creative, and will give me some hope—because at this point, I don’t have any. I don’t see a living example.” His doctor happened to know Jamison: Their meeting was life-changing, and she ended up making a personal appearance in a key scene of the movie, “I wrote her into it without telling her,” Dalio says, “I wasn’t even planning on having her play herself. It was her husband who offered her up right off the bat. And that was hug.”

Go see for yourself. –B.D.

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**MOVIES**

**TRUST US**

Not your mother’s—or even your big sister’s—chick flick, *How to Be Single* serves up a posse of randy women, as Rebel Wilson’s professional party girl instructs a newly unattached friend (Dakota Johnson) on up-to-the-minute, uh, dating etiquette, while another swingle (Alison Brie) tries on an actual relationship. As ever, Leslie Mann steals the show as a soulful older sister.

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**CUBAN CONJURING**

Surely the most improbable (but entirely justified) Irish entry ever for best foreign-language Oscar, *Two-Way Street* gorgeously and poetically immerses us in the repressed and besieged drag queen demimonde of Havana, Cuba, where a lonely boy (Héctor Medina) has to face down the homophbic rage of his father (Jorge Perugoria) in order to find his own version of freedom.

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**TWO-WAY STREET**

When the elite, private Avenues: The World School opened across the street from the Elliot Houses projects in New York City’s Chelsea neighborhood, Marc Levin saw a perfect illustration of today’s mind-boggling inequalities. His HBO documentary, *Close Divide*, shows how youths on both sides of the street have reached across the gap in outcomes, looking for connection. –B.D.

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**MOVIES**

**MIXED DOUBLES**

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