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 For the week of Friday, March 23rd!
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DAVID LYNCH'S INLAND EMPIRE
 Jeremy Irons Laura Dern Harry Dean Stanton
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 7:30 Nightly Sun Mat 1:40 [R]

Academy Award Winner! [R]
THE LIVES OF OTHERS "Moving and deeply satisfying."
 S. Zacharek, Salon.com
 5:25 & 8:15 Nightly Sat & Sun Mat 2:30

PAN'S LABYRINTH
 5:00 Nightly Sat Mat 2:40
 SOON: THE HOST

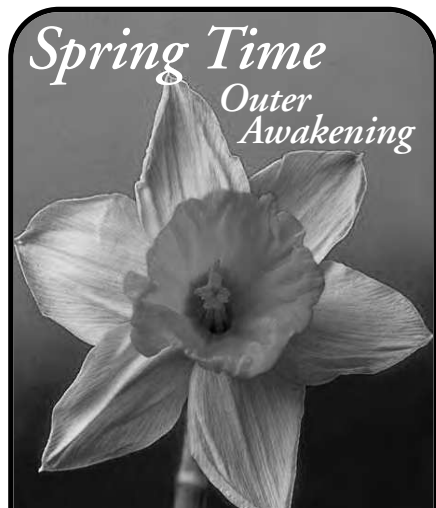
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PAN'S LABYRINTH 11:00 pm fri, sat & sun

In-Concert LateNite • An evening of **Joni Mitchell!**
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SHOOTER R
 12:00, 12:30*EXCEPT SAT 3/24, 3:00, 3:30, 7:00, 7:30, 10:00, 10:35

LAST MIMZY PG
 12:05, 1:35, 2:35, 4:20, 5:10, 7:10, 7:45, 9:45, 10:20

PRIDE PG
 1:25, 4:05, 7:20, 10:00

TMNT PG
 12:10, 2:05, 2:55, 4:30, 5:25, 7:05, 7:50, 9:30

REIGN OVER ME R
 2:00, 4:40, 7:10, 10:10

HILLS HAVE EYES II R
 1:30, 3:55, 7:35, 10:05

PREMONITION R
 11:55*EXCEPT SAT 3/24, 1:40, 2:45, 4:15, 5:20, 7:15, 7:55, 9:50, 10:35

DEAD SILENCE R
 12:15, 2:40, 5:05, 7:40, 10:10

300 R
 12:40, *1:10, 3:35, *4:10, 7:00, *7:35, 9:55, *10:30
 *DIGITAL TIMES

WILD HOGS PG13
 12:20, 1:45, 2:50, 4:25, 5:30, 7:30, 8:05, 10:05, 10:40

BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA PG
 1:50, 7:45

GHOST RIDER PG13
 4:35, 10:30

MUSIC AND LYRICS PG13
 10:15 PM

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BREACH PG13
 11:50, 2:25, 4:55, 7:25, 10:10

STOMP THE YARD PG13
 2:10, 7:40

THE MESSENGERS PG13
 12:10, 2:35, 5:05, 7:20, 9:50

CATCH AND RELEASE PG13
 11:30, 4:50, 10:20

BECAUSE I SAID SO PG13
 11:40, 2:15, 4:45, 7:35, 10:05

BLOOD DIAMOND R
 11:55, 3:05, 7:15, 10:25

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS PG13
 11:35, 2:20, 5:10, 7:50, 10:30

HAPPY FEET PG
 11:15, 12:05, 2:00, 2:40, 4:30, 5:15, 7:05, 7:45, 9:35, 10:15

CHARLOTTE'S WEB G
 11:25, 2:05, 4:40, 7:10, 9:45

NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM PG
 11:20, 12:00, 1:55, 2:30, 4:25, 5:00, 6:55, 7:30, 9:40, 10:00

CASINO ROYALE PG13
 11:45, 3:00, 6:50, 9:55

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TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES (PG) DIG (1140 210 430) 700 930

SHOOTER (R) - ID REQ'D DIG (1235 410) 710 1010

THE HILLS HAVE EYES II (R) - ID REQ'D DIG (1220 250 505) 740 1015

PRIDE (PG) DIG (1150 230 510) 750 1030

THE LAST MIMZY (PG) DIG (1145 220 455) 730 1005

REIGN OVER ME (R) - ID REQ'D DIG (1245 415) 725 1025

I THINK I LOVE MY WIFE (R) - ID REQ'D DIG (1215 420) 650 940

DEAD SILENCE (R) - ID REQ'D DIG (1225 250 510) 735 955

PREMONITION (PG-13) DIG (1210 235 435 500) 705 945 1020

300 (R) - ID REQ'D DIG Fri. (1230 245 405) 715 935 1005
 Sat. (1200 1230 405) 645 715 1005
 Sun. (1230 245 405) 645 715 1005

WILD HOGS (PG-13) DIG (1135 1205 200 425) 720 745 950

GHOST RIDER (PG-13) DIG (400) 655 1000

BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA (PG) DIG (1155 215 445) 720

MUSIC AND LYRICS (PG-13) DIG (1240) PM

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THE LAST MIMZY (PG) DIG (1155 220 450) 720 950

THE HILLS HAVE EYES II (R) - ID REQ'D DIG (1215 250 520) 750 1020

300 (R) - ID REQ'D DIG (110 400) 650 940

WILD HOGS (PG-13) DIG (1205 235 510) 740 1010

GHOST RIDER (PG-13) DIG (1200 230 500) 730 1000

BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA (PG) DIG (1225 240 455) 710

AMAZING GRACE (PG) DIG 925

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REIGN OVER ME (R) - ID REQ'D DIG Fri. (410) 700 1000
 Sat. & Sun. (120 410) 700 1000

SHOOTER (R) - ID REQ'D DIG Fri. (350) 650 950
 Sat. & Sun. (1250 350) 650 950

PRIDE (PG) DIG Fri. (430) 720 1020
 Sat. & Sun. (150 430) 720 1020

300 (R) - ID REQ'D DIG Fri. (420) 710 1010
 Sat. & Sun. (130 420) 710 1010

Times For 3/23 - 3/25 ©2007 www.REGmovies.com



Split Decisions

Behind the wheel with the master of surreal

INLAND EMPIRE: Written and directed by David Lynch. Cinematography, Odd-Geir Saether. Starring Laura Dern, Justin Theroux and Jeremy Irons. Studio Canal, 2007. R. 172 minutes. ★★☆☆☆

What's true of the 1960s can be said of a David Lynch film — if you remember it, you weren't there — and that isn't always a good thing for filmgoers. A Lynch film is an *experience*. You don't sit back and relax into the familiar; you plunge ahead into a rich surrealistic fantasy. Cars are often present, sociopaths are a given and little people, blonde women and telephones predominate. Recently, his films have tended to fracture at key moments, like glass that's been heated too quickly, and Lynch's ability to recover from the narrative split is directly related to the success of his films. It's as if he enjoys digging philosophical holes just to see if he can climb out.

His last two features illustrate the mixed results of the Lynch approach. (I'm not counting *The Straight Story*, a true story he filmed for Disney.) *Lost Highway* lets go of the wheel early on, amounting to a bizarre, even disdainful take on split identities and emotional abuse. It remains, for all but the most ardent Lynch fans, a wandering and unwatchable film. Its successor, *Mulholland Drive*, is no less complicated in terms of structure, but it never strays too far from its storyline, making it easier to follow and therefore appreciate. I still can't tell you, after the diner scene in *Mulholland*, what's behind the restaurant dumpster, but when Lynch is this composed and upbeat — dare I say tender? — I'll gladly suffer his little detours through the grotesque.

A film shouldn't be something we subject ourselves to for insight or self-improvement. We have therapists and gyms for that. To my mind, a director should challenge me without being self-consciously difficult, and I've sometimes felt Lynch has a tendency toward the latter. His new film *INLAND EMPIRE*, boldly uppercased, is the offspring of both *Lost Highway* and *Mulholland Drive*, putting it a good distance away from *Blue Velvet* but not necessarily beyond your curiosity. If

accessibility is a quality you value in your films, you probably shouldn't bother with *INLAND EMPIRE*. Then again, you probably weren't a Lynch fan to begin with.

Although it feels like diving into water for the first time, I'll quit stalling and attempt a plot summary. In *INLAND EMPIRE*, actors Nikki Grace (Laura Dern) and Devon Berk (Justin Theroux) are starring in a film that turns out, *en media res*, to be a remake of a Polish movie which was in turn based on a Balkan folktale. The Polish movie was never finished, we find out, due to a significant scheduling conflict: The lead actors were murdered before the film was complete. The parallels between the two productions are unsavory, creating a cursed environment in which Nikki — depending on your interpretation — begins to lose her mind. For almost an hour of *INLAND EMPIRE*, Nikki is "trapped" within the film's sound stage, not to mention her frontal cortex, during which time an inner rupture takes place, producing no less than the following developments: a sleepover with several prostitutes; a sitcom of upright bunnies, complete with laugh track; and a long sojourn in Poland, either actually or metaphorically.

There you are. All three hours of it. If I tried to diagram it, it would resemble a bowl of spaghetti.

After a smart, effective first third, what to make of the nonsense in the middle? Once *INLAND EMPIRE* falters, the rhythm and mood are more than inconsistent: they're destroyed until it's arguably too late, at which point the film tries to double back on itself and hook you all over again. It's a mess, if an ambitious one, and no one deserves more credit for holding things together than Laura Dern. The consistency of her performance across at least three roles is, considering the material, superhuman. But I have to fault her for one thing: allowing Lynch to start shooting *INLAND EMPIRE* without a script. Rarely have I been so certain that a little forethought could have improved a film so much. **EW**

INLAND EMPIRE opens Friday, March 23 at the Bijou