Ricci sexes it up as nymphomaniac in new film

By Vivas Kaul
Staff Writer

Writer and director Craig Brewer (Hustle and Flow) has once again hit it big with his new movie Black Snake Moan.

The movie is set to be released March 2, and it features Samuel L. Jackson, Christina Ricci and Justin Timberlake.

This follow-up to Brewer’s critically acclaimed and Oscar-winning Hustle and Flow has likewise won considerable praise from critics and audiences alike.

Surprisingly, the film is based on many of Brewer’s real-life experiences.

The film places takes in rural Tennessee, an area that Brewer is intimately familiar with.

In fact, since the filming of Hustle and Flow, Brewer has been haunted by the same as the Fellini of the South.

The plot of the movie focuses on the two main characters Lazarus (Samuel L. Jackson) and Rae (Christina Ricci).

Lazarus is a down-and-out blues musician trying to get over the fact that his wife has left him for his brother.

He hasn’t played a concert in years, and has taken to drinking and violent outbursts against all of his wife’s possessions that remain inside his house.

Meanwhile, Rae, in her confederate flag halter top and Daisy Duke denim shorts, is on a downward spiral after her boyfriend Ronnie (Justin Timberlake) leaves to report for duty with the Marines.

After a particularly hard night of drinking, drugs and physical abuse, Rae finds herself on Lazarus’s doorstep.

Though Ricci and Jackson do an amazing job bringing to life the characters they portray, kudos also go to the supporting cast members.

Most surprising among these is Timberlake who, until this movie was filmed, was not an actor who would have been cast alongside thelikes of Jackson and Ricci.

However, moviegoers looking for something akin to “I have had it with these [expletive deleted] snakes on this [expletive deleted] plane!” will be more than a little surprised.

One reason is that this film is more of a Tone to Kill sort of role for Jackson.

Ah, his character, is a God-fearing man who is simply trying to do the right thing, all while trying to get his mind off his own problems.

Perhaps one of the coolest things about this movie is how flawed all the characters are.

At times, however, these flaws tend to be rather unbelievable and outlandish.

As an example, Timberlake’s naivety about Ricci’s sex, drugs and music is also fittingly upbeat and outlandish.

See Moan, page 21

Mario’s arch nemesis gets his own Wii game

By Nathan Garcia
Staff Writer

Wario knows good ideas when he sees them, especially when they involve large sacks of money. Deciding to cash in on the video game craze, he has convinced several of his friends to help him make games to sell to the unsuspecting populace.

The game has been on every system since the GBA, with variations such as turning the controller, multi-playable and using the DS’s touch screen. Finally, Wario’s (and Nintendo’s) master plan takes him to the Wii.

Wario Ware: Smooth Moves is the kingdom mini-game game play.

The entire game is centered on split-second, off-the-wall “microgames” demanding to complete an objective while only giving a short phrase as instruction. The Wii remote is referred to as the “Form Wand” in the game, an artifact Wario discovered in a conveniently located ancient temple.

Before each game, the player is given a “style” in which to use the controller during the upcoming game. Over 20 styles are used throughout the 200-plus games, but the provided pictures make learning them quick.

The player is given the job of rest-
David Lynch’s Inland Empire amazes, confuses

By Daniel Griffin
Staff Writer

Imagine a long, narrow room in complete darkness. A faint, red light glows from a small lamp at the opposite end of the room, revealing a tall, thinly-framed doorway. You run quickly towards the door, but when you get there, the doorway has disappeared.

Turning around, you see the door, bathed in pulsing red light, at the other end of the room. You rocket down the room reaching for the door and violently stab you in the chest with rusty screwdrivers.

There’s absolutely no point in discussing plot because it’s so confounding and befuddling that it certainly becomes clear that the essence of the film lies far removed from it. And anyone familiar with Lynch is all about the feel of the film, the intuition of the audience and, therefore, the film’s characters who represent pieces of the viewer. Lynch often interweaves the imagined dream world within the real world without the huge shift in narrative voice employed in the other two films.

Often, Lynch’s dreamworld is more developed and real-like than the actual real world, creating an audience comprehension lag that is so prominent in all of Lynch’s films (I do not consider Dune or Elephant Man true Lynch films due to heavy studio involvement and the lack of “final cut” say that Lynch was denied.)

Regardless of “final cut” say that Lynch was denied. Lynch always remains at least two steps behind Lynch’s comprehension and direction of the film, which gives him free rein to throw in bits of newly-created worlds just while we’re trying to catch up with him in the last scene.

The first concrete narrative sprouts from the movie set, a device of otherworldliness that was explored in Mulholland Dr. as well. Living in Hollywood, Lynch has come to enjoy the exploration of imagination through film: the act of one character creating a new world or life for themselves within the realm of Hollywood, or imagining who the actors are, what they do and how the narrator’s world would be different if transfigured through their eyes.

Here we have that, but he takes it a step further. He makes the film that our audience surrogate character, actress Nikki Grace (Laura Dern, also a co-producer of the film), is participating in indistinguishable from the actress’s real life.

And in fact, at one point, Lynch attempts to convince the audience this other world, where the actress is actually a poor, battered actress is actually a poor, battered homemaker-turned-who, in reality. Then he flips you over.

Incorporated into the film is a short film Lynch made in 2002 called Rabbit, so-called for the family of human-like rabbits that play as if lifted by a massive invisible arm, and cracks you across the head. Five more doorways appear, and you dazedly reach for the closest one. You disappear and the one on the opposite side of you crashes down on your head. More doors appear and they begin revolving around the walls with red light reflecting off the opaque surfaces.

You stand there with a horrified look on your face as three human-sized rabbits glide down the room towards you and violently stab you in the arm, and cracks you across the head. The troubled comes when you must decipher what is real and what is not. In Inland Empire, Lynch often makes this incredibly difficult. You accept the necessity to discard reason in the pursuit of how the film feels. Lynch is all about the feel of the film, the intuitions of the audience and, therefore, the film’s characters who represent pieces of the viewer.

Unlike his previous films, here he interweaves the imagined dream world within the real world without the huge shift in narrative voice employed in the other two films.

Lynch loves wrestling the audience around and around, and no film is more prominent, in this respect, than Inland Empire.

We always remain at least two steps behind Lynch’s comprehension and direction of the film, which gives him free rein to throw in bits of newly-created worlds just while we’re trying to catch up with him in the last scene.

Laura Dern plays an actress signed to star in a new Kingsley movie in Inland Empire. Justin Theroux also co-stars as womanizing Devon in the new movie directed and written by David Lynch.

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Bayside releases first album following death of drummer

By Kenneth Baskett
Senior Staff Writer

If you have heard of Bayside, there’s a good chance it was because of the death of their drummer, John “Bear” Holohan, Oct. 31, 2005. Despite this tragedy, the band recently released The Walking Wounded, their first original studio record since 2005’s self-titled release.

The new album is the band’s fourth release on Victory Records and presents a significant evolution of the group’s work. Before you write Bayside off as “just another Victory band,” take some time to check out their new album. With this release, they have successfully transitioned from the hip and trendy screamo scene into a legitimate alt-rock band. If you’ve never heard of the group, think of bands like Alkaline Trio, Rise Against and Avenged Sevenfold.

The songs on the new album feature solid, if sometimes simplistic, drum work and riffy guitars with solos that put some metal bands to shame. Anthony Raneri, the lead singer for the band, has one of the most distinct voices in the genre and is backed up by solid vocals from lead guitarist Jack O’Shea. Shep Goodman and Kenny Gioia, best known for their work with Aaron Carter, Mandy Moore and Paulina Rubio, were signed on to produce the record.

As a result, it has a certain poppy sparkle that their previous recordings lacked. The first single from the album is “Duality,” a song that at once stays true to Bayside’s sound while making it acceptable for the masses. The track showcases Raneri’s vocals with an upbeat, positive chorus that is far more radio-friendly than any of their other songs.

The title track opens up with an up-tempo instrumental bash and transitions into a Panic at the Disco-style waltz which seems completely out of place. Luckily, the song is saved from this poor choice by a killer guitar solo halfway through the track. One of the better songs on the record is “They’re NOT Horses, They’re Unicorns,” which provides a stark contrast to the positive sentiment on Duality: “She was a termite/Eating away at my roots. I was just a lost soul/Who needed a home/I was filling a void with you.”

Overall, The Walking Wounded is a solid album that should earn Bayside a lot of new fans. Hardcore fans of the group may be disappointed by the new direction the band has headed in, but it is more mature direction.

Bayside is on tour now with Anberlin, Meg & Dia and Jonezetta. You can see them at the Masquerade on Mar. 31.
Inland Empire is shot on a simple digital camera, giving the film an even greater surrealistic quality with Lynch's signature use of extreme close-ups and warped imagery. His exploration into his own world through this intimate imaging technique gives us a glimpse into how he feels about his own work—what he calls his babies. Lynch claims that he draws his inspiration from his daily meditations and a certain indescribable feeling in the air. With Inland Empire exploring that very feeling that inspires him to create, now we can all revel in an intimate look into the mind and, more importantly, the feelings of David Lynch.

rock-and-roll lifestyle does not seem rational based on his past history with her. By contrast, Ricci's outright devotion to her boyfriend is almost hypocritical in light of her constant indiscretions.

Despite these anomalies, Brewer manages to weave an intricate tale of people all simply trying to do better. It also seems that the numerous flaws in the characters work in a concerted effort to bring the film to a successful and believable closure.

As in Hustle and Flow, music plays a big role in the development of the story. As an example, the pain and heartache felt by Jackson's character is conveyed to the audience through the use of sad blues songs and riffs. In addition, Jackson actually does the singing, which, for lack of a better adjective, is absolutely amazing.

Overall, the movie is stunning. The plot isn't an edge of your seat experience, but the drama is put together very well. Plus, the use of humor sprinkled into the script helps to ease the tension associated with some of the more serious scenes.

Brewer's writing style and direction has also improved since his last film. In fact, one could go so far as to say that Brewer has developed his own unique signature.

When people talk of movie styles they talk about a Spielberg, Scorsese, and de Palma, just to name a few. However, people may soon be adding Brewer to that incredibly short, but highly recognizable list of people to watch.

Laura Dern plays an actress who learns the film she is cast in may be cursed in David Lynch's newest film, Inland Empire.

Samuel L. Jackson stars as a blues musician struggling to recover from the death of his wife in Craig Brewer's most recent film, Black Snake Moan, based on many of Brewer's real-life experiences.