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WEXNER CENTER SHOWCASES FILMS OF DANISH PROVOCTEUR LARS VON TRIER

SERIES FEATURES REGIONAL DEBUTS OF DOGVILLE AND THE FIVE OBSTRUCTIONS

“A film should be like a rock in the shoe.” —Lars Von Trier

In one of the major events of the film season, the Wexner Center showcases the works of Danish director **Lars von Trier**. The nine-film retrospective runs **March 4–March 25** and features the regional premieres of von Trier’s latest films: *Dogville*, starring Nicole Kidman, and *The Five Obstructions*—ferociously new takes on the fiction and nonfiction form, respectively. (The *Dogville* screening sold out in three days to Wexner Center members.) In addition, the retrospective will include screenings of his rarely seen early work along with his best-known films, *Dancer in the Dark* and *Breaking the Waves*.

Von Trier is among world cinema’s most radical experimenters and controversial manipulators. His films are the work of a filmmaker who is both a visionary provocateur and sadistic prankster. An upbringing by strict Communists as well as his later conversion to Catholicism is visible in his work, which aims to simultaneously set and explode the rules that govern cinematic expression. Nowhere is his concern with rules more evident than in his Dogme 95 manifesto, which calls for films made on-site with hand-held cameras and without ornamental music, lighting, or effects.

Tickets for each evening of the retrospective are \$6 for the general public, \$4 for Wexner Center members, students, and senior citizens. All screenings take place in the Wexner Center Film/Video Theater, 1871 N. High St. Call 614-292-3535 for advance tickets. The schedule follows.

VON TRIER RETROSPECTIVE SCHEDULE:

Thursday, March 4 / 7 & 9 pm

Regional premiere

***The Five Obstructions* (2003)**

In the hugely entertaining *The Five Obstructions* (90 mins.), Lars von Trier impishly challenges his mentor, veteran Danish filmmaker Jørgen Leth, to create five different remakes of Leth's 1967 short *The Perfect Human*. But there's a catch: each remake is constrained by a set of "obstructions" that von Trier lays down for Leth (e.g., no shot can last longer than one second). The film increasingly becomes a deadly, playful duel between these two master artists. Not only will this film introduce audiences to the major figure of Leth, but it provides great insight into the mind and working methods of von Trier.

Wednesday, March 10 / 7 pm

Regional premiere

***Dogville* (2003)**

Members-only screening

SOLD OUT

Engrossing from start to finish, *Dogville* (177 mins.) fuses influences from Bertolt Brecht and Thornton Wilder to create one of the boldest and most truculent films in recent memory. Nicole Kidman stars as Grace, a woman on the run who takes refuge in the rural town of Dogville, USA, during the Depression. Initially the town welcomes and harbors Grace, but as the situation begins to change a different side of everyone is gradually exposed. The first part of a proposed trilogy titled "USA," *Dogville* is sure to be one of the most memorable and discussed films you'll see all year. With an eclectic, all-star cast including Paul Bettany, Chloë Sevigny, Stellan Skarsgård, Patricia Clarkson, Ben Gazzara, Lauren Bacall, and James Caan.

Thursday, March 11 / 7 pm

***The Idiots* (1998)**

***Zentropa* (1999)**

The Idiots (115 mins.), Lars von Trier's only official Dogme 95 film, follows a commune of young people who practice "spassing" (pretending to be mentally or physically handicapped). Besides the transgressive subject matter, the film also features explicit sex scenes that were censored for its U.S. release. *Recommended for mature audiences.*

In *Zentropa* (112 mins.), Jean-Marc Barr encounters Nazi sympathizers called "werewolves" while traveling into the heart of postwar Germany. The film's dazzling visual inventiveness prompted Leonard Maltin to call it "a rare contemporary movie

that makes one feel privy to the reinvention of cinema.” With Eddie Constantine and Max von Sydow.

Sunday, March 14 / 2 pm

***Breaking the Waves* (1996)**

Von Trier’s breakthrough film and the winner of countless awards, *Breaking the Waves* (159 mins.) offers a devastating examination of love and faith—between a wife and husband, between God and His subjects. The film features powerful hand-held Cinemascope camerawork by Robbie Müller and unparalleled performances by Emily Watson, Stellan Skarsgård, and Katrin Cartlidge.

Thursday, March 18 / 7 pm

***Medea* (1988)**

***Dancer in the Dark* (2000)**

Fellow Dane and filmmaker Carl Theodor Dreyer has always been von Trier’s deepest artistic inspiration. For the criminally underseen *Medea* (76 mins.), von Trier pays tribute to his vision by faithfully filming the adaptation of Euripides’ tragedy Dreyer had written and planned to film. Director John Waters called the result a “beautifully muddy masterpiece.”

Von Trier’s *Dancer in the Dark* (137 mins.) swept the Cannes Film Festival in 2000, taking the awards for best film, best actress, and also for its soundtrack. A revisionist musical melodrama, the film stars pop music maverick Björk, who also wrote music for the film, as a mother who makes sacrifice after sacrifice for her son. With David Morse, Catherine Deneuve, Peter Stormare, and Joel Grey.

Thursday, March 25 / 7 pm

***Epidemic* (1988)**

***Element of Crime* (1984)**

Unreleased in the U.S. until now, *Epidemic* (106 mins.) is von Trier’s second feature, a postmodern film-within-a-film that critic J. Hoberman places “among his better and most revealing” works. In it, a director (played by von Trier) loses his screenplay and is forced to write another one on the fly. The resulting script, about a doctor (von Trier again) inadvertently spreading a disease while trying to cure it, becomes the bulk of the film and a metaphor for the creative process.

A cult hit on its initial release, *Element of Crime* (104 mins.) is von Trier’s auspicious debut feature. Fusing German expressionism, Hitchcock, and sci-fi dystopia, it’s a murder mystery dreamed up by a true cinephile.

EVENT SUPPORT

The 2003-04 film/video season is presented with support from the Rohauer Collection Foundation and the Corporate Annual Fund of the Wexner Center Foundation.

Contemporary films, international films, and visiting filmmakers are presented with support from the Ohio Arts Council.

WEXNER CENTER

The Wexner Center for the Arts is The Ohio State University's multidisciplinary, international laboratory for the exploration and advancement of contemporary art. Through exhibitions, screenings, performances, artist residencies, and educational programs, the Wexner Center acts as a forum where established and emerging artists can test ideas and where diverse audiences can participate in cultural experiences that enhance understanding of the art of our time. In its programs, the Wexner Center balances a commitment to experimentation with a commitment to traditions of innovation and affirms the university's mission of education, research, and community service.

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