**Watching *Twin Peaks*** **based on literary criticism**

**Remember that the ‘90s were a time of new things: intro of *Seinfeld, The Simpsons,* booming popularity of procedural crime shows like *Law & Order,*** **as well as many soap operas. *Twin Peaks* both pays homage to and parodies these elements of the time period.**

**David Lynch on creating *Twin Peaks:***

"I didn't try to make 'Twin Peaks' realistic – it's sort of a mythical town and it's a desire town. It's where you'd want to go at 10 at night to just float and see what was gonna happen. The story revolves around what happens when the most popular girl in high school is mysteriously murdered – she's found floating face down at the Packard Saw Mill. We then get to know the secret lives of all the people in the town as an FBI agent attempts to unravel the crime."

"I love the world of Twin Peaks. It has its own rules, and its mood, and its way of being...."

"Twin Peaks is about entering a world, falling in love with it, working within it, and letting it talk to you. To me, if it doesn't have honesty, and you don't obey those rules, then it won't work, it won't feel good, and the audience won't stay with it. That's also true of painting, or any movie."

"What is it about the ambience of that town and the dark firs looming in the deep wood carvings that lends itself to this time, this mystery and this sense of doubleness about all the characters? Just picture this kind of darkness and this wind going through these needles of the Douglas firs and you start getting a little bit of a mood coming along. And if you hear footsteps and you see a little in the window and you start moving toward it, little by little you're sucked in. And a mood, this fantastic mood and a sense of place comes along, and hopefully you like to go back and feel this each week."

“I love the idea of a soap opera, of having the luxury of time for characters to unfold and reveal more and more about themselves. That study of human nature is fantastic to me.”

"There are certain things about it that deal with human nature that are going to strike human beings, and there are certain things about it that are very American."

**RadioTimes, 20-6 October 1990, p. 5-7**

**Are you ready for TWIN PEAKS?**

A year ago cover girl Sherilyn Fenn was unknown. Today she´s a star, acclaimed for her 'disturbingly sexy' portrayal of bad little rich girl Audrey Horne in Twin Peaks, the most-talked about show in America. The quirky murder mystery series launched a cult and gripped the nation with a huge cast of characters involved in the biggest cliffhanging plot since JR was shot in Dallas. So just what is it all about? Pearson Phillips explains ...

The mood is set by the opening credits. No glittering skyscrapers or sun-baked paradise, but cold, dreary logging country in America´s Pacific Northwest. Smoke rises straight up from factory chimneys in the frosty morning air. A descending musical throb accompanies a shot of some nerve-jangling machine which sharpens the teeth of a band saw. Welcome to Twin Peaks! Population: one less than it was the evening before, thanks to the body at the lake.

So begins the surreal soap opera which last summer had some 30 million Americans in thrall. Each week Peaks freaks gathered around their sets, munching cherry pie and doughnuts (as consumed by the show´s two lawmen), and tried to work out which of the towns various bizarre inhabitants killed Laura Palmer.

Lynch, who disturbs his audiences with voyages around the seamy side of the mind in such films as *Eraserhead*, *The Elephant Man, Blue Velvet,* and *Wild at Heart*, claims: 'It´s just a regular television show. It´s about secrets.'

Lynch had taken the familiar hour format of a cast of characters in a family or place and given it a twist. As one producer said, 'He´s very good at parodying. He shows a side of American life under the surface, a side rarely shown on American television.'

On the surface, Twin Peaks is a quiet town. But an underbelly of corruption, drugs, illicit sex and downright weirdness is exposed when the naked corpse of 17-year-old, high-school homecoming queen Laura washes ashore in a plastic bag. Before the sheriff, Harry S Truman (Michael Ontkean), begins to investigate, another victim, tortured but still alive, is discovered. Enter the FBI in the form of Agent Dale Cooper (Kyle MacLachlan), who uses a pocket tape recorder to dictate his thoughts on everything, from the beauty of the area´s trees to each detected murder clue, to his unseen assistant Diane. He is, among other things, a cherry pie freak - and coined the American catch-phrase of 1990s: 'That´s a damned fine cup of coffee!'

Together Truman and Cooper unwrap the layers of the town before our eyes, scattering clues and red herrings along the way. Laura, they discover, was leading a secret double life and so is almost everyone else in Twin Peaks. There´s trouble over at the saw mill. The waitresses in the Double R Diner are all carrying on with someone they shouldn´t be. The proprietor of the Great Northern Hotel is too ambitious for his own health. There´s a dotty psychiatrist, a wife-beater trucker, a woman sublimating her desires into a search for a silent curtain rail and a woman with a pet log.

What, you wonder, is the meaning of the dwarf who talks backwards? Why is a stag´s head on the table at the bank?

Pervading it is all the Romeo and Juliet aroma of adolescent sex and power. The adults have forfeited control and the youngsters have broken loose.

Who killed Laura Palmer? Perhaps everyone...