

the outpourings of his imagination. When his pop-culture cherry gets popped, he goes straight for the deep end, by way of Sylvester Stallone's jungle warrior in *First Blood*. Will stumble upon a bootlegged VHS of the film while taking his first-ever steps toward making a friend. He couldn't have chosen a worse influence – Lee Carter (Poulter) is a fast-talking, chipmunk-cheeked pickpocket who's more or less raising himself. Borrowing a video camera, the two boys, both terribly starved for male affection, band together to make a homegrown sequel to *First Blood* called *Son of Rambow*. Yes, there's the Eighties nostalgia and post-Wes Anderson oddball beats and deadpan timing (fun, if a little indie de rigueur), but the real pleasure of the piece is in its uncommon, unaffected portrayal of male intimacy. (05/16/2008) – Kimberley Jones

★★★★ Alamo Drafthouse South, Arbor

## SPEED RACER

*D: Larry Wachowski, Andy Wachowski; with Emile Hirsch, Christina Ricci, Susan Sarandon, John Goodman, Matthew Fox, Paulie Litt, Scott Porter, Roger Allam.* (PG, 129 min.)

Former Matrices Andy and Larry Wachowski populate their shiny, happy, CGI-drenched Hot Wheels world with living, breathing, identifiably organic actors: *Into the Wild*'s Hirsch as Speed, a mountainous Goodman as Pops, Oscar-winner Sarandon as Mrs. Racer, a preposterously perky Ricci as Speed's best gal Trixie, and so on. But in the supersaturated and breathlessly overdesigned unreality of the film, the actors fail to deliver even a quart of real, nonsynthetic empathy. The outrageously eye-popping visuals are indeed psychedelic in both flavor and execution (this film owes everything to Japanese animé and Timothy Leary alike). The Wachowskis' big, unspoken, vaguely transgressive joke is that their *Speed Racer* experience is akin to nothing so much as diving face-first into a rainbow-hued bowl of methamphetamine-laced cinematic Jell-O. It's a giddy rush for a moment or two, but the comedown is long and harsh, and you'll need one helluva nap afterward. (05/09/2008) – Marc Savlov

★ Alamo Drafthouse Lake Creek, Alamo Drafthouse South, Barton Creek Square, CM Cedar Park, Hill Country Galleria, CM Round Rock, Southpark Meadows, Dobie, Highland, Gateway, Lakeline, Metropolitan, Tinseltown North, Westgate

## STREET KINGS

*D: David Ayer; with Keanu Reeves, Forest Whitaker, Hugh Laurie, Chris Evans, Martha Higareda, Terry Crews, Jay Mohr, Cedric the Entertainer, the Game, Naomie Harris.* (R, 109 min.)

Dirty cops are the kings of the L.A. streets, and no one knows that better than James Ellroy, the crime novelist who wrote the story on which this film's screenplay is based and for which he receives credit with Kurt Wimmer and Jamie Moss. It's a tangled, gritty story full of gunfire, blood, and vicious men (both on the side of the law and against it), and, for the most part, it's an

# Citizen Kane

**Citizen Kane (1941)** *D: Orson Welles; with Welles, Joseph Cotten, Agnes Moorehead, Everett Sloane, Dorothy Comingore, Ruth Warrick.* (NR, 119 min.) **Music and a Movie.** RK. Waddle and tenuous colleagues, including Invincible Czars bandmaster Josh Robins and Austin Children's Choir Artistic Director Adam Roberts, present pre-movie and intermission concerts devoted to the year of *Citizen Kane*'s release, 1941, and the music of Bernard Herrmann, who conducted the film's score. @Alamo Drafthouse Lake Creek, Sunday, 7pm; \$14 advance, \$16 door.



absorbing *policier*. Curiously, the often affectless Reeves is well-cast as a vice detective whose placid exterior cloaks a volatile temper that his captain (Whitaker) puts to good use whenever he needs a mad dog to take care of business using methods best kept under cover from the public eye. Director Ayer brings a tactile feel to the urban grit he portrays, even though some of his imagery is rather worn. Despite its limitations, *Street Kings* is a solid contemporary crime drama. (04/18/2008) – Marjorie Baumgarten

★★★ Tinseltown South

## SUPERHERO MOVIE

*D: Craig Mazin; with Drake Bell, Leslie Nielsen, Sara Paxton, Christopher McDonald, Marion Ross, Kevin Hart, Brent Spiner, Jeffrey Tambor.* (PG-13, 85 min.)

Mazin's feature debut, *The Specials*, is a superhero satire that affectionately winks and nods at the whole concept of what superheroes do, if anything, on their days off. That said, his new parody, *Superhero Movie*, blows harder than Storm from *X-Men*. It's a tonally confused comedy, which, for once, doesn't go far enough comedically. Featuring an earnest performance from Bell – whose riff on Peter Parker/Spider-Man is very nearly note-perfect – and an appropriately scenery-devouring McDonald (voice of *The Iron Giant*'s G-man, Kent Mansley) as the supervillain Hourglass, *Superhero Movie* plays like a real (albeit really cheap) Marvel Universe knockoff that was shanghaied by the Wayans gang and then minimized by Reducto from *Harvey Birdman, Attorney at Law*. Even cameos from *Airplane!*-er Robert Hays and *Forbidden Planet*-er-cum-comedy-stalwart Nielson can't supersize the yuks on what turns out to be a mere annoyance of a spoof. Bah, puny insect! (04/04/2008) – Marc Savlov

★ Movies 8

## 10,000 B.C.

*D: Roland Emmerich; with Steven Strait, Camilla Belle, Cliff Curtis, Mona Hammond.* (PG-13, 108 min.)

Emmerich comes to the prehistoric party considerably late in the Hollywood timeline, and he arrives bearing neither the spark of creativity nor anything resembling even the flimsiest glimmer of originality. *10,000 B.C.* is a stunningly ham-fisted

paste job of a caveman flick, directed with all the subtlety of *Eegah*, woefully acted (those Geico advertisements are considerably more nuanced), and sporting some awfully shoddy CGI effects (the woolly mammoths are up to par, but that saber-toothed tiger seems like a hastily created digital afterthought). Strait is D'Leh, a (possibly) Paleolithic hunter with abandonment issues who crosses continents (maybe) to rescue his blue-eyed beloved (Belle) after she and others of their tribe are captured by an equestrian raiding party in the employ of (who knows?) some wiggled-out Egyptian proto-pharaohs. Emmerich's narrative is maddeningly vague on plot specifics. But most egregious of all is the insurmountable fact that this film is just plain dumb. (03/14/2008) – Marc Savlov

☹ Movies 8

## ★ THEN SHE FOUND ME

*D: Helen Hunt; with Hunt, Bette Midler, Colin Firth, Matthew Broderick, Ben Shenkman.* (R, 100 min.)

Hunt's debut as a film director makes me glad she found us. This story about a 39-year-old woman (played by Hunt) whose biological clock is ticking loudly and whose life is not turning out as planned is a work of maturity – at least in its humanist perspective if not always its cinematic scope. The film delivers a nice blend of drama, comedy, and the unknown, in other words, an accurate reflection of life as we live it. Based on a novel by Elinor Lipman, *Then She Found Me* finds just the right tone for detailing its heroine's problems: It's neither a sob story nor a satire. Hunt's visual palette often looks as drab as the character she plays, but the film's rhythms are well-tailored yet pliant. Some may dismiss *Then She Found Me* as a mere "women's film," but it's really a more honest and mature take on sex and the city. (05/09/2008) – Marjorie Baumgarten

★★★★ Arbor

## 21

*D: Robert Luketic; with Jim Sturgess, Kate Bosworth, Kevin Spacey, Laurence Fishburne, Liza Lapira, Josh Gad, Aaron Yoo, Sam Golzari, Jacob Pitts, Jack McGee.* (PG-13, 123 min.)

One might think that characters who have the mental quickness to count cards and take the

Vegas blackjack tables for tens of thousands of dollars would also have the acumen to notice that some aspects of their caper just don't add up. The filmmakers take a pass on character development in favor of fluttery Vegas montages of cards, lights, money, and pretty, young faces in thrall to the gods of self-made fortunes and striking it rich. Adapted from Ben Mezrich's true account of similar events, *Bringing Down the House: The Inside Story of Six M.I.T. Students Who Took Vegas for Millions*, the film shows little interest in the honest reasons why a Harvard Medical School admittee, who professes that he's only in it for the \$300,000 needed to finance his education, just doesn't apply for a student loan like everybody else. 21 shares with the Las Vegas mythos the same stale temptations: empty glitz and little substance. (03/28/2008) – Marjorie Baumgarten

★★★★ Movies 8, Tinseltown South

## UNDER THE SAME MOON

*D: Patricia Riggen; with Kate del Castillo, Eugenio Derbez, Mário Almada, Adrian Alonso, Isaac Bravo, Ernesto D'Alessio, Julie Dove, America Ferrera.* (PG-13, 109 min., subtitled)

With the right set of eyes, anywhere can be heaven. Take the poor neighborhoods of East Los Angeles, for example: In the mind's eye of 9-year-old Mexican Carlitos (Alonso), that concrete jungle of endless strip malls and fast-food restaurants is a wonderland. Four years ago, his mother, Rosario (del Castillo), left him in their small Mexican village to seek work as a domestic across the border and hasn't been back since. Carlitos dreams of that Los Angeles barrio the way the Spanish conquistadors dreamed of El Dorado, so he resolves to make the perilous journey across the border and into America to reunite with his mother. As a work of dramatic fiction, *Under the Same Moon* isn't anything to ring bells over. Its parallel stories of two lost souls seeking each other across geographical divides is never more than one small step away from mawkishness and cliché, and oftentimes less. But as a sociological study, it's fascinating. (03/21/2008) – Josh Rosenblatt

★★★★ Tinseltown South

## THE VISITOR

*D: Tom McCarthy; with Richard Jenkins, Haaz Sleiman, Danaï Jekesai Gurira, Hiam Abbass, Marian Seldes.* (PG-13, 108 min.)

McCarthy (*The Station Agent*) is back with another humanist drama set among a mix of characters who might not ordinarily interact. Curiously, *The Visitor* is both predictable and unpredictable. Jenkins, a busy character actor, is uncharacteristically cast in the lead as Walter Vale, a gift that he capitalizes on fully. His performance (and the film) are studies in understatement, communicating often through the absence of words or actions. We may think we know where this is going: A hard-hearted economics prof reclaims his soul through his interaction with illegal immigrants (Sleiman, Gurira, and Abbass) who are full of life and artful enterprise. Well, yes and no. Change occurs, but not necessarily in the ways you might expect. McCarthy's approach is much truer to life, in which people enter and depart another's personal orbit without causing earth-shattering alterations in behavior or relationships. By definition, that means that not much occurs in *The Visitor*, yet it is never uninteresting to watch. (04/25/2008) – Marjorie Baumgarten

★★★★ Arbor, Barton Creek Square

## WHAT HAPPENS IN VEGAS

*D: Tom Vaughan; with Cameron Diaz, Ashton Kutcher, Rob Corddry, Lake Bell, Jason Sudeikis, Zach Galifianakis, Treat Williams, Dennis Farina, Deirdre O'Connell.* (PG-13, 99 min.)

For all its bright lights and ersatz glitz, Las Vegas can be a dispiriting place, and there's something of that same desperation and forced cheer in this jaded comedy of unmarried starring two Hollywood actors known for their prankishness and pluck. Overplucked here, turns out: Diaz and Kutcher practically pant with franticness trying to convince us that *these! yuks! are! fun!* They play two halves of a one-night stand that turns into a quickie marriage; plans for an annulment derail when husband and wife win a \$3 million jackpot and a sadistic judge (Dennis Miller) sentences them to six months of "hard marriage" before they can divorce and/or touch the money. A strident Diaz plays against type, shackling the good-time gal to play a tightly

*The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian*

