

film

The Celestine Prophecy

Armand Mastroianni, the son of Italian star Marcello Mastroianni, directed this slow yet positive adaptation of James Redfield's novel about ancient scrolls found in Peru and their prophecy. Mysticism seems to be a hot topic at the movies this year, but while *The Da Vinci Code* is more of an action film, this one is focused on a deeper experience of spirituality. Opens June 2 at Hollywood Theatre. **B-**

—Yvonne P. Behrens

District B13

This adrenaline rush from France delivers a few scenes that rival *Run Lola Run* and *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* for sheer action ecstasy, but the sublimely choreographed chase scenes and gunplay can't make up for mediocre storytelling and one-dimensional characters. Set in Paris in 2010, the occasionally disjointed plot follows a hunky convict and a cop who team up to dismantle a gang and defuse a bomb in a walled-off ghetto known as District B13. Co-written by Luc Besson, the man who brought us the superior action flick *The Professional*. **B**

—Stephen Blair

Drawing Restraint 9

Avant-garde poster child Matthew Barney shows an alarming lack of restraint in this overlong and pretentious follow-up to his famed *Cremaster Cycle*. Despite these near-fatal flaws, the film has considerable visual appeal thanks to odd and unforgettable images of pearl divers and bloody blub-

ber. Alternately hypnotic and mind-numbing, the virtually dialogue-free story portrays a man and a woman (Barney and his real-life wife, Björk) who board a Japanese whaling ship, have tea together and mysteriously morph into whales. Björk is stupendously photogenic as always, though her musical contributions to the soundtrack suffer from the same little-girl preciousness that has plagued her recent albums. Opens June 2 at Cinema 21. **B-**

Evil

Erik (Andreas Wilson) is sent to Stjärnsberg Boarding School after being expelled for fighting with other students. The institution is ruled in the tradition of "fraternal upbringing" where senior students are in charge of disciplining younger ones. When Erik refuses to obey their unfair punishments, he makes himself a target. This Swedish film by director Mikael Håfström (*Derailed*) is about friendship, first love and the constant battle of good vs. evil. Opens June 2 at Hollywood Theatre. **A**

—SB

A Prairie Home Companion

This charming adaptation of Garrison Keillor's legendary radio show is no *Nashville* or *Short Cuts*, but octogenarian director Robert Altman proves

—YPB



Angel (Ben Foster) takes flight in *X-Men: The Last Stand*.

he's still in fine form. Still reeling from the announcement that their long-standing variety show is toast, a bunch of small-time musicians perform their final gig. Even trashy tabloid queen Lindsay Lohan manages to hold her own in a well-oiled ensemble that includes Kevin Kline, Virginia Madsen and Keillor himself. But the real standouts are Meryl Streep and Lily Tomlin as a loopy pair of singing sisters. Opens June 9 at Cinema 21. **B+**

—SB

The Puffy Chair

Nominated for two 2006 Independent Spirit Awards, this road movie gets off to a bumpy start but soon kicks into gear with funny and touching vignettes about romance and the humiliating restrictions of traveling on the cheap. Up-and-coming filmmakers Jay and Mark Duplass tell the deceptively simple story of a failed musician who hits the highway with his girlfriend and his brother, stopping along the way to pick up a

divided mutant community is fractured further. *Rush Hour* director Brett Ratner takes over from Bryan Singer, who left to direct *Superman Returns*. Unfortunately, Ratner isn't known for his nuance, giving precedence to noisy effects sequences, wanton property destruction and groan-inducing dialogue. At a jam-packed 104 minutes, the film could have been longer and given time to developing and justifying the relationships between characters.

Still, there's plenty to love for *X-Men* fans and new viewers. Notable newcomers include Vinnie Jones as the obnoxious Juggernaut and Kelsey Grammer as the big, blue diplomat Beast. There are some shocking surprises and lovely visual effects that guarantee you won't take your eyes off the screen.

The best popcorn movie of the year so far has arrived, though it's a shame it isn't as good as the first two films in the franchise. Let's see if *Superman Returns* is any better. **B**

—Jemiah Jefferson 10

Pride 2006

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