

Sweetly uplifting tale of a neglected talent

Robbie Collin

Searching for Sugar Man

12A CERT, 86 MIN ★★★★★

● The good news about *Searching for Sugar Man* is that it is not a summer blockbuster about a man endowed with superpowers after eating a spoonful of radioactive demerara. The better news is that Malik Bendjelloul's film is one of the most sweetly uplifting documentaries in recent memory.

In 1970, Detroit folk singer Sixto Rodriguez released an LP called *Cold Fact*, but despite reviews as warm as his honeyed, tobacco-rich voice, neither it nor a 1971 follow-up made much of an impact in the United States, so he found

work in the city's thriving demolitions industry instead.

In South Africa, however, things were different – unwittingly, Rodriguez became a bigger star there than Elvis Presley; more than 500,000 copies of his album sold and countless bootleg editions were in circulation. In the late Nineties, two fans traced their hero to his modest abode, and man and legend were finally united.

The tumultuous, miraculous journey that followed is retold here with interviews and touchingly ham-fisted camcorder footage shot by Rodriguez's daughters. The wonderful soundtrack, made up of Rodriguez's songs, makes his relative obscurity over here seem all the more puzzling. Happily, this film may set that right.



Famous at last? Sixto Rodriguez made little impact in the US

The Lorax

U CERT, 86 MIN ★

● This adaptation of Dr Seuss's 1972 anti-deforestation verse parable is an all-hooting, all-whooping, all-3D-swooping travesty, and both the plot and point are lost amid irrelevant action sequences, strainingly enunciated punchlines and some of the crumbiest songs in recent memory. Seuss would have loathed it. **RC**

The Man Inside

15 CERT, 99 MIN ★

● This shoestring urban drama follows a troubled young boxer (Ashley "Bashy" Thomas) as he shakes off the spectre of his monstrous father, currently in prison. It's capably assembled but so incessantly, furiously gloomy as to be almost unwatchable: for all concerned, it feels like a dry run for better things. **RC**

El Bulli: Cooking in Progress

12A CERT, 113 MIN ★★

● Leave it to the Germans to freeze-dry the fun out of molecular gastronomy. Gereon Wetzel's coffee table documentary offers an orderly account of a year at Ferran Adrià's restaurant, but culinary wizardry is camcordered and catalogued so blandly, these superchefs might as well be soldering circuit boards. **RC**

The Dark Knight Rises

12A CERT, 164 MIN ★★★★★

● Sitting comfortably at the top of the UK box office, in its second week of release this remains the film to watch above all others. The final instalment of Christopher Nolan's Batman trilogy, it is ferociously satisfying, soaringly ambitious – and the best and boldest blockbuster since his last film, *Inception*. **RC**