

This week's DVDs

By MICHAEL GILTZ

**Spider-Man 2
Special Edition**

★★★★

Sony, \$29.96

"THE Empire Strikes Back." "Superman II." "Tarzan and His Mate." Yes, "Spider-Man 2" joins these classics as another example of a sequel even better than the original. Tobey Maguire anchors this heartfelt, witty film about the hapless Peter Parker with a sensitive, convincing performance that deserves an Oscar nomination. Loads of extras, including a look at how they filmed the visually striking villain Doc Ock. 'Nuff said.

Hero

★★★★

Miramax, \$29.99

JET Li is the martial-arts hero fighting for the future of ancient China in this art-house version of an action film. Rather static, most of the story is told in flashbacks. While the fights are not always exciting, they are gorgeous. The fights are extraordinary to look at, making "Hero" one of the most beautiful films of the year.

It's All True

★★★★

Paramount, \$14.99

DID Orson Welles sabotage his brilliant career with childish behavior and mercurial projects? Or did Hollywood sandbag the genius because he was too frighteningly talented and arrogant? This documentary looks at his first great boondoggle. A South American jaunt, it resulted in an unfinished film, the death of an amateur actor and the butchering of Welles' second feature, "The Magnificent Ambersons," when he left the editing to the studio to fly south of the border. Fascinating and frustrating, just like him.

Peter Gabriel – Play

★★★★ ½

Warner, \$19.99

NO artist has done more to

explore and expand the possibilities of music video than Peter Gabriel. This collection gathers all his innovative work in a smashing new sound mix that takes full advantage of home theater systems. "Sledgehammer," "Shock the Monkey" and more than 20 others are here. Also just out: Ray Charles rocking Brazilian TV with a short live concert in 1963's "O Genio" (Rhino, \$14.99) and Eric Clapton gathering some friends for a guitar fest in "Crossroads Guitar Festival" (WEA, \$29.99). Look for B.B. King, James Taylor, Joe Walsh and many more.

**Northern Exposure
Season Two**

★★★★

Universal, \$59.98

LIKE "Freaks and Geeks," this hit show is quirky and original, with music absolutely essential to the story. Getting the rights to all those songs is why this small batch of episodes



is so expensive. It's worth it for this gentle comedy about a kvetchy New York doctor, played by Rob Morrow (above), who is stranded on assignment in oddball Cicely, Alaska.