



## "THE HOURS"

A film about suicide, "The Hours" (\$19.95, Paramount) becomes less interesting the closer it gets to the present. **Nicole Kidman's** Virginia Woolf is magnetic (and rightly won her the Oscar); **Julianne Moore's** '50s housewife was fine; and **Meryl Streep's** present-day book editor was the least interesting of all. But the pieces of the film are threaded together so adroitly that as a whole it remains much more powerful than its parts. The main extras are two commentary tracks, the better one featuring director **Stephen Daldry** and author **Michael Cunningham**, while the star-studded one with the three female leads is a bit dull, since none of them really worked together.

## "LOST IN LA MANCHA"

This is the movie director **Terry Gilliam** was born to make: an amusing but sad look at the frustrating, insane events that can turn a movie shoot into a nightmare. "Lost in La Mancha" (\$29.95, Docurama) — a look at Gilliam's adaptation of "Don Quixote" as it collapses in front of our eyes during production — has flash floods, supersonic jet planes (which interfere mightily with the period setting), and an ailing star who goes off to see a doctor and never comes back. The best extra is an hour-long chat between Gilliam and author **Salman Rushdie** at a film festival.

## "THE CENTURY OF WARFARE"

### "HEROES OF WORLD WAR II"

A solid 1993 miniseries (\$139.95, A&E), "The Century of Warfare" gives a thorough if unremarkable overview of all the major battles of the bloodiest century, with highlights invariably being the archival footage they dug up going back as far as 1896 and stretching to the Gulf War. **Walter Cronkite** adds gravitas to the equally superficial "Heroes of World War II" (\$39.98, Koch), with the best moments again being the you-are-there newsreel footage both in the feature and the roughly 60 minutes of footage included as extras.

## TV roundup:

"The Return of Sherlock Holmes" features three more volumes (\$14.98 each, MPI) of **Jeremy Brett's** brilliant, defining performance as the great detective. Those who think "CSI" was the first to turn grisly forensics into prime-time fodder would do well to dip into "Profiler": Season One (\$99.95, A&E). "Soul Food" (\$89.99, Paramount) will be a godsend to those who don't get Showtime and were wondering where an African-American show without broad, slapsticky humor could be found. And "Dark Shadows" Collection 6 (\$59.98, MPI) continues to document the reign of Barnabas Collins.

## Also out:

**Robert Altman's** 1980 "Popeye" (\$19.99, Paramount) was praised for its sets — which should tell you something about the movie. "Kangaroo Jack" (\$27.98, Warner Bros.) was a surprise family hit, but trust us, the kangaroo only talks for a brief moment. 1982's "Grease 2" (\$19.99, Paramount) was a notorious flop (poor **Maxwell Caulfield** never recovered though **Michelle Pfeiffer** did all right, didn't she?). It's out just as they're threatening to make "Grease 3."

Fassbinder's "Ali: Fear Eats the Soul" (\$39.95) was his 1974 remake of Douglas Sirk's "All That Heaven Allows." Appropriately, it includes an intro by **Todd Haynes**, who did his own Sirk remake with "Far From Heaven."

**Alain Resnais's** wrenching 1955 documentary short "Night and Fog" (\$14.95) contrasts horrific wartime footage with the haunted site Auschwitz, while his 1959 "Hiroshima Mon Amour" (\$39.95) makes more intellectual use of its setting at the postwar location of the nuclear blast.

All are probably familiar to casual movie buffs. But Italian director **Ermanno Olmi's** "Il Posto" from 1961 and "I Fidanzati" from 1962 are almost forgotten serio-comic gems that are given the serious attention they deserve.

## Next Tuesday:

**Martin Scorsese's** epic "Gangs of New York," the haunting "Wings of Desire," **Barbra Streisand's** screwball comedy "What's Up Doc?" and four Charlie Chaplin classics.