



DVD

DISC DETAILS

RELEASED:

Out now

RRP: £24.99

DISCS: 2

ASPECT RATIO:

2.35:1

AUDIO: DD5.1

EXTRAS: Subtitles

PICTURE: ★★★★★

AUDIO: ★★★★★

SHOW DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR:

Lionsgate

CERT: 15

RUN TIME: 215 mins

(4 episodes)

YEAR: 2008

STARS: Andrea

Riseborough, John

Simm, Dominic West

Sam Tyler in *Life In The Middle Ages*.

SHOW ★★ EXTRAS ★

THE DEVIL'S WHORE

Talking about a revolution...

Don't expect a watertight history lesson from *The Devil's Whore* - those seeking a 17th-century cheat sheet should look elsewhere. This is all about flourish, and to hell with all those niggling, pernickety details of actual historical fact. Instead, this four-part mini-series serves up blood, bodies, betrayals, sex, swords, strumpets and John Simm glowering rather menacingly in a slightly silly hat.

It's perhaps an oversight that we haven't had a meaty Civil War series until now. Times of bloody turmoil are always good for a costume drama, just as Simm's Edward Sexby, a sword-for-hire who goes from Royalist to anti-Royalist to anti-Cromwell, is said to always be good for a fight, but chances are the only TV take you've seen on the whole Roundheads and Cavaliers business will be *Blackadder: The Cavalier Years*. Time, then, for a proper lusty battles-and-bodices bonanza.

Penned by Peter Flannery, who wrote *Our Friends In The North*, it's got an interesting selection of thespis including Dominic West, aka *The Wire's* McNulty, as Oliver Cromwell and *The Thick of It's* Peter Capaldi as King Charles I. Andrea Riseborough is semi-fictional Angelica

Fanshawe - the real Lady Fanshawe was born Ann Harrison and married her cousin, Richard Fanshawe, who was Secretary of War to the Prince of Wales (later King Charles II). Angelica marries her cousin and

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childhood sweetheart, Harry (rising star Ben Aldridge), just as John Lilburn (Tom Goodman-Hill) is being flogged for distributing pamphlets denouncing King Charles I. She's a bit of a rebel and shows spirit right from the first episode, when she dares to criticise the king. She's also prone to visions of the Devil, which doesn't go down well with her husband, who reckons she's a bit of a whore, and she doesn't do what Harry says either, resulting in Charles I having him shot after they annoy him by surrendering to parliamentarians. Thus the scene is set for a bloody romp through the Civil War years.

All of this is exciting stuff, but we could still have done with that history lesson.

If you've got some idea about the real-life events of 1642-51 (*The Devil's Whore* keeps going until 1660) you'll notice the perforated plot. Key players are omitted, key events removed or rewritten - and did they *really* know how to do CPR in those days? Such is the licence of drama, but where's the documentary explaining it all properly? And where's the Making Of?

Perhaps it's a cunning ploy to deflect attention away from the fact that *The Devil's Whore* wasn't actually filmed in England, however olde English-y it all looks. It was made in South Africa, apparently because of a lack of suitable locations here, which is perhaps ironic. But who knew South Africa could look quite so grey and, well, olde?

What with its bloody battles and sex scenes, *The Devil's Whore* is gripping stuff - but the lack of context is frankly inexcusable.

Anne Wollenberg

FINALWORD

Bloody exciting historical drama with limited attention to historical detail - the cavalier attention to DVD extras is disappointing.

BEST IN SHOW



EDWARD SEXBY

A real-life sword-for-hire who switches sides when he sees how Cromwell treats 'Honest' John Lilburn; *The Devil's Whore* takes liberties with the facts of his life.