

Love's labour's lost:
kenneth branagh
essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

After watching the musical film of Love's Labour's Lost, I think I can safely say that it was a good interpretation of the play, in the style of a Hollywood musical. Kenneth Branagh, the producer as well as one of the stars of the film, really made one of Shakespeare's plays enjoyable to watch, to a range of ages. I am recommending this production to you, because I really enjoyed it, and I think that you will too, as well as it being a help in your studies.

One of the main reasons that I liked this film, and why I think that you will too, is because most of the audience know the plays such as Romeo and Juliet, A Midsummer Night's Dream, and Twelfth Night, and are less likely to know about this one. So I liked the idea of introducing to you, what I think is an equally beautiful play, with the advantage, that the audience is not sitting, waiting for the balcony scene! Set during World War 2, this production captures the strength of musical comedies and war dramas of the period, balancing the laughs and the tears. The story is quite light, and while the film hangs onto much of Shakespeare's original language, the story is still very straight forward, making it relatively easy to follow, producing an enjoyable film to watch. I think that Branagh put across the message that 'actions speak louder than words', meaning that the emotions and the passion of the film, were more important than the words (or lyrics). Four bachelors, Berowne (Kenneth Branagh), Dumaine (Adrian Lester), Longeville (Matthew Lillard) and the King (Alessandro Nivola), have sworn off women, in order to devote three years to the studying philosophy. However, a visit from the Princess of France (Alicia Silverstone) and her three striking followers soon alters the men's belief that they can live without love.

One of the features of the play, which returned to the screen more than once, was the newsreel. Shown as 1930's news broadcast, the narration of parts of the play was put across to the audience very skilfully. The commentary was very 'well articulated', and the 'upper-class' vowel sounds were very realistic to the time it was set for. Even on the screen, Kenneth Branagh had put 'scratchy' parts in as if it was not a great signal, which is also very authentic for the 1930's. Having this 'old-fashioned' newsreel, brought to the audience, a variation of dates and times. This was very good, and was one of the themes in the musical that I really enjoyed.

The choreography of this production was top-quality, with all of the actors using their own singing voices and dancing skills. I think that for many members of the audience, it was a surprise that all of the actors sang for themselves, because it was unknown to most, that many of these actors could either sing well, or sing at all. The general colour of this film was very bright, which was a great contrast to the newsreel which was in black and white. The backdrops of the scenery were very brightly coloured, and this was unrealistic to real life; however, this was the point. It wasn't meant to be realistic, which was a nice change because normally everything in a film has to be so perfect.

At points in the film, there was an excellent use of colour, when it was faded from black and white (newsreel) to colour. The colour used, was more obvious of that of today. This fading was very effective, and I think you will find it very interesting. There was one very 'sexy scene' in this production of Love's Labour's Lost, in which each couple was involved. When scenes came about, where the eight of them (the four couples) took part, each couple's

<https://assignbuster.com/loves-labours-lost-kenneth-branagh-essay/>

outfits matched. If the girl wore a red dress, then the man would wear a red bow tie.

This was very good, as it showed who was together, and it also showed that they were devoted to their partner. In the 'sexy scene', each couple danced together, and I interpreted this to mean that they all wanted something more than dancing a kissing. I took this scene, to mean that they each couple wanted to sleep together, and again, this is a style of the 1930's and 40's. Most of the songs were well incorporated into the storyline, with only a couple seeming out of place, or that they should not be there at all. Of course, technically, none of the songs are supposed to be there, but one of Branagh's achievements, was that most of the songs didn't seem imposing.

One of my favourite musical numbers was when the four girls were in the tent on their beds. The camera angle was a bird's eye view, and this was very popular in 1930's Hollywood musicals. As the camera looked down on them, they would dance (lying down), and this was very effective and synchronized. This was very successful style of dancing for Busby Berkley about seventy years ago. He used the dancing patterns as like a flower opening and closing.

Used for the last scene, the song 'The Way You Look Tonight' was very appropriate. As the four girls were flying off home in their plane, the men were standing beside the plane waving them off, until they were to return the following year. In four consecutive windows of the plane, was each girl, opposite her man. This was very good, because it made it seem individual for

each couple but at the same time, the girls had been reunited as one group, and the men as another.

So I think that you could gain a lot from watching this production; firstly for your studies, and secondly for your own pleasure. When I saw this at school, I did not think of it as something I had to watch, but as something that I would watch through my own choice; thus making Kenneth Branagh successful in his purpose - making one of Shakespeare's plays, into something that could be seen and enjoyed, by a range of ages.