

Significant features of
baz luhrmann's style
of the opening scene
of romeo and ju...



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Baz Luhrmann has a reputation of making excellent films and is known for his camera always moving. He likes doing close-ups, zooms and slow motion shots .

As he has grown more secure of his position as a director, and has got a higher budget, his camera and editing have merged into a sort of helter skelter style that blends the emotional and poetic in ways that appear new and revolutionary. Luhrmann says that there are three basic things about his films: the story line is simple, the world created in his films is one of a heightened reality, there is always a specific device driving the story whether it be song or dance etc. Luhrmann did the prologue so he could show the audience the current story of what's going on and what the story is about. He needed to have strong images because at that point most of the audiences ears' won't be in tune with the Shakespearian text.

He repeated just so anyone who missed it the first time would hear it this time and people that heard it before would understand it more thoroughly. The prologue is probably one of the most important parts of the film as it is a summary of what is happening and what happens throughout the film. Luhrmann manages to juggle multiple story lines in a manner that keeps the audience involved, using his trademark moving camera and using music to move the plot forward. His hopes for this film are to " Put Shakespeare back on the billboards of Times Square".

He wants everyone to appreciate Shakespeare and never wants him to be forgotten. The fact that all of Shakespeare's plays are timeless helps Luhrmann and he uses this to his advantage. The most vital person of any

film is the director. The director makes all the decisions and if the film isn't that good he gets the blame. The reason he chose to do the film was to answer the question " If Shakespeare was alive today how would he make the film? ". He tried to make the first scene as a spaghetti western.

He did this by using techniques in westerns like slow motion, zoom and fast track. He even made the music like a western. They took out all the westerns from the local video shop and stole the music that they liked. They made the style of the shootout flamenco. Luhrmann handled the prologue very well by making it like a news report.

When there is a screen inside of a screen your bound to look at it because there is nothing else. He made it start off small because he wanted to make sure that you fully concentrated on it. Even if you didn't concentrate on it he made it appear after it so you would not forget. Altogether the prologue was said three times so there was no way you missed it. The words " Star cross'd lovers" are broken shows that it is a love story that goes wrong. The camera kept going on the religious statues showing that the law is also a means of maintaining peace and harmony in this society.

He made it shift from funny to scary by making them make fun of the nuns but as soon as they went the two enemies saw each other, and then he shifted it to the law taking action. He used music to shift it from funny to scary to the law. He made it at a petrol station because he thought what would rich, young boys do with their time? And then he thought that they would ride around in cars biting their thumb at each other. Also a petrol station is a place that everyone goes, every day to fill up their cars. In that

way it is like the town centre because everyone passes by. He made this a first scene to introduce you to everyone and it is an exciting scene, which makes sure you won't want to walk out.

The production designer has to choose where they were going to set the film. At first they thought of filming it in Miami because they need generic landscape, one that no one recognises, and everyone there was Latino and hot blooded. The reason they didn't film there was because they were not allowed. They went around the world looking for a new place which had what they wanted and found Mexico. They thought it was such a great place because it already had religious statues about the place and everyone was Latino.

It represented Verona very well. The production designer also needs to focus on the small details because they all tell a story about the person for example, if someone has a button missing it may show they have been in a fight, or are not very well off or even don't treat their things well. The more detailed, the more believable, even if it is invisible. For the guns, they had to make in a certain way because if there was a guns designer or guns specialist watching they would instantly become bored and maybe even leave the film and everyone loves mistakes so it may even be put in the paper.

An example of things being detailed is that in the film the Latino guns were older and had religious symbols while the Anglo's had sleeker, more modern guns. Also on the guns it had the words "sword" and "longsword" as that was the make. This was done so the script didn't have to be changed when

Benvolio said “ Raise your swords”. The film, like every other film, needs casting.

In this film they knew what they wanted, but they had to find them. They did this by going to all the local talent agencies. As it was a Shakespeare film they needed to attract people because no one would really want to go. They needed a big name in the film.

At the time Leonardo DiCaprio (Romeo) was the heartthrob of young girls and was in many films so quite well known. Films use famous people because if you had seen them in a previous film that you had enjoyed you would be attracted to watch them in their next film. Claire Danes (Juliet) is good because she looks like someone you could know. This also makes you want to watch the film.

Hollywood didn't like this because they only like big stars. Leonardo would help Shakespeare go “ back on the billboards of Times Square”. Once the people had been chosen they needed to look the part, this is down to the costume designer. The costume designer got pictures of the cast, using the computer, and put them in different costumes. They thought of putting Juliet in an angel costume because Romeo called her a bright angel and put Romeo in armour because he is her knight in shining armour.

The costume designer is important because it takes a while for your ear to be in tune with the language so you needed to show the words with what you see. An example of this is Tybalt. You can tell he is evil by the way he dresses. Also you can tell he is religious because he has a vest with Jesus on it.

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The choreographer is the person in charge of the movements the cast make. This is important because the movements the actors make give the style of themselves. This style embellishes the character and tells you about what the person is like. The Montague's move in a way that makes them out to be laid back and not really bothered about things, just want to enjoy life. The Capulet's move in a way showing that they are serious and want to be above the Montague's. The sound is a major part in any film and is a long, hard job.

In one shot there is more than one sound. There is the background music, footsteps, maybe the sound of cars, gunshots etc. As they tried to make it as a spaghetti western they did things like using the sound of spurs when Tybalt gets out of the car. Luhrmann has answered his question about " How would Shakespeare make this film if he was alive today? " He has made this achievement because the only reason Shakespeare made the play in that way was because that was what things were like those days.

If he was alive today he probably would have made it in the way Baz Luhrmann has. Zaffarelli made his version the same as Shakespeare's but if Shakespeare was alive today he would have updated it using a modern cityscape.