LOVE’S LABOUR’S LOST

By William Shakespeare
Directed by Peter Pasyk

GRADE RECOMMENDATION
8+

CONTENT ADVISORY
Please see the show page for a detailed audience advisory.

SYNOPSIS
In the Kingdom of Navarre, King Ferdinand and his three companions make a pact: in order to further their studies and wrestle with the great philosophical questions, they will avoid all female company for three years. The life of the heart, the men declare, must make way for the far superior life of the mind.

But the arrival of the Princess of France and her three lovely companions puts the King’s decree to an impossible test. Meanwhile, romance is threatening Ferdinand’s plan outside the scented gardens of the nobility. Love letters are posted, misdelivered and misinterpreted. Comic subplots abound. Vows are pledged and disavowed. Light-hearted drama reaches its climax in a twist as the four budding philosophers are schooled in the ways of the human heart.

Love’s Labour’s Lost is one of Shakespeare’s earliest and most beloved comedies. As critics have noted, it is the first of the Bard’s plays to fully display his command of a dizzying range of poetic and rhetorical forms. The play’s love-smitten characters exchange puns, rhyming couplets, metaphor, and high philosophical speechifying, testing the very limits of language and expression. In doing so, they dramatize the conflict between heart and head, desire and will, and idealism and reality. Shakespeare is also making a wry comment on the impossibility of trying to contain the female experience within the narrow male gaze.

Reimagined for contemporary audiences by renowned director Peter Pasyk, Love’s Labour’s Lost shines a gentle light on our romantic aspirations and our often feeble attempts to express them.

THEMES
• Appearance and Reality
• Authenticity
• Human Nature
• The Idealization of Women
• The Inevitability of Passing Time
• The Pursuit of Knowledge
• Love, Desire and Courtship
• Metatheatre
• Morality and Hypocrisy
• The Power of Language
• Social Status and Power
• Temptation and Responsibility
• Trustworthiness
• Upended Expectations
DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Do you believe young people can truly fall in love? Why or why not?
- What is more important in life: pleasure or discipline? Why?
- In what ways do romantic comedies reinforce traditional or problematic ideas about gender? In what ways do they support more radical or progressive gender ideas?
- What questions would you ask yourself or others before making a promise?

STUDY GUIDES

2023 Shorts and Study Guides and those from previous seasons are available free of charge online at https://www.stratfordfestival.ca/Learn/Teachers/ResourcesPD

BOOKING INFORMATION: TICKETS, WORKSHOPS & CHATS

STUDENT MATINÉES

You may book any available date, but selected student matinée performances for this show are at 2 p.m. on the following dates:

- Wednesday, September 13th
- Thursday, September 21st
- Friday, September 22nd
- Friday, September 29th

WORKSHOPS & CHATS

Pre or Post-Show Workshops and Post-Show Chats (virtual, onsite or at your school/centre) can be booked by calling the Box Office at 1.800.567.1600.

SOCIAL MEDIA

/StratfordFestival /stratfest /stratfordfestival /stratfest /stratfest

TOOLS FOR TEACHERS SPONSORED BY

Proud Season Partners

Production support for Love’s Labour’s Lost is generously provided by Catherine Elliot Shaw in memory of John D. Shaw, and by the Tremain family. The appearance of members of the Birmingham Conservatory in Love’s Labour’s Lost is generously supported by The Marilyn and Charles Baillie Fund and by Alice & Tim Thornton.

Tools for Teachers includes Prologues, Study Guides and Stratford Shorts.