

<p>Volume 26 Number 11 NOV 2023</p>		<p>Website https://www.williamstown-film-society.org Email michaeljslee58@gmail.com Phone 0478 624 528</p>
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Council Chamber of the Town Hall, 104 Ferguson St, Williamstown, 7.30pm, Wednesday 29th November, 2023.

The Court Jester & W.F.S. A.G.M.

Even after a decade in Hollywood, during which time he had scored with *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* and *White Christmas*, Danny Kaye was still concerned that the energy and spontaneity of his cabaret performances didn't come across on screen. He had been performing live since he was 14 and a rapport with his audience was key to his appeal. So, he formed Dena Productions to attempt some uniquely Kayesque vehicles. Although it remained his favourite picture, his initial venture, *Knock On Wood*, had only done moderate business. But it at least it made money. *The Court Jester* lost \$1.8 million. Yet, it has since become one of Kaye's best-loved outings.

As ever, there were some amiable songs and plenty of pantomimic tomfoolery. But Kaye was always more verbally than physically dexterous and his tongue-twisting ingenuity during the scene in which he, Mildred Natwick and Glynis Johns lace a goblet of wine gave rise to perhaps his most famous line, 'The pellet with the poison's in the vessel with the pestle; the chalice from the palace is the brew that's true.'

Yet, while Kaye sought to steal every scene, the film's success owed much to the excellence of the supporting cast. Cecil Parker essays another of his genial dupes, while Angela Lansbury revels in the rare opportunity to be glamorous and coquettish, as the amorous princess. Indeed, only Glynis Johns is short-changed, as Kaye never got the hang of love scenes and the romantic subplot is something of a dud. But the pivotal performance came from Basil Rathbone, who not only excelled at such hissable villainy, but whose presence also linked the movie to the very swash-buckling costumers, like *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1937), that it was seeking to lampoon.

A cracking jest, wonderfully enjoyable.



By David Parkinson, 1 January 2000

<https://www.empireonline.com/movies/reviews/court-jester-review/>

Starbox Results

	5	4	3	2	1	Average
The Lost City Of Melbourne	46	2	0	0	0	5.0

To watch a trailer (& read more) head to the 2023 program on our website

[https://: www.williamstown-film-society.org](https://www.williamstown-film-society.org)