



BELFAST

(2022) 12A. (DRAMA)

Director: Kenneth Branagh With Judi Dench, Ciaran Hinds Runtime: 98 mins

Kenneth Branagh, who grew up in Belfast, directs this semi-autobiographical and poignant story of love, laughter and loss in one boy's childhood, just at the onset of the Troubles. Filmed mainly in black and white, with some flashes of colour.

It's emotionally affecting but warm enough to be a crowd-pleaser, and Judi Dench and Ciaran Hinds are delightful as Buddy's grandparents.

"There is a terrific warmth and tenderness to Kenneth Branagh's elegiac, autobiographical movie about the Belfast of his childhood: spryly written, beautifully acted and shot in a lustrous monochrome, with set pieces, madeleines and epiphanies that feel like a more emollient version of Terence Davies. Some may feel that the film is sentimental or that it does not sufficiently conform to the template of political anger and despair considered appropriate for dramas about Northern Ireland and the Troubles. And yes, there is certainly a spoonful of sugar (or two) in the mix, with some mandatory Van Morrison on the soundtrack." *The Guardian*

"Branagh has an easy way with a camera and isn't afraid of sentiment, but he offsets this with a good line in comedy that cuts through the softer stuff like an astringent. . . Although this community would go on to be largely defined by strife in the eyes of the world for many years to follow, Branagh makes sure that what we chiefly feel is the love." *Eye for Film*

"Dench, like the whole cast, is irresistible." *Evening Standard*