2022 - 2023 Touring Production

LOVE’S LABOUR’S LOST

STUDY GUIDE

Prepared by Steve Abaroa, Education Director and Cameron Abaroa, Dramaturg
Contents

Cast and Crew ........................................................1
Characters .......................................................................2
Summary of the Play ...................................................3
Notes on Our Production ............................................5
What is Navarre? .......................................................6
Themes and Discussion Questions ...............................7

Cast and Creatives

CAST

Spencer Beckwith...Costard
Elizabeth Broeder...Princess of France
Nathan Gayan...Dumaine/Moth
LaToshia Hill...Boyet
Johnny Kalita...Don Adriano de Armando
Sam McInerney...Berowne
Paul Nichols...Longaville

Ian Nussle...Sir Nathaniel/Dull
John Pene...The King of Navarre
Ksjusha Povod...Maria
Briyannah Simmons...Rosaline
Sawyer Wolter...Jaquenetta
Sarah White...Katherine

Creatives

Director...Steve Abaroa
Asst. Director/ Dramaturg...Cameron Abaroa
Dance Choreographer...Elizabeth Broeder
Costume Designer...Beau Heckman & Nathan Gayan
Hair & Makeup Designer...Juliana Jackson
Scenic Designer...Chase Budden
Sound Designer...Peter Bish
Lighting Designer...Stacey Walston
Props Designer...Beau Heckman

Stage Manager...Dylan Prentis
Assistant Stage Manager ... Alexis Nomorosa
Technical Director...Stacey Walston
Master Carpenter...Chase Budden
Scenic Artist ... Cadence Stewart
Protagonists: King Ferdinand, the Princess of France. (They dictate and control the destinies of the other lovers)
Antagonists: The immaturity of the men, the wise reluctance of the women to believe in love at first sight

Ferdinand: King of Navarre, who woos the princess of France.
Princess of France: Beautiful woman who captures the heart of the King of Navarre but tells him at the end of the play that he must spend a year in a hermitage before she will marry him.
Berowne (Biron): Lord at Ferdinand's court. Berowne loves Rosaline.
Rosaline: Lady attending the Princess of France.
Longaville: Lord at Ferdinand's court. Longaville loves Maria.
Maria: Lady attending the Princess of France.
Dumain: Lord at Ferdinand's court. Dumain loves Katherine.
Katherine: Lady attending the Princess of France.
Don Adriano de Armado: Pretentious and long-winded knight who loves Jaquenetta with a passion. He appears to symbolize King Philip II of Spain and the Spanish Armada (hence the name de Armado).
Jaquenetta: Comely country wench loved by Don Adriano.
Boyet: A Lady of high birth attending the princess of France.
Sir Nathaniel: Curate (or parson).
Dull: Constable.
Costard: Clown (jester).
Moth: Page to Armado.
The impetuous king of Navarre and his friends, Berowne, Longaville, and Dumaine, resolve, following a rowdy turn of courtly pleasure, to spend their time in study for three years, totally renouncing the company of women. The idea of sleeping but three hours a night and allowing no women in the court seems a bit severe to Berowne, who protests the absurdity of the whole notion but agrees to sign the vow. What good can come, he reasons, when their only recreation is to be the conversation of Costard, a country fool, and on Don Adriano de Armado, an affected and flamboyant Spaniard.

Settling into this celibate life might have proven easier were it not for the arrival of the beautiful princess of France, on a very important diplomatic mission, with her three attractive and vivacious ladies: Rosaline, Maria and Katherine. The king, of course, must “adjust” his vow in order to take care of state business.

Even so, he insists the ladies must be lodged in a tent outside his gates. The problem is, the king almost instantly falls in love with the princess, and each of his friends follows suit by falling in love with one of the three ladies. All would like to dissolve the pact, but each believes the others are holding true to their vow.

Meanwhile, the first violation has already occurred. Don Armado finds Costard with Jaquenetta, a convenient country wench, whom Don Armado wants for himself. Now in Armado’s keeping, Costard must do penance by subsisting for a week’s fast on bran and water.

As this is happening, each of the four lords is busy composing passionate love sonnets and having them delivered to the lady of his choice. Alas, some of the sonnets are intercepted, some are overheard, and soon each of the lords is accusing the others of oath-breaking.
Why pretend any longer, they finally reason, since it is obvious that “young blood doth not obey an old decree”? So, the vow is thrown to the wind and they openly devote themselves to the pursuit of the women. They plan all sorts of devices to woo their ladies, even to the extent of disguising themselves as Muscovites to visit the ladies’ tents.

However, these ladies are not giddy girls, but sophisticated women of the world, and they are more than a little suspicious of the lords’ foolish importunings. The lords get an education no university could have afforded them. These ladies are even more adept at disguises than the “Muscovites,” who are tricked into wooing the wrong women, among other things.

A messenger arrives from France to inform the princess of the death of her father, and that she must return home with all haste. The king and his friends make their plea for the hands of their ladies, fully expecting to be accepted. The ladies feel the lords are still not to be trusted. After all, they have broken their own vows of celibacy, Penance is assigned to each of the lords, and the ladies agree to reconsider their proposal in a year and a day. The ladies return to France, and, at play’s end, the poor forlorn men are left to contemplate the realities of love and responsibility.
We decided to set our touring production of *Love's Labour's Lost* in 1936 to 1937, the short care-free era as Europe began to emerge from the Depression and before the horrors of the rise of Fascism; the era of swing Jazz and Big Band, which seemed to fit with the dramatic love between the Navarrese and the French courtiers.

In crafting this production for a tour, it became clear that many of the minor characters added too much distraction to the wild love story between the five couples, and so the characters of Marcade (a French nobleman), and Holofernes (The King’s auspicious tutor), into the characters of Boyet and Sir Nathaniel, respectively.

In addition, wherever possible, the audience is visible to the actors as a way to simulate what audiences in 1598 would have experienced - the actors speaking to the audience as a part of the action.

As Navarre is a Basque region (and the familial background of the director and dramaturg), we added a few small Basque Easter Eggs.

- As a nod to the Basque language, a single word was added to the prologue- *arreta* - which translates roughly to “attention!”
- The arrival of the Russians is heralded by a Basque folksong “a su kiki.” The idea behind using this music was that the King, living in the 30’s, would not have had much access to actual Russian music, due to the paranoia surrounding the Soviet Union at the time.
- On the King’s Chain of Office and Dull’s cap, we have added the coat of arms of Pamplona, the capital city of the ancient Kingdom of Navarre. You can see elements of this heraldry in the King’s chain of office.
The Kingdom of Navarre was a medieval kingdom established in the northeastern part of the Iberian Peninsula, covering part of modern Spain and France.

Starting as a duchy (province ruled by a duke - a reference to which the Princess of France makes when she calls the King a “Virtuous Duke”), the Kingdom was established in the late 800s CE as a part of the Reconquista, the period of time where the Christian Kingdoms of Navarre, Aragon, Leon, Castille, and Lisbon made an alliance to drive the Moors out of Iberia.

Unlike the Latin nations surrounding it, Navarre was Basque, an indigenous population dating to before the Romans, never conquered by the Romans, and was thus culturally and linguistically different from their neighbors.

Navarre, due to political marriages, was informally absorbed into Spain by the late 1400’s, but still continued to exist as a symbol of “Non-Spanish” Iberians through to Shakespeare’s era.

Love’s Labour’s Lost was first performed in 1597, nearly ten years after the defeat of the Spanish Armada, which cemented the Spaniards as the object of ridicule by Shakespeare and his contemporaries, leading to the creation of Don Adriano de Armado, a clownish Spaniard.

Navarre also had some claim to the territory of Aquitaine, leading to the diplomatic mission that brings together the French Court and the Navarrese Court.

The area exists today as the Comunidades Autónomas of the Basque Country and Navarre in Spain, and the arrondissement of Bayonne and the cantons of Mauléon-Licharre and Tardets-Sorholus in France.
Major Themes:

True love must be tested in the crucible of time. The princess and her company of ladies find their wooers entertaining, but they do not commit to a relationship with them immediately. Wisely, they realize that true love does not strike like lightning but instead develops over time, like a rose growing from seed to full bloom. At the end of the play, they tell the men that they must wait and undergo tests to prove that their love is not mere infatuation. In this respect, these ladies contrast with other Shakespeare heroines, such as Rosalind (As You Like It), Juliet (Romeo and Juliet) and Hero (Much Ado About Nothing), who all fall in love at first sight and never doubt their feelings or the intentions of their lovers.

The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. This paraphrase from the Bible (Matthew 26: 40-41) aptly sums up the state of mind of the king and his three compatriots. For a moment, they become idealistic scholars who renounce the world and its pleasures. But the princess and her companions bring them down from the rarefied clime of academe to the sensual world of perfume and feminine beauty.

Love of learning cannot vie with love of a man for a woman. This theme is a variation of the second theme. King Ferdinand and his compatriots decide to isolate themselves for three years to study great books and great ideas, vowing that they will keep no company with women during this period. However, when beautiful women arrive on a diplomatic mission, the men immediately forswear their oaths.

Spain's King Philip II is a pompous bumbler. In 1588, Philip attacked England with his supposedly invincible Armada but was soundly defeated by a smaller English force. In the play, Philip and his Armada—and all of the high hopes for it—become Don Adriano de Armado (Armada), a pretentious aristocrat who is thwarted in his verbal forays by his lowly page, Moth, and in his wooing of the illiterate Jaquenetta, a country girl.
Discussion Questions

1. To what plan of Ferdinand, the King of Navarre, have Berowne, Longaville, and Dumaine apparently agreed?
2. What will happen to the gentlemen if they break their oaths?
3. How do Longaville, Dumaine, and Berowne view the King’s radical proposal? Which gentleman implies that the provisions of the plan are unrealistic?
4. Why has Constable Dull brought Costard to see Ferdinand? What crimes has Costard committed? Who has made the accusation? What was his motive for this accusation?
5. When Dull delivers Costard into Armado’s custody, what will be the conditions of his imprisonment?
6. What will happen to Jaquenetta?
7. Who accompanies the Princess of France on her diplomatic mission to the King of Navarre?
8. When the King of Navarre and the Princess of France finally met, why does she accuse him of a lack of hospitality?
9. What observation about the King of Navarre has Boyet made? What is the Princess’s reaction to the news? Although the Princess does not comment upon Boyet’s observations, what could she be thinking?
10. Why has Armado decided to free Costard?
11. Why does Berowne berate himself so much for falling love with Rosaline?
12. As soon as he spots the King, where does Berowne hide? What does Berowne realize about the King’s mood?
13. What arguments does Berowne use to justify the broken oaths of the men?
14. Why does Sir Nathaniel need the assistance of Costard?
15. What gifts has each of the women received from her suitor? How does each woman regard the gifts?
16. According to Boyet, what are the three purposes of the suitors’ plan? How will each man know his beloved?
17. Like Bottom’s performance as Pyramus, Costard steps out of character to evaluate his performance. What is Costard’s critique?
18. How does news of the French King’s death stop the pageant? How does the Princess (now Queen) react? What is revealed about her in this moment?