



DIRECTOR'S NOTES ON OUR PRODUCTION

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 High School students, 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.

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 respect 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. "A Su Kiki" 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 Kingdom of Navarre (and the home of the famous Running of the Bulls.)

What is Navarre?

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. ▼

~ Steve Abaroa, Director