



# Writ in the Margins Podcast

Created by the students in REN670: Dramaturgy in the Shakespeare and Performance graduate program at Mary Baldwin University

Produced by Prof. Molly E. Seremet

## Episode Guide

### Season 1, Episode 1

#### *FuenteOvejuna*: Chivalry in Context

Hosts: Kelsey Harrison and Kailey Potter

Special Guest: Sara Renee Topham

NOTE: This resource was created for *Writ in the Margins* by students in the Shakespeare and Performance graduate program at Mary Baldwin University as a final project for graduate students in Prof. Molly E. Seremet's REN670: Dramaturgy class. All recordings and accompanying materials are available for use for educational and entertainment purposes. Please do not duplicate or distribute these materials without permission, however. All opinions stated in episodes are those of the hosts and special guests and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the institutions presenters represent.

## Episode Resources

“Calatrava, Order Of.” *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Encyclopedia.com, 26 Oct. 2021.

Casalduero, Joaquin, and Ruth Whittredge. “Fuenteovejuna’: Form and Meaning.” *The Tulane Drama Review*, vol. 4, no. 2, Dec. 1959, pp. 83–107., <https://doi.org/10.2307/1124864>.

“Despots to Discos.” *The List Archive, The List*, 14 Aug. 1992, <https://archive.list.co.uk/the-list/1992-08-14/37/>.

“Fuente Ovejuna (1612-1614), Lope De Vega Carpio.” *Out of the Wings*, King's College London, 2018, <http://www.outofthewings.org/db/play/fuente-ovejuna/productions.html#pr223>.

Writ in the Margins, 1.1 (*FuenteOvejuna*: Chivalry in Context)

Hosts: Kelsey Harrison and Kailey Potter

“Laurence Boswell, Ed Henderson - Music in Fuente Ovejuna.” Youtube, Stratford Festival, 29 June 2008, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cVbKyhRe4AE>.

Martineau, Janet. “De Vega Upstages the Bard at Stratford Festival.” Mlive, *The Saginaw News*, 26 July 2008, [https://www.mlive.com/entertainment/saginaw/2008/07/de\\_vega\\_upstages\\_the\\_bard\\_at\\_s.html](https://www.mlive.com/entertainment/saginaw/2008/07/de_vega_upstages_the_bard_at_s.html).  
MacKay, Angus, and Geraldine McKendrick. “The Crowd in Theater and the Crowd in History: Fuenteovejuna.” *Renaissance Drama*, vol. 17, 1986, pp. 125–147., <https://doi.org/10.1086/rd.17.41917216>.

Nestruck, J Kelly. “Stratford Show a Refreshing Window into a Foreign Time.” *The Globe and Mail*, 29 June 2008, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/stratford-show-a-refreshing-window-into-a-foreign-time/article25579956/>.

“Program: ‘Fuente Ovejuna’ (1972).” LaMama - Archives, LaMama, <https://catalog.lamama.org/index.php/Detail/objects/1669>.

“Sara Topham, Severn Thompson - Fuente Ovejuna (2008) - Youtube.” Youtube, Stratford Festival, 2008, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jSgd2zwiQTs>.

Shuttleworth, Ian. “Review of Fuente Ovejuna.” *Shutters, City Limits Magazine*, 1992, <http://www.cix.co.uk/~shutters/reviews/92066.htm>.

“Webcast #16, Part 3 - ‘Introduction to Fuente Ovejuna.’” Youtube, Stratford Festival, 5 June 2008, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JlqihwtNp9I>.

## Episode Transcript

Theme music plays

Banjo music plays

Kailey: Hello, and welcome to today’s episode of Writ in the Margins, where we’ll be covering Lope de Vega’s *Fuenteovejuna*. I’m Kailey,

Kelsey: I’m Kelsey, and we’re graduate students in the Mary Baldwin University Shakespeare and Performance program, here to chat about some of the dramaturgical aspects of this Spanish Golden Age play. We’ll be discussing the true events that the play is based on, and chatting about production history, featuring an interview with Sara Topham, a Canadian actress who starred in the Stratford Festival’s 2008 production of the play. For anyone who hasn’t yet read *Fuenteovejuna*...

Kailey: And you should, it’s really good!

Writ in the Margins, 1.1 (*FuenteOvejuna*: Chivalry in Context)

Hosts: Kelsey Harrison and Kailey Potter

Kelsey: ...here's a bit of a plot summary. We're first introduced to Commander Guzmán, who persuades the Master of the Order of Calatrava to attack Ciudad Real, a city held by Castile, in the name of the Portuguese monarchy. While that attack occurs, the Commander assumes control of Fuente Ovejuna, a local pastoral village. After becoming more and more of a threat to the women of the town, the Commander attacks Laurencia after she refuses his affections. She's rescued by her love, Frondoso, but the Commander vows revenge on them both. At Laurencia and Frondoso's wedding, the Commander interrupts the ceremony, imprisons Frondoso, and drags Laurencia away to his fortress. The men of the town gather that evening, debating what they should do about the Commander. Laurencia, having escaped the Commander, confronts them along with the other women of the town, demanding that they take revenge on the Commander. The entire town of Fuente Ovejuna rises up and together they storm the fortress and kill Commander Guzman.

The death of the Commander draws the attention of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, who send a magistrate to the village with orders to find out who killed the Commander, by any means necessary. The villagers, knowing that they'll be tortured to see if they'll reveal what happened, all take a vow to only say that "Fuenteovejuna did it". Even during torture they all keep their vow and Ferdinand and Isabella pardon the town for the crime and retake Ciudad Real from the Master, who apologizes for allowing himself to be manipulated by the Commander Guzmán.

Kailey: Ah, a mob scene, a wedding, torture - all the ingredients you need to make a great early modern play.

Kelsey: And also why de Vega was such a popular playwright in his own time.

Kailey: One of the most compelling facts about de Vega's play is that it is based on true events. In 1476, the historical Adalusian village of Fuente Ovejuna, located in the kingdom of Castile, rose up and murdered Fernán Gomez de Guzmán, a commander of the Order of Calatrava, after he took over the town and mistreated them. De Vega tells us this is because of his threatening the women of the village, but history doesn't tell us specifically what Guzmán did to incur the wrath of the town. In response to his death, King Ferdinand II of Aragon sent a royal magistrate to investigate the killing. Even in the face of torture, the citizens of the village refused to confess who was responsible for the attack, only responding that "Fuenteovejuna did it".

Which is really what theatrical dreams are made of, right Kelsey?

Kelsey: Eat your heart out, Shakespeare.

Kailey: So, to really understand just how serious the death of the Commander was, we'll need to go into a bit of detail about the relationship between the military and the church in 1400s Spain. First, let's talk about the different Spanish kingdoms existing at this time. We have the Kingdom of Aragon to the east and Navare to the north, which both share a border with France. Then Castile, the largest of the kingdoms in the middle of what is now modern-day Spain. Granada exists on the southern border of Castile, and finally we have Portugal to the west, touching the Atlantic Ocean. Five kingdoms, all ruled by separate monarchs, and all fighting for territory. That power dynamic will change in 1469, when King Ferdinand of Aragon marries Queen Isabella of Castile, his half-cousin.

Kelsey: Wait, his half-cousin?

Writ in the Margins, 1.1 (*FuenteOvejuna*: Chivalry in Context)

Hosts: Kelsey Harrison and Kailey Potter

Kailey: Don't think about it too much. This was medieval Europe, Kelsey. Their marriage will unite the two territories to create the first Spanish kingdom, which they will rule jointly.

Kelsey: Wow, good for them! Equal authority.

Kailey: All of these kingdoms are Catholic and face an external threat from Moorish armies located in northern Africa. Those Islamic forces posed an especially dangerous threat to Castile, due to how close the territories were. To address this threat, Castilian monasteries converted themselves into military orders, meant to defend pilgrims and church property from Islamic invaders. One of the orders was the Order of Calatrava, formed out of a Cistercian monastery, which became the kingdom of Castile's first military order when it was formed in 1164.

Kelsey: Admittedly, Kailey, I know very little about military orders. The Knights Templar was one, right? Can you go into this a little more?

Kailey: Life in any military order at the time would have been heavily structured, focused on the honing of military skills and the purification of the soul. Taking up arms to defend the church was chicken soup for a Spanish knight's soul.

Kelsey: Interesting combination. Violence and piety.

Kailey: All knights in a religious order would have obeyed the same vows as the monks they worked and lived alongside - oaths of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Calatrava had some additional requirements for their members, mainly the rule that they must always wear the white and red Cistercian robes while in public. Life was strict in these orders, but it also created a cultural system where wealthy men could advance socially.

The Order, having existed for over three hundred years by the time the events of *Fuenteovejuna* begin, has grown to be incredibly powerful - powerful enough to challenge the authority of the king and queen. In the play, the Commander has convinced the Master of the Order to invade Ciudad Real in the name of Portugal, and since Fuenteovejuna is nearby, the Commander occupies the city under the pretense of protecting them from the soldiers. That's when things start to go wrong.

Kelsey: Dun, dun, dun.

Kailey: While the Commander has taken and promised to keep his vows of poverty, obedience, and chastity, he will quickly abandon those ideals once he is in control of Fuenteovejuna. His powerful position allows him to confiscate food and goods from the villagers, which they first give as gifts but are later taken by force, his attack against the sovereignty of the kingdom of Castile has shattered his promise of loyalty, and the numerous attempts he and his soldiers make to assault the women of Fuenteovejuna show how little he cares about chastity. In fact, the Commander gives an entire speech about how much he enjoys the women of the town.

Kelsey, as Commander:        Loose women I've a soft spot for  
    But less so once I'm satisfied.  
    Ah, Flores, if they only were  
    Aware of what their charms are worth!  
    A man whom ardor's heat lays waste

Writ in the Margins, 1.1 (*FuenteOvejuna*: Chivalry in Context)

Hosts: Kelsey Harrison and Kailey Potter

Is glad to have his pleasure sealed  
 By lady friends who readily yield,  
 Though he disdain them for this haste.

All this bad behavior has set him against the Catholic Church and the authority of Ferdinand and Isabella, which means that while he may wear the robes of a holy order, he no longer represents it. This corrupted manifestation of christianity is what motivates the villagers of Fuenteovejuna to muster the courage and justification in taking action against the Commander, who as they kill him, cry out:

Mob of voices: Die, wicked Christians and false traitors, too!

Kelsey: So, we mentioned earlier that Lope de Vega was hugely popular in his own time. Cervantes' called him "one of nature's marvels" and "the reigning monarch of the stage." He was an incredibly prolific playwright, producing more than 1,500 plays in his time. However, he was lesser known outside of Spain. It wasn't until the 20th century that we would begin to see *Fuenteovejuna* rise in popularity in the English speaking world. When the play was first published and performed, in the late 16th century, de Vega's audience would have immediately viewed the play as political, comparing it to the current political situation and the disappointing leadership of Philip III. However, de Vega upholds the place of the monarchy, highlighting what happens to those who act against it and its laws in the torture of the citizens of *Fuenteovejuna*.

Productions from the past century have focused on the ideals of democracy, socialism, and sometimes communism (like the notable Russian ballet adaptation). Peasants rising up against unjust powers rang true amongst the rebellions and political upheavals that plagued the 20th century. *Fuenteovejuna* was first published in French in 1829 in the aftermath of the French Revolution, causing other translations to quickly spread throughout Europe.

Kailey: We've singled out three productions, not adaptations, from the last fifty years that demonstrate *Fuenteovejuna's* place in the modern world. The first being the 1972 La Mama production.

Kelsey: The La Mama Experimental Theatre Club of New York City produced a three act version of the play in 1972. The English translation was done by Professor William Colford. This production, apart from changing the traditional 5 act structure, appears to have been a pretty straightforward production, set in an early modern Fuenteovejuna.

Kailey: Then there's the 1989 production done by the Royal National Theatre in London.

Kelsey: This production was directed by Declan Donnellan.

Kailey: That name sounds familiar.

Kelsey: He was one of the co-founders of the theatre company Cheek by Jowl.

Kailey: Ooh! The one that did that crazy Russian production of *Measure for Measure* that we watched!

Writ in the Margins, 1.1 (*FuenteOvejuna*: Chivalry in Context)

Hosts: Kelsey Harrison and Kailey Potter

Kelsey: Exactly! This production was also his directorial debut at the Royal National Theatre when he was made Associate Director.

Kailey: Oh, wow. You know what, good for him!

Kelsey: Yeah, the translation was done by Adrian Mitchell, and tickets only cost £5-£15.

Kailey: Well, there's also inflation to consider.

Kelsey: Still cheaper than when I was seeing shows there, and that was with a student discount. Anyway, the play had a bit of a lengthier run. In addition to its mounting at the National Theatre, this production represented Britain at Expo 92 in Seville and went to the Edinburgh International Festival. In Seville, the play was presented in front of the Spanish delegation in English. Donnellan was rightfully fearful since the play is a darling of the Spanish Golden Age. However, the audience and delegation from Fuente Ovejuna loved it and gave flamenco hand-claps at the curtain call.

Kailey: Oh, I love that!

Kelsey: Isn't that sweet? One critic described it as being a succession of set-pieces, before the community of the village sweeps the audience away into the narrative. Rachel Joyce's performance of Laurencia was described as "free, assured and lively; her grief and rage, when they inevitably come, are the more overpowering for the contrast with her former character." The same critic also noted that "the entire company, though, are uniformly excellent both as individuals and in inspired ensemble sequences."

The aesthetic of the play was similar to that of La Mama's in that it was set in the original time period. A programme for the production showcases little to no conceptual notes, but paragraphs of historical context regarding Lope de Vega's career and the geography and political issues surrounding the play help to center an audience unlikely to be familiar with the text. Critics and audiences loved it, being performed "to unanimous approbation."

Now the 2008 Stratford Shakespeare Festival production was the debut of Lope de Vega on their stage.

Kailey: They'd never done a de Vega play before 2008?

Kelsey: Nope.

Kailey: That's crazy considering how much Shakespeare they do. You would think they would also be doing other early modern playwrights, including those from the Spanish Golden Age.

Kelsey: You would think. It was performed in the Tom Patterson Theatre and directed by British director Laurence Boswell. He also translated this particular production. Something else interesting to note is that the Tom Patterson Theatre is a thrust stage.

Kailey: Mmm, that must have been a fun challenge for all those crowd scenes.

Writ in the Margins, 1.1 (*FuenteOvejuna*: Chivalry in Context)

Hosts: Kelsey Harrison and Kailey Potter

Kelsey: Indeed. Now, the word to describe this production was melodramatic. Another critic describes the production as “awkward but inadvertently comic.” He really didn’t like Boswell’s direction. He also describes, “a fight in slow-motion ends up looking silly, while the decision to have crucial offstage dialogue boom like the voice of God through the sound system turns the off-stage torture of a 10-year-old into a giggle-inducing moment.” However, audiences received the performance positively, and Sara Topham, our own acting instructor, was singled out for her spirited performance.

Kailey: Now, we are ecstatic to announce that a very special guest will be joining us.

Kelsey: Yes, Sara Topham played Laurencia in the Stratford production, and she has graciously agreed to speak with us today about her experience.

Kailey: So, Sara, you played Laurencia in the 2008 Stratford Shakespeare Festival production of *Fuenteovejuna*. Did you have any familiarity with the play before you were cast?

Sara: I had absolutely none and, uh, I sort of first heard of the play—the season hadn’t been announced, and on my dressing room table, I was doing, uh, *An Ideal Husband*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *King Lear* that year, like the 2007 year, and on my dressing room table, I came in for a performance of *Merchant*, I think, and on my dressing room table was, uh, an envelope. And you always know at that time of year it’s from the director’s office and it’s probably an audition. And, so, um, inside it was the big speech when she comes back to rouse the townspeople and, uh, and a copy of the play in a different translation. Because the translation we were using in the production was done by the director who had—uh, has—a big expertise in those plays, um, and so, I read another translation, which was not nearly as good, to give me a sense of the play and then I went in and actually did his translation of the speech. And I think it was literally like the next afternoon, and I had a two show day the next day, so it was, you know, almost a cold read. Um, and I remem- I remember what I was wearing in the audition! I remember the-the room it was in at Stratford. And I remember kind of connecting with Laurence and knowing that he was sort of nodding his head. And thinking, like, “Oh, I think I’m gonna end up playing this part,” at one of those auditions.

Kailey: Quite the speech to jump into, like, off the jump, for sure.

Sara: Yep!

Kailey: Alright, so you mentioned your director translated the play.

Sara: Oh, that was amazing, because he knew the play. I always think the idea is that on the first day of rehearsal, the director knows the play better than anyone. And by the end of rehearsal, you should certainly know your journey through the play better than the director. And the company as a collective should know the play better than the director. It's part of how you take the play away from the director, which you have to do to run a play successfully. And but he was really wonderful. And we had a couple of things like, so he's British. So for example, in one speech I had to talk about what we would call an eggplant. And being British, he had used the word aubergine because the Brits tend to use that word for eggplant. And I remember the Pascuala and I spent quite a long time trying to explain to him that, like, it's not that Canadians don't know aubergine, but for a lot of people, and particularly for a

Writ in the Margins, 1.1 (*FuenteOvejuna*: Chivalry in Context)

Hosts: Kelsey Harrison and Kailey Potter

lot of Americans, you can get a lot of in the festival that will be a kind of like a clang in their ear and maybe take them out of play. So I actually don't remember. I know we change the line, but he hated the word eggplant. You just hated it. But it was great also because you could talk about what the word tastes like when you say it, because the physical experience of speaking a word or a phrase is such an important part of acting, of bringing the words to life, because we choose words in heightened situations, because of how they feel to say, right. There's a reason that certain curse words are invoked a lot. It's because they're satisfying to say; they feel like they're accomplishing something. And so that part was great. That was great with him. We could get in there and figure that out.

Kailey: Awesome. It sounds like a very collaborative process, which seems cool, especially with the sort of translation aspect of the play.

Sara: Yeah, absolutely. And not collaborative in the sense that we got to say, I don't like that word. Can we change the word? There had to be a... you don't think we changed a lot, but we were able to get a lot of support. And I think that's always a thing with translation. I've had it on Molière plays where my husband, who is fluent in French, I've gone to him and said, what is this in the original French? Because I can't make sense of what it is in English. It doesn't something about does it feel right and something sometimes having someone talk through it with you in the original language gives you a window into the translation or the translators what they were trying to do with the text. And it was a large company. He had before directed the play with a much smaller group of people. But Stratford tends to have a lot of bodies. So there were almost 40 of us in the production. So we had a real village and we had whereas a lot of time you'd be doing that play with maybe like eighteen people. So it's harder. So I think he really enjoyed that piece of it being able to be more physically creative because he had more bodies. How can you do the mob scene with eighteen people? Well, you have to employ you know, the great thing about theater is you know, it's you know, your thoughts, mystique, our kings, right? From Henry Five from the chorus. And, you know, I think I think you probably just have to employ a lot of theatrical Whiz-Bang to make that happen. But he had a little bit of we did different theatrical Whiz-Bang in our production because he had the bodies. Yeah.

Kelsey: So looking at your theater credits, is this the only Spanish Golden Age play that you've done?

Sara: It is, sadly, I loved doing this play. Laurence and I talked about he has a translation of *The Girl in the Green Breeches* as well, and one of *The Dog in the Manger*. He's translated a lot of them. And we did at a certain point talk about trying to get something else done and it just didn't happen. But I did go to England and do the UK production of intimate apparel, the Lynn Nottage play we did in Bath at his theatre there, and then we transferred it to London. And so that was an amazing that was cool. Six years after one day to go and work with him on that play. But Paul Gross came to see about our sixth or seventh preview. For those of you listening who might have seen *Slings and Arrows*, Paul Gross plays the director, Geoffrey. He came to see our sixth or seventh preview and he came to the stage door afterwards to chat and talk to friends. And I remember him grabbing my arms and just starting to weep and saying I was so sure they were going to kill you, was so sure they were going to kill you, the king and queen. And... and then he said it's an extraordinary feeling to go and see a classical play that I don't know the ending of. And he said it must have been it's what it must have been like for the first group of people who saw

Writ in the Margins, 1.1 (*FuenteOvejuna*: Chivalry in Context)

Hosts: Kelsey Harrison and Kailey Potter

*Romeo and Juliet* or *Macías* or *Hamlet* or when you don't really know how it's going to end. So, yeah, I'll always remember that he was so moved by Isabella and Ferdinand pardoning us.

Kelsey: Wow, that's really beautiful. So we know that you've done a lot of Shakespeare in the past. How was this experience different? Doing a Spanish play and then obviously translation. But the play itself, how is that different from English drama?

Sara: I think having to relax into the weave is different, right? Like if Shakespeare is a particular kind of fabric weave, it was different on the Spanish Golden Age play and I don't quite know how to articulate it. It's less. It's a bit Rumbalara somehow, and you had to trust that the rumble of the plane would carry you, whereas with Shakespeare I experience it more like a thread that pulls me through. So. So that was really interesting. That is, of course, also partly hooked to the translating piece because in Shakespeare, the play is not the meaning of the words. It's literally the words, the meaning, the texture, the sound. And of course, the same is true in a Spanish golden age play. It's just that we only do them in translation. So we are losing a little piece of that combination and maybe that's why the weave feels looser. But also, you know, my friend Severn and I who were playing in San Pasquale, talked all the time about how these women are different. These women know that there are real things in the world in a way of a lot of Shakespeare's women only discover over the course of the play like you think about. Imogen, she begins as a princess. And then and then she makes all these discoveries through the woods. Through her journey, Laurencia and Pascuala begin the play knowing the truth about men, a particular kind of man, knowing the truth about the Commander, knowing the truth about how life is dangerous. They already know those things. And so I would say that was different in that in my experience, playing Shakespeare's women versus these women.

Kelsey: Thank you. So, most of the previous productions of *Fuenteovejuna* that we've researched appear to have tried to remain historically accurate. We haven't really found any modernizations. Was there a particular concept for the production? We know music was really important. Yeah, we were incredibly lucky. We had Leive. We had two guitarists who were just guitarists. They were hired as onstage musicians who were who are in every scene. So they were part of the village. We had a bunch of people in the, we were paired with *The Music Man*, so we had a lot of musical ensemble members. And that was pretty crazy to do. And we always had to show that because we did six music bands a week and then two *Fuente*'s. So we only ever did *Fuente* on two show days. So you would either go from "Shipooopi! Shipooopi!" into like one day over who did it, or you would go from like one day I was going to did it to you know, "Shipooopi! Shipooopi!" was pretty funny. That was pretty funny. So we had a lot of instruments. The music was all original, which was incredible with this incredible guitars at Henderson. The clothes were very, very much of the world, you know, I mean, not overly period, soft period, I would call it, but definitely nothing that would place it outside of its own thing to our modern I like its own time. And the set was, honestly it was these incredible like long benches. So it was done in the Patterson Tom Patterson Theatre, which is a sort of shaped like a tongue. It's a thrust along for us. So we had benches that ran on either actually ran the benches, ran in a U shape all along the thrust. And other than that, we had a couple of chairs and there was a cart at one point, but it was incredibly sparse, incredibly sparse, which was really cool. It was like making theatre in elementary school, right. The benches became bushes, they became rocks, they became benches, they became a table or they just became whatever we needed them to become. So it was cool, but it was very simple, really. The language was the centerpiece

Writ in the Margins, 1.1 (*FuenteOvejuna*: Chivalry in Context)

Hosts: Kelsey Harrison and Kailey Potter

of the play. I like that that exist in the same world as Shakespeare, where you can strip it back and just kind of let it speak for itself.

Kelsey: That's nice.

Sara: Absolutely. And you know, what else it has in common with Shakespeare is that filmic thing we often say at Stratford. The reason our stage, our thrust, the tiny Masaryk and Festival Theatre works so well for Shakespeare is it allows you to do a sweep like you would in film because you don't have to exit one group and then into another group. You can have two worlds on the deck at the same time. And, and so it moves incredibly fast. If you're really doing it, it moves incredibly fast. The first line of the scene can come right on the heels of the word of the last line of the previous scene. And, and often they relate, which is an incredible thing that Shakespeare does. But in terms of *Fuente*, it had an incredibly filmic sweep to it because it's built like that and the stage lends itself to that. And Laurence was very cognizant of that. So, you know, we were really able to make it sort of go. And so you feel the, you feel the pulse of what the villagers are working against, which was a really cool thing. So the thing about it, playing in rep with *The Music Man* was hysterical was it was high with Ethel Toffelmier, the lead into Crupi. And, and we were working with this wonderful choreographer who came over to me on the second day of rehearsals. You said to me, no Ethel Toffelmier in the history of this play has ever been able to dance like you. So instead of doing what's usually done, like I'm going to kick your backside with this, like you're really going to have to dance. So it was quite fun to go from that ridiculousness to... Yeah, it was pretty good. Popular with Stratford audiences. Massively popular. You couldn't I couldn't have sold my grandmother for a ticket about six weeks into the run and the last two months of the run, there were people waiting for returns, although the box office did have some amazing stories about people phoning up and saying things like, I'd like to get tickets for a wave of just Spanish words, because, of course, in Canada, where Spanish is not so much a part of our educational system as it is in the States, because our official second language is French. So that's what we all learn. But people loved it. And I think in sort of postal chats and meet and greets and we do a thing called Meet Festival, which is where people can come buy tickets and come and have an hour and a half chat about a specific play, which I did, I think, with Jonathan, who played Toronto. So I don't think I've ever had people saying as much. We want more of this. We want more Spanish Golden Age Plays. I think because of what Paul said, the sensation of a classical play, but the novelty of something that you don't know the ending of, because over the years, of course, people who have been coming to Stratford since 1953, which I still meet people who say I love, first time he came to Stratford, was in the tent as a kid. They have seen Twelfth Night a million times and they have seen Hamlet a million times. And there they love those plays. But I think they were delighted by the opportunity to be in the classical world but not know the ending. So but sadly, it hasn't happened again, which is which is too bad that the next time I talk to someone in power, I will say, hey, I just did a podcast about and asked this question that I remembered. And so now I should poke you and say, maybe you should look at that again. Yeah, but people love it.

Kelsey: Wow, that's nice to hear. So, when you were in the very beginning of the production, did you have a dramaturg for on your production team?

Writ in the Margins, 1.1 (*FuenteOvejuna*: Chivalry in Context)

Hosts: Kelsey Harrison and Kailey Potter

Sara: No, because Laurence was sort of doing that because he had translated it. So he was really sort of in charge of the room. And we did a lot of like one of the things we did I can't remember the name of the film maker, but we watched there were these incredibly incredible flamenco films made in the 1970s of this flamenco company. And we watched that production of Blood Wedding, which is, of course, Lorca, not the same author, but... That was incredible, the sense of them, the sense of their bodies, and it's a real flamenco company that's all in rehearsal clothes, there's no production element at all happening in the hall. And so you watch how the company is together and then you watch how they are when they're moving and dancing. That was a really, really incredible thing. And we did a bunch of kind of, I guess you call them exercises or explorations around the villagers coming back from the fight, that kind of thing. What is it to all be together in a room? We did some sort of like Spartacus, like because, you know, the end of the play feels like Spartacus, right. And did it. We did some kind of work on that improvisation, work on that to just kind of try and get that organic in our systems. Yeah, we did a lot of great stuff with that. And we had a wonderful choreographer named Nicola Pantin who did as a kind of not formal flamenco, but flamenco flavored, more country dance kind of version for the wedding. We had a beautiful dance that was very Spanish in connectivity and therefore recognizable to the audience because of some flamenco elements, but not feeling like, oh, we're suddenly in a flamenco ballet. It was great.

Kailey: Thank you, Sara. That's really awesome. We appreciate you taking the time to work on this.

Sara: You are most welcome. It's really actually it's really nice to think about it. I've thought about it in a while and it was a very special production was really special to me. So thank you for the opportunity. Oh, yeah. Any time.

Kelsey: Thank you so much, Sara.

\*Conclusion\*

Banjo music outro