

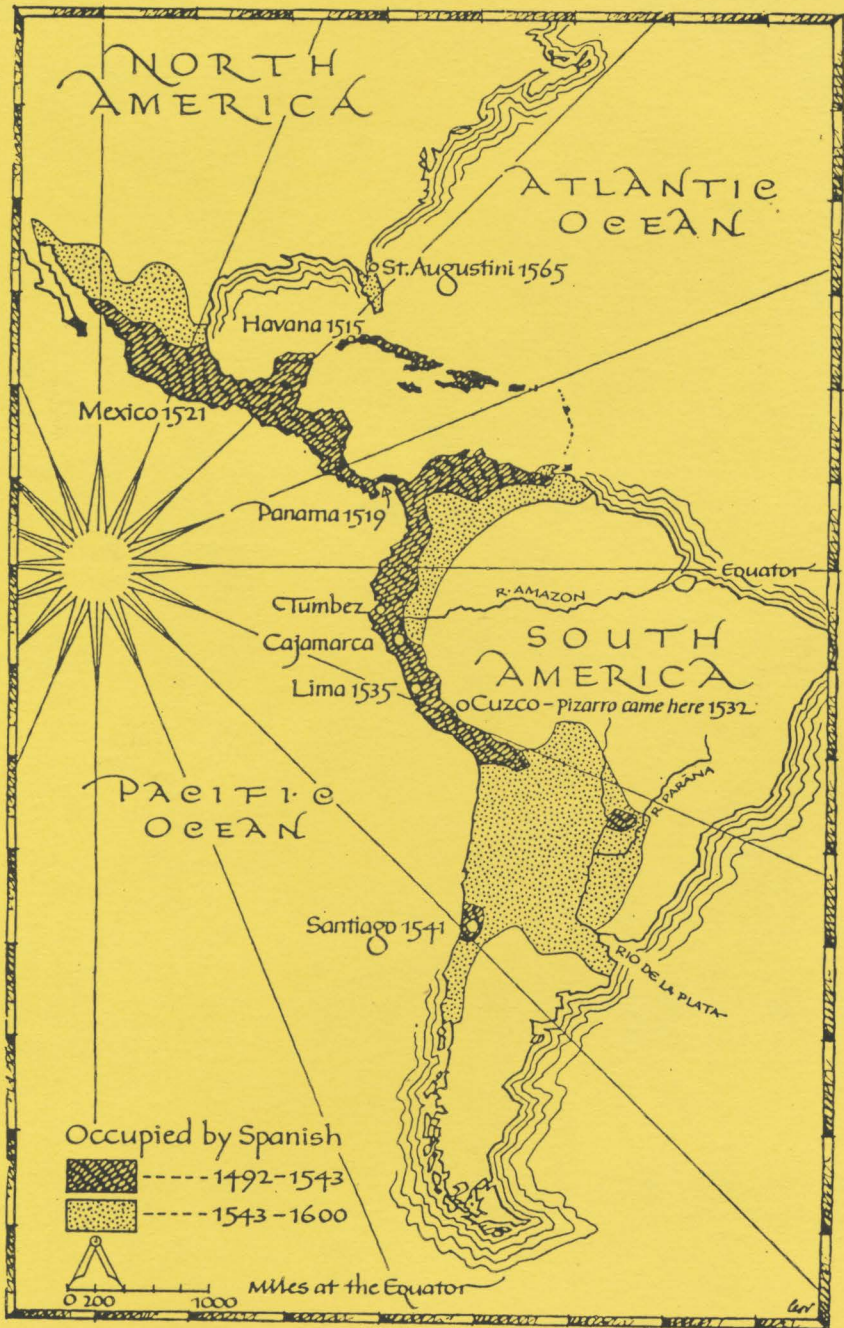
WILSON'S SCHOOL DRAMATIC
SOCIETY PRESENTS

The Royal Hunt of the Sun



by
Peter
Shaffer

IN THE SCHOOL HALL AT 7:30 pm
8th, 9th & 10th DECEMBER 1983



HISTORICAL NOTE

Spain's Golden Age of Expansion

In medieval Europe one of the major sources of wealth was spices, which for centuries had made their tortuous way from the East Indies to the Mediterranean by what came to be known as 'the overland route'. The cities of northern Italy which were the gateways to Europe in monopolizing this trade had amassed considerable fortunes in the process.

With the rise of Europe's nation-states in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, particularly in Spain and Portugal, this monopoly was seriously challenged for the first time. In the quest for an alternative sea route the Portuguese ventured south around Africa to India and the spice islands beyond. The Spaniards on the other hand sailed west, and with Columbus's discovery of the Bahamas in 1492 a new exciting chapter in Western history opened. While these islands were unimportant in themselves since they were not the fabled Indies, it did mean that Spanish eyes were turned permanently westward to what soon came to be realized as a vast, unknown continent.

With the discovery of America, Spain's maritime policy began to alter its purpose. The interest in spices was replaced by a new greed when rare metals and precious stones were discovered. The original dream of spices began to fade as the early explorers plucked silver and gold from the natives and sent them home to a delighted monarch.

The rich fertility of the new lands was another attraction, a striking contrast to the arid soil of Spain. Families were transported westward in the reasonable expectation of a more prosperous living, so that the new virgin territory began to be permanently settled in a very short time.

There was another incentive – the challenge that lay in the conversion of the heathen Indians. While of prime concern to the papacy, it was also important enough to Charles V, King of Spain and Holy Roman Emperor, to figure very large in his plans, a design for power which would extend both his

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empire and the Catholic faith at the same time. For the Church it was obviously important to convert the heathen, since it gave the Pope an opportunity to shore up his realm, shaken by losses to the Protestant faiths in Europe. New Spain thus offered a fresh field in the winning of new souls to a Church seriously depleted. Since in the Church's eyes the heathen were as much the Anti-Christ as the Protestants of Europe, any means of persuasion was justified, even the most brutal, as long as their conversion could be realized. Because salvation could be expected only inside the Faith, any method to secure conversion was sanctioned. This practice of forced conversion does, of course, play a very large part in the story of this drama, particularly in the conversion of Atahualpa.

So powerful were the economic and religious motives that drove Spain in its course of discovery and colonization, that within fifty years of Columbus's voyage its representatives had won control of the entire Caribbean and Central America. They had also conquered, in the process, the two greatest civilizations of the New World, the Aztecs in Mexico and the Incas in Peru.

This achievement would have been impossible without the right men, and Spain had them in a body that came to be known as the *conquistadores* (the conquerors). Popular legend often paints these men in romantic hues, but more often than not they were from the dregs of society. Spain was still a completely feudal society: in it were two basic classes — those with land, and (the majority) those without. It was very nearly impossible for a landless opportunist to better himself. Unlike England, Spain had no real trading tradition nor commercial middle class, so that the only way the landless peasants or the lower nobility could escape its grinding poverty was to ship out to the uncertain glories of the beckoning West. The stubborn determination of Pizarro and his men should not thus surprise us. The cruel suffering and misfortunes which they bore were quite simply born of desperation. In the Americas there was excitement and the lure of fortune, for which the *conquistadores* were willing to gamble with their very lives.

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The Kingdom of the Incas

In 1492, Peru, although unknown to the West, was already an empire three centuries old. Isolated from the rest of South America by the Andes and the Amazon jungle, its inhabitants had developed sophisticated agricultural methods to wring subsistence from a dry and hostile soil.

In the centuries after A.D. 1200 the Incas, by lengthy conquest, extended their hegemony to an area of 350,000 square miles occupying all of Peru and extending into Ecuador in the north and Chile in the south. Although several thousand miles long, the kingdom was never more than two hundred miles wide; so, in order to survive, the rulers developed a strongly centralized form of government with its capital at Cuzco. This strong centralization was reason for both its amazing efficiency and its equally amazing sudden and total collapse.

In the state, the most important economic group was the *ayllu* or clan. It corresponded to a community occupying a certain area in which all arable land was divided into three parts. The largest section was for the people's use with enough soil to support all those who had to live off it. When each male member of the community set up a home after marriage at twenty-five, he became known as a *puric* and was given enough land to maintain himself and family. After the people's basic needs had been satisfied, the rest of the land in the *ayllu* was divided between the Church and the State. Every *puric* was required periodically to work on this land as a form of taxes. The produce of the State lands fed the army and the small number of executive officials (usually related to the Inca) and the surplus was stored in large warehouses throughout the land. When a particular *ayllu* suffered disaster or a crop failure these stored foodstuffs were doled out during the emergency. Consequently there was no need for currency, and none was used. Goods were exchanged at local fairs by means of barter.

Within each *ayllu* and over the entire state every child and adult had his appointed task. Boys from nine to sixteen, for

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example, were expected to act as shepherds to the state llama herds, while men over sixty acted as schoolteachers or tended the community's poultry. Each male *puric*, in addition to working on the state lands, was required to serve in the army, and in his absence his fields were cultivated by the rest of the *ayllu*.

The main problem in such a scattered empire, an empire consisting of (like Russia today) many different tribes, was communication. Like the Romans, the Incas met this difficulty by the construction of a vast system of roads running the length of the 'nation'. At every 'mile' post, relay stages were built with post runners or *chasqui* stationed in each who were required to run to the next post. The roads were invaluable for the expediting of transported goods and messages, as well as for the provision of means of rapid transport for the army to quell any sudden uprising.

All roads led to Cuzco, the fabled capital of Peru where all reports were received by the Sapa Inca. From him all directives issued, and without his command nothing could be undertaken. Venerated as a god, an incarnation of the sun, he ran his empire smoothly with the assistance of an army of retainers but a surprisingly small coterie of officials. The state was an unusual blend of 'socialism' and centralized theocracy.

One very surprising fact about this sophisticated and highly efficient society was the fact that it developed no written languages. All relayed messages were either verbal or in the form of a *quipu*. This was a single thick cord with knots from each of which other cords were strung with their own series of knots. A *quipu* reader, by examining the number and colour of the knots could thereby interpret a fairly lengthy factual message. At best it was a ponderous system.

Peru under the Incas was a quietly contented state without poverty or begging. Artistic expression, particularly in metal craft, reached a high level. Invasion from without was unknown and the rule of the Sapa Inca was in most instances benign. Yet it possessed two great weaknesses which, with the arrival of Pizarro, proved its undoing. The absence of a

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written language made the communication of a potential threat impossible, since the *quipu* dealt in facts, not ideas or emotions. Secondly, so centralized was the empire that without the Sapa Inca's explicit orders no action could be taken. After Atahualpa was seized by Pizarro his subjects stood helplessly by because they had never been trained or exposed to the exercise of initiative.

Pizarro and Peru

It is probable that Francisco Pizarro was born in 1471. What is certain is that he was illegitimate, that he grew up in the most squalid of rural surroundings, and that he was first heard of as a soldier in Hispaniola in 1510. A year later he was a member of Balboa's party which discovered the Pacific. It may have been at this point that Pizarro first heard of the existence of Peru, for tradition suggests that some captive Indians informed Balboa of a great kingdom to the south. Balboa did himself make one fruitless voyage in that direction. Spain's absorption, however, lay in the isthmus territory where a passage through to the Pacific might still be found. The story of Inca gold was discounted as another of the numerous vague rumours with which New Spain abounded.

The Initial Voyages

The rumour, however, was not lost on Pizarro. In 1524 he combined with Diego de Almagro, a middle-aged soldier-of-fortune, and Hernando de Lueghe, the Vicar of Panama, both of whom shared his faith and vision. Together they raised enough money to equip a ship and assemble a crew. With the local governor's permission Pizarro set sail from Panama and steered south into unexplored waters. This first voyage proved a nightmare but, despite the terribly heavy seas, Pizarro beat his way further south along the Pacific coast than anyone before him. They did obtain some crude gold ornaments from the few natives they captured but, more important, Pizarro received confirmation of the existence of a

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great empire further south, an empire rich beyond imagining with gold.

Little notice was taken of Pizarro or his news on his return to Panama, because of the electrifying excitement of Cortes's capture of the Mexican kingdom. The Aztec empire was being methodically plundered by Cortes and his men, so Pizarro's poorly substantiated rumours claimed little attention. Nevertheless a second voyage was fitted out and two ships sailed in 1526 to find the Inca kingdom. After endless difficulties the two ships put back to Panama, leaving Pizarro and sixteen volunteers behind on a small island off the coast of Ecuador. When the relief ship returned nine months later Pizarro persuaded it to continue the search, and sailing south across the equator it put in at Tumbez, a prosperous port in northern Peru. Here they were warmly greeted by the inhabitants and welcomed by an Inca noble of high rank. Here, also, Pizarro enlisted the services of Felipillo, who was to become the party's official interpreter. At last Pizarro's quest was successful, for it established beyond all doubt the existence of a vast empire of high civilization and great wealth.

Upon his return to Panama plans were immediately agreed upon to enlist the approval and support of the royal court of Charles V. Pizarro made his trip back to Spain in 1528 and though King Charles never fully grasped the significance of his report, permission was hesitantly granted for a third voyage. The King also took the precaution of appointing a royal overseer, Miguel Estete, to ensure that the Crown should receive its one-fifth of all the treasure obtained. The King refused to provide Pizarro with any financial assistance. In all history there can be no more marked example of such a niggardly investment reaping so golden a reward.

When Pizarro landed in 1531 at Tumbez for the second time, he was immediately encouraged by the news of fierce civil war within the Inca empire. With the death of the Sapa Inca, Huayana Capac, in 1523, there had broken out a violent and unprecedented conflict over the succession. Two brothers were at odds - Huascar, the legitimate heir, and Atahualpa, the illegitimate but favoured son. The civil war, which had

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been a terribly bloody affair, finally terminated in victory for Atahualpa with a monumental battle in the northern Andes. For this reason, the Inca was not at Cuzco, a thousand miles to the south of Tumbes, but, rather, at Cajamarca, only three hundred and fifty miles away in the mountains. Pizarro could not have been more fortunate; the state was still a disturbed shambles, and the Sapa Inca lay just within reach. It was as though the Fates were atoning for sixty years of miserly encouragement. Already a plan had taken shape in Pizarro's mind and it seems likely that his conversations with Cortes at the Spanish Court had a marked influence on his design. Cortes had seized Montezuma, the Aztec chief, by treachery, and, as a result, had inherited an empire. The lesson was not to be lost on Pizarro, as the story of the play, which begins at this point in history, makes clearly evident.

The Aftermath of the Story

The aftermath of this tale of cupidity and betrayal continues the thread of treachery. Systematically the Spaniards set out to strip the nation of its wealth. Temples were looted, towns were gutted, insurrection sprang up only to be ruthlessly suppressed, and famine and disease were the common lot of the natives. Inevitably the thieves fell out and split into two warring factions, those supporting Pizarro, and those his erstwhile colleague Almagro. Despite the intervention of Charles V, which effected a brief peace, strife broke out again very shortly. It is probably fitting that both disputants should suffer sudden and violent deaths during the course of their struggle. There remains one final irony to the Pizarro story. The gold which had flooded Spain with such an abundance of wealth was responsible for her eventual ruin. With this surfeit of gold, prices rose, inflation was given its head, and Spain started on the steady economic decline from which she has never recovered.

John W. MacDonald
John C. Saxton

PLACE

Apart from two early scenes in Spain and Panama, the play is set in the Upper Province of the Inca Empire: what is now South Ecuador and North Western Peru. The whole of Act II takes place in the town of Cajamarca.

TIME

June 1529 — August 1533

ACT I

The Hunt

ACT II

The Kill

There will be one interval of twenty minutes; refreshments provided by the PTA will be available in the Sandwich Area (turn left outside the Hall and go through the Greencoat Courtyard.)

CAST

THE SPANIARDS

The Officers:

Francisco Pizarro, Commander of the Expedition	Edward Applewhite
Hernando De Soto, Second-in-Command	Martin White
Miguel Estete, Royal Veedor, or Overseer	David Fisher
Pedro De Candia, Commander of Artillery, Venetian	Jonathan Hunt

The Men:

Martin Ruiz	Clive Peckover
Young Martin, Pizarro's Page; Old Martin as a boy	Peter Morris
Diego, Master of Horse	Allister Simpson
Salinas, Blacksmith	Simon Thomas
Rodas, Tailor	Stuart Arden
Vasca	Robert Street
Domingo	Steven Pink
Juan Chavez	Peter Hamilton
Pedro Chavez	Anthony Inglis

The Priests:

Fray Vincente De Valverde, Dominican Chaplain to the Expedition	Richard Vagg
Fray Marcos De Nizza, Franciscan Friar	David Wolf

Peasants in Trajillo:

Guitarist	Paul Longhurst
Dancer	Amanda Wood
Woman	Clare Stretta

Choirboys:

R. Addy, J. Cope, I. Courtman, R. Cowan, C. Gardner, J. Graystone, J. Hart, D. Holmes, P. Hunter, C. Myers, I. Thomas, J. Yerrell.

THE INDIANS

Antahuallpa, Sovereign Inca of Peru	Gerrard Hales
Villac Umu, High Priest of Peru	Spenser Frearson
Challcuchima, An Inca General	Christopher Grandy
Manco, A Chasqui, or Messenger	Malcolm Boxall
Chieftain	Richard Cook
Felipillo, An Indian boy, captured by Pizarro and employed as Interpreter	Clive Mills
Inti Coussi)	Amanda Wood
Oello) Wives of Atahuallpa	Clare Stretta
Peruvian Indians:	Edward Allen, Barry Alston, Michael Ayling, Malcolm Blake, Neil Courtman, Colin Crowhurst, Paul Davies, Dominic Hill, Richard Lawrence

PRODUCTION	Mr C. Burge
DESIGN	Mr J. Shaw
LIGHTING	Mr J. Gibbons
SOUND	A. Douch & A. Porter
COSTUME	Miss S. Towson
Musical Director	Mr K. Pearson
Make up	Miss S. Towson
Stage Manager	S. Kewalram
Stage Crew	N. Fry, D. King, A. Kirchin
Lighting Crew	C. Butlin, S. Cornwell, E. Cownden, A Davidson, G. Rennles, G. Veale
Set Construction	Mr K. Hemmings, R. Adamson, M. Ayling, M. Ball, M. Bourne, M. Creamore, A. Davidson, A. Douch, D. Frawley, P. Hamilton, S. Hutson, C. Lake, A. O'Donnell, S. Payne, A. Porter, T. Richards, A. Ryde, A. Simpson, D. Skinner, R. Tribe
Scaffolding provided and erected by Properties	Mr R. Fletcher J. Baker, Mrs N. Finch
Musicians on soundtrack	R. Abrahams, E. Applewhite, J. Atwood, M. Atwood, D. Fisher, P. Geddes, G. Hales, J. Yerrell
Call boy	L. Sanders
Programme and Ticket design	A. Keefe
Programme printed by	T. Wetherfield
Box Office	Mrs B. McLoughlin, A. Kirchin

★★★★★

Our thanks are extended to Mrs A. Jones of Old Palace School for providing us with our actresses; to the Church of St. Michael And All Angels for letting us use its cassocks and surplices; to the many mothers who worried and sewed; to the ladies of the PTA and the School Office, without whom refreshments would mean a glass of water; and to Mr. Kelly and his caretaking staff who have been so patient and understanding throughout our endless rehearsals.