



Les Liaisons Dangereuses

*by Christopher Hampton
directed by Mark Lester*

NVT
NEW
VENTURE
THEATRE

Bedford Place,
Brighton BN1 2PT

Friday 16th - Saturday 24th February 2024 at 7.30pm
Matinee: Sunday 18th February at 2.30pm

www.newventure.org.uk
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Les Liaisons Dangereuses

A plot hatched by Madame de Merteuil is one fueled by a desire to not only avenge an infidelity of an ex-lover, but also over the person closest to her. Valmont agrees to assist his ex-lover to take his own revenge on Merteuil's cousin who has dared to interfere in his pursuit of Madame de Tourvel; Cecile, Volange's beautiful young daughter and Merteuil's niece, is a hapless pawn in the pair's vicious game. "Love is something you use, not something you fall into, like quicksand, don't you remember?" asks Merteuil. And this attitude is what sees the fallout devastate so many in the play.

People frequently ask what it is that makes you choose a play you want to direct, and for me personally, it varies. Essentially though, it is the story and the challenges it presents to me, the actors, and subsequently the audience. Are the audience going to connect with the plot? Are they going to care about the characters? Is it going to resonate with them on some levels?

Choosing the wrong partner, a mother with a problematic teenage daughter who she does not know what to do with, love, sex, jealousy, societal pressures, exploitation, betrayal, and all against the backdrop of a country that seems on the brink of turmoil because of the burgeoning gap between rich and poor. It is safe to say the play's issues are still highly relevant today.

Apart from being an incredible piece of writing for the theatre, the personal driving force is to create a piece of theatre that takes the audience on a journey with each of the play's protagonists. Lee Strasberg, the eminent theatre practitioner who developed Stanislavski's 'Method', said that "acting is being private in public." This has stuck with me both as an actor and director. There should be times at which the audience should almost feel like they are voyeurs, watching intensely personal moments they feel they ought not to be, while being fascinated and drawn in by them. The play is wry, witty, sexy, shocking, and moving in equal measure.

At NVT, I have been lucky enough to have had the support of our incredible Artistic Director, as well as having a fantastic cast, crew, and design teams who have worked tirelessly to help make this production everything I had hoped it could be.

Finally, I would like to dedicate the production to the memory of Simon Goodenough and Timothy Lawrence. I never had the privilege of meeting either man, but their warm, creative, and talented daughters do them both extremely proud.

Mark Lester
Director



CAST

Vicomte de Valmont: Neil Drew

Marquise de Merteuil: Bridgett Ane Lawrence

Mme de Tourval: Charlotte Atkinson

Cécile de Volanges: Grace Vincent

Chevalier Danceny: Elliot Dryer-Beers

Mme de Volanges: Zoë Edden

Mme de Rosemonde: Rosy Armitage

Azolan: Bertie Purchase

Émilie: Kasha Goodenough

CREATIVE TEAM

Director: Mark Lester

Production Manager: Robert Dunkley

Stage Manager: Gaby Bowring

Assistant Stage Managers: Richard Lock, Laura Wilkinson, Cameron Davies, Bryony Weaver, Natalie Sacks, Elaine Larkin & Ayshen Irfan

Set Design: Michael Folkard

Lighting Design & Rigging: Strat Mastoris

Sound Design: Ian Black & Esther Draycott

Costume Design: Mary Weaver, Millie Sutherland-Thorne & Emi Salkeld

Dressers: Mary Weaver, Millie Sutherland-Thorne, Emi Salkeld, Emma Owen, Tandy Cufley

Make Up: Emese Csoma

Hair & Wigs: Richi Blennerhassett

Set Construction: Simon Glazier, John Everett, George Walters, Sam Deards & Andy Hind

Set Painting: Michael Folkard & Fiona Hewitt

Lighting Operation: Alex Epps, Will Neal & Tamsin Mastoris

Sound Operation: Ian Black & Esther Draycott

Props & Set Furniture: Gaby Bowring, Simon Glazier, Martin Gordon, Mary Weaver

Poster & Programme: Tamsin Mastoris & Strat Mastoris

Production Coordinator: Ian Black

Publicity/Headshot Photography: Strat Mastoris

Publicity & Marketing: Robert Dunkley & Linsey Fryatt

Health & Safety: Ian Black

Rehearsal Prompt: Ollie Wilson

Intimacy Coordinator: Gaby Bowring



With many thanks to Chris Connah, Sam Pugh and George Metcalf at Noble Science of Defence for their excellent stage combat training and choreography (<http://noblescience.co.uk>), Tony at printhouse (<http://www.the-printhouse.com/>), Katie Brownings, Gladrags for their wonderful help with the costumes, and, as always, to the Front of House and Box Office teams, without whom no show would ever go on.



Vicomte de Valmont - Neil Drew

After a long hiatus, Neil is delighted to be returning to the NVT stage in this beautifully written play.

Previous appearances here have been as Freddie in 'The Deep Blue Sea' and Cletus in 'Lone Star.' Neil has also made numerous appearances with Southwick Players and Brighton Little Theatre.

Marquise de Merteuil - Bridgett Ane Lawrence

BA received her BFA in Acting from Ithaca College, NY. Chicago and NY credits include: A Christmas Carol, Anne Frank (Right As Rain), Princess of France (Love's Labour's Lost), Pope Joan (Top Girls), Pattie (Brimstone & Treacle). She wrote, produced and performed An Evolution of Love (Brighton Fringe 2014). NVT credits: The Homecoming, Proof, The Language Archive, Farragut North and Suddenly Last Summer. Catch her as Joan Crawford (Bette and Joan) at Brighton Little Theatre next month where she's played Mrs. Robinson (The Graduate), Ariel (The Tempest).

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Mme de Tourval - Charlotte Anne Atkinson

Lots has been performing in theatres in Brighton for over 15 years. She is delighted to take on the role of Tourval and hopes you enjoy the tale of seduction! Past credits include '1984': New Venture Theatre, 'The Blonde, The Brunette and the Vengeful Redhead': Theatre iNQ, 'Summerland': Shoebox Films, 'Hay Fever': Brighton Little Theatre, 'Canary': Theatre Royal.

Cécile de Volanges - Grace Vincent

Grace Vincent graduated from Bird College of Performing Arts and is an alumni of the National Youth Music Theatre. Since then her credits include short film 'Eyes on the Nightstand' winner of the London Lift-Off Film Festival under Local Filmmakers, feature film 'Miss The Kiss', and musical 'The Producers' directed by Paul Robinson whilst in her final year of drama school. This is Grace's first production with the NVT and she would like to thank everyone involved for being so welcoming.



Chevalier Danceny - Elliot Dryer-Beers

Elliot has been acting in Brighton since early last year. Local past productions include 'When the Rain Stops Falling', 'Shakespeare in Love', and most recently 'Black Mountain' with Brighton Little Theatre; 'Les Liaisons Dangereuses' is his first production with NVT. He has loved working on this play and is particularly grateful to Mark, Gaby, and the rest of the cast and crew, as well as Chris, George and Sam from the Noble Science of Defence for their constant encouragement and (at times definitely undeserved) praise.



Mme de Volanges - Zoë Edden

Zoë first appeared at NVT in the BT Biennial production of 'Nasty Neighbours' and other performances here since have included Mrs Drudge in 'The Real Inspector Hound' and, most recently, Sister Felicity in 'Suddenly Last Summer'. Elsewhere she has played the title roles in 'The Beauty Queen of Leenane' and 'The Gingerbread Lady' at Brighton Little Theatre, together with a variety of other roles for that company and, amongst others, Ifield Barn Theatre, Archway Theatre, Drip Action Theatre, Wick Theatre Company, Southwick Players and Devil's Party Theatre Company.





Mme de Rosemonde - Rosy Armitage

Rosy has only recently started acting. She's been in 4 shows at Southwick, several pantos in Crowborough and one horror film. This is her first appearance at the NVT and she's thrilled to be playing Madame de Rosemonde alongside such a wonderful cast.

Azolan - Bertie Purchase

Bertie was once a familiar face at the New Venture Theatre. Pre-Pandemic, he appeared in 'Pickwick and Weller', 'Happy Now?', 'Lovesong', 'The Messiah', and 'Proof', among others. More recently, he appeared at Brighton Little Theatre in 'Dark Sublime' and 'The Little Tempest'. 'Les Liaisons Dangereuses' will be his first performance on the NVT stage in nearly five years.



Émilie - Kasha Goodenough

Kasha joined NVT in 2015 attending the Monday night Acting Classes before securing roles in productions such as 'Blood Wedding', 'Lulu' and 'Consent'. She has also worked with several other independent theatre companies for Brighton Fringe over the years. Her most recent performance was at Brighton Little Theatre in 'Black Mountain' (Sept 2023) with a reviewer calling it a "first rate production" with "scintillating" performances. Kasha is thrilled to be in 'Les Liaisons Dangereuses' and amongst a killer cast & crew to give you warmth on these wintery nights.



Mark Lester - Director

Mark is an actor, director, and member of the Artistic Director team at NVT. He has appeared in plays including 'The Deep Blue Sea', 'The Winterling' and 'Farragut North'. He has directed a variety of plays and is hugely excited to bring 'Les Liaisons Dangereuses' to NVT, and to be working with such a hugely talented and brilliant cast.



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In the Studio Theatre

King Lear by William Shakespeare directed by Richard Lindfield

King Lear, a vain, unyielding father with a furious temper, is preparing for his old age. He comes up with an ill-fated idea to divide his kingdom between his three daughters by giving the largest share to the one who says she loves him most. What could go wrong? Just about everything. The two daughters who don't really like their father that much shower him with praise. The daughter who does love him (and whom Lear loves dearly) refuses to play the game and is banished. So the clock starts ticking. Lear's mind begins to disintegrate and so does his kingdom. Spoiler alert: it's not going to end well for the King.



Supporting The New Venture

We all need a little 'care and maintenance' from time to time and our lovely Grade II listed theatre is certainly no exception. Whether it's fixing the roof or upgrading equipment it is all increasingly expensive. So any donation you can make to help keep the New Venture alive and kicking will be hugely appreciated, and you can do it either via the donations box by the fireplace in the bar, or using the Donate Button on the homepage of our website - www.newventure.org.uk

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New Venture Young Adults Theatre

For young people wanting to build their skills and experience within the theatre sector (17-25) Fridays 4.30-6.30pm. £55 per 10 week term, first session is FREE!

NVT Acting Class

Monday evenings at 7.30pm for all levels of acting skills. It will cost you just £5 per session (£2.50 for NVT members) First visit is FREE! See website for details.

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Or why not become an Angel, Archangel or even Archangel Gabriel to help us support the current and future improvements to our theatre. For further information please contact the Angels Coordinator Gerry McCrudden: angels@newventure.org.uk.

Membership

Company membership - £15 a year. Full participation, discount on tickets & newsletter. Student/Unwaged - £10 a year. As above... Proof of status is required.