

Les Liaisons Dangereuses

by Christopher Hampton, from the novel by Pierre Choderlos de Laclos

Please read carefully all the details, in particular rehearsal dates. Please do not audition if you have significant clashes or regular unavailability within the rehearsal period, or any unavailability during the performance period. If you are unsure whether unavailability will be an issue please check first by emailing jez.pike@maddermarket.org

Production Dates: 17th-25th April 2020 (10 performances – 7.30pm Monday-Friday & Saturday plus 2.30pm on both Saturdays. No performance Sunday).

Location: Main House

Director: John Holden

Rehearsal Dates: Commencing Week of the 24th February. Rehearsals will predominantly be on week nights between 7pm-10pm, with a total of 4 to 5 rehearsal per week. The majority of roles will not be called for every rehearsal; an exact schedule will be devised following casting.

Audition Dates: All auditions will be held at The Maddermarket Theatre. There will be signs directing you where to go on arrival.

1st Rnd

Option A: 25th November – Slots between 7pm & 10pm

Option B: & 26th November - Slots between 7pm & 10pm

Recall Auditions

Option A: 28th Nov - 7-10pm

Option B: 1st Dec - 2.30pm-5.30pm

Please note that all auditionees should in principal be available for the recall audition. If you are unable to make any of the audition dates but would still like to be seen, contact the director jaholden0@gmail.com and alternative arrangements may be possible, though are not guaranteed.

Format of auditions: First round will consist of a one-to-one reading with the director and a discussion about the character in the context of the play as whole. Extracts will be provided in advance. Please make sure you have read the play before the audition - it is unlikely you will be able to get past this stage of the audition process without having done so.

Second round will consist of recalls where actors will work on extracts in pairs or small groups, working with different combinations of actors.

You do not need to have learned a part or any of the extracts before the auditions.

The Maddermarket is committed to making its audition process as accessible as possible. Auditionees may request that reasonable adjustments are made to the audition process in order for them to attend and participate. Please contact the Director of Productions, Jez Pike – jez.pike@maddermarket.org to enquire.

How to sign-up:

Please download the Auditions Submission Form from the website. Complete and return it as an attachment to the Director of Productions at The Maddermarket Theatre, Jez Pike at jez.pike@maddermarket.org. Your information will then be processed, stored and distributed in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The director of the production will then contact you via email to arrange an audition slot.

Scans of the audition extracts can be emailed to you. Alternatively hard copies can be picked up from the theatre office (10.30am-6pm, Mon-Fri). In addition a scan of the script may be requested by email, or alternatively a reading copy is available at the theatre office to read on-site.

Please note that all auditionees must complete an ‘Auditions Submission Form’ **prior** to auditioning, even if they have had existing contact with or made informal arrangements with the director of that production.

About the Play & Production

Set on the eve of the French Revolution, the Marquise de Merteuil and the Vicomte de Valmont play a dangerous game of seduction, corrupting the innocent and the virtuous for their own gratification. Once lovers, they are now engaged in a dark rivalry born from jealousy and pride. They entertain themselves and ward off the ennui of their privileged lives by setting each other devious challenges involving other members of the aristocracy. As the play develops we see just how far their schemes will take them: deep into the realms of humiliation, sexual jealousy, and fatal revenge.

Merteuil's most recent lover, Gercout, has dropped her to marry a young woman, Cecile. In revenge, Merteuil sets Valmont the challenge of seducing the virginal Cecile before her wedding. Valmont himself has his eye on conquering Madame de Tourvel, a beautiful, but pious, married woman. Merteuil doesn't think he can succeed and makes a wager, offering him one last night with her if he proves his success. Valmont cannot resist, but finds himself committing the cardinal sin of falling in love with Tourvel, which to Merteuil is the ultimate betrayal. She responds devastatingly, using her new young lover Danceny as a pawn in the plot for her revenge.

Set in a period but stylised setting, reflecting the themes of passion and decadence, the production will explore not just the cold, calculating aspects of the characters but the hot blooded passions that underlie and drive their behaviour. Revenge may be a dish best

served cold but the motivation for it comes from the heat of the blood. Together we will explore the raging passions that lurk beneath the tight corsets, waistcoats and mores of an aristocratic society on the brink of collapse

This play contains some of the most demanding, but rewarding, roles in modern British theatre. Actors will need to be prepared to work hard to meet the challenge of the text, and also develop a physical language for the characters that reflects the languid cynicism of the era.

Casting Breakdown

The Maddermarket is committed ensuring its volunteer community – both onstage and off – reflects and celebrates the diversity of the world of which it is a part of. We welcome interest from actors of all backgrounds and identifications and our productions strive to approach casting with a progressive and flexible mind-set at all times.

LA MARQUISE DE MERTEUIL (40+) - a woman of experience. A rich widow; ex-lover and now co-conspirator of le Vicomte de Valmont; an extremely shrewd and formidable woman with deep reservoirs of intellect, emotion, and passion, though she guards the latter two characteristics fiercely; a supremely cool and cunning manipulator with a steely resolve; impenetrable and unapologetically deceptive; she plays the game better than anyone.

LE VICOMTE DE VALMONT (40+) - a man of experience. Today he might be described as a playboy. The former lover of the Marquise, he is a distinguished, wealthy, and effortlessly charming lothario; stealthy, manipulative, and determined in the extreme; a proud man used to getting his way. But he has a fatal vulnerability: blindsided by falling genuinely in love with his latest conquest, Madame de Tourvel.

LA PRESIDENTE DE TOURVEL - (20-30) - beautiful, but pious and chaste, she is a virtuous, and deeply religious married woman of notoriously unassailable moral character; Valmont sets out to corrupt her for sport; passionate in her faith and loyal to a fault, Tourvel is relentlessly pursued and seduced by Valmont and, after giving over, is overwhelmed by deep feeling, passion, and ultimately grief.

MADAME DE VOLANGES (40+) - a wealthy widow and friend of the Marquise; mother of the teenaged Cécile; respectable and spirited if parochial; very aware of her daughter's budding sexuality and mindful of making a beneficial match for her; deeply distrustful and disdainful of Valmont.

CECILE VOLANGES - (must be 18+ but with a playing age of 15-18) - Madame de Volanges' pretty and virginal young daughter, recently released from a convent to enter into a marriage her mother arranged; girlishly exuberant yet tentative, increasingly curious about the ways of the adult world the more she is exposed to it; devoted to her music teacher, le Chevalier Danceny. Has some intimate scenes with Valmont, and whilst there is no nudity, little is left to the imagination about what is happening beneath the nightclothes and the sheets.

LE CHEVALIER DANCENY - (20+) - a Knight of Malta, Cécile's music teacher and pet of the Marquise; a charming and eager naïf, caught between boyhood and manhood; devoted to

Cécile, though not necessarily the most suave, assured, and confident suitor; ultimately, a man of honour.

MADAME DE ROSEMONDE - (60+) - Valmont's aunt. Grandmotherly, in the sense of being protective, but lively, intelligent and sympathetic. She is a wise and witty woman with a waspish sense of humour, and though devoted to her nephew, far from blind to his ways.

AZOLAN (20+) - Valmont's valet and also his spy; dapper and droll; does most of Valmont's dirty work, and reaps the rewards--both in his pocket and in his bed. Makes the most of the status afforded to him by association to Valmont.

EMILIE (20-30) - an attractive courtesan, for whom Valmont is one of her "regulars". Perceptive and well aware of her role in this unequal society.