

Audition Notes

Les Liaisons Dangereuses
by Christopher Hampton
adapted from the novel by Pierre Choderlos de Laclos
directed by Rick Vincent

Auditions will be held **Monday, October 22, 2018 at 19h00** in the basement of the **English Church Hall**, 14b rue du Mont-Blanc, Geneva (take the outdoor lakeside stairwell).

Performances: March 19-23 at the Théâtre de l'Espérance in Eaux-Vives.

**** This play will be in English.****

Audition Information

The audition will be a cold reading from the script. We welcome all demographics interested to attend and no specific accents are required. The director is looking for **4 male and 6 female roles plus servants**. Actors can read several roles. Among other things, the director is looking for malleability. Can you adapt to different direction? For copies of the script or for scheduling issues with the audition, please contact Rick Vincent at vincent.rick@gmail.com. If you would like to participate in a backstage role, please contact Rick as well.

Rehearsals

Four exploratory rehearsals begin the last week of November where backstory and technique will be the focus. All the cast are required to attend. Regular rehearsals will begin the 3rd week of January and be Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday and will not always require the full cast, although Merteuil and Valmont will probably be called for every rehearsal.

Background on the Play

Based on Pierre-Ambroise-François Choderlos de Laclos' (1741-1803) novel by the same name, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* was staged by the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1985 starring Alan Rickman and Lindsay Duncan, followed on Broadway in 1987, and was made into a film (*Dangerous Liaisons*) in 1988 which starred Glenn Close, John Malkovich, and Michelle Pfeiffer. The play won the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award and was nominated for a Tony Award. The film was nominated for seven Academy Awards.

A play where vanity trumps love, and sex is weapon number one, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* will be staged as a period piece in English just before the French Revolution. The Vicomte de Valmont and the Marquise de Merteuil have a special relationship: they share each other's darkest secrets. Once lovers, they have presently accepted that each is beyond love, and now communicate unabashedly to one another intimate details of their conquests and sordid relationships. Merteuil, a rich widow, seeks to deflower Cécile Volanges, the daughter of her cousin, merely because she is to be wedded to a man who once slighted her. She enlists Valmont, a known womanizer, to help, but Valmont declines, intrigued with conquering a devout married woman, Madame Tourvel. Once Valmont discovers Cécile's mother is warning Tourvel away from him, he accepts Merteuil's previous offer, and plots to deflower Cécile while continuing his pursuit of Tourvel. When his pursuit of Tourvel succeeds, Valmont discovers he is unable to detach from her, but when Merteuil demands it, he complies, and viciously breaks off from Tourvel, setting off a series of tragic outcomes.

Character List

(Speaking roles : 4 male, 6 female. Non-speaking roles: servants)

We welcome all demographics interested in the play to attend and no specific accents are required. Actors chosen will need to attend rehearsals required for the particular character as well as any preliminary rehearsals focusing on technique and backstories.

Le Vicomte de Valmont – Duplicitous, nihilistic, seductive, and sadistic. Sex is conquest to him, and he is not afraid to ruin a women’s reputation and call it sport. Yet, love captures, surprises, and eventually shames him. He comes to grips with this change tragically.

La Marquise de Merteuil – A wealthy widow twice as duplicitous as Valmont. She does as she pleases in a man’s world through cunning and trickery, even if she might be past the twilight of her youth. Once involved with Valmont, presently her relationship with him remains open, and she teases him with sexual rewards. The two share their most sordid secrets with one another and enlist each other’s help to ruin others. But when she sees Valmont and Tourvel together, she turns vicious. Love and jealousy end up putting her at war with Valmont.

La Présidente de Tourvel – Presently married and deeply religious, she becomes ensnared in Valmont’s charm and story of being a changed man. She is young, beautiful, witty, and intelligent. At first, she is successful resisting Valmont’s advances, but in the end, cannot overcome them, even after fleeing.

Madame de Rosemonde – Valmont’s aunt. A kind-hearted old woman who will leave her vast estate to her nephew. Wise to love’s pitfalls and friend to Tourvel, she still has a special place in her heart for Valmont.

Madame de Volanges – Mother of Cécile and Merteuil’s cousin who disapproves of Valmont and counsels Tourvel to steer clear of him. Valmont discovers it and vengefully proceeds to seduce her daughter. She seeks to wed Cécile to Gercourt who has once offended Merteuil.

Cécile Volanges – Virgin daughter of Madame de Volanges and recently out of a convent. She is young, naïve, inexperienced, and easy prey for Merteuil and Valmont. She falls in love with chevalier Danceny, her music teacher, and through Valmont, secretly exchanges letters with him. However, Valmont cons her into giving him her room key, and the consequence eventually shatters her romantic hopes.

Le Chevalier Danceny – Young, naive, emotionally needy, romantically cliché, but fiery. He seeks to marry Cécile. Eventually he learns of Valmont’s deceit and subsequent deflowering of Cécile and challenges him to a duel.

Azolan – Valmont’s valet and right-hand man privy to all of Valmont’s secrets and treacherous means of achieving his goals, oftentimes instigating relations with the help of Valmont’s targets in order to blackmail them.

Emilie – Courtesan. Valmont is an occasional client. She plays a pivotal role in stoking Tourvel’s jealousy.

Majordomo/Footman/Maid/Manservant/Various Servants – Servants who will act as stagehands and be in full costume. They won’t have any lines but will be seen by the audience during set changes. A good way to get your feet wet in theater without dirtying them with stage fright and learning lines.