

## N.O.D.A. REVIEW.

### OTTERSHAW PLAYERS – ‘LES LIAISONS DANGEREUSES’ JUNE – 2005

This beautifully written and rather chilling play presented quite a challenge, not only because it has been seen as a much-acclaimed film, but also its subject matter is dominantly sexual. The cast are required to be totally at ease with both dialogue and actions, and they were.

The set design was simple yet imaginative, and with little effort cleverly converted into the various salons and boudoirs, by either changing the position of the pillows or re setting the furniture, all carried out quietly and efficiently by the servants. The furniture and properties were appropriate, (did you really get the chairs from the Salvation Army?) and the overall impression was of understated elegance.

The play was lit superbly by Stewart Mison, the sound was fine and choice of music played was suitable.

Peter Moore was obviously passionate about directing this particular play and I'm sure he was delighted with the results of his hard work. His notes in the programme were very interesting to read too.

In the lead role of the Marquise de Merteuil, Tina Knight gave an impeccable performance, scheming and manipulating the downfall of anyone who should dare to offend her, even in the slightest way, and all for personal gratification. Certainly a woman best avoided! As her partner in the vengeful sexual exploits, and her sometime lover Valmont, Wilf Hashimi also gave a very good performance. He was less vindictive and more intent on satisfying his own unbridled passion, but perhaps as a Viscount he could have been a little grander in his manner.

Lynne Walters made a refined Presidente de Tourvel, who very gradually softened to the advances and rebuffs made by Valmont after she had the misfortune to become a player in the cruel game. It was difficult to decide whether or not Valmont had truly fallen in love with Tourvel, and La Marquise feelings were plain to see when he confessed to such emotions.

Another victim of the despicable couple was Cecile, and the 'rape' scene was handled confidently by Nicci Brighten. She characterised the well-bred young woman, who under Valmont's tuition became familiar with previously unknown delights.

Alison Byers was suitably cast as the protective mother and Jo Parkins gave a good interpretation of Madame de Rosemonde, who knew only too well her nephews weakness for the ladies.

A notable performance was from Roy Seal as Azolan. He really made something special of the small role and portrayed skilfully the familiarity of a servant who understands his master needs.

The bedroom scene with Emilie was also effectively staged, and Nicky Breslin appeared quite comfortable and credible as a dalliance for Valmont.

Inevitably Valmont had to come to a bad end, and Julie Jonklaas had done a fine job with the duel which was most realistically acted.

Martin Gardener was a creditable Le Chevalier Danceny, and Graham Botterill made an aptly obsequious Major –Domo for the spiteful scheming Marquise de Merteuil.

The four household servants acquitted themselves well in their parts.

Your programme is informative and nicely presented and it was good to meet Peter in the interval. Front of House arrangements worked well; thank you for your kind hospitality on the evening and for inviting me to review the play, which I thoroughly enjoyed.

E. Gloria Smith  
N.O.D.A. Regional Representative