

The Ustinov Theatre School Frankfurt presents

# Dangerous Liaisons

by Christopher Hampton  
adapted and directed for the Ustinov Theatre School by Sarah Blake



## Cast

**Vicomte de Valmont** Aaron Getachew

**Madame de la Marquise de Merteuil** Finja Heck

**Madame de Tourvel** Melanie Kenny

**Cecile de Volanges** Celina Wolf

**Emilie** Celina Wolf

**Chevalier Danceny** Duc Huy Tran

**Madame de Rosemonde** Antonia Marie Waßmund

**Maid 1** Antonia Marie Waßmund

**Madame de Volanges** Marie-Pierre Minten

**Maid 2** Marie-Pierre Minten

**Adaptation and Direction by** Sarah Blake

**Sound engineering** Alexander Brusencev

**Sound editing** Hendrik Dingler

**Sound effects** cast members

**Photos** Roberto Palmari

**Project Management** Gabrielle Staiger for the Ustinov Theatre School Frankfurt,  
in association with the English Theatre Frankfurt.

Recorded at the Klang Kantine Studio, Darmstadt

**Music** Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart excerpts from Symphonies 36 and 40 performed by the Tsumugi Orchestra and  
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## About the play - Dangerous Liaisons

*A court full of decadence and luxury...*

*A ruling elite obsessed with intrigue and deception...*

*A country on the verge of chaos...*

This is the setting for the novel, **Les Liaisons Dangereuses**, which was published in 1782 – just seven years before the French Revolution. Its author, Choderlos de Laclos, was an army general who supposedly wrote the novel to highlight the corruption and hypocrisy of France's ruling class. However, when the book was first published, it caused a scandalous sensation – and the French court loved it. Did Laclos mean to denounce the French nobility, or celebrate them? Even today, the message in the story is ambiguous, because the characters are such a complex combination of dark and light.

In 1985, the English playwright, Christopher Hampton, adapted the novel into an award-winning stage play. The 1980s was the decade of 'Greed is Good' and many of the themes within the story still resonate with modern life – the desire for power, the conflict between honesty and ambition, the consequences of revenge, and the position of women in society. Perhaps this is why, even today, **Les Liaisons Dangereuses** remains so compelling – and why Christopher Hampton's brilliant adaptation has become a modern theatre classic.

## Ustinov Theatre School Frankfurt

The Ustinov Theatre School Frankfurt is a project created and funded by the Peter Ustinov Foundation with the support of an institutional partner, currently The English Theatre Frankfurt. It is directed by Gabrielle Staiger and Michael Gonszar and was launched in 2015 to give youngsters who are interested in the field of theatre and the performing arts and whose families would otherwise not be able to afford this professional training a possibility for further education, experience and challenge.

Currently there are 14 students between 14 and 24 years old who are attending weekly classes and rehearsals. Participation is through audition only.

The Peter Ustinov Foundation was founded in 1999 by the famous artist and humanist Sir Peter Ustinov and his son Igor Ustinov who, after the death of Sir Peter Ustinov in 2004, is the president of the foundation. The main purpose of the Foundation is to help children and youngsters all over the world to achieve optimistic prospects for their future regardless of their origin, ethnicity, religious believes or their social background.

## Dangerous Liaisons audio book

**Dangerous Liaisons** is a project of the Ustinov Theatre School Frankfurt and The English Theatre Frankfurt and was conceived by Gabrielle Staiger, Co-Director of the Ustinov Theatre School.

The audio play marks the peak of a four month period of core study titled Stimme - Sprache - Sprechen, emphasizing training in voice, language and the dramatic act of speaking.

With creating this core study Gabrielle Staiger intended to set a special challenge for the students: To learn how to create a character, to describe an atmosphere and to convey dramatic development of the storyline **only** through the use of the voice.

Absence of the body and all other visual aspects of theatre can lead to a very intimate relationship between the listener and a character of a play. One's fantasy and imagery are triggered on a very individual level.

Those who listen are seduced, seduced through their ear.  
A rather different experience to a „regular“ theatre performance.



### Aaron Getachew (*Vicomte de Valmont*)

Aaron was born in 1998 in Lich but his parents are originally from Ethiopia. Whenever possible he entered the stage from an early age on. He took part in School Productions as well as Drama Club Productions and developed his own stand up comedy formate, which he performs in for the Ethiopian Community in their native tongue in Frankfurt.

### Finja Heck (*Madame de la Marquise de Merteuil*)



Finja was born in 2000 and started acting from an early age on. She took part in two Musical Productions of her religious community and has been part of the Theatre Company at her school, the Lessing Gymnasium, since 2011. There she played in productions such as **Wilhelm Tell**, **Emilia Galotti** and **The Hobbit**, where she starred as the dwarf leader Thorin. Finja also has a passion for Vovinam, a Martial Arts Technique from Vietnam.

### Melanie Kenny (*Madame de Tourvel*)

Melanie is 15 years old and ever since she was very young she has had a passion for performing, taking part in a variety of dance, acting and music classes and productions over the last 11 years. In 2010 she got the part of child soloist in the musical **Evita** which was being done at the Alte Oper Frankfurt. Music is a huge part of her life, she plays 4 instruments, 2 of which she taught herself, and attends singing lessons.



### Celina Wolf (*Cecile / Emilie*)

Celina was born in 2001. Although she grew up with music and is still very much in love with it, she has always been active in all the performing arts. At the age of thirteen she starred as Frau Kritschmann, the main part in the musical **Big Star Factory**. Apart from playing Maya in **Grillfest mit Hindernissen** and Lucy in **Der Faschingsball**, she also wrote and directed both plays. Celina also conceives projects for film. For **Diabolo Pferd meiner Träume**, she adapted the original book by Gabi Adam and played Cathi and Markus. Besides acting she sings at different events.



## Duc Huy Tran (*Chevalier Danceny*)



Duc Huy Tran was born in 1996 in Germany and is of Vietnamese descent. He just completed his A-levels at Otto-Hahn-Schule in Hanau, where he took part in many Drama Productions as well as in the very well known Musical Theatre Productions of the school. It was his love and passion for dance which made him investigate the genre of Musical Theatre. At Otto-Hahn-Schule he starred in **How to succeed in business without really trying**, played Michael in **Billy Elliot** and is now also in their current production **Fame**.

## Antonia Marie Waßmund (*Madame de Rosemonde / Maid 1*)



Antonia was born in 1997 in Bad Homburg. She discovered her passion for theatre and music at a very early age. She was participating in school musicals such as **Canterville Ghost** or **Die blaue Flöte. Dangerous Liaisons** is her second project at the English Theatre Frankfurt. Last year, she performed as Alice in the DramaClub production **Alice in Wonderland**. Having completed her school studies she is currently auditioning for Drama School.

## Marie-Pierre Minten (*Madame de Volanges / Maid 2*)

Marie-Pierre was born in 1999 in Frankfurt. She started taking ballet classes when she was three years old and discovered her love for dance, taking classes also in other styles such as hip hop, jazz and modern dance as well as ballroom dancing. When entering High School at the age of 10 she discovered her passion for theatre and has been addicted to it ever since. At her school drama group she starred as one of the witches in **Macbeth** by Shakespeare. Last year, she performed as Alice in the DramaClub production **Alice in Wonderland** at ETF.



## Hendrik Dingler (*Sound Editing*)

Hendrik Dingler, born in Kleve, Germany, started his career as a DJ and Turntablist. After graduating from the School of Audio Engineering in Frankfurt (SAE) in 2005, he started working as a sound technician. In 2013 Hendrik acquired a second academic degree in electronic composition from the Institute for Computermusic and Electronic Media (ICEM), part of the Folkwang University of Arts in Essen. In 2015, Hendrik moved to the Rhein-Main region and joined The English Theatre Frankfurt.



## **Sarah Blake (Adaptor and Director)**



Sarah Blake is an English writer, director and actor, currently living near Frankfurt. She worked as a journalist and magazine columnist for many years, before re-training as an actor at Drama Studio London. In 2009, Sarah formed her own professional theatre company, Cabinets of Curiosity, and since then she has written and directed a number of live theatre shows that have premiered in both London and Yorkshire, many of which have received 5-star reviews and toured to Germany.

She is also the Writer in Residence at The Ripon Walled Garden – an historic walled garden charity foundation in the north of England.

In 2016, Sarah became a co-founder of the new audiobook company, Sounds Curious, which has published its first title – Fairy Tales for Grown Ups – on Audible, Amazon and iTunes. She is also an experienced workshop leader, giving private, group, or corporate lessons in the subjects of: voice, business presentation, directing, acting and physical theatre. Further details about Sarah's work can be found at: [www.cabinets-of-curiosity.co.uk](http://www.cabinets-of-curiosity.co.uk)

## **Gabrielle Staiger**

*(Co-Director of the Ustinov Theatre School Frankfurt and Project Coordinator)*



Gabrielle is a Choreographer, Teacher, MovementCoach and certified Project Manager. She trained at the Laban Centre for Movement and Dance in London as well as the German Sports University Cologne. She produced and choreographed many works for her own Physical Theatre Company, ARAZZO Tanztheater as well as for the repertoire of Dance Universities winning the Cologne Dance award twice, the Künstlernachwuchspreis der Stadt Ulm, the German Video Dance Award and a variety of scholarships.

Originally intended to prepare her creative process she created a specific dance technique training, using Rudolf Laban's movement principles as a point of departure. Due to the success of her training she taught thousands of professional dancers and dance students all over the world, as well as choreographers and dance teachers. After holding a professorship in Korea at SungKyunKwan University Seoul and at Palucca, Hochschule für Tanz Dresden, she moved to Frankfurt in 2010 and started collaboration with the Drama Club as well as the pedagogical programme TIES of the English Theatre.

# The English Theatre Frankfurt

Cast and Creative team would like to thank the **Peter Ustinov Foundation** and **The English Theatre Frankfurt** for their generous support.



Special thanks go to Roberto Palmari for photography and for filming the rehearsal process and creating a **Making-Of**.

Please visit our websites, where you can listen to the Podcast of **Dangerous Liaisons** and watch the **Making-Of** video.  
[www.english-theatre.de](http://www.english-theatre.de) • [www.ustinov-stiftung.de](http://www.ustinov-stiftung.de)

Design by Igor Trkulja