



**Stratford Shakespeare Festival
MEDIA RELEASE**

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***Dangerous Liaisons, a tale of deceit and seduction, begins previews
Director Ethan McSweeney makes Stratford debut***

August 3, 2010...Manipulation and seduction take centre stage in playwright Christopher Hampton's adaptation of *Dangerous Liaisons*, beginning previews at the Festival Theatre today.

Making his Stratford debut at the helm of this production is **Ethan McSweeney**, a young director who has been described in the media as a wunderkind with a Midas touch. Now artistic director of New York State's Chautauqua Theater Company, Mr. McSweeney has directed more than 50 productions for leading companies around the U.S. He is the winner of multiple awards and began directing on Broadway when he was still in his 20s.

"Ethan McSweeney is a talented director with deep classical roots. I saw him do a wonderful production of *The Persians* in New York, and have been trying to get him here ever since," says Artistic Director **Des McAnuff**. "*Dangerous Liaisons* is a contemporary adaptation of an important novel that I happen to be in love with and happily Ethan McSweeney shares that love."

"We have been eagerly anticipating this late opener since it was first announced in 2009," says General Director **Antoni Cimolino**, "From the first promotional photograph taken of the amazing leading players, *Dangerous Liaisons* has promised to be a luxurious and sensual work. Audiences can expect a thrilling theatrical experience."

The production features a stellar cast, led by **Martha Henry** as Mme de Rosemond, **Tom McCamus** as le Vicomte de Valmont, **Seana McKenna** as la Marquise de Merteuil, and **Sarah Topham** as la Présidente de Tourvel, with **Bethany Jillard** as Cécile Volanges and **Yanna McIntosh** as Mme de Volanges.

La Marquise de Merteuil and le Vicomte de Valmont are two French aristocrats who, for their own amusement, plot to seduce and conquer two virtuous women: the virginal Cécile Volanges and the respectably married Mme de Tourvel. The plot thickens when

the convoluted scheme sparks unpredictable reactions causing disastrous and even deadly consequences.

“The decadent aristocracy of *Liaisons* play their games of love and chance poised on the edge of an abyss that they don’t see coming, when their teetering, untenable *ancien régime* will finally succumb to the Revolution,” says Mr. McSweeney. “In the 1980s, when Christopher Hampton wrote the play, there were wonderful parallels to be drawn between the greed and excess of that seminal decade and the greed and excess of the 1780s, when the play is set. Interestingly, as we approach the story in 2010, the gap between rich and poor has, if anything, increased.”

Designed by Tony Award-winner **Santo Loquasto**, the production features **Robert Thomson** as Lighting Designer, **Michael Roth** as Musical Consultant, **Todd Charlton** as Sound Designer, **Shona Morris** as Movement Coach, and **Todd Campbell** as Fight Director.

Production support for *Dangerous Liaisons* is generously provided by Sylvia D. Chrominska, and in memory of Susan Harkins from her family.

Dangerous Liaisons opens officially on August 12 and runs until October 30. To purchase tickets call the box office at 1.800.567.1600 or visit the Festival online at www.stratfordshakespearefestival.com.

The Stratford Shakespeare Festival runs until November 6, featuring *As You Like It*; *Kiss Me, Kate*; *The Tempest*; *Dangerous Liaisons*; *Evita*; *Peter Pan*; *The Winter’s Tale*; *Jacques Brel Is Alive and Well and Living in Paris*; *For the Pleasure of Seeing Her Again*; *Do Not Go Gentle*; *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*; and *King of Thieves*.

Cast (in alphabetical order)

Quincy Armorer.....	Footman
Paul Dunn.....	Azolan
Martha Farrell.....	Émilie
Barbara Fulton.....	Maid
Bruce Godfree.....	Footman
Adrian Griffin.....	Footman
Martha Henry.....	Mme de Rosemonde
Bethany Jillard.....	Cécile Volanges
Tom McCamus.....	Le Vicomte de Valmont
Yanna McIntosh.....	Mme de Volanges
Seana McKenna.....	La Marquise de Merteuil
Stacie Steadman.....	Maid
Sanjay Talwar.....	Major-domo
Michael Therriault.....	Le Chevalier Danceny
Sara Topham.....	La Présidente de Tourvel

Brigit Wilson..... Maid
Fuzz Bucket..... Rousseau, Rosemonde's dog

Artistic Credits

Director..... Ethan McSweeney
Designer..... Santo Loquasto
Lighting Designer..... Robert Thomson
Sound Designer Todd Charlton
Movement..... Shona Morris
Fight Director..... Todd Campbell
Assistant Director..... Darcy Evans
Assistant Designer..... Alix Dolgoy
Assistant Lighting Designer..... Siobhán Sleath
Music Consultant..... Michael Roth
Assistant Fight Director..... Michael Dufays
Stage Manager..... Bona Duncan
Assistant Stage Managers..... Martine Beland, Holly
Korhonen
Production Assistant..... Loreen Gibson
Production Stage Manager..... Margaret Palmer

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PHOTOGRAPHY

IMAGE GALLERY: www.stratfordfestival.ca/imagegallery

DANGEROUS LIAISONS PRODUCTION SHOTS:

<http://www.stratfordfestival.ca/imagegallery/imagegallery.aspx?id=5475>

HEADSHOTS: <http://www.stratfordfestival.ca/imagegallery/imagegallery.aspx?id=3335>

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2010 Season | As You Like It | Kiss Me, Kate | The Tempest | Dangerous Liaisons | Evita | Peter Pan | The Winter's Tale | Jacques Brel Is Alive and Well and Living in Paris | For the Pleasure of Seeing Her Again | Do Not Go Gentle | The Two Gentlemen of Verona | King of Thieves