

Queensland **Ballet**

QB25

Dangerous Liaisons

2 – 18 October 2025

Talbot Theatre, Thomas Dixon Centre



Queensland
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From the Artistic Director

It's a pleasure to welcome you to *Dangerous Liaisons* - a striking and sophisticated ballet that explores the seductive undercurrents of love, power, and betrayal with extraordinary elegance and intensity.

This work, choreographed by the late Liam Scarlett for Queensland Ballet in 2019, has become one of the most defining pieces in our recent repertoire. Liam's vision was fearless. He had an extraordinary ability to distil complex classical narratives into movement that was both emotionally truthful and dramatically arresting. In this ballet, inspired by Pierre Choderlos de Laclos' infamous 18th-century novel *Les Liaisons dangereuses*, Liam created something that is not only beautifully crafted, but also deeply human and unsettlingly relevant.

The world he built with lavish sets and costumes by Tracy Grant Lord and music drawn from the evocative works of Camille Saint-Saëns, arranged by Martin Yates, is one of opulence and intrigue. Key to the work is the wonderful lighting design by Kendall Smith, and the stunning score that sets the tone for this sultry tale - recorded by Camerata - Queensland's Chamber Orchestra. It's a Paris of salons, secrets, and shifting allegiances. At its centre are two of literature's most notorious characters: the Marquise de Merteuil and the Vicomte de Valmont whose games of manipulation come at a cost neither fully anticipates.

This ballet is also deeply personal to the Company. Many of the current dancers were part of this work's original development. Their connection to the piece, and to Liam himself, runs deep. You will sense that bond on stage in the nuance of their performances and the weight of the story they carry forward.

We give thanks to Laura Morera, Artistic Supervisor for the Scarlett Estate, whose attention to detail and intimate knowledge of Liam's choreographic artistry have ensured this revival honours his vision with deep respect and authenticity. While *Dangerous Liaisons* is rooted in 18th-century France, its themes of seduction, revenge, manipulation and vulnerability remain universally resonant. Whether you're familiar with the novel, the film adaptations, or are encountering the story for the first time, this ballet invites you into a world that is as intoxicating as it is dangerous.

We are especially grateful to Amanda, Alexandra, and Claudia Talbot, and to the Ken Talbot Foundation, whose generous support has enabled us to bring this production to Brisbane audiences this year.

Queensland Ballet is proud to share this co-production with Texas Ballet Theater and invite you to immerse yourself in an experience that is as visually stunning as it is emotionally rich.

Enjoy the performance.



Ivan Gil-Ortega
Artistic Director



Scan for
cast sheets

Queensland Ballet acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we train and perform. Long before we arrived on this land, it played host to the dance expression of our First Nations Peoples. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging, and acknowledge the valuable contribution they have made and continue to make to the cultural landscape of this country.

Credits

Choreographer ————— Liam Scarlett

Stager and Artistic Supervisor for the Scarlett Estate ————— Laura Morera

Music ————— Camille Saint-Saëns

Music Arranged by ————— Martin Yates

Music Recording by ————— Camerata – Queensland's Chamber Orchestra,
conducted by Nigel Gaynor

Set and Costume Designer ————— Tracy Grant Lord

Lighting Designer ————— Kendall Smith

Intimacy Coordinator ————— Nerida Matthaei

Duration: Approximately two hours and 20 minutes,
including one 20-minute interval.

A co-production between Queensland Ballet and
Texas Ballet Theater.

This season of *Dangerous Liaisons* has been
generously supported by the Ken Talbot Foundation.

Please note: *Dangerous Liaisons* contains adult
themes and is not recommended for children. This
performance uses theatrical haze and low fog effects.

Every effort was made to ensure program details
were correct at the time of printing, however details
are subject to change where necessary and without
notice. Please check queenslandballet.com.au for
updates.



The Characters



CHAVELIER DE

Danceny



MARQUISE DE



Merteuil



FORMER



CÉCILE

Volanges



MADAME DE

Volanges

LOVERS

MANIPULATES

MANIPULATES

COUSINS

DAUGHTER/MOTHER



MADAME DE

Tourvel



MADAME DE

Rosemonde

HOSTESS

VICOMTE DE



Valmont

NEPHEW/AUNTIE

SEDUCES

LOVERS/RIVALS



Émilie



Azolan

ASSOCIATE

VALET

LOVERS

The Story

Act I

PROLOGUE

The Funeral of the Marquis de Merteuil

Aristocrats gather to pay their respects to the late Marquis, and his widow, the Marquise Isabelle de Merteuil. As the mourners disperse, she is deeply comforted by the Comte de Gercourt.

SCENE 1

Marquise de Merteuil's Salon

Six months have passed, and Merteuil is entertaining Madame de Volanges, whose daughter, the young and virginal Cécile, has just become engaged. Merteuil is horrified to find out her suitor is Comte de Gercourt. Her music teacher, Danceny, plays for her guests and the young musician soon catches Cécile's eye, noticed only by Merteuil. The Vicomte de Valmont enters with his valet Azolan. Valmont takes great pleasure seeing his former mistress in such distress, yet agrees to help her seek revenge. The two concoct a malicious bet to corrupt the innocent Cécile, thus exacting Merteuil's revenge, if Valmont succeeds in this then his prize will be one night again with his former lover, Merteuil.

SCENE 2

Madame de Rosemonde's Country Château

Valmont travels to the country to visit his aunt, Madame de Rosemonde. Valmont greets his aunt, and then suddenly spots her guest for the summer, Madame de Tourvel. Valmont is left alone with Tourvel, she rebuffs his advances, yet he promises he will write to her and demands that she reply.

SCENE 3

Valmont's Private Chambers

Émilie and other courtesans are entertaining Valmont as he composes the letter he promised to Tourvel. Once completed, he instructs Azolan to deliver the letter.

SCENE 3

Cécile's Débutante Party

During Cécile's débutante party, Merteuil and Valmont revisit their bet. Sensing Valmont's obvious attraction to Tourvel, Merteuil mocks him—and proposes a new wager. Meanwhile Cécile slips away and chances upon Danceny. Valmont and Merteuil decide to help the two secretly meet. Valmont approaches Tourvel, who leaves after hearing about Valmont's reputation from Madame de Volanges. Cécile departs with Gercourt, leaving Danceny with Valmont and Merteuil as they coerce him into seeing her in private.

SCENE 4

Cécile's Chambers

Valmont slips into Cécile's chambers to seduce the naïve, virtuous youth. He leaves her sleeping, with Merteuil waiting for confirmation that he has succeeded in corrupting the young woman.

Interval





Act II

PROLOGUE

Letters of correspondence are exchanged regarding Valmont's progress on both Cécile and Tourvel.

SCENE 1

Marquise de Merteuil's Salon

While Danceny gives Cécile a music lesson, the two, finally alone, express their innocent yet awkward love. Merteuil enters with Madame de Volanges, revealing the secret affair. The engagement to Gercourt is broken off, and Merteuil is left to comfort Danceny.

SCENE 2

Tourvel's Chambers

Valmont enters, begging for Tourvel's affections in order to win his bet with Merteuil. However, it soon becomes clear that he has genuinely fallen in love with her — and she begins to return his feelings. He falls asleep and Tourvel writes to Merteuil, unaware of the bet.

SCENE 3

Merteuil's Private Chambers

Merteuil has received Tourvel's letter confessing her feelings for Valmont. He enters triumphantly in order to collect his prize. Merteuil mocks him for his true feelings for Tourvel, and tells him that he must break her heart or he is weak. Valmont retaliates. Fuming, he storms off to find Tourvel. Moments later, Danceny arrives. Merteuil, feigning innocence, reveals Valmont's betrayals involving Cécile.

SCENE 4

Tourvel's Chambers

Valmont has come to Tourvel. He tells her he never truly loved her, breaking both their hearts. She is left alone, distraught. Danceny enters seeking revenge on Valmont.

SCENE 5

Marquise de Merteuil's Salon

Merteuil is entertaining guests when Azolan, followed by a distraught Danceny, enters and announces that Valmont is dead. He carries all the letters given to him by the dying Valmont, and exposes every dark detail of Merteuil's corruptive plans. The guests leave in disgust and Merteuil is left alone and humiliated clutching to the letters of her loved one.

The Choreographer

This is a story of the rich, the deceitful and the corruption of all those that stand in their way.

"With an opulent setting amongst the wealthy of the French, *Dangerous Liaisons* provides one of the richest design periods that the world has seen, and my collaborators and I were keen to exploit this lavish world to the fullest extent. We wanted something to personify the dark malice that resides within the antagonists' hearts and so created a scenic and audible scape that shows both beauty and betrayal. Hidden rooms, secret chambers, and magnificent architecture dominate the arrogant lives of the characters on stage. The music, arranged from another French master Camille Saint-Saëns, aids the restraint and beauty of this destructive story.

It has been a pleasure working on this piece with all the creatives and the dancers, in bringing this complex work to life, and letting the characters live of the pages, one that a choreographer can only dream of."

Liam Scarlett (1986 - 2021)

Choreographer

About the Choreographer

Liam Scarlett was born in Ipswich, England and trained as a dancer at the Linda Shipton School of Dancing and then The Royal Ballet School before joining The Royal Ballet in 2005. He was promoted to First Artist in 2008.

In 2012, Liam retired from dancing to pursue his choreographic career and was appointed the first ever Artist in Residence with The Royal Ballet. He went on to create his first full length work *Hansel and Gretel* (2013) in the Linbury Studio Theatre. He also choreographed new works for Ballet Black, Miami City Ballet, Norwegian National Ballet, the BalletBoyz, English National Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, American Ballet Theater, Royal New Zealand Ballet, Atlanta Ballet, Polish National Ballet, and The Royal Ballet School.

Liam became Artistic Associate with Queensland Ballet in 2017. Queensland Ballet's 2018 Season included Liam's *The Firebird* - the production from the Norwegian National Opera & Ballet, where he brought his hallmark musicality and finely-crafted choreography to the iconic 20th century ballet.



In 2019 Queensland Ballet premiered Liam's *Dangerous Liaisons* – a co-production with Texas Ballet Theater. Based on Pierre Choderlos de Laclos' time-honoured novel which had captured audiences for the past 200 years, Liam's rendition of the sultry tale, set amongst the aristocratic elite of late 18th century France, was a hedonistic tale of love, virtue and humanity, reimagined into a dramatic new ballet for mature audiences.

"Liam was a creative tour de force and his passion and artistic sensitivity were infectious."

– Lucy Green, Queensland Ballet Principal Artist

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Lucy Green



Yanela Piñera



Neneka Yoshida

SENIOR SOLOISTS



Chiara Gonzalez



Alison McWhinney

SOLOISTS



Vito Bernasconi



Lina Kim



Edison Manuel



Georgia Swan

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Ivan Surodeev



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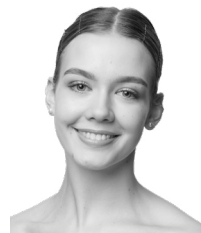
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Photography David Kelly.

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04-05 Queensland Ballet dancers.

Photography David Kelly.

06-07 Queensland Ballet dancers performing

Dangerous Liaisons in 2019.

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15 Queensland Ballet dancer performing

The Nutcracker in 2024.

Photography David Kelly.

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The revitalisation of the Thomas Dixon Centre is an incredible story of passion, tenacity, and altruism. Queensland Ballet, a not-for-profit arts company, refurbished its heritage home, not only to house its own artists and arts workers for years to come, but to create a vibrant space for its neighbours, sector and wider community.

The Thomas Dixon Centre is an extraordinary space, where stories are shared, creativity flourishes, and connections between artists and audiences are forged.

Discover more about the Thomas Dixon Centre at thomasdixoncentre.com.au and see stories unfold.



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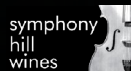
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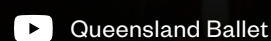
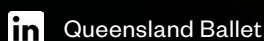
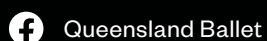
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