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## audience reviews

### *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, Capital Stage Aboard the Delta King

**Review:** This was an incredibly interesting play. The plot is wound tight as a spring and had me spellbound from the start. I suppose it doesn't speak well for my own character to admit enjoying seeing such cruelty on stage but I have to admit a bit of pleasure seeing the main characters weave their webs to entrap their victims but thinking about it later you realize that they themselves are snared in the very webs they've woven and you can sleep with a clear conscience. I don't think the acting could possibly have been any better and the whole thing was presented with a professionalism you just don't see in smaller theatres. This is the play you'll be talking about ten years from now-glad to have been in attendance, or kicking yourself for having missed out. Just remember though, years from now when you're gloating over those unfortunate enough to have missed this experience be kind; cruelty has a way of wreaking its revenge.

**Review:** Capital Stage once again shows why it was named Sacramento's Best Professional Theatre Company by the Sacramento News and Review last fall with a stunning production of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, which I saw during the opening weekend. The production is filled with exceptionally strong performances by the entire cast, lavish costumes, taut and seamless direction, and a fine set. Janis Stevens as the Marquise de Merteuil gives a wonderfully balanced performance, showing at times just how much pleasure she really gets from her acts of revenge and deception while at other times showing a deeply tormented woman. Her performance is masterful: the difficulty in portraying Merteuil is the tightrope the actress must walk. If she leans too far to one side she becomes a cartoon, too far to the other side she becomes too grand to be believable. Stevens allows us to see the many facets of the Marquise. Jason Kuykendall as Valmont has the same tightrope to

walk, and like Stevens is up to the task. His Valmont is seductive, playful, and determined. I was never quite sure if he really DOES fall in love, or if he's just playing the game. Considering the wordiness of the script, these two make the time fly by in a nearly 90 minute first act that seems like less than an hour. (Kudos to director Michael Stevenson here for keeping the pace up and the staging interesting). Stephanie Gularte as Mme de Tourvel once again graces the stage with her talent and her beauty as another tormented player in this chess game of love and revenge. Her almost histrionic reactions to Valmont's advances are totally believable, her decisions make sense to us. Vada Russell, Gail Dartez, Michelle Murphy, David Campfield, Paul Alary and Megan Smith are all perfectly cast and add to the total enjoyment of the play. The fight choreography was designed and executed superbly. This production SHOULD NOT BE MISSED! Thank you Capital Stage for bringing us such consistently fine professional theatre to Sacramento!

**Review:** What a great show! I saw this yesterday afternoon and was very impressed. The acting was top-notch and the costumes were beautiful. I was in the previous production of this done at Sac City College in 1998, and it was especially nice to see Stephanie re-create her great performance as M. Tourvel again. It's nice to see this play done as a professional production, that is what works best for the material as it has a very careful interpretation that has to be done just right lest it come across as boring. They all nailed it! I was very impressed with everything about this theater company and am looking forward to seeing more productions they put on.

**Review:** I really enjoyed this production! Both the male and female leads were perfect for their respective roles. The only disappointment was that there were not more people there to enjoy it.  
- Brooke Chantland

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