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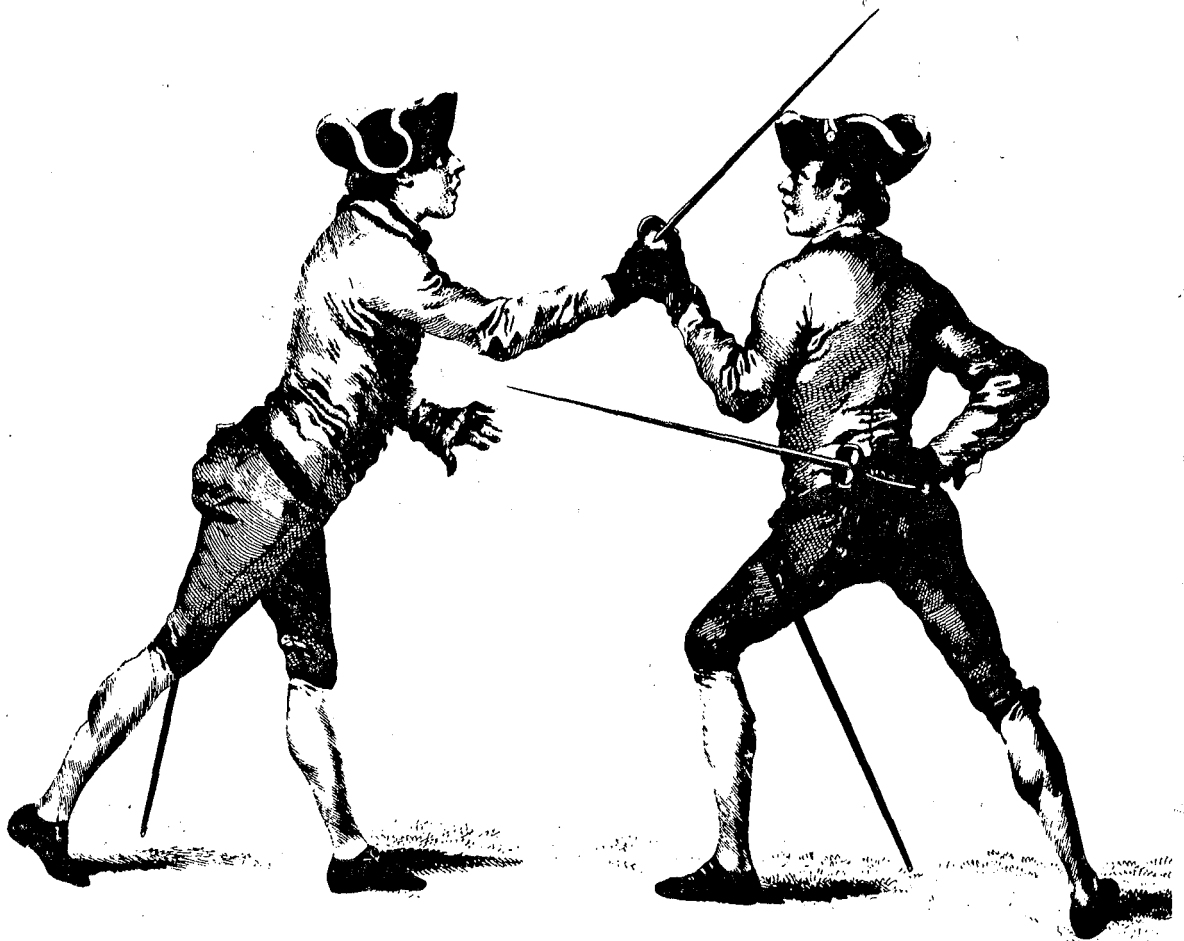
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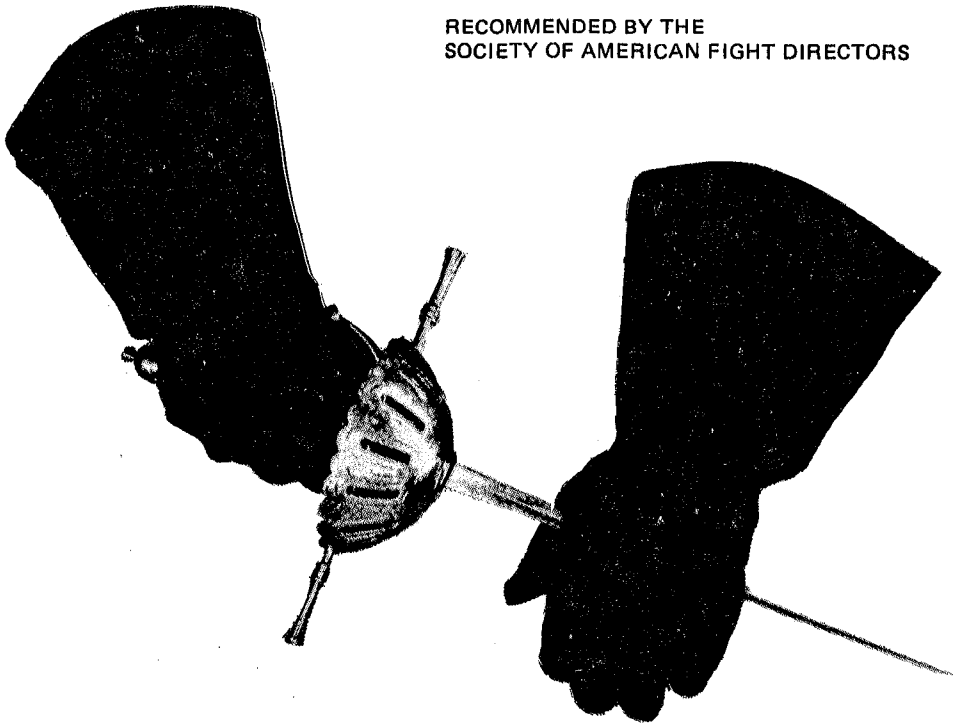


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THE FIGHT MASTER

The Magazine of the Society of American Fight Directors

NO. 5

APRIL 1979

Editor - Mike McGraw

Lay-out - David L. Boushey

Typed and Duplicated by Mike McGraw

Society of American Fight Directors

The second Society of Fight Directors in the world has been incorporated in Seattle, Washington. Its founder is David Boushey, Overseas Affiliate of the Society of British Fight Directors.

OFFICERS:

President	David L. Boushey 4720 38th N.E. Seattle, Wa. 98105
Vice President	Byron Jennings 1440 Sacramento #6 San Francisco, Calif. 94109
Sec/Treas.	Erik Fredricksen 202 W. 98th #5-D New York, N.Y. 10025

A NATIONAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY

Joseph Martinez and I will be conducting a workshop in armed and unarmed combat at the National A.T.A Conference in New York; August 15th, Wednesday, 8:30 A.M. This will be an excellent opportunity for all our members to meet and discuss mutual aims of the society. Many of us have yet to meet due to the vast distances which separate us.

Though I realize some members may have prior commitments, I hope the others will make a special effort to attend this meeting, which should be interesting and benefit us all. The best way for you to influence the direction of the society is to start planning your trip east now and become a part of the decision-making process. Many issues will be discussed which will influence all of us.

The A.T.A. Convention will be held at the Statler-Hilton Hotel in Manhattan. The entire membership should try to attend. I look forward to seeing you there.

D. Boushey

ANY SUGGESTIONS?

I recently spoke with Mary Santelli of Santelli's Fencing Equipment and Jeffrey Tishman of Castello's Fencing Supplies and they both put forth a proposal regarding theatrical supplies. They both said they were very interested in acquiring more weaponry designed specifically for the satage. What Mary and Jeff would like is some feedback on the types of weapons you would like to see made available on a commercial basis.

We have all complained at times about the lack of good fighting weapons. Now is your chance to let the people who can supply such weapons know what you as a Fight Director/Teacher need and desire. Especially on the east coast I see a real need for practical broadswords; the type that aren't just meant for the fireplace. Both of these distributors are willing to meet our needs if we would simply tell them what we want! All of us have different ideas as to what makes a good fighting weapon; the type of material to be used, weight, size, etc. Take this opportunity to express your preference. You may just get it.

It is a pleasure to have Costello's with us, in addition to Santelli's and American Fencing Supplies, as advertisers. I want to re-emphasize that the advertisers in this magazine support our efforts and help us immensely in defraying our publication costs; therefore, when you need fencing or theatrical supplies, patronize one of our supporters. We have done this in the past and must continue to do so. I might also suggest that when you place an order with one of our advertisers, you mention that it is coming directly through a member of The Society of American Fight Directors.

In the case of Santelli's and Castello's we need to help them with information regarding types of weapons. They have both mentioned to me that the requests for and sales of theatrical supplies is growing and, here again, I don't find this a coincidence. The formation of The Society of American Fight Directors has had an impact on stage fighting across this country. I am proud to have been a part of the formation and growth of this corner of the theater. Now we must take the responsibility of expanding all areas of stage combat and this includes the types of weapons we must deal with in the future. One of my primary questions, whenever I do a job, is "Do you have any practical weapons?" You know as well as I that the type of weapon you are using can directly affect the quality of your choreography. Send your recommendations to the society and we will in turn forward that information to our suppliers. THANKS AGAIN TO CASTELLO'S, SANTELLI'S, AND THE ARMOURY.

D.L. Boushey Pres.- S.A.F.D.

IN DEFENCE OF FENCING

by Erik Fredricksen

For more years than we care to remember Fight Directors have been told that "we have someone who can do the HAMLET fight", etc. "Joe is an actor and fenced for TWO years....yeah, he's really good". Or, worse yet, "the local community college fencing club coach can really handle the ROMEO AND JULIET fight work....after all, the epee really is the classic duelling weapon....right?" Well, we all know what atrocities (physical and aesthetic) have resulted. There is no argument against getting a trained and qualified professional Fight Director (or the closest thing to that ill-defined creature) to stage fights in theatrical productions, stage or screen.

What concerns me is that I feel there is a rather insidious and quietly felt belief growing that fencing has little or no value in the actor's and/or stage choreographer's continuing development. Oh, I really don't know anyone who will not vigorously affirm the value of a fencing class or two in the well-rounded actors' training program or the fight arranger's background. We've all heard it, right? "Good for the balance.... and talk about developing flexibility". "Good for the actor's decision-making and a great psycho-physical tool in teaching action-playing.... Have you heard about this exercise?" Yes, and of course any fight arranger worth his salt ought to have had a foil and sabre class. And we eagerly, perhaps too enthusiastically, remind each other that "modern fencing has nothing to do with theatrical fight work".

Lots of people (colleagues especially) have even reminded me that the sport or competitive fencer is dangerous in the setting of a stage fight. "Parries are too small....finger work can't be seen by the audience.. .What does a lunge have to do with the bulk of theatrical fight work?....They just can't adapt to the larger, slower tempo requirements of stage fencing".

Is there in the very nature of competitive fencing some evil lurking that can destroy the actor's theatrical skill and forever jaundice the eye of the professional fight arranger? I strongly submit a hearty "NO!" and even suggest that regular sport fencing can greatly help the actor and/or fight choreographer. (I keep mentioning actor

because many of our membership are also actors and, in any case, frequently work with actors.)

Perhaps it would be good to briefly discuss sport or competitive fencing. I use the terms interchangeably because "competing" is the very essence of the sport. You train so that you can give more touches than you receive. If one wants to, one can enter A.F.L.A. competitions in the hopes of receiving medals and awards to confirm their self-assessment and impress friends. Certainly, getting into the National Finals or being selected a member of the Olympic team would cause everyone to suspect that you were a serious sport fencer; indeed, a competitor to be reckoned with.

I feel that anyone who studies on a fairly regular basis and also competes by 'fencing on a regular basis' may be termed a sport fencer. Indeed, I'm afraid we must also affix to him or her that dreaded term: competitive fencer. Well, who knows when they might enter an A.F.L.A. sanctioned competition to test their skill and development?

Have you perused many actors' résumés? I have had to on certain occasions. Really, nine-tenths of them have FENCING as a 'Special Skill'. Believe me, friends, when I tell you that this generally means they took a class somewhere, sometime. This is not a suspicion, but a fact; one borne out through having to conduct interviews to ascertain athletic skills in general for ensemble work. No, it is not my belief that one has to have had sport fencing to be a good actor in a fight scene! Dancing and/or tumbling skills would do quite well for me, thank you. Yes, of course, martial arts training would be a natural - or would it? What if this actor has competed in a martial arts tournament?

I strongly feel that there is nothing inherently wrong in an actor or fight arranger competing for sport in any activity that might be termed "combative". An ACTOR or FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER who enjoys the sport of Kendo (two-handed fencing skill) will not necessarily be detrimental to a production of RASHOMON. Indeed, this sport could end up being a positive determining factor in the participation of either an actor or choreographer, depending upon their overall theatrical ability and adaptability. Well, yes, you say, that's pretty obvious. I suggest that the specificity of training that goes into the delivery of a well-timed DO cut or MEN strike could, with minor and rather obvious revision, find positive application in a MACBETH fight for either actor or choreographer.

I have seen Christopher Plummer work with Shakespeare, Sophocles, and, yes, Neil Simon. He's an excellent actor with unusual adaptive skill. Because he's remarkably sensitive to variations in style and tempo, his extensive training and experience in the classics does not hinder his work in contemporary ventures. Indeed, it is my feeling that it enhances his contemporary work. There are actors who have had a lot of 'movement' and, God bless them, that's all you are aware of when you see them work. Yes, there are bad Voice coaches and Acting teachers and Movement coaches and I imagine that the sport of Fencing has its fair share of charlatans. My point is still the insistence that developing an interest in any aspect of theater-related activity or sport is not in and of itself a necessary evil. Bad actors and bad choreographers will exist whether they enjoy fencing (competing) or not. Indeed, a fight choreographer who never fences for sport is not necessarily going to be a creative and safe fight arranger. Do authors write stream-of-consciousness because they never learned how to punctuate?

The sport of Fencing can do much to aid the actor in acting, doing a fight scene, and certainly be of great value to the Fight Director. Studying on a regular basis and competing with a degree of skill and regularity are essential. We all know people who say they "play tennis". Some do and some don't, correct? Of course, the question of skill is relative, but going out to the courts 5 or 6 times a year and standing center court and taking swipes at balls that whiz by you probably can be easily discounted as playing the sport of tennis. Conversely, it doesn't mean that you have to have Wimbledon aspirations to say you enjoy the sport. A certain amount of recognized skill and success is necessary, however, in being able to truthfully say that you "play a sport". A Fencing Salle and a trained coach is one way of judging your development of skill. Participating in the sport is a way of practicing and comparing your skill. This can be done in tournaments. Your ability in terms of any number of ingredients will be the final test as to your success as an actor in a fight scene or a Fight Director; not the fact that you happen to like the sport of fencing.

REGULARITY is a key word in my determination of whether someone fences, or used to, or merely "had a class". Those of our membership who dance are aware of what missing bar work for a couple of weeks can do. Eva La Gallienne fenced for many years and says that an actor can dispense with any number of other studies if he fences regularly.

How many times have you heard the admonishment "relax"? This is a difficult thing for an actor to do and, of course, the tension increases proportionately with the perception of stress. It is impossible to fence with any degree of success if you are tense. The more you fence, the more you are able to control the tension that is so inhibiting and tiring. You find that rigid trapezius muscles and sterno-cleido mastoidal muscles result in missed touches and fatigue. Taking a class you may become aware that you have a certain amount of tension along with learning the eight foil parries, etc.; but only doing it, playing the sport, will allow the body to eventually find the easiest way to do the activity. It is easy for a teacher or coach to say "Relax". Relaxation is a wonderful by-product of fencing on a regular basis. Obviously, freeing the large musculature of the upper body is going to result in less major work in freeing the vocal mechanism. Again I reiterate, you are not going to find that telling an actor/theatrical combatant to "relax" is sufficient.

Related to relaxation and the improvement of posture in the upper body (to that point, watch the number of people with rounded shoulders and neck pulled in and down. Contraction is antithetical to the optimum physical state for successful fencing.) is the very real and necessary development of good posture in the lower back. To maintain a balance that will allow you to function well as a fencer, you will find it necessary to keep the buttocks tucked in and under and maintain a degree of turn-out. Naturally this will extend the range of flexibility you have in all movement.

I know in talking to you that much of this is "common knowledge" or at least not commonly refuted, but I do not believe these physical benefits to be generally available as the result of an introduction to fencing. They are marvelous by-products of the regular participation in the sport of fencing. Of course, dance and other sports may do the same, if done on a regular basis. My concern, however, is that the fight arranger not arbitrarily discount an actor because he has a sport fencing background. I have heard fight people say they don't want to work with "competitive" fencers. If indeed these competitive fencers are not actors, why would a fight choreographer be working with them? If they are good actors, they may be relaxed, move better, and have less tension than other good actors. We, as Fight Directors, should not automatically assume the defensive or a negative stance because we are working with a good actor who fences for sport. Agreed, most actors do not fence for sport. It has been my good fortune as a

fight arranger to work with some who do. Some have been wonderful assets to the production and some have not. It was not their training in fencing that made them difficult to work with on the rare occasion. It was their inability to adapt to a theatrical situation of a certain kind. It was an ACTING PROBLEM. And my experience has taught me that generally no form of specific good training is problematic - it's usually the individual's inability to adapt. Adaptability...is the very essence of the above-average actor and, incidentally, the above-average fencer.

I feel that there are other very real benefits in terms of concentration and psycho-physical commitment to action that actors can accrue as a result of fencing. Briefly, let me give one example before moving on to the fight arranger. An individual who has fenced for a substantial period of time knows physically and intellectually that he cannot go out on a rapid, long lunge, tense and freeze there with whatever attack he mounted. Yet to score with a fencer of any appreciable ability, he must indeed commit himself completely... but not hopelessly. He must react in a split second to his partner (opponent). If he is hopelessly committed to an action, he will freeze and not be able to respond (i.e., parry and riposte). Yet, if he is not fully committed initially, he will not reach his opponent. The parallel to acting is rather obvious; playing an action fully, even the most strenuous, and yet be relaxed enough to move on, to adapt. As a fight choreographer who frequently acts, I have found this to be another very real product of sport fencing, immediately applicable to the other side of my professional life. I mentioned playing a strenuous action. I would certainly include as strenuous a climactic emotional note to be hit in a scene and, achieving that, having the ability to move on, to adapt, to play the rest of the score. Yes, fencing can teach that after a time.

As a fight arranger I have found that sport fencing (this thing that has "nothing to do with theatrical combat") very helpful. Incidentally, I don't think it merely coincidental that such respected fight masters as Patrick Crean, William Hobbs, and others have a strong background in sport fencing. No, I am not saying it is absolutely necessary. I am saying, however, that it is not detrimental and can be extremely helpful.

How often we talk about the problem of actors maintaining "distance". They want to step in on parries instead of stepping back. They always seem to be too close. That's when they look least effective (except when specifically arranged for a dramatic moment) and is,

of course, when they are most dangerous to each other. Whether an actor or choreographer, the individual who fences for awhile on a regular basis learns what this thing called distance is and to respect it. In case someone misunderstands me on this point; no, I realize you cannot automatically transfer sport fencing distance to the stage. For the mildly adaptive and creative mind, though, there is a very real and valuable application available.

How often have you seen the old around-the-clock drills trotted out in rapier and rapier/dagger fights - that and a variation of whacks to closed sabre parries and Voila!, a fight? We have already agreed that anything taken from an actual combative sport will need adapting for the stage. That judicious process is, is it not, what generally determines to a great degree the quality of the art? A parry quarte, croise and riposte to sixte concluded by a parry sixte needs adapting to be safe and, in this choreographer's opinion, dramatically effective. Yet, from competition one can build up a repertoire that, again depending on the creativity of the fight arranger and the skill of the actors involved, is constantly being renewed and freshened. If there is one thing we do know about sword play, it is that it is an evolved art form. To immediately dismiss as potentially valid anything that occurs in sport fencing is to close the door on a vast storehouse of goodies that can (with proper refurbishing) yield dramatic results.



MOVIE REVIEW- THE DUELLIST -

(Choreographed by William Hobbs)

Well, Hobbs did it again! I waited 6 months to see this film as I was out of town when it came to Seattle. I kept missing it during my travels but at last caught up with it in San Francisco. What a treat it was! Hobbs took two relatively mediocre combatants and made them look great. In this case it was Keith Carradine and Harvey Keitel. I think one of Hobbs' greatest assets is his ability to take a couple of actors and in a very limited amount of time make them look as though they have been fencing all their lives.

I must say Hobbs got a great deal of help from the cinematographer who painted some lovely scenes and did a great job filming the action sequences. But there is little doubt that most of the credit goes to Hobbs. The very opening fight between the antagonist (Keitel) and the Mayor's nephew was indicative of what was to come - some very authentic fights running gamut from duelling swords to sabres to horseback to pistols.

What I especially liked about the opening fight was the fear that emanated from the nephew. It was obvious he was no match for his opponent and the fear in his body gestures and the way he moved left no doubt in the minds of the viewers. He slouched over and moved from side to side while often retreating in a very awkward manner. It looked like a one-sided match, which is exactly what it was! The weaker swordsman did not put up some great fight when the odds were against him. He did not look as though he just came off the fencing piece. He didn't even go down in grand fashion. He simply got his butt kicked by the superior swordsman! I get a bit tired of some films where the underdog looks like he could turn the tables at any moment and win the day. This man was obviously doomed. I languished to see what was to come. I didn't have long to wait.

Basically what happens is that Carradine delivers a message to Keitel alluding to the fact that he is in hot water because of the duel with the nephew. Keitel faces the music and commences to exact vengeance on Carradine, who merely delivered the message. A note is sent, the duel is decided upon and they meet, sabres in hand. It ends up a draw with Carradine getting a bit of the worst of it. The antagonist continues to challenge the protagonist and another duel takes place; this time with duelling swords. Carradine is thrust through

the lung but lives to fight another day. All the while Carradine desires to end the feud but Keitel will not hear of it. Not until one of them is dead. They meet for a terrific duel in a stable where all stops are pulled out. They use their teeth, feet, rocks, anything they can get their hands on and they both fight to a state of total exhaustion with half of Carradine's shoulder lying on his bicep! Somehow they survive to fight again even though Carradine thinks it is all over. But as fate would have it, they meet again and old wounds are re-opened. Now comes a brilliant fight - on horseback. Keitel rides in on his black steed and he himself is dressed in black. His horse canters sideways as they prepare to charge. A close up of Carradine shows the nervous tension that engulfs him. They pan down to his hand on his sabre and it is trembling so much he can hardly grasp it. The tension is overwhelming. And finally the charge; slowly at first while gradually picking up speed and finally at full tilt. There is one cut and a thud and the next shot shows Keitel on the ground with half his scalp hanging over his face. All the build, all the tension, the charge and then ONE cut and it is all over. But what a fight! It goes to prove that the swordplay is not everything, that the build up to the fight is crucial no matter what fight sequence you are choreographing.

If my memory serves me, some fifteen years pass by while these two men haunt one another. Understand this is not all taking place in a matter of a couple of weeks. This is a running feud which takes years to culminate, which it indeed does in the final scene where once again Keitel has looked Carradine up and challenged him. By this time Carradine has been crippled through the various campaigns. He is in no frame of mind to fight once more. But, as honor would have it, they commence to fight again, this time with pistols. Keitel gives Carradine 15 minutes to get lost in the woods and he in turn stalks him through the brush. Another great scene of maximum tension takes place with Keitel firing both his pistols and Carradine only one of his. Keitel is at Carradine's mercy but he (Carradine) opts not to kill him but to claim him a dead man. Carradine leaves him in the woods and the film ends with Keitel heading in no particular direction; a beaten man with no purpose in life as the one thing that kept him forever kindled, the duel and the glory that was part of it, was now at an end.

It was a fine example of fight choreography and how much it can lend to a film rather than detract from it. How some moderately executed fights could look so effective with the proper build up and camera angles. Imagine what Hobbs could have done with a couple of strong combatants! But he made Carradine and Keitel look good and that is why he is considered the best in the business.

D.L Boushey

* A POETIC FENCING MASTER

by

Henry Marshall

Many of the old Masters wrote books to preserve and propagate their methods. In fact this is how we know how men did fight, or at any rate, were supposed to fight in ancient times. A few of the Masters may have written verses as well as books but, if they did, their poetic works have not come down to us, with one extraordinary exception. About 1540 Nicole Prunet wrote an epic poem of 350 verses which has survived the centuries. Prunet was a Fencing Master with a school in Paris and his poem gives us a vivid picture of his activities.

The weapons he taught were four in number. There was the two-handed or long sword, the buckler, the quarter-staff and the single sword. The techniques of these implements of destruction were not described in the poem, but many of the moves associated with them may be ascertained from some numerous drawings made in 1476 by Hans Talhofer

The long sword (double-hander) had a double-edged blade four feet in length with a long handle, heavy pommel and straight quillons. One fact, little known nowadays, about this weapon is that it was sharp only at the point. Presumably this was to facilitate grasping the blade with one's left hand to embrace the enemy and break his back, reversing it to swing the pommel at his face, or to thrust it at his eye or chin, or, alternatively to catch him round the neck or leg by using the quillon as a kind of shepherd's crook. There was a large department of dirty tricks accompanying long sword play, including every kind of kick or trip. An Italian gentleman, writing some ten years before Prunet, had already urged his admirers to "practise wrestling which goeth together with all combats on foot". The quarter-staff was a stout ash staff of six to eight feet with iron at the tips. With such a staff a Devon man, while a prisoner in Spain, had fought and defeated relays of Spanish rapier and dagger men. One presumes that he kept them at bay and out of distance by twirling his long-shod weapon or prodded it at their faces.

The single sword was a type of weapon called braquemart, short and heavy with a single-edged blade. This would seem from the drawings not to have been a short-sword of Roman or Greek proportions, but a longer weapon - a shorter, squatter version of the ordinary broadsword.

When we come to the buckler we are in some difficulty. The usual meaning of the word in English is a small round shield held in the fist and used in conjunction with a sword. However, J.D. Aylward, who rediscovered Prunet for us and described the details in the poem some years ago, wrote that since Prunet did not mention any offensive weapon in connection with the buckler, Prunet's buckler must have been a large oval shield shown in Talhofer's drawings and which covered the whole body and sharpened at the ends. This description was sufficiently intriguing to take the present writer to the British Museum to look at Talhofer's pictures.

The long shield in question must be one of the most preposterous and peculiar weapons ever devised by man. The shield is an enormous wooden contraption several feet taller than a man with sloping ends that taper to a top and a bottom that are very sharp indeed. There is also a long three-sided wooden strip along the front for two thirds of the length, also presumably sharp. The shield is held by a long pole-like handle fitting inside and extending to the pointed ends so the whole can be wielded like a very cumbersome staff. The weapon is really a combination of shield, spear and quarterstaff, and resembles, at first glance, some weird type of gigantic canoe or drunken double bass. The nearest comparison in our own times is an enlarged version of the African shield used with a spear and on view in films like 'Zulu'. The technique looks as if strokes were mainly confined to thrusting with the pointed ends, but only after bashing the opposing shield out of the way with a Herculean swipe.

Further on among Talhofer's drawings there are pictures of a little shield, described as a "bouclier" in the nineteenth century additional text. This might seem a more likely candidate for Prunet's armoury. It is a small version of the English Buckler and looks rather like an elaborately carved fig leaf. The protection for the hand grip protrudes from the center like the base of a pudding basin and the edges are delicately leafed round it, two of them having an almost

oriental curve. The whole resembled a dainty metal hat and is so small as to become almost invisible in some of the fight positions shown in the drawings.

However, the fact that Prunet in his poem mentions the buckler among the "weapons" he teaches does indicate that the huge shield with sharpened ends was what he meant. He can hardly have needed to devote much time to the tiny fist-shield which is purely defensive and used only with a sword. If confirmation is needed one only needs to refer to the information the Society received in 1976 about the modern Klub Microscena in Czecho-slovakia, which exists to perform historical fights. Among one of the ancient and sometimes exotic weapons the club lists as using is a 'fighting shield'. This must be the weapon Talhofer drew and Prunet taught.

The stock in Maitre Nicole's armoury was therefore indeed formidable. The two-hander, the colossal buckler, the iron-tipped quarterstaff, and the short heavy broadsword. But none of these weapons was used with a sharp point or sharp edges. They were turned into 'foils'. The idea of foils was already an old one. For lessons and practice, even the Ancients were not foolhardy enough to risk maiming prospective swordsmen by using sharp weapons in training. Blunting point and edge were common practice. Therefore, Prunet's weapons were technically foils, however ferocious their length and weight would make them to a modern swordsman. But the poem also tells us of "buttons of foils". In fact, two of the many offences his pupils could commit was to "place the buttons of the foils on the floor or against the wall"; i.e., the students might surreptitiously remove the buttons so as to make their attacks more telling (shades of Laertes in years to come!). Given the size of the weapons, the proportions of the buttons must have been equally significant. In attempting to visualize Maitre Nicole's Salled'Armes, one must try to imagine racks of blunt short-bladed broadswords complete with buttons, racks of blunt long swords with even bigger buttons, quarter-staves with the leaded tips padded with leather and, finally, the colossal canoe-like bucklers, tips also padded, probably stacked against the wall.

What protective clothing was worn to defend the students against assaults with these massive weapons? Fencing masks, let alone jackets, were, of course, far in the future. There are

no extant pictures of fencing bouts of this kind, though paintings do exist of rapier and dagger men and fencers with other weapons at practice, bareheaded and wearing what seems to be their ordinary clothes. But Prunet's verses refer to "equipment", which must not be put on the wrong way, and fines for fencing bareheaded. The most likely equipment would seem to be a breastplate, pads for the elbows and some kind of fencing hat or helmet for the head, since these were all "targets" in competition.

Prunet claimed a "secret" method of instruction that would insure a pupil's proficiency in thirty days. The induction of a beginner into Prunet's school was elaborate. Aiming to become a member of the "fraternity", the new student had to place five silver pieces on the cross-guard of a sword, raise his right hand and make a solemn oath to this effect: He will not use the art of arms for any evil purpose, he will not become a robber or ravish women, or attack the Church or King. He will help brethren in distress. He will pay Maitre Prunet what he owes him and will stand food and drink for his comrades in the school.

Money played a vital part in Prunet's proceedings, as we shall see, and following the oath there was a brisk discussion about fees to tuition, since the five pieces of silver the student had already subscribed were apparently merely symbolic. When this matter had been settled to the Master's satisfaction, the student was asked a number of rather alarming questions. Does he have the heart of a lion, the claws of a griffin, the eye of a falcon, and the foot of a greyhound? Without them, it seems, it is useless to continue the interview, let alone embark on any lessons. So presumably the unfortunate novice claims to possess all these demanding attributes. After a lecture on hard work and punctuality from Maitre Nicole, the student is promised that he will be able to defend himself with a sword after a month. Even this achievement has its penalties, however, since he then has to pay six more pieces of silver and ten pieces of copper and buy a "noble pie" for the Master and the other students of the school. When he is finally "passed in defence", he has to pay all his Master's expenses as well as presenting him with a pair of gloves lined with gold crowns.

Prunet was clearly a sharp customer and makes no bones about telling us how other sums of monsy were extorted from

the students by a series of ingenious fines. When reading the tariff below, remember that six deniers would be worth now about forty-one pence (cents).

For entering the Salle without removing your hat - 6 deniers.
 For passing between the Master and the equipment - 6 deniers.
 For taking equipment without permission - 6 deniers.
 For putting on equipment the wrong way - 6 deniers.
 For picking up a weapon without permission - 6 deniers.
 For spitting on your hand before grasping your weapon - 6 deniers.
 For fencing without putting aside your walking sword - 6 deniers.

(But this was just the beginning. The fines began to escalate.)

For shouting during fencing - 10 deniers
 For failing to acknowledge a hit - 10 deniers.
 For refusing to shake hands after a bout - 10 deniers.
 For kicking the equipment - 10 deniers.
 For fencing barefooted - 10 deniers.

(But, if bare feet were a transgression, a bare head was twice as bad.)

For fencing bareheaded -20 deniers.

(The worse, however, was to come.)

For swearing by the Virgin or the Saints or speaking of the Devil - 30 deniers.
 For picking a quarrel with a comrade, stealing, making signs or playing the fool while the Master or his assistants were demonstrating - 30 deniers.

This elaborate tariff of financial penalties suggests the possibility of a hilarious knock-about scene set in this ancient fencing club with a Will Hay-like Prunet in charge. Assorted students would enter, some still in their hats, others passing between the Master and his equipment, or picking up various swords, staves and bucklers without his permission. While the Master is busy knocking off hats, wresting his weapons from

students' hands and pushing aside those who were walking about between him and his equipment, other students would pour noisily into the club, spit on their hands before picking up weapons, put on breast-plates upside down, fencing hats back to front and tie elbow pads on their knees while swearing violently the while. After Prunet has restored order, rescued his precious equipment, and collected fines from all and sundry, a new commotion would break out as fencing began. Some students start fencing bareheaded, others barefooted, a few still wearing their own swords, some shouting, most refusing to acknowledge hits, all refusing to shake hands afterwards and one, staggering from repeated blows on the head with a double-hander, kicking the equipment in delirium. After this outburst had been quelled by a second round of fines, the beleaguered and frantic Master would naturally attempt to cool things down with a quiet and neat demonstration of quarterstaff. However, no sooner than he has begun, then several students make derogatory and obscene signs behind his back, six start a tug-of-war with one of the bucklers, three or four remove the buttons from their swords and start juggling with them, two pick a quarrel, and one picks a purse. One imagines Maitre Nicole belaboring everyone in sight with his staff, then with ill-concealed glee, collecting a third lot of fines from his recalcitrant students and sending them all packing for the day.

Competitions were also a lucrative source of income for Maitre Nicole. A tennis court was hired for the occasion. The event lasted for an entire week and every competitor had to pay the Master daily on arrival. The bouts with the heavy weapons taught by Prunet must have been vigorous affairs, even if the blades and staves were neither sharp nor pointed and in spite of pads and buttons. It is true that the target for hits was restricted to the body between the belt, on the elbows, and on the head; but a hit on the top of the head was considered the best hit and a blow on the cranium with any of the massive weapons in Prunet's armoury must have given the recipient pause to ponder. Somewhat unexpectedly, if a competitor was disarmed, honor required that the bout should stop until he recovered his weapon. If there was a double hit, the hit against the attacker counted - the opposite of modern fencing rules. Prizes included a bouquet or a pair of gloves, plus a hat for the man who landed the neatest blow on his opponent's head.

Prunet's competitions began with an address given by himself in which all those present were warned that if they blasphemed the Saints or gave any trouble, they would go immediately to prison until they paid a gold crown to be released. Whether the "prison" referred to was a public gaol, or some private cell adjoining the hired tennis court, so that the desirable gold coin could find its way into the Master's pocket, is not clear.

Taken altogether, the epic poem of Maitre Nicole Prunet presents a portrait of a tough religious authoritarian with a mania for money. It is also, however, a valuable glimpse into a world that was soon to vanish forever. By 1540, when Prunet was writing his cantos, Marozzo's book, which included the revolutionary rapier and dagger method, had already been published for four years. Agrippa and the rest of the Italian masters of the twin points were to appear within a generation or so. Time was running out for Maitre Nicole, his antique armoury, his rules and ferocious financial demands. He is the only one of the really Ancient Masters who has left us his memorial.

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-GOOD HEAVENS!-

To the Editor:

Good heavens! I nearly fell over when I read Patrick Crean's 'rebuttal' to my review of his HAMLET at the Guthrie. I've never gotten a glove in the face through the mail before! Really, I'm very surprised he responded as he did. It was merely a review, not a personal attack or challenge.

I can well believe his assertion that he's never had a bad notice before. If he had, he'd have known that the best way to deal with them is to ignore them. Were I Patrick Crean, after I'd read that review, I'd have thought to myself, "Hmmm - Here I am, the most respected Fight Master in the world today, on my way to the Stratford Festival's theater to rehearse William Needles and Maggie Smith in the combat from TWELFTH NIGHT and some snotty-nosed Affiliate from Minneapolis panned my HAMLET? Well, well. Break, heart. I prithee, break", and I'd have buttoned my coat, gone to rehearsal, told Bill and Maggie the whole silly story and we'd have had a good laugh over tea. And then I would've forgotten all about it. I certainly wouldn't have dignified a negative review by responding to it.

But also, I do not consider it ungentlemanly or in bad taste to criticize a colleague's work in print. When you spend your life in the theater, you expect (and at times welcome) honest criticism of your work. If you don't, you're in the wrong business. If a colleague of mine, after seeing a fight I've set, hems and haws and finally manages to stammer, "Well...the weapons certainly sound good when they make contact, don't they?" or "Loved the way you had Macbeth fall down and then scramble back to his feet that one time"; then he's no colleague. To comment only on the positive aspects of my fight does me no good at all. I often know what's good about it. What I don't know is what's bad or how it might be made better. While I may not agree with his comments, I'll certainly thank and respect him for them, if indeed they are objective and without malicious intent, as I felt mine in the HAMLET review were.

Mr. Crean also asked that I release him from his bond of silence as a gentleman and allow him to express himself. Consider it done. I didn't know I had any power to keep him from speaking his mind. But if I do, I don't want it (not over him, anyway. My mother, maybe, but not him...). I'm sorry he feels the need to do so. I've never willfully

hurt anyone in my life, but I guess you can never know what will offend another person and, if he feels personally affronted, for that I'm sorry. I am not sorry, however, about what I wrote. It was an honest opinion and I stand behind my review 100%. I thought the fight was a clunker and the fact that the choreographer took offence at my saying so doesn't alter my opinion in the least.

So, by all means, let him speak out to his heart's content. But, lest we bore the readers of this magazine to tears with a verbal tussle that drags on for months, know that this will be my last printed comment on the issue .

Peter Moore

A Note from the President...

It has been the policy of the Society to print all letters sent to the Society for publication. We have been faithful to this position and sometimes we find ourselves in the middle of a jolly good rhubarb. I know both of the individuals who have exchanged greetings regarding the fights in Hamlet at the Guthrie and I know them both to be two fine gentlemen. I personally find nothing wrong with members questioning other members' work, as long as it is done in a gentlemanly fashion. And I think, for the most part, the blows were kept above the belt. I too agree that perhaps we can lay this one to rest.

REST IN PEACE!

I want to thank Peter and Paddy for their fire and steel! I only wish more members would take the time to write articles for the magazine. If they are a bit controversial, that's fine, as it only tends to liven up the issue. Best wishes to my colleagues and dear friends, Peter and Paddy. I look forward to seeing you both in the near future.

D.L. Boushey

From the Editor -

Due to personal commitments, this will be my last edition as editor of The Fightmaster. I want to thank David and other members of the Society for making the magazine possible. HOWEVER, I MUST EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF MORE MEMBERS CONTRIBUTING ARTICLES TO INSURE ITS CONTINUATION; ONLY THREE WERE RECEIVED FOR THIS EDITION. THERE ARE MEMBERS WHO HAVE BEEN IN THE SOCIETY SINCE ITS INCEPTION AND HAVE YET TO WRITE SOMETHING OF THEIR INTERESTS AND ACTIVITIES. D. BOUSHEY AND A FEW OTHERS CAN'T BE EXPECTED TO FILL THESE PAGES EACH TIME.
Mike McGraw.

PART II
THE DUEL OF CHIVALRY

From The Duel: A History of Duelling
by Robert Baldick

Springing from the judicial duel, existing concurrently with it for several centuries, and often indistinguishable from it, was the so-called duel of chivalry. This was a meeting in single combat between two knights, generally on horseback and always with great public ceremonial, to settle a difference of law, possession or honour.

Stringent regulations determining who was qualified to enter the lists inevitably applied to the participants in a duel of chivalry. These regulations were as follows;

I. Whoever has done or said anything against the holy Christian fait shall be excluded; and if any such shall presume to intrude himself, on the account of his family and ancient nobility, he shall be beaten and driven back.

II. If any, however nobly descended, have done or said anything against the Roman Empire, or the sacred majesty of the Emperor, he shall not be admitted, but publically punished before the assembly.

III. If any have betrayed or deserted his lord and master, or have been the occasion of any mutiny, disorder, or shameful flight in an army; or have oppressed and unjustly killed any of his subjects and vassals, or other innocent persons, he shall be publically punished.

IV. Whosoever has committed violence upon virgins or oppressed widows, or has violated and defamed any woman by word or deed, when he appears at the public tournament, shall be disgraced and punished.

V. Whosoever has been guilty of perjury, or of forging hand or seal, or lies under any other infamy, shall be held unworthy of the honour of a tournament; and, if he enter, he shall not be suffered to go away without some punishment.

VI. Whosoever has secretly or openly made away with his wife, or has advised or assisted the killing of his superior, whose vassal he was, let him be debarred, and let the law of the tournament be executed upon him.

VII. Whosoever has been guilty of sacrilege, by robbing churches

or detaining what belongs to them, or has wronged widows and children to whom he was left guardian, shall not be admitted, but punished.

VIII. Whosoever keeps up an unreasonable feud with another, and will not refer the difference to law or to a fair battle, but invades his adversary's land, burning and spoiling it, and carrying off his goods, especially if he has destroyed corn, which has caused a dearth or famine - if he appear at the tournament, let him be put to death.

IX. Whosoever has been the author of any new gabel or imposition in any province, city, or other dominion, without the consent of the Emperor, by which means subjects are oppressed, and trade and commerce with strangers are hindered and discouraged, let him be punished.

X. Whosoever is guilty of adultery, let him be punished.

XI. Whosoever doth not live suitably upon his lawful rents and income, but sebaseth his dignity by buying and selling, and using mean and sordid arts to the damage of his neighbors and oppression of his tenants, let him be beaten.

XII. Whosoever cannot prove his nobility for four generations at least by both father and mother, shall not have the honour of being admitted into the tournament.

However admirable the ideals of honour, loyalty, service and respect set up by these rules, and however considerable the contribution they made to civilization pending the institution and enforcement of civil law, it may be doubted whether all the knights who engaged in a tournament or a duel of chivalry lived up to such an exalted code - whether each chevalier sans peur was also sans reproche. Certainly the treatment of the vanquished in a duel ostensibly dedicated to lofty principles or gentle womanhood was generally brutal and pitiless.

The strict and, to modern minds, horrifying etiquette of the duel of chivalry is well illustrated by a duel fought at Naples between Monsieur de Bayard, the master of the lists in the Azevedo-Sainte-Croix affair, and a Spanish captain called Don Alonzo de Soto Mayor. The latter had been a prisoner Bayard's and had afterwards complained so insultingly of the treatment he had received that the Frenchman had offered him the satisfaction of a meeting on foot or horseback. On the appointed day, Bayard appeared mounted on a charger, dressed in white - 'in token of his humility' we are told - and accompanied by two hundred

gentlemen. Don Alonzo, however, decided that they should fight on foot, having heard that the French knight was suffering from a recurrence of a troublesome fever; and although Bayard's seconds urged him to object on the ground of his illness, the Chevalier rejected their plea.

Entering the lists, both combatants knelt down to pray, but Bayard prostrated himself on the ground and kissed the earth before getting up and walking towards his adversary 'as gaily as if he were stepping into a ballroom'. The Spaniard, who was no less confident, advanced in his turn and calmly asked him: "Senor Bayardo, que me quereys?" - to which the Chevalier replied: "To defend my honour." The two men then started fighting, and for a few minutes several blows were exchanged without any result, until Bayard, instead of parrying one of Don Alonzo's thrusts, let it glance past and promptly drove the point of his own lance four inches into his adversary's throat. The Spaniard closed with his opponent and the two fell to the ground together. Struggling free, Bayard drew his dagger and thrust it into the other man's nostrils, saying; "Surrender, Senor Alonzo - or you are a dead man!" It was a superfluous threat, for, as the Spaniard's second told him: "Senor Bayardo, es muerto; vincido haveys!"

No one, the chronicler records, could have been more distressed than the victor himself, who "would have given a hundred thousand crowns to have conquered the Spaniard alive". As it was, he knelt down, kissed the ground three times, and then dragged his enemy's body off the field, saying to Don Alonzo's second: "Don Diego, have I done enough?" The other sadly replied: "Too much, Senor Bayardo, for the honour of Spain."

Finally, Bayard observed to Don Diego that he would make him a present of the corpse, although he was entitled to do what he wished with it - an act of extreme generosity for which the chroniclers vie with one another in praising him. The fact remains that even this paragon of knights was not content to leave his adversary's body on the field, but submitted it to the indignity of being dragged out of the lists - either to emphasize the fact of his victory or simply to assert his rights.

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An action shot from the 1953 film choreographed by our own Paddy Crean, Fight Director.

* TRIPP'S GUIDE TO OLD FILMS ON T.V.PART II

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Hamlet, 1948 | Laurence Olivier |
| Hannibal, 1960 | Made in Italy with Victor Mature. Nice elephants. |
| Helen of Troy, 1956 | Excellent action with sword, shield, spear, chariot and all. Very lush. |
| Huk, 1956 | George Montgomery finds plenty of action in the Phillipines - not Japs but bloodthirsty Huk tribesmen. |
| If, 1967 | Interesting sabre fight in gym. |
| Iron Mistress, 1952 | Anthony Quinn in the New Orleans Salle, Alan Ladd as Jim Bowie. Knife vs. sword duel in darkened room. |
| Ivanhoe, 1953 | Robert Taylor vs. George Sanders and by the noise of the tourney the sound must be dubbed after - boom - boom! |
| Jason and the Argonauts, 1963 | Skeletons who fence are among the tricky effects. |
| Julius Caesar, 1953 | Brando, Mason, Gielgud - in reverse order. |
| The Kentuckian, 1955 | Burt Lancaster shows how to use a bullwhip. |
| King Richard and the Crusaders, 1954 | Harrison and Harvey. |
| The King's Thief, 1955 | Edmund Purdom in an interesting attempt to pinch the Crown Jewels and fights in the tower. 17th Cent. |
| Lady Godiva, 1956 | Normans and Saxons fight - probably to relieve the tedium of the ride. |
| The Last Command, 1955 | Sterling Hayden as Jim Bowie and the best of all the Alamo films. |

Little Big Horn, 1951 John Ireland. Grim and good.

Lives of a Bengal Lancer, 1935 The action still puts many later films to shame.

Man In The Iron Mask, 1938 An early Louis Hayward before he felt too tired.

The Mark of Zorro, 1940 Tyrone Power in some excellent swordplay. Well worth while.

The Master of Ballantrae, 1953 Flynn and Anthony Steel defy the '45. Both use broadswords for a change.

Men of Sherwood Forest, 1954 Don Taylor in a British version! Not bad stuntwise.

Mississippi Gambler, 1953 Tyrone Power in some good affairs of honour. Smallsword, 1850's.

The Moonraker, 1957 Cavalier George Baker vs. Roundhead Peter Arne. Good final sequence from Inn to seashore.

Pork Chop Hill, 1959 Superior Korean War film.

Prince and the Pauper, 1937 An athletic and much-praised Flynn.

Prince Valiant, 1954 Robert Wagner as the Viking. Sword, scramaxe, and spearwork.

Prisoner of Zenda, 1957 Colman and Fairbanks use lighting, good direction and camera angles to get the maximum effect with minimum effort.

Prisoner of Zenda, 1952 Mason and Granger use more brawn and less guile.

Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex, 1939 Very nice duel with Flynn cutting candles in half to reduce the light in the duelling room.

The Purple Mask, 1955 A very athletic Tony Curtis has some interesting shots in the Salle and a fast-moving duel around the base of Madame la Guillotine.

Quentin Durward, 1955? Robert Taylor comes to life before the end in a noisy belltower fight.

The Real Glory, 1939 Very good action with Cooper and Niven fighting the Mor's for the U.S. Army in Phillipines. 1900's.

Richard III, 1955 Olivier supreme.

Rob Roy, 1950 Richard Todd still a commando at heart. Good skirmishes because a highland regiment supplied the extras - men were the Scots and officers and neo's the redcoats. It paid off.

Rogues of Sherwood Forest, 1956 John Derek as Robin on horseback!

Romeo and Juliet, 1936 Leslie Howard, John Barrymore, Basil Rathbone. Good to see.

Romeo and Juliet, 1954 Laurence Harvey good to listen to but Susan Shentall stars.

Romeo and Juliet, 1962 Bolshoi Ballet. Superb action and a red-headed, left-handed Tybalt.

Romeo and Juliet, 1967? Royal Ballet and Nureyev.

Romeo and Juliet, 1968 Zeffereilli's hot sun and hot blood.

Scaramouche, 1952 Stewart Granger loses to Mel Ferrer in a well-contrived salle scene that strips the plastron off him, but gets his revenge on the ledges of the Paris Opera. 18th Century. Very well done.

Sea Hawk, 1940 Pirate Flynn with good Queen Bess Good boarding scenes.

Sodom and Gomorrah, 1962? Granger shows Baker that staff can beat sword.

Sons of Monte Cristo, 1940 Louis Hayward keeps busy.

Sons of the Musketeers, 1952 Nice fencing lesson with Maureen O'Hara. Cornel Wilde suitably triumphant on final staircase duel.

Spartacus, 1961? Kirk Douglas the gladiator. Good net and trident vs. short sword.

Taras Bulba, 1962	Tony Curtis and Yul Brynner as 16th Century Poles and Cossacks.
Three Hundred Spartans, 1962	Richard Egan holds Thermopylae
Three Musketeers, 1935	Walter Abel, Paul Lukas
Three Musketeers, 1939	A trevesty with Don Ameche and the comedy Ritz Brothers!
Three Musketeers, 1948	Gene Kelly shows how dancing helps the footwork, with some acceptable humour.
To Hell and Back, 1955	Audie Murphy's own story as the most decorated hero of World War II. Very good action scenes.
Tower of London, 1939	Basil Rathbone as Richard III. Good practice sequence with poleaxe in armoury workout.
Ulysses, 1955	Kirk Douglas pulls a nifty bow in splendid sets.
Valley of the Kings, 1954	Modern(ish) story where Robert Taylor duels with sword and shield against a Tuareg chief.
Vera Cruz, 1954	Cooper and Lancaster in the Mexican Revolution of 1866.
The Vikings, 1958	Much location in Norway. Much action, much blood and good final duel on castle turret. Kirk Douglas vs. Tony Curtis.
The War Lord, 1965	Charlton Heston excellent as a Norman overlord. 11th Century. Rousing siege and good fights.
Zulu, 1963?	Rorkes Drift and the actors deserved a V.C. too.

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'POINTS' OF INTEREST

New Members to the Society are:

RICK DUET (Student)	5015-17th. N.E. Room 9 Seattle, Wa. 98105
MICHAEL HOOD (Affiliate)	1942 North Salem Anchorage, Alaska 99504
CHARLES MORRIS (Student)	4223 Pinnacle Cr. Anchorage, Alaska 99504
JEROME SMITH (Student)	2250-48th. Ave. San Francisco, Ca. 94116
JOHN TOWSEN (Student)	21 East 2nd St. #26 New York, N.Y. 10003
LEON VAN DYKE (Affiliate)	Northwestern University c/o Theatre Arts Dept. Evanston, Ill. 60201
STEVE WOLFGRAM (Student)	3652 S.W. 23rd Miami, Florida 33145

Richard Gradkowski sent the Society a letter regarding Samuel Bruce Campbell's letter in the January edition of The Fight Master. He states that for those members interested in games of combat and warfare such as those mentioned by Mr. Campbell, you can find many such games in THE COMPLETE STRATEGIST, which is located at 11 East 33rd St.,

New York, N.Y. 10016. He says that some of the games which might interest members are :

ENGUARDE by Game Designers Workshop 1977

GLADIATORS by Hugh T. McGowan, Fantasy Games Unlimited, Inc. 1975

DESTRIER by Wes Ives, Fantasy Games Unlimited, Inc. 1978

Apparently this store is a veritable cornucopia of military information, history, games, weapons, uniforms, strategy and tactics. He feels this would be a very interesting place for a Society member to spend an afternoon.

An invitation to join The Society of American Fight Directors has been extended to B.H. Barry of the Society of British Fight Directors. Barry has been working in the U.S. for the past three years and has become very influential in the area of teaching armed and unarmed combat. As Barry now holds dual citizenship, he can opt to join the Society of American Fight Directors. Barry has not indicated whether he will join but an invitation has been extended. Those of you who have worked with B.H. will probably be most pleased to hear that he may be a member in the very near future.

The Armoury has a new weapon in stock. It is a swept-hilt rapier. It looks quite durable and very authentic. I might suggest it in place of some of the other weapons we often use as Article 1, 6, and 62. It is stainless steel as opposed to the brass-coated type. I am going to get one in the next few weeks so I will be able to tell you more about its durability, etc., but it is nice to see new weapons on the scene. The Armoury has a new catalogue out. Every member should have one for ordering weapons. - D. Boushey

SOCIETY NEWS

DAVID L. BOUSHEY recently choreographed Don Giovanni for the Seattle Opera as well as the U.S. premier of George Walker's Zastrozzi at The Empty Space Theatre. He will soon embark on a tour that will include his choreographing of As You Like It for the Ashland Shakespeare Festival, Macbeth for The San Diego Globe, and King Lear for the Utah Shakespeare Festival. He will also be conducting workshops for the Renaissance Institute in Oregon as well as a workshop in Tucson, Ariz.

ERIK FREDRICKSEN is currently working on a presentation called A NIGHT at the Fights with the Westbeth Theatre Center in New York. He intends to travel to Minnesota in the near future to choreograph and perform some original work.

ARTHUR JASSPE (Affiliate) had his play, Amerbyl, produced in New York. There is a fight in the play which Arthur choreographed.

BYRON JENNINGS recently choreographed the fights in Romeo and Juliet for the Phoenix Little Theatre in Phoenix, Arizona. He is now preparing for another season with The Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts.

PETER MOORE (Affiliate) recently finished acting in A Breeze From The Gulf at the Crickett Theatre in Minneapolis and is currently playing Jed in The 5th of July at the same theatre.

PETER PHILLIPS (Affiliate) has spent most of the winter working but not at fight choreography. He has been acting in Eccentricities of a Nightingale at the Queens Festival as well as Hedda Gabler and The Contrast at the New Globe Theatre in New York.

CHRIS VILLA (Affiliate) recently choreographed Macbeth for the New Shakespeare Company in San Francisco. He is now working on one of his own plays soon to be produced in San Francisco.

ABOUT THE SOCIETY

The Society of American Fight Directors was founded in May 1977. Its aims are to promote the art of fight choreography in such a manner that the Fight Director will be accepted as an integral part of the theater and cinema industry. Promoting the aesthetics of well-conceived fight choreography as an integral part of the total production is another aim of the society.

Full members are professional Fight Directors.

Affiliate members are fencing masters in drama schools, overseas members, or Fight Directors of limited experience.

Friends are people interested in stage fighting but who are not necessarily connected with professional fight directing.

Student members are drama students who aspire to become Fight Directors.

Society Rules

Members are reminded that only full members may use the Society's name to secure employment, however; affiliate and student members may use their status in any capacity other than securing employment.

Inquiries about membership and editorial articles should be mailed to the Society's permanent address:

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