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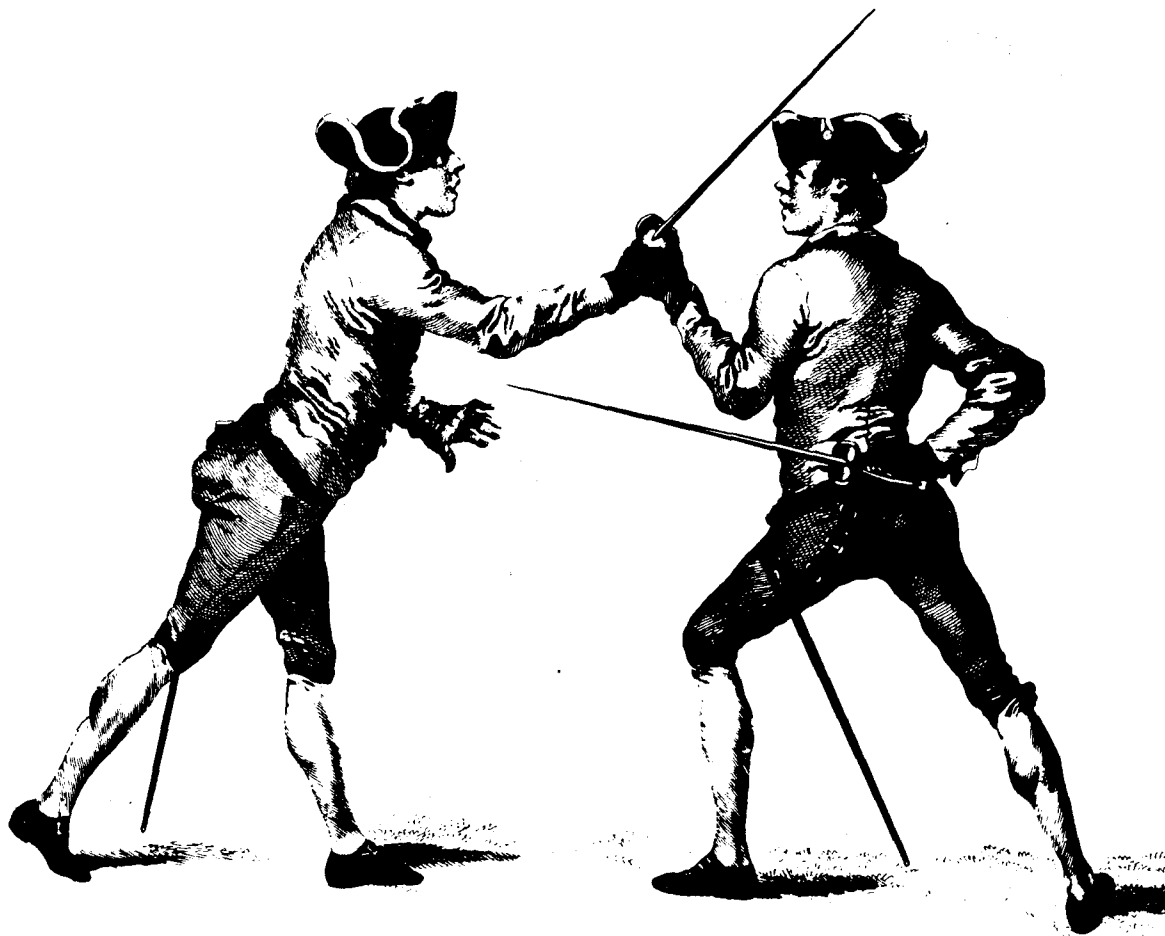
The Society of American Fight Directors

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THE FIGHT MASTER

The Magazine of the Society of American Fight Directors

NO. 7

OCTOBER, 1979

Editor - Ann C. Long

Lay-out - David L. Boushey

Typed and Duplicated by Ann C. Long

SOCIETY of AMERICAN FIGHT DIRECTORS

The Society of American Fight Directors was founded by David Boushey and incorporated in Seattle, Washington, in May, 1977.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Article</u>	<u>Page</u>
1. New York, New York	3
2. Certification Test in New York	8
3. Sample Form--Certificate of Proficiency	10
4. Combat in Shakespeare's Histories..	11
5. A Source Sheet for Arms and Armour and Fencing	13
6. Book Review--Errol Flynn	18
7. Duels in France, Part IV	21
8. 'Points' of Interest	25
9. Le Teatre Du Grand-Guignol de Paris	28
10. Society News	36

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

The Society of American Fight Directors held their first national meeting at the Hilton Hotel in Manhattan on August 15. There were twenty members of the Society in attendance--a good showing considering the distances that separate so many of the membership. I was very pleased to see such a strong turnout.

The meeting was chaired by myself, as President of the Society, and Erik Fredricksen, the Secretary-Treasurer of the Society.

Many issues were discussed at length. I propose to update the membership regarding these issues by discussing each article discussed as it came to the floor. The issues discussed were as follows:

- A. Certification
- B. Affiliations
- C. Form Questionnaires
- D. National Schools
- E. First Aid

A. Certification was discussed at length and took the bulk of the time allotted to the meeting.

A new classification was agreed upon and voted into the by-laws of the Society. The new classification is referred to as ACTOR/COMBATANT. The primary reason for it's inclusion into the by-laws was the fact that there wasn't a classification to represent those individuals who were actors who had no desire to choreograph fight sequences but rather were only interested in being technically proficient in armed and unarmed combat. The Affiliate status is given to those individuals who are part-time choreographers often aspiring to be full-time choreographers. Many of the Society's affiliates are instructors in various colleges and universities. Many individuals do not qualify as affiliate members, yet they are no longer students.

The ACTOR/COMBATANT classification will fall between affiliates and students and will better represent those individuals who are no longer students but unqualified for affiliateship. In order to qualify for ACTOR/COM-

BATANT status, a prospective candidate must pass the Society's test for certification given by a full or affiliate member and adjudicated by a full member of the Society. If any students wish to up-grade their student status, bear in mind that certification is mandatory. I am pleased with this new classification as it better represents all of our members.

It was decided that there should be a roster indicating all those individuals (members or non-members) who have been certified through the Society. This will enable the Society to recommend prospective candidates for acting roles which might include armed or unarmed combat. Those individuals on the roster will be able to include that information on their resumé's and better represent themselves to prospective employers.

It was recommended and passed that a \$5.00 fee be levied against candidates applying for certification. This fee is to defray travel costs or any other legitimate expenses accumulated by a full member who is charged with examining a group of candidates. The fee will be collected by the Society member who is conducting the test and who has trained them. The monies will be sent to the Society's permanent address where it will be put into the Society's bank account to be drawn upon when a full member has submitted a request for reimbursement. The full member is to present a billing showing his exact expenses while traveling to and from a given location with the express intent of examining a group of combatants.

If a full member has no travel costs, the money collected will go into the Society's account and will be drawn upon when a member does require reimbursement. There will be a ceiling as to how much a member can request, that amount being \$200.00. If any of the full members intend to pursue an adjudication that takes him a great distance (500 miles or more), please contact the Society's permanent address to confirm that monies are available to cover travel costs for said certification. Also, a small amount of the money will be used to print the certificates and to cover mailing costs to those candidates who pass the examination.

If any of the membership have any questions about

the fee for certification, please contact the Society. We hope that this system will drfray expenses to examiners as well as printing costs to the Society in general.

A debate was vigorously pursued with regard to the standardization of the test for certification. The two points of view where as follows: One group felt the entire test should be constructed by the full membership employing as many pertinent aspects of armed and unarmed combat as possible. This would make for a standard test that everyone would learn, thus insuring that all the combatants had a solid background in the techniques of stage fighting. It was suggested that a section in the middle of the fight could be left open to allow the combatants to put together some of their own work, showing off their own abilities as choreographers as well as technicians. The second group favored a looser structure that would allow the full members of the Society to present a number of specific moves which had to be incorporated into a given fight by prospective candidates. In this manner, a couple would not be confined to a "set" fight, but rather only have to fulfill the required moves as set forth by the full members of the Society. It would be similar to a gymnast who has to fulfill certain moves in a routine or a skater who has to perform "school figures" as part of their overall competition.

It was decided that the second system would be the most effective; that a "set" fight would be too restrictive. The full members are now in the process of submitting specific moves they feel should be incorporated into any fight sequence. The various moves will be trimmed down to a reasonable number where a prospective candidate will be able to incorporate the required moves and at the same time will be able to adopt many of his or her own moves to better insure that the fight sequence represents some of the candidate's own creation.

B. Affiliations were discussed at length. The Society is already affiliated with the American Theatre Association and has recently purchased an ad that will be in the Association's 1980 Directory, one of the "most read" directories regarding all colleges and universities in the United States possessing a drama

department. The Society will continue to be represented at the various regional A.T.A. conferences, as well as the national conference which will be held in San Diego next year. Other organizations the Society is affiliated with are Actors Equity Assoc. (although not formally) and Theatre Communications Group. The Society is now looking into a possible affiliation with the Society of American Stage Directors and Choreographers. The more affiliations we enjoy, the more recognition the Society of American Fight Directors will generate. This is an area the officers of the Society feel very strongly about. Only through our presence on the American theatre scene can we make the Society a viable organization with much to offer to professional and pre-professional theatres and organizations.

C. Form Questionnaires were suggested to the Society by Allen Suddeth. He felt that we as a society should request that each applicant to the Society fill out a questionnaire that would better serve the Society when determining a candidate's status with regard to full, affiliate, actor/combatant and student positions. The British society has such a system of evaluation when evaluating a prospective candidate and such a system might make our procedures more effective when we are approached by a candidate who has not been seen by a fellow member or has no recommendations to insure his qualifications. The questionnaire system is to be adopted by the Society in the near future and will be one more process by which we can evaluate prospective members to the Society, thus making our standards of the highest possible calibre.

D. National Schools in stage fighting have always been a consideration since the inception of the Society of American Fight Directors. We as a society intend to open three national fight schools in the near future. They will be located in New York, Illinois, and Seattle, thus covering the entire country. The schools will allow for students and teachers to further their skills in armed and unarmed combat. The schools will be open to both members and non-members of the Society. These schools will be a source of knowledge and skills for anyone wishing to involve himself more in the art of

armed and unarmed combat. We as a society feel it is no longer necessary for individuals interested in fight technique to have to travel to England to get it. There are now a number of qualified fight directors in the United States who can teach advanced stage fighting on any level. Many of us trained in England when there were no options over here, but due to the expertise many of us have acquired from our British colleagues, we are now at a point where we can offer those same services over here, thus eliminating the high cost of traveling abroad. It is no longer a question of whether we are as competent as our colleagues abroad. We are indeed and must now offer our services to those who have not had the opportunity to work with those individuals who hold distinguished reputations in the field of armed and unarmed combat for the stage and scene. There will be more information about the schools in future editions of The Fight Master. If you have any questions about further advanced study, please contact the Society at its permanent address.

E. First Aid is something that rarely gets discussed, but it was at our national meeting. It was almost unanimous that each fight director should have had a course in first aid; that he should hold a card validated by the Red Cross. None of us is devoid of possible accidents and the knowledge to deal with an injury is essential, especially when heads often don't remain cool when an accident occurs, thus making it even more essential that we know how to deal with a crisis. People will look to the fight director when an accident occurs, so be prepared! Take a course in first aid as recommended by your fellow colleagues and for Heavens sake, have a first aid kit on the premises when choreographing or teaching stage fighting. I personally would suggest that you carry your own first-aid kit to insure that such equipment will be available if a crisis arises.

NEXT YEAR IN THE MONTH OF AUGUST, THE AMERICAN THEATRE ASSOCIATION WILL BE HOLDING ITS ANNUAL CONFERENCE. WE INTEND TO HOLD OUR 2nd NATIONAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FIGHT DIRECTORS AT THAT TIME. IT WILL BE HELD IN SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA. WE HOPE MANY OF OUR MEMBERS WILL BE ATTENDING. OUR FIRST ANNUAL MEETING WAS A HUGE SUCCESS. LET'S MAKE NEXT YEAR'S EVEN MORE SUCCESSFUL!

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

CERTIFICATION TEST IN NEW YORK

The second proficiency test has been administered in New York by David L. Boushey on August 18 at the Sutton Gym in the Lancaster Hotel.

There were 11 combatants vying for certification through the Society of American Fight Directors. Of the 11, 6 were attempting to acquire recommendations, the highest achievement in stage fighting offered by the Society. Of the 11 applicants, all passed the necessary skills to attain their certification. Only one was able to achieve those standards to receive a recommendation. The participants were:

1. Robert Walsh (Recommendation)
2. Steven Stout
3. Peter James Cumba
4. John Van Wyden
5. Gary Phillips
6. Jim Manley
7. David Payton, Jr.
8. Peter K. Kallish
9. James B. Simpson
10. Jul Hickman
11. Stephen B. Ommerle

My primary concern was the fact that the fights were not well acted. There were some interesting themes and some rather clever ones, but whatever scene you are opting for, you must act the fight. I never felt a sense of danger while observing the fights. I do not mean carelessness or a lack of safety but a certain amount of tension that has to be built into any fight if it is going to be 100% effective. The technical work was very satisfactory. Perhaps a bit limited in that I saw the same moves rather obviously portrayed just as though that was the way they were taught.

Allen Suddeth takes credit again for turning out some competent combatants. He is batting 100% in that he has yet to have a student fail a test. If you will remember, he introduced the first test series in July, 1979. I cannot put the blame for the lack of acting on Allen's shoulders as the combatants are not there for acting lessons. But nonetheless, acting is an essential part of the fight game. The only other reservation I had was the inability of the combatants to mask the various blows. I was aware that they were on a different angle than had been intended, but the actors should have been able to adjust. After all, how many times have you been in a stage fight where something went askew and you

ended up on a different angle. Well, you have to adjust. There is nothing worse than seeing an obvious Knapp.

Overall, I enjoyed the fights and congratulate Mr. Suddeth on another success. If the fights were better acted and the moves better masked, the fights would have been a substantial success.

A reminder to those members of the Society who are teachers of the art. You should have your students certified. It is important to them, you and the Society. If you need to inquire about an examiner and there are no full fight directors in your area, please contact the Society. Another reminder to state that the certification does not qualify a person as a fight director, but rather to acknowledge a person for exceptional proficiency in the area of armed and unarmed combat. I hope the membership takes to heart the efforts of Mr. Suddeth and follows his example of producing competent stage fighters able to go onto the stage and achieve success with the tools they have been given.

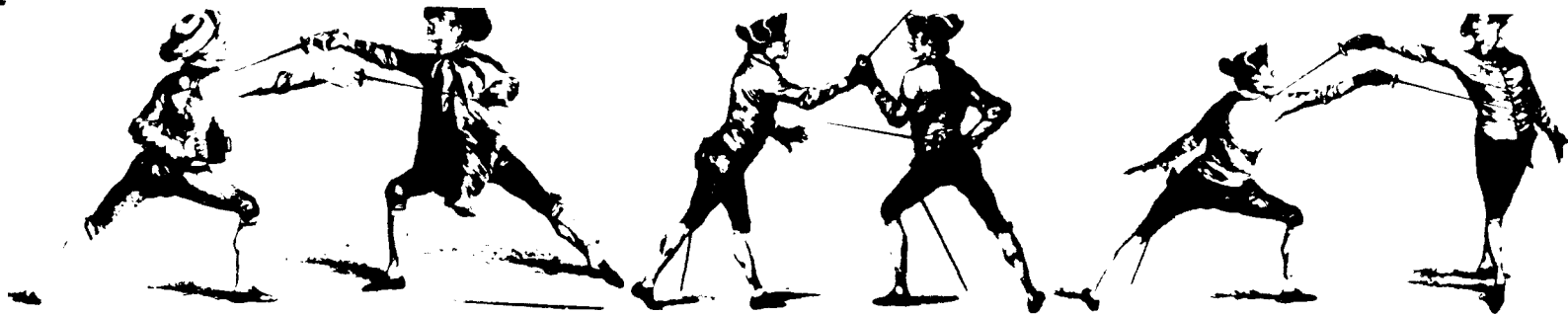
D. L. Boushey

* * * * *
* * * * *

ATTENTION: Instructors of stage fighting.

We feel it would be interesting and informative to be able to share the different formats and styles of presentation in teaching armed and unarmed combat; that is, whether you teach armed or unarmed combat first, whether you offer competition fencing in your program, whether you use the mask in teaching, whether you concentrate on epees or fencing foils or sabres, etc.

We would appreciate receiving your thoughts as to teaching techniques and believe that the readership would enjoy and benefit from them.



the society of american fight directors

RECOGNIZES
PROFICIENCY IN STAGE FIGHTING
Passed/Recommended

NAME No. of Certificate _____

*This is to acknowledge that in the opinion of the Society you
have displayed a significant level of competency in stage combat.
This should not be interpreted as a qualification in fight directing.*

DATE

SIGNATURE

COMBAT IN SHAKESPEARE'S HISTORIES

(Excerpt from the Master's Thesis of Michael Hood - Affiliate member to the Society and professor at the University of Alaska, Anchorage.)

HENRY IV, PART I

Henry IV, Part I, contains several combats. In Act II, ii, Falstaff and his cronies set upon and rob travelers at Gadshill and then are robbed in turn by Hal and Poins. The weapons used are not specified in the stage directions, and Falstaff's description of the fight is full of inconsistencies.

In a space of some 60 lines (II, iv, 182-241), Falstaff describes himself as having fought "at half-sword" (close quarters), with his "buckler cut through and through," and his "sword hacked like a handsaw." What seems at first glance to be a description of combat with a sword and buckler becomes less clear when he continues, saying that his opponents "mainly thrust at [him]", and that he had "all seven points in [his] target." A target, while similar to a buckler, is an entirely different weapon. Furthermore, as we have seen, thrusts could not cut through a buckler. Shakespeare gives Falstaff almost as many inconsistencies in his fight techniques as he does changes in the number of his opponents.

The battlefield at Shrewsbury in Act V provides several opportunities for combat. First of these is the single combat between Douglas and Sir Walter Blunt in which Blunt "semblably furnished like the King," is killed. Douglas twice mentions that his weapon is a sword.

An excursion opens Act V, iv. The dialogue which follows provides some clues as to how the excursion might be peopled, as well as possible specific actions within it:

I prithee,
Harry, withdraw thyself; thou bleed'st too much
Lord John of Lancaster, go you with him.

We are not told how Prince Hal was wounded, though short-

ly he calls his wound a "shallow scratch." Including Hal in the excursion would help establish his new-found martial character visually, and would lend suspense to his fights with Douglas and Hotspur since the very fact of his having been wounded grants him vulnerability.

Dialogue also points to Lancaster's prowess:

I saw him hold Lord Percy at the point
With lustier maintenance than I did look for
Of such an ungrown warrior.

John holds Hotspur "at the point." This may indicate his use of a sword as a thrusting weapon, or, on the other hand, any number of those staff-weapons used for the thrust. The inclusion of John in the excursion could be of benefit; the point being that, as was suggested earlier, peopling excursions with characters familiar to the audience lends suspense, excitement, and tragic or dramatic force.

Later in the scene Douglas and King Henry meet in combat and the King, in danger of defeat, is rescued by Prince Hal, who forces Douglas to retire. The exchange is well-founded in dialogue and stage directions though specific weapons are not mentioned. The culminating confrontation of the battle follows almost immediately when Hal and Hotspur meet. As in so many other cases the weapons used are not made clear. It is probably safe to assume that the combat is with swords. Douglas wielded one in his fight with Blunt, as has already been noted, and in scene iii, Hal asked Falstaff for the loan of a sword, albeit unsuccessfully.

During the combat between Hal and Hotspur, Douglas and Falstaff fight, probably only briefly, as Falstaff feigns death to avoid injury. Falstaff's weapon may be the sword he refused to give Hal in the previous scene. We know that later Falstaff stabs the dead Hotspur in the thigh and, still later, warns that he will make any that doubt his having killed Percy "eat a piece of [his] sword".

A SOURCE SHEET FOR ARMS
AND ARMOUR AND FENCING

Compiled by Eric Uhler

1. Aylward, J.D., The English Master of Arms. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

A very interesting book. It gives some interesting facts about what trials and tribulations aspiring masters faced and about the Masters themselves. It contains some well-chronicled histories of some of the most famous Masters of different times. The book explains the different schools of fence in a logical progression from the 12th to the 20th centuries. I suggest it be used as a basic book for anyone interested in arms, since it is not only about the Masters but covers their techniques and the use of many weapons, both for sport and real life.

2. Barbasetti, Luigi. The Art of the Foil. Dutton of New York.

This book should be read because it teaches the Italian school and the use of the Italian foil. It is pretty easy to follow, and the author takes time to explain the reasons for the different moves, which is something that is not found too often.

The second part of the book is a short history of fencing which covers Italian, French, and German fencing. There are some good plates and line illustrations. Of particular interest to me was the German student duelling societies, which he touched both from the sport aspect and the "mensur."

3. Beke, Z., Polgar, J. The Methodology of Sabre Fencing. Budapest: Athenium Printing House.

I like it. It is especially worth reading after the Barbasetti on sabre because it shows the contrast between the old and new schools. It is sometimes hard to follow, but it is the latest book that I know of that

breaks sabre fencing down into its component parts as completely as it does. I think if a person of basic ability and co-ordination could follow this book, with a little outside coaching he could do very well as a sabre fencer. It is fairly dry reading, though.

4. Castello, Hugo, Castello, James. Fencing. New York: Ronald Press, 1962.

A good book for the beginner. It is basic and very easy to follow, with good, clear photographs to help the beginner along visually. This book can turn someone into a fair intermediate fencer. One of the best things in the book is a conditioning program and a step-by-step lesson plan.

5. Castello, Julio M. The Theory and Practice of Fencing. New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons.

The father of Hugo and James. It's a good technique book, but the book by the sons is a bit more modern and it is easier to follow. I suggest using the later book since it is easier to get hold of and will do as well.

6. Davidson, H.R. Ellis. The Sword in Anglo-Saxon England. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962.

I found this book invaluable for experimenting with sword construction. It contains directions that anyone of average intelligence and a little previous knowledge of swords can follow.

It is a very complete book. It starts with getting the iron for the blades and goes to the use of the sword. It contains literary allusions to swords and somewhat of the supernaturalness of swords. The book tells about the parts of a sword in detail, covering the hilt, scabbard, pommel, and quillons as well as the sword itself. There is some interesting information about sword decoration.

7. Ffouikes, Charles. The Armourer and His Craft. New York: Benjamin Blom.

Not many plates, but it has a good glossary. It

seems to be a fairly complete compilation of armourers and the art of making armour. The book contains a list of some of the more famous armourers of the time, with short biographies of some of them. It covers the 11th to 16th centuries. There is a good breakdown of a typical 16th century suit of armour, with the parts labeled in French, English, Italian, German, and Spanish. This is the first time I've run across this sort of labeling, and it helped me a lot. I would run into one word for a certain piece of armour in one book then the same piece would have a different name in another book.

The book is easy to follow and it has pretty interesting material. It gives some methods of cleaning armour and tells of the tools used.

8. Flint Institute of Arts. The Art of the Armourer. Flint, Michigan: DeWaters Art Center.

Very good for studying the functional designs of armour that were beautiful but could still be used in everyday life. It has fine plates and some dimensions. The book contains mostly European wear, but it does touch on Japanese tsuba, or sword guards.

9. Hobbs, William. Stage Fight. New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1967.

William Hobbs is probably the foremost authority on stage fighting. This is a good basic book for directors to own. It's easy to follow, and it contains some line drawings to show positions. It offers a shorthand for fight notation, which I use, and is good for keeping track of what is to happen during a fight. He touches on fisticuffs and comedy fights. He includes some scenes that are already blocked and can easily be used over and over with slight variations. There are also some nice plates of actual fights in production.

10. Martin, Paul. Arms and Armour. Rutland, Vt.: Charles E. Tuttle Co. Inc.

Martin covers Europe and England from the 9th to the 17th centuries. He writes very clearly and with an

easily followed progression, and the book has many good plates and illustrations. The book contains very few dimensions. It also contains a chapter on tactics and the use of weapons in warfare which is particularly interesting.

11. Norman, Vesey. Arms and Armour. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons.

This book covers England and much of Europe and goes from the Vikings to the 18th century. It is fairly good in placing weapons in time periods. I found the chapter on sword and dagger to be interesting. The book has some good plates. There is no glossary, but the terms are well explained in context. The book would be better understood by someone fairly well versed in armour, though. It doesn't give much in the way of dimensions.

12. Robinson, H. Russell. Japanese Arms and Armour. New York: Crown Publishers.

There are some very good plates in black and white and color. It's basically a picture book, but it gives short histories of the seven basic periods that go from the 4th to the 19th centuries. It is good for the beginner in Japanese arms because the Japanese terms are well-defined.

13. Vince, Joseph. Fencing. New York: Ronald Press, 1933.

I use this book to teach from. Vince covers foil, sabre and epee. The book is easy to follow and I feel that the Vince method works well. He is unbiased as to schools of fence, giving equal weight to the Italian and Hungarian in sabre, and the Italian and French in foil, though he uses French foil. It is a good book, and my bible.

14. Wilkinson, Frederick. Edged Weapons. New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc.

The book is aesthetically beautiful, containing very fine color and black and white prints. It also

is pretty good on dimensions, which along with the pictures makes it a valuable book for making weapons. He covers weapons from the wooden spear to the modern bayonet. He includes English, European, Oriental, and American blades. The chapter on Japanese weapons is the clearest piece on Japanese weapons that I have come across.



Basil Rathbone (left) and Errol Flynn in the 1938 Warner Bros. film The Adventures of Robin Hood, directed by Michael Curtiz; fights choreographed by Fred Cavens.

BOOK REVIEW

ERROL FLYNN : A MEMOIR

By Earl Conrad

There was a sword in his family, reputedly captured from Captain Bligh. Flynn played with it as a child, until his father gave it away to the Naval and Military Club at Hobart, where it hangs to this day. As a young man he sported a walking stick. After he became a star he acquired a swordstick, with a tiger's head on the handle, the eyes made of two diamonds. In later years he carried this everywhere, occasionally unsheathing it for effect, a trifle rusty though it was, with one tiger's eye missing, but still with a sharp point. Once he gave the blade to Earl Conrad, the author of this book, asking him to take it and "cut a man down" while Flynn filmed it. After Conrad had done his best to imitate what he had seen Flynn do on the screen, Flynn handed Conrad the movie camera and invited him "Now you take a shot of me."

"He stood for ten or fifteen seconds gazing at nothing, but being Errol Flynn. Then he unsheathed the gleaming steel slowly and with one gesture or no gesture at all, pointed it straight at me and the camera. He held that pose for half a minute as I filmed away.

'Cut,' he murmured. I stopped shooting.

He lowered the sword and placed it back in its sheath. Why, the bastard! Those two shots would be on the same film, I cavorting like a monkey, he just doing nothing but being the great handsome brute of an Errol Flynn, looking grand, doing nothing but being the incomparable swordsman. His damned incessant tricks! I knew he liked me well enough to want to see me make an ass of myself."

This extract gives us two essential facts about Flynn. His damned incessant tricks, many of them, like this one, extremely unkind. And the fact that he could look like an incomparable swordsman without actually being one. He was not interested in swordplay, as has been stated before in this magazine. He would not have made a good fencer. He did what he was told in his film fights, and if the fight was well choreographed, shot, directed and edited, he looked "the greatest."

The Flynn industry is a remarkable phenomenon. Long since dead, he has already secured more book and television coverage than many who left behind far more serious achievements than a handful of charismatic screen performances, and some private life encounters that hit the world's headlines, before he was acquitted of sexual charges that had been trumped up for mercenary, political or malicious motives.

The interest of this particular book is that Earl Conrad really did know Flynn, being constantly in the star's company during his latter days in Jamaica and New York, ghosting the autobiography "My Wicked Wicked Ways." Now Conrad gives his own view and experience of Flynn, as well as filling in a good deal of what was left out of the autobiography.

Some of what is written here is speculation or philosophising, with which one may agree or disagree, some of it is really only trivia. But the real facts unearthed are interesting. Flynn had a lifelong hatred for his mother, to whom he only referred by means of a four letter word. His basic physical condition which rendered him 4F medically was recurrent malaria and "a touch of TB." He was hooked on morphine, and completely wedded to alcohol. His attraction to and for women, especially very young ones down to fourteen year olds, was fully documented and witnessed. His extraordinary youthful adventures in New Guinea and elsewhere were actually true. His zest for living especially in and around the water was insatiable.

His pranks were endless and often cruel. He was ungenerous, sometimes unpleasant, and completely selfish. When he tried to be serious the result was like some of his bad performances (Essex in "Elizabeth and Essex" for instance) well-intentioned but juvenile. And yet both Trevor Howard and our own Patrick Crean found him a real gentlemen. Of his overwhelming charm there can be no doubt.

There were times when he regretted that his more serious ambitions--to be a scientist like his father, or to be a real writer--had been submerged into acting and Hollywood stardom. But what happened to him was, in a way, inevitable. He was a genuinely beautiful man and had a real sense of "swash." Mr. Conrad has written

a lot of books, and one feels from this one that he is nobody's fool. He knew Flynn and if he says something happened, it happened. Apparently Flynn's only real regret was that he never learned to play the piano, and his greatest fear was (wait for it) castration, which in fact had once nearly happened to him. If you are interested in the Flynn truth as well as the legend, get this book.

Reprinted from
"The Fight Director"
No. 18 September, 1979



PART IV
DUELS IN FRANCE

From: The Duel: A
History of Duelling
By Robert Baldick

During the next reign, that of Henri IV, despite numerous edicts against duelling, the practice increased enormously, and it was calculated that from his accession to the throne in 1589 until 1607 no fewer than four thousand gentlemen were killed in affairs of honour. Scarcely a day went by without the bloody settlement of some private quarrel, as in the notorious 'duel of the hat' between Lagarde Vallon and Bazanez.

Lagarde was a celebrated duellist of the time whose reputation had attracted the attention and roused the jealousy of another quarrelsome swordsman called Bazanez. The latter decided to have a trial of skill with him, and hit upon the device of sending him a hat adorned with feathers and accompanied by a message stating that he would wear it at the peril of his life. As was only to be expected, Lagarde promptly donned the hat and sallied forth in search of his impudent challenger. The two men had no sooner come together and exchanged the usual civilities before Lagarde inflicted a terrible cut on Bazanez's head, but his opponent's skull was so hard that it deflected the weapon. His second lunge was more successful, and he exclaimed: 'This is for the hat!' as his sword entered Bazanez's body, adding: 'This is for the feathers!' and 'This is for the tassel!' with his following thrusts.

By now Bazanez had lost a great deal of blood, but he made a supreme effort and felled his opponent to the ground. Bending over him, he then stabbed him with his dagger fourteen times between the neck and the navel, remarking: 'I am giving you a scarf to wear with the hat.' In the meantime, as one chronicler of the duel put it, Lagarde was 'not altogether idle,' for he bit off part of his opponent's chin and fractured his skull with the pommel of his sword. The two duellists then fainted clean away, and were removed from the battlefield.

Strangely enough, both men recovered from the terrible wounds they had inflicted on each other. Bazanez died a few years later in an ambush, while Lagarde continued to terrorize his contemporaries with blood-thirsty challenges in the following vein:

'I have reduced your house to ashes, ravished your wife, and hanged your children; and I now have the honour to be your mortal enemy, Lagarde.'

The King himself looked favourably upon duelling, at least when there was a serious justification, as can be seen from this characteristic letter he wrote to Duplessis-Mornay when the latter complained of having been insulted by a young nobleman: 'I am deeply grieved to hear of the insult which you have received, in which I share as your sovereign and as your friend. In the first capacity I shall see justice done, both for your sake and mine; and if I bore only the second title, you would find me eager to draw my sword and cheerfully expose my life on your behalf.' Sully, however, the King's minister, used all his influence to check the practice, and it was as a result of his remonstrances that Henri issued a series of edicts declaring duellists to be guilty of lèse majesté, and hence liable to the death penalty. The edict of Blois, in 1602, not only condemned both parties in a duel and their seconds to death and the confiscation of their property, but specified that all offended persons should submit their complaint to the governor of their province, for it to be laid before the Constable and Marshals of France. This was the origin of the jurisdiction of the 'point of honour,' which would be embodied in an official code during the reign of Louis XIV.

Unfortunately, all these edicts remained without effect, for the King could not bring himself to allow the law to be enforced in all its severity. Bellievre, the Chancellor of France at this time, maintained that if it were left to him, he would soon put a stop to duelling by refusing a pardon to all offenders, remarking that the most quarrelsome of men would hesitate to fight if they knew that death would be the inevitable consequence of a duel for both parties; but he added that there could be no hope of bringing duelling to a stop so long as the King insisted on meddling with the law.

Moreover, the edicts against duelling, though strict enough in their phraseology, contained so many saving clauses as to suggest that they would be unlikely to be put into execution. For example, while duels were denounced as monstrous and criminal, it was specified that an offended party could apply to the sovereign through the Marshals of France for permission to fight; and d'Audiguier, a leading champion of duelling of the time, pertinently remarked 'that as the King never granted permission to fight to any applicant, and had frequently refused it, it was evident that it was useless to make an application, so that the parties came to blows without any reference to authority and were with very few exceptions pardoned by the royal clemency.' Henri IV did in fact grant some seven thousand pardons for duelling in a period of nineteen years, or an average of one a day, so that Sully had good reason to complain 'that the facility with which the King forgave duels tended to multiply them, and hence these fatal examples pervaded the court, the city and the kingdom.'

Matters became even worse during the reign of Louis XIII, which was distinguished by a host of unnecessary duels fought over trifling points of honour. Such a one was the encounter between the eldest of three brothers called Binau and a certain La Faye. The eldest Binau had thrashed his younger brother twice, first for fighting an 'unnatural' duel with the youngest of the family, and then for attacking the inoffensive La Faye; but the latter had refused to accept a reconciliation, and Binau had no option but to fight. They met with pistols on horseback; and while La Faye's shot struck the pommel of Binau's saddle, the latter's ball went through his opponent's body. La Faye's horse galloped off, carrying the wounded man, with Binau calling out: 'La Faye, come back, come back! You are running away!' This futile affair consequently had a bitter ending, for La Faye died the same day, declaring with his last breath that his only grievance was the fact of having been told that he was running away.

The prize for the number of duels fought by a single man at this time, often for the most trivial reasons, probably goes to the Chevalier d'Andrieux. According

to Tallemant des Reaux, this worthy had killed seventy-two men in duels by the age of thirty, as he observed one day to a nobleman with whom he was fighting. His opponent had unwisely boasted: 'Chevalier, you will be the tenth man I have killed,' to which d'Andrieux replied: 'And you will be my seventy-second'--suing the deed to the word. This same d'Andrieux carried his ferocity to supernatural lengths, for he sometimes induced his defeated opponents to deny God, on the promise of their lives, and then cut their throats, in order, so he said, to have the pleasure of killing their souls and bodies together.

'POINTS' OF INTEREST

We have finally hit the half century mark!
Mr. William Hauserman was the 50th person to become a member of the Society of American Fight Directors. The Society is growing and strengthening its prominence in many areas of the theatre world. The new members to the Society since the last issue are as follows:

Michael Osborne	(Student)	c/o W. E. Powers 180 Hollywood Street Oberlin, Ohio 44024
Drew Fracher	(Student)	525 Cherry Ave., No. 4 Waynesborro, Virginia 22980
Jim Manley	(Actor/ Combatant)	348 W. 47th. St. New York, New York 10036
Kent Shelton	(Student)	211 E. 10th., No. 15 New York, New York
Jan Kirk	(Affiliate)	26 Perry St., No. 4A New York, New York 10014
Peter Cumba	(Actor/ Combatant)	134 Kent St. Brooklyn, New York 11222
Steven Stout	(Actor/ Combatant)	71-7th. Ave. Brooklyn, New York 11217
Robert Walsh	(Actor/ Combatant)	171 East 92nd. St. New York, New York 10028
David Leong	(Affiliate)	3421 Toledo Terrace, #L2 Hyattsville, Maryland 20783

William Hauserman (Affiliate) 107 Marburth Ave.
Towson, Maryland 21204

The Society welcomes the new members and hopes that they will play a large part in the development of the goals that we all strive to achieve. We hope that the new members will be contributing articles to our magazine as the magazine is still the link that keeps us all abreast of what is happening in the are of fight directing and swordplay throughout the United States and the English-speaking world.

* * * * *

The Society welcomes our new editor of The Fight Master, Ms. Ann C. Long, who has taken over the duties of Mr. Michael McGraw who served the Society so admirably for the past two years. We look forward to a fruitful experience with Ann as she has already proposed new additions to the magazine which should make it even better than what has been published to date. We cannot thank Michael enough and wish him all the best. Welcome aboard Ann and don't be afraid to speak your mind!

* * * * *

Another reminder that we must continue to receive articles for the Society's magazine. Although we now have 50 members, that does not mean an overabundance of articles. This issue is a very good one only because of those who have contributed, such as Mr. Hood and Mr. Callahan. We must all continue to present information that can be of value to our fellow members. Remember, this magazine is the voice of the Society. Through it are we able to inform and be informed.

D. L. Boushey

* * * * *

In the April edition of The Fight Master, it was stated that an invitation had been extended to

Mr. B. H. Barry to join the Society of American Fight Directors as an honorary member such as the status Paddy Crean enjoys. To date Mr. Barry has not had the courtesy to reply to our sincere gesture. The officers of the Society now assume that Mr. Barry has no intention of pursuing that possibility. We regret this in that Mr. Barry conducts a great deal of his business in the United States and one would hope that as a guest in this country he would be most interested in becoming aligned with the society that represents the best interests of the fight directors who work in the United States.

LE TEATRE DUE GRAND-GUIGNOL DE PARIS:
THEATRE OF TERROR, SHRIEKS AND HORRIPILATION.
The Ultimate in Stage Violence.

A paper delivered at the American Theatre Association national convention in New York City, August 14, 1979.

Dr. John Callahan
Associate Professor of
Drama
University of Texas at
Tyler
403 Beechwood Drive
Tyler, Texas 75701

Le Theatre de Grand-Guignol de Paris lasted for almost sixty-five years, from 1897 till late in 1962, and although the term "Grand Guignol" translates as "Big Puppet," the theatre was not for children, and was instead devoted to realistic horror plays designed to terrorize its audiences. Since the Grand-Guignol's opening, the French have used the adjective grandguignol-
esque to describe any such fiendish melodramas. For most of its career, the Grand-Guignol used pure terror to hypnotize its patrons, and averaged four murders a night--probably the longest running crime wave in history. "Aided by trick lighting, fearsome props and make-up, the Guignolers [went] happily, if homicidally, about their business of gouging out one another's eyes, cooking villains in vats of sulphuric acid, hurling vitriol and cutting throats, all to the accompaniment of hysterical laughter and hideous shrieks."

The depiction of horror, while simulated, was quite realistic, and fainting spells were common in the audience. The Grand-Guignol was where tourists, voyeurs, and native Parisians went to be scared to death prior to World War II. After this war, the Grand-Guignol was tame stuff and Paris audiences began to laugh, while American tourists became the main clientel. The situation deteriorated until the theatre closed

its doors in 1962.

The Grand-Guignol believed in the concept of la douche écossaise, or "the hot and cold shower," meaning the alternation of horror and humor plays. A typical Grand-Guignoler was a one-act, and the Grand-Guignol usually presented four such plays a night, two horror plays and two comedies. But while the Grand-Guignol would present farcical comedies before or after their horrifying plays, terror was always the main attraction of the evening--terror achieved through the heights of stage violence tricks. These tricks were basically simplistic, depending upon illusionism and machinery and especially slight-of-hand. To act at the Grand-Guignol was to be a magician. But the primary ingredient of the Grand-Guignol was the recipe for the still secret Guignol blood which changed colors as it cooled, actually coagulated and made scabs and came in nine shades! Many critics have hailed this last effect as the pièce de résistance of the Guignol's stable of terrifying tricks.

For its patrons, the Grand-Guignol was a chance to be scared in complete safety. Audiences enjoy being frightened, as the box office receipts of movies such as The Exorcist (the original, please) and the current Alien will attest. Most people are vicarious lovers of violence and danger, and the majority of people find the realistic depiction of violence to be cathartic. People went to the Grand-Guignol to be scared, to be able to hug their girl friend or boy friend, to release their own sadism and/or masochism. It was a great time for everybody. But perhaps instead of saying people "enjoy being scared," one should say people "enjoy being not bored." Horror plays are one way of achieving a state of heightened consciousness, with little or no addiction problems, and absolutely no withdrawal symptoms except a sigh of relief when the play is over. People have enjoyed, and always will enjoy, now being bored. The Grand-Guignol was able to last for sixty-five years simply because it did not bore people. And when it did bore, after reality had far outdistanced its horrors, it closed.

The building in which the Grand-Guignol was located

on the Rue Chaptal in Montmartre was build in 1786 by the Jansenists, an ultra-conservative Catholic Group, and was later made into a convent. (Montmartre has since become the artists' and bohemians' section of Paris.) During the purge of religion under the Revolution, the building was sacked, but the chapel survived untouched, and it was this chapel that become the physical setting for the Grand-Guignol Theatre. In 1880 the chapel was closed by order of the Bishop of Paris. In 1896 when Maurice Magnier converted the chapel into an intimate, 285 seat theatre, he retained the chapel motif. Thus, some of the worst manglings, acid throwings and vile murders have been witnessed by carved cherubs and seven-foot angels, while the loges look vaguely like confessionals and the balcony seats like pews.

The Guignol was begun as part of the art, little theatre movement, and was dedicated to naturalism. André Antoine's Théâtre Libre, located just off the Place Pigalle in Montmartre, not more than a ten minute walk from the Grand-Guignol, was one of the early inspirations for the Grand-Guignol. The Théâtre du Grand-Guignol opened in 1897 under the leadership of Oscar Méténier, a playwright who had had several of his works produced at the Théâtre Libre. Méténier served his public brief, naturalistic "slices of life-in-the-raw." The opening bill of the Guignol, on April 3, 1897, consisted of seven short plays, including Mademoiselle Fifi by Méténier himself, a play which would become a Grand-Guignol classic with over 2,000 performances. Mademoiselle Fifi tells of a young French prostitute who knifes a German officer in the chest. Thus, from the first night of its existence, the Grand-Guignol dealt with violence, terror, and graphic representations of the seamier side of lie.

In 1898, after turning over the management of the theatre to Max Maurey, Méténier (who used to arrive at the theatre between two bodyguards) simply disappeared. Maurey replaced Méténier's "slice-of-life" plays with "slice-of-death" plays, and he decreed that the staple of the Grand-Guignol was to be terror rather than naturalism. By 1900 the Grand-Guignol was a thriving

enterprise.

Max Maurey advertised the Grand-Guignol as the "House of Horror" and he reprinted newspaper cartoons showing Grand-Guignol customers having medical check-ups before purchasing their tickets. One of his best promotional schemes was to add a house physician to the staff of the theatre--a doctor who would be in attendance to administer to anyone overcome from fright. However, on the doctor's first night of duty a spectator fainted and the ushers could not locate the doctor. When the victim regained consciousness he meekly confessed that he himself was the doctor.

Among the plays produced during the Maurey management were these classics of horror: Le Système du Docteur Goudron et Professor Plume, 1903, which features madness, eye gouging, and surgery; La Dernière Torture, 1904, which deals with the Boxer Rebellion in China, shows a Frenchman's hands being cut off at the wrist, and also features a father shooting his daughter in the head only to find that the approaching army is French, not Chinese, and he then goes insane; Les Nuits du Hampton Club, 1908, shows a self-inflicted gunshot to the head onstage (shares of The Deer Hunter!); Une Leçon a la Salpêtrière, 1908, presents a bottle of sulphuric acid being thrown in a character's face; and finally, L'Horrible Expérience, 1909, shows a doctor using electric shock to restore his dead daughter to life, however, the doctor only succeeds in causing his daughter's arms to grab him at the neck and choke him to death.

When World War I began, Maurey chose as his successor Camille Choisy, and it was under the Choisy management that the theatre attained its greatest successes and world-wide fame. Some of the more popular plays during this management were Le Laboratoire des Hallucinations, 1916, which depicts insanity, open brain surgery with the back of the victim's head visible to the audience, an extramarital love affair, and finally a chisel through a man's forehead--this play, not surprisingly, became a Grand-Guignol classic. In Au Petit Jour, 1921, the guillotine beheads a man onstage, and in Les Jardins des Supplices, 1922, the playwright shows the flesh being cut off of a young girl, and a red-hot needle

piercing a woman's eye; in La Maison des Hommes Vivants, 1923, murderers drink the blood of their victims; and in another Grand-Guignol classic, Un Crime dans une Maison de Fous, 1925, one can see an eye gouging with long surgical scissors and a woman's face sizzling on a hot plate; and in Le Baiser de Sang, a man amputates his own finger onstage (for an idea of just how grisly a finger amputation can be, see the Clint Eastwood movie, Escape from Alcatraz).

Between the world wars the undisputed Queen of the Grand-Guignol was "a generously proportioned actress called Maxa. No character in the Comte de Sade's novels ever suffered so many wrongs. Not an inch of her body was spared. She died more than 10,000 times in some sixty different ways, and was raped more than 3,000 times. Only one other performer ever came close to her, Maryse Leroy, who, as a result of her thousands of deaths, came to be called 'The Lady of the Père-Lachaise' (Paris' largest cemetery). This did not prevent her from fainting on stage one evening when her partner was seized with a genuine nosebleed."

In 1930 Choisy left the Grand-Guignol and Jack Jouvin took control, and Jouvin gave up his reins in 1937 to an Englishwoman, Eva Bergson. Miss Bergson fled to England after the fall of France but the Grand-Guignol continued to operate during the Occupation and was very popular with the Germans. Miss Bergson returned in 1945, only to find that Parisians now laughed at what had previously terrified them. The theatre became an important tourist attraction, but was hopelessly out-of-touch with post-war Parisians. Among the famous people who attended the Grand-Guignol during this period were Herman Goering, Robert Anderson and Ho Chi Minh (although not on the same night). General George S. Patton, old "Blood and Guts" himself, watched a performance prompting Paris newspapers to write "'Blood and Guts at the Grand Guignol.'" whereupon the box office received large numbers of orders for tickets to the new spectacle--'Blood and Guts.'" The theatre's decline was further documented by Time magazine in 1947: "It was not like the old days; there were only three gruesome murders, and there was no torture more

horrendous than a barehanded strangulation. Nobody in the audience even fainted. The spectators...lounged around on rough wooden benches and had a modest emotional binge. A few couples in screened baignoires had nother kind of binge on the indifferent house champagne."

The Grand-Guignol continued to flounder after World War II, and in 1951 Miss Bergson retired. The Grand-Guignol went through a series of temporary managements, then settled upon Madame Raymonde Machard from 1954 to 1958. Fred Pascale succeeded her, and after him came Charles Nonon, the last director of the Grand-Guignol. The theatre closed in late 1962 and Time magazine reported thusly on the demise of the venerable institution:

The last clotted eyeball has plopped onto the stage. The last entrail has been pulled like an earthworm from a conscious victim....Only recently audiences watched a nude and lissome actress nailed to a cross and carved to pieces by a group of gypsy magicians chanting something that sounded like a Protestant hymn sung backwards. Still another victim---popular with modern fans---was bound, gagged, and whipped; then the tips of her breasts were clipped off with hedge shears and her eyes were scooped out with a soup spoon and a jackknife. "We are very proud of that sequence," said Charles Nonon...."We consider it original, at least on-stage."

World War II began the end of the Grand Guignol. "We could never equal Buchenwald," moaned Nonon. Where audiences once cowered in fear, they started to whinny.

Technically, the postwar Grand Guignol was as good as ever. First-rate viscera were made from red rubber hose and sponges soaked in blood. Hand bulbs squirted blood through a hollow in the spoons that gouged out victims' eyes. The blood really curdled. It came in nine shades, and was mixed daily by Director Nonon.

In a sense, Charles Nonon was the Escoffier of the Grand Guignol. For eye-gouging scenes, he bought eyeballs from taxidermists, coated them with

aspic, and stuffed them with three anchovies marinated in blood. In Paris last week, there was a rumor that Nonon will soon open a quiet little restaurant on the Rue Morgue.

Along with eyeballs stuffed with anchovies, the Grand-Guignolers excelled in make-up tricks, with one specialty being a "boiled, partly skinned head (the actor is wrapped in a silk stocking and covered with putty, sponge, cloth and 'blood')." ."

Most of the Grand-Guignol violence tricks were extremely simple using trick lighting, mirrors, make-up, slight-of-hand and the imagination of the audience. For example, in an Italian documentary movie titled Ecco (1965), a Grand-Guignol actor cuts off a woman's arm at the shoulder while she is strapped to a table. This trick was accomplished by the woman pushing her arm down hard on a slat of the table made to roll over when pushed, the bottom of the table prepared with a fake arm already attached, dressed to match the actress' real arm at the shoulder. Just before the moment the table rolls over, the actor crosses in front of her, thus keeping the audience from seeing the maneuver. He then proceeds to dissect the fake arms, with any blood coming from the handle of the cutting instrument, being squeezed out through the blade. A device similar to this has been used for centuries to show the results of a decapitation.

The girl whose nipples were cut off with hedge shears could have been wearing a bra with a realistic breast and foam rubber nipple placed on the outside of the cup, or an even simpler method of doing this trick, and one favored many times in the movies for an on-screen amputation, would have been to hire a woman with a mastectomy, place a prosthetic breast over her scar tissue, and then slice away the fake nipple.

In a trick that goes back to the middle ages, chewing on a bar of soap could imitate the foamings at the mouth of a madman, or a victim of radies. Knives were used with collapsible blades, or knives with dull blades which retreated into the handle upon contact. The trick of having a bend or half-circle loop in the blade of a knife or the shaft of an arrow is well-known, and even used for comedy effect by Steve Martin, but as is the case with many well-known tricks, it is still effective

when used by actors who play the scene realistically.

In 1856 in L'Orgie dans le Phase the Grand-Guignol hung a girl on a hook, but hanging tricks have been done for centuries. In this same play, fire effects were achieved with a lycopodium torch, a device which Paris first saw in 1765, which produces brilliantly bright red flames with little danger because it burns its vegetable powder-fuel almost instantaneously. Lycopodium powder was commonly used in the Nineteenth Century for lightning effects and for when people needed to appear to be enveloped in flames.

For sixty-five years the Grand-Guignol entertained audiences through terror and laughter, stage trickery and realistic acting. Its end was caused by reality outstripping the imaginary horrors of the little theatre, but le theatre du Grand-Guignol de Paris left the theatre world with many fond, if gruesome, memories.

SOCIETY NEWS

DAVID L. BUOSHEY recently choreographed the fight sequences for the San Francisco A.C.T. production of Romeo and Juliet. He also did R. and J. for Yuba College. His latest choreography was Faust for the Seattle Opera. He is now teaching at the University of Washington and The Cornish Institute for the Arts.

ERIK FREDRICKSEN has recently choreographed Macbeth for the Folger Theatre in Washington, D.C. He is now choreographing Hamlet and playing the role of Claudius in the same production in Virginia.

BYRON JENNINGS is playing Captain Hook and choreographing the fights for Peter Pan at the Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts. He will soon be embarking upon Richard III in which he will play Richard and do the fights.

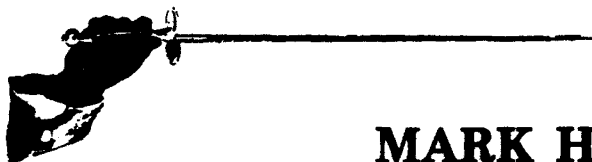
CHRIS PHILLIPS (Affiliate) designed the summer stock at Cortland Rep. in Cortland, New York.

JEROME SMITH (Student) is now directing the fights in Romeo and Juliet for the New Shakespeare Company in San Francisco, and will choreograph the fights in a San Bruno production of Don Giovanni.

ERIC UHLER (Affiliate) is playing Curley and choreographing the fight in Of Mine and Men at the Meadow Brook Theatre in Michigan.

CHRISTOPHER VILLA (Affiliate) recently choreographed the fight work in the San Francisco Opera production of La Forza Del Destino. He is now setting the fights in a production of Macbeth for the Julian Theatre in San Francisco.

MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY--PLEASE KEEP THE SOCIETY INFORMED AS TO THE WORK IN WHICH YOU ARE ENGAGED. WE SHOULD HAVE MORE SOCIETY NEWS THAN THIS WITH 50 MEMBERS IN THE SOCIETY. FELLOW MEMEBERS LIKE TO KNOW WHAT THEIR COLLEAGUES ARE DOING.



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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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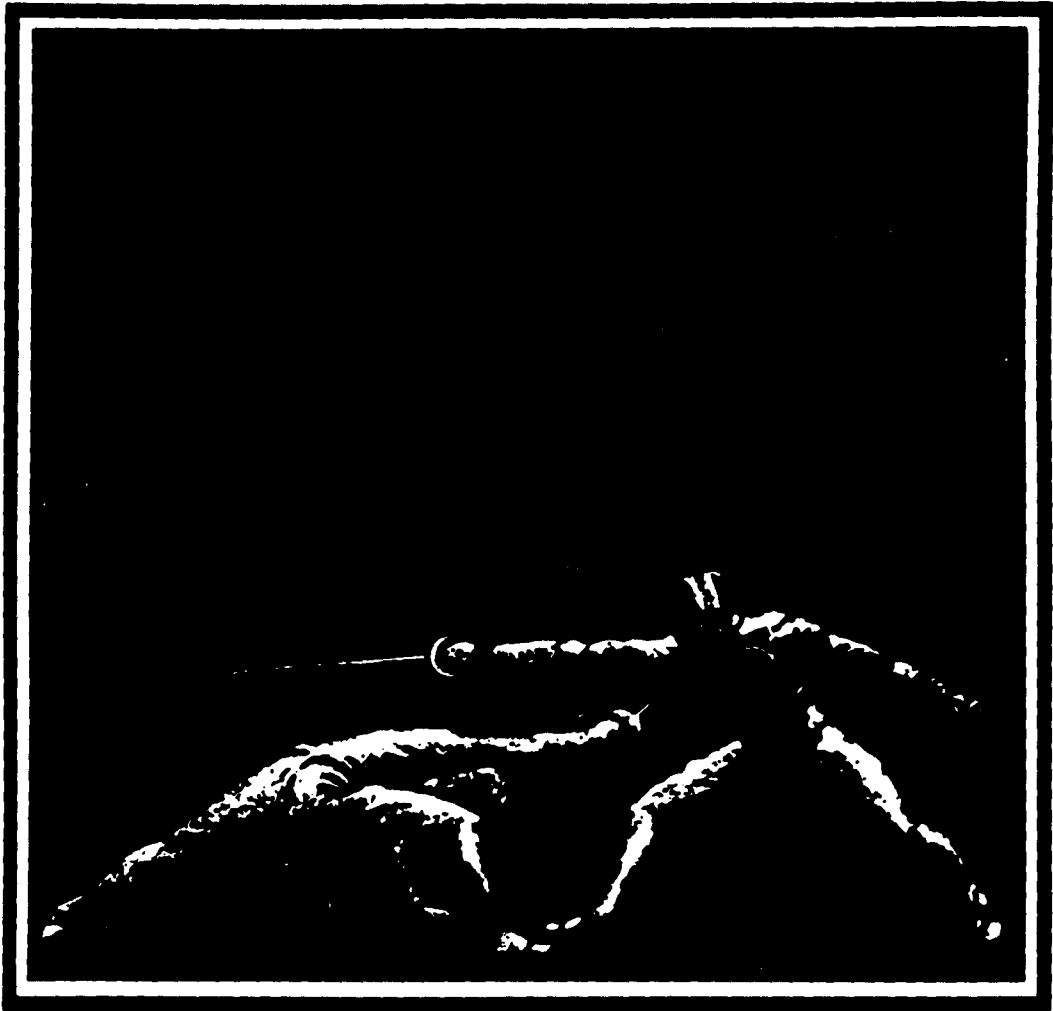
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