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The Society of American Fight Directors

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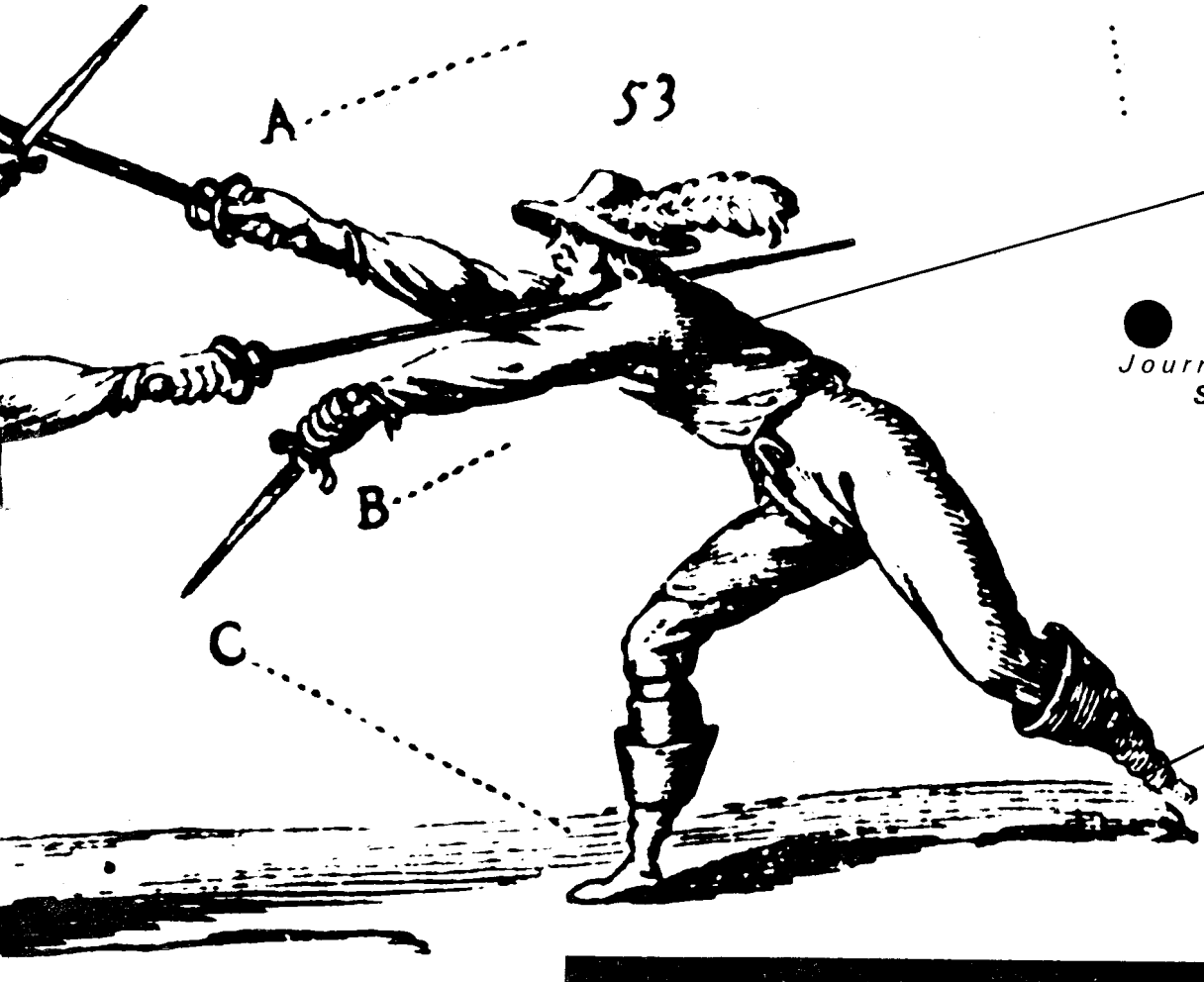
FIGHT MASTER



Journal of the
Society of American
Fight Directors

THE FIGHT MASTER

Journal of the Society of American Fight Directors

F E A T U R E ARTICLES

D E P A R T M E N T S

January 1983 **Volume VI** **number 1**

THE FIGHT MASTER
Journal of the Society of American Fight Directors

Editor Joseph Martinez
Associate Editor Phyllis Dunn
Design consultant Nancy Laurence
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EDITOR'S COMMENTS

I am sincerely honored to have been elected to serve the Society of American Fight Directors as the new Editor of *The Fight Master.* I am grateful to David L. Boushey, the original Editor, for his pioneering efforts in establishing this distinguished journal and for his support during this difficult period of transition.

I have made a number of rather bold changes in the format and design of *The Fight Master.* This is my attempt to reflect the growing national significance of our organization as a learned society actively involved in a contemporary and dynamic theatrical era. I hope that the changes I have made will meet with the approval of the majority of the membership. My intention is to spur everyone involved in our Society to uninhibitedly contribute to this journal by helping me to honestly reflect the activities and interests of the membership.

Please allow me to explain some of the more apparent editorial changes.

This issue and subsequent issues of *The Fight Master* will be cataloged according to Volume and number. This January 1983 issue is Volume VI number 1. Each following year will be represented by a volume designation and each of the yearly issues will be numbered consecutively, 1, 2, 3, 4. I determined the current volume and number by beginning with the very first April 1978 issue as Volume I number 1 and continued the process until arriving at the current issue. Members may wish to re-catalog their past issues in a like manner, as any subsequent references to past journals will be referred to by the appropriate volume and number.

The heart of the journal continues to be the Feature Articles submitted by Society members. I look forward to many new articles and ask only that the authors be willing to allow me to edit their articles according to my judgement.

Articles are welcome on any and every aspect of the Stage Combat Arts. All articles must be submitted however at least four weeks prior to publication, in order to work effectively with the printer. Please submit your articles as early as possible. It is extremely difficult to judge the direction or emphasis of a particular issue unless the feature articles are in my possession a comfortable length of time prior to publication.

A consistent aspect of the journal is the departments, incuding the President's Report, Secretary/Treasurer's Report, Points of Interest, and Society News. These department's will be included in each issue. I would very much like to increase the number of items in both Points of Interest and Society News. For example, in addition to the usual items included in these departments, we need more regional information on job possibilities. If any of the members are familiar with annual auditions, or events which may lead to employment for Society members as Actor/Combatants, Teachers, Choreographers, etc., please forward the information on to me and I will include any submitted item in Points of Interest. Let's pool our resources to help develop *The Fight Master* as a truly open and active forum, which may aid the membership in a meaningful and immediate manner.

A new department I've included in the January issue is Society Spotlight. This department will feature a prominent Society member each issue. Society Spotlight is intended to help the membership become more familiar with the individuals who have significantly contributed to the Society. I am particularly pleased to inaugurate this department with our chief officer in the Society, Mr. Erik Fredricksen. President.

If any member has an idea about other possible departments which could be consistently sustained, please forward it to me. I believe that my purpose as Editor is to reflect the ideas and interests of the membership.

The journal is very expensive to publish in its present form, as we print a limited number of copies. It is important that we continue to expand the journal and continue to upgrade the quality to the highest possible standard. To this end, I have sought out alternative funding sources to support the journal and have been successful in a small way, but I can't do this alone.

One rather significant suggestion I have to generate additional revenue for our journal is for each and every member of the Society to seek out one new subscriber for the next issue of *The Fight Master.* As a special first-time Editor's offer, a new subscriber may purchase a one-year's subscription to *The Fight Master* (four informative issues) for only $10.00. Surely we all know of at least one person who is interested in the Stage Combat Arts and who would appreciate an opportunity to receive *The Fight Master?* All checks for subscriptions only, may be made out to *The Fight Master* and sent directly to the Editor. Of course all membership dues should continue to be sent to David L. Boushey.

In closing I wish to emphasize that I welcome all comments and criticisms concerning the journal. I need to hear from all of you, so that I may improve our publication. The year ahead offers stimulating challenges to all of us, as we continue to advance the Stage Combat Arts in the United States, and I believe that *The Fight Master* is in the center of that challenge. Let us be open and aggressive in our communications with each other.

I am proud of the Society of American Fight Directors and its committed membership. I look forward to a closer contact with each of the members through my service to *The Fight Master.*

Joseph Martinez, Editor ■

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Now that the journal is being turned over to Joseph Martinez, I want to take the opportunity to thank David Boushey for the wonderful work that he has done in building this journal to what it is.

In the past year and a half I have had numerous comments from our own membership in the United States, Canada, and in Great Britain, as to the value and interest in *The Fight Master.* It is the most informative and varied publication in existence in the field of the Stage Combat Arts. This is largely due to the energetic verbal sallies issued by David, which accompanied so many of the quarterlies. His promptings were necessary, although many of us may not have wanted to see them. They were frequently the main reason that many of us (though less confident at the prospects) sat down and made a contribution to the journal.

Many thanks to David for his justified "carping" and keeping at us in order to make the journal the source of pride that it is today.

I know from talking to Joseph, that he has some interesting and creative ideas about the future of the journal. As the interest in the journal and our own membership continues to grow, we can now realistically consider seeking additional advertising and subscription sales. We are a national organization with something to say. There is a great deal of valuable information compiled in each issue and our journal has become as much a growing part of our voice as

our individual work. Those of you who responded to the call are also responsible for this positive visibility. Please continue to contribute and to help improve the journal. Those of you who are new to the Society, or those who simply haven't taken the time yet to contribute, resolve in the New Year to do so. We need you.

I also want the Editor to inform our membership that starting in January 1983, there will be a few changes in the membership designations. FULL membership status remains the same and is composed of individuals with exceptional teaching and choreographic credentials. The Affiliate membership designation will become ASSOCIATE. Anyone who joins the Society as an actor/combatant will now be designated as AFFILIATE (The Affiliate will be officially recorded as having passed the certification test as actor/combatant).

It is important to note that this decision was taken because there was significant concern among some of those members in the actor/combatant category, that their designation did not imply membership; as much as it designated success at certification.

There is no change in the rules regarding the use of the Society name and the manner it is used to procure work.

I look forward to my continued association with Joseph Martinez in his new capacity as Editor to *The Fight Master.* I am also looking forward to the support of the entire membership in 1983, as our Society continues to grow and to be deserving of it's respect and visibility as unique contributors to the Performing Arts.

Erik Fredricksen, President ■

SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT

We are heading into the New Year with a Society that continues to grow and prosper. What makes our organization financially viable is the money collected through dues from the membership each year. With such monies we are able to continue to publish our excellent journal, as well as promote the Society.

More and more producers, directors and theatre organizations are becoming aware of our contribution to the Performing Arts. We must continue to expand our reputation in the entertainment industry. This is accomplished by the various SAFD members spreading the word through workshops, conferences, teaching, word-of-mouth, and by Society funded promotion.

Again this year we have finished in the black. This is due primarily to good business management and the willingness of various individuals to work for minimal fees or no fees at all. Again, any funding we have from 1983 will be transferred into our general fund to help promote the Society.

The dues will remain the same this year. The fee schedule is as follows:

Membership Status	*Dues*
FULL	*$15.00*
ASSOCIATE	*$15.00*
AFFILIATE	*$12.00*
STUDENT	*$12.00*
FRIEND	*$12.00*

If an individual has been a member of the Society since July 1, 1983, he or she owes only one-half of the scheduled fee. If an individual has been a member prior to July 1, 1983, he or she owes the total fee.

The dues must be paid by *March 1, 1983* to ensure a member of his/her active status in the Society of American Fight Directors. Please submit your dues promptly. The dues are the working capital by which the Society exists. Last year many members were delinquent with their dues which hindered the effectiveness of the Society. We all benefit in the long run from a well run, well financed organization.

Please send your dues to:

THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FIGHT DIRECTORS
C/O DAVID L. BOUSHEY
4720 - 38th N.E.
SEATTLE, WA 98105

We look forward to another properous year with the Society gaining more recognition for its contribution to the entertainment industry.

The best to each and every one of you in 1983.

David L. Boushey, Secretary/Treasurer

SOME METHODS OF WEAPONLESS STAGE COMBAT

by Dr. John Callahan

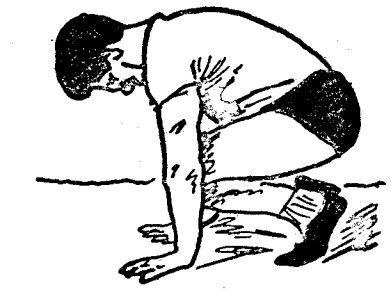
A simple backward roll is the opposite of a simple forward somersault and can be performed by any one capable of a forward roll. Laying backside down on the floor, bend your legs and bring them up and over your head till some portion of your legs (toes or knees) touches the floor behind your head. You may roll backwards out of this position by using your hands (placed palms down on the floor behind your head) to assist your body over, or by turning your head slightly to one side and rolling over on the side of your head and one shoulder. This is the simplest backward roll.

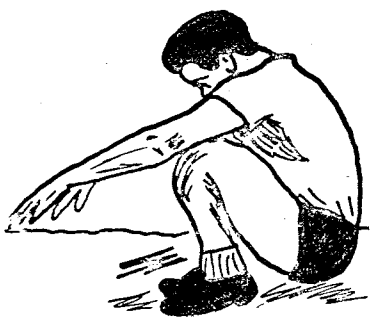
A variation on the simple backward rollover, the backward fall out of a chair, makes a spectacular stunt. This trick, and it is exactly that, is a "sure-fire-laugh-getter" in comedies and a highly dramatic movement in melodramas. In comedy, a character might tilt back too far in a swivel chair and topple over; in melodramas, a character might be pushed into a chair so hard as to tumble backwards. A simple backward roll is unimpressive, but the addition of a chair—an obstruction—makes the simple rollover appear difficult. (See Figure #9, Backward Rolls.)

A backward roll from a chair is accomplished in the exact same manner, though it is done with much more speed and force. The "trick" to this stunt is in the timing—the actor who rolls must be able to sense when to commence the roll. If he waits too long,the back of his head will strike the floor; if he starts too early, the fall is ruined by appearing faked. The roll begins a split second prior to impact; the force of the impact is absorbed by the back of the chair and the rolling body. The actor rolls backwards slightly to the side of his head and over one shoulder, preferably without the use of hands. With practice, the moment of the chair's impact and the start of the body's backward motion will be so close together as to be indistinguishable to the eye of the audience. A variant of this technique is for the falling actor to perform a sideways roll coinciding with the chair's impact—however, the backward roll is more theatrical. For such a roll, a padded high-backed chair, preferably without arms, is best because it allows the actor the most freedom for his movements. A backward roll, or a sideways roll from a chair, is effective from any audience angle and for that reason is especially useful in theatre-in-the-round.

The use of breakable props in staged fights has been brought to near perfection by the motion picture industry but is rarely seen in the "legitimate theatre." The most probably reason for this is the fact that breakable props create many problems on the stage and playwrights realize this—hence, few scenes are written for the use of breakable props. However, the problems are not insurmountable, and for stage violence, the best breakable props are the breakaway bottle and the breakaway chair or small table.

A scene in which a breaking bottle is used must be blocked far enough away from audience members so that the debris can be cleared off the floor between acts or scenes. Breaking a glass bottle over a person's head can be a brutal movement, but the audience's detachment will not be broken if the struck actor makes it clear by his reactions that the character being portrayed, and not the actor, was hurt.





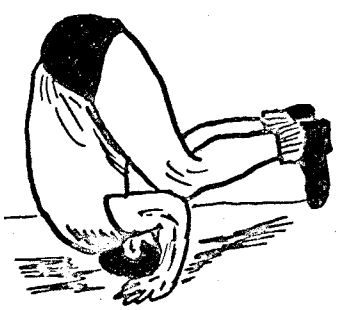


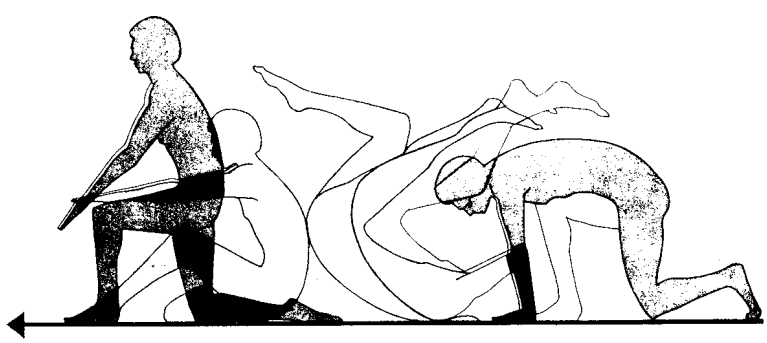
Figure #9
BACKWARD
ROLLS

A breakaway chair or small table is constructed out of lightweight balsa wood (the same material used in model airplane construction) with pre-cuts sawn in the legs, arms, and back. The problem with the breakaway chair or table is that no one can actually sit or lean on it. Another problem is that when broken, wood (becasue of its great weight) will travel farther than glass; consequently, this trick is safest on the proscenium stage when blocked upstage away from the audience. The chair should always be broken across the length of an actor's back, never over his head or across his chest. A small table may be raised and used as a club, but it is equally effective—possibly more so—to knock an actor onto the table by some sort of blow (a knee to the face, etc.), shattering the table beneath him. When seen in profile by the audience, these stunts can be devastatingly effective. It is recommended that these illusions be performed near the end of a scene so that the wood can be swept from the stage. Such illusions can cost substantial amounts of money for wood and carpentry skills, but for an extremely realistic and exciting stage violence technique, the money is well spent.

One possible danger in such a stunt is the very real possibility of a breakaway chair or table shattering in such a way as to leave jagged, sharp splinters lying on the stage. I know of a situation where an actor was seriously impaled by an improperly broken chair leg which resulted in a sharp, upward-pointing stake being on stage. Such dangers are always present in stage violence, but in the case of breakaway wooden props, the danger of sharp splinters can be lessened by always checking the pre-cuts in the props and seeing that they are deep enough to yield clean, smooth breaks.

COMBAT MIME

A Non-Violent Approach to Stage Violence



J. D. Martinez illustrated by Caren Caraway

Nelson-Hall Publishers
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Part I

CHOREOGRAPHING A BATTLE

by William Hauserman

There are, obviously, many different and effective ways to choreograph battle scenes, and the following is by no means the only approach. It can be used, however, as a guideline or springboard into your own battle scene.

It should be remembered that theatre is an illusion and that not every action of a battle need be represented on stage. In fact, the more that is left to the imagination of the audience, the safer and potentially more effective the scene can become. It is best to let the stage represent one spot of the battlefield where activities, some large and some small, will ebb and flow. This can help shape the scene, controlling the focus, action, and plot, and will allow the combatants enough space to fully execute their movements. This approach to battle scenes is a safe, effective, practical, and unified method of choreographing these grand melees.

The problem, however, is that it is sometimes not feasible, within the limits of the production (i.e., space, size of cast, and expectations), to do battle by these methods. There are events, such as outdoor productions and festivals, where you do not have a theatre's wings or vom into which the fighting may disappear. Or you may be staging a production in a theatre in which the audience is watching an important scene with armies gathered around, the fighting imminent. To represent a battle of such magnitude with only a few combatants is at best disappointing. There needs to be an alternative, and there is.

The battle scene is only effective, understandable, and interesting in the context of the play or production as a whole. Consequently, the director and fight director must discover where the beats are, what must happen, who the characters are, and what overall effect is desired. Thus the fight becomes part of the whole production, not just a violent intermezzo which stops the overall action of the play.

Having answered those basic questions, one must investigate the space and time requirements of the fight. If it is to be a very large battle, there must be a large and adequate space in which to fight. Consideration must be given to the established or desired aesthetic distance or relationship to the audience: how close are they to the battle; will they see blood? Furthermore, if there are physical obstacles or useful tools that are inherent in the space; if there are trees to swing out of or run into, a hill or ledge somewhere, hazardous rocks, set pieces, mud, or wandering audience members, then accomodations must be made.

Other important determinations must be made before the actual choreographing begins. It needs to be clear how long the battle should last, what time of day it is supposed to be, and what time it actually is, if there will be daylight or artificial lights set up, and what the combatants will be wearing. Thre is a myriad of considerations to be made common to most plays and productions and therefore will not be discussed further.

The next step, and probably the most difficult, is to make a master plan or flow chart. These master plans should show, both verbally and visually, which character will fight which other character, and when during the battle they will fight. The charts should also

indicate how long the combatants will fight before moving on to another part of the battlefield, where they will fight on the field, where they will go when they move, who they will encounter when they move, what weapons they will use, and what conditions they are in. In effect, you will be blocking the battle scene before actually choreographing the individual movements.

A couple of suggestions here may help. Do not try to block everyone's movements for the entire battle on one page of paper. Break the fight down into its beats and make a flow chart for each beat. Code each character by color. Be sure each combatant starts the next beat where you left him in the previous beat. Be sure everyone is occupied during the entire battle, either fighting, recuperating from wounds, lying unconscious or dead, or running away. Be absolutely certain that the actors have room not only to fight their sequences but also to travel to other parts of the battlefield.

When you are satisfied with your flow charts, it is time to choreograph each movement. Choreograph one beat at a time. Each time a particular character fights another character it constitutes a "mini-battle" and should be choreographed within the framework of the flow chart. If the characters are supposed to be holding their ground, do not put in any travelling moves that will endanger them or someone else. Conversely, if they are to travel, be sure they are travelling at the approximate desired rate. Keep in mind how long they should fight before moving on or killing one another. Choreograph the fight this way for each "mini-battle" in the beat, then go on to the next beat, and the next, until you have finished.

THE FABULOUS SAMURAI SWORDFIGHT

Part II

by Daniel M. Furuya

Development of Chambara from Kabuki

The karumi did not play major roles in the kabuki theatre and stood apart from the main actos of their particular troupe or theater. Actors who did not quite make it in looks or ability and who did not have wealthy patrons to support them usually specialized in lesser aspects of the theater. many of these people, known as *chu-dori* or "middle class" actors became karumi, mastering the acrobatics of the swordfight scenes and becoming an early version of the modern-day stuntmen. To enhance their own position and prestige, these karumi formed their own groups within their home theatres and elected leaders. The leader was usually a senior karumi of the group and was responsible for creating and devising the swordfight scenes. He carried a special *jitte* (baton) which was made of oak and gilded with silver as a symbol of his authority, and leadership. This jitte was passed from generation to generation of succeeding leaders. In addition, the karumi began to call themselves, *tateshi* or "specialists" (instructors) of fight scenes, which they thought a more fitting name than the slang term of tonbo (dragonfly) or karumi which could also be interpreted as "lightweight."

From the mid-1800s until 1868, when the Meiji Restoration brought the end of the feudal system, the traditional kabuki theater

suffered along with many other traditional fine arts. It lost much of its popularity, and with it the many wealthy patrons who supported it. The tateshi began to travel away from their home theaters and seek employment with smaller, less rigidly formalized theaters. As the tateshi gained more independence, he sought better positions and better roles for himself. He had no desire to remain a "middle-class" actor.

In the smaller theaters, the tateshi was free to exert artistic license in creating his fight scenes; he was less bound by the tight conventions of the traditional kabuki theater. It was during this period that the tateshi began to study the traditional martial arts to enhance his knowledge of the sword, jujutsu and other fighting techniques. In the early stages of this evolution, the tateshi was still hesitant to sacrifice the beauty of the traditional movements for more realistic techniques and did not readily employ his newly-acquired knowledge of the martial arts. His new knowledge did, however, become the foundation and inspiration for hsi new swordplay choreography, taking the place of the traditional dance movements.

The Meiji Restoration marked the dawn of Western culture in Japan, which permeated the country from the lowest classes to the politically-powerful creators of the new government. At this time, the Western or European theater became immensely popular. To the Japanese, the Western theater seemed much more natural and realistic than the highly-stylized traditional kabuki theater which they were accustomed to seeing. It is quite possible that a precedent was set which stimulated the tateshi to seek more realism in the swordfight sequence.

As the tateshi gained more expertise in the martial arts, his techniques naturally became more complicated and realistic. Not only was he trying to teach the actors innovative techniques, but he was, at the same time, creating new roles for himself in which greater skill was required, more skill than the regular actors could offer. In the traditional kabuki theater, the karumi carried the action while the principal sustained the drama. Gradually, during this period, the action became the responsibility of the main actor, who was required to perform movements which were less dance-like and more realistic, simulating actual martial arts techniques.

The greatest exponent of this new style of swordfight scene, and one of the first to adapt it to the film, was Ohnoue Matsunosuke, who began his career around 1908. Ohnoue, affectionately known as "Tonbo" Matsu (Dragonfly Matsu) from the many innovations he used in the swordplay scenes, was one of the first great stars of the chambara movies. Due to his incredible popularity, he made over three thousand screen and stage appearances from 1910 until the end of his career in 1927. This also indicates how well the chambara caught on in Japan in those early days. Matsunosuke's most famous roles were that of Nakayama Yasubei and Kume no Heinai, two popular heroes. The ken-geki, which completely centered arround the final grand fight scene, was created from his sword style.

Although Matsunosuke had never taken so much as one step into a kendo school in his life, his expertise with the sword was great enough to impress Sasaburo Takano, one of the great swordmasters and kendo instructors at the time. Sasaburo was once quoted as saying that Matsunosuke had the ability of a fourth degree black belt in kendo. This swordplay skill—even with a fake bamboo sword painted silver—was occasionally threatening. In one of the Matsunosuke's most famous roles, he accidentally cut through an actor's costume. At another time, he cut another actor's bamboo sword in half.

Although Matsunosuke was a great innovator, he was initially inspired by Nakayama Shibakuri, founder of the famous tate

association in Nagoya known as the *Isami no Ren* (Comrades of Courage). Dissatisfied with the dance-like movements of the traditional kabuki, Nakayama wanted to increase the tempo of the swordplay scenes and add more realism to the technique. To meet this end, he mstered swordmanship at the Butokukai, the center of Japanese martial arts at that time, and then began training Isami no Ren members in realistic sword techniques.

These training techniques ultimately produced the tateshi responsible for creating the early chambara movies and bringing chambara into its golden age. Nakayama's most famous students were Ohnoue Rokuro and Hayashi Tokusaburo. Ohnoue emphasized the realism of the new chambara movie, as is evident in his choreography for Okochi Denjiro, who starred in the first version of *Daibosatsu Toge (Sword of Doom,* or *Daibosatsu Pass).*

Hayashi, who continued to use many of the traditional dance-like movements, is noted for teaching Hasegawa Kazuo, whose most famous roles were in *Gates of Hell* and the *Revenge of Yukinosuke.*

The generation of students following these two pioneers included Adachi Renjiro, who choreographed their heyday, and Kuse Tatsu, who eventually got his break by developing the realistic swordfight scenes for Kurosawa Akira in *Hidden Fortress.* As Kurosawa fervently demanded realism in his films, he was quite pleased with the results, and later hired Kuse to choreograph the fights in *Tsubaki Sanjuro,* and *Yojimbo,* both starring the notable Mifune Toshiro. Miyauchi Shohei was another student of Hayashi who went on to create the fight scenes for *Sanpiki no Samurai (Three Samurai).* This film, one of the classics of the chambara genre, created the audience and paved the way for the first of the popular Zatoichi movies starring Katsu Shintaro.

As directors and tateshi began to demand greater realism, the actors struggled to acquire the necessary expertise. The stars of the early chambara movies who directly followed Ohnoue Matsunosuke were Ichikawa Yurinosuke and Bando Tsumasaburo. Ichikawa, who became famous for his intense and powerful facial expressions combined with artistic and skilled swordplay, built a fencing school in his home and hired Iwai Takeroku, a noted master of tate, to teach his students on a full-time basis. In this school, Ichikawa groomed new stars of the chambara movies and created new and innovative fight scenes. By continually adding new techniques and increasing the numbers of men involved in each fight scene, he added a dimension and scope which could not be duplicated on a stage. The final fight scene in *Ken-nan (Sword Hardships)* produced in 1927, required dozens of fighting men. The whole scene took three full days and nights to shoot, probably a record in those early days of filmmaking. As an interesting footnote, movie production techniques were not the sophisticated science they have become today. During the shooting, one of the karumi went to the toilet during a cut and everyone totally forgot about him. Only after the film was completed did the error become apparent, for when Ichikawa "cut down" that man in the fight scene, he did not just fall to the ground but actually disappeared from the screen.

Bando was a contemporary of Ichikawa and, in the same tradition, increased the scope and grandeur of the swordfight scenes. Most of his fight scenes involved 20 to 30 men and quickly evolved into an orgy of slashing swords and falling bodies. Every weapon imaginable found its way into these sequences. In one fight scene, for example, villains tried to run Bando down with carriages and handcarts.

Because films allowed for the unlimited use of outside locations, Bando could let these fight scenes grow as large and complex as he desired. He was not restricted by the limitations of a stage production, such as the small stage area and the special problems of live performances. In creating his epic fight scenes, Bando also learned

to take advantage of the camera's full potential. Earlier filmmakers had used only head-on shots, as this was the most logical angle to take, and also the angle from which the theater audience usually sees the action of live stage production. Bando realized that by changing the angle and utilizing distance and close-up shots, the camera could give depth to the scenes and increase the power and intensity of the action. He also experimented with different camera angles in order to reproduce the size and scale of the fight scenes he wanted. As one of the first stars to work closely with the producer and cameraman to create new shooting techniques, Bando not only contributed to the evolution of the swordfight scenes and chambara genre, but also developed Japanese cinematography in general to a higher degree.

Editing allowed the early producers to create faster-paced fight scenes and to eliminate all sequences which did not contribute to the action. This, of course, could not be done in a live stage production. Many fight sequences were rehearsed and shot in slow motion and then later speeded up on film. Because the actors were moving more slowly, the fighting techniques could be more precise, and the principal actor could come closer to his opponents with the blade. When the sequence was speeded up to a normal or even faster-than-normal pace, the effect was both realistic and dramatic. These effects, in great contrast to the formal kabuki or live stage productions, helped make the chambara film the most popular form of viewing entertainment.

Although Ichikawa, Bando, and movie producers in general were beginning to appreciate the many advantages that the camera had over live stage productions, the theater's contribution to chambara was still significant. During this time, the *shinkoku-geki* or "new national theater" was developing, and quickly gained a large audience. Shinkoku-geki was derived from the traditional kabuki, but was given a fresh impetus by the Western theater to become a popular art which met the new tastes of the public. An outstanding exponent of this new style was Sawada Shojiro, whose influence was so important that many people consider him the "father" of modern day chambara. Although he could not compete with the scale and complexity of the fight scenes developed by Ichikawa and Bando, Sawada's modernization of the fight scenes in stage productions influenced many of the early chambara filmmakers. In one production, Sawada flooded the stage with water and fought while water rained down on him. This scene may well have inspired Kurowsawa Akira's fabulous swordfight scene in *Shichinin no Samurai (Seven Samurai),* in which the final battle takes place in the rain. Sawada was also the first to produce the story of *Daibosatsu Toge,* which introduced the *otonashi no ken* (silent sword) style to the audiences. Later, the story was produced by every major movie company in Japan including Daiei, Toho, and Toei. (The most popular version is the *Sword of Doom* starring Nakadai Tatsuya.)

Sawada's most famous role was that of Kunisada Chuji, a gambler boss and a popular folk-hero. In one of the most memorable scenes, Sawada is returning home at night through Komatsubara Pass where he is ambushed by rival gangsters. His lantern drops to the ground as he cuts down the first attacker and, in the flickering light of the burning paper lantern, he continues to cut down the enemy right and left until he finally exits the stage. This is possibly the first example of strobe-effect swordplay action. It was incredibly tense and exciting scene for the audience.

The influence of the kabuki on chambara filmmaking was still strongly felt after the Occupation, when the samurai movie leaped into its golden age as the number one entertainment staple of the Japanese. At this time, there were two major trends in the chambara film: the desire for greater realism in the fight sequence, which naturally brought in a high degree of concern for the martial arts;

and an equally strong desire to incorporate beautiful, highly stylized elements from the kabuki and traditional dance. Whereas more realistic films from the genius of Kurosawa, such as *Shichinin no Samurai (Seven Samurai), Yojimbo* and *Sanjuro* became popular among Western people, many films produced during the same period, by Daiei and Toei, which still had a strong taste of the Kabuki, enjoyed greater popularity among the Japanese. In fact, during the fifties and sixties, chambara stars were still being recruited from the ranks of the kabuki actors. In the seventies and eighties, we begin to see a combination of the two trends, which created a new brand of chambara films. The way in which these trends were gradually blended together is another stage in the evolution of the chambara movie.

submitted by T.J. Michaels ■

P a r t V

ENGLISH BATTLE ARMS AND ARMOUR OF THE FIFTEENTH AND SIXTEENTH CENTURIES

by William Hauserman

Figure 38

An aspect of the armour which should be mentioned is that it was almost always engraved with designs of one sort or another. These designs were expressions of either the knights or the armourers and were as individualistic as the men themselves. In general, however, there was an "appreciation of the intrinsic beauty of steel, and a new desire to invest steel armour with graceful lines."[17] This grace is easily recognizable and almost awe-inspiring.

The designs engraved upon the armour had a functional basis. All of the engravings were designed so that no matter where the knight was struck, the grooves would serve to deflect the opposing blade in a glancing manner.

So far only the armour of the knight has been examined. In addition to knights, there were many different types of warriors, and all of them had to be dressed for battle.

Figure 39

After understanding the armour of the knights it is easy to discuss the armour of footsoldiers, archers, and other combatants. Basically the ranks were made up of common folk who did not have a great deal of money and therefore could not afford a suit of armour. They were left to scavenge any kind of armour they could from the fallen warriors after the battle. All had some kind of head protection, whether it was an iron skullcap, a chapelle-de-fer, a bascinet, or other covering. They usually wore a jack and some arrangement of limb defenses which by no means were all protective. They often had a camail or collar of mail for the neck. All in all it was a piecemeal of old, outdated, ragged and dented armour from previous eras. See figures 38–42.

Even though a knight was protected cap-a-pied and seemed invulnerable, he was never so. There were always flaws through which the knight could be wounded or killed. Even a straight-on

blow which was met by the plate armour could be fatal; "a fair blow delivered 'au pas de charge' with a well steeled lance might penetrate every defence; and . . . no armour could be made actually proof against downright blows from a two-handed battle-axe wielded by a powerful and expert rider."[18]

There were also crevices through which an opposing blade might find its way. One of the most sought after targets was the armpit, which was protected only by gussets of mail; "leaving the mail exposed under the armpit, was a vulnerable opening in the armour called the 'vif de l'harnois' or the 'defaut de la cuirasse'."[19]

Another vulnerable target was the face. If the knight were not wearing a mentonnière (a fixed neck guard) over the bavière, the bavière could be ripped off because it was only attached by the hinges. This would expose the face for another blow.

The petardier was also capable of circumventing the knight's armour. He hurled buckets of flaming oil into the ranks of the enemy, and no armour culd protect the soldier from that.

The foot soldier would also attack the horse the mounted knight was riding. If he were successful in killing or knocking down the horse, the knight would fall to the ground. Once on the ground the knight was practically helpless because of the immense weight of his armour. It was a simple matter for the enemy to either capture or kill a knight once he was down.

In the sixteenth century came a development which very rapidly ended the era of armour for battle. The development was gunpowder. Suddenly armour was no defense against the bullet and was only an encumbrance to the wearer. "The general introduction and use of firearms soon made even the heaviest armour no longer effective, and it went out of fashion with increasing rapidity as the sixteenth century drew it to a close. Complete suits were then used only for jousting."[20] Cannon guns and odd combinations of the two came into use, and the knight was forced to fight in a different way. The knight wore only vestiges of his former combat apparel.

However, the whole idea of armour did not disappear, but it continued to develop along different lines. The new suits were highly ornamental and were used for jousting and pageants only. The new lines began to follow that of civilian wear and no longer concentrated on shapes that would deflect an opponent's blow. In respect to the vestiges that were still worn in battle, the following can be said, "For the battlefield the plain, unornamental armour of the Transition Period [1500–1522] was invariably used; the Maximillian [1525–1600] was for tilting and pageant purposes chiefly, and for display. Its introduction, and subsequent development upon the lines followed by civil dress, was a sign of the decadence of armour for use in the battlefield—the turning-point which eventually led to its abolition."[21]

[17]Gardner, p. 45.

[18]Gardner, p. 45.

[19]Gardner, p. 45.

[20]Clark, p. 202.

Figure 40

Figure 41

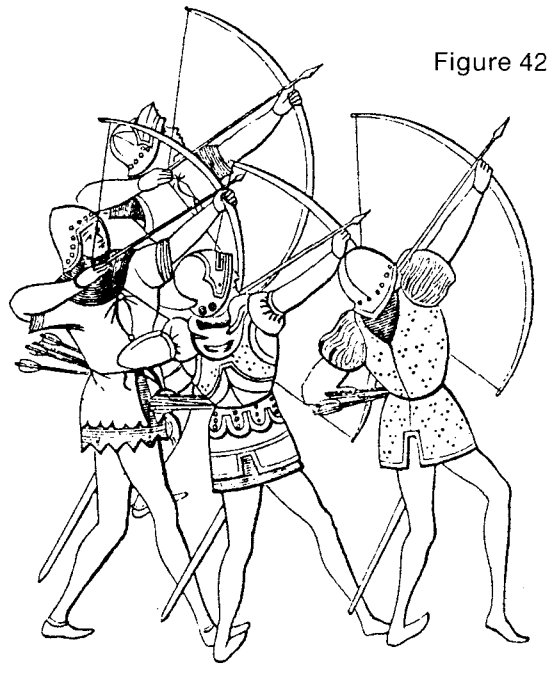

Figure 42

ERIK FREDRICKSEN

Erik's Career as a professional actor and choreographer spans over ten years. He began his combat training at Stratford with Patrick Crean and began his acting career at the Guthrie Theatre in 1971. He has acted and choreographed at the Guthrie, as well as with the New York Shakespeare Festival; most notable productions being the Lincoln Center HAMLET and Joe Papp's HENRY V at the Delacorte.

Among his many other credits are the Long Wharf production of MACBETH, Syracuse Stage's COMEDY OF ERRORS and ROMEO AND JULIET, and the CBS Special, HENRY WINKLER MEETS WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE. He has also choreographed on Broadway for Alan Schneider's THE LADY FROM DUBUQUE, and the Mike Nichol's production of LUNCH HOUR. In Canada he has taught at Stratford, as Paddy Crean's guest, as well as coached and choreographed at the Manitoba Theatre Centre and at the National Arts Centre of Canada.

In addition to his combat teaching and choreographic duties, Erik has continued to work professionally as an actor. In 1980 he won a NYC Villager Award for his critically acclaimed performance of BRAND. In 1981 he joined the faculty of the University of Michigan and became a founding member of the Michigan Ensemble Theatre, an equity company under the auspices of the Professional Training Program at the University of Michigan. Erik teaches acting and movement at the U of M and is affiliated with the American Movement Institute under the direction of Sarah Barker. Last summer he worked with the Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival on AS YOU LIKE IT. Erik still finds the time to free-lance whenever possible and to serve the Society of American Flight Directors as its President.

SOCIETY NEWS

DAVID L. BOUSHEY (Full) recently choreographed *The Three Musketeers* for the professional training program at the University of Washington. He continues to teach at Cornish Institute in Seattle. He soon goes into surgery for a hernia caused while lifting a funeral bier in a production of *Romeo & Juliet.*

JEFFREY DILL (Affiliate) has recently choreographed the fights and designed the costumes for the University of South Alabama's productions of *Much Ado About Nothing, A Raisin in the Sun,* and *Grease.* He also served as combat consultant for the University of Alabama's *Richard III.* He is presently pursuing an M.F.A. in Costume Design at the University of Alabama.

HOLLIS HUSTON (Associate) continues to teach at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri and to expand the activities of The MUM Company as its Artistic Director. The MUM Company has completed its first episode of "Holy Roman Radio", a thirteen part radio series romp through the music and literature of earlier centuries. The programs are planned to be distributed through National Public Radio next Fall. The MUM Company is now officially "in residence" at Washington University.

DAVID LEONG (Full) continues as head of the movement program at Northern Kentucky University. He choreographed the fights in *Rashomon* at SUNY Binghamton. Directed a performance by the Northern Kentucky University Swordplayers at the Cincinnati Art Museum in conjunction with the Tower of London exhibit. He has taught Quarterstaff, Rapier & Dagger, And Un-armed Fighting at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania and conducted a one week workshop at the Dance Theatre Workshop in Chattanooga, TN. David is currently directing *Deathtrap* at Northern Kentucky University.

JOSEPH MARTINEZ (Full) continues to head the movement program at the University of Illinois, Champaign. He has choreographed the fights for a children's production of *Androcles and the Lion,* and *Picnic,* at the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts. In the Spring he will choreograph the fights for *Hamlet,* and the operas, *Rodelinda* and *Falstaff.* Joseph will also be conducting a fight workshop with David Leong in Savannah, Georgia in the Spring, and will be choreographing *Rashomon* for Moriane Valley Community College later in 1983. At present he is Editor of *The Fight Master.*

JEROME SMITH (Full) recently completed choreography for Boston Shakespeare Company's Romeo and Juliet and for the Center For Theatre Technique touring show, *Physical Skills of the Actor.* He is now back in San Francisco for the Winter and is working at the Armoury.

ALLEN SUDDETH (Full) Artistic Director of Fights R Us, The Stage Combat Ensemble of New York, continues to give private lessons at his studio in New York City, as well as teach at Fordham University and Pace University. The Fights R Us company has just completed a highly acclaimed five week run at the Westbeth Theatre of *Smash Hits Volume I.* In addition Allen regularly choreographs fights for the television soap operas, *Texas* and *Another World.*

ROBERT WALSH (Affiliate) has just completed a successful production of a new comedy, *Penelope,* at the Perry Street Theatre, New York City.

POINTS OF INTEREST

There is one new member to the Society of American Fight Directors. We welcome him and hope that he, as well as all of the "old" members, will be interested in contributing to the Society and to *The Fight Master.*

DAVID W. PARKER (Associate)
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A few Society members have changed their addresses and are included here for your information. Please remember to notify the Society immediately of any address change so that we may keep you informed of Society activities and to insure that you receive *The Fight Master* promptly.

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CERTIFICATION

On December 17, 1982, I was invited to the University of Iowa to adjudicate seven students who had been trained by Michael Sokoloff, an Associate member of the Society. To my delight, the combatants proved to be very skilled indeed. The fights were on the whole above average, exciting and safe. The number of recommendations received by the combatants attested to the superior teaching skills of Mr. Sokoloff. The list of students who passed the Certification test follows:

Deborah Bremer, Passed
Kevin Gudahl, Passed
John E. Nelles, Recommended
Brian Potent, Recommended
Darcy J. Rahn, Passed
Scott Smith, Recommended
Jacquelyn Streeter, Passed

A REMINDER

Please remember to send any news, information, comments, or articles to the *new* address for *The Fight Master.* Please believe that your contributions are welcome and appreciated by all of the membership.

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