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The Society of American Fight Directors

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## **The Fight Master, January 1984, Vol. 7 Issue 1**

The Society of American Fight Directors

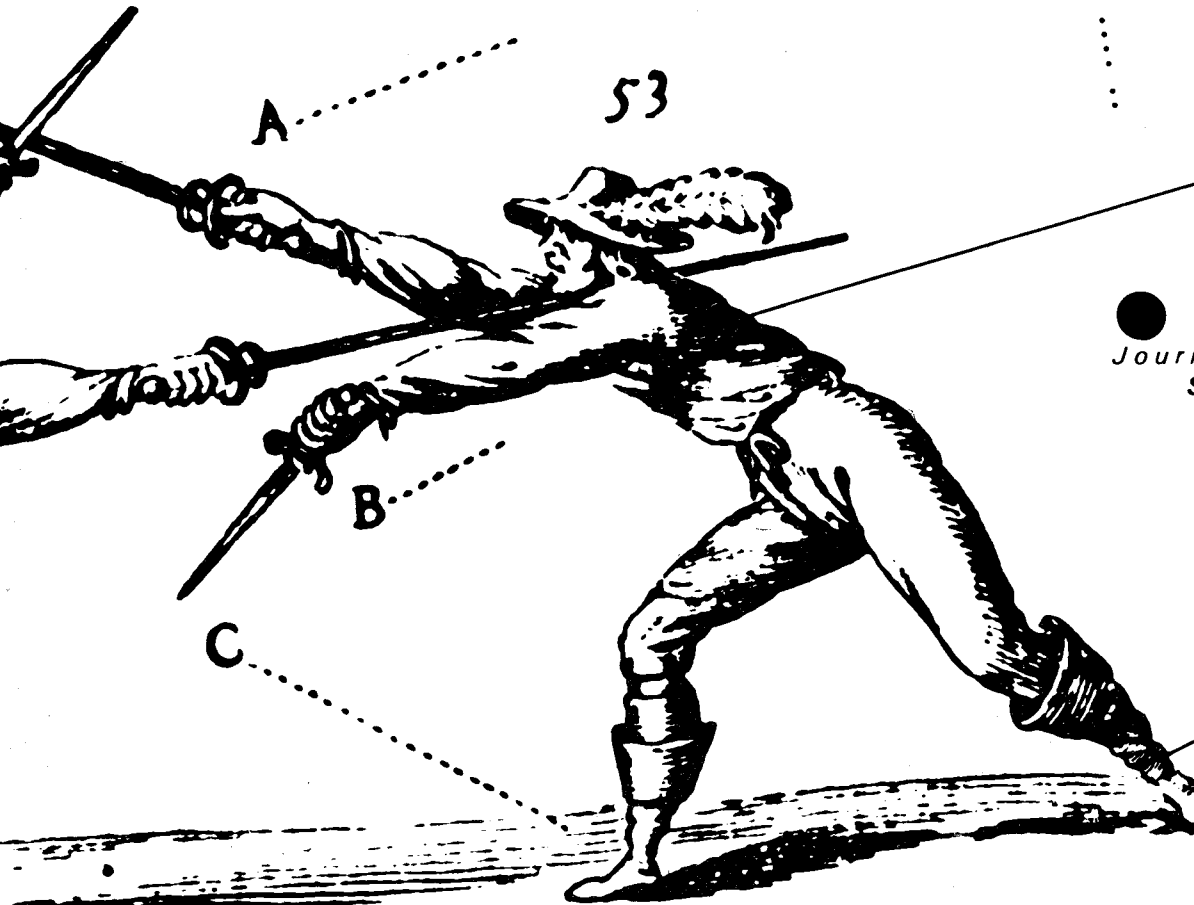
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# FIGHT MASTER



Journal of the  
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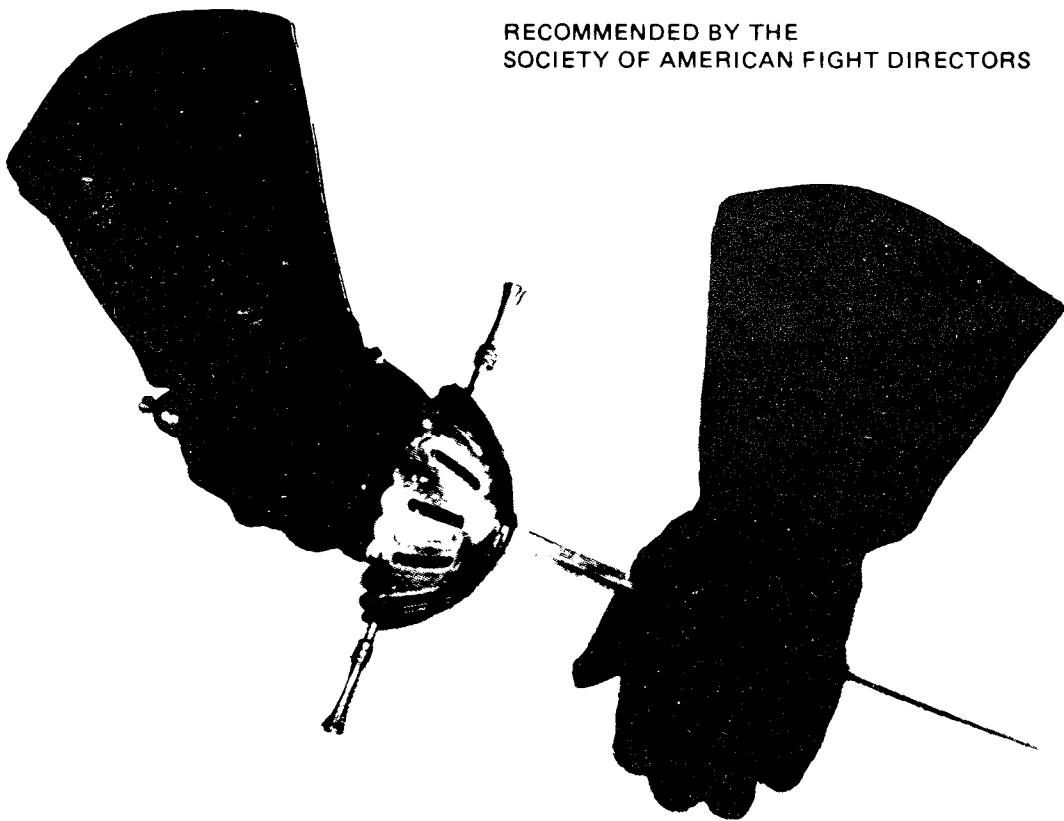
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# THE FIGHT MASTER

*Journal  
of the  
Society of  
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Fight  
Directors*

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JANUARY 1984

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**THE FIGHT MASTER**

*Journal of the Society of American Fight Directors*

Editor Joseph Martinez

Design Consultant Nancy Laurence

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**SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FIGHT DIRECTORS**

President  
Vice President  
Treasurer  
Secretary

Erik Fredricksen  
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David Boushey  
David S. Leong

*The Society of American Fight Directors was founded in May, 1977. It is a not-for-profit organization whose aim is to promote the art of fight choreography as an integral part of the entertainment industry. Members of the Society of American Fight Directors serve the entertainment industry by promoting the aesthetics and safety of well-conceived fight choreography.*

## EDITOR'S COMMENTS

Volume VII number 1 is the fourth issue of The Fight Master for which I have been Editor. I've received a few letters and suggestions from members concerning the changes and direction I have taken with the Journal, and I appreciate those responses. I am now curious about the opinions of the "silent majority" of our members who have not responded in any fashion. It has become a yearly ritual for the Editor to make a plea to those members who have not as yet contributed to The Fight Master. I ask you to resolve to do so this year.

We are a very tightly knit collective dependent upon input from every member in the Society. Your voice is important. Please send an article, or information concerning your past, present or future endeavors. I also welcome articles that you may have read in other publications which may be of interest to our readership. I have an especial need for graphic material. All I ask is that articles be typed and double spaced, or clearly xeroxed from printed matter. Please include your reference sources so that I may acknowledge them, or receive permission to publish copyright material.

You will notice in this issue (and in a flyer in Volume VI number 3.) that I have included some information on possible job opportunities. This is an area that I would like to expand as a service to our membership. If you know of any employment opportunities which are available far enough in advance to warrant inclusion in The Fight Master, please forward the information to me and I will include it in Points Of Interest.

This issue of The Fight Master has a particularly diverse variety of fascinating articles which I hope that you will enjoy. There are also a few zany pieces just for fun. Please let me know your reactions.

I am honored and looking forward to serving the members of The Society of American Fight Directors as the Editor of The Fight Master for another year. I will appreciate any assistance I receive from you. May I extend my best wishes to all the members for a pleasurable and profitable year!

Joseph Martinez ■

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As was seen from the last issue, our membership roster is growing by leaps and bounds. In the main this is due to the wonderful leadership being taken in many of our regions across the country and by continued fine efforts to promote certification testing where teaching is occurring.

Preparations are in full swing for next August's National Stage Combat Workshop, being conducted at Salem State College outside of Boston, Mass. Posters and information will be sent to you sometime after the first of the year. Liam O'Brien and Joseph Martinez are doing the kind of advance planning that I am certain will insure a success, perhaps able to rival the workshop hosted by David Leong last summer.

Again we are pleased to report that the "Dean" of fight masters, Mr. Patrick Crean, will be on the faculty. I just recently completed the role of Cyrano De Bergerac at University of Michigan under a great artist contract. When I took the job the first thing I requested was for Paddy to be engaged to work on this production with me...not only for "old times sake," but because when you tackle a role the size of Cyrano, you want a master hand on the other end of the blade — coaching while you're "spouting" lines. As anyone could have guessed, the maestro is still up to form; charming, and able to provide as much panache and "brio" as any fight could hold. It was a pleasure renewing our professional friendship and relationship under such rewarding circumstances. Next summer's workshop participants have much to look forward to.

In the next issue I will report on my experience of working with John Cullum in a new "Cyrano" translation for the Syracuse Stage. The set is one huge flight of stairs...that's it. I'm trying at present to use the term "challenge" as a positive euphemism. I am however excited about working with this respected Broadway and Television Star and hope we all don't end up with one leg shorter than the other when it's over.

My congratulations to J.R. Beardsley on his promotion to FULL member. His teaching and choreographic endeavors in the San Francisco area have been receiving fine reviews and recommendations. It has also been quite clear that in advancing his own professional visibility, he is publicly and privately supportive of the S.A.F.D. These fine official and unofficial efforts, as usual, eventually find their way back and we appreciate and applaud the quality of his commitment.

All members please continue the good work and resolve to submit articles for The Fight Master. Every month I receive congratulations on the Journal and increased anticipation for the next issue. Best wishes to all of my fellow members for a happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year.

Erik Fredricksen ■

# TREASURER'S REPORT

*Annual dues* are upon us again. We are now into a new year with great promise for the Society of American Fight Directors. There are now roughly 150 members in the society. The society continues to grow and prosper and with this growth new responsibilities are at hand. The society's magazine *The Fight Master* remains the single most expensive item on the society's books. With more members there are more expenses including such items as postage, envelopes, etc., not to mention the production of the magazine itself. We are now advertising in various magazines, tabloids and newsletters and all of this adds significantly to our budgetary responsibilities.

Again this past year we finished in the black! I am proud to say that the society has never been in the red. Our very first year we ended up with a surplus of a stupendous \$17.00. Since then, we have managed to do a bit better but unfortunately, we have never been in a position to relax and allow things to coast. We are now in the midst of starting a "hot-line" which will accommodate a number of our members regarding work possibilities. All of this takes money to promote and that is why it is crucial that all our members pay their 1984 annual dues. Last year, a number of people let their dues slide. Most of the membership paid their dues but in many cases they were months in arrears. Now those same members are being asked to pay their dues again. I can only reiterate the importance of paying your dues on time. The society will be healthier and you won't feel as though you just paid your dues!

I AM ASKING OUR MEMBERSHIP TO PAY THEIR 1984 DUES BY APRIL 1, 1984. I implore you to take care of this matter as soon as you can. The dues schedule has changed this year. It is as follows:

FULL MEMBERS	\$25.00
ASSOCIATES	\$25.00
AFFILIATES	\$25.00
STUDENTS	\$15.00
FRIENDS	\$25.00

As I stated in the last issue of *The Fight Master*, our dues pale when compared to the dues in 99 percent of the *professional* societies in this country. We cannot afford to be small time. We are worthy of the big time! With this image there comes the responsibility of supporting such standards. I think you all understand that and I hope you will agree with the officers to the society that we must continue to move onward and upward.

If an individual joined the society after July 1, 1983, he is responsible for 1/2 of the stated dues schedule. (This includes all those members who joined at the national workshop). If you joined the society prior to July 1, you are responsible for the full annual dues.

There are some members who still have not paid their 1983 dues. They are no longer in good standing with the society and have been removed from the official roster. They no longer receive the society's journal but if you know any of the following past members, I urge you to ask them to reinstate themselves. They are as follows:

Rab Bell            Bill Lengfelder  
Paul Clinco        Jim Manley  
Mark Cole        Ramon Martinez  
Roy Cox Univ. of North Dakota  
Peter DeAnello    Gary Smith  
Rick Duet         Ty Smith  
Roger Harris      Bruce Vieira  
Teresa Kochowicz

Please send your dues to:

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

In closing, I want to wish all of our membership a very Happy New Year.

David L. Boushey ■

# SECRETARY'S REPORT

Happy New Year to all members of the SAFD! I hope your holidays were cheerful and that your travels kept you safe. My congratulations go to Mr. Erik Fredrickson for his marriage to Janet on December 18th in New York City. I'm sure the entire membership expresses their blessings on our illustrious president.

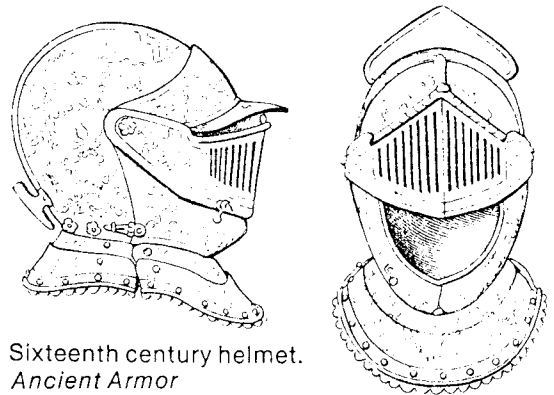
By now you should have received a copy of the revised By-Laws, an up-to-date membership roster and a new membership card. Please check your membership card to ensure that your status is correct. You should also examine your current address on the membership roster. This roster, typed in early December, includes the changes I've received from you recently. Corrections should be sent to me as soon as possible. Be sure to include your old address as well as your new one. That will help me continue to keep accurate records.

I hope the revised By-Laws will answer many questions that have been addressed to me over the last few months. The revisions in the By-Laws summarize the cost of adjudication, certification procedures, new membership categories, how to apply for a higher status, the change in annual dues, etc. These changes are extremely important so please look them over carefully. Questions pertaining to this document should be sent to me and I will forward them to the Board of Directors.

Many associate and affiliate members have written to me recently inquiring about the certification test. Specifically, they want to know what techniques and movements are required for each type of weapon used in the test. An old issue of *The Fight Master* stated this information but I will include this list and any changes in my next report. If you need to know immediately, please call or write any full member.

Finally, I would like to remind you to send in your annual dues. For those that have already done so, I thank you for your expediency. If you are unsure of the amount of the annual dues please consult the By-Laws or the last issue of *The Fight Master*. Thank you for your efficiency.

David S. Leong ■



Sixteenth century helmet.  
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# “WILL YOU PLUCK YOUR SWORD OUT OF HIS PILCHER BY THE EARS?”

Mercutio's challenge to Tybalt in *Romeo and Juliet* (III.ii.83-4) is further evidence in support of Adolph Soens premise that Shakespeare was describing Tybalt as fencing in the Spanish Style. The "ears" that Mercutio refers to would be the eared pommel of Tybalt's sword which took its name from the two thickened discs which, standing up at an angle, flared out from either side of the pommel. The eared pommel which originated in the eastern end of the Mediterranean with the "yatagan" and from there passed through trade and the Moorish conquests into Italy and Spain, was in vogue in the 15th century and was much prized by the fashionable nobility as the finest, most luxurious, exotic and expensive sword of the Renaissance. The ear-sword with its refined and delicate designs and colors in ivory, bone or metal, stood out against the sumptuous garments of the day. In its early form the discs were almost parallel but began to flare out more and more until they degenerated into a straight line perpendicular to the grip. By 1550 the vogue for the eared pommel sword had all but died out in Europe except for the highly exaggerated form that continued to flourish in Spain until 1700.

The eared pommel on Tybalt's rapier, while not only symbolizing his station, arrogance and pompousness, would be clearly identified as a Spanish weapon by an Elizabethan audience. Mercutio's contempt for Tybalt's rapier style indicates that Tybalt is using an affected foreign style of swordplay and to the Englishman of the 1590's the common rapier style would have been the Italian and the mannered and artificial style of the Spanish would be considered foreign.

Spanish swordplay was seen as ritual, as a kind of deadly dance in which the fighters were in close contact with the mystery of life and the laws of the universe. The Spanish science of arms was based on the principles of the mathematical relationship of angles, arcs, tangents and chords to the circle. The adversaries came on guard out of distance at the edge of an imaginary circle drawn on the ground. They stood at opposite ends of the diameter of the circle whose distance was determined by the length of the arm with the sword extended horizontally. The fencer carried his body in an erect posture with the right arm extended straight at the face of the opponent. The right foot was a little in advance of the left, so that the body was placed sideways to the opponent and the heart away from the

point of the opponent's sword. When they came on guard they would bend the right knee and straighten the left thus carrying the body forward but keeping the body in a straight line with the adversary. They would retreat by bending the left knee and straightening the right thus throwing the body back as well. Their ordinary guard was with the wrist in tierce and the point in line with the face. A circular walk in an anti-clockwise direction was made around the opponent until a position suitable for attack had been reached. The method of attack was to close the distance between oneself and one's opponent by advancing with short dance-like steps along one of the chords of the circle while constantly menacing the opponent with appels and half thrusts to the face while all the time keeping the body well back.

The cut was the prevalent form of attack. Don Luis Pacheco de Narvaez, a pupil of the famous Spanish fencing master Jeronimo de Carranza, gave exact definitions for cuts in his fencing manual, but none were given for thrusts. The cuts were the "arrebatar" (with the whole arm from the shoulder), the "mediotajo" (from the elbow) and the "Mandoble" (from the wrist with a slip of the point). Since the Spaniard already had his arm fully extended, the thrust was a short stabbing motion given on a pass by the arm alone as the weight of the body was always kept balanced between the feet to allow for the complicated series of steps.

Mercutio's reference to Tybalt as the "King of Cats" (II.iv. 19 and III.i.80) is not only a play on Tybalt's feline name but refers to the peculiarity of the catlike scratching of his thrusts in the Spanish style which only used the arm. And even after Mercutio is hurt under Romeo's arm, he still refers to the injury as a scratch (III.i.950) and accuses Tybalt of scratching a man to death (III.i.104).

Benvolio's description of his fight with Tybalt clearly shows Tybalt using the Spanish style of rapier play with its emphasis on cutting action (I.i. 110-119).

..... In the instant came  
The fiery Tybalt, with his sword prepared,  
Which as he breathed defiance to my ears,  
He swung about his head and cut the winds,  
Who, nothing hurt withal, hissed him in scorn.

Benvolio's description of Tybalt's wild cutting action, swinging his sword about his head cutting the winds is similar to action found in the manuals of Carranza and Narvaez.

In contrast, the Italian style since the time of Agrippa (1550), had discarded the cut in favor of the thrust and with Viggiani (1575) the pass had almost been replaced with a lunge. The Italian style involved a good deal of movement of passing, slipping to the side, changing the forward foot and changing guard.

Mercutio's contemptuous remarks about Tybalt's rapier play also reflects the Spanish school. "Courageous captain of compliments" (II.iv.20) is a punning allusion to the complement of the angle formed by one's rapier with that of the opponent's. "A gentleman of the very first house, of the first and second cause" (II.iv.24-25) refers to the

Spanish preoccupation with Aristotelian methods of discussing causation. "A villain that fights by the book of arithmetic" (III.i.106) alludes to the mechanics of the geometrical system of passes. Mercutio's musical metaphor in "he fights as you sing prick song, keeps time, distance and proportion; rest me his minim rest, one, two and the third in your bosom" (II.iv.21-23) puns the musical vocabulary as well as referring to the ratios of the angles between lines and arcs formed by opposing rapiers and the dance like motions of the fencers in the Spanish style.

The Spaniards enjoyed a reputation for being very dangerous duellists and having a habit of coolness developed from constant and careful practice. The methodical Spanish style of fencing would be totally unsuited for Tybalt's fiery personality and contradictory to his character. Mercutio knows that his tongue and wit can out "fence" Tybalt. His comments are meant to provoke Tybalt who, due to his nature, so easily could lose his control.

Tybalt's upright body position with his arm extended and the dance-like foot movements along with the flashy cutting action of his sword would stand out in bold contrast to the Italian style used by Mercutio, Benvolio and Romeo with its low crouching posture, wide foot work and more subtle point action of the blade.

Soen points out how these differences in style would explain the mechanics of Mercutio's death. Benvolio describes how Romeo's

....agile arm beats down their fatal points,

And twixt them rushes. Underneath whose arm

An envious thrust from Tybalt his the life

Of stout Mercutio...(III.i. 171-74)

A rapier held in the Italian style would be at a disadvantage when beaten down from the side by Romeo stepping in to break up the fight. The Italian weapon is already held lower in the *stoccata* (with the rapier under the arm) or slanted down in the *imbroccata* (with the rapier over the sword or dagger hand). The Italian fencer must withdraw his point to regain a thrusting position while the Spaniard who is accustomed to keeping his point in position for a thrust can with the flip of the wrist or possibly the "mandoble" recover the point and quickly and automatically thrust at his opponent. And since the injury is not readily apparent to others, it was probably delivered as a stab-like thrust to the kidney under the jerkin which would have caused internal bleeding and was a common yet concealed attack of the day.

The Elizabethan audience, well versed in the arguments over the fencing techniques of the day, would have relished the contrast in styles represented by the swashbuckling servants of the Montagues and the Capulets as juxtaposed to the elite styles of the young gentlemen using

both the Italian and Spanish styles of fence. The fact that Shakespeare is so specific about the fencing techniques used seems to indicate that he had a point to make by these choices. Tybalt's ear-sword would not only be the correct weapon of his class in Italy at the time of the action of the play, but would also have certain symbolic significance to an Elizabethan audience. At one level it is a continuation of the current debate regarding the fencing styles of the day and at another level Shakespeare was saying something about the Spanish. The ears of the pommel can take on a sinister, devilish look and Tybalt's arrogance, along with his choice of weapon would be a contemporary comment on the Spaniard of the day, who the Elizabethans considered to be notoriously proud, affected, hostile and Popish.

Castle, Egerton. *Schools and Masters of Fence*. (George Bell and Sons), London, 1892.

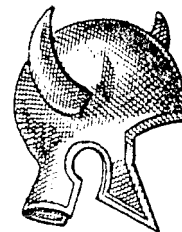
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By Linda McCollum



# COMBAT AS ACTOR TRAINING PART II

By Hollis Huston

The ensembl of actor/combatants is revealed in the matching of step to step, breath to breath. If I step forward, you step back. We preserve between us an interval which we call *fighting distance*, which keeps us out of the reach of each other's weapons. The space between us, however, is more than a safety measure. Fighting distance is the space across which it is possible to project illusions of conflict.

Few spectators — including learned critics — understand that there are exact values to theatrical space. Common sense, of course, tells us that two people can be too far apart to fight. In a hockey game, after all, the referee ends a brawl by separating the brawlers. The Cowardly Lion serves as a reminder that aggressive postures played at too great a distance are ludicrous. But common sense does not tell us something else that is equally true, that people can be too close to fight. Surely, one thinks, the attacker will try to get within striking distance. What we forget is that no competent opponent will allow him to do so.

Pragmatically speaking, a stage fight at insufficient distance is dangerous to the combatants, because every blow can do damage if the parry is missed. But the casual spectator would be surprised to learn that loss of distance also destroys dramatic integrity. The psychological value of the combat comes from the intention of two characters to reach across space and harm each other. When the space no longer serves as an obstacle, combat movements lose their intensity. The fight looks faked. To understand why fighting distance makes sense, and when it should be broken, is to understand the proxemic structure of conflict.

## *Proxemics: The Self Outside the Skin.*

Edward T. Hall discovered that certain kinds of interpersonal and intercultural conflicts can be understood on the assumption that the skin is not the boundary of the personality. "If we can think of man as surrounded by a series of expanding and contracting fields which provide information of many kinds, we shall begin to see him in an entirely different light" (*The Hidden Dimension* [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966], p. 109.) Hall described the human variety of territoriality — the tendency of organisms to mark out areas of space/time as their own. *You can assault a person without touching him.* We project ourselves into a series of concentric fields outside the body. If I penetrate your "bubble" without your permission, you will take it as an invasion. "Get your hand out of my face," you might say. You have been violated, even though I never touched

Hall's name for the study of such "bubbles" is "Proxemics." He distinguished four zones of informal interpersonal space (see *The Hidden Dimension*, pp. 147-148, for a matrix of these zones and their characteristics). *Intimate distance* is the zone within eighteen inches of the body surface. Within intimate distance, communication is primarily non-verbal, through extensive physical contact, smell, breath, and body heat. The voice is composed of sighs and whispers. Lovers and conspirators are often within intimate distance of each other. One and a half to four feet is the zone of *personal distance*, which signifies active, rational interest between people without physical intimacy. Friends, or colleagues working "closely" together, often observe personal spacing. *Social distance* lies between four and ten feet. At social distance, two people cannot touch each other. On the other hand, they must acknowledge each other. Trying to ignore a person at social distance is self-defeating: the tension will grow until you *must* form a relationship. As you are first introduced to a person, you observe social distance. Many business or service transactions are also carried on at social distance. Outside of ten feet, behavioral changes occur that are appropriate to public speaking or performance. This outermost proxemic zone is called *public distance*.

## *The Proxemic Structure of Stage Conflict.*

Actor/combatants also carry territories with them. The stages of conflict are marked by systematic penetrations of that territory. The *challenge* is usually given from opposite ends of the space. (The sheriff comes through the swinging doors of the saloon and calls to the bad man, who is drinking at the bar.) The combatants then move forward to do *reconnaissance*. In this phase they may stop and talk, or they may circle each other and, feinting to draw the other into a mistake. In due time the *fight* is joined; the fighting distance is somewhat closer than reconnaissance but slightly greater than the reach of the weapons. The *kill* demands a distance even closer than fighting distance, but the director, actor, and fight master, must be very careful about penetrating this last spatial boundary. Kill distance signals either the end of the fight, or a failed attempt to end it. It is either a cadence or a deceptive cadence. To linger within kill distance endangers the combatants and stops the music of the scene. The phases of the conflict are not a matter of taste. They are, rather, intrinsic properties of theatrical space.

It seems that the phases of stage conflict should correspond to the proxemic zones of human behavior, but the two schemes are not directly comparable. In theatrical behaviors, the relationship between two persons is not a direct one, but exists through the mediation of a third party. The paradox of dramatic behavior is that signals of intimacy must be transmitted across public distance to the spectator. The actor must publicize, and thus distort, real patterns of communication into a code which has been called "public solitude." The intimacy of the stage, perceived at thirty, fifty, or a hundred feet, is not the same behavior as actual intimacy, which can only occur within a few inches of a person; and other proxemic zones must be adjusted for the stage accordingly.

### *The Shape of the Scene.*

Diana Lee and I have constructed, on the basis of observations in our studio, a scheme of dramatic proxemics that explains the phases of stage combat as a special case of action between characters. As two actors enter from opposite ends of the stage, one senses the possibility of contact. If they approach each other, there is a distance at which that contact will be activated. One may call this the "buzz" point, because actors who stand at this distance will feel a growing tension: it is as if there were some sort of issue outstanding between them, though neither they nor the spectator can say what that issue is. The actors can nurture that tension with timely approaches and retreats, by circling movements, counters and mirrors, with well-chosen pauses and new impulses. If they approach too close, however, the tension will be broken. It is as if the unstated issue between them is resolved. One may call this the "stop" point, because by proceeding beyond it, the actor induces a cadence. "Stop" distance, like "buzz" distance, depends on the scale of the action; but in the case of an action played across the length of a sizable stage, we find it to be five or six feet — that is, outside the distance at which actors can touch each other.

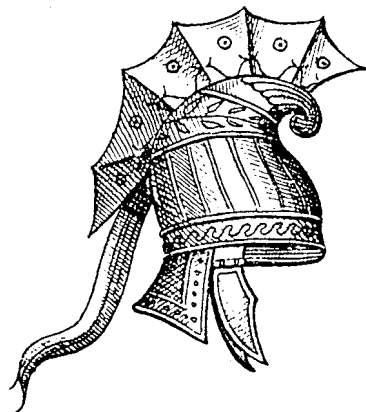
The area outside the "buzz" point may be called a *zone of potential*, signifying the possibility of contact. Between and including the "buzz" and "stop" points is the *zone of influence*, where a scene between two parties is "built" toward its climax. Within the "stop" distance is the *zone of closure*, where the potential of the scene is discharged. Premature closure is disappointing; and loitering within the zone of closure halts the rhythm of the performance. Inexperienced actors try to stay within arm's reach of each other, mistaking proximity for intensity. Combat training helps them to learn that energy arises from playing against the obstacle of intervening distance.

### *Real, Theatrical, and Stage Combat Space.*

The actor projects himself across the public interval between himself and the spectator. The spectator, in turn, regulates the performance by transmitting behavioral signals back across that gap to the actor. *Actors affect each other through a third person who is far away.* Theatrical intimacy is therefore larger than actual intimacy: it is signified by the zone of closure. The theatrical sign of personal space is the zone of influence. The zone of potential, where actors are not yet bound in conflict, represents social distance. Since all communication in the theatre is publicized, there is no meaningful category of public distance on this progression.

The phases of the stage conflict can now be written within a general scheme of proxemics. The challenge comes at the distant end of the zone of potential. Reconnaissance occurs at or around "buzz" point. The fight oscillates around the inner range of the zone of influence. Only at the moment of a kill or a near-kill can the combatants move past "stop" point into the zone of closure, which in the special case of combat is measured by the length of the weapons.

The sense of the various envelopes that enclose an actor, and the knowledge of when to penetrate them, are two of the stage's most fundamental skills. An artist ignores the structure of theatrical space at his own risk. Stage combat training clarifies the spatial values of the theatre by making that risk physical. ■





# LETTERS TO DR. RAPIER

*By J. R. Beardsley*

A humorous section of *The Fight Master* is accepting letters from members of the Society concerning problems they might have had in teaching, staging, or dealing with people in our industry on a professional level. They say that the pen is mightier than the sword. Dr. Rapier plans to put that rumour to death once and for all! Letters to Dr. Rapier may be sent in care of: J.R. Beardsley, 2233 Grant St. No. 19, Berkeley, CA 91703.

Dear Dr. Rapier,

I run a small theatre in Paris, Kansas and just recently I had an occasion to need help from a fight master. I didn't realize until late into the rehearsals that you need to practice this stuff, so I just waited until opening night. Since actors are a dime a dozen I told them to go for it, and to my surprise they did! No one refused to do it and I didn't need to spend the extra cash on a fight master. So why should I bother? It did look sloppy and never came out the same way twice, but no one actually went to the hospital. So who needs you guys anyway?

PRODUCER/DIRECTOR

Dear Pudd,

I wish I had a nickle for every one of you jerks that are running loose in this country. All theatre people must voice the cry of safety! Actors, you need a professional Fight Director for your protection, as well as to keep you from looking like anymore of an idiot than you already do on stage. Actors, how far will you go for a part? Please don't let the directors kick you while you're still down. Refuse to do a show with violence unless there is a trained professional present. And don't wait until it's too late into rehearsals for your own sake. The director might not know the dangers of stage combat (most don't). Vital organs are starting to be reproduced, but they are expensive and take a while to install. Help all of us by helping yourself.

# STAGE COMBAT: VIEWS OF THE DANCE OF VIOLENCE

By Rob Hall

Stage Combat is a discipline that has been overlooked far too long by professional and academic theatres and training programs. It has often borne the brunt of erroneous assumptions regarding its place and value in productions and schooling. In short, it has been neglected and taken for granted. As a result, with each new season comes a new list of injured actors — some with permanent losses. Most of these injuries could have been prevented. As things stand now, chances are future injuries won't be.

However, the purpose of this lecture is to change all that. I will attempt to give you a general overview of Stage Combat, its nature, elements, techniques, and styles. In addition, I hope to acquaint you with the basic dangers of Stage Combat, and several methods by which they may be avoided. I also wish to point out the potential in optimum use of Stage Combat, for it certainly can affect a show's overall success. On my desk I have a framed clipping of a review of a production of *American Buffalo*, presented at an Equity LORT B theatre in Richmond, Virginia. The review reads in part, "Richard Lee does a splendid job...his movements ring true and his fits of anger are built up well. Only briefly *during the fight scene* do things lose their momentum. The rest of the play flows smoothly..." It serves as a constant inspiration to me. Let me share with you a review of the B.B.C.'s *Hamlet*, starring Derek Jacobi, which appeared in the New York magazine *The Dial*:

What could easily have been the greatest Hamlet ever was totally destroyed in the last ten minutes by that ludicrous slapstick duel.

Whose insane idea was it, and why didn't Derek Jacobi object? Surely they could have spent an hour or two learning the fundamentals of swordplay?

Mind you, I'm not asking that they fence as well as Errol Flynn and Basil Rathbone, but this slipping, sliding travesty resembled two ducks learning to roller-skate!

And turning their backs on each other again and again? Since when does one slash with a foil as if it were a cavalry saber?

Aside from that, the play was truly magnificent. But, oh, what a helicopter-sized fly in the ointment!

"What could easily have been the greatest Hamlet ever was totally destroyed in the last ten minutes by that ludicrous slapstick duel."

What is Stage Combat? I introduced myself as a Stage Combat Choreographer, which supplies the first clue. Stage Combat is a dance. When done correctly, it is a totally choreographed dance, designed to keep the actor in one piece while conveying the illusion of violence (in that order). But Stage Combat is not solely a series of choreographed moves by two or more individuals — it is an action in acting as well. The true fighter does not drop his character as he goes into a fight; he views the fight as an opportunity to extend his character in another dimension, letting the combat grow from his character, rather than his character from the combat. Therein lies one of the secrets of believability.

Bob McDonald, Associate Head of Dramatic Arts at the University of Connecticut, speaking of the process of shaping an acting event, lists five basic steps: 1) focusing on the problem or stimulus, 2) determining the proper course of action, 3) preparation of the action, 4) the attack, and 5) the release of energy at completion of the attack. A combatant should follow these same steps in the execution of a fight. One does not enter into a fight simply because he's reached the point in the script to do battle. There are motivations and attitudes to establish, obstacles to be overcome. Is the fight a matter of defense for the character, or a sweet revenge? Is there fear of death, or has the character anything left to lose? Are the combatants equal, or mismatched in skill? Have they had the same type of training, or different, as with Mercutio, the street-trained, and Tybalt, who fights "by the book"? To quote Craig Turner in his article "The Matrix of Stage Violence" which appeared in *The Fight Master*, the official publication of the Society of American Fight Directors, "...techniques of stage fighting must be balanced continually with the needs of the characters involved, the environment in which the fight takes place and the general style of the play. A stage fight...is the end result (or) by-product of what the characters are doing."

Mention Stage Combat to someone who is not very familiar with the art and his first image is of sword play —Errol Flynn and company. True. Go further. Shakespeare and broadswords. Keep going. Brawls and rumbles as in *Oklahoma!* and *West Side Story*. Absolutely, and much further. A description I heard given by one non-actor to another was "...unfriendly contact with another actor." She brought light to something directors often overlook: to an audience member, George lunging for Martha and being thrown across the room in *Virginia Woolf* is just as much an act of violence as MacDuff "laying on" with broadsword and shield. For an actor, the potential for injury is just as great, since the choreography can't be as refined. Unfortunately, all too often, such actions are staged with no choreography at all.

I will extend her definition to include "unfriendly contact with oneself." After George is pulled off Martha and (seemingly) propelled across the room, the fall he takes needs to be a choreographed stage fall, or he runs a risk of injury. With proper techniques, an actor can safely fall on any surface short of broken glass.

Stage Combat, and the realm of the Stage Combat Choreographer, (SCC) extend to the mere handling of any weapon the actor may not be intimately familiar with. A brief "war story" will serve as an example: I was acting in an outdoor drama in Tulsa for which I had choreographed a great amount of combat. One scene involved a major gun battle, in which I shot the Outlaw/Hero in the back. The female lead, distraught over the death of her lover, picked up his revolver and threatened me with it, before collapsing in tears of grief. His weapon was a cartridge-style .45 caliber revolver, fully loaded with factory blanks, and the blanks were powerful. During one performance, she picked it up, pointed it at me, and accidentally pulled the trigger from a distance of four feet from my face. Through what I, to this day, consider to be an act of God, the factory-made blank misfired. Which is why I can see today. I had not done my job. I had drilled the gunfighters on every detail of the use of their weapons, but I had not thought to familiarize the girl who simply had to hold it. She had picked it up wrong. That scene was never quite the same for me. Or for her, I imagine.

If Stage Combat were written in a somewhat mathematical formula, it might read something like: ACTION REACTION EFFECT, the effect being the illusion of violence. But that formula is itself an illusion, as a study of some of the techniques of Stage Combat will show. Often that which appears to be a "reaction" is, in fact, an action, and that which appears to be an "action" is a reaction. In looking at unarmed combat, the techniques may be divided as being "contact" and "non-contact." With the former technique, the blow — be it slap, grab, punch, knee or kick — actually connects with the target. With "non-contact," the illusion of connection is given. As a professional choreographer, I am greatly biased toward "non-contact," though I do use elements of "contact" from time to time when required. Most circumstances allow the illusion to be possible. Reasons I have heard for using

"contact" technique have included: 1) a lack of knowledge of a "non-contact" form, 2) a lack of time to perfect "non-contact" and what I have often heard regarding slaps, 3) a desire for it to be a "real moment" between the actors. Let's think about that one for a moment. Does that mean, then, that George should actually choke Martha in *Virginia Woolf*? That if the moment calls for a hair pull, the actor should grab a handful and yank? Of course not. How is a slap any different? It can be done in a "contact" form with minimal pain for the slappee, but why should it? "Contact" technique is easier. It requires less rehearsal and instruction. But it's often a copout. It is not as safe as "non-contact" and, as a Stage Combat Choreographer, my first priority is the safety of the actors.

This brings us to the basic dangers of Stage Combat, and some methods by which they may be avoided. The first hazard the actor is likely to encounter is himself. In spite of the tremendous demand for stage combat techniques in the theatre today, his training will probably have been woefully neglected in that field. All too few acting programs maintain a fully-developed movement program which includes substantial training in Stage Combat. This situation gradually is improving, but much more progress needs to be made. If his acting instructors have not given any importance to that area, the actor may not have availed himself of the opportunities for training.

Whether he has been influenced directly by his instructors or not, it is a sad truth that many actors have not had instilled in them the discipline needed to be constantly at work developing their craft. The fact that acting classes in many universities and colleges meet no more than three or four hours a week adds to the problem. The result of all this is that an actor may be cast in a role which demands of him certain skills he has not developed, and for which he lacks the conditioned intuition to practice and perfect.

A number of steps may be taken to compensate for these conditions. The choreographer must focus on creating a clean, effective fight, and put away all elaborate and complicated touches. The director must be sympathetic to the actor's situation, and avoid pressuring the actor during rehearsal while he is struggling to have his fight performance reach the same level as his acting performance. The stage manager must allocate and schedule rehearsal time for the actors with the choreographer, and assign an ASM to be present at all such rehearsals. The ASM must record the choreography to the smallest detail, and later rehearse the actors after they've been turned over by the SCC. And the actors, in a word, must *practice*.

There is inherent danger in any movement on stage that involves speed or implied violence. This danger is increased when weapons are introduced, and further magnified when several actors are involved. All these factors occur not only in many of Shakespeare's plays, where entire armies are occasionally decimated, but in many modern works as well. The actor must stay constantly on top of what he is doing, as well as what is happening around him. If he doesn't, it is only a question of time before he gets hurt. *Concentration is essential!* This inherent danger can

also be minimized in several ways through the actions of a good SCC, and the rules he lays down for the actors.

Every action in a stage fight or act of violence is *totally choreographed*. There is absolutely *nothing* left to chance! The action of a simple stomach punch consists of six separate steps — steps the actor is trained to follow exactly, every time. Each action is choreographed, and notated by the choreographer, the ASM, and the actors involved. There is no deviation from choreography.

One of the elements of choreography we in the SAFD are attempting to make universal is the use of eye contact. Eye contact is used as a non-verbal signal between actors before and during a fight or act of violence. Its use is quite simple: if your partner won't meet your eyes, you don't begin or continue the fight. Something is wrong. He may have forgotten the choreography, or his weapon; he may have just noticed his weapon is broken; he may have just gotten an intense cramp — any number of things could be wrong. If, during a fight, your partner averts his eyes, the fight stops. At that point, the actor's acting skill takes precedence, and he improvises — in a non-physical manner — his way out of the situation.

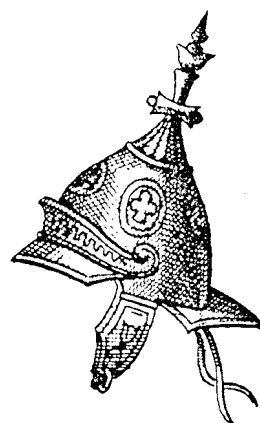
Along these lines, a good choreographer will have built an "escape" into every fight. Working with the actors on a "what if..." theme, the SCC develops set solutions to a myriad of possible occurrences. The cardinal rule established with actors is that there is absolutely no improvisation in SC. Blown choreography can't be covered as a blown line can be. As soon as an actor attempts to improvise a fight, he puts at least two people in extreme danger. I have fired actors for changing choreography during a fight. After the SCC has laid all the groundwork, the actor must prepare his mental attitude and fine focus his concentration.

In addition to preparing his mind, an actor must prepare his body. Every major muscle system must be thoroughly warmed up. An actor who doesn't warm up prior to a performance won't have much of a reputation. A fighter who doesn't warm up won't have much of a body. Muscles and bones bruise, bones break, and spines chip all too easily. The point I stress over and over with my fighters — once an eye is knocked out, or a muscle shredded, it is gone. And so is a major part of an actor's career. He is no longer as well-rounded or capable. Each choreographer has his own warm-up exercises. I use the MAO exercises, supplemented by whatever the choreography calls for. These excellent exercises take approximately eight minute to complete, and serve to warm up every major muscle system in the body. The standard warm-ups an actor goes through are *not* enough. Every major muscle system must be warmed up.

When an actor takes on a role in a production, he prepares himself by learning the practical aspects of lines and blocking. He surrenders himself to the guidance of the director. Before each performance he warms up his voice and body, and psyches himself for the show. On stage, he follows the direction and blocking given him by the direc-

tor, keeping his concentration focused on his character's purpose, and remaining totally aware of his fellow actors. So it is with the combatant. He must learn the choreography to the smallest detail. He creates the fight exactly as directed by the SCC, both in spirit and form. Prior to the fight he warms up his body completely, and mentally and physically rehearses the fight again. During the fight, he remains acutely aware of his surroundings and his partner's safety.

All of the aforementioned methods are used to avoid the basic dangers of Stage Combat, and to compensate, in part, for deficiencies in training. But if an actor were to be trained to become a competent master of Stage Combat, what would his training consist of? Clearly, the potential combatant's training should include a tremendous amount of movement conditioning. A finely focused awareness of one's body is essential. Work in developing muscular tone and strength is needed. Balance and flexibility must be perfected. In the final analysis, an actor's body is all the protection he has. A weapon or partner may fail him, thereby stripping him of all external defenses. How well his physical being can adapt to the unexpected will determine the extent of the ensuing damages ■





## DAVID LEONG

David Leong, Secretary to the Society, has served as fight director and/or guest artist for the Alliance Theatre, Acadmey Theatre, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, Cleveland Playhouse, Roundhouse Theatre, and for many colleges and universities throughout the United States. David is also stunt coordinator for Taft Attractions, America's largest live entertainment industry. In addition to his credits as a fight director, David teaches full time at Northern Kentucky University, where he heads the actor-movement training program.

Before David started his career in fight directing he received his BA from the University of New Hampshire and his MFA from the University of North Carolina-Greensboro. He devoted 13 years of his life to the sport of gymnastics, winning numerous state and regional gymnastic medals.

David's stage fights and mass battle scenes can be viewed this summer at two outdoor dramas: *Tecumseh!*, and *The Legend of Daniel Boone*. He will be teaching at the S.A.F.D. National Stage Combat Workshop this summer near Boston ■



# COMBAT PART I

*By Clint Vaught*

Combat between groups or individuals in a real situation occurs for many different reasons and in many different forms. It is the waging of war, the carrying on of aggression or self-defense; its purpose is to inflict injury or death. A particular combat may include a choice of weapons: fists, blades, guns, bombs, but in most instances spontaneity and random incident shapes the fight, itself. The result of combat is usually unpredictable in advance, whether it is a scheduled boxing match between individuals using only fists for weapons, or an all-out military assault.

Unpredictability and spontaneity may characterize actual combat, yet these are the qualities to avoid when producing staged combat for the theatre. Stage combat must appear spontaneous, but the production of staged combat must be carefully calculated. Stage combat is a predetermined event that must be rehearsed to be safe and to appear authentic. Injury or death to the major character may be the tragic climax of a show, but it may not be climactic if performed unconvincingly, and may indeed be tragic if an injury accident occurs to a performer(s).

In my close association with a number of outdoor dramas, I noted that some staged combat was safer and more effective than others. When I assumed the position of fight arranger for some of these episodes, I learned even more about the procedures and techniques involved.

Very little has been published on the art of staging unarmed combat. There exists much material regarding real-life unarmed combat for war or self-defense. Instruction manuals for judo, boxing, karate, and others are readily available at bookstores and libraries. I could find only one seven-page direct reference on the subject of staged unarmed combat, that by Wm. Hobbs in his book, *The Stagefight*. [*Combat Mime*, Nelson Hall Inc. Chicago, Ill. J.D. Martinez.]

Stage fighting warrants such definition, but definition exists in non-recorded knowledge and skills being passed on from director or performer to performer.

Stage fighting skills, particularly hand-to-hand combat, are learned predominantly through imitation, and consequently there is very little in print.

I will rely upon the experience of performing and directing stage combat, to formulate suggestions and observations. There are no formulas guaranteeing the absolute success of each staged performance every night, but it is my belief that certain methods of preparation and performance of the staged fight have proven beneficial to specific productions where others have failed.

## *Analysis, planning, and preparation*

Poorly prepared hand-to-hand stage fighting often does not achieve its purpose. Intended moments of magnificent dramatic tension may well vanish due to a central focus or supporting background filled with uncommittedly hesitant or carelessly random combat. To guard against such failure, the producing director must insure that either he or the fight arranger-choreographer or whomever is responsible must completely understand the play as a whole and the function the combat is to serve in the plot. Then, mindful that the relative skills of the operatives are to dictate the manner in which they fight, he determines the combat event in accord to the abilities and skills of and safety for the operatives. The fighters do not show off the fight; rather the fight is to show off the fighter's personalities and skills.

The trust and commitment of operatives must be absolute to insure a convincing battle. These are achieved by eliminating hesitancy and chance. The determination of the combat event, the design and arrangement, must be made to comply with each actor's mental and physical capabilities. Even a most athletically skilled operative may prove lacking if asked to follow too complex a routine, or one more in tune with intellectual complexities might be physically unable to time correctly even a slight knap.

Hesitancy is the result of the operative not having the trust in himself or his partner, or the physical ability to commit to the combat episode or stunt. Random or chance fighting results from a lack of mental preparedness or ability. Trust and mental preparedness can in time be established, but physical or mental ability will probably not improve. The fight arranger must therefore, determine the events to fit the operatives.

To be successful, stage combat must appear authentic. Convincing the audience that the scene enacted is true to life requires trial-and-error preparation by directors and performers. To insure the safety of the performance, procedures and steps must be followed accurately.

Stage combat is like a business partnership; if it is appropriate to the plot of the play and well-designed, and the partners are capable, then it has a good chance of success. Losses may occur for many reasons, however. For example, let's consider an analogy to the problems in the business of environment, motivation, and marketability, and compare each with problems experienced in stage fighting.

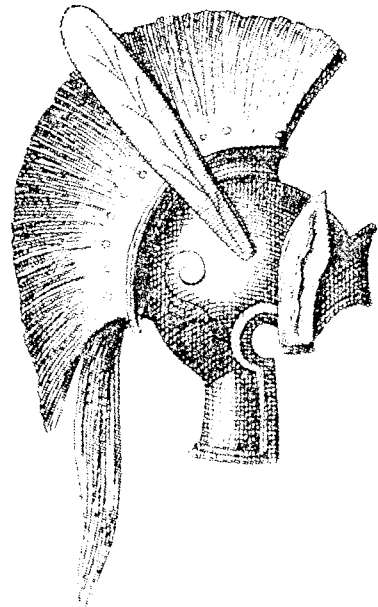
Safe and pleasant conditions, such as a well-constructed and well-maintained facility, are beneficial for the health and safety as well as the attitude of the working actor. No performer should work in fear of slipping on a wet stage, caving through a weak one, or having a counter weight open his skull.

If he is not a conscientious and willing performer, but rather one who is careless or given to self-aggrandizement, he might cause the production to suffer by an unconvincing or avaricious effort lacking in preparation and performance. He might also greedily seize unwarranted moments, unrehearsed, thereby endangering his fellow actors' credibility and safety as well as the production.

Marketability translates into believability. If there exists consumer/audience demand, or, in stage fighting, a sequence is well-designed, prepared, and executed, (what I like to call "logical"), and the motivation is true and effective, and therefore entertaining, and the environment is properly maintained, well-conceived and safe, then the stage business has a very good chance of succeeding, indeed.

Stage combat is usually employed for dramatic climax, but may assist other production purposes as well. For example, it may serve to inform the audience, encourage acceptance or rejection of character, and/or historical elements and conflicts, establish crucial or subordinate consequences of plot, or simply provide a thrilling change of pace. Combat may appear for transition, denouement, and exposition purposes, but, since drama exists through conflict, and combat is the apogee of man versus man, its potential impact as dramatic climax in this area is unrivalled.

The stage fight should be considered as a form of both art and science. There is a beauty in skilled execution of movement, akin to dance, and musical impact in its tempo and percussion. Visual artistry may be manifest in its pictures formed by the relationship of figures and playing space, and, perhaps, profound literary import created from its statement of the human condition ■



# **THEATRE DEPARTMENT**

**University of Illinois  
Urbana, IL 61801**

# GRAND OLD MAN IN ART OF FENCING STILL SHARP AT 92

*By John Dart, Times Staff Writer*

Visiting the "world's oldest living Olympian" means going to an especially seedy part of Hollywood Boulevard, across the street from a place called Sinorama.

A transformation occurs behind the door of Falcon Studios, however. Museum-like sights of souvenirs and autographed photographs crowd the wall space. The pleasant smell of old rugs and furnishings evokes memories of a grandparent's home.

This is where Ralph B. Faulkner, who will be 93 in July, surrounds himself with memories of competing on the U.S. fencing teams in the 1928 and 1932 Olympics and later teaching a slew of national Pacific Coast fencing champions.

But his studio office is also a slice of old Hollywood because he also coached Douglas Fairbanks Jr., Errol Flynn, Basil Rathbone, John Derek, and not long ago, Bo Derek, for fencing scenes in adventure films. Faulkner's office is a testament to how he successfully combined his two great loves, fencing and acting, into a career in which he is still active.

The Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee's claim that Faulkner is the oldest veteran of the Olympic Games, so far undisputed, means little by itself. It simply says Faulkner is one Olympic athlete who has lived a long life.

What is most certainly unique — even startling — is that Faulkner is still coaching fencing three days a week.

On a typical evening, as many as 20 students sign in on a blackboard for about five minutes each of instruction tailored to their level and particular needs. A young coaching assistant runs students through more rigorous exercises.

Wearing a well-worn fencing mask and chest protective gear, Faulkner hardly moves from his spot but deftly maneuvers his foil to teach the most efficient means of attack and defense.

"He has quick hands and nimble fingers," said Lance Wilson, an electrical engineer who fenced in college and decided to take it up again. "He's given me some complex lessons."

Faulkner confesses to troubles with his knees and past problems with cataracts. But he still manages the slim handle of the French-style foil, a grip that gives finger-play advantages but affords less comfort and firmness than the pistol-grip handle many young fencers use.

During the 1920's silent film era Faulkner was an aspiring character actor when he injured both knees at a movie location in Canada. He came to California on crutches and

took up rowing in a gymnasium shell and fencing in an effort to rehabilitate himself.

Rowing was no fun, he said, so he went all out in learning to fence with the foil, epee and saber. Faulkner was the three-weapon champion of Southern California in 1925, 1926 and 1927. Faulkner made his first U.S. Olympic fencing team the next year at age 37, usually considered old for an athlete. In fencing, however, it is a truism that experience, psychological craftiness and adept hands can compensate for the speed and stamina of youth.

Though named to the 1928 Olympic fencing squad, he was confined to the saber team competition and not named to fence in individual events. But Faulkner demonstrated his mettle that summer against the traditionally dominant Europeans by taking first place in the saber in an international tournament held in France and second in the epee at a tournament in Belgium.

Competing in the 1932 Olympics, Faulkner said he heard an Italian saber fencer say that the foil was an effeminate weapon. (The saber harks back centuries to combat on horseback and the epee goes back to European dueling, but the foil was introduced as a practice weapon for dueling — distinctions that even the modern sport fencers are not aware of. The foil is also the only weapon permitted in women's competition at the international level.)

"I said, 'My friend, I'll make you eat those words,'" Faulkner said. At one point the Italian was pitted against Faulkner in a bout that could see the Italians's elimination. Faulkner, limiting himself to scoring touches only with the point (as in foil fencing) and not using the side of his blade as well, defeated his flustered opponent.

Although he never won a medal in the Olympics, the swordsman began profiting from his athletic prowess in Hollywood in the late 1920s and 1930s by becoming a swashbuckling double and character actor in movie studio swordfights.

"I was killed five times in one picture," Faulkner said. He estimated that he has worked on 100 films as actor, fencing instructor or choreographing swordfight scenes, the last one being "The Clash of the Titans."

Some actors and actresses came to the Falcon Studios for drama and dance lessons taught by his wife, Edith Jane Plate, who died in 1975. The mirrored front rooms of Faulkner's place are still rented to dance companies.

The parade of stars to Falcon Studios for dance, drama or fencing lessons is attested by the handprints and autographs of Anthony Quinn, Danny Kaye, Alexis Smith,

Victor Jory, MacDonald Carey and Vera Ellen cast in concrete in Faulkner's backward version of Mann's Chinese Theater.

Faulkner now operates his studio with the help of his 60-year-old "Girl Friday," Polly Craus August. An avid student of his in the 1940s, she won the 1949 national championships, was an alternate on the 1948 Olympic team and competed for the 1952 U.S. Olympic squad. (Another longtime student of Faulkner's in that period was Janice Lee York, later Jan Romary, who went on to compete in six Olympics and won the first of her 10 national titles in 1950.)

Carlos Fuertes, fencing supervisor for the Los Angeles Olympics and winner of the Pacific Coast saber title a half-dozen times while being coached by Faulkner, said "the Boss" (as Faulkner is familiarly known) has always been a hard taskmaster. "He had one student with him over 20 years. This girl was not good, but she had been one of his students," Fuertes recalled. He made up two teams to represent the Falcon Studios in the Southern California women's foil championship and put her on the second team. "Why did I get put on the second team after all the years I've been fencing here?" she asked. Fuertes said Faulkner looked up and said, "Because I don't have a third."

The considerate and even courtly side to Faulkner is readily evident, too.

Lessons, which cost about \$4 or \$5 including practice time, are often paid for by students who put in an hour and a half work for Faulkner at the studio. "I had 3,000 hours of lessons in exchange for work," said Polly Craus August.

His "courtliness" shows up occasionally, whether it is trying to discourage a slender young woman student, Becky Sue Epstein, from taking up the rough, slashing saber fencing, or in his relationship with actress Bo Derek. John Derek, who was coached by Faulkner years ago in a movie, brought his young wife and the star of "10" to Faulkner to choreograph a sword fight with a villain (for a movie that was never completed). She later came back for further lessons.

"I have a great admiration for her. She's a very fine, very decent girl," Faulkner said. He was still upset over an old tabloid scandal newspaper story about Bo. "It was a stinking article," he said. Faulkner wrote her and told her so, and received a cherished card in response, which thanked him "for teaching me things I'll never forget."

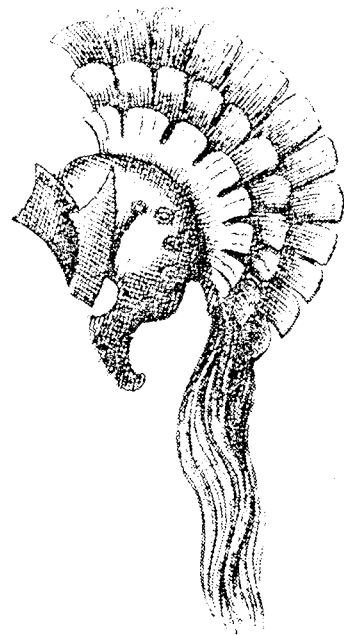
An able namedropper when it comes to his film days in Hollywood, Faulkner can go back further to his childhood in Abilene, Kan., when he lived in the same block with Dwight D. Eisenhower.

"He had a buckboard and my brother and I had a boat," he said. They would go fishing in a nearby river and go about selling their catch for 15 cents a fish.

Faulkner is often asked who was the best fencer among film stars. If pressed on the subject, he says that Cornell Wilde, who was an intercollegiate champion, was probably the best competitive fencer, but that several actors were excellent dramatic fencers.

One questioner volunteered his own answer, Basil Rathbone, and proceeded to cite movies in which Rathbone displayed impressive fencing techniques. Faulkner demurred: "That wasn't Rathbone you saw, that was me."

*Janice Jones of the Times Editorial Library assisted in research for this article.* ■



# WORDSEARCH

“On the fence...”

## ANSWERS

1. ward
  2. Italians call it *spada*
  3. master of fence-FR.
  4. FR. for *filo*
  5. where the fashionable fence
  6. respectful gesture
  7. call a *pied*
  8. running attack
  9. premier parry part
  10. *glize*
  11. opp. No. 9
  12. old Italian for *coup*
  13. fore-guard
  14. “ , I do confess it.”
  15. *riverso*
  16. ‘en-garde’ guard
  17. ‘foiled’
  18. 1st No. 1
  19. old French *kiai*
  20. old Italian for *coup d’arret*
  21. lunge, \_\_\_\_\_
  22. passata \_\_\_\_\_
  23. cut-and- \_\_\_\_\_
  24. old Italian for No. 18
- Unlisted clue: “ , a very palpable “-Shake.

P A R R Y P R I M E H L A I  
 S H R D P L E P A S T O C  
 M A I T R E D E S C R I M E  
 E T A O I N E D I H R U S T  
 R D E E M B S B A S S O G I  
 E I L C O A V A F O I B L E  
 C B U R N H L T L O A O I T  
 O T O E S I U O E O R T Z R  
 U T C I R T U C D N T E A  
 E O N T F S E C H I T O E U  
 R B P U T O H E T S S O Q

Submitted by Tony Soper

“On the fence...”

# WORDSEARCH

## SOCIETY NEWS

NORMAND BEAUREGARD had the pleasure of staging the fights for "The Three Musketeers" at West Point for the cadets. It was fun to work with young, athletic, intelligent military men. They had incredible natural instincts for the swordplay. He recently appeared on the nationally televised PBS special, "These Gifts" with John Houseman. He also conducted the New England Theatre Conference Stage Combat Workshop with David Leong. Attendance was good and interest was high for the upcoming national workshop in Salem, Massachusetts, which is relatively close to anywhere in the New England area.

After a tremendously successful opening season last year, he is beginning preparation for the Cumberland Company for the Performing Arts 1984. Cumberland Company for the Performing Arts is a period performing arts center located on the grounds of a 550 acre Monastery in Rhode Island. They have a heavy stage combat orientation in all performance material (but of course!). Those interested in further information please write: Cumberland Company for the Performing Arts, The Monastery, Cumberland, Rhode Island 02864, (401)333-9000.

RICK DUET is an instructor in the Theatre Department at Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, Louisiana. Since arriving at the University he has choreographed "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead," as well as "Hamlet" and "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" for Louisiana State University, The Louisiana College Theatre Festival for 1982 and 1983, and also for the Lafayette Arts Council. Please note his new address in this issue. He received "across the boards" rave reviews from the New York Press for fights staged in "The last of the Knucklemen." This play features two incredible knock-down, drag-out fights comprising the last 10 minutes of the show. It ran Off-Broadway and starred Dennis Quaid and Kevin O'Connor. In Miami he will conduct Stage Combat Workshops for the Artists Recognition and Talent Search which is a national talent hunt for performing artist at the high school level, sponsored by the National Foundation for the Advancement of the Arts, January 1984. He is in the process of staging fights for an original treatment of Tom Jones at Rhode Island College, for presentation in February of 1984.

DAVID LEONG choreographed the fights for The Three Musketeers at the Cleveland Playhouse. The show was directed by Phillip Keer (Associate member). He conducted a week long workshop at Towson State University, Towson, MD. The focus of the workshop was on special effects and unarmed combat. He is also in production for a video cassette series on stage combat. The first of the series will center around hand to hand combat. The series will be produced by "Theatre Innovations."

GARY BOECK has been working for King Richards Faire, a renaissance festival located north of Chicago, which also toured to the south of Boston for two months. Gary played the part of the Evil Chancellor Blackwell and sword fought every day.

JAMES FINNEY continues to teach acting at the Goodman School of Drama in Chicago. He recently choreographed the fights for a production of The Prince and the Pauper there. James is working on a french translation of Joseph Martinez's book, Combat Mime.

LINDA McCOLLUM is busy co-ordinating the American College Theatre Festival XVI for Region VIII South. She is teaching a rapier and dagger class at the Rainbow Company in Las Vegas and she is enjoying working with the young people in the ensemble. She continues to teach theatrical fencing to university students in the Department of Theatre Arts at the University of Nevada.

JOSEPH MARTINEZ recently forged several Samurai Swords and choreographed the fights in a production of RASHOMON which he directed at Washington & Lee University. He will be conducting workshops in stage violence at the Southeastern Theatre Conference Convention in March. He is currently forging rapiers, daggers, and broadswords at a local blacksmith shop in Lexington, Virginia. In April Joseph will conduct a six week theatre tour in Great Britain in order to meet and see the work of the members of the Society of British Fight Directors.

CHARLES KILLIAN just bought a new facility for "Theatre Innovations," a theatrical production company. He recently finished stage managing and acting as Fight Captain for "Revenge at Tumble Gulch," a wild west slapstick stunt show at King's Dominion, Virginia.



# POINTS OF INTEREST

## Job Availabilities:

1. 10 actors needed for wild west comic stunt show at Outdoor Theme Park. Experience in unarmed combat, gymnastic or stunt necessary. Physical show includes horseback riding, high falls, rope swings, hand to hand fighting and trampoline stunts. Must be in excellent physical condition. Rehearsal period May 18 - June 2; show runs until August 31. Salaries approximately \$210./Wk.

Contact:

David S. Leong  
48 West Villa Place  
Fort Thomas, KY 41075

2. Actor/combatants needed for outdoor drama in Chillicothe, Ohio, *Tecumseh*. This outdoor epic drama about the rise of the Indian chief Tecumseh includes mass battle scenes, horseback riding, high falls, etc. Fight sequences will be choreographed by David Leong and assisted by Drew Fracher. Mr. Fracher (associate member) will also play a role, serve as fight captain and teach classes in hand to hand combat, rapier and dagger, and quarterstaff. Classes will end with a SAFD certification test. Salaries equivalent to the size of the role. Some equity positions available. Rehearsals begin May 27.

Send letter of interest and resume to:

Mr. Marion Waggomer  
P.O. Box 73  
Chillicothe, OH 45601

Information can also be addressed to David Leong or Drew Fracher.

3. Actor/combatants needed for outdoor drama in Harrodsburg, KY entitled *The Legend of Daniel Boone*. Fight sequences will be choreographed by David Leong and Drew Fracher. Position of fight captain still available. Rehearsals begin May 16. Salaries based on the size of the role.

For information write to:

Mr. J. Hilburger  
General Manager  
The Legend of Daniel Boone/Lincoln  
Box 365

Harrodsburg, KY 40330

Additional information can be addressed to David Leong or Drew Fracher ■

## CERTIFICATION TEST

On November 27, I was invited to adjudicate the fight tests held at The Drama Studio (London) at Berkeley. There were 10 participants taking the test. I am pleased to announce that all the participants passed the test. Newly appointed "full" member J.R. Beardsley did a quality job in teaching them technique and safety. My primary complaint was the acting of the fights and the speed at which they were presented. At times the speed was too slow and thus unconvincing dramatically. Although very safe, they looked very safe! The tension was not there to convince me that there was danger in the fights. I was too relaxed. Remember, it is all right to put your audience on the edge of their seats but you mustn't put them off of their seat. But here again let's not put our audience to sleep! To make a long story short, I had all the combatants do their fights again with the exception of one couple and after some preparation time, they pursued their fights with much more vigor which allowed all of them to pass. Those students taking part and passing the test were:

Kelly M. Barham

Clive Chafer

Catherine Harrison

Trisha Schaller

Mark Schuler

Chris Waters

David J. Winter

Randy Haege

Allison Rowley

Vince Scappaticci

Teacher: J.R. Beardsley  
Adjudicator: David L. Boushey

I had the pleasure of adjudicating a delightful fight test performed by Colleen Kelly and Lory Leshin. They based their fight on a scene between Hermia and Helena from a *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Both actresses had a solid control of technique with the various weapons and performed the fight safely and humorously. They were perhaps a bit too slow in the execution of the Rapier and Dagger section, but I would not hesitate in hiring either one of them as actor/combatants. Both actresses passed the test.

Adjudicator: Joseph Martinez

A Reminder:

Please contact me (David Boushey) when you are preparing to have your students adjudicated. Follow the procedure set-forth in the Sept. issue. If you are a teacher, get those folks adjudicated ■

## CHANGES OF ADDRESS

James W. Neely Jr.  
723 Brookfield Rd.  
Kettering, OH 45429

James Finney  
1029 W. Altgeld, Apt. 2-E  
Chicago, IL 60614

Gary Boeck  
638 W. Addison No. 28  
Chicago, IL 60613

Gray Stevens  
219 Avenue Miramar  
San Clemente, CA 92672

Keith R. Morgareidge  
1269 Viné St. No. 3  
Denver, CO 80206

Kay Aoyama  
691 Eglinton Ave. East  
Toronto, M4G2K6  
Ontario, Canada ■

Kim Kahana—Owner/operator of L.A. Stunt School—  
"People are simply not "born" into a profession, no matter how talented they may be. It takes time: Ten, twelve and sometimes twenty years to become a doctor, dentist or attorney: working, living and breathing their chosen profession, eighteen hours a day. Why, then should a stuntman or actor be different? However, it requires less time for a stuntman or actor to achieve more, emotionally and financially, provided his or her dedication and determination are comparable to that of the doctor, dentist or attorney.

Stunt people are a proud breed. And being part of it, I want to impress upon you that in my opinion, it is the most discouraging, heart-breaking, but rewarding business I know."

IN THE WIND—In the coming year look for the coming of the muscle-women in the following—"SHEENA, QUEEN OF THE JUNGLE," "JANE," "SHE," "HUNDRA," "SUPERGIRL," "THE LOST EMPIRE," "HELL SQUAD," "THE 7 MAGNIFICENT GLADIATORS," and "HERCULES." All feature women in major fight-roles.

SYBIL DANNING—co-star of HERCULES quoted in USA TODAY: "Women have always been beautiful, charming, and sexy. Now they clash swords, too" ■

## NEW MEMBERS

There are a number of new members to the Society. We welcome them and hope that they will be active in contributing to the Society and to *The Fight Master*.

R. Barry Kemper, Affiliate  
505 E. Jones St.  
Savannah, GA 31401

Robert Scranton, Associate  
24 Broadmoor Drive  
Little Rock, AR 72204

Ramona Rice, Friend  
24116 Madison Ave.  
Greensboro, NC 27403

Richard Martinez, Friend  
509 C. Darlene  
Glendale Heights, IL 60139

Alan Barlow, Affiliate  
209 Airport Ave.  
Murfreesboro, TN 37130

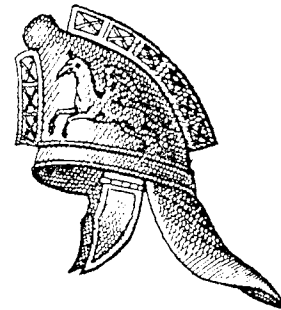
Brent Gibbs, Affiliate  
5022 Whitehaven St.  
Baton Rouge, LA 70808

James Shadburne, Affiliate  
8701 Bambridge Rd.  
Louisville, KY 40222

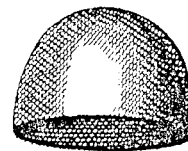
Daniel Rose, Associate  
32 - 64 45th St.  
Long Island City, NY

Richard Minor, Affiliate  
317 - 15th St. N. W. No 207  
Charlottesville, VA 22903

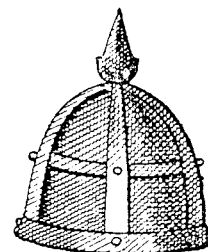
Courtlandt Gilmour, Associate  
Rt. 8 Rison Rd.  
Greenville, SC 29611 ■



**"Beyond the Sundown"** by Kermit Hunter. Alabama-Coushatta Indian Reservation, Livingston, TX. Michael Y. Walters, producer/general manager. Story of the Alabama and Coushatta Indian peoples during Texas' War For Independence. May 27-August 26. Company of 60 includes 40 actors, 11 principal and feature roles. Need 16 strong dancers, 2 stage managers, 1 sound engineer, 1 master electrician, 1 lighting technician, 1 props/pyrotechnician, 1 costumer and assistant, some staff. Salaries \$90-\$150. Housing and utilities provided (most in cottages on Lake Tombigbee) in addition to salary. Performances nightly except Sundays. Inquiries to: Michael Y. Walters, Producer/General Manager, Sundown Theatre, Route 3, Box 640, Livingston, TX 77351. Tel: (713) 563-4777.



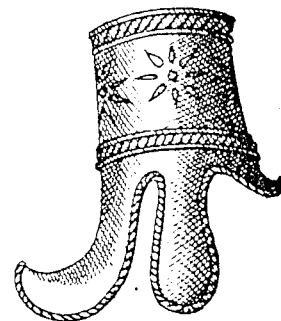
**"Blackbeard: Knight of the Black Flag"** by Stuart Aronson. Bath, NC. Seventh season opens mid-June. Thursday, Friday, Saturday performances for 8 weeks. Symphonic drama celebrates the history of Edward Teach, the pirate, and his connection with Bath. Hiring actresses, actors, and technicians. Salaries \$50-\$125. Housing not provided. "Blackbeard: Knight of the Black Flag," P.O. Box 209, Bath, NC 27808. Tel: (919) 923-6931 or 923-3971.



**"Blue Jacket"** by W. L. Mundell. Xenia, OH. Tally Sessions, producer. The tragic story of the white youngster captured by the Shawnees who became one of their most feared war chiefs, and of the Black Shawnee, Caesar. Rehearsals begin May 31. Performances June 17 thru Sept. 4, nightly except Mondays. All ages, male and female. Salaries \$90 up. Some technical positions. Assistance in locating housing, some housing subsidies. "Blue Jacket," P.O. Box 312, Xenia, OH 45385. Tel: (513) 376-4318.

**"Horn in the West"** by Kermit Hunter. Boone, NC. Ed Pilkington, director; William R. Winkler, III, general manager. 32nd season. Hiring actors, dancers and singers. Salaries \$60-\$170. Housing not provided, but company assists in locating quarters. Rehearsals begin June 4. Season June 17-Aug. 20. "Horn in the West," P.O. Box 295, Boone, NC 28607. Tel: (704) 264-2120.

**"The Legend of Daniel Boone"** by Jan Hartman and **"Lincoln"** by Michael Y. Walters. Harrodsburg, KY. Celeste Hall, director. Need 40 performers, including leads. Some singing, folk dancing, and stage combat. Salaries \$95-\$120, with leads to \$165. Technical director, stage manager, lighting designer, pyrotechnician, and other supporting technicians needed. Studio productions. "Daniel Boone"



plays 4 nights per week and "Lincoln" 2 nights. Eleven-week run. 14 weeks employment from May 16 thru Aug. 27. "Legend of Daniel Boone," P.O. Box 365, Harrodsburg, KY 40330. Tel: (606) 734-3346.

**"The Liberty Cart"** by Randolph Umberger. Keanansville, NC. The exciting development of eastern North Carolina from 1755 to 1865. 25 performers and technical positions. Salaries \$85-\$150. Folk dancing required. Company provides some housing. Must be available June 18-Aug. 23. Alternate production on two nights each week. Studio productions. "The Liberty Cart," P.O. Box 470, Keanansville, NC 28349. Tel: (919) 296-0721.

**"The Lone Star"** by Paul Green. Galveston, TX. Seventh season. Runita Gaston, general manager; Larry Stanley, director. Musical drama of the establishment of the Republic of Texas. Plays on alternate nights with **"Annie Get Your Gun"** by Irving Berlin. 80 performing, 15 technical positions. Actors, actresses, singers, dancers, musicians, riders, and technicians. Technicians report May 11. Rehearsals begin May 15. Performances May 27-Aug. 21, nightly except Monday. Salaries \$90-\$225. Low cost on-site housing. Inquiries to: Ms. Runita Gaston, General Manager, "The Lone Star," P.O. Box 5253, Galveston, TX 77551. Tel: (713) 737-3440.

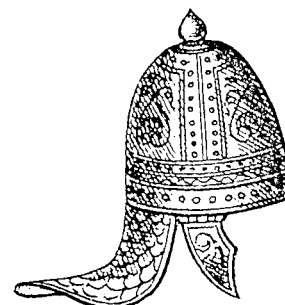
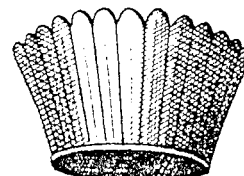
**"The Lost Colony"** by Paul Green. Manteo, NC. Joe Layton, director; Robert Knowles, associate producer and general manager. 11 principal actors, 4 principal actresses, 20 dancers, 20 singers, 24 actor/technicians, 4 actress/technicians, 11 technicians and 6 costume assistants. Requires Anglo-Saxon and American Indian types. Salaries \$80-\$150. Company housing. Children's theatre and Professional Theatre Workshop with academic credit through UNC-CH if eligible. Workshop conducted by Joe Layton with visiting theatre professionals. Dance classes, choral concerts and studio productions. "The Lost Colony," Box 40, Manteo, NC 27954. Tel: (919) 473-2127.

**"The Sword of Peace Summer Celebration,"** Snow Camp, NC. Tenth season. "The Sword of Peace" by William Hardy presented in repertory with a new musical by Robert Watson and a mainstage children's show by James Ragland. James Wilson, general manager; Robert Watson, director. Salaries \$75-\$125. Company will assist with housing. "Sword of Peace Summer Celebration," P.O. Box 535, Snow Camp, NC 27349. Tel: (919) 376-6948.

**"Tecumseh!"** by Allan W. Eckert. Chillicothe, OH. Directed by Marion Waggoner. **"Shenandoah"** from book and screenplay by James Lee Barrett. Directed by W. L. Mundell. This is the eleventh season for "Tecumseh!," the epic struggle for the Northwest Territory, and the fourth season for "Shenandoah." Seeking 10-15 actors, 10-12 actresses, 10 actor/dancers, singers including leads, 10 tech and house staff positions. Requires special skills: horsemanship, archery, weaponry, military drill and artillery. Salaries from room plus \$80 per week to Equity scale. "Tecumseh!," P.O. Box 73, Chillicothe, OH 45601. Tel: (614) 775-4100.

**"Trumpet in the Land"** by Paul Green. New Philadelphia, OH. Fourteenth season. Depicts the founding and eventual destruction of Ohio's first settlement, Schoenbrunn, during the Revolutionary War. Need 14 dancers, 30 singers with acting background, 8 male leads and 4 female leads. Salaries \$90-\$100 for non-Equity leads, \$80-\$85 for minor roles. Some Equity actors. 15 technical positions, salaries \$80-\$150. Workshops in acting, dance, voice and martial arts. Academic credit. Food allowance, company housing at nominal cost. Rehearsals begin May 30. Season June 21-Sept. 4. Inquiries to: Casting, Ohio Outdoor Historical Drama Association, Inc., 203 E. High Ave., New Philadelphia, OH 44663. Tel: (216) 364-5111 or 339-1132.

**"Unto These Hills"** by Kermit Hunter. Cherokee, NC. William Hardy, director; Carol White, general manager. 15 actors, 5 actresses, 17 dancers, some technicians and extras. Average salary \$80-\$120, but some leads to \$275. Requires white settlers, Cherokee Indians. Housing provided by company, also swimming pool, dining hall. Canteen shows on off-nights. May 25-Aug. 27. Cherokee Historical Association, P.O. Box 398, Cherokee, NC 28719. Tel: (704) 497-2111 ■



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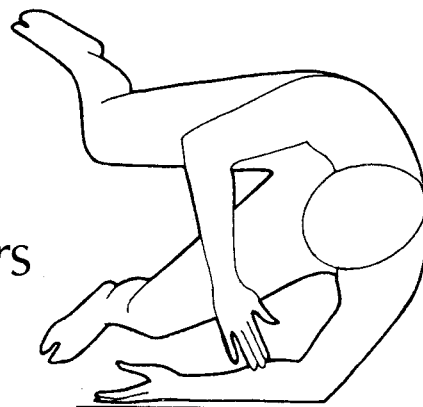
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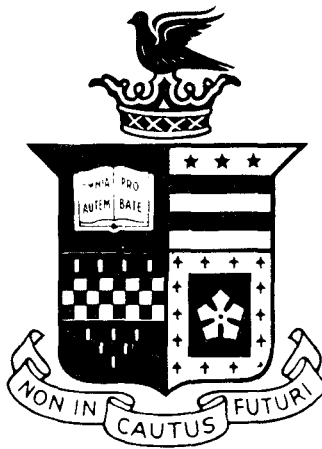
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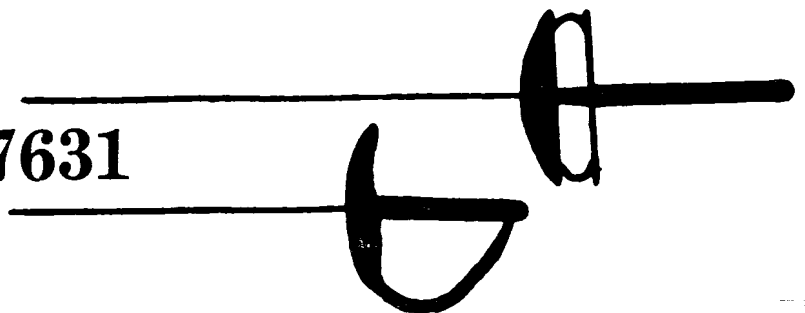


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