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Fight Master Magazine

The Society of American Fight Directors

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## **The Fight Master, January 1987, Vol. 10 Issue 1**

The Society of American Fight Directors

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Jan 87

The  
**Fight**  
**MASTER**  
JANUARY 1987

JOURNAL OF THE

SOCIETY OF  
AMERICAN

FIGHT DIRECTORS

# The Fight MASTER

JOURNAL OF THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FIGHT DIRECTORS

JANUARY 1987  
Volume X number 1

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### THE FIGHT MASTER

Journal of the Society of American Fight Directors

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### SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FIGHT DIRECTORS

President Joseph Martinez  
Vice President Drew Fracher  
Treasurer David Boushey  
Secretary Linda McCollum

The Society of American Fight Directors was founded in May, 1977. It is a non-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.

As the Society of American Fight Directors prepares to enter its second decade, we may look back at the progress we have made since our incorporation in May of 1977. From a handful of members we have grown to an organization of two hundred fifty members. We offer a national workshop each year taught by the finest instructors in stage combat in the nation. We have certified nearly a thousand actor-combatants in the use of weapons for the stage. We have shown the impact well conceived and executed fight choreography has on a production. Working hand in hand with the armorer our research in historical styles has influenced the work of the theatrical armorer. Our members are working in all areas of the entertainment industry and as their individual work and expertise continues to gain national and even international recognition the Society and its goals continues to come to the forefront. We have made some giant strides forward for the fight choreographer and our second decade promises many more advances.

With this issue we end our first decade. We welcome Robert Eiler Cook, lecturer and knife collector, who has authorized the reprinting of his article on historical weaponry. Drew Fracher shares a personal encounter with Ralph Faulkner. Richard Gradkowski's research of fencing styles sheds light on the use of the parrying dagger in double fencing. T.J. Glenn reveals the real story of Conan, and Rob Colbin sends us an offer we can't refuse. Tony Soper reviews productions he has seen around the country, and in our letters section we have some very concrete responses to some previously set forth ideas.

For our May issue I am encouraging members to share with our readers their views of and experiences with the Society during the first decade. I am hoping we can update our archives for the future. Please share any reminiscences you have on the early years of the Society.

Linda Carlyle McCollum

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the founding of The Society of American Fight Directors. In June of 1977 I was Fight Master to the Virginia Museum Theatre in Richmond. I received a letter of invitation from David Boushey to join the Society. I remember, as I walked to the Theatre on that bright Spring morning, saying to myself, "Ah, now it begins. The Fight Choreographer will take his place among the other resident professionals in the professional theatre! I am not alone."

Like Mr. Boushey, I was forced to train in stage fight choreography in Great Britain (there certainly wasn't anything as exciting as the National Stage Combat Workshop in existence then), and then to return to this country and begin to carve a position for myself within the theatre system. Everywhere I went I was compelled to convince Directors and Producers that their productions would be better and their actors safer and more consistent, if they hired a professional Fight Master. It was certainly an uphill battle.

Then, six years later, that letter from David. At the time I knew only a few of the other qualified individuals choreographing stage fights on a regular basis. Most of the violence occurring on stage was wild and dangerous, or completely anachronistic, because stage fights were being "staged" by competitive fencers. And naturally, the qualified Fight Masters were working the East and West coasts. Except for Chicago, where I had resided for a number of years, the great center of the country was a blank sheet. And before the Society of American Fight Directors it was almost impossible to share ideas or to have a healthy argument with a peer about theory or technique.

But why dwell upon the past? Today the Society is very much a part of the entertainment industry. We are much better acquainted with the other individuals who practice our art in the United States. We have

a national tool, **The Fight Master**, to communicate our ideas and opinions. Producers and Directors universally acknowledge the role of the Fight Master. We have established standards of safety and promote excellence in training through our programs of Certification. We are no longer alone.

David Boushey deserves a warm accolade for drawing us together in 1977 and for his untiring efforts in supporting the day to day operations of our organization. He has spent thousands of hours in the service of an ideal, the Society of American Fight Directors. And now, he is stepping down as Treasurer; a measure of his confidence in the health and vigour of the Society. From Founder, President to Treasurer, he has shouldered much of the responsibilities of seeing that our organization survives and prospers. On behalf of all of the members of the Society, past, present and future, thank you David.

However, as the saying goes, "The King is Dead, Long Live the King." We must now look for a successor to David as Treasurer. Any member of the Society who is interested in serving as Treasurer to the Society should submit a letter of intent to me. I must say that it is very important that the Treasurer have some form of secretarial help (funded outside of the Society) and perhaps have the possibility of access to subsidized photocopying services. This is a very crucial position among the Officers and I will be appointing a Treasurer as soon as possible. The interested individual will serve for a minimum of two years.

We are going to celebrate our tenth anniversary at the Southeastern Theatre Conference in Richmond, Virginia in March and at the National Stage Combat Workshop in Memphis, Tennessee in July. I urge all of the members of the Society to get together and organize other regional celebrations of our tenth anniversary. We must vigilantly continue to promote the Society whenever and wherever we can. We are poised to prosper in the next decade.

**Joseph Martinez**

Dear Members,

I hope the New Year finds you all well and ready for another period of forward progress and growth for the Society. I am still working on gathering information for a brochure on the Society to be sent to theatres and universities across the United States. Many thanks to those members that have contributed information. Hopefully it will be ready for mailing by workshop time this summer.

We will be having a get together at the spring SETC Conference in Richmond, Virginia for any members in attendance and I look forward to seeing some of you there.

Otherwise things seem to be moving along well for us and again I urge all of you to get out there and hold the Society of American Fight Directors banner high. We must strive to make ourselves THE organization that theatres call upon for fight work and this is only possible by continuing to do safe and solid work in all aspects of the business. Keep up the good work and keep those lines of communication open

Cheers!

**Drew Fracher**

The 1987 ANNUAL DUES are here once more! It seems as though we just finished paying for one year when the next year is upon us. For those who paid last January, it probably doesn't seem quite so soon so might I suggest that the membership pay their dues early this year and avoid the problem of back to back payments.

A new resolution was proposed and passed by the Officers of the Society and in turn was approved by the Board of Directors. The proposal is intended to encourage members to pay their dues on time. It is as follows: Starting in 1987, all dues must be paid by July 1st or the member will be dropped from the Society roster. Delinquent members will have to re-join the Society as a Friend and go through the current procedure for classification of status. This means that any Associate members who become delinquent will have to submit video tapes and letters of recommendations to regain the Associate member classification. This is also true for any Fight Masters that become delinquent. Some members may feel that this new resolution is severe but keep in mind that few professional organizations allow their membership dues to lapse for more than six months. I have personally maintained all along that we are a professional organization and we must act accordingly. The Society continues to grow and with that growth, more monetary demands are made on us. I implore you to avoid any headaches in the future by paying your annual membership fees by **July 1, 1987**.

The dues structure is the same as in the past years. Dues for everyone except students are \$25.00 annually with students being \$15.00. If you joined the Society after July 1, 1986 you owe half of the fee or \$12.50. The dues will be paid this year and in the future to:

Society of American Fight Directors  
c/o Ms. Linda McCollum (Secretary)  
P.O. Box 218  
Blue Diamond, Nevada 89004

Please make your checks out to the Society of American Fight Directors. Do not send your dues to the Seattle address as Linda has taken over this responsibility and will continue to do so indefinitely. It simplifies our bookkeeping and makes our organization more efficient. We continue to explore new ways of making our Society run smoother and more efficiently.

I wish to make it known that I will be stepping down as treasurer to the Society of American Fight Directors this May. It will be the Tenth Anniversary of our founding and after a decade as president and treasurer to the Society it is time to pass the banner on to younger blood who will continue to promote and to improve the Society. The president, Joseph Martinez, will be appointing someone to take my position until such time that a new treasurer is selected.

The Society is doing well. We continue to get the recognition we deserve. We are now an international organization and well respected by those who appreciate the art of combat for the stage and screen. Let us continue to build as an organization. The benefits will be substantial to all of us who pursue this little corner of the theatre.

**David L. Boushey**

This year the workshop will once again be held on the campus of Memphis State University in Memphis, Tennessee from July 13-July 31. The central location, superb facilities and low cost of housing were the principal factors affecting the choice of the workshop site. Additionally, the warm welcome, hospitality and efficient work efforts of the faculty and staff at Memphis State University have proven to be exceptional.

The master teachers scheduled to conduct classes will be Society President Joseph Martinez, Fight Masters David Boushey, Allen Suddeth, Patrick Crean, Drew Fracher and David Leong. Special guest instructor will be Dale Kirby, author of **Samurai Swordsmanship**. Mr. Kirby is a USA National Weapons and Karate Champion whose work has been featured in **Karate Illustrated, Esquire, Black Belt, Kick, Inside Karate** and **Karate Today**. He is a fourth degree Black Belt in the U.S. Eastern Wado-Ryu Karate-do-Remni and has competed with many of the country's top martial arts stars of motion picture films. Mr. Kirby is also an instructor in Katori Shinto Ryu (oldest existing samurai sword style of Japan) and in laido (the art of drawing, cutting and re-sheathing the sword). The expertise of Dale Kirby's samurai swordsmanship will be of significance to those students, teachers and fight directors who plan to work on plays such as **Rashomon**. Be sure not to miss his classes.

The total cost of six hundred fifty dollars will remain the same as last year. This fee includes three weeks of instruction (eight hours a day), housing in double occupancy rooms, use of weapons and facilities, one year's membership in the Society of American Fight Directors and the certification test fee.

This year we will also be offering a Special Program in Advanced Technique and Teacher Certification with master teacher Joseph Martinez. This program is limited to a maximum of twelve participants who for seven hundred fifty dollars will receive one on one instruction with the fight masters. This includes six hours of instruction a day for three weeks plus two to three hours of individual study on special problems in choreography with critiques of their work being done by the master teachers. The emphasis in this Special Program will be on teacher training, stage combat choreography and technique (rapier and gauntlet, rapier and cloak, sword and buckler, halberd). This advance workshop will be offered concurrently with the National Workshop

Brochures will be mailed during the month of January. If you are a current member of the Society, your name will be included on the mailing list. Interested people not included on this list should write or call the address and/or phone number below.

Department of Theatre  
NKU Campus Station  
Highland Heights, KY 41076  
(606) 572-5420

If you are interested in attending the 1987 summer workshop register as early as possible. The maximum enrollment of forty is reaching the limit earlier each year. Those people who wait until the registration deadline of May 1st risk the chance of not being accepted. Register soon to be a part of the workshop of 87!

**David Leong,**  
National Workshop Coordinator

<p>Initial membership in the SAFD is \$25. Dues for Fight Masters, Certified Teachers, Recognized Actor/Combatants, Associates, Affiliates and Friends are \$25 annually. All membership dues are to be paid in January to the Secretary, Linda McCollum, P.O. Box 218, Blue Diamond, Nevada 89004.</p>	<p>Inquires concerning new memberships, status or change of address should be addressed to the secretary, Linda McCollum, P.O. Box 218, Blue Diamond, Nevada 89004.</p>	<p>Application for change in status within the Society should be addressed to Drew Fracher, c/o Abiding Grace Fams, 780 Bushtown Road, Harrodsburg, KY 40330</p>	<p>Articles for consideration in <i>The Fight Master</i> should be submitted to the editor, Linda McCollum, Department of Theatre Arts, University of Nevada, 4505 Maryland Parkway, Las Vegas, Nevada 89154.</p>
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# STAGE FIGHTING?? NO SUCH THING!

by Drew Fracher

Last summer while visiting Los Angeles I had the great fortune to meet and take a lesson from Ralph Faulkner, one of the last remaining swashbuckling choreographers from the golden days of Hollywood. I drove to Falcon Studios, his headquarters since those days, which is located on a rather seedy stretch of Sunset Boulevard. The building was run down and dingy but somehow spoke of a most illustrious history. There were photos of the Maestro coaching various world champion fencers during the thirties, forties and fifties, as well as shots of Stuart Granger working on *The Prisoner of Zenda* and Basil Rathbone getting pointers for *Captain Blood*. After seeing the pictures I was most disappointed to find the door locked and the building seemingly deserted. I knocked several times and had given up and turned to go when the Maestro opened the door and asked creakily what I wanted. At the time Faulkner was about ninety four years old and seemed at first typical of folks that age; a bit frail and aged to say the least. I introduced myself as a Fight Director and actor and member of the Society of American Fight Directors and he let me in. He quickly dispelled my initial evaluation of his condition by crushing my hand as we shook. Faulkner may be getting on in years but he is still very strong and possesses a right forearm about the size of my thigh!

He made me feel at home right away and let me look around the lobby which was full of photos and awards. He answered my many questions about various Hollywood types and champion fencers of different nationalities that filled the photos on the walls. Several plaques proclaimed his talents as a fencer including his being world champion sabre fencer in about 1934. The exact year escapes me now probably due to my awe. I explained to him once more who I was and told him I was interested in taking a lesson or two while I was in the area. I said I wanted coaching in stage fighting and he immediately broke in with, "Stage Fighting?? NO SUCH THING." His meaning was clear; whether it be fencing on the strip or a fight between Tybalt and Romeo the strategy and desired results are the same. In other words, swordplay is swordplay no matter where or how it occurs. The difference is simply distance and perhaps a greater emphasis on the "ZA" in the theatrical instance. I hid my combined amusement and embarrassment and apologized for my problem of semantics. I then tried another tack by asking him if he ever coached actors anymore in fighting for the stage or film. He said, "Sometimes if an actor is in a particular movie that has swordplay I'll coach him for those scenes." I explained that I was specifically interested in that sort of work with him and he responded simply..."Why don't you get into a movie?" I began to realize that he had no real point of reference for what I was asking so I inquired about a simple fencing lesson. As it turned out he was holding a class that night and told me to come back at 5:30 p.m. I left there feeling extremely excited at the prospect and pondering over his interesting philosophy of "no such thing as stage fighting."

I returned to the salle at the appointed time and met several of his students who were getting ready for class. These folks were all



competition fencers and ranged from a young woman from France who had been in town making a film and wanted to work out, to Herb who had been studying with "the Boss" as they all called him since the mid 1950's. All told there were about ten students plus a fellow named Randy who was acting as the Maestro's assistant. We all gathered in the salle and the students began pairing off and engaging in various drills. Everyone signed up on a blackboard and Faulkner took his position at one end of the studio and began to hold individual lessons with each student in order. As each student came on the strip with the "Boss" he was given a basic lesson using various drills of point work, basic and compound attacks and parries. He gave each student some tidbit of information, usually one clear and concise point to ponder during the seven to ten minute lesson. Afterwards his assistant took each student aside and drilled with him what Faulkner had taught. My turn came up and I was given an ancient foil and mask that served to make me wonder what Hollywood great might have worn it before me. He drilled me verbally on my basic knowledge of blade work before we stepped onto the strip. He asked what a double was, what a feint was and what a deception of a lateral parry was called and so on. I answered to his satisfaction and we engaged blades for my lesson. He had me do various parries and defences to his attacks and then we drilled combinations and complex attacks from me. He defended against my attacks with ease and made me hope that I am that spry at ninety four!! No matter how his physical self appeared, the man is a world class champion of the blade and his mind and body are clear and very much together in that respect. He was quite the task master and once or twice whacked me on the mask with his foil for not responding to his attacks properly or fast enough.

At the end of the lesson I asked him for some advice on the theory of bladework and its relation to fencing for the stage and screen. He finally seemed to understand where all of my questions were based and he took off his mask and said to me very clearly...

***"What does the other man do? How does he do it? What can I do against what he does? How well can I do it?"***

Simple statements from a man of vast experience. Like many axioms of truth from the masters it has taken and will take me many hours of thought to glean what knowledge is contained therein.

With that the lesson was over and I said my goodbyes and told him that there was an organization called the Society of American Fight Directors that would greatly appreciate his words of wisdom and that I planned to pass them along. He gave me his blessing and sent me off into the night to ponder his input. On the way out I paid the secretary the huge sum of five dollars for my lesson from the "Boss." I hope some of you may have the opportunity to visit him soon and receive some tidbits of wisdom. I hope what I have given you in this article will be of some use to you as you investigate this thing we call stage fighting. "Stage fighting?? NO SUCH THING!!"

# THE USE OF PARRYING DAGGERS

by Richard J. Gradkowski

In the Europe of the sixteenth century the civilian sword developed gradually from the medieval cruciform type into the swept-hilted rapier. The large shield which accompanied the sword as a defensive accessory proved incompatible with the dress and manners of the rapier men and a smaller version, the hand buckler, evolved. However, towards the end of the century, even this small buckler was replaced by a sturdy dagger which the swordsman could wield either in defense or as an auxiliary offensive implement. The use of this dagger required a new and complex skill.

In 1570, Giacomo Di Grassi published in Venice his **True Art of Defense**. This text was translated into English by I.G., Gentleman, and licensed for publication in London on March 22, 1594. Shortly thereafter, in 1595, a more up to date text by Vincentio Saviolo of Padua, **His Practice in Two Books**, was also published. In 1599, George Silver, gentleman, issued his **Paradoxes of Defense**, a manual of swordplay and commentary on rapier and dagger fighting. Silver was a proponent of the combat style used by the Tudor masters-of-arms and his pointed criticism of rapier and dagger fencing, shed useful light on some of the problems associated with the dual weapon style. These writings are invaluable to those of us who are interested in the authentic depiction of the swordplay of the period.

The fundamental difference of the newer fencing style from the older swordplay was the greater emphasis on thrusting actions, especially to the exposed face of the opponent. These thrusts, the "imbrocata," the "stocatta," and the "punta riversa" were immediately recognized as very dangerous.

The thrust was a relatively quick action, more difficult to perceive than a cut, while allowing less time for a defensive reaction. Any puncture of the body in those days of primitive surgery and lack of antisepsis often had fatal results. In addition, the practice of aiming at the face or belly of the opponent must have made the swordsman nervous and would thus inhibit his coordination.

It is important for the teacher of rapier and dagger fighting to be aware of these difficulties and to avoid imparting an impractical and idealized style which, while it might look well in drawings or the ballet, would get his pupil killed in a real combat.

The optimum coordination of the two-weapon system was theorized to be a simultaneous parrying of the attack by the dagger, and a counter thrust by the rapier. Parrying with the dagger first and then riposting with the rapier, as well as parrying together with the rapier and dagger and then riposting with the rapier, was thought to take "two times" and was therefore considered inferior to defending and counterattacking

simultaneously in a "single time."

Giacomo di Grassi comments:

*It is possible to withstand the thrust with the sword and dagger joined together, but it is so discommodious and so ridiculous a way that I leave to speak thereof.*

The fine coordination required for the effective rapier and dagger swordplay was extraordinarily difficult as witnesses of the period recognized.

George Silver states:

*When they find the point of their enemies rapier out of the right line, they say, they may boldly make home a thrust with a passata, the which they observe, and do accordingly: but the other having a shorter time with his hand, a nature many times teacheth him, sodainly turneth his wrist, whereby he meeteth the other in his passage just with the point of his rapier in the face or body.*

Vincentio Saviolo states:

*Therefore I advertise you to exercise your self continually, that occasion beeing offered you to fight, you maie perfourme the same with much readinesse, and without daunger, otherwise, if you onely faile in one and even the least point, you endanger your life.*

G. Silver further adds:

*So those that trust to their fight, the excellency of a good eye, their great cunning, and perfect wards of the dagger, that they can better see to ward than with a buckler, shall ever be deceived. And when they be wounded, they say the Agent was a little too quicke for them: sometimes they are thrust under the dagger, then they say, they bare it a little too high: sometimes a thrust being strongly made, they being soundly paid therewith, say, they were a little too slow, and sometimes they be soundly paid with a thrust, and they thinke they were a little too quicke. So they that practice or thinke to be cunning in the dagger ward, are all the dayes of their lives learning, and are never taught.*

Silver, who had grave reservations about the entire system of rapier and dagger fighting, points out that the difficulties of this system are so great as to practically introduce the element of chance in any combat with these weapons. He proposes:

*...then set a skilful Rapier and Dagger-man the best that*

*can be had, and a valiant man having no skill together at Rapier & Dagger, and once in two bouts upon my credit in all the experience I have in fight, the unskillful man, do the other what he can for his life to the contrarie, shall hurt him....*

The difficulty to defense solely with the dagger was universally recognized. The swordsman was thus advised to maintain his guard with his dagger arm fully extended in front, and was warned to always keep it "within" (i.e. between the enemy's rapier and his own body), parrying "outward," as a rule. The dagger itself was to be moderate in size and sturdy. The shape of the dagger was to be of a standard pattern, and the fanciful parrying daggers often seen in our museums were decried. Di Grassi comments:

*....they have daggers of purpose, which beside their ordinary hilts, have also two long sterts of iron, four fingers length, and are distant from the dagger the thickness of a bow string, into which distance, when it chanceth the enemy's sword to be driven, they suddenly straine and hold fast the sword, the which may come to pass, but I hold it for a thing rather to be imagined than practiced, the case so standing, that in the heat of fight, where disdain bickereth with fear, little does a man discern whether the sword be in that strait or not.*

Such testimony and the reports of numerous observers to duels (e.g. Brantome) attesting to the mutual slaughter from rapier fights, reinforces the view that rapier and dagger combat was difficult to carry out safely. Thus, while the use of the dagger was purportedly taught as the correct defense, we may infer from these conditions that swordsmen would naturally modify their technique accordingly, to provide greater security in combat. One of the lines of thought leading to this technical modification shows up in the supportive use of the dagger in combat actions. Di Grassi states:

*When the edge blowe or thrust commeth above, it must be incountered with the sword without, on the third or fourth parte of the enimies sword, and with the dagger borne within, on the first or second parte thereof: having thus sodenly taken the enimies sword in the middle, to turne forcible the enimies sword outwards with the dagger, keeping the sword stedfast, and as streight towards the enimie as is possible by means wherof it may the more easely be turned.*

Di Grassi points out the importance not only of parrying with the dagger, but also maintaining control over the opponent's blade after such a parry. Saviolo comments:

*Likewise if you see he commaunded not his point, and being advauntaged upon his right side, you maye with great readines put your pointe under his sword, lifting your sword hand and your dagger, when in the mean time you may give him*

*a stoccata or imbroccata, and be master of his swoorde with yours and your dagger.*

Saviolo even advocates a similar supportive use of the left hand (with or even without a mailed glove) in the case of combat with the single rapier.

*...and if he offer you a Stramazone to the head, you must beare it with your sword, passing forward with your lefte legge, and turning wel you hand, that your point maye go in manner of an imbroccata, accompanied with your left hand....*

Saviolo also gives instructions on supplementing the defense by the rapier by immediately neutralizing the opponent's blade with the dagger.

*...or in both these false thrusts, when he beateth them by with his rapier, you may with much sodainnesse make a passata with your lefte foote, and your Dagger commaunding his Rapier, you may give him a punta, either dritta, or riversa.*

Saviolo further iterates:

*Again, if he make anie violent blow at your head, retire a litle on your left side, and receive it with your rapiers point, passing with your left foote, and turning your point to his face, and clapping your dagger on his rapier:*

Giacomo di Grassi states more explicitly the practical swordsman's application of the dagger:

*The third waie: As soone as he hath made the slope pace, and found the enimies sword, he ought to staie it with his Dagger, and therewithal withdrawing his own sword, to discharge a thrust underneath with increase of a straight pace.*

Again, di Grassi says:

*...or els in steede of striking with the Dagger, therewith to staie the enimies sword, & with it, (encreasing another straight pace) to deliver a thrust;....*

Finally, di Grassi concludes:

*After a third sort also, he may strike, and that is to deliver the foresaid blow from the wrist, and having met with the enemy's sword, to make presently a slope pace, and stay the sword with his dagger, and then nimbly recovering his own sword, to thrust underneath with the increase of a straight pace.*

A careful reading of these three authors, all undoubtedly highly experienced and technically sound swordsmen, leads us

to several conclusions about the character of rapier and dagger fighting. In the first place; it was extraordinarily difficult to perform well under conditions of real combat, and our ideas of the way in which it was executed should not be overly colored by the idealized explanations in books by authors or the illustrations by artists. In the second place; the use of the dagger in defense was probably not only for parrying attacks or for counterattacks in close combat, but often for restraining the opponent's blade after having parried securely with either the rapier or dagger or both. Such a technique of restraining the enemy's rapier with one's dagger, while counterattacking with one's own rapier, is compatible with the natural instinct for self preservation.

The quotations in this paper are all from the following sources:

Jackson, James L. Three Elizabethan Fencing Manuals.  
Delmar, N.Y.: Scholar's Facsimiles and Reprints, Inc.,  
1972, which includes:

Giacomo di Grassi. His True Art of Defense (tr. 1594)

Vincentio Saviolo. His Practice (tr. 1595)

George Silver. Paradoxes of Defense (1599)

George Silver. Bref Instructions Upon My Paradoxes of  
Defense

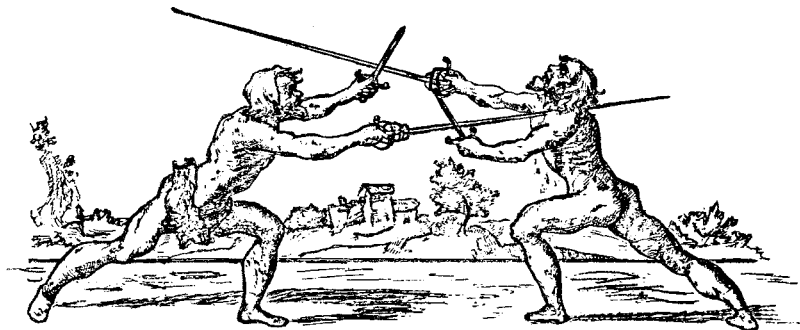


Illustration from the Great Simulacrum of the Use of the Sword  
by Ridolfo Capo Ferro da Cagli (1610).

# THEATRICAL WEAPONRY

by Eiler Robert Cook

A fascinating field usually overlooked by edged weapons enthusiasts is that of theatrical weapons. If you stop to think about it, many operas sooner or later have a dueling scene. Even if there is no on stage fighting or fencing, period costuming should include authentic historic weaponry if the desired credible atmosphere is to be maintained. A tenor carrying a naval officer's dress saber in the opera **Trovatore!**, for example, is about as sensible as having a thirteenth century knight make an entrance on a motor scooter! Would it not be ridiculous to have a group of supposed Babylonians and Israelites on stage carrying swept-hilt rapiers instead of Biblical style broadswords? If one assumes that most Shakespearean plays with the exception of his historical plays are done in the Elizabethan Age period, then the characters should be wearing Renaissance style daggers, not bowies! For years, Hollywood has prided itself on the accurate researching of costumes and weapons for its historical movies. Thus, in no small measure, this helped audiences the world over to accept actors like Errol Flynn as Robin Hood or as a dashing pirate, as the case might be.

In the world of opera, a serious stage director must have access to sound technical advice on period weapons and armament. The feuding Montagues and Capulets of **Romeo and Juliet** must have proper swords during the fighting scenes if their "piercing steel and fatal points" are to be credible. By the same token, Cassio and Montano in **Othello** should be properly armed as "...swords out, and tilting one at other's breast in opposition bloody," they fight across the stage.

With regard to the "proper" sword or dagger for any production, it is of course essential to establish the period of the staging. Is **Faust** being done in the days of the Landsknechts (Saxon mercenaries), or will it be a modern setting with Mephistopheles appearing in white tie and tails? **Macbeth** has been produced in Star Wars costumes! One **Romeo and Juliet** production was performed in Georgian British uniforms, and the swords supplied were quite properly early nineteenth century "walking out swords." In a modern day version of the opera **Carmen**, the fiery Carmen would probably carry a switch blade rather than the traditional small stiletto or navaja.

A good basic rule is that the earlier the period, the simpler the weapon and the more savage the fighting. The early knights used a heavy double edged sword with a simple cruciform hilt. A large shield was part of his equipment. It was used not just defensively, but also offensively as the knight "stabbed" at his opponent with the point or edge of the shield. With the greater use of the point (as the swept-hilt or cup hilt rapiers), it was common, initially, to use a buckler (small round shield) and then later a parrying dagger (main gauche) in the left hand. In the famous play **Cyrano de Bergerac**, the seventeenth century hero was known for his long nose and for his skill in sword fighting. His weapon was the rapier, and he dispatched his foes with precision thrusts rather than with crude slashing. The rapier again gained fame in Alexandre Dumas' **The Three Musketeers**, as the stalwart musketeers fought Cardinal Richlieu's henchmen both in the book and on the silver screen.

Going back again a bit in history, we have the Roman shortsword known as the "Gladius Ibericus" or Iberian sword made familiar in renditions of the Great Bard's **Julius Caesar**. Gladiator (swordsmen) derives from the word *gladius*, and later came to mean any combatant in the Roman arena. The Roman military tacticians learned early on that the point was deadlier than the edge, and stressed the use of the thrust. On the other hand, from the Gothic invasions of Rome to the end of the depredations of the Vikings, the rugged swords of the "barbarians" struck terror into Christian Europe. These swords common to the Germanic tribes, encased in primitive leather scabbards, have since become identified with countless Wagnerian operatic heroes (in **Siegfried, Tristan and Isolde, Twilight of the Gods**).

It is somewhat ironic that despite the really quite well defined historical periods of operatic or theatrical works, one weapon overshadows the rest. The cup-hilt rapier seems to be the "all wrong" all purpose theatrical weapon from post armor to kneebreeches. Interestingly enough, the French hardly used the cup-hilt. In any event, it was not in use anywhere until long after Athos, Porthos, Aramis and yes, D'Artagnan. Nevertheless, because the cup gives maximum protection to the hand, it remains the favorite of stage fighters. Stock theatrical cup hilts are normally mounted with a triangular epee fencing blade and lack the *pas d'ane* of the more authentic pieces. While the epee blade's lightness makes possible some flashier and "prettier" movements, the purist would point out that it also leads to unauthentic and less dramatic swordplay.

Another stock theatrical sword is the swept-hilt rapier. If properly designed, it serves as a good all purpose steel swept hilt, usually with a seventeenth century blade. A familiar swept hilt is the Spanish Colada, the traditional rapier with a shorter, wide blade which many Spanish edged weapons manufacturers incorrectly attribute to the legendary Cid Campeador. It is an elaborate sword with many decorative elements which make it more expensive but not more functional. For some reason, it seems that every swordmaker in Spain from the prestigious Fabrica Nacional to the most modest workshop in Toledo describes a late sixteenth century rapier as the "Tizona del Cid." When one asks how they can attribute that particular weapon design to a man who died in 1099 A.D., the answer invariably is: "Hombre, didn't you see **The Cid** with Charlton Heston?" The moral of this little story should probably be not to underestimate the power of Hollywood, history or no history!

If we turn for a moment from swords to daggers, we find that the latter were in constant use throughout most of the historical periods we have touched upon. While a gentleman unbuckled his sword at home, he was never without his dagger. Among the more representative stage daggers, one could include the parrying dagger (*main gauche*), the classic Italian stiletto, the classic English nobleman's dagger, the dirk, Crusader Age knight's dagger, and a wide variety of Renaissance daggers such as the impressive cinquedeas. Although daggers were not originally made "en suite" (same design elements in both sword and dagger), this practice is ideal for theatrical use by virtue of the eye catching appearance of such sets. Thus, "companion" daggers to swept hilt and cup hilt rapiers were designed "en suite" and were just as decorative as they were deadly. Furthermore, purists can mix them for stage use. Incidentally, there is



often a need for what we can term "gimmick blades" during on stage violence. For that reason, there is a small but steady market for stage daggers with telescoping blades that "give" when you strike or thrust. Rather than being turned off by an obviously fake blow from a fixed blade dagger, the audience's imagination is satisfied when a telescoping stage blade can be driven in "to the hilt." There are also stage swords with break-away blades that can react on cue to magic spells cast upon them in plays such as Shakespeare's **The Tempest** ("You fools!...the elements of whom your swords are temper'd may as well wound the loud winds, or with bemock'd stabs kill the still closing water..."). Another very practical stage sword is the "all period" sword that can be changed from medieval to nineteenth century periods by removing or adding parts of the hilt elements with an ordinary screwdriver. Dubbed "Sextet," this one theatrical sword can be converted through six stages from the thirteenth century to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

During a recent trip to Spain, the author obtained some first hand accounts of the world of theatrical weaponry from the former resident fencing master of the Metropolitan Opera, Oscar Kolombatovich. Kolombatovich, at one time the only theatrical armorer in the United States, now produces authentic and beautifully executed hand-crafted replicas of historic weaponry (Note: see "Blades of Heritage" article in the April 1985 issue of **Knife World** ). Some years ago, he acquired a large portion of the Met's store of armor and weapons, and now turns out theatrical weapons by casting them from the original models. Of special note is his Duke of Mantua swept hilt rapier with elaborate brass hilt, a replica of the sword used by Enrico Caruso in the Met's production of **Rigoletto**.

When questioned regarding the general state of the art of stage fighting, Kolombatovich commented informally as follows. The goal of all stage directors was of course to avoid operatic swordplay so crude that the audience laughs. Swordplay for opera scenes has little relationship to normal fencing, and he choreographs it like a dance with every foot movement planned by the numbers. Also, he tries to make fights look as they might have in the old days. For this purpose, he relies heavily on his two rare Italian fencing books--one dated 1607, and the other, 1568. Over the years, he has made swords for such stars in the entertainment world as Jose Ferrer, Ezio Pinza, and Luciano Pavarotti.

Continuing, Kolombatovich noted that most stage fencers are erratic. He characterized Placido Domingo as an enthusiastic fencer who throws himself into his role. Luciano Pavarotti, another of the world's leading tenors, is very graceful for a man of his size, and benefits from the fact that he was an athlete as a youth (a soccer player and a horseman). The opera singer with the "best moves," in his view, was the bass Cesare Fieti, who now resides in Florida.

Kolombatovich is still very active in staging battle and fight scenes for both movies and operas. His most recent effort was the choreographing of on stage fighting in the Spanish production of Verdi's **Othello**, with Placido Domingo. The opera opened at Madrid's Teatro de la Zarzuela in July of 1985. However, the most challenging task was setting up the fight scenes for a one night stand at Madrid's Calderon soccer stadium, which seats seventy thousand! At one point, Kolombatovich had several dozen

fencers paired off and fighting across the "field stage." The weapons used were theatrical cup hilt rapiers and parrying daggers. It goes without saying that even though they may carry the designation of "theatrical weapons, these blades should be "combat worthy." For example, the Kolombatovich line is handcrafted of forged and tempered steel that can take the abuse that even opera singers can give. Additionally, most of his guards have cusped points on the quillon block that "lock" the blade. All other crossbars are recessed at the quillon block so that the blade will enter and be "locked." This prevents the blade from turning, an indispensable safety feature. Every fencer knows that parries must be made with the edge; parries are impossible with the flat of the blade. The sword tang is made as an integral part of the blade when it is forged, instead of welding it on. The tang is also made as wide and thick as the size of the blade permits so that it is well secured in the handle. Further, the handles or hilts are "burned" on so that the wood takes on the exact shape of the tang. All the Kolombatovich swords and blades are shipped with sharp points, for many theatrical actions and gestures call for a clearly visible sharp point. Where the blade is to be used in an actual stage fight, it is the job of the prop men to dull or flatten the edges and the points for safety.

Perhaps the foregoing will have given the prospective opera-goer or theater goer an added insight to the importance of the theatrical weaponry. A well-staged fight scene, with the appropriate weapons, adds immeasurably to the aura of realism which every stage director must strive for. So the next time you hear Macbeth's ringing lines "Lay on, MacDuff: and damn'd be him that first cries Hold, enough!," take a close look to see indeed if they are wielding authentic Scottish Broadwords!

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## THE BARBARIAN FROM CROSS PLAINS

by T.J. Glenn and David Burton

"Know, O Prince, that between the years when the oceans drank Atlantis and the gleaming cities, and the year of the rise of the sons of Aryas, there was an age undreamed of when shining kingdoms lay spread across the world like blue mantles...but the proudest kingdom in the world was Aulonia, reigning supreme in the dreaming west. Hither came Conan the Cimmerian, black-haired and sullen-eyed, sword in hand, a thief, a reaver, a slayer, with gigantic melancholies and gigantic mirth to tread the jeweled thrones of the earth under his sandled feet."

Thus begins Robert E. Howard's fictional Nemedian Chronicles and the tale of one of the great heroes of modern literature--a hero who straddles the chasm between fiction and fact like the ancient Colossus.

Robert Ervin Howard was born in Peaster, Texas in 1906, the son of a frontier doctor. While still young, the Howard family settled in Cross Plains, Texas, which became Robert's prison and the springboard from which his fertile imagination leapt across time and space.

Early on, a small-framed, bookish Howard decided that, living in a frontier environment, he would take up frontier pursuits. He took to body-building, horseback riding, and boxing. At his full growth he was an inch short of six feet and a strapping two hundred pounds--a fitting "father" to a literary titan.

By fifteen, young Robert--a voracious reader--had decided on writing as a career. By his eighteenth birthday, he had sold his first story Weird Tales to a new magazine--itself barely a year old and destined to become a legend. The year was 1924.

For the next twelve years, until his untimely death in 1936 by suicide, Howard produced a steady stream of fiction of all kinds; boxing stories, westerns, horror stories and tales of exotic adventure, and the genre he all but invented in its modern form--sword and sorcery.

In 1928, Howard's pen birthed what is perhaps his second most famous creation: the dour Puritan adventurer Solomon Kane. Kane is an Englishman of the late sixteenth century, a solemn, dark, and brooding man who is compelled by a wanderlust and the fanatic principles of the Puritan to right wrongs no matter where the quest takes him (in one story, "Red Shadows," Kane pursues a man from Southern France to the jungles of Africa--no easy trip in those days--because a victim of the man, a stranger to Kane, had died in the Puritan's arms).

In the twelve Kane stories and three poems, the whole of the character's life cycle, from young man in Europe already searching for the unattainable, to the poem "Solomon Kane's Homecoming," a still-restless spirit came home to England for promised peace. Along the way he fought pirates, demons, lost races and vampires.

A life perhaps only a bit more exciting than that of the man Howard's stories were based on. The real Solomon Kane (same name) lived from 1604 to 1668 and, apparently suffering from the same wanderlust as his fictional stepchild, left England for the New World. There he preached the word of God along the New England coast and up into Canada. This however, did not hold his interest and he shipped out

to Europe and then to Africa to convert the heathens. Records place his further journeys off to Asia, but then became vague.

Kane certainly must have felt he was fighting demons. However, records do not show any vampires along the way.

Howard, a confirmed Celtophile, dug a little further into the history of the British Isles and wrote a series of stories about Cormac MacArt, an Irish chieftain who fought the Noresemen. The stories were based on the life of Cormac Mac Art who reigned in Ireland about 1016 to 1028.

But all this time, Howard's greatest creation lay slumbering in his subconscious and among the dusty tombs of antiquity.

Conan of Cimmeria is a literary demi-god worthy and capable of standing beside Hercules. He is described by Howard as "...A man whose broad shoulders and sun-browned skin seemed out of place among...luxuriant surrounding. He seemed more a part of the sun and winds and high places of the outlands. His slightest movement spoke of steel spring muscles knit to a keen brain with the coordination of a born fighting man. Either he was perfectly at rest--still as a bronze statue--or else he was in motion...with a catlike speed..."

He is also described as having "blue eyes blazing beneath the tangled black mane that fell over his low, broad forehead. He dominated the scene, turning to tinsel the pomp of the conquerors by the sheer vitality of his elemental personality..."

This is an image almost completely at odds with the popular image of Conan as depicted by the dynamic paperback illustrator Frank Frazetta whose covers in the mid-sixties were, in a large part, responsible for the "epic" sales of Conan. Arnold Schwarzenager, while certainly capable of some of the muscular feats of the Barbarian, is difficult to imagine "out sneaking" a Pict. And he is certainly not "tigerish" in his movie depiction.

The fictional Conan's career, chronicled by Howard out of sequence during the period from 1932 through 1936, begins with Conan as a youth in Cimmeria (the Northern mountainous region of the Hyborean continent) where he is part of a raid which destroyed the Frontier fort of VENARIUM the only civilized outpost ever attempted in the frozen wasteland--it is so far for the remainder of Conan's life.

The young Cimmerian (though we never meet other Cimmerians--one gets the impression that they are all as fierce and muscled as Conan, if not as bright) finds his way South, a rare thing, and becomes a mercenary. At the time, he is unschooled in such "civilized" war arts as horsemanship and archery. But as the sage progresses, he gains skill at these arts, as well as rapier, sabre, and axe play and a truly amazing number of languages. No dumb barbarian he.

Along the way, he pursues such careers as mercenary (in scores of different armies), tribal chieftan (among the southern Black tribes where he is called "Amra"--the lion, and among the desert Bouedins, where he incites several tribes to revolt in order to restore a rightful ruler), a buccaneer, and a frontier scout.

His journeys take him from one end of the civilized world to the

His journeys take him from one end of the civilized world to the other and in every case he reveals himself a natural leader of men who gains the respect of his troops rather than their fear.

And no matter what veneer of culture he acquires, he never loses the savage, feral edge of his consciousness that distinguishes the "civilized" from the savage. More than once, it saves his life.

Conan is about forty when, as a general in the army of Aquilonia, he participates in the revolt against mad king Numedides. It is Conan's blade which slays the tyrant and Conan's hand which snatches up the crown. He is acclaimed by the troops and ascends the throne of the most powerful kingdom of the mythical Hyborean world.

In the last chronologically recorded tale King Conan speaks of sailing westward. In 1936, on the hot and sticky afternoon of June 11th, Robert Ervin Howard, distraught over the imminent death of his mother, took his own life. There died the authority on Conan the Cimmerian. He too sailed across the Styx to follow his creation.

Of Conan's origin, Howard wrote " Conan simply grew up in my mind a few years ago when I was stopping in a little border town on the lower Rio Grande. I did not create him by any conscious process. he simply stalked full grown out of oblivion and set me at work recording the saga of his adventures...he is simply a combination of a number of men I have known...some mechanisms in my sub-conscious took the dominant characteristics of various prize fighters, gunmen, bootleggers, oilfield bullies, gamblers and honest workmen I have come in contact with and combining them all produced the amalgamation I call Conan the Cimmerian."

While Howard did indeed achieve a depth of character with Conan that outstripped any of his other characters, his subconscious had more help than the oil boom.

It would be unlikely that a Celtophile did not know of Conan, Duke of Brittany, who was born in 833 A.D. He was not a Cimmerian--the Cimmerians were a nomadic tribe in the Sahara, a fact that Howard knew. The young Celt was raised in Norway, his birthright unclaimed. In 848, at the ripe age of 16, Conan became king of the Cerones tribe. The records don't show whether he gained that throne at sword point or not, but considering the balance of his life, it's a good bet.

Not long after the newly-made king led his men on a Viking ship to England(still a popular sport for the Norsemen in those days), where amongst the spoils of war he brought back an English(more properly, a Britton) wife. King Conan quickly found the burden of his title too confining and retired in 856 with his wife and three year old daughter Constance leaving behind him the crown and Hardanger Fjord to become a farmer. This didn't last long; the difference between soils and spoils got to him.

In 859, Conan the farmer apparently first became aware that he was indeed the heir of the Duke of Brittany--or else his wife(who is never named in the records) decided to finally take little Constance to visit her paternal grandparents, because Conan ,et al hopped a ship and moved back to Brittany.

Well, when the twenty six year old Conan appeared to say."Hi, I'm here for the job of Duke!" he was not well-received. It just wasn't the sort of thing you "turned over" to the first Celtic giant who came along.

The present Duke and company were perfectly happy with things as they were. They told Conan to take a hike. Instead, Conan took a ship, returned to Norway for a year to raise support for his cause. When next he knocked on the Duke's door, it was at the head of an army of Norsemen. A hard eight-year campaign followed, but Conan gained his birthright, and was proclaimed Duke of Brittany.

The story should end there, happily, but Conan, real or fictional, seems to have been born under an adventurous star.

In 874, the now forty-one-year-old Duke Conan got on the bad side of King Ceolwulf and was declared a fugitive. It seems that Conan (for reasons still unclear--it might have had to do with residual passions from his war for recognition) had tried to start a revolution against the king.

That sort of thing was frowned upon.

In 877, Conan and other "fugitives" boarded ships and sailed west toward the "Vinland," much like the later pilgrims, with hope of freedom.

Unfortunately, no one knows what became of that intrepid band. The real Conan, like so many mythical heroes, simply sailed into the west--and the pages of Howard's "demi-biography."

The story of Conan's children, however, does not stop there. Constance, his daughter (and the eldest) was heir to all her father's heritage. She was married to Geoffrey, son of Henry II, by whom she had two children, Eleanor and Arthur. In 882, Geoffrey died and Constance obtained guardianship of her son and the government of the duchy. She later married Guy, brother of the Viscount of Thouars, and they had three daughters, from whom the eldest, Alix, has sprung the modern Dukes of Brittany.

Conan's son, Constantine, became quite a warrior himself. He reigned over the kingdom of Alban (900-943). In 904, in Stratherine, he totally destroyed an invading body of Danes led by Ivan. In 943, he resigned his crown and in the same year, became the abbot of the monastery of St. Andrews. It was there, in 952, that Constantine died.

Howard's Conan and the real Conan weren't all that different. Their stories are just about the same from beginning to end--being brought up in a Northern land where life was all But easy, to becoming, by bloodshed, a royal ruler, to sailing off into the West never to be heard from again. A fitting end, the hero fades away into adventures unknown-- the sunset of a hero.

# THE NOT SO VERY FUNNY ART OR THE QUEST FOR FUN

by Rod Colbin

What the evening needed was humor....a little zest...SOMETHING! It was all very well to describe the duels, mime the fights, recall the history. It was a "show and tell" lecture on swordplay and seemed to come across to the audience as interesting and even intellectual. Sort of an academia of swordplay come to life. And for myself, of course, ego fulfilling. BUT.....it was not really entertaining. And since my business IS entertainment, coupled with the world of swordplay and general mayhem, I knew that in order to "sell" my presentation, it had to be more than another lecture showing how swords are held and duels fought. What it really wanted was a few laughs. Something silly. Something to counter the blood and gore. In short, the corpse needed some humor.

And so it started. I thought I'd begin with an anecdote from my own career. I told the story about the night I knocked Cyrano's nose off! It bounced all over the stage and finally stopped in front of a rather stunned Cyrano(to say nothing of a gasping audience) who, after regaining his composure, reached down, picked it up, stuck it back on, to tumultuous applause, and then warily, and rather carefully finished the duel. Or what about the time several years ago at England's Stratford's Festival during a performance of **Henry V** when the director insisted that all his fighting men be dressed in authentic fifteenth century armor fashioned from iron. The star agreed and after a minimal amount of rehearsal in the armor, made his first entrance on opening night. After letting out a ferocious battle cry to spur his men to eager battle he dramatically raising his arms and burdened with the weight of his iron costume, he felt his balance give way and fell down flat on his back. What was even worse was that he could not get up by himself. He ended up being the first Henry to be dragged off a battlefield by stagehands in front of a howling audience.

Or maybe I could make it personal and tell them how once, when I put my bag of weapons on an airline conveyor belt, the bells clanged and I was whisked off to be searched. That episode ended by their repacking my gear in a "proper" cardboard box to travel with "luggage." Or at a later time on another airline conveyor belt, the weapons bag went right through...no bells...no buzzers. The bag contained daggers, rapiers, and broadswords. When I retrieved the bag and after settling in my seat, I couldn't help wondering in a quick mini fantasy what it would look like in the media when I sued that airline for allowing guys like me to come aboard...the nerve!

OR...how about querying some of the actors I've been associated with over the years about some of the humorous incidents involving swordplay in their careers. I did just that but the replies were dismal and sad. Hume Cronyn: "Tell them about the

time my broadsword came out of my hand, slid across the stage and landed in this lady's lap(HO.HO..HO). Christopher Plummer: "What about the time I almost slashed Farley Granger's arm off during your Zenda duel." (Hilarious!) I even asked Douglas Fairbanks Jr. whom I'd just recently met and who was on his way to London at the time. His answer arrived two weeks later. "I've contemplated your question seriously. I'm afraid I can remember nothing amusing, only the horror and constant fright every time I wielded an (on screen) sword."

Finally in desperation I discussed the problem and situation with our editor Linda McCollum . She suggested I ask the vast and talented members of the Society through an article. Hence the above words. We discussed a small stipend or honorarium plus of course program mention to whomever could come up with an amusing or even downright funny story or incident concerning swordplay for the stage or screen. It's open...and I'll be awaiting your replies... I might even throw in, as a grand Prix, the name of the airline which allowed me to climb aboard untouched for YOUR very own use.

Replies can reach me, Rod Colbin, 2067 Broadway, Suite 41, New York City, New York 10023.





**HENRY IV, PART ONE** was produced by the Shakespeare Society of the University of Washington. Robert MacDougall's fight choreography brought a much needed level of professionalism and drama to this otherwise undistinguished modern-dress production. Few attempts were made to "justify" the modern setting. King Henry made his first appearance in a wheelchair, and Lady Percy's references in Act II scene iii were changed to "....trenches, tanks, and ambuscadoes..."

Armor consisted of WWII-type leather jackets, sweatshirts, leather gloves, and cowboy-style boots. The boots caused a great deal of skidding and two falls(although not in combat) because of the slick waxed-wood stage floor. For safety, the Fight Director should have made the costume designer aware of the problem so that this danger could have been easily eliminated by putting rubber soles on the boots. It's tough enough to control safety without expecting the actors to skate as well as fence.

The weapon of choice was WWII era bayonets. There was an attempt to integrate this odd choice of weapon into the production as standard parts of the character's costume but believability and illusion of danger were destroyed when the actors handled their bayonets by the blades with unprotected fingers. The bayonets were also used in both rapier-dagger and broadsword combat styles. This was very confusing and ultimately not very successful. While I do not believe that a Fight Director must slavishly attempt to recreate the surviving wood-cut tableaux of the "old masters," it's plain that a blind mapping of moves from one style of weapon onto another weapon is no guarantee of art. For example, parrying two-handed with the bayonet, broadsword-style against a cut to the shoulder drew sniggers from the audience. Likewise, I found the use of a punto-rivero in the Hal/Hotspur fight to be confusing and faintly ridiculous. Some thought must be given to the presumed "reality" of the weapon, whether it is a bayonet or a light-sabre. A character who is a trained fighter would

probably not try a thrust to the chest on a lunge with a club in his hand.

The first combat(V,iii) Douglas/Blunt was mercifully short, but ended in a dangerous disarm. The bayonet was not "placed," but flew into the wings. Unfortunately this was the most interesting moment in this fight.

In the Henry/Douglas fight in Act V, scene iv, Henry miraculously rose from his wheelchair to oppose Douglas' bayonet with his cane, parrying Douglas' cuts in a two-handed broadsword style. This fight was also marred by a bad disarm. During an Aikido-style disarm, Henry's cane flew off the stage and down into the "pit" area in front of the audience. The King was knocked unconscious just before Hal's entrance and the actor was apparently unaware of the mishap. A stage manager came down the aisle, retrieved the weapon and put it into his hand(because he would need it later in the scene). The Hal/Douglas exchange scripted next has been cut from many recent productions, but here they surprisingly followed the original intent of the scene in which the stage directions state "Douglas flieth."

The Hal/Hotspur fight in Act V, scene iv was fairly long with some very good unarmed techniques in evidence, good knaps, well masked punches and kicks and some very good flips and throws. It was very hard to accept the use of double-bayonets with rapier-dagger style movement (including punto rivero and lunges). Another extremely dangerous disarm occurred when Hal broke Hotspur's grip and the weapon dropped directly in front of the actors, bouncing so that the point very nearly impaled both of them as they fell. The kill move was badly masked and executed but it is very difficult to mask more than two feet of blade in a thrust to the stomach, so the choreographer was forced to make the blade appear to be entering from high in the chest. This of course prevented the actor receiving the blow from bending over at the waist in a natural reaction.

While the non-professionals involved should be commended for some non-traditional casting(primarily Asian) and for having the good sense to involve a fight choreographer, their attempts to "modernize" the fights were largely unsuccessful.

Particularly disappointing were all the low-line attacks using rapier-dagger attacks and parries, and all parries with the bayonet using two hands as if a broadsword. All fight directors can take a lesson from the overuse of weapons as props in non-combat scenes, as it often diminishes the theatrical sense of danger that the weapon will be expected to evoke.

**Tony Soper**

**ROBIN HOOD** at the Seattle Children's Theatre was choreographed by David Boushey. The local reviewer's comments were "The actors took their curtain call. So I guess they survived. But it's hard to imagine how performers can get through a brawling, sprawling production like...*Robin Hood*..."

This very successful children's theatre production emphasized action, including several major fight scenes, but no outright killing, blood or injury. Most of the action was played for laughs. As in children's cartoons, if a character was knocked down, he got back up with no apparent harm done. The one moment of "serious" violence, the coshing of a guard, is not seen. The movement was prepared and then there was a judicious blackout.

The twelfth century costumes and armor (knitted chainmail and Norman helms with noseguards) greatly helped the choreographer. The helms, over a chainmail hood, obscured the actors' faces, allowing them to use almost all of the cast in the fights, including the women (who were not featured, but often fought as "Black Guards"). The set was also helpful, with many levels to climb and jump from, several ramps for Aikido-style asymmetrical rolls and good clear aisles into the audience which were put to good use. It also appeared that several of the wood beams had been doctored with sandpaper, to provide more of a "ring" to the swords. Boushey was also helped by an excellent musical score, which would have been the envy of several high-budget "legit" theatres.

Boushey is to be praised for instilling extremely good weapon awareness into his nonprofessional actors, who had to run through and sometimes fight very close to a large audience of rambunctious children. All actors were very aware of their weapons, and of keeping the points up and safe when entering

and exiting. The stage management made a very necessary announcement to the children before the curtain to keep their hands and feet off the stage and out of the aisles. The only injuries reported by the cast were the result of the costumer's decision not to use gloves in the swordplay scenes. This is an unfortunate situation that I'm sure many Fight Directors have encountered, but I urge all Society members to demand proper safety equipment and clothing from the production companies. It's always much more difficult to enforce with a non-professional company, and the hand injuries on this particular show were minor, but one should not rely on luck to save an actor from possible career ending injury.

The first fight pitted a poor Saxon lad with only a knife against an evil Norman Baron in chainmail, and featured some excellent rolls and falls (the actor playing Robin had studied for a short time with Craig Turner and displayed some of his famous "soft" Aikido-rolls). A few of the hand-to-hand moves were missed, with poor knapping, but this was partly due to the chainmail, which absorbs much of the sound from body blows.

The first encounter between Robin and Will Sharlock featured some very energetic "Bigtime Wrestling" techniques, and was a great delight to the children. Here again, there were some great Judo-style throws and falls, and some spectacular diving Aikido rolls, as well as the favorite comic foot-stomps and head smashes.

Sword work was introduced when Robin, armed with a shortsword, encountered two Norman soldiers armed with longswords. The bladework was slow, and short (each phrase no more than about six blows) but very clean. The main focus of this fight was Robin's comic deceptions and athletic evasions.

After a short intermission, there followed a large battle scene involving at least eight actors (on a fairly small stage) with swords, knives, quarterstaves and unarmed techniques, lasting approximately thirty to forty-five seconds. This was one of David's best battles to date, making very inventive use of a limited number of actors and weapons to maximum effect, with rapid entrances and exits, using all parts of the stage (including the audience), music, smoke---everything but the kitchen sink!

The final fight, and the best, involved Richard offering Prince John a chance to fight for the throne "winner takes all." This was a solid sword-to-sword fighting, the only small detraction being the tendency of the actor playing John to take his parries a little high, on the top third of his blade instead of the forte.

**Tony Soper**

## **H A M L E T at the University of Washington**

Erik Fredrickson choreographed the students of the Professional Actor Training Program in this "post modern" production directed by Nick Faust after concepts first applied in the Wisdom Bridge production with Aidan Quinn as Hamlet.

The climactic duel began with a business-suited Claudius detailing the terms of the bout while Hamlet and Laertes changed into knee pads, sweat pants and t-shirts in full view of the audience, and proceeded to idly "warm--up" with Aikido wrist stretches, runner's leg stretches and so on. With "let the foils be brought...." the ludicrous Texan Osric (in a ten gallon hat and accent to strip paint off the walls---"He hath much land...") entered with three epee-blade stage rapiers(San Francisco Armoury). The fight proper began in "single-rapier" style. The first hit involved a surprise move by Hamlet that involved him turning his back on Laertes and ending up on the floor to come under Laertes' guard. The second hit came after a complex series of feints, including a feint of seizure, and the participants are to be commended for making the difficult distinction in performance between a feint and a missed move. The exchange preceding the third hit was more playful, including Hamlet's use of the tray holding the drinks as a shield, but was marred with too many instances of closed-distance, resulting in three distinguishable mistaken "missed moves." After Gertrude had drunk from the poisoned cup meant for Hamlet(the third hit) both combatants added daggers for parrying. This phrase was quite long and involved the entire playing area, with Osric running between and around the duellists in the manner of a wrestling or boxing referee. The exchange of rapiers was singular: after "Nothing neither way," Laertes deliberately,

and in full view of the court stabs Hamlet when he is not looking, whereupon, in the shocked silence, Hamlet takes a long beat of realization, looking in amazement to Laertes who breaks character, and says "Have at you now: as if speaking as the actor. Laertes waits with swords full front as Hamlet breaks character and advances on the other actor, walking almost into his sword point, then gives him a look as if to say "Are you crazy? We haven't rehearsed this..." and quite calmly feels Laertes point, realizes it's not bated, looks toward Claudius, then calmly takes Laertes' sword and slowly hands him his own. At this point an exasperated (and perplexed) Claudius says rather weakly "Part them they are incensed." Hamlet's fatal thrust to Laertes after a bind under his own arm, was masked very poorly, and almost missed, apparently due to flagging energy and concentration from the actors. Hamlet then kills the King by straddling him while he lies face up and thrusting his dagger(in a double "ice-pick" grip) repeatedly into his stomach while crying "no, no, no," in an escalating sexual frenzy, finally collapsing over him. This was the least successful sequence in the show, partly as the move was very difficult to mask effectively on a thrust stage, and partly because with each repetition of the same move, the audience became more aware of the technique used.

As odd as it was, the fight fit well into the director's other conceits in the show, such as Hamlet playing the Gravedigger scene in nothing but his underwear, and substituting an old sneaker for Yoricks skull, and using music by the Talking Heads as bridges between scenes, with the actors breaking character and leisurely talking, smoking and moving furniture.

**Tony Soper**

Linda McCollum's article "To Cut or Thrust?" brought up some interesting points regarding English resistance to the adoption of the rapier as a standard for personal combat.

I'd like to add a comment to her description of the use of firearms in war. After the tragedy at Pavia in 1525 when Francois I's Compagnies were slaughtered by the Spanish arquebusiers, it was clear to all that armor in battle was no longer of value against the un-gentlemanly gun. But there had already been a marked change in the way that sword attacks against armor were carried out. Thrusting attacks had reached a rather sophisticated level. Although smashing/bashing tactics in battle continued, many soldiers had begun to rely more on flexibility and evasion in their tactics. Note the horrifying pole-axe that combined the leveraged, smashing power of the hammer/axe with the javelin point which could wend its way in the many opened joints of a suit of armor (or in the buttocks when raised from a saddle). Also, still-extant battle sword blades from the period (late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries) show a constant tendency to a narrower point with a flatter blade. Such a weapon had substantial percussion, but was also quite effective in thrusts. McCollum's main point is an important one: a clear distinction had developed between the soldier's weapon and the citizen's weapon.

Burton's contention that the northern European upper body made swinging action more appropriate seems a silly notion to me. I know of no evidence that shows such a significant difference between northern and southern European physiques. If anything, I would think a comparison of armor from the period shows a rather consistent "average" size for all Europeans. I believe he is on safer speculative ground when he speaks of the "naturalness" of a rounding blow.

One final point: A truly specialized, thrusting rapier as we now know it did not exist until the second half of the sixteenth century, and the "Rapier Period" we so blithely describe was short and full of variations. Hilt size, shape, weight, and design as well as blade length, shape and weight showed enormous differences from swordsman to swordsman, based mostly on

personal feel and taste. This is what makes arms and weapon archeology and classification so difficult. Blades, hilts, pommels, handles and so forth often were freely interchanged over the owner's life. I would suggest we add to McCollum's list of reasons for English reluctance, two of the most basic: individual preference and idiosyncrasy. We would not just be describing the English! Those interested should read Oakeshott's **European Weapons and Armor** for his comments on this(see the sections on dating authenticity).

But these are only minor, additional points to McCollum's fine article. I congratulate her on bringing together a number of interesting historical threads.

Sincerely,  
Craig Turner  
Head of Movement Training  
University of North Carolina  
-Chapel Hill

Are you looking for a good nineteenth century stage cavalry saber? Why not buy the real thing? I purchased two French Châtellerault 1865 cavalry sabers from James H. Cohen & Sons, 437 Royal Street, New Orleans, Louisiana 70130-2189. These weapons feature a wide, strongly-backed blade, a large steel guard, and a great plastic-like grip which conforms to the hand. I have already used them in four hours of combat. Try a high-second guard and molinea from the wrist. A light modern saber is no substitute. James Cohen has a large supply of these weapons and sells them with a scabbard for prices ranging from a hundred twenty dollars to two hundred dollars. Include five dollars for shipping. Two hundred dollars will purchase a blade and scabbard in first class condition. I bought my weapons for a hundred forty five dollars each. I asked for intact grips. The blades are going to get hacked up anyway. The weapons I received need moderate cleaning. If you purchase a weapon for a hundred twenty dollars you are likely to get a cracked, broken or loose grip.

I am convinced that authentic stage combat must use the appropriate weight weapon. That is why I purchased these sabers and why I use rapiers and broadswords by Dennis Graves.

Charles Conwell  
Assistant Professor of Theatre  
Philadelphia College of Performing Arts

## THUMB-RING RAPIERS

The last issue of **The Fight Master** ran a letter from F. Braun McAsh on an uncommon but very useful feature to be found on a few surviving examples of original rapiers: the thumb ring.

While thumb-rings are fairly common on many military swords which saw use between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, I had never heard of them in the context of rapiers until Braun wrote me about it a few months ago.

As a swordmaker, I was immediately curious to discover what functional advantages this aspect of hilt design might offer the rapier, so I built two such epee-bladed "rapiers" recently and tried them out.

My subsequent findings fully validate Braun's observations: "...having something to pull against adds force to a slashing blow and also facilitates the continuation of the cut and subsequent withdrawal of the blade after contact has been made. It also adds power to a down-cut." To further quote Braun "...for some draw-cuts using the outside or bottom edge...the thumb-rest allows for a much more forceful draw, exposing more usable blade edge, freeing as it does, the wrist-joint without sacrificing any pressure behind the contact. The thumb-rest also allows much more freedom in actions like the *molinello* where removing the thumb from the ricasso frees up the wrist." To this, I can only add that the thumb-ring generally facilitates a number of moves which are distinctive to period rapier-play, adding leverage, control, ease and fluidity to moves which can otherwise feel slightly stiff, even awkward. In short, it's quite amazing what a difference (this) single small "appendage" really makes!

Scant information seems to exist on the thumb-ring with respect to the rapier, but several authorities suggest its origin to be Germanic; but, as it happens with any useful idea, it was "borrowed" by craftsmen all over Europe in direct proportion to customer demand. Unfortunately, it doesn't often turn up in reference books, as photos most often show only the right side guards on hilts.

I was fortunate enough to see two original German specimens while vacationing last July. At Mader's Restaurant in Milwaukee, Wisconsin( a well-known landmark in that area), I discovered a wonderful collection of swords and armor. The collection was purchased by Mr. Mader years ago

when a small museum in Germany "sold out." Among the items were six original rapiers; of these, two had thumb-rings, so I was able to see exactly how these should be constructed. (Incidentally, I highly recommend Mader's as a "must see" for any SAFD members who visit Milwaukee!)

Braun got his wish: I am currently building a thumb-ring rapier for him. I thought I should let SAFD members know that I now offer this design feature as an option on the many styles of all steel, custom rapiers and epees which I build. I also provide a special SAFD member discount on all items.

Rod Casteel  
Colonial Armour  
106 Lynnbrook  
Eugene, Oregon 97404  
Phone (503) 688-0607

....I've been thinking of what the Society can offer me to spur my interest and continued support. What I would like to see more than anything else is a massive gathering of the Society of American Fight Directors in the Big Apple. I can imagine all kinds of possibilities: workshops, performances, demonstrations, induction of members, guest speakers, films--the list is endless. This is the kind of forum I would like to be a part of, and I would be happy to help bring such a plan to fruition.

Regular regional meetings should be held to promote more exchange of information and to help build up a solid base of brotherhood among members. Only through truly cohesive cooperation and communication can the Society hope to be recognized as a power to be reckoned with. Carrying a card from the Society of American Fight Directors should mean something to the potential employers of choreographers and combatants. As members, we know that it signifies the best in training a discipline. Since my early work with Chris Villa in California, I have maintained the dignity of the Society while developing my own unique "style." I am grateful for my association with such a worthy cause....

Todd Loweth

## CERTIFICATIONS

### LEGEND OF DANIEL BOONE

On Sunday, August 24th I had the pleasure of adjudicating students who were cast members of the Outdoor Drama **The Legend of Daniel Boone**, taught by Charles Killian. First of all let me say a word of thanks to Bob Ford, the Producer of LODB for continuing a summer certification training program started there in 1982. This is one of the only a few summer theatres that offer such a program for a very nominal fee to their actors to supplement a season where spare time abounds.

Twelve students took the test using Rapier and Dagger, hand to Hand and Quarterstaff and I am happy to say all of them passed. There were no recommendations but all of the actors did safe and solid work and passed with ZA! Due to unrelated injuries or sickness several of the participants had different partners than they started with, two of them testing with ladies who had been certified in the same program the previous season. One fellow had to report back to school a week early and so did his test on video tape and that was presented to me by the instructor on the day of the test. After viewing the tape in relationship to all of the other fights that day, he too passed solidly. Granted an unusual set of circumstances, but his work was obviously very good and I had no qualms about passing him. Several of the scenes were good, including a rather tongue in cheek piece entitled "Nightmare Clause" wherein the actress was haunted by a bevy of her fellow workers from the summer (including the Producer as himself) and wasn't allowed to leave the theatre once the season was over. The audience, made up of fellow cast members for the most part, thoroughly enjoyed the obvious in-jokes. All in all I feel like the students had been well taught and handled themselves with

confidence and intelligence. Congratulations to Charles for a job well done. Those who passed are:

- 661 Sharon Round
- 662 Martha Wehneier
- 663 Tony Rodriguez
- 664 Scott Sophos
- 665 Brian Kapell
- 666 Mike Repeta
- 667 Tim Cordes
- 668 Shawn Kane
- 669 Brendan Medlin
- 670 Janet Reed
- 671 Keith Gearhart
- 672 Eric Traynor

Instructor: Charles Killian  
Adjudicator: Drew Fracher

### VIKING

After arriving a day before and seeing a performance of the premiere season of the new Outdoor Drama, **Viking**, I adjudicated twenty students of George Bellah who were actors in the show. I think a hearty congratulations should go out to George and to choreographer, David Boushey for instituting a summer training program at another of the country's Outdoor epics. After seeing the show and the fights choreographed by David the night before I was very anxious to see the actors fight again; happily I was not disappointed.

Out of twenty students that took the test fourteen passed with two recommends. The test fights choreographed and taught by George were both demanding and very exciting. Several of the students tested using three weapons and a smattering of a fourth, as they were trained in Hand to Hand, Rapier and Dagger, Quarterstaff and Broadsword. Again, congratulations to George for taking on such a big project with such quality results. While some of the fights were a bit longer than necessary they completely covered the compulsory moves and really put the students to the test. Those that passed did so quite impressively and those that didn't pass this time should do so easily, given another chance in the future.

All of the scenes were well acted and a few really stood out. A scene from **Zoo Story**

complete with a very ingenious park bench designed and built by the combatants to hold (and disguise) their weapons was quite strongly acted. A scene between Inspector Clouseau and his sidekick Kato was hysterical with its repeated groin hits, kicks, and head butts. Kato certainly has some steel body parts as well as amazing endurance. Finally there was an original scene entitled "Games Pigs Play" which was a contest set "somewhere in the Mojave Desert" between two pigs. It consisted of nursery rhymes and tongue twisters done rhythmically as the combatants fought. The finish was loudly cheered by those in attendance when the gentlemen threw down their weapons and flung themselves into the lake which surrounds the upstage part of the theatre. A much needed cooling off and fun filled finish to a very fine afternoon of fights. Those that passed were:

- 673 Bobby Hawk
- 674 Phred Nelson
- 675 Patrick Carey
- 676 David Wintersteen
- 677 Scott Caple(rec)
- 678 Larry Ahlquist
- 679 James Ridge(rec)
- 680 Charles Deeter
- 681 Tom Storebo
- 682 Brian Reed
- 683 Matt Noesen
- 684 Thomas Rowlette
- 685 Jefferson Slinkard
- 686 Leo Di Lorenzo

Instructor: George Bellah  
Adjudicator: Drew Fracher

#### WEBSTER CONSERVATORY

During the month of May 1986, I adjudicated nine students taught by Robert Goodwin at the Webster Conservatory in St. Louis. A total of six students passed.

Overall, I found the fight technique to be safe and effective but not acted with a great deal of

believability and characterization. After speaking with each of the combatants, they understood the necessity for creating strong characters. In my opinion the choice of character directly affects each and every movement in the fight.

Steve Chambers and Frank Van Bree are to be congratulated for their splendid fight work from **The Star Spangled Girl**. Their sense of body awareness and agility clearly showed an easiness with weapons in hand. An unnecessary dropping of character when the fight came to a "dry spot" prohibited them from receiving a recommendation. I highly suggest these two fine fighters retest in the spring.

On the technical side, I observed a few high thrusts here and there and several exposed knaps in the choreography. It is my hope that these things will be improved upon for the next test.

My congratulations to Robert Goodwin for his teaching efforts at Webster Conservatory. It is clear that he is a dedicated and caring teacher.

The following is a list of those students who passed:

- 687 Peter Bernstein
- 688 John MacCrite
- 689 Larry Underwood
- 690 Michael Aanev
- 691 Steve Chambers
- 692 Frank Van Bree

Instructor: Robert Goodwin  
Adjudicator: David Leong

#### OHIO UNIVERSITY

Drew Fracher had his students adjudicated at Ohio University during May of 1986. All in all their fight work was very mediocre. It was evident that this group of students had not spent a great deal of time perfecting their technique. Even though their instructor Mr. Fracher was away from the classroom for seven weeks, I believe they chose not to take advantage of the lengthy rehearsal process available to them. Many of the scenes appeared to be thrown together at the last minute. Despite the lack of discipline exhibited by many of the students those that did pass certainly deserved to do so.

On an upbeat note, Drew's rapier and dagger choreography contained a nice mixture of point work and cutting technique. The length of his fights (which used to be longer than the unedited version of The Battle of New Orleans) has settled to a length that appears to be very appropriate for the scene. His choice of courtsword as a third weapon worked quite well. Evidence of "The Dean's" (Patrick Crean) training shows up throughout this fight.

I congratulate Drew Fracher for his efforts in training the students at Ohio University. I'm sure next year's students will grow from the experience of this year's class of combatants.

The following list of students passed the certification test:

- 693 Ann Tsuji
- 694 Nancy Bush
- 695 Jim Tisdale
- 696 Jay Michael Brennan
- 697 Rob Bennet
- 698 Marc Raia
- 699 Deborah Jeanne Culpin
- 700 Mary Naden
- 701 Ted Tyson

Instructor: Drew Fracher  
Adjudicator: David Leong

### CHAMPLAIN SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

On August 10, 1986 I adjudicated sixteen students instructed by Thomas Schall at the Champlain Shakespeare Festival. This was Tom's first time teaching a certification class and, considering the time constraints, he did a fine job of educating his students.

Praise should go to Mark Finley and Illya Haase for their performance of Sam Shepherd's **True West**. The integration of scene and fight was exceptional and had it not been for problems in the area of balance and alignment both would have received recommendations.

Tom's choreography in all styles (rapier and dagger, unarmed and quarterstaff) was essentially very easy to reproduce yet contained all of the basic requirements set down by the Society. The quarterstaff fight was the only one that contained moves that seemed

somewhat anticipated and poorly executed by everyone. One example was a cut to the chest while the victim was mid shoulder roll.

I'd like to conclude by encouraging Mr. Schall to continue his instruction of these certification classes. He should also be encouraged to pursue the rank of Associate Member. After having received formal training under Joseph Martinez, David Boushey, Erik Fredricksen, assisting at the National Workshop and being fight captain on many shows for regional theatres under Society Fight Masters, one might think he might aspire to this rank. My congratulations to Mr. Schall.

Below is a list of those who passed the test.

- 702 Michael Littman
- 703 Eben Young
- 704 Burke Lawrence
- 705 Richard Massery
- 706 Mark Finley
- 707 Illya Haase
- 708 Jennifer Silver
- 709 Peter Ciardelli
- 710 Mark Gordan
- 711 Dan Perry

Instructor: Thomas Schall  
Adjudicator: David Leong



The Society of American Fight Directors has been mentioned in a just published theatre encyclopedia: American Theatre Companies, 1749-1887, edited by Weldon B. Durham (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1986). John M. Callahan wrote an entry in this work on Benedict DeBar's Grand Opera House Stock Company of St. Louis, and on the contributor's page the editor said (p. 594) "The author of....more than a dozen articles on stage combat in **The Fight Master** (the journal of the Society of American Fight Directors). He is a member of Actors' Equity Association and the SAFD." This is volume one of a three volume set.

#### **Members Meeting at SETC Conference**

There will be a general meeting and casual get together of any and all Society members attending the SETC auditions in March in Richmond, Virginia. Members should look for signs announcing a specific room number. Tentatively it will be held at 5:00 p.m. on Saturday in Drew Fracher's room.

#### **EMPLOYMENT NOTICE:**

Actor/Combatants(Men and Women)  
Needed.

**The Legend of Daniel Boone**, a historical outdoor drama in Harrodsburg, Kentucky is looking for actors and actresses with fight training. The season runs May 24th through August 29th, 1987. Salaries average a hundred to a hundred fifty dollars a week plus housing. A certification class will be offered to company members as well.

#### **CHANGE IN ADDRESS**

Ralph H. Anderson  
370 West 51st St. #5D  
New York, N.Y. 10019

Jamie Cheatham  
179 Freeman St.  
Brooklyn, NY 11222

Bob Funk  
1801 Oakgrove Rd  
Hattiesburg, MS 39401

James R. Finney  
University of Iowa  
Department of Theatre Arts  
Theatre Building  
North Riverside Drive  
Iowa City, Iowa 52242

Gregory S. Michaels  
1207 Seventh St.  
San Fernando, California 91340

David W. Sollars  
50 Benton Rd  
Somerville, MA 02143

Tony Soper  
53 McCaul St. #562  
Toronto, Ontario M5T2W9  
Canada

James Thorpe  
3031 Weymouth St. Apt 202  
Durham NC 27707-2609

John Tobinski  
4734 N. Rockwell St.  
Chicago, ILL 60625

#### **NEW MEMBERS**

Jeffrey Coussens, Affiliate  
1601 Jenkins  
Norman, Oklahoma 73072

**DAVID BOUSHEY** recently finished his job as stunt coordinator on the feature film **Indian Summer**. Since then David choreographed **Richard III** for the Seattle Repertory Theatre, **Romeo and Juliet** for Youngstown State University and **Macbeth** for Dennison College. He will soon be embarking on another feature film to be shot in Seattle or Salt Lake City.

**JOHN M. CALLAHAN** will be delivering a paper on **The Grand-Guignol** in NYC, 1923 entitled "The Failure of Violence in the Land of the Violent" at the Popular Culture Association convention in Montreal in March, 1987. This is a follow-up on an article on the Grand Guignol in Paris which was published in **The Fight Master** in October 1979.

**JAMIE CHEATHAM** worked with David Leong last summer in Vermont on **The Three Musketeers**.

**DREW FRACHER** spent most of the fall farming at home in Kentucky. In September he choreographed and produced a teaser of video fight shorts, the first in a series of fight shorts by Single Six Productions. During November and December Drew toured Canada and the United States with the Nebraska Theatre Caravan's production of **A Christmas Carol** as an actor in the company. From January to March Drew will be in residence at Ohio University teaching stage combat and movement.

**KRISTINA A. LANKFORD** has been called upon to choreograph **Extremities** for the Ukiah Players, **Coriolanus** and **As You Like It** for the Berkeley Shakespeare Festival (which she co-choreographed with Louis Lotorto), **Ubu Unchained** for the Eureka Theatre and **The Abdication** for the Marin Theatre Company.

**DAVID LEONG** recently finished work on the critically acclaimed off Broadway production of **Shogun Macbeth** at Playhouse 46. Prior to that he directed fights for Michael Kahn's production of **Romeo and Juliet** at the Folger. David also directed, choreographed or served as Movement Coach for the Champlain Shakespeare Festival, Louisville Shakespeare In Central Park and the Cincinnati Playhouse In the Park. During the month of August David received private tutoring in the art of samurai swordsmanship (also known as

Kenjutsu) from Dale Kirby, United States National Weapons and Karate Champion. The month of January will be spent teaching stage combat at Brandeis University. At this time David is making plans to move to the greater Boston area in the Summer of 87.

**TODD LOWETH** returned to the United States after touring Europe in 1984 with a production of **King Lear**. He joined the National Shakespeare Company as an actor and fight director and performed three plays in repertory while touring the United States and conducted workshops along the way in colleges and high schools. Todd directed the fights for the Riverside Shakespeare Company's production of **The Spanish Tragedy** as well playing Horatio. Last summer Todd toured camps in the northeast region performing with a group called "Stuntworks" which was founded by Larry Lustberg. Todd taught classes for the Riverside Shakespeare Company this past fall.

**JOSEPH MARTINEZ** directed a murder-mystery entitled **Murder, Sorority Style** for Semtheatre of Virginia. Joseph conducted a five day workshop at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro in Performance Training for Actors and Stage Combat as well as delivered a lecture on the History of Swordfighting in the Tudor, Elizabethan and Jacobean periods in England. He will be directing the musical **Cabaret** and **The Ballad of the Sad Cafe** for Washington and Lee University in the Winter and Spring. Joseph will be teaching at the National Stage Combat Workshop this summer as well as directing a musical adaptation of **A Midsummer Night's Dream** and choreographing the civil war battle of Sharpsburg in the Outdoor drama **Stonewall Country** for The Limekiln Theatre Festival Company in Virginia.

**ROBERT MORSE** is currently teaching at Humboldt State University and has been choreographing some short, comic fight scenes for **The Bourgeois Gentleman** by Moliere.

**JANE RIDLEY** is still teaching at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Jane recently choreographed the fight in **A Couple of White Chicks...** at the Ensemble Theatre Project in downtown Santa Barbara.

**TONY SOPER** was recently seen on the television program "L.A. Law" and is a regular on the television series, "Kay O'Brien."

**ALLEN SUDDETH** filmed an episode for "One Life to Live" in Jamaica in October and did a four on one jail fight for "All My Children." Allen recently had his article on "Soap Fights" published in the British magazine **The Fight Director**.

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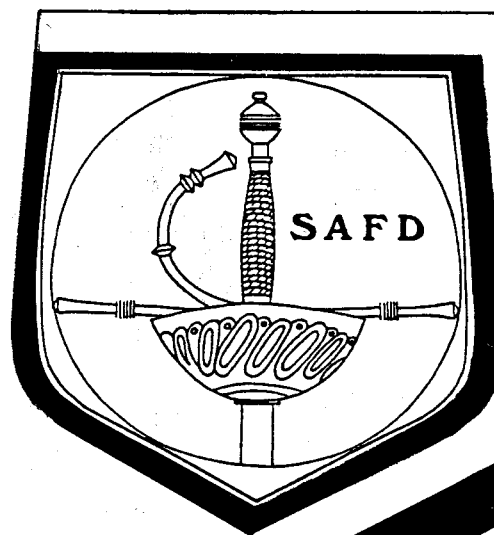
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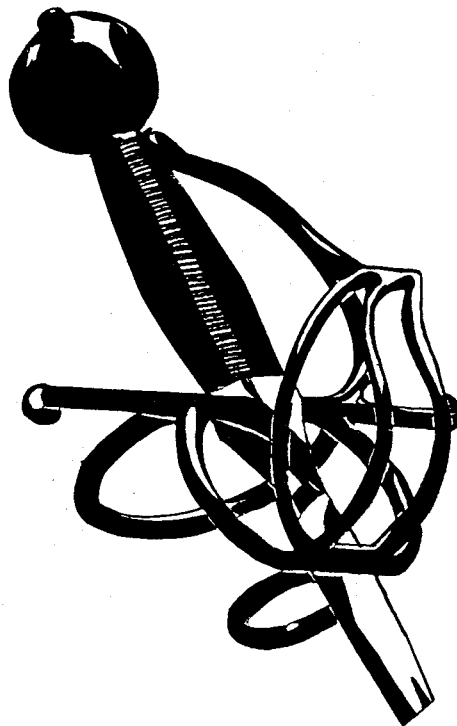


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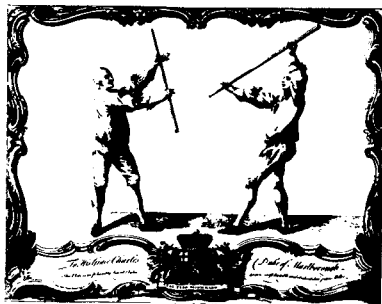
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# 3 Video Tapes by David Boushey

Founder of The Society of American Fight Directors



Steven Spielberg, *Director*  
"His fights were among the best I  
had ever seen on stage."

Jon Jory, *Artistic Director, Actors  
Theatre, Louisville*  
"It is very simply the best and  
safest combat work I have seen  
anywhere comparing favorably  
with the quality at all three  
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Kyle McLachlan, *Actor*  
"Boushey's training was  
invaluable to me in my work  
with *Dune*."

Robert Hobbs, *Director, P.A.T.P.,  
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promote safe and exciting fight  
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## COMBAT FOR THE STAGE AND SCREEN

*Produced by David L. Boushey at the University of Washington,  
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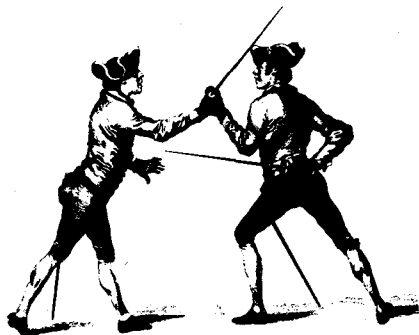
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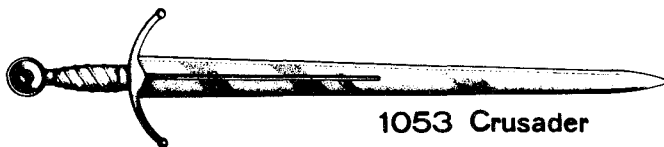
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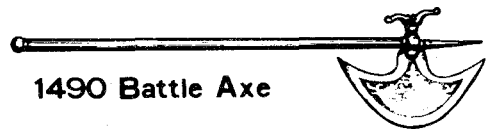
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