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The Society of American Fight Directors

Winter 2002

The Fight Master, Fall/Winter 2002, Vol. 25 Issue 2

The Society of American Fight Directors

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The Fight Master

Journal of the Society of American Fight Directors



**ACTING
THE FIGHT**

**HENRY
MARSHALL**
In Memoriam

At the Utah Shakespearean Festival's *Royal Feaste*, Colby Baker (left) accepts a challenge from Laura Catherine (right). Fight Direction by Robin McFarquhar, Photo by Karl Hugh. ©2001 Utah Shakespearean Festival

The 24th Annual Society of American Fight Directors

National Stage Combat Workshops

July 7-25, 2003

SAFD and University of Nevada-Las Vegas
College of Fine Arts, Department of Theatre

For more information: Linda McCollum at (702) 895-3662 or www.safd.org

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Actor/Combatant Workshop (ACW)

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Prerequisites and additional paperwork are required to apply for the IACW.

The Fight Master

Fall/Winter 2002 Volume XXV, Number 2



In a drunken rage, Cassio (James Knight, left) attacks Montano (Kevin Connolly) as Iago (Martin Klager) intervenes in *Utah Shakespearean Festival's* 2002 production of *Othello*. Fight Direction by Robin McFarquhar; photo by Karl Hight. © 2002 Utah Shakespearean Festival.

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*Choreographing female gang violence in Kia Corthron's *Breath, Boom* is explored by Darrell Rushton.*

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EDITORIALLY SPEAKING

As the Society of American Fight Directors celebrates its 25th anniversary, it finds itself mourning the loss of Henry Marshall who was so instrumental in creation of staged combat organizations throughout the world. Some fond memories are shared by a few who knew and worked with him. This issue also looks at Julius Palffy-Alpar, the author of *Sword and Masque*, who was one of the first to teach and to publish a work on what was then known as theatrical fencing.

This issue also takes a look at female violence, a topic consistently ignored in society in general. It is also a topic that has not been specifically addressed in staged combat training. Women studying unarmed combat often mention how differently the female body moves and would respond during techniques taught in classes. And society in general has totally denied that there is such a thing as female violence much less girl gangs. The type of violence perpetrated by these female gangs is quite different from that done by male gangs. Darrell Rushton explores the eye-opening topic of female gang violence which he had to deal with in choreographing Kia Corthron's *Breath, Boom*. It is time that these predominantly male stage combat societies throughout the world recognize the difference.

Greg Mele of Sword Symposium International (SSI) clarifies what really defines a rapier based on examining how the sword was used in the manuals of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Stefan Settig shares his experiences in teaching stage combat in another language in South America and comes up with some observations that might be of help to many teachers.

Finally a video in two parts has been produced which clearly explains the sixteenth and seventeenth century Spanish style of swordplay. Anthony De Longis, who is an honorary member of the SAFD, has produced this two volume video with noted authority Ramon Martinez.

Part II of Jamie Cheatham's series of exercises to help the actor/combatant in acting violence is continued and Robin McFarquhar's work as a fight director at the Utah Shakespearean Festival in 2001 is shared by Ron Hubbard.

Articles for the Spring/Summer 2003 issue should be written in the third person and submitted by November 1, 2002.

Feinting the pen briskly,
~Linda Carlyle McCollum

The Fight Master

Journal of the Society of American Fight Directors

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Articles and letters for *The Fight Master* are accepted at anytime. Articles intended for inclusion in the Spring/Summer issue must be received by November 1. Articles intended for inclusion in the Fall/Winter issue must be received by June 1.

Submissions to *The Fight Master* should be sent to
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Submitted material will be edited for clarity and length. Articles should be typed, and include a short biography, 50 words or less, about the author. Please include your address, phone/fax and email address in your correspondence.

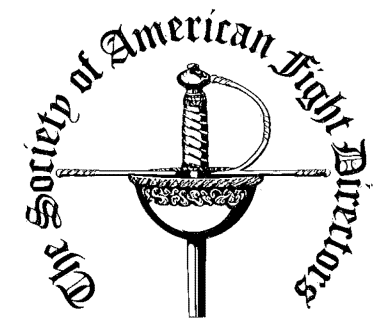
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Notification for advertising in the Spring/Summer issue must be received by December 1; artwork due by January 15. Notification for the Fall/Winter issue must be received by July 1; artwork due August 15. Please call for rates or other information.

The Fight Master

is a publication of

The Society of American Fight Directors



Friend

One need not be a stage fighter, teacher or choreographer to join and be active in the SAFD. Any individual who has an interest in the stage combative arts who wants to keep abreast of the field and receive all the benefits of membership may join as a Friend.

Actor/Combatant

Any individual who has passed an SAFD Skills Proficiency Test and is current in Unarmed, Rapier & Dagger (or Single Sword) and another discipline. The SAFD considers Actor/Combatants to be proficient in performing stage combat safely and effectively.

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Any individual who is current in six of eight SAFD disciplines, has had three years transpire since their first SPT test and has been a dues paying member in good standing for two years. The SAFD acknowledges Advanced Actor/Combatants as highly skilled performers of the staged fight.

Certified Teacher

Any individual who has successfully completed the SAFD Teacher Training Workshop. These individuals are endorsed by the Society to teach stage combat and may teach the SAFD Skills Proficiency Test.

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Any individual who has held the status of Certified Teacher of the SAFD for a minimum of three years and has demonstrated through work in the professional arena a high level of expertise as a teacher and choreographer of staged combat. These individuals are endorsed by the Society to direct and/or choreograph incidents of physical violence.

College of Fight Masters

Individuals who are senior members of the SAFD who have through service to the organization and the art form been granted this honorary title. These individuals serve in an advisory capacity as the College of Fight Masters, as master teachers at the National Stage Combat Workshops and as adjudicators of the Skills Proficiency tests.

The Society of American Fight Directors is a not for profit organization dedicated to promoting safety and fostering excellence in the art of directing staged combat/theatrical violence. The SAFD is committed to providing the highest level of service to the field through initiating and maintaining guidelines for standards and quality, providing education and training, promoting scholarly research and encouraging communication and collaboration throughout the entertainment industry.

The SAFD recognizes members at a variety of levels, including Fight Master, Fight Director, Certified Teacher, Actor/Combatant and Friend. SAFD members have staged or acted in countless numbers of fight scenes for live theatre, film and television.

Through its training programs across the United States, the SAFD has schooled thousands of individuals in the necessary skills to perform or choreograph safe and effective stage combat.

Visit the blazing SAFD Website

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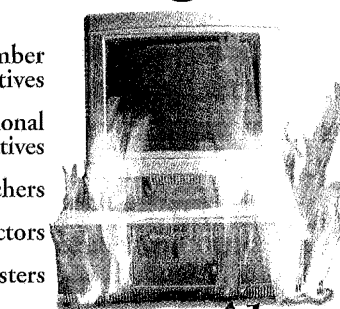
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1-800-659-6579
Call the SAFD Hot Line

For stage combat assistance, workshop information,
and general questions.

Call 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time



PHOTO CALL

The *Fight Master* is currently seeking active photos of stage combat for upcoming issues. Black & white and color prints (no smaller than 5"x7") and slides will be accepted. All photos should include performers' names and roles if fewer than five are pictured, photographer, play, playwright, fight director, theatre company and year of performance. Photos should also include return address. Without this information, pictures cannot be used. 8"x10" prints or color slides with strong vertical orientations are also desired for covers; these should be shot as close up as possible (full bodies need not be visible). **Photos from digital cameras do not reproduce well enough to print.**

The deadline for graphic material in the Fall/Winter issue is August 15, for the Spring/Summer 2003 issue it is February 15. Future submissions are accepted at any time. Send all prints sandwiched between two pieces of cardboard in an envelope clearly labeled, "Photos—Do Not Bend" to

Jeff A.R. Jones, Graphic Designer
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Raleigh, NC 27603

If there are any questions, please feel free to call (919) 835-3557 or email JARJones@nc.rr.com.

Again, exciting photos are encouraged from all levels of the SAFD membership.

—Jeff A.R. Jones

CONTRIBUTORS

Jamie Cheatham is a Fight Director in the SAFD who resides in New York.

Raymond Delgado is a freelance writer and instructor of voice living in Florida, who has an avid interest in swordplay and culture.

Ron Hubbard is an Associate Professor of Theatre at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. He is a member of Actors Equity and the SSDC.

Linda Carlyle McCollum serves as editor of *The Fight Master* and on-site coordinator for the NSCW. McCollum is a faculty member in Theatre at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Greg Mele is the founder and director of both The Swordplay Symposium International and The Chicago Swordplay Guild.

Darrell Scott Rushton is the Performing Arts Center Manager of Frostburg State University in Maryland and the fight choreographer of Kia Corthran's play, *Breath, Boom* which was performed at her alma mater.

Stefan Sittig is a dance and fight choreographer, actor, singer and dancer residing in the Washington, D.C. area. He holds an MFA in Theatre from VCU and has been a certified actor/combatant with the SAFD since 1994. For more information go to: www.stefansittig.homestead.com.

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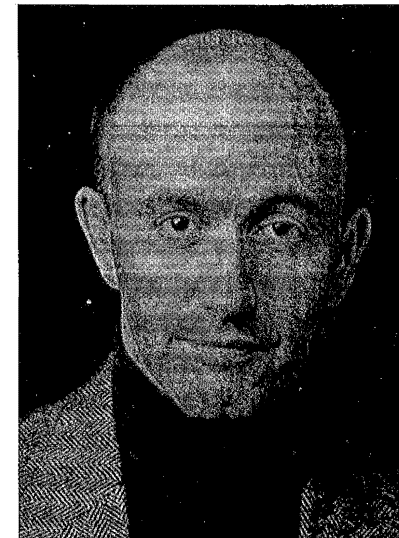
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As of the Fall/Winter 2001 issue, *The Fight Master* will advertise non-SAFD workshops and services, including any movement/acting/theatre-related workshops, training institutions, graduate/undergraduate programs, theatre companies, performances, books & scripts, publishers, swordcutlers, armorers, martial arts suppliers, period clothing and footwear, or other theatre/combat related training, goods or services. Workshops that have officially been sanctioned as SAFD workshops as detailed in the Policies & Procedures manual are entitled to a free 1/4 page ad in *The Fight Master*; larger ads may be purchased at a discount rate. Non-SAFD workshops may be purchased at full price. Ads can be designed by the graphic designer for a slight fee. For more information, please contact

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FROM THE PRESIDENT



First off, the Society of American Fight Directors welcomes aboard the new Executive Director, Julia Rupkalvis. Rupkalvis brings with her a wealth of experience in the not-for-profit arena. She has been given the

task of identifying and pursuing grant moneys, examining and suggesting improvements to SAFD business practices, and a host of other tasks vital to the society's continued growth and health.

This year's annual meeting was an exciting and productive one. The secretary reported that the SAFD membership is at its highest level in history. A scholarship fund was created to support the SAFD's current and future scholarship efforts. Grant money has already been allocated to the fund, and it is hoped that this new effort will allow the SAFD to broaden its scholarship offerings in the future. Much discussion about the on-going negotiations with the performance unions and a plan for approaching the individual unions was created. *The Cutting Edge* will be used to communicate the progress of negotiations to the membership.

The charitable giving continues with donations to Broadway Cares Equity Fights Aids and other causes solicited at the NSCW and regional workshops. Fight Director Representative Scot Mann has created the Food Fight charity event to benefit the Atlanta food depository. Others have jumped on the Food Fight bandwagon, leading to plans for similar events to be held in cities across the country. The commitment of giving back to the community is gratifying to see and is indicative of the best aspects of the SAFD.

As the SAFD continues to grow and evolve as an organization, all members are asked to look at the SAFD as an agent for the benefit of all rather than an end in itself. The efforts of the organization have benefited everyone directly and indirectly involved in the profession of stage combat. By

continuing to improve conditions in professional theatres, providing training for performers, teachers and fight directors, and acting as a focal point for information, discussion and research, the society has had a profound effect on this art form. Many SAFD members work in the artistic arena and have artistic differences. As professionals, artists and citizens; members must respect their fellows and treat them with common courtesy even to those practitioners who have opted not to be part of the SAFD. The SAFD is the largest organization of its type and has a leadership role to fill. Everyone is urged to lead by example.

As always: "Fight the good fight!"

Chuck Coyl

Chuck Coyl
President SAFD

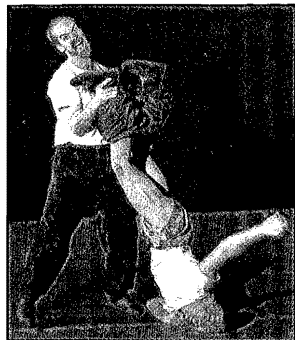


photo highlights from Jamie Cheatham's thesis project, *Violent Delights*, featuring MFA candidates: Robin Armstrong, Jerry Tan, Tiza Garland, Jim Quesenberry, Jamie Cheatham, and Jenny Male

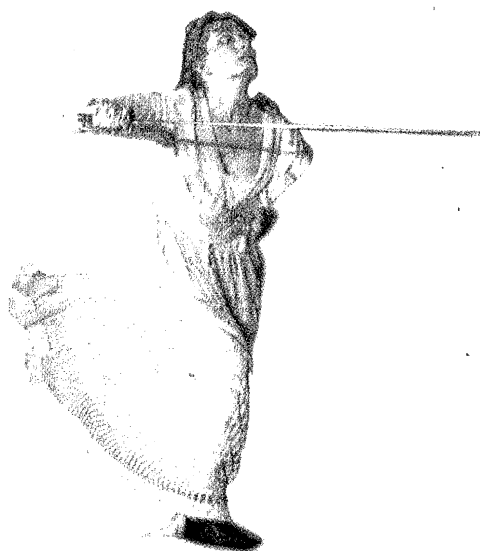
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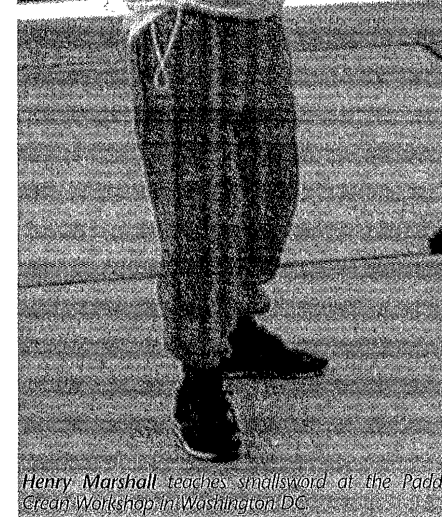
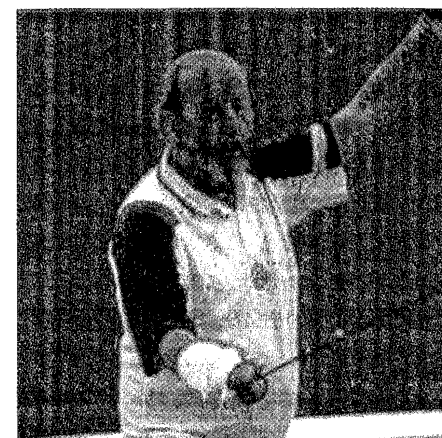
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Henry Marshall teaches smallsword at the Paddy Green Workshop in Washington DC

HENRY MARSHALL

1920 2001

On a cold winter night in February of 1969, in a small flat in North London, Henry Marshall, the Master at Arms of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA) along with William Hobbs, the Fight Director at the National Theatre, called a meeting of those who regularly engaged in directing fights in British theatre or who taught at the drama schools that offered stage combat or fencing. It was from this meeting that the Society of British Fight Directors was born. The founding members included Charles Alexis, B.H. Barry, John Barton, Roy Goodall, John Greenwood, Ian McKay, Bryan Mosley, Derek Ware, Arthur Wise, Philip Anthony, Patrick

Crean, Hans Mater and John Waller. Their aim was to raise the standard of stage fighting in England and to raise the status of the *fight director*, a term coined by Hobbs, as opposed to swordmaster or fight arranger. Fight tests were introduced at the drama schools and combined techniques of rapier and dagger, point work and unarmed combat along with Shakespearean text. This organization which was then called the Society of British Fight Directors (SBFD) was the first of its kind anywhere in the world and led to the establishment of similar organizations in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Scandinavia, Africa and Asia. In 1996 the SBFD changed its name to the British Academy of Dramatic Combat (BADC).

Autumn of 1973 saw the first publication of *The Fight Director* which Marshall compiled and edited from 1973-1990. The opening paragraph reads, "This is the first issue of the first magazine in the world devoted to the art and profession of those who create and direct stage fights." The magazine was composed of articles, letters and gossip germane to stage combat enthusiasts worldwide.

In 1977 he published *A Manual of Dramatic Armed Combat for Actors* entitled *Stage Swordplay, or "So You Want to be Errol Flynn?"* The manual was based on his instruction at the RADA where he taught for nearly forty years and to overseas visitors at Marymount College. It contained all the precepts of safe staged combat necessary for the enthusiastic amateur to practice and the seasoned professional to observe. It is still considered by many to be a masterpiece of its kind.

Henry Marshall was born Marshall King Bartcock in 1920 and enjoyed a comfortable middle class life growing up. He began studying English Literature but abandoned it for musical composition and dramatics, activities which sowed the seed that began a life in the arts for him. At the age of twenty he gave up his academic studies and entered the theatre.

He soon discovered acting was not his *forte*. As he is often quoted as saying, "I was the worst actor I've ever seen and I've seen a lot of bad actors." He turned to playwriting with an equal lack of success. "I've emptied more theatres than any other dramatist in the country." But his creation of texts, lyrics and music for original pantomimes was prolific, as was his success as a scriptwriter for BBC Radio and TV.

As a boy he had a passionate interest in the films of Douglas Fairbanks Sr. which led him to become a fight director after the war. This resulted in his great success in the world of entertainment and teaching.

People who knew Marshall often comment on his mischievous sense of humor. Jean-Pierre Fournier, while studying with Marshall in 1978 mentions Marshall's delightful sense of mischief.

On several occasions we would be walking from RADA after stage combat class to the tubes, and he would say, "Jean-Pierre, did you know that everyone in London is either from Birmingham, America, or Canada, like yourself?"

"Of course, Henry," I would say. "You don't believe me? Well, then, let's ask this man coming towards us right now." He would then stop whomever it was and ask them, out of the blue, "My friend and I were just wondering where you're from?" On literally every occasion, the man (it was always someone new), a bit stunned at the unusual question, would answer, "I'm from Birmingham."

Henry would say, "That's what I was just telling my friend! That everyone in London is either from Birmingham, America, or Canada like himself! Thank you."

We would carry on down the street, leaving the passerby on the street somewhat perplexed at the odd request. No matter how often he did this, the passerby would answer, "I'm from Birmingham." Henry too, was from Birmingham.

Marshall and a group of his friends would go fence at the Plitech Centre New Oxford Circus on Thursday night. While Marshall was a fine fencer, he occasionally found it difficult to accept a hit. In a twenty-minute

The Society of American Fight Directors and Celebration Barn Theatre

National Fight Directors Training Program

Fight Directors Workshop — Actor Ensemble Workshop

Faculty: Fight Direction: J. Allen Suddeth, A.C. Weary; Actor Ensemble: Mark Olsen



Thirteen days in Maine includes instruction in stage combat technique, in-depth scene work, video production, improvisation, duels, mass battles, gun safety, and a public performance.

The Celebration Barn Theatre, surrounded by 12 acres of woods and fields overlooking the White Mountains, is where participants live, rehearse, work and eat. Food is provided by a staff chef. There is even a Maine Lobster Night Feast.



The Actor Ensemble Workshop accepts twelve participants to focus not just on advanced stage combat technique, but on the integration of scene and character work into stage combat performance.

The Fight Directors Workshop invites six participants to study the creation of fight choreography in a variety of theatrical styles. Videotaped work is critiqued daily. All aspects of fight direction are examined including staging, research, safety, theatricality, direction, design, and business aspects.

June 15-27, 2003

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set-to, he might make half a dozen hits on his opponent and when he was hit he would very often decline the hit, saying it was off target or had not pressure, even when the tip was showing a huge bow in the top of the blade and the tip planted squarely in the middle of his chest. He did not like to lose, but these Thursday evenings provided him an opportunity to try some of the countless historical moves he had discovered in his years of research. Fournier reports

On the occasion of him pressing his point home in my abdomen through a strange and a never-before-seen-by-me kind of move, I would ask, "What was that, and is it legal?"

"Of course," Henry would reply, "and it's right out of Angelo; don't you recognize it?" His eyes would light up and an impish grin shine on his face, as he knew he had you.

Fournier reminisces about going to the pub after class with Henry and Leonard Chase.

After a two-hour workout on the fencing floor, we would clean up and head to a nearby pub, which they affectionately called the "Glue Pot," because of a strange jug of beer that had once unwittingly made it to their table. There they played the weekly game of trivia, with questions so obscure, that I had no answers for most of them. Henry would start, "For ten 'p'[pence], who was in the first production of *Four Feathers*, who gave the feathers to whom, and who arranged the music?" They would simply rattle out the answers and move on to the next. When the pot in the middle of the table grew big enough, another jug was ordered and polished off before heading over to Cypriani's, a delightful Greek restaurant where the Thursday night regulars were treated like royalty. It was an evening of endless exchange of wit and warmth that seems now to have become a lost art.

Lloyd Caldwell began corresponding with Marshall in 1987 while doing research on his dissertation on the history of staged violence. Being interested primarily in how violence was actually performed, Caldwell picked up on articles Marshall had written for *The Fight Director* on the use of "country fours" and "country sixes,"

which were canned fights that were plugged in when needed in the 19th century theatre. Since Marshall was unfortunately allergic to footnotes, Caldwell began corresponding with him about where he found the information. As it turned out, these routines were what Marshall first learned on becoming an actor and led him to further training and research. Marshall had actually learned these fights from provincial actors from the 19th century which made him a link with past stage combat practitioners. Caldwell finally had the opportunity to meet Marshall in the Spring of 1990.

I called Henry and we set a date for lunch. Over food and copious wine we discussed the fact that so much historical knowledge of our craft is lost. Stage fencing, like other stage business, was considered a minor achievement which one was expected to master but which excited little comment. Notice was paid only if there were an accident. Stage fencing was acquired through imitating other actors and if you rose to a certain level in the profession, from a *maitre d'armes*...We discussed the old London fencing masters, and the training of young actors of the last century. We talked about Hutton and Aylward in exhaustive detail. At the end of the

lunch, I felt that I had just attended one of the most important seminars in my academic career...What was most important to me however was that Henry would give of his time to a complete unknown. It was a very generous gesture and greatly encouraging.

Marshall was always generous and open in sharing his knowledge, expertise and tricks of the trade. He seemed tireless in his dedication to keeping a calm, clear sense of direction of the SBF and its distinguished founding members.

Allen Suddeth met Gordana Rashovich, an actress at the Denver Theatre Center for the Performing Arts who had studied with Marshall in England.

I never thought I'd know how to pick up a broadsword and shield until Mr. Henry Marshall showed me the moves, and we were all out playing. His spirit of fun was contagious, and he taught me that if I let my imagination go the moves, with prac-

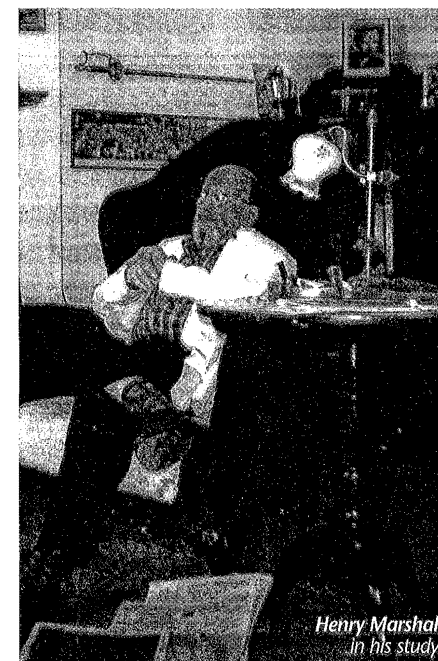
tice, would transport me to a new place. My friend Mavaunen and I got the Derek Ware prize at RADA with Shakespearean text. What fun! I thank him for that.

Everyone in the theatre worldwide owes a great debt of gratitude to Henry Marshall and his colleagues for putting stage combat where it is today. It was Marshall who ensured its perpetuity through his generous spirit and passion for the art of stage combat. He calmed internal waves on occasion and kept nurturing the group until they took on a handful of international students, who brought their new found knowledge home and continued to spread the word.

Fournier remembers, "Henry was a man who enjoyed a good beer, and as he said, 'a poof, err-puff on a pipe or a fine cigar,' great music and theatre, and appreciated a well done stage fight." He was an exceptional horseman, a fine swordsman, a writer of the famous British Pantos, a composer and director and continued his appreciation and admiration for the opposite sex, right into his final years. Henry was, by English terms, a mild eccentric.

As Caldwell points out, Marshall "was a walking repository of rare information, and a scholar of his craft. He was more than an infinitely courteous and generous man. He was a living connection to our predecessors, the early fight directors."

Marshall was a complex man who could be both subtle and obvious. He was self-deprecating. When it came to success he often gave the impression of a sense of failure at his literary and artistic endeavors. Those who knew him and especially his students, enjoyed and profited by his teachings. He was an original upon whose like one may not look again.

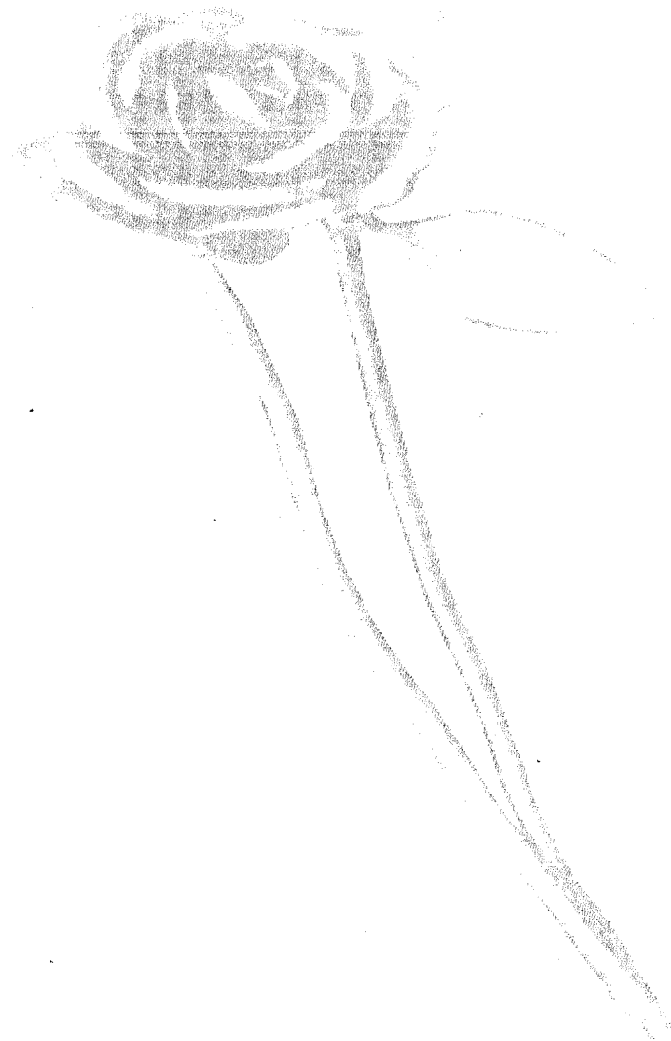


Henry Marshall
in his study.

Fin

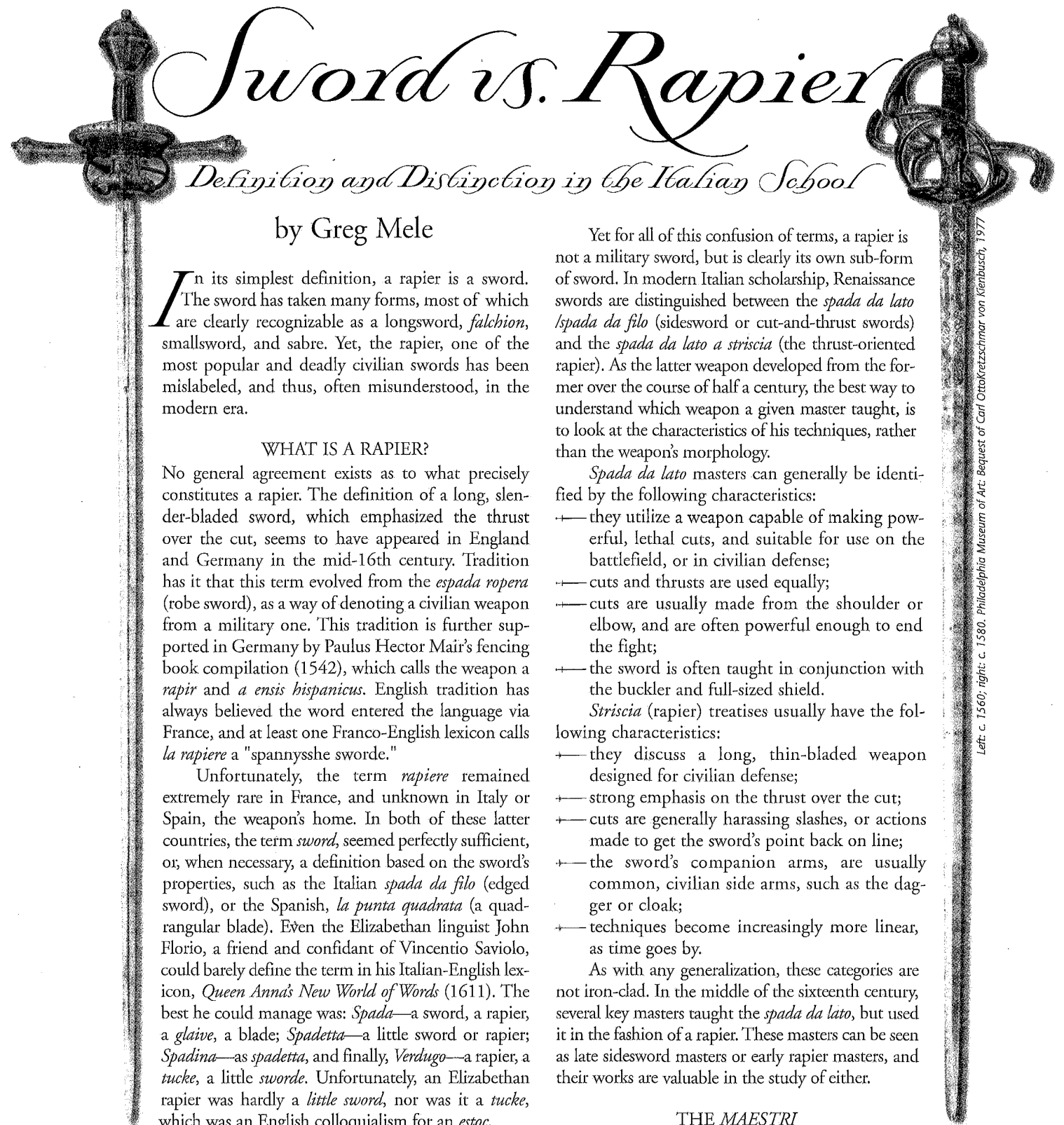
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Sword vs. Rapier

Definition and Distinction in the Italian School

by Greg Mele

In its simplest definition, a rapier is a sword. The sword has taken many forms, most of which are clearly recognizable as a longsword, *falchion*, smallsword, and sabre. Yet, the rapier, one of the most popular and deadly civilian swords has been mislabeled, and thus, often misunderstood, in the modern era.

WHAT IS A RAPIER?

No general agreement exists as to what precisely constitutes a rapier. The definition of a long, slender-bladed sword, which emphasized the thrust over the cut, seems to have appeared in England and Germany in the mid-16th century. Tradition has it that this term evolved from the *espada ropera* (robe sword), as a way of denoting a civilian weapon from a military one. This tradition is further supported in Germany by Paulus Hector Mair's fencing book compilation (1542), which calls the weapon a *rapir* and a *ensis hispanicus*. English tradition has always believed the word entered the language via France, and at least one Franco-English lexicon calls *la rapiere* a "spannysshe sworde."

Unfortunately, the term *rapiere* remained extremely rare in France, and unknown in Italy or Spain, the weapon's home. In both of these latter countries, the term *sword*, seemed perfectly sufficient, or, when necessary, a definition based on the sword's properties, such as the Italian *spada da filo* (edged sword), or the Spanish, *la punta quadrata* (a quadrangular blade). Even the Elizabethan linguist John Florio, a friend and confidant of Vincentio Saviolo, could barely define the term in his Italian-English lexicon, *Queen Anna's New World of Words* (1611). The best he could manage was: *Spada*—a sword, a rapier, a *glaiue*, a blade; *Spadetta*—a little sword or rapier; *Spadina*—as *spadetta*, and finally, *Verdugo*—a rapier, a *tucke*, a little *sworde*. Unfortunately, an Elizabethan rapier was hardly a *little sword*, nor was it a *tucke*, which was an English colloquialism for an *estoc*.

In the modern era, most fencing historians have looked to the Renaissance as the birth of *real* fencing, and the rapier as the first real fencing sword. In defining a *rapier*, however, they seem to have followed the lead of the curatorial community, who have based their nomenclature primarily on the sword's hilt rather than its blade. Combined with a mistaken belief that pre-rapier masters did not use the thrust in any meaningful way, almost any complex-hilted sword of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries becomes a *rapier*.

Yet for all of this confusion of terms, a rapier is not a military sword, but is clearly its own sub-form of sword. In modern Italian scholarship, Renaissance swords are distinguished between the *spada da lato* / *spada da filo* (sidesword or cut-and-thrust swords) and the *spada da lato a striscia* (the thrust-oriented rapier). As the latter weapon developed from the former over the course of half a century, the best way to understand which weapon a given master taught, is to look at the characteristics of his techniques, rather than the weapon's morphology.

Spada da lato masters can generally be identified by the following characteristics:

- they utilize a weapon capable of making powerful, lethal cuts, and suitable for use on the battlefield, or in civilian defense;
- cuts and thrusts are used equally;
- cuts are usually made from the shoulder or elbow, and are often powerful enough to end the fight;
- the sword is often taught in conjunction with the buckler and full-sized shield.

Striscia (rapier) treatises usually have the following characteristics:

- they discuss a long, thin-bladed weapon designed for civilian defense;
- strong emphasis on the thrust over the cut;
- cuts are generally harassing slashes, or actions made to get the sword's point back on line;
- the sword's companion arms, are usually common, civilian side arms, such as the dagger or cloak;
- techniques become increasingly more linear, as time goes by.

As with any generalization, these categories are not iron-clad. In the middle of the sixteenth century, several key masters taught the *spada da lato*, but used it in the fashion of a rapier. These masters can be seen as late sidesword masters or early rapier masters, and their works are valuable in the study of either.

THE MAESTRI

The following are the principle Italian masters of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the principle form of the *spada*, they taught.

(*Nota Bene*: While the following descriptions occasionally reference the weapons illustrated in the masters' treatises, this is hardly a reliable way to denote sword form. In Giacomo di Grassi's English translation, for example, one of his principle sword guards is illustrated with a man wielding a *falchion*. Only reference illustrations that support descriptions in the actual text are used.)

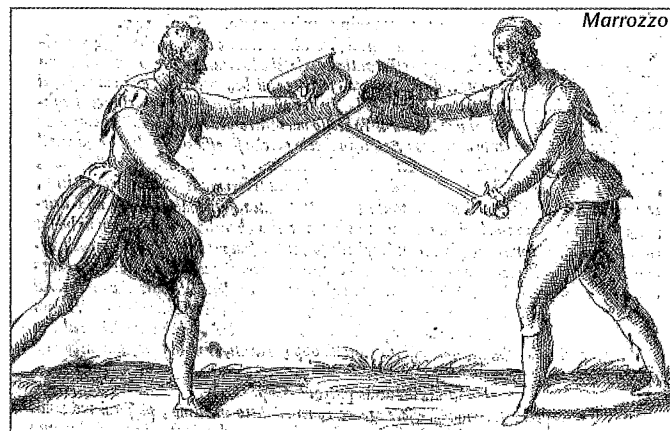
Left: c. 1560, right: c. 1580. Philadelphia Museum of Art. Bequest of Carl Otto Kretschmar von Kenbusch, 1977

ANTONIO MANCIOLINO, *Opera Nova* (1531)

Spada da lato (cut and thrust/sidesword). Manciolino teaches the use of a military sword, and instructs in its use for war (with a variety of shields), and for personal, civilian defense (alone, or with buckler, dagger, or cape). Manciolino favors the edge, but uses both edge and point, and his cuts are made from the shoulder and elbow.

ACHILLE MAROZZO, *Opera Nova* (1536)

Spada da lato. Like Manciolino, Marozzo uses the same weapon for civilian and military use. Like Manciolino, he also uses powerful shoulder and elbow cuts, and uses edge and point equally.



Marozzo

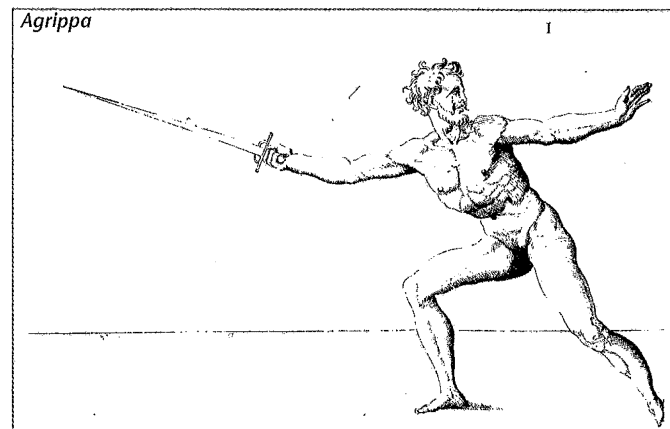
FRANCESCO DI LORENZO ALTONI, *Trattato Dell'armi Inititolato Monomachia* (1540s)

Spada da lato. Altoni was a rival and contemporary of Marozzo. CAMILLO AGRIPPA, *Tratto di Scientia d'Arme* (1553)

Agrippa's sword is not described in illustration or text, as being any different than Marozzo's, but his focus on civilian swordsmanship and emphasis on the point, shows the evolution towards the *spada da lato a striscia*, or rapier.



Agrippa



GIACOMO DI GRASSI, *His True Art of Defense* (Italian: 1570, English, 1594)

As Agrippa. Di Grassi, while focused on civilian swordsmanship, still included military weapons, such as the pike, hal-

berd, bill, and two-handed sword, and felt his *spada* would serve well on the field of battle. This makes its form, clearly that of a *spada da lato*. However, like Agrippa, his method strongly preferred the thrust to cut, and while his sword could make strong cuts, he generally preferred slashes made from the elbow or wrist. Thus, while the weapon might be the earlier sidesword, its method of use was more consistent with the rapier, so much so, that his English translator translated the *spada solo*, *spada e pugnale*, and *spada e capa* material as "rapier, rapier and dagger, and rapier and cape," respectively.

Di Grassi

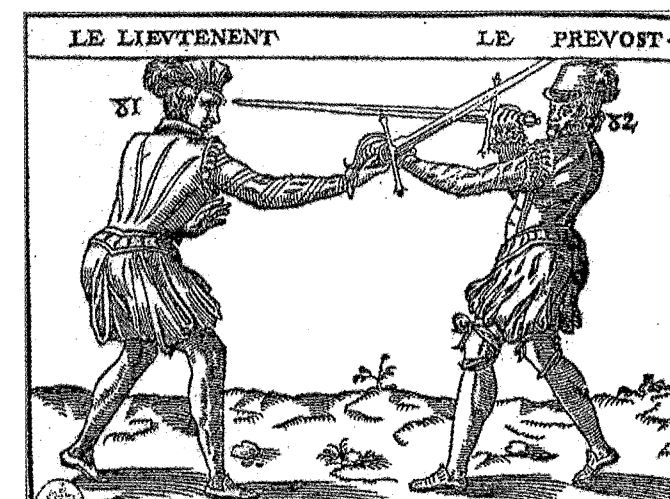


HENRY SAINT DIDIER, *Traicté contenant les secrets du premier livre de l'espee seule* (1573)

Saint Didier's manual is largely a French translation and reworking of Di Grassi, with more detailed diagrams and descriptions. His *espee*, like Agrippa's, is relatively short and wide-bladed, although it includes a knuckle guard.



Saint Didier



Saint Didier

GIOVANNI DALL'AGOCCHIE, *Dell'arte di Scrimia Libri Tre* (1572)

Dall'Agocchie was Marozzo's student, and his work has largely been considered an expansion and clarification of Marozzo's swordplay. However, unlike the earlier master, dall'Agocchie places his emphasis on the thrust.

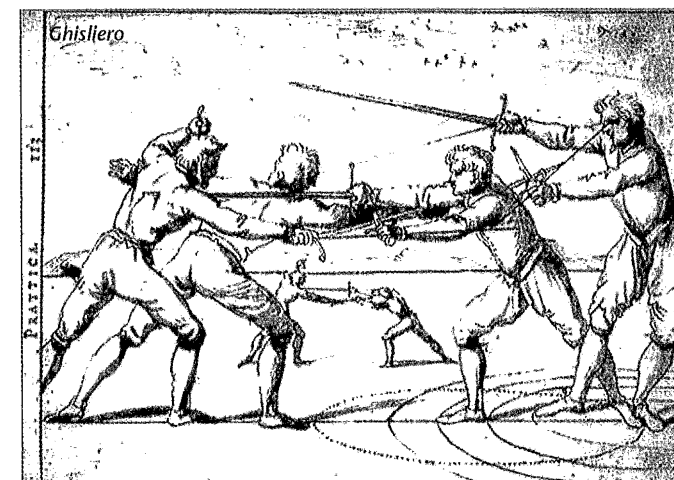
FEDERICO GHISLIERO, *Regole di molti cavagliereschi essercitti* (1587)

Ghisliero gives precise details for the dimensions of his weapon, which neatly fits the perfect description of a late 16th century rapier (*striscia*). Agrippa, dall'Agocchie, di Grassi, and St. Didier, all used a sword that, in form, was a military weapon, and all were familiar with how to use its stronger cuts, and its battlefield



Ghisliero

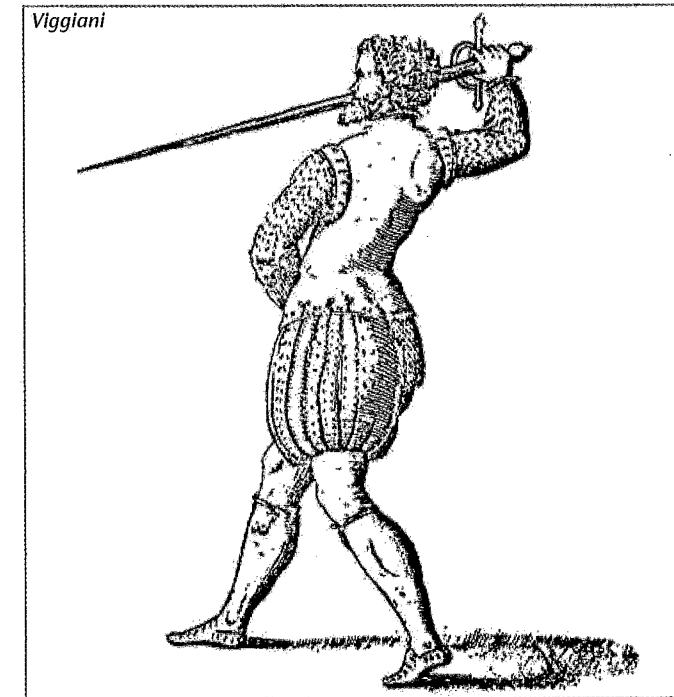
companion arm—the shield. Yet these masters also were clearly laying the framework for the *spada da lato a striscia* and thus can be classified as both cut-and-thrust sword masters or early rapier masters.



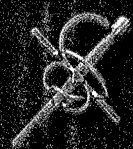
ANGELO VIGGIANI, *Lo Schermo* (1575)

Viggiani names his weapon a *spada da filo*, but in terms of technique, by this point, the sword is clearly being used as modern students generally think of the rapier.

Viggiani



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G.A. LOVINO, *Traite des Escrime* (c.1580)

Lovino's writing, and his illustrations, suggest the *striscia*. When he teaches the sword used with the buckler or shield, he seems to treat it as a different weapon altogether.

ALFONSO FALLOPIA, *Nuovo et Brieve Modo di Schermire* (1584)

Striscia (rapier). Fallopi's method is not only clearly that of a rapier master, but he himself is adamant that he is covering a civilian weapon, not a military one, and its companion weapons: the dagger, glove, and cape.

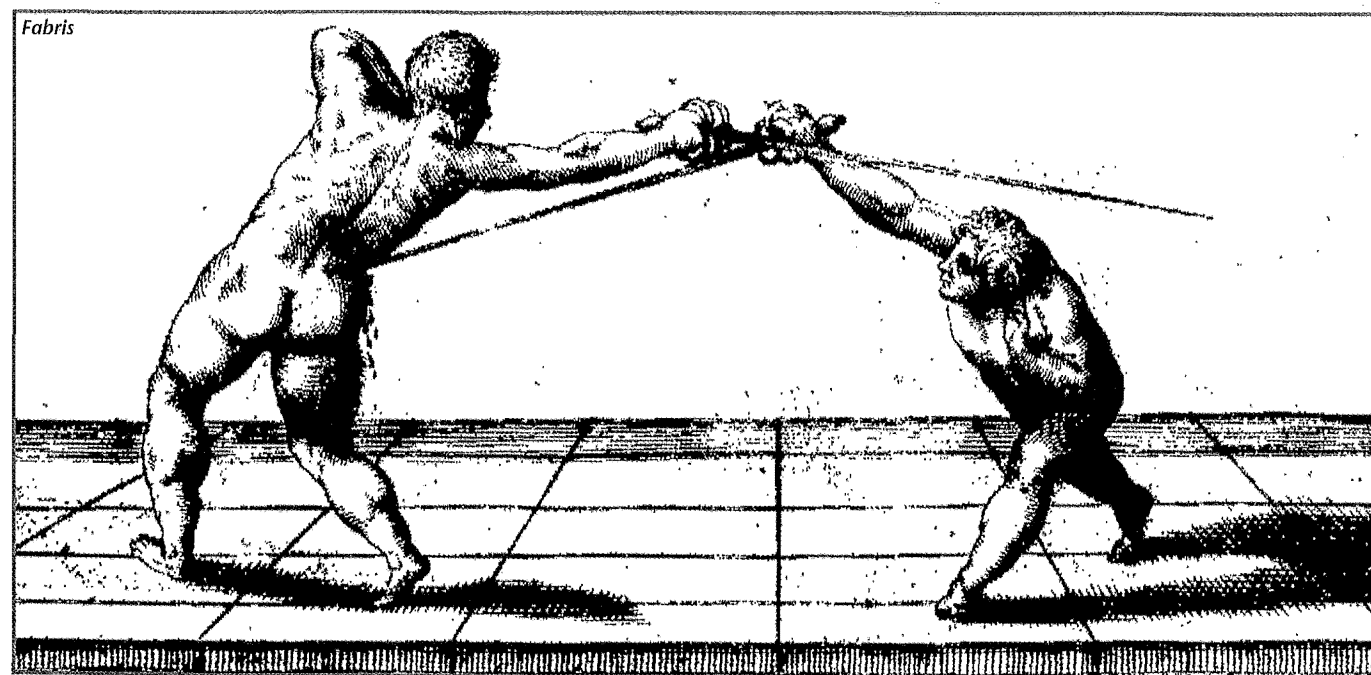
VINCENTIO SAVIOLO, *Saviolo, His Practice* (1595)

Striscia. Although the illustrations show a simple, cruciform sword, Silver's description of the "improper length" of the weapon, Saviolo's boast to thrust "two foote farther than other Englishmen," (i.e. the lunge), and the slashing nature of the cuts in his repertoire, all point to the true 16th century rapier.



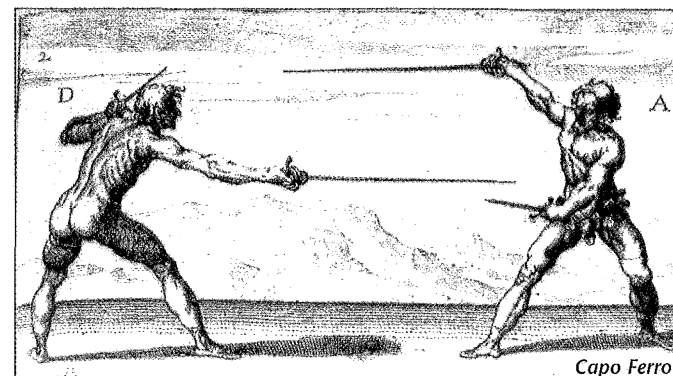
SALVATOR FABRIS, *Scienza e pratica d'arme* (1606)

Striscia. His technique is clearly for civilian use with a thrust-oriented style of fence, and his illustrations depict a swept-hilted sword.

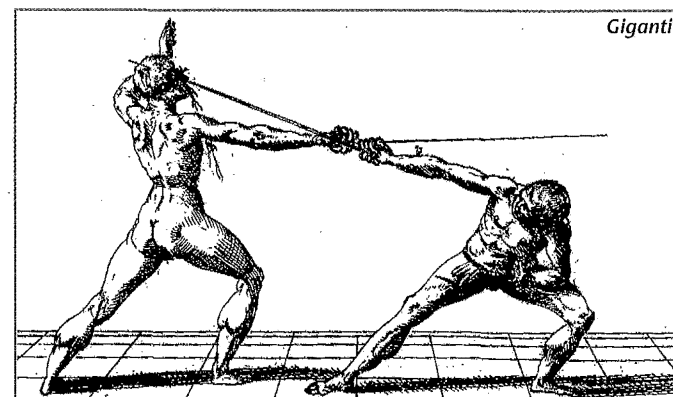


RIDOLFO CAPO FERRO, *Gran Simulacrum* (1610)

Exactly as Fabris. Capo Ferro's method is far more familiar to the modern eye than the earlier methods—a more linear stance, sword hand presented, long, deep lunges. Interestingly, Capo Ferro includes a few techniques for using the rapier with the target shield, and the two were clearly not a happy marriage.



NICOLETTO GIGANTI, *Scola* (1619)
As Fabris or Capo Ferro.

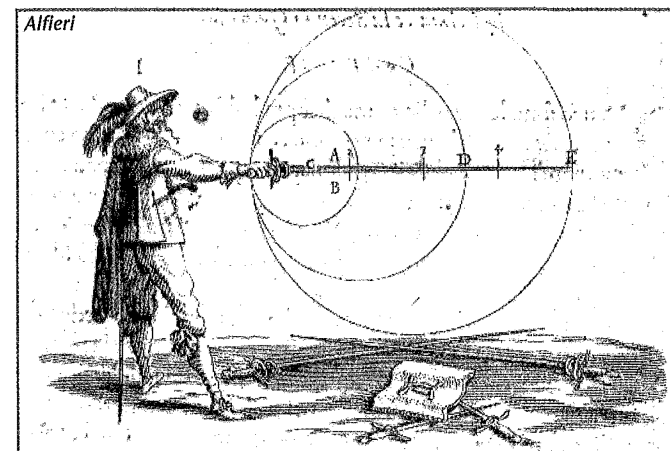


GIOVANI BATTISTA GAIANI, *Arte di Maneggiar la Spada* (1619)
As Fabris or Capo Ferro.



FRANCESCO ALFIERI, *La Scherma* (1640)

As Fabris, his method is classic rapier fencing—a long, thrusting sword with a complex hilt, using voids, hand parries, demi-voltes, and lunges.



GIUSEPPE MORISCATO PALLAVACINI, *La scherma illustrata* (1670)
A typical Italian thrusting rapier, with a shortened blade—in essence a transitional weapon between the rapier and smallsword.

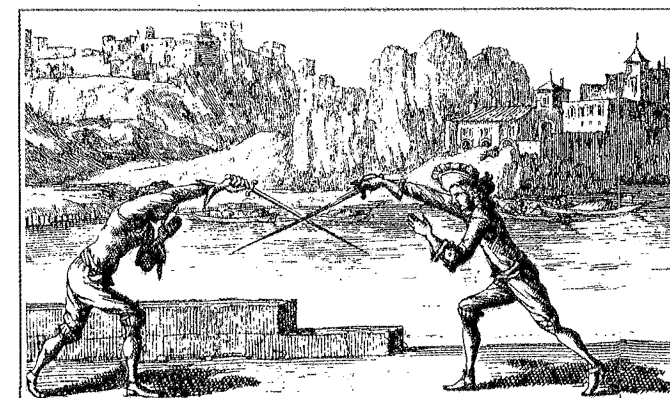
FRANCESCO ANTONIO MARCELLI, *Regole della Scherma* (1686)
A cup-hilted *striscia*, used almost solely for thrusting.



ANDRÉ DE LIANCOUR, *Le Mistre d'armes* (1686)

An early, transitional smallsword, still used much like a rapier.

BONDI DI MAZO, *La Spada Maestra* (1696)
As Liancour.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks to Maestro Andrea Lupo Sinclair for his consultation and clarification in the writing of this article.

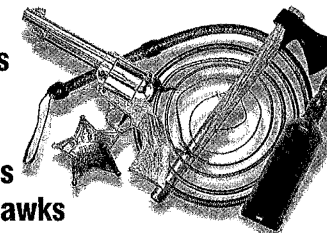
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JUMPIN' IN AT FROSTBURG: by Darrell Scott Rushton

Today's society wants to pretend that violence between women does not happen. Gini Sikes in her book *8 Ball Chicks* cites over and over the reluctance of Police Departments in Los Angeles, Texas, and Wisconsin to acknowledge the existence of girl-gangs. If they do admit it, the girls are considered auxiliaries to the boy gangs: gun carriers, owners of safe houses or property of the gang. The possibility of women leading or organizing gangs, much less as perpetrators of violence, is alien to the police, and by extension, society in general.

Playwright Kia Corthron addresses this issue indirectly in her violent and often funny world of girl gangs in the Bronx in the play *Breath, Boom*. As the fight choreographer of Frostburg State University's production of Corthron's play, female brutality was one of the things that needed to be clearly staged in the production. Yet what Corthron writes in her stage directions is as simply put as Shakespeare's "They fight."

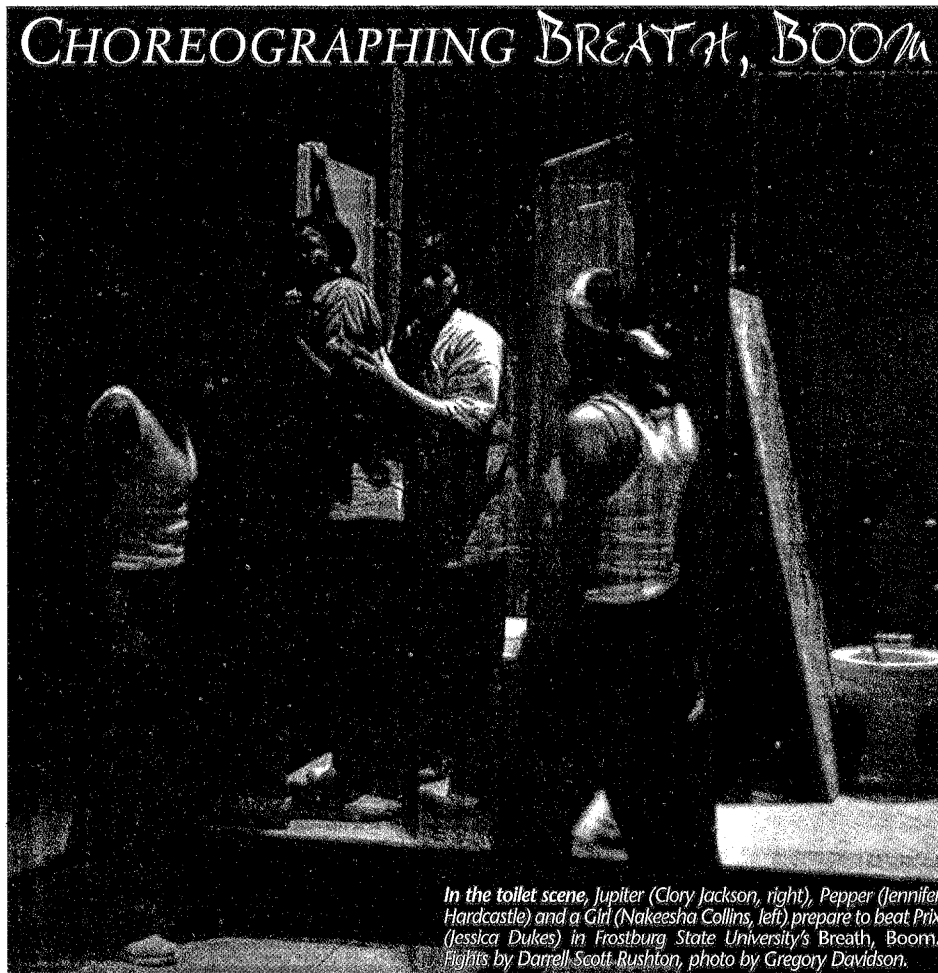
PRIX give ANGEL and MALIKA a look. COMET is suddenly terrified but before SHE can get away ANGEL and MALIKA pounce, beating the crap out of COMET: no mercy. COMET screaming. (*Breath, Boom* 2)

It was the choreographer's job to realize safe and believable choreography for not only this scene, but also have the lead character get jumped in a bathroom stall, have girls whip razor blades out of their mouths, and have two women sexually assault another woman.

Breath, Boom was originally commissioned by the Royal Court Theatre in London, and was later produced in New York at Playwright's Horizons. Frostburg State University had been looking for plays for ten superb black actresses in the department none of whom had been previously given the opportunity to shine in lead roles. *Breath, Boom* filled this need and permission was obtained to produce it.

SYNOPSIS

Breath, Boom is playwright Kia Corthron's look at the gritty world of girl gangs in the Bronx. It is based largely on her experiences teaching at Rikers Island Correctional Facility. The play follows the life of head gangster Prix from age fifteen to thirty. The play opens with Prix, Angel and Malika jumping a fellow gang member, Comet, and hospitalizing her; a scene Corthron wrote because she felt that if she began the play with this much violence, she would be able to show less during the rest of the drama. Throughout the course of the play, the audience gets glimpses into why Prix is the "ice cold" killer she is:



In the toilet scene, Jupiter (Clory Jackson, right), Pepper (Jennifer Hardcastle) and a Girl (Nakeesha Collins, left) prepare to beat Prix (Jessica Dukes) in Frostburg State University's *Breath, Boom*. Fight by Darrell Scott Rushton, photo by Gregory Davidson.

including that her mother's boyfriend, Jerome, began raping her at age five. The audience also learns the one thing that makes Prix human: her love and fascination with fireworks and her dream of one day becoming a fireworks' designer. This dream never fades as Prix spends the remainder of her life in and out of correctional institutions, dealing drugs and hurting anyone who gets in her way. After making a huge mistake on a prison deal, Act Two sees Jupiter, Comet's daughter, ripping the mantle of power from Prix in a brutal fight staged in the stalls of a bathroom. Prix, brought completely down, eventually gets out of prison and learns that she has to find some new way of living. The finale of the play is a confrontation between Prix and her mother, and Prix is finally able to take the first steps towards forgiving her mother the betrayal she felt at the hands of Jerome.

RESEARCH

Knowledge of girl gangs in the Bronx was pretty limited for this white choreographer, who had been raised in suburban Florida. Research had to be done. Fortunately there were two extremely valuable sources, Kia Corthron, the playwright and David Leong, the fight director for the New York premiere at Playwright's Horizons.

Corthron was in residence for the last two weeks of the production and available over Christmas vacation giving the artistic team an opportunity to explore this urban drama with her. Corthron related her experiences teaching a playwriting course on Rikers Island and the amazing insights into the

minds of the girls she met in prison. A number of things became implanted. First, the violence on stage could never possibly equal the violence perpetuated by the real gangsters. Second, that in order to be true to the vision of the playwright, everything on stage had to have a brutal, ugly realism. Third, the book that Corthron used as research was Gini Sikes' *8 Ball Chicks*.

On the verge of acceptance into the Theatre Pedagogy MFA Program at Virginia Commonwealth University, this choreographer had the opportunity to meet David Leong and watch him teach a class on Contemporary Violence, and the hour and a half he spent in that class molded the approach to the upcoming production. Leong's ideas about contact improvisation, grappling techniques and actor's vocalizations (noises of pain and fear) were of amazing value. Leong also granted time to discuss how he approached the New York production, in particular the use of the razors and fighting in the toilet stalls.

Further research was done with *8 Ball Chicks*, and *Gangs: A Handbook for Community Awareness*, a book that takes a "wake up, white people, its coming to your hood" approach. It reiterated the fact that society really does not want to admit the problem exists. A number of films were watched such as *Menace II Society* which is all about boy gangstas but invaluable for its ugly realism and a gang beating in prison, *Colors* with its useful depiction of police as the bad guys and gangstas as sympathetic but not much else. *Stranger on the Inside*, an HBO Production, was extremely valuable for its insight into the bleakness of women's prisons.

THE OPENING SCENE

I don't trust no girls. No bitch.

—8 Ball Chicks

For the opening monologue, the director specified a pool of light that Comet walks into with the rest of the stage in darkness. The playwright created a scene in which nothing is explained; for no reason apparent to the audience, three teenage girls beat another woman almost to death. On the other hand, it was a blank canvas on which to work.

Several things needed to be accomplished in this scene. The sheer brutality and senseless violence that these characters inhabit every day had to be immediately determined for the audience. Corthron had mentioned several times during the research discussions, the misogyny present amongst these "girl gang bangers." In fact, while lecturing at Frostburg, Corthron mentioned more than once that had she included even a fraction of the real violence carried out by the women she had met in Rikers, the play would be unwatchable by the audience. A sense of foreshadowing had to be created without giving away what was going to happen to Comet and the scene had to be choreographed long enough for the audience to believe Comet could be hospitalized but short enough to maintain the illusion of reality. The timing of the ending of the opening scene had to coincide with the numerous technical aspects, namely a series of fireworks explosions which distract the girls from beating Comet.

The misogyny and brutality of these characters towards each other had to be demonstrated. The scene needed a stage scuffle on the ground with the girls kicking Comet in the crotch. The girls drag Comet upstage, kicking and screaming.

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Comet needed to be on the ground a long time while they worked over her body and face which was an idea borrowed from Leong's New York production. After Corthron revealed how it was done at Playwright's Horizons, the sound and lighting designers were asked to create the effect of a subway passing overhead that would cover a lot of the noise and distract the audience enough to sustain the length of the beating on the ground.

The fight was to end with a *curbie*. A *curbie* is when one places the victim's face, mouth open, on the curb and stomps on the back of the head. On the off chance they survive, one will have destroyed the teeth and facial structure of the victim. This was staged to happen right before Prix's line "Don't kill her" so the *curbie* never actually happened, however the fact that the girls were going to do it is terrifying enough. The audience needed to feel as if they were bodily struck by what they were watching and come out of the first scene thinking "What play is this? What am I watching? What world am I in?"

In coaching the fighters, several images were used. Angel and Malika, the two girls who actually did the beating, were to circle slowly during Comet's opening monologue. They were told to think like sharks, to remain just out of reach of the light, somewhere in the murky darkness. This helped to create a sense of tension, even if the audience was unaware of why. They arrived at their final spots just before Comet's realization that they were about to jump her. Fortunately the actress playing Malika was belted in two martial arts and could throw punches that did not hide her training. The actress playing Angel was more of a grappler in fighting style.

Malika tackled Comet at one point, and then Comet scooted across the floor. For safety, it was staged so that Malika and Comet shared weight throughout the tackle, and Malika took almost all the impact in her legs, straddling Comet in a wide stance so that she could help her get to the floor. The illusion of Malika trying to punch Comet while Comet crawled across the floor was created by a contact grapple improvisation, where Malika made fists, and Comet pushed them away. Once they felt safe, they slowly worked up the tempo and added the acting. The drag onstage was simple, the only concern was that the stage floor might be too rough and scrape the skin of the actress playing Comet. Costumes helped solve that problem by giving Comet a vinyl coat. When the girls flipped her on her back, she set her leg so that Angel could execute a contact kick to the inner thigh, which both actresses brilliantly sold. It looked scary and the choice of choreography paid off every night when someone would invariably gasp when the pop of Angel's shoestrings hit Comet's leg: an aural illusion as well as a visual one.

Originally a trickle of blood was needed on the corner of Comet's mouth, but after experimenting with capsules and a supply of Halloween blood marked: "Please don't ever use this near your mouth" and the stains it would cause, the blood was cut from the final production. The scene was too dark, and her costume change too quick to justify the difficulty for such a little visual effect.

Everyone was pleased with the end result. And although the actresses, who were all somewhat inexperienced, brilliantly executed the fights safely every night, rehearsed faithfully, and never missed a fight call.

JEROME & PRIX

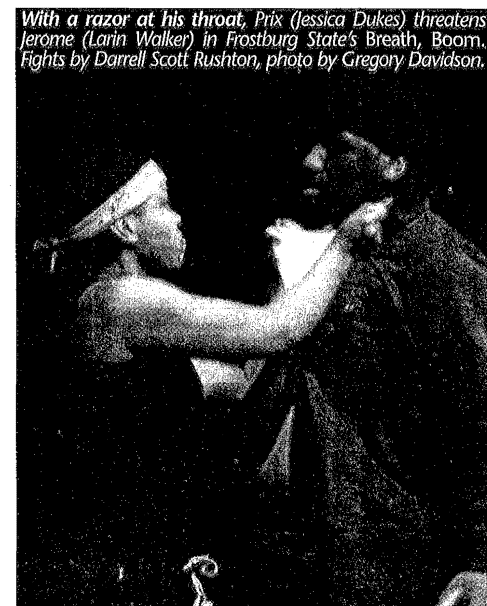
These girls don't give a fuck about life itself 'cause the simple fact is, they've been hurt too much.

—8 Ball Chicks

In *Breath, Boom*, the lead character Prix and her mother are terrorized by the mother's boyfriend, Jerome, and have been for years. A drunken Jerome breaks in Prix's bedroom door, looks around, and salaciously suggests to Prix: "Wonder what we do 'till your mama gets back?" (*Breath, Boom* 15). The script suggests nothing more than some sort of scuffle, which Prix wins, and then says: "I ain't five no more." All in all, the choreography was absolutely simple, yet the moment was one of the defining moments of the play, and demanded considerable attention.

Physically, all the actress playing Prix had to do was reach between Jerome's legs, grab his inner thigh so that the audience would make the visual connection, pull a razor blade out of her mouth, walk him over to the bed, push him down onto it, and say her line. The audience needed to see a physical manifestation of the reversal that the playwright had written, so Prix walked Jerome over to the bed and crawled on top of him: victim on top, woman on top, abuser abused. All the power in the relationship shifts in actual physical space as well as emotionally.

Getting these two actors to do what was needed consistently proved to be one of the greatest challenges in the show. The moment was difficult to capture. Jerome has to act like there is a real razor at his throat, instead of a piece of plastic. He has to walk backwards ten feet to a bed he could not see and trust that his acting partner would help him get safely onto the bed. Prix has to sum up eleven years of hatred and accurately portray a woman who was raped for the first time at five years old getting back at her aggressor. She had to sneak a razor into her mouth somewhere during the scene, so she could pull it out at the right moment. (No one ever caught when she actually put it into her mouth, she was so good at it. And she never told anyone either.)



With a razor at his throat, Prix (Jessica Dukes) threatens Jerome (Larin Walker) in *Frostburg State's Breath, Boom*. Fights by Darrell Scott Rushton, photo by Gregory Davidson.

THE TOILET SCENE

The fact that gangs are increasingly violent is a barometer of the state of childhood itself.

—8 Ball Chicks

The first question asked of Leong was not how he staged the fight in the toilet, but how he handled the razors. The second question was about the toilet fight. How had he dealt with what the playwright had written: how did Prix get her head smashed repeatedly with a toilet seat and not get hurt? Leong's replay was simply, "They don't have toilet seats in prison." Leong then went on to describe how he staged the majority of the fight inside the stall so that the audience did not see it.

(For the record, they do not have doors on the stalls in prison either, but you have to draw the line of artistic license somewhere.)

The set designer had the unit ready three weeks before the opening in order for the actors to have the longest rehearsal time possible on the set. Two matching industrial toilets were located and loaned from FSU's Physical Plant, but locating the walls proved to be a major hassle. So, with four actors, two ASM's and an assistant director in tow, the company adjourned to the ladies room in the lobby. Only two definite ideas were in mind before getting into the rehearsal. The scene happens later in the play, and the girl who beats up Prix is the daughter of Comet, who was beaten up pretty bad in the first scene so there needed to be a sense of completion, of Prix's life coming full circle. It was also decided that the playwright must have written the scene to take place in a toilet on purpose. Prix not only gets brought down, but also has to be degraded when it happens. For this reason, the girls needed to give Prix a *swirly*. So, in addition to the subway and fireworks cues specified for the sound designer, now toilet flushes were needed on cue as well. The other concept was borrowed from Alfred Hitchcock.

In *Psycho*, the knife never actually goes into Janet Leigh. Never once is a close-up effected, or anything whatsoever that shows a twelve-inch knife being plunged into a human torso. Yet, ask almost anyone, and they will swear it happens. One sees the knife go up, hears the knife cut, sees Janet Leigh's reaction, sees the blood pool down the drain, sees everything but the knife actually penetrating the body. Hitchcock believed that nothing he could show on film could equal what the audience could create in their own minds.

Almost all the fight takes place inside the stall, where the audience cannot see it. Two girls are waiting in line. The audience sees Prix enter the stall and sit down. Jupiter, the lead gang girl, enters, looks around to make sure no one is watching and signals to the two girls already there. They sneak to the edge of the door and wait. When the toilet flushes, the stage right attacker kicks open the door, the stage left attacker catches it, slides in and punches Prix in the face. The punch, since the view of it was masked by the stall, was a simple, high straight to the face, which landed eight to ten inches away from Prix's nose. Prix was responsible for making the knap.

Once the door was closed, Prix was in control, and it became all about acting and sound. The audience would see about eighteen inches of clear space between the floor and the bottom of the wall. They could see feet moving, hear slamming, and their minds would put it together. Prix hit the door first. Then she was turned around, and



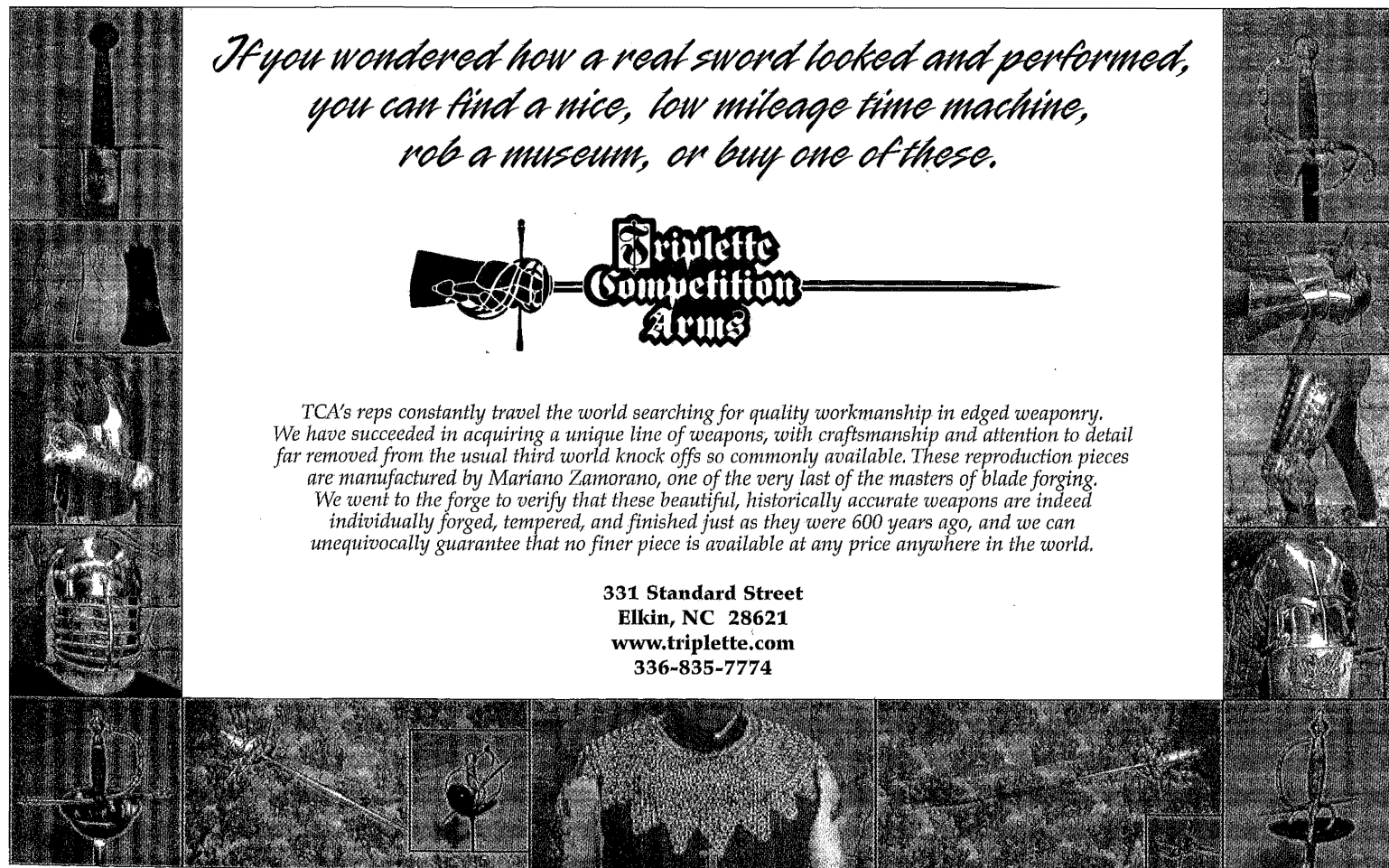
Taking control, Prix (Jessica Dukes) forces Jerome (Larin Walker) down in *Frostburg State's Breath, Boom*. Fights by Darrell Scott Rushton, photo by Gregory Davidson.

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kneed in the stomach twice. Then the audience saw her get forced to her feet, and heard the flushes. She gets picked up again and slammed back and forth between the two walls before Jupiter opens the door and tells her crew, "That's enough." She grabbed Prix, slammed her head against the stalls and made her recite a speech that the girls make fun of.

The beauty of the entire fight lay in its simplicity. Once the door was closed, every action was motivated by the victim. All the other two girls had to worry about was making their footwork look real. Other than teaching the actress a safe way to slap the walls and get a good noise without injuring her hands, very little safety was involved. The audience would fill in what it did not see.

More demanding was the scene work between Prix and Jupiter. The actress playing Jupiter had a difficult time acting as mean as she needed to be for the scene. When it was explained to her that Prix was actually doing all the hard stuff, making believe that she was being thrown against a wall and Jupiter really only had to grab her shirt and act like she was doing the slamming, it got easier for her. It was communicated to the actors that if they worked the technique over and over again, then they know that their partner is safe. Once an actor is



Gloating, Jupiter (Clory Jackson, right), beats Prix (Jessica Dukes) while Pepper and a Girl (Jennifer Hardcastle, Nakeesha Collins, left) enjoy in Frostburg State's *Breath, Boom*. Fights by Darrell Scott Rushton, photo by Gregory Davidson.

sure that he will not harm his fight partner, he is able to commit his full energy to the scene, and this makes for a better performance.

Prix for her part, has a really difficult time playing the victim. The character had up until this point in the play, never lost control. Now she had to, after working for weeks to be a stone cold killer, "the ice" as Comet called it. The key to playing the scene for her was when she was told to play the pain. Once the actress took that adjustment, the scene just got better and better.

When the company moved into the theatre space, things changed around a bit. The entire

set unit moved when they executed the choreography. The director wanted Jupiter to throw her on the floor instead of against the wall because Jupiter's face was lost which at that moment was much more important than Prix's. However, since the theatre was a black box, the stage floor was lower than the first row of seats and anything which happened on the floor had a tendency to get lost. The entire set unit was shifted to be upstage six feet and Prix got dropped on the ground right in front of it and the rehearsal was finished.

Moving to the floor proved the best thing that could have happened. Once the actions was on the floor, the scene jumped up a

notch in danger. Jupiter could now stand over a broken and bleeding Prix, terrorizing her. The audience had a physical picture of who was holding the power. Prix could try and get up, and be kicked while she was on the floor. What it really made exciting was the last moment of the scene. Jupiter could now come up behind Prix with the razor blade, grab her shirt, yank her throat to the side and put the razor right on her neck. The choreography was amazingly simple; shirt grab, lay razor, Prix acts, Jupiter acts. It freed them from any concerns of safety and opened the scene to a much better interpretation. The director was happy, the actors were happy, the playwright was happy, the fight director was happy, everybody wins.

Corthron had a number of notes on the scene, which were discussed at length. Jupiter, she felt, had to be the angriest in the scene whenever her mother was mentioned. The audience needed to see her decide not to kill Prix at the end of the scene. Prix had to realize that Jupiter gets upset at the mention of her mother and gambles her life on this. Prix was also attempting to reach the shred of humanity left in Jupiter and plead for her life, which she agreed with.

Your third birthday, she show me the shoppin' bag. Pooh Bear!

—*Breath, Boom*

In addition, Jupiter's character realizes the status she will gain by toppling Prix, and leaving her alive to continually face the humiliation this causes. "O. G." Jupiter laughs hollowly at the end of the scene "Original gangsta!" The original vision called for Jupiter to take that moment to wipe Prix's blood off with toilet paper and toss it on Prix, completing the image of Prix as trash, utterly humiliated and degraded. It was ultimately decided that was unnecessary to the scene, and it was cut during tech week.

Stage blood was used. Ignoring advice to the contrary, it was believed that judicious use of blood would complete the connection in the audience's minds. When the door was flung open and the audience saw Prix with her face being pushed into a wall, blood running down her nose, and on her hands, all over the front of her shirt, it was an extremely effective moment. The audience was taken by surprise, and shocked by the quick flash of red. Water was used which the actress spilled down the front of her shirt and Pepper flung into the air at the moment they are ostensibly pulling Prix's head out of the toilet. The first time this was tried, Prix tried to eat the blood pack instead of breaking it onto her nose, and wound up looking like a vampire. Pepper flung about three drops of water into the air and everyone laughed. Prix's clean up was a nightmare. Without three people to help, she could not make the quick change and the blood almost had to be cut. One show, Pepper did not wait for Prix to clear and *clocked* her with the tupperware bowl full of water. The entire stage unit had to be cleaned with Windex every night. The toilet bowl had to be shop-vacuumed clean of water. Still, the defining moments of the scene were the initial punch, the flash of blood and Jupiter holding a razor to Prix's throat, Prix covered in water, blood on her face. The blood worked and the moment was worth it.

THE RAZORS

First time I saw a girl put a razor in her mouth, she was flipping it around with her tongue, not getting cut. I thought...Oooh, that's for me!

—8 Ball Chicks

It is called a *buck fifty* when one slashes someone across the face with a razor blade formerly hidden in the mouth. It probably got its name from the number of stitches it takes to sew the victim back up. Club owners in New York and DC not only pat down their clients, they look in their mouths before admitting them. In *Breath, Boom* the characters spin the razors in their mouths, flipping them back and forth on their tongues, and twice in the script, characters attack with them. A method had to be figured out to make this property realistic and safe.

For rehearsals, razors were cut out of plastic trays from frozen dinners. They were the right size, and the actresses could practice with them. Everybody got two or three of their own to play with and they began to work them into the scenes. The final product was made by the property crew out of a relatively new material called Wonderflex™. It looks like fabric and maintains its malleability until it is set. Once it is set, it becomes rigid and can be painted to look like whatever is needed. The property crew made them slightly larger than a real razor so they would read better on stage. After a lengthy search, the property crew discovered that there was no paint in existence that was not in some way mildly toxic, so they chose the least they could find and painted them silver. Ultimately, they were the best that could be concocted, were safe onstage, and nobody had one in her mouth longer than a few seconds. The girls got so good at twirling and hiding them it was scary.

SEXUAL ASSAULT & SCENE CHANGES

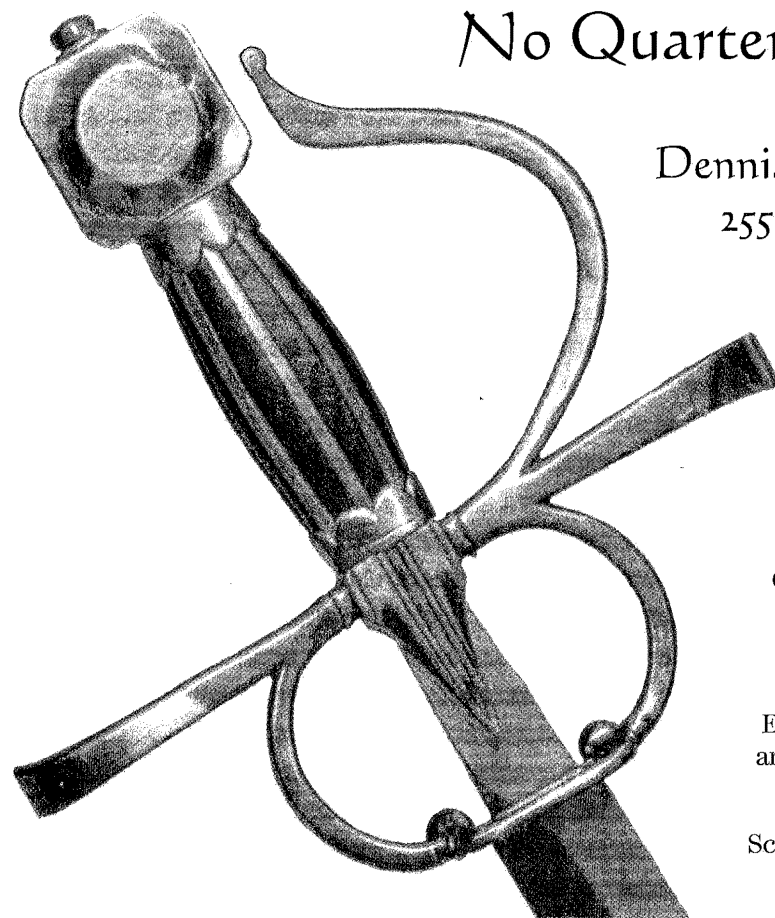
These girls are likable when you take them away from their neighborhoods, their drugs. But put them in a pack and they're evil.

—8 Ball Chicks

Breath, Boom is written almost like a movie script; it is episodic in structure and locales and time shifts in huge chunks between the scenes. The entire production staff agreed that no one wanted the flow of the play destroyed by having technicians come out in blacks and change the scenery. Rather, the director wanted each change to flow organically from the scene prior or into the following scene. Actors would move their own properties, set up the stage and even perform small little vignettes to cover the scene changes. In the counseling scene in Act I, the director wanted the girls, Shondra and Fuego, to assault Cat, but it had to be sexual in nature. In the prior scene Cat has been accused of spying on the two, who violently explain the difference to her between *wants* and *needs*. Shondra: "I need a man's touch but none around; I take what I can get." In the scene immediately following, Cat hangs herself in her and Prix's cell. This change was, in part, to foreshadow the next scene.



Victorious, Jupiter (Clory Jackson, right), stands over Prix (Jessica Dukes) in Frostburg State's *Breath, Boom*. Fights by Darrell Scott Rushton, photo by Gregory Davidson.



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Again, simplicity of choreography and economy of movement proved the best choice. Shondra crossed downstage and smacked Cat on the behind. Fuego gyrated and danced, altering between grabbing Cat's hips and trying to pin her between Shondra and herself. The girls had a really hard time with it because the scene was so emotionally charged. They did not want to be perceived as lesbians. They did not want to scare or hurt the actress playing Cat, and it was difficult for them to be sexual attackers. While evidence of females raping females was not found in the research, the possibility was justified by the playwright's views. Society's mistaken view that women do not do that: Yet they do. As psychologists say, "Rape is about power."

The actors were coached and reminded that they never had to do anything which made them uncomfortable, and that no one would believe anything other than it was these characters doing this to Cat and not them. The actors worked privately for awhile before anyone was allowed to see the results. A safe environment was created to see how far the actors could stretch. In the end, they pushed the envelope pretty far. While not actually grinding genitals or breasts, they created the possibility. It made the audience uncomfortable and reiterated again the point of view that the audience must be confronted with the fact that girls do do that. It was ugly violence, of a sexual nature happening between women.

Another scene change was having one of the Correctional Officers' frisk Denise. Thankfully, Brian Shanley, Chief of the Frostburg State University Police, consented to show how to do it properly. A number of things were learned from Shanley including a realistic glimpse into the training and thought process of a law enforcement officer. He showed how to search a suspect or prison-

er. Women are searched differently than men. In addition to the standard leg and body frisking, an officer checks the woman's hair and her bra straps. Small pistols and knives are easily concealable in these spots. Men, as a general rule, do not frisk women. If a female officer is not present, they try and use the back of their hands to preserve some decency for the woman or to avoid a sexual harassment lawsuit. Shanley was very willing to discuss not only how a technique is to be executed, but why.

CONCLUSION

Gangs mirror society, what society teaches them. Society doesn't want to look inside its dark soul. Children have always come forward with the truth, whether it's ugly or beautiful. And we've become an ugly society. Our kids are mirroring that, and no one wants to take the blame.

—8 Ball Chicks

What really makes Corthorn's style of writing, in particular her juxtaposition of heartrending violence with hilarious comedy is what makes this play. Dark comedy, to be sure but comedy nonetheless. When Cat is abused for being arrested for prostitution, Shondra and Fuego are laughing so hard they can barely accuse her of trading it for a Big Mac. After all but raping her in the change of scene, they exit singing "two all beef patties..." In Act 2 when Prix is beaten almost to death, Pepper and the Girl hang on the bathroom stalls like a jungle gym, laughing uproariously at "my sisters, my sisters." When Prix stumbles in her recitation, they accuse her of not saying "the best part." Their comic take on beating Prix so badly, she is bloody, should be very disturbing to the audience.

In the opening scene, the only thing that stops Angel and

Malika from killing Comet is the fireworks display. Eerily, Angel, Prix and Malika revert to being five-year-olds, basking in the reflection of the explosion, asking if it is "memorial day." All of these moments drive home the point that they are children; that this violence is like playing to them. In *Menace II Society*, one of the most disturbing moments was when a child of four or five picks up a huge handgun and plays with it like a toy. What is even more disturbing is that *none of the adults stop him or take the gun away.*

It is disturbing that kids are capable of killing. Corthorn's intent that when the audience is made to laugh at horrific violence, the point that it is failing somehow as a society is driven home that much more intensely. The audience needs to at least be aware that a problem exists out there, and pretending that there is not will not change the fact. Society needs to make abject poverty stop breeding gang violence, drug abuse, spousal abuse, child abuse, child molestation. An audience should hate the fact that kids are not only capable of but *are* shooting each other over the best crack-dealing turf.

In some of her talks, Corthorn expressed disappointment in the actors she worked with on Rikers. Many of them were patronizing to the girls, and took the attitude of: "I would never make the choices you made; I would never be in your shoes." Corthorn felt that since she had come from a middle class family in a quiet town and parents who loved her that she was better equipped to make choices and had better choices to begin with. An actor, of all people, would be the most understanding, since actors should all know that any human being is capable of any action given the right set of circumstances. The characters in this play inhabit the world of the projects in the Bronx, or San Antonio, or South Central Los Angeles: They are real kids. Prix may not be the most sympathetic protagonist, but how many choices did she really have in life?

On a final note, two things occurred that illustrate society. A scenic artist from Houston was in residence while *Breath, Boom* was being prepared. When he saw a copy of *8 Ball Chicks*, he asked about it. He said he thought Gini Sikes was just being a sensationalist that he worked in a tattoo parlor, and the "little gang-banger kids" would come and get their gang tattoos, and in his opinion they were playing: just wearing the clothing and talking the talk. That is like saying one can be part time in the Mafia. The Gang credo *blood in, blood out* does not leave a whole lot of room for negotiation. Maybe the kids in question were playing, but whoever was about to jump them was not. If he knew they were gang tattoos, why did he ink them? While *Breath, Boom* was running, a production of *The Vagina Monologues* was done on campus. "V Day" was a huge success: Sponsors were on campus, plus the Clothesline Project, information about Afghanistan, support groups, a Take Back the Night March and talks on defense against date rape and violence by men. The week long event included not one mention of violence *between* women. Maybe society will never admit it. The fights for *Breath, Boom* were directed so as to leave the audience unable to admit or pretend that it does not happen.

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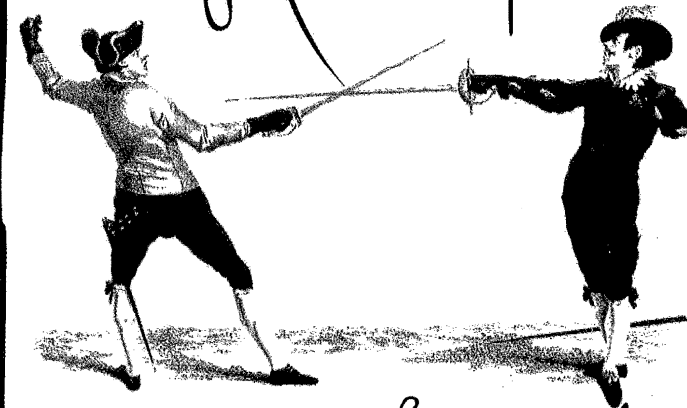
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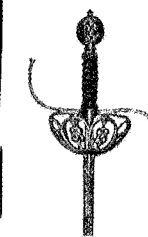
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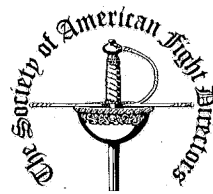
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Fanny Cavendish (Dame Judy Dench) watches as Tony (Toby Stephens) fights McDermott (Richard Ryan) in Sir Peter Hall's West End production of *The Royal Family*. Fights by Richard Ryan, photo by Robert Petkoff.

Acting the Violence II

by Jamie Cheatham

Several years ago *The Fight Master* ran an article on "Acting the Violence" which included several exercises. These were the exercises used regularly in this author's teaching. Due to the positive feedback from the article, here are some more exercises. All of them help to detail the acting by heightening and specifying an awareness of the partner. Through these exercises, actors can discover a more detailed, personal relationship to violent choreography.

These exercises, with the exception of the first, are used mostly in sword work—although they could all probably be adapted to suit whatever style necessary. Unlike the previous exercises, which required a slow-motion, quarter-speed approach, these are to be explored at rehearsal or even performance speed. This is generally because sword fighting is faster than an unarmed fight, full of conditioned reflexes. Actors need a different strategy to relate to its quick ups and downs.

For the following exercises, it is recommended that the actor work with a short piece of choreography that is well rehearsed technically, and which he is able to perform safely and confidently at speed.

GOOD GUY/BAD GUY

This exercise is as simple as the name suggests. Most instructors and combatants do this one, to some extent, instinctively. However, formalizing this imagination game helps the actor in detailing and understanding violent acting. For this exercise a short piece of unarmed choreography that has a clear, definitive victor at the end is needed.

SET-UP

The set-up is simple. The combatants are told to choose whether their character is the *good guy* or the *bad guy*. No conference between partners is necessary—they may both be *good*. No outward display of their choice should be manifested such as illustrating *good* by puffing up the chest or *bad* by hunching and twisting a fake mustache. They need only know that by choosing either *good* or *bad*, they have assigned *their partner* to the opposite role.

Their partner, now their *opponent*, is the person that stands for everything they are against. The combatants also know that the universe hangs in the balance.

Any further discussions are avoided. Often students will want to discuss the playing of *bad* since bad characters often justify their actions as good, and so on. This discussion can wait until after the exploration.

Once the set-up is clear—good versus evil, and the universe hangs in the balance—the actors can have at it! Once they have gone through it, the fight should be tried again—but switch! If their last choice was good, they are now bad. That means the opponent switches, too. The actor must remember, the universe is still at stake.

THE RESULTS

The inevitable result is two very different experiences of the same piece of choreography. After the exercise, the students are asked how it felt. They will probably respond with a great sense of elation and purpose. The reason is worth discussing. What this exercise underlines, in its very simple, almost cartoon-like way, are the basic premises of any fight. First it establishes a *relationship* and *intention* for the actor. It also creates a stronger sense of winning and losing.

RELATIONSHIP AND INTENTION

The *relationship* is one of antagonists, good versus evil. The *intention* for each is to destroy the other's influence on the world. Yes, it is huge, a caricature, but if the student can own up to this childlike exercise, it will bring the student actor's imagination to the level necessary for most onstage fights.

Even though most fights are not literally about the future of the universe, they are usually about something just as important, personally. Whenever a conflict grows to the point of violence, then one may as well say that each character's *personal universe* is at stake. Even if the argument is trivial—arguing over the last piece of pizza, say—if it comes to blows, then the personal investment must be huge. Any kind of fighting could mean putting one's life on the line. The climactic placement of onstage violence demands this level of risk-taking. In this light, *fighting for the universe* hardly seems exaggerated.

It does not matter if both fighters chose the role of *good guy*. That means that they each characterized their opponent as the *bad guy*. It is worth mentioning that this is usually the case in all conflicts. It is clear from the above statement that even bad guys perceive themselves as *good*. So how does one truthfully play *the bad guy*?

Sometimes, like a villain, one chooses to do something he knows is wrong, and does it anyway, in full awareness that he is being bad. Sometimes one even relishes in this knowledge. One justifies his actions in the light of an unfair world. Someone being bad can characterize their opponent as a *goody two shoes* or as being *holier than thou*. The right choice ultimately is the one that helps the actor connect more strongly to the violence. Whatever the choice, a clear understanding of relationship and intention are necessary for making the fight feel real.

WINNING AND LOSING

This exercise brings out a strong sense of winning and losing. Since the choreography is repeated the same person loses twice, but their experience each time is different. Winning as the good guy usually feels appropriately triumphant. Winning as the bad guy has an even greater sense of euphoria. Losing as the bad guy may feel like one in a long line of losses, and carry with it a bitter vendetta. Losing as the good guy feels catastrophic, and is often formed in a feeling of denial. All of these feelings are absolutely appropriate, realistic and usable.

Often so much attention is paid to the technical side of giving and receiving blows that actors simply forget their super objective, to win (or sometimes to survive). Sometimes on stage one pursues winning so hard, he forgets about the potential of losing. But a keen sense of winning *and* losing is absolutely present in a real life situation of violence. It feels bad to lose. It feels good to win. All actions taken are motivated by this emotional drive to succeed, and the fear of losing. This creates risk and consequence to each action taken. As in all scene work, each character must strive to win throughout. Not every attempt may be successful, but trying to win is everything.

If the choreography has any reversals (and this author highly encourages a few clear ones for the sake of this exercise), then these too will be felt more profoundly. It is fine to choreograph a fight with a lot of back and forth, but if the actors are not experiencing the moment-by-moment shift in advantage and loss, then the audience will just be watching *the fight*, or worse, choreography. Once the actors can connect to their struggle, it is a scene worth watching!

JOURNEYS

Journeys are used to increase the actor's ability to interpret and experience weapons work, particularly rapier, inactable ways. Unlike an unarmed fight, the moment-by-moment shift of advantage in a swordfight is more subtle. Few attacks actually land until near the end, so sword fights tend to be a series of thwarted attacks. Acting these subtleties can prove a challenge.

For these exercises a short phrase (four to six moves) is recommended since it will be repeated several times. Since the focus is on acting, a short phrase allows the actors to commit fully without safety being compromised by exhaustion. These lessons should be taught in the context of a duel, but the lessons can be applied to any swordfight.

Again these exercises should be explored with a piece of choreography that is well learned and easily performed at three-quarter speed. The choreography should be non-decisive; that is, it should not end it with a wound. The end should be with some kind of slash and avoid.



Striking a winning pose, Tony (Toby Stephens) exudes confidence in Sir Peter Hall's West End production of *The Royal Family*. Fights by Richard Ryan, photo by Robert Petkoff.

1. THE GREATEST SWORDFIGHTER IN FRANCE

The first in this set of exercises is simply an assertion. Fight the phrase with the assumption that the actor/combatant is *The Greatest Swordfighter in France*.

This is hardly an original exercise, but the benefit is that the actor will instantly take the *work* out of his fighting. He will fight lighter, with more control and a greater ease. The only catch is that the actor must believe it.

Often this assumption can lead to aloof fighting which is boring. It is also rather self-focused. It should be tried again. The actor is still *The Greatest Swordfighter in France*; however, he has been told that his opponent is sneaky. The actor should not be caught off guard.

This slight adjustment helps to keep the actor more attuned to the subtle give and take of the phrase. His focus becomes more attuned to his partner, and as a result, he fights better with him. For this reason all the subsequent assumptions are phrased in terms of the other/partner.

2. THEY'RE MUCH BETTER THAN YOU

Assumption number two, *They're much better than you*. After given a moment to consider this change in attitude, the combatant must fight the phrase again.

Inevitably one will see a change in style. The fighters become heavy-handed, clutching their weapons out of a show of fear. The movements may become choppy and hesitant. This change in style should not be allowed for long as these results are undesirable.

The actors should discuss what has happened to their style and be invited to try it again, but with this new awareness. A swordfighter, entering into a duel may indeed surmise that his opponent is better. That is not a reason to fight in a manner that would insure defeat.

When facing a superior opponent, it is time to fight with one's best technique possible. That means the actor should breathe and hold the sword lightly. One should stay relaxed and attentive. The students should be reminded that all the lessons that they have taught about stage combat, their historical counterparts have learned from their swordmasters in the *salle de arms*. They, like their opponents, would be struggling to recall all the technique lessons they can to survive. So this conscious rethinking of technique is about being in the moment.

SWASHBUCKLING

Swashbuckling

A Step-by-Step Guide

by

Richard
Lane

Executive Director
Academy of the Sword

to the Art of Stage Combat
and Theatrical Swordplay

It takes more skill than daring to appear a genuine swordsman on the stage or screen.

a step-by-step guide to
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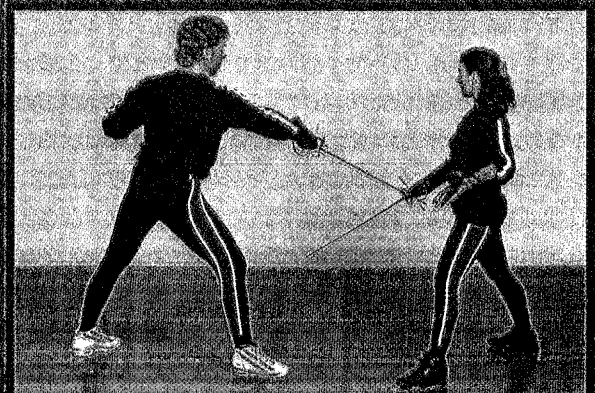
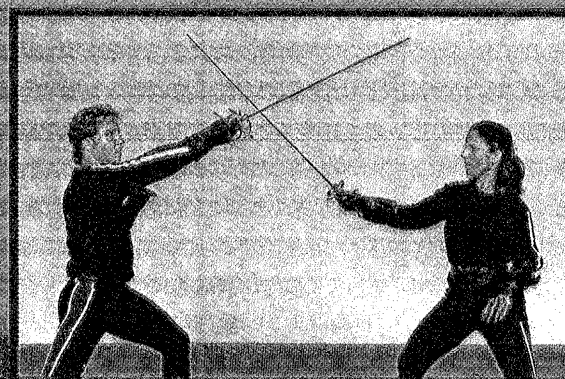
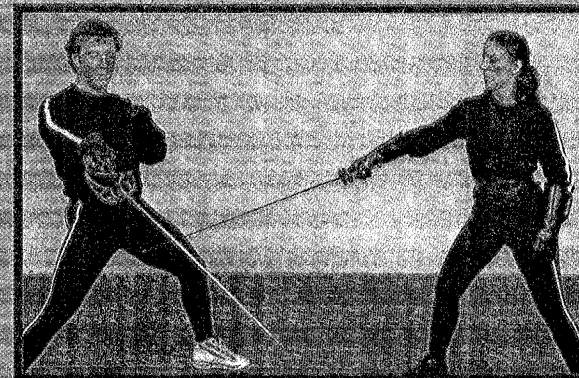
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A combatant in the situation where he is rethinking technique would work hard to hide any signs of fear. It is as much about strategy as about style or pride. Consider how in competitive sports one often *pulls up* when playing against one's better. It is the same here. The phrase should be fought again, without this slip in technique. The actors may need a couple tries to make the adjustment.

The result should be the same lightness and technique as in the previous exercise, but now the phrase should have an element of suppressed danger. This is the kind of layering that makes for intense acting and intense fighting. Placing the focus of the assumption on the partner increases the awareness of the other in the scene. Since the opponent is the source of danger, the partnering technique and the acting skills can increase together. Now the actor can begin engaging in the fight, instead of trying to do the fight correctly.

3. I CAN TAKE THEM!

Here is where the Journeys get their name. Now one begins with this previous assumption and adds on.

The actor/combatant begins the phrase with the assumption *They're much better than you*, but by the end of the phrase, he makes the discovery that, *You can take them!* The actor makes the journey from *They're much better than me* to *I can take them!* This exercise should be done at speed.

Since the choreography is non-decisive, the actors can and must determine for themselves what moment triggers this discovery. It may be a progressive discovery, moment by moment, or it may be one decisive moment. Either way is correct. What the actors should work toward is allowing themselves to make a *genuine* discovery. A speed exploration teaches the actor that they can make specific acting choices even at fast speeds. The actor needs to think quickly.

Since both partners are making the same journey (*I can take them*), it should be discussed how both combatants could have reached the same conclusion. In effect each of the actors have won the phrase. If the phrase ended with a slash, the slasher can relish how he made his opponent jump away in fright. He can also toy with the thought that they could have gotten him, had he really wanted to.

The avoider can also claim victory in this moment. *Ah ha! I'm too quick for you!* or *I don't even have to parry to thwart your attacks!* The victory, then, can be in the eye of the beholder. Certainly, both opponents in a duel could silently claim a simultaneous victory. The point is that the combatant is now able to draw this excitement from moments in the choreography, while remaining attuned to his partner.

4. UH-OH

The last journey is the opposite one. Beginning with the assumption *I am The Greatest Swordfighter in France* by the end of the phrase the actor discovers that *He is much better than I thought!*

Again the discovery may occur as a series of moments or one decisive one. The exact moments of discovery may change slightly

performance by performance, which is one way of staying fresh and in the moment on stage.

Both partners should be able to make this journey simultaneously, so again it is good to discuss the results. A final slash will feel like a desperate attempt to drive the opponent away. The leap away from that same slash will feel like a desperate escape from death.

Combining the last two exercises can help the choreographer or actor sketch the arc of a character's emotional journey through a fight. By stringing them together, one can create the ebb and flow of an inner monologue.

The name *journeys* suggests that movement occurs within each phrase. Like a beat of acting, something occurs within each phrase that changes the situation. Because the journeys culminate at the end of the each phrase, each discovery resonates strongest for the actors (and the audience) in the relative stillness between phrases. This, of course is when the audience gets the best chance to share in the human events of the fight. A fine example is the final fight in *Rob Roy*. People say, *What a great fight!* The response is always, *Yes, but what a well acted fight scene!*

Entering into any physical struggle, like a sporting competition, there will be an instinctive assessment of the opposition. Usually this is very prominent in the consciousness. It no doubt colors one's expectations of victory. So it is not enough to win and feel it. An *unexpected* victory should feel quite different from a sure win. These exercises create the groundwork of expectation. They also place the actor's focus where it belongs in any scene, on the partner. Victory, the threat of death, the momentary opening, or the sneak attack must all be anticipated in the actions of the other person. Taking focus off the self and placing it where it belongs helps bring the actor into the world of the fight.

The benefits of these exercises are many. Both sets, *Good Guy/Bad Guy* and the *Journeys*, are set up to enhance an actor's relationship to

the fight and to his opponent. All of the exercises stress a realistic, play-by-play awareness of the need to win. The need to win is heightened by an enhanced fear of losing. By linking the source of danger (the opponent) with the need for technique, a heightened awareness can be developed that strengthens the acting and the technique simultaneously. Unfortunately, these two important elements often fight against each other. Finally, since these exercises are done at a fast tempo, actors can learn that their powers of observation and imagination are not limited by speed.

If the students really grasp the skills needed to act fights in this heightened way, it will serve them in all of their climactic acting. As is known, there are too few sword shows, fewer still written for women. The high-stake acting skills learned from this work, however, can greatly offset the limited opportunities to use a sword on stage. Certainly this is the best reason to include armed stage combat in any actor training program. It is also why one must continue to teach beyond technique, and always stress acting the violence.



Attempting to win, McDermott (Richard Ryan, below) attacks Tony (Toby Stephens) in Sir Peter Hall's West End production of *The Royal Family*. Fights by Richard Ryan, photo by Robert Petkoff.

Fin

FIGHTING IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE PELEANDO EN OTRA LENGUA

by Stefan Sittig

Teaching unarmed stage combat is never an easy task. Teaching unarmed stage combat in a foreign language is even harder. At the invitation of *Grupo Aventura*, a South American professional theatre company based in Montevideo, capital of Uruguay, this author traveled there to teach unarmed stage combat workshops in Spanish last year. The experience turned out to be challenging and rewarding.

When first presented with the opportunity, the initial emotional reaction was the thrill and excitement about visiting a country and experiencing the culture. On second thought, even though questions arose as to why stage combat teachers did not exist in Uruguay, the challenge of teaching stage combat in a foreign country had been offered and was accepted. Concerns began to arise as to how one did this in Spanish. Negotiating daily life in a foreign language is one thing. Teaching a specific skill with all the jargon it encompasses, in a foreign language, even though it was a second language, is quite another.

The main challenge was to translate all the combat information contained in the English language part of the brain, into safe, clear and concise Spanish for students who spoke no English. How does one ensure that nothing was lost in translation? How does one provide an experience as complete and safe for these Spanish-speaking students as an instructor would for native English-speaking students?

About the size of South Dakota, Uruguay is nestled just south of Brazil and east of Argentina. Originally a Spanish colony, it has struggled for years to escape the shadow of its two larger and physically imposing neighbors. With approximately three million inhabitants concentrated in Montevideo, the country is small but large in its love and appreciation for the arts. With a literacy rate of almost ninety-seven percent, Uruguay is the most literate country in Latin America. It has a much higher educational standard than many areas of the United States.

The vibrant Montevideo Theatre community is always bustling and constantly growing. With more than twenty professional theatre companies and over one hundred productions a year, Montevideo offers a healthy variety of choices for the hungry theatre-goer. It has a union for Independent Theatre Professionals called *Federacion Uruguaya de Teatros Independientes* (FUTI). Everything from Spanish translations of Ibsen to Tony Kushner and original works are constantly in rehearsal or in production with a frequency that rivals any mid-sized US city. A production of Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire* had just closed, and a much celebrated production of *Copenhagen* was packing the houses during the workshop.

Uruguay has an equivalent of the Tony Awards, the *Florencio*. Named after Florencio Sanchez, one of the most important actors and playwrights of Uruguayan theatre, the awards are bestowed yearly and, just like the Tonys, a *Florencio* can mean a much longer run and more money and box office receipts. However, unlike the US, little government funding of professional theatre exists in Uruguay. Many years ago, an annual amount was doled out and divided by several struggling theatres, but due to recent economic constraints, it has been eliminated. Despite the lack of government funds, Uruguayan theatre survives, moves on and manages to focus on performance, artistry and creativity instead of big budgets and elaborate sets.

Yet, with all its richness, Montevideo theatre lacks familiarity with stage combat. It is practically an unknown skill. Most theatre practitioners are aware that it exists, but they rarely have the chance to learn it unless they travel to Europe or the United States. It has no SAFD or similar organization to regulate and sanction the teaching of stage combat. Unlike the US, there are no educational theatre programs at the college and university level where students can hone their skills. Students in Montevideo who want to study theatre, must do so at a private academy, in the evening after school hours. While strong in acting, voice training and theatre history, these academies are sorely lacking in the area of movement for the actor. Besides that, most interested theatre students cannot afford private training at all. They usually have to work two or three jobs to help out at home. Montevideo is a city of contradictions. The desire and love for

theatre is ever-present, but the opportunities to study and financial resources to receive or give training are scarce.

The school in which the workshop was held was an old Spanish-style house, restored for use as a school. It had a series of spacious classrooms. While the house was indeed a marvel of 19th century Spanish architecture, it certainly did not seem to be the ideal place for a stage combat class. A closer examination of the surroundings revealed that the floor, made of a soft, pliant wood with considerable give, was actually not bad for falling, tumbling and forward rolls. The nonair-conditioned room, which initially seemed cramped and claustrophobic, was actually quite open and cool once the long shutters covering the floor-to-ceiling windows were opened and fresh air from the outside came in. While this is not the same as teaching in an air-conditioned studio with sprung floors and full length mirrors, it actually served its purpose quite well and turned out to be just fine for the number of students registered for the workshop.

The concept of time is different in Montevideo, too. The class was scheduled to start at 9:30 in the evening which seems like a rather strange time to start a class. Back in the US one is used to teaching during the day or in the seven to ten evening rehearsal slot common for most theatre groups. Apparently in Montevideo, it is usual for activities to start as late as ten in the evening on a weeknight, since most students have to work until then.

On the first day of class most of the students did not arrive until a quarter past 10:00. They were a crew of eight—four men and four women—of various shapes and sizes. Most were dressed appropriately and seemed ready to work.

After leading a basic physical warm-up, other more specific challenges started to hover in the brain. How does one communicate such technical terms as *knap* or *safe distance* in Spanish. But that was determined soon enough. After pairing them up according to height and body type they were taught a forward fall. It was amazing how fast they mastered this skill, with almost no verbal direction from the instructor. They imitated the position of the instructor's feet, body, hands and head with very little coaching. Their focus and commitment to learning was intense. They were so eager to learn, absorbing every detail like sponges. The

fact that the instructor could not rely on his words to communicate a skill, actually helped the students to focus on the visual demonstration. They quickly seemed to be comfortable with the forward fall.

Next, they were taught the side fall/faint and moved on to the stage slap (no contact), and the hair/ear/nose pulls. As the workshop progressed, it was hard to believe how focused these students were. They delved into every technique with such abandon, with such dedication. They asked questions without shame, and they repeated techniques diligently until they became comfortable with this new physical language. Even students who were struggling with certain techniques kept trying until they improved significantly.

Once the workshop was in full swing, all the initial fears and doubts about teaching stage combat in a foreign language proved to be unfounded. These students were eager to learn. It was as simple as that. The language barrier was not enough to keep them from experiencing a new skill that they so desperately yearned to master.

What this experience—teaching in Spanish—showed was that one often relies too much on vocal cues and verbal explanations to teach the details of each unarmed stage combat skill. Because many of the words used in English to describe unarmed stage combat techniques, such as *knap* or *safe distance* have no Spanish counterpart, the instructor finds himself teaching more by example and demonstration. The students then focused more on visual clues, rather than verbal directions. Different students learn differently, but when one is teaching a movement skill, such as stage combat, dance or mime, the ultimate learning technique has to be a combination of visual and kinesthetic. Verbal coaching can help a student, who is more of an aural learner, but eventually, that student will have to engage their other modes of learning to grasp the techniques fully.

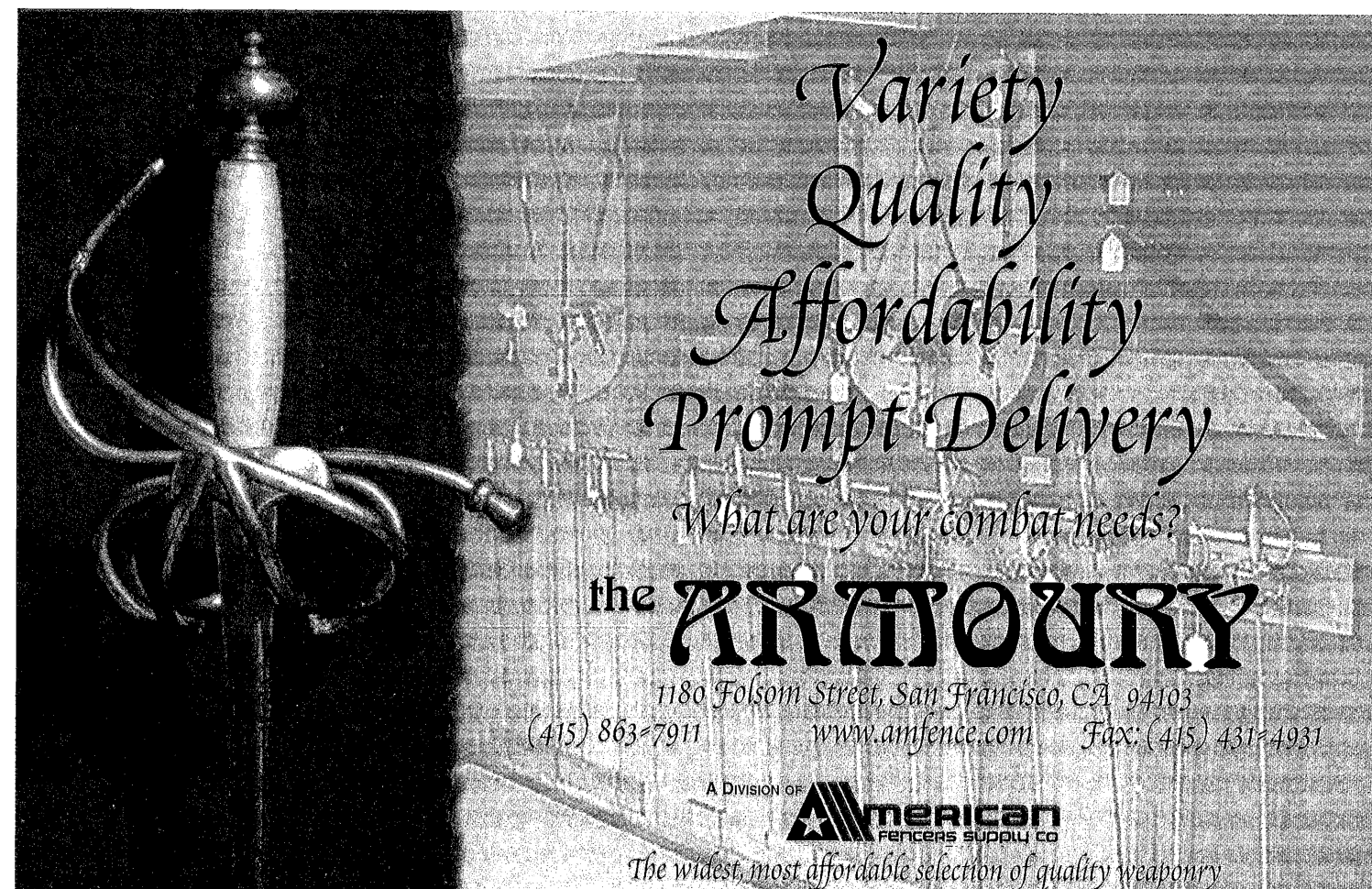
The intensity and love that these Uruguayan students brought to their learning of stage combat was surpassed only by the respect, love and admiration they showed the instructor outside of the classroom. All sorts of social events, discussions about every possible theatre subject, and movement advice occurred on a

daily basis. These students are not dedicated just while in the classroom, but they live and breathe theatre day and night and treated it with respect, love and a sort of awe that teachers in the US rarely experience. Perhaps they have learned something essential about the student-teacher relationship that has not been found in the US or which has been forgotten.

A crucial meaning surfaced from this experience. Students who are not given as many opportunities to learn, and are not handed everything on a platter, but are made to work for their knowledge, go to their tasks much hungrier to learn.

The experience in Montevideo has shown how a teacher can foster this kind of hungry student. One hopes this hunger can be passed on to students being taught in the US. Maybe it has something to do with passion and connecting with what truly motivates one in life. Uruguayans, with their rich Spanish culture, exacting European precision and Latin passion seem to have found the right combination for learning. Teaching stage combat in Montevideo was not a job, it was a pleasure.

— Fin



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Working with a Fight Director

by Ron Hubbard



At a Renaissance feast, Laura Catherine (left) challenges Colby Baker in the Utah Shakespearean Festival's 2001 production of *The Royal Feasts*. Fights by Robin McFarquhar. Photo by Karl Hugh. ©2001 Utah Shakespearean Festival.

The Utah Shakespearean Festival (USF) begins rehearsing for its summer season in early May, and because the practitioners of USF come from all over the country, production meetings begin in January in Los Angeles and finalize in March at Cedar City, Utah. It was at the March meeting that the fight director for the 2001 Season was introduced to the USF staff.

The twenty people at this meeting included the music director, dance choreographer, designers, and directors, all desperately trying to find time to discuss matters important to them. After all of the important matters had been discussed, the subject of properties came up. As the discussion eventually got around to the weapons to be used, a thin, quiet figure at the other end of the table spoke to the group. Where this soft-spoken voice was coming from, how he got there and who he was had not been noticed. This was Robin McFarquhar, the fight director.

As the role that fighting would play in the shows was explained, an enigmatic expression formed on McFarquhar's face. Nine fights were required for the Revels Company. Five of the fights were one-on-one, the others were complex movement pieces involving as many as eleven participants. The weapons would be rapier and dagger, single rapier, broadsword, unarmed, staves, clubs, and a giant golf club.

McFarquhar took all of these assignments with stoic indifference. One could not tell if he was uninterested or was going to resign immediately after the meeting. Fortunately, neither was true. What could not be read in his face or demeanor was quiet confidence.

At USF the Revels Company is a group of two or three specialty performers, seven musicians, and ten actor-singer-dancers. But now, it seems that with all of these fights, these actor-singer-dancers would have to be transformed into actor-singer-dancer-combatants, and it would have to be done quickly.

With a company rehearsing forty-eight hours a week for two months one would think plenty of time was available for all of the directors and coaches to do what they had to do. Yet time is a precious commodity. With four shows to be mounted it seems as if everyone always needs more time. A rhetorical question: Why are so many fights needed?

The Revels Company shows are composed of almost equal amounts of singing, dancing, and acting. Since the action takes place in the sixteenth century, none of the hot kind of jazz associated with most musicals existed. The hot numbers were the fights.

The company was cast and the deck was not exactly stacked in favor of stage combat, although the fights were to be the structurally defining moments in the shows. The acting company of five men and five women were actors with wonderful voices most of whom could also dance. Stage combat was not in overabundance on the resumes.

McFarquhar started slowly, teaching the fundamentals as a class. He used a method aimed at getting the shows mounted. He used terminology and simple phrases that were easily understood by these mostly untrained fighters.

As the process of creating the choreography began, it seemed to make sense that McFarquhar would start with the duels. The Royal

Feaste which is one of the Revel Company shows, is a dramatic action based around a five-course meal. For the 2001 season, Sir John Falstaff and friends (patrons) had spent the day hunting. As part of their entertainment at the evening meal a fight apprentice would try for his (actually, it turned out to be a girl) master's title. Spaced throughout the show the apprentice battles with her masters for equality.

The first test was with rapier and dagger. McFarquhar created a subtle (the audience was close and surrounded the stage), beautiful (as movement) bit of choreography. Communication between the director and the fight choreographer was always terse. The director would present the vaguest of outlines and could see the ideas forming in McFarquhar's mind. He would repeat back what had been said in his own words to be sure that the director understood. Then he would ask a few questions such as how long the fight should last, the nature of it, and so forth.

The second test was with single rapier. The apprentice was pitted against a Spaniard noted as the finest swordsman in all of Spain. McFarquhar brought a unique style to the fight with this character. And it had a delightful surprise ending that made good use of the performer's acting ability which was far greater than his fighting ability. McFarquhar made it all believable and the performer looked good.

The test of staff was finely chiseled movement. This is a good place to note how seriously a fight director takes the issue of safety. At a point late in the rehearsal process, he had given instructions for the staves used in fighting to be

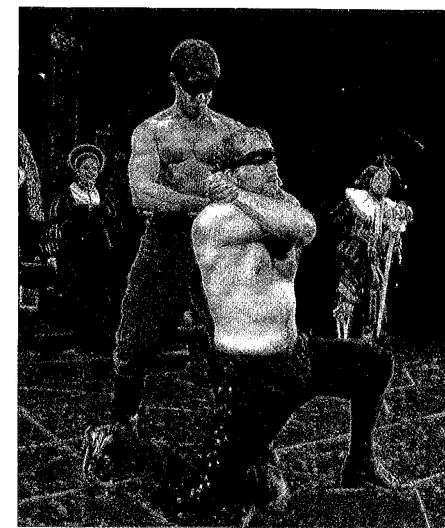
on hand for a certain rehearsal. The rubber pads on the ends of the staves were being replaced or repaired. The wrong staves were brought to the rehearsal. McFarquhar, who always insured safety made several outbursts and several of the staff felt the wrath of one who will not tolerate any irregularities in procedure or discipline when it comes to safety.

Five fights had to make a discernible progression in complexity and also advance the story from the beginning fight through to the climax. They had to go from comedy to near tragedy and back. The fights defined the structure of the *Royal Feaste*. In musical terms, the feaste was a *rondo* and the fights the *ritornelli*.

A lot of choreography had to be taught. McFarquhar's work was hardly over. In addition to the nine fights for the Revels Company, McFarquhar also did the fight work for six other shows including *Julius Caesar* and *The Pirates of Penzance*.

He had to create a comic melee between two Scottish clans, and a comic broadsword fight between four Scotsmen that had everyone fighting each other until the Loch Ness monster tries to eat them. This is where the giant golf club comes in. Two lasses drive away Nessie with the over-sized club and the audience loved it.

The Irish fight was also comic and used clubs. The Welsh fight with rapier and dagger, was something special. It began with two men quarreling over a woman. Soon, it grew to four men quarreling over the very same woman. Sometimes they were paired off one-on-one, then the partners changed. Finally, they are all fighting each other. It was



Besting his rival, Orlando (James Knight, behind) wrestles Charles (Shelby Davenport) as Touchstone (Michael David Edwards) and a Lady (Elizabeth DeRosa) observe in the Utah Shakespearean Festival's 2002 production of *As You Like It*. Fights by Robin McFarquhar. Photo by Karl Hugh. ©2002 Utah Shakespearean Festival.

another comic fight that delighted the audience with its humor, innovative choreography, beauty of pure movement, and the abilities of the performers, all of whom were students of McFarquhar.

Comedy is difficult. One gets the laugh or does not. It is not like drama or tragedy when the director and performers can claim anything because the audience is mostly silent. And comedy is not silly. Anyone can be silly, that takes no particular talent. Comedy is serious. It takes talent. One must use someone else's words, actions, and story. This is a challenge not meant for the frivolous. Most people do not have the discipline or drive needed to master the technical intricacies of comedy.

McFarquhar seemed to have an extraordinary sense of rhythm. He understood immediately the comic implications of each of the fights outlined for him. Understanding and doing are two entirely different things. McFarquhar knew exactly where the laughs should come and rehearsed the performers' moves and reactions to point up the laughs. And he guessed right almost every time and did not allow the performers to go for cheap laughs, or mug, or do any of the things actors attempt first when trying to be funny. It was not silly, it was comedy.

McFarquhar was definitely an experienced fight director. He showed the expertise and confidence that a professional fight choreographer should possess.



Disguised as a man, Laura Catherine (right) fights Colby Baker for her master's title in the Utah Shakespearean Festival's *The Royal Feasts*. Fights by Robin McFarquhar. Photo by Karl Hugh. ©2001 Utah Shakespearean Festival.

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SWORDPLAY

LA VERDADERA DESTREZA, THE TRUE ART AND SKILL OF SPANISH SWORDSMANSHIP by Raymond Delgato

Palpage Hit Productions and the Martinez Academy of Arms has released a two volume video on Spanish Swordsmanship entitled *La Verdadera Destreza, The True Art and Skill of Spanish Swordsmanship*. This is the first set of instructional videos on the Spanish School of Swordsmanship. The video demonstrates the applied geometry on which the Spanish school was founded based on the original treatises of Don Jeronimo Sanchez de Carranza and his protege Don Luis Pacheco de Narvaez. *La Verdadera Destreza* Volumes 1 & 2 provides the basic skills, techniques and drills to practice the fundamental elements of one of the most misunderstood and deadly systems of fencing.

Maestro Ramon Martinez, an internationally recognized authority on the Spanish school of rapier fencing, shares the knowledge he has gleaned from over twenty-five years of teaching and research. He presents the fundamental techniques in a simple format that is comprehensible to the modern swordsman who is training without a master. The presentation is done with his wife and colleague Maestro Jeannette Martinez and the producer Anthony De Longis.

Producer De Longis, a performer, fight director and teacher for nearly thirty years, became involved with the Spanish School of fencing when he approached the producers of *Highlander: the Series* in 1996 with the idea to create something different for their show. De Longis was intrigued and inspired in his readings on the Spanish style described by Domenico Angelo in his book *The School of Fencing*, coupled with eighteenth century fencing master P.J.F. Girard's descriptions and those of Egerton Castle in his *Schools and Masters of Fence*. In the "Duende" episode De Longis combined the courage and cool definance of a matador with the staccato rhythms, flashing footwork and playful grace of a flamenco dancer. De Longis always wanted to study the works of Carranza and Narvaez, the originators of the Spanish style, rather than only reading the commentary of others.

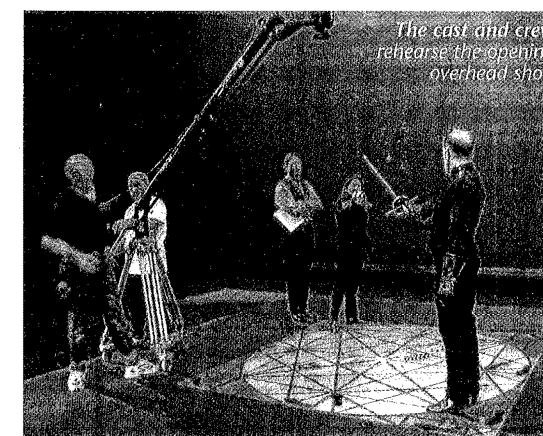
The seeds for the video project were planted when De Longis attended a two-day seminar in Ashland Oregon in May of 2001 that Martinez was teaching on the sixteenth



Maestro Ramon Martinez (center),
Maestro Jeanette-Acosta Martinez
(right), Anthony DeLongis.

*I hope that the public enjoys
viewing and using these videos as
much as I enjoyed making them.
For my part, I am certainly glad to
make the fruits of my labor
available to a wider audience.*

— Ramon Martinez



The cast and crew
rehearse the opening
overhead shot.

and seventeenth century school of Spanish swordsmanship.

Martinez was pleased with De Longis' videos and his previous film work. Although De Longis had taken considerable theatrical license with the Spanish style in his choreography for the *Queen of Swords* and *Highlander: The Series*, Martinez praised his efforts to show, for the first time on film, a sense of the spirit and character of the Spanish swordsman.

Martinez had never worked in front of a camera and was concerned about how effective his teaching would be in this unfamiliar environment. He was very ambitious about the amount of information he wanted to introduce and cover. Originally he had wanted De Longis to contribute some stage combat applications inspired by the lessons. It very quickly became clear that in the time allotted, the video needed to be entirely devoted to learning the basics of Martinez's process. Advanced concepts such as *acometimiento* and theatrical analysis would have to wait until the next video.

This two-volume set takes the mystery out of the Spanish Mysterious Circle, a much misunderstood term since nowhere in

the Spanish documents is the term magic or mysterious ever used in describing the circle. The diameter of

the circle is established by the distance from the tip of the swordman's index finger when extended over his head, to the floor. The circle is not stationary but moving with the two swordsmen who must maintain the distance to avoid becoming vulnerable. The circle is continually maintained three dimensionally in the swordsman's mind.

Volume I opens with a fantastic overhead shot of two fencers fencing on the Spanish circle with all its lines and angles. The circle used in the video was loaned by Moreno Films, the Spanish producers of *The Queen of Swords*, which had used Thibault's circle in the teaching scene of the opening episode. The circle is a detailed reconstruction of the circle found in *The Academy of the Sword*, the profusely illustrated seventeenth-century treatise written by Flemish fencing master Gerard Thibault who, not being of the mainstream of the art, practiced his own unique version of Spanish swordsmanship.

In the written instruction accompanying the video, directions are provided to help viewers to build their own circle. Though, aside from a late sixteenth-century engraving showing the fencing school at the University of Leyden, there is little historical evidence that fencers actually practiced on a circle on the floor. Martinez explains.

We thought, again, that it would be a useful visual aid and training tool for students practicing without a master. However, we were careful to make it abundantly clear that the circle is only a visual reference designed to help students learn proper distance and the judgment of angles, and not meant to be literally followed in a connect-the-dots fashion while fencing. When actually fencing, one should



Maestro Ramon Martinez (left) executes an extrano.

An interesting difficulty that I encountered was the necessity of halting action at the end of a drill, so that the phrasing of blade work ended on a specifically designated mark before the camera. Though this was necessary to ensure the correct camera angles, in actual fencing, which is a very different matter than following a carefully choreographed sequence, it is nearly impossible to stop the action on cue on a particular point on the floor. I developed a whole new appreciation for fight directors, who are many times forced to work on a confined set with little or no preparation on the part of the actors and sparse rehearsal space and time.

— Ramon Martinez



Anthony De Longis (left) executes unas at vera.

not use a fixed circle drawn on the floor.

Volume I goes on to include instruction and drills in weapon and blade selection, grip, positions of the hand, stance, footwork, blade actions and opposition developing sensitivity and how to build the circle. While the latter is done visually through animation and the tape includes John Michael Greer's pamphlet explaining how to construct the circle, all the lines and angles of the circle are never really explained.

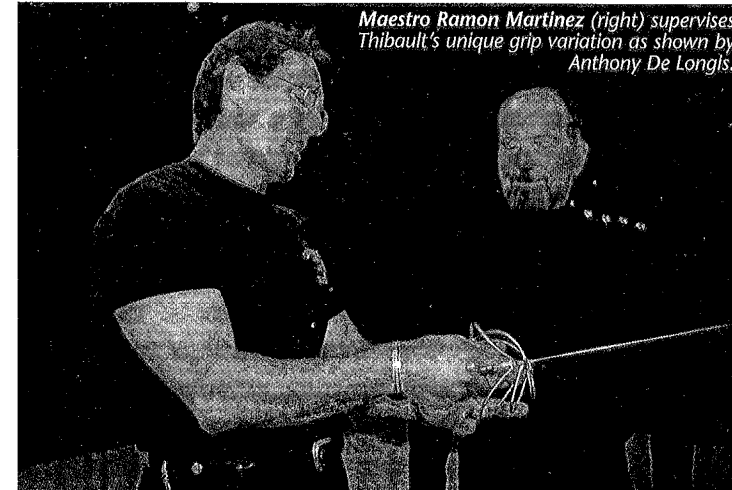
Volume II builds on the foundations established in the first tape and includes instruction and drills in *Movimientos*, cuts, thrusts, defensive blade actions, dagger selection and grip and attack and defense with rapier and dagger.

Martinez's attention to every detail including stance, hand and blade positions (*unas-arribal abajol afuera adentro*), footwork, both simple and complex (*compases*) and the concept of movement (*movimientos*) clearly illustrate the combative effectiveness of the Spanish system and why its principles were utilized effectively for over three hundred years. Engagements (*atajo*) and changes (*cambio de atajo*), attacks by thrust (*estocada*) and cut (*arrebatar, medio tajo* and *mandoble*) as well as defense (*desvios*) are examined and explained.

One of the pedagogical problems that clever camera work and visual aids could not solve was how to teach *tacto*, or the tactile sense that a skilled swordsman must acquire. Martinez points out.

Obviously, we can not give a student direct experience of this through the medium of a videotape. Therefore, instead, we gave explicit drills and instructions on the tape concerning how to acquire *tacto*, beginning with the all-important *atajo*, or engagement of the opposing blade. We were aided in this by the special

weapons that we had manufactured for this video tape, the cup hilts of the rapiers were custom-made by Dennis Graves of No Quarter Arms, while the blades, FISAS-model practice rapier blades made by Del Tin of Italy are, far and away, the best practice rapier blades available on the market today. The FISAS blades are manufactured to exacting specifications, with a triangular cross-section, a temper that is neither too stiff nor overly flexible, and proper weight, length, taper, and balance. Most importantly, they have a true *ricasso*, that portion of the blade that passes through the perforation of the guard. When held in the way we demonstrated on the video, the true *ricasso* conveys to the swordsman's fingers unsurpassed tactile sensitivity.



Maestro Ramon Martinez (right) supervises Thibault's unique grip variation as shown by Anthony De Longis.



Director of Douglas Morado Martinez and Producer Anthony De Longis discuss the video.

La Verdadera Destreza is of great interest to both the combative and theatrical sword community as a basic introductory video on Spanish rapier fencing. Even if one has had the opportunity to attend one of Martinez's workshops, the tapes are valuable in enabling the viewer to clearly see and hear what is being demonstrated. It provides a solid introduction to the vocabulary and basic concepts of this unique school of fencing. Nothing like it exists outside of the

Martinez Academy in New York.

Palpable Hit Productions produced the tapes which may be ordered by visiting <http://www.martinez-destreza.com> or <http://www.delongis.com/PalpableHit/destreza.html>

or write to

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— Fin

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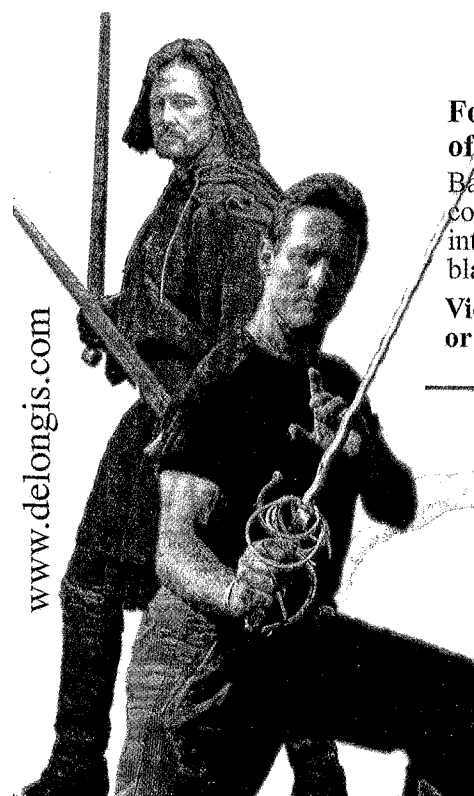
— Nick Evangelista, Fencing Maestro and Author

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The Pen & the Sword

JULIUS PALFFY-ALPAR 1908-2001

by Linda Carlyle McCollum

Julius Palffy-Alpar who passed away at the age of ninety-three on Valentine's Day in 2001 was the author of *Sword and Masque*, which being published in 1967, made it the most comprehensive and authoritative book of its day on fencing, and one of the earliest books to be published on theatrical fencing.

Alpar was most noted as a Hungarian fencing coach with an international reputation for training skilled fencers such as Adam Paul Kovac, Olympic and World Saber Champion, Tibor Bercelly and Ladislaus Rajcsanyi, members of the 1936 Olympic Champion Saber Team. He also tutored the likes of such celebrities as Marcel Marceau and Robert Goulet.

In the foreword to the book, Marcel Marceau said:

I thank Julius Alpar, whose pupil I still remain, for bringing the love for fencing to my soul. Julius Alpar is not only a great fencing master, but a man of stature whose warm personality and pedagogic knowledge I will always remember. I recommend those who want to practice this noble art to receive their first lessons from an artist like Julius Alpar.

In the dedication to his book to his wife Eva, Alpar mentions how she accompanied him with love and understanding in their wanderings through seven countries from Budapest to San Francisco, "Teaching young and old, unknown and famous, the secrets of fencing." He goes on to mention how the "family of fencers...gathered around me to learn and understand the conversation of the blades and acquire knightly manners in 'the sport of Kings and Cavaliers.'"

Alpar was born in 1908 in Hunyad-Kristyor, Transylvania which was a part of Hungary at the time. His father was a descendant of German settlers and his mother was a member of the Palffy family. In 1927 he received his diploma from the high school in Békés-Gyula and then spent three years at Békés-Csaba with the army. In 1930 he entered the Toldi Miklos Royal Hungarian Sports Institute and graduated at the top of his class. He spent three years as an assistant instructor and

received his Master's degree and diploma as *Maitre d'Armes* and sports instructor. At the Sports Institute he studied almost every known sport, won the individual ski championship for the Army three times, and was a member of the Ski Biathlon Team for five years, spent two years in Austria for the government on Alpine and glacier climbing. He was also a member of the Modern Pentathlon Squad and participated in horseback riding, shooting, fencing, running and swimming competitions.

Upon graduation in 1935, Alpar became a professor of physical education and fencing at the Hungarian Military Academy in Budapest until the Russian occupation in 1945. During this time he was the *Maitre d'Armes* to the Hungarian Athletic Club and the Hungarian Officers' Club and one of the coaches of the 1936 Olympic Champion Team. He won a reputation as an Olympic Fencing coach and in 1943 won the Three-Weapon Championship for Army Fencing masters.

While in Budapest Alpar was also connected to the film world through his work as the fencing director of the Hungarian film *Mayfair*. It was his work and friendship with Marcel Marceau which encouraged Alpar's interest in theatrical work.

In 1945 he became Sports Manager for the American Army in Europe serving as director of sports at the US Army Recreation Center at Garmish-Partenkirchen Winter Olympic Resort at Eibsee, Bavaria. While there he also learned and taught water skiing. In 1948 he spent one year in Coblenz with the 10th French Division where he worked with the French Master Epee Champion, *Maitre d'Armes* Devimeux. After leaving Coblenz, he worked in Saarbrücken with German fencer Otto Adam who was the German Saber Champion and President of the German Fencing Association. In 1948 he taught at the Racing Club de France with Maitre Bourdon and Maitre Spinozi. It was during this time that he was able to compare the Italian style of fencing he had learned in Hungary with the French foil fencing in France.

From 1949 to 1960 he was *Maitre d'Armes* at the University of Toronto, the largest university in Canada where he was the fencing coach. He taught theatrical fencing in the New Play Society which was the theatrical school in Toronto under the direction of the English actress Dora Mavor Moore. It was while in Toronto that he taught fencing to Robert Goulet.

In *Sword and Masque*, Goulet's picture is inscribed with the comment:

I'm soon obtaining a sword cane and I assure you that much posturing will be inflicted upon the unwary passerby. But each time, it shall be done in the memory of you.

Then in 1960 Alpar was invited to become the Chief Instructor for the San Francisco Sports Academy. In 1962 he left the Sports Academy and joined the faculty at the University of California in Berkeley where he became *Maitre d'Armes*, Master of Physical Education, Department of Physical Education until he retired in 1975. While teaching at Berkeley, enrollments in fencing

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Philadelphia Stage Combat Workshop

Fall, 2003, SAFD and The University of the Arts, Philadelphia, PA
(215) 888-4172 philasc@yahoo.com

increased markedly and his students won numerous awards in intercollegiate competition. He won Berkeley's Distinguished Teaching Award in 1976.

While at Berkeley, he was associated with the Department of Dramatic Art where he gave instruction in theatrical fencing. He introduced and taught a course entitled "Theory and Practice of Staged Combat," and choreographed *Hamlet*, *Coriolanus* and *Don Juan* as well as other dramatic productions while at Berkeley.

A female student who was advised to take the new course in theatrical fencing showed up to the first day of the class only to be confronted by Alpar with "What are you doing here? Women don't fence on stage." He went on to qualify the comment by clarifying that the only play a woman would fight in would be *A Servant of Two Masters* in which this student, who was almost six feet tall, would never be cast. The young female student, not knowing quite what to say, politely responded, "But I might have to show someone else how to do it." She was allowed to remain in the class and served as what is called today, the fight captain, on two productions at Berkeley.

The rehearsal process at Berkeley consisted of taking the actors with all the safety equipment, i.e. jackets, gloves and masks, and teaching them the fight.

Fencing on the stage...is a set of routine exercises that have been practiced step-by-step by the actors from a plan. The actors must be drilled very carefully so that they maintain the proper distance from each other. Until they are able to control their movements, they should use masks and study with a fencing master. (Alpar 171)

After the fight had been drilled into the actors and the timing and pace were in place, the actors worked without the safety equipment and then went into costume. Before each performance the actors walked through the fight under the supervision of a trained rehearsal assistant who made sure everything was still in place.

Today, stage combat is taught from the beginning without the mask and padding being worn. The safety features are built into the technique from the start.

In his book *Sword and Masque* Alpar gives a brief background on how weapons were used in different periods from Ancient combat with sword and shield and net and trident, the Middle Ages with the two-hand sword, spear and halberd along with the dagger, and what he refers to as the early modern period with rapier, rapier and buckler, rapier and dagger, rapier and cloak, two rapiers and the transition rapier. The Modern Period consists of small sword, saber and bayonet.

He gives exercises that he considered useful for stage move-

ments and could be used as basic warming up exercises. He also gives the fight choreography for *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *King Lear* and Moliere's *Don Juan*.

Alpar also describes two salutes in his text that were done for exhibitions and bouts, done with great ceremony with all the prescribed movements and attitudes.

From the initial on guard position, the weapon was lifted with straight arm obliquely up above the shoulder. From this position, the weapon was brought down to point obliquely down, then was brought back, crossing in front of the body and held with both hands (arms straight). The left hand held the foible of the weapon. Both arms and the weapons were raised over the head and the on guard position was finally resumed.

The other salute was known as the Grand Salute.

This consisted of a series of movements performed without masks. The fencers faced one another in the initial position with arms held straight. They saluted facing each other, and then to the left and to the right. Both took the on guard position for five counts. Coming back to the upright position they separated and one made a lunge while the other executed a prime parry. Again both took the on guard position for five counts and then engaged in various movements showing the basic methods of attack and defense. At the end, stamping twice with their right foot, both returned to the initial position. They saluted both to the right and to the left, took the on guard position once again for five counts, then stamping with the right foot they returned to the upright position, saluted each other and shook hands.

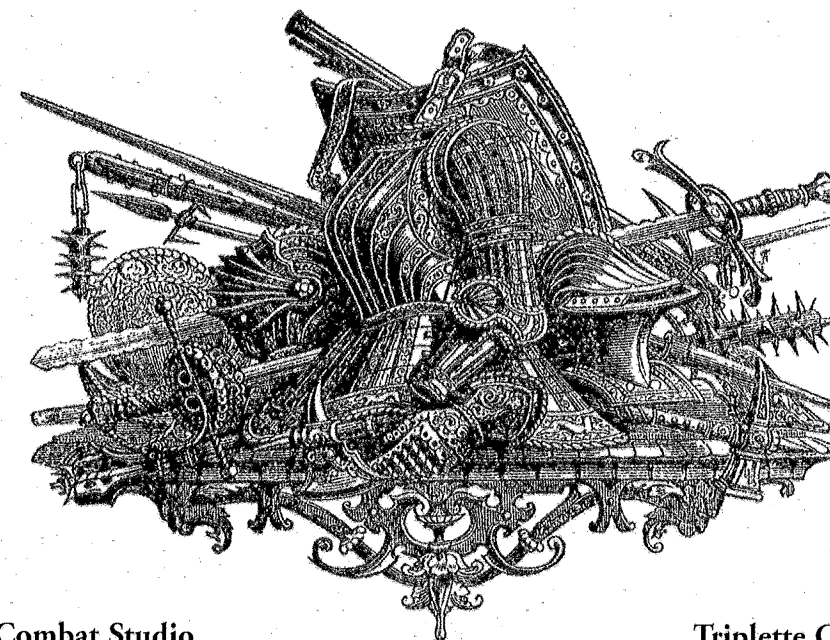
Alpar worked both as a performer and as a coach and teacher in the fields of sports and fencing. In many noted opera and drama productions he staged the fencing and gymnastic movements. Among the major operas and dramas he staged were Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, Gounod's *Faust*, Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac*, Moliere's *Don Juan*, Oliver's *The Antifurce of John and Leporello*, Shakespeare's *Henry IV*, *King Lear*, *Hamlet*, *Anthony and Cleopatra*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Coriolanus*. Towards the end of his career Alpar had devised an ingenious method for teaching fencing to the blind.

Alpar was one of the first to bring stage combat into university training programs and is to be commended for making others aware that there was more to staging a fight on stage than just bringing in the local fencing coach to set the fight.

— Fin

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EAE	Examiner's Award for Excellence

AUGUST 2001

August 26, 2001	Pioneer Theatre Company
Geoffrey Kent	Dale Girard
Mark Mineart	R&D UA

SEPTEMBER 2001

September 9, 2001	Video Renewal
Brian Byrnes	Chuck Coyl
Philip Raybourn	R&D UA

September 16, 2001

Pioneer Theatre Company	David Boushey
Dale Girard	
Mark Mineart	SIS

NOVEMBER 2001

November 18, 2001	Pioneer Theatre Company
J. Allen Suddeth	Joe Travers
Andrew Smereck	SIS

DECEMBER 2001

December 15, 2001	Illinois State University
Paul Dennhardt	Richard Raether
Thomas Haynes	SIS
Holly Locke	SIS
Heather Freer	SIS
Faith Hurley	SIS
Raymond Kurut	SIS
Porowan Pattaynon	SIS
Keith Nadal	SIS
Haley Rice	SIS
Lawrence McDonald	SIS

APRIL 2002

April 14, 2002	Bard Alley Studio
K Jenny Jones	Drew Fracher
Thomas Nealeigh	SIS SS BS S&S
Sandy van Bremen	SIS SS BS S&S
Christopher Ensweiler	SIS SS BS S&S

April 18, 2002 University of Washington

Geoffrey Alm	David Boushey
Anna-Marie Broback	R&D UA BS
Ilene Fins	R&D UA BS
Trey Gorden	R&D UA BS
Kevin Inouye	R&D UA BS
Douglas Steves	R&D UA BS
Jesse Hinds	R&D UA BS
Robert Borwick	R&D UA BS
Deb Fialkow	R&D UA BS
Chris Gullimet	R&D UA BS
Rob Jones	R&D UA BS

April 19, 2002 The Shakespeare Theatre

Brad Waller	Erik Fredricksen
Denise Cormier	R&D UA S&S-AII EAE
A.J. Ferriter	R&D SS UA-AII EAE
Larry Giantonio	R&D SS UA-AII EAE
Paula Hubman	R&D SS UA-AII EAE
Carol Roscoe	R&D SS UA-AII EAE
Foster Solomon	R&D SS UA-AII EAE
Jason Ma	R&D SS UA
Fletcher McTaggart	R&D SS UA
Ayla Yarkut	R&D SS UA
Craig Bentley	R&D SS UA
Ian Gould	R&D SS UA
Fred Grandy	R&D SS UA
Margaret Kemp	R&D SS UA
Marie Shell	R&D SS UA
Michael Weingart	R&D SS UA
Timothy Worley	R&D SS UA

April 22, 2002

Bruce Lecure	Miami, FL
Timothy Bell	Brian Byrnes
	SS BS- All EAE

April 23, 2002 Marymount Coll. London Centre

Richard Ryan	Drew Fracher
Thomas Hamilton	R&D SIS UA
Janine Reyes	R&D SIS UA
Jed Hancock-Brainerd	R&D SIS UA
Jonathan Templeton	R&D SIS UA
Maia Newell-Large	R&D SIS UA
Anna Egloff	R&D SIS UA
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Cristina Flagg	SIS
Kathryn Flynn	SIS
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Forest O'Neil-Greenberg	SIS
Adam Smith	SIS
Amanda Spears	SIS
Katie Urban	SIS
Emily Vick	SIS
Benjamin Gooch	SIS
Toni Trucks	SIS
Sally Burgess	SIS

April 27, 2002

Ian Rose	Arcadia University
Brett Cassidy	J. Allen Suddeth
Matt Mainhart	R&D UA BS-EAE QS
Catherine Kee	R&D SIS UA BS-EAE QS
Brian McAnn	BS
Doug Thomas	SIS-EAE UA-EAE BS
Mark Binder	SIS UA BS
Owen Timony	SIS UA BS
Jason Salotti	R&D BS QS
Karl Babij	SIS BS

April 27, 2002

Robert Westley	University of Alabama
Stacy Alley	Dale Girard
Rita Cevallos	UA-EAE KN
Will Cleckler	UA
Lee Crouse	UA KN
Eric Curtis	UA KN
Robert Ek	R&D SIS SS UA QS KN

Rashida Giles	UA KN
Brooke Harrison	UA
Marcus Lane	R&D SIS SS UA QS KN
Andre LaSalle	UA
Heather Lawson	UA KN-EAE
Brent Maddox	R&D UA KN
Debbi Mazzone	KN
Daniel Meredith	R&D UA KN
Adam Pellegrine	KN-EAE
Diany Rodriguez	R&D UA KN
Mike Sheldon	UA KN
Stephen Wade	UA KN
Michael Walker	UA KN
Brad Williams	KN
Cliff Williams	UA KN

April 28, 2002 Pennsylvania State University

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Brian Caplan	R&D UA-EAE BS-EAE
Mallery McClure-Mitchell	R&D UA BS
Ty Lemerunde	R&D UA-EAE BS-EAE
Wendy Windle	R&D UA BS
Herb Newsome	R&D UA-EAE BS
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Carla Blumberg	UA
Nicole Bowman	UA
Hugh Fletcher	UA
John Rankin	UA
Nicole Brucato	UA

MAY 2002

May 1, 2002 Southern Methodist University

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Sebastian Kadlecik	R&D SIS UA
Matthew Berg	R&D SIS UA
Shannon McLemore	R&D SIS
Chris Matthews	SIS
Aaron Roberts	R&D SIS
Matt Nitche	R&D
Matt Wahlquist	R&D SIS
Lada Vishtak	SIS
Andy Schneider	R&D SIS
Blake Walker	R&D SIS
Sean Byrne	R&D SIS
Rachel Harper	R&D
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Sarayu Rao	R&D SIS UA
Chad Daniel	R&D UA

Dianna Schoenborn	SIS UA
Hiedi Ferren	R&D
Steve Armit	UA

May 1, 2002 Univ. of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign

Robin Mcfarquhar	David Woolley
Mick Hilgers	R&D UA
Andy Gershenzon	R&D SS UA
Kelly Lamont	R&D SS UA
Zeva Barzell	R&D SS UA
Darren Hengst	R&D SS UA-EAE
Tony Fiorentino	R&D SS UA-EAE
Andrew Carter	R&D SS UA
Kevin Lambert	UA
Jonathan Kite	R&D SS UA
Rachel King	R&D SS UA
Molly Hall	R&D SS UA
Mary Foran	R&D SS UA
Phillip Herrington	R&D SS UA
Dan Kitz	R&D SS UA

May 4, 2002 Atlanta Stage Combat Studio

Scot Mann	Chuck Coyl
Jason Armit	R&D-EAE UA-EAE BS S&S
Michael Schneider	BS S&S
Brian Smith	R&D-EAE UA-EAE BS S&S

May 4, 2002 Kennesaw State University

James Brown	Chuck Coyl
William Greenberg	QS
K.Ashley Holmes	QS
Matthew Miraglia	QS
Caroline Harrison	QS
Summer Gray	QS
Dewey Vick	QS
Cliff Hensley	QS
Jonathan Banish	UA QS

May 4, 2002 University of Oklahoma

Paul Steger	Brian Byrnes
Luis Arri	UA BS
Keia Booker	UA BS
Allison Burns	UA BS
Greg Castle	UA BS
Danielle Coody	UA BS
Walter Elder	UA BS-EAE
Megan Ofsowitz	UA BS
Tyrone Palmer	UA BS-EAE
Jaynie Saunders	UA BS
Amy Storemski	UA BS
Jill Taylor	UA BS
Derrico Thomas	UA BS
W. Bryan Thompson	UA BS

May 5, 2002

Tiza Garland	Miami, FL
Timothy Bell	Brian Byrnes
	QS-EAE

May 5, 2002

Tiza Garland	University of Miami, FL
Ashley Atkins	Brian Byrnes
Brian Blattman	R&D UA QS
Jessica Delbridge	UA QS
Doug Ghizzoni	R&D UA QS
Paul Haash	R&D UA QS
Maura Hannigan	UA
Randee Kaplan	R&D UA QS
Kat Lower	R&D UA QS
Lauren Potter	R&D UA QS
Lindsay Smith	UA QS
Ariana Shore	R&D UA QS
Cheryl Waltuch	R&D UA QS
Dan Weisberg	UA QS

May 7, 2002 University of Houston

Brian Byrnes	J. Allen Suddeth
Keith Caldwell	SIS UA
Mary-Margaret Allen	SIS UA
Audra Resendez	SIS SS UA
Yong Kim	SIS UA-EAE
Corey Sleeth	SIS SS UA
Jason Reynolds	SIS UA
Rachel Seney	SIS UA
Christi Waldon	SIS UA
Bob Galley	SIS UA
Gustavo Roman	SIS UA-EAE
Michael Walker	SIS UA
Ryan Heitzman	SIS SS
Henry Wilson	SS UA

May 7, 2002 Northern Kentucky University

Regina Cerimele-Mechley	Drew Fracher
William Fisher II	R&D UA KN
Eric Bauer	R&D UA KN
Joshua Beshears	R&D UA KN-EAE
Patrick Thernes	R&D UA KN-EAE
Cory Collinson	R&D UA KN
David Hennessey	R&D UA KN
Jennifer Owen	UA
Leonid Levi	R&D KN
Brandon Ashcraft	R&D UA KN
Robert DeHoff	R&D-EAE UA KN
Robert Dreyer II	R&D UA KN

May 7, 2002 Miami University, Oxford OH

Regina Cerimele-Mechley	Drew Fracher
Lauren Parkinson	R&D UA
Benjamin Gillman	R&D
Seamus Long	R&D UA
Emily Prouty	R&D UA
Aaron Einhorn	R&D-EAE UA
Jonathan Baca	R&D-EAE UA
Christina McMenemy	UA
Amy Harpring	UA

May 8, 2002 Illinois State University

Paul Dennhardt	David Leong
Heather Freer	R&D
Thomas Haynes	R&D -EAE
Raymond Kurut	R&D -EAE
James Marlott	R&D
Lawrence McDonald	R&D
Keith Nadal	R&D
Porowan Pattaynon	R&D
Christopher Weise	R&D
Haley Rice	R&D
Holly Locke	R&D
Phillip Burgess	R&D
Rebecca McGraw	R&D

May 9, 2002 University of Wisconsin-Madison

John McFarland	Chuck Coyl
Seamus Dooley	UA
Leif Erickson	UA
Andrea Geurtsen	UA
Naoya Hashimoto	UA
Christine Higgins	UA
Kristen loquinta	UA
Kimberly McKean	UA
Maggie O'Hara	UA
Breahan Pautsch	UA
Nicole Ryan	UA
Elyte Salna	UA
Jessica Schim	UA
Christina Thuli	UA
David Austin	R&D UA BS KN
Scott Bennett	R&D UA BS KN
John Graham	R&D UA BS KN
Megan Link	R&D UA BS KN
Mitchell Mullen	R&D UA BS KN

Dominik Rebilas	R&D UA BS KN
Ryan Schabach	R&D UA BS KN
Jason Schumacher	R&D UA BS KN
James Stauffer	R&D UA BS KN
LaShawn Welsh	R&D UA BS KN

May 10, 2002 Salem State College

Edward Sharon	J. Allen Suddeth
Joseph Biberger	UA KN-AII EAE
Karla Trigueros	UA KN-AII EAE
Ellen Murphy	UA KN
William Prest	UA KN-AII EAE
Christopher Morris	UA KN-AII EAE
Lara Jay	UA KN

May 10, 2002 Boston University

Edward Sharon	J. Allen Suddeth
Kate Place	R&D
Robert Reyes	R&D
Luke Leonhardt	UA KN
Joseph Lanza	UA KN
Barton Jones	UA KN-AII EAE
Risher Reddick	UA KN-AII EAE
Luke Willis	UA KN
Jared Swanson	UA KN-AII EAE
Donald Rudnickas	UA KN-AII EAE
Ryan Sypek	UA KN
Brendon Scoggin	UA KN
Jessie Hain	UA KN
Bennett Leak	UA KN

May 11, 2002 Fights4

Robert Tuffee, Ricki Ravitts	Chuck Coyl
J. David Brimmer, Michael Chin	
Andrew Blasenak	R&D UA BS
Samantha Phillips	R&D UA BS
Zach Calhoun	R&D BS
Michael Bradford	SIS -EAE BS S&S
Zorikh Lequidre	R&D S&S
Mary Molloy	R&D BS
Barbara Brandt	R&D BS-EAE
Robert Hamilton	BS-EAE
Ray Rodriguez	SIS-EAE
Al Foote III	SIS-EAE
Carrie Brewer	SIS-EAE
Mark Silence	SIS-EAE
Robb Hunter	SIS-EAE
Lauren Ahrold	S&S
Matthew Rini	S&S
Denise Hurd	S&S
Andrew Smereck	S&S
Dan O'Driscoll	S&S
Jared Hoffert	S&S

May 11, 2002 New York University

J. David Brimmer	Chuck Coyl
Richard Ab	UA
Joshua Bauer	UA
Joshua Brisbane	UA
Adam Laupus	UA
Mollie Marr	UA
Burl Moseley	UA
Emily Rouch	UA
Ashley Springer	UA
Kenneth Urbina	UA
Matt Walters	UA
Katie Whitcraft	UA
Shana Solomon	UA
Sheila Carrasco	UA
Sean Holohan	UA
Mick Lauer	R&D
Bobby Knox	R&D
Camron Robertson	R&D
Michael Yahn	R&D UA
Allison Laugs	R&D UA
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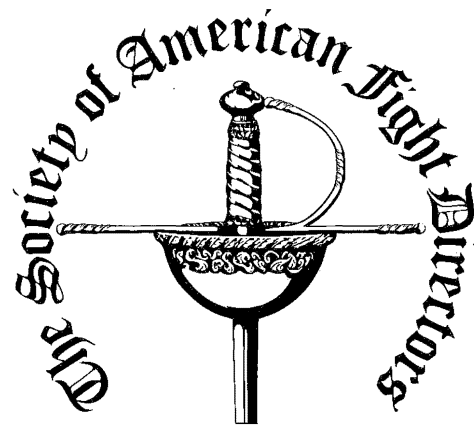
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Society of American Fight Directors

DEDICATED TO IMPROVING THE QUALITY AND SAFETY OF STAGE COMBAT



The Society of American Fight Directors (SAFD) is a non-profit organization devoted to training, and improving the quality of stage combat. We are committed to the highest standards of safety in the theatrical, film and television industries. The SAFD offers educational opportunities across the country at universities, privately and at the annual National Stage Combat Workshop expressly to disseminate this information. In addition, the SAFD tests individuals in three categories:

Actor/Combatant +— Teacher +— Fight Director

However, one need not take any sort of test to become a member of SAFD. Anyone interested in the art of fight choreography and stage fighting can join. SAFD members receive a 10% discount on SAFD workshops; *The Fight Master*, a journal published twice yearly; and *The Cutting Edge*, a newsletter published six times yearly with news updates on SAFD activities, policies and members.

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Jumping over the sofa,
McDermott (Richard Ryan)
narrowly escapes Tony Cavendish
(Toby Stephens) while Fanny
Cavendish (Dame Judi Dench)
watches in Sir Peter Hall's West
End production of *The Royal Family*.
Fights by Richard Ryan, photo by
Robert Petkoff.

