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The Society of American Fight Directors

Summer 2003

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The Society of American Fight Directors

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The Fight Master

Journal of the Society of American Fight Directors

MARTIAL ARTS ON TOUR

BAR FIGHTS

In *Voice of the Dragon*, Miao Hin (Philip Silvera, left) battles with his nemesis Red Phoenix Manchu Warrior (Bilqis Benu). Martial arts choreography and photo provided by Jose Manuel Figueroa.



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

The Fight Master

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Why Do the Nations so Furiously Rage Together: Pal Udvarhelyi (left) and Ilir Shitylla fight in representative battle scenes in Carolina Ballet's Messiah. Fights by Jeff A.R. Jones; photo by Russ Howe.

EDITORIALLY SPEAKING

Again the members of the world of staged combat mourn the loss of one of its greatest contributors, Oscar Kolombatovich. Many have had the opportunity of using his historically accurate stage weapons, but few may have known or even have met him. Kolombatovich was an extraordinary man with an obvious bearing of European nobility which he humorously attributed to the fact that his father owned the only horse in the village from which he came. He could discuss anything in his usual charming and argumentative way—in several languages. He had definite opinions that often led to heated discussions, which he always seemed to win. He will be missed.

On a historical note, Caravaggio's duel in Rome at the beginning of the seventeenth century, brings to light the ambiance of Rome at the time Shakespeare was writing in England. Rome, which had been practically destroyed earlier in the sixteenth century, had been rebuilt; and by the end of the century the city itself was overrun with military personnel from the recent wars who were unemployed and trying to integrate themselves back into society. Unaccepted by the community who considered them vagabonds, military personnel were argumentative and frustrated after having served their country's leaders under extremely harsh circumstances. Similar discrimination of military personnel has occurred repeatedly throughout history and has led to various forms of repercussions.

In the academic vein, Andrew Vorder Bruegge shares with the readers the results of an experimental course that used both dance and stage combat, along with SAFD fighting techniques and historical research. Some pleasing results came from this on-going experience. On a similar note Tom Turner, a graduate of UNLV, talks about his experiences working with actors to blend impulse with technique. Michael Chin reports on NSCW 2002 and Dana Anderson Wyman reports on a unique experience of filming a fight in a bar at the Winter Stage Combat Workshop in 2002.

Voice of the Dragon, which has been called a *martial arts ballet with music* is an hour long epic based on 17th century Chinese fable from the Ching Dynasty, but laced with 21st century cultural precepts, which has been attracting a lot of attention. The work, which was part of BAM'S Next Wave Festival in 2001, began its national tour in 2003. Ruth Margraff, the author, sheds some light on the whole process of working with this unique form of theatre.

Articles for the Spring/Summer 2004 issue are due by November 1, 2003.

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.

To advertise in *The Fight Master*, please contact
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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.

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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.



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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 2004 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
2917 Isabella Drive
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

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Dana Anderson-Wyman, a graduate of California State University, San Jose, and a fencer for thirty years, is the Director of Drama at Brazosport College in Lake Jackson, Texas.

Andrew Vorder Bruegge teaches theatre arts and directs theatre and opera at St. Cloud State University. His most recent fight choreography credits include MacBeth at Gustavus Adolphus College and *The Exercise of the Courtier* at the Stratford Festival, Ontario, Canada.

Michael Chin, NYC Fight Director and professional actor, is the NSCW Coordinator and founding member of Fights 4. He coordinates the NY Regional Workshop, is on faculty at Pace University in Manhattan and teaches stage combat at Brooklyn College.

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

Richard Gradkowski is an honorary member of the SAFD, being one of its founding members. He is a regular contributor *The Fight Master* and a guest lecturer in the Arms and Armour Department of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.

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.

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Ruth Margraff is an award winning playwright whose works have been produced all over the world. She currently teaches playwriting at Brown University and the Yale School of Drama and is a member of New Dramatists.

Tom Turner, a graduate of UNLV, is the founder of a children's theatre company in the Los Angeles area.

Workshop Coordinators and Advertisers

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 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



The past few months have been exciting and productive for the SAFD. The governing body of the SAFD has created an award to honor the memory of Henry Marshall. The award, named for Fight

Master Emeritus Joseph Martinez, who studied with Henry during his time at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA), will be called the Joseph Martinez Award. The award will be given annually as a part of the RADA "Prize Fights."

SAFD efforts to make further inroads with the performance unions continue. Fight Master Rep. Drew Fracher had an informative and productive meeting with representatives of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers (SSD&C) in September. A report on the results of that meeting will soon be published in the *Cutting Edge*. The SAFD continues to reach out to other unions as well. The SAFD recently attended a local area meeting of American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA) to hear the concerns of and share ideas with AGMA members. More meetings have been set up for the future and the results of those meetings will be reported on an on-going basis.

The Food Fight initiative continues to gain momentum. Michael Gray has been named chair of the recently created Food Fight committee. The committee will oversee and coordinate the Food Fight campaign nation wide. Members who are interested in helping with the Food Fight project should contact Michael at foodfight@safd.org.

Fight professionals are called upon not only to be conversant with unarmed combat and edged weapons, but also with theatrical firearm use and safety. Unfortunately, the SAFD has never offered comprehensive training in this area. In order to address this need, the SAFD governing body has created the Firearm Safety Committee. The committee is manned by its chair Julia Rupkalvis, along with Scot Mann, and Donald

Preston. The committee is charged with creating standards of training and safety in the theatrical use of firearms. The committee and its activities are in a recent article published in the *Cutting Edge*.

The annual business meeting will be held this summer. Member who have concerns, questions, or items of discussion that need to be addressed, should submit that information to their Membership Representative.

This is an election year for the Membership Representatives. Members are strongly encouraged to participate in the election process. It is only through the efforts of an active and concerned membership that the SAFD will continue to grow and prosper.

My thanks to all. Fight the Good Fight

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chuck Coyl". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Chuck Coyl



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

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OSCAR F. KOLOMBATOVICH

September 14, 1919

June 26, 2002

by Richard J. Gradkowski

After a long illness, Oscar Kolombatovich died on June 26, 2002.

Maestro Kolombatovich lived in Madrid, Spain and was the proprietor of a firm which manufactured swords, both for the military and for the theatre. His showroom was located near the Palacio Real in Madrid, and his workshop was in Toledo.

Building on a career as a Fencing Master (he taught swordsmanship for a time at the US Military Academy at West Point), he was one of the first persons in contemporary times who promoted an interest in historically accurate swordplay. In the 1960s, he established the Excalibur Company for the purpose of manufacturing accurate reproductions of period weapons.

His method involved studying an existing example from a museum and copying its specifications precisely, as well as consulting with curators. He then developed a model based upon drawings of such an example. Using his knowledge of machining, casting, etching, as well as other processes, he would then make a sword. His weapons were real swords, unlike the usual tourist fare. While his reproductions were clearly contemporary, from time to time one finds one being passed off as an antique.

Because of his deep knowledge of fencing, he was able to understand the way in which these weapons were used. He often choreographed swordplay for the theatre, and especially the opera. Being fluent in a half dozen languages, he was on familiar terms with some of the greats of the opera field, among which were Luciano Pavarotti and Placido Domingo. For a staging of *Faust* he designed a sword whose blade could be broken with the push of a button in the hilt. One of his pet peeves was what he denounced as the all purpose, all wrong, cup hilted rapier mounted with a fencing epee blade.

A US citizen, he was descended from Dalmatian nobility. His father was a minister in the former Yugoslavian government. In the 1970s, Kolombatovich moved to Spain to be nearer his workshop. Active socially, he was invited by the Navy League to make a sword for King Juan Carlos II, which he presented personally to him.

Always enthusiastic about his interest, he was open and accessible to all who shared his love. Those who had the privilege of knowing him were enriched by the experience.

After Kolombatovich came to New York in the 1920s, he studied fencing with both Giogio Santelli and Aldo Nadi. After serving in World War II he founded his own fencing school on Long Island, the Huntington Fencing Academy.

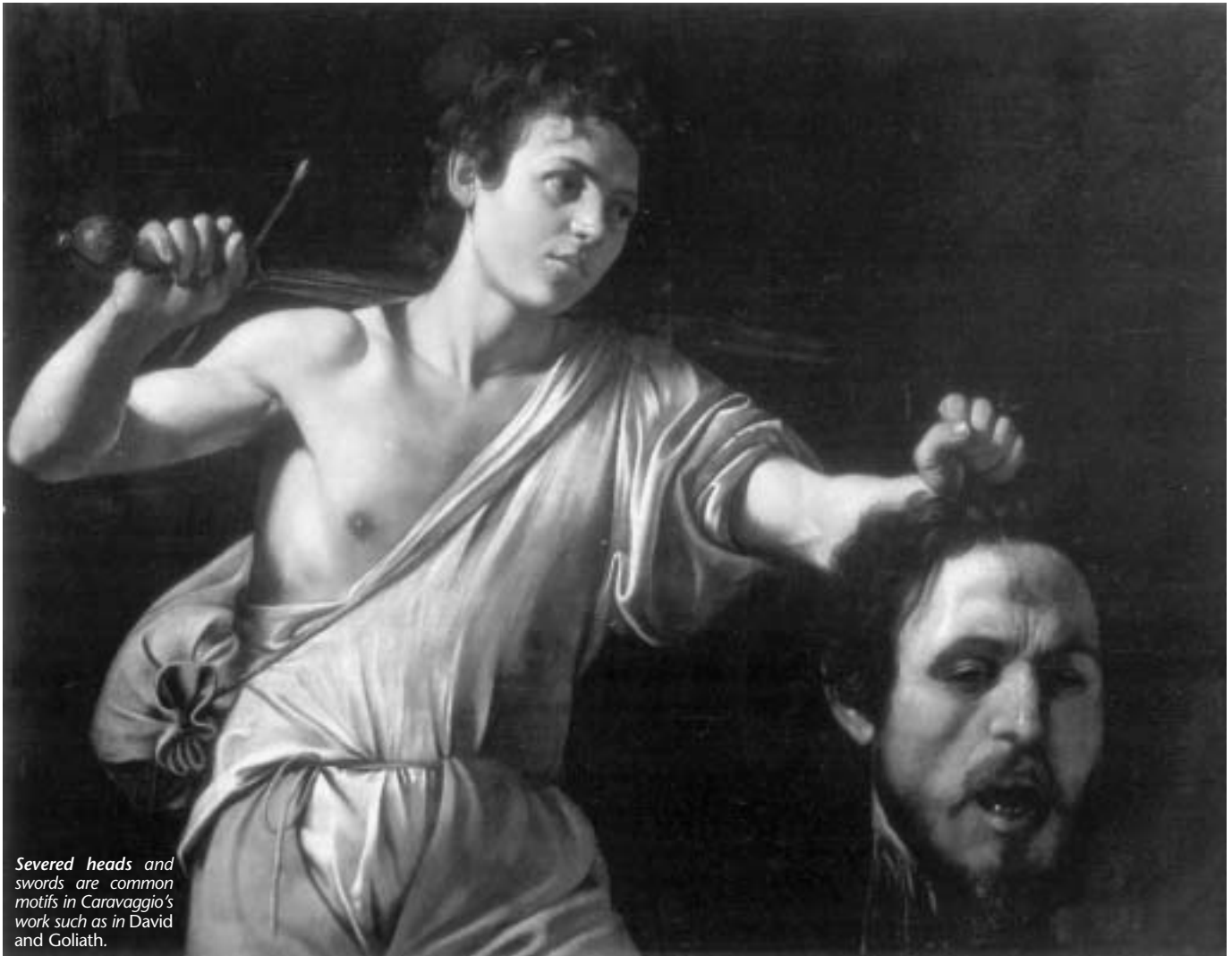
During the 1950s the Metropolitan Opera hired him to teach fencing and by the end of the decade he was choreographing all the Metropolitan Opera's productions becoming solely responsible for all their fights. It was the property manager at the Metropolitan, asking him for swords for a new production of Verdi's *Nabucco* that resulted in his starting a company in 1962 to manufacture authentic reproductions of arms and armor which company he later moved to Spain in 1974.

In 1973 Kolombatovich made a film, with his son George, for the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Education Division in conjunction with the Arms and Armor Department. The film portrayed authentic methods of thirteenth century sword and shield, sixteenth century two-handed sword and seventeenth century rapier and dagger. Since the film is still shown periodically, it is an opportunity to see Kolombatovich in action using the weapons he created.

— Fin



DEATH OVER A TENNIS MATCH



Severed heads and swords are common motifs in Caravaggio's work such as in David and Goliath.

by Linda Carlyle McCollum



Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (1571-1610), whom many consider to be the most revolutionary artist of his time, broke all the rules and was violently criticized for doing so. He had one of the most violent and adventurous lives of the seventeenth century making him one of the prototypes of the artist as rebel. His fifteen-year career as a painter is as mysterious and controversial today as it was when he was alive. His life was as much a drama as the images he portrayed in his paintings. The fact that at the height of his emerging career he killed a man in a duel over a tennis match adds even more to the mystery.

In looking into this incident, many surprises emerge about the conditions in Rome at the end of the sixteenth century. In the early part of the century Charles V's imperial mercenaries had looted and nearly destroyed Rome. The Pope had been

imprisoned, women raped and thousands of people killed. Between the plague, the Tiber River flooding the city and famine, one third of the population had perished. By the middle of the century Rome was basically a small slum surrounded by abandoned ruins.

Surprisingly it was the onslaught of Protestant ideas and the crisis of Christianity in Europe that saved Rome. Beginning with the Council of Trent, a counter offensive began. In 1570 Rome began being rebuilt on a monumental scale to become the symbol of reformed Catholicism. Fifty new churches were built or enlarged. Thirty new roads were built from one piazza to another linking the key points of the city. A hundred kilometers of restored aqueducts were built giving Rome the best water supply in all of Europe. St. Peter's was completed in 1590 and became the largest church in the world. The prospect of large commissions attracted painters, sculptors and architects, and the population in Rome doubled.

By the end of the 1590s, Rome was overrun with floating populations of unemployed military men and young girls and boys involved in prostitution. Continual clashes on the streets of Rome occurred between all these young, sexually active and socially insecure males who swarmed the streets, taverns and brothels. In an attempt to keep all this rowdiness under control, dueling and the carrying of weapons was banned. One had to secure a license in order to carry a weapon into the streets of Rome. A crackdown on carnival celebrations, the playing of cards and dice games was put in effect. Groups of young men were forbidden to roam about the city at night and women were forbidden to leave their houses in the evening. Courtesans were removed from the Vatican area and all prostitutes were herded into an area known as the Ortaccio which was easier to police. Rome's sex industry was put in a panic since this was Rome's main economic activity and its biggest employer. This was the Rome that Caravaggio arrived to in the early 1590s.

Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio was born in 1571 near Caravaggio, thus his surname. When he was about thirteen he apprenticed himself to a painter in Milan named Simone Peterzano. Seven years later, when he was twenty, both his parents had died and the family property was divided among his brother, sister, and Caravaggio who took his inheritance of nearly four hundred imperial pounds and moved to Rome.

Caravaggio settled into the cosmopolitan society of the Campo Marzio, a decaying neighborhood of inns, taverns, temporary shelters and picture shops. He worked as an assistant to other painters of lesser talent and earned his living with hack-work never staying more than a few months at any studio. He was virtually without means having dissipated his inheritance shortly after his arrival in Rome.

Accompanied by a young Sicilian friend and painter named Mario Minniti, Caravaggio began painting his own pictures and possibly portraits and tried to sell them to draw attention to himself. Many of these early works, which tended to be scenes from everyday life, are considered disturbingly erotic, revealing a tempestuous and volatile character.

In 1595 Maestro Valentino, an art dealer, brought Caravaggio's work to the attention of Cardinal Francesco Del Monte, a prelate of great influence in the papal court. Soon Caravaggio came under Del Monte's protection and was invited to receive lodging, board and a pension in the cardinal's home, Palazzo Madama, where he began moving in the society of cardinals and

princes. Noble patrons began competing for his favors. Like a celebrity he was spoiled and temperamental.

As a member of Del Monte's household, he began carrying a sword, especially when he went out at night. Caravaggio's love of swords is shown in his paintings with the exact reproduction of hilts and pommels and by the rendering the flash of a blade in a couple of smears of white paint. An early biographer claimed Caravaggio did not study his art constantly but would spend a fortnight painting and then would go out for awhile with his rapier at his side and a servant behind him, moving from one tennis court to another looking for a fight. It was said that he gave a good account of himself with a weapon in hand. He was a drinker and womanizer. His pugnacious making him quick to anger and fearsome with a sword, and easily manipulated by others.

Caravaggio began establishing himself as a painter revolting against artificiality of the Mannerists predecessors. While his work was not totally in line with Church dogma and was violently criticized, his reputation increased and his works were rapidly collected by the people in power. His reputation increased throughout Europe and became envied. Caravaggio loathed being imitated and copying his techniques could be physically dangerous to the imitator.

At his studio, he always used a model from the lower classes of society as the subject of his early secular works and his later religious compositions. Even biblical characters were portrayed by ordinary people. Called a naturalist, he prided himself on working directly from nature. The intense *chiaroscuro* effects of light and dark are characteristic of his works and may have come from the working conditions of his studio.

Caravaggio is described as a stocky young man with heavy eyebrows, dark eyes and a bit of a black beard. He dressed in black and was a bit untidy with his torn black stockings. In 1598 at the same time he was painting the Contarelli Chapel in San Luigi dei Francesi in Rome he begins being regularly mentioned in police records for causing assaults, libel and other crimes.

By 1600 he has taken up with the quarrelsome architect Onorio Longhi who had been born in Milan and grew up in Rome. Longhi was the eldest son of stonemason foreman who had been one of the men who had rebuilt Rome. Longhi received his degree in law and worked as an architect. Since the early 1590s, Longhi had repeatedly gotten into trouble over street skirmishes involving swords.



Judith by Caravaggio.

He is quoted as saying, "I don't carry arms of any kind, by day or by night. The servant who follows me carries it."

In July 1600, Onorio Longhi reports that he had been at the French tennis courts watching a fencing match and afterward had walked through the Piazza Navona where he had stopped to watch a football game. He met four men who called him over and asked what he had thought of the fencing match and who had scored the most hits. After Longhi told them what he thought, one of the men responded by saying that either Longhi could not see properly, or he did not know what he was talking about. Longhi bet him ten *scudi* on the first bout and one of the men overreacted and went to punch him and then put his hand on his sword. For his honor's sake and in self-defense, Longhi drew his sword and began striking out at his opponent until they were separated. In the fray his opponent was slightly wounded on his hand (148-49).

When the judge interrogating Longhi asked if Caravaggio, who was also present, was carrying a weapon, Longhi replied that his friend was convalescent and had his boy carry his sword as he was so sick he could hardly stand. Longhi seemed to go to great pains to conceal Caravaggio's involvement in the incident and to minimize his part in the fight. It turns out that the unknown person was Flavio Canonico, who was a former sergeant of the prison guard and it was actually Caravaggio who had wounded him slightly on the hand with his sword. The other man was the artist Marco Tullio whose career had been promoted by a Federico Zuccari, a promoter who had sneered at Caravaggio's first major work claiming that he had ripped it off from another artist. Basically, Caravaggio drew his sword to defend his honor in this altercation.

This incident marks Caravaggio's entry into Rome's criminal records at Longhi's side. Longhi was out on bail at the time of this incident and the law was closely watching him because of a long series of assaults and brawls that kept recurring with the same people.

Violence seemed to begin with Caravaggio's public emergence as a painter. About the same time another young painter, Girdamo Spampa, reported he was attacked by Caravaggio when he stopped at a candle shop on his way home. He claimed that Caravaggio came up behind him and started hitting him with a stick and Spampa tried to defend himself. When butchers arrived with lanterns, Caravaggio pulled out his sword and hit Spampa with the flat of the blade that Spampa tried to fend off with his cloak which became badly slashed. Caravaggio then ran off. Having been attacked from behind with a stick, as well as, the flat of the sword was considered an insult and a humiliation to Spampa. Both Spampa and Tullio later withdrew their charges against Caravaggio in exchange for his promise not to attack them again.

In 1603 Caravaggio was accused of libel by the painter Baglione, who would later write a three-page biography on Caravaggio in 1625. Along with Longhi and two other painters Caravaggio was circulating scurrilous verses against Baglione. Caravaggio was imprisoned and the French ambassador intervened for his release. He was then confined to his house and could not leave without written permission. If he violated this, he would become a galley slave. Later that year Longhi was in trouble for insulting Baglione again.

Caravaggio had a hair-trigger touchiness over respect or lack of it. In 1604, while hanging out in the Campo Marzio with friends for lunch, he felt a lack of

respect from the waiter, and attacked him in a rage by throwing a plate of artichokes at him. The waiter claimed he brought eight cooked artichokes, four with butter and four with oil and that when Caravaggio asked which were which, he was told he could easily tell by smelling them. A witness states that the waiter actually picked up one of the artichokes and stuck his nose in it. Caravaggio took it badly, got up in a rage, and said "It seems to me, you fucking prick, that you think you're serving some two-bit crook."



St. Catherine of Alexandria
by Caravaggio.

Caravaggio took the china plate with the artichokes and threw it in the waiter's face which hit him on the left cheek causing a bit of an injury. Then Caravaggio stood, put his hand on a friend's sword that was lying on the table and was about to go after the waiter who had already left and gone to the police.

He was later arrested for bothering a woman and her daughter and was bailed out by friends. Then nine days later he drew his sword on the lawyer Pasqualoni in front of the palace of the Spanish ambassador over a courtesan, who was described as Caravaggio's woman. He wounded the lawyer and fled to Del Monte's palace and then left for Genoa. Scipione Borhese, the nephew of Pope Paul V, arranged Caravaggio's release from jail, and Caravaggio made peace with the lawyer.

In 1605 during the interregnum after Clement VIII's death in March, the streets of Rome were more volatile than the summer of 1604. In May Caravaggio was arrested for carrying a sword and dagger without a license. The weapons so interested the arresting officer that he actually made a sketch of them in the police report. When he was arrested again later in the year he appealed to Cardinal Del Monte for help. The sword in his painting of the Martyr Saint Catherine is probably the sword the authorities seized and sketched.

Martyrdom of St. Matthew (detail) by Caravaggio.



In the autumn of 1605 Caravaggio was found at the house of Andrea Ruffetti, a friend of Longhi and associated with a young group of intellectuals. Caravaggio was recovering from stab wounds to his throat and left ear which Caravaggio claimed were accidentally self-inflicted when he fell down the stairs with his sword. Regardless, he was placed under house arrest. Whoever had wounded him obviously had powerful protection and it may have been Ranuccio Tomassoni.

Tomassoni was the son of the late colonel Luca Antonio, who had done military service to the house of Farnese. All of the family, except the twenty-year-old Ranuccio, had served in the military. He was well known to the police and appeared to be a protector of prostitutes in the brothel districts because of his connections with the households of several cardinals.

Tennis courts were the habitual hangouts for people playing and betting on each other's games. Caravaggio, accompanied by Captain Petronio from Bologna, Longhi and Minniti had a significant clash with Tomassoni, Tomassoni's brother Giovan Grancesco and his two brothers-in-law. During a brief fight, Caravaggio and Petronio were seriously wounded by Grancesco. Tomassoni was killed with a blow to the inside of his thigh. He died and was buried the next morning at the Rotunda. The fight was said to have

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been over a *fault call* while they were playing tennis.

Reports claim that Caravaggio had lost a bet on the tennis match and refused to pay Tomassoni the ten *scudi* he owed. Other reports say the whole incident was a trivial quarrel over a point in a match that had occurred two days earlier. In the scuffle with Caravaggio, Tomassoni apparently fell down while he was retreating. Grancesco and Petronio jumped into the fight and the others followed making it a general brawl.

Bad blood existed between Caravaggio and Tomassoni and may have been the reason that Caravaggio was so reluctant to talk about his *self-inflicted* injuries seven months earlier when he claimed he had fallen down the steps with his sword. Baglione the biographer claimed that Caravaggio had an overly passionate nature and was a bit wild, sometimes looking for a chance to break his neck or put someone else's life in danger. He spent a lot of time with men who had quarrelsome characters themselves. Caravaggio finally clashed with Ranuccio Tomassoni, a young fellow with a very good style, in a difference over a tennis match. They challenged each other, took up arms and when Ranuccio fell, Caravaggio wounded him in the penis with the point of his sword and killed him. Caravaggio's attack, which was meant to be a humiliating gesture, insulting and denying Tomassoni's manhood, went horribly wrong. The flick severed an artery and Tomassoni bled to death.

Onorio Longhi fled to Milan and joined the Spanish army as an engineer. He never saw his friend Caravaggio again. Mario Minniti went home to Syracuse and was par-

doned years later by authorities who intervened with nobles. Giovan Francesco and the widow's two brothers fled to Parma and petitioned the Pope to return to Rome.

Caravaggio hid out for three days and then fled from Rome being sentenced to death as *bando capitale* which meant that anybody in the territory of court's jurisdiction could kill him by cutting off his head and bringing it to a judge to claim the reward. He spent the summer recovering in Colonna and then went on to Naples which was outside Rome's jurisdiction. During the time he was in perpetual flight from Rome he painted some of the greatest paintings of his career, *The Beheading of St. John the Baptist*, *The Flagellation of Christ*, *The Raising of Lazarus*, all emphasizing sadness, suffering and death. These paintings surpassed everything he had done before.

He eventually wound up on Malta in the Order of the Knights of Malta and was made a knight in 1609 of one the oldest and most exclusive aristocratic warrior castes in Europe. A few months later he got into a quarrel with a nobleman and wound up imprisoned. Somehow he miraculously escaped, probably with some help, and fled to Syracuse and stayed with his friend Minniti. He went on to Messina and then Palermo. In his absence he was expelled from the Knights of Malta.

He returned to Naples where he planned to stay until he was pardoned for the incident in Rome. No one heard from him for months. Reports circulated claiming he had been murdered when he had actually been so badly slashed in the face in an altercation with his enemies that he was disfigured. He remained in Naples and continued to paint.

Cardinal Ferdinando Gonzaga successfully petitioned the Pope for a pardon for Caravaggio. In 1610 after hearing he had been pardoned by the Pope he headed for Rome in a small boat. When he reached Porto Ercole which was Spanish territory only eighty miles from Rome, he was wrongfully arrested and imprisoned. The boat which had all his belongings, left without him. Upon release it is said he ran down the beach trying to catch up with his boat that had abandoned him. Exhaustion and fever overtook him, and it is said he died alone on the beach never setting foot in Rome again. A document granting him clemency arrived in Rome three days later.

The most revolutionary artist of his time, Michelangelo Merisi Da Caravaggio, died as he had lived—all alone, Caravaggio's painting style was emulated throughout Europe and still is today.

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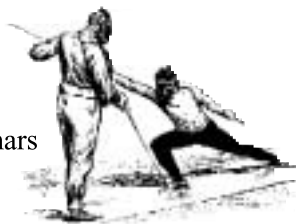


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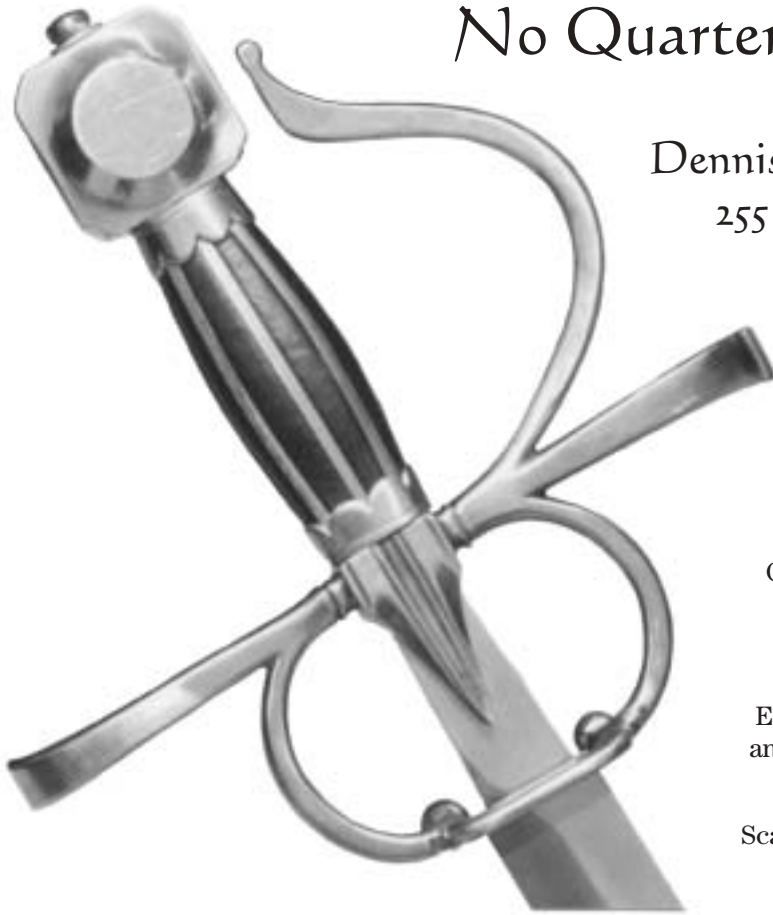
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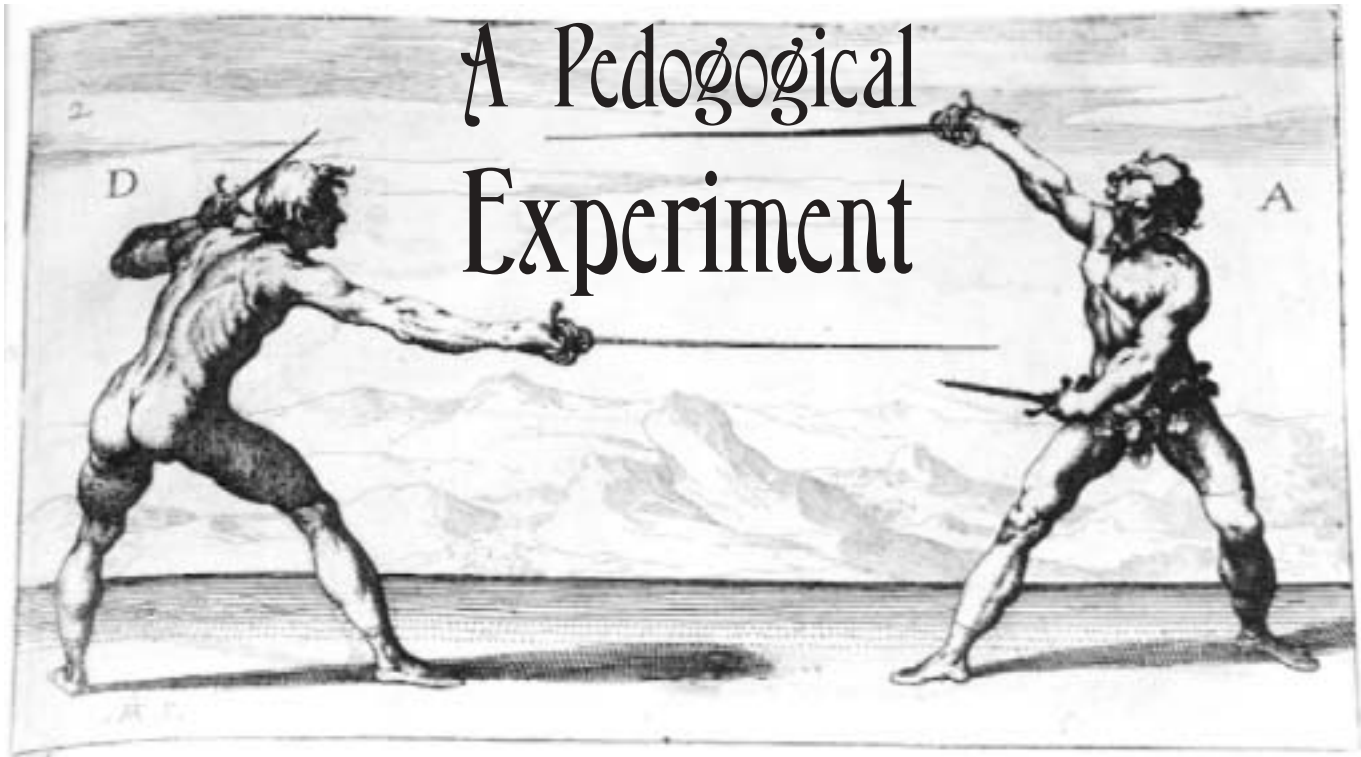
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by Andrew Vorder Bruegge

During the 2001-2002 academic year, a team of instructors conducted a course called *The Exercise of the Courtier* at the St. Cloud State University Department of Theatre, Film Studies and Dance. *The Exercise of the Courtier* represented an expansion of the program's well established early dance curriculum and early dance ensemble performance activities. The two instructors intended to use the course to prepare an ensemble of students to perform at the Pageant Waggon Stage at the 2002 Stratford (Ontario) Shakespeare Festival. The show to be presented would be a thirty-minute, crowd-pleasing variety show of early dance and stage combat for the amusement of the festival audiences. The instructors correctly predicted that the addition of stage combat to the program of training would encourage students to continue their study of early dance and ignite their interest in performing at the Stratford Festival. All of the students enrolled in *The Exercise of the Courtier* had at least one semester of introductory level early dance, and minimal previous experience in stage combat or swordplay. The course included two ninety-minute class sessions per week, once a week for stage combat and once a week for advanced work in early dance.

During the fall semester, the stage combat sessions focused on the study of rapier and dagger techniques. The stage combat instructor elected to use forty and forty-two inch rapiers manufactured by Darkwood and Scottie Armories. The rapiers manufactured by Darkwood Armory mounted Deltin blades. The rapiers manufactured by Scottie Armory mounted a Scottie blade (an imitation of the Deltin blade). These rapiers are heavier, longer and more tip heavy than the typical stage combat rapier mounting an *epee* or *schlager* blade. Also, these longer weapons are more authentic in balance, length and weight. In making the decision to train novice students with these non-normative weapons, the instructor wanted to investigate two questions.

First, would the longer, heavier weapons interfere with proper execution of SAFD rapier and dagger techniques? Second, would these authentic weapons facilitate the application of historical swordplay techniques in stage combat?

THE FIRST QUESTION:

The students' rapier and dagger training started with the basic SAFD techniques and safety protocols for rapier and dagger, utilizing the instructions, techniques and concepts in Girard's *Actors on Guard*. The instructor theorized that the students would encounter difficulty with low parries (1 and 2) as the tips of the longer blades might scrape the ground. Furthermore, the instructor theorized that they might experience some difficulty in executing binds and *envelopments* for a similar reason. Finally, the instructor theorized that they might have some difficulty executing attacks to 5, as the inertia of these heavy weapons would make the fly-fishing *flick* very challenging.

At the end of the fall semester, the instructor conducted an assessment survey of the students to get their self-assessment of their competency. They did not report that any particular attacks or parries were more difficult, as predicted. They did report that *moulinets* seemed challenging. Observation of their slow and awkward wrist rotation for this move confirmed their self reports. Observation of their competent execution of the various attacks and parries confirmed their self-reports. It must be noted that the students rehearsed for less than thirty total hours in the semester, far fewer than the minimum required of a combatant to be eligible to certify. They may not have developed enough proficiency with any of the attacks or parries to know whether any one was more difficult than another.

THE SECOND QUESTION:

Pedagogically, the instructor aspired to construct a multi-level, student-centered, learning experience for the students. First, the stu-

dents would learn the techniques in the historical manuals to help them manipulate the authentic rapiers effectively. Second, the knowledge of the historical manuals would provide a contrast to the SAFD stage combat techniques. The students could compare kinetically the difference between the two-movement systems, discovering the intentions of each system. Third, the knowledge of the historical techniques would provide the students with a rich array of raw material for composing their own fight sequences.

The instructor used demonstrations to compare the SAFD rapier-and-dagger movement system with techniques, stances, wards, and attacks from late-sixteenth century rapier manuals (mainly Saviolo and DiGrassi). The study and application of the historical manuals seemed to achieve the instructor's pedagogical goals. This work gave the students some concrete knowledge of a variety of wards, invitations, variations on footwork, and *corps-a-corps* grappling moves that would allow them to maintain control over their weapons. Also, the application of the knowledge in the historical manuals helped the students grasp kinetically the difference between lethal intentions of real swordplay

and the theatrical intentions of stage combat. Their own physical experience powerfully confirmed for the students not only the *Whys and Wherefores* of the historical techniques, but also the *Whys and Wherefores* of SAFD safety protocols, such as right-angle parries and the *cone of safety* in front of the face.

Aside from the investigation of the two original questions, this training program serendipitously generated another important result: The students did develop excellent skills in creating their own fight sequences. Moreover, they very quickly took ownership of the creative process. The students started to construct their fight sequences by using the well known telephone number system. Next, the teams of combatants taught one another their sequences, so that each team actually learned three fight sequences that they later would combine into a single, long fight sequence. Next came the crucial breakthrough step in the process. The instructor assisted each pair of combatants in refining that basic sequence of attacks and parries, inviting them to build moves that seemed to flow logically out of the circumstances. For example, the results of an attack were observed, and then through reason, the counterattack would be determined, using the historic principles of time, distance and initiative. It did not take very long for the students to learn how to apply this methodology on their own. The instructor was very gratified by the students' display of aptitude. The instructor also observed that this authentically and empirically-based creative process brought the students to a number of discoveries about rapier and dagger action. For example, they came to appreciate the great value of the defensive move of voiding. Not only would a void handily move the victim's body

out of line of the attack, but it also would bring the combatant into a position that was ripe with possibilities (both theatrical and authentic) for the counter-attack. Their study of historical sources also inspired the students to incorporate a healthy portion of *corps-a-corps* grappling, disarm attempts and pommeling into their fight sequences. This close-quarters struggling enhanced the tension and added extra texture to their work. Without the study of the historical materials, the students (and the instructor/choreographer) would probably have been less bold in their use of

corps-a-corps moves. The study of the historic manuals and dance manuals also helped the students develop a precise, authentically-based vocabulary for footwork (See Table 1). As the instructor and students worked, they used this vocabulary in their oral communication, and the students used this set of terms in transcribing their sequences onto paper. Since the students were required to teach their fight sequences to one another, they immediately grasped the vital importance of a communally agreed-upon set of conventions.

The instructor assisted each set of combatants

with final polish. This final step involved two layers of work. First, the instructor helped the students incorporate into their sequences the various required moves for rapier and dagger certification (using the SAFD Web site as the source of this information). For example, a single beat parry would be changed into a bind or a lunge attack would be extended into a running attack. Then, the instructor helped the students refine their choreography for stage appeal. Ways were sought to upgrade individual moves or sequences from authentic/boring to theatrical/exciting. What emerged in each case was a fight sequence that had a distinct style, which used the entire stage and told a story through violent conflict. Furthermore, each fight sequence was generated by the combatants rather than by the instructor/choreographer. The students utilized their critical and aesthetic senses to integrate knowledge of the SAFD stage combat techniques and authentic, historical swordplay techniques.

The instructor observed that the weapons—because they were heavy—clearly slowed down the action. In the opinion of the instructor, this observed phenomenon produced several positive effects. On the pedagogical side, the students worked more deliberately, more carefully, with more focus on executing the technique precisely. They always were required to concentrate on controlling their weapons, rather than letting the weapons (by their weight and length) control them. The students' training in early dance supported their efforts to master these physical/technical challenges of the stage combat work. Much like stage combat, early dance requires cognitive and physical mastery of a vocabulary of moves, precise technical

TABLE 1

<i>pace</i>	forward step
<i>dimarche</i>	backward step
<i>traverse</i>	sideways step
<i>slope</i>	step at a forty-five degree angle forward
<i>shwart</i>	step at a forty-five degree angle backward
<i>void</i>	stepping back with one foot so that the body turns ninety degrees and both feet are on the same <i>railroad track</i>
<i>vofsa</i>	stepping back and around with one foot, so that the body turns one hundred eighty degrees

execution of a multitude of complex steps and movement combinations, and it engages the performers as partners who must always be working together (and as part of a larger ensemble). On the aesthetic side, the action appeared very authentic to the instructor's eye. Logically, if combatants engage each other with rapiers that are heavier and longer than normal, all the dynamics would slow down. The combatant would need to exert more energy as well. Also, the *story* of the conflict was easy to follow. The students, because they were moving slowly, recognized that they needed to enhance the believability of their fights by making their acting of the story as precise, controlled and deliberate as their moves with the weapons. Finally, the longer weapons and the longer reach that each combatant possessed made the stage combat larger, more expansive and theatrically bolder. Once the students learned to wield their rapiers with confident strength, they could sense that their personal bubble of space was quite large. This aesthetic suits the needs of stage combat, foregrounding the potential danger of the violence and filling the stage space.

During the second semester of the course, the students learned broadsword techniques in preparation for their performance at the Stratford Festival. The training followed a similar regimen as outlined above for their work with rapier and dagger (SAFD techniques, historical techniques, organically created fight sequences, and final polish for theatrical effectiveness). The students used weapons of a normative weight and length. In learning the fundamentals, this process revealed nothing remarkable. The instructor observed; however, that when it came time to create broadsword choreography, the stu-

dents quickly and easily applied what they had learned while working with rapier and dagger. As the students developed their broadsword fight sequences, the instructor hardly needed to provide any guidance to the students. They enthusiastically jumped into the creative process—experimenting, exploring and integrating historically based moves with SAFD techniques. Their fight sequences ranged from farcical to deadly earnest in style, all incorporating a wide range of moves, disarms, unarmed combat, and *corps-a-corps* grappling. As with the rapier and dagger training, the students, not the instructor, created the choreography, and each fight sequence possessed a unique style.

The pedagogical experiment provided encouraging results. A group of novice students were introduced to basic stage combat training that included the use of non-normative rapiers. These students also acquired knowledge of historical swordplay techniques that assisted them in manipulating their weapons. The integration of these two forms of swordplay knowledge enabled them to engage in stage combat safely and believably. Moreover, the broad scope of this training provided the students with a rich inventory of material to facilitate choreography of their fight sequences. The instructor modeled a problem-solving methodology for the students to use in the creative process, a methodology that they grasped with amazing speed and applied with very rewarding results. The year-long course embodied the pedagogical ideals of student-centered learning in addition to providing some answers to the instructor's original two investigative questions.

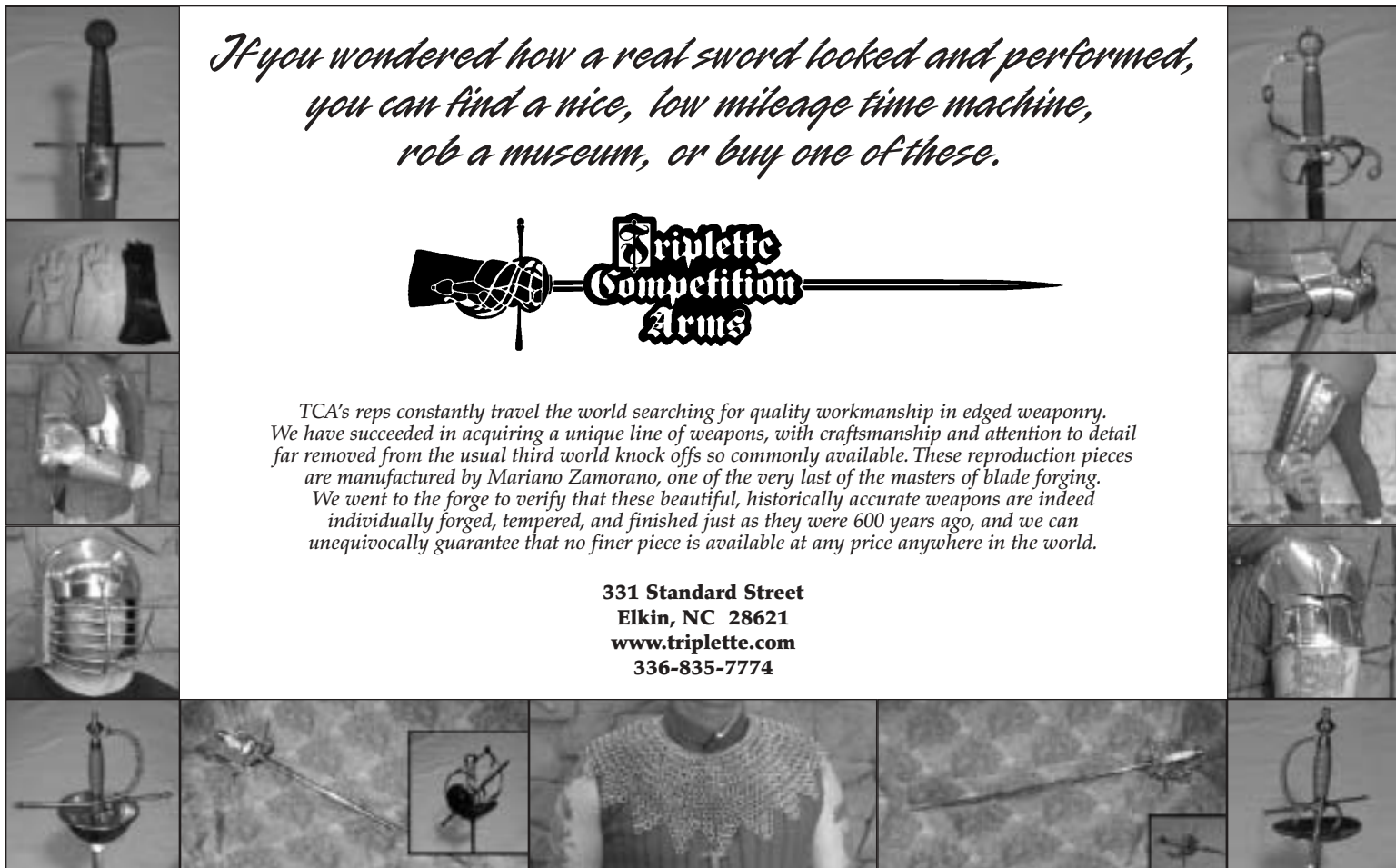
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Technique

AND Impulse IN STAGE COMBAT

by Tom Turner

No other area of theatre better demonstrates the need for the blending of technique and impulse than stage combat. It is also one of the most neglected aspects of actor training. At one time, every actor who either studied or apprenticed the art would take fencing to develop balance, skill and grace. It was also studied because theatre is about conflict and swordplay is the epitome of conflict.

In the forward to fight master William Hobbs's book, *Stage Combat: The Action to the Word*, Laurence Olivier writes:

I have always felt very strongly that a stage fight offered the actor a unique opportunity of winning the audience, as great as almost any scene, speech or action. That Shakespeare put it high in his estimations of stage effects is proclaimed by the amount of times he trustingly leaves it to this element to provide him with his denouements (Hobbs, 54).

At most universities, training in fencing or any other type of stage combat, is non-existent due, in part, to a lack of teachers and weapons. Students are forced to improvise fight scenes based on what they have seen in movies and television or picked up at drama workshops. Worst is the old *go-ahead-and-hit-me* school of stage combat.

It is unfortunate that stage combat is available to so few students. In the book *Swashbuckling*, Richard Lane lists several advantages to stage combat:



Practicing a test fight, Scott Franco (left) and Christopher Beaulieu try to balance clean technique with acting impulses. Fight by Jeff A.R. Jones; photo by J.R. Meriano.

1. A better ability to concentrate
2. Improved coordination, strength, stamina, and appearance
3. An inner calm and confidence (Lane 5, 6)

Lane also discusses the acting side of combat:

But knowing which weapons to choose and how to wield them—including the techniques of unarmed combat—is only half the challenge of swashbuckling. The other half is acting while in action, the reason you're on stage. Unless you can convince an audience that the story continues during the fight—that this most dramatic form of conflict can and does reveal still more of your character—you will have failed at your primary task (Lane, 4).

The types of stage combat range from small slaps or punches to major battle scenes. Most fights combine more than one element. In a knife fight choreographed for *Gris Gris*, the winner of the Morton R. Sarett National Playwriting competition at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, three actors were used. Each actor, at some point in the play, used unarmed combat or a knife. Of the three actors, only one had stage combat experience and that came from working on a green show for Nevada Shakespeare in the Park.

When choreographing a stage fight, particularly with actors who have little or no experience, the only place to begin is with technique. The knife fight for *Gris Gris* began with simple safety instructions such as eye contact before each move, spacing, telegraphing of movements and instructions to watch out for elbows, wrists and knees when falling. When choreographing the three major battle scenes for Shakespeare's *Henry VI Part III*, the choreographer worked with ten to sixteen combatants on stage at any time. The weapons were broadswords, shields, and quarter-staves. Two of the actors were well trained in combat. Rehearsals for this production began the same way as for *Gris Gris* with safety technique.

Both productions used a forward fall which was broken down and taught by moving the actor slowly through each component from stepping out in a lunge, lowering oneself forward and down (making sure the knee was over the ankle and not past it), placing the hands on the ground with one hand outside the body and the other inside the knee, lowering oneself to the ground making sure not to put stress on the wrist or knee. This was rehearsed at one eighth the speed that it would be performed. As it was rehearsed over and over, the speed was gradually increased.

Speed is one of the most dangerous elements of a fight and most actors want to rush immediately to performance speed and intensity. The actor must be pulled back. The slower they go in the beginning the easier they will be able to focus on technique and allow the movements to enter their muscle memory. This makes for a safer fight and also a stronger looking fight.

In his book *Fight Directing for the Theatre*, J. Allen Suddeth reports:

Slow and steady is the key to fight-choreography rehearsals. A fight director should continue to keep the pace slow by mutual agreement until quite close to the opening night. The performers will continue to learn details about the fight in slow motion every time they do it—Details that are lost to them when they fly through the choreography (Suddeth, 4,5).

When dealing with weapons, it is even more imperative the fight remain slow and steady until the actors have complete control of themselves and their weapons. For *Henry VI Part III*, the choreographer had a two-hour rehearsal to assign weapons and choreograph some small skirmishes. Then a four-hour rehearsal to choreograph three group battle scenes, six kills and one plotted assassination. Finally, at the wet-tech, time was allotted to finish choreographing one large fight scene between three major characters and two short fights between four minor characters. Overall the choreographer had twelve hours to choreograph and tech the fights for the show. Fortunately the director had decided to do all the fights in a stylized fashion. Each fight was done in a slow-motion style with a drum underscoring the fights so that each hit took place on a pulse every four beats. Speed was

never a concern since every fight was paced to a very slow 4/4 time signature. Thus the choreographer was able to concentrate solely on teaching the fights. Once the actors had learned the technical moves, the choreographer moved quickly to working with the actors on acting the fights.

Gris Gris had full tempo fights at 1/4 to 1/3 less that the speed of a real fight. The knife fight was only a three-minute fight but the choreographer spent twelve hours with the combatants.

The first rehearsal was spent teaching safety and choreographing the unarmed portion of the fight. During the fight, two men fight over a woman. The woman is caught in the middle and tries to break up the fight. She also participates in it. The unarmed sequences used both contact, and non-contact techniques. Three hours were spent on just the first thirty seconds of the fight. The second rehearsal was spent choreographing the knife fight. Particular care had to be taken when the weapons were introduced for the safety of the actors and the audience since the audience arrangement in the theatre had the front rows located only a few feet from the actors. After another three hours, the knife fight was choreographed. The rest of the rehearsals were spent cleaning up the spacing and the intensity of the fight.

Safety for the actors is always the primary importance. The actors should know when to make eye contact. Moves are telegraphed in a manner that their partners and the audience knows what is coming. For an audience member to watch a fight and say "What happened? I didn't see it" is the worse that can happen. When working the weapons, actors should know where to thrust and parry safely. Technique will allow them to have polished movements and phrases because both mind and body know what to do.



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Stage combat first needs to be mastered as a skill so that it may be more easily integrated into the acting craft. Having carefully gone through all the fundamental moves and mechanics in a neutral state, we now can explore the character within the conflict. Once the skills are understood and the artist is comfortable with the mechanics of the weapon, then they can start a process of working the acting craft into a stage fight (Girard, 433).

The fights in *Gris Gris* and *Henry VI Part III* had to move into impulse. For *Gris Gris* it was a natural progression. The story alone, two men fighting for a woman, lends itself to impulse. In fact the choreographer had to pull the actors back several times because they would rush through the fight. Speed not only caused a safety hazard, but it also took away from the orchestration. In Hobb's book *Stage Combat*, he describes orchestration:

I have always been conscious that most well-constructed fights have changes of rhythm and are "orchestrated" in a way not unlike a musical score. For example, the fight may, like a piece of music, start in a low key in a slow tempo and gradually gain in momentum and pitch, arriving eventually at the equivalent of a clash of Symbols (Hobbs, 15).

The key to a well-orchestrated fight is that the actor motivates the fight based on factors such as who the aggressor is, who is more skilled, which characters had any training in fighting, what is the

size of their opponent, fatigue, injuries, or any dialogue in the scene. In *Gris Gris*, the female character does a lot of talking to both of the combatants. The combatants themselves have a few verbal exchanges. The actors had a tendency to forget everything and just go at each other. Unfortunately, this is not acting on impulse, this is living impulse and living impulse is not acting.

There is a school of actor training that espouses "real emotion" for every moment in the play. Unfortunately, this technique while popular and effective in many situations is particularly dangerous during a fight scene. The actor playing Edmond cannot really want to kill Edgar, or he might—and the curtain will ring down to the wailing of ambulances (Suddeth 175).

The choreographer was able to stop the actors from rushing the fight by having them justify the reasons for each move in the fight. Reasons had to be based on the given circumstances of the scene. Once they could justify each move, they were able to work toward impulsive acting choices that were not only safe, but also realistic and clean. An out of control fight scene can look as bad as a purely technical fight scene.

In *Henry VI Part III* the choreographer had to take particular care to make the stylized fights look realistic. Since the style chosen was a type of slow motion, the actors had to find a way to realistically struggle with each other. Fortunately, they were using heavy weapons and having to slowly wield them was a struggle in itself. If the actors would have fought at top speed, they could let momentum do half the work of wielding a broadsword. The actual strain on the actor's muscles lent an unexpected appearance of struggle to their performance.



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One of the major acting obstacles that had to be overcome was that several of the actors were wincing as the weapons came towards them. This may seem like a logical impulse except that it did not come from an acting choice. Instead, it came from the actor's fear of the weapons. This problem was solved as the actors became comfortable with the weapons. They were reminded that they were trained warriors fighting not just for their lives but for a cause they truly believed in. With that little bit of imagination work, they began to look like trained soldiers. Their acting impulse began to show in the way they attacked, retreated, and died. In *Swashbuckling*, Richard Lane has a wonderful description of what he calls the "roots of combat."

1. Survival: This is the most primitive combat instinct of all.
2. Need. Someone has threatened to take away the most valuable thing I have, or denies me something I'll eventually need for survival.
3. Greed. Avarice is an overwhelming desire to possess something regardless of the consequences.
4. Righteousness. Moral imperatives lie at the upper end of the violence motivation scale. In drama, a fight that begins as a matter of principle often dissolves into a fight based on greed, need, or survival (Lane, 13).

When an actor is able to tap into one or more of these as a motivation for their character, they can begin to bring a fight to life. Stage combat is a wonderful tool for an actor to study both impulse and technique. Through the drills required to master different combat styles, an actor can develop a strong and flexible body as well as the actor/combatant's powers of concentration. Working in a discipline that can injure and kill oneself if one is not focused on what he and his partners are doing can truly make one concentrate.

Once the drills are moved into choreography and the actor has safely mastered the fight sequences, the actor is able to begin to make impulse choices based on character. In most non-combat plays, the conflict can be very difficult for an actor to find. It may be hidden in subtext or lost in dialogue. The conflict might be spread over several scenes. When it comes to stage combat, the conflict is right there in the struggle for life and death. Very rarely, except through stage combat, does the actor get the wonderful opportunity to play straight out, no holds barred, conflict. Even a scene that only contains a slap is powerful. In society, physical violence is normally forbidden. For a character to be moved enough to break such a cannon there can be no doubt as to the reasons for their impulses. With that much power, even the most inexperienced actor can find a way to experience truthful impulse on stage.

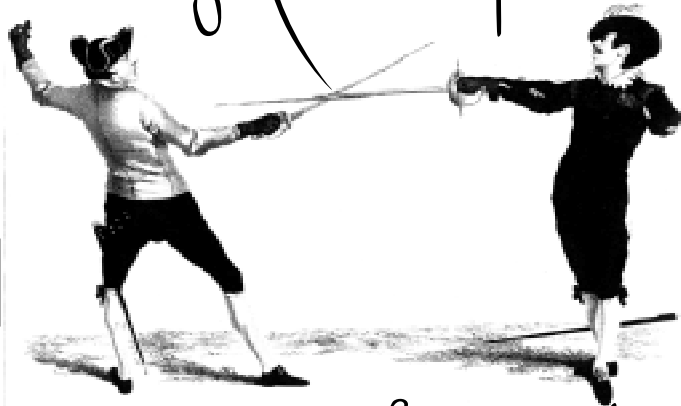
Stage combat is the only area in performance where there should be a slight tilt toward technique. If an actor makes an impulsive vocal choice that is too strong, his dialogue may be lost or he may strain the throat muscles. An overly impulsive acting choice may come across as over the top. An overly impulsive actor/combatant could cause serious injury or death to someone. The ultimate goal is the appearance of violence and not the actual act.

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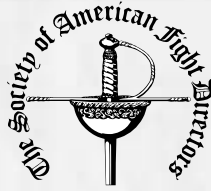
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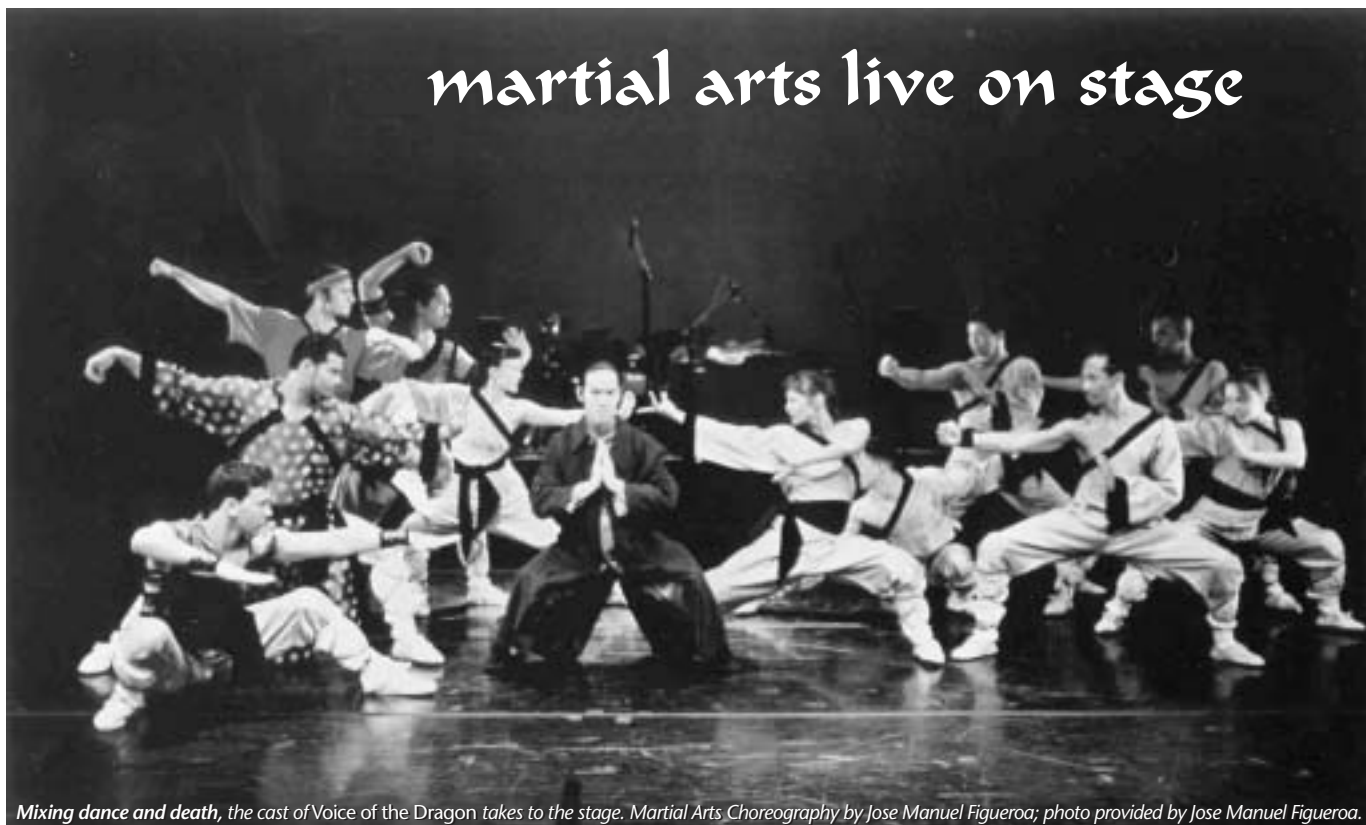
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VOICE OF THE DRAGON

martial arts live on stage



Mixing dance and death, the cast of *Voice of the Dragon* takes to the stage. Martial Arts Choreography by Jose Manuel Figueroa; photo provided by Jose Manuel Figueroa.

by Ruth Margraff

A new *wuxia* dragon...spawned of the Hong Kong cinema has taken America by storm. It has come to dance with Hollywood in Los Angeles and to flirt with the fine arts of New York City. Not since *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* and *The Matrix* has there been such furious American interest in Hong Kong-style martial arts in every aspect of the performing arts.

And now comes this new invention... *Voice of the Dragon* by Big Red Media composer Fred Ho and martial artist Jose Figueroa. It is martial arts live on stage with weapons, high drama, and a lively wicked jazz score. Twelve martial artists competing with no wires, no special effects, no stunt doubles and no rewind—just hand-to-hand combat in the ancient Shaolin way. All to save the legendary temple once again from bandits and the poisoned soul of a new antagonist named Gar Man Jang.

FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHY AS MODERN DANCE

Sold out houses at the Guggenheim Museum leapt to their feet for *Voice of the Dragon*'s last performance of the millennium before its 2003 North American tour. At the wine and cheese reception, Manhattanites of all ages and walks of life rushed up to the collaborators saying they had never before seen anything like *Voice of the Dragon*. Composer Fred Ho cut to the chase with

Wuxia:

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon director Ang Lee describes the word *wuxia* as made up of two characters: *Wu* for things relating to the martial arts, war or military. And then *xia* for the type of heroes found in Chinese *wuxia* novels, full of Chinese swords, hand-to-hand combat and Chinese sorcery...and as a symbol for chivalry.

PBS's *Eye on Dance* Celia Ipiotis. Ho attested, "Chinese martial arts can kick the butt of modern dance any time." There were applause and some surprise, as Ipiotis laughed and moderated, "Well! Good thing you have that hand-to-hand combat experience behind you, Fred, 'cause there's gonna be a line out there to meet you when we're done!"

Composer Ho continued, "I find modern dance to be exhausted, effete and formulaic. While Chinese martial arts has existed for centuries, it is continually renewed in live performance. And I would say its main practitioners are inter-city African-American and Latino youth. And Jose [Figueroa, martial arts choreographer] is an example of this, growing up in the South Bronx. Now we can get into a discourse, later on, as to the reasons WHY..."

"Any of you guys a black belt?" asked a sixth grader from the Manhattan School for Children. "We all are," responded Michael Pasigan (Bolo Super Manchu), as they all went down the line, citing training ranging from traditional and contemporary northern and southern *wu shu*. Until Marina Celano who played Ng Mui in 1999, (now played by Soomi Kim and Lisa Limb), piped up, "Um, I'm not a black belt. I'm a dancer." Ipiotis brought her mike to Celano, "Oh and how was that?" "Very difficult," confessed Celano, "I've got all kinds of bruises: but I love the discipline."

THE FIGHT DIRECTOR

Retiring from martial arts competition in 1999, Jose Manuel Figueroa is the brilliant fight director behind the successful *Voice of the Dragon*. Figueroa enjoys the success of his martial arts discipline now with live audiences in the theater community, introducing martial art as legitimate performance art.

According to Jose Figueroa: "Fred Ho's work has opened new doors for the contemporary martial artist, that never existed until now. Fred's pioneering vision truly transcended our expectations of theatrical interest. And our beloved director with the patience of a saint—Mira Kingsley—truly transformed our movement to the beautiful work of modern dance and fine art with purpose that it is today. Mira transforms my fight choreography into physical drama, working with martial artists, who have won collectively thousands of martial arts awards, but who had no experience performing on stage! Mira's direction changed all of that. I guess you can compare our working relationship to that of director Ang Lee and fight choreographer Yuen Wo Ping of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* fame—on stage!"

When asked what it is like to win a Grand Championship, Figueroa replies:

Well it's a lot like performing in *Voice of the Dragon*. In that you compete in several categories, running in sometimes eight divisions. So you need to get a gold medal in five or more events. For example, in weapons—short to long, single, double, *Tui shou*—push hands, *Tai Chi* form, etc. You are measured by the gold medals altogether. *Tui shou* is actually a form of preparation for fighting. How you learn to be sensitive to a partner. (In

VOICE... this is crucial to not getting kicked in the eye, which we kinda learned the hard way!). The higher levels of push hands require you to be able to joint, lock and throw your opponent. Most of the *Tai Chi* competitors focus on form and weapons but not the combative components. My master Ren Guang Yi believes that form without fight is worthless. There has to be *Yong*, Master Ren says, or *combat usefulness*. With *Voice of the Dragon*, in one hour, we not only integrate the usefulness of multicultural drama and music...we are using all the martial arts styles of *Chen tai chi*, *Shaolin kung fu*, *Hung Ga*, *Capoiera* and much more.

For example, fight director Figueroa along with director Kingsley built the signature fight for his character Chen Jak against a lyric Chinese percussion with solo woodwind. Figueroa started with:

◆ *Chen-style Taijiquan* combat locks and throws.

His fight cadences then vary from meditative to sudden thrusts giving this fight an almost surreal quality when pitted against an array of slow motion strikes and throws from his opponent that most people could barely perform at regular speed. Let alone in slow motion backwards handsprings, landing effortlessly. For the other fights, Figueroa designed new fusions for:

◆ Staff, Spear & *Kwandao* versus Staff

◆ Staff versus double broad sword & double daggers

◆ *Wushu* Peking operatic kicks, punches and full twisting butterflies climaxing in sword versus fan;

◆ *Bolo Enter the Dragon*-style showdowns man to girl, homage to the Davids and Goliaths of the world

◆ And, in the spirit of the cult film classic *The Five Deadly*

The villainess Gar Man Jang (Kathleen Cruz) rampages against Shaolin. Martial arts choreography by Jose Manuel Figueroa; photo provided by Jose Manuel Figueroa.



Voice of the Dragon is an hour long Martial Arts Ballet and Music Theatre Epic based on a seventeenth century Chinese fable from the Ching Dynasty. It is an epic action adventure with astonishing imagery and pyrotechnical moves that chronicles the story of a renegade nun, Gar man Jang, whose unholy alliance with the Manchu Imperial forces leads to the sacking of the Shaolin Temple and the unleashing of the terrible secret hidden within its scrolls. A whirlwind of destruction is halted years later by a climactic martial arts battle using a newly developed martial arts form known as the *Drunken Fist*. This story of intrigue, opportunism, betrayals, revolutionary redemption and innovation is an allegory for the destruction and resurrection of the modern-day Asian American movement. Fred Ho's brash and densely textured music draws on Chinese folk songs, opera, as well as Motown and stylings of such jazz musicians as Archie Shepp, Charles Mingus and John Coltrane. *Voice of the Dragon* was performed at the 2001 Next Wave Festival at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Guggenheim Museum and in Seattle. It began its American Tour in 2003.

Voice of the Dragon concept & music by Fred Ho, text for *wuxia* narrator by: Fred Ho & Ruth Margraff, directed by Mira Kingsley, lighting by Allen Hahn, costumes by Kenneth Chu, original scenic design by Michael Forrest Kurtz, Shaolin Secret Scrolls by Tong Kin-feng Cheng, martial arts choreography by Jose Manuel Figueroa.

VOICE OF THE DRAGON

ONCE UPON A TIME IN CHINESE AMERICA...

The Martial Arts Epic



少林功夫



龍虎風雲

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Lighting by ALLEN HAHN Martial Arts Choreography by JOSE FIGUEROA Costume Design by KENNETH CHU Stage Managers JUSTIN DONHAM & EVA PINNEY
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Venoms, a climactic battle creating a new drunken fist-style version of Snake, Crane, Tiger, Leopard & *Taiji* styles of *wushu* refracted throughout the entire cast against the central villain, Gar Man Jang, played by Kathleen Cruz and Lisa Limb.

According to Figueroa:

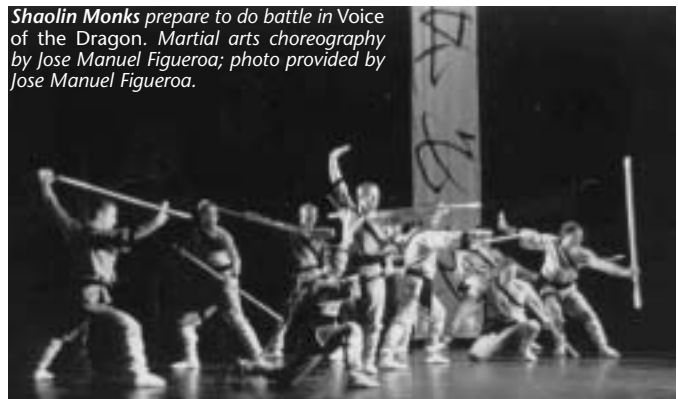
The task was great, but with an impressive cast like this one—the journey was sheer exuberance! This concept of hi-tech advancement in the art of filmmaking doesn't necessarily mean that good will come! Like Yuen Wo Ping's recent film *The Matrix*, we find reliance on too much technology forces us to think about compromising our humanity. Our stage production begs this very question. In a time of global gunpowder and firearms, and Weapons of Mass Destruction, why can't we still negotiate our human conflicts hand to hand—in the ancient Shaolin way!

Figueroa, who resides in the Bronx, is the martial arts choreographer of *Voice of the Dragon* and a native of the island of Puerto Rico. Figueroa has pioneered a revolutionary usage of *Tai Chi* and *Wu Shu* in New York City schools along with being a world champion.

Figueroa explains, "I use *Tai Chi Chuan* for the body, intellect and spirit. I teach focus, discipline and self-control. We move into *Wude* (Martial code of ethics) from there, and self-respect. My work is always adamantly aimed at cultural diversity. Practicing the martial arts improves your health. You learn how to resolve a conflict without guns and violence."



The narrator (Jim Yue, below) unravels the story before the eyes of an inquisitive Gar Man Jan (Kathleen Cruz). Martial arts choreography by Jose Manuel Figueroa; photo provided by Jose Manuel Figueroa.



Shaolin Monks prepare to do battle in *Voice of the Dragon*. Martial arts choreography by Jose Manuel Figueroa; photo provided by Jose Manuel Figueroa.

CHINATOWN, NEW YORK

Composer Fred Ho is a nationally recognized political activist and Marxist, who has spoken in universities all over the world and leads his own company called Big Red Media, Inc. with his legendary Afro-Asian music ensemble and Brooklyn Sax Quartet. Ho uses the intrigue of working-class Chinatown and Chinese politics, the high drama of Peking opera, the grandeur of Chinese heroic literature and the virtuosi power of Chinese martial arts—to illustrate political themes.

In legendary Fred Ho style, Ho describes his radical themes: "*Voice of the Dragon* is about betrayal and bravery, subterfuge and survival, lust for power and loyalty to principle, of determination in the face of destruction and defeat, and of integrity versus invincibility. It is a revolutionary epic-adventure fable inspired by a seventeenth century martial arts legend. It tells the story of the betrayal of the legendary Shaolin Temple by a renegade monk, who allies with the Manchu imperial forces to destroy the temple. While sacking the temple, the traitor Gar Man Jang finds the Shaolin Secret Scrolls, the accumulated knowledge of all martial arts, and in absorbing the Scroll's deadly power, becomes invincible. All with a comic book sense of humor."

Both Ho and Figueroa would be the first to point out that martial artists have long enjoyed a subcultural urban following in cities like New York. More specifically, the New York audiences who saw these films were predominantly recent or second-generation Asian-, African-, and Latino-Americans from the Harlem, Brooklyn, Bronx and Chinatown boroughs of Manhattan. This can be attributed to the influx of martial arts films imported to Chinatowns across the United States during the '70s and '80s. Figueroa sites George Tai as one of the persons responsible for heading the distribution of hundreds of Hong Kong films to beloved cinemas on 42nd Street Times Square and Chinatown—now extinct. For the price of five dollars one could see a triple feature of as much Hong Kong action as one could take. Working-class audiences cheered loudly during the films, making wise cracks in many languages that would have people laughing in the aisles.

A NEW LEGACY UNFOLDS

Voice of the Dragon carries on a new legacy born from Chinatown cult-followings and the Hong Kong action films that audiences have come to love, with live music by composer Fred Ho hailed by the 2001 *New York Times* as "one of the best dance scores to be heard in these parts in recent times." Ho and Figueroa's innovations in the martial arts genre continue to move the art of the

fight director from the more proletariat and working-class arenas of competition in subcultural after-school programs and local *kung fu* studios all over New York City—to the some of the most prestigious live theaters, opera houses and performing arts centers all over America.

Says Figueroa:

We here at *Voice of the Dragon* give a *shout out* to acknowledge our profound debt of gratitude to all our teachers and martial art film pioneers that paved the way for us... We owe an eternal debt of gratitude for their time and effort that allows us to shine as a pioneering company traveling on uncharted waters. And as far as the entertainment industry is concerned, the following people set the standard and continue to raise the bar. They are why we exist. We pay homage to the following for enriching our lives with the magnificence that we know as the martial arts: Bruce Lee, Yuen Wo Ping, Donnie Yen, Stephan Berwick, Ang Lee, Gordon Liu, Jet Li, Jackie Chan, Sammo Hung, Michelle Yeoh, Tsui Hark, Liu Chia-Liang, Corey Yuen, Yang Yang, Philip Kua, Douglas Wong, Kwan Tak Hing, and many other



Sucking power from the shaolin secret scrolls Gar Man Jan (Kathleen Cruz, left) confronts the narrator (Jim Yue). Martial arts choreography by Jose Manuel Figueroa; photo provided by Jose Manuel Figueroa.

great film directors, action choreographers and actors that help set the standards for generations to come. We only hope to carry on the torch.

Voice of the Dragon was made possible by generous commissions and contributions from the Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust, the World Music Institute and the New York State Council on the Arts, the John Harms Center for the arts with support from Mrs. Mary Sharp Cronson/Works and Process Series at the Guggenheim Museum and Ms. Tina Chen. *Voice of the Dragon* premiered as *Once Upon a Time In Chinese America. A Martial Arts Ballet* in June at the 1999 JVC Jazz Festival and aired in December, 1999 on PBS. It has been presented in theaters all over America in 2001-2002 and featured at the world-renowned Brooklyn Academy of Music's international opera house in November of 2001. It is now on tour with Big Red Media, Inc./Columbia Arts Management, Inc. to venues in more than 40 cities in North America.

North American bookings for *Voice of the Dragon* can be made by contacting Columbia Artists Management Inc. at (212) 841-9721.



The Ching/Manchu Imperial Eunuch (Ronald Anthony Williams, left) attacks Li Wen Mao (Scott Parker) who defends with his fan. Martial arts choreography by Jose Manuel Figueroa; photo provided by Jose Manuel Figueroa.

THE CAST OF 2003 *VOICE OF THE DRAGON* TOUR

The five loyal Shaolin disciples who plot a mighty insurrection against the Ching (Manchu) Empire:

- Kathleen CruzGar Man Jang
- Lisa LimbNg Mui & Gar Man Jang
- Soomi KimNg Mui
- Scott ParkerLi Wen Mao
- George Crayton IIIGee Shin
- Philip SilveraMiao Hin
- Jose FigueroaChen Jak

These Five Disciples confront their bitter enemy Gar Man Jang & her bandit cohorts in a magnificent climactic battle:

- (Seku) Ronald Anthony Williams
.....The Ching/Manchu Imperial Eunuch
- Bilqis BenuRed Phoenix Manchu Warrior
- Earl WeathersFlying Eagle Manchu Warrior
- Ron WheelersGolden Tiger Manchu Warrior
- Greg Zilb ...Gee Shin & Fierce Tiger Manchu Warrior
- Jose QuinonesChen Jak
.....& Golden Snake Manchu Warrior
- Jim Yuethe *wuxia* narrator

BAR FIGHT

by Dana Anderson-Wyman

Everyone remembers seeing movies in their youth when the young usually idealistic and optimistic teenage couple needed money for some noble cause and the adults in their world telling them it is impossible. Suddenly, one of them has an epiphany and shouts, “Hey, I *gotta* barn. Let’s put on a show!” Suddenly, in the next scene, the once ramshackled, barely standing shed-sized barn has been magically transformed into the interior of a huge sound-stage set complete with twenty-foot fight curtains on a forty-foot proscenium with a highly waxed to-a-mirror-like-shine black marble floor along other set pieces, such as a staircase large enough for two hundred or more dancers in formal attire to perform upon. Ah, if it were only that easy, everyone would do it.

As it turned out at the University of Nevada Las Vegas’ 2002 Winter Stage Combat Workshop, that is exactly what Gregory Hoffman decided to do. Well, not exactly. He did not say, “I *gotta* barn.” Instead, he exclaimed, “Hey, I *gotta* bar, about twenty combat workshop students, two certified instructors (Ted Sharon and D.C. Wright), a couple of interns...let’s have a barroom brawl.” And that is where the similarities ended. Hoffman did not need money for a cause, noble or otherwise; but he thought it would be a good learning experience for the participants of the workshop to undergo the realities of working through a fight scene with many participants at a real location within time constraints. He was able to locate a bar/restaurant with an attached pool-room a few blocks from UNLV that would allow the workshop staff and students to take over the premises for a morning’s filming.

An enormous difference exists between choreographing a fight for the stage and staging one for film. For the stage, the actions must be worked out, demonstrated, learned, practiced until they are second nature and finally performed in front of a live audience. If it is a duel between Cyrano and Valvert, from *Cyrano de Bergerac*, the audience will probably see most of the fight. However, if it is the brawl between the Montagues and Capulets in the opening of *Romeo and Juliet*, the audience might miss some of the action because, depending on the size of the cast, there might be as many as ten different duels or fights happening at the same time. It is all done live and in real time. When it is done, it is done.

Not so in film. In film or video, the camera is the audience’s eyes and the audience sees only what the camera sees; so if an action happens out of frame it has not happened, or at least not in the film.

Before the first drunk was punched or the first inch of tape was shot, Hoffman had to concern himself with a myriad of technical details. For example, he had to remove or cover anything that had a trademark. Also, the talent (the workshop students) had to be paid and sign a complex release promising not to sue for royalties at some later date. He had to make sure the lighting was just right; too much and all the camera sees is a halo, too little and the camera does not see a thing. Hoffman had to compose establishing shots that identified the location and travel shots, various camera angles, pans and close-ups while maintaining continuity between takes. Last but not least, he had to devise at least ten different fights that must happen in sequence and include punches, kicks, chokes, throws, slaps, hair pulls, pool cues and pool balls as weapons, in short everything except furniture breaking that any respectable bar-room brawl would have. All of this had to have the look of spontaneity.

One way to achieve this look of spontaneity is to take the heuristic approach to the fights and let them happen as they may. Hoffman, Sharon and Wright, thought better of it and pre-planned and staged each conflict. Twelve to fourteen different fights were staged. After each participant knew what specific fight action he was supposed to execute, and exactly when in the sequence of the fight, Hoffman would stop and adjust some camera angle or angles of striking/punches.

When everything was all worked out the final shooting went something like this. First, there was an establishing shot of the bar/pool hall, which was a large dimly lit room with a bar in the middle, separating the room in half. The front half had small round tables and chairs, while the back had larger tables and a kitchen area. Next to the wall on the right side of the room is seen five booths with people drinking. The wall at the top of the booths has been cut out to create an opening to the next room. On the other side of the windows were seen for pool tables and about ten or twelve people, either playing pool or sitting on the benches that border the room watching the others play. One hears general ad libs and laughter.

When the action starts Actor A accidentally bumps into Actor B. *Cut!*



Ensemble work is a key factor in a Bar fight as in *Wild Bunch Brawl*. Fights by Greg Ramsey; photo by Lisa Diehl.

Reestablish a new shot (move the camera's position while the actors maintain their exact position), this one being a close-up of protagonist B shouts at A for bumping into her, and ruining her pool shot. *Cut!* Establish a close-up shot of protagonist B shouting at A. *Cut!* Next a tracking shot catches a couple people on the sidelines being drawn into the brawl, either egging it on or trying to defuse it. They, along with everybody else, complete their entire choreographed fight exactly the same way every time a new angle or shot is set up. The whole sequence starts over and over and over until the



Controlled chaos is a goal of group fights like Wild Bunch Brawl. Fights by Greg Ramsey; photo by Lisa Diehl.

camera has been up and down, front, middle and back of the pool-hall, high to low, low to high and across the pool-hall.

The actors have to execute the exact actions in the exact sequence as the time before because when the film is edited, all of the individual actions will be pieced together like a garment, one action following the other. For example, if the trip and forward sit fall that a participant executes at nine in the morning is different from one executed at eleven in the same sequence, it will be very noticeable in the finished film. Everyone has noticed in a film that one second a glass is almost empty and then suddenly it is full, or a burned-down cigarette is suddenly almost new. This is the result of inexact repetition of a sequence. Hoffman was able to film nearly fifteen minutes of raw footage that he hoped to edit down to two or three minutes of a usable finished fight. If this is all done correctly, then the viewer/camera would see the fight as if walking down the aisle between the pool tables and the seats on the sidelines, everything happening in view in what appears to be real time.

After the final sequence was shot, everyone was able to relax, have lunch and repair to the workshop *salle* and complete the day's schedule of events. In the evening everyone was able to view the rushes, which is the raw footage of everything filmed. It seemed a little strange to look at an entire morning's work condensed into fifteen minutes. It is surreal to think that even that time would be further reduced to two or three minutes of finished product. The class found the experience fun, entertaining and educational.

— Fin

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National Stage Combat Workshops 2002

by Michael Chin

The year 2002 was a special year for the Society of American Fight Directors(SAFD) and the National Stage Combat Workshops(NSCW). Not only did it mark the tenth anniversary of the 1992 NSCW Teacher Training Workshop(TTW) but also the twenty-fifth anniversary of the organization itself.

To celebrate the tenth anniversary of the 1992 TTW, seven of the fourteen original members of the *Crew of 92* gathered for the annual Fight Directors Workshop and Conference. Old war stories were exchanged, idle promises of working out that weekend were given.

On a much grander scale, nine of the eleven Fight Masters were brought out to Las Vegas to teach at the Actor Combatant and Advanced Actor Combatant Workshops in celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary. Led by the SAFD's co-founders, David Boushey and Erik Fredricksen, Brian Byrnes, Drew Fracher, Dale Girard, David Leong, J. Allen Suddeth, David Woolley and first-year Fight Master and president Chuck Coyl taught classes in contemporary violence, acting the fights, sword tricks, film fighting as well as Skill Proficiency Tests (SPT). To commemorate the event special twenty-fifth anniversary certificates of the SPT recognition were issued.

Weapons night was its usual big success as five armorers hawked their wares, and no less than seven regional workshops (New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Hawaii, Louisiana, Las Vegas and London) were represented.

The annual Broadway Cares/Equity Fights Aids(BC/EFA) drawing was quite special because over \$1,900 was raised. The money was split between BC/EFA and Certified Teacher Neil Massey. Prayers go to the Massey family in their time of need. Also to be thanked are Vulcan's Forge/Lewis Shaw, American Fencers Supply, Fiocchi Sword Cutlery/Tom Fiocchi, Western Stage Props/Mark Allen, Hollywood Combat Center, David Leong, Dale Girard, David Woolley, and the following SAFD regional workshops for their contributions to the drawing: Fights2, John Bellomo, Richard Ryan, John MacFarland, Gregory Hoffman and Mark Guinn. In total fifteen prizes were donated for these worthy causes.

The closing night ceremonies were the highlight of the workshop as SAFD webmaster, Al Foote, put together a special videotape to commemorate the occasion. Vintage film footage of the early days showing many of the Fight Masters in action was shown. The *piece de resistance* of the reel, no doubt being the rapier duel between David Boushey and Erik Fredricksen as they warned the world of the evils of corporate takeovers. The James Finney Memorial Award was presented to Denise Alessandria Hurd for her perseverance. The Paddy Crean Award was presented, most deservedly to a long-time friend and supporter of the SAFD, Dean Jeffrey Koep of UNLV. Ever since the NSCW moved to UNLV, Dean Koep has been an integral part of the SAFD and is to be thanked for his support and faith.

The 2002 NSCW was one that will not soon be forgotten. Twenty-five years of existence was celebrated as the organization looks forward to an even brighter future. Next year, the NSCW will present an Intermediate Actor Combatant Workshop as well as the Basic Actor Combatant Workshop. The NSCW has received its first grant in twenty-five years from a major advertising firm, who will be doing work *pro bono*. The SAFD is doing something for the community at large with the Food Fight program which like the BC/EFA program will raise funds for a worthy cause: world hunger.

The SAFD would be remiss if at this time it did not stop and look at the struggles and growing pains that this organization has endured this past quarter century. No future would exist without a past. The SAFD genuinely acknowledges the work of two men and offers a fond and sincere thank you to the co-founders, David Boushey and Erik Fredricksen, for having the hunger and vision for creating the SAFD. Without their contributions and sacrifices the organization would not exist. The SAFD is truly indebted to these two gentlemen.

Fin



Paddy Crean Award
 Founder's Award (Unarmed)
 James Finney Memorial Award
 President's Award
 Best ACW Scene

 Best Male ACW Actor/Combatant
 Best Female ACW Actor/Combatant
 Best AACW Scene

 Best Male AACW Actor/Combatant
 Best Female AACW Actor/Combatant

Jeffrey Koep
 Tony Clarno
 Denise Hurd
 Michael Chin
 Matthew Ellis
 and Scott Deans
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 Jose Garcia
 Pam Hurley
 Mark Mineart
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SWASHBUCKLING

Swashbuckling

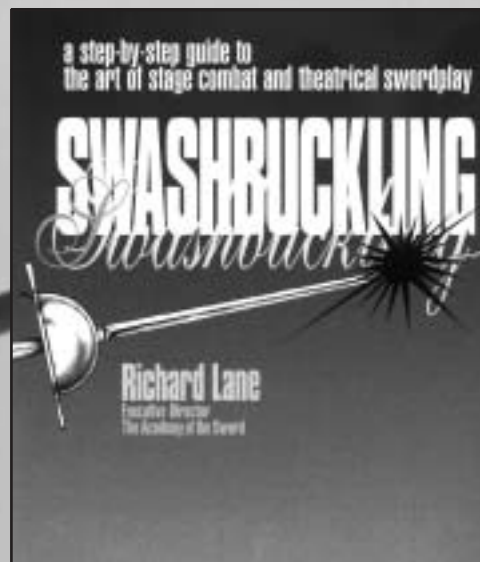
A Step-by-Step Guide

by to the Art of Stage Combat
and Theatrical Swordplay

Richard
Lane

Executive Director
Academy of the Sword

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genuine swordsman on the stage or screen...*



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and salute you, Richard...Well Done!"*

--Oscar F. Kolombatovich, Fencing Master Emeritus

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Swashbuckling is written with wit and patience by SAFD Fight Director/Certified Teacher Richard Lane, and although he is the first to admit that a book is no substitute for instruction, "a book like this *can* go a long way toward preparing you for such instruction, then help you remember and perfect the techniques you've learned, even if they differ slightly from those presented here." With those honest words and many more, Richard Lane has created the most comprehensive manual of its kind available today.



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TO THE POINT



On the *ER* set, Noah Wyle (left) and Goran Visnjic rehearse with Roberta Brown. Fight sby Robert Brown.

by J.T. Marlowe

The *Fight Master* decided to return to basics and what better place to revisit one's roots than a fencing academy—The Westside Fencing Center in Los Angeles, one of the country's largest training facilities. There, *The Fight Master* met the agile and enchanting Roberta Brown.

TRUE BEGINNINGS

Brown's roots are planted firmly in fencing. She took up the sport in college and continued her work as an actor and stage combat student in London at the Webber Douglas Academy of Dramatic Art. In addition to being on Westside's teaching staff, Brown is one of a handful of professional *swordmasters* who work between stage, screen and television as sword fight choreogra-

phers. She has worked as swordmaster, fight director, swordplay coach, and bullwhip choreographer on such film and television projects as *Charlie's Angels*, *Queen of Swords* and *ER*. She also has expertise in the Chinese Fighting Fans arena.

Teaching a beginner's class, Brown ran home the need for centering weight. She encouraged her students to check their positions in the mirror. She explained how the primary control of the foil is with thumb and forefinger—and how to determine the top of the weapon—how to grip—the subtle difference between right and left handers. She went on to show the *en garde* position and how to block a *parry*—how the *parry* clears the path for the *attack*. Brown used a common sense logic to bridge inexperience with newfound technical skill. Toward the end of this first lesson, she explained to her stu-

dents the value and meaning of the *salute*; how a warrior would kiss his sword as if it were a cross and offer it up to God. Then, to the students' delight, she gave them what they really came for: the experience of a *hit*. As she smiled and proclaimed: "I know that's why you're here!" Each student practiced a *hit* on Brown, who wore a mask and what she termed her *Barbie plate*. After the students left, she was asked why she still teaches beginners. "Because I truly enjoy introducing them to the sport! It also feeds my professional work with actors."

EMERGENCYPOINTERS

Brown worked with Noah Wyle and Goran Visnjic on a sword fight on *ER* this past season. Wyle's strength was in sport fencing while Visnjic's was in theatrical fencing. Brown used the strengths of each to choreograph the phrases of

this three-minute fight. When she works in the theatre, the allotted rehearsal time allows her to train actors to meld the text, character and arc of the dramatic action to the demands of the fight. In most of her film and television work, she is not afforded the same luxury with the technical demands of the camera, the shortened rehearsal time and the collaboration with the director who may alter a phrase at the last moment before shooting. Brown tries to have initial conversations with the director (the ultimate decision maker) and is proactive in her collaboration with the stunt or fight coordinator. With *ER* she was given a solid rehearsal time and two enthusiastic actors who wanted to *go for the gold*.

Brown's solid acting background set the foundation to communicate with the actors. Wyle was given the *why* of how one sword move leads to the next. As he proclaimed in admiration: "She's giving us *motivations!*" Brown was able to give both Wyle and Visnjic the subtextual links to the fight. Brown also used a dynamic hit from a 1964 Olympic Fencing match between Japan and France. She works the fights and then brings in the camera to adjust it. She coaches her actors on not *dropping out of frame* and how to get the most *dramatic* effect for their close-ups. With *ER*, she met with the director to understand and define his needs and what he hoped to see in her fights so that her choreography took shape and remained intact throughout. In other instances, Brown has had to use her honed instincts and improvisational skills to accomplish the task.

Photo by Lesley Bohm.



Roberta Brown

before shooting a fight sequence. Fortunately, Brown's ability to understand the tech-

Charlie's Angels include Roberta Brown as fencing double for actress Lucy Liu.



CHARLIE'S ANGELS

One of Brown's influences is Jackie Chan. She admires the way his fight choreography tells stories, and how he can create laughter with a single move. Such influences may have helped her to prepare for the work on the successful and adventurous film *Charlie's Angels*. Brown met and was on the same page with the stunt coordinator and even though, she tried to meet with the

director beforehand, it could not be arranged. Brown always tries to make it a priority to regularly meet and involve the director and director of photography in the process. It was not too surprising to Brown when the director requested a critical change

nical demands of the camera and the need for an exciting fight mitigated what could have proved disastrous otherwise. As always, Brown keeps the safety of the actors the highest priority. She reminds *adventurous* actors how important their faces are when they think and move ahead of their capabilities. She also feels that safety does not minimize the storytelling but is an integral element to its success. It is her solid experience, talent and smarts that allow her to thrive in an otherwise male-dominated field.

ON THE HORIZON

Brown continues to use her talents between stage, film and television. Upcoming projects include a book on stage combat for kids and a film for PBS on Boudica, the Celtic Queen starring Alex Kingston. She is also involved in the development of a possible film project based on a famous female pirate. And, as always, Brown can be found teaching her young initiates the fundamentals of fencing, keeping her rooted and reminding all fight directors of the great lessons of the sword.

Visit Roberta Brown's Web site: www.robortabrown.net.

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SWORDPLAY

THE PRACTICE OF ARMS BEGINNING SWORDWORK FOR STAGE AND FILM by Raymond Delgato

The *Practice of Arms*, the first of F. Braun McAsh's accumulative tapes by Cord Productions, Inc. is clearly an educational video dedicated to instructing the student or professional actor in the use of the sword. Using modern sabre and foil, the video teaches the basic footwork, and the defensive and offensive techniques for both cutting and thrusting weapons, while always emphasizing control and safety. The tape gives enough basic instruction in two systems yet is thorough enough for the viewer to have enough information to safely choreograph his own fight scene.

Canadian actor McAsh has been a professional fight director for nearly a quarter of a century and is a recognized authority on the use of historical bladed weapons. He was the Swordmaster for the television series *Highlander* and has choreographed extensively for the stage.

From the very beginning McAsh defines theatrical fighting as illusionary combat that tells a story. It is the interaction of characters in a violent situation. He defines theatrical fencing as being reactive in nature. One makes a threat and the opponent responds. He goes on to demonstrate how the fight moves are equivalent to the lines of the play and how it tells a story.

The Practice of Arms is not dealing with historical accuracy but with the basics for the beginning student. The drills and exercises are done slowly and repeated like a *kata* so that the moves can be put into muscle memory.

McAsh begins with footwork which is crucial for reasons of safety. While the feet are shown in a seemingly contemporary fencing position, the left or rear foot is turned slightly forward instead of being at a right angle with the front foot. This opens the actor up to the audience. He emphasizes the importance of everything



F. Braun McAsh with Anthony De Longis on the set of *MythQuest*, one of many television and film projects on which has worked.

being absolutely automatic from the waist down and instilled in muscle memory since footwork and distance are critical to maintain safety.

McAsh's demonstrations are filmed straight on facing the camera and from the side so that the viewer can clearly reference the exact placement of the foot, the arm, the sword angle in relation to the body.

McAsh clearly shows all factions that have to be kept in mind when sword-fighting. He allows the viewer to understand why something is done in a certain way so that it is clear to the fledgling actor/combatant what he is doing and why. The tape is designed to be repeated, using slow motion or freeze frame.

Done with a professional crew with Sony Betacams, a full compliment of

lights and a boom operator as well as lavelier mikes, it was scripted and rehearsed for two weeks. Post production in a studio in Vancouver after the tapes were reviewed and off-line edited twenty-four dailies for over two weeks to produce the rough cut. The final choreographed fight, done in costumes was filmed on location in Washington at the Spokane Gardens and Arbor Crest Vineyard.

McAsh has several tapes planned for future production. The next will be on the rapier with its various ancillary weapons, which should be historically authentic from the late 1500s to the late 1600s. If it is anything like his current tape, it will be a valuable asset to the stage combat industry.

Produced by Cord Productions, the tape costs \$40.

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June 9-28, August 25-September 13, 2003, United Stuntmen's Association, Everett, WA
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National Fight Directors Training Program Actor Ensemble Workshops

June 15-27, 2003, SAFD & Celebration Barn Theatre, South Paris, ME
(207) 743-8452 www.safd.org

National Stage Combat Workshops Intermediate Actor Combatant Workshops

July 7-25, 2003, SAFD & University of Nevada, Las Vegas, NV
(702) 895-3662 www.safd.org

Summer Sling VII

August 21-24, 2003, Fights4, New York City, NY
(718) 788-4957 www.safd.org

Philadelphia Stage Combat Workshop

September 27-28, 2003, SAFD and The University of the Arts, Philadelphia, PA
(215) 888-4172 philasc@yahoo.com

Winter Wonderland Workshop

January 23-25, 2004, The Chicago Mob at Columbia College, Chicago, IL
(708) 755-8767 1stimpulse@earthlink.net



The Pen & the Sword

BY THE SWORD: A HISTORY OF GLADIATORS, MUSKETEERS, SAMURAI, SWASHBUCKLERS, AND OLYMPIC CHAMPIONS

by Richard Cohen

Review by Richard J.
Gradkowski

In the tradition of the Seigneur de Brantome's *Discours sur les Duels*, Captain Alfred Hutton's *Old Sword Days and Old Sword Ways*, and in the easy style of Baron de Bazancourt's *Secrets of the Sword*, Richard Cohen has written a fascinating and erudite social history of swordplay, dueling and fencing.

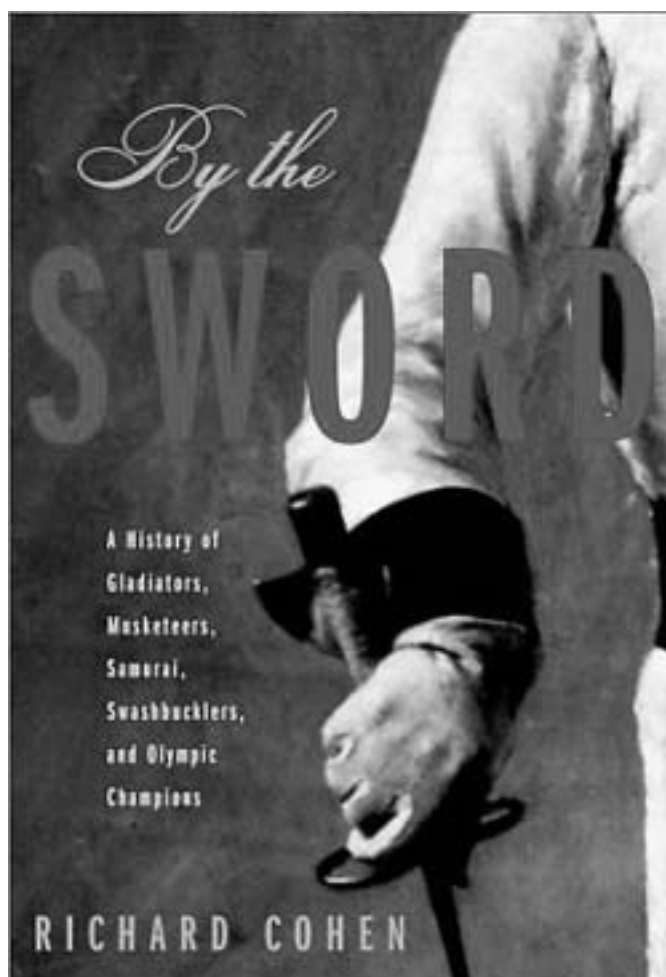
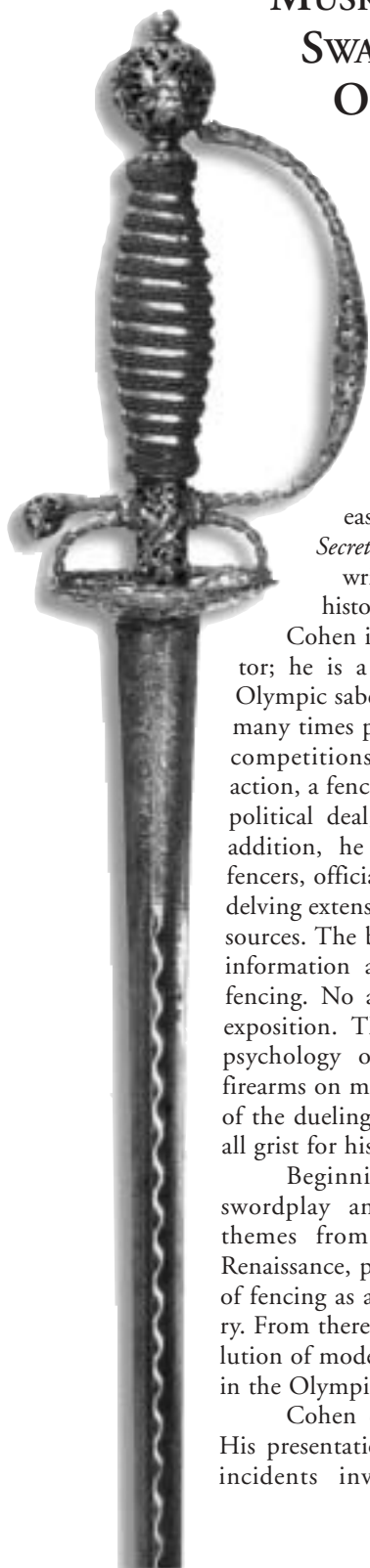
Cohen is not merely a scholarly commentator; he is a four time member of the British Olympic saber team, twice nation champion and many times participant in Grade A International competitions. When he discusses a fencing action, a fencer's idiosyncrasy, or an underhanded political deal, he knows whereof he speaks. In addition, he has traveled widely, interviewing fencers, officials, coaches and historians as well as delving extensively into libraries and other written sources. The book is a *tour de force* of fascinating information and commentary on the world of fencing. No aspect is too obscure to escape his exposition. The metallurgy of steel blades, the psychology of the *Samurai*, the influence of firearms on military theory, the social significance of the dueling ethos, and the politics of sport are all grist for his mill.

Beginning with the earliest records of swordplay and dueling, Cohen develops his themes from the Middle Ages through the Renaissance, past Napoleonic times, to the revival of fencing as a sport in the late nineteenth century. From there, he recounts the history of the evolution of modern fencing both internationally and in the Olympic Games.

Cohen does not simply present dry facts. His presentation is embellished with accounts of incidents involving fencers such as George

Washington, Prime Ministers Churchill and Clemenceau, the Italian dictator Benito Mussolini, SS Chief Heydrich, the communist writer Karl Marx, as well as many other famous and not so famous figures. Cohen also writes an interesting chapter on the influence of fencing on films, recounting various anecdotes of Hollywood swordsmen and their coaches and fight choreographers.

His descriptions of fencing personalities and their adventures reflect the evolution of modern fencing from a gentlemanly and aristocratic pastime to the high level of professionalism and politics exhibited today. Nor are scandals exempted; the cheating



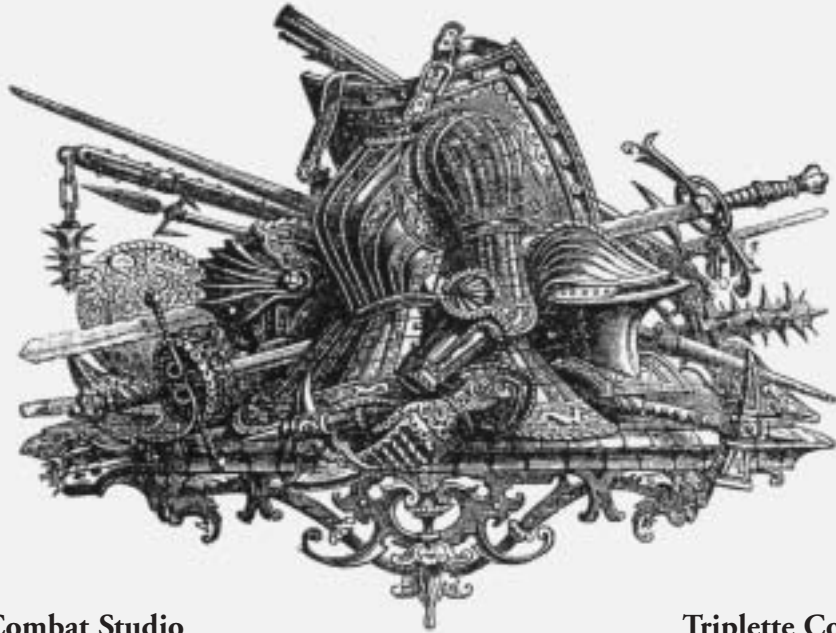
scheme by the Soviet Pentathlon epeeist Onischenko, the espionage trial of the Polish saber champion Pawlowski, the brutal training and payoffs by the German coach Beck, the corrupt referees, the various deals and bouts thrown on orders of team captains are exposed in detail.

A colorful and highly informative writer, Cohen makes this encyclopedic text an essential resource in the education of students and teachers of fencing.

Fin

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Person Tested	Weapons Proficiency
RD Rapier & Dagger	UA Unarmed
QS Quarterstaff	SS Smallsword
BS Broadsword	S&S Sword & Shield
KN Knife	SiS Single Sword
Renewal	Renewal of Actor/Combatant status
EAE	Examiner's Award for Excellence

MARCH 2002

March 10	Swordplay Stage Combat
Joseph Travers	J. Allen Suddeth
Campbell Bridges	R&D BS
Dan O'Driscoll	R&D BS
Mark James Schryver	R&D BS

APRIL 2002

April 20	University of Arizona
Brent Gibbs	Drew Fracher
Matthew Bailey	QS
James MacEachron	QS
Sean Kehoe	R&D UA QS
Monica Bausman	R&D UA QS
Albert Herr IV	R&D UA QS
Sam Lofberg	R&D UA QS
Catherine Kresge	R&D UA QS
Laura Miotke	R&D UA QS
Ricky Coates	R&D UA QS
Monick Tijerina	R&D UA QS
Jennifer Bishop	R&D UA QS-EAE All
Koryie Harvey	R&D UA QS
Michael Tennant	R&D UA QS
Joshua Lamoreaux	R&D UA QS

MAY 2002

May 11	University of the Arts
Charles Conwell	David Woolley
Erin Weaver	R&D SS-EAE UA-EAE S&S-EAE
Gretchen Jameson	R&D SS-EAE UA-EAE BS
Brett Donohue-Barrett	R&D SiS SS UA BS KN
Michael Gatto	SiS SS S&S-EAE
Justin Jain	R&D UA BS
Stephanie Okupniak	R&D UA KN
Daren Herbert	R&D UA BS
Kenrick Burkholder	R&D UA BS
Nicole DiGaetnao	BS

JUNE 2002

June 28	Swords and Surf Workshop
Gregory Hoffman, Aaron Anderson	J. R. Beardsley
William Tucker	R&D SiS SS UA BS QS
Tucker Sonoma	R&D SiS SS UA BS QS
Steven Kam	R&D SiS SS UA BS QS
Christy Hauptman	R&D SiS SS UA BS QS
Joseph Biberger	R&D SiS SS UA BS QS
Scot Davis	R&D SiS SS UA BS QS
Orion Couling	R&D SiS SS UA BS QS
Erik Heger	R&D SiS SS UA BS QS-EAE All
Jamie Luemen	R&D SiS SS UA BS
Michael Lee	R&D
Harry Wong	R&D SiS QS
Thomas Morinaka	R&D UA BS
Barrett Condy	R&D SiS SS UA BS QS

JULY 2002

July 30	Great Lakes Medieval Faire
Spencer Humm	David Woolley
Shannon Sidorick	UA
Erik Sweimer	UA
Thomas Hull	UA
Maria Henriksen	UA
Peter Krynski	UA
Iriemimen Oniha	UA
Dave Schade	UA
James Sheesley	UA
Emily Stewart	BS
Melissa Kraus	UA
Heather Johnson	UA
Bryan Hughes	BS
Jennifer Hampton	UA
Sean Seaber	UA

AUGUST 2002

August 10	Washington DC
Michael Johnson	Dale Girard
Monalisa Arias	R&D SS UA QS
Arthur Rosenberg	R&D SS UA QS
Kevin Robertson	SS QS
Adam Konowe	SS QS

August 24

Ian Rose, John Bellomo	Arcadia University
Matthew Arkins	Dale Girard
Jeff Beers	R&D UA BS
Robert Flanagan	R&D UA BS
Sarah Fornace	BS
Charles Illingworth	BS
Jeff Kennedy	UA BS
Max Kleinman	R&D UA BS
Mark Binder	R&D
Brian McAnn	R&D
Owen Timony	R&D
Doug Thomas	R&D
Ahren Potratz	R&D UA BS

SEPTEMBER 2002

September 17	Video
Brian Byrnes, Dale Girard	Charles Coyl
Jason Armit	SiS SS KN

September 29	Philadelphia Stage Combat Wkshp
Ian Rose, J. David Brimmer	Charles Coyl
Stanton Davis	R&D UA
Jessica Hester	R&D UA
Kristen Schier	R&D UA
Samantha Bellomo	SiS

OCTOBER 2002

October 6	Renaissance Historical Society
Bruce Lecure	Brian Byrnes
Joy Leavy	UA QS
Mala Echerling	R&D UA QS
Wilfreid Meybohm	R&D UA QS
Elizabeth Richie	R&D UA QS
Daniel Balseiro	QS

October 10 Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire

Gregory Ramsey	David Boushey
Norma Gruschow	R&D SiS UA
Alissa Gross	R&D SiS UA
Erik Anderson	R&D SiS UA

Jayson Wickenkamp	R&D SiS UA
Rachel Sitzman	R&D SiS UA
Nate Rubin	R&D SiS UA
Kristen Herbert	R&D SiS UA
Clifton Braswell	R&D SiS UA
Ron Keller	R&D SiS UA
Joe Regan	R&D SiS UA
Phillip Leipf Jr.	R&D UA BS S&S
Nicholas Leinbach	R&D UA BS S&S

October 13

Geoffrey Alm	Seattle, Washington
Robert Borwick	David Boushey
Rebecca Brinson	SS QS-EAE All
Molly Boettcher	SS QS
Gregory Singleton	R&D BS
Beth Peterson	SS QS
David Nochimson	SS QS
Lauren Merry	UA BS
Evan Whitfield	BS
Heidi Wolf	SS QS
Brynna Jourden	SS QS

October 27

Joseph Travers	Swordplay Stage Combat
Campbell Bridges	J. Allen Suddeth
Carl Bradford	SiS UA
Barbara Brandt	SiS UA
Nathan DeCoux	SiS
Marius Hanford	SiS
Jared Hoffert	SiS UA
Heather Murdock	SiS
Cat Pedini	SiS
Daniela Rapp	SiS
Mark James Schryver	SiS
Kennon Wolff	SiS UA
Chanticleer Macleod	UA

NOVEMBER 2002

November 10	Actor's Gymnasium
Angela Bonacasa	Charles Coyl
Andrew Scott	R&D SS-EAE
Tom Carr	SS-EAE
Wm. Michael Gray	SS
Ryan Lawrence	SS-EAE
Reginald Jackson	SS-EAE
Glenn Proud	SS
Elizabeth Styles	SS
Mara Wolverton	SS
Noah Wasserman	SS
Andrea Merrill	R&D

November 26

J. David Brimmer	New York University
Clark McCasland	J. Allen Suddeth
Joseph Yeagain	UA BS
Richard Aab	UA
Josh Kaminkow	BS
JoshUA Bauer	BS
Sean Holohan	BS

DECEMBER 2002

December 5	Virginia Commonwealth University
Aaron Anderson	David Leong
Darrell Rushton	UA QS
Josh Fargason	UA

Matthew Ellis QS
 Jasonete Bonaparte UA
 Resharma Coleman UA
 Nikki King UA
 Westley Du UA

December 7 University of Texas at Austin
David Woolley Brian Byrnes
 JT Arbogast SiS
 Elena Aroaz SiS
 Enrique Bravo SiS
 Alexis Chamow SiS
 Kimberly Dilts SiS
 Zachary Dorsey SiS
 Matthew Herrick SiS
 Mickey Killianey SiS
 Flordelino Lagundino SiS
 Elia Nichols SiS
 Melinda Peinado SiS
 Kent de Spain SiS
 Tommy Schoffler SiS
 Carsey Walker SiS

December 10 Virginia Commonwealth University
Aaron Anderson David Leong
 Aaron Holland UA
 Brandon Kaye UA
 Linden Tailor UA
 Aaron Robertson UA
 John Connolly UA

December 10 New American Theatre
John McFarland Richard Raether
 David Gingerich SiS
 Elizabeth Hartman SiS
 Charla Mason SiS
 Casiena Raether SiS
 Jeremy White SiS
 Christine Swan SiS

December 12 Marymount-Fordham
London Dramatic Academy
Richard Ryan J. Allen Suddeth
 Dina Cataldi SiS
 Joannah Bryan SiS
 Jennifer George SiS
 Autumn Clack SiS
 Cathryn Basile SiS
 Liisa Britt SiS
 Brian Barnett SiS
 Emily Allbrink SiS
 Tim Harvey SiS
 Aaron Oetting SiS
 Migina Tsai SiS
 Shannon McShane SiS
 Aliza Yarrow SiS

December 12 Ithaca College London Centre
Bret Yount J. Allen Suddeth
 Eddie Cooper UA
 Ben Schnickel UA
 Justin Maruri UA
 Ben Duval UA
 Mike Cyr UA

December 16 University of Michigan
Erik Fredricksen Drew Fracher
 Michelle Roberts R&D UA QS
 Kevin Bradley R&D UA QS
 Taryn Fixel R&D UA QS
 Kellie Matteson R&D UA QS
 Joanne Spanos R&D UA QS-EAE All
 Zachery Dorff R&D UA QS-EAE All
 Meghan Powe R&D UA QS
 Kathryn Thomas R&D UA QS
 Nora Bonner R&D UA
 Bradley Frazier R&D UA QS-EAE All

Alex Mendiola R&D UA QS
 Dan Granke R&D
 Katie Banks R&D

JANUARY 2003

January 12 Ricki Ravitts
 David Tyson SS
 Daniela Rapp SS
 Jared Kirby SS
 Campbell Bridges SS-EAE
 E. Calvin Ahn SS
 Barbara Brandt SS
 Carrie Brewer SS
 Michael McGuire SS
 Mark Silence SS
 Nicole Godino SS
 Jared Hoffert SS

New York City J. Allen Suddeth
 SS
 SS
 SS
 SS-EAE
 SS
 SS
 SS
 SS
 SS
 SS

Aaron Manby S&S-EAE KN
 Emily Ward S&S KN
 Jessica Bruesewitz S&S
 Jennifer Robertson S&S KN

January 19 Actor's Gymnasium
Angela Bonacasa David Woolley
 Andrew Scott S&S
 John Tovar S&S
 Glenn Proud S&S
 Noah Wasserman S&S-EAE
 Elizabeth Styles S&S
 Brigitte Lehmkuhl S&S
 Mara Wolverton S&S

January 26 Winter Wonderland Workshop
J. David Brimmer, David Boushey, Chuck
Donald Preston Coyl, David Woolley
 Leland Burbank R&D UA
 Henry Layton R&D UA
 Michael Naglee R&D UA
 Jessica Cerutti R&D UA
 Casey Kaleb R&D UA
 Paul Mitri R&D UA

FEBRUARY 2003

February 22 Denver Center Theatre Academy
Geoffrey Kent Charles Coyl
 Gia Chinisci UA
 Eric Corneliussen UA
 Matt Korda UA
 Terry Kroenung UA
 Mike Mcneil UA
 Jon Noel UA
 Tom Priestley UA
 Erin Ramsey UA
 Melissa Ruchong UA
 T. David Rutherford UA
 Kelley Wade UA
 Brett Wilmott UA
 Benaiah Anderson R&D UA

MARCH 2003

March 2 Actor's Gymnasium
Charles Coyl, Angela Bonacasa David Woolley
 David Kelch R&D UA KN
 Branden Scala R&D UA KN
 Glenn Proud R&D UA KN-EAE
 Eleanor Kaufman R&D UA KN
 John Tovar R&D
 Elizabeth Styles R&D
 Ernest Ray R&D UA KN
 Robin Southworth UA KN
 Victoria Floro UA KN

March 11 North Carolina School of the Arts
Dale Girard Chuck Coyl
 Adam Mills UA KN-EAE
 Alexis Hyatt UA KN
 Matt Cowart UA KN-EAE
 Bridgett Regan UA
 Jordan Miller UA S&S KN-EAE
 Jerzy Gwiazdowski UA
 Andrew Honeycut UA KN
 Eddie Kurtz UA KN
 Tom Sawyer UA KN
 Ashley Robinson UA KN
 Trieste Dunn UA KN
 Colin Hovde UA KN
 Evan Lubeck UA S&S
 Samantha Daniel UA KN-EAE
 Will Rogers UA KN
 John Patrick UA KN
 Maggie Marlin QS-EAE
 Tim Eulich QS-EAE
 Kelly McConkey UA
 Kara Nelson UA



Finished by a knife to the back, Jefe (Ramon Lasa) slumps dead in the arms of Al (Jose Aviles) in Venture Theatre's production of El Paso Blue. Fight direction by John Bellomo; Photo ©Mark Garvin.

January 15 San Francisco
Gregory Hoffman David Boushey
 Laura Downing R&D UA BS
 Sarah Eron R&D UA
 Dana Anderson-Wyman UA BS
 Glen Wall R&D UA BS
 Lance Chinen UA BS

January 16 Columbia College-Chicago
David Woolley, John Richard Raether
 Tiffany Lawson R&D SS UA
 Emily Carvey R&D SS UA
 Laura Hamm R&D SS-EAE UA BS
 George Yencho R&D SS-EAE UA BS
 Sarah Lesley SS UA
 Melanie McCullough UA
 Jeremy Johnson SS UA
 Marvin Quijada SS UA
 Tracy Collett S&S
 Andrea Merrill S&S KN
 Bethany Williams S&S KN
 Partick Capurro S&S KN

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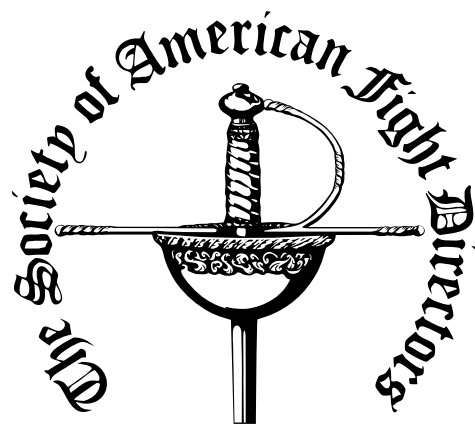
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Society of American Fight Directors

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.

To apply for membership in the SAFD fill out the form below and send to

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Dues are \$35 annually. (For members outside the U.S., annual dues are \$40)
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Please make checks payable to Society of American Fight Directors

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With a desperate shield attack,
Young Siward (Carl Pearson) fights
in vain against Macbeth (Danny
Smith) in Duke University's *Macbeth*.
Fights by Jeff A.R. Jones; photo by
Russ Howe.

