Fall 2015

The Fight Master, Fall 2015, Vol. 37 Issue 2

The Society of American Fight Directors

The FightMaster

Fall 2015 The Journal of the Society of American Fight Directors

The Sixth Sense in Action

The Language of Actions & Reactions

The World Conference 2016

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A Deer Caught in Stage Fright

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Features

Standards

Editorially Speaking

I hit myself in the face. It was unintentional—my hand was supposed to go to my chest to knap a face hit. Instead, on perhaps the tenth run of the morning, I mixed up my mental commands and smartly rapped my own face. I recall looking at my hand in surprise, as though I wasn't quite sure what had happened. Every stage combatant has had a moment such as this—a moment of miscommunication with the self. Each of us wants to be an excellent fighter. Each of us wants to be a good (not necessarily nice) partner. Each of us wants to illustrate to our peers our hard work and talent. But then each of us will eventually go up on a line, drop a weapon, or hit ourselves in the face. I've been told it's how we deal with these mistakes that truly illustrate our talent.

There are several references to Paddy Crean in the following pages, and the word (or sound) he used to describe the intangible presence of the swordfighter, "*Za!*" *Za* suggests that there is a meeting of physical and mental conditions that enable the stage combatant to transcend being a person with a weapon to a character in which the audience believes. But how does the beginner to our profession hope to achieve such an elusive goal? You will hopefully find some answers in this issue of *The Fight Master*. Several of the articles presented explore the ways in which the body enhances or impedes the illusions we want to create on stage. Be it our eyes, our feet, or our stature, physicality is key to selling a performance. When the body creates a barrier to success, how can teachers encourage students to surmount it?

How does the classroom foster space for the finding of *Za*?

This is a good time to congratulate all the newest Certified Teachers who completed their training at this year's National Stage Combat Workshop (NSCW). Our craft will always need the passion of new voices, and the community as a whole looks forward to what you will contribute in the coming seasons. Of course, I anticipate that when you've found something new or interesting in your coursework, you'll contribute to this publication so that the rest of us can share in your discovery. In mean time, make sure to visit the SAFD's new and improved website, and add your names to the directory so you can be discovered by students.

Be well. Fight well.

Jean A. Monfort, Editor
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Correction: In the Spring 2015 issue of this journal, Justin Krall's name was improperly printed. His proper middle name is Mitchell, not Michael.

The FightMaster

Published bi-annually

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Editorial and graphic content featured in *The Fight Master* is the product of contributions from SAFD members of all levels as well as from the global stage combat community. Participation is greatly encouraged and submissions are accepted on a rolling basis, with deadlines for the Fall and Spring editions occurring on June 1 and December 1 respectively. For submissions by traditional mail, please send a shipping address request by email.

Articles

Submitted material will be edited for clarity and length with the assistance and approval of the author. Articles should include a short biography 150 words or less, as well as contact information. By submitting material to *The Fight Master*, it is assumed the author agrees the following:

- All submissions are subject to editorial discretion
- All work submitted is assumed to be the original work of the author, and *The Fight Master* will not assume any of the author's copyright liabilities and publication rights.
- Submissions must include any and all necessary supporting documentation (bibliographies, etc.)
- Before publication, author must approve all changes beyond grammar and conventions
- Submissions must be written in a clear and professional manner
- No submissions defaming individuals by name will be published
- Authors are assumed to be working toward the betterment of the SAFD and, thus, will not be paid for submissions

Please forward submissions and questions to:
Jean A. Monfort, Editor
fmeditor@safd.org

Graphics

Both digital and traditional photographs are accepted; however, resolution will play a factor in where, or if an image is used. All photos should be accompanied by the names of the performers w/ roles (if fewer than five are pictured), photographer, play, playwright, fight director, theatre company, and year of performance. Without this information, we can not give proper credit to the contributors and the picture will not be used.

Traditional images/negatives submitted by mail should be sent in an envelope clearly labeled "Photos—Do Not Bend," with larger photos secured between cardboard or foam core. Submissions should also include a return self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Digital images must be submitted in an uncompressed format (RAW, TIFF, PNG or TGA) on a CD or DVD if possible. Images that have been reduced in size to send by email will also be considered as long as a larger version exists that can be requested later. Please do NOT crop or alter photos. Touch-ups and color correction will be performed as needed.

Please forward submissions and questions to:
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Contributors

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Kevin Inouye (CT, Theatrical Firearms Instructor, and Rocky Mountain Regional Representative) is an Assistant Professor of Acting, Movement, & Stage Combat at the University of Wyoming. He is a SAG-AFTRA performer, award-winning fight choreographer, and author of *The Theatrical Firearms Handbook* as well as several previous articles for *The Fight Master*. He also runs Fight Designer, LLC, providing prop weapons rentals nationwide.

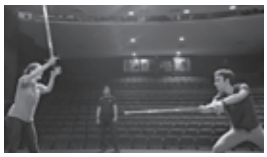
Paul Gelineau was granted membership to the Fight Directors Canada College of Fight Masters in 2004. He currently serves as the Director of the Academy for Fight Directors Canada, and lives near Vancouver, British Columbia where he teaches and directs.

Robert Najarian (FD) is an actor, instructor, and fight director. As a performer, he has been seen in more than 40 productions in cities such as New York, Chicago, Washington, DC, and. As a fight director, he has staged the violence for more than 100 productions for stage and film with such companies as the A.R.T., Boston Lyric Opera, and Commonwealth Shakespeare Company. He has taught at movement and stage combat workshops in the US, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Taiwan, and has served on the faculty of the theatre departments at Boston University, College of the Holy Cross, Emerson College, and the American Repertory Theatre's Institute for Advanced Actor Training at Harvard University. He is currently Assistant Professor or Acting and Stage Combat at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor and a Fight Director with the SAFD.

Eugene Solfanelli (AAC) has been a registered Advanced Actor Combatant and professional combatant and fight director since 2001. He has a MFA in Acting from Brooklyn College and a BA in Education from St. Joseph's College. A martial artist for over 25 years, he has been teaching stage combat at Brooklyn College since 2008, in the stage combat department at AMDA NY and stage combat workshops at Swordplay. He assists Joe Travers and Nathan DeCoux at Swordplay.

Joseph Travers (SAFD FD/CT) has been fight directing and teaching stage combat for over twenty-five years. Recent fight directing work includes the Broadway production of *Bronx Bombers* and the world premier of Billy Porter's *While I Yet Live* at Primary Stages. He teaches stage combat for the *Columbia University* MFA Acting Program, heads the stage combat program at *AMDA, NYC*, and is the Managing Director of *Swordplay*, NYC's longest running stage combat school.

On The Cover



Students Danny Daigle and Lana Percival engaging in broadsword at the University of Wyoming certification class. Instructor Kevin Inouye (CT) observes in background. *Photograph by* Kyle Spradley

Letter to the Editor

Editor: For the first time since I took over stewardship of The Fight Master, *I received some feedback on an article from a member of the community. This response to "Acting: Red Tooth and Claw" comes from Richard Gilbert of R&D Choreography:*


ACTING:
RED TOOTH AND CLAW

I think the most important thing to consider when designing violence for a non-human is no different than with a human, and comes back to our motto: "Fight plans, not moves." As actors, of course, you have to perform your choreography, but that is not what you should be doing on stage any more than 'saying your lines' is what you do on stage. Your character does not have choreography, she has a plan. That plan is what she wants to have happen in the fight, and it often won't go down that way, but she is always trying to accomplish the plan. So, for example, the choreography might be my opponent feints, I respond to the feint and he disengages and kills me, but none of that is part of my plan. My plan is to parry his attack, and I need to be trying to do that, or it is going to look fake.

How does that apply to non-humans? The first thing you need to do as a designer is to think about what the character's plan would be: what does she want, and what tools will she employ to get what she wants? You will find references for those tools in videos of animal movement or from the way the costume or set or whatever helps create the creature, or from the text where the playwright describes what she envisions, or any number of places.

So for example, when we choreographed the fight against the Great Beast of London for Rob Kauzlaric's adaptation of Neil Gaimon's *Neverwhere*, we were working with a bunch of large wicker puppet pieces that a half-dozen actors were manipulating to create the beast. The ability of the pieces to assemble, disassemble, and assemble in a different configuration at will gave us the idea that that would be how the beast fights – disincorporating when attacked and then re-incorporating when it made its own attack. The fight followed from that basic plan. (And of course, the humans had their own plans - a fight is what results when two plans are crashed together. But we aren't talking about humans right now.)

On the other hand, when we were working on the violence for John Hildreth's adaptation of *Watership Down*, we started with videos of animals - definitely rabbits, but also other animals - to come up with the ways animals could move, and from there we got a sense of how a rabbit would win a fight, allowing us to develop plans that made sense for rabbits, and resulted in the case of one fight in a high-flying fight where the actors leapt at each other, crashed into each other in midair, came down and leapt apart, striking as they did, to do something similar again. However, the big showdown between General Woundwort and Bigwig looked quite different, since the actors were both big men, well over six feet and powerfully built, and a fight like that wouldn't make sense for them - neither of these huge rabbits would fight like that. Instead, the movement took on more of a bear-like quality that suited the plans that such powerful characters would rely on. —Rick

The Pen is Mightier...

Use this space to draft your choreography, take notes, or start your own contribution!

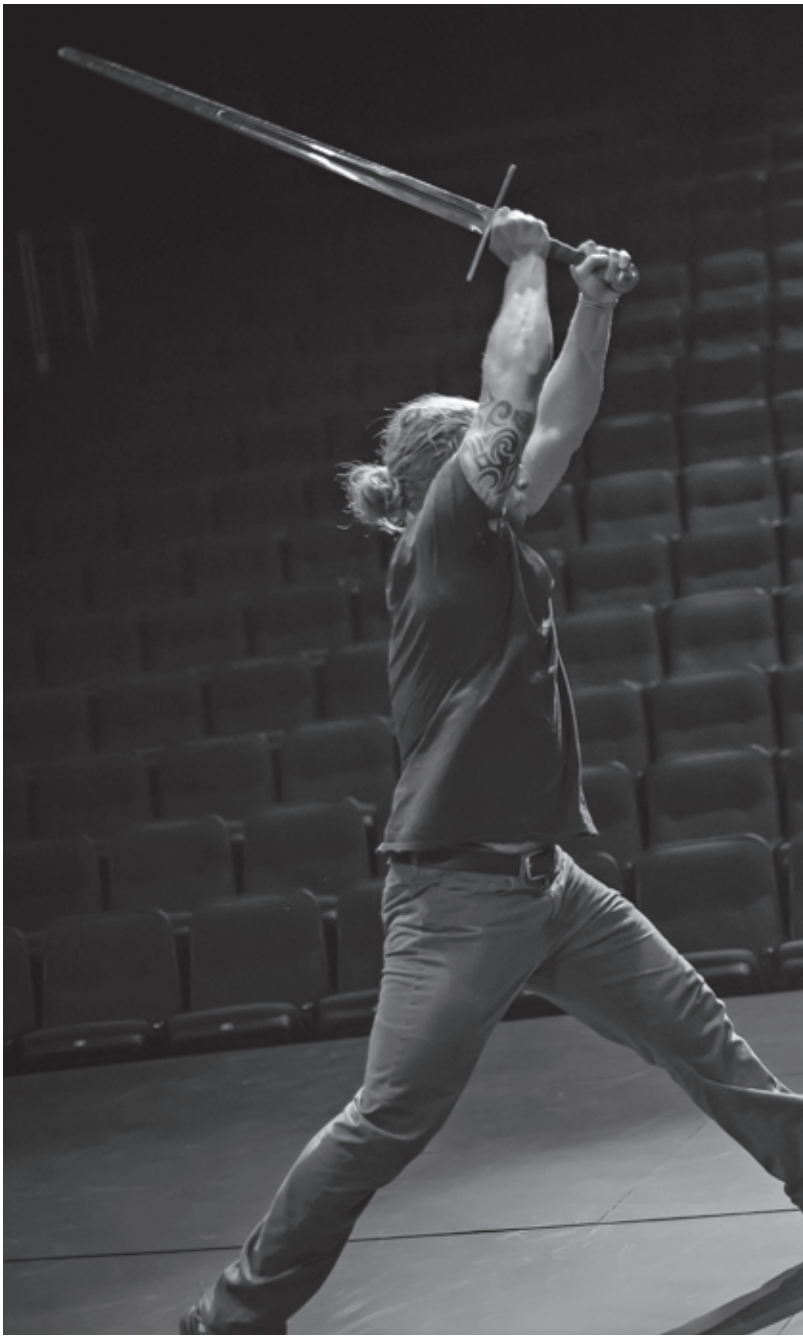
The Sixth Sense in Action

BY KEVIN INOUYE

Elaina Osburn at the University of Wyoming's SPT course in Broadsword, discovering the moment when a prop turns into an extension of the will.

"I have no words. My voice is in my sword"

—Macbeth, Act 5 Scene 8



KYLE SPRADLEY

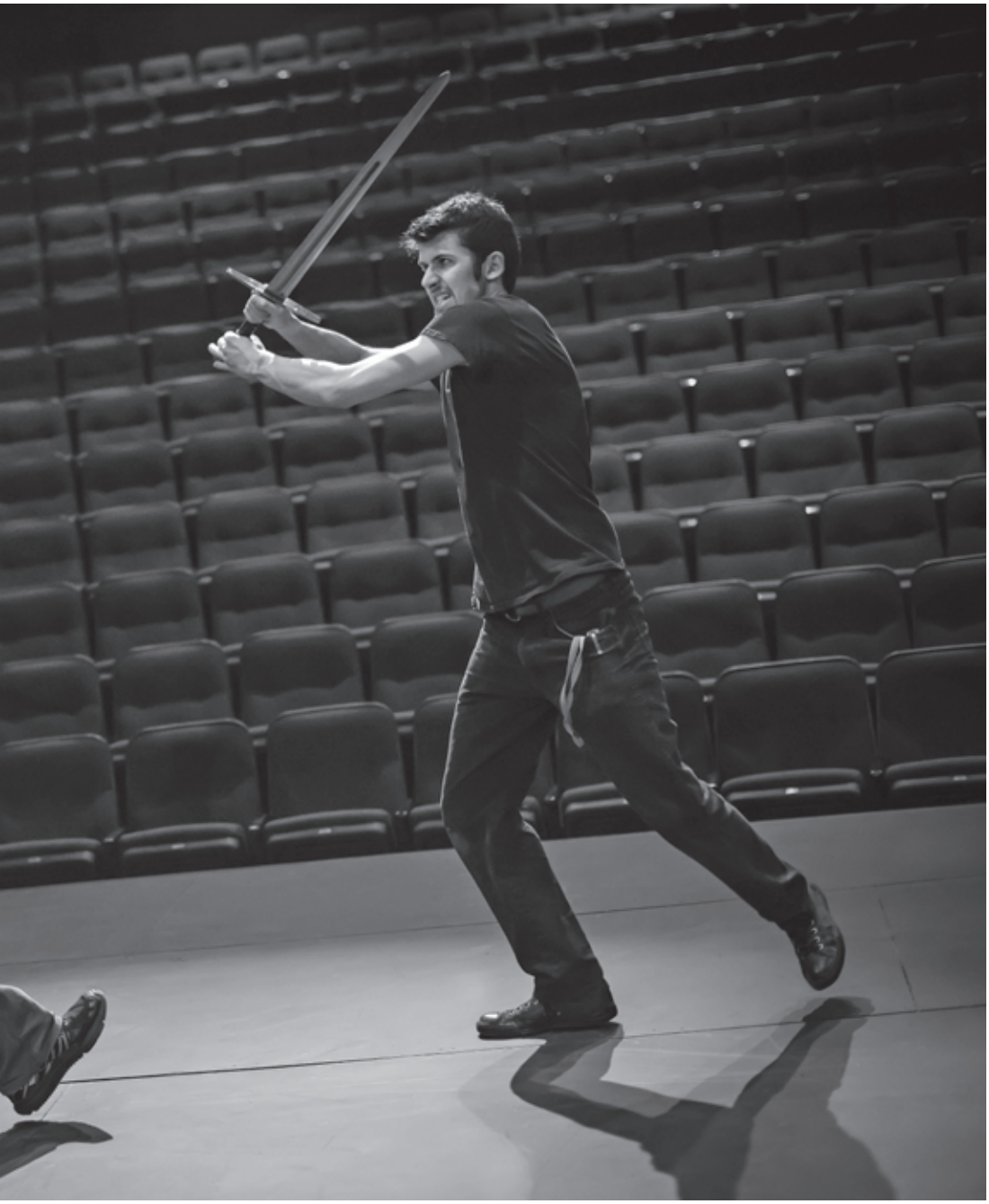
WHAT'S the difference between a swordsman and a man with a sword? When does a woman become a fencer instead of a person who is fencing? There are many possible answers to these questions, from competitive ability to experience, accumulation of skills to that intangible quality of "*Za!*", as the late great Paddy Crean used to call it (quite possibly a shortening of the Italian *sprezzatura*, the studied nonchalance and panache that comes when skill and style transcend effort and become as natural as breathing). For me, it is perhaps a question of achieving that state where one's sword makes the transition from being a prop or accessory to being a virtual extension of the body. Swordsman—it is a compound word for a single thing born of the union of two.

That may sound mystic, but it needn't be. Close your eyes and picture yourself, not in any particular situation but just you, who you are. I periodically ask this in workshops when working on these qualities, and the closing of eyes also helps keep answers both honest and anonymous. The vast majority of us picture ourselves with clothes, shoes, etc. —and even the 5% or so who picture themselves without still carry a self image that has hair, and fingernails. What does this tell us? It shows that what we include in that package of "me" is not just living flesh or nerves. In other words, there's something at play beyond what our nervous system can account for, and this something is malleable. Actors have long manipulated this self-image, whether through adapting their bodies to support a mask, or through visualization and embodiment as you might find in something like LeCoq's elements, animal imagery, or Michael Chekhov's "Imaginary Body."

One of the common pitfalls I see in beginning stage combat classes is people who focus overmuch on the weapon itself, letting blade traffic take priority over the movement of the body, to the detriment of their capacity as physical storytellers. The inert prop should never be more interesting than the actor using it; It cannot reach, it cannot flinch, it cannot pursue an objective or overcome an obstacle or have a genuine response to the outcome of said struggle. That said, we can't just forget about blade traffic and technique. The answer, as it usually is in theatre, is a 'Yes, And' approach. What we need to work towards is breaking down the barrier between what is prop and what is actor, so blade traffic ceases to be a distracting separate issue and becomes just another part of the actor's corporeal performance. The sword becomes a part of our Imaginary Body, our aura, within the energetic body through which we extend our chi/ki; pick your own movement vocabulary of choice, and chances are good there's some way of expressing this.

There is a rarely mentioned (outside of medical or movement disciplines) sixth sense, one that lets us perceive ourselves in three-dimensional space; proprioception. It's what allows you to point at your own nose or knee with your eyes closed, or to scratch your mosquito bite without looking down, or applaud while still looking at the stage. Some of this is inherently biological, while some is acquired through calibration over time. For those with interest in it, the past few decades have brought some fascinating research into proprioception, but for the performer, our subjective experience is more important than academic wisdom or medical fact. If it doesn't lead to playable actions, it's not immediately useful on stage.

What actors need to understand is how to feel and use this sense. With familiarity comes incorporation. Elements like hair and clothing and nails become incorporated through habituation, helping us keep from tripping over our shoes, tottering on our high heels, catching our hair in things, scratching ourselves or breaking nails constantly. The same can be said of habitual accessories, such as cigarettes or canes. People who have habitual accessories learn to track where those objects are unconsciously, and can grasp or and



Vincent Oltion (left) and Abram Sayre (right), finding their Za! At the University of Wyoming's SPT class in Broadsword.

manipulate them without looking. Often those same objects become integrated into habitual gestures—we push up our glasses as we shift our attention, we point with the cigarette or pencil we're holding just as easily as we do with our fingers, or we tap the floor with our cane for emphasis. We actively use these items in the same manner as our own extremities. When I had corrective eye surgery done about a decade ago and stopped wearing glasses, it took me a while to stop periodically –habitually - trying to shift them up my nose when they were no longer there. When I cut the hair I'd had long for a decade, it took me a week or two before I adjusted how I turned my head quickly, or to stop trying to clear it out of my collar when putting on a shirt. I expected these things to be there, and felt like they were.

This is not just a matter of passive knowledge of the presence of these things, or of using them to act upon the outside world. The world also acts upon them, and as they become a part of ourselves we feel that personally. We sense the floor through our shoes, we feel the writing surface through our pencil, we experience the crackle of the cigarette—all through our interactions with them, and the feedback we get through the point of connection (hands, feet, lips, balance). It is a quality that fencers dubbed *sentiment du fer*, the feel of and through the steel, and it's what allows prise de fer in swordplay from longsword to smallsword. Our integration of the sword into our calibrated sense of self lets us not just track where it is without looking, but also allows us to listen to the information we can receive through contact with another's blade. Minor variations in pressure, or the vibrations of an edge sliding against another edge, or the release and slide of an edge rolling over into contact with the flat—all of these give us almost as much tactile information (which tends to be faster and more useful for defensive or offensive impulse than visually-processed information) as you'd get from forearm contact in a sticky-hands exercise.

Being able to gain useful information through an inanimate prop requires active physical focus, something sent outside the body as you would your vision, but independent of eyesight. Think about when you get a stitch in your side, or something pops in a joint that isn't supposed to; you send a non-visual focus to that area inside your body, searching for information about what's going on there. A similar process happens when reaching inside a purse or pack to feel around for a "missing" cellphone. Now you just need to imagine that you have to feel around and with another object. The most [ironically] visible example of this might be a blind person navigating with a cane, but anyone who is a skilled craftsman does it; A woodworker can feel when they start going with or against the grain. An experienced driver can tell when a tire is going soft, or when they start to lose their grip on the road. A dentist has to feel the border between softer, rotten cavity and healthy tooth enamel with his pick or drill. The tools of your trade become your body's point of interaction with the world—not its surrogate, but necessary enhancements.

Getting to know a tool or prop requires the practice of both acting upon it and feeling how it acts back upon you. We all do this; everyone picks up an epee and starts swinging it around to make that lovely swoosh sound. We all make that initial moulinet with a new broadsword. These initial moments are not always practiced or graceful. I've seen plenty a student pick up a new sword, start swinging it around, and quickly hit the floor with the tip. They have not yet

Danny Daigle (left) and Lana Percival (right), at the University of Wyoming SPT course

KYLE SPRADLEY

calibrated their body to the length of that blade. Striking the floor, while inadvisable for a number of reasons, actually gave them more useful information that will help them know where that tip is later.

The point of contact with the prop needs to be secure but not tense—what we want is for energy to be able to flow in both directions, from an actor's center to the point of impact and back again. Too much tension can block this flow. This truth is known to martial artists, boxers, and fencers across the ages, but is also found in the gospel of actors. Turning to Stanislavski, by way of Jean Benedetti's 2008 translation of *An Actor's Work: Sonova*, a movement expert brought in to assist Tortsov with his class of acting students (all fictional of course—that's the conceit of Stanislavski's text), leads them through a visualization exercise where a physical focus or energy travels through the body, and they go on to define

relaxation as the free flow of energy. Tension, by contrast, is a blockage in the flow of energy. There are times when we need that blockage, but it is not conducive to listening, be it with the ears or through our mid-blade during a bind. As I was once told by the Italian rapier fencing maestro Andrea Lupo Sinclair at the 2000 Paddy Crean workshop in Edinburgh you need to hold the sword like it was a little bird; "Too tight, and you kill her. Too loose, and the little bitch, she fly away!" Tension in your sword is a punctuation mark to emphasize a willful action. As such, it cannot exist through most of your physical dialogue, as even during a fight we don't talk primarily in punctuation.

What a performer can take away from this tactile exchange is a way to honor impulses, but direct them according to the needs of the scene. Breathe. Relax and flow. Listen, then respond, and have an active, constantly shifting focus. Always be interacting with your scene partners (even the inanimate ones) according to the given circumstances at hand. This should all sound familiar to actors, but it's also essential to those who live by the sword, sharp or blunt. These things will help you become one with your props, even within the accelerated timeframe of your typical rehearsal period. The best news is, while you do have to re-calibrate every time you change props, the more experience you have with this calibration and incorporation, the better (and faster) you get at the process in general.

Within the classroom/ rehearsal space, I have various exercises I run my students through that can help consciously build up that feedback mechanism. These include feeling surfaces through the sword (such as the floor, or a variety of different props), trying to point to the tips of different objects held blindly, and sticky-hands type exercises incorporating props. Sometimes just incorporating a little extra sword-handling time into our warm-ups can help. That said, there are also variations a character can do within a scene. Picture Hamlet, sampling the wares and commenting "these foils have all a length?" while picking them up, testing the responsiveness of the blade, doing a few moulinets, checking the point of balance, etc. He does all this not by balancing the blade on a finger like a see-saw, as that tells the visual/analytical point of balance, but by seeing what point it wants to pivot around most easily when handled, which is same information packaged as a subjective and actually useful bit of knowledge. Perhaps your modern Tybalt (or Bernardo, if doing *West Side Story*) likes to play with his balisong or butterfly knife, flipping it open and closed, switching grips, and generally making sure everyone knows just how familiar he is with that piece of sharp steel. Though most of those flourishes are gratuitous at face value, what it demonstrates is that the character knows the balance, resistance, reach, shape, weight, and grip of that knife very well. Whether or not that translates directly to combat effectiveness is another question, but at least they know the prop, and by having the character do this the actor also becomes fluent in speaking its language.

The end goal here is to be familiar enough with the prop that it feels natural holding it, no more or less so than with it not in your hand. You can point with it without looking, yet you don't feel the need to do every single gesture with it any more than you need to do every gesture with your index finger (many of us have a pet peeve with actors who feel the need to constantly point with their swords). You reach out to interact with the world with the prop just as naturally as you do with your hand or foot, and if someone slaps it away, you feel their level of intent and commitment just as much as if they'd struck the bones of your forearm. It's an essential skill in antagonistic or agonistic sword fights, cueing you in on when to resist and when to yield or redirect.

This is true whether the object is a sword, a projectile weapon (look up instinctive or point-shooting for more on that—a gunman is to a gun what a swordsman is to a sword), a swagger-stick, stilts, an extended animal mask, or even wardrobe; until he gets used to wearing one and has a sense for how far behind him it flares out, I imagine Batman probably catches his cape in the odd doorway, or steps on it while trying to come out of a backwards shoulder roll. Those who go into mime or screen work may have to maintain that sense of something being there even when it's not—the completely CG blade has become a standard way to handle penetrating wounds on screen, and if you can't maintain that intentional phantom limb syndrome of the missing blade, chances are it won't move quite right in your final edit. Being able to maintain that sense of the blade being there can also make the low-key or impromptu finger-fighting rehearsal much more productive.

One might even argue that we maintain a similar relationship with our audience or camera; with time, we know where they are without looking, and we respond to their intent accordingly. It's awareness without self-awareness, a non-cognitive way of keeping track and gauging feedback without detracting from our ability to focus on the work of our characters in the scene. It is in both cases, to use Michael Chekhov terms again, a radiating and receiving, ideally just as instinctive as feeling someone hold your hand and holding them back. Perhaps that's one of those indelible elements of Za that Paddy spoke of - that studied nonchalance, something that can make us not just swashbucklers, not just swordsmen and women or actor/combatants, but also the audience's heroes and villains. The next time you feel like you're not finding what you need in your scene, listen harder. Your sword just might tell you what you need to hear.

THE LANGUAGE OF ACT

By Robert Najarian, FD

"That roundhouse-duck combo was crap." The words jarred in my ears as I sat there and listened to a senior instructor give feedback to two of my graduate students on their fight scene. I thought I had misheard my colleague. Had he meant to describe the student's work in that way? Surely this was some slip, or a desire to bring some levity to the somewhat stressful exercise of listening to immediate feedback to artistic work.

I glanced at the faces of the two students sitting across the table from my colleague. The comment didn't seem to land on them the way it had been intended. All I could see was confusion on their faces. "There was no responsiveness to the action of the roundhouse," my colleague continued. "You swung before the other guy had a chance to duck so you ended up missing him by a mile." *Of course!* The comment made sense after that explanation. He was referring to an acronym used for decades in stage combat training to technically describe the system for not hitting a partner on a planned miss. He had not said "crap," but "C.R.A.P." - the Cue-Reaction-Action Principle.

Most people who have taken a class in theatrical combat have been exposed to this principle at least once. In fact, I make sure to introduce the concept and the acronym in my combat classes, partly because of the fact that somewhere in an actor's continued training he or she will hear it again from another instructor. Years ago, I asked my colleagues if anyone knew about the exact origin of the Cue-Reaction-Action acronym. I got as many ideas about the original use of the phrase as I did responses. Of those, several colleagues who had been fight directors for decades attributed its first use to one of their own classes. This phrase has been in use for so long and has become so integrated into the instruction of violence on stage that its invention has been claimed by the most experienced practitioners in the field. As a result, its true origin is unknowable.

Robert Najarian and Ted Hewlett working through ARC sequences.

KOKO LANHAM

This is not to say that every instructor out there uses C.R.A.P exclusively. There are probably half a dozen other similar sequences in use by instructors. One such variation is used by SAFD Fight Master Dale Girard in his book *Actors On Guard*. While his book deals exclusively with historical rapier and dagger techniques adapted for stage and screen, the mechanics of initiating and responding to an attack are still essentially the same. Girard suggests a different sequence: ACTION-REACTION-ACTION where the first "Action" is the preparation to attack, the "Reaction" is the acted response to the aggressive initiation, and the final "Action" is the completion of the offensive and defensive movements together, each movement flowing continuously from one into the other. This is a splendid alternative, and seems much closer to what actually occurs between two people locked in physical conflict. Though phonetically symmetrical, A.R.A lacks any resonant connection to an already existing word, which should be the goal of all good acronyms.

Girard's phrase rightly places emphasis on the word "Action" through repetition, instilling in the performer a sense of the action being the most important element in the moment. Additionally, the use of the concept of "completion" where both performers finish their moves together at the same time is critical when examining the wholeness of the interaction. Performers are an excitable bunch and as such are typically very enthused to begin anything. The start holds

IONS AND REACTIONS

so much promise! When the moment of action comes they throw themselves into it (leap, and the net will appear!) waiting to see what the effect might be. However, when the moment has happened, they freeze as though hypnotized.

Most theater-goers have, unfortunately, been witness to these instances. One actor swings a fist and freezes the arm out like a baseball bat in mid-air before letting it go suddenly limp. Another actor moves in what he or she thinks is an instinctual way but really is just the poorly executed action of a theretofore mentally rehearsed moment of what the mind thinks the body should do as a reaction. Both actors pause for a fraction of a second, but that is unfortunately all it takes to shatter the illusion of violence in performance. Then they move on, starting again as though nothing happened. They do not move through the event, the choice, the technique to discover the effect of their actions on themselves, each other or the world.

This is true of many young performers. Sometimes they fall into the trap of playing a mood (happy, sad, angry, etc.) and never waver from that choice of mood for an entire five-minute scene. They have talent—wonderful instincts and the ability to make bold choices—but they abandon those choices after three seconds and move on to something else, without acknowledging the reality of the moment they just created through violence. There is no sense of the

completion of a moment, and since there is no completion of one moment there is no chance of connecting it to any moment thereafter. One must complete a moment to discover the consequence of it. Only then can another choice be made, an informed one, of how one will try to change to course of events.

Of course, none of this mattered as my students sat, listening to notes from my colleague. Their initial bemusement turned to pain and embarrassment at hearing their work and art being put in the same sentence as the word "crap." They knew what the acronym meant in the context of a fight rehearsal, but they could not hear the acronym, only the word. What they heard was an expert comparing their artistic work to excrement. As technically accurate as the note may have been, the damage it did to the ability of the actors' process was irreparable; they could not examine their own work without self-condemnation.

I had been taking this acronym for granted for so long I was blind to its implications until that moment. No matter what the instance, I don't want anything that I teach or perform in my art to ever be referred to as "crap." There must be a better way to refer to this part of the work. This article is my attempt to redefine how we teach the Action/Reaction process, and offer for professional consideration a stronger acronym to use in both the academic and professional arenas.

Let's break down each element that makes up this C.R.A.P. I will skip the word "cue" for a brief moment. I would rather get to the heart of the matter and the acronym, and that is the relationship between action and reaction. As it stands, in C.R.A.P, the reaction *precedes* the action. Why is this? Embedded in the principle is the caveat that the person doing the reaction (typically an avoidance or parry of the incoming strike) will perform their reaction first so as to vacate or protect the threatened area. The person performing the action or attack only then has permission to fully realize the action to completion. This sequencing of completing the reaction before the action creates distance and ensures safety. The only problem with it is that it's backwards.

The physical world that we all share operates under specific principles of motion, the most basic of which are Sir Isaac Newton's Three Laws of Motion. I was not a great student of the sciences in my time at college, but I was aware enough (or perhaps fool enough, by my final undergrad GPA) to take a few courses that covered the basics of Physics. Most, if not all, of these courses started with a nod to Sir Isaac Newton. Newton observed that there were three laws of motion that every physical body observed. I would posit that most people would be hard pressed to recite verbatim all three [1], but I would wager most people know the third one by heart: "For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction." If we take a look at the third law closely we see that the order of events seems to flow nicely. The action precedes the reaction. The reaction follows the action. Newton could just have easily said, "For every reaction there is an equal and opposite action," since no reaction occurs without an action. However, since a reaction is a response to an action, the way that language and the laws of motion shape the relationship between action and reaction, why do we not say it in reverse?

This raises the question: how can the person receiving or responding to the action stay safe? Doesn't that person need to know what the other person is doing for staged moments of violence? Rehearsal of choreography beforehand certainly helps, but in the moment of performance shouldn't there be something more to help

KOKO LANHAM

the actors communicate with one another to ensure safety? Now we can return to the first letter of C.R.A.P. - Cue. The word "cue" has various meaning, but for our purposes here we can safely stick to the dictionary definition that refers specifically to theatre: "A word or a bit of stage business signaling the beginning of an action. A reminder or prompting as a signal to do something. A hint or suggestion. A perceived signal for action, especially one that produces a operant response." This too seems appropriate, since one performer is doing something that spurs the other person to respond.

The Cue-Reaction-Action Principle makes sense in and of itself. So where's the problem? The problem is that it is completely self-referential. The sequence is simply a statement about itself and what is going on with no relation to story, character, or even the natural world. In a closed system it would be perfect. But theatre (and, if I may paint with a broad stroke, every artistic endeavor) is not nor should ever be a closed system. The things we do in it, no matter how we describe them, must be in relationship to something or someone else. Everything, even the description of technique, must be resonant with anyone who comes in contact with the work and the language used to describe it.

Let us return to Sir Isaac and his premise that every action has an equal and opposite reaction. If we apply this rule vigorously, we get a modified principle of CARP, or the Cue-Action-Reaction Principle. While this describes the physical nature of the work well, the associated language it creates is unsatisfactory in that the word "carp" means "to find fault with unreasonably." Even though it may feel at times that directors and critics do exactly this when it comes to the performing arts, we need not be reminded of it in our process. Also, we are trying to find the best balance of both accurately described technical motion and professionally valued language. "CARP " certainly does not meet the second criterion. For the sake of argument, let's keep going.

Go back to the word "cue" and its innate theatricality. Let's assume that we are not talking about a stylized moment in a performance, one that requires an absurdist or meta-moment where we deconstruct a physical action and show all the guts of it. Rather, we just want to see two people in a violent interaction It must reveal character, fit into the logical progression of the story, and be moving to the audience. If this is the case, then why have the *theatrically* technical cue at all? Why not simply perform the action? One might object that this would be unfair and even unsafe to the receiver of the violence in that they won't be prepared for it. But theatre, when last I checked, is a cooperative endeavor. So I would assume that the actor initiating the violence would not want to catch the actor receiving it unawares. If this is a well-rehearsed moment (and it should be!) the actors would have already agreed upon when the slap will occur – after this line, before this cross downstage left, when the lights change, etc. So there is in fact already a cue. Why add a demonstrable physical cue when a theatrical one is most likely already in place? Adding cue upon cue only adds *delay*. If we were to do this for every moment of violence, then the show would be too long and everyone would be late to the pub for the after-show pint (and we can't have that, can we?)

But what about keeping the actor receiving the violence as safe as possible? Isn't that worth an extra cue? If the actor on the receiving end is not paying attention to the other actor, then no amount of cueing will keep anyone safe. We demand a razor-sharp attention and skill of our performers when it comes to every other aspect of

theatre – singing, dancing, speaking, emotional truth – why should we not expect the same when it comes to a moment of violence that is potentially dangerous for the actor? Instead of having the actor looking for the cue, let's shift the focus to the *action*. That is the important part after all! If we eliminate over-emphasis on the cue in the technique, we will help the actor not to over-emphasize the *beginning* of the physical action. I have observed too often on stage that one character makes a very sudden preparatory gesture for a slap, punch, kick, or grapple only to slow down the action during the actual moment when the violence occurs. The cue is strong but the action is weak. So let's get rid of the cue.

By focusing more on the action, we allow time and space to understand the guts of the action better. We know where it comes from, what it is in the moment it happens, and what the effect is after it has occurred. If the actors are truly paying attention to each other and reacting in time to each other cooperatively to keep each other safe, then we don't need the cue. We already know when the action is coming, because we rehearsed it. When it comes down to it, we're actually cueing each other all the time--not just on stage, but in life. We give ourselves away more than we know, especially through our visual focus. Your partner is already cueing you; you just need to pay more attention to see it.

Moving "cue" out of the spotlight changes our process once more. We now trust our partners a bit more to share the same timing as us, and we shift our focus to the action. Now we have an Action-Reaction Principle or ARP. As an acronym this seems incomplete so let's move on by examining beginnings and endings. For every story there is a beginning, a middle, and an end. I would suggest that there are many miniature stories for every moment, gesture, and action within that story. These mini-stories, moments, and actions have a beginning, middle, and end as well.

The catalyst for each story, large or small, is the *action*. The action spurs the relationship and the story on a particular trajectory. Next comes the *reaction*. By reacting in a way that takes into account the given and imaginary circumstances of the character and the physical reality of the moment, the other actor has a say in what direction this story and relationship will proceed. This is the middle of the story, where the story and relationships can and must change. What is the end to this mini-story of the violent action? After the violence has occurred, can things return to the way they were before? Keep in mind for dramatic purposes there is (and always should be) a reason why the playwright chose violence. It signals a tectonic shift in the relationship between two people. Things can never be quite the same way again after one human being has decided to be violent towards another.

All too often I have seen good actors who have invested heavily in a character and a scene throw all that lovely work away after a moment of violence has occurred. Two actors will be wonderfully connected throughout the scene, and then a slap happens, or a punch, or even a shove, and those same actors will play the rest of the scene as though nothing had happened. They left out the end to that part of the story. There is no end because they did not take the time to follow through with the effect of the violence and give the full weight to the aftermath of the action and the reaction. There is no sense of completion. We must realize the *completion* of one moment before we can go on to the next one. I would argue that completion is more necessary than cueing for an act of stage violence to be technically and dramatically successful.

Now we have our beginning, middle, and end. We also have a new dynamic, the Action-Reaction-Completion Principle or ARCP. Because the "principle" is understood in the technique itself, it is redundant and can be removed, leaving us with ARC. One understanding of an "arc" seems particularly appropriate for our line of work: "a continuous progression or line of development." This fits rather nicely into the matrix of anything to do with storytelling. We often speak of the arc of a story when speaking about a play. We also talk about the arc of a character when discussing how that character fits into the story. The word "arc" seems to play nicely with all aspects of our theatrical endeavours.

Changing language, especially codified language (whether codified by policy or custom), can be difficult. We exist, we think, we have feelings and thoughts, and then we express those thoughts through language. Pretty soon we find ourselves stuck with a word for a thought. As thoughts change and refine themselves through our experiences, we find that our needs require new words and new language to better express or define the essence of what we truly mean. The acronym CRAP has done yeoman's service for quite some time. As a technical description of the physical process for staged violence it is accurate. However, as we strive to integrate our physical systems with our artistic endeavours more and more, we can make our systemic language more precise, effective, and resonant. Teaching and referring our actions through the acronym ARC is one step in the right direction. As artists, we must cease to think of our art as crap, and think of our work as having more arc.

Endnotes

1 To save you a google search the first two are 1) An object in a state of uniform motion tends to remain in that state of motion unless an external force is applied to it. And 2) The relationship between an object's mass m, its acceleration a, and the applied force F is F=ma. Acceleration and force are vectors; in this law the direction of the force vector is the same direction as the acceleration vector.

The World Conference 2016

By AFDC Fight Master Paul Gélineau

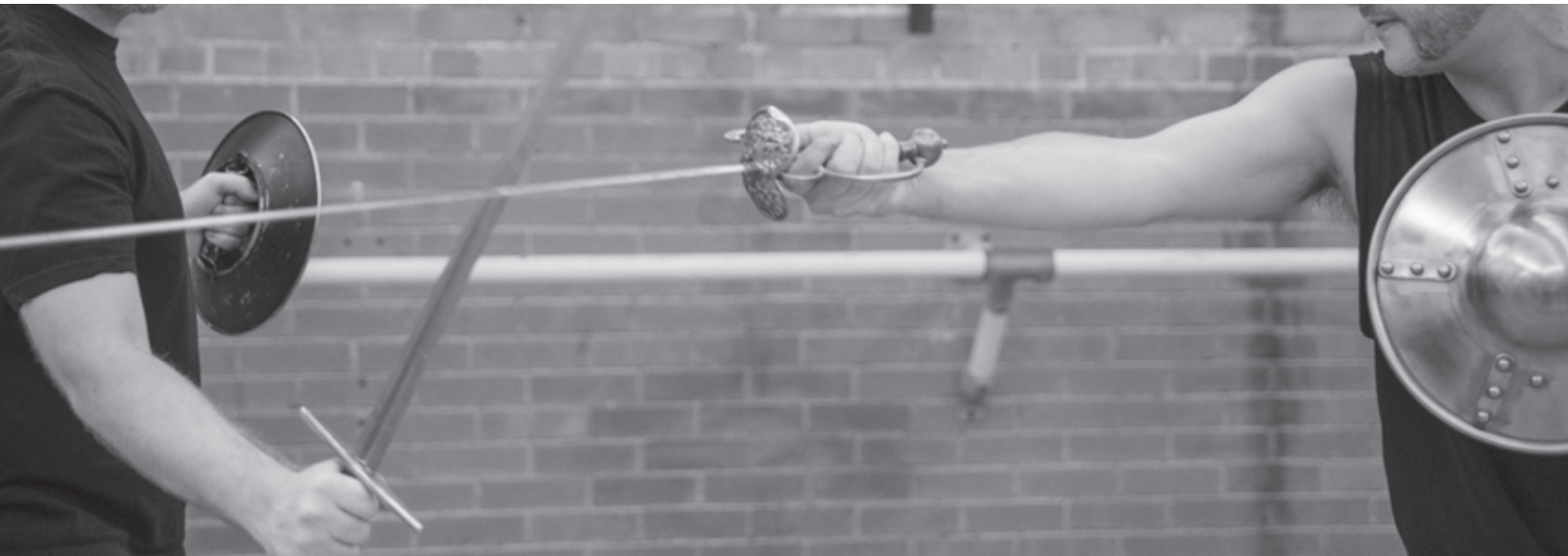
INVITING THE COMBAT TESTING GIANTS TO PLAY

In August of 2016, five of the most established, respected and celebrated stage and screen combat training authorities around the world will join together to offer The 2016 World Conference.

Last year, *The Fight Master* invited me to write an article about the process of creating an event of this scale, and the challenge of collaborating with several associations on its development. One year after that introductory article, and with the support and good will of many, "the Worlds" are very much on track and I am pleased and proud to report how far we've come to date.

Building Good Will

When I began the work of developing a multi-association actor-combatant testing conference, I was well aware that the process would bring many challenges. Predictably, these have largely involved defining the World Conference structurally, academically, politically, and in terms of viability and accountability. There have been times, however, when the bigger challenge has been inspiring potential collaborators to give the idea of this exchange a hearing and support the concept of a global network. Happily, there have been many who were able to see the merit of such an opportunity.



From the beginning it was important to me that Fight Directors Canada be the association developing, creating, and hosting the inaugural Worlds in 2016. As one of the larger national associations and a member of our global fight community, FDC has a rich history of inclusiveness and generosity encouraged by the teachings of Paddy Crean and the continued inspiration of Maître d'Armes Jean Pierre Fournier. It was in this spirit that we invited our sister associations and fellow teachers from all over the globe to take part in the Worlds. This would be a shared opportunity to deepen our relationships with one another, and to enhance our associations' abilities to best serve the professional and academic needs of the institutions and individuals we train and advise.

The associations invited to participate in the **WCC** were those who:

1. were nationally registered with the federal government in their country/countries;
2. had nationally-recognized policies and procedures;
3. had documented certification/testing procedures;
4. were led by an elected executive or governing body; and
5. had a history of collaboration with other dramatic combat associations.

Of those approached, five national associations agreed to participate, collaborate and support the World Conference and its goals: Fight Directors Canada (FDC), The British Association of Stage and Screen Combat (BASSC), The Nordic Stage Fight Society (NSFS), The Society of American Fight Directors (SAFD), and The Society of Australian Fight Directors, Inc. (SAFDI).

Where We Are Now

From The Worlds Academic Committee: The 2016 WSCTC Mission Statement

The Conference is intended to create a global academic and professional knowledge exchange through the collaboration of five national stage combat training associations. In the spirit of celebrating our diversity, our goal is to encourage new professional and academic partnerships which will broaden our perspective on dramatic combat practices around the world. The conference will consist of two parts:

1. a specialized professional development program and exchange for advanced actor-combatants, apprentices/teacher candidates, researchers, specialists and certified teachers to explore new horizons in stage combat pedagogy and assessment methods; and

2. an actor-combatant examination program which incorporates best practices from five international training bodies. This program will allow participants to be tested and recognized professionally by all five associations at one event.

The Worlds Committee would like to stress that its sole purpose is to organize and support the World Conference. This event will at no time attempt to promote a new certification system or any other than those of the national associations represented at the conference.

About the Actor-Combatant Conference Component

The first part of the conference is the **WCC** (**World Certification/ or SPT Conference**) which takes place August 3-24, 2016, at York University in Toronto, Canada. Thanks to a dozen or so FMs and senior members of AFDC, SAFD, BASSC, NSFS, and SAFDI, this will be the largest and most comprehensive actor-combatant testing conference ever coordinated as one event.

Participants will be able to register for one of three courses: Level 1, Level 2 or Level 3. Each of these levels has an academic equivalent in every participating association's training structure. Weapon systems at each level will be co-taught by teams of instructors from more than one participating association. This collaborative teaching program will give participants a view of these disciplines from each association's perspective - a world-class learning opportunity! At the end of the conference participants will have the chance to test at their registered levels and be adjudicated by all five association panels at once. If a participant tests successfully, he or she will be recognized at the equivalent level of each association.

As a respected colleague from the US noted recently,

"… most people with several certifications or who have traveled to study with these different associations and teachers have spent tens of thousands of dollars and years to do it. To actually have the ability to go (somewhere) and access all that knowledge in one place, and in an exchange that will have all the global and academic leaders in the same room teaching you, is truly a gift…"

About The Teacher Conference Component

The other component of the World Conference is the **WTC (World Teacher Conference**) which will take place at York University in Toronto from August 3-15, 2016. This non-certifying professional development program is designed for the participation of Certified Teachers (1-8 years of teaching experience) and highly experienced apprentices. Although such a program was not part of our original Worlds plan, this component became a priority for the Worlds Academic Committee early on. Committee members felt that although the core of the original vision was the actor-combatant testing conference, we should also make it a priority to bring all of our top young teachers together and engage them on the topics of certification/testing standards and best practices for the future.

The WTC is an exploration and exchange on subjects related to our current pedagogy and how industry needs manifest in our teaching practices. Most importantly, this is a forum to discuss how we supply the training and testing in future. Master classes in teaching methodologies for physical disciplines will give participants the opportunity to share, teach, and explore colleagues' testing ideologies and pedagogical practices. Those involved will have the chance to create, fight, and perform at their highest level of proficiency, working with some of the best fighters in the world.

Ideally, the combination of teaching, certification, and testing standards taught by all of our associations will reach thousands of combatants worldwide per year through studio courses, workshops, and dozens of University/College programs. Over the last twenty-five years our influence on actor training and the movement arts has been truly remarkable, and it is all due to the members and teachers of our associations who have proudly and steadily waved the flags of safety, artistry, effectiveness, professionalism and generosity. It is time for our next generation of professional and academic leaders to network and discuss the changing landscape of education, training and industry demands. Our committee wanted to give our cherished young teachers an opportunity to stretch themselves technically and professionally, network, share their own creativity and research, and find the fellowship and partnership with their contemporary colleagues that would help them become the leaders we need for our continued success.

As someone who has spent his career developing training standards and the policies and procedures for teaching these standards to young teachers, I admit that I was of two minds when the Teacher Conference was proposed. The old badger in me said, "We spent decades developing what we teach now. It works for a reason. Trust us!" But the teacher and artist in me grinned at the idea. It was right to add an opportunity for new leaders to engage with each other to our original plan. I know that growth, expansion and being current means that it's necessary to allow new ideas and new energies to feed the current success. Hence the 2016 World Teacher Conference - our invitation to cross blades with the best while exploring the future of our craft and teaching standards.

2016 and Beyond

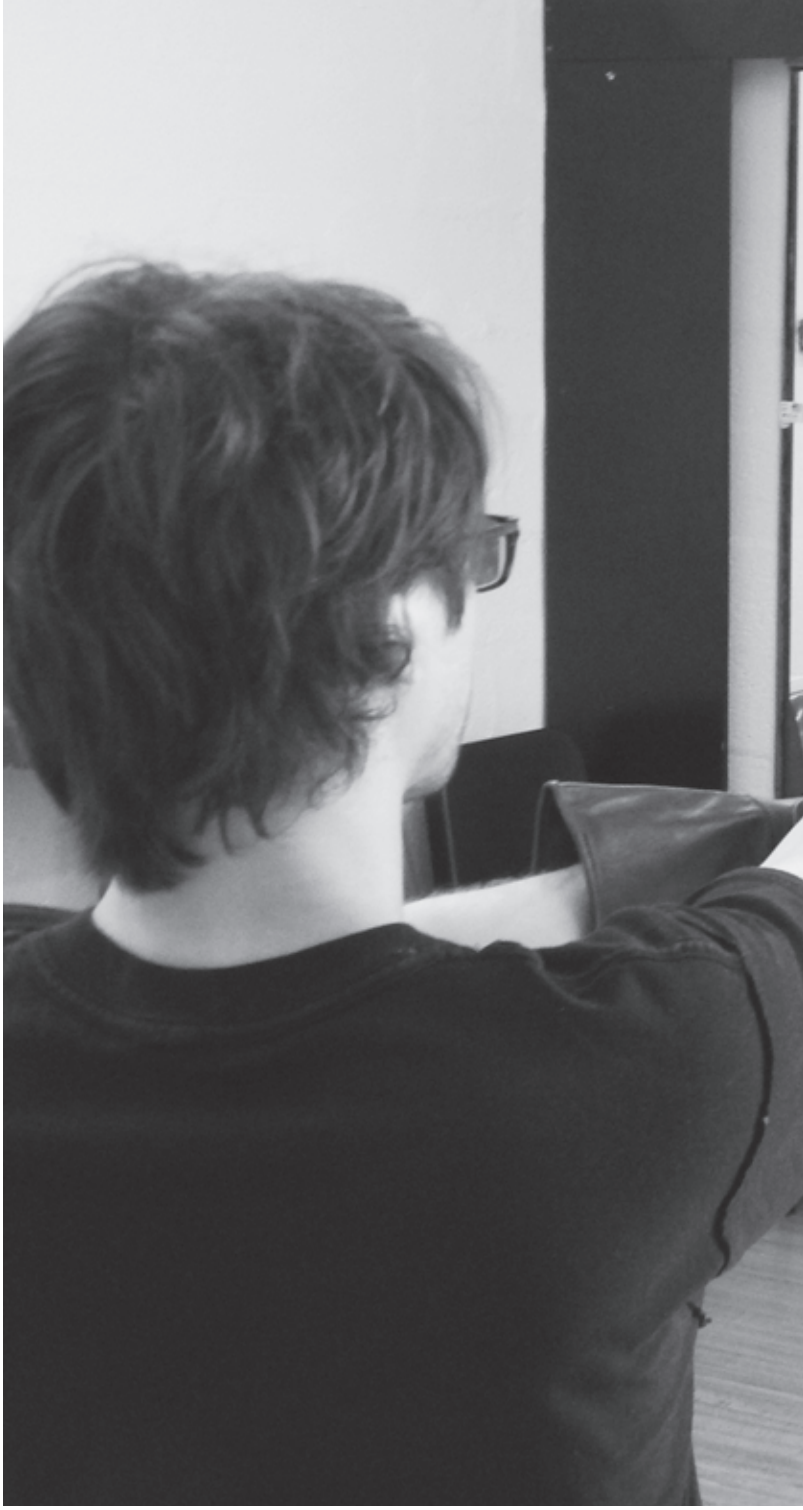
As an entity, the World Conference is not FDC-owned; it belongs to the 5 associations who developed it. It has been designed to occur once every five to six years, with the host association and location changing each time. The association hosting the Conference is responsible for all financial and resource management and whatever profits or losses are incurred. This structure ensures that the other associations are not liable for an event they didn't coordinate. This also allows each host association to control the scope and scale of the event according to their own capacities, priorities and resources - to allow each World Conference to be truly both a shared event and one that reflects the unique character of its hosts.

Because of this framework, after 2016 we will not see another World Conference until at least 2021, and it will not return to Canada for at least a decade.

The Students. Our Teachers. Our Craft. Our Industry.

With much time, communication and effort, the Worlds is being built through mutual respect, a willingness to learn from our esteemed colleagues' systems, and a shared desire to see all our associations thrive and grow in their home lands. We hope you'll be a part of this growth by joining The Academy of Fight Directors Canada at the first World Conference for stage and screen combat training in August 2016 at York University, Toronto. We invite all practitioners of our art to come connect, create, learn, and share in the beginning of a truly world-class event.

See you at the Worlds!
FM Paul Gelineau
Chair, World Academic Committee
Director of the Academy
Fight Directors Canada



A DEER CAUGHT

Body alarm reaction and its effects on o

As a stage combat educator I have often heard how the effects of adrenalin should be avoided or ignored to maintain safety and allow for clear physical storytelling. In contrast, as a life long martial artist I have been trained in how adrenalin must be embraced and understood in order to survive a life or death encounter. Having trained as both for many years, I have often wondered how combining stage combat training with martial art training philosophy would affect results of students success.

I understand each profession seeks different means to each individual end, and training for a life or death encounter is on the other side of the spectrum compared to training for a performance. But regardless of this, adrenalin, when activated, affects us in ways that can overtake our ability to succeed independent of what we are training for. In my experience with both a life and death encounter as well as in performance, I can attest to these negative results. It wasn't until I began training as a black belt that I could identify the physical effects of adrenalin for what they were and learn how to train with them rather than ignore or fight them. Then I noted how my results, both in competition and on stage, changed. It is this type of training that I feel needs to be added to our stage combat instruction to help our students, especially our newer ones, to succeed when the adrenalin kicks in.

It is my goal to present my previous research and results from student training, and why those results inspired me to change my curriculum. We all experience adrenalin in various pressure situations, and understanding how adrenalin affects us is why training to

Miles Butler (in glasses), and Schylar Westbrook. BFA graduates from the acting department at Brooklyn College and veterans of BAR training. In these photos they are demonstrating adrenal results.

IN STAGE FRIGHT

ur stage combat students By Eugene Solfanelli

use it is so important. We need to understand it, its effects, and then learn techniques that will allow the skills that we have learned to take precedence, so as not to be hindered by our body's natural response to stress. This is the world of Body Alarm Reaction Training for stage combat. In my years as a stage combat teacher, I have begun to add and adapt many of my teaching techniques to facilitate the effect of adrenalin on my students. I address some of these techniques here, as well as the interesting positive results. This is an ongoing study, one that I plan on implementing with greater detail with my next stage combat class at Brooklyn College. Ideally, I will track enough follow up data as my study continues to write a future article about my conclusions from this year's class and their experience with said technique.

Before we can give examples of what Body Alarm Reaction Training, we must first understand Body Alarm Reaction (BAR). At its most basic level, a Body Alarm Reaction is the body's response to stress, be it physical, emotional or psychological. Commonly referred to as the "fight or flight" response in animals, I now deem it the "Flight, Fight or Freeze" response based on what I've witnessed in my classroom. The "Freeze" occurs when stress overrides the body's ability to move – where the phrase "a deer caught in the headlights" originates. The physiological changes occurring during this reaction – elevated blood pressure, increased blood flow to muscles and blood glucose levels, more ready coagulation, diminished blood supply to non-essential organs - increase physical strength and mental activity. This reaction is an automatic and immediate response that increases the body's capability to deal with a sudden emergency, even if the emergency is not real and only "perceived" by the individual.

Delving further into the physiological science, BAR affects several different systems, and it's helpful to know what happens from the inside out, so as to better understand what happens when the body reacts. The first thing to note is the change in visual perception. When the perceived threat begins to affect us, the brain will fixate on what it thinks the threat is. In his book *Body Alarm Reaction*, Michael Patrick states that response becomes what is known as "Tunnel Vision," perceived as a dark tunnel surrounding the threat, followed by an impaired near vision. He continues with an example of the severity of these visual changes. In research, when police officers were placed in a stressful situation, 51% of the subjects would not only not look away from the perceived threat, but became so fixated with it that they "had no connection with anything outside of their periphery."[1] Tying this to stage combat instruction, it's easy to see how dangerous a situation could become when, for example, the main character on stage is swinging a broadsword in a mass battle with poor depth perception and a lack of awareness of those around him or her.

Though there are also changes to our respiratory rate and blood pressure, the next thing I would like to note is the change in motor skills. When adrenalin kicks in and BAR occurs, fine motor skills decrease greatly and gross motor skills take dominance. This is due to the fact that processes in the brain that allow us to utilize our fine motor skills become inhibited by our body's response to stressful stimulus. It would be like doing internal surgery with a chainsaw or pushing someone with both hands vs. striking a tiny pressure point with a finger. BAR also affects our Complex Skills, which is where I feel our stage combat skills and technique fall under. Complex Skills are skills that combine both fine motor and gross motor skills. In stage combat terms these skills are reflected in our ability to throw a punch like a huge haymaker, combined with our ability to control the punch and track and time the punch in order keep our partner safe

Here and on next page: Further BAR examples—looking away, freezing in a moment. These are overcome with BAR training and games.

and cover the audience sight lines (fine motor specificity and control of the gross motor haymaker). Another example would be swinging a broadsword for a huge cut vs. using the point as an attack. If our fine motor skills are compromised, our Complex Skill sets and abilities will be greatly affected. How can one wield a smallsword with alacrity and specificity with his or her Complex Skill level inhibited? Again, the potential danger and clouding of physical storytelling is obvious. According to Patrick, this is because more changes occur in our Internally Paced Skills and Externally Paced Skills. *Internally Paced Skills* are skills where one is able to control the speed of their own physical movement, while *Externally Paced Skills* are when one can control the speed with which your body reacts to an incoming event. Again with these being compromised, one can see the potential negative affects.[2] This is not the entire physiological picture, but the potential effect on an actor's physical ability should be clear For instance, when a student approaches me with the inability to hold a knife or single sword during class with the question "Why?" the above explanation is only the beginning. The physiological effects that will have the most impact on the safety of our students. The results are not positive, unless we train for them.

The aforementioned "perceived threat" is an important concept within BAR. This means that a Body Alarm Reaction can occur without the presence of a genuine life or death scenario. As we approach training with any student, we have no knowledge of their history and life experience, which will affect the response to any physical "heightened" situation. A student with a negative past regarding violence can have a BAR when placed in a violent scene, even though they know it's not real. A student with no past experience with violence may have a BAR in working on a fight scene because they have never experienced an adrenalin spike before. When presenting a fight scene to a new audience, it is unknown how a student will respond to attention when showcasing a brand new "fight skill" or their new ability to wield a weapon. These potential responses are important because in our world of make believe, actors don't need a real threat to have a BAR. It is based on who they are, the experience and the life they've lived, rather than the authenticity of a life and death scenario. Students may not even know the true psychological causes of a reaction themselves, though they may in time develop an understanding of their individual triggers. Teachers, who won't know the causes (real or perceived) of a BAR, need to understand this and be prepared to handle these physical responses with techniques that will help students succeed in this type of physical environment. It is for this reason alone that we must delve into this training and allow for our students to grow in understanding of the possibilities found within them.

Before continuing, I'd like to discuss how identifying responses to BAR affected my own training. It was a difficult journey in the beginning, but with knowledge, training, and trust in my teachers and myself, I began to adapt, learn and grow within my own body, comprehending its changes during my 'life and death' encounters

ABOVE AND PREVIOUS PAGES: EUGENE SOLFANELLI

both perceived and actual. I remember entering my first tae kwon do tournament at the age of 14. I remember how excited and charged up I was to compete in the tournament, determined to win my way to the top. I was a green belt at the time, filled with visions of giant trophies hoisted over my head, the crowd standing in unison to my celebrate my championship.

I wound up disappointed on two fronts. The first, minor disappointment was discovering that the 1st place trophy was only a foot and a half tall. The second was to be worse. The tournament was a single elimination bracket challenge, where the number of times a competitor had to spar was based on the amount of students at his or her belt level. With only 8 green belts in my division, I believed the path to be clear. A quick road to the championship was only two wins away. The first match was an easy one. My opponent could not match my reach and speed, and with the exclamation point of a side kick to the ribs seconds before time elapsed, my arm was raised in victory to a 3 to 1 score. The second match was much of the same, albeit closer in score. Highlighted by a reverse punch to the ribs following the successful block of a sidekick, I was victorious by a score of 2 to 1.

With the other sparring matches at my belt level completed, I was identified as a finalist and the wait began as all other sparring concluded. Each finalist pairing would spar in front of the main judges at the center of the gym in front of the headmaster himself. They called my name. I received my red sash, and walked into the main judges' circle. My teenage dreams of championship felt just moments away. I bowed to the judges and then to my opponent. But as I got into my fighting stance, I sensed something was very wrong. My arms felt suddenly detached, sound disappeared, and I could not feel my legs under me.

I don't remember much after that except yelling at myself, "Move faster! Come on, move!!' It was to no avail. My body was unresponsive. Later, those observing the match told me they were surprised by how immobile I was compared to my previous matches. I concluded that I must have been tired or dehydrated, even though I had eaten, drank and rested in the time leading up to the championship match. Though defeated, I filed the incident as a one-time affair. Sadly, this would not be the case. The next two tournaments as a green belt would offer much of the same. And regardless of how well I practiced, and even how well I did in mock tournaments at my home dojo, success eluded me during the real thing.

These changes then began reaching beyond my martial arts career. Early on in my acting career, I remember an opening night where, in a production of *Barefoot in the Park*, I entered the room for my first scene and looked out to the audience and froze. This was not due to lack of rehearsal or me not remembering my lines. I simply froze. There is no other way to describe it. Luckily, the stage manager in the wings prompted me, which pushed me forward into the scene. Looking back now, I realize the frozen sensation was coupled with trembling in my limbs, especially my legs, and an interesting (or frightening) "shortening" of the stage as I looked towards the audience.

After the play was over, I sat back and tried to understand what had happened. I noted the similarities between what I had just experienced and my tae kwon do tournaments from years prior. The lack of depth perception (stage looking smaller), trembling in my limbs, and frozen body were different to the physical results that I had in the tournaments, but somehow they were also the same. In the case of the show, however, it was as if a switch had been flipped with no precursor and no warning. As my career continued, I became fearful in regards to potential performances. I could not yet explain this behavior and the fear of it taking over my performances froze me in my tracks. It arguably led to a series of panic attacks when I thought about performing. At one point, I began to avoid performing, feeling that I would be unreliable to a production company and be an embarrassment to myself. My future as an actor and combatant in performance would always be affected by what I would learn later to be the affects of adrenalin and BAR.

During this time I continued to train as a martial artist. I would enter more tournaments in my late teen-age years. Eventually my success rate began to rise and the memories of what happened in my first tournaments began to fade. I didn't realize why this was at first, but now I know it was due to one of my instructors. When I received my first black belt and began training at an advanced level, one instructor began talking about "Body Alarm Reaction." He explained that in heightened situations the body would change and that the ability to survive did not result from how hard you trained or what martial art you studied but rather how your body reacted to adrenalin. All else would be null without this type of understanding. Martial arts was the vehicle to survive a potential attack, but adrenalin would become the driver of the car if one did not understand the body's natural responses and work with them in harmony rather than fight them.

His method of training us for this was to immerse us in as close to the "real" situation as deeply as he could. This style of training was called "Reality Based Training" or RBT. I had been doing it for years without classification. It explained how, as time passed, my success and confidence had risen, while the negative affects of BAR would lessen. The basic theory from my instructor (as well as Mr. Patrick) is as follows: each individual has a unique response to any stressful situation based on who they are. It wouldn't matter what their unique response was, however, as long as they submersed themselves in the stressful environment to experience that unique response and learn how to succeed within it. As time passes, through immersion training and repetition, the BAR begins to lessen. As it lessens we are allowed to let our physical, now unaffected skills deal with the stressful encounter. This cycle repeats until the BAR is manageable and success with our skills is repeatable.

Fascinated by BAR training, I began researching the effects of adrenalin on the body. Then I began to identify my body's responses, and from that I could recognize the physical patterns in my life that had affected me for years. I saw how those patterns occurred not only in my early martial arts tournaments, but also in my acting and stage combat career. That was when I began to ask the question: how can my martial arts BAR training help me outside of my martial arts? How can I utilize this training to make myself a better stage combatant? When I became a teacher, the question evolved to: how can I adapt my training to prepare my students so that they won't go through similar physical patterns that would hinder their safety and success? From these questions, Body Alarm Reaction Training (BART) was born.

Results sought from martial arts training are quite different from the results desired from our stage combat training. In order to implement BART for the actor, I had to do more than simply use my martial arts training. Creating a life and death RBT situation for a stage combatant to work with their individual BAR would not give us the results that we are looking for (and could lead to lawsuits). I had to adapt certain techniques, improvisations, and mental approaches to the stage combat training practices that would prepare students for what might come to them physically while performing. An example of this is the game "Keep the Hack in the Air," introduced to me by Michael Chin (FM) at Brooklyn College when I studied with

him. It's a relatively simple game, where the class stands in a circle and attempts to keep a hacky-sack from hitting the ground. Students can use any part of their bodies to hit the sack, but it must always be hit, never held.

Where does the BAR come from in this game? When we begin to play there is no quantifiable goal or ending. There is no true way to measure success; the game just keeps going. Some students have a hard time accepting this, especially growing up in a goal-oriented society. In my experience, students don't like to 'fail' in front of their peers or classmates. I had originally used this game as an athletic evaluator to better understand my student's physical abilities, but soon began to notice that students in the game went through Body Alarm Reactions. The first sign would be my observation that student's respiration rate would rise while in physical stillness. Their bodies would also freeze or shake. They'd "run away" from the game actually leaving the play area in order to get away from the cause of the tension, having lost control and use of their fine motor skills (the ability to hit the hack). If the class did manage to keep the hack in the air for a long period of time and the proverbial stakes rose, so did the BARs, grow more potent and dynamic. Students' centers would rise, arms and legs would shake and flail and a breath or vocal release was a common way for students to indicate the tension they were experiencing.

The next stage of the game involves getting students to recite the alphabet while keeping the hacky-sac in the air. When I introduced going through the alphabet with each progressive hit, I recall students trying to walk away from the game, saying, "I can't do this. It's too stressful!" and others not being able to speak the alphabet during the game as their voices would cut out. Now, without knowing their histories and psychologies, I can't explain why some reacted with one form of BAR and some another, but the fact that they occurred is what is important. When a student, analyzing her lack of physical control and mobility tells me, "Wow, I forgot how much adrenalin affects me in a stressful situation," I see the need for this type of training. Over time, with repetition of this game, the students not only adapted, but began to thrive under their physical stress responses. They begin to work with ease and, in parallel, when working on stage combat techniques with a partner, I've documented much lower stress levels after implementing this game into my curriculum rather than before.

This is only one example of how I train my students for BAR. Another traditional game I use is slightly modified version of "tag." Instead of a free for all, two players are "it" and the rest of the class observes. There is only one touch for victory, so from the get go the game is sudden death. The only rule is that the face is off limits for safety. I encourage the observing students to watch for BARs in the players. Both player and observer are often amazed at what the body will go through during stressful scenarios. The progress that results from the game of tag regarding BAR is usually higher than those of the Keep the Hack in the Air game because the circumstances of tag run more parallel to a stage combat performance. One on one "combat," high stakes, and an audience watching classify as Reality Based Training more than the high, communally based stakes hacky-sac has alone.

Though both valuable I find the true physical/psychological preparation for stage combat performance rooted more in tag-like exercises. I have been told by my students, after having their first onstage stage combat experience, something like the following: "I was scared at first, but then I realized it was just like playing our game of tag." This is the result I am looking for - not a way of eliminating adrenalin but rather a way to identify it and succeed with it while it is firing in our systems. The pragmatism of this type of RBT for our stage combat students is the way in which we are psychologically preparing them for the aspects of performance that each individual will face. In training they are exposed to "themselves" and the fears that they face slowly fade away with each repetition. This works particularly well for new students. Here we can control the application of the training environment, adapt it for our needs, and repeat it for quantifiable success. This will even benefit for our most experienced students, as repetition is the key to identifying an ultimately overcoming a BAR.

As I have witnessed BAR behavior in my students through the years, I have been able to spot 'flags' which help assess and identify adrenalin needs training. Though the physiological effects (lack of fine motor skills, tunnel vision, freezing, trembling, etc) are the same across the board, the way that these effects manifest themselves in physical behavioral responses will always be unique to each student. What you can look for in your students moving forward include sudden slow movement in the upper or lower body when a quicker reaction is necessary, acting head heavy, or banging of feet when passing or advancing/retreating. Often when I am working closely with a student, I will look at their hands and notice a trembling in their extremities or intense squeezing or holding of the weapon in their hands. I have also watched students bump into a prop or set piece right next to them claiming that they never saw whatever it was that they struck. When chatting with a student while working on a phrase or technique, students who are normally strong conversationalists show an inability to speak about whatever it is that they are working on.

I try to identify the effects of BAR, its causes and physical responses in my students early on in the teaching process. I then encourage open communication through dialogue and journals so that any individual with paralleling physical responses can identify and express them to me. There are times when these physical changes can only be identified through communication. This is why educating students about BAR is so important, so that they can understand and identify what is happening and, once identified, we can take steps to move forward together.

I am hopeful that as my research and classroom experiments continue I will find new games and modifications to help students deal with adrenalin and its effects on a performer's body. The BFA department at Brooklyn College granted me permission to treat my Stage Combat for the Actor class as a sort of laboratory, with students participating in modified games and providing feedback on their stress levels. I intend in future classes to alter games to more closely mirror choreography, and have students keep detailed journals regarding their physical responses in class. My hope is that by working in dialogue with my students, I will able to see the direction that BART and Stage Combat RBT training need to go in order to help our students move forward. At the same time, I encourage my fellow teachers to take the basic games presented here and try them in their own classrooms. Give students a chance to see what stress does to them physically, so that come performance time they can excel in the spotlight, rather than become a deer caught in stage fright.

Endnotes

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2 Ibid., 125-127.

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Fight Matters

A Noble

BY JOSEPH TRAVERS, SAFD FD/CT

Teaching has long been considered one of the "noble professions." The term, applied to this and a few other occupations (medicine and law, for example), acknowledges that teaching involves responsibilities and requires moral and ethical standards that go beyond those of most other livelihoods. Extreme dedication and self-sacrifice are the norm for its participants. No doubt, the association of engaging in noble professions with being underpaid comes in part from the frequent occurrence of teachers putting far more of their time and personal energies into their preparation, work and care for students than would be expected or even necessary for ordinary jobs.

The teaching of stage combat, in the form it takes today, is very new. Not long ago, "stage combat instruction" was confined to the action of fencers or boxers who met with actors while they worked on a role, and coached them in techniques and stances. From time to time, perhaps they even went so far as staging a fight. It is notable that although the oldest actor training program in the English speaking world began not so long ago (as recently as 1884), its training featured fencing instruction, but not stage combat – stage combat as a discipline, of course, did not yet exist. It was not until the latter part of the twentieth century, when individuals such as Patrick Crean sought to codify and teach the principles of stage fighting, that courses in the techniques of this art form began to emerge.

In this country, in the few decades since the beginnings of the SAFD, the spread of the popularity of stage combat training has been overwhelming. SAFD Fight Master Mike Chin recently spearheaded an effort to update the online list of schools where SAFD Skills Proficiency Testing takes place (available on our new website!). As shown by that list, dozens of institutions of higher learning (including Ivy League schools) have now committed to stage combat as a vital part of their acting curriculum. With this boom, the demand for stage combat teachers has of course also increased.

At the same time, it has become characteristic of the highly competitive nature of show business in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries that individuals drawn to the performing arts have been forced to seek alternative income streams as they pursue their careers. Since stage combat is a fun and engaging skill that

Profession

is increasingly in demand, it can be a way of supporting one's self while pursuing that "big break." If one is good at it, and could be paid to teach it, why not do so? It would be a fair assumption to say that a majority of those who currently make the bulk of their living teaching stage combat began teaching as a supplement to their acting pursuits, and there is nothing wrong with that. "Hyphenated" careers in the performing arts abound. But when teaching becomes only one's "survival job," the nobler aspects of the occupation can take a back seat.

For most of our country's teachers, teaching is not a means to an end, but a career. The majority of professional teachers go through rigorous training not only in their particular disciplines, but also in the science of Education. Whatever the standards and theories of the time, the passing on of knowledge to younger generations has usually been taken very seriously by educators and society.

In addition to technical preparation, we expect our teachers to exemplify society's highest values. Teaching anything - really teaching - goes beyond instruction and information. It means embodying, inspiring, imbuing, enriching, and ennobling. In their book, *The Elements of Teaching* (1997, Yale University Press), James M. Banner, Jr. and Harold C. Cannon (both teachers) examine the qualities of which truly fine teaching is comprised, qualities that transcend the science of education into its art. Among these they include compassion, imagination, patience, authority, and character. Their investigation starts from the premise that a teacher is much more than an instructor or an educator. A teacher is an example. Walking into a classroom to teach means serving as a model for the students who are waiting to learn.

How do we make our teaching better? How do we train harder, question deeper, see our students more clearly, feel about them more deeply, and pass on to them the love we feel for this passion of ours? Will a degree in Education be the key? What about experience teaching other disciplines? How about apprenticing and assisting an experienced teacher? The answers will most likely be different for each individual, but one thing is certain – they must lie in remembering that we are not merely teaching principles, techniques, and practices. In the end, we are not teaching stage combat. We are teaching *students*.

Each one of us who has chosen to teach had a first teacher. The first person who, say, put a sword in our hand, or taught us to take care of a partner, passed on a tremendous legacy that is beyond noble in many of its best qualities – discipline, formality, romance, courage, hard work, boldness, daring, zeal, fun! (As Paddy Crean would put it, "Za!"). It is now our duty, our responsibility, and our noble calling to pass that legacy on.

Let's do it!

EYE-OP

ENGAGING THE AUDIENCE BY STAYING ENGAGED

By Jamie Cheatham, SAFD Certified Teacher and Fight Director

There is a single note I've given countless times over the years as both a fight director and teacher, to "open your eyes." For various reasons, actors have a tendency to clench their eyes shut when doing the opposite could enhance the actor's and the audience's ability to connect to important moments of violence. One general way in which actors shut their eyes is in the habitual use of a "fight face." This is a mask of aggression adopted by the actor, typically with clenched or bared teeth, a furrowed brow, flared nostrils, and of particular note here, squinting eyes. Sometimes actors are tempted to wear this mask from the first line of conflict until the last moments of the fight. There may be legitimacy in this aggressive facial mask, perhaps, when used as a prelude to violence. It is a facial posture with a singular purpose, to intimidate.

This mask of aggression is the facial equivalent of puffing one's chest and stretching to full height in a confrontation. Most animals have similar displays as a means of an aggressive deterrent. Roosters and other birds puff up their feathers and/or spread their wings, blowfish inflate, horses and bears rear up, dogs round their backs and their hair stands on end (a physiological trait we humans share, called *piloerection*, which for some produces a tingling neck). All of these behaviors are prompted by the familiar fight-or-flight stimuli triggered by a threat, and are intended to create a larger or more threatening image. Keep in mind, these behaviors are all simply displays. Their function is intended as a tool of dominance; they are psychological weapons meant to avoid a fight. Should the confrontation actually lead to a fight, posturing displays may have little tactical advantage.

For humans, standing tall with one's chest thrust forward is an instinctive stance of intimidation, but once the fight is on, instinct also instructs us to drop into a low and balanced stance. Similarly "fight face," while useful as a means of intimidation, may be impractical during a real fight. The excess tension in creating this "mask" taxes facial and neck muscles, impedes breathing, and with eyes squinted to almost shut, it becomes difficult to see clearly. Try the following exercise: First, adopt your best "ultimate angry face"; clench and

"The Taming of the Shrew", featuring Ethan Hall (as Petruchio) and Brittany Boeche (as Kate). Note Hall's open eyes

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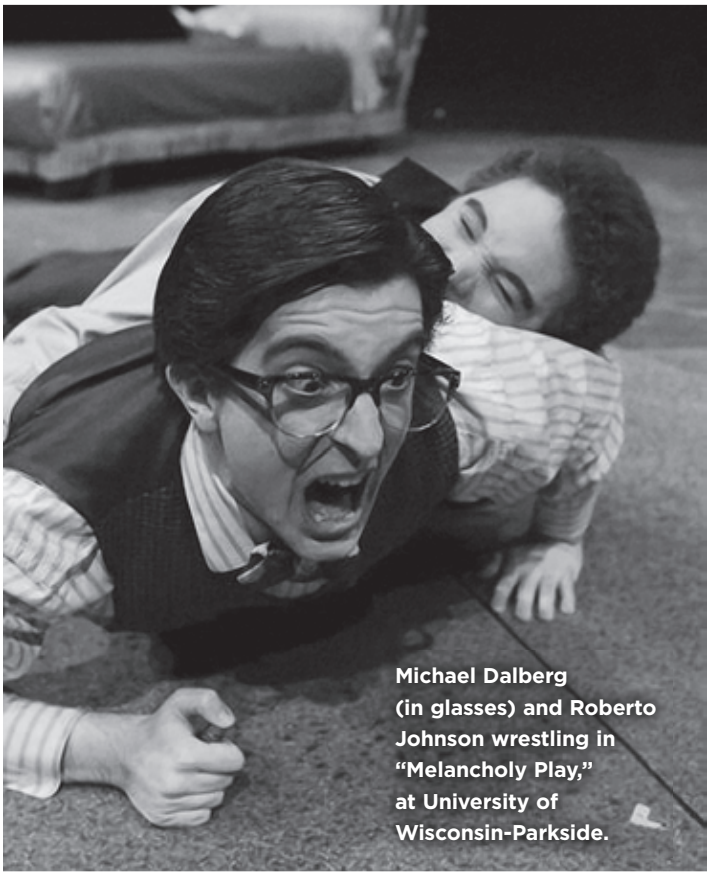

Michael Dalberg (in glasses) and Roberto Johnson wrestling in "Melancholy Play," at University of Wisconsin-Parkside.

bare your teeth, furrow your brow together, and snarl! Exaggerate it (for full effect) and hold it for at least 10 seconds, then release. The moment of release should reveal how much tension is involved and just how taxing it can be. You should also notice a difference in your ability to see clearly.

"Fight face" may be useful as a means of intimidation to avoid a fight, and in tactical moments between phrases to frighten one's opponent. However, once the fight is on, once blows are being exchanged, the eyes should be open to fully take in any and all information. Think about a moment when something unexpectedly is thrown a little too close to your face. In such instances, one's face tends to twitch back (out of harm's way) and the eyes open wide, as your mind wonders, "*what was that?!*" The eyes are ready to take in information. The same impulse occurs (or should occur) in a fight. All the scowling and scrunching of the face is fine as a deterrent, but once the first punch flies, the eyes widen, taking it in. Sight is our primary sense, and to lose any visual information in a fight due this "tactical mask" is less true to human nature and less safe for the actor-combatant.

Unfortunately, much of the media and even theatrical convention reinforces this kind of facial tension. The ferocious snarl is decidedly picturesque and theatrical, but we don't need to perpetuate this. It is the mask worn more by the professional than competitive wrestler. One is putting on a performance; the other is trying to win. Close-ups of athlete's faces, even in extreme moments of exertion, tend to show mouths open, maximizing oxygen flow, and open-eyed concentration. No scrunching. Let us emulate these real-life pursuits of victory, and open our eyes.

An important part of our work as fight directors and actors is to tell the story of the fight. Looking at our targets not only enhances safety, by communicating clearly with our partners and by increasing our accuracy (with blade, fist or foot), but also helps to tell the story. The moment you spot your target signals your character's thought or intention to the audience. By looking at our targets, the audience also knows where to look. On the receiving side, really seeing the attack coming, rather than "sensing" it or simply noticing it peripherally, raises the stakes. While a parry may in fact be a well-conditioned, almost automatic response, discovering the danger of an oncoming attack is always more engaging. The more you take in and discover, the more *in-the-moment* you will be. It is a great part of our technique that we don't have to "hide" from the audience. Quite the opposite - in our fast-paced sequences, it keeps the audience engaged and looking where we want them to; they look where we look. There's nothing worse than the audience missing a great punch because they got distracted, or worse, we let their attention drift to knaps and such that we don't want them to notice.

Of course there are characters who fight with abandon, and there are moments in fights when characters are "flailing," attacking without clear intent or perhaps without regard for their own personal safety. If a character in these moments is not looking at precise targets, we are telling a very different story, one that becomes more powerful by being the exception, rather than the rule. The rule then is that by really looking, your eyes will guide the audience.

What follows are my methods for improving your violence by improving your reactions. There are often moments in reacting to violence or pain when actors commonly close their eyes. I believe one reason why some actors do this is uncertainty. If you've never been in a serious fight, never been hit full force in the stomach with a broadsword pummel in battle (for example), it is reasonable to be unsure as to how to react. In these cases, I believe unsure actors default to closing their eyes and "hiding" their uncertainty from the audience. It is the job of a fight director to help fighters understand these foreign experiences, and to tell them to open their eyes.

THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE: DON LINTNER

Before going further, let me stress the importance of the reaction. In every action we commit on stage, there are three key storytelling moments: the moment before, the moment of the action, and the result, or the moment after. Surprisingly, despite all our (actor) attention to blows and strikes, the most profound story telling moments, the ones that leave the biggest impact on the audience are actually the moments before and after. Using the example of the slap, the only way an audience knows if it was a big slap, a small slap, a painful slap, or an unsuccessful slap is by the moment before and the moment after. The moment before is the set up, including the wind-up. The difference between a big slap and a small slap is in the size of the wind-up. Similarly, the difference between a devastating slap and a glancing blow is told in the follow through and the reaction of the receiver. The moment when the hand "contacts" the receiver's cheek, the moment *of* the action, paradoxically gives the audience much less information.

This is advantageous to us, since it goes by very quickly, is often intentionally obscured, and involves some element of fakery. We spend a great deal of attention on this moment for safety's sake, but don't let the attention to this moment supersede the other two storytelling moments. The moment before and the moment after are the most important in communicating the story of the action. The reaction's importance is how it impacts the audience's last impression of each technique.

In reacting to the slap, one must realize that this "moment after" is prime storytelling "real-estate." Reacting with one's eyes shut closes the door to the audience's involvement. The audience relates to your experience by looking at your face, and particularly your eyes (the proverbial windows to the soul). Reactions can be more impactful by simply keeping your eyes open! Let the audience share your pain, surprise, confusion and/or anger, all of which they can read in your eyes. Reactions to arm twists, hair-pulls and especially chokes all tend to elicit eyes-closed reactions from actors. By opening your eyes instead, you will better engage your audience.

From "The Playboy of the Western World," and features (Phil Zimmermann) as the recipient of the bite. Jonathan Matthew Finnegan as Christy, the biter.

I believe another reason why actors close their eyes when acting pain is because they naturally relate stage combat pain to most of the pain experienced in life. An intense stomach cramp will indeed make you want to close your eyes, perhaps concentrating on the source of and ways to alleviate the pain. However these commonplace pains are not experienced in heightened or life-threatening situations. It is not unusual for an athlete to seriously hurt her

THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE: DON LINTNER

From "The Musical Comedy Murders of 1940". Pictured: Aaron Verbrigghe and Robin Schneider. Emotion is clearer when the audience can see the performer's eyes.

ankle and not even notice how bad it is until the whistle blows or the game is over. Soldiers, despite life-threatening wounds, will press on to accomplish the mission or to save a comrade. Pain experienced in heightened situations doesn't allow us to focus inward, closing our eyes. Stage fights must resemble these heightened situations.

In the heightened situation of a fight, it is important to remember, too, that we are still dealing with goals and obstacles. Common goals in fights are to survive, to win, to escape or to destroy (your opponent). A common obstacle to all of these goals is pain. Actors must play the action, not the obstacle. Just as the injured athlete is focuses on the goal, not the pain, so too must the fighter on stage. Perhaps a character in the middle of a fight receives a very solid gut punch, stopping him in his tracks. This is not the time for him close his eyes or to take his focus off his opponent. Even if the pain is so intense it immobilizes him, he must remain active, trying to "see" what he could possibly do next. Even the struggle to see clearly is active. The need for self-preservation should supersede the impulse to shut one's eyes or "give in" to the pain. Audiences are paying to see characters that fight to win their goals. The moment someone gives in to the pain, they've given up, and we stop rooting. Closing one's eyes "to suffer" is a signal that your character is no longer willing to fight past the pain in order to succeed. Further, it belies the illusion that more violence might occur unexpectedly. No matter the amount of pain a character might be suffering, he or she, like the wounded soldier, should be *looking* for some way to achieve the goal. This choice engages the audience. Opening your eyes, during even great pain, makes the audience root for you!

Perhaps the greatest moment to waste by letting the eyes close in pain is in the acting of a death scene. Again, whether it is death by sword wound or poison (or both if performing *Hamlet*), to prematurely shut tight the portals of life is to again play the obstacle, instead of playing the action. Death speeches are made because the characters need to complete one last action ("*report my cause aright to the unsatisfied…*"). They struggle against death and the pain to fulfill their last moments of life. These are the last things you'll see as your character; relish them. Or as Romeo instructs, "eyes, look your last."

Whether based in real life physiology, or in defiance of it, the stronger, more audience-engaging actions and reactions, whether dramatic or comic, are enhanced by keeping the eyes open. Experiment with this concept in the classroom. Try out a series of reactions for your students or peers; see which they respond to more. Students - watch your classmates try the same reaction, first eyes closed, and then eyes open. See which grabs you more effectively as a viewer. Ultimately, focusing clearly on targets and defense helps the audience follow along. Reacting with eyes open let's them share your pain. Keeping a vigilant eye on your opponent, overcoming the pain, in order to see a path to victory will engage your audience in a believable and powerful struggle. Opening our eyes and relinquishing our "fight faces" for more natural, open responses will lead to stronger performances and a more engaged audience.

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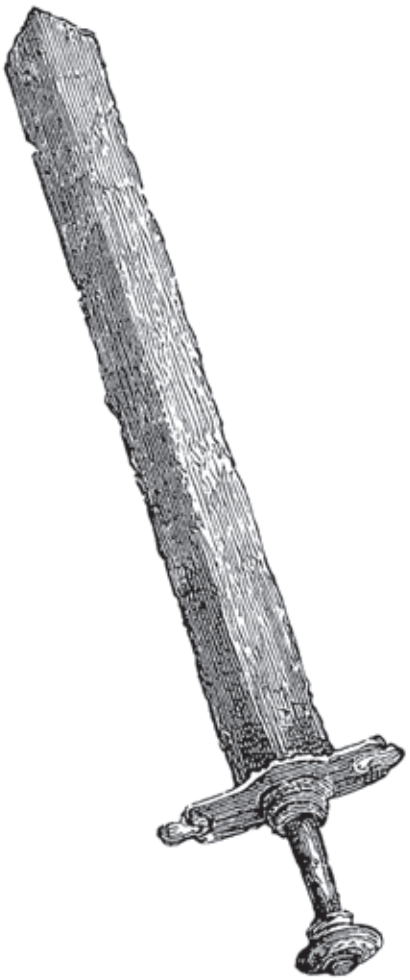

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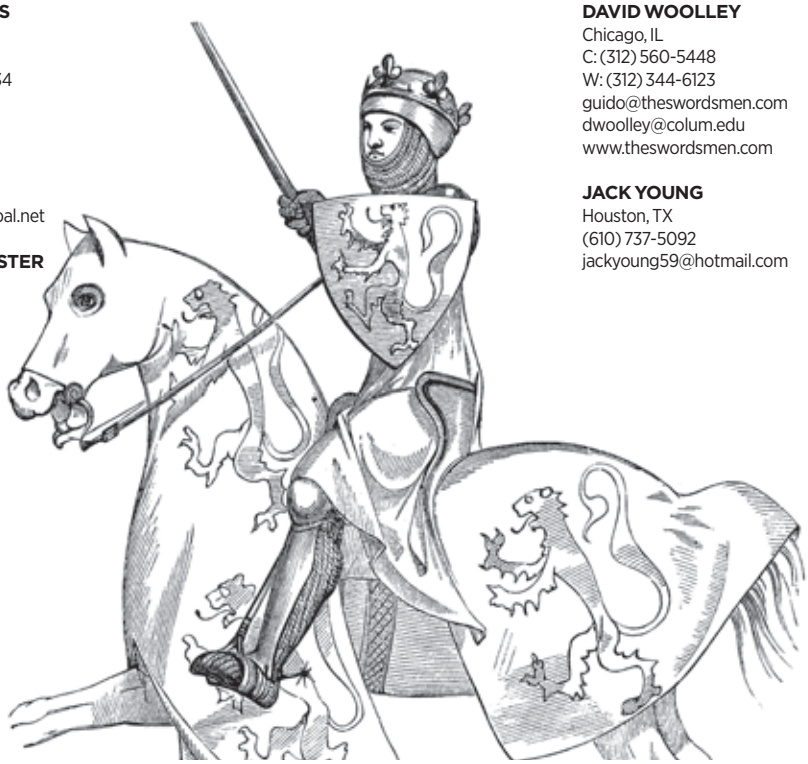

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The Society of American Fight Directors is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting safety and fostering excellence in the art of stage combat. The SAFD is committed to providing the highest level of service through initiating and maintaining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

Whether you are a producer, director, actor or teacher, we can help accelerate your stage combat skills. SAFD members gain access to a world class networking organization, high caliber stage combat training and mentorship designed to expand your career. Our members include professional actors, directors, producers, educators, dancers, singers, stunt performers, historians, scholars and armorers working in theatre, film, television, all levels of academia, stunt shows, opera and the video gaming industry.

The SAFD Recognized Membership Levels

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 memberships may join as a friend.

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

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 staged combat safely and effectively.

Fight Director
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.

Advanced Actor Combatant
Any individual who is current in six of eight SAFD disciplines, of which at least three (3) must be recommended passes and is a member in good standing. The SAFD acknowledges Advanced Actor Combatants as highly skilled performers of staged fighting.

Fight Master
Individuals who have successfully fulfilled the requirements of Fight Master as established and published by the Governing Body and awarded recognition by the current body of Fight Masters (College of Fight Masters). Individuals must be members in good standing and engage in continued active service to the Society.

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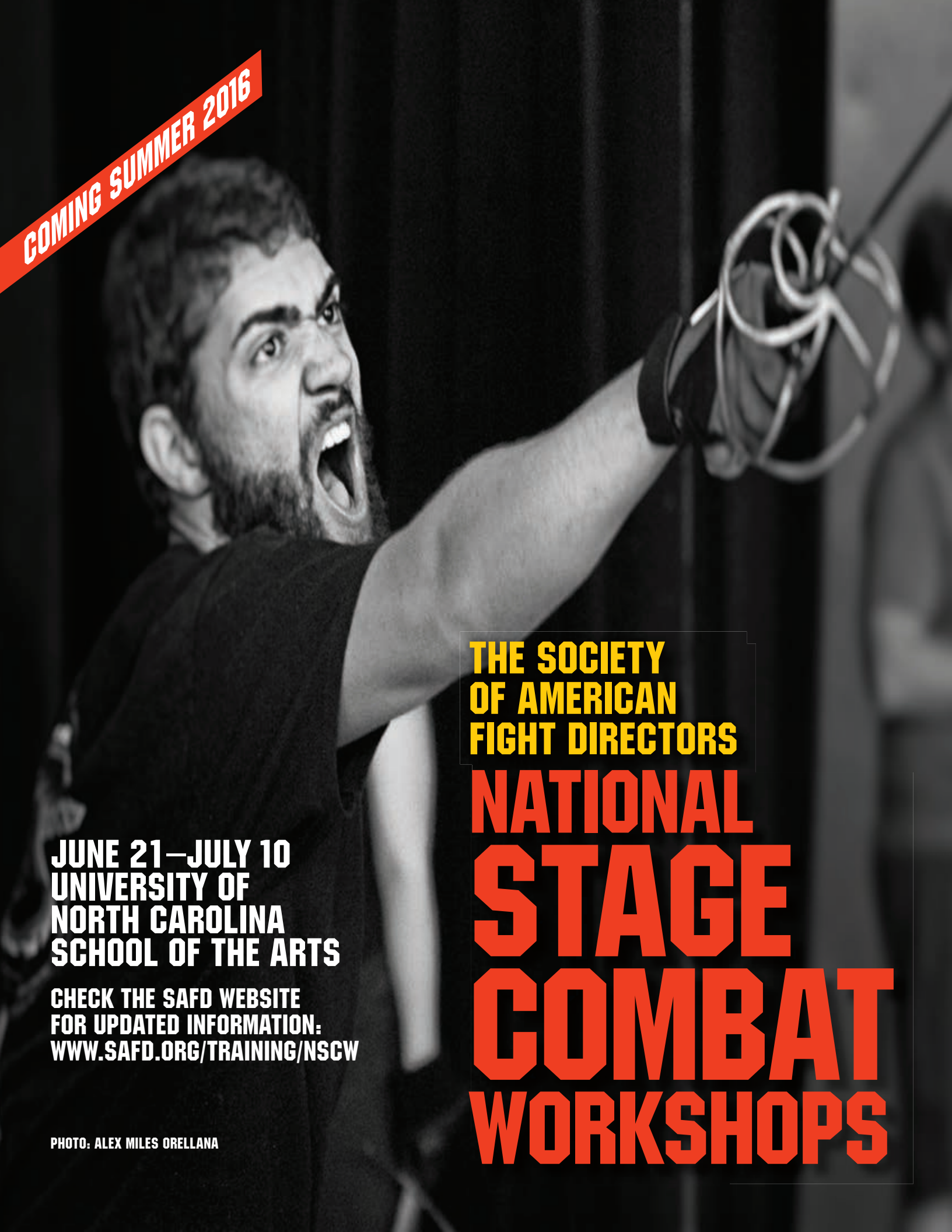
You will need to login or set up an account at through the SAFD website (www.safd.org). From there you will be guided through the membership payment process.

Thank you for supporting The Society of American Fight Directors.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