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The Society of American Fight Directors

Summer 2002

The Fight Master, Spring/Summer 2002, Vol. 25 Issue 1

The Society of American Fight Directors

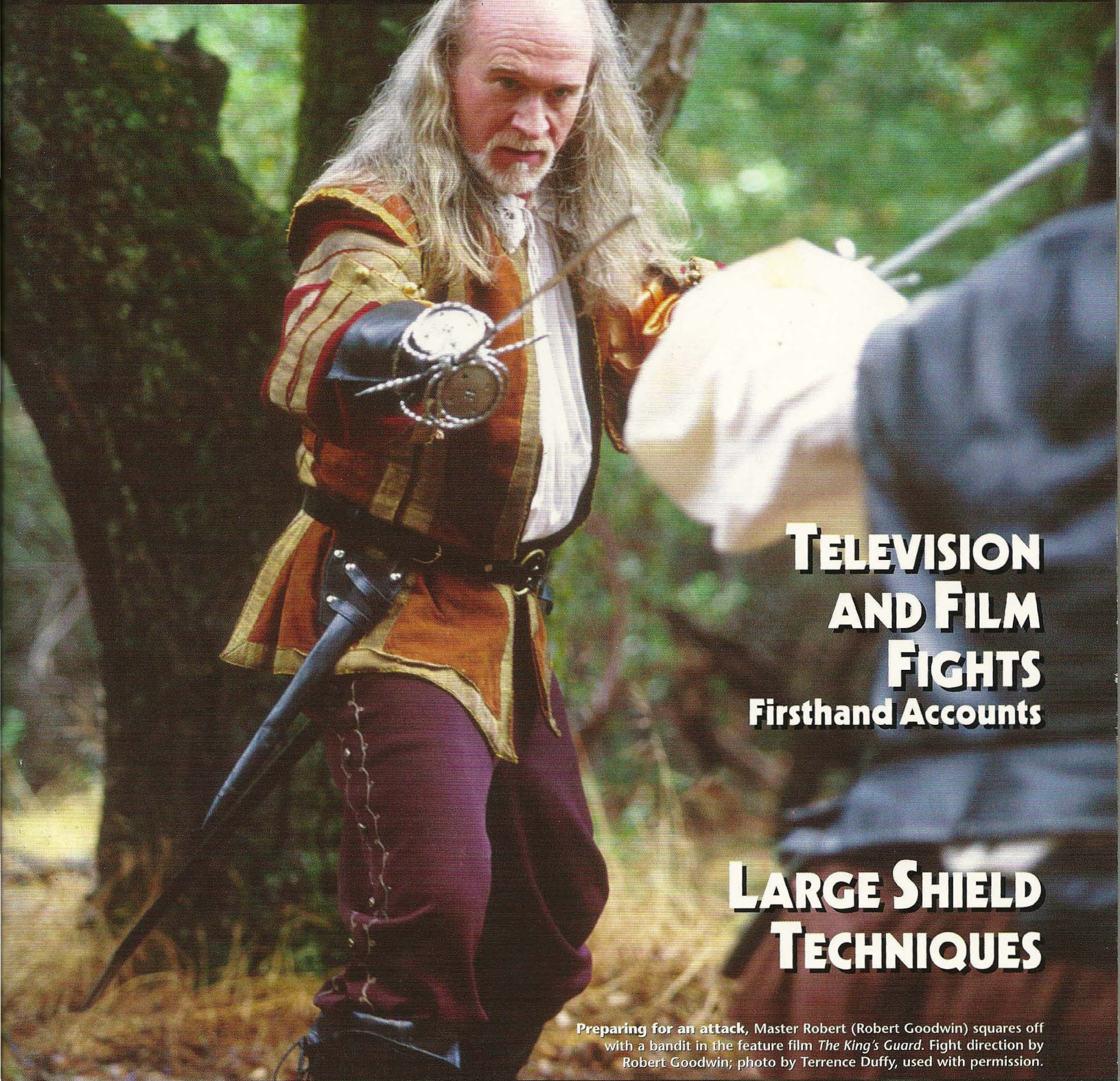
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The Fight Master

Journal of the Society of American Fight Directors



**TELEVISION
AND FILM
FIGHTS**
Firsthand Accounts

**LARGE SHIELD
TECHNIQUES**

Preparing for an attack, Master Robert (Robert Goodwin) squares off with a bandit in the feature film *The King's Guard*. Fight direction by Robert Goodwin; photo by Terrence Duffy, used with permission.

The 23rd Annual Society of American Fight Directors

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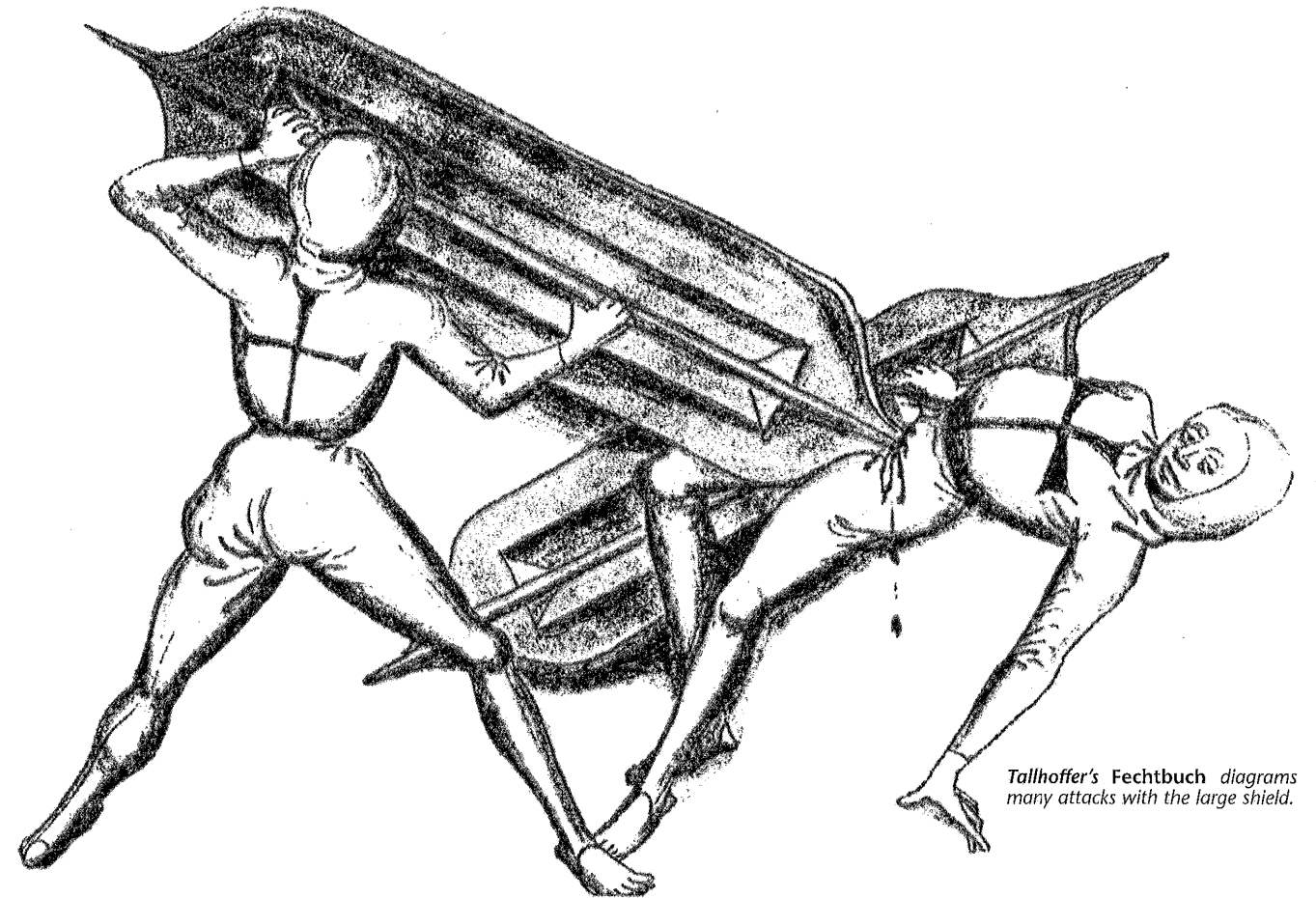
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Prerequisites and additional paperwork are required to apply for the AACW.

The Fight Master

Spring/Summer 2002 Volume XXV, Number 1



Talhoffer's Fechtbuch diagrams many attacks with the large shield.

Features

How to Use a Large Shield 7

Stephen Hand reveals some historically based fighting techniques with the large shield that bring a new excitement for staging fights with the shield.

On the Set of MythQuest 13

Anthony De Longis deals with the realities of filming a television sequence involving swordplay and how important the collaborative effort is in making the unexpected work.

Words as Weapons 19

The importance of verbal dueling and its contribution to staged combat training is discussed by Kevin J. Wetmore, Jr.

Making a Swashbuckler Movie 23

Robert Goodwin shares the first part of a hands-on experience of creating and acting in a swashbuckling movie.

The Fencing Match in Bernhardt's Hamlet 28

How the Divine Sarah made less mean so much more in her production of Hamlet is explored by Linda Carlyle McCollum.

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EDITORIAL SPEAKING

Spring/Summer of 2001 allows the reader to reflect on the past, find what he can use, and deal with the present.

Stephen Hand, who is the editor of SPADA, has been reconstructing historical fencing styles from surviving fencing manuals written between 1300 and 1650 since the early 90s. He is one of the founders of the Stoccata School of Defence, a historical fencing school in Sydney, Australia and is currently a candidate of Master at Arms with the International Master of Arms Federation. His work has been seen at numerous conferences throughout the United States and he has graciously shared a condensed version of his article on the use of the large shield which he presented at a conference in the San Francisco Bay Area in May of 2001. The reader and choreographer will find some exciting new moves that are historically based to enliven the use of the shield in staged combat.

Kevin J. Wetmore, Jr. gives us two very insightful and scholarly articles. One takes a look at how words can be used as weapons and how exercises in developing and understanding that skill helps the actor/combatant. The other is a review of several books on Japanese sword technique that may be useful for the director/choreographer and actor/combatant in adapting Japanese swordplay to the stage. Ken Mondschein again shares a review from the Association of Historical Fencing Website, this time on Sydney Anglo's *The Martial Arts of Renaissance Europe*, which many consider to be the most important work on the history of fencing since Arthur Wise.

Honorary member Anthony DeLongis again takes the reader on a captivating behind the scenes look at what really goes on in putting together a television series involving swordplay. As usual, the unusual is constantly occurring, dealt with and miraculously salvaged. It takes team work and people who know how to solve problems quickly and efficiently and still maintain artistic integrity.

Robert Goodwin also gives the reader the first part of a behind the scenes look at making a swashbuckling film in the States, which is extremely unusual these days. Here again, teamwork is what really paid off in making this venture a success.

A course on Women and Dramatic Literature last semester resulted in some exciting new discoveries about some women in the theatre. Sarah Bernhardt's fencing scene from her 1899 production of *Hamlet* was documented on film in 1900 and reveals how less can be so much more. The fight between Hamlet and Laertes is only a few moves, but what is communicated through gesture says more than a series of fencing phrases or lines of dialogue. Would it work today? Some claim they were the first to do so, but it was really the Divine Sarah who was their predecessor.

Feinting the pen briskly,
—Linda Carlyle McCollum

The Fight Master

Journal of the Society of American Fight Directors

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EDITORIAL STAFF

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Linda Carlyle McCollum

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

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

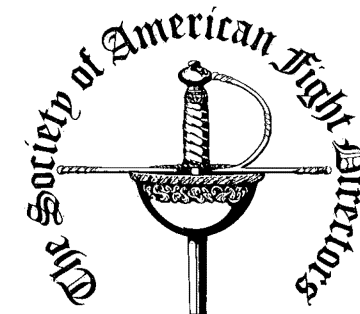
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Notification for advertising in the Spring/Summer issue must be received by December 1; artwork due by January 15. Notification for the Fall/Winter issue must be received by July 1; artwork due August 15. Please call for rates or other information.

The Fight Master

is a publication of

The Society of American Fight Directors



Friend

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

Actor/Combatant

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

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College of Fight Masters

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

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

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

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

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PHOTO CALL

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

The deadline for graphic material in the Fall/Winter issue is August 15, for the Spring/Summer 2001 issue it is February 15. Future submissions are accepted at any time. Send all prints sandwiched between two pieces of cardboard in an envelope clearly labeled, "Photos—Do Not Bend" to

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

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

—Jeff A.R. Jones

CONTRIBUTORS

Anthony DeLongis is an actor, fight director, sword-master, professional weapons trainer, horseman and writer. Some of De Longis' film and television credits include *Roadhouse*, *Masters of the Universe*, *Sinbad*, *Highlander*, *the Series*, *Wild Bill*, *Far and Away*, *Circle of Iron*, and *Jaguar Lives*. He was sword master/stunt coordinator for *The Queen of Swords*. His company, Palpable Hit Productions, has produced two instructional videos, *Rapier for the Stage & Screen*, *the De Longis Method and Broadsword for the Stage & Screen*. He also has four bullwhip instructional videos teaching whip artistry and safety. For further information visit www.delongis.com.

Robert R. Goodwin, who teaches at Loyola Marymount University, has choreographed for off-Broadway, regional theatres, Utah Shakespearean Festival, USC, UCLA, Syracuse University, Webster College. He has over thirty years experience and has been stunt coordinator for eight films including *East Sofa*, performed in *Quest for Camelot* and was the sword foley consultant for *Rob Roy*.

Stephen Hand, a medieval and renaissance re-enactor since 1979, has also studied modern fencing and *ken-do* and since the early 90s has been reconstructing historical fencing styles from surviving fencing manuals. In 1998 Hand and colleagues founded the Stoccata School of Defence. Hand is currently a candidate for Master at Arms with the International Master at Arms Federation.

Linda Carlyle McCollum a member of the SAFD, the United States Fencing Coaches Association and the International Academy of Arms, serves as editor of *The Fight Master* and on-site coordinator for the NSCW. McCollum is a faculty member in Theatre at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

F. Braun McAsh is an award-winning Canadian fight director, actor and instructor with over twenty-five years of experience. He has choreographed extensively for stage, including the Stratford Shakespeare Festival, Shaw Festival and Canadian Opera Company, film and television. He is best known as the Sword Master for *Highlander*. He recently released the first of his series of instructional videos, *The Practice of Arms*. He is currently writing a book on historical and theatrical fight techniques and his first novel. Website: www.fbraunmcash.com

Ken Mondschein holds an MA in history from Boston University and has been a student at the Martinez Academy of Arms (www.martinez-destreza.com) for four years. He has written for *FightingArts.com*, *Renaissance Magazine*, and *Hammerz Forum* and is the editor of *Estafilade*, the newsletter of the Association for Historical Fencing (www.ahfi.org).

Kevin J. Wetmore Jr., Ph.D., has been an actor/combatant since 1994. He teaches theatre history, Asian theatre, acting and stage combat at Denison University. He can be reached at wetmore@denison.edu.

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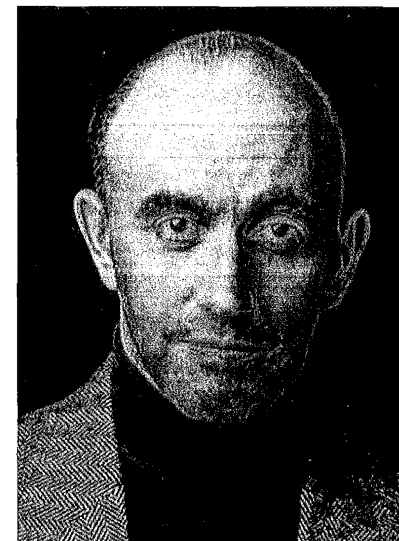
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As of the Fall/Winter 2001 issue, *The Fight Master* will advertise non-SAFD workshops and services, including any movement/acting/theatre-related workshops, training institutions, graduate/undergraduate programs, theatre companies, performances, books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

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FROM THE PRESIDENT



The year 2002 marks the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Society of American Fight Directors. This silver anniversary finds the world and the SAFD much changed since the Society's

inception in 1977. The membership has grown from a mere handful to a roster of hundreds, with members living not just in the U.S. but all over the globe. Stage combat training is now considered a vital part of actor training and is now offered at virtually every major acting program in the United States. The visibility of the Fight Director has improved significantly. In addition, the inclusion of a Fight Director as a part of the design team has become much more the norm than ever before. It is no exaggeration to say that the SAFD has been the driving force behind these changes.

All those members of previous administrations are to be thanked, for without their selfless exertions, the SAFD would never have reached its current place of prominence in the art of Stage Combat.

The Society must now move with increased concentration to formalize its relationship with the performance unions. Alliance with the unions is the next logical step on the road to making stage combat performance, training and direction a vital part of education and the industry. These negotiations will involve much give and take and will require the members to re-examine the nature of the organization. The groundwork has been laid and now is the time to act.

The push will require a membership that is active and involved. All of the Membership Representatives will be asked to contact their constituencies to solicit aid for this effort. A formal relationship with the performance unions will benefit all levels of membership, and it is hoped that this request for help will be met positively.

Finally, the past few months have been humbling for this newly elected president. To be named a member of the College of Fight Masters and then to be elected to the office of President is quite an expression of faith in this President's abilities not only by the membership at large, but also by the teachers and mentors in the College of Fight Masters. This President will do his utmost to be worthy of the trust placed in him.

"Fight the good fight!"

Chuck Coyl



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

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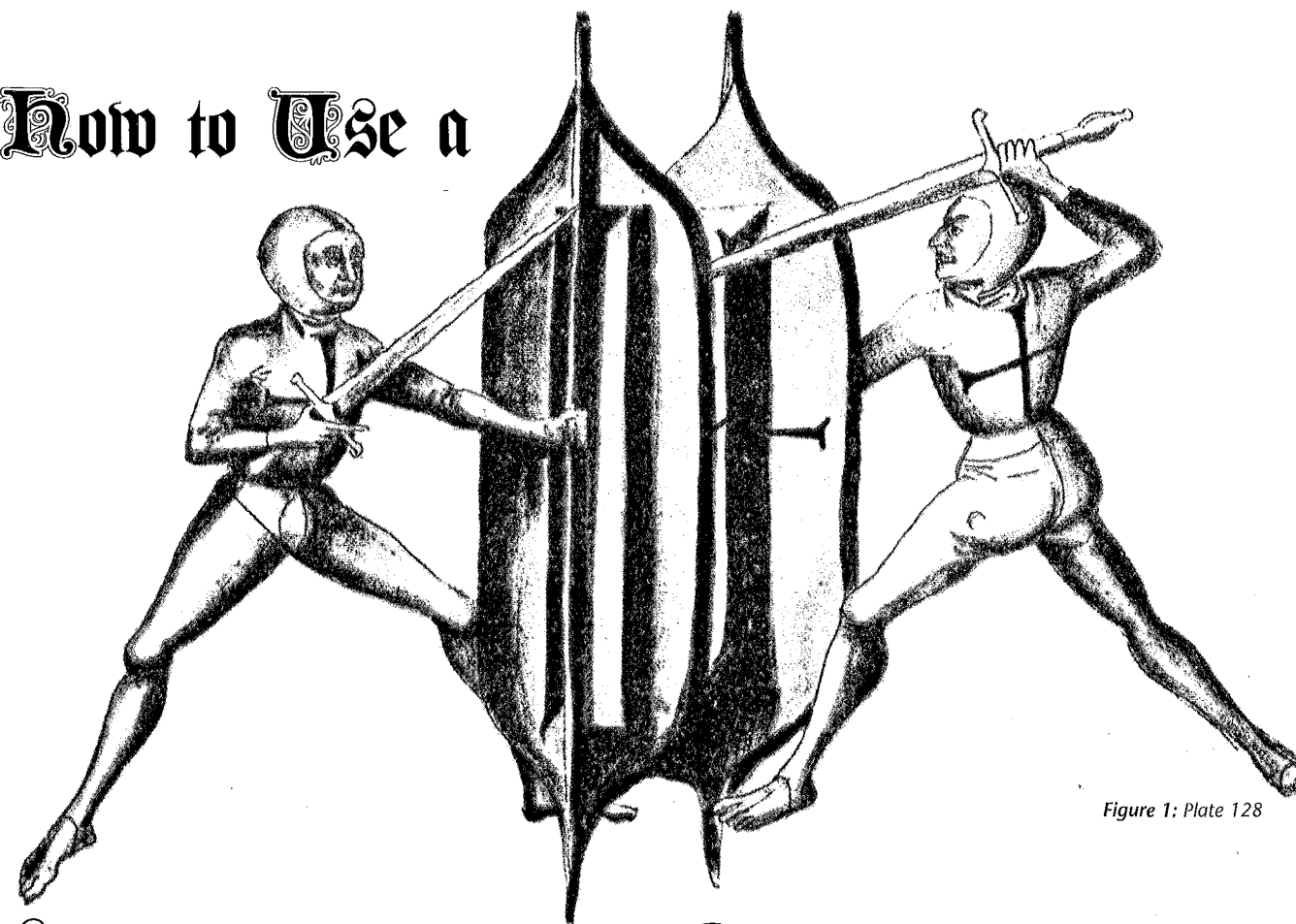


Figure 1: Plate 128

LARGE SHIELD

by Stephen Hand

Editor's Note: *This article is based on program notes for a class on fighting with the large shield. The class was given by Stephen Hand at the Schola St. George Swordsmanship Symposium held on May 11th-13th 2001 in Livermore, California. A paper by Hand and Paul Wagner, covering the same subject in far greater detail will appear in the inaugural issue of SPADA, the Journal of Swordplay Symposium International (SSI). The journal contains scholarly papers on the reconstruction of historical weaponplay and is due for release in 2002.*

One of the most popular weapon combinations of the Middle Ages was the sword and large shield. Unfortunately, it seemed that manuals did not exist describing combat with sword and shield because the decline in use of this weapon combination corresponded with the rise of the fencing manual. However, many German *fechtbuchs* of the fifteenth century (most notably Talhoffer's *Fechtbuch* of 1467) illustrate and describe a method of formal judicial duel using an extremely large shield with spikes on either end. Because of the fact that a weird-looking shield is being used, people have overlooked the fact that these manuals offer just about the only Medieval description of how to fight with sword and large shield. Pictorial evidence from the twelfth through fourteenth centuries suggests that single combat on foot with sword and large shield was conducted in much the same

way as described by Talhoffer and others.

Stage combatants and re-enactors typically use large shields very actively, moving them to block every attack, or very passively, holding them statically in front of the body. It seems that the correct manner of using a shield is quite different to both styles (though as discussed later, passive shield use is appropriate to a shield wall). The basic principle of how to use a large shield is that the combatant must use it to cover a defensive line (just as one would use a sword) and that when one is attacked in an open line he must move his body and shield together to close that line.

THE TWO WARDS

Two wards are shown with large shields in Talhoffer. The first ward, the Outside Ward, is with the shield upright and facing to the left. The second ward, the Inside Ward, is with the shield upright and facing to the right. These two wards are shown in figure one. The purpose of these two wards is to cover one line of attack. The shield should be held in such a way that it crosses the opponent's shield, as in the engagement of two blades together (Figure 1). The sword may be held in a number of wards, but the main ones appear to have been the German wards *Ochs* (ox) with the blade horizontal above the head or angled slightly downwards, point forward and *Pflug* (plow) with the sword held low, by the right side with the blade horizontal or sloping slightly up, point forward. Early Medieval illustrations show wards more

suited to cutting to have been commonly used. Medieval illustrations also show the most common shield ward to have been with the shield held flat in front of the body, the Medium Ward. This is a passive defense better suited to mass combat (which is almost invariably where it is shown). The problem with it in single combat is that any attack from this ward exposes the arm to a counter-cut.

TECHNIQUES

The techniques are described by referencing Talhoffer's plates. Those who are interested should obtain a copy of *Medieval Combat*, Mark Rector's excellent translation of Talhoffer's 1467 *Fechtbuch*.

Attacks may be made by closing a line, hence blocking off the possibility of being attacked down one side.

1. Both swordsmen adopt the Outside Ward with left legs forward. The attacker may have his sword in *Ochs* or in *Pflug*. The attacker steps forward and left with his left foot, pivoting his shield 180 degrees, closing the inside line and thrusts with an *Imbroccata*

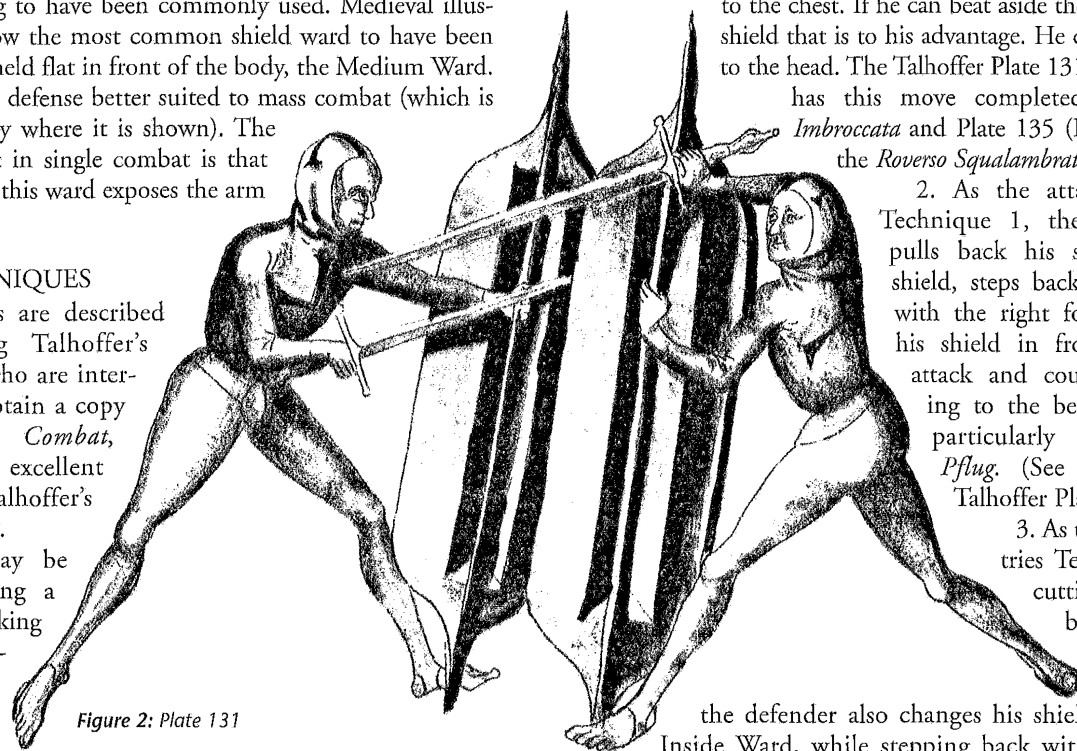


Figure 2: Plate 131

to the chest. If he can beat aside the defender's shield that is to his advantage. He can also cut to the head. The Talhoffer Plate 131 (Figure 2) has this move completed with an *Imbroccata* and Plate 135 (Figure 3) is the *Roverso Squalambrato*.

2. As the attacker tries Technique 1, the defender pulls back his sword and shield, steps back and right with the right foot placing his shield in front of the attack and counterthrusting to the belly. This is particularly easy from *Pflug*. (See Figure 4: Talhoffer Plate 132.)

3. As the attacker tries Technique 1, cutting to the body with a *Roverso Tondo*,

the defender also changes his shield into the Inside Ward, while stepping back with his right foot. He deflects the cut out to the right with his shield and cuts straight down between the shields onto the attacker's head (the sword must pass between the backs of both shields, meaning that the shields must pass by each other before the cut is

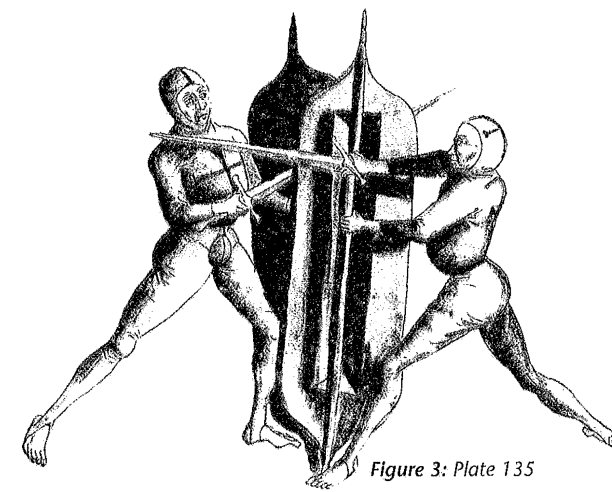


Figure 3: Plate 135

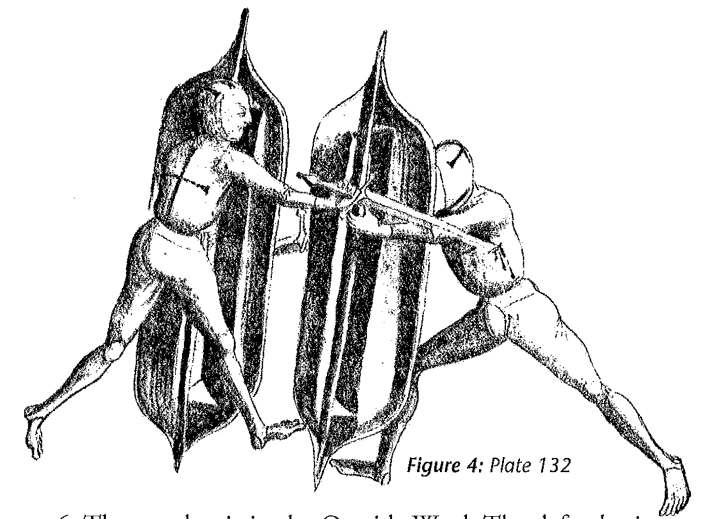


Figure 4: Plate 132

made). Alternately, with shields smaller than Talhoffer's dueling shield he can cut over the shields with a *Fendente*. The defender should draw his shield back as he turns it so that no contact is made between the shields. If contact is made it will be impossible to cut between the shields. (See Figure 5: Talhoffer Plate 141.)

4. If the defender is in *Ochs* he can be attacked by rotating the shield clockwise and punching it out facing upwards. The shield slopes down towards the defender at approximately 30 degrees. The edge of the shield will prevent the defender from moving his own shield to cover himself. The attacker holds his shield high enough to avoid being hit with a thrust from *Ochs*. This is not from Talhoffer, but is from a scene shown on a Greek vase. This demonstrates the incredible continuity of this basic style of fighting with the large shield.

5. The attacker is in the Inside Ward. The defender is in the Outside Ward. The attacker pivots his shield into the Outside Ward, passing forward and right as he does so and cutting to the left side of the defender's body. He should attempt to beat the defender's shield aside as he changes ward. This is not mentioned in Talhoffer, but seems to be an inevitable consequence of adopting a different ward to one's opponent. This would explain why Talhoffer's fencers almost always commence with their shields in the same ward.

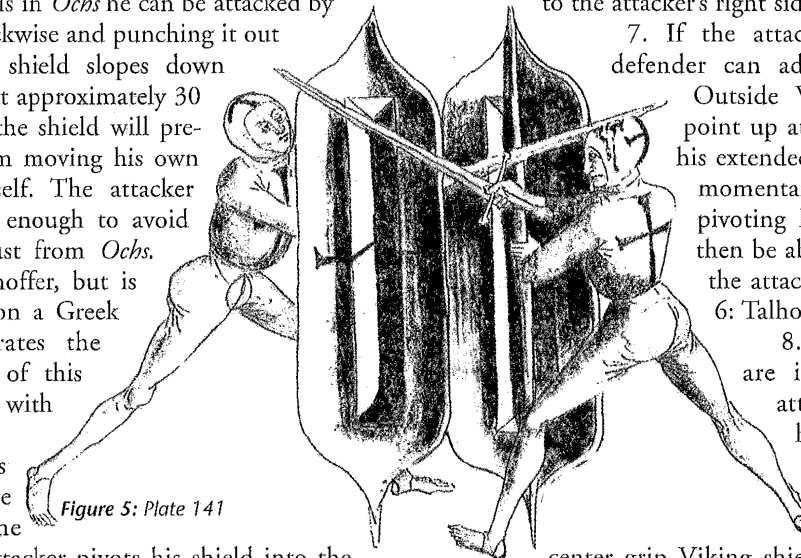


Figure 5: Plate 141

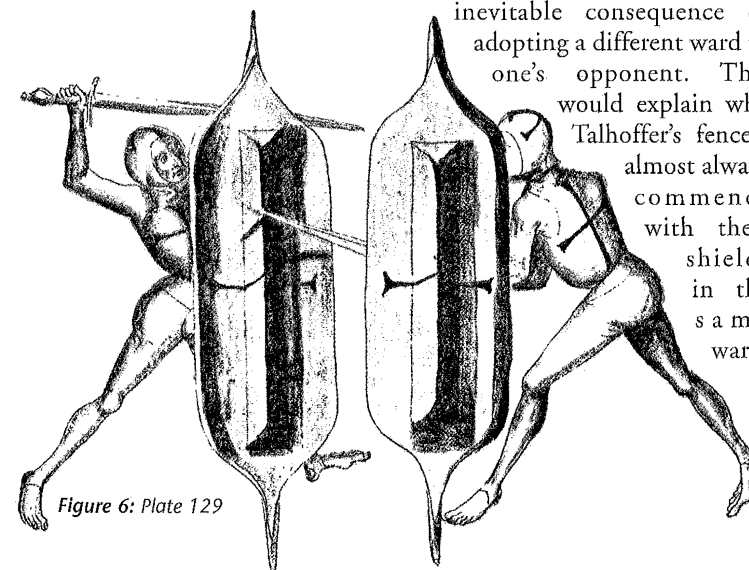


Figure 6: Plate 129

6. The attacker is in the Outside Ward. The defender is in the Inside Ward. The attacker has the option of cutting directly into the defender's ward, which will achieve nothing, or attacking to the defender's unguarded inside line. If the attacker does the latter the defender can pass forward, pivoting his shield into the Outside Ward and counter-cutting or thrusting to the attacker's right side.

7. If the attacker tries Technique 1, the defender can adopt Half Shield (shield in Outside Ward, sword held extended, point up at about 45 degrees) and using his extended sword, braced by his shield, momentarily prevent the attacker from pivoting his shield. The defender will then be able to lift his sword and cut at the attacker's head or legs. (See Figure 6: Talhoffer Plate 129.)

8. Both attacker and defender are in the Outside Ward. The attacker passes forward, kicking his opponent's shield aside (it will spin into the Inside Ward) and thrusting through his body. If it is a center grip Viking shield, the attacker can kick the forward bottom corner, which will uncover the entire left side. If it is a kite shield, the attacker can kick the tail of it which will make the shield rotate and will uncover the thigh. (See Figure 7: Talhoffer Plate 134.)

9. Both attacker and defender are in the Outside Ward. The attacker tries Technique 1, trying to thrust behind his shield as he pivots it into the Inside Ward, beating the defender's shield aside. The defender drops his shield,

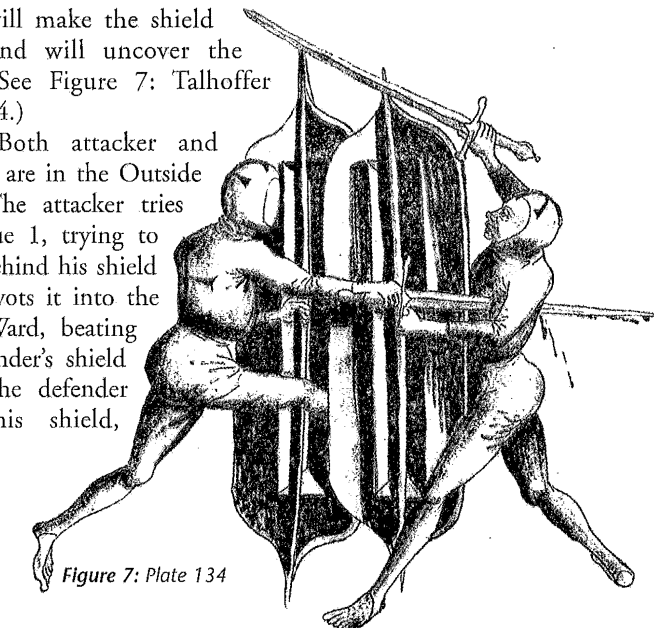


Figure 7: Plate 134

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passes forward into what George Silver would call a True Guardant Ward, grabs the attacker's shield with his left hand to prevent it being used in defense and does a *Fendente*. (See Figure 8: Talhoffer Plate 136.)

10. If the defender does Technique 8, the attacker can drop his shield, gripping the defender's right elbow, pushing him to the left while withdrawing his sword and making an *Imbroccata*. (See Figure 9: Talhoffer Plate 137.)

11. Leg sweeps are possible against most shields, which are smaller than Talhoffer's dueling

shields. Unlike sword-and-buckler, one cannot simply slip back and thrust to the face, as these shields are usually large enough to cover both forearm and face. One

alternative is to use a shield knock as used in sword and buckler (a technique where the shield is used to pin the opponent's shield, leaving him open to attack). The attacker is in the Underarm Ward (the shield is in Outside Ward and the sword arm is held under the shield arm with the point directed down and back). If he does not immediately attack, then he is uncovered and the opponent should attack. From the Outside Ward the defender steps forward and left with the left foot changing into Inside Ward and pinning the attacker's arm. One can then hit him as one will. If the attacker does a reverse leg cut, the defender can parry with the sword, point down, and then press his shield across his arms, completely pinning both sword and shield (a shield knock) and leaving him open to a range of attacks. Underarm is not recommended.

12. Both attacker and defender have their shields in Outside Ward. The attacker makes a reverse leg cut changing his shield to the Inside Ward. The defender parries with his sword in a Bastard Guardant Ward (one of George Silver's wards, the hilt is below head height and the point is vertically down or sloped a little back towards the defender) and does a shield knock with the edge of the shield to the head. Alternatively it may be possible to cut to the forearm as the attack is made.

13. If the attacker is in Tail Ward (the shield is in Outside Ward and the sword is held outstretched behind the attacker on his right side) and attacks with a *Mandritta* (right hand or forehand) leg cut, the defender parries with his sword in a Bastard Guardant Ward and does a shield knock with the edge of the shield to the head.

14. If the attacker is in Tail Ward and attacks with a *Mandritta* leg cut, the defender passes forward and parries with his sword in a Bastard Guardant Ward. The defender then hooks the attacker's shield to the side with his pommel and stabs him in the belly. This is particularly useful against an opponent in Medium Ward.

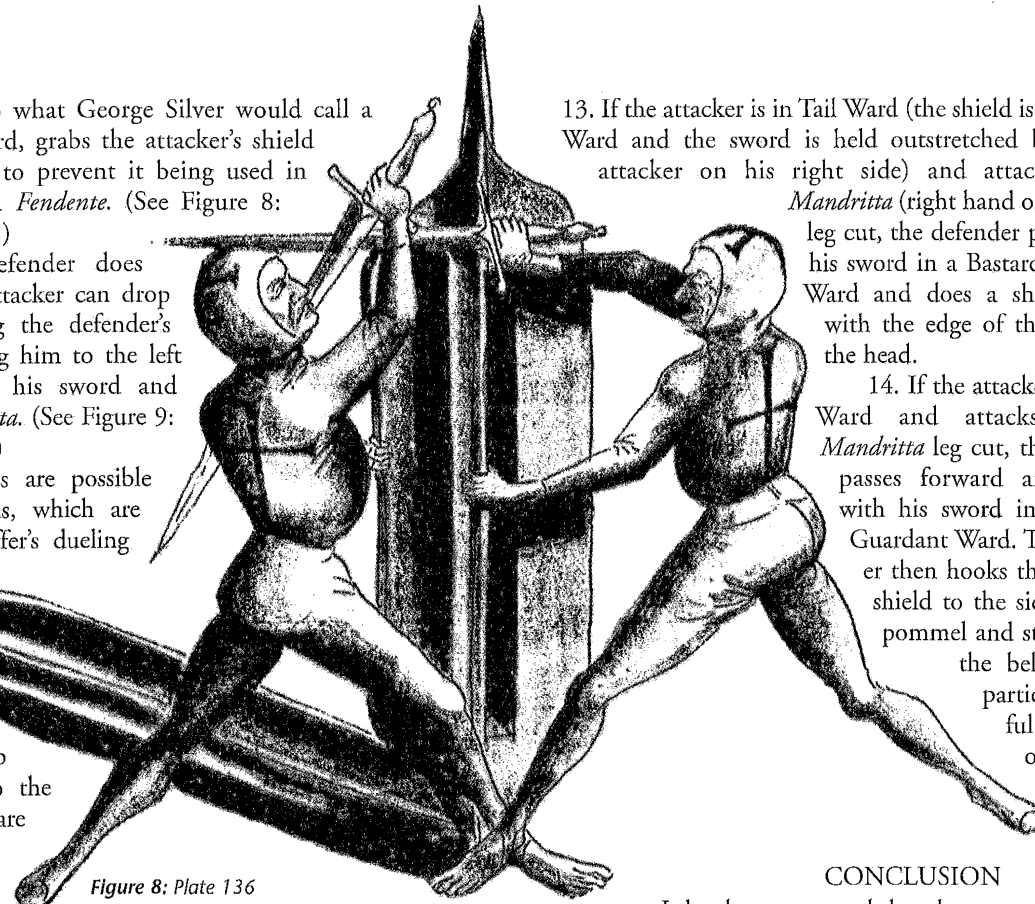


Figure 8: Plate 136

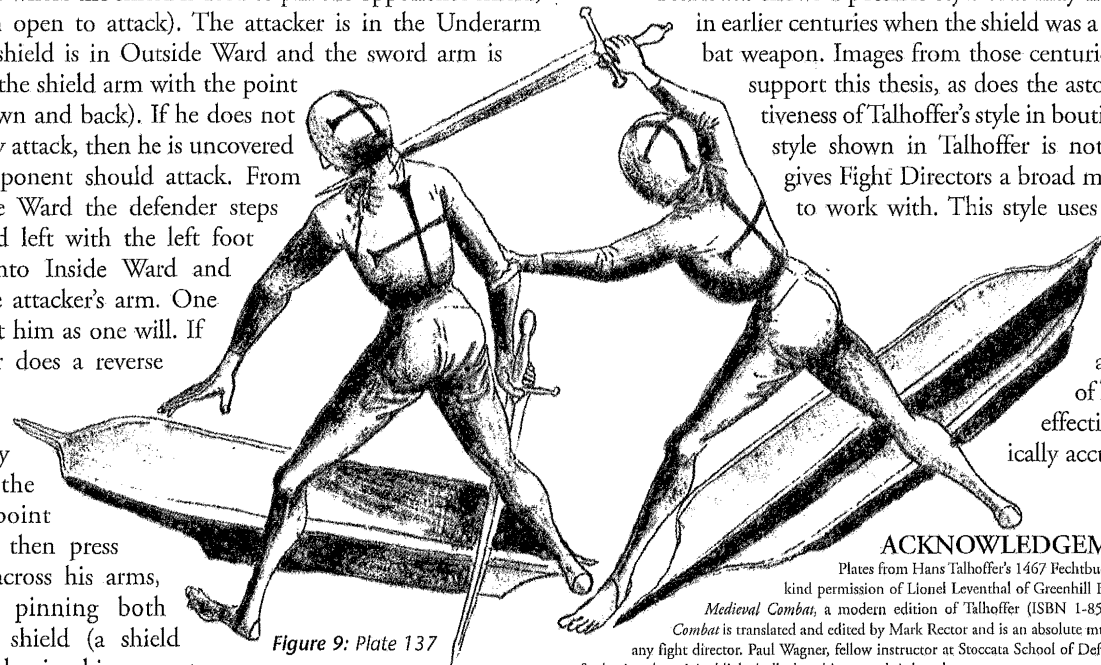


Figure 9: Plate 137

CONCLUSION

It has been supposed that there was no evidence for how large shields were used in single combat. Talhoffer's *Fechtbuch* shows a possible style that may have been used in earlier centuries when the shield was a genuine combat weapon. Images from those centuries (Figure 10) support this thesis, as does the astonishing effectiveness of Talhoffer's style in bouts. While the style shown in Talhoffer is not complete, it gives Fight Directors a broad movement style to work with. This style uses large actions, easily appreciated by an audience, with the added bonus of being martially effective and historically accurate.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Plates from Hans Talhoffer's 1467 *Fechtbuch* are reproduced with kind permission of Lionel Leventhal of Greenhill Books, the publisher of *Medieval Combat*, a modern edition of Talhoffer (ISBN 1-85367-418-4). *Medieval Combat* is translated and edited by Mark Rector and is an absolute must have on the shelf of any fight director. Paul Wagner, fellow instructor at Stoccata School of Defence, must be thanked for having the original light bulb that this research is based on.

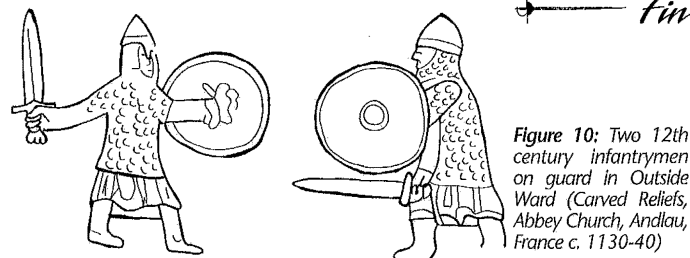


Figure 10: Two 12th century infantrymen on guard in Outside Ward (Carved Reliefs, Abbey Church, Andlau, France c. 1130-40)

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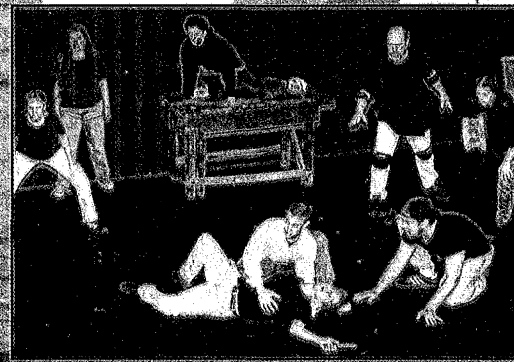


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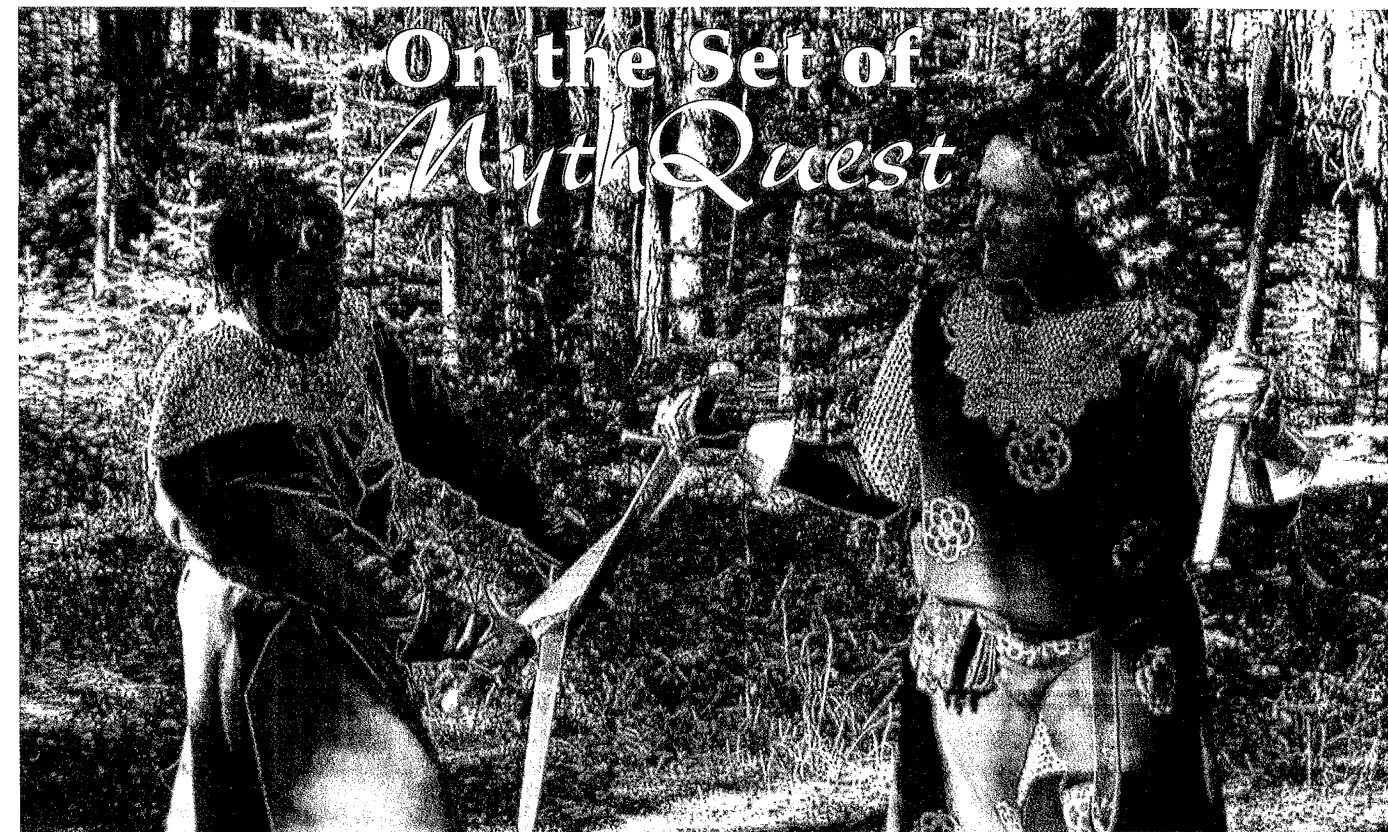
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Arthurian characters Maleagar (F. Braun McAsh, left) and Sir Lancelot (Anthony DeLongis) battle on the television show *MythQuest*. Photo provided by Anthony DeLongis

by Anthony DeLongis

Gillian Horvath is the executive story editor for a new series called *MythQuest*. The premise is the importance of myths to the modern world view and personal moral code. Horvath was associative creative consultant for *Highlander: the Series*, season two through five and played a large part in making the episode "Duende," with its close sword's point stylings of the Spanish Mysterious Circle training system so successful. Horvath polished the characters like a razor sharp blade. Sword Master Braun McAsh co-choreographed the sword encounters with Anthony De Longis, including the climactic and treacherous duel in the rain. It was a magical combination on *Highlander* and now this collective talent was assembled to give it another go on *MythQuest*.

Horvath has intimate knowledge of the difficulties of episodic television, especially trying to highlight a story with action when time is of the essence in filming. When she wrote an episode involving Arthurian Knights, and extensive sword action, she suggested casting actors with the training and experience to deliver the performance no matter what the obstacles were.

Fights are dialogue with action instead of words. An actor cannot give his best performance if he does not understand the language or know his lines. That is what training and rehearsals are for, to acquaint the actor with his new vocabulary of expression. Action can be one of the most powerful story tools in a performer's arsenal.

It is a lot easier to get rehearsal time in film than episodic television. The production manager will still resist paying for rehearsal but compare the tally. Pay three people to rehearse and the actors progress beyond mechanical moves into an effective visceral performance that grabs the audience imagination. If one does not, then a crew of 30-50 is kept standing around, on salary, while one struggles to get something mediocre on film. The

author trained Michelle Pfeiffer for six weeks for her role as Catwoman in *Batman Returns*. As a result, she did all her own whip work without any doubles. A strong actress had another powerful story-telling tool at her command, and she took full advantage of it. This made shooting her scenes far easier and her portrayal even more effective.

In television time is always the enemy. The actor must assume responsibility for his own training. The actor has the skills he shows up with on the day of the filming. He must be able to turn adversity into advantage. The set is not the place to hone one's craft. The more skills the actor has developed, the greater his range of choices to tell the character's story.

Fortunately, McAsh and De Longis have fifty-three years of experience between them, working under conditions from ideal to adversarial and were ready for the organized chaos and last minute changes that are the norm in television.

GETTING STARTED

The collaborative team of McAsh and De Longis agreed to pull out all the stops for the big fight. The unnecessary was eliminated. No special effects, no wires and no camera tricks would be used. Just an intelligent, well executed, character-driven fight.

As sword master for the episode, McAsh had many other responsibilities besides the fight, choreographing and coordinating most of the action for the episode. The collaborative team decided that the climactic fight must be finished and rehearsed before McAsh left for Calgary, knowing that locations and shooting schedule could change at a moment's notice. With the story set, the team felt confident it could adapt to whatever was thrown at it on the day of the shoot.

The fight evolved by incorporating the seed of combative truth into the work. McAsh initiated an attack and a series of

defensive options and a variety of offensive responses were offered. The team choose the ones that were the most dynamic and which flowed as a logical reaction to the immediate danger. McAsh responded to this jeopardy with an answer of his own. Then tempo and speed were played with to clarify and accent the story until a well-crafted phrase was approved.

Good choreography is a conversation between characters given greater voice through action. The actor must react and respond organically to his partner's energy. That is life, that is drama; that is combat. Staged combat is the attempt to create the illusion of reality while maintaining safety for the actors and crew as the character's story is told. The episode was called *Sir Caradoc at the Round Table*. This author played Sir Lancelot and McAsh played Maleager, a king of old Britain chafing under his oath of fealty to King Arthur. Since the story involved myth, historically accurate sword technique was not required, leaving the team to freely mix styles and weapons for the greatest effect. It was decided that Maleager start the encounter with an unfair advantage, a second weapon, say an axe. For Lancelot to accept this inequity, shows his confidence and echoes Maleager's comment when he captured Queen Guinevere, "I finally got you out in the open, away from your brave, undefeatable Lancelot." The playing field was leveled with Lancelot disarming the axe at the end of the second phrase and Maleager retrieving Caradoc's lost sword. This gave Phrase Three the double weapon complexity of sword and axe versus double swords.

From collective experience, it was decided to have a maximum of five phrases and that would be pushing it. The characters had logically accumulated four weapons, but for the climax it would be easier to divest the characters of the extra hardware.

More choreography is not really the answer since three phrases out of a possible five had already been composed.

McAsh had kept Horvath up to speed with the progress. A bit of dialogue to motivate the change of weapons was in order. McAsh suggested it should be a point of honor. Horvath pointed out that Lancelot was the hero and should be the first to discard his weapon. When Lancelot discarded his axe, Alex (played by Christopher Jocot) explained, "They're knights of the Round Table, fighting fair is more important than winning." Maleager followed Lancelot's example and tossed away his second sword. The warriors offered a salute to God and each other and squared off for the final battle.

The last two phrases featured the expertise of Maleager, reiterating his strengths by pressing Lancelot and nearly defeating him. Of course Lancelot triumphed in the final phrase. It was decided not to wound or kill, incorporating instead lots of near misses and plenty of speed and intensity. Blood and wounds call for costume doubles and changes in the middle of shooting as well as creating time consuming continuity nightmares for reversals and coverage. It was also decided not to squander time in that manner because the story did not need it.

Mary Gallien, the assistant, shot the rehearsals on both hi-8mm and digital formats for easy viewing and review. Masters were shot in profile and from above, as well as, over the shoulder coverage of each phrase favoring each performer. The digital footage was e-mailed to Horvath so she could see exactly the story being told. This resulted in a flow of ideas that improved the work and inspired additions to the script, the perfect collaboration. A compact disc (CD) was burned of the final fight and McAsh took it to show director Steve Scaini and the director of photography (DOP) Rick

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Wincenty (another *Highlander: the Series* alumnus). This gave them a jump on planning their coverage and helped insure that the fight would get to tell the story that had been prepared and rehearsed.

THE CLOSE-UP

The growing trend in film and television is to shoot everything with lots of close-ups. The prevailing *wisdom* thinks the audience will be drawn in by the contortions of the actor's face rather than the drama of the action. It is a way to hide the physical shortcomings of the leads but it distances and confuses the audience more than it pulls them into the story. To be involved, one must understand what is going on. Who is in danger? How do they



DeLongis and McAsh balance action and the close-up. Photo provided by Anthony DeLongis

avoid it? Is it through skill or luck or the over-confidence of the bad guy? These are all possible choices with character elements to be mined. But the audience must be able to follow the narrative story of the action in order to appreciate each individual's jeopardy and care about them as people in conflict.

Fred Astaire had the right idea. His contract stated that when dancing, he would always be shot head to toe, full figure. He wanted his whole body to tell his story. This mania for too close coverage robs both the performer and the audience of the actor's most powerful story tool, the body. The story is told from the ground up, each movement motivated by the feet and the hips, each action accented by the power of the entire physical unit. The intelligence and dexterity of the characters is lost when all one can see are straining faces. Often an important story beat such as a clever disarm or reversal goes unnoticed. It just looks like magic or bad continuity that the hero or villain is suddenly unarmed. The hero is lessened because one cannot appreciate what one does not see.

Accommodations were made for film, raising the low-line parries and cuts so that the action was always in the frame, even when the camera moves in close. Attacks to the legs were accented by dropping the whole body during delivery to insure the camera would follow. Story beats were choreographed into the action and accentuated by varying the tempo, and changing distances from long to medium to grappling range *corps-a-corps*. This encouraged the cameraman and editor to move fluidly into closer coverage. Facial expressions were revealed as a logical progression of the action. Tight two-shots allowed both performers to react to the dramatic moment at the same time.

ALL EQUINES ARE NOT BORN EQUAL

The script called for Lancelot to ride past a *quintain* with a lance. A *quintain* is a shield mounted on a revolving torso with a ball & chain in his other hand. Ride too slow and the ball smashes the rider in the back of the head, knocking him senseless. The horse had probably never seen a *quintain* or a lance (horses hate new things), so options were considered in case the horse did not want any part of Plan A.

The horse was a huge shire horse, used to pull wagons on *Lonesome Dove*. Since he was experienced wearing elaborate harness, it was thought this would be helpful with the decorative armor Valentine Armouries was providing. It should cut down on his panic flight mode. The wrangler set up some hay bales and the horse was trotted towards his intended task. After a few tries, he got the idea but he did not seem too promising as a jumper.

Two days later was the horse's riding test in front of McAsh, and one more effort was made with jumping training. The horse cleared one bale pretty well so two were stacked to get him to pick up his feet. He jumped once, then decided it was easier to crash through the bales. It was pretty much decided to abandon the jumping since it was not good for the horse to quit on a failed attempt. Patches of ice and snow were in the area where the wrangler set up the bales. On the last attempt the horse fought the turn, splaying his feet and yanking his head away at the last instant. It was a perfect lay down which recalled the old adage, "Unless it's on camera, a stunt is only an unfortunate accident." This horse would not be jumping comfortably by show time.

On the day the training sequence was shot, the horse handled the armor with ease, but hated the fluttering banners, was freaked by the nearby sword-wielding extras and danced away from the camera tracks laid practically under his feet. The *quintain* did not work at all but the property master had been warned to have a head of cabbage standing by. The cabbage was mounted on a pell (wooden post for sword training) and the author sliced it in two as he trotted by. Not as dramatic as one would have liked, but within the capabilities and comfort level of the horse.

When Lancelot returns from France and meets Guinevere, he is dressed in full armor with all the trimmings. An additional treat for the author was the chance to wear a full suit of well-made armor. Rob Valentine made all the armor for the show. It was made one piece at a time in the historical manner. His craftsmanship is excellent. One may visit his web site, www.valentinearmouries.com. The pieces felt great and articulated easily: quality work.



Two swords take on sword and axe on MythQuest. Photo provided by Anthony DeLongis

THE BIG DAY

Before the climactic fight could be shot, the following had to be accomplished, all on the same day because it was the last day of shooting.

1. The queen and her ladies wander through the idyllic forest picking spring flowers next to a babbling brook. Cameras had to be arranged to hide the ice and snow left from last weeks blizzard covering both banks, ice flows big enough for Simon Legree to chase Little Eva across.

2. Also shot was the capture of the queen by Maleager and his men. This included a two on one sword fight with Maleager and the queen's guard, followed by Maleager defeating Sir Gareth. The scene provided strong visual proof that Maleager was a force to be reckoned with. He also revealed his purpose. "Your ransom will release me from my oath of fealty to Arthur."

3. The critical scene at camp between Maleager and the Queen Guinevere was filmed: "Why do you want to bring war back to our land?" Maleager: "Where's glory without it?" Followed by a rather important dialogue scene between Alex and Guinevere before he slips away to bring help.

4. Lancelot arrived to challenge Maleager and his entire army: "I am the queen's champion. Who dares to face me?" Three soldiers swarmed Lancelot. He takes on two, while Alex protected his back and got his first taste of combat. This encounter gave the series star the chance to prove his mettle with the skills he had learned from the previous day's training scene.

5. In between shots, in their spare time the cast answered questions for the local paper and conducted television interviews.

6. The Second Unit borrowed one of the cameras and shot Lancelot galloping to the rescue, Arthur galloping to the rescue, Arthur's knights galloping to the rescue, all filmed on asphalt paths hidden but made extremely slippery by snow and ice.

7. Maleager held a sword to Guinevere's throat. "Drop your sword and she lives." Lancelot: "Release the queen and you live." They bargain back and forth and Maleager accepts his challenge. The final fight is almost there.

8. The first phrase of the fight is shot. Then while the cameras are facing this direction, the final phrase and disarm at the end of the fight were shot. Maleager yielded. Lancelot freed the queen. They collapsed into each other's arms. They kissed. The king arrived and caught them. It was the end of Camelot. As one might imagine, this sequence took awhile.

9. Now it is time to shoot the rest of the fight. The chosen location is next to the brook. It is at the bottom of a ravine with high walls and tall trees. The sun is setting. The light is failing. The scene is in trouble. This is not a total disaster. God is a great art director. Shafts of golden light blasted through the trees. Stunningly beautiful but only for about another hour and change, if luck holds. Time is needed to finish the fight, clear video village and all the other equipment and reposition cameras to shoot the reversals to cover the action. After sunset the cameraman loses one f-stop of light every five minutes. Steve Scaini, Rick Wincenty and producer David McAsh huddle. Talk of cutting the fight circulated.

Thanks to years of experience and an understanding of how camera angles tell the story, McAsh and De Longis come forward with an idea of using the camera as another character in the scene with the combatants. "We can give you your coverage and you won't have to cut the fight. Leave the cameras

where they are. We'll provide the reverse angles. Trust us." Director Scaini and DOP Wincenty assigned each of their three camera operators to a different task. One would follow each actor in a medium shot, racking in for close-ups where appropriate. The third camera would cover the action as a full figure master. The fight started from the top, rehearsing each phrase once for cameras, then shooting it twice, covering the fight one section at a time. The intensity always accelerated at the end of each phrase, climaxing in a stalking action as the characters broke apart to regroup and search for a new opening.

Next phrase: Rehearse and Shoot.

Here is how it worked. On "Action," the final blow of the previous attack was repeated before the fighters broke apart. Then the characters would stalk each other, slowly pivoting 180 degrees before exploding into action once again. The acting beat motivated the change. The story beats built, such as when Maleager pinned Lancelot against a tree while trying to pressure both blades into his face, that allowed the cameras to push in for a tight two shot or close-up. When Lancelot's counter-attack exploded him away from the tree, the editor had a natural story break to motivate his change of shot.

As Maleger and Lancelot alternated positions, camera one and two would change who they were covering, or more precisely, the actors change and the camera would cover in the same over-the-shoulder relationship with a new character. Camera number three recorded the action in profile as a full figure master to cut back to.

All five phrases were filmed, with full coverage in 1:38 minutes. The actors were rewarded for their efforts. Shafts of light slanted through the trees to form long shadows that battled in support of the

struggling figures. Sunlight glinted off the furiously slashing blades at just the right moment. It could not have been planned nearly so well. Even the setting sun framed itself perfectly between the struggling figures when Maleager pinned Lancelot to the tree. When one is prepared, the rewards will happen. That is why one rehearses, that is why one trains. When one is ready for anything, magic happens.

MythQuest will air in the US beginning in April on PBS.

Fin



The sun sets on the final moments between Sir Lancelot (Anthony DeLongis, left) and Maleager (F. Braun McAsh) on MythQuest. Photo provided by Anthony DeLongis

MythQuest: From the Fight Director's Point of View

by F. Braun McAsh

When Gillian Horvath, the executive story editor for the television series *MythQuest*, approached this author about being Fight Director on an Arthurian episode, after getting over the initial excitement of having work, he realized that this might be an interesting opportunity to create choreography that would be a metaphor for the conflicting demands of emotional needs and personal honor, of frustrated ambition, and the moral imperative to act in a chivalrous manner.

The episode, *Sir Galahad and the Round Table*, incorporated elements of several Arthurian legends. This author was to play King Maleager, a villain of sorts, and his good friend and fellow Fight Director Anthony DeLongis would play Sir Lancelot. This was good news on several fronts. First, even though the two of them had worked twice before on *Highlander: The Series*, they had never acted or fought opposite each other and were very much looking forward to the opportunity of using virtually any move or combination with the surety that it could be done with both speed and control. Second, since it was being presented as a myth, the Fight Director did not feel constrained to stay within the boundaries of historical authenticity.

Another advantage of working with DeLongis is that, for once, the Fight Director did not have to do everything by himself. It may not be faster, but it was a lot more fun to get the weapons and just play, the one off the other. They would feed each other blows, try out different defense responses, seek openings, move

from long to mid to close range. After about a week's work the five phrases of the fight were up to reasonable speed. Each phrase of the fight was then recorded on both Hi8 video and digital formats in wide shot, both sides, over-shoulder, point-of-view and one phrase from an overhead. The digital was loaded into the computer and burned onto a CD disk and sent to the director, Stefan Scaini, to give him a heads-up on getting together his shot list. The Director of Photography was Dick Wincenty who had been the DOP on the *Highlander* series for about two years.

When the Fight Director arrived in Calgary for his prep week, the script, with only a six-day shooting schedule, called for six sword fights, one of which is a pitched battle between Maleager's men and the queen's guard. Since the local stuntmen were mostly cowboy types who were more comfortable with Colts than cleavers, there simply was not sufficient rehearsal time to stage the fights. The Fight Director suggested that the scene be rewritten as an ambush since the character of Maleager simply wanted to capture Guinevere with minimal fuss and blood-letting.

Things had to be resolved. First, a subsequent scene had the queen treating the wounded, so some injuries had to occur, otherwise two scenes would have to be rewritten. Second, since Maleager later faces Lancelot in single combat, a man acknowledged as the greatest of the Round Table Knights, there was a need to establish that Maleager might possibly be able to take him. It was suggested that Maleager bushwhack the queen's party with a company of cross-bowmen, but that some of her knights move

to protect her when Malleger approached to take her away. This is what was shot and it seemed to say much more dramatically than a big, under-rehearsed brawl for the sake of more action.

Another point in the script where the fight Director got involved with rewriting dialogue was the big fight at the end when Lancelot dismisses Malleger, at which point he capitulates. Since the bulk of the fight was to be done with two weapons apiece, and it was much cleaner to finish it with single bastard swords, there had to be a justification for losing the second weapon without the story of the fight becoming a series of increasingly contrived disarms. It was suggested that since Lancelot and Malleger both knew each other and were fellow knights, they would mutually agree to finish their fight on an equal and honorable footing. This led to the line for the series lead, Christopher Jacot (whose character of Alex has, for this episode, taken over the body of Caradoc) explaining to his sister, "They're Knights of the Round Table; fighting fair is more important than winning. Fights are always more interesting when the major decisions are driven by character choices rather than visual concerns. This is the main difference between acting and animation."

Other rewrites were constantly appearing. By the last day of shooting, the big fight with Lancelot had gone from an interior (Great Hall) to an exterior (Great Outdoors) and there was a new fight added. Ginevere was to have a flirtatious fight with Lancelot in a training yard scene where he is instructing Caradoc.

The entire show was choreographed and the fight Director was working with actors and stunt players daily. With the use of the weapons and armor from Valentine Aumont, the fight Director was able to use the same actors who had some level of training and experience in several different sequences. Through the miracle of costume changes, helmets with visors and brasas with aventails, the worthy actor/combatants were able to fight on both sides.

The costumes were another challenge. It is difficult to choreograph for the possible restraints of wardrobe when one does not know what the wardrobe is going to be. The costumes came from England and had to be held to undergo sufficient inspection for decontamination (due to the anthrax quarantine) before being delivered to the set. Upon arrival at the set, one of Malleger's costumes was multiple layers of velvets and furs that weighed thirty pounds. It actually broke the hook off its metal hanger. Ginevere's garb to be worn in her fight had ruffled hanging sleeves and a trailing train and Lancelot's surcoat was split both front, back and sides, allowing each section to snap flag like in the breeze, crangling his weapons.

Finally, it came to filming the Lancelot/Malleger fight which had been pushed back to day seven due to weather. The fight Director had assured the director that the fight could be shot in three hours maximum. It is disappointing to be asked to cut down the fight on the day of the shoot because of all the unnecessary footage of previous scenes. It is a shame to see time wasted that could have been spent making other actions better and safer, after the fight has been choreographed within the director's stated time frame.

The first phrase for the fight was filmed and then, while the cameras were on the correct axis, the director went ahead and shot the scene whole, after the fight between Malleger and Lancelot, Lancelot and Ginevere succumb to the passion of the moment and are caught by the sudden arrival of Arthur. Finally, they returned to the fight, and the scene was beautifully shot with the setting sun casting golden shafts of light through the

minis and the branches but with only two hours of daylight left to finish the shoot.

No reverse shots could be done since there was not time to clear out the mess and personnel behind the camera and turn the camera around. Three cameras were set up: the center one shooting a wide angle, the other two at forty five degrees to its fishing for face shots and points of view (POVs). To facilitate this, the fight team made alterations in the blocking as they fought and at the beginning and end of each phrase so they could find their respective lenses.

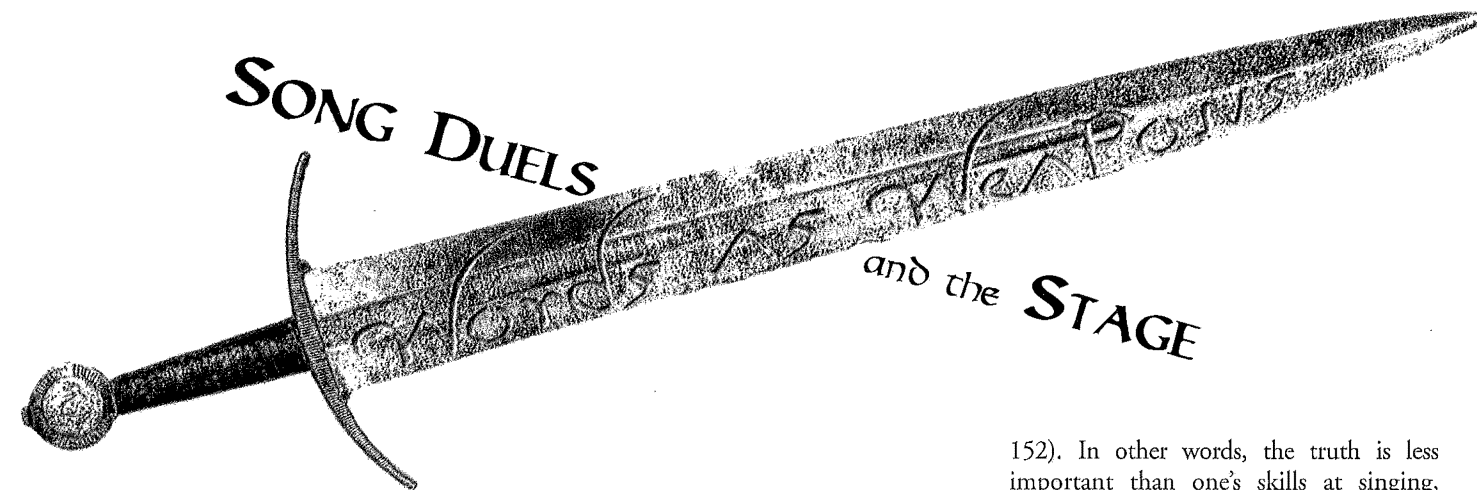
Talk began circulating about cutting a phrase of the fight. The director and DOP were tracing the sun millimeter by millimeter with the same intensity as a submarine crew counting off the decreasing sonar pings of an incoming destroyer. All five phrases with dialogue were shot. All the normal coverage was achieved by tweaking the movements within the fight to create the visual equivalent of reverse shots without moving the cameras. Total shooting time, one hour thirty eight minutes.

Naturally, the final cut does not contain the entire fight. About twenty percent is missing, including a rather spectacular series of pivoting windmill blows with sword and axe. In their place, the scene was inter-cut with approaching horses, cloumps of pounding hooves, blurring legs, to signal the arrival of Arthur.

For those readers embarking on fledgling careers as fight directors, here are some points to keep in mind. First, although in retrospect one felt certain pride that a reasonably large fight had been filmed thoroughly and safely in a short period of time, it was not done gladly. It is more like taking pride in having won the thousand yard dash after the coach decided to make the competitor run it with a refrigerator strapped to his back. It is not a condition one would have chosen for himself. Getting an early start on the fight by doing a week of rehearsals on one's own time, working unpaid weekends during the shoot, and generally making oneself capable of performing it at top speed for a master shot if necessary, would never have been possible under time constraints without cutting the fight substantially.

Moreover, the necessary footage for the editor to put the entire fight together would never have been accomplished. Nor would the necessary attention to fellow actors and stunt players been given. In seven days, six fights were rehearsed and shot, including two two-on-ones, plus a training scene, all without a single injury of any kind. In other words, the way it is supposed to be. It is hard enough to choreograph for the we want it good but we need it by Tuesday exigencies of episodic television (or features for that matter) with little to non-existent rehearsal time. But when one is in it himself it is imperative that he consolidate his own scenes as soon as possible so that he might fulfill his professional obligations to the rest of the cast. One must also insure that the director understands, in no uncertain terms, the time necessary to rehearse a given piece of action so as not to over choreograph for both the rehearsal and shooting schedule. And that he vet and approve the final choreography on the understanding that he cannot change it on the day of shooting. Of course, one has a fall back plan and options ready for when he does. On the wish list would be convincing the director that sword fights should be shot mostly on wide frame full body shots or at least cowboy shots when the lower frame cuts off at the knee. On the assumption that if actor/combatants are going to all the trouble of rehearsing, that the audience might enjoy actually seeing the final result.

— Fin



by Kevin J. Wetmore, Jr.

Now shall I split off words—little, sharp words

Like the wooden splinters which I hack off with my ax...

Song from an Inuit song duel

Elevating the duel to a higher plane, the weapons used are words.

E. Adamson Hoebel,
describing an Inuit song duel

Every fight director will tell of the importance of the vocal quality of a fight—the sounds and words used in stage combat serve to increase verisimilitude, dramatic tension, and energy. The sounds the actors make, the manner in which words are voiced speak volumes about the situation, the characters and the fight itself. In some cultures, however, the sounds and words alone are the fight. Many cultures have the tradition of a song duel—a duel fought without weapons, or rather, with words as weapons—fought with all the physical ferocity of a rapier duel.

Perhaps the best known example of verbal dueling is the Inuit song duel, practiced in Greenland and other areas of the Arctic Circle. The duels are a form of social control, a "mechanism to defuse potential violence between individuals" (Oswalt 103). In small communities such as among the Inuit, physical violence is discouraged because all members of the community are needed for survival. Thus, a form of communal justice and personal revenge developed using public ridicule instead of swords or fists.

Two kinds of song duel exist according to Wendell Oswalt: a single-event duel when a transgression in the community has occurred, and a life-long series of duels between two sworn adversaries. In the single event duel, an individual with knowledge of another individual's failings or transgressions—theft, lying, adultery, unpaid debts,—would sing about said failing(s) at a public gathering. The subject of the song might then challenge his accuser to a song duel. The two combatants would compose songs and sing them in front of an audience. The challenger would sing first, and then the challenged. When one of the combatants faltered, or when the audience felt that one of the combatants had superior songs, the contest would end, and the loser had no further recourse, nor could he express ill will towards the winner. As with duels with weapons, song duels are matters of honor, have very strict rules, and serve as a means of dispensing justice within a small community.

In some cases, reports Hoebel, the song duels could also be performed with limited physical exchanges as well. While one combatant sang, the other could respond with *buffeting* (straight-armed blows on the side of the head) or *butting* (using the forehead to butt the opponent on the forehead or chest) (Hoebel 92). For the most part, however, Inuit law calls for the combatants not to touch each other at all, but simply sing insults about one another until one of the two contestants ran out of material.

The standard duel involved challenger and challenged facing one another in the open in front of an audience. In the words of Oswalt, "Real offenses were exaggerated, the sins of the ancestors recounted, and accusations made about uncommitted crimes" (Oswalt

152). In other words, the truth is less important than one's skills at singing, mocking and insulting one's opponent, and appealing an audience, just as in a rapier and dagger duel, the rightness of one's cause is less important than skill with a blade.

Although not as well-known as the Inuit song duels, Turkish song duels are similar in their approach and structure, although different in their participants and purposes. *Ashiks*, Turkish minstrels, fight duels with other *Ashiks* as entertainment in Northern Turkey, making them more competitions than true duels. Still, they are, as Yildiray Erdener notes, episodes of "non-physical aggression" in which two minstrels take turns insulting each other through improvisational song in front of an audience, usually in a coffeehouse (Erdener 153). Erdener observes that the audience is of particular importance, as they will decide who won the duel, and thus the *Ashiks* will frequently alternate within their rhymes compliments for the audience with mocking insults of their opponents (Erdener 157). Unlike those of the Inuit, the song duels of *Ashiks* are not part of a justice system, but like Medieval jousting or tournaments, the best song-duelers achieve fame and fortune.

Numerous cultures within Africa have dance, song, or word duels as means of solving conflict. For example, among the Tiv of west Africa, two men who have a dispute will argue through drumming, song and dance. Eventually the drumming becomes part of a pre-fight ritual in which the combatants drum their dispute, and then have an actual fight with fists or clubs or other weapons. Whoever wins the fight is then declared the winner of the dispute, but the declaration of a winner can occur as early as the song or drumming stage (Bohannan 265).

In *Word Play*, Peter Farb studies several cultures in which song duels or speaking duels are held. In most cases, the status of a

combatant is "greatly diminished" if one answers a verbal taunt with a physical attack (Farb 109). In other words, one can only win a verbal duel through words. As with Turkish song duels, the role of the audience is very important in verbal dueling, as the audience determines the winner in many cases. An example of this verbal dueling from American culture would be the African-American practice of *playing the dozens*, also called *snaps*, the most exemplary form being "y'mamma" jokes. In playing the dozens, two people insult each other in front of a group of mutual acquaintance, and, as with all dueling, rules and formalities must be observed. The first person will issue an insult challenge, the challenged will then respond with a retort in kind. Sometimes specific limited subject matter will be stated (mamas, houses, sisters, friends), sometimes no subject is off limits. As with most other verbal duels, the winner is declared by mutual agreement of the audience.

In thinking about words as weapons and song-dueling and their potential applications for the stage, two scripts can be used in the combat classroom to teach students about stage fighting: *The Clink* by Stephen Jeffreys and *Pecong* by Steve Carter. *The Clink* is set in Elizabethan England, telling the story of a wandering fool and of a variety of political conspiracies and plots that encircle the throne of Elizabeth. In Scene Eleven, one of the many sub-plots comes to a head as Beatrice, a wealthy young noblewoman, not wanting to marry Gridling, the young officer her father has chosen, disguises herself as a tavern girl and challenges Gridling to a duel. Her servant Zanda and Lucius Bodkin, the fool who has stumbled upon the field of honor at dawn, serve as seconds. Master Drysdale, an ancient scholar, oversees the proceedings of the duel.

As with any duel, the formal structure is observed, the mat-

ter presented, the combatants encouraged to reconsider, and finally fall to with the weapon of their choice: insults. When Drysdale tells them to begin the two fighters circle each other and exchange insults, responding with a physical reaction:

BEATRICE: Sheep-shagger!

GRIDLING: Curate's armpit!

BEATRICE: Nasal cavity!

GRIDLING: Undergarment!

BEATRICE: Toad-sucker!!

GRIDLING: Margery-prater!!

ZANDA: Foul, this is canting talk.

Drysdale rules that canting is acceptable in the fight, and such talk is a very palpable hit. They continue insulting until the fight turns physical (Beatrice headbutts Gridling in the stomach), and her response to his final insult is to shoot him, thus winning the duel.

Steve Carter's *Pecong* is a Caribbean adaptation of the Medea story, set during Carnival. In the second act, Jason Allcock must fight *Pecong* with Cedric in order to win the hand of Sweet Bella. Carter's stage directions state:

The Pecong is a contest in which each man insults the other.

When one man does, the other will react as if he's been struck by a blow. With each verbal blow, the crowd will react, as if at a prize fight, and roar its approval (Carter 59).

Alternating rhymed verses of six to twelve lines each, while other characters shout encouragement and make observations, Jason and Cedric attack each other's manhood, ancestry, health, sexual orientation and appearance. Many verses refer to the speaker having sex with his opponent's mother. They fight until Cedric falters and Jason is proclaimed winner.

As in *The Clink*, *Pecong* provides a wonderful pedagogical tool which can be very useful in the classroom. Both scenes remove all weapons, even fists and legs, and require the performers to react physically as well as verbally to insults. The lessons learned by a group of students working on these two scenes are many.

First, both scenes help acting students understand the structure of dueling and get a feel for the development of characters in relation to fighting. *The Clink* is particularly useful as it has two strong female characters fighting, allowing for women to play roles written for women, with strong combat skills.

Second, the exercise helps actors to better understand how to create reactions in combat. By removing weapons, the fight is safer and allows the actors to focus on creating physical reactions to unfelt blows. One learns very quickly to vary the reactions or the fight is flat and on one-note, something easy to forget with a sword in the hand. The actors must think about the specificity of a reaction, sometimes allowing the words to dictate where and how one receives the blow. In one *Pecong* exercise, a student treated any insult to his physical appearance as a blow to the face, while an insult to his manhood resulted in a response as if kicked in the groin. The specificity of his responses both made sense of the fight (told the story) and allowed for varied reactions.

Third, the verbal dueling allows the actors to connect the physical to the vocal. They learn how and when to breathe. They learn how a fight sounds and how those sounds change the longer a duel goes on. The physical is also directly connected to the vocal as one must learn to physically respond to a verbal attack, and the attacker learns to direct his or her energy towards an opponent. Levels also come into consideration, as one must progress logically and naturally in the fight. Whereas most students take time to get used to weapons, most are quite comfortable yelling at and reacting to one another in one of these scenes.

Lastly, as each fight scene involves two contestants and a band of observers (something which does not usually happen in a fight class where people tend to work in pairs), the students begin to understand the fight as a construct of everyone on stage. Those who make observations and respond to the blows add energy, help to tell the story, and are actively involved in the fight itself. Again, because weapons are not present, the other (non-combatant) actors feel safer exploring their role in the duel. The end result is a fight scene in which all the characters on stage are active, present, and contributing to the energy and the story.

By using words as weapons and responding physically to verbal attacks, student actors become better actor combatants, better actors, and are still participating in a form of dueling found in many cultures. They learn that sticks and stones may break one's bones, but words may be used on stage as effectively as a sword.

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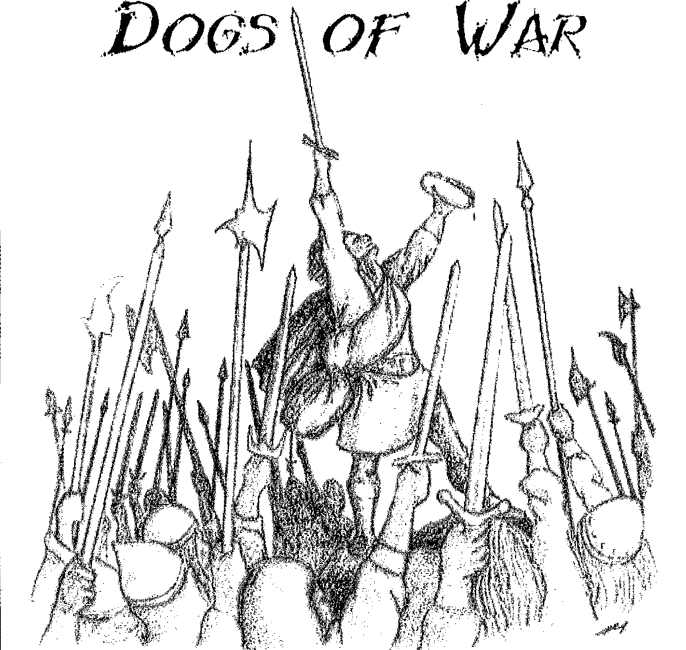
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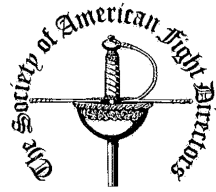
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Making a Swashbuckler Movie

by Robert Goodwin



In a two-on-one fight, Master Robert (Robert Goodwin, left) disarms one of two bandits (Eric Oran) in *The King's Guard*. Photo by Terence Duffy, used with permission.

Editor's Note: This is the first of two articles on the filming of *The King's Guard* starring Ron Perlman, Eric Roberts, Leslie-Anne Down, Ashley Jones and others. This is a fun film for the entire family. The sword master is SAFD trained Robert Goodwin who also co-starred as Master Robert. The follow up article will be on swords, aluminum blades, choreography, fights, camera angles, what was learned and how it affected teaching technique, adjusting the action and on the spot changes.

The King's Guard was the first sword movie shot in the U.S. since *Robin Hood: Men in Tights*. Most of the movies one sees with swords in them are filmed abroad. The producers can make more money by not paying union wages or residuals, except to principal actors. Thus all of the run-away productions with sword work in them are shot in other parts of the world.

To work on a film project from the beginning is a labor of love. One will never work harder for less, be frustrated more, and have one's heart broken as much as watching a project go through its growing pains. The other edge to this sword is the pride of having helped complete the impossible. The miracle was making a period film, for under one million dollars, after its conception only one year earlier. Most projects in Hollywood take anywhere from two to ten years. Part of this minor miracle was being able to work with friends and students. This gave the project an energy that would be difficult to duplicate. Usually films are made by a group of strangers acting together.

THE IDEA

Jonathan Tydor got the idea for the screenplay after watching sword classes being taught at the Action Actors Academy at the Westside Fencing Studio in Culver City. From a class of twelve, Tydor chose to focus on four academy members. He began writing the script with this author as Master Robert, Malcolm Earl Robinson as Donald, Casie Fox as Katie, and Abba Elfman as Adam. Through discussion it was decided to set the action in the middle of the seventeenth century because it was a period when rapier and dagger were in transition. Assuming the script was in the works, the academy began gearing up for the possibility of working on such a vital and challenging project.

Tydor's novel idea was that if the Academy members were willing to put up the fights while he raised money and wrote the script he would be able to offer any prospective producers considerable savings in time and money. Prospective backers did not always know what the period was until Tydor showed them photographs of the four academy members giving a demonstration in costume.

REHEARSALS AND TRAINING

Training began with actor/combatants for the various roles and fights. Naturally one wants to work with students and others that one has worked with before, because their abilities and work ethics are known. Working on a legitimate project with people one has been teaching and can trust is a rare experience in Hollywood, unless one belongs to one of the stunt organizations that only uses their own people. Ten academy members were cast, four co-stars and six action actors. Kit Devlin was one of those six action actors and was trained by the Society of American Fight Directors. Devlin was given a line and became eligible for the Screen Actors Guild (SAG).

Cast as the villain Augustus Talbert, Eric Roberts helped give the film credibility needed for SAG. Photo by Terrence Duffy, used with permission.



MONEY AND CASTING A LOW BUDGET PERIOD FILM

Getting start-up money for a new project is difficult. Even though Tydor had established himself as a writer with the feature *I Come in Peace*, he still had trouble finding the start-up money. What most people do not realize is that without money one cannot get a draw (name actor) for a project and without a draw one cannot get the money. Money will also dictate what co-stars are available. For that reason, and others, the project became SAG. This created some friction in the beginning, not enough money, dealing with agents, and so on. After a few meetings, the director realized that to produce a quality film, SAG sanctioning would be necessary to help attract the appropriate draw. The usual money problems were faced. Due to Tydor's diligence, he located

Being SAFD trained, the sword master contacted other SAFD members in the area such as Chris Villa, Payson Burt and Eric Oram. The quality of training from the SAFD is such that one can easily adjust one's skills for film fighting, if needed. The film was shot in the summer of 1999, even though most SAFD members were out of town working, a few were used. One was Eric Oram in the duel of Master Robert against the two bandits.

The academy was enthusiastic and classes began research in the Italian systems of rapier, rapier and dagger, and Spanish fencing as applied to the *main gauche*. The Spanish techniques were for a sequence that was unfortunately cut the day the scene was supposed to be shot. It was a time of growth for the sword master as well as all others involved. The Italian rapier and dagger had been chosen because of their versatility. This gave the elite guardsmen movements that were visually interesting and could be used in broad or subtle movements. This seemed the natural choice for the king's private guards.



As Lord Morton, Ron Perlman brought his talents as a scoundrel to the project. Photo by Terrence Duffy, used with permission.

Michael Marcopoulos and Eileen Craft to assume the producers' responsibilities. Before the money was available, the search for the cast, including stunt fighters, had begun.

For those that do not know, working on a movie is demanding enough but being involved in a project from its conception is filled with ups and downs, financially and emotionally. The

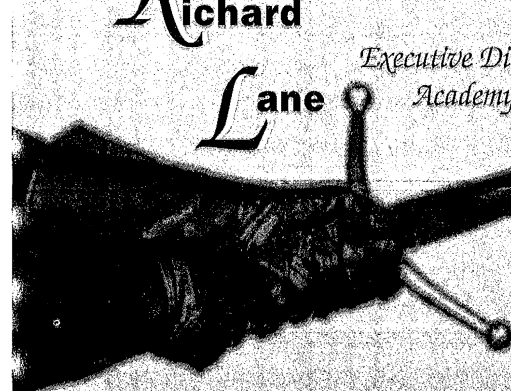
SWASHBUCKLING

A Step-by-Step Guide to the Art of Stage Combat and Theatrical Swordplay

by
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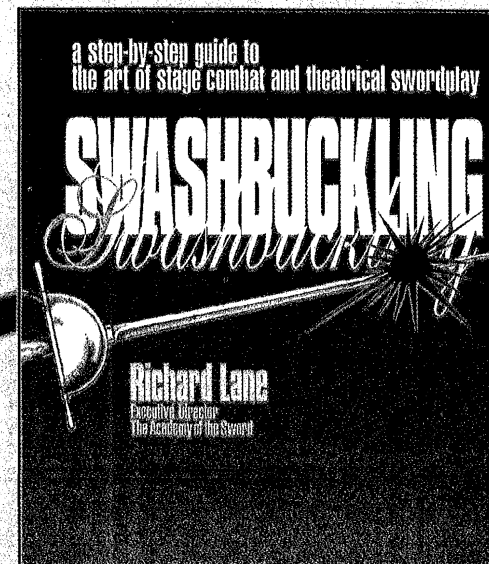
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Swashbuckling is written with wit and patience by SAFD Fight Director/Certified Teacher Richard Lane, and although he is the

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

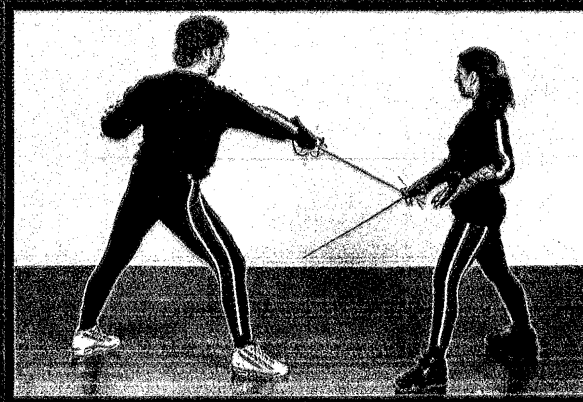
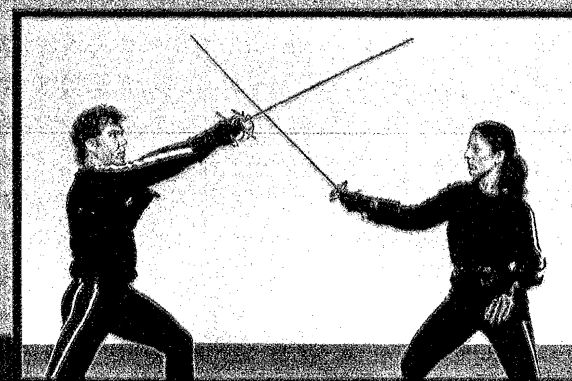
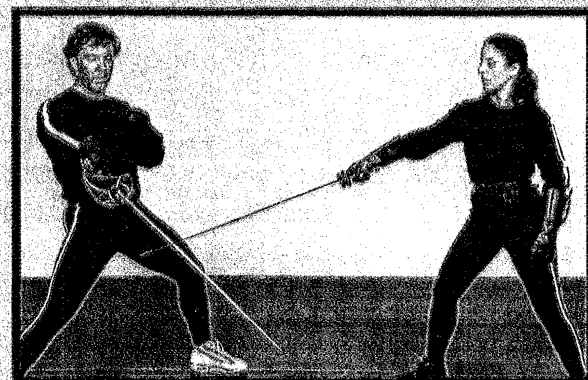
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The villainous Talbert (Eric Roberts) kills Morton (Ron Perlman) in *The King's Guard*. Photo by Terrence Duffy; used with permission.

deal is on, then canceled, then on, then no money. Then a lead signs, then cancels due to a scheduling conflict, and the money pulls out. Then the lead resigns and the money comes back. The business side of film making is so fragile that artists do not want to deal with it. That is why artists have agents, then all the artist has to do is focus on his/her art.

Many times the money fell through and the production was back to ground zero but actors kept on training and rehearsing the fight scenes. Only when Eric Roberts signed on did enough money come in for SAG. The film had its draw. He is a very recognizable villain. Then rumors began about Ron Perlman joining the project. That excited the company even more because his work in the French film, *City of Lost Children* and other projects were known. Now it felt as if the film was actually going to be made.

THE FIRST REAL TEST OF THE ACTION ACTOR'S ACADEMY

Academy members auditioned for acting roles, as well as fight roles. Throughout the process some excellent actors and fighters declined working towards the project because of the lack of SAG sanctioning and the time commitment, even though it was explained to them that they would eventually have SAG contracts. At this point class became more about choreography for the scenes in the movie then learning technique. A lot of personal time was contributed by academy members and many others in the collaboration of making this film. The academy prepared for the day-to-day grind of a three-week shoot on location.

This would be a test because most of the academy members had never been in film or on television. The sword master taught classes on camera technique, adjusting for a one-camera shot: acting the fight, safety, self-defense on the set, working inside the normal/safer fencing measure, adjusting for a hand-held camera, using film language, cueing one's partner to adjust for something/someone they cannot see,



The band of heroes (from left: Casle Fox, David Beecroft, Robert Goodwin & Earl Robinson) defends an opening from the bandits. Photo by Terrence Duffy; used with permission.

fighting in the rain and mud, weapons safety on exiting a *corps-a-corps*, fighting in a zone, controlling intensity, using the cut in major battles, costuming restrictions and asking everyone to perform a daily aerobic exercise. When it came time to start filming, the academy was prepared and eager to begin. Different levels of ability existed, yet everyone contributed as much as they could, with safety always the priority.

BREAKING DOWN THE ACTION SCENES IN THE SCRIPT

The job as a sword master is two-fold: setting the tone of the fights while remaining true to the period and fulfilling the director's intent. If working with a relatively inexperienced director, one may have to educate as one goes along. After viewing some of the prepared fight scenes, the director expressed his interest in the rough and tumble fighting of the original color *Three Musketeers* movie while the sword master wanted fights people had never seen before. The sword master wanted the Italian principles of a parry becoming a thrust and a thrust becoming a parry and the linear concepts stressed by Capo Ferro. He wanted to show the techniques used in the middle of the seventeenth century in his duel with the two bandits, Eric Oram and Jon Napier, two excellent swordsmen.

The Sarcinian soldiers and bandits' fight was cast out of the production office in San Diego and choreographed by George Ye. To maintain the integrity of the period Ye and the sword master communicated on weapons as well as fighting style. The fencing style of the elite king's guard did not need to be duplicated as the Sarcinians were soldiers, therefore, they fought like soldiers.

SOME NOTES ON ACTING FOR THE CAMERA

Acting for the camera is different from acting on stage. Both are based on the same principles and stage experience is the best foundation one can have, but the demands of a highly charged, emotional day and the shooting out of sequence in film life offers different challenges than one experiences on stage. The actor may be in a battle scene where he is fighting for his life in the morning and be



Master Robert (Robert Goodwin) takes on a bandit in *The King's Guard*. Photo by Terrence Duffy; used with permission.

expected to be laughing and enjoying himself at a ball in the afternoon. Then a week later they need a pickup shot from the middle of the battle scene. It is a close up and the actor has to be at the same emotional level he was in the middle of the scene when it was originally shot and still remember the fight choreography. Otherwise they cannot match the shot in the editing bay and the close-up ends up on the cutting room floor. The pick-up shot needed will invariably be the most physically demanding phrase of the fight and director and crew will want to film it at the end of a fourteen-hour day. Luckily this did not occur during the filming of *The King's Guard*.

When an actor is called to the set as a stunt fighter he needs to be in character, focused, physically ready to fight, and bring a safe, emotional level to the scene that is appropriate for the shot. The actor's job is not to outfight, or look better than the principle actor, or in any way make the principle actor look bad or inexperienced, unless directed to do so. One's job is usually to get killed, wounded, knocked-out or run away and allow the principle actor to be the hero. If an actor does not follow directions, he will be asked to leave the set and will be replaced in a phone call by one of the hundreds of stunt fighters available in Hollywood. Plus one cannot ever expect to be called back by that director, producer, casting director or production company. Hollywood has a long memory.

PACING YOURSELF

It is too demanding to be the sword master of a film with a lot of fights/duels and also have a high visibility role. When one is not speaking in front of the camera, one's character will be in the background during most of the movie. Plus, when the actor is not in front of the camera he may be training someone, choreo-

graphing a new fight scene, or changing an existing one. In the evenings, after a typical ten to twelve-hour day (if shooting in daylight), the actor goes to his room and prepares for the next day's action and his lines. The next morning he is back on the set and the rehearsal time he has with his scene partner, again, will be minimal, if any.

Pacing oneself on the set should definitely include eating correctly throughout the day to maintain proper blood sugar level. Sugar should not be eaten to get up for a scene.

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

If the actor is cast in a feature film, television movie of the week, or a commercial with sword work in it, he should consider himself very lucky and enjoy it. It will be hard work but the results can be rewarding. The actor should learn self-defense on the set, find the camera and find the light. If the actor cannot see the camera lens, the camera cannot see the actor, and if one is in the shadows, one cannot be seen. The actor may want to stay hidden.

Remember an actor's looks may get him in the door, but he will need the training to do the job well, whether it is acting or acting the fight. One needs to keep training with someone that has skills superior to one's own whenever possible, then when one gets that sword fighting role he can hold his head up and proudly represent his teachers, their teachers, other sword masters and actor/combatants around the world. Remember whenever an actor picks up any sword, he accepts the responsibility of carrying on a tradition founded on honor and respect.

Fin



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The Fencing Match in Bernhardt's Hamlet

by Linda Carlyle McCollum

Renowned throughout the world for her numerous *travesti* roles, the famous nineteenth century actress, Sarah Bernhardt, played the role of Hamlet in 1899 at the Theatre Sarah Bernhardt. She was fifty-four years old. The fencing match was documented on film in 1900 and is housed at the Cinematheque Française in Paris. The film contains the entire fencing match but does not include the rest of the scene involving the court, Osric, Claudius and Gertrude. A 16 mm print of sections of the fencing scene is housed at the Deutsche Kinemathek in Berlin. The film along with contemporary commentaries on the productions, gives a close approximation of how the fencing match in *Hamlet* was performed at the beginning of the twentieth century by the *Divine Sarah*.

The tradition of female *travesti* dates from the seventeenth century and flourished in the nineteenth century not only in theatre but in opera and ballet as well. Before Bernhardt's *Hamlet*, over fifty women had played the role. In her *The Art of the Theatre*, Bernhardt answers the question as to why she was so fond of playing male parts. Her answer was that it was not the male roles but the male intellect she preferred. "Generally speaking male parts are more intellectual than female parts. This is the secret of my preference" (Bernhardt 139). She was attracted to the role of Hamlet because it was "the most original, the most subtle, and the most torturous, and yet the most simple for the unity of his dream" (Bernhardt 137). And while many male roles existed in which she would have enjoyed performing, as a woman she could only interpret a male role when it represented a mind and not the physicality of a male or as she is quoted saying, "a male in a feeble body" (Bernhardt 141).

Prior to Bernhardt's production, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* was only known in France through adaptations of the play and not through an actual translation. Anything which might be considered offensive to the audience was removed. Early adaptations did not include the scenes with the players, the grave scene, or the fencing match. Bernhardt, who was not only an actress but a producer and director as well, acquired an actual translation that was faithful to the plot and was translated into prose and not Alexandrine couplets. This translation by Marcel Schwob and Eugene Morand also included the translators' stage directions and production notes.

Bernhardt's production was a complete change from the nineteenth century productions which had previously seen young prince Hamlet as a romantic hero whose intellect kept him from action. Bernhardt's production put the emphasis on the revenge theme while still incorporating the theme of a son's



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affection for his dead father and for his mother. The fencing scene in its staging and performance carries out the two themes of revenge and affection.

The film shows the set consisting of an arched gallery in the background. Contemporary commentaries and pictures of the production reveal a raised dais or tribune with steps at stage left. These same commentaries also mention the fencing match preceded by a "Viennese tune."

In Bernhardt's production, Claudius and Gertrude were not seated together but were on opposite sides of the stage. Gertrude occupied the platform alone on stage left while Claudius was on the floor stage right and nearer to the fencing action. The translators suggested that the king and queen be separated by the width of the stage to give credibility to Claudius' aside, "It is the poison'd cup. It is too late." In previous productions the question had always been left in the audience's mind as to why Claudius did not take the cup from Gertrude before she drank the poison.

The positioning of the match between the king and queen also reinforced, through a strong visual triangulation, the alignment of all those involved thematically and reinforced the themes of revenge and affection.

The match began with Laertes, played by Pierre Magnier, entering from stage left and Hamlet from stage right. Magnier wore knee-length coat over tights and Bernhardt wore a tunic which extended to mid-thigh elongating her figure. Bernhardt also had a long black cloak, worn throughout the play, which was fastened to the left wrist by a tight-fitting and buttoned sleeve which slipped over the sleeve of her tunic. The sleeve formed a gathered bell at the forearm extending over the left shoulder into draped folds slightly to the right at the back of the shoulders. Bernhardt's movements throughout the match were reinforced by the movement of the cloak.

While the script called for rapier and dagger, the French *epee* was used in place of the rapier. The dagger was not actively involved in the fencing and served only as a decorative element.

Upon entering the playing area, Laertes and Hamlet crossed and gave the Grand Salute to the king and queen, then returned to their original positions, saluted the king and queen again and then faced each other and saluted. Laertes then walked about in a small circle upstage and then downstage while Hamlet made a similar circle downstage and then upstage with the cloak trailing his movements, drawing the audience's attention to Hamlet/Bernhardt.

Shakespeare's script has basically four sections to the fencing match: three bouts and the duel. Hamlet scores in the first two bouts, the third ends in a draw and then the actual duel follows after Laertes wounds Hamlet. In Bernhardt's production the third bout is merged with the fourth section.

The fight was staged on the diagonal with Hamlet upstage so that Bernhardt was facing the audience during the fencing match. The first bout was short. With her knees bent in the classic fencing stance, Hamlet attacked Laertes, scored and immediately stood up with feet together. In the second bout, Laertes initiated the action, Hamlet parried Laertes' attack and lunged. Laertes was hit and Hamlet returned to the elevated stance as before.

At this point in the production, Queen Gertrude stood and toasted Hamlet. From the translation it is clear that the queen, who has been observing the match, comments on Hamlet being "hot" and "scant of breath" rather than the actual translation of

"fat." Here, because of the width of the stage and the flight of steps, Claudius admonished Gertrude to not drink but could do nothing to prevent it.

The third bout was the longest and the most complex. Hamlet was more aggressive than in the first two bouts working his way from stage right to stage left as he forced Laertes to stage left. They then circled back to the audience by moving stage right. The graceful movement of both fencers and the footwork made this the most obviously choreographed sequence. The fight continued on equal terms until Hamlet suddenly drew back, again standing erect but with the feet apart in contrast to the elevated stance of the first two bouts where the feet were together. The action stopped. Hamlet placed his sword under his left arm with his face showing amazement at having been wounded by Laertes supposedly bated weapon. Since French epees were used, the whole body was valid target. Laertes, with his unbated weapon, wounded Hamlet on the wrist which would be the closest part of the target to Laertes.

What followed is referred to as the *Sequence of the Gauntlet*. Renowned for her mastery of gesture and pantomime, the sequence showed how even a non-French speaking audience could follow the dramatic meaning in the scene. During the sequence, Hamlet looked at Laertes six times revealing what was passing through his mind: once before removing the glove, again while removing the glove and four times after it was removed.

Examining the film frame by frame one can see the intricacy of Bernhardt's pantomime that made Hamlet's suspicions so evident. The first glance occurred as Hamlet lowered his head while transferring his sword under his left arm and shifting his weight to his left foot. Once the sword was in place, he raised his head and then looked down as his right arm swung down to his right side. While bending his right arm at the elbow and moving it to his left hand which was at waist height, he raised his head and looked at Laertes then down at his right hand as he placed it in the left. The right hand was pulled out of the glove and moved to the right as he again glanced at Laertes. The right hand then moved back to center taking the glove from the left hand and after a sweeping move to the right, the glove was rapidly pitched across the body to offstage left. The right hand was brought straight up, palm down at waist height where Hamlet looked at his wound and again glanced at Laertes. The right hand was then brought to shoulder height and close to the eyes and dropped quickly. Hamlet looked towards Laertes and immediately looked at his hand again which was at waist height but not in front of the body. The hand was brought up near the face and was quickly moved about eight inches from the side of his body. Again looking at Laertes, he moved to take his sword, again looking at the wounded hand as he drew his sword from under his left arm. With the point of the sword at his left foot and his head down, he raised the point of the sword to his eyes and looked at the point and then again at Laertes. He then came *en garde* to fight his now reluctant opponent. The sequence occurred so quickly and so naturally that the audience was unaware of this intricate pantomime.

Schwob and Morand indicate in their translation and production notes that a disarm should be achieved through a *corps a corps*. What actually happened in production was that after recognizing the treachery, Hamlet pressed Laertes in the next action and brought his upraised sword down in *seconde* on Laertes weapon. After striking Laertes' sword out of his hand, a long,

intense, hostile pause followed accompanied by a riveting glance at Laertes. With Laertes' sword on the floor, Hamlet, with a constant gaze approached Laertes and offered Laertes his own sword. Laertes hesitated. With a quick and forceful urging of his sword-arm as well as the nod of his head accompanied with grim politeness, Bernhardt's Hamlet forced the reluctant Laertes to take the sword. Then, with a quick movement of his right hand, Hamlet signaled the page on stage left to bring him Laertes' sword which was lying on the floor. The page placed the sword in Hamlet's hand. Hamlet gave a quick glance at the unabated point and resumed the duel.

With blades crossed, Hamlet began the assault and became increasingly aggressive, closed the distance and the two fencers were in *corp a corps*, the strategy the two translators had recommended for the disarm. With their bodies touching and their hands in half supination, Hamlet withdrew just enough to wield his weapon and wounded Laertes on the lower lines of the trunk. Laertes' swordarm was still raised from the position of the *corp-a-corps* when he received the fatal hit.

Horatio asked Hamlet "How is it, my lord?" in a normal voice while Osric posed the almost identical question in a whisper to Laertes, "How is't, Laertes?" The translators' production notes indicate that this subtle difference between Horatio's forthright concern and Osric's whispered delivery emphasized Osric's complicity in the plot to kill Hamlet. It was Osric who presented the weapons to the two fencers. It was Osric who answered in the affirmative as to the equal length of the weapons. It was Osric who carefully officiated at the match.

In the film, after Laertes is wounded, he disappeared placing the focus on Hamlet. In the actual production, Gertrude and the king died before Hamlet's death. Gertrude's death was described as having her torso bent across the elevated tribune with her hair streaming over the edge. After Laertes' confession, Hamlet ran after Claudius who tried to run away while Hamlet repeatedly and vigorously stabbed him while shouting "Then, venom, to thy work!" Hamlet then worked his way to stage left where he reverently kissed his mother's flowing tresses before succumbing to the poison in his body.

The effect of the venom on Hamlet was shown by Bernhardt from the moment Hamlet was wounded. Even though Hamlet's death was compressed in the film, it showed how subtly Bernhardt revealed the effects of the poison.

In the first part of the scene, the wounded Hamlet, with his back to the audience, showed the poison's effect by the position of the head and the halting manner in which he stepped backwards. The cloak also reflected this through spasmodic and semi-circular movements. The intensity of Hamlet's pain was reflected in the movement of the cloak which moved towards Hamlet's left as he began to step diagonally backwards with his right foot. The cloak then swung from the left to the center of his back as he raised both his sword and his dagger. He then lowered his arms and walked in a backward semi-circle towards stage left until he was almost facing the audience and dropped his sword. His right arm was raised in a semi-circle above his head. The arm fell to his side and was then raised to his forehead and then lowered to his heart. As the hand moved away from his heart, Horatio supported the reeling Hamlet and took his hand to his heart while supporting him. Another courtier from stage left came to support Hamlet's left side and a third covered his feet with his cloak as the two men at his sides lowered his shoulders down to the ground. The cloak was then draped over his body and he was carried slowly on the shoulders of four courtiers from stage left to their exit on stage right.

Bernhardt was innovative in having Hamlet die standing. This tradition was used by Guthrie McClintic in John Gielgud's *Hamlet* and while he received credit for having invented the standing death in actuality it had been used some thirty-seven years prior to Gielgud's performance by Bernhardt.

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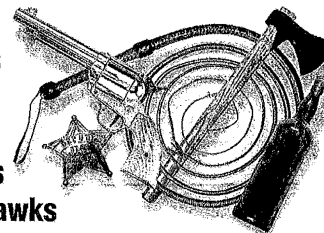
Some critics saw similarities between Bernhardt's fencing scene and the fencing match in Tommaso Salvini's 1875 London production of *Hamlet*. Arthur Colby Sprague described the climactic moments from the fencing scene.

Hamlet, feeling the prick of the "unbated" foil, clapped his hand to his side, looked, astonished, at his fingers, as if he had found blood on them. Then he pressed his attack on Laertes, "disarmed him in seconde," and setting his foot upon the poisoned weapon, offered his adversary with a low bow his own foil...

Marked differences existed between these two fencing matches. Salvini's weapon was the foil in which only the trunk was the valid target. He was wounded in his side and the use of the hand was to ascertain the blood from the wound in his side. No mention was made of the removal of the glove. While Salvini's multiple glances were mentioned in other reports of his performance, they were not specific. The exchange of the weapons was accomplished by Salvini barring Laertes from his sword by placing his foot on it.

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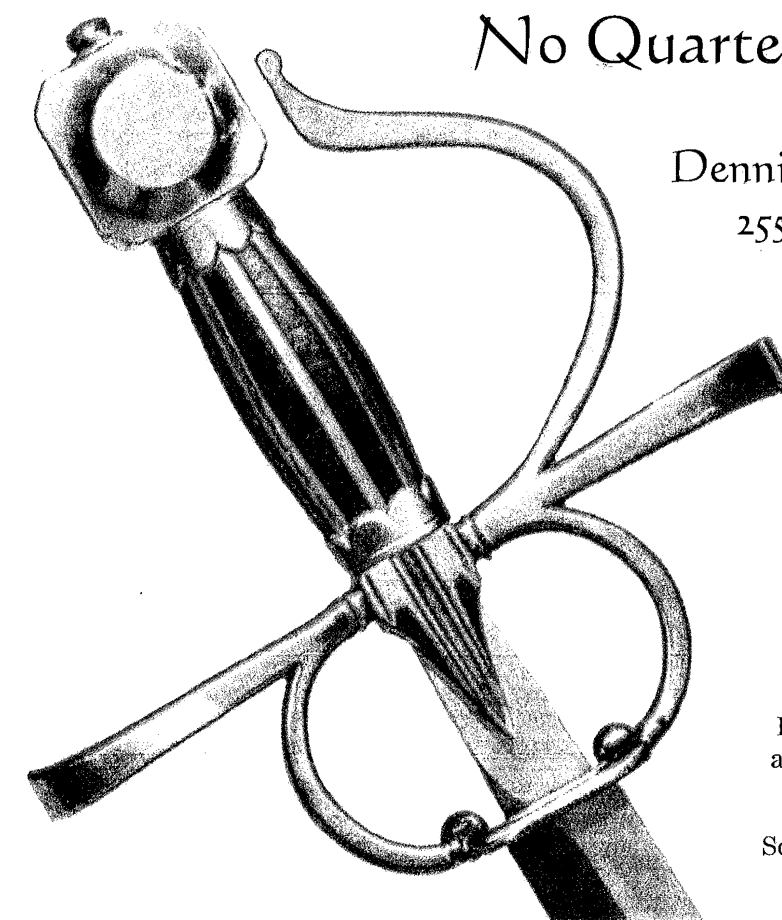
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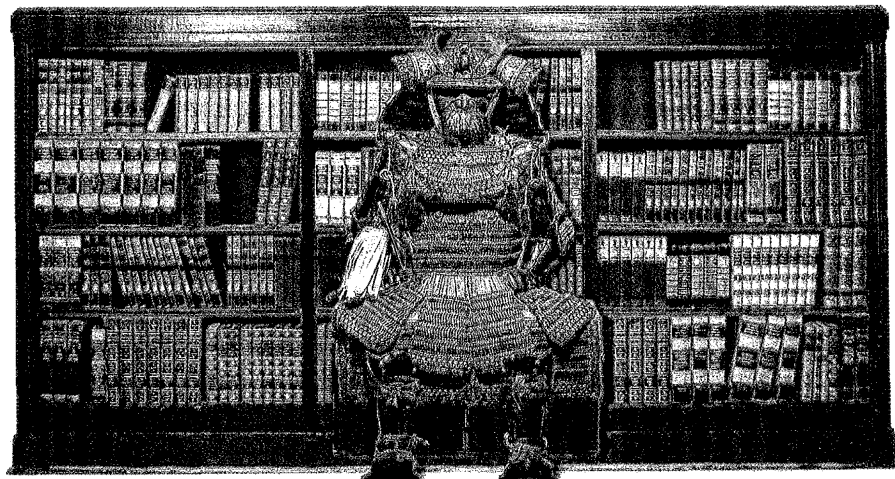
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THE SAMURAI'S BOOKSHELF

by Kevin J. Wetmore, Jr.



"A warrior ought to read ancient records regularly in order to steel himself," advises Taira Shigekisuke (1639-1730) in *Bushido Shoshinshu*, a seventeenth-century guidebook for young *Samurai*. If one reads the ancient records, Taira argues, one will be constantly reminded not only of the great deeds of past warriors, but also one will recognize how many people died in each and every battle, and better prepare for one's own death.

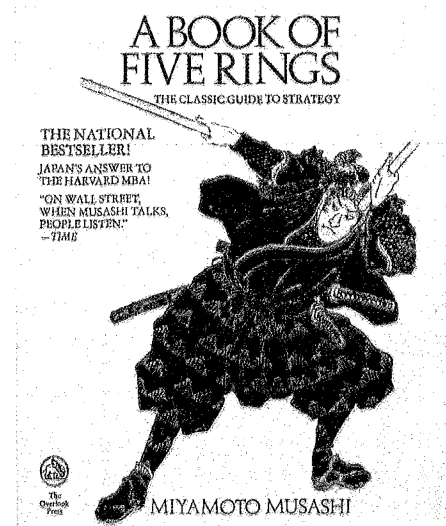
While such preparations may not be necessary for the practitioner of stage combat, familiarity with the ancient records may still prove useful. Productions involving Japanese swordplay are on the increase in the professional and academic theatres of the United States, and it is not unusual to be asked to choreograph or act in a production involving *Samurai*, whether it is a *Kabuki Macbeth*, or a play set in Tokugawa Japan, such as *Silence* or *The Golden Country*. One might even simply take a class in the use of *katana* at a Society of American Fight Directors (SAFD) regional workshop.¹ At some point in a person's combat career, he is likely to find a samurai sword in his hand.

Far greater in number than the English or the Spanish, the Japanese martial class represents perhaps one of the largest organized warrior classes in history. In 1597, for example, eight percent of the total population of Japan was in the warrior class, as opposed to England, where the martial class was six-tenths of one percent of the total population.² The unification of Japan, however, at the beginning of the seventeenth century by Tokugawa Ieyasu made the warrior class obsolete. One in twelve people was a warrior in a land that no longer had wars.

Ieyasu's solution to the danger of so many warriors was to turn them into bureaucrats and administrators while still requiring them to maintain military training and a warrior tradition. As such, a rich body of literature about how to train and fight and die like a *Samurai* exists to aid the choreographer and actor who wants to accurately create *Samurai* combat on stage. As in Europe during this period, some of these texts were secret, known only to members of a particular school of fencing. Other texts were known to all and highly recommended reading for all *Samurai*.

Many who study stage swordplay are familiar with the great western works on fencing, and *The Fight Master* frequently carries articles about other European fencing texts. Here, however, is a list of accessible books translated in English written by *Samurai* on the art of fighting. Some contain technical information on how to fight, others are primarily philosophical or psychological in nature, offering ideas on how to approach combat. Some also have everyday, practical advice on a variety of topics from

how to sharpen one's swords to the correct way to blow one's nose to the best way to impress one's commander. All of these will give insights into the how, why, and what of *Samurai* conduct and combat to aid the choreographer in creating historically accurate stage combat.



THE BOOK OF FIVE RINGS
BY MIYAMOTO MUSASHI

Miyamoto Musashi (1584-1645) is best known in this country through the novel by Eiji Yoshikawa and the *Samurai* films of Inagaki, starring Toshiro Mifune as Musashi. Historically, he was a *ronin* (masterless *Samurai*) who dedicated himself to the perfection of swordsmanship. He fought over sixty duels between the ages of thirteen and twenty-nine and was undefeated. At thirty years of age he retired from active dueling and became a teacher of the *two sword* school of fighting. *Two sword* refers to the fact that a *Samurai* wears two swords at all times (the *katana*, a long sword, and the *wakazashi*, a short sword), but traditionally only uses the *katana* in battle. Musashi used both *katana* and *wakazashi* when fighting, allowing him to fight in a radically different style from traditional *Samurai* dueling. Although he stopped using a real sword, he continued to mortally wound his opponents with a wooden sword. In 1643, at the end of his life he wrote *Gorin no sho*, *The Book of Five Rings*, a collection of his teachings.

The book consists of five scrolls: The Earth Scroll, concerning the science of mar-

tial arts; the Water Scroll, about attaining a fluid mind; the Fire Scroll, concerning battle, the Wind Scroll, consideration of other schools of swordsmanship, and the Scroll of Emptiness, a Zen-like treatise on the nature of confrontation. Musashi is primarily concerned with the sword, but he also addresses

practices, as ultimately Mushashi writes of how to confront and beat an opponent. As a result of its popularity, many translations exist. Thomas Cleary's translation includes a copy of *The Book of Family Traditions on the Art of War* by Yagy Munenori, martial arts instructor to the Tokugawa family in the seventeenth century, which offers another secret text from another sword school. Regardless of which translation one uses, Mushashi's book is hailed as one of the great books of combat from Japan and is well worth the read.

HAGAKURE BY YAMAMOTO TSUNETOMO

In May of 1700, Nabeshima Mitsushige died. His retainer, Yamamoto Tsunetomo, was forbidden from committing ritual suicide in order to follow his lord into death as had been common practice until recently. The *Shogun* had issued an edict forbidding the practice as too many good *Samurai* were being lost to it. Thus, Tsunetomo retired from active life, shaved his head, and became a Buddhist monk instead. Around 1716, he was called upon to share his wisdom and experience with the younger *Samurai* of his clan and he wrote the *Hagakure*, which means "Hidden Leaves," suggesting the secretive nature of the book.

The great truth from which Tsunetomo begins his instruction is, "The way of the samurai is found in death." What follows is a disorganized, meandering essay containing stories, maxims, and commentaries on how to live one's life as a *Samurai*. Time and again, the author returns to his main point: the *Samurai* must be ready to die at any moment. It is only by being completely disconnected from life and ready to die or kill for one's lord at any moment that the *Samurai* can live an effective life. By not being afraid of death, by willingly embracing it, then one lives without fear and with the ability to do anything.

Famed author Mishima Yukio wrote an entire book on the importance and influence of the *Hagakure* on his own life: *The Samurai Ethic and Modern Japan*. Yukio's purpose is to remind modern Japanese of their *Samurai* heritage and encourage them to be "men of action." He quotes at length from the *Hagakure*, offering such advice as "Make up your mind within the space of seven breaths," and "Know the limits of your abilities."⁶ It is this book which is quoted from extensively in the film *Ghost Dog: The Way of the Samurai*.

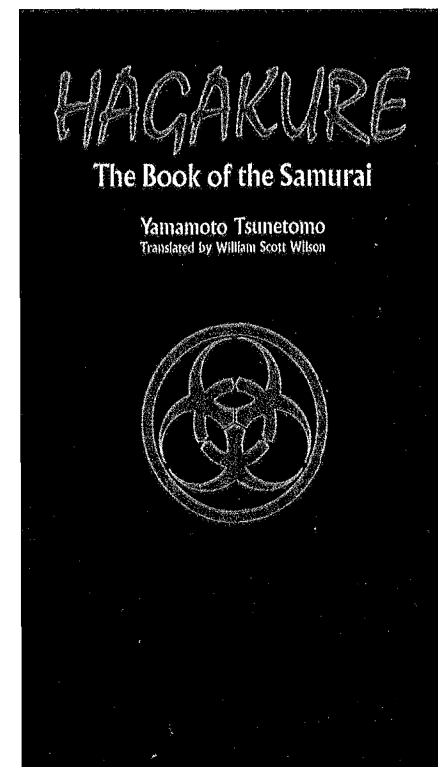
Tsunetomo's book is a guide to *Samurai* ethics that also contains practical advice for living and fighting as a true *Samurai*. This book is the first one to read in order to understand the *Samurai* mindset, and is highly recommended.

HONCHO GUNKIKO BY ARAI HAKUSEKI CHIKUGO NO KAMI

Arai Hakuseki (1657-1725) was the privy counselor of the *Shogun*, a writer and historian, a lecturer in Chinese classics at the court of Tokugawa Iyenobu, and author of the *Honcho gunkiko*, a twelve volume history of arms and armor in Japan, the first of its kind to be written in that country. The twelve-volumes are split into two hundred and ninety-five chapters, including thirty-five on swords and sixty-five on armor. Written between 1709 and 1722, Hakuseki's book is both general history about Japanese weapons and armor as well as narrative of specific weapons: Certain swords are traced throughout their histories from their maker's forges through famous battles to current owners. Later authors complain that Hakuseki did too good a job documenting historical armor; because of his book particular styles of armor kept being made despite the fact that they were of no practical protection against muskets.⁷

Two volumes of the *Honcho gunkiko* have been translated into English, both with lavish illustrations of weapons and armor. The first book, *Yoroi*, translated as *The Armour Book in Honcho gunkiko*, is a history of body armor worn by the *Samurai* and gives an excellent idea of armor in context. The eighth book, *The Sword Book*, demonstrates types of swords, how they were made and tested, the history of specific swords, and also contains chronicles of famous battles and how swords were used in them.

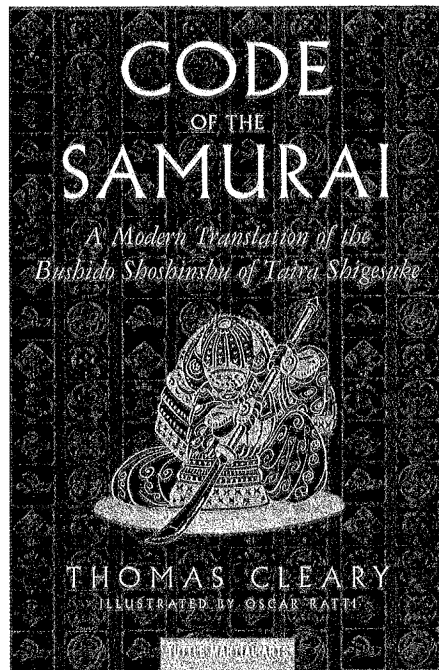
Hakuseki, it should be noted, was taken to the theatre (in this case the *Noh*) at the age of seven and recited the entire play from memory following the performance.⁸ As with many court *Samurai* of his age, he was a gentleman of many talents with an appreciation of the arts, literature, and military history. His books serve as a useful guide to the weapons and armor of the *Tokugawa Samurai* and are written from the point of view, not of a practitioner writing for other practitioners, as Musashi's or Tsunetomo's, but of a scholar and historian writing for a general audience. They give a different, albeit equally useful, perspective.



how one might use a spear, halberd and bow. The book is nothing short of a textbook on "the psychology and physics of lethal assault," as Thomas Cleary notes in the introduction of his translation of the work.³

Musashi covers how to grip a sword properly, the importance of knowing the advantages and disadvantages of particular weapons, the rhythm of combat, formal techniques, advice on facing many opponents, and many other topics. His advice is detailed and practical; for example, on threatening an opponent: "You can threaten by means of your body, you can threaten by means of your sword, and you can threaten by means of your voice."⁴ As a veteran swordsman, Musashi understands the reality fighting and training, distinguishing, for example, between "striking" (which he defines as, "consciously and deliberately strike the blow you intend to strike") and "hitting" (which "means something like running into someone"), and advocating in favor of the former.⁵

The Book of Five Rings was very popular in the 1980s, when in both Japan and America it became a guide for business



BUSHIDO SHOSHINSU
BY TAIRA SHIGESUKE

As translator Thomas Cleary observes in his introduction to the text:

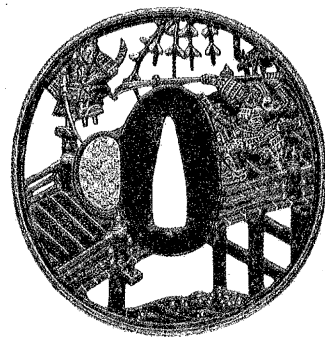
To compensate psychologically for the urbanization and bureaucratization of the warrior class, martial arts were developed into highly theatrical, philosophically elaborate systems of mental and moral training.⁹

Samurai combat is both highly theatrical and highly philosophical in nature; the former being one reason for the popularity of *Samurai*-style productions of Shakespeare. As noted above, the opportunities for fighting were greatly decreased after the end of the civil war in Japan, so the martial training systems were just as much about moral, philosophical, and personal development as they were about learning combat techniques. Taira Shigesuke (1639-1730), a Confucian scholar and military strategist, wrote the *Bushido shoshinshu* (literally, *The Way of the Warrior for Beginners*) for the young *Samurai* of his clan. He divides his advice into "ordinary principles" (how to conduct one's self in everyday life) and "emergency principles" (combat practices).

Shigesuke covers education, familial duty, friendship, the care and maintenance of military equipment (including how to clean a white kimono), how to behave militarily, and a final chapter on "cultural refinement." As with the

Hagakure, Shigesuke's work demonstrates that the principles which guide a *Samurai* in combat extend to all areas of his life.

Shigesuke's book also demonstrates many principles that would seem universal, or, at the very least, which East and West have in common. For example, in the chapter on military behavior he states, "Trouble arises from below."¹⁰ He goes on to explain that when two military trains meet on the road, it is the underlings who first encounter each other and start trouble. If two lords must duel over a matter of honor, it is often because a lower fight has worked its way up to the higher ranks. Compare this with Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, in which Lord Capulet calls for his longsword because his servants are fighting with those of the house of Montague. *The Way of the Warrior for Beginners* offers object lessons in human behavior which transcend cul-



ture, while still dealing specifically with Tokugawa Japan.

Also recommended as a reference work is Ratti and Westbrook's *Secrets of the Samurai: The Martial Arts of Feudal Japan*, an illustrated guide to the practices, arms and armor of the *Samurai* that will also prove useful to choreographers and performers alike.

The *Samurai* capture the imagination of audiences and actors alike. Witness the popularity of the films of Kurosawa, Kabuki or *Samurai* productions of Shakespeare's plays and films such as *Ghost Dog*. Before attempting to stage a *Samurai* fight, it would be wise to read the books that *Samurai* read to prepare for battle.

The Spanish royal decree of 1609 in which the king of Spain ordered Spanish conquistadors in the Philippines to "not risk the reputation of our arms and state" by fighting the Japanese, whom he feared were unbeatable.¹¹ He was proved

right in 1620 when an outnumbered group of *ronin* defeated a Spanish contingent in Siam. Historically, the *Samurai* were a force to be reckoned with, as any choreographer who has worked with *katana* can attest.

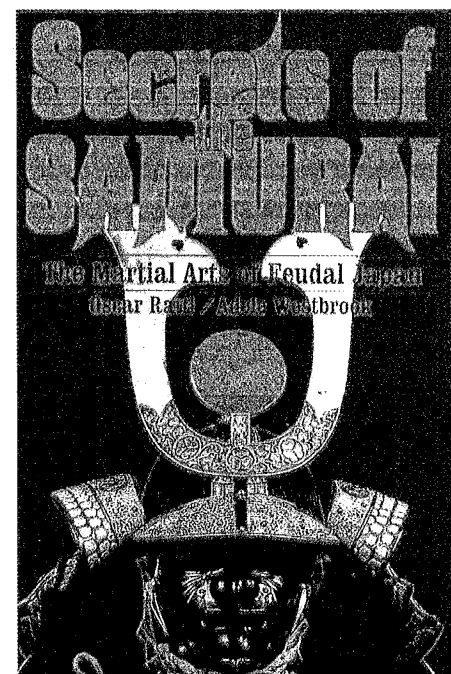
FOOTNOTES

- ¹ This author highly recommends the *katana* workshop often offered by Chuck Coyl at SAFD regional workshops as an excellent introduction to the stage use of this weapon.
- ² Noel Perrin *Giving Up the Gun* (Boston: R. Godine, 1979), p. 33-5.
- ³ Thomas Cleary, "Introduction" *The Book of Five Rings*, p. xvi.
- ⁴ Miyamoto Musashi, p. 43.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 26.
- ⁶ Musashi, pp. 135, 112.
- ⁷ Quoted in *The Armour Book in Honcho Gunkiko*, p. 8.
- ⁸ Henri L. Joly and Inada Hogitaro "Introduction" *Code of the Samurai*, p. viii.
- ⁹ Thomas Cleary, "Introduction" *Code of the Samurai*, pp. xiv-xv.
- ¹⁰ Shigesuke, p. 88.
- ¹¹ Antonio de Morga *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* trans. J. S. Cummins (Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 318.

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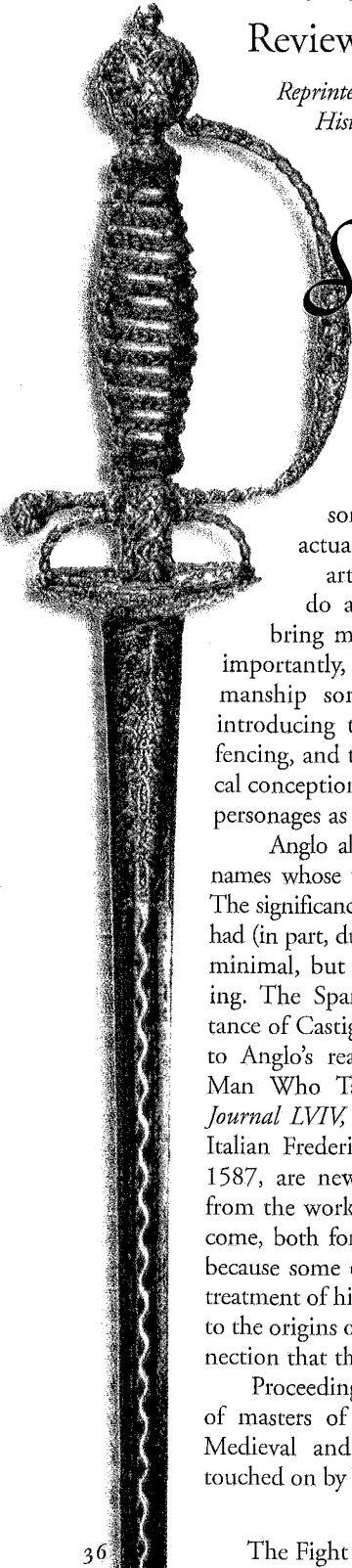
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THE MARTIAL ARTS OF RENAISSANCE EUROPE

by Sydney Anglo

Review by Ken Mondschein

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Dr. Sydney Anglo's long-awaited book, *The Martial Arts of Renaissance Europe*, is unquestionably a labor of love, a well put together work of remarkable erudition. The command that the author, a research professor at the University of Wales, shows of his source material is encyclopedic. While certainly owing debts to previous writers, Anglo also attempts something quite unique: To examine the actual teaching and practice of arms as an artifact of culture. While Anglo does not do a perfect job of this, his work does bring much exciting material to light. More importantly, it gives the study of historical swordsmanship some much-needed academic cachet, introducing the art historian to the literature of fencing, and the historian of ideas to the geometrical conceptions of fencing put forth by such diverse personages as Agrippa, Carranza and Thibault.

Anglo also introduces the reader to some new names whose works have been previously neglected. The significance of the impact these masters may have had (in part, due to poor distribution) may have been minimal, but their works are nonetheless fascinating. The Spanish master Pietro Monte, acquaintance of Castiglione and da Vinci, is already known to Anglo's readers through his monograph "The Man Who Taught Leonardo Darts" (*Antiquities Journal* LVIV, 1989). However others, such as the Italian Frederico Shisliero, published in Parma in 1587, are new. Excerpts, rather than paraphrases, from the works of these men would have been welcome, both for the sake of nuance of language, and because some of Ghisliero's illustrations and Anglo's treatment of his text provide titillating suggestions as to the origins of the equestrian art of dressage, a connection that the author may not be aware of.

Proceeding from a broad discussion of the place of masters of arms and the teaching of arms in Medieval and Renaissance society (a topic also touched on by Wise), Anglo proceeds to a chapter on

the "notation and illustration of movement in combat manuals." His answer to the problems posed therein seems to be much influenced by the methodological approaches of dance history—that each position illustrated in a manual captures a moment in time.

Though Anglo's view of fencing manuals and their relation to dance manuals is indeed a welcome and astute insight, being as both genres deal with social graces of different sorts, it is surprising that a scholar of his erudition did not further discuss art-historical topics as they relate to the subject at hand. What of the Mannerist concept of elegance, the *contrapposto* that is present in both the Michaelangelo's Sistine Sybils and the twining combatants of Fabris? What of the Renaissance idea of *real* space and *ideal* space that are exhibited both in Thibault's elaborate engravings and Bellini's Madonnas? What is the relationship between the Medieval Memory Palace and its allegorical mnemonics and the wolves, dragons, and elephants of de'Liberi and Vadi? Such mention might have further enriched this chapter. Happily, though, Anglo has left his subject virgin ground for future writers and scholars.

What Anglo neglects is that fencing is not merely kinetic art. Such concepts as timing, second intention, and other such subtleties are hard to understand, or to recognize in texts, without practical experience. As the author paraphrases Pietro Monte, "lessons will be more readily grasped if there is a master to show how they should be done." A thorough knowledge of intangibles such as these is the main pitfall when attempting to comprehend books or fencing. Even the *pictographs* of 1-33, the earliest known manuscript that can be considered a work on fencing, are not so occult to cognoscenti. This is why a knowledge of tradition is also important, so that the pieces of the puzzle have some framework to fall into. (Unfortunately, Anglo also seems to be unfamiliar with Dr. William Gaugler's *History of Fencing*, which is not listed in his bibliography, and which might have been useful in attempting to grasp these intangibles).

Additionally, though Anglo is critical of Egerton Castle's Victorian-era superiority in *Schools and Masters of Fence*, which saw all fence as leading up to the perfection of contemporary (i.e. nineteenth-century) foil play, Anglo himself occasionally lapses into modern editorial when he discovers a construction he does not understand. This is most notable when, like many writers, he seems to have been bewildered by the Spanish school of rapier fencing. Indeed, even his bibliographical information on Carranza-giving 1582 instead of 1569 as his date of publication for *De la Filosofia de las Armas* is in error. Even a cursory glance at *La Verdadera Destreza* will reveal a rationalistic system of fence, intimately tied, as with the rest of the masters considered, to the humanistic pedagogical, intellectual and aesthetic concerns of its time and place. Anglo says, "The Spanish masters . . . were anxious to work out a symbolic notation rather than one which relied . . . on a realistic representation of fencers. And the key to this quest was their obsession with the interrelationship between mathematics and word play."

Indeed, this is so, but not because swordsmen were expected to fence "by the numbers," but rather because geometry and mathematics were believed to develop the facilities of judgment

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and enable the practitioner to address the problem at hand rationally-intangible qualities of no small use in fencing, but which can not be understood without first-hand knowledge. Static figures do nothing to convey this sense. (Not mentioned is the connection between geometry and conceptions of Platonic forms, which would have been implicitly understood by Carranza's audience.) The Spanish masters differed from their predecessors in that they tried to elucidate a meta-approach to fencing. Whether the systems works or not is immaterial; what it means is. To his credit, though, Anglo does produce one of the best discourses on Thibault's *Academie de l'espee* in recent years, and explores the humanistic idea of fencing along the Vitruvian plan quite well. (Ironically enough, Thibault was derided by Narvaez as confusing the issue with complexity, and Narvaez is in turn criticized on the same grounds by Anglo.)

The next chapters in *Martial Arts of Renaissance Europe* are rather straightforward, dealing with the "Myths and realities of foot combat with swords;" "Vocabulary and taxonomy of sword fighting;" "Staff weapons;" "Bare hands, daggers, and knives;" "Arms and armour; Mounted combat (both with the lance and other weapons);" and "Duels, brawls and battles." In all, a wealth of information and analysis is expertly introduced and dealt with. When Anglo deals with the intellectual history of the sword, he cannot be disputed. It is when he offers technical analysis that errors and errata creep into the discourse.

For instance, in "Myths and realities of foot combat with sword," one encounters a passage on cut versus thrust, in which the author quotes Castle's well-known dictum: "The thrust belongs to a more advanced state of the art." Castle is then used as a straw man to expound upon the deadly efficacy of medieval swordsmanship, which included both cut and thrust. While this may be a useful rhetorical technique with which to enlighten the reader, what is surprising is that Anglo then launches upon a vague flight of fantasy, pitting the rapier against the *katana* and the longsword, without even mentioning the technical virtues of each. One can only wonder what scholarly works are informing this flight of fancy. That relevant fact and necessary analysis mix so with such material is one major flaw of this work.

Likewise, in his final chapter on "duels, brawls and battles," a brief consideration of hopology might have served Anglo in good stead. Likening rapier fence to commando-style "all-in fighting," he states, "Renaissance duels and armed affrays were analogous to war; and to judge from the homicidal pages of the masters and the bloodstained record of personal combats, prisoners were rarely taken." This statement would seem to be a concise statement of the leitmotif of the book, and it is disappointing, for it is far too simplistic. Regardless of the fact that the true intention of the skillful use of the rapier is to keep the adversary

at distance and kill him here-and-thus is quite different from the earlier weapons discussed, such as the longsword—this attitude is also contrary to some of the best thinking on the subject. Christoph Amberger has pointed out in his *Secret History of the Sword* a definite difference between combat in war and personal combat fought under a set of rules, and between mass combat and the predatory, cold-blooded dispatching of an adversary. If absolute dominion was the only requirement for success in all scenarios, then why the often-repeated admonitions on grace and style in countless manuals of fence? Indeed, why fight a duel at all?

Nor does Anglo convincingly show that the teaching of "all-in" fighting was all-pervasive throughout the period in question. The inclusion of unarmed techniques in a manual of fence in the sixteenth century does not mean that this material was not being taught alongside the use of the sword a century later, but it does not imply it either. Just as society changed greatly from the fifteenth century to the seventeenth, and just as customs varied from country to country, so, too, did customs regarding personal combat. Most importantly, one sees in this period the evolution of the civilian sidearm. This is especially true in that the rapier was to a battlefield weapon, and its use must be examined as a separate subject entirely.

Because Anglo deals mainly with written evidence, his arguments and conclusions are almost wholly derived from his examination of fighting manuals and anecdotal accounts. His mastery of this material is irrefutable. It is when he attempts to synthesize this material into a coherent whole that he reveals a critical lack of understanding of purposes and lack of knowl-

edge of time-honored traditions. In this Anglo shows himself to be, in his own way, just as biased as his predecessor Castle. The idea of martial arts in the modern conception is a recent one, and a poor lens through which to filter the world of five hundred years ago. Martial arts may mean fighting arts today, but to attempt to apply the term to the entire breath and scope of activity dealing with mass and personal combat on foot and on horseback in armor and in shirtsleeves, in war and in peace that existed a half-millennium ago is little better than a gimmick.

Although somewhat flawed, *The Martial Arts of Renaissance Europe* is still a significant work and welcome addition to the English literature on the subject. It should be required reading for all serious students of the history of swordsmanship.

The Martial Arts of Renaissance Europe
by Sydney Anglo
ISBN: 0-300-08352-1
384 pp./ Yale University Press, 2000/\$45

The MARTIAL ARTS of Renaissance Europe

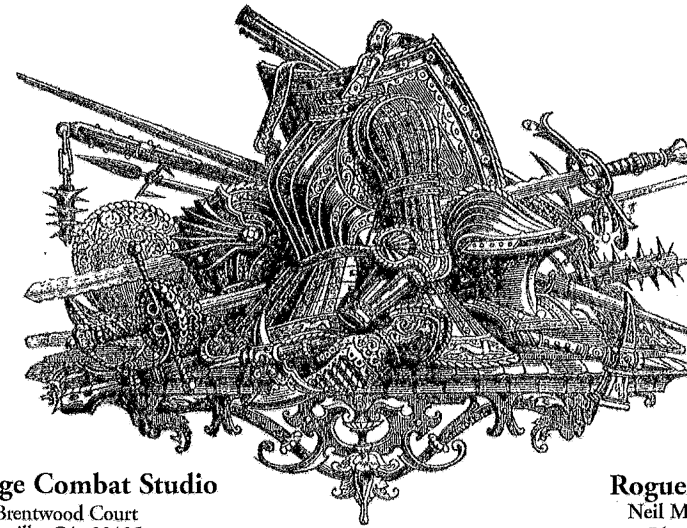


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EAE	Examiner's Award for Excellence		

MAY 2001

May 16	Elgin Community College	David Woolley
Stephen Gray	UA QS	
Lewis Wilkins	R&D UA QS	
Mark Hardiman	UA	
Tyler Metzger	R&D UA QS	
Jay Kim	R&D UA QS	
Luke Sevcik	R&D UA QS	
Matt Stewart	R&D UA QS	
Mike Tumilty	R&D UA QS	
Jim Bobby	R&D UA QS	
Jeremy Hardt	R&D UA QS	
Laurel Kirk	R&D UA QS	

AUGUST 2001

August 26	Fights4/New York University	Brian Byrnes
Michael Chin	KN	
Nicole Godino	KN-EAE	
Al Foote III		

SEPTEMBER 2001

Sept 30	Philadelphia Stage Combat Wkshp	Chuck Coyl
Regina Cerimele-Mechley,		
Andrew Hayes, John Mc Farland		
Kevin Wetmore Jr.	R&D QS	
Jim Jensen	R&D QS	
Brandon Smiley	R&D QS	

NOVEMBER 2001

November 10	Actor's Gymnasium	Chuck Coyl
Angela Bonacasa	QS	
Jessica Hester	QS	
Jennie Ealy	QS-EAE	
John Tovar	QS	
Mara Wolverton	QS	
Anne Foldeak	QS	
Wm. Michael Gray	QS	
Leland Burbank	QS	
Jill Matarelli	QS	

November 11	Renewal	Chuck Coyl
Angela Bonacasa	R&D UA	
Tom Dacey Carr	R&D UA	
Drew Vidal	R&D UA	
Gregory Larson	R&D UA	
Brenda Kelly	R&D UA	

November 17	Nat'l Conserv. of Dramatic Arts	Chuck Coyl
Michael Johnson	KN	
Joe Mancuso	KN	
Adam Dowell	KN	
Deborah Carr	KN	
Kirsten Trump	R&D UA	
KenYatta Rogers	R&D UA	

November 18	New York City	J. Allen Suddeth
Ricki Ravitts	SS	
Andrew Smereck	SS	
Christopher Boldon	SS	
Tony Javed	SS	

Jeffrey Nauman	SS	
Denise Hurd	SS-EAE	
Dan O'Driscoll	SS-EAE	
November 18	Swordplay Stage Combat	J. Allen Suddeth
Joseph Travers	SIS	
Denise Hurd	SIS	
Peter Husovsky	SIS	
Kate Schafer	KN-EAE	
Andrew Smereck	KN-EAE	

November 27	New York University	J. Allen Suddeth
J. David Brimmer	BS	
Tara Canny	BS	
Julie Schubert	BS	
Lisabeth Jorgensen	UA	
Rick Faugno	UA	
Rob Signom	UA	
Tim Peper	UA	
Douglas Castillo	BS	
Michael Yahn	BS	
Kathryn Ekblad	UA	
Rachel Chavkin	UA	
Mick Lauer	BS	
Bobby Knox	BS	
Allegra Libonati	UA	

DECEMBER 2001

December 5	Marymount College London Centre	Brian Byrnes
Richard Ryan	SIS	
Erin Hood	SIS	
Tara Seisener	SIS	
Thomas Hamilton	SIS	
Janine Reyes	SIS	
Greg Bibens	SIS	
Nicholas Kauffman	SIS	
Juliette Reiss	SIS	
Jed Hancock-Brainerd	SIS	
Jonathan Templeton	SIS	
David Ruffin	SIS	
Sally Burgess	SIS	
Brynn O'Malley	SIS	
Lori Cohan	SIS	
Shelby Lee	SIS	
Maryssa Wanlass	SIS	
Amber Largent	SIS	
Maia Newell-Large	SIS	
Anna Egloff	SIS	

December 5	Ithaca College	Brian Byrnes
Bret Yount	UA	
Kate Wiegiers	UA	
William Pinchin	UA	

December 10	University of Michigan	Drew Fracher
Erik Fredricksen	UA QS	
Katie Banks	UA QS	
Julie Strassel	UA QS	
Audra Ewing R&D	UA QS	
Dan Granke	UA QS	
Josh Lefkowitz	UA QS	
Allyson Grossman	R&D UA QS	
Ethan Kogan	R&D-EAE UA-EAE BS-EAE QS-EAE	
Christina Reynolds	R&D-EAE UA-EAE QS-EAE	
David Jones	R&D UA QS	
Jason Smith	R&D UA	
Jonathan Rosen	R&D UA	
Tehura Henning	R&D UA QS	

December 13	Virginia Commonwealth Univ.	David Leong
Aaron Anderson	UA-EAE	
Austin Corbet	UA	
J.D. Deluca	UA	
Jennifer Krisch	UA	
Bryant Pugh	UA-EAE	
Nicole Russo	UA	
Tiffany Wagner	UA	
Danny Wikowsky	UA	
Andy Grigg	UA	

December 13	Boston University	J. Allen Suddeth
Edward Sharon	R&D	
Rod Brady	R&D	
Benjamin Sands	R&D	
Robyn Levine	R&D	
Jennifer Robinson	R&D	
Geoffrey O'Donnell	R&D	
Mehera Blum	R&D	
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Shean-Michael Hodge-Bowles	R&D	
Brandon Murphy	R&D	
Johnathan Green	R&D	
Corina Alfier	R&D	

December 15	Univ. of Colorado at Boulder	Dale Girard
Geoffrey Kent	UA	
Lindsey Blackhurst	UA	
Rick Compton	UA	
Sarah Jane Johnson	UA	
John Jurcheck	UA	
Brian Murray	UA	
Michael Skillern	UA	
Jordan Young	UA	

December 19	Seattle, Washington	David Boushey
Mike Mahaffey	BS KN	
Angela Johnson	BS KN	
Ryan Spickard	BS KN	
Kate Bortner	BS	
Scot McIntosh	BS KN	
Anna-Marie Broback	BS KN	
Crystal Smith	BS KN	
Kevin Inouye	KN	

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January 17	Columbia College-Chicago	Richard Raether
David Woolley	R&D UA BS	
Megan Carr	R&D UA BS	
Renee Panchal	R&D UA BS	
Dario Ruis	R&D SS UA BS	
Aaron Manby	R&D SS UA BS	
Jesse Weinberg	UA BS	
Paul Phillips	UA BS	
Alzan Pelesic	R&D SS BS	
Bradley Norris	S&S KN	

Matt Cowie	S&S KN
Jamie Luemen	S&S KN
Jacob Snodgrass	S&S KN
Alexander Martin	S&S KN
David Yondorf	S&S-EAE KN-EAE
Glenese Hand	S&S KN
Jessica McCloud	S&S-EAE KN-EAE
Justine Turner	S&S KN
Nick Lewis	S&S KN

FEBRUARY 2002

February 1	American Musical & Dramatic Academy	Drew Fracher
Nicole Callender,	UA	
John Paul Scheidler	R&D UA	
Marisa Byer	R&D UA	
Robert Zuniga	R&D UA	
Phil Morris	R&D UA	
Marc Silberschatz	R&D UA	
Vanessa Barnhar	R&D UA	
Jason Eddy	R&D UA	
Dap Dunbar	R&D UA	

February 2	The Winter Wonderland Wkshp	Chuck Coyl
Angela Bonacasa,		
Neil Massey		
David Schmidt	R&D UA	
Peter Talbot	R&D UA	
Cliff Lawson	R&D UA	
David Blixt	R&D UA	

February 17	Renewal	David Boushey
Mike Mahaffey	SS BS QS S&S	
Ryan Spickard	SS BS QS S&S	
Lacy Altwine	SS BS QS S&S	

MARCH 2002

March 3	Actor's Gymnasium	Dale Girard
Chuck Coyl,		
Angela Bonacasa	R&D UA BS KN	
Wm. Michael Gray	R&D UA KN	
Ryan Lawrence	BS	
John Tovar	BS	
Gregory Larson	R&D UA KN	
Justin Marchert	R&D UA KN	
Victor Mazzeo	BS	
Brenda Kelly	R&D	
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Jessica Hester	R&D BS	
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David Kepley	BS	

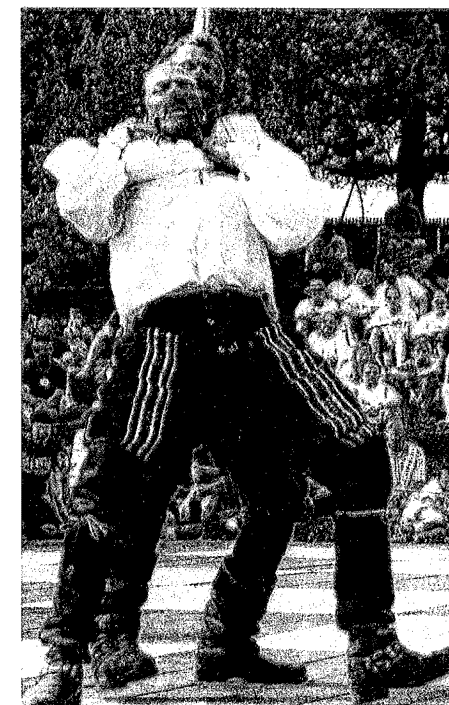
March 3	Swordplay Stage Combat	J. Allen Suddeth
Joseph Travers	UA QS	
Sarah Bisman	UA	
Nathan DeCoux	UA	
Laurie Jeffers	UA	
Meron Langsner	QS	
Chant Macleod	QS	
Karen Macleod	QS	
Mary Molloy	UA	
Dan O'Driscoll	UA QS-EAE	
Sunny Paige	UA QS	
Karen Schaefer	UA QS	
Mark James Schryver	UA QS	
Andrew Smereck	QS-EAE	
Peggy Wolfe	QS	

March 3	New York City	J. Allen Suddeth
Ricki Ravitts	KN	
Robert Dyckman	KN	
Tony Javed	KN	
Robin Flanagan	KN	
Dan O'Driscoll	KN	
Cat Schaefer	KN	
Campbell Bridges	KN	

March 5	Video Renewal	Drew Fracher
Brian Byrnes	SS S&S	
Leraldo Anzaldua	SS S&S	

March 7	The Chicago Stage Combat Academy	David Woolley
Angela Bonacasa	KN	
Lauren Pesca	SIS	
Anne Foldeak	KN	
Amy Harmon	KN	
Joel Sutliff	KN	
Jeff Lisse	KN	
Brian LeTraunik	SIS KN	
Gregory Larson	QS	
Tom Dacey Carr	QS KN	

March 12	North Carolina School of the Arts	Chuck Coyl
Dale Girard	UA-EAE KN-EAE	
Tim Eulich	UA-EAE KN-EAE	
Cedric Hayman	UA-EAE KN-EAE	
Brian Sutherin	UA-EAE KN-EAE	
Allison Nichols	R&D UA-EAE KN-EAE	
Jennifer Etzkin	R&D UA KN	
Kenny Cahall	UA KN	
Rachel Shane	UA KN	
Maggie Marlin	R&D-EAE UA KN	
Henry Vick	R&D-EAE UA KN	
Megan Papier	UA KN	
Chris Hartl	UA KN	



With a vicious chokehold, Jason Zumwalt (behind) subdues Greg Ramsey in the 1996 Human Chess Match at the Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire. Fights by Greg Ramsey, photo by Bob Bunch.

Jeff Cusimano	UA KN
Jeremy Beazlie	UA KN
Lindsey Harrison	UA KN
Kristina Bell	UA KN
Rachad Anthony	UA KN
Jennifer Ferrin	UA KN
Ryan Hill	UA KN
Lucas Hall	UA KN
Alcorn Minor	UA KN
Ruth Eglsaer	UA KN
Rebecca Jones	UA KN
Jerry Miceli	UA KN
Jennifer Lyon	UA KN

March 14	Theatre School at DePaul University	Chuck Coyl
Nicholas Sandys	R&D UA KN	
Christopher Harris	R&D UA KN	
Brian Swibel	R&D UA KN	
Brian Troyan	R&D UA KN	
Scott Jay	R&D UA KN	

Ron Hanks	R&D UA KN
Jameela Aghili	R&D UA KN
Christine Bunuan	R&D UA KN
Ryan O'Donnell	UA
Linda Obasi	UA
Adrienne Coleman	R&D UA-EAE KN
Janine Mercandetti	R&D UA-EAE KN

March 30	The Stage Combat Workshop	at Louisiana Tech
Angela Bonacasa, Mike		Chuck Coyl
Mahaffey, Donald Preston,		

John McFarland	BS S&S
Nicole Godino	BS S&S
Marcus Lane	R&D UA
David Hoover	R&D UA
Al Foote III	R&D UA
Ashley Wright	R&D UA
Andrew Sutherland	R&D UA
Chris Foster	R&D UA-EAE
John Chambers	R&D UA-EAE

APRIL 2002

April 7	Actor's Gymnasium	Brian Byrnes
Angela Bonacasa	SIS	
Gregory Larson	SIS QS	
Brenda Kelly	SIS BS	
Mara Wolverton	SIS	
Chris Julun	SIS	
Jessica Hester	SIS	
Bill Benton	SIS	
James Ballard	SIS	
Jill Matarelli	SIS	
Betsy Gargano	SIS	
John Tovar	SIS	
David Kepley	SIS	

April 7	Chicago, IL	Brian Byrnes
Neil Massey	S&S	

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SAFD Hotline (800) 659-6579
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President
CHUCK COYL
6321 N. Lakewood
Chicago, IL 60660
(773) 764-3825
chuckcoyl@prodigy.net

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BRIAN BYRNES
School of Theatre
University of Houston
Houston, TX 77204-5071
H: (713) 528-3413
W: (713) 743-2915
BByrnes@UH.edu

Secretary
ANGELA BONACASA
6321 N. Lakewood
Chicago, IL 60660
H: (773) 764-3825
Cell: (773) 485-3098
goodhouse@hotmail.com

Treasurer
ANDREW HAYES
Indiana Wesleyan University
4201 South Washington
Marion, IN 46953
H: (765) 677-2728
W: (765) 677-2794
Ahayes@indwes.edu

Fight Master Representative
DREW FRACHER
61 Bon Jan Lane
Highland Heights, KY 41076
(859) 441-9433
vern10th@worldnet.att.net

Fight Director Representative
SCOT MANN
1211 Brentwood Court
Douglasville, GA 30135
(770) 949-5097
scotmann@stagecombat.com

Certified Teacher Representative
GEOFFREY KENT
3047 West 47th Avenue
Unit #512
Denver, CO 80211
(303) 877-2670
geoffkent@attbi.com
fightdirector@attbi.com

**Actor Combatant/
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(212) 717-8117
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(212) 315-3956
Dan35051@aol.com

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10353 Alameda Alma Road
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cashman@gdi.net

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176 Clemmons
Hanover, IN 47243
(812) 866-9344
stark@hanover.edu

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P H Burt@aol.com
www.4lafa.org

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Acting Company
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W: (541) 482-2111
chrisduval@earthlink.net

PACIFIC WESTERN
RICHARD LANE
The Academy of the Sword
587 Lisbon Street
San Francisco, CA 94112
(415) 957-3622
ricl@pacbell.net

FOREIGN
RICHARD RYAN
10 Cranbrook Park
Wood Green, London
N22 5NA United Kingdom
+44 (0) 20 8881 1536
richard@stagefight.com
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Fight Master Emeritus
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martinezjd@wlu.edu

J.R. BEARDSLEY
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www.showcreators.com
intljr@aol.com

DAVID BOUSHEY
2723 Saratoga Lane
Everett, WA 98203
(425) 290-9973
BUSHMAN4@prodigy.net

BRIAN BYRNES
School of Theatre
University of Houston
Houston, TX 77204-5071
H: (713) 528-3413
W: (713) 743-2915
BByrnes@UH.edu

CHUCK COYL
6321 N. Lakewood
Chicago, IL 60660
(773) 764-3825
chuckcoyl@prodigy.net

DREW FRACHER
61 Bon Jan Lane
Highland Heights, KY 41076
(859) 441-9433
vern10th@worldnet.att.net

ERIK FREDRICKSEN
1425 Textile Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48108
H: (313) 944-0116
W: (313) 747-2296
Hannis@UMICH.edu

DALE ANTHONY GIRARD
969 LaPlata Drive
Kernersville, NC 27284
(336) 993-3255
F: (336) 993-5955
H: FightsGuy@aol.com
W: dgirard@NCARTS.edu

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106 North Strawberry Street
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H: (804) 254-2071
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1834 Camp Avenue
Rockford, IL 61103
(815) 962-6579
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J. ALLEN SUDDETH
131 Linden Avenue
Glenside, NJ 07028
(973) 748-5697
Fax: (973) 748-5697
NYFGTDIRECTOR@aol.com

DAVID WOOLLEY
3315 West Sunnyside #28
Chicago, IL 60625
H: (773) 267-8513
W: (312) 344-6123
smen@interaccess.com;
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FIGHT DIRECTORS

GEOFFREY ALM
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H: (425) 483-1351
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(215) 334-1814
Pager: (888) 979-6937
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J. DAVID BRIMMER
434 7th Street, #3
Brooklyn, NY 11215
H: (718) 788-5381
W: (917) 928-3028
jdavidbrimmer@aol.com

PAYSON BURT
Los Angeles Fight Academy
4335 Van Nuys Blvd. PMB #195
Sherman Oaks, CA 91403
H: (818) 997-3356
Cell: (818) 694-5550
P H Burt@aol.com
www.4lafa.org

DAN CARTER
603 East Irvin Avenue
State College, PA 16801-6606
H: (814) 867 1803
W: (814) 865-7586
dhc4@email.PSU.edu

JAMIE CHEATHAM
230 West 79th Street Apartment 1A
New York, NY 10024
(212) 580-5579
swordman@nyc.rr.com

MICHAEL CHIN
260 W. 22nd Street, Apt. 3
New York, NY 10011
(212) 807-1004
Fax: (212) 807-9557
Nscwboss@aol.com

CHARLES CONWELL
1252 Yellow Springs Road
Chester Springs, PA 19425
H: (610) 827-7707
W: (215) 717-6454
CharlesConwell@aol.com

PAUL DENNHARDT
942 E. 550 Road
Stanford, IL 61774
(309) 392-2300
chefprd@aol.com
prdenh@ilstu.edu

DEXTER FIDLER
1620 Ortega Street
San Francisco, CA 94122
(415) 564-6040
Fidhauer@yahoo.com

BRENT GIBBS
738 E. Mabel
Tucson, AZ 85719-9402
H: (520) 622-2143
W: (520) 621-9402
BrentG@U.Arizona.edu

GREGORY HOFFMAN
4189 N. Wilson Avenue
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H: (415) 606-3835
Cell: (209) 601-7729
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JEFF A.R. JONES
2917 Isabella Drive
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(919) 835-3557
JARJones@aol.com

k JENNY JONES
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COLLEEN KELLY
Alabama Shakespeare Festival
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H: (334) 395-6991
W: (334) 271-5311
colleenkelly@mindspring.com

GEOFFREY KENT
3047 West 47th Avenue Apt 512
Denver, CO 80211
(303) 877-2670
geoffkent@attbi.com

RICHARD LANE
The Academy of the Sword
587 Lisbon Street
San Francisco, CA 94112
(415) 957-3622
ricl@pacbell.net

BRUCE LECURE
9830 SW 222 Terrace
Miami, FL 33190
H: (305) 234-7897
W: (305) 284-4474
BLecure@aol.com

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P.O. Box 23078
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Clanrdmac@aol.com

SCOT MANN
Atlanta Stage Combat Studio
1211 Brentwood Court
Douglasville, GA 30135
(770) 949-5097
scotmann@stagecombat.com
www.stagecombat.com

JOHN McFARLAND
1146 South Ridgeland Avenue
Oak Park, IL 60304
(708) 660-0636
jmacland@aol.com

DR. ROBIN McFARQUHAR
810 North Colar, # 1
Urbana, IL 61801
H: (217) 337-0099
W: (217) 333-1659
rmcfarqu@uiuc.edu

TIM D. PINNOW
Theatre Department
New Mexico State University
Las Cruces, NM 88003
H: (505) 647-2667
W: (505) 646-4517
TPinnow@NMSU.edu

RON PIRETTI
15 Leroy Street, #12
New York, NY 10014
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2350 Broadway, #924
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SAFD Hotline (800) 659-6579
rravitts@carlsonpartners.com

RICHARD RYAN
10 Cranbrook Park
Wood Green, London
N22 5NA United Kingdom
+44 (0) 20 8881 1536
richard@stagefight.com
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Alexander, NY 14005
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(610) 336-4805
jackyoung59@hotmail.com

CERTIFIED TEACHERS

AARON ANDERSON
1813 Nortonia Road
Richmond, VA 23229
(804) 683-3483
aanderson@vcu.edu

ANGELA BONACASA
6321 N. Lakewood
Chicago, IL 60660
H: (773) 764-3825
Cell: (773) 485-3098
Goodhouse@hotmail.com

JAMES NEEDHAM BROWN
4529 Shawhan Road
Chattanooga, TN 37411
(404) 668-5621
JNBrown12153@aol.com

NICOLE CALLENDER
857 Montgomery Street
Jersey City, NJ 07306
(201) 435-9067
calendorf@earthlink.net

JOHN CASHMAN
10353 Alameda Alma Road
Clermont, FL 34711
H: (352) 394-8522
W: (407) 560-1083
cashman@gdi.net

GINA CERIMELE-MECHLEY
2353 Park Avenue Apt. 4
Cincinnati, OH 45206
(513) 200-5866
Swordlady@sprintmail.com

BRUCE CROMER
101 King Street
Yellow Springs, OH 45387
(937) 767-8510
bruce.cromer@wright.edu

TIZA GARLAND
1972 Four Oaks
Commerce, MI 48382
H: (248) 360-9506
Cell: (407) 256 9215
TizaG1@aol.com

STEPHEN GRAY
701 N. Leavitt St.
Chicago, IL 60612-1309
(773) 818-7972
SGray@elgin.cc.il.us

MARK "Rat" GUINN
2008 West California Avenue
Ruston, LA 71270
H: (318) 255-6823
W: (318) 257-4693
Cell: (318) 791-9672
mguinn@latech.edu
rat@elvis.com

ANDREW HAYES
Indiana Wesleyan University
4201 South Washington
Marion, IN 46953
H: (765) 677-2728
W: (765) 677-2794
Ahayes@indwes.edu

MICHAEL J. HOOD
Dean, College of Fine Arts
PMB 403
7720-512 Main Street
Fogelsville, PA 18051
H: (724) 463-9192
W: (724) 357-9192
mhood@grove.iup.edu

SPENCER HUMM
5765-F Burke Centre Pkwy. #125
Burke, VA 22015
(703) 626-8572
spencer@hackandslash.com

DR. MICHAEL KIRKLAND
8315 Countryside Ln.
Fogelsville, PA 18051
H: (610) 285-0210
W: (610) 683-4571
mhill3326@aol.com (H)
kirkland@kutztown.edu (W)

MICHELLE LADD
12016 Temperance Street
Huntsville, AL 35803
H: (818) 838-1424
Pager: (888) 614-2700
HRHmladd@aol.com

BILL LENGFELDER
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lengfeld@mail.smu.edu

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(818) 760-4712
tloweth@dbalax.com

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(206) 378-0398
Mike_Mahaffey@hotmail.com

NEIL MASSEY
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DOUGLAS MUMAW
600 D Univ Blvd Suite 125
Harrisonbrg, VA 22801
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drmmumaw@eucloraimail.com

MARK OLSEN
457 E Fairmount Ave
State College, PA 16801
(814) 867 8119
mco2@psu.edu

DONALD PRESTON
1637 Selby Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55104
(651) 645-2093
theyfight@yahoo.com

GREG RAMSEY
210 Riders Way
Lebanon, PA 17042
H: (717) 272-7265
W: (717) 665-7021 ext. 139
Sabre@desuper.net

TINA ROBINSON
Hirsevej 26 2700
Br'nsh 1
Denmark
(45) 32967874
fight@mail.danbbs.dk

IAN ROSE
218 Carpenter Street
Philadelphia, PA 19147
(646) 345-4300
rosi@arcadia.edu

JOHN PAUL SCHEIDLER
720 West 181st Street #53
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H: (212) 928-5328
Service: (212) 462-9116
jpdoe@earthlink.net

LEWIS SHAW
Vulcan's Forge
330 West 23rd Street
Baltimore, MD 21211
(410) 321-6519
LonnieSC@aol.com

EDWARD "Ted" SHARON
84R Walnut Street
Peabody, MA 01960-5631
(617) 323-1506
tsharon@hotmail.com

HARRIS SMITH
7301 Candletree Lane #91
Lincoln, NE 68506
(402) 489 6977
hsmith2@unl.edu

PAUL STEGER
1614 East Boyd
Norman, OK 73071-2616
H: (405) 292-3578
W: (405) 325-5302
bucy1999@aol.com

TIMOTHY TAIT
31-24 47th Street #2F
Astoria, NY 11103
(917) 202-6735
bottledspider@hotmail.com

JOSEPH TRAVERS
413 West 56th Street Apt 7
New York, NY 10019
(212) 726-2400
swordplay98@hotmail.com

BRAD WALLER
5616 Kirkham Court
Springfield, VA 22151
H: (703) 323-7233
W: (703) 861-3307
GlobeFG@aol.com

ROBERT WALSH
60 Tolman Street
West Newton, MA 02165-1020
H: (617) 244-9656
W: (617) 494-3078
Fax: (617) 244-2487
WalshLowry@msn.com

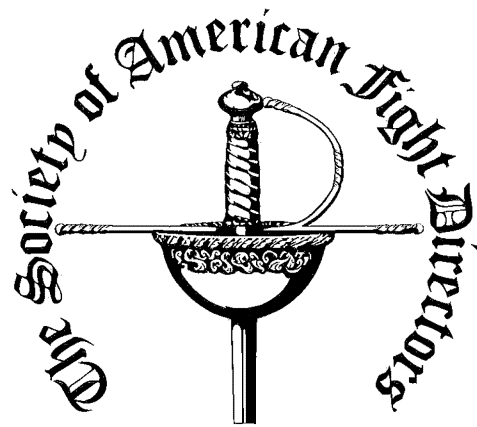
ROBERT WESTLEY
612 Inverry Lane
Deerfield, IL 60015
(205) 310-2235
dpwestley@yahoo.com

D.C. WRIGHT
1799 Centre Street #7
West Roxbury, MA 02132
(617) 469-9735
dchedu97@aol.com

BRET YOUNT
116 Boundary Road
London E13 9QG UK
(020) 8552 0775
swordsman@compuserve.com

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

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For the show *MythQuest*, Lancelot (Anthony DeLongis, left) fights Maleagar (F. Braun McAsh) in the dying light of sunset. Fight direction by F. Braun McAsh, photo provided by Anthony DeLongis.

