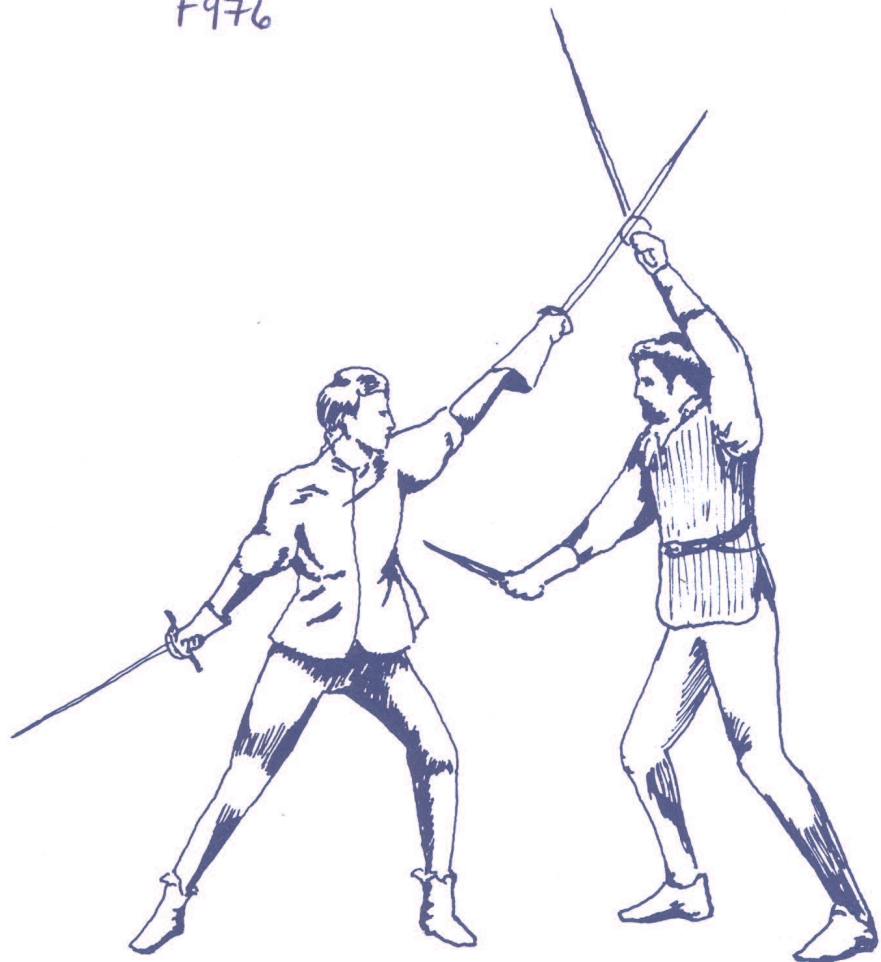


# *Theatre Video Series*

## **“ Combat For The Stage ”**

Teacher's Guide

F976



# "Combat for the Stage"

## Teacher's Guide

There is more to realistic and exciting sword fighting than meets the eye. "Combat for the Stage" teaches the fundamentals of stage combat through the importance of safety and well planned choreography. This video demonstrates hand-to-hand combat, the use and selection of stage guns, stage falls, the use and selection of swords, and choreographing armed and unarmed combat. A quiz, selective bibliography and handout materials have been included in the teacher's guide and we encourage you to make copies for your students. The following is the outline for "Combat for the Stage."

- I. INTRODUCTION
  - A. The use and selection of stage guns
    - i. Real weapons vs. stage weapons
  - B. The use and selection of swords
    - i. Parts of a sword
    - ii. What is a combat worthy sword
    - iii. The correct sword for the time period
  - C. Unarmed combat choreography
    - i. Types of blows
    - ii. Margin of safety
    - iii. Telegraphing the blow
    - iv. Stage falls
  - D. Armed combat choreography (blow sequences)
    - i. Blow sequences
    - ii. Distance
    - iii. Contact
  - E. Armed combat choreography (breaks)
    - i. Types of breaks
    - ii. Reflecting the character
    - iii. Rehearsing
  - F. Reviewing a choreographed sword fight
- II. SAFETY IN THE USE AND SELECTION OF GUNS
  - A. Selecting weapons
    - i. Real guns and the dangers involved
    - ii. The wad
    - iii. Started pistols and their disadvantages
    - iv. Stage guns and why they are safe
  - B. Variety of stage guns
    - i. M-16
    - ii. Riot shotgun
    - iii. AK-47
    - iv. .44 Magnum
    - v. P-38
    - vi. Snub nose .38
    - vii. Other stage guns
- III. SAFETY IN THE USE AND SELECTION OF SWORDS
  - A. Selection of the weapon
    - i. Parts of a sword
      - Blade
      - Guard
      - Handle
      - Pommel
      - Tang
    - ii. Real swords vs. stage swords
    - iii. Safety the number one consideration
  - B. Competition weapons

- i. Foil
- ii. Sabre
- iii. Epee
- iv. Rapier
- v. Musketeer
- vi. Variety of handles
- C. Other types of stage weapons
  - i. Broad sword
    - "One handed"
    - "Two handed"
  - ii. Samurai sword
  - iii. Sword blank
  - iv. Battle axes

#### IV. UNARMED COMBAT CHOREOGRAPHY

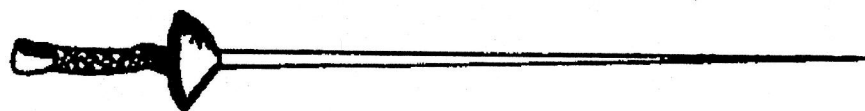
- A. Types of stage blows (the body as a weapon)
  - i. "Stage slap"
    - Where to make contact
  - ii. Control
    - Isometrics
    - Practice for control
    - Pulling the blow
  - iii. "The punch"
    - Reactions
  - iv. "The knee"
  - v. "The kick"
    - Flatten the foot
  - vi. "Blow to the black"
    - Protect the spine
    - Distribute the blow
- B. Margin of safety
  - i. Angles
  - ii. Telegraphing the blow
  - iii. Writing down the blow sequences
- C. Stage falls
  - i. Safety
    - Fall on padded areas of the body
    - Roll into the fall
  - ii. "Fainting"
  - iii. "Roll fall" or "pratfall"
- D. Rehearsal and safety tips
  - i. Plan carefully
  - ii. Margin of safety
  - iii. Timing
  - iv. Practice slowly
  - v. Write down blow sequences

#### V. ARMED COMBAT CHOREOGRAPHY (Blow Sequences)

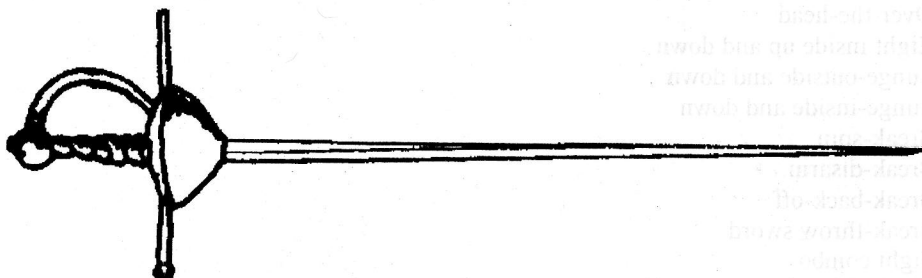
- A. The choreography "language"
  - i. Outside
  - ii. Inside
  - iii. Up, middle and down
  - iv. Blow sequences are written down from the attacker's point of view
- B. Making contact
  - i. Fighter distance
  - ii. Right angles
  - iii. Edge to edge
  - iv. The "meat" of the blade

- v. Pulling the blow
  - C. Blow sequences
    - i. Outside up, outside down
    - ii. Inside up, inside down
    - iii. Outside up, inside up
    - iv. Outside down, inside down
    - v. The triplet
    - vi. The combo
    - vii. The riposte
    - viii. "Head blows"
  - D. Using multiples of four
- VI. ARMED COMBAT CHOREOGRAPHY (Breaks)
  - A. Types of breaks
    - i. Stopping a blow sequence
      - Any stop constitutes a break
    - ii. "The lock"
    - iii. "Over the head"
      - Telegraphing the blow
    - iv. "Under the feet"
    - v. Using props or furniture
      - Breaks can reflect character
    - vi. "The disarm"
    - vii. "The lunge"
    - viii. "The kill"
  - B. Rehearsal tips
    - i. Rehearse a fight as it will be performed
    - ii. Beginning rehearsal should be at half speed
    - iii. Telegraph your blows
- VII. REVIEWING THE CHOREOGRAPHED SWORD FIGHT
  - A. Review:
    - Four outside up and down
    - Combo
    - Break-move apart and circle
    - Triplet
    - Lunge-outside down
    - Triplet
    - Four outside up and down
    - Lunge outside down
    - Break-spin
    - Four outside down, inside down
    - Break-lock
    - Lunge-outside down
    - Over-the-head
    - Eight inside up and down
    - Lunge-outside and down
    - Lunge-inside and down
    - Break-spin
    - Break-disarm
    - Break-back-off
    - Break-throw sword
    - Eight combo
    - Break-the kill

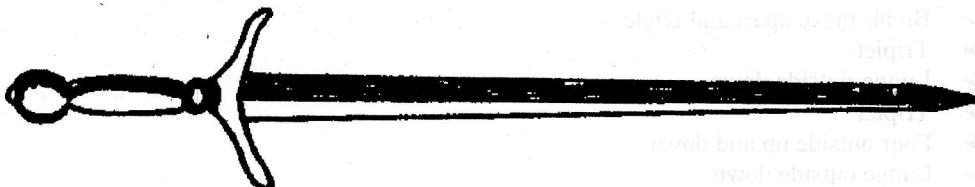
# SELECTED SWORDS



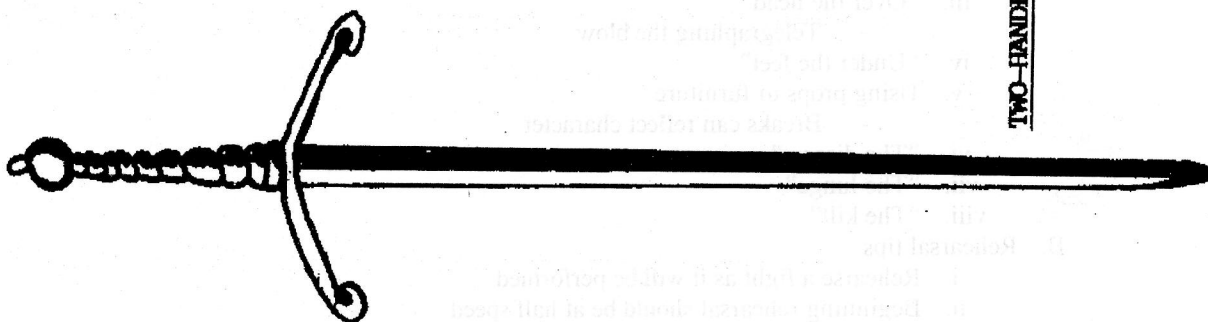
FOIL



CUP-HILT RAPIER  
(based on epee)



ONE-HANDED BROADSWORD

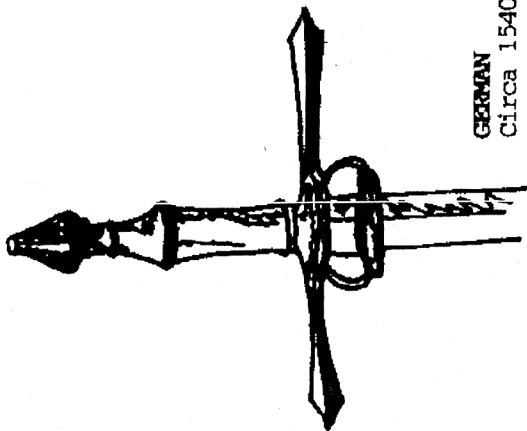


TWO-HANDED BROADSWORD

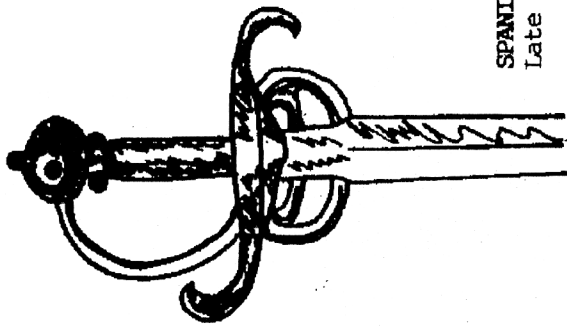


SAMURAI SWORD

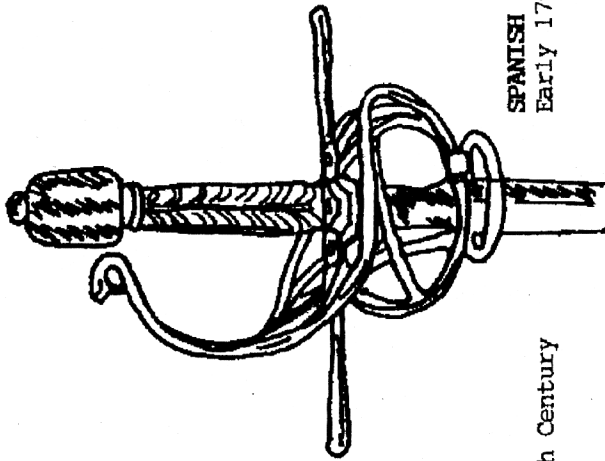
# SELECTED SWORD GUARDS



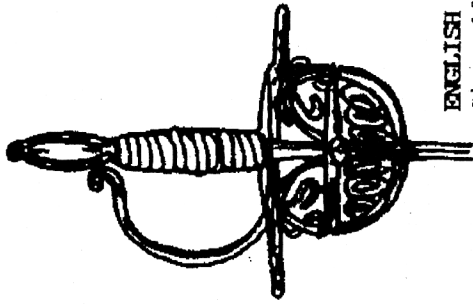
GERMAN  
Circa 1540



SPANISH  
Late 16th Century

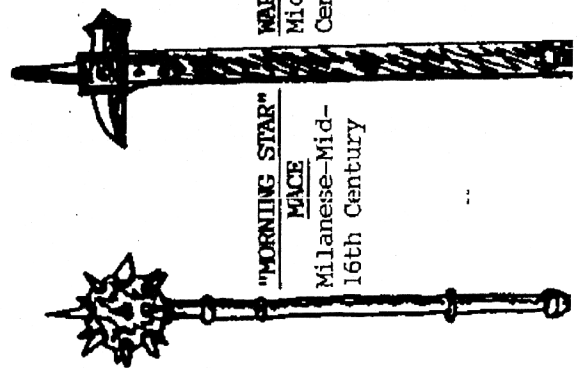


SPANISH  
Early 17th Century

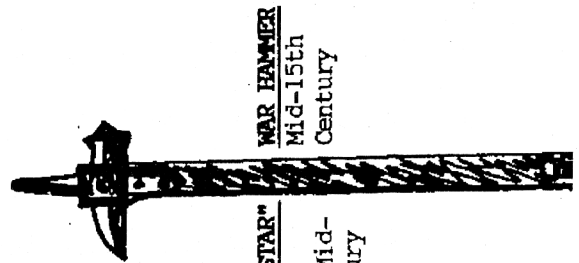


ENGLISH  
Circa 1620

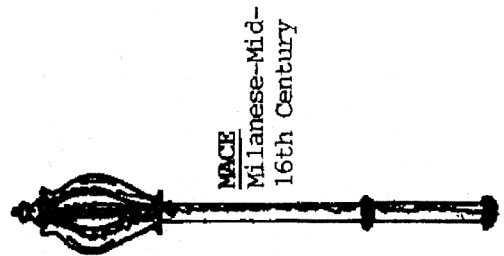
# MISCELLANEOUS SELECTED WEAPONS



"MORNING STAR"  
MACE  
Milanese-Mid-  
16th Century



WAR HAMMER  
Mid-15th  
Century



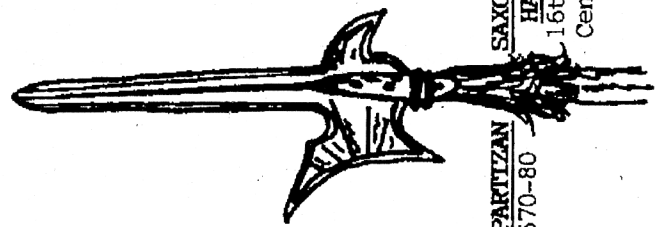
MACE  
Milanese-Mid-  
16th Century



ITALIAN  
HALBERD  
16th Century



FRENCH PARTIZAN  
Circa 1670-80



SAXON  
HALBERD  
16th & 17th  
Century

## Combat for the Stage Quiz

1. Real guns work fine for stage use.

True

False

2. Name the parts of a sword.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name two competition weapons.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

4. Where is contact made in a stage slap?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. The most important aspect of any stage combat is:

\_\_\_\_\_

6. When performing unarmed stage combat use control and always \_\_\_\_\_ your blows.

7. What is the margin of safety?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. What are the three sections of the body?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

9. Armed stage combat is always choreographed from the \_\_\_\_\_ point of view.

10. Name one armed combat blow sequence.

\_\_\_\_\_

## Combat for the Stage Quiz Key

1. False
2. Blade  
Guard  
Handle  
Pommel  
Tang
3. Foil  
Sabre  
Epee  
Rapier  
Musketeer
4. The neck
5. Safety
6. Pull
7. The distance by which you "miss" when performing unarmed stage combat.
8. Up  
Middle  
Down
9. Attackers
10. Outside up, outside down  
Inside up, inside down  
Outside up, inside down  
Outside down, inside down  
The triplet  
The combo  
The riposte  
(Any combination of blows is acceptable answer)



## Selective Bibliography

- Bower, Muriel. Fencing. William C. Brown Company, 1976. ISBN 0-697-07065-4
- Castello, Julio M. The Theory and Practice of Fencing. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961.
- Hobbs, William. Stage Combat. St. Martin's Press, 1980. ISBN 0-312-75493-0.
- Paculski, George R. Sword of the Samurai. Paldin Press, 1985. ISBN 0-87364-332-1.
- Szabo, Laszlo. Fencing and the Master. 1977. ISBN 963-13-1275-5.

## Stage Weapons Sources

Stages Unlimited, Inc.  
635 Dee Road  
Park Ridge, IL 60068  
(312) 698.6545

American Fencers Supply Company  
1180 Folsom Street  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
(415) 863.7911

Collector's Armoury, Inc.  
800 Slaters Lane  
PO Box 1061  
Alexandria, VA 22313

Santelli  
465 South Dean Street  
Englewood, NJ 07631  
(201) 871.3105

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