



The Ring of Steel

Action Theatre

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The Ring of Steel is a troupe of performers capable of providing a wide variety of artistic and educational services. We offer theatrical shows, combat training, stunt F/X, lectures, demonstrations, costume and theatrical equipment rental, and F/X makeup design and consultation. We can provide any one of a combination of our many special services that will fit a need or a venue. Given sufficient time, we can develop virtually any type of action or dramatic production. We have experience performing in festivals, conventions, films, television, stage and live-action stunt shows, parties (specialized children's birthdays), corporate training and even weddings. (We've kidnapped the bride and staged her rescue!) The Ring of Steel is the largest action theater, stunt and special effects troupe in the country and the fight choreographers for the Michigan Renaissance Festival. The Ring's Maestro, Christopher Barbeau, has over 30 years experience in swordplay and stunts and the 7 senior staff embody a combined 150 years of training with 23 feature film credits and over 350 stage productions.

Theatrical Combat & Performances

We have a repertoire of 3 to 40 minute original vignettes that are suitable to a wide variety of themes — broad comedy to interpretive dance and classical drama. We also have a large repertoire of 30 second to 5 minute fights that can be added to virtually any type of show. We have our own outdoor stage and renaissance-style pavilion. As a stunt performance troupe, we run the historical gamut from medieval to futuristic. We are trained in pyrotechnics including body burns, fire breathing, explosives and firearms. Our repertoire includes rappelling, zip lines and high falls. Light us on fire, and throw us through a glass window for a three-story fall and we're happy to oblige. We can place 2-30 people on stage, fully armed from a stock of over 1000 theatrical weapons representing over one hundred and fifty thousand dollars worth of equipment. Rapier, broadsword, quarterstaff, dagger, shields, smallsword, whips and hand-to-hand are just a few of the broad categories of prop weapons with which we can perform. We also have a stock of period and modern handguns and longguns.

Demonstrations, Workshops & Lectures

Demonstrations are typically designed to fit a 1-2 hour format and usually consist of our performing 2 or 3 2-person scenes; allowing the audiences to hold and examine examples of about 50 different prop weapon types and assorted armor components; and discussing the history of the equipment from 500AD to 1750AD from a number of different perspectives that are tailored to the individual class content and presented in a fashion appropriate to student age.

Workshops are 1-2 hours in length and basic principles of theatrical conflict are introduced and 1-2 demonstrations fights are performed. Participants are invited to try their hand at swordplay and hand-to-hand under the guidance of our instructors. We also consult on any staged conflict or stunt for stage and screen.

A Few of the Lecture topics available:

- † Shakespeare and the Theater
- † Western vs. Eastern Martial Arts
- † Arthurian Mythology
- † Stylistic Development of Swordplay
- † Zen and the Martial Arts
- † Greek and Arthurian Ideals in the Renaissance
- † Martial Arts and Stunt work on the stage and screen
- † A historical perspective on the Psychology of Violence

Additional specialized lectures are available.



Choreography & Consultation

The Ring can provide customized choreography for productions containing virtually any level of physical conflict from the silly to the sublime. We will coordinate training for 2-1200 performers and we are experienced in working closely with the director and actors to interpret scenic requirements and to assist in the creation of a dramatic moment that enhances the presentation. We can provide the necessary equipment, extras for mass battles, and F/X for graphic portrayals. We consult on any aspect of staged violence: technical, interpretive and historical. We encourage directors to involve us even before the casting process as you cannot begin training performers too early for the rigors involved in safe and effective theatrical combat.

Other Services:

- ‡ Games - Balloon Fencing, Catapults, Crossbow, Archery
- ‡ Modular Stage (8'x12' to 16'x40')
- ‡ Canvas Pavilion (18'x28' setup & tear down)
- ‡ Fogger & Hazer (OSHA approved for opera)
- ‡ Air Brush Makeup unit (10 brush)
- ‡ 28' Cargo bus/16' Cube van/14' Maxivan
- ‡ Sound System (speakers, mixer, amp, wireless mikes)
- ‡ Sound Production services (Mixes, CD's burned, composition, live video mixing)
- ‡ Lights (gobo scanners, color changers, pars, fresnels, scoops, pin spots, strobes, mirror balls, DMX control board)
- ‡ 350+ costumes
- ‡ Plate armor, chain mail & shields
- ‡ 1000+ weapons (swords, black powder, semi-auto handguns, etc.) Realistic, stylized and stage/costume only.
- ‡ Climbing/Flying rigging & harnesses
- ‡ Zip-line trolleys, rigging & scaffolding
- ‡ Stunt Fall body padding
- ‡ Squib Vest
- ‡ High fall pit (24"x6'x12')
- ‡ Mats (1"x6'x12' and 2"x3'x6')
- ‡ Flash Pot F/X (controller, cans, cable)
- ‡ Kettle Corn Popcorn popper (live-action display)
- ‡ Bubble Machines
- ‡ Fire Stunts (performance only)

Typical performance venues for the Ring include:

- ‡ Theme parties/events for any age
- ‡ Weddings
- ‡ Madrigal Feasts & Wassails
- ‡ Tall Ship Events
- ‡ Film & Video
- ‡ Renaissance Faires
- ‡ Science Fiction & Fantasy Conventions
- ‡ School English and Drama Departments
- ‡ Summer Drama Camps
- ‡ Haunted Houses
- ‡ Stage Productions in any venue
- ‡ Library outreach programs

Themes the Ring is prepared to present concerning:

- ‡ Pirates
- ‡ Fantasy
- ‡ Renaissance
- ‡ Cavalier
- ‡ Medieval
- ‡ Modern Gothic
- ‡ Haunted/Horror
- ‡ Wild West
- ‡ Scottish
- ‡ Hi-tech Futuristic
- ‡ Starwars™
- ‡ Far Eastern (hand & sword)

What the Ring is not...

The Ring does not currently engage in horse stunts nor provide animal acts. We have a source for a small quantity of plate armor but it is not available for rental. We are not a "living history" organization as per the Society for Creative Anachronism nor are we a Live-Action Role Playing group. We have musicians in our troupe, however we do not perform musical acts. We typically do not accept members younger than 12. If you've need of a service that you do not see listed, please contact us as we've an extensive network of contacts and are happy to provide references.

