

# The **MID-ATLANTIC SOCIETY** For **HISTORIC SWORDSMANSHIP**

## A Curriculum for the Italian Dueling Sabre July, 2001; revised June, 2007

### **PREFACE:**

This system of Italian Dueling Saber is founded on the work of Maestro Luigi Barbasetti, as presented in his book, The Art of the Sabre and the Epee (E.P.Dutton, 1936), with supplemental material from Maestro William Gaugler's The Science of Fencing (Laureate Press, 1977, 2004).

### **LESSON 1. THE BASICS**

*Goal/Milestone: Understanding the theory of dueling sabre, and the basic mechanics of the sabre.*

- The dueling sabre, its use.
- The weapon, holding the sabre.
- The basic guard.
- The target areas.
- Distance and measure.
- Footwork; advance, retreat, lunging, passing (running), and ballestras.

### **LESSON 2. HAND POSITIONS AND BLADE MOVEMENT**

*Goal/Milestones: Learning the hand positions associated with sabre, the molinelli, the invitations, and the engagements.*

- The six hand positions.
- The molinelli to the head from left and from right.
- The molinelli to the flank and the belly.
- The molinelli to the face.
- The invitations and the engagements of blades.

### **LESSON 3. OFFENSE AND DEFENSE**

*Goal/Milestone: Learning how to cut and thrust with the sabre, learning the parries, and learning how to riposte.*

- Direct Cuts.
  - Vertical Cut: to head and check - push cuts
  - Diagonal Cut: from high to low - draw cut
  - Flank Cut: to outside line of chest - push cut
  - Belly Cut: horizontal - draw cut

- Cuts to the arms: push cuts to top of hand or arms, angular to clear opponents guard, or draw cuts with true or false edge to underside
- Leg Cut: draw cut, most effective if started with a feint or attack to blade
- Cuts by the Molinello.
- The Thrust.
- The Parries:
  - Prima: to protect low line inside attacks.
  - Seconda: to protect low line outside attacks.
  - Terza: to protect horizontal cuts to outside.
  - Quarta: to protect horizontal cuts to inside.
  - Quinte: to protect high line outside attacks.
  - Sixte: to protect high line inside attacks.
  - Secondary Guards: Low Terza, substitute for Seconda  
Low Quarta, substitute for Prima  
Septime: hanging guard, to protect check cuts on outside.
- Yielding or Ceding Parries
- Counter-Parries or Circular Parries, and Half Circular Parries
- The Riposte

#### **LESSON 4. COMPOUND ATTACKS**

*Goal/Milestone: Learning the use of feints to set up compound attacks.*

- Simple Feints
- Feints With the Point
- Feints After the Disengagement
- Feints By the Filo (Graze Feints)
- Feints With the Cutting Edge
- Feints During the Advance
- Double Feints
- Double Feints at Normal Distance
- Double Feints With the Point
- Riposte by Feint
- Remises

#### **LESSON 5. ACTIONS AGAINST THE OPPONENT'S BLADE**

*Goal/Milestone: Learning how to attack your opponent's blade in order to open lines for offensive actions against your opponent.*

- The Beat
- The Press
- The Sforzo, Expulsions
- Transports

## **LESSON 6. COUNTEROFFENCE**

*Goal/Milestone: Learning how to thwart your opponent's offense, by safely attacking into his/ her attack.*

- The Theory of the Attack; Understanding Tempo.
- Actions with First Intentions.
- Actions of Attack into Tempo
- Actions into Tempo upon the Opponent's Attack; Counter-Attacks:
  - Time Thrusts, Stop Thrusts
  - Time Cuts, Stop Cuts
  - Disengagement into Tempo
  - The Appuntata
  - The Inquartata
- Second Intentions
- Counter-Tempo Actions

## **LESSON 7. PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER**

*Goals/Milestones: Understanding the dynamics of the Assault.*

- Lesson in Assault
- The Assault, described
- General Principles
- Practical Application of the Attacks
- Application of the Beat
- Application of the Parries
- Application of the Feints
- Application of the Blows in Tempo
- Against the Left-Handed Fencer