

The Agincourt Battle Choreography  
As Created by Paul Gibson (paul@thatboy.ca)  
For Ken Hudson's *The King #5 Henry*  
Presented by Vivid Theatre Ensemble  
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### Introduction

Creating the battle choreography for Ken Hudson's *The King #5 Henry* was a task I could never have imagined myself tackling. I had designed the Romeo/Paris dagger skirmish for a theatre school production of *Romeo and Juliet* and professionally I had choreographed the Hamlet/Laertes foil-and-dagger duel in *Hamlet*, but Hudson's idea of staging *Henry V* on an ice rink to draw parallels between the violent aspects of hockey and the phenomenon of war presented a fight choreography assignment that seemed to have the magnitude, risk and prospective madness of an actual military campaign.

Shakespeare himself anticipated the challenge of staging the Battle of Agincourt sequence in any production of *Henry V*: as the Chorus laments, without a "muse of fire" to "ascend the brightest heaven of invention" the conventional "four or five ragged foils" at hand might reduce the historic battle to a "brawl ridiculous". Staging Agincourt on ice presented a unique set of challenges, of course, but as I began to plot out the battle's structure and imagine hockey-like versions of the text's events, it quickly became apparent that the speed of skating actors and the distance available to them on a rink would provide a rare opportunity to create a live theatre spectacle with the scope, dynamics, pace and proportions of an actual horse-mounted battle. As I factored in the plumes of ice flakes that would spray from under bladed feet, the steam bound to billow from cold mouths and noses, and the cacophonous echo of male voices, clacking sticks, and rattling helmets, I could see that this production also promised a thrilling sensory environment not unlike that of the famous French battlefield of October 25, 1415.

Hudson's prime stipulation for the battle choreography was "no pucks (of any kind), no nets." He felt, correctly, that no amount of rehearsal could guarantee a puck's trajectory in a performance situation, thus endangering the audience (whose seating was mounted on the ice surface) and hampering the actors' ability to perform rehearsed choreography. A principal challenge for *The King #5 Henry*, then, would be to create a spectacle that looked and moved like a hockey game without the benefit of a hockey game's actual galvanizing focal point (i.e. getting that puck into that net).

### Establishing Structure and Style

Fight choreography, in addition to honoring the director's vision, must render a spectacle that is interesting to watch, safe to perform, 'actable' (with specific cues and

timing that retain their shape in the heat of performance), and supportive of the story as established in the text.

To delineate Shakespeare's 'story' of The Battle of Agincourt the battle's structure had to be extrapolated from the text. Most playwrights are not fight choreographers so dramatized fights usually occur in ill-defined, stage-directionless vacuums:

ie. CHARACTER ONE: "Have at you!"

*They fight*

CHARACTER TWO: "Z'wounds!"

*They die*

In *Henry V* the battle begins in Act IV, Scene Four\* with

*Alarum. Excursions.*

(*alarum* usually indicating an offstage sound effect, *excursion* an onstage mini-spectacle showing one small corner of battlefield action). At Shakespeare's Agincourt the initial "*excursions*" are followed by a comic scene wherein the English Pistol captures a cowardly French Soldier. Scene Five (punctuated by "*a short alarum*") features French officers bemoaning "their ranks have broke" and vowing to leap into "the throng". Scene Six begins with an *alarum* that brings on King Henry and his French prisoners, then features another *alarum* signifying the French have "reinforced their scattered men", inspiring Henry to order the prisoners be killed. Scene Seven starts with Fluellen and Gower expressing outrage that the French have killed the English boys and luggage carriers, then has an *alarum* bring on Henry, who orders the prisoners' throats be cut. This is followed by the entrance of Montjoy, the French Herald, who declares the English have won the Battle of Agincourt.

This, then, is the sequence of events as described by Shakespeare (in our production historical research of the actual 1415 battle was kept to a minimum-- Shakespeare provided enough 'events' for our purposes). Before developing the details of the choreography several conventions were established:

- Much of the fight would have to be stylized. In the text the battle's big events occur offstage and are only *described* by onstage 'messengers', but one of the reasons for staging *Henry V* on ice was to present the "broken ranks", "throng", and "scattered men" for the audience to see. With only twelve actors to portray both 'armies' we could not literally 'translate' each

\*Hudson's adaptation of the *Henry V* divided the play into two 'scene-less' acts. In the interest of specificity I use the Act/Scene divisions and line numbers from the Signet Classic edition, edited by John Russel Brown

Agincourt event into a realistic hockey equivalent and build a spectacle that would sustain interest. Therefore, in addition to hockey-like movement, we decided to use combat-like movement, mime, dance-like movement, tableaux, and any physical business that skate-shod actors in athletic padding carrying a hockey stick could perform, as long as it was story-supporting, entertaining, safe, and stylistically consistent. We also decided to augment the movement with taped music where appropriate

- The weaponry would involve hand-to-hand combat (punching, shoving, hockey checking) and a moderate use of the hockey stick as a quarterstaff, broadsword, or swinging axe (the actors' padding and hockey skills allowing us to take shoving/checking liberties that would have been considered unsafe in an 'unpadded' situation).
- Notwithstanding our stylizations, we would cram as many hockey-game 'images' into the battle as our serious dramatic intent would allow.

The flow of events in the text, from formal *excursions*, to comic scene, to broken ranks, to savage chaos inspired the decision to stage the battle, generally speaking, as a "Hockey Game Gone Awry".

With the preceding conditions in mind, the following structural sections were established:

- I. PRE-BATTLE ANTHEMS
- II. FIRST CLASH
  - a. English Penetrate
  - b. French Break Away
  - c. English Rally
 (TABLEAU ONE)
- III. PISTOL & FRENCH SOLDIER 1
- IV. FRENCH PHALANX
- V. FRENCH BREAK RANKS
- VI. ENGLISH AXE THRONG  
(TABLEAU TWO)
- VII. EXETER'S NEWS OF SUFFOLK AND YORK
- VIII. FRENCH REINFORCE
- IX. KILLING FRENCH PRISONERS
- X. KILLING THE BOY

### Plotting the Action

As previously mentioned, the Battle of Agincourt in *The King #5 Henry* was performed by twelve actors, each playing a single character throughout the battle (though the actors did play multiple characters elsewhere in the play):

#### THE ENGLISH

Henry V  
Exeter  
Pistol  
Fluellen  
Boy

#### THE FRENCH

Constable of France  
Dauphin  
Orleans  
Montjoy  
French Soldier 1 (M. le Fer)  
French Soldier 2  
French Soldier 3

(The French ‘team’ was augmented with Soldiers 1,2, and 3 to reflect that the English were outnumbered at Agincourt and to provide the English with French prisoners to capture).

Twelve actors ice-skating and behaving in a hockey-like manner meant that this stage battle would have a degree of fluidity, speed, and simultaneous action that would make pre-planning every moment almost impossible. Therefore the choreography was divided into ‘Dominant Action’ (plotted out and taught to the actors) and ‘Subordinate Action’ (developed by the actors in rehearsal). The ‘Dominant Action’ would carry the focus and tell the story while the ‘Subordinate Action’ would fill in the blanks, keep the battle interesting and consistent, and ensure that everybody ended up where they needed to be when they needed to be there.

The Dominant Action, (which will be described in detail later) was rehearsed in the following manner:

\* A parking lot was chalked to simulate the half-hockey rink (see subsequent diagrams) upon which the battle would be performed. Patterns of movement were plotted on paper, taught to the actors, then drilled on the parking lot, much like the ‘plays’ a North American football team devises on a blackboard and then practices on the field. Quarterstaff fights, axe swinging and focal fisticuffs were choreographed and drilled in the manner of conventional stage combat, quarterstaff strikes and parries being devised along a simple “opponent’s-upper-body-as-clockface” grid:

i.e. *English attacker strike horizontally at three,*  
*French defender parry vertically at nine*

\*With no puck and no net the actors had to create the illusion that the hockey-like sequences had a focal point they were following. To simulate the moving focal point that passing and stick-handling a puck provides in a hockey game, a football was used to learn

the pattern of movement. Each plotted pattern established who had the football, where everyone was headed, and when and to whom the ball was to be passed. A pass consisted of the ball carrier calling the intended receiver's name, the receiver calling back to the carrier, and then the carrier throwing the ball to the receiver as all the players watched the trajectory of the ball. The whole sequence occurred with everyone in motion. Once the pattern had been learned the football was taken away and the passes (and the trajectory-watching) were mimed, with the carrier and receiver still calling out to each other. Then, once the players were very familiar with the pattern, they were given hockey sticks and told to adapt their football movements to hockey movements and to continue miming the passes (and trajectory-watching) and calling out to each other. Occasionally the actors would rehearse knocking a tennis ball around with their sticks to help maintain the sense of puck-chasing urgency.

\*vocal cues were culled from the text and inserted where necessary to enable the actors to synchronize their movements. Most of these cues came in the form of military commands and are included in the detailed description of the Dominant Action.

The Subordinate Action was developed by assigning each character an inner intent and an outer antagonism to serve as behavioral poles between which to alternate. If an actor did not have a specific plotted action at a given moment they could choose to play the behavior that best animated the pattern and maintained the focus. Experimentation was encouraged in early rehearsal but actors were expected to develop a consistent performance to ensure the entire battle could be played with precision. These inner intents and outer antagonisms were assigned in accordance with the characters' psychology.

#### Inner Intent

Henry V: *watch the whole fight, set up the play*

Exeter: *stay between Henry V and the pass, set up the play*

Pistol: *control the pass, make trouble*

Fluellen: *police the action, scold others, check with Henry V on battle's progress*

Boy: *stay out of the way, do as you are told, be ready with water bottle*

Constable of France: *torn between controlling pass and setting up the play*

Dauphin: *torn between controlling pass and getting to Henry V*

Orleans: *control the pass, goad Fluellen*

French Soldier 1: *avoid the fray*

French Soldier 2: *cover Pistol and anyone who crosses your path*

French Soldier 3: *always on the move: get close to pass, then far away from it*

### Outer Antagonisms (paired antagonists)

Henry V.....Dauphin  
 Exeter.....Constable  
 Pistol.....French Soldier 2, French Soldier 3  
 Fluellen.....Orleans  
 Boy.....French Soldier 1

(Montjoy, although engaged in the battle, maintained a characteristically aloof stance, his relation to the action resembling that of the hockey referee).

Four standard ‘grapples’ were choreographed and rehearsed by all the actors, giving them a repertoire of safe hockey checks with which to experiment as they developed their antagonizing Subordinate Action. As the plotted patterns were rehearsed, actors would seek out their ‘antagonist’ (or any opponent who was nearby), make eye contact, call out one of the following ‘grapples’, the two actors would perform the ‘grapple’, and then they would disengage, to find their place in the pattern again:

Fist to Fist (push at each other’s hockey gauntlets)  
 Sticks Crossed (cross sticks and push at each other)  
 Side by Side (lean upper bodies together and push at each other)  
 Shoulder to Shoulder (lock shoulders like Roman-Greco wrestlers  
 and push at each other)

Insults and exhortations were culled from the text to provide the actors with vocal exclamations to insert in the action when they felt necessary (and to prevent them slipping into contemporary colloquialisms as they snarled at their foes and cheered on their teammates). The English insulted the French with “Prating coxcomb!” and spurred each other on with “The game’s afoot!” The French insulted the English with “Norman bastards!” and “Foolish curs!” and coaxed each other with “To the field!”

### Sound and Music

As rehearsals moved from the parking lot to the hockey rink an ‘organic’ soundscape emerged and every effort was made to capitalize on its elements. The echoing sounds of hockey sticks being whacked on the ice, or clacked against each other, or clattered on a penalty box bench, the equipment-clad actors crashing into the boards, helmets and pads crunching together, the swoosh of skateblades digging into the ice, all were emphasized as the parking lot choreography was fleshed out and applied to the ice. Fluellen, the rule-obsessed Welshman, was given a referee’s whistle to blow at appropriate moments. An off-ice steel Zamboni garage door that rolled up and was secured by a chain was incorporated for its ‘violent’ sound and guillotine-like mechanism.

Taped 'heavy metal' rock music was chosen to accompany certain sections of the choreography. Short 'national anthems' were composed (lyrics culled from the text) for each team to sing. The English anthem was styled after a rousing British hymn (i.e. "All Things Bright and Beautiful" or "Jerusalem"):

Follow your spirits and upon this charge  
Cry "God for Harry, England, and St. George!"

The French anthem was a cross between "The Marseillaise" and the opening studio fanfare of an old MGM or Paramount movie. It also featured a percussive triple bang of hockey sticks on the ice:

O Dieu viviant (bang bang-bang)  
Mort de ma vie (bang bang-bang)  
Dieu de bataaaaaai-le! (bang bang-bang).

### The Choreography (The Dominant Action)

What follows are the point-form notes chronicling the detailed choreography of the ten sections of the Battle of Agincourt from *The King #5 Henry*. The notes are accompanied by a series of diagrams illustrating selected moments (and some of the movement) in the choreography.

In the notes the English and French characters are referred to by the following abbreviations (the English in bold-face):

Henry V..... <b>HV</b>	Constable of France.....CON
Exeter..... <b>EXE</b>	Dauphin.....DAU
Pistol..... <b>PIS</b>	Orleans.....ORL
Fluellen..... <b>FLU</b>	Montjoy.....MON
Boy..... <b>BOY</b>	French Soldier 1 (M. le Fer)....FS1
	French Soldier 2.....FS2
	French Soldier 3.....FS3

On the diagrams the English characters are represented by red circles, the French characters by blue squares, and each is identified by the following letter code:

Henry V.....H	Constable of France.....C
Exeter.....E	Dauphin.....D
Pistol.....P	Orleans.....O
Fluellen.....F	Montjoy.....M
Boy.....B	French Soldier 1 (M. le Fer)...S1
	French Soldier 2.....S2
	French Soldier 3.....S3

All characters wore skates and varying amounts of hockey equipment according to character and costume design choices. All carried a hockey stick except the English Boy.

In addition to the entrances through the 'up ice' bench doors in the rink boards (as indicated on the diagrams) the actors could enter and exit 'down ice left' and 'down ice right', since the ice surface continued around behind the audience (as not indicated on the diagrams).

## I. PRE-BATTLE ANTHEMS

Act IV scene iii

**HV, EXE, MON** center ice

(line 126)

**MON**: "I shall King Harry... herald any more."

**MON** crosses 'up ice left' to French bench door

**EXE**: "My lord... leading of the vaward." (originally York's line)

**HV** "Take it..."

**EXE** cross 'up ice right' to English bench door

**HV**: "Now soldiers march away..."

**MON** and **EXE** open respective bench doors

**CHORUS** speaking from stage: "And so our scene must to the battle fly..."

(text taken from top of Act IV)

from English dressing room process **PIS, FLU, BOY** on to ice

**EXE** joins **PIS, FLU, BOY** skating in circle like hockey team before game, 'ice right'

from French dressing room process **CON, DAU, ORL, FS1, FS2, FS3** on to ice

**MON** joins **CON, DAU, ORL, FS1, FS2, FS3** skating in circle 'ice left'

**CHORUS**: "... name of Agincourt."

**CHORUS** exits

**ALL** cross to respective blue lines into Anthem Formation

(SEE DIAGRAM A)

**ALL** invert hockey sticks with butt ends on ice

English sing their anthem looking straight out to audience

French sing their anthem (triple-banging sticks on ice) looking straight out to audience

English and French look to each other

taped heavy metal music starts

on taped music cue **ALL** yell "Hey!" and go into Face-Off Formation

(SEE DIAGRAM B)

**ALL** with stick blades on ice, ready to play hockey, all heads down

**BOY** watches action from down ice center right, near stage area,

cheering when appropriate

INSERT FIGURE #1



INSERT FIGURE #4c. English Rally

**HV**: “The game’s afoot!” (*inserted vocal cue*)

on **HV** vocal cue **EXE** breaks around **CON** to start English rally

(SEE DIAGRAM E)

**EXE, HV, PIS, FLU** do four intermittent ‘passes’ moving focus ‘ice left’ to Fr. blue line  
ALL engage in character Intents/Antagonisms putting play in motion

**HV** ends up at ‘ice right’ French bench door, against boards

**DAU** ends up ‘ice right’ of **HV**, engaging **HV**

**FS2** ends up ‘ice right’ of **DAU**, covering **DAU**

**FLU** ends up ‘ice left’ of blue line at French bench

**FS3** ends up ‘ice left’ of **FLU**, engaging **FLU**

**EXE** and **CON** engage ‘center ice left’, ‘ice left’ of French blue line

**MON** monitors battle from ‘ice left’ of Fr. blue line, ‘down ice’ from **EXE** and **CON**

**ORL** charges from center red line ‘up ice left’ to **PIS**

**PIS** trips **ORL**, **ORL** slides ‘up ice left’ crashes into boards between **HV** and **FLU**

**HV** braces self against boards like hockey player trapping puck with skates

**PIS** crosses ‘ice right’, as if heading for English bench

**HV**: “Stiffen the sinews!”

on **HV** vocal cue ALL freeze in position, Tableau One, except **PIS, BOY, FS1**

**FS1** crosses ‘ice left’, heading for French bench

(SEE DIAGRAM F)

**PIS** notices **FS1**

III. PISTOL & FRENCH SOLDIER ONE (MONSIEUR LE FER)

Most of the dialogue in this scene (Act IV, scene Four) was cut,

just enough remaining to guide action, which took place ‘down ice center’

Tableau One maintained ‘up ice left’

the physical action:

**PIS** accosts **FS1**

**FS1** cravenly tosses his own stick ‘down ice left’ and goes to **PIS** to ingratiate himself

**PIS** seizes **FS1** by lapels

**FS1** falls to his knees and begs for his life

**PIS** enlists **BOY** to translate

**FS1** takes off hockey glove for handshake

**PIS** keeps glove on and crushes **FS1**’s hand

**PIS** brandishes hockey stick blade like axe threatening to cut **FS1**’s throat

**FS1** lies prostrate before **PIS** begging for mercy

**PIS** gives stick to **BOY**, grabs **FS1** by back of collar, drags him ‘up ice’ to penalty box

**BOY** picks up FS1's stick and dropped glove, crosses to penalty box, opens door  
**PIS** deposits FS1 in penalty box and slams penalty box door  
**BOY** drops stick and glove into penalty box, climbs over boards into English bench.

INSERT FIGURE #5

INSERT FIGURE #6

#### IV FRENCH PHALANX

on penalty box door slam cue **ALL** yell "Huh!" and disengage from Tableau One in a stylized, rhythmic 'punctuation' all hockey sticks are whacked on the ice:

two half notes, then four quarter notes: 1...,2...,1,2,3,4

on the 4 beat **HV, EXE, PIS, FLU** retreat to English bench boards, regrouping the French seize this tactical opportunity

**CON**(military command): "Montez a cheval!" (inserted vocal cue)

**DAU, CON, ORL** sweep in, take up formation center ice, three-quarters facing audience three abreast, stick across body like quarterstaff

English watch French apprehensively, **HV** realizing what French are doing

**CON**(military command): "Le cheval volant!" (inserted vocal cue)

**FS3, FS2, MON** take up formation kneeling three abreast in front of **DAU, CON, ORL** stick across body like quarterstaff

**CON** is about to call out third command when **HV** calls out English command

**HV**(military command): "Set the teeth!" (inserted vocal cue)

**HV, FLU, EXE** sweep in and take up formation facing French 'Phalanx' French are surprised

(SEE DIAGRAM G)

**HV** establishes rhythm calling out: "Teach them how to---"

in rhythm **HV, FLU, EXE** and French 'Phalanx' engage in stylized quarterstaff battle each English combatant with two French combatants facing him

(one kneeling before him, one standing behind 'kneeler')

the following pattern is repeated five times:(in a 1,2,3,4,5; 1,2,3,4,5 rhythm)

Eng. strike Standing Fr. at 12 o'clock (regarding opponent's torso as clockface)

English strike Kneeling French at 6 o'clock

English strike Standing French at 3 o'clock

Standing French strike English at 3 o'clock (all take one step 'ice left')

English strike Kneeling Fr. at 3 o'clock

(each strike with a corresponding parry)

throughout this sequence the following dialogue (Act IV, Scene Five):

**CON**: "O diable!"

**ORL**: "Tout est perdu!"

**DAU**: "O mechante fortune!"

during this sequence **PIS** crosses to Fr. bench and goes through hockey bags, looting on fifth repetition of quarterstaff pattern **HV** rhythmically calls:

"Sum-mon up the blood and---"

on “and---” Eng. strike Standing Fr. at 12 o'clock and hold with staves crossed  
after “and---” all yell “Ho!” as Kneeling French rise, striking away crossed staves,  
and dispersing from ‘Phalanx’

INSERT FIGURE #7

V. FRENCH BREAK RANKS

**FLU** chases FS2, both crossing ‘ice left’, then doubling back and crossing ‘ice right’

**HV** swings stick horizontally at FS3, who ducks and retreats to Eng. bench

**BOY** (in Eng. bench) grabs FS3 by jersey, **HV** sweeps in to join them

**PIS** returns to English bench with French loot

**EXE** snatches away MON’s stick, tosses it’ down ice left’, off battlefield

MON chases after stick

CON crosses ‘ice left’

ORL crosses ‘ice right’

DAU: (crossing to ‘down ice center’ calling to Fr.) “Do not run away!”

(Act IV, scene Five, line 6)

**FLU** and **EXE** chase FS2 crossing to ‘ice right’ of red line

**BOY** and **HV** release FS3 to ‘ice right’ of red line

**FLU**, **EXE**, **HV**, **PIS** gather at Eng. bench (**BOY** in bench) to strategize

CON, ORL, DAU gather ‘down ice center’

remainder of Act IV, Scene Five lines reduced to:

CON: “All our ranks are broke!”

DAU: “Is this the king we sent for his ransom?”

CON: “Disorder that hath spoiled us friend us now!”

ORL: “The devil take order now. I’ll to the throng... will be too long!”

(originally Bourbon’s line)

(SEE DIAGRAM H)

INSERT FIGURE #8

VI. ENGLISH AXE THRONG

DAU, CON, ORL cross ‘ice left’ then double back ‘ice right’ to attack English

**HV**(military command): “The English are embattled!”

**FLU** starts to sing English anthem

**HV** and **EXE**, swing hockey sticks overhead with both hands like broadsword,

sweep ‘down ice right’ then double back ‘ice left’ to meet Fr. head on

CON, ORL, DAU, FS2, FS3 stop in their tracks, horrified, furiously skate backwards  
retreat to ‘ice left’ of Fr. blue line

**HV** (‘up ice’) and **EXE** (‘down ice’) advance, swinging sticks overhead, side by side

**FLU** brings up the rear, singing and swinging stick overhead

**PIS** sweeps ‘ice right’ to build up speed, then doubles back ‘ice left’,

hockey stick tucked under arm like battering ram

*sails past HV and EXE into French*

**EXE** sweeps 'up ice' and doubles back to Eng. bench  
**HV** sweeps 'down ice' and doubles back to 'down ice center' near stage  
 (SEE DIAGRAM I)  
**CON** suddenly stops his retreat and checks the sailing **PIS**  
**PIS** flies off his feet, quickly recovers and points at **CON**, instigating a fistfight  
**FLU** grabs FS3, marshals him over and into penalty box  
**FLU**, **ORL**, **FS2**, **MON**, **DAU** establish a periphery  
*in which PIS and CON circle each other*  
**BOY** (in bench) tosses water bottle to approaching **EXE**  
**PIS** and **CON** hurl their sticks, then helmets, then gloves on ice, circling each other  
**HV** holds ground 'down ice center' near stage, notices fistfight brewing, looks away,  
*strategizing*  
**FS2** picks up **CON**'s stick  
**PIS** grabs **CON** by the jersey, they struggle, **CON** punches **PIS** in head  
**PIS** punches **CON** in stomach, **CON** doubles over  
**PIS** pulls **CON**'s jersey over his head, both fall to their knees,  
**EXE** sweeps 'down ice' with bottle to join **HV**  
**MON** leaves battlefield 'down ice left', disgusted by fistfight  
**PIS** grabs **CON** in headlock and punches him in ribs three time  
*CON grunting loudly with each punch*  
 on third punch **ALL** (except **HV** and **EXE**) freeze in Tableau Two  
 (SEE DIAGRAM J)

## VII. EXETER'S NEWS OF SUFFOLK AND YORK

**EXE** and **HV** share water bottle 'down ice center right' near stage  
*as they relate an abbreviated version of the deaths of Suffolk and York*  
*(Act IV, Scene Six) with Tableau Two maintained 'up ice left'*  
**EXE**: "...The noble Earl of Suffolk also lies."

INSERT FIGURE #9

INSERT FIGURE #10

## VIII. THE FRENCH REINFORCE

on **EXE** vocal cue "...Suffolk also lies." **CON**: "L'air et la feu!"  
**CON** shakes off **PIS** headlock  
**ALL** disengage from Tableau Two  
**CON** and **PIS** both scramble to feet, **PIS** retreating  
**EXE** and **HV** look on  
**FLU** grabs **ORL**, marshals him over into penalty box  
**CON**: (military command) "Chez la narine de feu!"

FS2 returns hockey stick to CON

CON: (military command) "Les eaux et la terre!"

CON, FS2, DAU gather in a tight circle, back to back, 'up ice left'

menacingly wave inverted hockey sticks (stylized movement suggesting a 'spider')

they start to 'sing' Fr. Anthem in a light monotone

triple-banging sticks on ice at designated moment in song

(SEE DIAGRAM K)

## IX. KILLING FRENCH PRISONERS

**EXE** notices Fr. 'spider' formation

**EXE**: "The French have reinforce their scatter'd men!" (originally **HV**'s line)

**HV**: (looking across entire battlefield, indicating entire rink and beyond)

"Then every soldier kill his prisoners:

Give the word through."

**EXE** and **PIS**: "Kill the prisoners!"

accompanied by taped music **EXE**, **PIS**, and **FLU** cross to penalty box

where ORL, FS1, FS3 are being kept 'prisoner'

**EXE** tosses water bottle to **BOY**, **BOY** sets bottle on top of boards, in full sight

CON, FS2, DAU start to rotate their 'spider' circle, waving and banging sticks

singing menacing sotto voce monotone in a stylized 'threat'

**BOY** crosses from Eng. bench (behind boards) to Zamboni board doors, opens doors

**EXE** snatches FS3 and ORL hockey sticks, tosses them in penalty box,

marshals FS3, ORL onto ice

**FLU** snatches FS1 hockey stick, tosses it in penalty box, marshals FS1 onto ice

**EXE** and **FLU** lead prisoners in walking 'execution procession'

from penalty box to 'up ice' English blue line

**PIS** brings up the rear holding inverted hockey stick like executioner's axe

**HV** oversees proceedings

**BOY** rolls up steel Zamboni garage door (on arena wall), secures it with chain

FS3, ORL, FS1 are lined up, on their knees, along English blue line, facing audience

## INSERT FIGURE #11

## IX. KILLING FRENCH PRISONERS (cont'd)

**HV** commands "Kill the prisoners!"

**PIS** (with back to audience) swings hockey stick, slashing blade at FS3's throat

(**PIS** with two hands on stick like a broadsword)

FS3 collapses on ice, dead

**HV**'s "Kill the prisoners!" command and **PIS**'s 'slash' repeated

as they work their way up the line of prisoners

as each prisoner executed **FLU** and **EXE** drag them off ice  
 through Zamboni board doors  
**BOY** comes on ice to help them

(SEE DIAGRAM L)

last prisoner is executed and dragged off  
**PIS** and **HV** following in procession through Zamboni board doors off ice  
**BOY** lingers on ice

## X. KILLING THE BOY

**BOY** notices **CON**, **FS2**, **DAU** singing/stick-banging/rotating 'spider', is intimidated,  
 heads for Zamboni board doors  
**BOY** notices water bottle on boards at Eng. bench, crosses 'ice left' to get water bottle  
**CON**, **FS2**, **DAU** expand their circle, anthem-singing and stick-banging growing louder  
**BOY** grabs water bottle from top of boards at English bench,  
 heads 'ice right' to Zamboni doors with bottle to get away from **CON**, **FS2**, **DAU**  
**CON**, **FS2**, **DAU** expand their circle to engulf **BOY**, cutting him off from Zamboni doors  
**BOY**, panicked, doubles back to 'down ice left' of red line but is cut off by encircling **Fr.**  
**CON**, **FS2**, **DAU** contract their circle around **BOY**, ensnaring him,  
 as they sing anthem and bang sticks

**BOY** crosses 'down ice right' to 'down ice center' but **CON**, **FS2**, **DAU** are upon him

(SEE DIAGRAM M)

**CON**, **FS2**, **DAU** poke at **BOY** with hockey sticks,  
 taunting him as they sing and bang sticks on ice  
**BOY** falls to ice, **CON**, **FS2**, **DAU** raise their sticks on high,  
 final triple-bang of sticks on ice kills the boy (stylized 'killing')

**CON**, **FS2**, **DAU** raise their sticks in victory

**FS2**: "Les eaux et la terre!"

**CON**, **FS2**, **DAU**, sing anthem and bang sticks again, sweeping around battlefield  
 knocking water bottle to each other with their sticks

**DAU** crosses to Eng. bench, steals a hockey bag of equipment

**CON**, **FS2**, **DAU** exit battlefield 'down ice left'

body of **BOY** lies 'down ice center'

**\*End of Battle Choreography\***

Enter **FLU** and **GOWER** from English bench, onto ice, cross 'down ice' to **BOY**

**FLU**: "Kill the poys and the luggage!"...

the play continues...

INSERT FIGURE #12

INSERT FIGURE #13

## Conclusion

The performance time of the choreography worked out approximately as follows:

Sections I & II: 2 minutes 10 seconds

Section III: 15 seconds

Sections IV, V, & VI: 2 minutes 15 seconds

Section VII: 12 seconds

Sections VIII, IX, & X: 2 minutes 15 seconds

The entire battle sequence, then, ran approximately 7 minutes.

Before each dress rehearsal and performance it was imperative that the actors walk through and then perform the entire battle on the ice with as many performance elements in place as possible (i.e. skates, sticks, taped music.) During the intermission the quarterstaff sequence of *The Phalanx* was drilled in the dressing room.

The main staging difficulty imposed by the ice (other than some audience members being uncomfortable in the cold) was that the kneeling actors in the *Phalanx* had a difficult time planting themselves on the slippery ice. Some actors taped abrasive material to their knees to give themselves a better grip.

The flow of the settings in the play, from onstage court scenes to on-ice battle scenes and back to onstage court scenes meant that skate-donning and skate-removing occasionally had to be incorporated into the timing of characters' exits and entrances. It should also be mentioned, though, that this court-to-battle-to-court flow also pointed up the effectiveness of director Ken Hudson's decision to stage the spectacle of *Agincourt* on a plane separate from, yet fully integrated with, the rest of the play.