

Hip-Shot: 'The Fifth Musketeer'

Posted by [Llewellyn Hinkes](#) on Jul. 10, 2009, at 11:28 am

The Fifth Musketeer

The Apothecary at the Trading Post

Remaining Performances:

July 12th at 7:45 p.m.; July 17th at 9:45 p.m.; July 18th at 1:30 p.m.

They Say: Follow one woman's quest in acquiring the art of the sword. Filled with drama and adventure, the play also delves into power politics behind religious persecution, the nature of revenge, and the role of women in society.

Llewellyn's take: Of all of the shows in this year's Fringe involving female swordplay (three so far), *The Fifth Musketeer* just happens to be the one without nudity. Must be tough on publicity! Think about it: given the option, would you go see a.) female swordplay or b.) naked female swordplay? Of course, that might be the same as asking if you would rather see bowling or naked bowling. Sometimes nudity doesn't have the additive property.

Instead, this show takes the high road, and everybody keeps their clothes on for a straightforward sequel to the adventures of d'Artagnan and his swashbuckling friends. In this rendition, there's a feminist bent: Tara Garwood plays the daughter of D'Artagnan, a perky swordsmith dueling for the honor of her father and against the sexual mores of 17th-century France. Kelley Slagle plays a great swordmaster with the eerie poise of a lone gunfighter, and Matthew Wilson puts his all into crushing the Huguenot rebellion. But the show languishes at points—not for fault of the cast, but when one goes into a show with *Musketeers* in the title, one expects something like a violent ballet with weapons. The action is there—and tastefully done—but it's a minor note in a story about religious tolerance and sexual identity. A small, delightful tale on the whole, but I was left yearning for more saber battles.

Maybe that's just me.

See it if: You like your swordplay with pants on.

Skip it if: Musketeer boots just get in the way of your psychosexual stage violence.