

PDF Taster Issue No.3
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...more nooks
and crannies
than you'll find
in Mel Meller's
swimsuit!

magic seen

THE MAGIC MAGAZINE FOR
MAGICIANS & MENTALISTS

JOAQUIN AYALA

**SIEGFRIED
& ROY**

**MAGIC ON
THE RADIO**

MASTERCLASS

FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

KOCHKOV

FREE TASTER PDF #3



60 SECOND HERO

THOMAS BLACKE



Tell us what you do in three sentences

I am billed as the "World's Fastest Magician, Escape Artist, and Pickpocket". My show takes the audience on a fast paced magical journey with new twists and turns at every corner. I am President of Escape Masters, the International Association of Escape Artists, and U.S. Vice President of Record Holders Republic 'Registry of World Records.'

You are recognised as the world's fastest balloon artist. What do you do?

I've made a balloon dog in 3.1 seconds! My behind the back balloon record is 4.35 seconds and my wrist-strap escape record is 1.47 seconds.



What's the last thing you forgot to do?

Buy the latest issue of **magicseen!**

Tell us what America is like in just 3 words!

Land of opportunity.

What did you have for breakfast?

Trix cereal. What would you expect from a magician?

Best magical moment?

Setting my first world record in 2006 at the RHR World Records of Magic event, Fantasma Magic, NYC. It was nice to be recognised as the best in the world at what I do.

Biggest influence on your career?

Studying performances of the great magicians who came before me. I find a great deal of material for my own show by looking at effects that were performed decades ago and with some modification, would be suitable for today's audiences.

Houdini: what do you think of him?

Houdini was a genius, pure and simple. Nearly 90 years after his death, he remains the most popular magician of all time. His methods of marketing and public relations made him one of history's most famous celebrities. His name and magic are synonymous — What more could you ask for?

Biggest lesson you've ever learnt?

That there is always a new lesson to be learned. I am on a constant quest for knowledge about magic and it's affiliated arts. It's how I stay creative with my shows.

Favourite magician who is still alive?

I have 2 favourites. In close-up magic Richard Turner, "The Cheat." In stage magic Derren Brown. In my opinion, they both come closer to performing real magic than anyone else.

Favourite childhood memory?

Watching Doug Henning perform his first NBC magic special in 1975. It was at that moment, as a young child, that I decided to become a magician.



The favourite effect you perform?

The \$100 bill switch. The effect on the audience never ceases to amaze me. It works in nearly every situation and with all ages.

Last book you read?

Think Big: Make It Happen in Business and Life by Donald Trump.

Tell us three things people don't know about you?

If I tell you, then everyone will know. OK, I would have to say that people do not know that I'm sentimental, humble and loyal.

Jay Sankey's MAGIC FRANKENSTEIN



JAY SANKEY give us the lowdown on the bits and pieces he'd choose...

- a) **Best hands on a magician belong to?**
Richard Sanders
- b) **Best looking magician?**
My son Mason
- c) **Best dressed magician?**
My daughter Madelaine
- d) **Best hair-do?**
Eugene Burger
- f) **Most charismatic?**
Houdini
- g) **Scariest magician?**
No such thing (alas).



RICHARD SANDERS:
Best hands.

EUGENE BURGER:
Best hair.

HOUDINI:
Most charismatic.

IN THE NEWS...



Photo: Laure Leber. www.laureleberphoto.com

FOUR IN THE PHONE BOX!

On Wednesday, April 14th, 2010, four **magicseen** 'In The Phone Box' interviewees - as seen from left to right, Thomas Blacke, Chris McDaniel, The Great Throwdini, and Richie Magic, - performed in The Record Holders Republic World Record 'Show-Off Show' for The Congress of Curious Peoples Week at The Coney

Island Circus Sideshow in Coney Island, NY. All 6 performers in the show are world record holders in knife throwing, bull whipping, oral cigarette snuffing, escapology, balloon sculpturing, fire eating, and coin manipulation. A mighty fine bunch they look, too. **magicseen** sends our best wishes to the fab four!

MAGIC UNLIMITED GETS BIGGER! (BY ONE)

Mara & Renzo of Magic Unlimited got married recently and have just launched a new magic show in Spain.

Says Mara, "The last six months of our adventurous life have been even more exiting for me! Starting with

the best magic I ever did: giving birth to a wonderful, healthy boy, named Kian." Two months later, during performances in Barcelona, Magic Unlimited received the prestigious Li-Chang magic award, recognised by the FISM.



CHRIS IS BACK!

Chris Dugdale returns to the London Stage with a three week run from 31st August to 19th September 2010 with a 3 week run of 21 shows at the Riverside Studios - Hammersmith... Wooed by Angelina Jolie, praised by the Queen, world class magician and mind reader Chris Dugdale returns by popular demand to Riverside Studios for three weeks this autumn (31st August - 19th September) with his critically acclaimed, ground-breaking magic show.



RAY ALAN & LORD CHARLES RIP

Ventriloquist Ray Alan, famous for his act with monocled, upper-crust puppet Lord Charles, died suddenly in his sleep on May 24th.

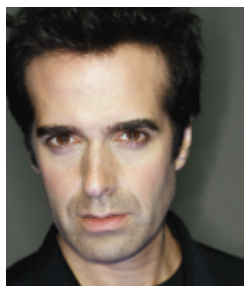
Alan, 79, was best known to millions of television viewers from the 1950s to the 1980s for his appearances on variety

shows. The dinner suit-wearing puppet appeared to be tipsy, was noted for his catchphrase 'You silly arse' and would often be distracted by glamorous women in the audience. Alan's agent Peter Pritchard said the ventriloquist 'passed away very suddenly' at his home in Reigate, Surrey. He had complained of feeling unwell and had not worked for several months because of ill-health.

Alan, who is survived by his wife Jane, said of Lord Charles in 2006: 'I'm not one of those ventriloquists who thinks he's real. When I finish my work I put it back in the tool box and I don't take it out again until the next job.'

STILL THE TOPS!

They may have been around the block a few times, but world-renowned performers David Copperfield, and the teasing-tuosome Penn & Teller still rank as the highest magicians in the world as far as celebrity goes. Copperfield ranks 80th on the Forbes Celebrity 100 list while Penn and Teller made it in at 96th.



"The Celebrity 100 is a measure of power based on money and fame," Forbes said of its report. "Fame is calculated using Web hits on Google Blog Search, TV/radio mentions on LexisNexis, overall press mentions on Factiva and the number of times a celebrity's image appeared on the cover of 25 consumer magazines." Mark Leveridge was 'unplaced'.

MAGIC WORLD RECORD: THE MOST MAGICIANS IN A MAGIC SHOW!

On the 21st of May 2010 at the picturesque mountain resort of Saint-Vincent in Italy a whole host of magicians gathered to take part in a magic show, organised by the Masters of Magic Association. After an hour and half the show had started to draw to a close and to the amazement of organisers Walter Rolfo and Piero Ustignani, they had managed to achieve their goal of having 62 magicians in their magic show; making it a new Guinness World Records title for the most magicians in a magic show. We dread to think how many silks and rabbits were on show!

JOAQUIN AYALA

PASSION IN LAS VEGAS

By Benoit Grenier

It is always a joy and a privilege to meet with some magicians, especially in Las Vegas. Even more when they are, at the same time, great performers, great thinkers and great builders. Ayala is all this and a very nice person to boot. It is rare in this day and age to find someone always ready to help others, to give them advice and point them in the right direction. Joaquin always has time for you or at least it seems that way. Because, as like all magicians wanting to make a living and survive in Las Vegas, he is an expert at multi-tasking. Building props for some, designing acts for others while traveling the world with his lovely partner and better half, Tanya.



Ayala has an impressive résumé: He appeared on Mexican TV from an early age, and in 1984 he performed for the first time in Las Vegas at the Landmark hotel. In 1985, he was featured at the Magic Castle.

He was the headliner of a show called "Spellbound" at Harrah's Las Vegas, and then toured the world,

from France to Japan. He even had his own TV special "Ayala in Control". In 2000 he was chosen as the Magician of the Year and the International Magician's Society awarded him "Entertainer of the year" and "Best performer on stage".

But the year that changed Ayala's life was in fact 1999 when he met Tanya. Their story sounds like a TV series. Two performers, trained from an early age to master their craft. A master magician from Mexico and a world-renowned belly dancer from the U.S.A., teaming up to produce great shows, great magic and unforgettable entertainment. Together they presented "Magical Passion" and starred at the now defunct Caesar's Magical Empire.

Since then, Ayala has been busy with his FX company and lately he has been working with his long time friend Criss Angel, in both Mindfreak and BeLIEve, as a consultant.

A MASTER MAGICIAN FROM MEXICO AND A WORLD-RENOWNED BELLY DANCER FROM THE U.S.A., TEAMING UP TO PRODUCE GREAT SHOWS, GREAT MAGIC AND UNFORGETTABLE ENTERTAINMENT.



**JOAQUIN PERFORMING
HIS SIGNATURE PIECE
'BLADES OF DOOM'**





ALL MY LIFE I HAVE BEEN THINKING IN WAYS TO DO THINGS A BIT DIFFERENT AND HOW TO BE CREATIVE (FINANCES NEVER WERE IN MY FAVOUR, UNTIL LATER) SO IT MADE ME LEARN HOW I COULD DO THINGS BY MYSELF.

We met at a café in the Luxor Casino...

Las Vegas is the place to be for a magician. A lot of them can only dream about making it there. You did! Tell us how you arrived in Las Vegas and why you decided to live there?

I arrived by plane, I hate driving...ha ha ha...Mexico is too far away!

Sorry but this question has a little bit of a story behind it.

When I was 11 years old I already knew I wanted to become a performer/magician - and on

Mexican TV they aired magic shows like "Presto Chango It's Magic", "Abracadabra it's Magic" and the series "The Magician with Bill Bixbi" and they showed what I considered the best magic of that period of time and along with images of Siegfried and Roy, Shimada, Carlton & Co., and Tomsoni as headliners in Las Vegas...I wanted to be there. I wanted to meet those guys... I wanted to be like them and perhaps, one day, perform on those stages.

Back then, the dream of a little Mexican kid seemed so far away. I didn't have the finances, didn't

speak the language and I didn't have any contacts...but like magic, in 1984 I was invited to participate in the "Magic Olympics", produced by the Japanese NHK Network in Las Vegas and it was then my eyes opened and my heart talked to me saying: Joaquin...here it is, this is it! A few years later a famous Las Vegas producer, Mr. Dick Foster, needed a different magician for his new show called "Spellbound".

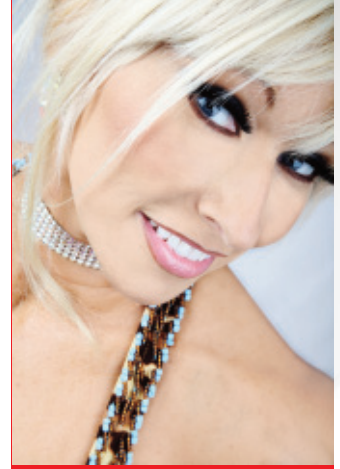
Somehow he saw some promotional pictures of us, and a few weeks later he invited us to come to Las Vegas, I performed for him, got the part and I joined the cast of Spellbound. Then I moved to Las Vegas!

You are also working as a magic consultant, creating magic for other magicians. How did you start that business?

All my life I have been thinking in ways to do things a bit different and how to be creative (finances never were in my favour, until later) so it made me learn how I could do things by myself.

In Mexico I learned how to build stuff; I learned tailoring, stitching, carpentry, electricity, auto mechanics, sketching and drawing. Also in high school I specialised in designing and building scenery and theatre props. Later on, when I started to perform big illusions my close friend Greg Frewin taught me the basics of welding. I joined the Community College in Las Vegas and the Art Institute in New Zealand to master my techniques on foam, wood carving, mask making and aluminum/steel welding.

My company Ayala EFX in Las Vegas started about 8 years ago building, designing, and consulting for shows by other performers. I have been working with people like Criss Angel, Franz Harary, Kevin James, Shimada, Johnny Thompson, and Jeff McBride just to name a few...



LET'S TALK TO TANYA!

How would you describe Joaquin in a few words?

He is very kind, cute and talented and also dramatic! Haha!

How would you describe Joaquin's magic in a few words?

I find his magic entertaining which is the most important. Original and funny, which often surprises people!

What is it like to work with him?

I have always been a fan of his magic...even way before I worked with him. It is great to share the stage with him - we have fun. He is a born entertainer for sure...

What was your best moment on stage with him?

I think the best moments are when he actually makes me laugh with the things he says on stage. He is funny and he has his own way of saying things...it is charming and also cracks me up!

What is Joaquin's best quality?

That he is always protecting and caring for his friends in the business. He knows what material belongs rightfully to whom...and will never build or copy any illusions for his clients without the rights and permission to do so. He watches out for people in the business. He has a lot of great qualities: He takes care of me!

His worst quality?

His continuing...broken English...which, in a way, is also his best quality!

** Tanya, an incredible belly dancer, has also starred in many shows in Las Vegas (Neyla at MGM Grand hotel and Casino, Splash at the Riviera Hotel...).*



I THINK THE BEST MOMENTS ARE WHEN HE ACTUALLY MAKES ME LAUGH WITH THE THINGS HE SAYS ON STAGE. HE IS FUNNY AND HE HAS HIS OWN WAY OF SAYING THINGS...IT IS CHARMING AND ALSO CRACKS ME UP! TANYA

Let's talk about your show. What are the roots of Magical Passion?

I'm 100% Mexican and I have Hispanic/Latin roots...that's why people say that I have a special "way to be" on stage...whatever it is, it is in my blood. It's like a combination of mariachis, fiestas and mucho rhythm....with lots of passion!

You and Tanya make a great couple. Tell us how you met her and how it is to work with her in the show?

Tanya and I met when she attended one of my shows in Las Vegas when I was a headliner in Spellbound. Working with her in the show is wonderful; she is my balance, my other half and the beautiful side of the show...she is very creative and she has a great sense of humour, fashion, looks and she has a perfect eye for magic presentations. Also, working together is fun, fun, fun. we are born artists. Ahhh we have the same taste in music...very important!!!



You have known Criss Angel for a long time. How did you meet?

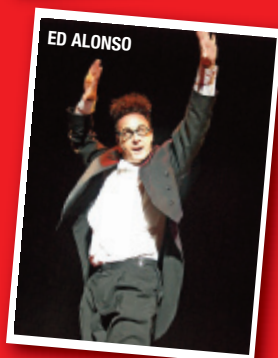
Criss and I met in 1989 when Criss and John Evans (Criss Angel's former partner back then) came to Toluca Mexico to perform at a magic convention and we became very close friends from that moment on.

Tell us about your work on Mindfreak.

When Criss Angel and his manager David Baram signed the contract

ARE YOU WORKING FOR OTHER MAGICIANS?

At the moment I'm designing and consulting for magicians like Franz Harary, Ed Alonzo, Criss Angel, Juan David from Colombia and Hiroki Hara from Japan.



with A&E Network they first approached me as a magical consultant/outside vendor for Mindfreak for seasons 1, 2 and 3. For the 4th season, Criss made me an offer than I couldn't refuse - and besides moving my company Ayala EFX to Angel's warehouse, I became part of the permanent cast.

There are a lot of criticisms among magicians about the show, the way it is edited... How do you address that?

That's jealousy I think. Angel is making history, not them... He has great ideas that they don't. Camera tricks? I won't tell you.... I respect our secrecy agreement... people are the judges, and it was the people who made him famous.... and if magic is back on TV because of his actions... then it's great for all of us!

Your worked on 'Believe' with a dove act called the Phantasm. How did you come up with it?

I was in the middle of the 4th season when Criss approached me with the idea to meet with Cirque Du Soleil executives and together make a presentation using livestock for the first time in the show.

Criss became excited with the idea of working together and creating lots of cool bird effects for the live show. It was like reviving the way we were: young teenagers talking, discussing, testing and creating effects for the act.

Also, Cirque executives loved the idea of Criss performing magic with no props around, just his bare hands, no scenery or special effects, just him - suave, slow and elegant.

That's how Criss and I created "Phantasm" for the live show Believe... by testing and exploring hundreds of bird effects until we decided. Then, he practised the bird act with me every day for 6 months: 3 hours a day. Lots of work!

It paid off immediately when Lance Burton came up to us after the show hugged Criss and said: "Brilliant!" then, he looked at me and said: "Joaquin, wonderful job!"

Criss Angel seems to do a million things at the same time, what's it like to work with him?

Very intense, and I love that - because I'm intense too! He is a very passionate person with a very strong belief in his capabilities and limitations He is very smart. I can say that because we've known each other for more than 20 years. We grew up almost together, separated but knowing each other's careers. I respect him and he respects my opinions and beliefs. We are like brothers: sometimes we fight and disagree, but in the end we work things out because we understand that we are there for each other. Criss has the largest fan club and they are very loyal. And like any humble



Greek guy, Criss is loyal to his friends and family... he always makes me feel part of the family.

I heard that the Masked magician asked you to work for him, is that true?

Yes! Don Weiner the producer of the show and Val Valentino (The masked magician) approached my company AYALA EFX to build 25 illusions for the upcoming series 4 weeks before the taping. After I noticed that all the material wasn't original and some of the illusions were a rip-off of other artistes, I told them that in order to be part of this project, I would need two things:

1. A written release of copyrights of every effect by the owner and
2. A written permission for my company to build them as part of the show

Both Weiner and Valentino agreed on that.

And the rest, you probably already know. They didn't get any copyright releases, ripped off many people including Criss Angel and myself. And, like a slap on my face, they poorly exposed a different method of my original version of "Blades of Doom".

Shame of them. Doing the wrong thing just to make money!

About Blades of Doom, your signature piece, how did you create it ?

The title Blades of Doom was suggested in 1994 by Lynne Foster when I was rehearsing this illusion for the version of "Mystique" a new magical show with a sort of story line produced by Dick Foster. When I first came to USA to perform in Las Vegas in 1990 I felt I had to expand my repertoire in a bigger scale. Back then, I loved the look of two props owned by two great illusionists: Steve Wheeler and Franz Harary. One was an escape inside of a trapezoid with spikes, and the

other was a drill on a track system. After getting the permission from Wheeler to use fire as the "timer for the spikes to drop" and the concept of Harary's track design, I came up with my version of two monster saws on tracks while escaping from hand cuffs in full view.

My presentation and the look of the "machine" was so cool that I had a hard time not to overshadow my persona when standing by such a menacing looking prop. As with every piece in magic I create, I worked a lot in choosing the right staging, music and movements to build an interesting presentation that would fit my style. My idea was to come up with an illusion to open the show... instead, the result was so strong, that we decided to use it as the closing effect. Fortunately, the TV show "Worlds Greatest Magic" used Blades of Doom as a TV catch opening (the only time we were used as an opening) and it made my illusion famous worldwide. Unfortunately, non-creative magicians, performers, wannabes, and non-ethical builders started to rip off my concept in Argentina, China, Japan, Holland, Germany and Russia... and recently, cheap versions of my original design have been seen in dinner theatres, amusement parks - and even on TV shows in the USA!

After all...this is one of those moments where I feel that I inspired so many people ...that they want to be like me and perform this illusion the way I did it. People love it, people are drawn to it, but they don't know why! The secret? I will tell you in just one word.

Passion...

I have it in everything I do.....they don't. Think about that! **ms**

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THE SECRET?

I WILL TELL YOU IN

JUST ONE WORD.

PASSION...



KOCKOV

THE FASHION CRISIS FROM MONROKVIA

KOCKOV IN ACTION



Now and again, a talent comes along that is so big we find it difficult to find the words to describe it. When we saw Kockov in action, we realised there actually ARE no words available that can accurately do him justice!

Kockov is a true original, a man with a tight act, and even tighter trousers. We decided to try and get inside the mind of this Cardiff-based mullet-haired Monrokvian mind-reader – and believe us, it wasn't always a pleasure! Graham Hey meekly asks the questions...

Who is Kockov?

My full name is Vladimir Dimitri Kockov, from the Former Soviet Republic of Monrokvia.

Where? I've never heard of it!

Monrokvia. It's a principality of merely 200 – 250,000 people in between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. Not many people know of Monrokvia as the Russians refused to allow it to be drawn onto a map or atlas until our independence struggle in 1986.

What's your background?

Like my 17 brothers and sisters in Monrokvia, I had to work 23 hours a day underground in the lard mines. These natural animal fat mines are the main export of Monrokvia. Most of the high-grade fat to be found in the richest and deepest seams, make their way into the finest kitchens and most expensive cakes and puddings in

the most luxurious shops and restaurants all over the world.

How did you get into magic?

My father, Serge Dimitri Kockov, a national card magic expert in our country, saw that I had his natural skill for conjuring, so wanting a better life for me in the West, he arranged to have me secretly deported to Barry Island in South Wales.

Do you see much of your family now you live in the UK?

No.

Is it painful to talk about your family?

Yes.

Why?

See above.

What's with the mullet and your look?

In my country the more hair a man has, the greater his status. With my hair I am pretty much a demi-god, that, coupled with the braiding on my back hairs. I have to spend much of my income on conditioner. As for my sense of style, I admit the leather trousers and handcuffs for a belt can be more saucy than sorcery, but the ladies dig it and when a specimen of manhood such as me catches their eye, that's the greatest mis-direction a magician could hope for.

What's been your greatest magical moment?

There have been so many, but the greatest trick I do day after day has to be getting into those leather

trousers and still being told by a doctor that I'm able to conceive. – Now that's a bloody miracle!

Who are your influences in magic?

Clumski the Clown - Russian clown who used to fall over a lot because he had no legs. The strange thing is he chose to have them removed in spite his father who was a cobbler, sad but true. I also must give credit to Grakaw – he was Monrokvian mafia boss who taught me the importance of underwater escapes - locked in the boot of a car, in a sack, going over a cliff into a lake whilst on fire!

If you hadn't been a magician what would you have been?

Disappointingly, an astronaut. I passed all the exams as a teenager, they'd even measured me up for my suit and a special chair in the rocket, unfortunately they went with the dog instead. They never did find out why that accident happened..

Which magicians do you think you most closely relate to?

Doug Henning – hair, Max Maven – beard, Copperfield – trousers, Blaine – vest and Clumski – ultimate commitment to the craft.

How would you like to be remembered when you're gone?

I'm a humble person. If only one person even vaguely recalls my name a year after my demise, that would be beautiful enough. If I weren't such a humble person I'd like people to remember that for just one tiny moment in their dull short lives they were witness to a true miracle-maker, a ground-breaking entertainer of galactic proportions who brought tears of laughter and gasps of disbelief. If you're really pressing me my gravestone would read "Copperfield, Burton, those chaps with the large hair and tigers whose names slip my mind and Blaine, thanks for holding the fort now Kockov has gone" – you see simple and understated, that's my philosophy, oh, and hairspray.

**IF ONLY ONE PERSON
EVEN VAGUELY
RECALLS MY NAME A
YEAR AFTER MY
DEMISE, THAT WOULD
BE BEAUTIFUL ENOUGH.**





JASPER BLAKELEY

THE MAN BEHIND THE MONROKVIAN MONSTER!

Jasper Blakeley refers to himself as 'an entertainer/comedian who just happens to be a magician'. This award-winning international entertainer/comedian/ magician, is the creator of nearly two dozen unique and fully realised characters, some using magic, some not. It is as Monrokvia's greatest Mind-reader and magician – Kockov, that he is best known in the magic world.

Tell us a potted history of your career so far...

As a child I was a classically trained singer and dancer, so I went to study as a dancer at University in London. I quickly realised it was really acting I wanted to do, so I changed courses and became an actor. After graduating, the frustration of continued rejection from West End musical roles led me to re-train and qualify as a radio journalist. I was then a feature news reporter, local dj, sports producer, entertainment news producer, national network programme producer and spent more than two years as producer of The Pepsi Chart with Neil 'the Doctor' Fox. Just ahead of the 90s dotcom bubble burst, I was a digital content producer, working with clients including Sky – then after eleven years in London, I left with my wife for Wales. Within a year life changed again and we had twins, a boy and a girl. I was working for a regional radio station, but after being a weekend DJ on the graveyard shift for about a year, I was made redundant. As a househusband with young twins, I needed a job that made good money in a short space of time. I remembered liking magic as a young boy, so I joined Cardiff Magical Society and quickly became a paid close-up magician,

THE BOTTOM LINE IS, TO BE A FULL TIME MAGICIAN, YOU HAVE TO BE AN ENTERTAINER, AND ENTERTAINING MEANS LAUGHTER

then I started doing kids parties as well and eventually cabaret magic. I've been a full time professional entertainer and magician for 5 years.

How did Kockov come about?

I created Kockov in embryonic form in Moscow in 1989 on a drama exchange trip. It was a cabaret show for the Russian students and whilst one of my friends played guitar, my other mate sang Bowie's Ziggy Stardust. Meanwhile I was dressed as a Russian with a large coat and fur hat and simultaneously translated the English lyrics into 'mock' Russian along with over the top physical descriptions. Clearly the student's English was good enough to understand the song, but their English was also good enough to understand the 'mock' Russian and my stupid acting – it just worked. I always knew from then on that if Russians got it, so would everyone else.

What are the main difficulties of performing as a character?

Convincing new 'non-referral' clients to book a character instead of a straight magician, you have to get them to trust you. Of course the downside is then the repeat bookings where they really want the character but don't want to pay the extra I charge for it, but that's another matter.

What are the advantages?

Too many to mention. Primarily being able to put on a costume and use it as a suit of armour. I can get

away with much more as a character, allowing myself the freedom to do whatever I want. But if a character's personality becomes restricting, I simply invent a new character to do it. I'm very protective over the boundaries that my characters can and can't cross. For instance (on the whole) Kockov doesn't swear that much, but I adore swearing, so I invented my deranged adults/kid's entertainer, Uncle Al The Kiddies Pal. Uncle Al uses the 'F' bomb in every sentence, plus he allows me to say and do exactly what I couldn't do when I used to entertain kids. Being that non politically correct plays a big part in my characters, as does sexuality.

Is Kockov based on anyone?

Yes, not his voice or his abrasive attitude, just his costume, arrogant stage manner and his hair. Unfortunately I can't be too specific as it's actually a UK stage magician I saw many years ago who made me weep with laughter at his whole act. Unfortunately there wasn't a hint of irony about him, that's why I play Kockov straight. Kockov truly believes he is amazing and everyone else is inferior. His utter conviction in his 'look' and his belief that he has 'real powers' lies at the heart of his comic appeal.

Do you laugh at a lot of straight magic then?

It's hard not to. If there were venues (other than conventions and cruise ships) available, where you could get paid to be a serious straight magician, brilliant, but there aren't. To be a serious straight magician is very hard. The bottom line is, to be a full time magician, you have to be an entertainer, and entertaining means laughter, to get laughter you have to be funny, to be funny you have to be born funny or you have to work very hard at it. If the vast majority of magicians stepped out of their bedrooms, away from the clubs and societies and away from the opinions of their magician friends and took a course in acting or even performed in a local

QUICKIES:



Fav vegetable (excluding parsnips)?

Jizzonut – a variety of hairy coconut with a creamy pulp

Fav coloured smartie?

No to Smarties, yes to Peanut M&Ms and their 7 E numbers !!!



Fav hair product?

Fudge

Fav movie?

Raging Bull

Fav piece of garden furniture?

Bench (I'm lazy)

TEN MOST BIZARRE THINGS ABOUT JASPER BLAKELEY

1. I used to make radio adverts in 10 different languages

2. I acted in a sex infomercial for Sky.

3. I did a voice-over for Playboy TV.

4. I danced in an Asian Pop Video, the only pop video ever filmed at The Houses Of Parliament.

5. I had a Top 20 UK dance hit with a parody of The Macarena called 'The Macaroni' on a Sony BMG label.

6. When I was introducing Beyonce she laughed and told me I'd actually just dribbled.

7. I've driven over-land to India, from the UK.

8. I told my mates I'd just interviewed some new musician who seemed to think he was all 'that' with his

debut single – I said he was a one hit wonder... it was

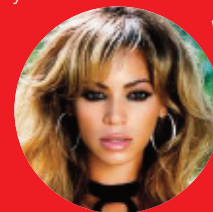
Usher.

9. I was flown to New York for 15 minutes to interview Mariah Carey. I was left alone with her in a bedroom and (only wearing a negligee)

she insisted we got into the bed to do it – (the interview!) *"Who was wearing the negligee? -ed*

10. Aged 18 I had a stand up row in my Student Union

with a drunken bloke after I'd come off stage after doing my awful comedy routine. I told him if he could do any better he should try. He'd never done it before, but he thought he was funny, so this young lad got up and did half an hour off the top of his head – his name was Michael Pennington, and he later became top UK comedian Johnny Vegas.



www.jasperblakeley.co.uk

Jasper in character as 'Archie Grot'



I'VE ALWAYS ENJOYED PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES OF WHAT'S ACCEPTABLE AND BELIEVE IN THE RIGHT SITUATION, A WELL-PLACED 'F' WORD IS DYNAMITE.

musical or just got professional advice from theatrical performers, they'd quickly see what their act is missing. As a magician, the trick and the mechanics should look after themselves, it's the presentation that needs the work. Magic is about the only art form that apparently doesn't need any formal training. It's very rare to find an actor, singer, dancer, painter, playwright, director, filmmaker or sculptor who hasn't had some kind of formal training. We can't be surprised then to find so few paying outlets for our art form if so much of what people have seen publicly over the years has been done by amateur non-performers. Everyone

has a right to be a paid magician, but we're now part of an industry so obsessed with the new effect, we've forgotten that we haven't even mastered the basics of performance. I'm not saying I'm better than this person or that, I just recognise that to make it in this business you need much more than just technical skill. I love magic and I want the public to love it too, so if you're not being ironic, burn the playing card ties, playing card waistcoats, the cufflinks, the lapel pins, the metallic suits, the dreadful hair, burn the out-of-date badly painted shabby props, burn the 'wacky' stage costume along with your 'wacky' personality and your

shameful stolen gags from the 70s, ditch the 80s badly recorded music and the over-rehearsed shite patter, simply accept that you want to be better – this applies to close-up workers, cabaret performers, stage acts and kids entertainers. Let's just agree to be better.

You have lots of characters - do you have individual scripts for each, or are they basically the same, with a different accent!?

Anyone who has seen me perform or spent time with me whilst I'm in character knows that a good 70% of what I say is improvised. Yes, there are stock lines and rehearsed ad-libs for common situations, and whilst I can't claim I don't cross-pollinate gags between characters, much of what I say comes from the audience at that moment in time.

Some of your material can be quite 'adult'. On the whole how have you found the attitudes of magicians to this type of material?

I've always enjoyed pushing the boundaries of what's acceptable and believe in the right situation, a well-placed 'f' word is dynamite.

Interestingly I was concerned about offending people when I started lecturing and then performing my act for magicians at societies and conventions. Let's not forget I come from a generation where attitudes to language are different from those of a large swathe of the magic population. For a lot of people in their sixties and above, swearing at all, never mind in front of a lady, is not acceptable.

Therefore to have an overtly gay Spanish-esque balloon modeller called 'Fabio Bendi – balloon modeller to the stars' mince on to stage to the sound of The Village People's Y.M.C.A. and start pumping up balloons from a pump using pelvic hip thrusts – it was probably a step too far for some. I use the 'c' word on occasion as Fabio and with Uncle Al, the 'f' word is regular. What I have

discovered though is using 'ripe' language in the right context and having been given the right billing and warning (if necessary) most people will be ready to accept a character and their language. Interestingly at the recent Bristol Day Of Magic, given the context, it was odd to hear French Magician David Stone using the 'f' word three times during his close-up set. Clearly I noted it but was not offended and as far as I know nobody complained about his use of language with children in the room – was it his being French that let this pass? Would I have got away with it? Would one of my characters have got away with it? Was his magic and routine so strong that he was forgiven instantly? I admire David very much and only use this as an example of how we consider language in performance. I was always told I didn't need to swear to be funny, I don't, but I choose to use expletives and innuendo as and when I see fit because I'm an adult entertaining adults. Also at certain less fancy bookings, the women's language even makes me blush.

Which is the favourite effect you perform?

'Ar-gosh'. I recently put on my one-man 'Kockov' show at The Wales Millennium Centre in Cardiff, a fantastic arts venue in the capital. For the show I devised a few new effects, including one called 'Ar-gosh' using an Argos shopping catalogue and Argos slips



and pens. The basic effect allowed a member of an audience to use the catalogue to win the object I'd bought from Argos that was hiding under the cloth on a table. Without wanting to give too much away, it appeared to go spectacularly wrong, only to go right, but then with a kicker ending. I've only performed it the once, but I discovered afterwards that of everything I did that night, 'Ar-gosh' amazed the most people.

ANYONE WHO HAS SEEN ME PERFORM OR SPENT TIME WITH ME WHILST I'M IN CHARACTER KNOWS THAT A GOOD 70% OF WHAT I SAY IS IMPROVISED.



What's the best magic or mentalism effect you've seen in the last year or so?

What tends to happen when you spend so much time around magic, is that you can pretty much work out how everything is done. It's frustrating because no one likes to be fooled more than me. With this in mind I'd have to say the final effect in Derren Brown's Enigma stage show. Unfortunately, but understandably, Derren asked for it not to be discussed for obvious 'spoiler' reasons, but anyone who's seen the show knows how good it is.

You've released DVDs of Kockov, tell us about them and do you have any plans to release effects as yourself?

Alakazam released 2 Kockov DVDs a couple of years ago. Despite some great reviews in the press and on forums, I think they slipped under the radar a bit. Featuring a full live Kockov show across the two dvds, they teach you how to do my original 6 book blindfold book test, my hidden spike routine called Plunge of Death, my Real Live Russian Roulette with revolvers and Dialabical, my telephone directory prediction. Just as it takes

a bit of trust to 'sell' Kockov to a client, I think there's a barrier with marketing comedy character mentalism dvds, therefore the next project will probably feature Jasper.

What's next for you?

I'm starting my Cabaret Academy, where anyone interested in improving their performance, not just magic, can spend a day with me and a handful of others at a training venue in Cardiff. I'm hoping to release a new DVD in the near future, I continue to lecture and appear at conventions and hope to get to perform at conventions in The States. I'd love to perform in Las Vegas again, this time in my own show, plus I'd love my own TV show in the UK. Nothing to do with magic, but I was asked to audition, and eventually got a part in, an upcoming comedy pilot for BBC3. Other than that I continue to make subversive videos for my Youtube audience, the most recent character being 'Gareth The Gimp', the secretary of the Rhondda Rubber Club.....quite adult, you'd better get those parental restrictions back on your computer!



WHAT TENDS TO HAPPEN WHEN YOU SPEND SO MUCH TIME AROUND MAGIC, IS THAT YOU CAN PRETTY MUCH WORK OUT HOW EVERYTHING IS DONE. IT'S FRUSTRATING BECAUSE NO ONE LIKES TO BE FOOLED MORE THAN ME.

Do you have more affinity with Sacha Baron Cohen than Paul Daniels?

Most definitely Sacha. Whilst anyone who's seen me perform both publicly or socially, knows I strive to be original in all that I do, I can't deny the similarities between some of the independently created characters we both perform. I can only dream of having his kind of success. He's a truly gifted actor and comedian who knows the freedom and amazing reactions you get from inhabiting an extreme character for long periods of time. Put a camera on him and he's fearless and dangerous, a very clever man.

What do you reckon is the most important thing to become successful in magic?

Having the support of good friends and mentors, making sure you get the critical opinions from non magicians and above all making sure your audience knows you enjoy what you do.



SIEGFRIED & ROY

UNIQUE IN ALL THE WORLD

“The Mirage would have never succeeded without Siegfried & Roy. Our deal was that I provided the theatre and a production fee. S&R would do the pre-production, and we would split the profit, fifty-fifty after costs. S&R spent fifteen to twenty million more on the show than their allocated production fee. I told them that there was no more money to cover the difference. They said they had hocked their contract and their house to pay for it. I was shocked. Who does this?” – Steve Wynn, excerpt from “Siegfried & Roy: Unique In All The World.”

By Paul Stone

I had the opportunity to sit down with author and editor, Diana Zimmerman, and co-author and art director, Robert Gould, to discuss the much-talked about and highly anticipated Siegfried and Roy collector’s vault book—*Siegfried & Roy: Unique In All The World*. Like S&R, the book is also “unique in all the world,” and with only 500 numbered copies being printed, it is definitely a rare and important piece of magic history.

The journey to its publication is almost as intriguing as the book itself. With actual ephemera from Siegfried and Roy’s Mirage show, a piece of their Marquee that stood

outside the Mirage on the Strip in Las Vegas, and reproductions of many rare items that have never before been published—and that can be removed from the book—as well as a DVD of the London Palladium Tribute to Siegfried and Roy show that I produced in 2008, it is like nothing ever created in the history of magic publishing.

I asked Diana and Robert how this remarkable project came to be: “The concept for the book Paul,” Diana replied, “grew out of your Tribute to Siegfried & Roy at the London Palladium. Robert and I wanted create a book that



memorialised that event. But in thinking about it, we decided we wanted to go deeper into the world of Siegfried & Roy than anyone had ever ventured. Since a book and countless articles have already been written about S&R, we knew we needed to go in a new direction—one that would intrigue them and secure their full cooperation. Rather than do just another biography about their lives and history as performers and personalities, we chose to focus on them as artistes and people—to really explore, for the first time, their unique creative philosophy and process.”

“We explained this approach to S&R,” Robert says, “in a meeting at their home. They graciously listened to our pitch: ‘The world knows you from the outside, through the show, your performances, and your personalities. We would like to create a book that reveals who you are from the inside, and how you create your magical world. We want to create a book that embodies the vision of Siegfried & Roy.’ When we finished, there was only silence.

Siegfried looked at Roy—unsaid words flashed between the two of them. He finally looked back at us and smiled, saying, ‘The vision of Siegfried & Roy, I like that. Let’s do it.’ Roy nodded, then immediately chimed in with a laugh, ‘Just make sure Siegfried doesn’t take credit for everything.’ And that was it; our remarkable journey had begun.”

Of course my next question to Diana and Robert was the one that is on everybody’s mind, when will the book be released?

“When we first started the book,” Diana explains, “Robert and I thought it would take about a year to produce. We anticipated it would be published in late 2009. It has taken over two years, but is now completed. We had choices to make—do we rush to publish it, and exclude a new collection of items that we were just given access to last fall, or do we push back the publication date and include these important finds? We choose the latter. Getting on the calendars of people such as Steve Wynn, Kenny Ortega, and

...WE HAD TOUGH CHOICES TO MAKE ABOUT WHAT TO PUT IN AND WHAT TO CUT. WITH A \$695.00 PRICE POINT, (\$595.00 PRE-PUBLICATION) IT HAS TO BE INCREDIBLY SPECIAL—AND IT IS. WE HAVEN'T CUT ANY CORNERS ON THE PRODUCTION.

Kenneth Feld also took longer than anticipated. Meeting with them wasn't always at our convenience—not to mention juggling Siegfried & Roy's own schedule. And then there were the thousands of visual items that had to be sourced, sorted, selected, scanned and, due to the age, size and/or shape of many of these rare pieces, had to be cleaned up for legibility."

"We were overly optimistic in our original timeline," Robert adds, "and really had no idea about the depth and breadth of the world of images we were exploring. In my thirty-five years of working as a designer and art director, I have learned that books have their own life. Somewhere in the course of their creation, you cease to drive the process, and they begin to reveal themselves to you. At that point you must surrender, listen, trust, and serve the work. Let it become what it must be, because that is where the real magic evolves. And that is what we chose to do with Siegfried & Roy: Unique In All The World."

"As a result, the book has grown into so much more than we ever anticipated," Diana continues. "It has almost doubled from the original size. And even with the increased page count, we had tough choices

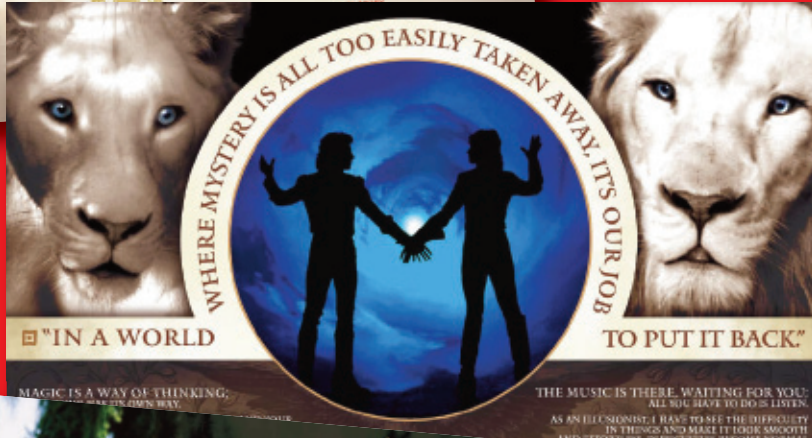


**PAGES TAKEN FROM
SIEGFRIED & ROY:
UNIQUE IN ALL THE WORLD.**



**MORE PAGES TAKEN FROM
SIEGFRIED & ROY:
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to make about what to put in and what to cut. With a \$695.00 price point, (\$595.00 pre-publication) it has to be incredibly special—and it is. We haven't cut any corners on the production. It is costing \$250,000 to produce, so there may never be another book like this again. Collectors and enthusiasts—even non-magicians—have been snapping them up. Some people have purchased two, three, and even four copies. But then, with the first book having sold at auction for \$3,000, it is understandable that people think the resale on it will skyrocket."



"But that's not the reason to purchase this book," she insists. "The interviews, alone, are some of the most revealing and thought-provoking ever accumulated in our field. Individuals such as Steve Wynn, Kenny Ortega, John Napier, and Kenneth Feld speak frankly about S&R; what it took for them to be successful, what they were like to work with, and how they changed Las Vegas. When you hear people at this level of success, not in magic, but mainstream, talk about what it takes to become a success, you not only gain a tremendous insight into Siegfried and Roy, but into success itself. I challenge anyone to read this book and not re-examine their own career, whether he or she is in magic or not. Individuals such as Penn Jillette, Criss Angel, Lance Burton, and David Copperfield also share highly personal stories about S&R. Of course, Penn's interview is one of the most provocative."



"We also wanted S&R's contributions to be insightful and new, to really capture the essence of these two remarkable men," Robert explains. "That may seem to be a bold goal, especially from two people of such exceptional celebrity, but working with them proved to be a remarkably open, gracious, and generous process. It's important to understand that I am not a magician, nor am I part of the magic community. I never saw S&R's show, and never met them



before we began this project. That said, working with them has been, and continues to be, the most profoundly affecting experience of my creative life. The vision, passion, creativity and humour of Siegfried & Roy are a pleasure and honour to experience first hand. I have never heard any artistes discuss their work with such clarity, vision, and joy.” “Capturing such depth, artistically,” Robert adds, “was my challenge in designing the book—imbuing S&R’s mystical world-view into a compelling visual experience. I loved every moment of it, and have come away from my relationship with S&R with the profound realisation that they have a secret, something that is the key to a deeper understanding of who they are and why they are so successful—and that is all revealed in the book.”

The book is truly unique in so many ways, as Diana explains: “We’ve made every aspect of it a reflection of Siegfried and Roy’s very being. You’ll read about them in their own words, often illuminating and inspiring, sometimes blunt, sometimes bold, but always revealing who they really are—and that may surprise you. When they created their stage shows, they did so with the audience foremost in their minds and hearts, and that is what we’ve been able to capture. It is experiential in every way, from the removable sketches of their first illusions, to their early contracts, brochures, and an actual piece of the magnificent marquee that dominated the Strip, plus the DVD of the Palladium show. It is so much more than Robert and I ever imagined.”

“You’ll read about how S&R realised their extraordinary dreams, and charted new paths where no model existed,” she adds. “How they were able to conceive and create a show that changed the face of Las Vegas entertainment, and opened doors where none existed for magicians and variety performers, alike. And we’ve included another very important individual in the lives of Siegfried &



WE’VE MADE EVERY ASPECT OF IT A REFLECTION OF SIEGFRIED AND ROY’S VERY BEING. YOU’LL READ ABOUT THEM IN THEIR OWN WORDS, OFTEN ILLUMINATING AND INSPIRING, SOMETIMES BLUNT, SOMETIMES BOLD, BUT ALWAYS REVEALING WHO THEY REALLY ARE - AND THAT MAY SURPRISE YOU.

Roy. You will meet, up-close and personal, Lynette Chappell, S&R’s leading lady—both on and off-stage. Her story, like theirs, is one of amazing courage and unbridled strength. Perhaps no one is closer to them than Lynette. In the book, you will see why.”

“When you have the opportunity to explore the minds of highly successful people,” Diana goes on to say, “you walk away with an entirely new insight into what can be achieved. Robert and his team of artists have done an amazing job of displaying the elegance and importance of the words that I’ve written, as well as the interviews we’ve been fortunate enough to gather. He’s done it in a way that is elegant, provocative and inclusive. Originally, the interviews were all going to be short. But they are so important to understanding S&R that we decided to include many of them in their entirety and create an

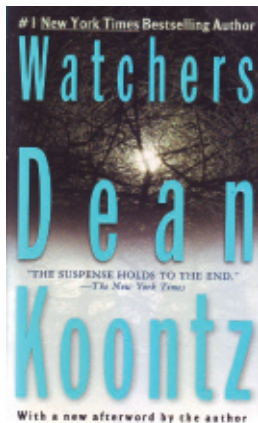
additional section in the book to do just that.”

“These are men who, to this day,” Robert continues, “with all of the struggles, successes, and challenges that they have faced in their lives, live every moment in the vital, joyful present, hungry for new experiences, looking boldly forward to a far horizon, all the while immersed in humility and gratitude. You’ll also read about the struggle both Siegfried and Roy went through after the “incident,” as Roy calls it, how they fought to overcome such horrendous adversity, and where their heads are today. These are not two men who have ever rested on their laurels—nor will they ever.”

From the previews that I’ve seen, the book is, indeed, extraordinary. Using exact facsimile reproductions of rare memorabilia and never-before-published documents and

artifacts, Siegfried & Roy: Unique in All the World will immerse you in their magical world like never before. Drawn from private collectors, as well as Siegfried & Roy’s own closed archives, the book affords rare glimpses into the creativity and vision that has guided the lives and careers of these two precedent-setting artistes. Rare historical show posters and tickets, tour marketing materials and merchandise, photographs, handwritten letters and notes, and so much more have been faithfully reproduced. And, as Diana mentioned, many of these items are designed to be removable.

Siegfried & Roy: Unique in all the World is truly unique in magic. It can be ordered by going to www.noesispublishing.com. My suggestion is, don’t wait. Now that the publication date is set, and with only five hundred copies, half of which are already sold, it will undoubtedly sell out quickly. **ms**



WATCHERS

by Lewis Jones (illustrated by John Teo)

EFFECT

Spectators are allowed to freely select up to 60 page numbers from a paperback novel. Then any spectator makes a final (secret) selection of any of these pages. He runs his finger down his chosen page, and you are able to tell him some remarkable and correct information about the passage where his finger stopped.

SETUP

The paperback novel is ungimmicked. It is "Watchers" by Dean Koontz, and it has over 500 pages. At the time of writing, it is being sold on www.amazon.com for 1 cent, and on amazon.co.uk for 1 penny.

You will also need a small notebook that has a spiral binding that runs down the left side, so that the front cover opens by swinging from right to left, like a normal book.

Open the notebook by turning the front cover to the left. Using the pen you

will be using in performance, on the first blank page you are now going to write a series of numbers, as if they had been written by different members of your audience.

Which numbers you write will depend on the edition of "Watchers" you are using. If you are using the Berkeley publication choose from these numbers:

86, 87, 88, 94, 96, 106, 109, 110, 113, 124, 155, 182, 208, 209, 211, 215, 237, 238, 240, 250, 251, 252, 278, 281, 282, 288, 290, 295, 297, 298, 299, 300, 308, 311, 317, 335, 348, 357, 363, 375, 393, 394, 396, 397, 398, 401, 402, 409, 410, 411, 412, 414, 415, 419, 421, 423, 428, 429, 430, 432, 433, 458, 463, 468.

But if you are using the Headline edition, choose from these numbers:

97, 98, 99, 106, 110, 122, 123, 125, 126, 128, 160, 168, 169, 225, 226, 227, 228, 253, 254, 255, 256, 267, 270, 289, 301, 302, 308, 319, 325, 330, 354, 356, 377, 378, 384, 411, 418, 424, 426, 427, 434, 435, 437, 447, 448, 452, 453, 456, 457, 458, 460, 462, 464, 479, 483, 484, 494, 495, 506.

Don't write the numbers in neat order of increasing value, as I've done above. Write them in haphazard order, and spread them all over the page at random. Use as many of them as you can cram in, and try to fill the page.

Now close the book, and turn it end over end, so that the back cover is facing you. Open this cover. You will find yourself looking at the back page, which is now upside-down. Fold the rear cover all the way round to the back, against the front cover, so that all that remains to be seen are the blank page (now at the front), and the inside of the back cover (now at the back).

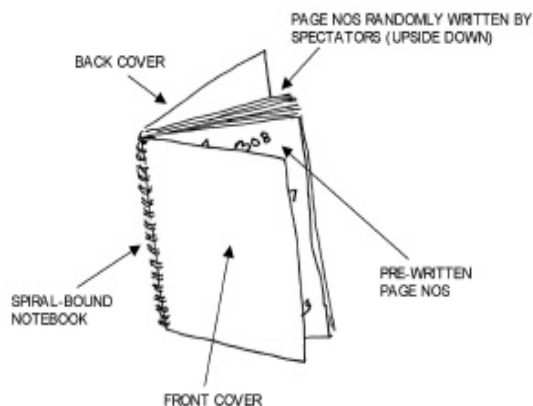
To begin, have the pen, the notebook (with folded-back rear cover), and a copy of "Watchers" at hand.

METHOD

Introduce the paperback book, and hand it to someone well over to your right for examination. Encourage him to allow other people nearby to examine the book.

Show the already-opened notebook, with the blank page showing, and hand it with the pen to someone near to the person examining the novel. Ask how many pages are in the novel, and invite members of the audience to write random page numbers all over the blank page. Make it clear that each person is free to write as many numbers as they like — all different — and then pass the pen and notebook on to someone else. In this way, the pen and notebook pass further and further over to your left, and well away from the spectator holding the novel.

When the notebook has travelled about as far to the left as it can, check to see



if anyone else wants to add any numbers. Then your right hand takes back the notebook, holding it upright (spiral to your right), so that the written page faces the audience, and it is obvious that you can't see any of the writing yourself.

Your right hand passes the upright notebook to your left hand, which takes hold of the left edge of the back cover only (thumb nearest to you, and fingers in between the back cover and the bulk of the notebook). The notebook should be leaning slightly towards you, to make sure that the bulk of the notebook doesn't swing away free.

Hold out your right hand as you ask for the pen to be returned to you. If you want to use the old joke ("That's how I got it"), now's the time. Take the pen by one end, in the way you would hold a magic wand.

Now, as you begin to move to the right, towards the spectator holding the novel, your left hand allows the notebook to tilt away

from you. Let the back cover move down towards a horizontal position, and the bulk of the notebook will swing downwards to a vertical position.

Simultaneously, use the pen to help the bulk of the notebook to continue its swing — upwards and flipped over to your left — so that in the final position, the front cover is on top. The entire notebook is now horizontal, and your left hand is still holding no more than the edge of the back cover, which is now on the underside of the notebook. Your left fingers are now underneath, and your left thumb is trapped above the back cover and below the page with the spectators' numbers on it.

At the same time, you are moving away to your right, and asking, "Now who has the novel?"

Drop the pen into a pocket, and use both hands to hold up the closed notebook in a vertical position, with its front cover facing the audience. Open the front cover, making it

>> clear that you can't see any of the writing. Tear out that page and hand it to the spectator with the novel, then close the notebook. Ask him to check that all the numbers are all different, and then to make a secret mental choice of any page number on the written list.

Ask the spectator to roll the page into a paper ball. You helpfully relieve him of the paper ball and drop it into your pocket.

While you move well away, ask the spectator to open the novel at his mentally chosen page. He is now to place his forefinger tip at the middle of the top of that page, and move his finger slowly down the

middle of the page. His task is to be aware of some of the words that are available to his peripheral vision, but not to select any of them yet.

To demonstrate how he is to pick a spot on the page of the book, hold up the notebook with the rear cover facing the spectator, and run your right forefinger slowly down the centre, from top to bottom. (This serves to show that the notebook doesn't have two front covers.)

Choose a moment when his finger has clearly reached the bottom of the page, or is very near it. "Hold it right there. Take a close look at some of the words near your fingertip."

Go into divination mode and say, "Let me just write down what it is I'm getting." With the notebook's front cover still facing you, turn the notebook through 90 degrees, so that the spiral is uppermost. Your left hand takes hold of the rear cover and its adjacent page together, and your right hand swings everything else up and away from you, so that it drops down on the audience's side.

You are now looking at a single blank page, and on the other side of it is the list of numbers that were previously written by members of the audience. (The long edges of the notebook are now

top and bottom, with the spiral still uppermost.) Write the word EINSTEIN across this page.

Turn the notebook to face the spectator with the book, and ask him to read out loud what you've written, then ask him to check that the word is close to his fingertip on the page of the novel.

This is a success, and the effect appears to be over. But you still appear to be bothered by something. Say, "There's just one more thing. I don't really understand it, but let's see if you can make sense of it."

Tear out the page with the word EINSTEIN on it (and be careful not to flash the

list of words on the other side). Crumple up the page and drop it into your pocket. Then write the word DOG, or (perhaps better) the words GOLDEN RETRIEVER on the visible blank page (this is in fact the end page of the notebook). Show this to the spectator, and let him confirm that Einstein is in fact the name of a dog.

Finally (and here's the point of all this), hand him the notebook "as a souvenir of a rather special occasion". He can now examine it as much as he wants - it's just a standard notebook and there's nothing suspicious to be found.

I don't know of any similar routine that allows this. **ms**



WHO'S UNDER THE BLANKET?

Andy Clockwise

(Extracted with permission from Andy's lecture notes "Kidwize With Clockwise")

This is a great game for children's parties and can be played for 5 minutes or 25 minutes. The children love it and all you need is a blanket, some music and a few small prizes.

"OK children, this is a game called who's under the blanket. I'll play some music and I want you to dance around the room. When the music stops I want you to curl up into a ball on the floor like this and close your eyes."

Curl up on the floor yourself showing the children what to do.

"OK, while you're on the floor curled up into a ball with your eyes closed, I'll place a blanket over one of you and if I do you have to stay very, very still. We'll then have just 3 guesses to try and find out who's under the blanket. OK, let's play, everybody up and let's dance".

Play your music as you do a silly dance with the

blanket. After a short while stop the music.

"OK, everybody on the floor curled up into a ball with your eyes closed and NO peeking."

There will need to be some space around the children, so if many of them are very close together say the following; "Now I do need enough room around you to place the blanket, so if you're very close to a friend you'll need to move. Have a quick look and if you do need to move I'll give you 5 seconds to do it. 1,2,3,4,5."

Place the blanket over one child covering them completely. Put the child at ease with a reassuring tap on their back and a "right, stay very still".

"OK kids, someone's under the blanket, come and have a look".

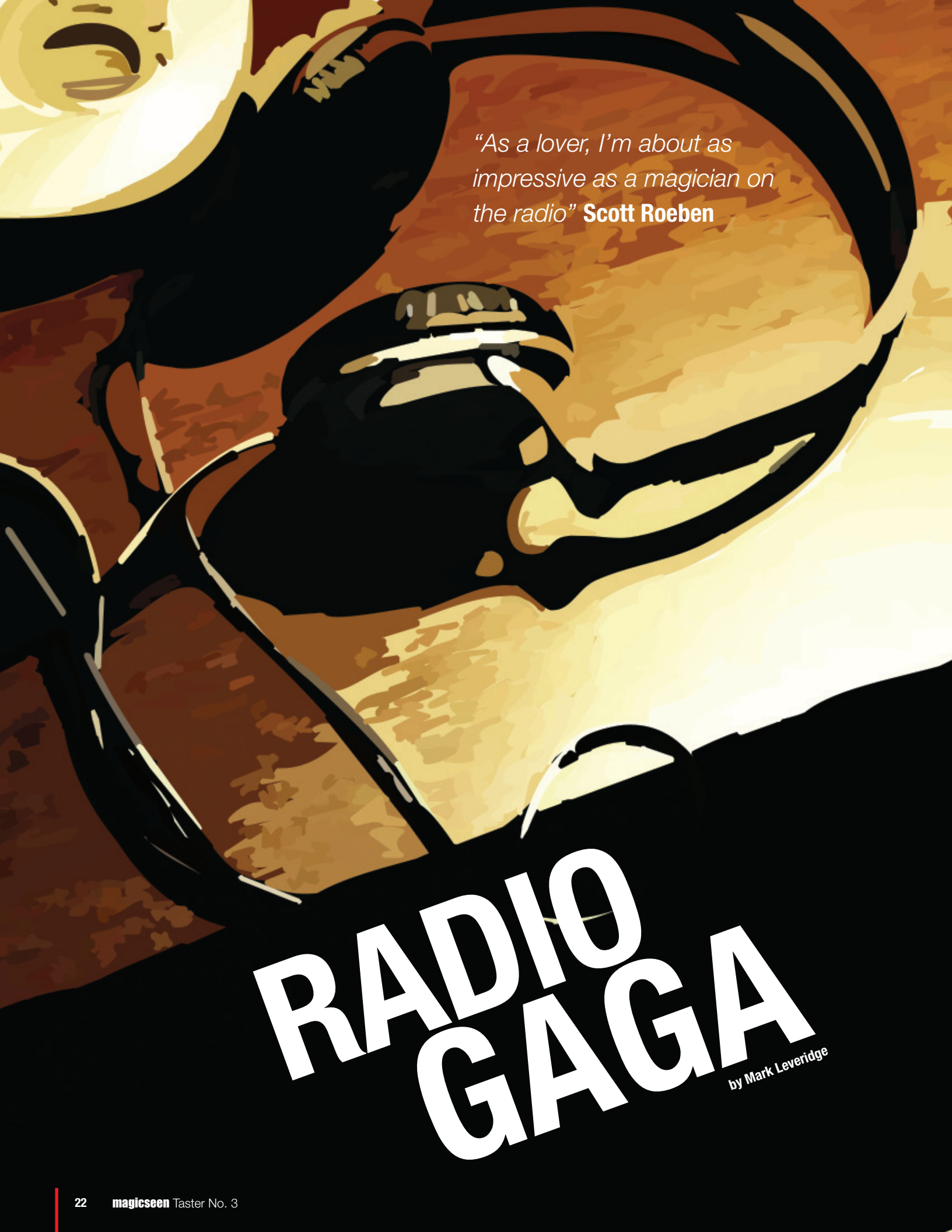
Have all the children make a large circle around you and the covered child making sure that nobody stands on the blanket.

"Right, who do we think is under the blanket. Don't call out. If you would like to have a guess just put your hand in the air."

Ask a child who they think is under the blanket. Then ask the person under the blanket that if the guess was correct to stand up. If the guess is incorrect, they are to stay where they are. Tap the covered child's back as you talk to them so that they know you are talking to them. If guessed correctly,

the covered child will stand up. Award both the correct child and the covered child with a small prize.

I would only have three guesses. After all, you don't want the covered child to stay covered for too long. After three incorrect guesses, have the covered child stand up slowly and pull the blanket away carefully revealing them giving a small prize to the covered child only. Then you start all over again with the music playing etc and give someone else a chance to be covered with the blanket. The children really do love this game, and they'll come up to you as they're dancing asking for you to cover them. **ms**



“As a lover, I’m about as impressive as a magician on the radio” **Scott Roeben**

RADIO GAGA

by Mark Leveridge

very now and again you hear of magicians who have performed on the radio, but have you ever wondered just how effective it really is as a medium for magic? Does it actually come across well, or is it all just a bit 'gaga'. We take a look at this specialised form of entertainment and try to draw some conclusions with the aid of five guys who have all been there and done it, those performers being Alan Jones, Ian Keable, Jay Fortune, Mark Waddington and Stuart Watkins....

Painting Audio Pictures

Let's start by stating the totally obvious - magic on the radio will be audible but not visible (unless there's a webcam or something similar covering the studio, which does happen occasionally but is certainly not something to be relied upon). Now since magic is normally considered to be a visual artform, you may think that you have immediately hit the buffers - if people can't see you, how are they going to know what you're doing?

The answer is that as the performer, you need to set up a situation which the listeners can readily understand and appreciate, using magic in which the plot is as much as possible self-evident. Certainly Ian Keable feels that "as soon as the listener has to hear what is happening in order to understand the effect ('that's amazing, sponge balls have appeared in my hand') something is inevitably lost".

Next, the reaction of the radio show host to the magic needs to be such that it conveys to the listeners the amazement of what has just taken place. Stunned silence may be a testament to your magical prowess in some situations, but it is total death for magic on the radio! What you need are gasps, and exclamations from those watching in the studio.

Jay Fortune sums the whole scenario up nicely when he says, "As long as the effect is clear so the listener can follow it, and the reaction of the spectators in the studio is strong enough, then radio can create a real magic experience. It's all



Jay Fortune

“As long as the effect is clear so the listener can follow it, and the reaction of the spectators in the studio is strong enough, then radio can create a real magic experience. It's all about painting a clear picture in the mind of your listener.” Jay Fortune

about painting a clear picture in the mind of your listener.”

To give you an example of this, I can tell you that years ago I had the opportunity to appear on BBC Radio Bristol and I remember that I presented the Finger Chopper. What was great about this was that the plot was set up in advance of anything actually happening as I explained the Finger Chopper prop and what I intended to do with it, tension was built up through a series of false starts and humorous lines, leading to the highly dramatic moment when with an audible sound the blade was hit through the radio presenter's finger, culminating in a shriek of surprise and relief from said presenter when his finger survived

unharmd. It proved to be an excellent choice of effect all round.

Trick Tips

So what kind of effects would our experts recommend? Alan Jones suggests that the Linking Rings make a good magic effect because of the accompanying sound that they make, but he, along with most of the others, would by choice opt for something in the mentalism line. Clearly, many prediction tricks or other mental plots are easier to put across than more visual tricks.

Mark Waddington likes to present a musical prediction based on that week's top 40 chart, as this enables the track itself to be played and in situations where the interview slot is very short, it allows for the effect to be continued after the music has finished.

Ian thinks you can't really beat a newspaper advert prediction along the lines of 'on such and such a show on the 9th July, Ian Keable predicts that so and so will select the eight of clubs'.

Interestingly, Jay feels that the actual trick is not really that important, but it is more "how the personality of the magician can be best presented through the effect (in order to) communicate and showcase their talent."

The end game of whatever you perform is that you must engage the listeners. People often have



Stuart Watkins



- make sure you have plenty of material - sometimes you can get asked to stay on longer than you expected, especially if you are going well and they have time to fill.
- the presenter is the star, so you need to carefully take control of him/her or they may talk over your punch lines, but try not to pre-brief on what you intend to do, or you will lose that all important spontaneous reaction that you need in order to sell the magic to the listener.
- keep your eye on the time. You should know how long your trick lasts but you don't want it interrupted because they have to cut to a news break or travel bulletin.



All our experts agree that keeping it simple is the best way to go. As Ian puts it, "they think of a word, you tell them what it is. They choose a card, it's predicted in the newspaper. They shake a dice, you tell them what the top number is. Cut out any complicated instructions which will be hard for both the presenter in the studio and the listener at home to follow."

Stuart also recommends that you only use material that you are really comfortable with and that you perform all the time so that you can concentrate fully on creating the necessary tension in the studio and for the listeners at home. Nerves can affect your concentration in these unusual situations, so the better you know the magic, the more likely you are to survive and do well.

the radio on while they are doing something else, it's a sort of background noise to accompany people eating, working, gardening, house cleaning, driving etc, and so for a performer to succeed he has to create something which grabs the attention of those who up to that point were perhaps only half listening.

One way to do this, is to involve a listener who calls in to the show. Stuart makes a real feature of this by using an Invisible Deck in which the card with the different coloured back matches one chosen at random by a listener who calls in to the show during the performance. This creates a nice three way segue between the performer, the DJ and the listeners.

The Key To Success

In order to try and crystallise what you need to be looking for when creating something to use on the radio, Alan Jones has set out a checklist of a few basic things you might want to think about. He says:

- your magic must have a straightforward plot and have an engaging and relevant theme for the demographic of the listeners (know your audience!).
- any instructions you give to the radio presenter should be clear and unambiguous. Remember, the DJ's attention will probably be split between you, the effect and keeping all the buttons pressed!

What's The Point?

Given that radio is not the easiest of mediums for a magic performance, why bother with it? The answer is almost always that it is free, local publicity. If you are having a one-off event and you want to promote it, appearing on local radio in advance probably won't do you any harm (unless you mess it up!) and it might encourage a few extra people to come along to your show.

If it's for more general publicity, Ian suggests that you really need to do a series of appearances for it to have any impact. Jay stresses that radio is excellent for selling you and your personality, but not so good if you are simply trying to prove how strong your tricks are.



Mark Waddington

Alan sees it as an excellent way to promote your name and to encourage people to visit your website, plus it can lead to follow up exposure on the radio station's own blogs and forums. Mark says that unlike TV, which can be quite daunting, appearing on radio where there is usually only yourself and one or two presenters, feels a lot calmer and allows you to take control more of what you want to say and do.

On The Air

So you've decided you want to give radio magic a try and you've sorted out some suitable material, now all you need to know is how to get invited to appear. There are a number of ways to go about this:

- Send in a Press Release about something that you are going to be doing. It needs to be something that will get the attention of the production team. Alan got coverage for a Houdini stunt, and on another occasion for a blindfold drive. Stuart suggests that if you are working for a local charity, particularly if it is a children's charity, the radio station will usually be interested in finding out more about it.
- Become a local expert on something. Radio stations have blogs and listener forums, so have a look on those and see what the hot topics are and see if you can

“...unlike TV, which can be quite daunting, appearing on radio where there is usually only yourself and one or two presenters, feels a lot calmer and allows you to take control more of what you want to say and do.” Mark Waddington

become the resident expert on something connected with a current topic.

- See if you can find someone who is involved with hospital radio and try to get on to that a couple of times in order to give yourself some experience. This in itself may generate some interest from the regular local radio station.
- Ian recommends that if you send in a Press Release, you should do a follow up 'phone call if you haven't heard back from the station within a few days as this will give you a chance to show what a fascinating person you are during the call!

More Info

What it all boils down to is that just like performing commercial close up, or children's shows, or cabaret or appearing on TV, presenting magic on radio is a skill and a knack too, and it is not something that anyone should just rush into thinking it will all be easy. In fact Jay recommends that people "take a crash course in radio. It's a different ballgame to performing in a visual capacity. Many magicians go after the publicity that radio can bring...without really understanding the medium".

So, if this article has piqued your interest and you would like to go into the subject further, here are a few suggestions from our experts for material you may care to source in order to increase your knowledge.

Banachek's Radio Magic - 3 CD set - \$35 (approx. £20) from www.magicinspirations.net/radiomagic.htm

Mind Waves by Andrew Gerard - 3 DVD set - £39.92 from www.magicshop.co.uk



Radio Magic by John Wade - MP3 audio download - \$14 (approx. £9) from www.lybrary.com/compere-radio-magic-p-17911.html

The Dunninger Radio Show - MP3 download - \$3 (approx. £2) from www.lybrary.com/dunninger-radio-show-p-594.html

Verbal Magic by Juan Tamariz - £26.99 from www.magicbox.uk.com



Plus... **Alan Jones** is in the process of producing a product featuring detailed information on how to perform on radio. Entitled FM : No Visuals At All with a subtitle of: Practical Themes and Ideas for Radio Mentalists, it is available from Alan direct. Contact him for more information on alanbjones.uk@googlemail.com

And finally...**Ian Keable** is the author of 'Stand-up, A Professional Guide To Comedy Magic' which we reviewed in issue 23 (Nov. 08) and which you can get from www.iankeable.co.uk/stand_up