THE MAGAZINE FOR MAGICIANS AND MENTALISTS

MAGIC SEEN Lite



MAGICSEEN: THE MAGAZINE YOU'LL NEVER FORGET (NO MATTER HOW HARD YOU TRY!)

Own a piece of magic history



'Dai Vernon: The Professor' by Jay Fortune
Official Limited Edition Fine Art Print 20 x 20"

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Painting the Professor's Portrait

by Jay Fortune

I am excited and honoured to announce to readers of MagicSeen a brand-new Official Limited Edition Print which will be shipped to collectors this September.

- Official Limited Edition Print - Own a piece of magic history -

Working with the Estates of Ross Bertram and Dai Vernon, this portrait has taken 3 months to create across many, many sessions. The finished work is 24x24" and is currently being professionally captured before an expert Fine Art publisher will produce 10 Artist Proofs. From these, I will carefully select the perfect finished print which will then be produced as a Limited Edition run of 100.



Each print will be on the finest archival quality Fine Art grade paper at a finished size of 20x20". I'll then hand-sign and number each work. With a Certificate of Authenticity accompanying every print, the finished works will be shipped worldwide early September.

Don't miss out on this opportunity to own a piece of magic history! Please register your interest by email to mail@jfortune.co.uk. Once the Proofs have been produced and the Limited Editions are ready, I will notify you with costs and availability on a first come, first served basis.

Until now, I have released mini-prints of some of my magician paintings and it would be hard to imagine a greater magician than Dai Vernon as the subject for my first Official full-size print.

- Destined to become a collector's item -

Above, is a work-in-progress photograph as the painting began to take shape. The first washes are on and the background begins to be defined. Left, is a later work-in-progress photograph, with tone and detail beginning to give form and movement to the piece. The foreshortening on Vernon's arm, creases of the hand and shading of facial features all begin to give the painting energy and definition. The finished work (opposite page) has my 'signature' vertical slashes and is a faithful artistic expression of the source image, famous among magicians.



- working with the Estates of Ross Bertram and Dai Vernon magicians and collectors of magic will enjoy owning one of these stunning prints -

I am most grateful to the kindness and support from the Estates of Ross Bertram and Dai Vernon and hope that magicians and collectors of magic will enjoy owning one of these stunning prints when they are available this coming September.

A percentage from all sales will be donated to the Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal. As an artist with works in prestigious galleries and worldwide collectors, I cannot wait to see these finished works in magicians homes and offices across the globe. For more info, please email mail@jfortune.co.uk. Thank you.

Destined to become a collector's item,
only 100 will ever be produced with 10 Artist Proofs.

To register your interest in acquiring, please email mail@jfortune.co.uk
Official Release - September 2022.

WELCOME TO ISSUE #21...

...our latest slimmed down edition of Magicseen. This issue is sampled from the full version of issue 107 (November 2022) and features the full length article about our cover stars - Vegas & Lopez.

What else is in this issue? There's our Readers' Letters page and Wolfgang Riebe's Aces in Glass effect in the Masterclass where the four Aces visually appear in a wine glass one at a time.

Ian Adair is once again featured and talks about being part of magic club or society, and Mark Leveridge offers his final Pro Tips article on slowing down.

If that's not enough screen writer and oral historian Jonathan Carr talks to Roberto Forzoni about mindreading, football and athletics.

We also have our usual selection of product reviews which I'm sure you will find useful before parting with your cash.

Finally, Mark Leveridge says goodbye as Editor /Partner of Magicseen after 18 years of publishing. Go and put your feet up Mark :)

Happy reading!

Phil Shaw

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The Card-Warp, reinvented by the crazy mind of Spanish FISM Award Winner Mario Lopez.

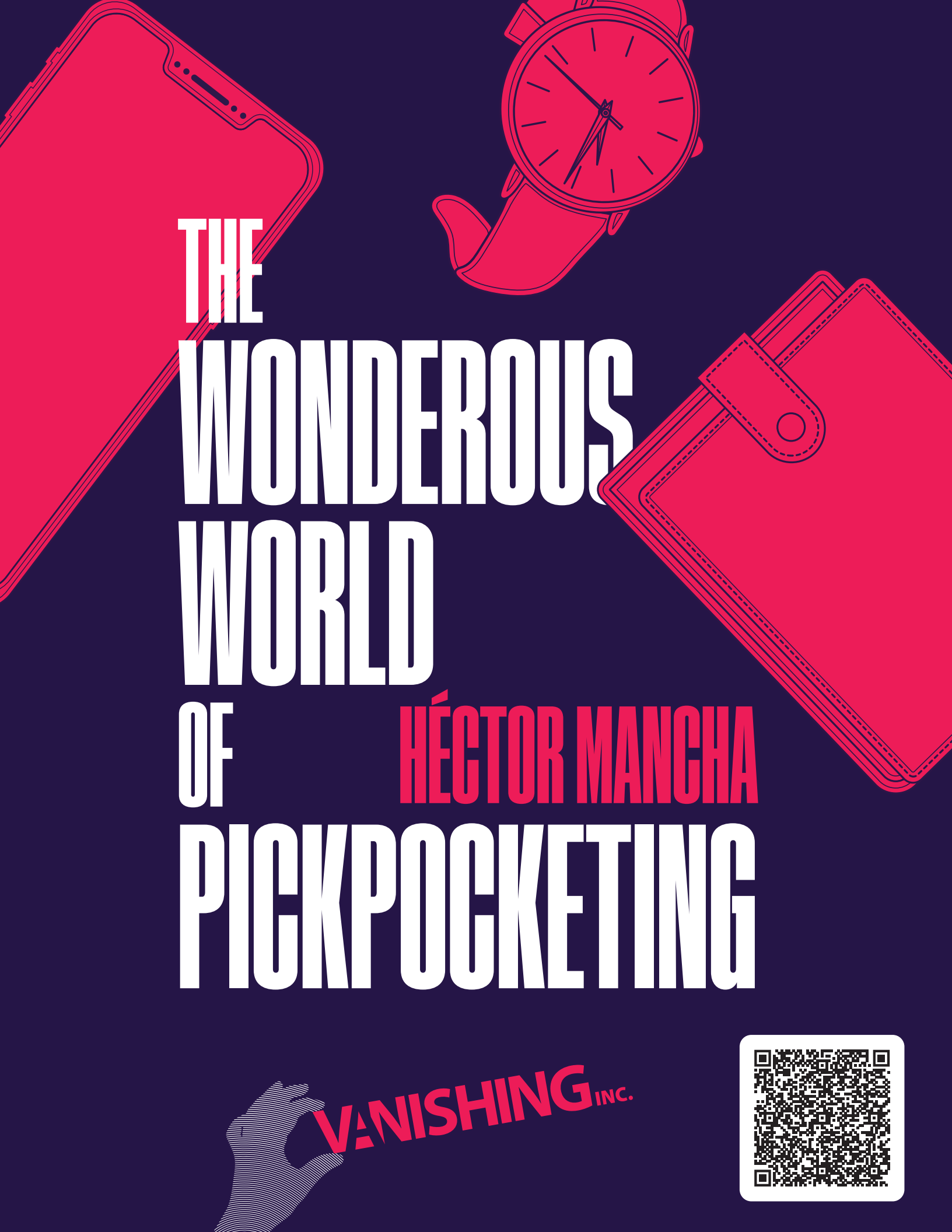
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Vegas & Lopez

A MAGICAL CHAINSAW MASSACRE CABARET

Illusion Duo Vegas & Lopez Execute a Side-Splitting Spectacle of Hilarious Horror

By Thomas L. Swieciak

This particular evening, it's easy to feel sorry for Linda Lopez. After all, tonight she will be crushed by giant spikes, sliced into multiple pieces, pierced by swords, impaled, dismembered, beheaded, burned alive, and sawn in half with a chainsaw by her stage partner, Kiwi horror illusionist Andre Vegas. However, the Vaudevillian cabaret spectacle of New Zealand illusion team Vegas and Lopez discourages the audience from giving any sympathy whatsoever to the tragic plight of the hapless Lopez.

Welcome to the Vegas and Lopez Horror Show, one of the most uniquely original magic shows ever conceived. This cabaret-style illusion show has been thrilling audiences throughout Oceania for over ten years.

Howls of laughter from the audience often drown out Linda's screams while she is being sawn in half. Even as Lopez is burned alive, the black smoke that billows from her charred remains frequently wafts throughout the theater amidst wild and gleeful applause.

Andre Vegas has been perfecting this presentation since he was a teenager. "I first started working on the horror-themed show when I was 16 years old," Vegas said. "I am a big horror fan and you can't beat the classic horror movies from the 70's and 80's," he added.

Vegas has used his extensive familiarity with the horror genre to craft a 1970's grindhouse horror film come to life, complete with 1980's-era gory special effects. This style, combined with customised illusions that accentuate the atmosphere, creates a theatre environment akin to a haunted house, drive-in spookshow.

Taking her role in stride, Lopez noted that comically over-the-top theatrical drama is all part of the experience. "I love playing the part of the horror 'Damsel,'" Lopez said, citing one of the characters she periodically portrays.

A thespian in her own right, Linda brings a wealth of dramatic acting experience to the production, acquired during her professional dance career.

Staying true to stereotypical 1970's and 1980's horror film traditions, Vegas and Lopez have scripted their illusion show to mimic classic horror film tropes to the point of comedic excess.

"The basic theme of the show has always been similar to my original concept," Vegas said. "Basically, a live horror movie with live special effects. The classic girl who survives the madness to come out on top in the end," he added.

Lopez is occasionally cast as the 'Damsel,' or the classic horror film 'final girl.' The concept of the 'final girl' is a horror film genre acting role analysed in film classes the world over. The analysis of the role has been spawned from countless horror films of the 1970's and 1980's in which a female protagonist often outsmarts, outmanoeuvres, or simply outlasts the awful circumstances that are thrust upon her and the accompanying cast. As Andre Vegas puts it, when cast as the Damsel,


OREGON
DOUBLE GUARD
.325



Lopez gets "put through the wringer, only to come out unscathed and the star of the show."

In an homage to this narrative form, Vegas and his bumbling assistant Bubba haul an increasingly distressed Damsel from one dastardly contraption to the next throughout the production. The murderous, yet clueless, duo of Vegas and Bubba scratch their heads every time in disbelief as the Damsel emerges from each ghastly encounter unscathed.

However, Linda is keen to ensure that her role as the horror show 'Damsel' is delightfully aware of the "tongue-in-cheek" nature that such a character has garnered after four decades of retrospective filmic analysis steeped in gender awareness.

Reflecting on current trends in feminist politics, which in many cases have condemned the notion of female illusionists being locked in boxes, Lopez dismissed such concerns as negligent of the fact that Vegas and Lopez are intentionally trying to be politically incorrect. It is this intention, and the corresponding 'horror film' narrative development, wherein the comedy lies.

"I am playing a character in a story comparable to a role in a play or a movie," Lopez said, likening the Damsel's plight to classic character depictions in both Western films and horror films. "I have never been made to feel like a sexual object in this or any other work with Andre," she added.

After all, when locked inside a box while a gas-powered chainsaw is ripping down the center, Lopez has more immediate and pragmatic thoughts in her mind. Linda is usually attempting to keep calm, and trying to avoid catching a chunk of raw chicken in her mouth.
"I'm just hoping to not have blood or meat splattered on my face," Lopez said.

Fortunately for Lopez, the perpetually suffering 'Damsel' role is traditionally filled by Andre's longtime friend and colleague, professional dancer Elise Agnew. Elise has been cast in the starring role of the horror show Damsel for almost a decade.

During most of the large Vegas and Lopez horror productions, Elise is the unlucky pawn who usually finds herself locked in the chainsawing box, as well as inside the remaining maniacal machinations. Furthermore, in several ancillary presentations, such as the Circus of Horror, Elise assumes the role of a reluctant laboratory test subject, experimented upon at the depraved whims of both Vegas and Lopez.

In these productions, usually exhibited at theme park Halloween events or the occasional late night adult-themed show, Lopez performs in her regular horror stage role, which is best described as being akin to an 'Evil Queen.' To the disadvantage of poor Elise, this evil queen character is not a bumbling blunderer like Andre's occasional sidekick Bubba - but rather this display exhibits a far darker side of Linda's dramatic repertoire.

...LINDA IS USUALLY ATTEMPTING TO KEEP CALM, AND TRYING TO AVOID CATCHING A CHUNK OF RAW CHICKEN IN HER MOUTH.

Lopez always ensures that Elise is perpetually dispatched or executed in an orderly manner, however swift or slow that may be.

Alas, for the endlessly unfortunate Elise, Lopez usually prefers pursuing a slow course of action.

ANDRE VEGAS
THE VILLAINOUS HORROR ILLUSIONIST



"I am originally from Tuturau, a rural district in Southland, New Zealand," says Vegas.

A self-described 'black sheep' of the family, Andre recounts how, when growing up, many didn't take his aspirations seriously. "When asked what I was going to be when I grew up, I always replied, 'a racing car driver.' Everyone laughed and said I couldn't do that for a job," he says. "After a while, when asked the same question, I would reply, 'a magician and a racing car driver,' and they laughed twice as hard - but now I get paid for both professions," Andre laughs.

Founding roots of the Vegas and Lopez Horror Show are deep, going back more than three decades, to when Andre first began professional performances as a grand illusionist. Back then, before Andre met Linda, it was simply known as the Vegas Horror Show.

"In the 80's and 90's, I had a very popular stand-up comedy horror magic act called 'Bob the Butcher,'" Vegas said. "This act was very bloody and the highlight was my buzzsaw illusion," he added.

Vegas crafted his performance narratives over the years, working with good friends and longtime colleagues, in a variety of venues. While the profession was taxing, especially given the geographic constraints of New Zealand, Vegas always persevered for the purpose of doing what he loved - making magic.

"I have been doing this for a long time, but only since social media and other platforms came to the fore have I really been recognised across the board," continues Vegas.

While the horror genre is Andre's speciality, this illusion company is hardly limited to this most popular of its presentations. For example, Vegas and Lopez present a jungle themed performance called "Going Bananas," designed for young school children, complete with educational explorers and a feisty gorilla. This is in addition to a number of family-themed spectacles, including Christmas shows, where Andre poses as a mischievous elf, and a Summer Circus, which displays a variety of juggling and acrobatic acts aside from the Vegas and Lopez illusion show.

Additionally, Andre has bisected celebrity Kimberly Crossman, pierced a beauty queen with swords at the New Zealand Miss Universe Pageant, and appeared on New Zealand's Got Talent with his horror entourage.

Naturally, if given the choice of a favorite act to perform, Andre always prefers a chainsaw in his hands.

LINDA LOPEZ
THE QUEEN OF HALLOWEEN



"I was born in Auckland, New Zealand," says Lopez. "I was a strong-willed child, according to my parents, and spent my childhood either at school or in a dance class," she adds.

A mother of three with a Bachelor's Degree in accounting, Lopez never envisioned herself becoming an illusionist later in life.

"I began dancing at age five," she continues. "I have done an array of dance styles including ballet, jazz, tap, lyrical and contemporary, but my passion was always ballet."

Now, after 'living and breathing' ballet for a number of years, Linda dances for the pure love of it.

Throughout the Vegas and Lopez Horror Show, Linda repeatedly exhibits her skills, such as a dramatic dance piece she performs in conjunction with the Interlude illusion, or her brief dance number before performing the Zig Zag Girl.

Lopez began her illusion career doing more simple, family-oriented shows alongside Vegas. However, when Linda discovered that she and Andre shared a common interest in retro horror films, the pair decided to take their act to the next level.

"I told him I loved the idea of horror, getting bloody, bound, and burnt alive," says Lopez.

After developing the horror show into its current incarnation, Vegas and Lopez went on to perform the new show for several venues, before taking top trophies at New Zealand's "Magicana Day."

Countless performances, and several Halloweens later, Lopez once again finds herself playing the 'Queen of Halloween,' alongside fumbling villains Andre and Bubba, as they endlessly dissect a hopeless Elise.

A smiling Lopez continually exudes an intimidating confidence throughout the production. Obviously, the same cannot be said for Elise, who comedically becomes increasingly paranoid with every slicing, dicing, burning, crushing, piercing and dividing.

"We hope our audience takes away a combination of it all, and leaves entertained by the journey we created," Lopez says. "After all the screaming is done, of course," she added, with a devilish smile.

"I TOLD HIM I LOVED THE IDEA OF HORROR, GETTING BLOODY, BOUND, AND BURNT ALIVE..."

ELISE AGNEW
THE PERPETUALLY DIVIDED DAMSEL



Having been regularly divided with a chainsaw for almost ten years now, it can be said without question that Elise Agnew was born to be sawn in half.

If there is one ability that rivals Agnew's stunning talent in dance, it is the regrettable tendency of her character, the Damsel, to repeatedly end up in perilously fatal situations throughout the various Vegas and Lopez productions.

"The story behind my character is the classic 'car breaks down on cold winter's night, an innocent girl stumbles upon an old mansion,' and so begins the horror, comedy and illusion," says Agnew. Naturally, Elise has named her Damsel character 'Elise.'

However, the real Elise Agnew was born in Nelson, New Zealand, and began dancing when she was three years old. Agnew has been the recipient of a national ballet scholarship, in addition to performing in dance competitions all over New Zealand.

Trained in Winter schools at New Zealand School of Dance, Elise has now been teaching the artform for a number of years. Agnew's talents have taken her from local events like the World of Wearable Arts Awards Show, all the way to the Bahamas for a six month performance contract.

Admittedly quiet and shy, Elise found her creative outlet in performance.

"I always knew I wanted to be a performer, because when I was on stage, the shyness disappeared," she says.

Multiple individuals have attempted the role of the Damsel, including Andre's close friends Zoe and Tess. However, as a seasoned veteran of Andre's horror shows, Agnew's portrayal of the Damsel character remains a distinct hallmark of the Vegas and Lopez productions.

Furthermore, Elise noted that throughout her time performing alongside Andre, the duo have developed a unique business partnership.

"Our professional relationship blends into our personal relationship, so it never feels like work," Agnew said. "We know everything about each other, as we have worked and travelled closely together for the last 10 years. We have had so many crazy times over the years, and stories to go with it... but that would take up another article on its own," she adds.

Regardless of her character's predestined doom, Elise plays the Damsel role with the lightheartedness and awareness of the 'tongue-in-cheek' style in a Vegas and Lopez horror show.

"So, I am always helpless, scared and usually bound and gagged," Angew says, laughing.

It is within the concept of this endless misfortune where Angew encourages viewers to find comedy. Sadly, in every production, relief for the Damsel always remains tragically beyond her reach, no matter how badly Elise longs for reprieve.

"In the show there are sometimes violent and shocking moments, but this is always followed by light relief using comedy aspects," Agnew says. On that note, a self-assured Elise is absolutely unrivalled as the comedic relief, playing the Damsel as "a little, ditzy blonde, who never seems to escape even when I could, yet I always seem to survive," says Agnew.

At this point in life, given her acting prowess and extensive experience playing the Damsel, there is a sense of inevitable destiny in how Elise views her role in the Vegas and Lopez Horror Show. "I love the role of the 'Damsel in distress.' It suits my personality," she says contentedly.

This fact, as the sawing-in-half box is rolled into view, suits Vegas and Lopez just fine.

ON HALLOWEEN, THE VEGAS AND LOPEZ HORROR SHOW BEGINS...

The theatre lights dim, and an old projector flickers to life. At the center of the stage, a movie screen captures the images of the projected film. It is a classic horror film created by Vegas and Lopez.

The audience watches a series of woefully unlucky circumstances which play out on film at the expense of the eternally star-crossed Damsel, Elise. After she encounters a raging lunatic in butcher's garb, the terrified Damsel makes a hysterical attempt to escape. Then, before the audience is able to witness Elise's on-screen fate, a chainsaw is heard, physically, within the theatre.

Suddenly, a gas-powered chainsaw begins eating its way through the movie screen, blowing bits of silkscreen into the audience until finally, the raging lunatic Bubba emerges from the hole in the center of the movie screen, searching the stage for his prey. It does not take long for the lunatic to find the petrified Elise, as she has been bound hand and foot, and lashed to a vertical post, audibly wailing at the far end of the stage.

Needing no introduction, the infamous illusion duo Vegas and Lopez emerge from the opposite end of the stage. The maniacal Bubba, clearly in league with the freshly introduced magicians, lumbers off stage and returns rolling an intimidating horizontal wooden box.

Sheepishly, Elise stares at the approaching box with a wide-eyed sense of foreboding,



as it looks just about her size. Without further delay, a screaming Elise is hauled to the center of the stage, and locked into the box by the dubious duo. Once Elise is inside, Vegas stirs up the crowd into wild cheers before he begins running Bubba's gas-powered chainsaw through the whimpering Damsel, splattering her blood and guts everywhere.

Meanwhile, a vindictively delighted Lopez periodically cradles Elise's head gently, offering the Damsel a mockingly insincere sympathy while flashing repeated smiles of sadistic glee to the crowd.

As always, the many cheers and audible laughter from the audience drown out the screams of a shocked Elise. After separating the unfortunate Damsel, the audience is able to witness Elise wiggling her toes, a key feature of ingenious design for this unique illusion, invented and built custom by Andre Vegas.

Andre, Linda and Bubba, unsure of how to proceed, push the halves of Elise into the audience and around the stage with mutual obliviousness.

Blood and raw meat dripping from a chainsaw gash in the sawing-in-half box, a blubbering Elise trembles within, waiting for whatever comes next.

Tonight, Lopez is allowing for her evil alter ego to emerge - as Linda exits the stage and returns with a large cremating cabinet - just big enough for Elise.

With Bubba clumsily parading around the halved Damsel, Vegas retrieves a flaming baton, and the audience already has a burning suspicion of what comes next.

This particular evening, it's easy to feel sorry for Elise Agnew... while cheering for Linda Lopez, that is.

Thomas L. Swieciak is an American lawyer and lifelong magic enthusiast. He resides in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, U.S.A. with his wife Sheila, their daughter Tavra, and their dog, Radagast the Brown. milwaukeemagicworks@gmail.com.



READERS' LETTERS

IF YOU HAVE ANYTHING YOU WOULD LIKE TO TELL US, WHETHER IT'S ABOUT THE MAGAZINE OR ANYTHING MAGIC RELATED, PLEASE EMAIL: **LETTERS@MAGICSEEN.CO.UK**

ROUTINES THAT MEAN SOMETHING

I've often been to magic conventions and seen my friends – and many other people – just buying tricks because they were impressed by them. There's nothing wrong with that, of course, but I was always 'taught' that for a performance to be really effective, it needs to be planned and the effects linked – therefore creating almost a themed performance.

I don't think that the magician can really win over an audience by simply going from one un-linked trick to the next: "Ok, let's do a card trick!" etc. I think that audiences like to be drawn into something – and I really think that they appreciate when a performer has obviously worked on his performance, and it comes across as a cohesive act. Buying a load of tricks and then sticking them into your pocket to go around some tables will not make you successful. I believe it will make you into a lazy performer. Be creative, consider what you do, and engage with your audience through a series of connections. That, in my opinion will lift you above many other magicians.
L.F Watkins, Suffolk.

OUT OF THIS WORLD

I love the classic effect: Out of this World! I was wondering if Magicseen had any thoughts on what is a good 'impromptu' Out of this World routine?
Jake Wright via email

Hi Jake. Just off the top of our heads, Harry Lorayne's impromptu Out of this World is a brilliant routine – and you'll find it in Harry's book, "My Favourite Card Tricks." But, if you'd like to do a more impromptu routine, why not be creative and perform an Out of this World routine from props you can find on your travels. For example, we've seen a magician using those different coloured sugar packets that you'll find in restaurants and pubs. This actually reminds us that Mike Close does a clever version using a gimmicked sugar packet!

Talking of impromptu effects and routines – we asked a few magicians for their favourite impromptu bits and pieces.

Here's a list of some brilliant effects that you might like to check out... Paper balls over the head – you know the one!

1. ***Dan Harlan's Starcle!***
2. ***Knife Thru Coat (Paul Zenon does a great version)***
3. ***Bob Read's Coins Across to Glass***
4. ***Richard Osterlind's Perfected Centre Tear***
5. ***PK Touches by Banachek***
6. ***Max Maven's Positive/Negative***
7. ***Luke Jermay's Touching on Hoy (from the book Coral Fang)***

WALLETS? WHY?

Dear Magicseen,
Why are so many magicians obsessed by wallets? I mean, there must be HUNDREDS on the market – they can do anything from peeks, switches, vanishes, you name it, they can do it! They can even hold a whole deck in multiple different secret compartments. The question is... why? Most people these days don't even carry a wallet do they? I used to perform a Card-To-Wallet – just a simple trick – the one with a slit in the back. THE CLASSIC ONE!
...But I noticed in the last few years, wallets beginning to lose their appeal and mine began to look very unfashionable! Yes, I still use it, but I don't personally feel the need to have a selection of the two hundred wallets on the market all claiming to be amazing!
I must also add that these wallets are not cheap! I admit that I once paid about a hundred pounds for one – but that 'one' was Confabulation' – one of the all-time classics and it was worth every penny. God bless the great Alan Shaxon! C'mon you magic creators, forget wallets and put your efforts into something else!
Neil Killick, via email

CAN'T STAND THE NOISE!

Dear Magicseen,
As an inexperienced performer, I have just had a bad experience whilst performing at a wedding party. It was my first wedding event, and I can honestly say that I learned so much from actually performing at a real event that I can tell you in this email! I really wasn't prepared for the things that could/can/did go wrong.

The main lesson I learned was that when you're going to perform at a party-type event, you must take this into account with the type of effects that you perform. For a start, the room was so noisy that I was almost shouting to be heard as there was also loud music playing, lights flashing and glasses chinking! At the end of my stint my voice had practically gone!

From now on I will make sure that I have a selection of tricks which require less talking – as when people are struggling to hear you, they can switch off pretty quickly. So, some visual effects are perfect for such an eventuality! Other key lessons I learned – 'pocket management'. Make sure you can move smoothly between effects – and also that you have a selection of non-card tricks – as some people seem to have a very negative view of card magic. OK, I've got that all off my chest now. Where did I put my stress tablets??
Mark J. via email.

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Tony Armstrong

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MASTERCLASS

ACES IN GLASS

WOLFGANG RIEBE

Trick extracted from The Complete Works, published by Wolfgang Riebe 2020.

The magician shuffles the four Aces into a pack and places everything into a tall-stemmed glass that he holds at the stem. Every time he brushes a silk past the glass, the Aces appear visually, one at a time, in front of the deck.

REQUIREMENTS:

You will need a long-stemmed, red wine glass. Fig.1. Make sure that your whole deck fits snugly into the glass. Fig.2. You will also need an 18" dark colour silk, a regular deck of cards and four, gimmicked, double-faced cards; these you just glue back to back as follows: AC/5D, AH/AC, AD/ 5D, AS/AD.

SET-UP:

Place the 5D on the face of the normal deck. Now, have your prepared double facers stacked at the back of the deck as follows: Place the pack face down. The first card on top of the face down deck is the AC/5D, then AH/AC, followed by AD/5D. The Ace faces are all face down. Finally the AS/AD card with the AD side face up. Have the four regular Aces distributed throughout the deck. Fig.3.

WORKING:

Keep the gimmicked stack at the bottom of the deck and without exposing them, show the faces of the cards and remove the four normal Aces. Make sure the normal 5D is still your first face-up card.

Once the Aces have been removed, square everything up and stick the Aces back into the pack at various places so that the audience believe you have 'lost' them randomly within the deck.

Place the entire deck into the bowl of the wine glass; remember that it must be a nice tight fit. Hold the glass at the stem. The longer and thinner the stem of the glass, the more effective the trick and the less noticeable the turning of the stem is.

Pick up the silk and wipe it across the bowl of the glass, at the same time turning the stem of the glass 180 degrees between your fingers. Basically you are doing a 'paddle move' with the stem of the glass. This creates a visual appearance of the first Ace!









The AD is now the front card. Pull it out and place it at the back of the deck. Remember it's a double facer with the AS behind it that appears next. Repeat the move with the silk, and the AS appears. Now, remove the AS plus the card that is now at the back of the deck; this will show the AD. Fig.4. This is the AD/5D double backed card. Place these cards to one side.

You are now set to go again. This time the AC appears and is placed at the back of the deck. Then, the AH appears. Again, remove the front AH/AC and the back card, which is the AC/5D. Fig.5.



The four Aces are now on the table, and you have just performed the most visual four-Ace trick re-appearance ever. You can ditch these cards and then carry on using the deck as a normal pack.



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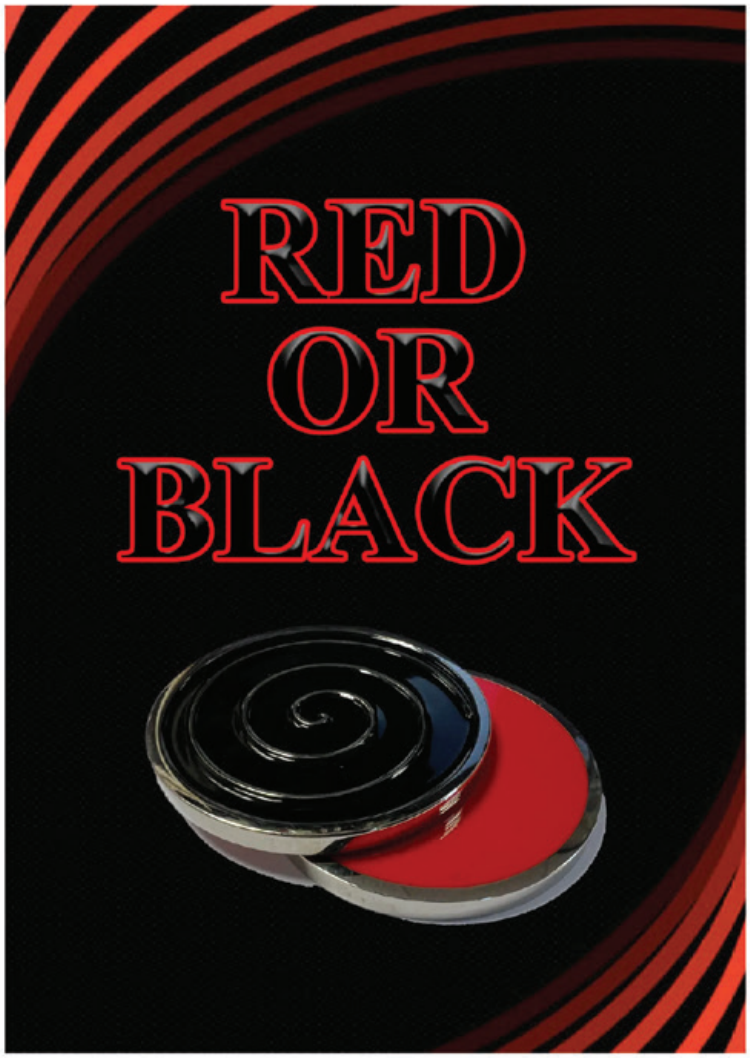
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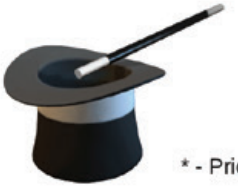
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HAPPY MEMORIES (OF THE) BOY MAGICIANS CLUB

IAN ADAIR (M.I.M.C.)

I am sure most readers are, or have been, members of one magical club or society or another.

Now into my 80s, over the years I have been a member of many national and international societies, including Honorary Life Memberships of twelve.

In the 1940's membership into most magical societies, even local ones, was only offered to anyone who was interested in magic, aged eighteen and over.

One magic club, known as the Boy Magicians Club of Prestatyn was formed in the 1940's, by a man called Jack Rees. The club's members consisted of boys (no girls and no adults), had no annual fees, and there were no examinations to be admitted. Small adverts appeared in comic papers of the day, Jack Rees offering youngsters interested in magic to reply by sending a 5/- postal order for immediate membership to the club, a monthly magazine, personal advice from the editor (Jack Rees) who stated he had many years of practical experience and technical knowledge behind him. That all members would receive valuable advice on every branch of magic – arranging programmes, misdirection, overcoming stage fright, the best ways to obtain engagements, advertising, as well as help with problems. And, at the age of eighteen, or before, if a member made good progress, he would introduce him to his nearest adult magical society.

A new member also received a magic wand (wooden 15" in length) a metal badge (depicting a magic rabbit popping out of a hat), a member's certificate, a membership card, a copy of a 32 page catalogue of magical effects, plus the first issue of his magazine, TRIXY. I received all these things, and as time passed by, I owned a complete set of 24 issues of the Trixy magazine. I was one of the many proud members of the Boy Magicians Club.

Jack Rees never revealed his name to members until issue number 23 of his magazine – until then he was always known as 'the editor.' He and his wife Doreen were accomplished performers, presenting magic and string marionettes.

Trixy differed from all other magic magazines. Although each issue was numbered, it wasn't dated, and no matter when a new member was enlisted into the club, he would always commence with issue number one, the first being free of charge. Members who wanted to continue receiving future issues paid a small subscription fee, and each issue would be sent out to him the first day of each month. It has been recorded that the first issue was duplicated on foolscap pages in September 1946. This issue was reprinted by letterpress, as too were the other 23. A large photograph of a famous magician eg: Houdini, Dante, Harbin, Jasper Maskelyne, Voltaire etc, was also included with each issue, one which the editor hoped members would frame. The editor's first editorial welcomed new members and he wrote "Many thousands of young lads have already started learning magic through the Trixy magazine, and have made good progress as conjurors. We want you to look upon us as personal friends, always willing to help you if any problems arise".

Most of Jack's editorials referred to the contents of each issue and he always asked how members were getting on. Approximately eight effects were described in each issue, these accompanied by illustrations (no mention of an illustrator anywhere – perhaps Jack Rees was



Photo: Andrew McKenna Photographic

IN THE 1940'S MEMBERSHIP INTO MOST MAGICAL SOCIETIES, EVEN LOCAL ONES, WAS ONLY OFFERED TO ANYONE WHO WAS INTERESTED IN MAGIC, AGED EIGHTEEN AND OVER.

responsible for these.) There was also a 'Readers' Page' so members could submit their ideas regarding some of the published tricks. A special cash award was offered if a member is mentioned in his local newspaper, a copy of which had to be sent to the editor so the sum of 5/- could be claimed.

As a boy magician I first performed two effects which appeared in issue number one – Kanudoo (two single matchsticks held by the performer spookily part and move away from each other, whilst the spectator's matches remain together) and a Just Chance sort of trick called Giving Away a Pound Note.

It's interesting to learn that some of our best known magicians were members of the Boy Magicians Club, such as Terry Herbert, Ali Bongo, Ken de Courcy, Neville Wiltshire, Eddie Burke, Chris Woodword, Ron Escort, Reg Webb, John Pye, Alan Tipton, and many others. At the age of fourteen, Terry Herbert was performing his act which consisted of material published in Trixy magazines. Because his name was mentioned so many times in his local newspapers, he received 5/- each time. Rees later reduced the cash award to 2/6d because of Terry's constant claims.

As for the 32 page magic catalogue, this was the first catalogue I ever received, filled with magical wonders which any boy magician would enthuse over. I remember purchasing my first effect from this 'Wine and Water Trick costing 2/- (it was also Terry's first trick) plus a set of wooden Multiplying Billiard Balls lacquered in bright red, costing 4/6d.

Members were asked to refer to the 'star' rating symbol printed next to particular trick titles, which denotes the effect requires more practice than usual. Jack Rees also wrote: "If buying a large, expensive trick from any other depot, or shop, we will advise you whether we think it would suit you, and worth the cost."

Apparently, the club vanished into thin air during the mid-1950s and Jack and Doreen Rees were no longer living in Wales. It has been recorded that both arrived in Perth, Australia in 1958 where they continued to present their marionette shows in various theatres, including the Trivoli Theatre in '58.

As I look back to my youthful days when the magic bug bit me, I have to thank Jack Rees and his Boy Magicians Club for helping me to become a fully-fledged magician. I also know that most of those well-known magicians I've previously mentioned are also thankful they answered one of those little adverts and became members of the 'never to be forgotten' Boy Magicians Club.



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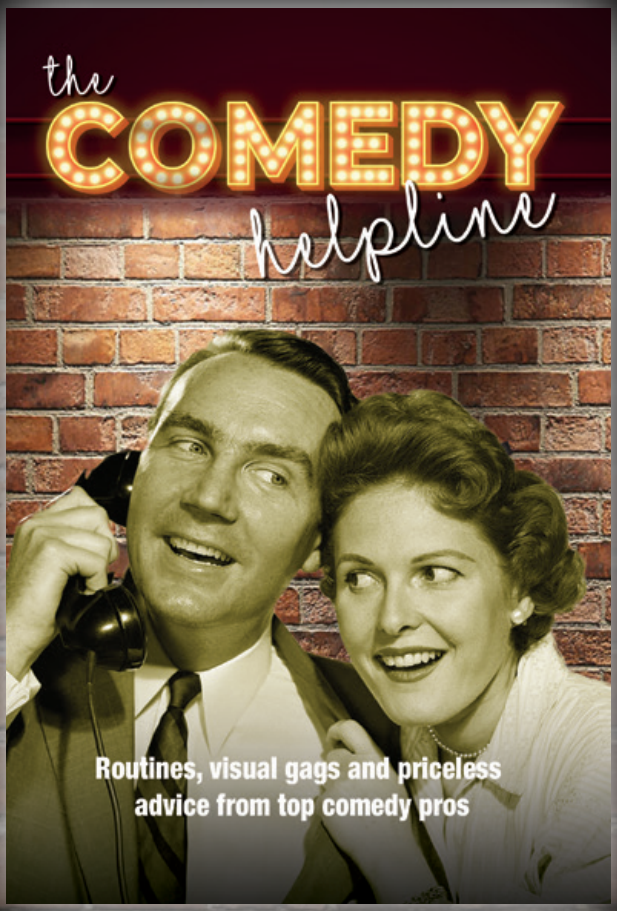
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PART #6
SLOW DOWN

Not long after I turned pro I took on a kids' show booking for a summer event which was taking place outside in the grounds of a school. There were all sorts of attractions provided for the families who came along and I was the magician. They set me up in the corner of the playground which also happened to be a through route to get to several other areas of the site, so it was a very busy place.

I set up my show feeling extremely uncomfortable about my surroundings. I managed to assemble an audience of kids who were asked to sit down on some rugs that had been positioned in front of me on the ground, but the noise and commotion of the area I was in made it extremely difficult to get and keep the attention of the audience.

As I suppose is natural when feeling a bit stressed, I started to speed up my show delivery. I spoke faster than normal, cut out some of the bits of business in order to get to the end of the tricks quicker, and the whole show was a bit of a disaster. My instinct that the only way to keep the children's attention was to go quicker was actually the complete opposite of what I probably should have done.

EACH TABLE THAT YOU APPROACH SHOULD FEEL THAT YOUR TIME WITH THEM IS SPECIAL TO YOU, AND THAT THEY ARE THE ONLY GROUP YOU WILL BE ENTERTAINING THAT NIGHT

I have since learned that slowing the pace of a show down can often be more effective than speeding it up when the performing situation feels awkward. I think the reason is that the performer's anxiety may not be shared by the audience, and if you are relaxed with your delivery, the spectators will enjoy the show more too.

Speeding up, on the other hand, can transmit to the audience that you are nervous or unsure of yourself, and this can lead the onlookers to feel anxious too, which in turn may mean that you don't go down as well as hoped.

Another performing situation where there is a temptation to work too fast is when table hopping at a large dinner. If you have a lot of tables to entertain in a time slot that you are concerned may not be long enough, it's natural that you may want to rush each show in order to get to the next group sooner.

However, while this might help you to make an appearance at all the tables in the allotted time, the quality of your performance will almost certainly reduce. By rushing you will make mistakes, possibly drop props occasionally, forget lines you normally use or miss ad lib opportunities in your race to get through the magic.

Each table that you approach should feel that your time with them is special to you, and that they are the only group you will be entertaining that night, and not just

JONATHAN ROYLE
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the latest in a roller coaster ride of endless tables. They should not be aware of your hectic schedule but should be able to relax and enjoy the magic you do for them.

By slowing down your delivery and taking the time to interact properly with them, you will make a much better impression and will be enjoyed far more. In my view it's better to do one routine slowly and well, than to try and fit in three which you race through. Quality rather than quantity.

Another situation where slowing down is beneficial is when you are performing for older spectators. Many elderly people suffer from reduced hearing which means that if you race through your patter, they may not be able to pick up accurately on what you are saying. Sometimes, the spectators appear to be hearing you and following along, but then if you ask someone a direct question, they say, "Sorry, I'm a bit deaf, I didn't hear what you said."

Speaking louder in this situation is not necessarily the answer either. Slowing your speech down a little will give people who are hard of hearing the time to work out what you are saying, and this combined with a little lip reading will mean they will find it easier to follow along. If you speak too quickly, this possibility becomes lost and will result in those with hearing difficulties giving up and tuning out of your performance completely.

The final example I would like to offer where slowing your delivery down can be beneficial is when you are performing for an audience for whom English is not their first language. Over the years I have worked many functions where some of the attendees are visiting from abroad, and if they are mixed in with local people, you may not realise that they are not English. Business events such as conferences, for instance, are often international in their appeal and attract attendees from all over the world. This means that some of your spectators may not have a firm grasp of English.

If you speak in a reasonably measured way, most people will understand enough to get the gist of what you are saying. This will definitely not be the case if you gabble away! I remember talking many years ago to Trevor Lewis when he and I were both lecturing at a convention in Scandinavia. At the time Trevor was far more experienced than me at working abroad, and he gave me a piece of excellent advice.

He said the best thing you can do to get a good reaction is to slow your speech right down. He explained that it may feel laboured to you as you do it, but it gives the audience time to actually hear what you say, if necessary to translate it in their heads into their own language, and then to react. If you patter too quickly, they don't have the time to process, understand and respond before you have raced on to the next thing. Gags appear to die a death not because the audience didn't find them funny, but because you didn't allow enough time for the joke to be appreciated. So slowing down is vital if you want to get a good reaction.

ROBERTO FORZONI

A LIFE OF TWO HALVES

Many people spend a lifetime searching for their one true calling; but for Roberto Forzoni, his search revealed not one vocation, but two: magic and sports psychology. As a magician and mentalist, he is a member of the Inner Magic Circle, resident mind-reader at The Ned, and one of the UK's most in-demand performers; as a sports psychologist, he has worked for Premier League clubs, co-written the FA Guide to Psychology in Football, set up Team Murray and is the go-to man for elite athletes. But what do these two passions have in common? Screenwriter and oral historian, Jonathan Carr, went to find out.

Seated in the rooftop bar of The Ned, a rather swanky hotel and members' club in London's financial district, you might expect the hotel's resident magician to mirror the glitz and glamour of his environment; but, although impeccably attired in waistcoat and shirt, Roberto Forzoni is reassuringly down-to-earth. His one enigmatic touch: an antiquarian wooden box on the table in front of him, containing cards, dice, cups and other tools of the trade.

ROBERTO: I started doing magic when I was twelve, but I was always playing football too, and, after playing at a semi-pro level, moved into coaching. I went on all the FA coaching courses, did an MA in Sports Science, worked with the first teams at Palace, Brentford and Brighton, then quickly realised that although changing diet and fitness regimes had little effect, altering the psychology did. It had an immediate impact. At the same time, in my work as a magician, I found myself veering towards mentalism and mind-reading.

JONATHAN: Do you feel that there is a clear overlap between the two disciplines?

ROBERTO: Oh absolutely. One obvious example is the power of narrative, both in mentalism and sports psychology. With mind-reading, the use of narrative is hugely underrated. I do a touching effect. I touch one person and another one moves. Now, at the same time as doing this, I talk to the audience about Anton Mesmer, who founded mesmerism, hypnosis, animal magnetism, and I refer to the universal magnetic fluid that circulates the body. Now you could do the same effect without understanding or relaying the rationale behind it, but it would be bland. If you apply narrative, it gives the whole performance an added dimension. Derren Brown is the master of this. He'll get you to think of a word, then tell you to look around, and you'll see that word all over the place. It's not simple; you have to be quick-thinking, agile, ask the right question to the right person – but if you do it well, you'll have an absolute miracle.

JONATHAN: I suppose the power of narrative in sport is everywhere too.

ROBERTO: It is. Take for instance Emma Raducanu. Achieving that win in the US Open was astonishing, but now the pressure is a million times what it was. Her Instagram following goes up from ten to several million, she's on the front page of Vogue, doing all these marketing campaigns, all these endorsements and







WHEN STEVE COPPELL WENT TO BRENTFORD F.C, BE BROUGHT ME IN AS FIRST TEAM COACH/ RESERVE TEAM MANAGER; AND STEVE WAS INTO PSYCHOLOGY, SO WE WERE ALWAYS LOOKING TO BRING IN LITTLE PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS

everyone's writing about her. A powerful narrative is being written. But she has to ignore it. For an 18-year-old, that's difficult, almost nigh-on impossible to block out the noise. The Japanese player Naomi Osaka, who suffered from depression, even brought in Kobe Bryant, to help her deal with the difficulty of living as a high-profile sportswoman.

JONATHAN: Does psychology play a role in your day-to-day routines at The Ned?

ROBERTO: It does in the way I approach the tables, the rapport. There's an arrogance with certain magicians who imply they're going to 'trick' you. I don't use that word. If someone says to me, "Show me a magic trick." I say, "Sorry, I don't do tricks." The connotation of the word is, I'm gonna get one over on you. The smarmy magician acts like this, trying to make himself look clever, more knowledgeable than you. I always say, "I do magic," which I think is more engaging; and I make clear it's something I practice. People say, "You look surprised that worked," and I say, "To be honest, I am. It doesn't normally." And they like that. Some ask, "Does it ever go wrong?" And I say, "Yeah, loads." And they laugh.

JONATHAN: So you try to break down the distance between you and the audience?

ROBERTO: You're honest with them, including the fact you're employed by the hotel. The main magician here, Fay Presto, her opening gambit is, "Hi, it's my job to entertain you for two minutes," which breaks down a bit of a barrier. It lets the table know she works here. I always follow that up with, "Do you have two minutes?" If not, I move onto another table. I'm aware I'm interrupting people's meals, conversation, so I'm sensitive to that. Quite often people ask, "What's in the box?" and I respond with, "I'm glad

you asked," and that's my in. I always try to be pleasant, try to make their evening just a little bit nicer than it was. Sometimes people say, "Pull up a seat. Stay. Have a drink with us." If I turned up at a table and went, "Hey, I'm going to entertain you!" the response would be, "F**k off."

JONATHAN: And you find there are similarities here with sports psychology?

ROBERTO: Absolutely. When Steve Coppell went to Brentford F.C, be brought me in as First Team Coach/Reserve Team manager; and Steve was into psychology, so we were always looking to bring in little psychological interventions. It sounds grandiose, but it really wasn't. It was more about looking at what we said, how we said it, putting posters up that reinforce messages, making slight adjustments to the regime; and I remember, after about a month, we were doing training, and as the players ran around, I heard one say, "I thought he's a psychologist. When are we going to start doing Psychology?" And I said, "We are doing it. We're doing it every day." Psychology should be integrated into the culture. If I'd have gone in and said, "Hey, let's do Psychology!" it would've been rejected. It has to be kept real and relatable. In sport, it's about marginal gains.

JONATHAN: That's fascinating. Would you say, therefore, that another parallel is the need to keep things simple, achievable?

ROBERTO: Yes. In magic it's more about honing a few routines; in that way the audience feel your confidence, and are drawn in. In my job here, I try and bring in one new routine a year. There's this old adage: 'A busy magician does a few effects to a lot of people; an amateur does lots of effects to a few people.' I've been at The Ned for four years, and the beauty is, I do four or five effects a hundred times a night, and have perfected them. There's a routine with a fruit and cup. In front of eight or so people who are burning me, I have to load fruit under a cup, and I've got it down slick; seamless. Penn and Teller do it with glass cups. I never really liked that routine, and was surprised how many people took to it.

Similarly, in sport, you do need clear objectives. A good example of this is my work with a footballer called Steve Hunt, who, at the time, was playing for



I'VE BEEN AT THE NED FOR FOUR YEARS, AND THE BEAUTY IS, I DO FOUR OR FIVE EFFECTS A HUNDRED TIMES A NIGHT, AND HAVE PERFECTED THEM.

Reading. Steve was such a nervous player. He'd even swap wings in the middle of a game because he didn't like how a coach, standing on the sidelines, was having a go at him. So, with Steve, you'd set clear objectives, and say, "What's one thing you need to do well?" And he'd say, "Put quality crosses in." So you'd set a target of four quality crosses to be delivered in the first half, and his mindset altered instantly. Simple, achievable targets, in sport, work in two different ways; they give you a direction of where to go, but also stop you dwelling on negative thoughts.

JONATHAN: I imagine both professions require a degree of self-analysis, in order for you to improve your practice.

ROBERTO: I constantly review my work as a magician. Why did they turn me away? Was I not energetic enough? Could I have been nicer? Last night I got about four rejections and that rarely happens; so you ask yourself, am I off it tonight? Sometimes, if an effect doesn't work and you get busted, you really feel like you've let a customer down. I don't sleep that night. I find myself thinking, I got my angles incorrect or I got my body shape wrong. You also have to be really mindful of space. Some tables peer down from rooftops, and later in the evening someone says, "I saw what you did."

JONATHAN: And in coaching it must be essential to constantly review your work.

ROBERTO: I used to use the FA four corners model – Technical, Tactical, Physical and Psychological - but very soon realised that the balance of this wasn't quite right. I adapted it. You see the psychological underpins everything else. It isn't a separate entity. If you don't get the psychological side right, you're not going to push yourself in the gym, push yourself to the max and it's going to affect your decision-making under pressure.

JONATHAN: Finally, do both professions give you equal satisfaction?

ROBERTO: They're both different of course. Sports psychology can be highly pressurised because of the responsibility; you're being employed to improve performance, to help athletes be better at what they do. With magic, it's entertainment. But the one common factor, and the one I want to stress, is you want people to come away feeling good about themselves. In sports psychology, you want them to feel good about their improved performance; in magic, you want the same feel-good factor. On occasion at The Ned, groups of people are still laughing an hour after I have visited them. There's a fantastic magician, Marvin Berglas at Hamleys, who gives talks at The Magic Circle. Marvin talks of that sense of wow. Penn and Teller refer to it too. When it works, that sense of wonder is beautiful. It's why I love it.

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www.vanishingincmagic.com
Price: £43.75

In 2007, I was talking to Andi at a convention and he introduced me to his then new book '52 Memories'. He told me the story of the contents' creator, a card magic enthusiast called Jack Parker. The story had an unhappy ending; Jack had died at a young age from cancer and Andi was producing 52 Memories to establish Jack's rightful place in conjuring literature.

With each issue of Magicseen, editor Mark Leveridge chooses which of us lucky reviewers receives which product. I feel it is very much fate that Mark asked me to review Andi's latest tome dedicated to the legacy of Jack's card magic; 52 Explorations.

Given I've already read and enthused about 52 Memories (and a volume called The Magicians Cookbook which I also highly recommend), you're not going to be surprised to read that I am a massive fan of this latest, final work dedicated to Jack's card magic.

This is a big book, beautifully produced, well written, clear to follow and with excellent illustrations by Tony Dunn. It lays flat, so you can follow along without having to prop the book open with an elbow! The card magic ranges from self-working through to advanced techniques.

Andi's commentary introducing each effect shines a light on how the trick came to be, not only as part of the book but also in its initial fruition. Andi also lets us know if it is based on a previous incarnation, often directing you to an effect in 52 Memories or from which of Jack's many notebooks and ebooks the effect was cherry picked.

The final chapter is particularly intriguing and beautiful. Andi had remembered Jack had given him a CD-rom with video presentations on. Andi was quite sure he'd gotten everything he needed, but wanted to double-check. As he did, he found a collection of effects that had no explanation, only the performances by Jack! This left Andi to work with his team of knowledgeable card magicians and begin to deconstruct Jack's effects, allowing Andi to describe a method for these final pieces. Wonderful, just wonderful. And, as Andi notes, maybe it was supposed to be Jack's last trick – to leave those particular pieces as performances and keep magicians guessing. I love the spirit of this final chapter.

Whether intentional or not, another lovely touch to the writing of this book is how Andi refers to Jack in the present, as if he were still with us performing the effects. Students of philosophy know that most classic tomes are written in the present tense (we say Aristotle says and not Aristotle said), and Andi follows a similar style; Jack asks you to think of a card… Jack says… another beautiful touch.

Finally, this book is one of fun and play. It makes you want to try out every trick. I have only had a fortnight to digest this big book and am now looking forward to actually spending time learning and playing with Jack's magic effects for my own enjoyment. No doubt, many of these pieces of magic would also work brilliantly in the 'real world'.

Yes, I am biased. I am a fan of Jack's card work and think that Andi should be most proud of producing this beautiful, detailed work full of love and spirit. One couldn't ask for a more fitting tribute to a magician; one I never met, except through the pages of Andi's books where he makes Jack's personality and magic shine. By the time you finish reading this book, you feel you knew Jack personally. **JF**

WHAT'S HOT: beautiful book of card magic, well written, lovingly produced and full of spirit
WHAT'S NOT: if you don't do card magic, this isn't for you!
RATING: 95%



NS

N2G
Available from n2gpresents.com
Price: £53 (approx)

I'll keep this one short. NS is an electronic device that when triggered emits a selection of coin related sound effects such as coins being dropped into a cup or coins clinking together.

The sound effects themself are a little artificial sounding for my liking. I'm not really sure where this device would be of use unless you were working in a loud environment. The video tutorial is not great either. I'm not sure this is something I would personally ever use. **PS**

WHAT'S HOT: not much
WHAT'S NOT: artificial sounding
RATING: 35%



BLANKETY

Liam Montier
Available from:
www.bigblindmedia.com
Price: £15.99

Liam Montier loves his card magic and his output covers a wide range of effects from standard classics well explained to original material. Blankety is almost retro in that it is an unashamed packet trick! It is a progressive assembly routine which incorporates a strong kicker finish and, as with so many effects of this genre, it's totally non-commercial (requires a table top to display piles of cards and the plot is quite drawn out), but magicians are going to love it! Four Jokers are displayed and then dealt into a face down row on the table. 12 blank faced cards are then divided into four groups of three, each of which is dropped onto one of the Jokers. Picking up the first pile the Joker is shown and then vanishes leaving a set of four blank cards. Pile no.2 is then shown to now contain two Jokers. These promptly vanish only to be discovered in pile 3. Finally these all become blank and the assumption is that pile 4 will now consist of all four Jokers. However, on turning the cards over, they are seen to be four Aces.

So, a plot that will please card magicians everywhere as it contains elements of other familiar assembly effects, and a method that consists of enough moves to keep card enthusiasts practising, but not so many that the trick becomes too hard to perform. In fact, if you can already do the Elmsley Count you are about 75% of the way there as much of the handling relies on that original classic move and a couple of associated variations.

Unlike many packet tricks, the plot of Blankety is logical, magical and easy to follow. The ending is also a complete surprise creating a pleasingly strong finish. You are supplied with the 16 necessary Bicycle cards in a plastic wallet and the instructions are provided online via a 10 minute Vimeo video in which Liam clearly and succinctly describes everything you need to know. All round a fun trick for packet trick lovers! **ML**

WHAT'S HOT: nice, progressive plot featuring some good visual magic achieved by a well thought out combination of familiar moves and with a genuine surprise ending
WHAT'S NOT: not really a trick for most commercial close up conditions, although lay people will enjoy the magic itself if they see it
RATING: 75%



SHARPIE SCREEN

Alan Rorrison
Available from:
www.bigblindmedia.com
Price: £6.99

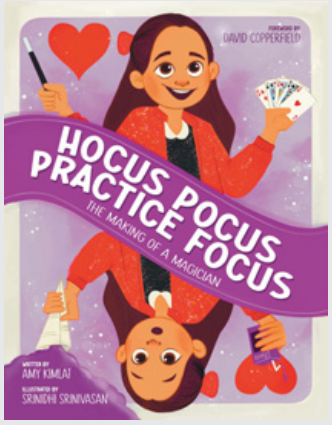
This is a short effect that takes less than sixty seconds to perform. The performer's smart phone is placed on a spectator's hand and a Sharpie pen is shown with the logo on both sides. A wave of the pen and one of the logos vanishes and appears on the screen. The performer's hand is passed over the phone, the pen vanishes and appears on the screen. Taking the phone back the performer gives a shake, the screen image disappears and the original Sharpie appears to drop from the phone.

This is not a stand alone effect. If it has an application it is while the Sharpie is in use for another effect. The problem with this is one of credibility. The effect appears to be that the logo and then the physical pen transpose into the smart phone. Everyone knows that this is not possible. Everyone knows that a smart phone is capable of many amazing things and the immediate assumption, which is of course correct, is that this is an app or video already on the phone. This leaves any spectator, perhaps other than your granny, with a puzzle. How did the magician make the logo and then the pen vanish? A stronger effect would be to dispense with the phone and just vanish the pen.

The download comes as five short videos. If you do want to do this you will have to prepare a Sharpie and the way to do this is explained. Performance requires two straightforward moves both of which are taught. To perform the effect you need a jacket or clothing with a suitable sleeve. Rorrison performs in a hoodie. To make this possible he had to buy two hoodies so that the necessary tailoring changes could be made to one to facilitate the key move.

After the effect it is recommended that you make sure spectators can't look at the phone as they might discover the method. It is suggested that they are given the Sharpie to distract them. An observant spectator would then be able to see that while at the start of the effect there was apparently a logo on both sides, at the conclusion one side is now blank. **SB**

WHAT'S HOT: absolutely nothing at all
WHAT'S NOT: the proposition that the pen is inside a phone is not credible
RATING: 15%



HOCUS POCUS PRACTICE FOCUS: THE MAKING OF A MAGICIAN

Amy Kimlat
Available from www.amazon.co.uk and other book stores
Price: £16.99

In this read-aloud rhyming storybook, Amy Kimlat (wife of Magicseen cover star Kostya Kimlat, issue 66 Jan 2016) has written a tale aimed at inspiring children, and in particular girls, to take up magic. We all know that there has been traditionally an imbalance in the magic world in favour of male conjurors, and although this is gradually changing, this story seeks to encourage more girls to get involved.
Using rhyming verse, a simple story is told about a girl called Mila who has a female magician to her birthday party and, suitably inspired by the performance, decides that she wants to become a magician too. However, she thinks that doing magic will be easy, and is therefore initially dispirited when none of her tricks actually work.

Just at the point when she is thinking of abandoning her magic dream, she gets suitable encouragement and mentoring from the magician she had at her party, and following a lot of practice and dedication, eventually she puts on a successful performance.

The illustrations that accompany the text would appear to be aimed at young children - I would guess about 6 years of age and below - but the message of the story is really more relevant to older children. I wonder therefore if this is a slight contradiction in that the target audience for the message might look at the book and discount it as being too 'babyish' for them to bother with. I don't know if Amy has an educational background or took any advice on how to target the relevant age group, but it feels as if it misses the mark a little.

To give the book and its laudable aim some credibility, as well as to boost sales no doubt, David Copperfield writes a Foreword and says all the right things about encouraging girls to take up our art. There are also some slightly odd paragraphs towards the end of the book when the author is suddenly talking directly to the parents in an attempt to get them onside with the purpose of the book. It's almost as if Amy is worried that the adults won't get the point of the story unless it is spelled out to them.

One simple trick is explained at the end of the book as well to get the kids started with their magic career. It's a somewhat odd effect in which a toothpick (sharp points, small children?) can be made to appear and disappear. The illustrations and explanation of this are not especially clear and I imagine some parents will not fully understand what they are supposed to do. I think a better trick could have been chosen, to be honest.

My overall feeling is that this book will make a nice colourful story for young children to have read to them, but as mentioned earlier, I would suggest that this target audience is too young to be the ones ready to get involved in magic. Kids aged 8+ would have been a better target market for the message, but for that to work, the story and illustrations would need to be a bit more sophisticated and age relevant. **ML**

WHAT'S HOT: encouraging girls to get involved in magic is a laudable aim. The story and illustrations would be enjoyed by young children
WHAT'S NOT: possibly the content has not been targeted at the right age group. The trick taught at the end could have been better and easier to understand
RATING: 55%



CYLINDER AND COINS

Joshua Jay
Available from:
www.vanishingincmagic.com
Price: £152.70

Cylinder and Coins (CaC) is Joshua Jay's re-invention of John Ramsay's classic effect. While the basic idea of the trick has been kept, almost everything else has changed. Coins one by one vanish only to appear underneath a ring which was initially covered by a rolled bank note. Then one by one they reappear at your fingertips. Only the ring in now seen when the rolled bank note is lifted. Covering the ring one last time the coins this time quickly vanish appearing once more underneath the ring. As a kicker ending, the rolled bank note is opened revealing a shot glass containing liquid.

Four coins were used in the original version. This has been reduced down to just three making it much less repetitive. Because of this there is a slight discrepancy in the routine, which is addressed on the video tutorial, where four coins appear under the ring instead of three. This is not an issue and actually enhances the transposition effect of the coins due to how the gimmick is constructed. I doubt anyone, other than a magician would spot this anyway.

CaC is not cheap to buy but you do get a lot for your money. Firstly it all comes really nicely packaged. The vanish and appearance of the coins in the routine is achieved using Josh's Triad Coin set. Only previously sold in half dollar size this is supplied in the set in Morgan Dollar coins making them much easier to see and handle. You also receive a matching s**ll set. This has been expertly made and handles beautifully when showing the coins under the ring.

Also included is a black coin purse, two rings, the necessary bits to construct your bank note roll and a couple of shot glasses that you can customise to suit your own needs and requirements.

This is not an effect for walkaround and even in a parlour setting if you were to finish with the shot glass production I think you would need to watch your angles. An eager spectator could easily get a peek of the glass ahead of the big finish.

This is a really great routine that I think will serve you well if you put the time into learning it. It's not actually that difficult to do as the coins and gimmicks supplied do most of the work for you. But like most magic it's not something you will be performing straight out of the box. Put in the time though and you will have a solid 5 minute classic routine that's served the test of time. **PS**

WHAT'S HOT: brilliantly reworked version of a classic of magic
WHAT'S NOT: not cheap
RATING: 90%



BORROWED DECK MIRACLES

Dani DaOrtiz
Available from:
www.vanishingincmagic.com
Price: £26.40

What you get here is a two and a half hour workshop/lecture first presented by Dani DaOrtiz to a group of magicians at Magifest. In the session he performs and teaches eight strong card effects all of which can be done with a borrowed deck, or in some cases several decks. For reasons I will explain, I'm not entirely clear how many of the eight need to be done while seated at a table, but, I think that it is four.

The video opens with about forty minutes of performance and being an audience of magicians there are plenty of decks available to borrow. The reason I'm not quite clear about whether you need to be seated or not is because I often found it quite hard to follow what was happening due to DaOrtiz's trademark presentation style.

In a blur of Tamariz style "shuffle, shuffle, shuffle", asking questions, changes of verbal direction, physical activity, do this – no, do something else – I got lost. Indeed had it not been for the on screen titles and the list of effects on the Vanishing Inc site I would not have been sure if the tape contained six, seven or eight card effects.

Once you get to the explanation stage the reason for this become clear. The apparent mess, the chaos and the confusion is a carefully constructed technique intended to manipulate the spectators' actions, attention and memory of what has happened, all designed to enhance the spectators' anticipation, engagement and emotional impact.

In many respects the title 'Borrowed Deck Miracles' is a misnomer. True, all the card effects can be done with borrowed decks, but it is not essential. The lecture/workshop is really about how the construction of his verbal and physical presence is used to mask any actual sleights, to manipulate perception, alter memories and heighten the moment when magic happens.

DaOrtiz credits the development of these ideas to his mentor Juan Tamariz and he in turn back to Slydini. While the idea of using moments of tension and relaxation, creating pauses and asking questions are common techniques in an experienced performer's repertoire, DaOrtiz has taken and then developed the ideas to a new level.

Although again, I don't think that I fully understand the analogy, he uses punctuation as a metaphor to distinguish between different types of verbal presentation. While the meaning of Exclamations, Questions and Full Stops seem relatively clear, I would need more effort to grasp Parenthesis and I just don't understand "taa, taa, taa".

In this approach, language is used as a key tool in creating the effect. This does not mean that the card effects are accomplished without sleights. Amongst others he uses a pass, a cull, a top change, a double lift, a force and a glimpse.

Two things are worth saying. First, his language, timing and physical movements cover the moment and make some of the sleights easier. The way he 'classic' forces being a good example. The spectator is basically just shown a card to remember. Second, DaOrtiz executes the sleights impeccably. He has performed them a huge number of times, and even when you know what to look for, they are almost imperceptible, and most of the rest of us just won't be at that level.

The chaos, confusion and busy presentation looks like the antithesis of Vernon's maxim "confusion is not magic". At one point DaOrtiz addresses this specifically. Arguing that, at the moment when the magic happens, his presentation focuses attention on the effect and heightens the impact.

Personally that was not my experience, but it is one example that illustrates that his ideas are not ephemeral but the product of an extensive knowledge of magic, thought and experience and consequently worth listening to.

If you come to this tape just to learn some card effects then I think that you will be disappointed. The eight card effects are primarily used as case studies to explain his verbal and physical technique. The key to the methods is in the language and becoming fluent with that technique will not be easy. It will take study and work to understand the principles and then to incorporate them into your routines.

One participant asked about how to practise. DaOrtiz said it is something you just have to start using. The encouraging thing is that to do that you do not have to emulate DaOrtiz's whole style. I have seen some of these methods in action but presented in a much quieter narrative style and the impact has been powerful.

The two and half hours is packed with strong verbal, physical and handling methods which are relatively independent of effect and thus transferable and will enhance a wide range of magic.

If you don't want to adopt the full package this session is still worth watching. There are lots of ideas that provide food for thought and many small changes, and details of handling, that can almost immediately be incorporated into existing material. Frankly, if you never use any of the core principles there would be some valuable takeaways for almost every performer and well worth the money. **SB**

WHAT'S HOT: an in depth explanation and tutorial of presentation techniques that can be adopted and used to enhance any magic performance
WHAT'S NOT: not as easy to understand as I would have liked
RATING: 90%

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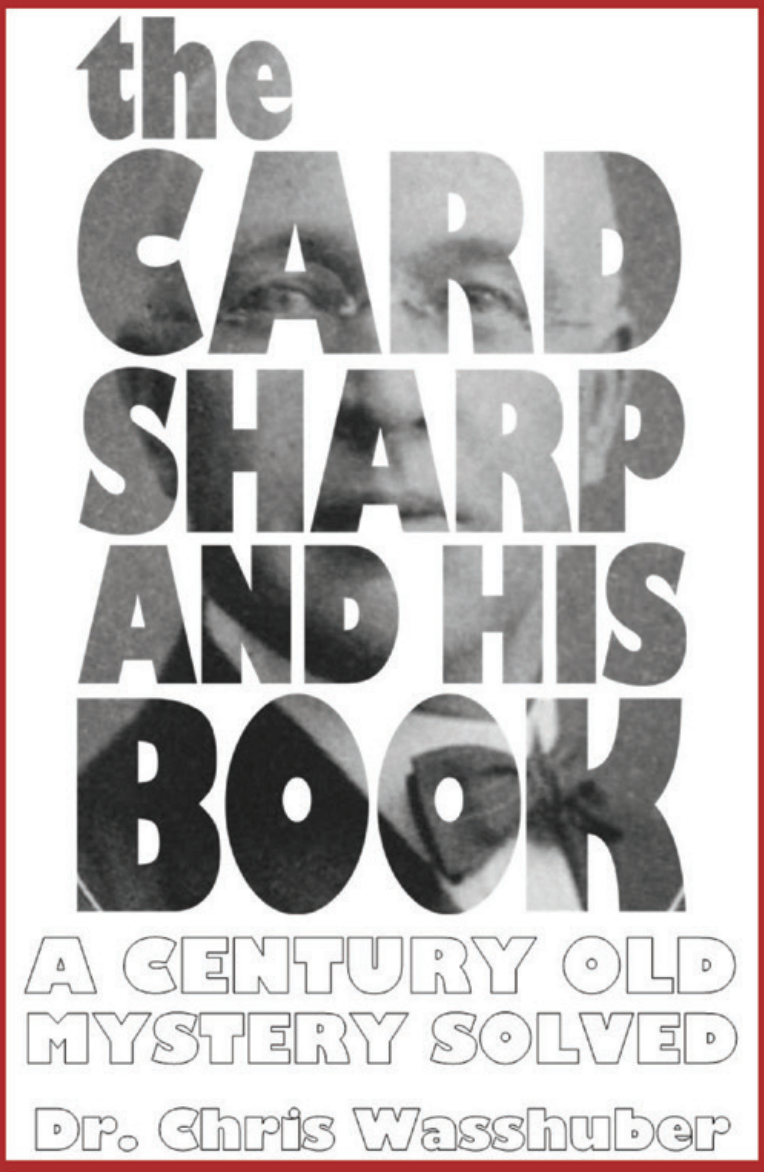
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GOODBYE - AND THANKS!

Mark Leveridge



When Graham Hey and Phil Shaw first approached me back in the autumn of 2004 about the possibility of joining them in publishing a new magic magazine, it was not something that I had ever considered before. At first I was full of doubt - would the magazine take off and be successful, would I be up to the job of being editor, could we maintain the bi-monthly schedule long term, oh and, who the hell were Graham Hey and Phil Shaw!!

But having met with them and been infused with their enthusiasm and ideas for the project, I decided to throw myself into the job and so it was that the inaugural edition appeared in March 2005. Having now completed almost 18 years, I can reflect that it was a good decision and I have to say that I have enjoyed every minute of my involvement with Magicseen.

But, of course, nothing lasts for ever, and for me personally I have reached a point in my life where the most precious commodity in it, is my time. Fun though Magicseen has been, I have decided that this is the right moment to leave my editor's desk and to withdraw from the magazine. It's not a decision that I took lightly, but once having made the decision, it feels like the right thing to do.

Happily, Magicseen is now well established and, I feel, is in a good place generally. Widely recognised around the world, the eclectic mix and variety of content has made the publication a must-have read for subscribers everywhere, and so it is great news that Phil Shaw and a new team will be continuing to produce the magazine.

As I bow out I would like to extend my thanks to....

1. Graham and Phil for offering me the opportunity to be part of such a great project in the first place....

2. The many magicians, both famous and up-and-coming who have willingly provided so much interesting content for our publication....

3. To the dealers who have supported Magicseen, some for many years, through their advertising ....

4. And to you, the readers, who have encouraged our efforts by subscribing and by the many appreciative comments about the magazine.

Finally, I'd like to extend a particular thanks to the product review team, all of whom are personal friends of mine and who have for years selflessly dedicated their time and expertise to assessing a steady flow of the good, the bad and the downright ugly of the commercial magic world. Between them they have written many hundreds of reviews and I have always appreciated their impartiality and honesty, plus the fact that none of them have ever let me down by missing a deadline!

I am not retiring completely from magic, I would like to stress, and Mark Leveridge Magic will continue for the forseeable future, and I am certainly looking forward to having more time and energy to spend on that business.

So, as one door closes, another opens, and I am looking forward to seeing Magicseen continue to flourish and provide interesting content for you all to enjoy in the future. It's a great opportunity for new 'voices' to be heard and for new directions perhaps to be taken, and I wish everyone concerned with Magicseen going forward every success. I may not be directly involved any more, but I shall enjoy watching from the sidelines. No pressure.... :-)

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