

Genii Speaks

Richard Kaufman

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I'M SOMEWHERE over the Atlantic ocean on the way from the World Magic Seminar in Las Vegas to the biggest magic convention in the world in Blackpool, England. I must say, it's a *schlep* ... up at 5 am in Vegas (a horribly busy airport where John Moehring missed his flight to Blackpool last year because of the two-hour check-in line—I only made my flight because the folks at United treated me extraordinarily

well), then a short hop to San Francisco, then an almost 12 hour flight to London. When I emerge from this flying petri dish (hopefully without catching a cold from the guy next to me with the leaky nose), and arrive at London at 6 a.m., there's an hour journey to Euston Station where I'll catch up with Matt Field, editor of *The Magic Circular*, for our 10:30 a.m. train to Blackpool—another three hours. Blackpool is hectic, but fun. Afterward it's off to London for five days of work.

Richard Turner is a remarkable guy: in addition to his expertise at martial arts and various daredevil activities like the trapeze and flying in military jets, he's also one of the best sleight-of-hand artists on the planet. He was close friends with Dai Vernon, Larry Jennings, and Michael Skinner (all of whom considered him the best they'd ever seen), and these days Richard counts Steve Forte among his close friends. Since a lot of people consider Steve Forte the best they've ever seen, I can only imagine what it's like when these two guys sit down at a table together. Richard's performing persona is that of a riverboat gambler from the late 1800s, and he performed in actual riverboat style venues for years. Semi-retired, he works at The Magic Castle twice a year and does a few other bits now and then (he was at the convention in Vegas). He's recently been putting out a series of DVDs that are really just a taste of his enormous amount of original material. Jason England, no slouch at card table work himself, strips Richard out of the pack for us on p.66. • I can't recall if I was 14 or 15 when Ken Krenzel started answering my questions about card magic. At Tannen's magic shop on 1540 Broadway on Saturdays, always followed by a trip to the Governor Cafeteria afterward, he would happily teach me really difficult things. This had a great benefit: he once taught me his way of doing Jerry Andrus's Panoramic Shift. Having learned this notoriously balletic sleight where a light touch and balance mean the difference between cards on top of the deck or cards on the floor, I was then able to tackle equally difficult things in the books Tony Spina was doing his best to sell me on an almost weekly basis. Master one genuinely difficult sleight and all other difficult sleights become available to you. Ken is still going strong and David Acer, bravely leaving his

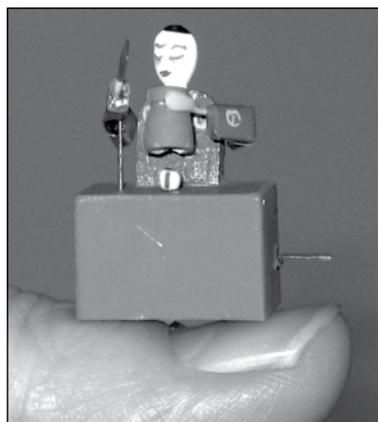
home in Montreal, found Ken on Long Island and brought back an interview and some excellent tricks—"The Zen of Ken" forms our rather unusual "Magicana" this month. • Jeff McBride and Abbi Spinner McBride recently brought their full evening show to a casino in Laughlin, Nevada. As an east-coast boy, my reaction was, "Laughlin where?" Mike Close answers that question and brings you an intriguing report on a great show on p.56. • Good columnists are the backbone of a magazine and three of your favorites are with us this month: Paul Osborne brings you a "Poor Man's Self Levitation"; Roberto Giobbi breaks down the components of "Artistic Magic"; and Tony Giorgio returns after a long hiatus with the elegiac tale of Mr. Z, an advantage player in his twilight years. * Our reviews this month are handled elegantly by Eric Mead, Joe M. Turner, and a returning David Oliver, whom I'm pleased to welcome back after a few months off.



Ricky Jay Plays Poker (above) finally appeared on the market after several months' delay and it was worth the wait. This deluxe and smartly boxed set includes a CD with 21 poker-related songs, about which Ricky writes in the liner notes, "Mercifully you will not hear me sing on any of these tracks, so I am able to bet my entire stack that you will enjoy the tunes that I've selected" And you will. For magicians, however, the CD itself is the least enticing item because the box also includes a wonderfully produced booklet of almost 70 color pages full of memorabilia, history, and wit from Ricky, along with a 30-minute DVD where Ricky demonstrates some fine poker and betting-related routines in a relaxed setting with some friends, topped off by a bet where he knocks an egg balanced on a rolled-up playing card into a glass of liquid by tossing a card at it. The box also includes a custom deck of cards from the U.S. Playing Card Company, printed on what feels like Bee stock, which has a one-way back design for added mischief. Buy it on amazon.com through the Genii Forum where you can view

a clip from the DVD and receive a 10 percent discount and free shipping.

Those of you who found "The Remarkable Little Man," a hand-cranked automaton produced by Pierre Meyer, and about which I wrote in the October 2005 *Genii*, interesting, may be even more interested to learn that he has produced a functioning miniature version that's about



the size of the end of my thumb! This little marvel is cheap when compared to the \$850 of the original (which has since increased in price)—only \$100. In fact, Pierre produces several of these wee automata, and you may e-mail him for more information, or to order, at pierregmeyer@hotmail.com. Since the female Geisha he produced in early 2006 (and which I profiled in the August

2006 *Genii*), he has also created an automaton of Christian Fechner performing his stool levitation which I'll describe in more detail in a few months. Next on his list: a miniature automata of Robert-Houdin's "Orange Tree." It sounds impossible, doesn't it!

The Big News in Las Vegas right now is the new show starring Carmen Electra (who was supposed to headline a magic show that Gary Ouellet had been trying to sell before his sudden death) and Dutch illusionist Hans Klok. Robin Leech (a long-time magic fan) broke the news on the Vegaspop.com website, "The decision for Carmen and Hans to star at the Aladdin/Planet Hollywood was made by an almost uncanny, and eerie, coincidence as former Aladdin magician Steve Wyrick opened his own theater downstairs in the hotel's Desert Passage shopping center. His new theater is a lifelong dream and a \$35-million investment. Klok and Carmen, ironically, will perform in the theater upstairs that he used to work in. The show's director will be Anthony Van Laast. He was the director of the original Siegfried & Roy show at the Mirage. Laast, who is British, was awarded an MBE (Member of the British Empire) from the Queen for his contributions to world theater." Don Wayne is doing the magic consulting and Ms. Electra will certainly get the male audience twitterpatin'. Leech then wrote, "Expect Vegas magic to be kicked up a notch instantly. All this comes as Cirque du Soleil is days away from officially and finally confirming their new \$110-million spectacular at the Luxor with *Mindfreak* magician Criss Angel."

NOW PERFORMING

THE MAGIC CASTLE

APRIL 2 TO 8

Close-Up Gallery

Early: 7, 7:45, 8:30, 9:15

Bob Fitch

Late: 10, 10:45, 11:30, Midnight

Bill Goodwin

W. C. Fields Bar

(Friday and Saturday only)

Joe Monti

The Parlour of Prestidigitation

Early: 7:30, 8:45, 9:30

Bob Dorian

Late: 9:45, 11:15, Midnight

Dana Daniels

Palace Of Mystery

8:30, 10:00, 11:15

Eric Buss

John Shryock

APRIL 9 TO 15

Close-Up Gallery

Early: Steve Silverman

Late: Johnny Ace Palmer

W. C. Fields Bar

Doug Brewer

The Parlour of Prestidigitation

Early: Matt Marcy

Late: Brian Gillis

Palace of Mystery

Robert Baxt

John Cassidy

Ice McDonald

APRIL 16 TO 22

Close-Up Gallery

Early: TBA

Late: TBA

W. C. Fields Bar

TBA

The Parlour of Prestidigitation

Early: David Regal

Late: Fukai

Palace of Mystery

Ken Noyle

Bravo Nakaya

Albert Tam

APRIL 23 TO 29

Close-Up Gallery

Early: Mark Matsumoto

Late: Doc Eason

W. C. Fields Bar

Doc Eason

The Parlour of Prestidigitation

Early: Tom Ogden

Late: B.J. Hickman

Palace of Mystery

Kerry Ross

Michael Finney

Mercer Helms

Magic Castle Information

Those with guest cards, and those who belong to the IBM and SAM, are admitted to The Magic Castle with dinner reservations. Please call 323-851-3313 for more information. Updates to the performing schedule can be found at www.MagicCastle.com.

LAS VEGAS

Compiled by David Neubauer
(www.dnmagic.com)

Amazing Johnathan

10 pm, (Dark Thurs.), Sahara

Beacher's Madhouse

Christopher Karpiak, Chuck Lane, Tyas Frantz, 9 pm pre-show. Last Sat. of the month, Hard Rock

Bite (Vampire Strip Revue)

Antonio Restivo, 10:30 pm (dark Thurs.) Stratosphere

David Copperfield

7:30 & 10 pm, 4:30 Sat. & some Sun. MGM Grand. Through April 19

Gerry McCambridge—The Mentalist

8 pm (Dark Fri. & Sat.), Rampart Casino

Haunted Vegas Tour & Show

Robert Allen, Jac Hayden & Zamora, Greek Isle, 9 pm tour and show (Dark Fri.)

Jason Bird

The Shops in Desert Passage, Aladdin. Main stage, near the "V" Theater, Thurs.-Mon. From 1:15 pm to 8:15 pm, Free

La Femme

Stephan Vanel, 8 & 10:30 pm, (Dark Tues.), MGM Grand

Lance Burton, Master Magician

7 pm Tues-Sat & 10 pm Tues. & Sat., Monte Carlo

Mac King Comedy Magic Show

1 & 3 pm, (Dark Sun. & Mon.) Harrah's Clint Holmes Theater

Nathan Burton

Comedy Magic Show

2 pm, (Dark Fri. & Sun.) V Theater in the Desert Passage, Aladdin

Penn & Teller

9 pm, (Dark Tues.), Rio

Phenomenon

Hans Klok (with Carmen Electra), (Scheduled to open May 12th for a 13-week run), Aladdin

Steve Wyrick

7 & 9 pm, Desert Passage, Aladdin

The Magic of Rick Thomas

2, 4, & 7 pm, (Dark various days), Orleans

The Ultimate Variety Showcase

8 pm to Midnight every Tuesday, Free. Magicians: Christopher Karpiak and "S," Roxy's Live, Sam's Town

V, The Ultimate Variety Show

Jeff Hobson, Nathan & Sarah 7 & 9 pm, Aladdin

World's Greatest Magic Show

Kevin James, Kozak and guests. Billy Ferguson (pre-show). 6 pm Sat.-Thurs., 8:15 Fri., Greek Isle

Xtreme Magic Starring Dirk Arthur

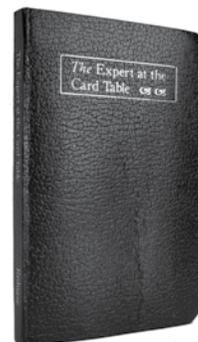
Tiffany Theatre, Tropicana 2 and 4 pm. (Dark Fri.)

Goodbye to the Printed Word: In the February 6 *Washington Post* in section D5 there appeared, in the very brief "International Briefing" sidebar, a note that the world's oldest newspaper, which happens to be published in Sweden since 1645 (read that date again) will cease printed publication and become a web-only publication. *Magicseen*, which proclaims itself as "Europe's No.1 Magazine," and which is published in England, is now selling back issues in downloadable pdf format at 3 pounds (roughly equal to \$6), or half the cost of their printed version. The I.B.M. gives its members the option of opting out of receiving *The Linking Ring* as a printed magazine and allows them to download an electronic version from their website. In the past one might have written, "The handwriting is on the wall," but now it appears to be on your computer monitor. Slowly but surely, the end of the printed word is coming.

The phenomenal French photographer Zakary Belamy is back in the U.S.A. from March 6 to April 5 to continue his "World Magic Photo Tour" in which he's shooting the greatest magicians living in America. This time he'll be in Las Vegas, then in Los Angeles for a few days. After his first U.S. photo tour in September and October, 2005, and a successful photo exhibition at the recent FISM in Stockholm, he'll meet and shoot pros like Mac King, Joseph Gabriel, The Majestix, Armando Lucero, Jeff McBride, Penn & Teller, Mark Wilson, Carl Ballantine, James Dimmare, Rick Thomas, and many more. The list of the world famous magicians that he has already photographed is enormous—you've seen some of his work already in *Genii* and you're going to see a lot more very shortly. For more, visit him on the web at www.zakarybelamy.com.

The Wee Erdnase: Original publishing ideas involving the classics are rare. Bill Kalush and the Conjuring Arts Research Center (and co-author of *The Secret Life of Houdini: The Making of America's First Superhero*) has published a new edition of *The Expert at the Card Table* by S.W. Erdnase. Subtitled *The Expert Bible*, the new edition is described by the publisher as a "... new take on the classic cardman's bible It's the perfect size to fit in your hand or pocket and beautifully produced using the same paper as a Bible, gilt edges, a ribbon place holder, and in a soft leather-like binding." The type has been completely reset and all the lines are numbered for easy reference in your notes. It's quite something—you'll definitely need your reading glasses if you're among my brothers and sisters in middle age. You can't beat the price: \$15. Order from the website www.conjuringarts.org or call 212-594-1033 and tell 'em the *Genii* sent you.

Good-byes: Jules Lenier died in February and it's unforgivable that I neglected to mention it last month in my haste to finish "Genii Speaks." Jules was a unique, creative individual with a sardonic sense of humor and I always enjoyed his writings. He was associate editor of this magazine in the late 1960s. We'll have a memorial piece in the near future. • A note arrived from J.K. Hartman on February 16: "Sad news regarding Joseph K. Schmidt. I just received a letter from his wife: 'I want to let you know that my husband died on the 10th of January in the American Hospital. He just fell to sleep, the way he always wanted to die.' There goes an institution, perhaps the most prolific artist the world of magic has ever known and certainly the king of freehand illustrators. I think he was 86 or 87." There were certain projects that only Joe Schmidt could handle—I used him to illustrate J.K. Hartman's books *Card Craft*, *After Craft*, and *Trickery Treats*, as well as *Arcade Dreams* and *The Magic of Edward Victor's Hands*. His greatest champion as an illustrator is Karl Fulves, and he has illustrated every single thing Karl has published since the late 1960s. Joe Schmidt was a friendly guy and a pleasure to work with and he will be missed. • Also noted, the death of magician Howard Flint, a very funny man, whom most will remember for performing J.C. Doty's "Bowling Ball from Briefcase."



It Ain't Like it Used to Be: The U.S. Government no longer allows airline passengers to bring white doves in or out of the United States because of the fear of spreading avian flu, despite the fact that no white doves have been found to carry the disease. This has adversely affected any dove worker either leaving or entering our country. • Los Angeles magician Simon Winthrop inadvertently caused the TSA to shut down the entire Palm Beach airport and surrounding roads, including a partial evacuation of the terminal, because he packed a Butane canister in his checked baggage. Winthrop uses it to shoot flames out of his wrists in his act. According to the *Palm Beach Post*, "'Winthrop obviously is not a terrorist and will not be charged with a crime,' FBI spokeswoman Judy Orihuela said. ... The federal government could fine Winthrop if the materials in his checked luggage violate TSA rules, but a spokesman said Saturday said he didn't know if the items were prohibited. ... Officials from the sheriff's office, airport and FBI said they hope passengers with unusual possessions, like flame-throwing Butane tanks, will anticipate attention from the TSA and declare the items in advance." No kidding! •