

ADVANCED  
PRESTIDIGITATION GUIDE

# The FABULOUS Book of MAGIC SECRETS



# I

## Are you fascinated by the art of magic?

Do you wish to speed up  
your apprenticeship as a magician?

Are you curious about  
the well-kept secrets of illusion artists?

More than a magic manual, this book will allow you  
to recreate professional magic effects  
and will reveal information that only many years  
of experience on stage can provide.

### This first book will teach you:

- Illusions for the stage and up-close magic
- Stagecraft for magicians
- Professional advice and biographical anecdotes

### TESTIMONIALS

" Mesmerizing and mystifying,  
Loran will blow your mind away... with great class ! "

- NOW Magazine, Toronto, ON, Canada

" Loran has contributed greatly to attract the public at Lotte World ! "

- Ki Joo Kim, Lotte World, Seoul, South Korea

" You and your magic dazzled audiences here in Algeria.  
Your musical illusions were masterful ! "

- Fouad Filali, MASAF, Algiers, Algeria

" A magician? No, Loran is much more than that ! "

- Château Mont-Ste-Anne, QC, Canada

### About the author :

Quebec illusionist Loran has amazed thousands of spectators around the world. He has collaborated on stage and films with the Rolling Stones and AC/DC, Allan Rayman, and Jackie Chan.

**Accomplished magician, lecturer, and author,  
Loran now shares his magical passion with you !**



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The  
FABULOUS Book  
of MAGIC  
SECRETS



Loran  
magician illusionist

# CONTENTS

## Foreword

## ACT ONE

Magic effects.....	7
Mirrorize .....	8
Mysteries of the invisible .....	14
Grandma's spoon .....	22
The Apache stone .....	30
Penetrating silk.....	38
Vanishing lighter .....	44
Appearing wine.....	52
Magic Please.....	60

## ACT TWO

Stagecraft for magician .....	69
Cue sheet.....	70
Technical requirements .....	81
Microphone, Music, Lighting .....	86

## ACT THREE

History of magic .....	93
Abracadabra .....	94
Discoverie of witchcraft .....	96

Acknowledgments .....	98
Bibliography .....	99
Final Act .....	100

## THE FABULOUS BOOK OF MAGIC SECRETS of Loran, magician illusionist

Volume 1

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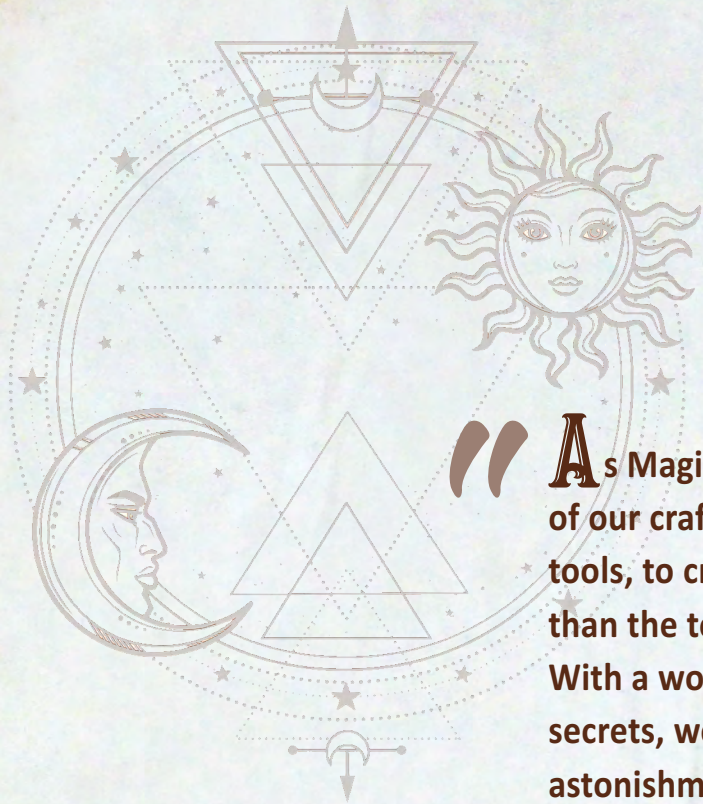
pages 12, 18, 27, 34, 41, 48  
57, 64, 78, 90



pages 12, 19, 28, 35, 42  
47, 58, 65, 79, 91



pages 13, 20, 29, 36, 43  
50, 59, 66, 80, 92



**“** As Magicians, we use the tools of our craft like a carpenter uses his tools, to create something greater than the tools themselves. With a working knowledge of these secrets, we weave a spell of mystery, astonishment and pure wonder.

We amaze, amuse and even inspire. But these are, by no means, the only secrets of magic. One can no more reveal or expose the Real Secrets of Magic than one can take apart a piano to find the music inside.

For the magic, like the music, exists only in that timeless moment of the performer and the performance. It is then, and only then, that the craft of magic is elevated to what Maskelyne so aptly called... The High Art of Magic.



(JAY SCOTT BERRY)





## FOREWORD

**T**he moment I decided to write these lines as an introduction, I found myself in the grip of the blank page syndrome. Who am I? What do I have to say?

**To paraphrase the famous Quebec singer Serge Fiori,  
“We brought someone into this world,  
shouldn’t we at least listen to what they have to say!”**

I hope you find these pages filled with magical thoughts and material for you to use. At the very least, I hope you’re inspired and take some pleasure in reading this book.

As a kid, stage magic cast its spell on me. Most importantly, I loved the theatrical aspect of the performances. Then I discovered close-up magic. This style of magic is more intimate. It takes a minimalist approach and urges you to refine your presentations. Akin to a circus artist, this would be like working without a net.

Throughout the years I explored these different genres. Yet, I always felt drawn to the grandeur of stage magic. But like many professional magicians, one must perform in a variety of situations. This is how you gain experience. This is why I included material appropriate to both close-up and stage performances.

This book is not like the conventional one you’ll usually find in magic stores. Not only does it teach you different magic effects, but it also goes backstage with stagecraft such as lighting and sound. The history of magic is even visited.

Furthermore, you will find different annexes throughout the chapters. These are identified in 3 different ways.

### *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*

**We all make choices in the course of our lives  
that shaped us into who we are today.**

I read somewhere: “What’s the point of asking myself what I would be today if I had made different decisions because I would have asked myself the question anyway even if I had?” This section will allow you to better understand my personal and artistic journey as well as my point of view on different subjects.





## Master's Advice

**"You want to know the difference between a master and a beginner? The master failed more times than the beginner even tried."**

(STEPHEN MCCRANIE)

No matter if you are a beginner or a working pro, we learn every day. You will find here various tips that have served me well over the years. I hope they will help you improve your magic and your presentations.



## SECRET TRAPDOOR

**Even if you think you've thought of everything, it may happen that you unexpectedly fall into a secret trap.**

Here, I share stories and anecdotes that happened to me during shows these past years. These were sometimes amusing, while others were more tragic. All of them were very informative. But as they say...

**the show must go on!**

### **And, to the point ... what is a professional magician?**

Some say it's a person who makes a living by practicing magic or illusions.

I have a different opinion, though. Whether you generate your main income from magic or not, it doesn't matter. If you want to be a professional magician, you must have respect for your craft, clients, and audiences. Always offer quality moments of wonder, regardless of how much (or little) you're paid.

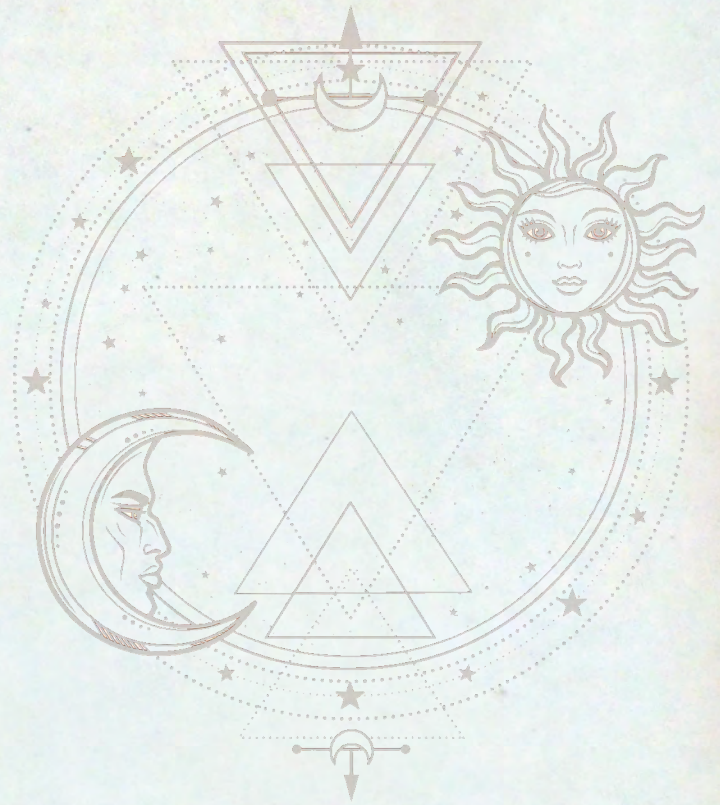


*Remember, whenever your actions or words touch another person, you've influenced their future.* Your job is to make sure this future is fun and inspiring. Also, make sure to leave everyone with a positive image of magic.

Respectfully yours,

**Loran**





“ **B**eing different  
is neither a good nor a bad thing.  
It simply means  
that you are brave enough  
to be yourself. ”

(ALBERT CAMUS, 1913 - 1960)

# ACT ONE

## MAGIC SECRETS AND METHODS

The following pages contain methods to effects that I've worked on over the years. I do my best to explain their origin to help you better understand the creative process. Also provided is a detailed summary of the effect. This includes a description of the material, the preparation, and my presentation.

Many of these tricks are suitable for close-up, while others are more appropriate for the parlor or stage. Keep in mind that many of these ideas are part of more complete routines with full scripting and blocking.

Some of these effects require accessories that you can easily get at any magic shop, while others require some "do-it-yourself."

Are the ideas in these pages difficult to learn and perform? No. Yet, don't fool yourself into believing all these techniques are simple. If magic was easy, everyone would do it.

It's important to decide the audience you want to perform for. Are you looking to impress the master manipulator of your magic club? How about the audience who hires you for real money?

**Magic is not about props or technique.  
Those are a *means to an end*.  
Magic's strength solely comes from your ability  
to communicate a true sense of wonder.**





PHOTOGRAPHER : LORAN

# MIRRORIZE

**W**hether or not you believe in the use of Tarot cards for divination, this esoteric object always arouses curiosity. Tarot cards can even generate fear among some people. But just like magic, we like to believe in the impossible and the mysterious. The routine that follows is based on the theme of the Tarot but uses modern playing cards. It allows you to create an effect with some mysterious elements while remaining in your audience's comfort zone. Though you can present this in a more direct and commercial way as well.

## Effect:

After you explain the mysterious origin of the Tarot, you and a volunteer hold in your hands **two packs of five cards each**. Both of you randomly choose a card from your respective packs. You and your volunteer exchange cards then replace them face up, in your respective packs.

What a surprise when it is discovered that you and your volunteer have curiously chosen the same card. But that's not all, as a finale all the other cards in both packs are shown to have mirrors on the faces of the cards!



## Material:

- Two identical Queen of Spades
- 8 other cards on which you will apply a self-adhesive Mylar mirror film. This type of material is available in craft stores.



## Preparation:

- Place the two queens of spades face down on the table.
- Place the eighth mirror cards on top, still face down.
- Hold this pack of 10 cards in your hand face down. You are ready to go.

# PRESENTATION, BLOCKING & CHOREOGRAPHY

## Introduction

Hold the cards face down in your hand, as you state:

*“Have you ever heard of Tarot cards? What many people do not know is that modern playing cards, as we know them today, come directly from the Tarot. The images and symbols have simply been modified through time. So, for now, imagine that the cards here are those of a Tarot deck. Maybe they can tell us something about your destiny.”*

## Execution

☛ Hold the cards in your left hand.

Deal the top five cards from the top of the pack face down in your right hand.

Give this packet to the volunteer and instruct them that they must keep them like your cards, face down. (This pack contains only five mirror cards. Your pack contains two Queens and the remaining three mirror cards).

You continue explaining:

*“We don’t want to look at the cards yet, because I don’t want you to be influenced by their colors or their meanings. So be sure to always keep the cards face down. Now, perhaps you would like to challenge your destiny. To do so, you can cut the cards in your hands a few times.”*

☛ You demonstrate how the volunteer can cut their cards by taking the first two cards off the top of the pack and placing them underneath the pack.

Then you take one card from the top of the pack and place it underneath.

Finally, you take two cards from the top of the pack and place them underneath.

This series of cuts puts the cards exactly in the same order they were in the beginning. You should have in your hand from bottom to top, a pack with the two Queens of Spades followed by three mirror cards. It doesn’t matter how many cuts your volunteer will make, because all their cards are the same.

## Execution

- When the volunteer is finished cutting, ask them to hold the cards behind their back. You do the same.

Now explain that... *the volunteer must select a random card from their pack. After they chose it, they must bring the card in front of them, kept face down. The other cards remain behind their back.*

You now do the same. However, the card you take is one of the two Queens of spades that are resting at the bottom of your pack.

Exchange your card with the volunteer's card as you explain that... they must put it back in the deck held behind their back. However, just before returning it, they should turn the card face up. It may be placed at any position, other than the top of the pack.

- When they are done, ask them to bring all the cards in front of them but kept face down. For your part, you give the impression to proceed in the same way, but in fact this is not the case:

First, you place the card the volunteer gives you on top of your pack, turned face down like the others.

You then take the card under the pack (the second Queen of Spades), and turn it faces up while putting it back in the middle of the pack.

- Finally, return the cards out in front of you as your volunteer did.

Explain to everyone that *there is no possible way that you could have influenced their choice. They even had the cards in their hands and did everything themselves.*

*NOTE: In the case that your volunteer is seated at a table (for example in a restaurant), it will be easier for them to hide the cards underneath the table to make all the moves, instead of doing it behind their back.*



## Magic Reference

Mirrorize is not the only trick that uses mirror cards. It is an adaptation of several other effects. The origin can be found with "Back Flip" and "Flipperation" by Sam Schwartz. The idea is similar to "Dream of the Hermit" sold by Nick Trost and based on an idea published by Jack Stanley, "Flipped Out" by Ed Hollins and published by Emerson & West, "Mirror Miracle" published by Meir Yedid, but the routines and techniques are completely different. Marc De Souza's "Alice thru the windowpane" uses a full deck of mirror cards with also a different routine. Feel free to provide any information to update this book and add the proper credit.



## Conclusion

Ask the volunteer to spread the cards before them like yours.

You should see in each of your hands four cards turned face down, and one card face up.

The two face-up cards are the Queen of spades.

☛ You finish by saying:

*That's a strange coincidence because we both chose the same card. According to some historians, this card represents Joan of Arc, the Maid of Orleans.*

*In a Tarot deck, she could be the Queen of Swords, suggesting a battle or a challenge to come in the near future. Finally, one might think that all this is mere coincidence. But the Tarot is also known as the mirror of the soul and it is perhaps because of this ...*

## FINAL ACT

☛ Turn all your cards face up and ask your volunteer to do the same. All will discover with amazement that all the other cards are mirrors. The Tarot of destiny has spoken!



## Alternative presentation

If you prefer a less esoteric presentation, here is a more direct and commercial approach.

*It is well known that magicians use boxes and mirrors to create their illusions on stage. But in close-up magic, they mostly use cards. I'd like to perform a trick with these.*

Then proceed with the trick as described until the Queens are revealed. Finish by revealing the mirror cards with the following script:

*Curiously, we chose the same card. But in the beginning, I said that magicians often use mirrors to cheat. That's exactly what I did with this trick!*



## The Sorcerer's Apprentice

## Pif Gadget



LORAN HOLDING ONE OF HIS MANY SKELETONS. A CHILD LIKE THE OTHERS... OR ALMOST. PHOTOGRAPHER : MY DAD

**I**t's hard to find the exact moment when magic really came into my life.

In my childhood, it was above all the inexplicable and the mysterious that interested me. Paranormal effects, haunted castles, witches, time travel, and flying saucers fascinated me. I keep on the desk in my room models plastic kit representing medieval torture machines, characters from horror movies, and skeletons hanging everywhere. My poor mother wondered what would become of her son!

But the publication of the French magazine "Pif Gadget" in Quebec in the 70s was certainly a defining moment. Included with the magazine, there was the "Magie Gadget" which were little tricks that we could assemble. However, it was mostly reproductions of show posters of Houdini, Thurston, Dante, and other magicians from the early 1900s that caught my attention. These images of great masters surrounded by demons, spirits, and ghosts inspired me greatly. As a child, I spent hours analyzing these posters and imagining what these mysterious men could present on stage with their magical powers!

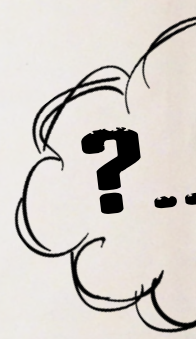
## Master's Advice

## Develop your style

**I**t can take years to find a style that suits us well.

*That goes for the stage as much as it does for the close-up magician.*

For example, in my early days, I toured bars and comedy nightclubs. I had developed a silly character with thick glasses, a big tuxedo, and a huge top hat on my head. I then created a commercial musical act with scarves and candles. This act then turned into a gangster producing doves, cards, and cigarettes. I also presented grand illusions with medieval outfits and even incorporating comic book elements such as the character of Batman. Finally, I much prefer the Gothic and Steampunk style.





anecdote

## THE MAGIC BOAT

**I** was performing on a small cruise ship sailing the waters of the St. Lawrence River in Quebec, Canada.

After docking at the port, a few passengers and I sat at the bar having a drink and chatting. Suddenly, my gaze stopped on a can of soft drink that was right in front of me the minute before. I realized that it was moving intermittently as it slid across the counter. As we were moored, the boat was leaning slightly to one side and the top of the counter was wet. I was the only one who knew it was an empty can. All the elements were there for the beverage to move by itself. That was all it took for me to jump on this opportunity to produce an unexpected miracle.

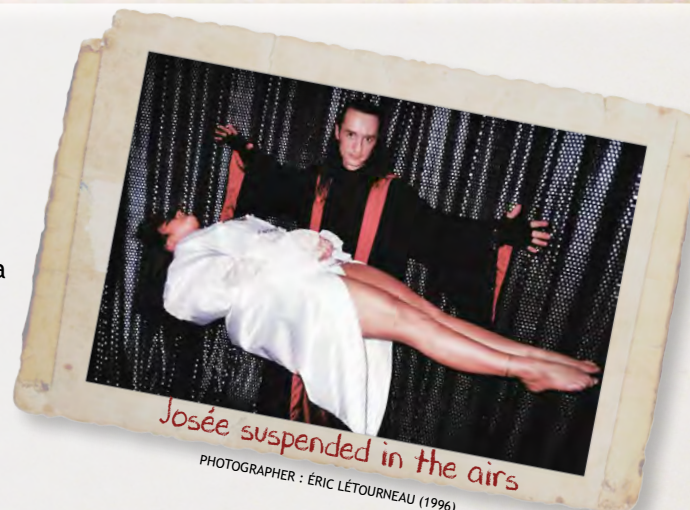
Discretely, I quickly made sure that no one else saw the can move. I then asked the people leaning at the bar if they wanted to see a little trick I was working on. Placing my hands above the can, I began to move my fingers in a telekinesis way. To the amazement of my audience, the can began to move in front of them as it had done for me just the minute before. When I felt that it wouldn't move anymore, I took it in my hand as if it was full. As I took a false sip and left the bar, I pretended that the trick wasn't perfected yet, but that I would eventually perfect it, while leaving my spectators speechless.

**Two years later...** I'm at home and get a call from a variety television show researcher. He explains to me that he had seen me in a show before. But more importantly, he was part of the small group of people for whom I had done the "can trick" on the boat and he asked me if I would accept to come and do the trick again on their show!

**A trick that I hadn't even planned to do and that I had almost forgotten brought me a TV contract.**  
Life often offers funny surprises!

If you decide to impersonate a character however, it involves some research so that the effects that you want to achieve are realistic and believable. For example, a wizard doesn't make cigarettes appear, just like a magician dressed in a jacket and tie won't make a mysterious skull float. Your staging is therefore very important if you opt for a specific style.

**But you can also stay natural and just be yourself. My suggestion is not to put barriers in your way and try different things to find what suits you best.**



# MYSTERIES OF THE INVISIBLE



LORAN THE SORCERER WITH THE MAGIC SWORD (2008) PHOTOGRAPHER : LOUIS-PIERRE MARIEN

**I** developed this routine, especially for a medieval event, in which I presented my show in a tent for small private groups.

The poetic and magical aspect of this act immediately establishes my wizard character. However, it can be adapted to any other style or simply be presented as is without a theme.

A few times, I've even presented it accompanied by music only. Composed of three distinct phases, this routine ends as it begins, closing the loop as a story.

## Material:

- 1 silk of approximately 30 cm X 30 cm (12 inches X 12 inches)
- 1 large thumb tip of 6 cm (2.5 inches) long.  
*This accessory is available in most magic stores.*



You will also need a 2nd large thumb tip with a "flint flasher" fixed on it. Another method is suggested if you do not have this accessory.

- 1 small goblet
- A sufficient amount of silver confetti, salt, or fine sand to fill the goblet
- 1 small jewelry box

## Preparation:

- Fill the jewelry box with silver confetti and fix the regular thumb tip inside the box with an elastic band.
- Fill the goblet with silver confetti.
- Insert the silk into the flash thumb tip.
- Prepare the flint flasher with flash cotton.



**Effect :**

You tell a story about the  
**“mysteries of the invisible”**

during which several magical effects occur.

- In a flash of fire, a small silk appears at the end of your fingers.

- You pour dust into your hand from a silver goblet and make it disappear and appear at your whim. You finally finish by vanishing the silk in your hand.

## PRESENTATION, BLOCKING & CHOREOGRAPHY

### Execution

#### ACT 1 : Appearance of the silk

Secretly secure the prepared flash thumb tip on your right thumb and hold the cup with your right hand. Make sure you're standing directly next to the table and start with the following patter:



*Mysteries, visible and invisible. Many are those who seek to discover them. Yet, to see the invisible, you just simply need to learn how to look closely. A good way to explain it is by using this silver dust. Like snowflakes, they all look similar to one another. But if we know how to look, we discover that each of them is unique and contains its own mysteries...*

- Slowly pour a handful of confetti from the cup into your left hand and then put it back into the cup. Then pretend to take a single piece of confetti and place the cup on the table.

Now, join your hands, light the flash thumb tip and make the silk appear by gradually pulling it out of your thumb as if it has materialized between your fingers.



## Execution

*If you don't have a flash thumb tip,*

- start by placing a lit candle on your table. Hold between the fingers of your right hand a piece of flash paper with the regular thumb tip with the silk inside.

After the introductory patter, light the paper with the candle flame.

As soon as the paper is almost completely burnt, join your hands and pull the silk out of your thumb. You can also forgo cotton or flash paper.

*Just pretend to take a piece of silver dust and transform it with your fingertips while gradually taking the silk out of the thumb tip.*

## ACT 2 : Disappearance / Reappearance of Confetti

- Open the jewelry box with your right hand. With your left hand, deposit the silk on the edge of the lid of the box while secretly dropping the flash thumb tip inside.

Take the cup with your right hand and pour some confetti into the hand of a volunteer saying the following:

***Please open your hand. If I place some silver dust in your hand, you can see it. It is real and tangible, isn't it? Now put it back in the cup please.***

- Place the cup back on the table.

With your right hand, take the silk and secretly slip on the regular thumb tip.

Make a fist with your left hand, then deposit the silk on top.

Push the thumb into the silk, secretly leaving the thumb tip inside your hand. Now take the cup and pour out confetti until you fill  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the thumb tip.

Place the cup back on the table and secretly remove the thumb tip with the thumb of your right hand as if you wanted to push the powder a little more into your fist.

***Effectively it is part of this world and this universe in which we exist, just like this silk that I have right here. However, if I pour a good amount into my hand and even if it is real, visible, tangible, the next moment it seems to no longer exist. One might think it is completely gone. But in reality, it simply becomes invisible.***

- Unfold the silk and hold it by two corners. Show that all the confetti has disappeared, while keeping your thumb tip hidden behind the silk.

Now fold all four corners of the silk, upwards, holding them with the tip of your right thumb, first and second fingers. It forms a small pocket.



## Execution

Grab the “invisible” confetti from in front of you and act as if you place it in this small pocket.

*To find it, you just need to look closer. For example, here, there, again right here. Of course, you must believe. And when you do, that’s when the magic happens!*

- ☛ Your left hand completely wraps the silk with the thumb tip inside and removes it from the right thumb.

Keep in mind that your left hand is positioned above the box at a decent height so you can have the confetti reappear by simply pouring it out like a waterfall, directly into the box beneath.



## ACT 3 : Disappearing Silk

- ☛ Again, display the silk with both hands, secretly transferring the thumb tip onto your right thumb.

Pass the thumb tip into your left hand and push the silk into it.

As before, secretly remove the thumb tip with your right thumb on one of the final pushes.

Your right hand then takes the goblet and pours a little bit of confetti on your fist while you say:

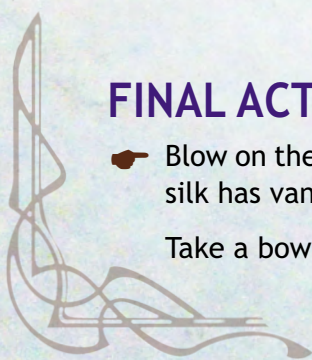
*Just like this dust, each of us is unique with our own strengths and qualities. All you have to do is to believe in the magic that is already inside yourself, and to discover ... the mysteries of the invisible.*



## FINAL ACT

- ☛ Blow on the confetti, open your hand, then show that the silk has vanished.

Take a bow and enjoy your applause.

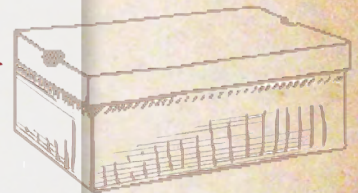


# My First Show

**I**t's usually difficult to forget the first time you've been on a real stage for a performance.

It's one thing to do your magic tricks at home for your parents. It's another when it's in a theater in front of 450 high school students. It was during a day of activities for a variety show where students could perform. I was about 13 years old, the age when young people go through their not-so-easy teenage crisis. I can still see myself standing backstage ready to walk on stage. In front of me, my magic props were meticulously arranged on a small wheeled cart, usually used by my teacher to move a TV screen around the classroom.

**All my precious material  
was contained in a small shoebox**



anecdote

and consisted of a thumb tip for the trick of the cigarette crushed in a jacket, the Professor's Nightmare rope trick, the endless water vase, the double-bottom glass for the disappearing milk, and a sheet of newspaper.

Backstage and hidden behind the curtain, I watched the other participants preceding me performed, being applauded and encouraged by their groups of friends who were sitting in the theater. Then comes the moment when I hear the master of ceremonies unceremoniously announce,

***“And now we have a magician named Loran! “And then...  
silence, not a sound in the room, not a clap, not even a whisper,  
as if everyone had just disappeared in one swoop!”***

After a second of hesitation, I pushed my cart forward in the middle of the stage in front of the microphone and a room full of students who had no idea who I was. But I was so passionate about magic and so convinced of my tricks that I didn't even think for a second about whether the other students would like what I was going to present. So, without waiting, I began to perform one "miracle" after another, gradually winning over my audience. I would interact and even improvise spontaneously with the comments I heard in the room, using them to my advantage to make the audience laugh. After my last effect, I thanked the audience and then went back backstage pushing my little cart again, but this time, finally, under thunderous applause.

I was no longer a no-name!

**Have confidence and be convinced.  
Because if you are not,  
then no one else will be.**





## The Quest for inspiration

**W**hen we are short of inspiration, it would be so great to be able to take a walk on Mount Helicon in Greece to visit the nine Muses and ask their advice!

But while waiting to meet the daughters of Zeus, you can develop your imagination by taking an interest in many areas and activities. Inspiration also comes from our life experiences, which are different for everyone. I am constantly in inspiration mode. It can happen at any time. It can be triggered when I walk in a park, a hardware, a department store, visit a historical site, while I listen to music, read a book, or watch a movie.

My interest in the mysterious pushed me towards the study of esotericism, which then led me to explore the myths and beliefs of different cultures. I developed a taste for history, fiction, and legends. Whether inspired by the era of the great explorers, knights, Vikings, First Nations, or with the stories of vampires, werewolves or others, my imagination is nourished by all these elements. Your muse can even be an event that provokes an artistic creation in your mind. It often happens that an object inspires me,

without me knowing why. I then leave it in plain sight on a shelf until it speaks to me and reveals its secrets.

**A personal example** is an accessory I noticed in a magic store I visited regularly. It was a small box in which a scarf was inserted through two holes on each side. Fire then begins coming out of the box. The fire disappears and the scarf is shown intact again. I knew I wanted to use this accessory because of the visual effect it offered, but I found the trick totally illogical. Why would a scarf in a box catch fire for no reason at all? This accessory was consistently in my mind, but I didn't know what to do with it. It was while going to see a Harry Potter movie that I finally found my answer in one of the scenes. A scarf has no reason to catch fire... but a "Phoenix Feather" can. BINGO! I rushed to the store the next day wishing that the little magic box would still be there. When I arrived at the counter, the cashier took a moment to take a last good look at the box. She confided to me that the box had been lying asleep on the shelf for years and she wondered when she would finally see it go.

**Touched to see that somebody finally found a purpose for it, she was happy to know that it would finally be used, just like the Phoenix, to rise from its ashes.**



Loran and his crystal ball

PHOTOGRAPHER : LOUIS-PIERRE MARIEN



## THE SORCERER

**I**f you decide to play a character for your show, don't do it halfway.

There is a difference between someone who is simply dressed up like people do during Halloween and someone who assumes their costume by living their character. I have regularly participated in various historical events such as Medieval, Steampunk, and Pirate festivals. People who visit these types of places are often truly passionate and will not hesitate to attend these events with splendid costumes. As a specialist in your art, you must at least make sure that you live up to their expectations.

When one day I was asked to participate in a medieval event, I decided to create a show that would be presented in front of a maximum of fifteen people. The staging, combined with the intimacy of the show, made the experience truly mystical for the audience.

It started with a priestess in costume, greeting the visitors at the entrance of a small forest with a short speech about the Viking gods. She then marked their foreheads with a reddish mixture of a runic symbol, explaining that it was for their protection against any manifestation of spirits. After gathering about fifteen people, she left the group and entered the forest alone. She returned a few moments later announcing that the sorcerer had almost finished his incantations and that they could now slowly enter the forbidden forest.

The group then crossed a small path through the trees. My assistant confided to me that during this journey, the attitude of the people changed very quickly. Instinctively, the gossips became whispers and then disappeared completely.

This short trip led to a clearing where a large Viking tent was erected. All over the place and suspended in the trees, one could see artifacts, animal skulls, and unusual objects. People were instructed to enter the tent in silence and sit on the benches. Inside, they could finally see the sorcerer, eyes closed, still in meditation, and sitting in his large chair covered with furs. To his right, embedded in the ground and within reach, shone his sword. Next to him, various witchcraft accessories, grimoires bearing alchemical symbols, cups, and ceremonial objects were placed on small tables. Here and there, dried plants and amulets of dubious function were hung on the sides of the tent. When everyone was seated, the priestess would ring the bell three times and request an audience for the group. A few seconds later, I opened my eyes and began with the presentation of the "Mysteries of the Invisible."

You can easily imagine that to make this kind of show, you must completely inhabit your character to make it believable. The atmosphere created was such that when people left at the end of the performance, I didn't get applause. Instead, people bowed to me in respect with their heads down, as if they had just met a shaman or a great Tibetan master. Some would even leave me some fruit as an offering and a thank you.

**When I can stimulate people's imagination and transport them for a moment in a universe so magical that they forget their worries, I know that I have overcome the "illusion" and succeeded in my work as an artist of wonder.**



**“** **T**he fairest thing we can ever experience is the mysterious. It is the fundamental emotion, which lies at the cradle of the true art and science. And he who knows it not and can no longer experience wonder or amazement is as good as dead, a snuffed-out candle. **”**

(ALBERT EINSTEIN, 1879 -1955)

# GRANDMA'S SPOON



IMAGE : PIXABAY

**S**haring a personal segment of your life during a presentation creates an intimate moment, and also makes you seem more human to your audiences. This piece of magic allows you to share a wonderful story which most people will easily relate.

### Effect:

You present an old wooden spoon of normal appearance that you say, “belonged to your grandmother.” After offering the spoon for examination by a volunteer, the spoon is placed in their hand. Securely holding it, they leave you no chance to withdraw the spoon from their hands. A card is then selected by the volunteer, noted, and returned to the pack. You then try to find the selection by inserting the handle of the spoon, several times, into the deck of cards. You have no success. At some point, you admit your defeat. However, when the volunteer opens their hand, they are surprised to see the name of the card written in the spoon with what appears to be cake icing.

### Material:

- 1 spoon made of wood
- 1 identical spoon with a card inscribed inside, using thick red or dark brown paint
- 1 more identical spoon as above BUT with a different card inscribed inside
- 1 safety pin
- 1 deck of cards



### Preparation:

- Secure the safety pin at the top of your inner left jacket pocket to create a space just large enough to insert the handle of one of the spoons with a card inscribed in it.
- Place the regular spoon and a pack of cards in the same pocket.
- If you do not wear a jacket, simply put the two spoons and the cards in your pants pocket. The thick paint will make it easy to distinguish between the two spoons by simply rubbing the inside of the spoon with your fingertips to feel the ‘icing’.

# PRESENTATION, BLOCKING & CHOREOGRAPHY

## Introduction

- ☛ Take the regular spoon out of your pocket and give it to a volunteer while asking them if they see anything special about it.

After the volunteer finishes inspecting the spoon, you retrieve it.

- ☛ You're now going to switch it for the spoon waiting in your jacket pocket. In a bold but relaxed manner, bring your right hand to the inner pocket of your jacket.

Place that spoon into your pocket, take the pack of cards and the 2nd spoon. Make sure the back of this spoon faces the audience while the secret inscription faces you.



During the switch you say:

*“Maybe for you, this spoon seems ordinary. But for me, it’s a very special object because it belonged to my grandmother. One of my childhood memories is when my grandma was making cakes. I always asked her if I could lick the spoon. I am sure this might bring back some memories for you, too.*

*One day she baked her famous cherry cake, and I asked if I could have the spoon to lick. She smiled and said to me ... “If you can show me a good magic trick, I’ll give you the spoon and you can lick all the cherry icing on it! ...” Since then, I’ve kept this spoon as a souvenir to remind me of the magic trick that I did for her. Would you like to see it?”*

## Execution

- ☛ Ask the volunteer to open their hand flat like a table, with their palm facing up. Place the bowl of the spoon in their hand while making sure the secret prediction faces downward, toward their palm. Ask them to close their fingers around the spoon and to hold it tight.

You explain *that they must be sure to never open their hand, because, during the process, you will try to take the spoon away from them several times. They must guard it, carefully.*



## Execution

- Using your favorite method, force the same card inscribed on the spoon.

If you do not know how to force a card, a simple method is explained at the end of this chapter.

- Once your audience member selects the card, return it to the deck and start shuffling.

Explain *that it is not you, but the volunteer who will find the chosen card.*

To find it, the volunteer must insert the handle of the spoon into the deck at the same time you rifle through the cards.



- You repeat the process several times but are never successful in finding the selection.

Occasionally you pretend “trying” to remove the spoon by pulling on the handle.

This little merry-go-round game is great fun for the spectators. Besides, it forces the volunteer to tighten their grip on the spoon so that they don't inadvertently discover the inscription in it.

You can also skip the secret switch without having the spoon inspected. In this case, simply take the spoon out of your pocket, making sure not to show the side with the card written on it while saying the introductory text.

### The Paddle Move

You can also use the “paddle move” with the spoon. This gives the illusion that you are showing both sides of the spoon when in fact you are only showing the same side twice.

**TO DO THIS**, hold the spoon in the middle of the handle between your thumb and forefinger, showing the side where there is nothing written.

The palm is turned up and the spoon down. In a continuous movement, now rotate your wrist while pointing the spoon toward you. However, at the same time as you make this move, the thumb and forefinger secretly rotate the spoon handle by half a turn.

If everything is done smoothly, you will appear to have shown both sides of the spoon, thus hiding the inscription in the spoon.

The important thing is to do this casually.

Don't rush or put too much emphasis on the spoon.

Because if you give too much importance to the fact that it is a “normal spoon,” you will create the opposite reaction and everyone will want to check it.

## Final Act

- After failing, explain how you're unsure about what happened and that your grandmother would probably be highly disappointed.

Confirm with the volunteer *that you've failed to find their card, but also that you never managed to remove the spoon from their hand.*

Now, for the first time, ask the volunteer to tell everyone the identity of their selected card out loud.

Conclude by saying the following:

*If my grandmother were here, she surely would also have given you the right to lick the spoon. In fact, there's still a little bit of cherry icing on that spoon.*

*If you turn your hand over and slowly open your fingers, you will see that not only is there still a little icing, but curiously it spells the name of a playing card. Could it be? Is that yours?*



- Hold the spoon and point to the inscription on it, while saying...

*"Thank you, Grandma!"*



### Magic References

**Criss-Cross Force:** This force is originally attributed to Max Holden, and is easily found in Card College Vol. 1 (Roberto Giobbi, 1995 p. 8)

**The Paddle Move:** The precursor of this manipulation is found in the book Discoverie of Witchcraft (Reginald Scott, 1584, p. 193). But the most modern version comes later. We find it among others in the Encyclopedia Tarbell Course in Magic, Volume 4 (1945, p.62).

## ALTERNATIVE PRESENTATIONS

Here are several different ways to utilize a second spoon with another card inscribed inside.

### 1 - Restaurant

- After you've performed Grandma's Spoon for one group of people, you can present the same routine to another group located directly adjacent to them. However, you're going to use a different card. This allows everyone to talk with each other after your performance. They will find that it was not the same card. This further reinforces the impression of how free their selection truly was.

## Alternative presentations

### 2 - Double prediction

- Place the second spoon in your inner pocket, next to the first as described in the above preparation. After forcing the card on the first volunteer, force a second card on another volunteer. Follow the steps to reveal the first card. Take a bow and while the spectators applaud, you take the spoon and pretend to return it to your pocket. Drop the first spoon into your pocket and switch it for the second one. Casually bring it back while saying ...

*One moment, I almost forgot that you also have chosen a card!*

Then ask the second volunteer the identity of their card. After they reply, rub your finger inside the bowl of the spoon while saying:

*All I have to do is warm the icing on the spoon. It slowly transforms into the name of your card.*

You can also ask your volunteer to rub the spoon, themselves. Bring the downward-facing spoon to the volunteer. Ask them to use their first finger and run it inside the bowl. To wrap up, turn the spoon over to reveal the name of the other selected card.

### 3 - Mentalism

- The advantage of a wooden spoon is that it is very light. If you enjoy working with the technique of invisible thread, you can use this tool to “telepathically” move it on a table or even directly in the hands of a volunteer. It’s almost as if the spoon still embodies the spirit of Grandma.

#### Criss-cross Force



**Definition :** Forcing a card is a way to have a volunteer select a card whose value is already known by the magician. The volunteer believes they have chosen their card freely when in fact the magician determines which card gets selected well in advance.

Here is a simple method called “Criss-cross force” that does not require any complicated handling.

Simply prepare the deck of cards by secretly placing the card to be forced directly on top of the deck. When you begin performing, rest the deck on the table, then ask the volunteer to cut the deck in two halves. Instruct them to place the cut part (pack #A) beside the remaining cards on the table (pack #B). Now take pack #B and position it crosswise on top of pack #A.

Explain that the volunteer *could have cut anywhere in the pack and at any point. Stress that it is a completely random choice. Your goal here is to talk just long enough for people to forget which pack of cards was which.*

After a short time, lift pack #B and ask the volunteer to take the top card off of pack #A. In fact, this card is the one you already know because it was on top of the deck to start with.

If you made a double prediction, simply place your two forced cards on top of each other. Then ask the first volunteer to take the first card and the other volunteer to take the second one. You can also have one card on top, and the other at the bottom of the deck and do the same criss-cross force. One spectator picks their card from the top, and the other card you can display so everyone sees. *Just remember which card each volunteer chooses and proceed as described in the explanations above.*

# HOUDINI

DO NOT REPRODUCE AT HOME...  
OR ANY WHERE ELSE!

The Sorcerer's  
Apprentice

**W**hat could be more normal for a child than to want to imitate their idols? Mine were nothing less than magicians!

At the illusion show "Reveen, the Impossibleist" I attended as a child, I saw a chain shackle escape where the magician was handcuffed to a metal bar with chains and padlocks. He frees and reattaches himself

repeatedly by quickly placing his hands in a large cloth bag held by two volunteers from the audience.

What surprised me was that my parents who were accompanying me did not understand how the magician could do it, while it was the opposite for me! The technique of this trick seemed so simple that as soon as we returned home, I made a rudimentary version of the handcuffs with a coat hanger made of wire. After showing it to my father, he helped me make some real ones with a metal rod.

A few years later, as a teenager, I got a summer job as a children's playground instructor. While swimming, I organized (or maybe I should say improvised?) a Houdini escape act. We first found a heavy fence gate made of large metal pipes and wire mesh. Then, I proceeded to lie down on it, face up, my ankles and wrists were then tied to the gate with the famous handcuffs I had made

with my father. After being well padlocked by my teammates, they slid the fence over the edge of the pool, pushed it directly into the water and watched me sink very quickly to the bottom of the pool in 12 feet of water!... I was fortunate enough to have parents who offered me swimming lessons at a very young age, so I was able to hold my breath underwater for very long periods.

So, I held my breath as long as possible and pretended to work hard to free myself from my chains. I even remember that I had to hold on to the heavy wire door not to return to the surface too quickly. When I got tired of waiting without doing anything on the bottom of the pool, I swam back up to the surface, clinging to the edge of the pool and giving the impression of being out of breath. I was then triumphantly pulled out of the water!

After the presentation, I was informed that my teammates were in a real panic by the side of the pool. It wasn't until they pushed me into the water that they realized that if there had been a problem, they had no way to get me to the surface quickly. The fence could also have flipped over completely when I went into the water and I would have found myself face down against the bottom of the pool, tied up and crushed by the weight of the door. *I was not familiar with the "50 repetitions rule" at the time.* I still have these handcuffs today. However, my wrists are now too big for me to use them.

**A reminder of the carelessness of a teenager who felt invincible, like we all do at this age. One day in the playground... I had become Houdini!**



Poster of Houdini  
McCord Museum, Montreal

# Video Capture

**N**owadays, access to a video camera to film yourself is very easy. Even the integrated camera of your smartphone or that of a digital tablet will do very well.

*So, there are no excuses!*

It is essential to ALWAYS FILM YOURSELF when you practice at home and during each of your shows. It is by watching yourself that you will be able to correct your mistakes and improve your performance.

Is the flow of your words too fast or too slow? Do you blink every time you make a secret movement? Some people stick out their tongues when they're concentrating... and others scratch their noses regularly without realizing it! Unless you have an artistic director who is constantly following you, it will be hard for you to notice these important details.

## SUGGESTION

*I first set up the camera to film myself from the front and then diagonally to the left and right so that I can study all the angles. This way, you will see what the audience is seeing when they are sitting on each side of the room.*

During a show, I sometimes place the camera close to the stage not to film my act, but rather the spectators. This is a good way to see their reactions to your act. When we are on stage, the lighting blinds us and we are focused on our performance. It is then difficult to see if the effect we have just produced generates the reaction we are looking for.

Practicing in front of a mirror is a good thing at first, but it can become dangerous in the long run because you risk becoming a slave to your reflection. When you look at yourself in the mirror, you are constantly correcting your position and movements so that you don't see the errors.

**But when you are in front of a real audience, there is no longer a mirror in which you can look and correct yourself.**



*Questions to ask yourself!  
What is your particular habit to correct?*

PHOTOGRAPHER : DARKMOONART\_DE, PIXABAY



# METAMORPHOSE

**S**ome magicians and audiences prefer close-up magic that is done within inches of their eyes, while others opt for stage magic.

I perform both types of magic and each requires a lot of work. For example, one wrongly imagines that to perform grand illusions, all you have to do is to smile, enter a box and come out of it by doing a few small dance steps to music.

*The reality is quite different.*

First of all, you have to be in good physical shape to move around in style, to be able to contort yourself in small and very uncomfortable spaces. Besides, one of the omnipresent aspects of stage magic and especially of big illusions is the danger of having accidents.

I have presented the illusion Metamorphose, also called Sub-Trunk, several hundred times. For this act, the assistant is handcuffed and locked in a trunk. The illusionist then climbs on the trunk, raises a small curtain in front of him for two seconds, drops it, and presto!!! The assistant is outside in the magician's place and the magician is locked inside. The challenge with this illusion created by Houdini is to perform it as quickly as possible. In fact, we would all like to be as spectacular as the duo "The Pendragons".

One day, I wanted to push my speed and go a little faster. The moment I'm hidden behind the curtain, I must secretly drop from the top of the trunk to make the exchange with my assistant. But during the maneuver, my shin violently hit the edge of the trunk. The force of the impact was so strong that I thought I had broken my leg. However, the professional in me was aware that I had to finish the presentation.

Usually, when the lid opens at the very end, I jumped theatrically to take the applause and then leave the stage.

This time I got up painfully and did the best I could to smile and wave to the audience without getting out of the trunk. Knowing that my assistant hadn't realized something had gone wrong, I waited until the curtain closed in front of us. As soon as it was closed, I collapsed into the trunk, writhing in pain, and holding my leg in tears. Fortunately, it was the end of the show because I would not have been able to continue.

**The good news was that my leg was not broken. In the end, the Pendragons have nothing to fear from me...**

*Maybe i should reduce risk by learning more card tricks?*

*With my show partner  
Camille and ready for the  
Metamorphose*

2019



Charlotte + Jonathan Pendragon + Loran  
OTTAWA, ON. (2008) PHOTOGRAPHER : JEFF HILL

# THE APACHE STONES



PHOTOGRAPHER : JOHN STANLEYS, PIXABAY

**W**hen I perform close-up magic at an event, I avoid opening with a card trick. It is good to vary your repertoire because not everyone appreciates card tricks.

I'm sure you heard many times someone says, "I know this trick!" after you've pulled out a pack of cards. Even if no one says it aloud, you can be sure someone is thinking about it.

Here is a different presentation based on a Native American legend. Your audience will have no idea what you are about to do. You use unusual objects that have no connection with traditional magic. This is a good routine, and you will be surprised by how well it plays for an audience. The concept and method are not new. However, linking a good story to this routine makes the effect meaningful.

## Material:

- A small box with a removable lid. The cover can be decorated with a small feather.
- Three pieces of cardboard that are the same size as the inside of the box.
- 3 stones or glass pellets of different colors (Ex: green, blue, amber)



## Preparation:

- In big letters write the name of the color of one of the stones on a piece of cardboard. Stick it under the box.
- Write the color of a second stone on another cardboard and stick that inside the lid of the box.
- Finally, write the color of the third stone on the last piece of cardboard and place it face down inside the box.
- Place all three stones in the box and replace the lid. You're ready to perform.

## Effect :

After you've spoken about the **Native American legend of the Apache stones**, you present a little box decorated with a feather. Inside are three stones of different colors. A volunteer freely chooses one of the three stones. Surprisingly, the box reveals a prediction that corresponds exactly to the volunteer's choice. **The great Apache Spirit has spoken!**



# PRESENTATION, BLOCKING & CHOREOGRAPHY

## Introduction

Hold the box in your left hand.  
Begin by telling the following story:

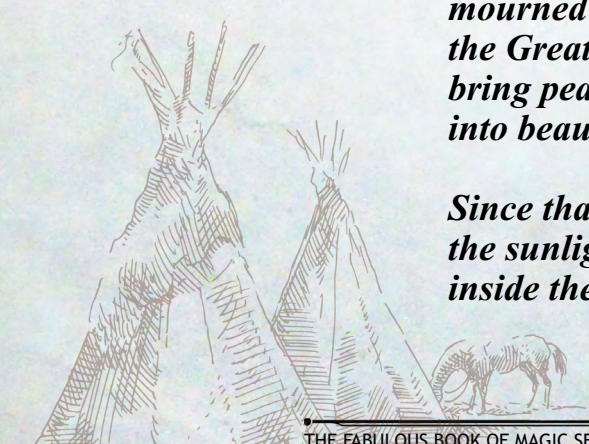
*The Native American culture is full of stories and legends. One of them is "The Apache Stones."*

*The legend begins in Arizona when a group of Apache made a series of attacks against military encampments. After retreating to the mountain with the mistaken belief that they were well hidden, they were all caught by surprise and attacked by soldiers who had followed their trail.*

*Out of 75 warriors, 60 were killed. The survivors escaped by climbing up a cliff. Finding themselves at the edge of the cliff, the 15 warriors chose to jump off rather than die at the hands of white men.*

*For many days, the women and children of the tribe mourned the death of the men. Their cries were so loud that the Great Spirit heard them. To heal their sadness and bring peace into their hearts, he transformed their tears into beautiful colored stones.*

*Since that day, when one looks at these stones in front of the sunlight in the mountains, it is said that one can see inside the smiling and proud faces of the Apache warriors.*



## Revelation

- After retelling this Apache legend, remove the lid on the box and place it next to you on the table.

Show three stones resting in the box while saying:

*In the box there are three Apache stones of different colors. I need you to choose one of them and remove it from the box. You could have chosen any of the three colors. But the Great Spirit knows you well because he had already predicted that you would choose this color. The Great Spirit has spoken!*

## Final Act

- You will now reveal your prediction according to the color of the stone that was chosen by the volunteer. There are three possibilities:



**GREEN**

If they choose the green stone, take the lid and place it back on the box. Then turn the box over to reveal the prediction.



**BLUE**

If they choose the blue stone, place the lid on the table face-up to reveal the prediction.



**AMBER**

If the volunteer chooses amber, remove the remaining two stones from the box. Now let the hidden piece of cardboard fall into your hand revealing the correct prediction.



### Magic Reference

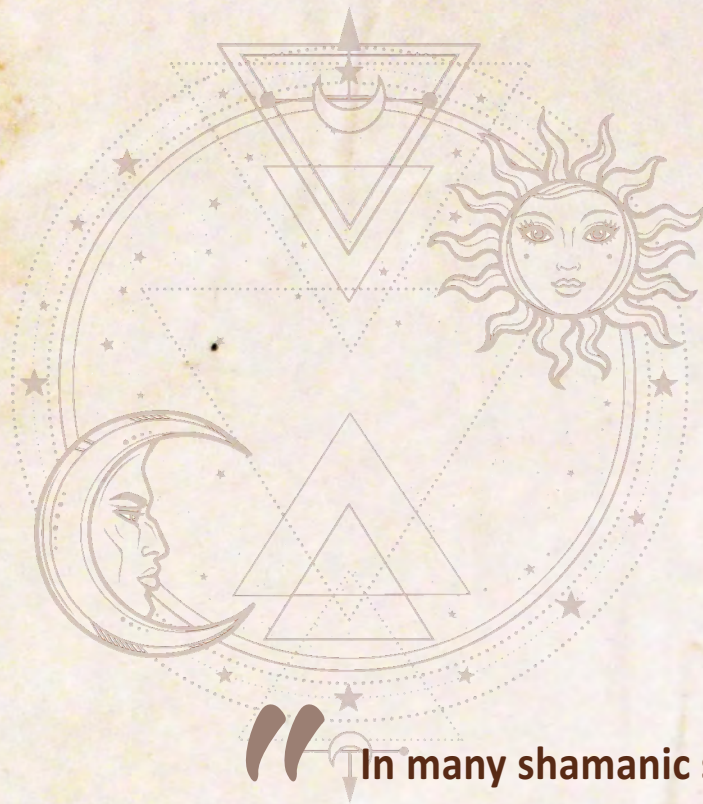
This is based on the classic Magician's Choice routine originally attributed to Theodore Annemann, and is easily found in Card College Vol. 2 (Roberto Giobbi, 1996 p. 440)

### Alternative Presentation:

You can also use another theme according to your style. For example, the stones could represent dragon eyes.

Or replace the stones with Viking runes, beer caps, small figurines, buttons or simply three coins.

**Be creative  
and make up your own story!**



**“ In many shamanic societies,  
if you came to a medicine person complaining  
of being disheartened, dispirited, or depressed,  
they would ask one of four questions:  
When did you stop dancing?  
When did you stop singing?  
When did you stop being enchanted by stories?  
When did you stop being comforted  
by the sweet territory of silence? ”**

(GABRIELLE ROTH, 1941 - 2012)

# The Sorcerer's Apprentice

## Ti-gui-dou the Clown

*You have to start somewhere.*

**My first real full-time job in the wonderful world of entertainment was for a party planner that supplies mascot services, decorations for weddings and private events, delivered bouquets of balloons and offer clown for children's birthday parties.**

The truth is, I never liked clowns! In fact, I don't think there's a big difference between the greasy white face of a clown with makeup and the pale face of a zombie or a vampire. In fact, I find vampires much more elegant and less creepy. On the other hand, the two years I worked there were very formative in many ways. First, I was able to start using my knowledge of magic. But most of all, I discovered human behavior, which is sometimes very strange and unexpected when it comes into contact with a clown or a mascot. It seems like people just imagine that there is nothing inside the costume, no real physical person as if it was just a living comic book character. I could tell you several stories about it. Let me think a moment... *OK, I've got one!*

It was winter and darkness had already fallen. I was coming back from my balloons delivery day, still in my clown outfit with my lilac and blue-collar puffy suit, white gloves, hat, my big shoes and, of course, the famous white and red makeup. To do my job, I used my own vehicle which was a small Renaud 5. I really liked that car because I could park almost anywhere and it consumed very little gas. It's another story in terms of comfort, but I could fit almost 50 helium-filled balloons in it.

Suddenly, I feel my car zigzagging and quickly realize that I had a flat tire. Maneuvering as best as I could to stay on the still snowy highway, my car still got stuck in the snow on the side of the road. After recovering from my emotions, I realize that I don't have a spare tire. Being way too far from the city to walk, mobile phones not being available at the time, I had no choice but to leave my car and hitchhike...

*Great!*

Imagine the surreal scene that other drivers passing by on the highway had in front of them. I could make every possible hand signals to stop the cars, but nothing I did could convince any of them to stop. They all thought it was a joke and wave back to me with a big smile, while I was shivering in the cold, swearing out loud. Finally, the god of clowns heard my call when a tow truck that happened to be passing by stopped. And again, I had to show the driver my flat tire to convince him that it was serious and not a hidden camera prank. In the end, I found myself sitting in the tow truck, with the mechanic, still wearing my long plastic clown shoes. I even had to make him a balloon dog!

**Did I mention that I don't like clown???**



Loran and his clown Ti-gui-dou  
(1990) PHOTOGRAPHER : FRIPO



## Ethics in Magic

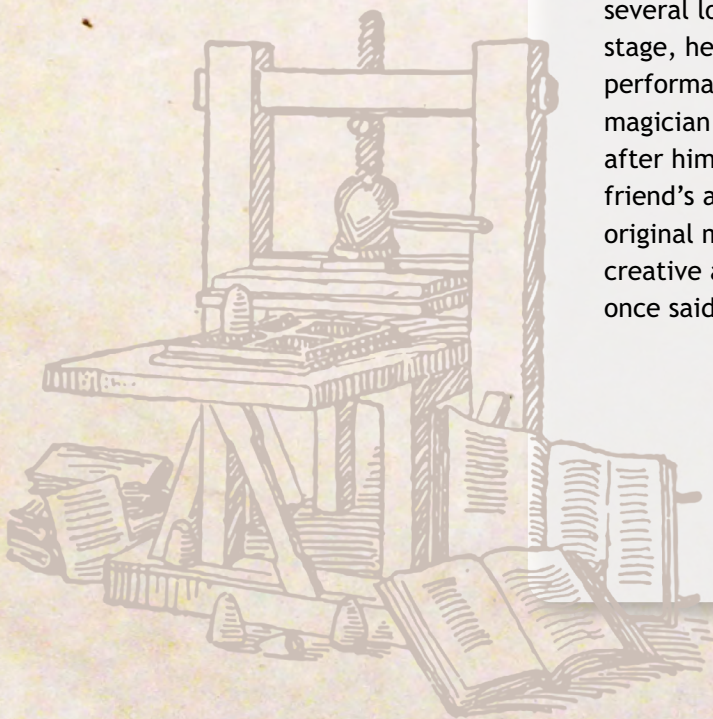
**O**ne can be inspired by other magicians, but copying is a flagrant lack of ethics. Moreover, plagiarism is reprehensible by law. That said, it is perfectly acceptable and correct to study the “modus operandi” of another, in order to understand and thus improve oneself by applying new techniques.

But when I see magicians redoing the same movements, sequences, and choreography, or using the same costumes, music, and props, it tells me a lot about the respect they have for their colleagues. If you buy a trick or a book in a store, you can, of course, redo the whole piece since the author has put it on sale. But there is a problem if you buy the same costume, uses the same music, and pretend that it is original material that you have invented.

*It's even worse if you copy the exact same act from a magician you've seen in a show!*

For example, I have a friend who was at a variety night with several local magicians. Being backstage and ready to go on stage, he was waiting for the one preceding him to finish his performance. Then, he had the unpleasant surprise to see this magician doing his own act, the very act he was about to do right after him! It was clear that the “copy magician” had copied my friend’s act for so long that he hadn’t even realized that the original magician was on the same stage that night. So please, be creative and don’t be someone else’s duplicate! Michael Jackson once said...

**“It is better to fail by being original than to succeed by imitating!”**



# MERRY CHRISTMAS

**W**e always remember our good shows. We never forget the bad ones either. But no matter what they are, we always learn a lesson from them.

Snow is very abundant in Canada and particularly in Quebec. Comes December and the City hires me for a Christmas show and to make the old bearded man with red and white pajamas appear. No problem, especially since the theater is only a few minutes away from my home. But...

During the night, while I was sound asleep, a snowstorm occurred. In the morning, the streets of the city are impassable. It doesn't matter, I have a show to perform. Having anticipated the storm, I had already loaded most of my equipment in my car and the small trailer attached to the back of the vehicle. I bring a snow shovel just in case and here we go! A trip that was supposed to take only 20 minutes took me almost 2 hours. Visibility is practically nil, and I don't remember how many times I had to get out of the vehicle to shovel the road and open the way. I am surprised that I did not meet Yeti or Big Foot.

Almost at my destination, I enter the last small alley that gives access to the theater. I get stuck again and I absolutely can't go backwards with the trailer. Getting used to shovel as soon as the car stops, I take my shovel and get out of the vehicle. I then realize that the theater door is at least 100 m away and that the snow in front of me is knee-deep!

This time, in my mind, it is game over! But just as my shoulders collapsed and I'm about to give up, I see a city snow plow coming down the street. Hallelujah! It only takes him a minute to clear the path, giving me



access to the alley, and finally I arrive at the theater loading dock.

Already exhausted from my journey in the snow and almost 2 hours behind schedule, I now must unload, with the help of my two assistants, all my equipment including 3 big illusions. Inside, I then meet the technicians and was greeted in a very hostile way by all of them, without exception, making unpleasant comments such as *"the good news for us is that we know you will leave after the show..."*.

Yet, I had never met these people, nor have I ever been in this theater before in my life!?? This attitude towards me and my assistants will last all day long.

However, I don't take it personally and since time is running out, I'm applying the "Friendly technician rule" (see the Cue Sheet chapter) to get the preparation process started as quickly as possible.

We then begin a race against time to be ready before the venue doors open. In the meantime, the actor who was to personify the old man who lives at the North Pole finally arrives, and I can explain to him how to hide in the trunk from which I will make him appear. He explains to me, without flinching, that he is claustrophobic! *Pardon me?!!* So, I tell him that it is today that his rehabilitation cure will begin!

Another surprise was still waiting for me with the theater staff. While we were setting up one of my illusions, and even though we were late, it was time for the crew MANDATORY union break.

## SECRET TRAPDOOR MERRY CHRISTMAS

Everyone leaves the room  
without saying anything and  
I find myself alone  
with my assistants.

As there is no one left available for sound and lighting tests, I find a broom and start sweeping the stage myself to save some time. It doesn't take more than that for the entire delegation of technicians to interrupt their break and warn me categorically that no one has the right to be on stage during the break, not even me. The interminable break eventually ended, I managed to settle the last details on stage and finally made it to my dressing room.

I opened the show with my sleight of hand act combining 9 doves, candles, scarves, multiplying balls, and appearing bird cages. It takes a lot of concentration to prepare this delicate material, but with all this delay, I run into my dressing room to be ready on time. To add to the stress, I am interrupted every two minutes by someone asking if I am ready. Miraculously, everything is set up, the curtain opens, and the show starts on time as planned. I thought I would probably be performing in front of empty seats because of the condition of the roads. But the storm is over outside, and I am pleasantly surprised to see a hall almost full. Finally, everything is going well, and the children's long-awaited moment arrives... the appearance of the toy giver saying, "Ho! Ho! Ho!"



JOSEE AND LORAN BACKSTAGE, 1994

Behind the closed curtain, my assistant has already put the trunk in position with our claustrophobic friend hidden inside. On top rest a dove pan, magic wand, flash paper, and lighter. But a few seconds before the curtain opens, our white-bearded old man decides to open the lid of the trunk to get out (so much for rehabilitation!) thus making all the material that was on it fall off. My assistant has just enough time to run up, put his hand on his head, push him back into the trunk, replace the equipment and run off the stage just before the curtain opens behind me. Unaware of what had occurred backstage and to my assistant's great satisfaction and pleasure, I decided to sit the two volunteer children I recruited to help me, on top of the trunk so that *the bearded eggnog drinker wouldn't be able to get out!*

I then give the technician my cue, "Christmas atmosphere!" to start the soundtrack, but nothing... the music doesn't start! I then improvise for a long 30 seconds to fill the void. I will find out after the show that the technician had placed the music "tape cassette" (it's the good ol' 80's!) the wrong way. The cameraman filming the show realized what was happening and had to tell him to flip the cassette over... The music finally starts.

Two waves with the magic wand executed by my young volunteers and voila! The big Star with the small round glasses finally appears. I take my bow and the curtain closes in front of me. We made it! (YouTube: LORAN - Petit Papa Noël)

Time to pack everything up and we go back to the snow. Backstage, all the technicians are finally smiling. I guess it's because we're leaving, but I still hope it wasn't personal.

**For my part, I've forgotten everything...  
or almost everything.**

**Merry Christmas!**

# PERMEATING SILK



CREDIT PHOTO : LORAN

“He first took his scarf to wrap the sword. But then, he could not believe his eyes when the cloth melts into the metal to magically pass through the imposing, sharp-edged, shimmering blade stabbed in the stone. No doubt it was Excalibur, the magic sword!”

**M**y new ideas often come from a problem to be solved. “Necessity is the mother of invention.” This is the case for this effect. Although the illusion of making a silk passing through a cane is not new, the conventional method usually uses a spring reel coil to execute it. That’s what I used until my reel broke three times during the same week. I was fed up with repeatedly fixing the prop. So I came up with a new way, that would be just as effective, to do the same trick. Instead of using the reel, I use the old technique of the string that runs through the neck.

#### Effect:

A silk that you hold at both corners, passes through your neck, a cane, a metal microphone stand, or even a sword.

#### Material:

- A silk measuring approximately 56 cm X 56 cm (22 inches X 22 inches)
- Sewing thread of the same color as the silk
- Sewing needle

#### Preparation:

- Sew the end of the thread to one corner of the silk.
- Unroll the thread, diagonally, to the opposite corner of the silk.
- Cut the thread and sew it on to that corner.

*If you'd rather not sew the thread, you can also easily attach the end of the thread to each corner of the silk by simply tying some knots.*

# PRESENTATION, BLOCKING & CHOREOGRAPHY



## METHOD #1

### Through the neck

- Use your left and right hand to hold the silk by the two corners, horizontally, exactly where the strings are attached.

Each corner is held between your thumb and middle finger. Insert secretly your left first finger between the silk and the string.



- Now put your hands over your head, place the silk behind your neck, then bring your hands out directly in front of you. Leave about 10 cm (4 inches) between your hands.

For the audience, the silk is clearly behind your neck.

*NOTE: The string attached to the silk has been deliberately enlarged on the photos to better understand the explanations.*



- Position yourself sideways to the audience by simply turning to the right. Bring your hands together.

During this movement, the first finger of your right hand will be placed between the silk and the string just behind the left first finger. You are now in position.



- Without pausing, and in one fluid motion, let go of the corner you're holding in your right hand and move both hands forward and away from each other.

Let the string slide around your first right finger.



- Keep pulling until the right corner of the silk reaches your right hand. If all these movements are executed smoothly, the silk will appear to have passed through your neck without the two corners of the silk leaving your hands.

In fact, the silk simply slides around your neck. Experiment in front of a mirror and you will notice that the illusion is better when you are positioned sideways rather than facing the audience.



## METHOD #2 Cane / Microphone Stand / Ring

This effect works even better by using a cane, a wand or a metal ring (like a linking ring) held securely and upright in front of you by your assistant or even a volunteer. I used a sword for a long time in my show. This will also look great if you use a microphone stand.

For these methods, you begin by holding the silk as explained above.

- Pass the silk over the cane or the microphone stand and press it against the stand, by pulling it towards you.



- Bring your hands together. Proceed the same way as in method #1, but this time pulls the silk towards you.



- The silk truly seems to pass through the cane in a fluid motion.



# The Sorcerer's Apprentice

## Street Busker

**W**hile visiting a tourist city, you see a busker doing his act in the street. You tell yourself that you only need to know a few simple tricks with one or two jokes to do this kind of show. You are wrong! Make no mistake, I assure you the reality is quite different.

In my early days as a comedy magician, I had the opportunity to experience a whole summer of street busking. And believe me ... it's an art. That summer spent in front of the terrace of the Château Frontenac in the beautiful city of Quebec was for me very formative. It's an excellent school to learn what it takes to be a good performer and how to keep an audience attentive to what you are doing.

First of all, you are not in a closed room where it is easy with the stage and lighting to direct all the attention on you. Here, you are directly in the street and at the mercy of any event that may happen around you. A barking dog, a fire truck going by with sirens on, a child who doesn't stop crying, a person who is talking very loudly on his phone, not to mention the group of tourists who had stopped and will suddenly leave during your performance, creating a ripple effect on the other spectators... All these events and many more can easily distract your audience's attention and ruin your presentation.



1991 - Loran Street Busker  
Chateau Frontenac (Quebec)

So, you need to be constantly listening to what's going on around you to be able to react as quickly as possible. *You must develop a great sense of repartee and be able to improvise continuously, using people's comments to your advantage.*

The choice of your effects is also very important. There is no backstage and people will be all around you before, during, and after the show, so everything must be easy and quick to prepare. Your act, which will last *about 20 minutes*, must be well constructed with a *very good final climax*. Be minimalist so that you don't end up with a suitcase that is too heavy to carry, especially if you are working under a blazing sun. You will probably need to get a permit from the city to perform and, quite often, you will have to respect a specific schedule.

But the hardest part of all will be getting people to come and put money in your hat. Finding the right formula to ask in a subtle way the audience to reward you monetarily at the end of your performance is also quite an art. You'll find that all you have to do is take your hat in your hand without saying anything and poof...

half of the audience disappears in one go. But it is your salary that depends on it after all, so you will have to master this aspect of your act as well. That's why today I raise my hat to all the brave street buskers of the world.

**The next time you see one, don't hesitate to give a few dollars!**

## Be Different

**T**oday, it is easy to order magic material, books, videos, and even have private lessons over the Internet. None of this was possible in my days.

I am from the countryside, living far away from big cities, and the only source of information I had at the time was the local library. There I found a few books on magic in general. Since one of the first basic rules stated in the books was that a magician never reveals his secrets, every 2 weeks I would renew the books from the library to make sure that no one else could read them. There was also the general store where I bought some magic boxes containing the traditional beginner's tricks with cups, balls, cards, and ropes.

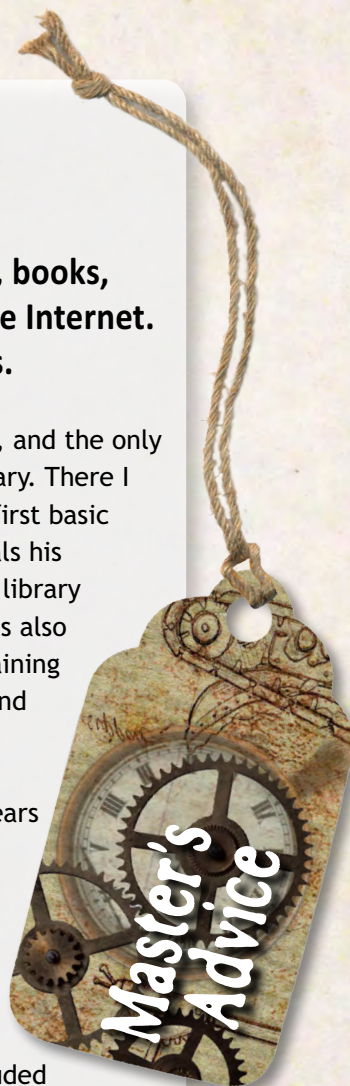
Because of this isolation, it wasn't until I was about 20 years old that I discovered the existence of magic stores. I remember that I religiously watched a variety TV show every week featuring amateur artists and oftentimes there were magicians. What I couldn't understand was that, even though each time it was a different magician, the boxes and accessories they used were identical, same colors, same designs. I had naively concluded that they were probably friends who knew each other and that each borrowed the other's equipment when they needed it. Except for a few tricks I could find in department stores, the only magic equipment I owned was the one I built myself.

*This forced me to be very creative, and this limitation eventually became an asset.*

This is still what I do today, which helps to distinguish me from other magicians. I even learned to use a sewing machine from my grandma, and I design my own costumes.

**If you want to stand out, you must be different.**

Of course, you don't have to start from scratch. When you see a magic prop, first get into the habit of imagining what you could do with it, other than the trick that it was designed for. Instead of having a dove appear from it, you could, for example, make scarves or some other objects appear in your little magic box. Why not decorate it or paint it in a color that would match your costume? By doing this, you may discover new talents and passions.



*Stay away from stereotypes!*





## LORAN... FIRE!

**S**ometimes, among the many props we use, some may fail during a show and the chances of having problems increase drastically if there is fire involved. I can't count the number of times I've injured, cut, or burned my fingers. These incidents were mostly minor, but sometimes they were more serious.

One of the tricks that were part of my act was holding a small scarf with my fingertips just above a burning candle. The scarf would then burst into flames to create a huge ball of fire, which suddenly, would disappear and be replaced by a metal cane. *Wow!*

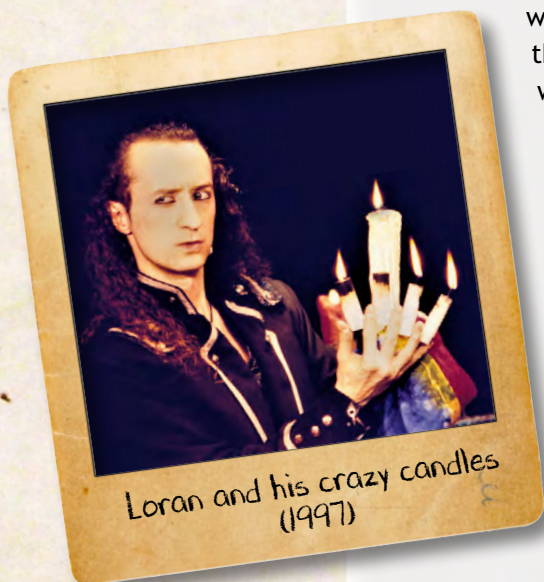
But, one day, just as the cane appeared, *a small piece of the still-burning scarf tore off, flew and ended up on my head.* Concentrating on the music and my manipulation routine, I didn't see nor feel anything and had no idea what was going on.

That's when I heard my assistant Josée from backstage shouting that I was on fire. Still not seeing nor feeling anything, I brushed my hand slowly over my shoulders a few times while continuing my act unwaveringly focused on my performance. But as the shouts of alarm did not stop and indeed increased, I finally left the stage and walked backstage.

Once behind the curtains, Josée in a panic, rushed towards me and started hitting me on the head to put out the fire in my hair which was very long at the time. As soon as she had finished putting out the flames, I quickly glanced in the backstage mirror to adjust my costume. I then calmly returned to the stage to continue my act as if nothing had happened. It all happened so fast that it was like having a daydream.

**It wasn't until after the show that I realized that this time the situation could have been really dramatic. Luckily, it didn't and I can laugh about it today.**

**Thank you, Josée!**



# WASHING LIGHTER



PHOTOGRAPHER : LORAN

**W**hen I had the idea to create this accessory, the first goal was not to create a new effect. In fact, the idea was to make use of a lighter, as discreetly as possible, to ignite a piece of flash paper in my hands. I just wanted to light my paper and get the lighter out of sight before the magic happened.

Eventually, I realized it could be a magical effect all by itself.

Furthermore, once installed, there is no reset, so it is always available for your use.

## Material:

- A lighter
- A thin metal plate folded to fit the shape of the lighter
- A powerful retractable ID badge holder. This accessory is often used by those who work in offices where an access card is required.
- A safety pin
- Electrical tape
- You must wear a jacket

## Preparation:

- Out of the thin metal, cut out a small piece of the same width as your lighter. The length of the metal piece should be about 2 cm longer than the lighter.
- Mold the metal so it matches the shape of the lighter.
- Drill a small hole at the end of the piece of metal and fix the badge holder to this hole with a small metal ring.



- Finally, attach the lighter to this metal plate with electrical tape.



## Effect :

From your jacket pocket, you remove a lighter and light a candle or a cigarette.

You then cover the lighter with your other hand.

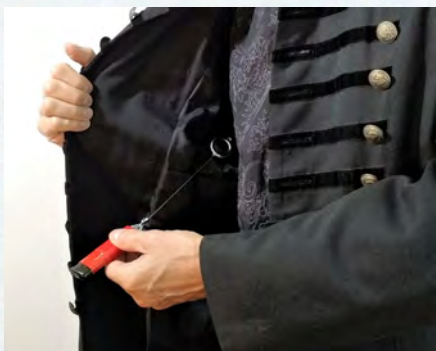
Almost instantaneously, the lighter disappears without a trace. Both hands are empty.

## PRESENTATION, BLOCKING & CHOREOGRAPHY



- Inside your jacket, position the safety pin inside your jacket just below your left or right arm. Then, attach the badge holder on the pin.

*The lighter will be easily accessible with your left or right hand, depending on which side you have installed it.*



- Assuming the lighter is attached on the right side of your jacket, take it with your left hand and pull down on it.



- As soon as your left hand reaches the edge of the jacket, you transfer the lighter to your right hand. The reel's wire will be hidden by your arm.

Use the lighter to light a candle or just flick the lighter to show that it's a real lighter.

## Presentation

- Then, hold the lighter close to you at your fingertips in a horizontal fashion.

Give the spectators maximum view of the lighter.

Cover the lighter with your left hand. Under the cover of your hand, release your grip.



- The lighter automatically gets pulled directly into your jacket via the reel.



- Open your hands to show the lighter has completely vanished.



### To make the effect even more visual

- Hold a piece of flash paper in your hand. Flick the lighter and bring the paper to the flame. When the paper ignites, throw it into the air while simultaneously releasing the lighter into your jacket. From the audience's perspective, the lighter seems to disappear right into thin air.

*To avoid searching again for the place to fasten the badge holder.*

### SUGGESTION

You will have to experiment to find the best place to position the holder. Once found, make sure you always leave the safety pin in place. When the time comes to bring your jacket to the cleaners, just remove the reel while allowing the pin to remain attached. However, do not forget to remove this gimmick before sending your jacket off for cleaning!



## Empty your pockets!!!

**W**hen they go on vacation, most people tend to pack their suitcases so full that they come home with clothes they haven't even unfolded or with things they didn't even use.

*This is also often the case for magicians who are hired to do close-up magic for corporate events!*

They will fill their pockets full of regular and fake cards, coins, ropes, sponge balls, a wallet that catches fire, elastic bands, a mental notebook, rings, dices, a felt-tip pencil, and, while we're at it, the escape handcuffs, not to mention the new trick they've just bought.

Typically, during this type of event, you move from table to table or small groups during the cocktail or meal to perform a 5 to 8 minutes presentation. By the time it's over, more often than not, we realize that we've presented the same 4 or 5 tricks throughout the evening. So, it's useless to bring all your suitcases full of material. Here, the adage that applies very well is:

*It's better to know how to perform 10 very good tricks than 100 ordinary ones!*

Choose effects that require little or ideally no preparation and set-up. You don't want to spend your evening hiding in a corner of the room to repeatedly prepare your little box which contains 2 plastic plates, wrapped with 25 rubber bands around it, to reveal the volunteer's signed card. It's a great trick but save it for a special presentation on stage for the director of the company who hired you for the event.

At a meal where people are sitting around a table, make sure that your performance is at the eye level of your audience. Not only will people get a better look at what you're doing, but they'll also have your face as a backdrop rather than your belt and zipper. This will also save you from always being bent over and ending up with a backache at the end of the night.

*In magic as in everything, there are trends that come and go.*

One of these was the use of the "Top-it," greatly popularized by Michael Ammar and Carl Cloutier. It is a technique that allows, with the help of a jacket, to make small objects, like a deck of cards, disappear. At the time, I used this method so much that I couldn't go out without my jacket. And that's the problem. I remember that I was hired one summer at an amusement park where I had to do 2 hours of magic while walking around the site. The temperature was probably over 30 C (86 F) and while all the visitors were enjoying the warm sun, dressed in their summer clothes, I, with my polished shoes, black pants, long-sleeved shirt, and my jacket, was suffocating under the heat and sweat was running down my face. Needless to say, it was rather odd for the people who saw me performing.

**Conclusion, your costume should not become a constraint and you will sometimes have to compromise in the choice of your magic tricks.**

**Choose the ones you prefer while keeping in mind that you must be able to present them in almost any condition.**



## Mom, I'm on TV!

**T**he famous French illusionist Jean-Eugène Robert Houdin used to say that a magician is an actor playing the role of a magician. You indeed have to be a bit of an actor to become a magician because you spend your time telling lies to your audience to succeed in producing your illusions.

While magic was taking hold of me, around the age of 15, I discovered the theater at school. This was followed for a few years by being an improvisation league player. Created in Quebec, this is a form of improvised theater where two teams of actors compete against each other and whose performance is judged by the audience. It can be a lot of fun getting inside a character's skin. At a party, place a chest full of costumes for your guests and you will quickly see behavior change simply by wearing, for example, a cape or an extravagant hat.

Most entertainer dreams of having their moment of glory on television. I had the opportunity to evolve in the television world as an illusionist, but also as an actor for small roles in movies and television. Don't hesitate if one day you have the opportunity, because it is very instructive to see the other side of this world. You will then look at your films from a different perspective and have a better

understanding of the complexity of the work done on a film set. However, you will often have to wait for long hours without doing anything, but they expect you to be ready immediately when it's time. So, if you can't hold still for more than two minutes, this type of work may not be for you.

One of my first appearances as a magician on one of Canada's major francophone networks was in 1993. It was for the show BlaBlaBla on the TVA network where host Danielle Ouimet interviewed Quebec stars. I prepared a special trick for her guest Serge Laprade, who was, years ago, the host of the TV quiz show, "Le travail à la chaîne." Since the show was filmed with the audience in the studio, I thought I would recreate the concept of the quiz show by interacting with the audience. Serge loved it and it was a great moment for the young magician that I was. (SEE ON YOUTUBE: LORAN - SHOW BLABLABLA)

In cinema, a "hand double" is often used. This is when a star has to do something in a scene that is too difficult for them to handle. This saves filming time by replacing their hands with those of a professional. A well-known example is David Bowie in the film "The Labyrinth" (1986) where he is seen juggling with a crystal ball. In reality, it is Master Michael Moschen who manipulates the ball while hiding behind Bowie's back.

## The Sorcerer's Apprentice Mom, I'm on TV!

I myself have had the opportunity to double a few celebrities, including martial arts expert Jackie Chan in the movie "The Tuxedo." In one scene, Jackie has to create shadow puppets with his hands on the wall of a warehouse to alert his mission partner. In fact, I'm the one doing the shadows for him while being installed in front of a light projector positioned on the roof of the high building. I even wear the famous tuxedo. I spent a whole night on the set for a scene that lasted barely two seconds. But it's rather funny to know that I could have dubbed a Chinese actor, to produce Chinese shadow puppets.

Without considering myself a great actor, I had the chance to participate in various films and television series. One of them is the music video clip College Boy of the French rock band "Indochine," directed by Quebecer Xavier Dolan. Referring to the phenomenon of bullying at school, the clip tells the story of a teenager who is crucified by his classmates and executed by machine-gun fire under the indifferent eyes of everyone. Not that it's a great performance on my part since I can barely be seen for a few seconds. It's rather the

fact that this subject touches me especially and also that the clip has greatly stirred up controversy in France. It was even banned for children under 16 (SEE ON YOUTUBE: INDOCHINE - COLLEGE BOY (OFFICIAL CLIP))

My interest in the Middle Ages also caught up with me on television thanks to Sydney Fox's series "Relic Hunter" (2001) with the very pretty Tia Carrere. In it, I portray a vampire killer in a 16th century castle. In Quebec, the comedy series "LOL" (2010) consisting of short sketches without dialogue and broadcast in 130 countries around the world also allowed me to perform a Viking with Réal Bossé, Martin Drainville, and Antoine Vézina. As Donald O'Connor demonstrates with his exceptional performance of the song Make'Em Laugh in the musical "Singing in the Rain" in 1952, *humor will always be appreciated by all.*

**By the way, would you have recognized me in the Viking photo?**

LOL  
Comedy Series  
2010

COMEDIANS CASTINGS  
PHOTOGRAPHER : MARTIAL GRISE



## MISSION ACCOMPLISHED



**“Magicians Without Borders”** is a non-profit organization composed of volunteer magicians who go on missions to present shows to people in different countries in need and bring them a moment of joy, laughter, and wonder.

During a tour that I was doing with the group, one of our shows took place in Laghouat, an Algerian commune located in the northern Sahara, about 400 km south of Algiers, Africa. The presentation was to take place in an agora located outside and adjacent to a small reception hall. Once there, against all odds, a deluge of rain started falling. It was obviously unthinkable to present our show. So, I suggested to my companions to do not just one, but rather two performances in the small room that was available. As this hall had a capacity of only about 250 people, the shows would be shorter to accommodate the maximum of spectators possible. Everyone agreed.

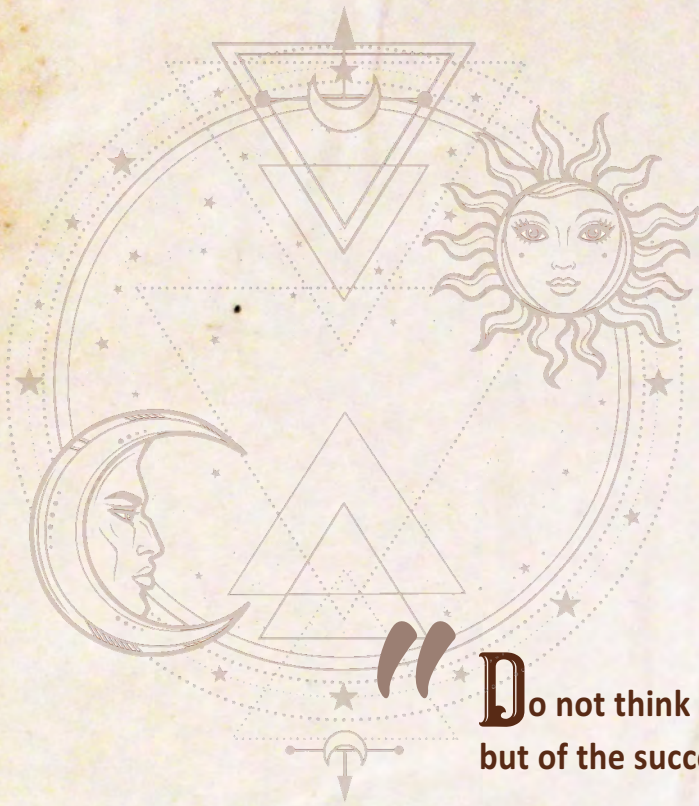
The very first show started in a hall filled to its maximum capacity. But what followed was not what we had expected. While we were performing indoors, the rain had stopped outdoor. Gradually, people began to arrive from all over the place to watch the show. The overflows were such that the security agents on site lost total

control, and in the end nearly 5,000 people gathered in the agora, which could only hold 2,000 people. Everyone was waiting outside for a show that was no longer to taking place there.

Unaware of what was happening outside, we were focused on the show that had already started in the hall. But as soon as one of the artists left the stage, our tour director would apprise them of the situation and inform them that we would have to present the second show outside. So, as one of us finished his act, without even changing costumes, each of us carried our equipment directly from the hall to the agora to prepare to do it all over again. It was so crowded that we could barely even make our way to the stage and backstage. It was completely unreal, and everything happened so fast that I still have trouble remembering the details. We all came together as a team and miraculously, the show went on without a hitch.

**In the end, the spectators, as well as the magicians, all left with bright eyes and heads full of incredible memories. Mission accomplished!**





**D**o not think of today's failures,  
but of the success that may come tomorrow.

You have set yourselves a difficult task,  
but you will succeed if you persevere,  
and you will find a joy in overcoming obstacles.

Remember, no effort that we make to attain  
something beautiful is ever lost.

What I am looking for is not out there,  
it is in me.

(HELEN KELLER, 1880 - 1968)

# APPEARING WINE



PHOTOGRAPHER : STEVE BUISSINNE, PIXABAY

**I** always like to open my presentation with a trick that catches the eyes of the viewers right away. That is the case with this effect. It may be presented with or without music, at the beginning of your act.

The effect is quick, magical, and lasts only a few seconds. But, in a short period of time, it instantly captures the audience's attention. Two versions, with two different methods, are explained below.

## Effect:

In an instant, a piece of white paper catches fire and turns into a silk.

Moments later, you produce a full glass of wine from the same silk.



# PRESENTATION, BLOCKING & CHOREOGRAPHY

## METHOD #1

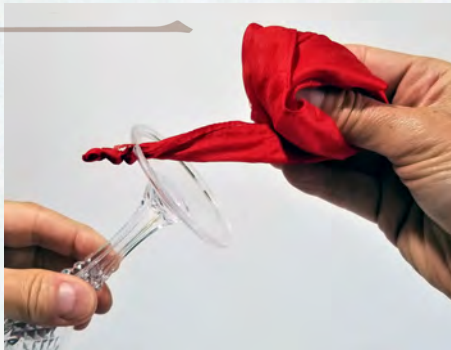
### Material:

- 1 plastic Champagne glass
- 1 silk large enough to cover the glass
- 1 latex balloon the same colour as the silk
- 1 piece of flash paper/string (an alternative is explained if you don't have this accessory)
- 1 lighter
- Cranberry fruit juice
- 1 rubber band
- Pair of scissors
- Jacket

### Preparation:

- With a fine-blade saw, make a notch about 1 cm (1/2 inch) at the base of your plastic glass.
- Take the latex balloon and tie a knot at the opening. Finish by cutting the top of the rounded part of the balloon.
- Fill  $\frac{3}{4}$  of your wine glass with the cranberry juice.

*Warning: Do not use carbonated drinks due to the pressure of the bubbles, because it will make the latex balloon explode. A good idea is rather than juice, use water and add a few drops of food colouring.*



- Stretch the balloon across the top of the glass to cover and hold the liquid. Make sure the knot part of the balloon rests on the outside of the glass.



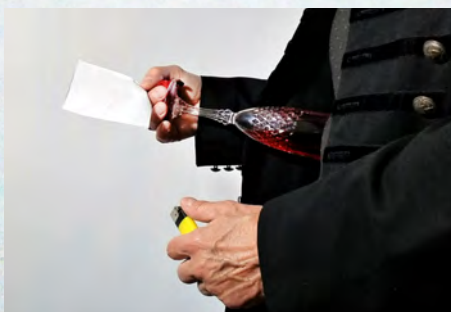
- Tie a small knot on one of the corners of the silk.

*You can temporarily secure the silk at the base of the glass by using the elastic band.*



- Roll the silk into a ball, turn the glass upside down and insert the corner of the silk with the knot into the small notch at the base of the glass.
- Prepare a piece of flash paper/string and a lighter.
- When you are ready to begin, remove the rubber band from the base of the glass.
- Cover and hide the silk with your right hand while holding the base of the glass.
- Position the glass horizontally behind your right arm with the glass bowl hidden inside your jacket.

*The small cut holding the knot of the silk should be positioned upwards.*



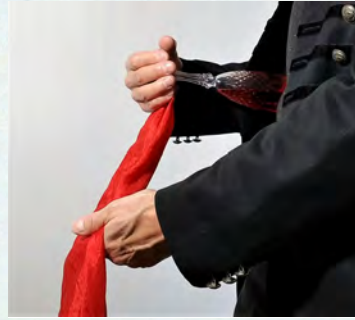
- Hold the flash paper between your right thumb and first finger while gripping the lighter in your left hand.

## Execution (Method #1)

- Position yourself placing the right side of your body facing the audience. Your right elbow presses on the glass holding it hidden in position and to the side of your body.

The left hand lights the flash paper with the lighter. As the paper burns, the left hand places the lighter in the left-side pocket of your jacket.

You can also use the “Disappearing Lighter” technique (SEE CHAPTER “DISAPPEARING LIGHTER”).



- When the paper is almost completely burnt, the right hand releases pressure for a short moment to allow the silk to start unfurling. Immediately, re-grip the base of the glass. As soon as the silk is fully unfurled, the left hand passes under the right to fold the silk back over the right hand and onto the arm completely covering the glass.



- As soon as the left hand reaches the top, this hand grasps the bowl of the glass. Using both hands, rotate it vertically while hiding it with the silk.



- Once perpendicular, hold the glass by the base with your right hand. Simultaneously the thumb and first fingers of the left hand secretly remove the latex balloon. While holding the silk and balloon secretly, your left hand moves downward to produce the glass.



- To wrap up, your left thumb simply releases the knot of the silk inserted at the base of the glass removing it.

**Take your applause.**

## METHOD #2

### Material:

- 1 glass small enough to fit in your sleeve
- 2 silks of the same colour, and just big enough to cover the glass
- 1 latex balloon the same colour as the silks
- 1 piece of flash paper/string
- 1 lighter
- Cranberry fruit juice
- Pair of scissors
- Sewing thread and a needle
- Jacket

- Prepare the latex balloon as in Method #1.

- Using your thread and needle, sew in the middle of one silk the part protruding from the knot of the latex balloon.



- Fill  $\frac{3}{4}$  of your wine glass with the juice. End by closing the top opening of the glass using the latex balloon.



- The silk needs to completely cover the glass.



- Place the glass in your right inner jacket pocket.

- Make a small knot on one corner of the second silk and roll it into a ball.

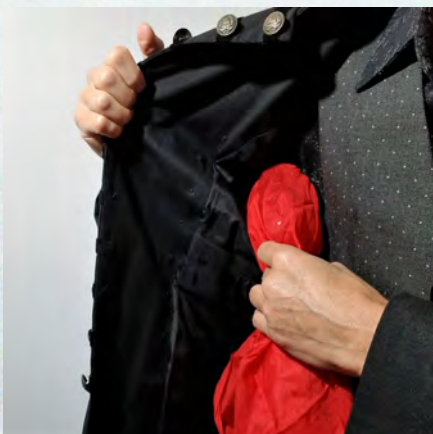
- Secure the silk, temporarily, using your rubber band.

- Finish by preparing a piece of flash/string paper and a lighter.

- Right before you're ready to begin, insert the glass head-down into your jacket sleeve. Make sure your arm is bent at a 45-degree angle, thus holding the glass secretly hidden in the upper part of your sleeve.

- **When you are ready to start**, remove the rubber band and hide the silk in your right hand by holding the little knot between your first and second finger.

- Hold the flash paper between your right thumb and first finger while gripping the lighter in your left hand.



## Execution (Method #2)

- Light the flash paper with the lighter. When the paper is almost completely burnt, the right hand releases pressure to allow the silk to fully unfurl.

Directly after the appearance of the silk, you drop the lighter in one of the pockets of the jacket. At this time, the right arm moves from its 45-degree angle, dropping down along your body. Because of its weight and the silk covering it, the glass will slide down the right sleeve falling directly into the hand holding the second silk.

- After placing the lighter in the pocket, the left hand moves toward the right hand, grasps the silk and the upper part of the glass together.

- The left hand takes the glass out of the sleeve, and the right hand grasps the foot to hold it vertically.

- The left hand removes the two silks together, while releasing the latex balloon with the left thumb.

- Finish by producing the wine glass.



### Alternative for flash paper

You can replace the flash paper with a small piece of tissue paper about 12 cm x 12 cm (5 inches x 5 inches) and the same colour as the silk.

Hold the paper at your fingertips and tear it into a few pieces. Then blow on the pieces or simply let them fall in front of you while letting the silk unroll at the same time. The silk will seem to materialize through the pieces of paper.

Cheers!

# Sorcerers Safari Magic Camp

**F**or several years I had the great privilege of teaching at the “Sorcerers Safari Magic Camp” run by Jennifer and Mike Segal.

(WWW.SORCERERS-SAFARI.COM)

Dedicated to teaching the art of magic and illusion, the camp located in Northern Ontario, Canada has welcomed until 2016 and for 20 years young people between the ages of 12 and 17 from around the world including Japan, Africa, Belgium, France, England, the United States, and Canada. More than 200 magic enthusiasts stayed for a week to learn and perfect their magic skills under the supervision of professional magicians.

Being isolated in the middle of nature near a lake and far from the noise of the city made the atmosphere totally different from that of a major magicians' convention such as FISM (Fédération Internationale des Sociétés Magiques) or IBM (International Brotherhood of Magicians) which always take place in luxurious hotels.

Each day included classes of different levels in close-up magic, such as cards, coins, ropes, all focused on theory and the subtleties of the presentations. Specialties such as grand illusions and even stagecraft such as sound and lighting were also on the program. Every evening there was a large-scale show presented by professionals. Aquatic and sports activities interspersed with the magic classes. At night, the young campers slept in cabins in the woods, while the artists gathered around a fire to chat. It was like Hogwarts in the movie series Harry Potter at the School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.

As a child, I dreamed many times that such a school existed. I never thought that one day I would be the teacher. But even if the tricks are only illusions, the confidence that many of these young people have developed through this teaching is certainly not. Over time, one could see the positive changes and the transformation happening. Many campers have even gone on to careers in magic.

## The Sorcerer's Apprentice

Each year, I have brought back home many good memories. One of the many times I performed during the evening shows, I did a very special act. It is not a traditional magician's act. In short, for almost seven minutes, I tell a rather sinister ghost story, being connected to an old and rather disturbing portrait. It ends with a small magic effect with the portrait.

*Here, it is not really the props, but rather the imagination of the spectators that is used to create the mystery and produce the magic moment in their minds.*

And I had the confirmation of this to my great joy the very next morning. At breakfast, I learned from the camp counselors that several youths, as well as adults, could not sleep that night because of my story! Apparently, my weird little tale had had a great effect!

**It's always a pleasure to know that I made a good impression on the audience. Mouhaaaaa!!!!**



Levitation on the beach  
at Sorcerers Safari Magic Camp  
(2004) PHOTOGRAPHER : JAMES CAREY LAUDER

# Stage Presence

**D**escriptions such as “This illusion will build you a real reputation as a magician!” that can be read in magic magazines have always made me laugh.

Owning the latest version of the three 18K gold cups set with diamonds and emeralds that “You’ll be proud to show your friends!” won’t give you any more magical powers than the plastic one.

Remember that when you walk on stage, the first thing your audience sees is you, not your tricks. *So, don't just learn tricks. Why not take classes in theater, dance, mime, diction?* These will definitely help you develop your stage presence. It's all about how you present your acts, your personality, and the energy you communicate to your audience.

For example, the same joke told by two different people will probably not create the same reaction. Perhaps the first person will be able to trigger the laughter, while the second person will only get a small response. *You will also need to manage your stress on stage.* Don't feel like you are the only one tackling this, as public speaking phobia is the most common one. *Peoples are more afraid to speak in front of a group of people than to die.*

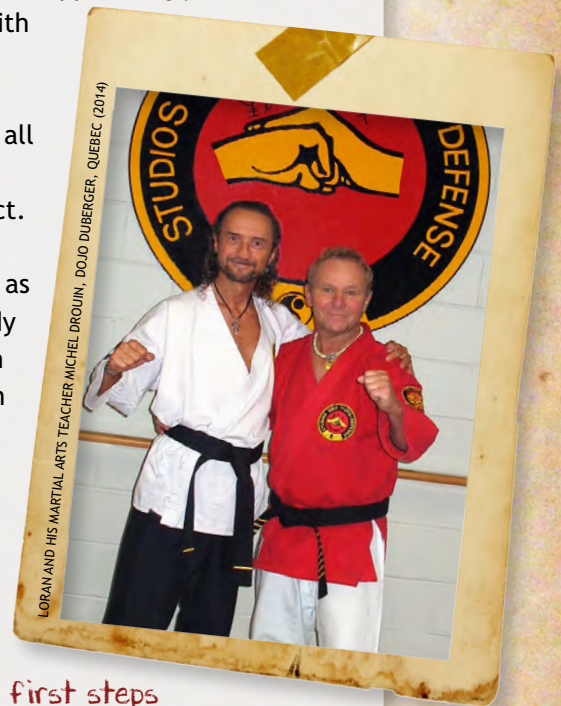
Of course, it is normal to feel tension just before a show. But don't let this stress take over your mind and body, because you will have serious problems with your manipulations if your fingers shake before you even begin.

There are various relaxation and meditation techniques that you can easily find on the Internet or in your local bookstore. Martial arts have also helped me a lot to channel my stress, keep my concentration and be aware of my physical environment. It has also instilled in me the discipline that I now apply to my work in addition to keeping me in shape. Tai chi or yoga could also be the right formula for you.

Before your show, visualize, imagine in your mind that people are applauding you and listening to you with approval. None of them are there to murder you. They all want to see you succeed in your act. Project yourself 5 minutes into time as if you were already on the stage when you are having fun and are so comfortable that you don't want to leave the stage anymore. *It is in this state of mind that you should take your first steps when the curtain opens.*

To inspire me, I like to mentally dedicate the show I'm about to perform to someone I know well, whether or not they're there.

**Chin up, chest out, confident but unpretentious posture and attitude will communicate without saying a word to your audience that they are going to have a good time with someone who is probably there for a good reason!**



LORAN AND HIS MARTIAL ARTS TEACHER MICHEL DROUIN, DOJO DUBERGER, QUEBEC (2014)



# FIRE-BREATHER

**Q**uestioning oneself is frequent in the life of any artist. For my part, several events almost put an end to my career as a magician. For example, when my hand and my right arm were completely burned to the second degree during a show, I thought about giving up.

In short, for a play, I embodied a medieval character who has the power to be insensitive to fire. To demonstrate this, I had to raise my arm to the sky and a fire-breather would come and join me with a torch to aim a big flame just above my arm.

Unfortunately, this person directed the flame directly at my arm which was completely exposed. I knew instantly that I was seriously injured. At that point, the only thing that kept me going was the adrenaline coursing through my veins. I saluted the audience and calmly walked off the stage. As soon as I was out of sight of the audience, I rushed to the hotel kitchen to put my arm under the cold water tap and remove the rings I was wearing, knowing that my fingers would quickly swell.

It was at the medical emergency of the nearest hospital that I ended my evening in extreme pain. I then had to cancel all my future engagements and stop working for two full months, visiting the hospital every day to have my burns treated. Fortunately, with good care and daily physiotherapy exercises, my skin healed well. I was able to regain the use of my hand and my dexterity. However, it was mostly my trust in people that took a hit. For a very long time, I trusted nobody around me. In my mind, anyone speaking to me was just a liar and a potential danger. I was constantly on my guard. For, you see, I am also a fire-breather. And ironically, it was another fire-breather who hurt me.

When this kind of event happens, many things happen in our heads. *We realize how fragile we are and that our lives can change instantly without warning.* I had to work very hard psychologically and physically to recover from this incident.

**It was very close this time!**



PHOTOGRAPHER : JAMES CAREY LAUDER



IMAGE : PIXABAY

**W**hen I build an act, I try my best to justify the objects used within my routine, as well as a logical sequence in which they are introduced to the audience. Ideally, I like to start each routine with empty hands and to finish with empty hands. This way you are positioned to take your applause or easily follow with another piece.

Here is an example of a basic routine that combines a few of the effects described in this book. Plus, it fulfills all my requirements.

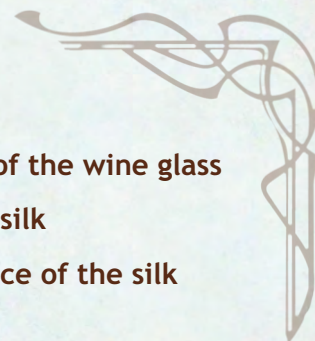
The routine below consists of three phases and can be done with or without music. It's up to you to elaborate by adding other elements from your repertoire.

### Program:

- Production of the wine glass
- Penetrating silk
- Disappearance of the silk

### Material:

- Material for the method #1 "Appearing wine"
- Material for the "Penetrating silk"
- A Hank Vanisher ball (see explanation below)
- 1 large powerful magnet
- 1 magnet small enough to be hidden under the base of the wine glass
- A thin piece of metal of the same diameter as the base of the wine glass
- Transparent adhesive tape or glue
- Handful of confetti
- A small suitcase or table
- Jacket



# PREPARATION

## 1. Wine cup



- Attach the small magnet to the middle of the metal piece with the adhesive tape.
- Then, attach the metal piece to the base of the glass. The magnet should be inside the natural curve of the base. Leave a small gap for the notch used to attach the silk.
- Finally, prepare the appearing glass as described in the chapter "Appearing wine," but using the penetrating silk.



## 2. Suitcase / Table

- Using adhesive tape, attach the large magnet to the inside of the suitcase, in the center. Be careful to place the magnet on the proper side (polarity) to attract the magnet under the glass of wine.



*The idea is to make sure the glass will hold well on the suitcase, thanks to both magnets.*

If the magnet you have placed at the base of the glass is very powerful, maybe you'll simply have to stick another piece of metal on your suitcase. Place the suitcase flat on a table in the center of the stage.

If you are using a table instead of the suitcase, make a small hole in the tabletop deep enough to insert your second magnet.

## 3. Hank vanisher ball



Place the hank vanisher ball in the suitcase.

This accessory is an empty ball about 5 cm (2 inches) in diameter with a hole that allows you to insert an entire silk inside.

A loop of fishing thread is attached allowing you to insert your thumb.

*THIS ACCESSORY IS AVAILABLE AT MOST MAGIC SHOPS.*

*You can also make your own by using an empty plastic ball and cutting an opening. Then add the fishing line to make the loop. Paint the ball in some flesh-tone colored paint.*

## 4. Confetti

Place a handful of confetti in your inner left jacket pocket.



# PRESENTATION, BLOCKING & CHOREOGRAPHY

## Phase 1

Present the "Appearing Wine" as previously described with method #1.

## Phase 2

- ☛ Drink half of the glass and then place it on the suitcase positioned on the magnet.

At the same time, secretly get rid of the latex balloon by dropping it behind the case.

- ☛ Stand close to the suitcase with the left side of your body facing the audience.
- ☛ Perform the "Penetrating silk" as described previously, but this time using the stem of the glass as shown in the photos.

It is important to perform this trick smoothly, because if you pull too hard, the glass may separate from the magnet, tip over, and spill juice everywhere.



Practice at first with an empty glass to get used to the movement!

NB: The string attached to the silk has been deliberately exaggerated in the photos to better understand the explanations.

## Phase 3

- After completing the “Penetrating silk” effect, hold the silk with your right hand.

Take the glass and drink any remaining liquid.

Open the suitcase with the right hand.



- Put the glass in the suitcase with your left hand while secretly grabbing the hank vanisher ball.

Bring your left hand toward you while simultaneously transferring the silk into this hand.

Close the suitcase with your right hand as you move to the front, away from the table.

Push the silk into the ball hidden in your left hand.

Once all the way in, steal the silk and ball with your right thumb while leaving the left hand in the same position mimicking holding the silk.



- Direct your right hand toward your jacket pocket with the hidden ball. Leave the ball and take the confetti.

To end, blow the confetti out of your left hand and show that the silk has disappeared.

**Take your bow!**

## Alternative presentation with a table

If you do not use a suitcase:

- Place the hank vanisher ball in your right outer jacket pocket.
- Fix with a few pins a small pouch (servant) of fabric behind the table. During the routine, as you place the glass on the magnet hidden in the table, secretly ditch the latex ball into this pouch.
- After completing the penetrating silk, insert the silk halfway into your right pocket, where you've put the hank vanisher ball.
- Take the glass with your right hand and drink what's left. After you have finished drinking, place the glass on the table, put your right hand back in your pocket to visibly take the silk back, and secretly palm the ball.
- Place the silk on your left hand. At the same time, your left hand will secretly palm the ball.
- Then proceed as described above to make the silk disappear.

# Prestidigitation



**I** like to present big illusions with assistants. Let's be honest ... disappearing on stage to reappear completely behind the audience and see the faces of the spectators stunned with surprise always gives you an ego boost and satisfaction!

Obviously, the technical aspect is important, and you must work well as a team to perform this type of act. It's a bit like playing in a music group where everyone supports each other. If one of the musicians makes a mistake, the others will do their best to cover it up. Of course, in magic, it's harder to hide when a problem occurs, or an illusion is missed. But at least you know that you are not alone, and your crew will do anything they can to resolve the situation.

Peter Reveen is the very first magician I saw who hooked me on magic when I was a kid. His show was full of stage illusions with assistants. There was a lot to impress a little boy like me!

*But if a magician could do "real" magic, he shouldn't need big boxes and flamboyant props. He could do it with his ability to manipulate the elements. It is this aspect of magic that has always attracted and intrigued me.*

That's why I am most inspired by magic sleight of hand acts. But unlike teamwork, here, you are alone on stage. When the curtain opens, all eyes are on no one else but you. *The pressure is then very intense.* In addition to having to fill the room with a good theatrical presence, the only assistants you have are your ten fingers. *It is also when the audience no longer feels the technique that the magic appears.*

But the slightest mistake can trigger a series of problems. It can be compared to a figure skating performance with a program made up of a multitude of figures. If you fall, suddenly your concentration gets a serious hit.

**However, nobody is perfect, so the only thing to do is to get up and continue your program as if nothing had happened.**

# The 50 Repetitions Rule

**R**epeating our acts makes it perfect... or almost perfect. Perfection may be hard to achieve, but you can try your best to get there.

Personally, I use the 50-repetition rule. In other words, when I prepare a new magic piece or a routine, I commit myself to do it a minimum of 50 consecutive times without error before presenting it to anyone.

*This technique has two advantages.* The first is to imbue my entire body, muscles, and brain with the movements that must be performed to execute it. Everything must become instantaneous and automatic. So, when it's time to perform your act, you can focus on other aspects such as your breathing, your speech flow, and eye contact with the audience.

For example, when you walk, you don't have to think every time "OK, I have to move my left foot and leg forward, now I move my right foot and leg forward, now the left..." and so on. You've already done this workout when you were a baby.

Also, rehearsing in your kitchen is not the same as being in a different and less familiar environment, such as a stage with lighting that blinds you, and feeling the warmth and energy of the audience.

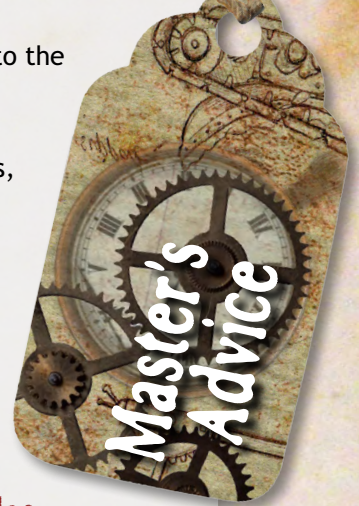
There is also a period of adjustment until you get to the point where you are comfortable in front of an audience. If space permits, regularly change your position in the room to practice your movements. Otherwise, your mind will get used to facing the same wall.

*The more you present your act under different conditions, the more comfortable you will be.*

The second advantage of this technique is that it allows you to see problems that may arise that you may not have anticipated. For example, let's say that your act involves you having to strike a match and light a candle. After the 27th try, surprise, your match breaks in half or doesn't light. If you don't have an emergency plan in place, you'll have to think fast to deal with the situation on the spot.

**Of course, not everything can be predicted, and a specific problem can occur after more than 50 rehearsals.**

**But at least you will have done the maximum to avoid as many possibilities as you can think of.**



# The Rolling Stones



**One day, I was visiting a talent agent that I used to work for regularly when I lived in Toronto. While I was in his office, our conversation was interrupted by the phone. After talking for a few minutes, he hung up looking me straight in the eyes, still stunned, and asked me if I was free on July 30. He then goes on to say, "It's big... very big!"**

In 2003, the City of Toronto was affected by the outbreak of SARS, a severe acute respiratory syndrome, which is an infectious disease of the lungs. This resulted in a major shutdown of Toronto's tourism industry. The city became virtually deserted and my engagements were canceled one after another for several months.

In response to a direct suggestion from The Rolling Stones to help boost Toronto's economy and image, the city organized the "SARStock" mega-concert in just one month. In addition to The Rolling Stones, the concert featured many other bands such as The Guess Who, Rush and AC/DC.

*The event attracted nearly 500,000 spectators, making it the largest concert in Canadian history.*

My friend Mike tells me that he just spoke with the producer of the concert. He is looking for different visual acts, including an illusionist to open the show. It was then my turn to be totally stunned. I had barely two days to get ready to get on the same stage as the rock legends.

*Wow!!!!*

The day of the event I felt like I was in a movie, proudly walking around with my Backstage Pass card. Throughout the day, each group, one after the other, arrived in a limousine that would stop in front of the entrance of a closed corridor. This allowed the stars to get out of the car and go directly to the stage without encountering anyone. There was no chance to take because of the contagion.

The moment of my performance arrived. When I got the signal from the stage manager and started to climb the long ramp that gave access to the huge stage, I still had a hard time believing it was really true. Once on the stage, my gaze turned to the mass of people who stretched out in front of me as far as my eyes could see. Giant video screens were set up everywhere so that the spectators in the back would have something to look at.

After about 3 or 4 seconds of contemplation and before I freeze in place, I turned my eyes away and concentrated on my act which combined sword manipulations and fire breathing.

## SECRET TRAPDOOR : *The Rolling Stones*

My performance went well, I bowed and made eye contact with approving faces in the crowd and left the stage by the same long ramp.

*Just when I'm still wondering if I wasn't dreaming, the stage manager comes up to me and tells me it was perfect!*

After I've changed my clothes, someone served me a well-deserved beer (what could be more normal at a rock concert!) to help me come down from my adrenaline rush. I then chatted with one of the members of "La Chicane," the only francophone band on the program. He's very happy because I'm the only one on site who speaks French. I had the privilege, as a performer, to be able to watch the show after my performance, so I joined the crowd through a passage near the stage reserved for artists. There was a small problem though with me trying to be incognito because with my long hair, my round glasses and my distinctive nose (two fractures in

the past...) and my famous Backstage Pass around my neck, some people started pointing at me and mistook me for the singer of the band Rush! With such a crowd, there's no question that I was creating a wave that I couldn't stop, so I quickly returned backstage for the rest of the show. Don't worry, I didn't miss anything because there's a giant screen for the artists there too. *Rock "N" roll!*

I can't ignore the strange déjà vu I'm experiencing right now. As I am finishing writing this book in 2020, the scenario repeats itself... This time, the whole world is affected by another pandemic: the Covid-19. I won't dwell on the subject...

**Finally, remember that every day you live is a privilege that is not granted to everyone. So, savor each and every one of them to the fullest!**



*Loran Backstage Pass*





**“ Stay afraid, but do it anyway.  
What’s important is the action.  
You don’t have to wait  
to be confident.  
Just do it and eventually  
the confidence will follow. ”**

(CARRIE FISHER, 1956-2016)

# ACT TWO

## STAGECRAFT FOR MAGICIANS

**N**o matter if you're a professional or beginner, this section will be very useful to you. In college, I was the drummer and singer in rock bands.

At the same time, I became the school's theater technician for shows and special events that took place during the year. Quickly, I discovered that working behind the scenes, in the shadows, taught me more than class could. I became intimately familiar with stagecraft in real-world situations.

If you want your show to be memorable, it's not enough to learn your tricks, script, and blocking. You must learn your act from the stagecraft side of things. You'll find as soon as you involve other people in your presentation, the possibility of errors and problems multiplies. Of course, none of us are immune to disasters, but it makes sense to do the utmost to prevent this from happening. Learn how to direct your own show. That way, you can easily explain to someone else exactly what you need to do.

If you're serious about a career in magic, the information contained here is essential. This is how you transition from hobbyists to professionals.

**Here is a backstage pass to your own show!**



If you are performing in a theater, school, for a corporate event, festival, or any other events, you will need to have a cue sheet. This is a document that gives information on when to play your music, open or close your microphone or stage curtain, illuminate the stage, trigger a smoke machine, bring an accessory on stage, etc.

*However, creating a clear cue sheet is not an easy thing.*

**You think your show is too simple for someone to make mistakes?**

*Think again.*

You must be ready to experience surprises during your presentations. But you can reduce the chances of an error by having a good cue sheet.

Creating a cue sheet also allows you to see your show from the point of view of the stage crew. It will lead to a better understanding of their work and of what they can or can't do for you. Remember that, when you're on stage, you depend on their goodwill and they are the ones who control the volume of your microphone and run the lights for you. So, make them your friends. A cue sheet allows you to get another perspective of what the audience sees from their seats. It can only improve your act and how you move on stage.

**Here are a series of recommendations that will help you create your own cue sheet.**



**CONFIDENTIAL**

**CUE-SHEET**

**CUE SHEET**



## 1-IN WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES A CUE SHEET IS NECESSARY?

**Even if you control your own music on stage or your presentation is composed of a single act with one piece of music, you must always give a cue sheet to the technician.**

It does not matter if you believe that your act is very simple or even if the person working the show has already seen your act. If you are not the only artist on stage, the technician will have many things to remember so make their life as easy as possible.

Should they wait for the master of ceremonies to leave the stage to start your music or look for your signal? Should the curtains be open before you arrive on stage or only when the music starts? Should the scene be lit when you enter or totally in the dark? Will you need to turn on the ambient lighting of the room to see the audience?

*How will they know when your act is over?*

If you want your act to be top-notch, you must supply a cue sheet. Otherwise, do not blame the technician if they make a mistake during your act. The cue sheet also serves to reassure the technician, and they will be very grateful.

## 2-WHO NEEDS A CUE SHEET?

**If only one person is in charge or acts as a stage manager to direct the show, you must put everything on the same sheet.**

On the other hand, if your team involves a lighting technician, a sound technician, props, pyrotechnics, etc. during the show, some will ask you to make a separate sheet for each one. That is to say that there will be only lighting on the sheet for the lighting, the music/microphone on another page for the sound technician, and so on.

*Make sure to write at the top of each page the job title such as lighting, sound, props, and so on. The goal is to avoid confusion.*

However, other technicians prefer instead to have all the cues (lighting, sound, accessories, etc.) on the same page. This way, it gives them additional references to follow your act. Even if you only have a few instructions to write, use a full-page, not just a little piece of paper or notebooks. There is nothing wrong with giving an almost empty page, especially since a piece of paper is easier to lose. It's great if you always work with the same staff. However, your technician may be ill one night or unavailable. In theater, technicians are often members of a union. Even if you arrive with your own crew, they may not be allowed to touch anything.

### 3-MAKE IT AS SIMPLE AS POSSIBLE

You must do the maximum to have the minimum on your sheet.

Then, after you've done it, try again to make it even simpler. If you work in a school, it is quite possible that it may be a group of predesignated students who will be your technicians as a school learning experience. Despite their goodwill, they certainly do not have the experience of a professional.

To check your instructions, ask a few people who are not familiar with the stagecraft to read it.

**Analyze the comments and make the appropriate modifications to your instructions if need be.**

*Professor's Nightmare*

### 4-USE CLEAR TERMS

A non-magician is not supposed to know terms like **Zombie ball**, **Svengali deck**, **Professor's Nightmare**, and other expressions that only an initiate would know.

*Use words that everyone will understand.*

For example, if your music should start when you take your "Zombie Ball" then write "Silver Ball" instead on your sheet.

Make sure that the signals indicated for music or other changes are as clear as possible, distinctive, and easy to see on stage. *They must not be ambiguous and confusing.* If, for example, the music should start when you open your suitcase,

*Zombie Ball*  
*Svengali deck*

be sure not to open another box just before because the technician might confuse the two. If the moment to start the music is crucial, why not just say, *"Maestro, music please!"* Of course, the audience understands that you gave the signal to the technician. But if you say it convincingly, it will show that you are in control.

If for a certain piece you do not use music, do not leave a blank space on the cue sheet but instead write, *"No music."* Otherwise, the technician might get confused if there is nothing written, but there will be none if it is clearly indicated.

## 5- WRITE WITH A READABLE FONT

Use only one type of font to write on your cue sheet. Personally, I use the style “Arial” because this lettering is easy to read. Also, do not use a font size so small that it will be difficult to read in the dim light of a theater. I personally use a font size 14.

Do not use color but only black for writing, as you may have to make additional copies on the spot and a color copier may not be available.

Always include your name and contact information at the top of the page, as you may not be the only one performing on the same stage and the technician must know which sheet is yours. The contact information will be useful if you have to send in your sheets a few days before the show, because the technician may need to ask you questions.

Also indicate the number of pages you have and a chronological number on each page.

## 6-STAGE LIGHTING

Not all theaters have the same equipment. You will need to allow the lighting designer some flexibility.

Personally, I indicate basic lighting by explaining what type of atmosphere that I want for each piece with some colors and ideas without being mandatory. I then give some points where I would like specific lighting and I leave the rest up to them.

It is best to plan your lighting so that it does not depend on signals so precise and complicated that the effect will fail if they are missed by the technician.

*YOU WILL FIND MORE DETAILS ABOUT LIGHTING IN THE “TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS” SECTION OF THIS BOOK.*

## 8-LAYOUT

There is no real “standard” established for the layout of the cue sheet.

Once again, the goal is to make everything simple and easy to read. I’ve included, in the following pages, two different models that you can adapt according to your needs. You can also use a “spreadsheet program” to make your page similar to model # 1.

## 7-BLANK SHEET

Upon arriving at the event, you might need to make modifications to your cue sheet.

It may happen that you will have to make so many changes that you will have to redo your entire sheet. Keep some blank cue sheets in a binder or bring your laptop to make the changes directly and print the sheets on the spot.

Also bring your cue sheet on a USB key. This way, the technician can download the document to display it directly on his computer screen.

## 9-THE FRIENDLY TECHNICIAN

**Arrive early enough to see the room and the stage, meet the technician and review your cue sheet with them. If you arrive at the last minute, you will have to live with possible mistakes. Give them your ideas and listen to their suggestions.**

The relationship with your technician begins before the show starts, but it must also continue when you are on stage because there is a lot of pressure on their shoulders. Even an experienced technician may have a moment of distraction or forgetfulness. Nobody is perfect and we all have our moments of inattention.

However, when the slightest technical problem occurs during a show, no matter what, *it will ALWAYS be the fault of the technician in the audience's mind, even if it is not the case.* For example, you go on stage and you forgot to turn ON the receiver of your microphone that is in your pocket. You start talking, and of course, we can't hear you. It's your fault but the audience will automatically think it's the technician who has made a mistake. Or if you make a mistake in your script or do not give the right signal to start your music. The technician will still be blamed by the audience.

This kind of situation can also happen when the technician is alone and does everything. Remember that this is a person and not an octopus. He may have to start your music, mute a microphone, change the lighting and operate a smoke machine all at the same time. They might be caught with a real technical problem that you do not know about and are doing their best to fix the situation. Someone may have walked on a

cable and disconnected your microphone. A customer or the manager of the place may request their attention for an issue, their bottle of water may have fallen off a stool, they may have a real urgent need to visit the bathroom. All these situations might require that they entrust a colleague with the job at hand. The possibilities are really endless.

So, if something goes wrong, keep your calm, DON'T let the audience catch you looking furtively backstage or the back of the room, don't look impatient or angry, just move along otherwise it will create an awkward situation. It is VERY unpleasant for a technician to have an artist on stage who seems to tell the audience that they are not doing a good job. You may also create an uncomfortable ambience in the audience, which will not help your cause. If a problem should really be acknowledged, do it with a smile. Don't say something like "Are you okay back there or do you need help?..." Because if you do, you will instantly create a new enemy. Even if your comment is a joke, the audience may not understand that you are not serious, and all accusing eyes will turn towards the poor technician.

If you had a good, friendly meeting with the technician before the show, you can be sure that they will do their best to resolve the situation when a problem occurs. Always remember that if the technicians have never seen your show ... they do not know your act! So do not expect your music and lighting to always be triggered at the exact second.

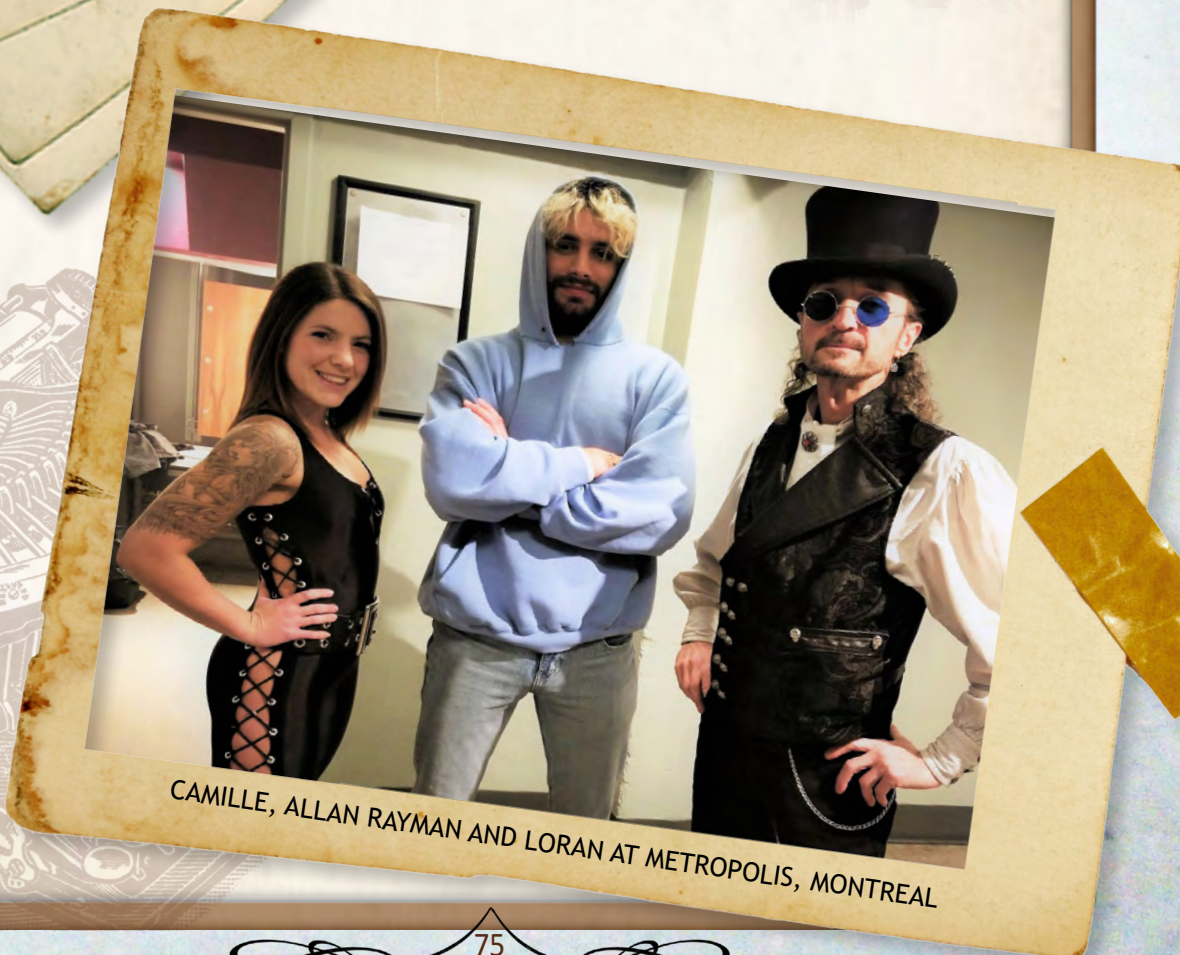
**Of course, you may have a perfect jerk at the soundboard. But even in this case, you must take a deep breath and stay "Zen" because getting angry on stage will not help.**

## 10-FINAL CURTAIN

Everything is clear and nothing can happen now! Haaaaaaaaa ... what a beautiful illusion!

Do not expect to succeed the first time you make your cue sheet. You will learn by trial and error. But no matter how you do it, you must have one because it is essential if you want to look professional.

The goal is to understand each other so that you, the technician, and the audience have the best possible magical experience.



CAMILLE, ALLAN RAYMAN AND LORAN AT METROPOLIS, MONTREAL

**MODEL**

**Loran**

Magician illusionist  
(514) XXX-XXXX  
Loran@Loranillusion.com

**Sorcellia**

**CUE SHEET : Sound / Lighting**

(page 1/1)

**1- FLOATING SILVER BALL**

Time :	4.30 min
Micro :	Close
Musique :	Track #1
Music Cue-in	Loran opens the blue box and says, "This is my new trick".
Music Cue-out	The silver ball vanishes in a cloud of confetti.
Lighting :	- When the curtain is completely open. - Mysterious atmosphere. - Follow the change of musical rhythm.
Curtain :	Open after the MC's introduction.
Special Effects :	- Smoke when music #1 begins. - Small cloud center stage.

**2- AUDIENCE INTERACTION**

Time :	5.00 min
Micro :	Open when the music track #1 ends.
Music :	None
Music Cue-in	None
Music Cue-out :	None
Lighting :	- White follow spot center stage on Loran.

**3- TRUNK ESCAPE WITH ASSISTANT**

Time :	3.00 min
Micro :	Close
Musique :	Track #2
Music Cue-in :	Assistant comes on stage.
Music Cue-out :	Loran and assistant return backstage.
Lighting :	- Dynamic beat. - Fade-out when Loran returns backstage.
Curtain:	Close when Loran returns backstage.
Special Effects :	None

CUE SHEET

# Loran

Magician-illusionist  
 (514) XXX-XXXX  
[Loran@Loranillusion.com](mailto:Loran@Loranillusion.com)

## Sorcellia

### CUE SHEET : Sound / Lighting

(page 1/1)

EFFECT	Music Track	Time	Music Cue-in	Music Cue-out	Mic	Lighting	Curtain	Special Effect
1. FLOATING SILVER BALL	#1	4.30	Loran opens the blue box and says... <i>This is my new trick</i>	The silver ball vanishes in a cloud of confetti	close	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When the curtain is completely open</li> <li>White follow spot centre stage on Loran</li> <li>Follow the change of musical rhythm</li> </ul>	Open after the MC intro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Smoke when music #1 begins</li> <li>Small cloud centre stage</li> </ul>
2. AUDIENCE INTERACTION	none	5.00	none	none	Open when music #1 ends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>White follow spot centre stage on Loran</li> </ul>		none
3. TRUNK ESCAPE WITH ASSISTANT	#2	3.00	Assistant comes on stage	Loran & assistant return backstage	Close when the music starts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dynamic beat</li> <li>Fade-out when Loran returns backstage</li> </ul>	Close when Loran returns backstage	none

**MODEL**

# IS THIS MAGIC?



**L**ance Burton once mentioned, in an interview, why he produced his first television special. One day after his show, a lady came and proceeded to compliment Lance on his performance. She then asked, “When are you going to become a professional, Mr. Burton?”

Perplexed and surprised by this question, Lance asks her what she meant? The woman answered, “Yes, when are you going to be on television?” Master magician, FISM winner, world-renowned magician, multimillionaire, and owner of his own theater in Las Vegas, *all of this didn't matter to this lady.*

For the average person who is not part of the entertainment world, *television has always been the highest level of an artist's career.* For them, only the “best” can be admitted into the pantheon of the god of television. Throughout my career, I've been on television many times as a magician, actor for films and TV series, or in interviews. Still, I've also been told many times, “Maybe one day you'll be on television!” The problem is that to have a real impact and to be noticed, your presence on the screen must be constant. Today, the world of television is undergoing great changes. The internet (along with COVID) has transformed the entertainment industry with the addition now of virtual shows.

Magicians such as Dynamo, Criss Angel, and Cyril Takayama are certainly creating an interest in magic among the general population and that's great.

However, it's an open secret that many of the impossible miracles they present are in fact... just impossible to present under real conditions. When David Blaine aired his very first TV special, I loved it, because it was a return to the very roots of magic. *It was a break from the mega-illusion type of productions that were becoming more and more extravagant.* It was almost like a race to who's going to make the biggest thing on the planet disappear. It's like when grunge music with minimalist style replaced the flamboyant “hard rock” of the 80s.

Unfortunately, everything was turned upside down later with the extensive use of digital special effects, so now *people don't know whether they're watching a magician or just a show full of video montages.* So, I'm asking you... *Is this magic?* On a screen, you can do it hundreds of times before you get the right shot and then broadcast it publicly. But with a real audience, you only get one chance!

But perhaps we should turn this situation to our advantage, to offer another door that gives access to magic that doesn't need these effects.

**A way of telling people that if they want to appreciate a real magician, to really judge his skill and talent, the best way will always be to see him live!**



PHOTOGRAPHER : PATRICK NICOLS

## Master's Advice

# Music, Maestro!

**I** may be a magician, but there is nothing more magical than music. It can convey all the emotions even without saying a single word. The mood of a scene can become completely different by a simple change of music.

Just think of the music in the movie Jaws. As soon as we hear the two dark cello notes, we already know that the shark is close. Imagine the difference that it would make if we should replace the cello by a bicycle bell doing...  
*Dring! Ding!*

Many segments of my show are presented with music. Years ago, when I first started, I had to use cassette players to do my sound editing. I even used magnetic tapes. It requires the patience of Job to create a musical mix and I had to start all over again if I changed my act. Today, the use of digital technology has changed everything, as much for photography as for video and music. There are computer programs that are very easy to learn and that allow you to edit your soundtracks quite easily. You can shorten or lengthen your music, mix different tracks and reduce or accelerate the rhythm. Sound effects at specific moments can be added



Françoise, Tim, Loran, Anne and Madeleine  
of the i-Musici Orchestra of Montreal, QC 2013

without any problem and will greatly enhance your act. Seriously... you have no excuse!  
*As much as possible, use instrumental music unless the lyrics are directly related to your act.*

Popular "Top 10" songs are also to be avoided, as they will quickly become out of fashion and you will need to replace them regularly. Movie and video game music is particularly interesting because it is mostly instrumental. Sometimes I hear music that I like, but I don't yet know for what I could use it with. When this happens, I prefer to keep it in my music bank rather than "wasting it" on something that doesn't really fit. *Very often, I imagine for an already existing act or one in preparation what music I will need.* I think about the rhythm and atmosphere I want to create. Then, I look in my music library and musical memories.

In 2013, I had the great pleasure of sharing the stage with the 15 exceptional musicians of the "i-Musici" chamber orchestra (WWW.IMUSICI.COM) from Montreal during a concept show entitled The Magician Who Wanted to Create Gold. An adaptation of the show with 4 musicians was then created for a road tour. It is quite a sensation to have musicians on stage with you playing the music live with violins, cellos, and percussions. Large cruise ships will usually offer you this option which I strongly encourage you to experience.

Finally, *be original in your choice of music.* A typical example of misuse is the piece "Chariots of Fire" by Vangelis. And please *do not take the same music as another magician.* There is no shortage of musical choices in the world!

**So, do a little research to find the rare pearl that will raise the quality of your magic, as well as your reputation, to the highest level!**



## At Cue-what?

**E**ven with a cue sheet so simple that a camel could understand it, there is always a chance that something will go wrong.

During a variety night with several artists on stage, the act I had to present was composed of only 2 segments, using 2 pieces of music on a USB key that contained nothing else. The instructions written on the cue sheet and explained in person to the technician were simple: Play the first piece of music completely. After the 1st piece of music, immediately follow with the 2nd piece of music and let it play completely until the end.

After the MC presentation, the first piece starts as planned and everything is fine. The piece ends and I wait... and I wait... and I wait... until, finally, *another piece of music that wasn't even on my USB key starts to play?! With a big smile, I had no choice but to wave to the technician, wake him up from his cerebral catalepsy, make him understand that he had to stop this music and play the correct one. I've put into practice the "friendly technician rule."*

Another time, I was performing regularly in a nightclub. On the 4th weekend, believing that the DJ had become familiar with my show, I gave him my cue sheet without revising it with him as I always did. During the first part of the show, almost all the tracks were playing at the wrong moment. At intermission, he told me that my sheet was unclear because I had not written down the numbers for each of the tracks. I realized that I had given him the sheet folded in half. Yes, this "professional" with 10 years of experience had simply not thought to unfold the page to see the track numbers on the sheet!



The “Technical requirements” document is where we find the material you need for your show. It does not describe what your show is, but rather what you need to present it properly. Regardless of the size or type of your show, you will be asked to supply one. It can be divided into two sections: **THE MATERIAL LIST** of what you need and **THE STAGE PLAN**.

However, even if you provide technical requirements, you may not have everything you need on-site. For example, material that was supposed to be available may prove to be defective the day of your show. You had planned to prepare your material on the stage, hidden by the curtains, but you discover that there is no curtain, or the opening mechanism is broken. If you are performing in a school, they may not have a stage at all and you will do your show directly in the gym. These situations are possible, so you need to be somewhat flexible.

Just like the “cue sheet”, the technical requirements must be simple and easy to understand, using only one type of black font. Your name, contact information, and page number must be on each page. Here are the basic guidelines that your technical requirements should contain. Others may be added according to your needs.



CONFIDENTIAL

## TECHNICAL SECRETS



# A- MATERIAL LIST

## 1-SOUND AND MUSIC

**If you use music, will it be on CD, on a USB key, on your digital tablet?**

Do you need a microphone with a stand, and will it need to be wireless or do you need a headset? Even if the client tells you they have sound equipment, make sure to ask them what they have exactly. Because if they are not used to having magic shows, in their mind, a sound system might be just a basic Radio-CD player, battery operated. If it's possible, bring your own system and microphone, especially if you are performing in a school or a small venue.

*It's easier to manage a system you know well than having to learn on the spot how to operate theirs.*

## 2-LIGHTING

**Do you need to create a "mystical and theatrical" mood or a simple "comedy stand-up" style lighting for your presentation?**

Unless you bring your own lighting, you will have to be flexible about what you can do according to the lighting available on site. Indicate your most important basic needs while being aware that you will have to adapt. Once there, if the only lighting available for the show is the basic room light (this is often the case if you are performing in a school or a convention hotel), ask where the switch panel is, adjust the light according to your need and

*stick a paper tag over the switch with tape saying "Magic show. Please don't touch!" with your name on it.*

This is important especially if you are performing in a school gym. Often, those places use industrial lights that will take almost 10 minutes to turn back on again when you switch them off. Once, I set the light in a school and started my show with a five-minute musical opening act. After a minute, all the lights in the gym turned off without warning!!! I discovered later that a teacher thought that he could rearrange the light in a better way and started to fiddle with the switch...

## 3-STAGE AREA

**What space do you need to perform?**

And even if you are told that the stage has the dimensions that you need, check with the organizer to make sure that nothing is permanently installed such as a huge lectern on a platform, a piece of scenery, or if a musical group is also performing, that their equipment is not on stage. If so, it automatically reduces the available space.

**What ceiling height do you need?**

This is the available and usable space between the stage floor and the ceiling above you. There may be lighting, fans, decorations, or other objects hanging from the ceiling. Check that this does not affect your presentation.

Is the audience surrounding you or will they be sitting in front of you? Will you need a backdrop or green room to hide or leave your gear? Do you need access to a power outlet? Do you need steps to get off the stage and go into the audience? Make sure the steps are stable. Ideally, mark with white tape the border of the stage and the steps to make sure that you or a volunteer do not stumble or fall. Do not laugh because it happens frequently and even with professionals. *If you are doing magic effect using confetti like the "Snowstorm" which will leave pieces of paper everywhere on the floor, make sure to ask for a broom to clean the place.* If the stage is a complete mess after your show, your client will remember you but not for the right reasons.

## 4-LOADING DOCK

If you only have a small handbag of material, you will have no problem getting in. But if you arrive with big illusions and scenery, it will be more complicated.

Ask if there is designed or paid parking as well as a loading dock with easy access to enter your material. Determine with the organizer the best time to arrive and avoid being confronted with a locked gate and door. Ask the name of the person in charge of the doors and if possible, a mobile phone number to reach them when you arrive on site.

## 5-TECHNICAL STAFF

Do you have your own technical staff to load and unload your material at the venue?

Do you need the client to provide the technicians to operate your music, lighting and bring accessories on stage or will you do it yourself?

## 6-SOUND TEST AND REHEARSAL

- ☛ When will you have access to the room and the stage?
- ☛ How long does it take to set up your props and test for sound and lighting?
- ☛ Does the area need to be clear of staff and public during your set-up and rehearsal? Guests may already be in the room several hours before your show time. You may need to settle in before.
- ☛ Does your equipment need to be removed from the stage or hall immediately after your performance and how long does it take you to do it?

## 7-SPECIAL EFFECTS

Will you use a smoke or fog machine, pyrotechnics, or other special effects?

If so, check that the smoke will not trigger an alarm system. Do a test before the performance. It is better to trigger the alarm and to see the firefighters arrive during the rehearsals than during the show itself.

## 8-SPIKING

Mark with white tape where to place your props and your position according to the lighting.

This way your equipment will be installed faster and in the right place when it's time. There is phosphorescent tape that allows you to install your accessories in the dark when necessary. Write on the tape your name with a black felt pen, just in case other artists have done the same.

## 9-GREEN ROOM

**Do you need a green room to prepare yourself? Will there be a mirror, chairs, water available?**

Will you have to *share it with other artists*, or will it be exclusive to you? If you present a dove act with many small, delicate accessories to prepare in a calm place, you probably will not want to share the room with a dozen Brazilian dancers or noisy musicians who won't stop disturbing you or ask questions about your birds.

**Maybe you could ask for a smaller space such as an office or temporary space with curtains in one corner of the room.**

## 10-SMARTIES

**Perhaps you have heard of the rock band "Van Halen," who requested to have, in the green room, a bowl filled with red Smarties only!**

Even though this is a strange requirement, there is a reason for this request. If the bowl is in the green room, it is an indication that the technical requirements was attentively read and followed. But if the bowl is not there, it indicates the opposite, as well as an idea of the seriousness of the client.

*Personally, I write the name of a very expensive bottle of wine.*

Of course, I do not expect to find the bottle in my green room, but rather to receive a call asking me about this clause that had not yet been discussed during the negotiations. If the call comes, then I explain that there is no problem and that a bottle of water will do just fine. If I do not get a call and nobody talks about it, then I know that my requirements have not been taken seriously and that I can expect anything.

**But who knows, maybe one day I'll have my bottle waiting for me in my room!**

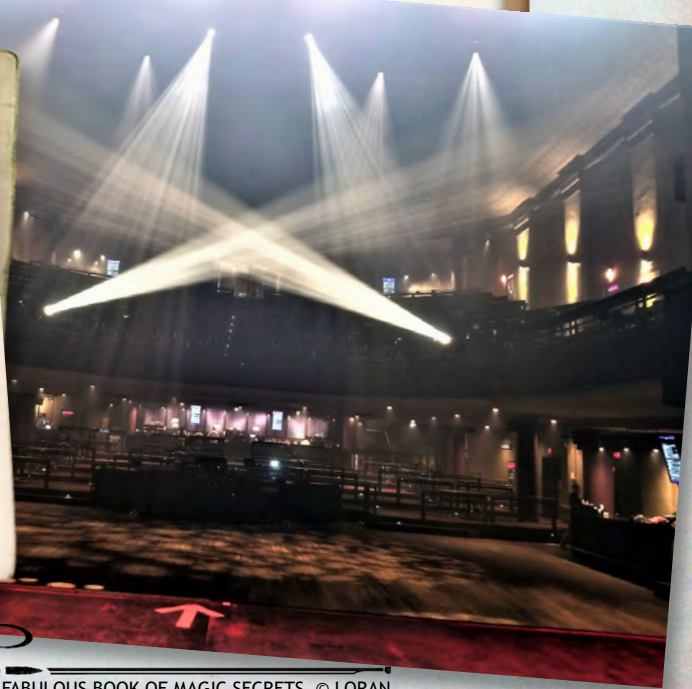
## B- STAGE PLAN

**On the following pages, you will find an example of a "Stage plan."**

This plan is not mandatory, but it allows you to better visualize what the audience will see, as well as your positions and movements on stage. It is also useful as a reference when you are settling in.

Instead of writing the name of the props directly on the plan, you can add a list on the same page that indicates, for example, chairs, microphones, electrical outlets, or smoke machines. Other items may be added according to your needs.

METROPOLIS STAGE



**MODEL**

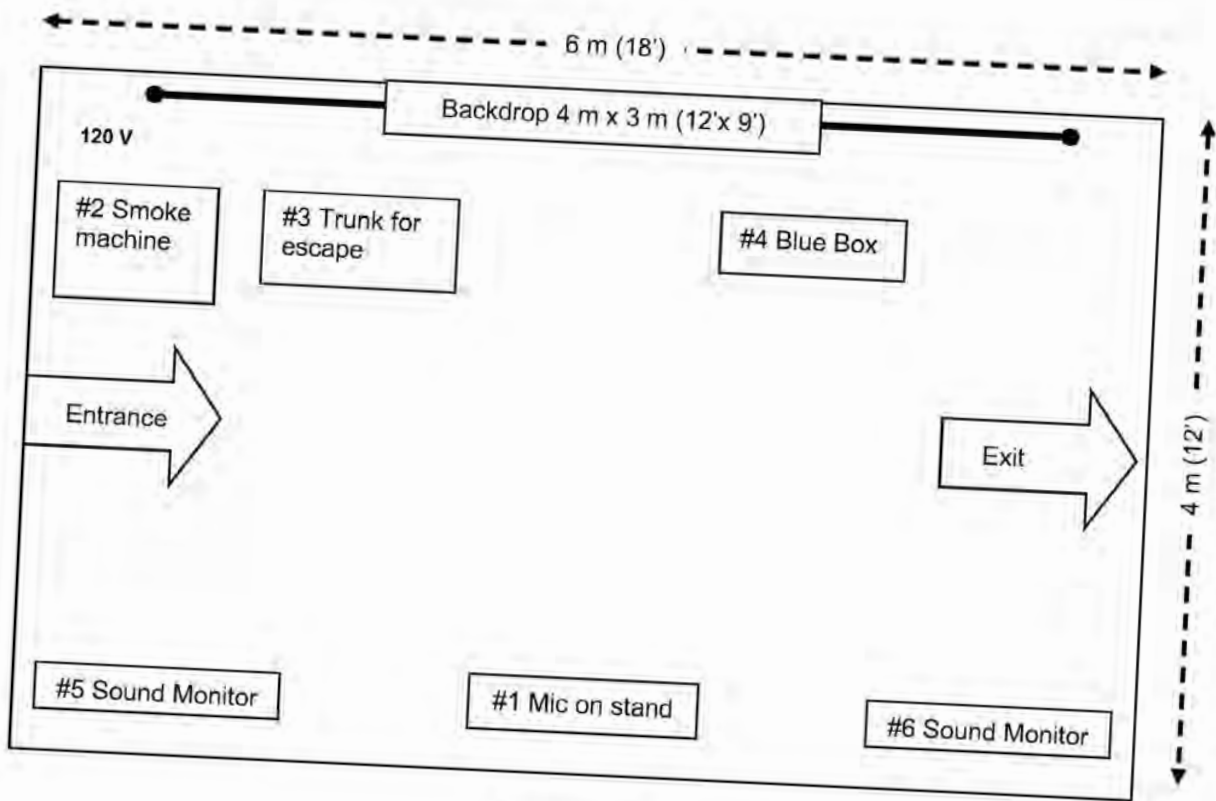
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**Sorcellia**  
**STAGE PLAN AND SPIKE**

(page 1/1)

Back-stage



- Legend :**
- #1 Mic on stand
  - #2 Smoke machine
  - #3 Trunk for escape
  - #4 Blue box
  - #5 #6 Sound Monitor

Stairs  
Front stage  
(Audience)

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

# MICROPHONE MUSIC LIGHTING

CONFID



**P**erforming on stage can be very stressful. So, if a technical problem occurs with your microphone, music, or lighting, your stress will rise to another level. This chapter will help you reduce the risk of technical problems that may occur during a show, as well as make your life easier during your presentations.

## 1-MICROPHONE

If you need a microphone, don't assume the venue where you perform will have one available. Ideally, you should have your own microphone with you. It's worth buying a good quality microphone because it's an investment you'll never regret. Even if you have a great show, it can be ruined if the audience cannot hear and understand you. Before you buy one, you can also rent from a supplier to see what best suits your needs. There are three types of microphones for an entertainer and they all have pros and cons.

### HANDHELD

This is good if you are doing hypnosis, stand-up comedy, or don't need both hands free all the time. You can modulate your voice very well by moving the microphone back and forth in front of your mouth. It's also handy if you are doing interaction with volunteers on stage. You can hold the microphone for them when they answer your questions or say anything that you need the audience to hear. If you occasionally need your two hands free, use a microphone stand. You can also use a handheld microphone holder that fits around your neck much like a tie. These types of holder cost only a few dollars and are available in different models.

### WIRELESS HEADSET

This is perfect for a magician who needs both hands free. The Rolling Stones and Kate Bush were among the first major artists to introduce this type of microphone for shows. However, it was Madonna who most popularized its use to such an extent that it has come to be referred to as the "Madonna's microphone." The device is behind your head and rests on your ears as if you were wearing glasses backwards. A small microphone is attached to it and adjusted near your mouth. Some models are very small and flesh colored, which makes them almost invisible to the audience. If possible, get one that has a switch ON-OFF on the device itself so that you can do it yourself. Don't forget to turn it off when you leave the stage at the end of your show because if you don't, the audience will still be able to hear you talking backstage.

### LAPEL MICROPHONE

These are even more discreet than the headset. This microphone can be clipped to the lapel of your jacket or on your tie. However, because they are more suitable for TV studio recording or a virtual show, this type of microphone is more difficult to adjust for a stage performance and will often have feedback problems.



## 2-MUSIC AND SOUNDTRACKS

**I**'m from the generation where the only support available for the music was audiotapes or cassettes that could be damaged easily. Today, digital has changed everything and there are many possibilities open to you.

### CD (COMPACT DISC)

Just like audio cassettes, CDs are slowly starting to disappear from the market. But if you still use them, there are different computer programs allow you to burn your music to CD media. All your music must be on the same CD and each piece must be in order and numbered.

Do not use a sticker on your CD to identify them as they tend to peel off and some readers also have difficulty reading them.

*Do not use CDs with a printable white surface. I already had the bad experience of having one of these discs whose surface was completely destroyed in small pieces in the player.*

Clearly identify your name on it using a felt pen with the *mention "Magician" and your name or title of the show.* Always bring a duplicate of your CD. Be careful as some CD players cannot read CD-ROMs that have been burned with a personal computer and can only play original CDs.



### USB KEY

It is common now to see theaters that only work with a computer. You will be asked to supply your music with a USB key. Make sure there is nothing else on your key and that each piece is in order and numbered.

Do not forget to attach to the key a sink with your name on it. Okay, a washbasin may be too big, but you must attach some distinctive tag, fob, or gizmo to make sure your key is not lost or mixed up with one for the other artist. I use the type of badge holder attached to travel suitcases. They always include a tag to list your name and even a space to slip your business card into.

### SMARTPHONE

Imagine that there is no CD player, that there is a problem with your USB key, or the computer is defective, or there is simply no computer available.

Do not laugh because all these situations have happened to me. Your cell phone can be a lifesaver if you have downloaded your music to it. You can plug your cell into the sound mixer to play your music.

However, you need the proper *cab*le to plug into the mixer. You need one of these cables, either: 1/8 stereo male plug to two (2) RCA male plugs or 1/8 stereo male plug to two (2) male 1/4 or XLR plugs. Always keep it in your suitcases. *You never know when you will need it.*

You will also need to download a Sound Manager program to your cell phone to organize your music. You can find more information about this in one of the following chapters.

## AUDIO QUALITY

Try not to use the MP3 format for your music. Of course, you will not be performing in a recording studio, but rather in a room with different ambient sounds around you, and that it will be difficult to hear the difference in quality.

But if you can have the **best quality** at the same price, then why not use it? Also, make sure that the volume level is the same for each of the soundtracks. Thus, you or the technician will not have to adjust the volume continuously during the show.

## MUSIC TRANSFERS OVER THE INTERNET

It may happen for an event that you will be asked to send your music in advance by email. For that, you will need to format your music files as an MP4 so that it is not too big to transfer.

**Important:** Make sure that the process of sending your email is completed before doing anything else on your computer.

Otherwise, the file could arrive incomplete at the destination and you will be surprised to have a shorter than expected musical piece for your show. When you arrive, check with the technician that he has received your music and that it is complete. And just in case, always bring your USB key with a backup of your music program.

## 3-ELECTRONIC TABLET, SMARTPHONE, SOUND MANAGER SOFTWARE

**It is possible to manage the music of your show yourself with a digital tablet, a computer, or your cell phone. You can even use a remote control with them.**

The advantage is that you will not have to explain to the technician when to start or stop your music. You will save time and have the certainty that your music starts at the right time. You can also change the musical order of your show on the spot.

To do this, there are different **programs** called "Sound Manager" that can be found on the Internet. Some are free or cost only a few dollars, while others are more expensive but more efficient. After downloading the program and your music to your digital tablet or smartphone, you can create different **"Music Playlists."**

During your show, the tablet or phone will be set close to you on stage and connected to the soundboard by a cable. Some equipment even has wireless **Bluetooth technology** using UHF radio waves. There are even programs that allow the use of remote control. You can start or stop your music remotely, raise or lower the volume and switch from one track to another without getting close to your device.

**However, at some venues, it might be impossible to use a remote control due to radiofrequency problems. Make sure to do some tests before the show.**

## 4-LIGHTING

**Lighting is probably the most problematic part of a show.**

If your act is a Comedy-Cabaret style of show, you will be able to do your show even if the lighting consists only of a ceiling bulb. I have done outside presentations where the only lighting available was a huge campfire. However, it will be much more complicated if you have an elaborate staging with varied lighting effects. If you have a technician, you must provide a good cue sheet (SEE THE "CUE SHEET" CHAPTER).

But if you want to be autonomous, just like for your soundtrack, there are "Lighting Manager" programs. Some can even combine sound, lighting, trigger a smoke machine, a video projector, or any other accessories. This type of manager is, however, much more complex than for the sound and will require some time for you to master. It's excellent if you always do your shows in the same theater. But if this is not the case, remember that each venue does not necessarily have the same equipment. You will therefore have to make adjustments on the spot according to your needs and available lighting.



## 5-TECH-SUITCASE

**When I do a show for a school or a small venue, I usually come alone with my equipment and there is no technician on site.**

Because I have to do everything myself, to save on the set-up and packing time, I thought about creating a "Tech-Suitcase" that contains my microphone, CD player, digital tablet, and soundboard.

All I need to do is to put the suitcase on a small table and open it, connect an audio cable to the mixer inside the suitcase and connect this cable to my preamplifier speaker. This way, I can manage my microphone and my music directly on stage.



# The Sorcerer's Apprentice

## Culture in Magic

**E**ach person is shaped by their own history and culture. This is why, from one country to another, we find different styles of magic. In Canada and more particularly in Quebec, magic is presented with a lot of humor and comedy. Quebec audiences love to laugh.

Magicians are sometimes confused with comedians. But unlike other countries such as France or the United States, the history of magic in Quebec is very recent. If you tell someone that you are a magician, it is immediately assumed that the only shows you do are children's birthday parties. Of course, there is nothing wrong with that, especially since it takes a lot of skill and experience to captivate a group of young people for a long period. But the art of wonder is not limited to one type of spectators.

*The world of magic has undergone transformations throughout the years.*

Just think of David Copperfield, born on September 16, 1956, in Metuchen, USA. With a sensual approach, combined with elaborate staging and sophisticated mega illusions like no one had ever done before, David has made magic serious and seductive. Before him, the late Doug Henning, born May 3, 1947, in Winnipeg, Canada, presented his illusions show "Spellbound - The Magic Show" on Broadway in New York in 1974 for more than four years. Just as the French magician Jean-Eugène Robert Houdin (1805 - 1871) had done by replacing in his shows the long tunic of the sorcerer by a tuxedo and bow tie, Doug revolutionized the image of the magician by getting rid of the black costume and replacing it with flamboyant costumes, decorated with rainbows and flowers which are symbols of the hippie culture of the 70s. It was only after many long years of work, following his death on February 7, 2000, that Doug finally got his star, on the "Walk of Fame" in Toronto, Ontario, Canada on June 8, 2010.

In creating my shows, I have, of course, been influenced by the magicians of the past. But I also try to visualize the future. In the very near future, "Augmented reality" will be used to create magic shows.

**Tomorrow's magic will probably not be like what we are used to seeing today. But the important thing is that it can still entertain and amaze!**



# Road Cases

**A** long time ago, I read a brilliant slogan in a guitar magazine that said, “When the content is important, the container is important too!” Yet, I have often seen artists carry their precious material, which they paid a lot of money for, in cardboard boxes or grocery bags and even plastic garbage cans.

Here are a few suggestions for protecting, transporting, and keeping your show equipment in good condition for a long time.

*If you only have close-up magic equipment, a small office briefcase will do it.*

The toolboxes you can find in hardware stores and those used by stage makeup artists are also excellent. They are divided into sections that will allow you to organize your coins, ropes, cards, and other small objects.

For your larger equipment, flea markets and garage sales are good places to find **old suitcases**. I’m not talking about the flexible nylon one with zippers everywhere, but suitcases that are rigid and covered with leather. Rather than having an assortment of mismatched suitcases, I have gotten into the habit of dyeing them black with leather shoe dye. This way, you will get professional-looking cases at a low cost.

More expensive are the travel suitcases that are made of rigid fibers like Curv. Lightweight, strong, with wheels and a retractable handle,

they are perfect especially if you’re frequently traveling by air. For even larger equipment, the ideal will be road cases (yes, like the rock stars. I know you’ve always wanted to be one...) that can be custom-built. There are models made of rigid fibers like Curv and those made of vinyl-covered wood. Both will have wheels and aluminum reinforced corners and sides.

Take the time to compare prices, as they may vary from one supplier to another. However, you won’t regret your investment, especially for carrying illusions. It is **important to mark all your suitcases**. A very simple method is to tie a large ribbon or piece of brightly colored fabric to each handle. When unloading your suitcases for a show, you will only have to tell the people helping you to take the ones identified with a ribbon. They will also be easier to spot on the airport conveyor belt. If you are transporting large illusions, unless you have a storage facility, remember **that your trunks must be able to get in and out of your home**. I once knew someone who made that mistake by building a stage illusion in his basement. When it came time to take it out, it didn’t fit through the door!

Better yet, here’s another little-known story about David Copperfield. On his first tour of Canada, David was scheduled to perform at the “Salle Albert-Rousseau” Theatre in Quebec City. I have performed there myself. Arriving with his many trucks full of trunks and equipment, his technical team discovered that the large door of the stage loading dock was still... too small. The brick frame had to be demolished to let his equipment in. Once inside, the wall was rebuilt. And of course, they had to demolish it again three days later so that they could leave.

**Apparently, it is more difficult for David to go through a theater door than to cross the Great Wall of China!**



Loran's different road cases

## TOO YOUNG TO DIE

**T**hroughout my career, I have had the opportunity to perform in all kinds of places, situations, and different audiences. You must learn how to adapt to your audience. But it's only over the years that you gain experience to know what elements need to be combined to create the magic chemistry. That's why, at the beginning of your career, you should seize every opportunity to perform in front of real spectators.

But I must admit that I once *seriously doubted the relevance of my presence for a show.* That was when an agent offered me a four-weekend contract at an exotic dancer club. The owner wanted to “boost” the popularity of the club by presenting various Las Vegas-style acts. My manager suggests a “sexy” magic show incorporating some of the dancers from the club.

Mostly male, the last thing the clients who frequent these kinds of establishments want to see in a show is a man making doves appear out of thin air. Moreover, the physical environment of the place combined the worst possible conditions for a magician. I had to perform on a central, narrow, elevated stage, surrounded by mirrors with the audience sitting practically at my feet, 360 degrees around me.



So, I put together a meticulously thought-out program with, among other things, a few big illusions to music. Two of my lovely assistants even had classical ballet training, which was an asset to the choreography.

Here we are, the evening of the premiere. This time, despite all the preparation I had put in for weeks, I was still wondering if it was really a good idea to have accepted this contract, because I was too young to die! *I was already imagining the beer bottles spinning around my head.*

But the fateful moment came, and the music started. I was standing behind the curtain frozen in place. I was so petrified that my agent, who was right behind me, had to literally push me to get me on stage!

I then focused on the music and turned on the “Show Time” mode in my head. In the end, the response was so good that not only did I fulfill my contract, but the show went on for another two weeks.

**I survived!**

**As I said before, sometimes you have to take risks if you want to learn and move forward.**

# ACT THREE

## SOME MAGIC HISTORIES...

**M**any magicians use a variety of magic props, without understanding the prop's origins.

The most common of these objects is, of course... cards. Almost everyone has a pack of cards at home but knows little about their history. Why not? You should. Take a few minutes to Google the history of playing cards.

Let me offer you another example. Do you own a "Change Bag"? You know, the one that performers are using to exchange, transform or vanish small items such as ropes or scarves. It is a cloth bag held by a wooden or metal handle and is rather unusual as an accessory. Where does something like this come from? We must go back in time to discover that it mimics the tithing offering bag found at Church. The servant passed around this type of bag during mass to collect the money donated by the faithful. Doesn't that conjure a variety of patters and scripting thoughts?

Here's a final example. If you use magic words and incantations in your presentations, know their origins. Especially if your style leans toward the bizarre. It's very important to look at these details so that your magic is consistent. Plus, it adds a layer of authenticity to your theatrical approach. By passing along real educational information, your audience leaves more informed. They also have a genuine story they will be happy to tell their friends.

You'll find this research process quite productive. It seems the more interested you are in a particular theme, the more you will want to know about other topics. This inspires you to create new routines, ad infinitum. It often happens that I transform a piece of my magic by associating it with some historical element. Trust me. Try this. Your magic becomes more believable, rather than feeling unauthentic and lackluster. You do not have to become a history teacher. But knowing a minimum of information about your profession will allow you to appear as a real expert at your art.

The following pages discuss magic, witchcraft, and esotericism. I wrote these articles for a Toronto Gothic magazine dealing with different themes related to the romantic and mystical aspects of this lifestyle.

**I hope my words inspire you to delve a little deeper in the different facets of mystery!**

## Some Magic Histories...

# ABRACADABRA

**From Merlin to Harry Potter to shamans, magicians, and wizards of all ages, all created their magic using different elements, objects, amulets, and magic spells. And if you are asked to name one of these incantations, the first one that will come to your mind will inevitably be... Abracadabra!**

However, even though many magicians and illusionists still use the Abracadabra spell during their performances, most do not know that there was a time when this term was taken much more seriously. In ancient times, Abracadabra was a word used to invoke the help of benevolent spirits against illnesses such as fever. Moreover, it was not spoken but rather written on a parchment or amulet worn as a talisman. Transmitted through the Middle Ages, the word gradually lost its occult meaning and was extended to magic in general.

### Origin

Several hypotheses exist on its origin. Abracadabra is thought to come from the word Abraxas. The thinkers of the second century considered the harmony between the planets and the universe. They also imagined that there were numbers that pleased the deities more than others. Basilides of Alexandria, having merged the philosophy of Pythagoras, the Jewish doctrine, and the Christian dogmas, knew that a year was composed of 365 days. Believing that the sun was making the same number of revolutions around the earth,

Basilides thought that the number 365 was the one most pleasing to the deity. Transposing his numerological calculations to letters, he formed the word Abraxas. According to Jacques Basnage, Abraxas is of Egyptian origin, because this term has been found inscribed on

several amulets representing the god Harpocrates sitting on his lotus and who appears in the form of a chimera with a rooster's head, snakes at his feet and holding a whip in his hand. For Orthodox Christians, the term refers to a demon.

Another hypothesis is that it comes from the mystical name of a Syrian deity. Abraxas would itself be made up of the initials of the words of the half-Hebrew and Greek formula Ab, Ben, Ruha-Acodesch, which means the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

It is also believed that Abracadabra would be of Aramaic origin with the phrase Avrah Kadabra, which means "I will create as I speak." Another possible source is the Hebrew Evrah Kedabri. Some also argue that the term could come from the Arabic Abra Kadabra, which would mean "Let things be destroyed" but this version is disputed. Since this is a word that can be spoken in many languages, some believers in the Bible have associated it with the confusion of languages related to the Tower of Babel in biblical times. (GN 11, 1-9)



## Some Magic Stories...

# ABRACADABRA

### Medicinal Incantation

However, the first known written mention is in the “Medicina Praecepta” by Serenus Sammonicus, a physician and scholar in the service of the Roman Emperor Caracalla in the 2nd century. To protect himself against diseases, he prescribed that an amulet containing the magic word Abracadabra, written with the letters arranged in such a way as to form an inverted pyramid, should be worn around the neck.

ABRACADABRA  
ABRACADABR  
ABRACADAB  
ABRACADA  
ABRACAD  
ABRACA  
ABRAC  
ABRA  
ABR  
AB  
A

Thus, a letter of the word Abracadabra disappears in each line of the pyramid. Just as the letters disappear, the disease or misfortune is also supposed to disappear, diminishing the influence of the disease or the evil spirit on the patient. It can be assumed that the opposite effect would be produced with a pyramid transcribed the other way around. The beliefs of the time gave much importance to the scriptures. Writing Abracadabra rather than simply saying it aloud made the magic even more effective.

### Amulet and Talisman

A large quantity of amulets using Abracadabra was found and are currently on display in European cabinets, demonstrating that they were very popular. Historically, amulets and talismans have been generated by people's beliefs and present in most religions.



However, the Christian religion is one of the few that rejects the trust placed in these objects. Nevertheless, its use was widespread both within the Church and in superstitious people. All social classes are affected, from the poorest to the richest and most educated. Even if the Church explains that the protection does not lie in the object itself but rather in the faith in God, the faithful do not hesitate to buy the countless statuettes, crosses, scapulars, and pendants that are sold to people on a pilgrimage.

### Harry Potter

In the Harry Potter books and films, some wizards use the Avada Kedavra spell to defeat their enemies. In an interview at the Edinburgh Book Festival on April 15, 2004, writer J.K. Rowling confirmed that she was directly inspired by the word Abracadabra. Here's what she had to say about it:

“Does anyone know where Avada Kedavra came from? It is an ancient spell in Aramaic, and it is the original of abracadabra, which means “Let the thing be destroyed.” Originally, it was used to cure illness and the “thing” was the illness, but I decided to make it the “thing” as in the person standing in front of me. I take a lot of liberties with things like that. I twist them around and make them mine.”

**So, my advice is that the next time you use the Abracadabra spell, beware. The result may be more surprising than simply making a rabbit appear!**

## DISCOVERIE OF WITCHCRAFT

**When a magician dazzles an audience with magic, the crowd doesn't realize that not very long ago, conjurers risked torture and death for practicing their art. Today, of course, most people understand that illusionists produce wonders for entertainment purposes. But there was a time in history when the word "Magic" invoked real fear among the masses.**

### Discoverie of Witchcraft

Published in 1584 by Reginald Scot, the book "Discoverie of Witchcraft" raised real controversy in the Middle Ages. Scot has the distinct honor of writing the first book that denies the existence of witchcraft. Most importantly, he vehemently accused the Church of unjustified persecution in this regard. It's also the first book in English to reveal the methods and props used by illusionists of that time.

In the Middle Ages, magic was intimately related to religion, superstition, and ignorance. This was the era of the Holy Inquisition. The Church began seriously harassing anyone with seemingly out-of-the-ordinary abilities. *Only "God is capable of miracles" so all other miraculous phenomena were the work of the devil!*

Thus, from the Middle Ages to the 18th century in Europe and North America, we see the famous witch hunts. They became infamous for their pseudo-trials

and brutal executions. Most victims were women, yet anyone was a possible target. Adulterers, red-haired people, epileptics, unwed mothers, widows, healers, and midwives - all were suspects.

Aside from the real religious fervor behind this plague, the Inquisition effectively eliminated those deemed embarrassing or perceived as a threat. Stories of bad neighbors or couples, the payment of debts, litigation to appropriate land, and broken promises were often the starting point for trial. Anyone with a so-called special skill could get sentenced to death.

Acting weird and eccentric was enough to warrant an accusation. Those tortured and executed during this period range in the several hundred thousand. Some historians speak of millions of victims. So, it's understandable that entertainers and magicians of the time were very discreet.



## Some Magic Histories...

# DISCOVERIE OF WITCHCRAFT



### Stop the Massacre!

To stop the carnage of the Inquisition, Reginald Scot (1538-1599) an English writer, published "Discoverie of Witchcraft." Scot believed the persecution of these alleged wizards and witches was irrational and anti-Christian. He blamed the Roman Catholic Church for perpetrating this abomination. His book demonstrates there were no witches and denies the existence of witchcraft. He goes on to protect the population from quacks and dispel superstitions. For instance, it was widely believed disease was the result of bad spells.

### Magic and Illusion

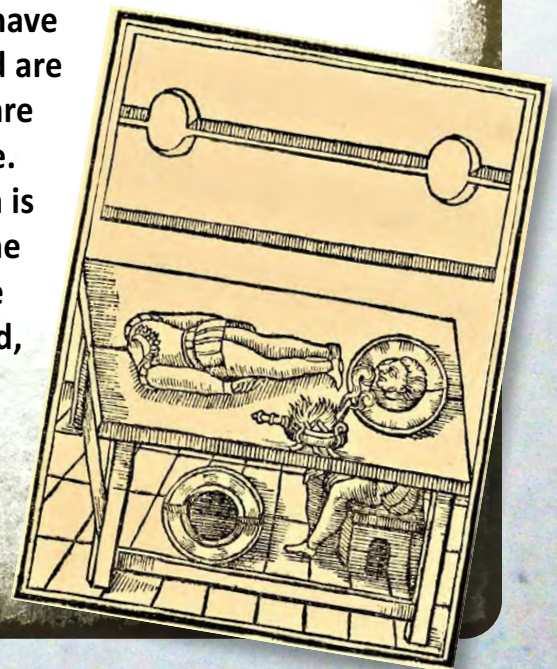
Scot's book was also written to prove that magic does not exist. He exposes how magical effects that seem miraculous are not. He describes the secrets of certain tricks that use accessories like ropes, knives, trick tables, and other devices.

We see among others an illustration showing the beheading of John the Baptist. Lying on a table, a person hides their head through an opening. Another person hidden under the table sticks their head out through another hole to present it in a large golden tray. Some of the illusions described in his book are still presented by magicians today. Additionally, Scot reveals the instruments used by the inquisitors during their interrogations to apparently unmask the witches.

### The Church

Naturally, the Church did not agree. They regarded this as a malicious attempt to lead good Christians far from the right path. And unfortunately, most people at that time did not know how to read or were too poor to buy books. Those reading Scot's book were the rich and the ones interested in keeping their power over people by promoting supernatural beliefs. That is why, upon his accession to the throne of England in 1603, King James I *declared Scot's book diabolical and ordered all existing copies burned.*

**Few copies have survived and are extremely rare and valuable. One of them is housed at the Magic Castle in Hollywood, California.**



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**Loran**



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Engraving depicting Abraxas in the book “The Gnostics and their remains Ancient and Mediaeval” by Charles William King. 1887. Public domain. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Abraxas\_gem\_scan.svg]

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Woodcut with tone block by the artist Hans Baldung Grien. 1510. Public domain. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hans\_Baldung\_-\_Witches\_Sabbath\_-\_WGA01221.jpg]

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Illustration from publication *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* by Reginald Scot and presenting the decapitation of John the Baptist. 1651. Public domain. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:John\_the\_Baptist\_illusion.jpg]

**Anneken Hendriks' torture:**  
Drawing of the torture of Anneken Hendriks who was burned in Amsterdam in 1571. Illustration by the artist Jan Luyken. 1685. Public domain. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Witch-scene4.JPG]

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Illustration of witches burned at the stake in Derenburg, County Reinstein in 1555. from the Rainer Decker. 1555. Public domain. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Zeitung\_Derenburg\_1555\_crop.jpg]

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Exhibition “ILLUSIONS - THE ART OF MAGIC” at the McCord Museum, Montreal. (2017) This is a magnificent chromolithography dating from 1916 used to announce Houdini's show in which he presented his legendary illusion “Water Torture Cell”. This rare poster comes from the Allan Slaight collection. [www.musee-mccord.qc.ca/fr/expositions/magie/]

## PHOTO CREDITS

EVERY EFFORT HAS BEEN MADE TO CONTACT THE CREATORS OF THE PHOTOS. IN CASE OF OMISSION, THE NAMES OF THE RIGHTS HOLDERS WILL BE ADDED IN A REPRINT.

## “ FINAL ACT

The expression “Merde”  
(which means shit in French) is used to wish  
“good luck” to an artist before the curtain opens.  
Its origin is uncertain, but one of them holds true.  
When the public used to go to the theater in a  
horse-drawn carriage, it was said that if there  
was a lot of horse shit in front of the entrance,  
it was a good sign. This meant that several carriages  
had stopped and let a lot of spectators off!

So, I say “Merde” to you, my magician friend! ”

*Loran*



Loran

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