

THEATRICAL MAGIC

The Book

Written and Illustrated by
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Edited By

Bill Palmer

Theatrical Magic
By John Pyka

Routines and text

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INTRODUCTION

One of the greatest pleasures of being the editor of a book is being able to write an introduction. This is especially fun for me, because I believe this book may help a number of budding performers avoid some of the pitfalls of becoming a professional magician without having any idea of how to go about it.

I met Big Daddy Cool, AKA John B. Pyka, on the Magic Café. Here was a fellow who obviously knew what he was talking about when he discussed magic and the theatre. I noticed that his profile said he was from Nashville. I go to Nashville about twice a year, so I made sure I had a chance to meet him. We hit it off right from the start. He is an original thinker, a talented magician and a heck of a singer!

Unlike some of the “experts” on theatrical magic, John has actually had a successful touring magic show. This, in itself, speaks volumes. He would probably still be touring, if it were not for a series of unfortunate events.

Now he has chosen to share his ideas and advice with those who will heed them. Take it from someone who has “been there, done that,” this book is worth whatever you take from it. Don’t just read it – learn from it.

The sections on character development are worth the price of the book.

So, what are you reading this for? Read the rest of the book!

Bill Palmer, MIMC
Houston TX, March 2007

Author's Introduction

In 1998 I wrote a short manuscript of close-up magic called "Just Like Magic." It was a collection of the material I used while working restaurants for nearly 10 years and it was well received by those few who read it. Joe M. Turner pointed out that the strongest part of the material was the original presentations.

In 2004 I co-authored a set of lecture notes called "Making Magic Your Own" with Jason Michaels. I had been fueled on by the response to my regular postings on The Magic Café. Again, those who have read that work have been profoundly influenced.

As I began to write this book, I decided to draw from and include much of the material in those two smaller works, in addition to brand new content. Jason Michaels and Bill Palmer also offered two of their original scripts and contributions, and Bill Palmer has so graciously agreed to serve as editor. I am forever in his debt.

Perhaps the most exciting part (for me) about this project is to be able to include what may very well have been Eugene Poinc's final contribution to our art. In collaboration with my friend, Nelson Griswold, Gene contributed the final piece to The Key to Room 158 and helped turn it into what may well be regarded as a masterpiece.

About the illustrations: The illustrations in this book are not your typical technical line drawings. In my life I have enjoyed a side career as an artist and illustrator. All of the illustrations in this book are done using a brush, rather than the typical technical pen. Because of that, the illustrations have a looser, painterly style and feel. It is intentional!

Read on and enjoy!

John B. Pyka

Nashville, TN 2007

Chapter 1

What Is Theatrical Magic?

I never set out to be an entertainer. I thought I was going to be a comic book artist. But looking back, theater and entertainment was my destiny from the beginning. When I was around the age of 6 or 7 I began creating variety shows at family gatherings and holiday events. Eventually these evolved into productions staged for the neighborhood and I charged a nickel to come see the show. These shows always included songs, skits, and dance. The shows were most likely horrible. But my die was cast.

At the age of 8, I saw a magician performing in a mall in Ft. Wayne, IN. It was the first magician I ever saw live and I was spellbound. He performed a bird production act that ended with the production of a large parrot. I decided that I wanted to learn how to do that.

On the back of one of my comic books was an ad to earn cash and prizes. One of the prizes was a magic kit. I sent away for the kit and about 4 weeks later a package arrived in the mail. It was full of 11 boxes of greeting cards. All I had to do was sell 9 boxes of the cards to win the magic kit. I sold all 11. I got the kit and \$2 cash to boot! I learned all of the tricks within a week and began adding magic to my dreadful neighborhood variety shows.

"Have you ever closed your eyes and wished that you could be someone else? Maybe even live in a different time or different place? I have. You see, growing up wasn't always easy for me. I wasn't cool or popular, and I was often made fun of and picked on - mostly because of my weight."

I discovered that I could escape my reality through music, and theater, and magic. I learned that I could create unforgettable, larger than life characters that could do amazing and impossible things. It made me special. It made me unique."

John Pyka, from The Really B!G Show

As I entered Jr. High School, I became very active in theater and music. I would go on to pursue acting with a passion throughout High School and win numerous local, state and even national awards. Because I am a skilled singer, I performed in a lot of musicals, and was even cast in The Hi-Los. I mostly pursued magic as a separate interest. That was, until I saw the MUMS on TV. They blended magic, juggling, and Commedia Del Arte. It was the first time I began to think about blending art forms.

As I grew into adulthood I began to blend music, magic and theater more and more, until one day I finally realized that they were not separate art forms at all, but one and the same. I now hold to the theory that Magic is a theatrical convention used to tell a story. This is also true of music, dance, Commedia, masks, pantomime, etc. They are all

theatrical tools that should aid in telling a story.

Many will disagree with me, and say that magic is an art in and of itself, with no tie to the other conventions. I used to think along these lines as well. I did not believe that theater should have any more of a purpose than to entertain. Period. All of those plays and songs that made a "statement" or tried to "make people think" or were going to "change the world" just made me want to vomit. Oh, I loved a good, moving story but in large I felt that entertainment was just entertainment for entertainment's sake, and the entertainer had no mandate to create art.

I liked fluff. There, I said it. And because of that, one of my all time favorite shows was the Broadway musical Cats. I loved that musical for the reason most people hated it: No story, meaningless song and dance, nothing but music and dance spectacle. It was bliss. Then it all came crashing down around me.

If you are not familiar with Cats, the premise is simple: Based on T.S. Elliot's narrative verse "Old Deuteronomy's Book of Practical Cats", several cats are presented as candidates to ascend to the Heavyside Layer, and come back to a new life. One by one the characters boast of their merit to have the honor. Mr. Mistoffelees, the magical cat, even saves Old Deuteronomy (their "king") from a kidnapping attempt. In the end it is Grizabella, the former glamour cat, who has squandered her life and alienated everyone who ever knew her, who gets the honor. Huh? What? That makes no sense. It was such a glaring inconsistency that one could only ignore it and enjoy the spectacle. At least that's what I thought, and it was easy to do because the story was deeply buried in spectacle.

After adoring this musical for well over a decade, one day it hit me. The story isn't meaningless, it is deeply profound, but so simple that you miss it. You see, it wasn't the cat that deserved a new life that got the honor, it was the cat that *needed* the new life the most that got the gift. Wow. That revelation shook me to the very core. Seriously. Everything I believed about theater and entertainment was personified by Cats, and I had just learned that I was completely off base. Theater must have meaning.

Now, many of you will say "But John, magic isn't theater,"

or "magic is entertainment in and of itself," or "the amazement is the meaning." While I do agree that magic can (and should) be entertaining, I also believe that it can be so much more. A magic show doesn't have to be a string of special effects and nothing more. It can tell a story, make a statement, or even instruct or educate. Unfortunately too many performers have created shows that are nothing except a string of special effects, that has no meaning or relevance. This is one of the reasons that many people regard magic as meaningless diversion (usually for children). It is because so many magicians have made it so. We have removed all meaning and relevance from our magic. How sad.

So, how do we fix this? Well, I hope that this book will help make a difference. And you, by reading it may well be a part of the change.

Theatrical Magic, in the simplest terms, is magic that is character and story driven.

Whether it is known as Story Telling Magic, Bizarre Magic, Gospel Magic, or some other title, it is magic that is used by the performer to accomplish one or more of several goals. 1) To tell a story, 2) to establish or showcase their character, 3) to solve a problem, 4) to make a statement, or 5) to instruct/educate. Often, magic accomplishes several of these goals at once. Of course it should go without saying that a fundamental purpose of theatrical magic is to entertain, amaze, and create wonder within the story.

To Tell A Story

A very good and immediately recognized example of theatrical magic is a packet trick that nearly every magician has owned or performed at one time or another, The Color Monte. The Color Monte is near perfect as an out of the box trick. It has everything a performer needs already built in to create wonder and amazement. It deals with gambling, and has a story that is tragic and humorous. And the script is perfect. Rarely does a word need to be changed.

For those unfamiliar with The Color Monte, it tells the story of a naive, amateur gambler who stumbles onto a game of 3 card Monte being played on a street corner. The cards are different from regular playing cards, in that they

have colored diamonds instead of the standard values and suits. The game seems simple enough, but try as he might the amateur can never find the money card. Its climax is a startling a magical revelation!

It is a perfect playlet, in that it has a beginning, middle and end. In theatrical terms, an introduction (characters, setting, conflict or situation), climax (the point that the conflict demands a solution) and resolution (the problem is solved, or replaced by a new problem). Further, it all happens in one act that is only 3-5 minutes long! I carry it with me everywhere I go. It has a permanent home in my wallet.

To Establish A Character

I love Harry Anderson. Not in the Biblical sense, I just really like his work. Like many other performers I went through a phase of imitating him. Harry is best well known for his character of Harry The Hat, a con-man character. Based on my observations and experience, Harry's magic for the most part is designed to establish and showcase his character, as he leads up to his famous Three Card Monarch, which in turn tells a story. This piece tells a powerful story about how Harry got involved in the world of magic tricks, con men and carnival freaks. It is a 3-Card Monte performed with not just jumbo, but giant cards. The cards are almost as big as he is! It uses a king, a queen and an ace, and at the end all three cards are transformed into the kings! It is the story of how things started for Harry. It is his magical biography. The tricks leading up to it serve specifically to establish this character so that you are held in rapt attention to hear his story. When I saw Harry's Showtime special **Hello Sucker**, it was, as he would say, a religious experience! He was the first modern magician I had seen who had a distinct character and had a story to tell.

To Solve A Problem

Usually when magic is used to solve a problem it is in the context of a larger narrative, or playlet. For example, Lance Burton performs a very cool version of the metamorphosis that I refer to as the Phantom Metamorphosis. I don't know what Lance calls it, but that is my title for it. In the

piece Lance's character is trying to win over a beautiful woman by performing amazing barehanded magic. These effects serve to solve one problem: how does the magician impress the girl? However, a Phantom type character wielding a sword, which challenges Lance's character to a duel, interrupts the courtship. The two fight. It becomes apparent that the Phantom is the stronger fighter and that Lance will lose if he doesn't do something quickly. Lance knocks the Phantom off balance and quickly hides under the tablecloth of a large table. The Phantom is not fooled. He stabs Lance and jumps up onto the table behind him. As the Phantom pulls the tablecloth from the table, Lance is seen to vanish. The Phantom jumps from the table, walks downstage toward the audience, pauses, and then removes the mask and cape to reveal that it is now Lance Burton. The Phantom is gone, and the two young lovers can continue their courtship.

In this example, the story is about a young man defending himself and his lover from the villain. The problem comes in that the villain is stronger than the hero is, so instead of defeating him with brawn, the magician defeats the villain using his magic. Problem solved.

In some cases, the problem may not be part of the story's conflict. For example, a woman who is dressed plainly needs to be dressed in a shimmering gown. She has no time to exit stage to change, so a magical onstage costume change is in order. Later on I will discuss my *Titanic Thompson* routine and the specific problem that it solved.

To Make A Statement

I stated earlier that theatrical magic can also make a statement. For example, one of my favorite performers, Jeff McBride, uses magic as theater to make statements about the human condition. I love his Rain Maker routine. I'm not sure if he intended it, but my interpretation of the piece is that it is a commentary about the needy yet ungrateful attitudes of man. In this piece the magician wants water to drink. He petitions the gods, who fulfill his request to overflowing. But rather than be grateful for meeting his need in abundance, he is annoyed by the surplus. In my opinion it is a commentary that is deep and profound.

To Instruct or Educate

This purpose is most commonly the purpose of Gospel Magic, in which the magic serves to illustrate a point or punctuate a lesson. Usually the instruction is about Jesus or Christianity, but often magicians create theatrical presentations designed to educate audiences about the dangers of drug use, or smoking. I remember in grade school *The Mathmagician* performed for my school. His entire act was designed to get kids excited about math by demonstrating how magical it could be. Large corporations often hire magicians to create magic that helps sell a product or convey information about the company to clients or employees. For example I once created a piece to demonstrate the difference between reality and illusion. The selling point came when I instructed the audience that the quality of my client's product was no illusion and that the product would fly off the shelves like magic! Now that I think of it, I believe I will include that script, Wonder Pen-attration, here in the book.

As I stated earlier, many of these examples overlap, and often a routine will serve several purposes. Throughout this book, I will present several theatrical scenarios that are augmented by magic. Some tell a story and are completely self-contained playlets. Other pieces were created as parts of a larger narrative and serve to either move the story along by revealing something about the character or solving a problem. And although these pieces serve a slightly different function, their ultimate goal is the same: *to tell the story*.

You will find several kinds of presentations here. Some of these are fully thought out routines and include handlings and methodology. Other pieces involve commercially available or marketed magic and therefore include only the scripts. In both cases these presentations are intended to help you be inspired to unlock your own theatrical creativity. To that end, I have also sprinkled creativity exercises throughout the book, to guide you along and give you something to work on yourself. You'll notice that each creativity exercise is followed by lined spaces. Use them. Write your thoughts and ideas down as they come to you. Use this book as a workbook. Highlight it, mark it up.

Finally, I have included essays on several key topics. These

range from the creative process to character development, to even a word or two about mounting your own theater show. One chapter is dedicated entirely to the development of “**Swingin' At The Roxy**” and serves to provide insight into what exactly goes into building a touring show. I think it will be very beneficial to many.

Read on and enjoy!



John B. Pyka swings as Big Daddy Cool
alongside his Swing Kitten paramour Trixie
LaMoore.

*Theatrical Magic, in
the simplest terms,
is magic that is
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driven.*

The story behind the stories:

*Swingin' At The
Roxy*

The most logical starting point for this book is to start with a discussion based on my own material from my stage show "Swingin' At The Roxy." "Roxy" was a narrative magic musical created by me for my character of "Big Daddy Cool" Johnny Dellarocca. I created the show to showcase my character, and to more fully integrate music, magic and dance. Set in 1940s post WWII Chicago, the story was focused around Dellarocca, a former gangster turned entertainer, who has opened his own club. Rival mob boss Tony Greico isn't happy and he seeks to shut down the club. Subplots include the Lane Sisters' onstage sibling rivalry, Lola Rogue getting caught in a love triangle with \$2 Deuce and C-note Charlie, and wannabe singer Ginger Brown who has come to Chicago from Kansas to become a big star. Ultimately, it is Mitzi Malone, Greico's moll, who turns on him to help Dellarocca win the day.

Swingin' At The Roxy opened in August of 2000 at the Stardust Theater in Nashville, TN. We completed the original run at over 80% capacity, and then took the show on tour. The show toured for 4 years in theaters and dinner theaters across the southeast, and would return to the Stardust for two more runs before closing the show in late 2004.

Swingin' At The Roxy was a culmination of a nearly life-long pursuit to integrate music, magic, and dance in a coherent narrative. I had dabbled with combining vocal music and magic years before with a levitation while singing "Music of the Night" from the Phantom of the Opera. However the practical way to combine music, magic, and dance continued to elude me. One of the final inspirations to create "Roxy" was my research into 1940s culture as part of my development of Big Daddy Cool. I realized that the supper clubs in that era featured floorshows that always featured dancers, singers, and a magician. A lightbulb came on above my head and I had the perfect setting and framework; a recreation of the classic supper club floor shows!

I worked for a year writing the script, researching the time period, selecting the music and deciding what magic would be included. I decided to use music that was a recognizable hit, that was either from the 1940s or stylistically correct for the 1940s. Each song had to be clean, or easily altered. Actually, the first two songs I chose I had



John strikes a solemn pose as his signature character - Big Daddy Cool

performed before as a part of resort show group called the Schussy Cats; "Minnie the Moocher" and "Sing, Sing, Sing." I began there and added to those. For the magic, I started with the magic that I had already been performing, was audience tested, and that also fit the character of Big Daddy Cool; Bill In Lemon, Sidewalk Shuffle and The Floating Rose. I then created a dancing cane sequence for "It Don't Mean A Thing If It Ain't Got That Thing," and a neat series of knife, money and cigar manipulation to "Mack The Knife." When the show opened in August of 2000, there were some pieces that were just vocal music, some were choreographed magic to music, there were some pieces that were just dance, some pieces that were stand-up magic, and then there were pieces like It Don't Mean A Thing that were all of the above. In all, it was in my opinion the perfect variety show: It literally had something for everyone. Add to the mix a compelling story and several sub-plots and we had the making of a hit show!

As the script was being completed, I held auditions in Nashville and cast eight swing dancers, four female singers and four additional men to play Tony Greico and his goons. I had negotiated a production contract with the Star Dust Theater and we began rehearsing in June for an August opening. During that time, I mounted a marketing campaign that included appearances on local TV talk shows, radio interviews, and articles in the local newspapers. The campaign also included paid advertising on local radio and in the Nashville Scene, the local entertainment newspaper.

During the 4-year run of "Roxy" we sold out 90% of the theaters we presented and had 80% capacity in the other 10% of theaters. During the four years there were new pieces of magic created for the show that solved some specific problems. Our run came to an end in November 2004 in the middle of The Road to Broadway Tour when one of the female cast members, who in my opinion suffered paranoid delusions, left the cast and took two other principles with her. We had been on our way to debuting in New York at the Producer's Club Theater. Obviously, we didn't make it. Although we could handle one cast member leaving, we were not prepared for three. We ended the tour then, and I decided to retire the show.

I hadn't realized until that incident how tired I was. For 5 years, my life was "Roxy." The most taxing aspect of the run was maintaining the cast of 13-15 performers. Traveling with that many people was a logistical nightmare. Can you imagine having to provide travel and lodging and food accommodations that pleased everyone? It was not easy. Further, I had to constantly deal with replacing cast members. The female cast members were a particular problem. One girl left the show to get married. Another got pregnant. One girl broke her ankle skiing. The singers were the biggest challenge. Since we were based out of Nashville, every singer that joined the cast was an aspiring country or gospel star waiting to be discovered. Focus and commitment was an issue. As soon as any one of the singers got a whiff of another opportunity, they were gone. Dealing with these problems left me drained.

I took some time off and in the aftermath, I experimented with scaling the show back and created a 45 minute "Swing Magic" revue that has also met with success. This show featured Big Daddy Cool & just two Swing Kittens. There was no narrative, and the focus was on the character of BDC and the relationship with The Swing Kittens. In August of 2006 while performing "Swing Magic" as a part of The Really B!G Show, I injured my back. The injury was so severe that I was forced into retirement until I could get the rehab and healing I needed. It was during this time that I decided to start writing the book you are now holding. As I write this I am hoping that I do make a full recovery.

Despite the trials, setbacks and successes, "Roxy" was perhaps the most important chapter of my career. It was the first show that I had created, written, produced and starred in all on my own. I had produced and directed several works previously, but this was my baby. All mine. Second, it marked the beginning of the most creative period of my career, a period which has not ceased. Almost all of the ideas and scripts in this book were hatched and developed during this period. My 2005 IBM Gold Medal Finals act was created out of "Roxy." Also, I made a solid living. When so many performers get stuck taking a day job they hate, or starving, I was making a solid living doing what I loved to do. Finally and most importantly "Roxy" led me to other performers. I met Nelson Griswold and Jason Michaels as a result of working on "Roxy." That relation-

ship would serve as the springboard for Music City Magic and several other projects discussed elsewhere in this book. I also formed relationships with several talented performers from the cast that will last a lifetime. Swingin' At The Roxy remains the zenith of my creative career.

The next few chapters will address specific routines created for "Roxy," and what purpose they served in moving the story or what problem they solved. In some cases they simply established a character or revealed an aspect of the character.

As a footnote, the story of "Roxy" is far from over. It has been opted by a team of Broadway producers who are interested in staging it in New York with an original score. So you never, know I still may be earning that elusive Tony Award!

The Mambo Scarves

We'll start light. Many of the magic routines in "Roxy" either tell a story or move the story along. But a few pieces, like this one, serve to establish character or reveal something about a character. In this case, The Mambo Scarves is a metaphor for the relationship between Big Daddy Cool and the Lane Sisters. It reveals something about the characters.

I am often an evangelist for meaning over method. I never buy a magic trick until I have a purpose for it, which means I've already written a script. However, I am human and every now and then I get blinded and fall in love with a trick with a clever method. Jay Scott Berry is a brilliant thinker and he created a great method for performing the 20th Century Silks using ungimmicked silks. His version is commercially available as the 21st Century Silks. I have always loved the 20th Century Silks and this method was so devious I couldn't help myself. I had to buy it. It was only a few hours later, sitting there with a brilliant method, that I realized I had no purpose for it. So I worked on it for my own pleasure, thinking that I might not ever perform it. I made notes in my journal, but otherwise it sat in my magic drawer, unused.

About a year passed before the inspiration struck. We had been performing "Roxy" for some time, and I was thinking of creating a drink act to the show. Afterall, the show is set in a nightclub. I had not added a drink act because despite the consistency of the setting and character, there still was no motivation to do it. However, the idea lingered in my journal. One day I was reviewing the notes in my journal, and these two items stood out, and all of a sudden it came to me.

I worked out a routine that uses the 20th Century Silks to illustrate the relationship that Big Daddy Cool shares with the Lane Sisters, Rose and Lana. What the relationship reveals is that the three are ultimately inseparable, bound by love.

Ultimately, I did not develop a full drink act, but this script does serve the purpose I had intended. By the way, the selected piece of music is the classic Tito Puentes mambo "Sunny Ray." Enjoy.

The Mambo Scarves

By John Pyka

Characters: "Big Daddy Cool" Johnny Dellarocca, Lana Lane, Rose Lane

Setting: Club Roxy, circa 1946

Props: 20th Century Silks, Cocktail Shaker, and three shot glasses

(Big Daddy Cool & the Lane Sisters have just finished a version of the floating rose.)

JOHNNY DELLARocca:

Well that was swingin' girls! I think this calls for a drink!

(The stage is clear except for a small cocktail table set with three shot glasses and a cocktail shaker. BDC crosses to behind the table.)

JOHNNY DELLARocca:

So girls, what can I get ya?

ROSE

Amaretto.

LANA:

Merlot.

JOHNNY DELLARocca:

And some Vodka for me...

(Big Daddy Cool looks around with a curious look... There are no bottles to pour drinks.)

ROSE:

Big Daddy, there ain't nothin' to drink here...

LANA:

Yeah baby, how we gonna have a drink?

JOHNNY DELLARocca:

I know how we can solve this problem... Let's Mambo!

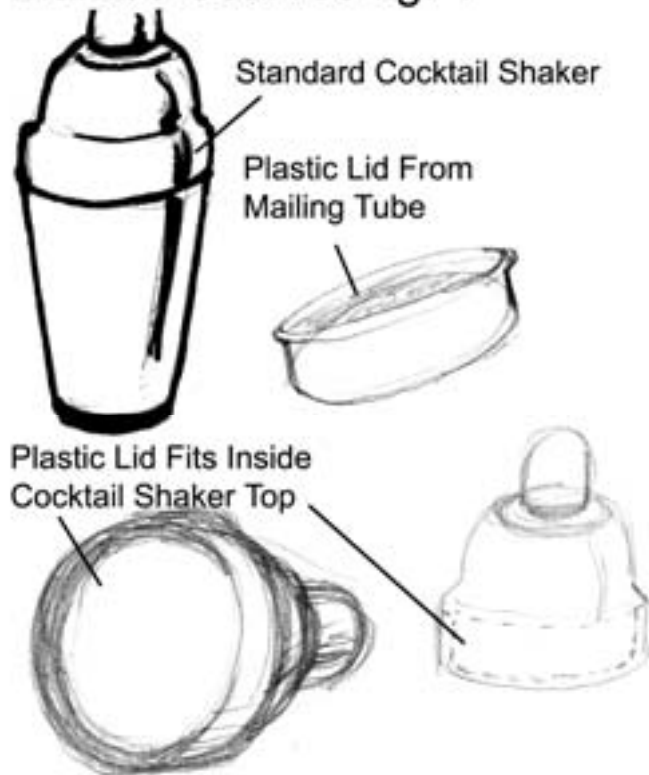
(Big Daddy Cool takes each of Lane sister's hands in his and the three dance a short mambo hand in hand. Lana is wearing a red scarf around her neck. Struck by inspiration, Big Daddy Cool pulls it free. He turns to Rose, who appropriately is wearing a yellow rose in her hair. He pulls on it and it transforms into a yellow scarf. He shows both scarves openly as the sisters continue to dance, and then ties them together in a tight knot. Holding the tied scarves

in his right hand, he reaches into the air and produces a third scarf, yellow with a red flame pattern on it. Still holding the tied scarves, he strokes the flame scarf a few times and tosses it high into the air where it transforms into a black and white cane. Big Daddy Cool taps the knot with the tip of the cane and tosses it aside. He pulls the two knotted scarves in opposite directions and the flame scarf appears tied between them. The girls are amazed and delighted.

Big Daddy Cool steps behind the bar and picks up the cocktail shaker. He removes the top and tucks the scarves into the shaker. He replaces the top and shakes it like he is a mixing a drink. He removes the top and pours three separate drinks into the three shotglasses: Amaretto for Rose, Merlot for Lana, and Vodka for himself. The trio toasts each other, then the audience, and drinks their respective drinks. As the music strikes its last chord, the trio assumes a close pose.)

(BLACKOUT)

Mambo Scarves fig. 1



scanned from the notebook of John B. Pyka

While I chose to use Jay Scott Berry's 21st Century Silks, it is entirely possible to use the classic version, which consists of a silk gimmicked with a secret pocket to conceal the duplicate silk. Instructions to build your own can be found in Tarbell and Mark Wilson's Complete Course. You may either make one, or purchase a commercially made set from most magic dealers.

When I first created this piece I had to figure out a way for the cocktail shaker to work. I consulted Tarbell, and a few other sources. I came up with a gimmicked cocktail shaker with a secret compartment in the lid to hold water (fig 1).

Obviously, this routine could be very adaptable to nearly any performance situation, and/or character. The meaning may also be different in different scripts. This routine could also serve as the finale or the starting point of a longer drink act. For example, in my original version this piece was the conclusion to an ongoing gag. Throughout the show, BDC would go to the table for a drink, and pour a drink from his flask. However the flask would only pour enough for one drink. It was a lota flask, and every time he poured a drink, the Lane Sisters were disappointed not to get a drink as well. After the gag repeated 5 or 6 times, the girls got angry. BDC suggested that they solve it with a mambo. In that regard, this piece also served to solve a problem magically. Although audiences responded well to the mambo routine, the set-up with the flask fell flat. Audiences did not find it funny that my character was in essence abusing the Lane Sisters, and in general it disrupted the energy and flow of the show. After working on the original version for a bout a year, I decided to re-write the script resulting with the current version. After I revised it, the piece became a huge hit with audiences!

What else could the scarves/silks represent?

[illegible]

Psychic
Entertainment

General Magic

Bizarre



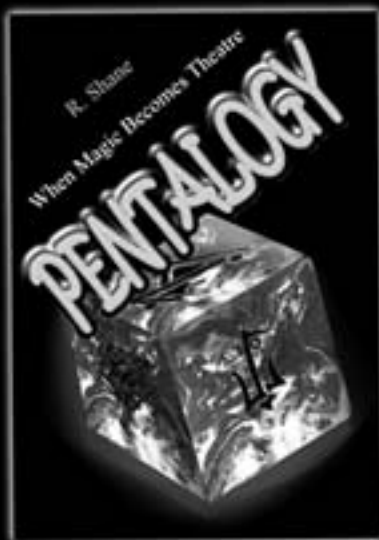
Hard Cover

Soft Cover

Magical Effects

Always something new

Wholesale Exclusively Through Murphy's Magic Supply
Available from YOUR FAVORITE DEALER



Pentalogy is almost 500 PAGES long with ZERO FLUFF! Pentalogy is a collection of FIVE smaller books that R. Shane wrote and released over the course of five LONG years!

Pentalogy is a powerful set of routines of easy to do, NON-finger flinging close-up magic that is more accurately called Close Up THEATRE!

Pentalogy is filled with themes, stories, effects and ideas that provoke emotion and involvement. From the romantic to the frightening, from the bizarre to the beautiful. R. Shane has poured his heart and soul into this collection of real pieces of magic that he has tested and performed.

Pentalogy is real, useable magic that has been used in front of real audiences!

Pentalogy is an inch thick! And Thicker Is better!

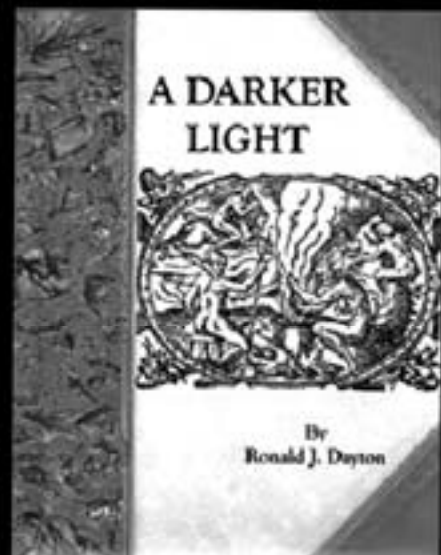
Pentalogy is fun, funny and FASCINATING as R. Shane tells you a lot about how and why he structures things the way he does and gives a look inside his head. (And BOY is it dark in there.)

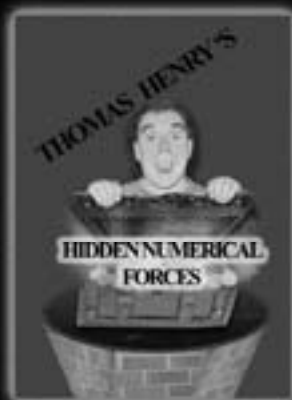
This 480 page hard cover, this book is an AWESOME value as I PROMISE that you can find more than a few gems that you will actually perform.

A Darker Light- From the fertile mind of Ronald J. Dayton (a.k.a Kotah) is a collection of dark stories and poems entangled in a web of magic. Some 120 plus pages of material for the Bizarrist. Twisted, and thought provoking stuff. Dark but real, pages from the tests of life. Tales that will touch emotions, and possibly a nerve or two. Things which once heard, will not soon be forgotten. Presentations gathered over the past three years and all released in one book for the very first time. A Darker Light is sure to please the dark side of your performers soul. Come, walk this shadow path, bathed in a darker light. In its glow you will come to know magic differently. This is the best of Dayton, at Dayton's best! The imagery of words used as tools of creative inspiration.

This book features over 30 bizarre effects presented in story form. Not for the novice, this book simply hints at methodology, preferring instead, as with all good bizarre magick, to focus on the presentation and mood.

A Darker Light will be printed in soft cover 8.5" X 11" format, and is sure to please the dark side of your performer's soul.





Hidden Numerical Forces Prepare to be surprised...

Within these pages lies a thorough investigation of the mathematics, psychology and subtleties of numerical methods in mentalism and mental magic. Despite the theme, Hidden Numerical Forces is not a book of number tricks. While numerical quantities and operations do figure in, they take a back seat to the unexpected twists in presentation.

Hidden Numerical Forces is truly a book of principles. Various complete effects are explained, but the emphasis is more on developing general techniques you can apply to create new handlings of your own. Think of it as a do-it-yourself toolkit brimming with unusual ideas for compelling psychic entertainment.

Thomas Henry has had over 130 articles published on a variety of subjects. Among these are several on mentalism, including a One-Man Parade, which appeared in The Linking Ring

Magictales "Magictales" - The Definitive Book of Storytelling Magic!

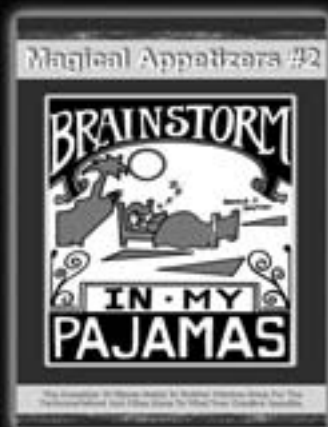
Do YOU want to perform Magic routines that are memorable, magic that people will talk about for days?

Do you want to learn entertaining routines that don't require knuckle-busting sleights or complicated mechanical equipment? You will find all of the above in Leslie Melville's new book, entitled: 'MAGICTALES' - The Definitive Book of Storytelling Magic! Author of the recently acclaimed book, "Kismet or the Enchanted Stepping Stones!" Leslie has written another, more comprehensive work in the field of Storytelling Magic!

The material includes seventeen complete storytelling routines.

Finally, we have included the entire text of my previous work. "Kismet - or The Enchanted Stepping Stones!" So you will have two major books in one about a subject of which little so far has been written!" 'MAGICTALES' - The Definitive Book of Storytelling Magic!

Is a collection of magical routines with entertaining story presentations that YOU WILL PERFORM! No pipe dreams! - No difficult moves! - No complicated apparatus!



Brainstorm In My Pajamas

Here we have Ronald Dayton's newest book, "Brainstorm In My Pajamas" a humorous title for one heck of an idea book. Ron Dayton is one of the most prolific mind in magic, and his alter ego-KOTAH as been popular on the bizarre scene for years as well.

Well, Ron has compiled a series of ideas, tricks, improvements for his creations and MUCH MORE. We offer it here as the second in our "Magical Appetizer" series! Within two months the book will be available for preview, but we wanted to share it with you now so you could get excited!

Best of all, this book will include a reprint of the long unavailable Dayton Razor Blade Miracle! Ron's version of the razor blade trick is superb in that it uses only ONE set of razors, and nothing need be concealed in the mouth at the beginning or the end. Yes, the EXACT same razors that go in to the mouth separate, are the exact same ones that emerge strung together at the end!

180 Plus full sized pages, with illustrations!

Dustin It Off! By Julie Sobanski and Dean Montalbano

This book is the first in our magical appetizers series. This series will be dedicated to a set of small "idea" books and single effect manuscripts. The idea is to spark creativity or offer powerful clever thinking in small packets to get your creative juices flowing.

In "Dustin' It Off", Julie Sobanski and Dean Montalbano revisit their 1980/90's Genii column Tarbell Treasures. In that old chestnut, the authors would take an old outdated item from the Tarbell Course In Magic and dust it off with a new twist, idea or presentation. Here, for the first time in once place are many of those routines, plus some new ones never seen before and several articles dedicated to magical thinking.

Dustin It Off features routines based on Rope and Tape Principle, One Ahead, Thumb Tips, Coin Penetrations and so much more. There are children's routines, bizarre magic, stand up, close-up and more. But more importantly, there is inspiration to encourage YOU to take some old outdated magic, and give it a face lift!

This 6 X 9 Soft Cover 128 page book is only \$25.00





AUTOMATA Automata is a collection of effects based on self working magic- WAIT- I know what yer thinking.... Counting and math, OH NO!

No Indeed!!! Yes, the principles behind most of these are based on tried and true mathematical principles which, in their original form are not particularly performable, but WOW what R. Shane has done with them.

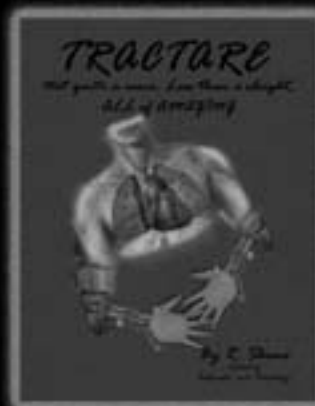
The subtitle of this book is Self-working magic with HUMANITY! That says it all. Here are simple methodologies enshrouded in AWESOME presentations that make the "tricks" into magic theatre that entertains, amazes and inspires. R. Shane begins each effect with a treatise on the original method and effect and then explores variations on the theme. R. Shane is also a master at finding a hole and plugging it up. He finds the "flaw" in a method that prevents it from being a masterpiece, and finds a way to seal that hole so the mystery won't escape.

In this 140 Plus page book, you will find over a dozen plus principles, PLUS complete performable routines based on each of them and literally DOZENS of variations on each one.

In **Tractare**, Shane takes a series of simple effects. Many of which you may know. He starts by sharing the original effect, talking about why he liked or in some cases DISliked the original. Then he starts "Shane-Ifying" it.... He talks about the psychology behind the trick, why it works. He talks about the weaknesses and strengths of it. Sometimes he runs off on tangents (and Oh yeah it sounds JUST like Shane talking... That makes it fun to read- even if sometimes mind spinning) and brings in other effects.

The thing about the material in **Tractare** is it uses no real sleights. There are some moves, little movements or things one does to make the magic happen, but in some cases they are as simple as turning over a stack of business cards. Yes- THAT little of a move.

Finally, Shane shows you what HE did with it all. Like mixing ingredients together for a cake, (Ever taste vanilla by itself? BLECHA!) the end is MUCH more delightful than the parts. Often the final routine and indeed EFFECT are not recognizable from the original, but ALWAYS Shane weaves a well thought out audience tested plot, with simple magic to leave you with Miracles. I HATE reading the word Miracle in magic descriptions, but that's all I can call much of his magic.



More Food For Your Bizarre Mood

For those who enjoyed Ron Dayton's HIT "A Darker Light" we present this sequel, "By Darkness Influenced."

Over 120 pages of bizarre poems, stories, effects and more. Bizarre magic is NOT for every audience nor for every performer, but every performer WILL benefit from learning how to take simple methods, sometimes only hinted at- wrap them in a dramatic or disturbing story, and make them in to something WONDERFUL. Some food for thought, some food for performance, and some, well- just down right disturbing!

By Darkness Influenced features Magick stories, poems and effects that range from necrophiliac paranoids who are killed by giant spiders, to paper butterflies that flap to life in a flash of fire. Poems about children who turn parents into living Mister Potato Heads, to clever card tricks used to illustrate a story of an old western shootout! From the Beautiful to the disgusting... it's all here!

MIND CANDY!

Contained herein are over 50 original effects and presentations for the Psychic Entertainer or Metnalist.

Mind Candy is over 150 pages of material, some never before published, glossy hard cover book filled with clever, off beat, actually performed mind reading material.

How often do you hear an ad for a magic book say, "This one effect ALONE is worth the price of the book." Well, we could certainly say that several times over. Consider this: What would you pay for an effect where instead of bending spoons, you bend WRENCHES! How about an effect where a deck of cards is hurled into the audience and random spectators merely THINK of a card that they catch... the performer is able to name those! A randomly selected cassette tape among hundreds ends up correctly predicting a randomly selected card, using an ordinary cassette player and ordinary cassettes! A Russian Roulette effect using Deadly Snakes!

All this and more in MIND CANDY!





Imagine a long lost Diary and sketch book which chronicles the life and times of a man named Stark. In this diary you read of the amazing, bizarre, dark, magical goings on that Mister Stark put his old friend Strombil Trodworthy through, and are left to guess how he did it.

NOW, imagine that diary fell into the hands of Dean Montalbano who has written a follow up book entitled "Stark- The Man And His Methods"- in which he teaches you how to do all 30+ of the miracles found within this old diary.

Imagine this second volume includes BONUS material in the form of "Cipher Speak" a two person code act system developed by Dean many years ago, presented here for further development for the FIRST TIME to the public.

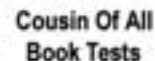
Volume 1 hard covered "reproduction" of the original "Diary." 6 X 9 over 115 Pages

Volume 2 is soft covered 6 X 9 over 80 Pages

There are two basic effects possible with this book.

The book itself, a normal looking novel, can be forced from a stack of others, or you can order several and recover them (We will be releasing other versions and titles with the SAME force pages and phrases at a later date) If you wish to use the Chuck Hickock Subtlety this is also a good book to include.

Effect A- Similar to Max Maven's Autome, but using a different book and offering 6 different force phrases, rather than one. The performer makes a sketch of his impressions which will later be shown to match the images and thoughts suggested by the phrase read by the spectator. This book allows SIX different sets of force phrases so that YOU decide in advance EXACTLY what phrase the spectator will choose. But remember, they MENTALLY choose a page, and SILENTLY read it-but before they ever open the page, you will KNOW what they are thinking. This can be used as a prediction OR a mind reading effect.



How often do you hear an ad for a magic book say, "This one effect ALONE is worth the price of the book." Well, we could certainly say that several times over. Consider this:

CONSIDER: What would you pay for a virtually sleight free card effect that can play for over 5 minutes, is topical, and can be done virtually under the spectator's nose? With UPC miracle II, you cause blank cards to become printed duplicates of freely selected cards, entire blank decks to print themselves and much more- but that is only ONE effect in *Quietus Of Creativity* volume One.

CONSIDER: A Magical Money Making effect which uses a plain sheet of notebook paper and ends with a REAL US LEGAL TENDER dollar printed right in the middle of the notebook paper... lines and all!

CONSIDER: Effects where popcorn visible pops itself, then moves back in time to become an unpopped kernel yet again..... With no sleights!

Suppose you could take an egg (Which CAN be borrowed- though where the heck are you going to borrow an egg.) and a coin (which can be borrowed and more likely,) and have both of them marked by a spectator.

You then cause the coin to magically penetrate INSIDE the egg. A small hole is chipped in the egg, big enough to pour out some of the egg goo, but small enough that a coin, which will be found INSIDE the egg, cannot escape. Spectator can look inside the hole and verify they see the coin AND their mark. Spectator can reach through the hole and grab the coin with tongs or tweezers and pull it out THROUGH the shell themselves AND can immediately verify that it IS the same coin they marked earlier.

Yes, there is a gimmick which you will have to create, but this takes less than 10 minutes once you have the knack, and many can be made at once and saved. You receive a manuscript giving you two versions of this effect, one totally impromptu, and another which thoroughly explains the gimmick. All this is a nice 45 page booklet, complete with over 50 illustrational photo's.





FROZEN

Ok, you will HAVE to see the video to believe this, but here is a 100% honest description:

The performer walks up to a total stranger and asks them if they have a coin which the magician will use. Spectator initials or marks the coin. Spectator drops the coin in the performer's hand.

The performer steps back a few feet, holds his hands at arms length and then blows toward his hand. Billows of "cold breath" puff forth with a cloud of (safe) smoke, like when you breath on a cold day.

The performer holds his hands over the spectator's, and cold drops of water drip forth. The performer slowly opens his hands, and a chunk of ice falls out into the spectator's awaiting hands. The spectator can then take the ice with them and wait for it to thaw to retrieve his coin.. yes it is the same one.

It is that clean, and THAT amazing

SOS, Self Opening Soda

Imagine, you show the spectators a (real) can of soda, or other canned beverage. (Such as Tea for instance.) You place the can on the table, or even in the palm of the spectator, hold your hands a foot or more AWAY from the can, and have everyone concentrate on the can. As everyone watches, the tab of the can visible and loudly cracks open and pulls upward! You then pour the beverage out of the can (Yes, really) and show the can to the audience for inspection!

This is a monograph of a little over 40 pages, and over a hundred photographs! It is soft cover and written in a conversational tone so the learning process is very personal as similar to watching a video as the step by step pictures unfold.

Real can, real soda, really amazing! Can even be done while the can is held by a spectator. Several versions, PLUS a bonus effect of a self opening beer bottle. This will work with almost any beverage can in an aluminum tab container.



The Devil Of A Bar And Pub is known to readers of Linking Ring, Members of the exclusive Shadow Network and elsewhere. The Scribe has long written reports about the goings on of this pub, and the peculiar cast of characters that frequents it. Those people are the alter egos of a veritable Who's Who of the magic, bizarre and storytelling world!

Who are they and who is The Scribe? Well, that has never been made publicly known... Until now! Yes, in addition to over 60 of the scribe's reports- in addition to never before published reports- in addition to reprints of the Linking Ring Pub specials, here you will learn the identity of the Scribe and his cohorts!

Leaping Lizards Magic is proud to have been chosen to bring this VERY exclusive hard cover collection of storytelling, bizarre and psychically entertaining magic together for the first and ONLY time. This dust jacketed book will top out close to 300 pages and is sure to become a collector's item.

Theatrical Magic, in the simplest terms, is magic that is character and story driven.

Whether it is known as Story Telling Magic, Bizarre Magic, Gospel Magic, or some other title, it is magic is that is used by the performer to accomplish several goals. 1) To tell a story, 2) to establish or showcase their character, 3) to solve a problem, 4) to make a statement, or 5) to instruct/educate.

Often, magic accomplishes several of these goals at once. Of course it should go without saying that a fundamental purpose of theatrical magic is to entertain, amaze, and create wonder within the story.

You want new routines, there are here. But John, in his wisdom, has instead focused upon theatre and philosophy, using the routines to teach the fundamentals of character, plot, conflict resolution, theatre language blocking and more.



