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History Behind The Hat: The Story Of The Magician

By Jim Kapowski

The concept of magician as entertainer has its roots deep in human history, but mostly dates back to the sixteenth century. Prior to this time, those who practiced magic claimed to have supernatural powers. When this idea clashed with Christianity in the Western world, new magicians, who entertained audiences, emerged.

Chevalier Joseph Pinetti impressed audiences in the late 1700s with his tricks as an escapist and mentalist. Illusionists emerged in the nineteenth century, using devices to produce elaborate stage shows. One of the first magicians to use live animals was

"Hermann the Great," who performed disappearing acts and levitation tricks with the animals. Later, famous magicians Siegfried and Roy gained fame in part because of their elaborate show and tigers.

Harry Houdini, perhaps the most well known magician of all time, developed elaborate escape tricks including handcuffs and locked chambers in the early 1900s. His death on Halloween is now also known as "National Magic Day." Houdini also created grand illusions, some of which magician David Copperfield emulated. During Houdini's time, Vaudeville acts included and promoted magic tricks.

Over time, the interest in magic has come and gone, although it enjoyed a revival in the 1970s that continues today. Many magicians, similar to other performers, develop a unique style or focus on a particular type of illusion. David Copperfield makes large objects disappear. Lance Burton employs many birds, and Penn and Teller are known for their unique style. Most recently, David Blaine gained fame for his street magic and outrageous stunts.

Magicians of all sorts keep their secrets very secret. The appeal of magic is trying to figure out how magicians accomplish those amazing feats. For those interested in learning magic, many sources are available for the entry-level magician. Some well-known tricks are "out in the open," and beginning magic kits can help a beginner learn the tricks of the trade. Many books and other resources are available for card tricks as well. Many stores carry magical wares as well.

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For those who are serious about the craft, two organizations are devoted entirely to magic, both with headquarters in St. Louis, Missouri. The Society of American Magicians and the International Brotherhood of Magicians have chapters throughout the world, provide information, and hold conferences. For those

seeking information, these are good places to begin. Your local library is also a good place to find more information, as is the Internet. However, online sources in particular are varied in quality and information, so beginning with one of the organizations may be a better way to begin.

The allure of magic is very real. Throughout the past few decades, magicians have taken magic to a new level, with elaborate stunts and full-out entertainment spectacles. From amazing card tricks to large disappearing acts, magic will likely continue to enthrall audiences worldwide for years to come. It is a performance art unlike any other, and the mystery associated with magic adds a level of intrigue that does not exist with other performance arts.

Magic Magicians is an information site that contains articles, a directory and other Magician Resources. It can be found at:

<http://www.magicmagicians.com>

3 Secrets Of Magicians

By Preston Houer

Magicians have their secrets but they won't tell. It's a sworn oath for magicians not to tell the audience how a trick is done. There are 3 secrets though that they've shared all throughout the years. Here are their 3 secrets.

The first secret is that some tricks are done through sleight of hand. These are ways with which they skillfully hide an object and make it reappear on another hand. New magicians hide things up their sleeves. Those are old tricks and very few used them now.

Sleights of hand require a lot of practice to master. Beginners of magic use specially created gimmicks to create the illusion. Professional magicians make use of their impressive sleight of hand. It requires a lot of time, patience and hand coordination to fully understand and do.

Another secret is the art of misdirection. See this blank paper? And as audience looks at the blank paper, he is carefully getting another piece with his other hand. This is misdirection. Another type of misdirection is the kind that doesn't let the audience see what's really causing the tricks. You might have seen that a magician has a lot of assistants who also do incredible stuff, but what you didn't know is that they are helping the magician perform the magic just with their presence.

Another kind of misdirection is the appropriate use of words. For example, a magician will tell you to look at the 'empty' box. We tend to look at the box as empty just because he said it. This causes our

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mind to wonder when the magician gets a rabbit out of it.

Misdirection takes a lot of practice and lots of time in planning. It requires body coordination (one body doing something while the other is doing another thing) and quick thinking. Misdirection is an art and magicians are proud of it.

Another secret is their patter or a magician's constant talk. Misdirection is achieved mostly because of patter. The magician will ask you to look at his right hand and as you are looking, you won't notice what his left hand is doing. This is a really clever way to achieve the illusion that what happens next becomes so magical with the wink of an eye.

Patter usually takes the form of a story, where a magician will tell you of something that happened to him someday. Sometimes it's so funny that we actually forget to look at what their hands are doing or what their assistants are giving them.

Preston Hauer has been involved with the art of illusion and sleight of hand for over 30 years. Let Preston show you how to Have Fun With Magic. Visit His Site Today!

<http://www.have-fun-with-magic.com>



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