



# THE BUZZ

AMSTERDAM MAGIC SOCIETY

SUZY WANDAS, BORN  
JEANNE VAN DYCK  
(MARCH 5TH 1896 –  
JULY 17TH 1986) IS  
WITHOUT A DOUBT  
BELGIAN'S BIGGEST  
FEMALE MAGICIAN.



THE ADVENTURES OF  
SOME MEMBERS OF THE  
AMSTERDAM MAGIC  
SHOW IN THE  
PICTURESQUE CZECH  
REPUBLIC.

November  
2023

ISSUE 9

# 1/ FRITZ WITH A Z

As I write this, I am still buzzing (pun intended) about our last meeting. We had 20 members in! So much fun! I did a talk about a trick of mine called Just in Time and Zippo talked about card manipulation.

3 p.



4 p.

# 2/ SUZY WANDAS

KOBE VAN HERWEGEN

In 2019 father en son Christ and Kobe Van Herwegen published a book about Suzy Wandas. We are proud that they were willing to support us with exclusive publication of the chapter of Suzy's years in The Netherland during the Second World War.



# 3/ THE MERLIN AWARD SCAM

TOM STONE

A few years ago Tom received The Merlin Award for "Best Cabaret Act of the Decade". He got the award against his will. This is the last chapter.

10 p.



14 p.

# 4/

KOUZELNÝ KOKTEJL

JEFFREY VAN VLIET

Before embarking on our adventure to the picturesque Czech Republic, I'd like to introduce myself briefly.



This magazine is a production of the Amsterdam Magic Society. If you like to contribute, send this to our editor & designer, Frans de Groot: [amsterdammagicsociety@gmail.com](mailto:amsterdammagicsociety@gmail.com)

Copyright © 2023 by the Amsterdam Magic society. All rights reserved. No part of this publication be reproduced, stored in any retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise without the prior permission of the Editor of The Amsterdam Magic Society. Views expressed in this magazine are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Amsterdam Magic Society unless specifically stated.





## DEAR READER

As I write this, I am still buzzing (pun intended) about our last meeting. We had 20 members in! So much fun! I did a talk about a trick of mine called [Just in Time](#) and [Zippo](#) talked about card manipulation.

Not only that, but I worked on [The Rose Seance Experiment](#) for a few months and it had its premiere. An immersive seance, so maybe we see some of you at Halloween.

The majority of you received your pins and certificate. We hope you wear your pin with pride and that you framed your certificate.

Congratulations to Omran and Olivier Henning for taking 3rd and 1st respectively at the national championships in Zeist! Also, congratulations to Rico who took 2nd place at the Magic Cocktail. Very proud of you three!

Speaking of the Magic Cocktail, in this issue you will read Jeffrey's experience of the Magic Cocktail convention. Plus you will learn about Suzy Wandas, a Belgian magician. Yes, that is her on the cover.

We have already started planning for 2024 and it will be an amazing year for the Society. If you want to become a member, visit our [website](#) and register. We look forward to welcoming you at one of our meetings.



"Fritz"



Suzy Wandas, born Jeanne Van Dyck (March 5th 1896 – July 17th 1986) is without a doubt Belgian's biggest female magician. Born on the fairground she was awarded with the Performing Fellowship award from the Academy of Magical Arts in America. In 2019 father en son Christ and Kobe Van Herwegen published a book about her life after doing more than 6 years of research. We are proud that they were willing to support us with exclusive publication of the chapter of Suzy's years in The Netherlands during the Second World War. One of the darkest chapters in our magic history.

The impressive Theater Carré building on the river Amstel in Amsterdam has long been the city's leading entertainment venue. Originally, the Carré circus family travelled the length and breadth of Europe with their spectacle. But when they stopped off in the Dutch capital in 1864, they received such a warm welcome that Oscar Carré promptly decided to stop travelling. Henceforth, he would show his equestrian routine in a fixed location. In 1887 the plans were ready and he had a stone circus in classicist style erected, with two stone horses adorning the front façade in tribute to his beloved animals. The majestic building was designed to host circus shows as well as variety spectacles. From 1 April 1940, Suzy Wandas stars in the Internationaal Variété show, she is fifth in the lineup. She could not wish for a finer venue to secure her breakthrough in the Netherlands.

The reviews are glowing. Within the Dutch world of magic, too, news of her exceptional talent spreads like wildfire. Nearly every show is attended by fellow magicians hoping to unravel Suzy's secrets. Among them is the 31-year-old Henk Vermeyden, a passionate magician and publisher who is determined to raise the art form



to a higher level in his country. Vermeyden was fascinated by magic from an early age, and worked his way up to become an assistant to magician Lurette. As well as a magician, Lurette is also the



owner of Goochelstudio Larette, 'The Netherlands distribution center for modern magic tricks', a magnet for aficionados of magic.



Vienna-born Cornel Hauer Larette does cigarette manipulations himself. Like no other, he appreciates the complexity of what

the Lady with the Fairy Fingers seems to be doing with the greatest ease. They had met before, in 1938, but it is clear that the beautiful blonde's act has evolved and matured since then. As one would expect, the three get on well. Suzy, Larette, and Henk Vermeyden, with their respective know-how, business savvy, and publishing clout, hatch a plan to publish a book about cigarette magic. Following her Dutch debut at Carré, Suzy travels on to the Rembrandt Theater in Arnhem, where she entertains audiences prior to film screenings. Back in Belgium, she calls at Liège and Brussels in April before the Germans invade the country on 10 May and all hell breaks loose.

In a series of barbaric attacks, German troops conquer Belgium for the second time in less than three decades. Their massive bombardments make short shrift of the Belgian air defences. Fort Eben-Emael, deemed to be impregnable, falls into German hands after a single day. Likewise, German glider-borne troops capture the bridges over the Albert Canal without much difficulty, thus clearing the way for the ground forces, which cross the Ardennes region and push straight through to the North Sea. Within the space of eighteen days, the Belgian army is trounced. They have no choice but to surrender, just like the Netherlands, which capitulated on 14 May.

To Suzy and her mother the spectre of World War I rears its head again. In a war economy



*In 1938, during a performance in the ABC Théâtre in Paris, she receives the name 'the lady with the fairy fingers'.*

in which scarcity and the maximisation of the war effort are key, it is no sinecure for an artist to find work. Bookings are few and far between, but Suzy consistently accepts them and performs in establishments such as the Moulin Rouge or Ancienne Belgique in Brussels. But the once crowded nightclubs are emptying out. When money is in short supply these kinds of diversions are the first to be dropped. Now the patrons frequenting the clubs are German soldiers seeking distraction.

One evening, when she sees only German soldiers in the audience, Suzy decides that enough is enough. She does not want to entertain the enemy and leaves straight after her performance instead of lingering among the guests. In the hope of reliving her glory days in the Netherlands she packs her suitcases and says a fond farewell to her

mother. It is Christmas Eve 1942, the last they spend together for some time to come.

On Christmas Day Suzy travels to Amsterdam by train. Three days later she registers with the country's immigration service. Under occupation she lists artist, under religion Roman Catholic. The clerk at the counter describes her as Aryan. She is safe, but from now on every step she takes will be very carefully monitored.



Although she has been in the Netherlands for three days, she is only able to register now. The minute she arrived she hopped in a taxi to the Tivoli Theater (This was and is Theater Tuchinski, The Jewish owners were fired in 1940 by the Nazis from their own company and were deported to

Auschwitz and Sobibor; all three were murdered by the Nazis in 1942) where she performed that same evening. Henk Vermeyden is in the audience again.



*The logo of the magic magazine Triks.*

In April 1941 he had launched a monthly magic magazine, *Triks*, a sixteen-page booklet full of reviews, trick reveals, news, and tips. It is very popular with amateur magicians.

*'In Tivoli in Amsterdam I had the genuine pleasure of seeing Suzy Wandas, the phenomenal female manipulator, again after a long time.*

*Her routine, consisting of deftly executed manipulations with cigarettes, silks, and cards, was performed in the charming manner we have come to associate with her.'* (*Triks*, February 1943)

It is no coincidence that Vermeyden is so complimentary about Suzy's cigarette manipulations. The publication of a book on the subject is still under discussion. But the plans have to be shelved. The March issue of *Triks*, the last of the second volume, is the magazine's final one until further notice. The Reich Commissariat, the Nazi administrative body in the Netherlands, tells Henk Vermeyden to cease publication with immediate effect. Reluctantly, he throws in the towel.

The Germans are clearly gaining ground. Swastika flags dominate the streetscape and all Jews are forced to wear a Star of David on their clothes. Millions of them are transported to concentration camps. What exactly happens inside those is still a mystery to many at that point. Suzy, now forty-seven, accepts every booking in the Netherlands. During her rare free time she



*Colourful picture in the middle of the Second World War.*



travels back and forth by train to see her mother in Brussels. Then, to her delight, she is contracted to appear in a touring variety show for an extended period of time. At long last, she has some job security. However hard the war tries to chip away at morale, it appears that there is still a need for recreation and entertainment. The colourful posters advertising the Vrolijk Variété-festijn are dotted around the cities where the 'Jolly Variety Extravaganza' can be seen. First off, the revue visits the Arena Theater in Rotterdam, before calling at Cinema Royal in Amsterdam.



*Cover of the program for Suzy's performance at Cinema Royal*

So far both theaters have been spared in this war, unlike the capital's Rembrandt Theater, which has gone up in flames following an act of resistance.

Accompanied by a live orchestra led by Henk Neef, Suzy appears fifth on the bill, just ahead of Coos Speenhoff Jr., whose smiling face on the poster is a big crowd puller. The show is so successful that it travels on to the Scala Theater in The Hague. In the audience one night is seventeen-year-old Bram Bongers, painstakingly jotting down every effect Suzy demonstrates. She starts by cutting in half a piece of rope, which she then magically restores again, and follows it with the production of silks and card tricks. Then she picks up her Chinese rings, and in conclusion she performs her cigarette manipulations. This final trick is of particular interest to Bram. As an amateur magician he specialises in manipulations, and does pretty

well out of them. Still, at this point there is nothing to suggest that later in life, under the name Fred Kaps, he will become a three-time world champion of magic.

The streets of Amsterdam are full of German soldiers. So too Willemsparkweg, where Larette's magic shop has its premises at number 128. The address is listed in German publication *Die Magie*, which may be why some curious soldiers are peeking in. When they spot Larette who's listening to the English news radio, the magician panics. His parents were of Jewish descent, and although they converted to Catholicism this does not put his mind at ease. Fearful, Larette sneaks to the back room and picks up the gun he keeps there, just in case. And so it happens that on 14 May 1943, among the colourful magic props in the shop, a loud bang can be heard. His wife Johanna rushes into the room, followed by the two German soldiers. They find the 54-year-old Larette on the floor in a large pool of blood. He could see no other way of keeping out of German hands.

Two months earlier, Louis Lam, who had helped to set up *Triks* magazine, had been deported to the Sobibor extermination camp, where he lost his life on 20 March. Michel Velleman, who is quite successful as magician Ben Ali Libi, is arrested during a raid in June and sent to transit camp Westerbork. He too eventually dies in Sobibor. Amateur magician Coniglio is executed by firing squad and magicians Maurice and Don José de Blasini both die in one of the many bombardments. This and other such horrible news reaches Suzy on an almost daily basis. It leaves her devastated. Her hopes of being safe in the Netherlands prove unfounded. But luckily she can still pick up work here, unlike in Belgium.

The Rembrandt Cinema in Arnhem, Lido Theater in Leiden, concert hall De Vereeniging and Elverding Theater in Nijmegen, Metropool Theater in

Amsterdam: Suzy's diary is pretty full. The visits to her mother in Belgium are now few and far between.



*Suzy started her career playing the violin and walking on a wire as Suzy White Flower.*

During a ceremony at the Stadsschouwburg, the municipal theater, in The Hague on 30 May 1942, the German occupiers declare the Dutch Chamber of Culture officially opened.

It set out to maintain strict control over the press and the art world and, where necessary, to exercise censorship. Although application for membership is not compulsory, those who do not register are no longer allowed to work. Suzy has no choice. She needs to earn a crust. On 21 January 1944 she registers.

*'Suzy Wandas was announced as the act with the question marks. And what Suzy presented was indeed a big question mark. If we men could conjure with cigarettes the way she does, we would surely have no more need for coupons. Such incredible*

*sleight of hand and where was she hiding those cigarettes, cards, and silks?'*  
*Dutch newspaper, 5 February 1944*

For some time now, there has been talk in military circles of Operation Overlord, the code name for the liberation of occupied Western Europe. In the early hours of 6 June 1944, the British, Canadian, and American allies launch their offensive with landings on the beaches of Normandy: D-day.



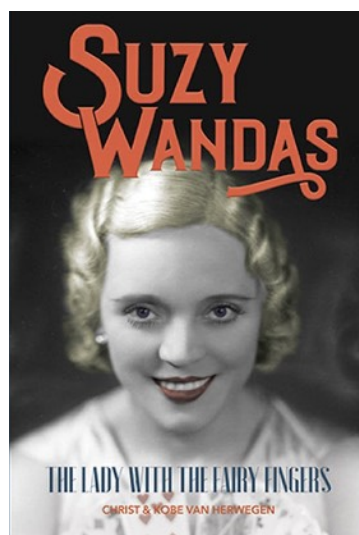
At this point Suzy is working only sporadically; every now and then she does a star turn in the once so popular variety programs. It is becoming more and more of a challenge just to survive. That winter the western Netherlands is in the grip of such severe hunger that people are reduced to eating tulip bulbs. In search of work and food, Suzy places an advertisement in Dutch newspaper De Telegraaf:

*'Suzy Wandas, 134 Amstel, modern magic, for family and children's parties.'*  
*De Telegraaf, 2 January 1945*



To make ends meet, Suzy now also works as a children's party entertainer, doing rope tricks, 'The Miser's Dream', which sees her producing coins from behind the children's ears, and her umbrella trick. After rolling an umbrella in a newspaper, she stuffs nine colourful silks into a bag. When all the children yell a magic formula together, the silks in the bag have been turned into the umbrella cover. And once unwrapped from the newspaper, the umbrella has all the vanished silks rather than the cover dangling from it. Suzy is going through one of the darkest periods in her life. It is hard just to keep one's head above water. Luckily, the reports of imminent liberation give her something to cling to. Slowly but surely, the allies are advancing and the Germans are losing ground. And when Hitler takes his own life on 30 April 1945 the war in Europe is finally over.

*'Exactly two-and-a-half years after the involuntary closure of our trade magazine I can once again address you from this familiar place. Let me start by looking back. Needless to say, it was a bitter pill when, just as the third volume of Triks was due to go to print, the Reich Commissariat told me, in no uncertain terms, to cease publication of our trade magazine. At the time I spared no effort to get this decision overturned. But when it emerged that I had exhausted all the then legal means, I turned to you illegally. I felt it was my duty to keep in touch with you. The many letters I had the pleasure of receiving shortly after our liberation, in response to the announcement that Triks would be appearing again, clearly show that the strong communal spirit of the friends of Triks has not weakened during the temporary disappearance of our magazine. What matters is this, TRIKS is back, TRIKS is here, and TRIKS is here to stay!' J.H. Vermeyden, Triks, October 1945*



Suzy Wandas came from the humblest of beginnings. Nothing about her entry into the world was auspicious, nor did it portend to her future as a star on the stages of Europe, England, or America.

Instead, Jeanne

Van Dyck was born in the back of a fairground wagon in Brussels in 1896.

Yet in the male-dominated world of magic, under the stage name Suzy Wandas, her light - her star - shone as one of the brightest in the firmament. An innovative sleight-of-hand artist who developed and refined her own remarkable techniques, Suzy became one of the most revered and sought-after acts of her generation.

Her rise to fame sometimes contrasted sharply with hard work and bitter poverty. Amidst the turmoil of two world wars and personal tragedies, her upward trajectory remained nearly uninterrupted. From fairground theater to the largest variety stages, she conquered every venue in which she performed.

The Lady with the Fairy Fingers is the incredible true story of Suzy Wandas, a woman who persevered against a backdrop of cultural turmoil, international strife, family tragedy, and a male-dominated profession to achieve worldwide success on her own terms. It is also the history of variety entertainment in the twentieth century, a personal view of women's rights, and a story of true love and pure magic.

Hardbound, 204 pages in full color, illustrated with never-before-seen posters, photographs, and ephemera. Limited edition to 700.

Buy the English version [here](#).  
Koop de Nederlandse versie [hier](#)

Or buy it from your favourite magic dealer!

CHRIST EN KOBE VAN HERWEGEN



# The Merlin Award scam (Part Three)

Here in Sweden, Anders Frank was still pondering how he would ever be able to get a return on the video tapes he was persuaded to buy, so he took up the offer. If he could get a notice in the press where his video club for beginners gave a “prize” to a famous magician, that would probably help to sell a few videos. So he suggests the Swedish illusionist Joe Labero as a suitable recipient.

Joe Labero and his team were just then preparing, for the fall of 1998, a premiere of a big illusion show at the Rondo stage in Gothenburg. Labero and his team were sharp enough to understand what it was all about. They immediately realized the intrinsic PR value of being given a gold-painted statuette in connection with the premiere...

Tony Hassini and Joe Labero on the other hand, they some doubts regarding the presenter – receiving a “prize” from an unknown amateur magician from some backwaters area of Sweden was difficult to portray as exclusive and prestigious. It would undeniably be more exotic and exciting if instead an American person came to present the award. All said and done – they contacted Hassini, flew him over and on the opening night he rolled up to the entrance, in a limousine, right in front of the entertainment press, which completely sold the illusion that Hassini was some VIP from the USA.

The whole thing with flights, luxury hotels,



limousines, VIP treatment, etc. really fueled Hassini's appetite for attention. In many ways, this visit to Sweden was the main catalyst that caused Hassini to, from this point on, focus more on handing out fake awards and less on selling videos. Anders Frank himself felt ignored by both Hassini and Labero. None of them said a word about the video club that was the real reason for the whole thing, so when he saw a couple of old friends in the audience, he joined them instead. Since 1998, Joe Labero has paid for at least three more statuettes, all accompanied by fanciful stories. You could almost say that he have turned mythomania into a business idea. During one period he made up a story that he would be acting in the movie “Pirates of the Caribbean”, which our Swedish entertainment journalists uncritically wrote articles about, without doing any fact-checking at all.

## **Fake awards – harmless or harmful?**

There are a variety of opinions about the propagation of fake awards. Many colleagues look down on the phenomenon, but almost as many find it a highly practical and legitimate marketing method. As long as it doesn't hurt anyone, I'd probably be pretty neutral myself – but the problem is that it actually does hurt people.

At the beginning of this article I mentioned the FISM – the World Championships of Magic. It has been quite unusual to have Swedes on the podium. Johnny Lonn came in 3rd place in 1967. Topper Martyn won his class in 1970, and came 2nd in 1973 and 1982. Lennart Green won gold in 1991 and after



Lennart's win it would be a full eighteen years without a single Swede on the podium... So it was a gigantic achievement when as many as four Swedes ended up in the prize place at FISM 2009 in Beijing, China: Brynolf & Ljung won Silver in Comedy Magic. Charlie Caper took Silver in Parlor Magic. And Johan Ståhl took Bronze in Micro Magic. ...Imagine their surprise when they came home with their well merited authentic awards, and found that it was impossible to get any media coverage for the feat, because "We've already written about it. Joe Labero got the biggest prize there, so Bronze and Silver are rather uninteresting". Yep, Joe Labero nicked the limelight from their great accomplishment by paying for yet another bogus award, claiming it had been awarded to him at the FISM in China. In reality, Labero was never even there, and neither was Hassini. The Swedes who were in China and blogged about the competitions were quite puzzled by the news from home. Peter Gröning wrote "I missed when Labero received his award this morning. Did anyone see him?" and Gay Ljungberg replied "He wasn't here and didn't get an award here either. Therefore, no one has seen it. Not everything in the newspapers are true." Quite shitty in my opinion, but Labero has done things that might be considered worse. For example, when Roy Horn in Siegfried & Roy was injured in a tiger attack, and everyone in the magic world was shocked and compassionate... Labero quickly took advantage of the tragedy, falsely claiming that he himself had been asked to take over Roy Horn's role in the duo, which our Swedish entertainment journalists uncritically filled a center spread with.

### **When the lie becomes the truth**

Since I myself keep track of what is happening in the world of magic, read trade journals and follow gossip on various Internet fora, I have had the impression that all magicians knew that the Merlin "award" is fake, and that the sole question is whether you have a negative, positive or neutral stance to the fraud. All that was turned on its head when I got to see Hassini "in action" in 2014. I had been

booked for a convention in Croatia. The organizer was an exceptionally nice and likeable young man who, together with his girlfriend, had managed to organize an unusually exciting and varied program with several internationally renowned artists. Like most truly good magicians, the booked performers were humble, accommodating and easy to work with – but in the midst of the group was a person I'd never met before, a person who both demanded and received VIP treatment. Tony Hassini. He talked incessantly, had tons of odd and ill-founded opinions on everything, pushed himself in between us every time a photo was taken, and was so generally annoying in every way that it became hard to keep a straight face. This was 9 years ago, when I still wasn't quite sure who was behind the fake award. I remember emailing a well-informed friend in the US asking who this annoying person was, and got the answer: "He is the con artist who sells the 'Merlin Awards.' He's a well-known bullshitter. Whatever you do, do NOT let him shoot any video of you. He makes videos, pays people nearly nothing, and sells them for decades. He's done this with many famous people."

It was utterly baffling to see our host and his delightful girlfriend bowing and being servile to Hassini's every whim, until the penny dropped and I realized "Oh my God, they don't know the Merlin award is fake! They think this is real!" It turned out that Hassini had seen information about the convention, contacted the young man and introduced himself and IMS as if it were a legitimate organization, and announced that the young man had won the vote for "Best Magic Promoter of the Year" and tricked the young couple to pay for Hassini's flight and accommodation. The rest of us artists exchanged worried glances, wondering if anyone would say something, but no one could think of a non-confrontational way to say it, so in the end we reluctantly played along in the charade.

Everywhere we went, Hassini carried two big canvas bags with large "cut-outs" of the fake prize that he quickly mounted at every photo-friendly opportunity, to make it look like he himself was the organizer of everything like the

young couple had organized (Image, 10 Mb). A shopping center had co-sponsored the convention in exchange for us doing a show for them. In the photographs from the mall, Hassini has photoshopped in his own domain name, as if it were an arrangement by IMS alone (Image, 10 Mb). It wasn't easy to do a good show in the mall, there was no backstage area, no space to change and prepare, and the stage was right in front of a big LED screen so the performers stood as black silhouettes against the flashing screen.

I'm afraid I briefly got into a pretty bad mood over the situation, before I came to grips with it and tried to make the best of the situation.

I gave my best in my performance, and inexplicably managed to make enough of an impression to get a pretty decent applause at the end... which was instantly halted by Hassini who without warning ran up on stage with a microphone, announcing that he had decided that I was the "Best Cabaret Act of the Decade", pressed an award into my hands, and turned to the photographer who quickly took a picture, and then he accepted the applause that originally was meant for me, while I, perplexed, walked off the stage behind him wondering "What the hell just happened?"

Apparently, this is a tactic he often uses – to ambush known magicians with his "award" to create the illusion of legitimacy, so that it will be easier to sell the "award" to others. Look at photographs of people receiving the award, and you'll see that about half of them have a surprised expression on their face, as if they've been taken aback and can't quite decide how to react.

Since 2014, I have begun to understand that if you are not very active in following what is happening in the world of magic, internationally, it is quite easy to be deceived by Hassini and his claims. During the preparation of this article, I have spoken to several artists who have received the "award", and all have said that they are happy to talk on the condition that they are not named in this article. Several of them feel a little embarrassed about having let themselves be tricked. "When I got it, I thought it was real," said at least three of those I spoke to.

As far as I understand, Hassini likes to travel to countries he's never been to before, so the first 1-2 magicians he contacts in each new country are carefully convinced that it's a real and legitimate award – after all, he has loads of photographs by himself and internationally known artists which do seem to support his claims. Once they fall for the initial scam, it's a simple matter of gradually upping the ante until Hassini gets flights, hotels, accommodation and VIP treatment. After the first couple of awards, the tactics become more blatant. Other magicians in the relevant country then receive the offer "Did you see how much PR the magician N got? You can also get just as much attention if you also obtain a Merlin award." In addition, there are quite a few who themselves initiate contact with Hassini to buy a "price". Many of those who have been tricked into thinking that Merlin is an authentic award have today completely removed the information that they received it, because they do not want to be mistaken for anyone who would buy a fake award. Many keep quiet about it, because they find it embarrassing that they let themselves be deceived. Which is a huge shame, because the silence helps the lie appear as reality.

### **It's time to speak up**

The Merlin Award is a cancer in the magic world. It needs to be cut out. Soon, on July 25, 2022, the FISM 2022 World Championships will start in Québec, Canada. Skilled and ambitious artists from all over the world have spent years preparing, investing energy and money in creating original and personal works. An award from FISM is a world-class achievement, something that deserves respect and admiration. If someone comes along with some junk of fool's gold and claims that they have received the "Magic World's equivalent of the Oscars", then it should not go unchallenged, it should be shot down immediately. Of course collegial respect and solidarity is good, but it should not include reputation leeching from those who have been meritorious enough to receive authentic awards. Enough is enough.





## AGENDA

October 30 & October 31 - [THE ROSE SÉANCE EXPERIMENT](#) - Boom Chicago

November 2-4 - [TRICS](#) (Carolina Close-Up Convention) in Charlotte, NC USA

November 2 [Amsterdam Magic Show](#) Boom Chicago

November 3-5 - [Daytona Beach Festival of Magic](#) - Daytona, Florida -USA

November 3-5 - [Unconventional Convention](#) in Corbin, Kentucky USA

November 5 - [The London Magic Convention](#) in London, England.

November 8 [Double The Magic](#) Amsterdam

November 9-12 - [Pacific Coast Association of Magicians](#) (PCAM), Carlsbad, CA USA

November 13 [Amsterdam Magic Society](#) Mascini, Amsterdam

November 18 - 19 [Mid West Magic Convention](#) West County Hotel, Limerick Road, Ennis, Co. Clare, Ireland

November 19 [The Magicians](#) Amsterdam

December 11 [Amsterdam Magic Society](#) Mascini, Amsterdam

December 7 [Amsterdam Magic Show](#) Boom Chicago







## JEFFREY VAN VLIET

**B**efore embarking on our adventure to the picturesque Czech Republic, I'd like to introduce myself briefly. I've recently become a member of the Amsterdam Magic Society, so you might have seen me around, but we haven't had a chance to get acquainted. My name is Jeffrey van Vliet, and I'm 31 years old. I reside in a quaint village in the Netherlands called Boskoop, along with my wife Sandy and our children, Sem and Joy. These are the loved ones I left behind to join an excursion to a magic convention in the Czech Republic, along with Fritz, Rico, Killian, Stefano, Edgar, Bart, Evan, and Willem. During the convention, Rico and Killian also took part in the micro-magic competition.



Our journey commenced on Thursday evening, September 14th, at Schiphol Airport. We congregated at LaPlace for our initial round of beers, confident that it wouldn't be our last. After some refreshments, we proceeded to the gate, where our KLM plane awaited to transport us to a place destined to leave a lasting impression. Fortunately, our flight was smooth, without any delays, and we touched down in beautiful Prague after a 1.5-hour journey. After collecting our luggage, we were promptly greeted by our driver,

who whisked us away to the hotel, a half-hour ride. Upon reaching the hotel, we swiftly freshened up in our rooms and headed out for a drink in Prague. The Ibis hotel welcomed us with a complimentary drink before we set out to find a bar to quench our thirst further. We stumbled upon a charming local bar frequented by young Czechs, where the drinks flowed freely, but fortunately, it didn't keep us out too late.

The following day promised an early start. The next morning, everyone was bright-eyed and eager to explore Prague in the daylight. With the sun shining, it was shaping up to be a beautiful day. We began with some coffee and a leisurely stroll, eventually convening at the restaurant "Next Door" for breakfast, where the food was delicious, and our spirits were high.

Post-breakfast, we returned to the hotel, and each of us had an hour to explore Prague individually before we headed to the nearby town of Týn nad Vltavou. Once we picked up our car, (I went on an electric step) it was time to hit the road, a scenic two-hour drive through the Czech Republic's enchanting landscapes. During the drive, it became evident that Rico and Killian had limited time to prepare for their competition.

By the time we arrived around 3 o'clock, they had a mere five minutes to finalize their preparations. The rest of us were already seated in the theater room, eagerly anticipating the competition. The venue was a splendid hall with a sizable audience, mainly consisting of local Czech guests. While the acts were entertaining, there was a noticeable distinction between Rico and Killian's performances and those of the Czech



magicians. The local acts appeared somewhat disorganized, with numerous elements and tricks lacking a clear narrative thread. It became challenging to follow the proceedings, and at times, I lost track of the performance. In my opinion, Rico delivered the standout performance, weaving a compelling narrative with a coherent routine. Killian also began strongly, with an engaging story and seamless execution. Regrettably, technical difficulties arose later in his act, hindering his ability to continue smoothly. Nonetheless, I commend their efforts and dedication.



Following the competition, we returned to the hotel to settle in and allocate rooms. Soon afterward, we were back at the convention, as the stage act competition was already underway. Just before the competition, Rico received a last-minute invitation to participate, leaving him with minimal time to prepare. Nonetheless, he delivered a remarkable performance, complete with a captivating narrative and flawless execution. Despite a minor hiccup, the other acts also impressed. After the competition, we hurried to grab a bite to eat and prepare for the masked ball. The evening commenced with a buffet



in a grand atmosphere, and everyone looked splendid.

The food was delicious, and the festivities commenced. During the ball, a pivotal moment occurred for Willem and me. Without revealing too much, I can say that it was not an ordinary event. Following this experience, Willem and I officially became members of the Amsterdam Magic Show, a moment we celebrated with drinks and continued revelry indoors. A heartfelt thanks to all the guys; it was an unforgettable evening!

After the ball, some called it a night, while others ventured to a club. I belonged to the latter group. Not far from the conventioncenter, we discovered a place where we could enjoy more drinks and extend our celebration.

Saturday, September 16th, saw an early start once more. I walked to the convention with Killian, as the competitions were in full swing.

This time, it was the second part of the stage acts. Following a hearty breakfast, we headed to the hall where the competition was taking place. After a night of revelry, it proved challenging to focus on all the acts, so we took a detour to the dealer hall. Soon, everyone had gathered, and we were a complete group once again. After the competition, a bus was ready to transport us to a surprise excursion. It soon became apparent that our destination was a nuclear power plant.





Upon arrival, we were treated to some schnapps before embarking on a tour. Initially, we were free to explore the museum, followed by a virtual reality tour of the nuclear power plant.

Subsequently, we returned to the hotel to prepare for the awards ceremony and gala show. The awards ceremony, conducted in Czech, proved challenging to follow, and Rico received second place for his stage act, a decision that left me somewhat perplexed. Nonetheless, I acknowledge that I am not a member of the jury. As the Amsterdam Magic Show, we were also presented with a collective award for our support, a kind gesture indeed.

The gala show commenced afterward, and it was an extended affair, with the singer taking up a considerable amount of time. Fortunately, there was an intermission during the singer's performance.



Our own Fritz with a Z graced the stage during the gala show, infusing it with his energy and stage presence, earning enthusiastic reactions from the audience.

Following the show, we gathered for drinks, some impromptu magic at the restaurant, and, when all was said and done, we returned to the hotel. A few of us continued to a club, as it was our final night in Týn nad Vltavou.

The following morning, we had to rouse ourselves early yet again, checking out of the hotel at 8:00 am. With tired heads, we boarded the van, retracing our steps to Prague. There, we returned our rental bus and strolled through Prague to our last hotel. Until around 5 o'clock in the afternoon, everyone had some free time to explore Prague or relax in the hotel.

We convened at 5 pm to take public transport to our last event, the Illusion Bar in Prague. Stepping inside, the magical ambiance was immediately palpable. The bar's atmosphere and aesthetics were undeniably captivating. We were warmly welcomed by Mihail and Desi, with Fritz performing his final show. Before and after the show, we entertained the audience with close-up magic. Following the performance, we enjoyed a drink and shared hearty laughter. As the night wore on, we took a taxi to a disco, where we continued to socialize with Mihail and Desi from the Illusion Bar. On our way back to the hotel, we savored a delectable slice of pizza, marking the end of our last night in Prague. The next morning, we rose early to check out of our hotel. Conversation was sparse, and everyone appeared somewhat groggy as we boarded the last bus to Prague Airport. On the bus, I discovered that the pizza from the previous day hadn't agreed with my palate, but I managed to keep it down.

At the airport, we enjoyed a more standard meal before, following a slight delay, departing for Amsterdam. At Schiphol Airport, we bid farewell to one another, each of us going our separate ways.

In this short period, I forged deep bonds with individuals I had only known briefly. I had an extraordinary time, and my laughter-induced sore muscles serve as a testament to the fun we had. It's a memory that will be cherished.

Thank you all, and until next time!







THE  
**ROSE SÉANCE**  
EXPERIMENT

OCTOBER 12, 30 & 31



ROSESEANCE.COM



Amsterdam Magic Society

Zeedijk 24

1012 AZ Amsterdam

[www.amsterdammagicsociety.com](http://www.amsterdammagicsociety.com)

[amsterdammagicsociety@gmail.com](mailto:amsterdammagicsociety@gmail.com)

