



# THE BUZZ

AMSTERDAM MAGIC SOCIETY



March 2024

ISSUE 3

KATHERINE RHODES  
PERFORMS ON  
MARCH 7 IN THE  
AMSTERDAM MAGIC  
SHOW!

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As I write this, I am packing up my bags to perform in Prague at the Illusion Bar. Because I come there often, I have to have new magic.

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FRANS DE GROOT

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)

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## DEAR READER

**A**s I write this, I am packing up my bags to perform in Prague at the Illusion Bar. Because I come there often, I have to have new magic.



There is something exciting about performing a new piece of magic in front of an audience. For me, a new routine is only 80-85% finished and it will increase when performed for an audience. You might rework the staging of the trick, add/remove lines, or rearrange the structure of the

routine. Working on the details is what excites me, and I feel that the audiences can appreciate these details.

One way to work on these details is to have outsiders who can review your act. Luckily, the Amsterdam Magic Society has invited Leif Olberius and Martin Hansson. They will help you to improve your act on Thursday, March 21st at Q-Factor in Amsterdam. There are 8 spots available. You'll need an act of no longer than 5 minutes, and each magician gets 20 minutes of time. The best part is you will get to see others and learn from them as well. Send us an email if you want to be part of it.

Furthermore, the Amsterdam Magic Society is one year old! Congratulations to all the members! We are happy that we can celebrate this special occasion on Monday, March 11th with an exclusive lecture from David Ben. This lecture is open to all the magicians, so we look forward to welcoming you!

This issue we have a review of The Session by Michael Vincent, Joshua Jay, a review by Frans de Groot, and more.

Enjoy reading!

*Fritz with a Z*



# Katherine Rhodes profile

Katherine Rhodes is a highly respected and sought-after performer with many years of real-world experience. Her sharp humor mixed with incredible magic leaves audiences amazed and amused as the laws of physics are cast aside and the impossible is made a reality. Katherine is a member of the world-famous The Magic Circle and in 2021 was elected Vice President. She also received The Cecil Lyle Award from The Magic

Circle, the first female to win it in the society's history. When not performing magic, you'll either find her on stage as one-third of the improv group Magician Improvable or in the sky as she holds a pilot's license and is a keen aviator. From small intimate gatherings to the largest theater stages and everything in between, Katherine performs in the [Amsterdam Magic Show](#) on March 7 at Boom Chicago Amsterdam.

# 10 QUESTIONS to Katherine Rhodes

1) Most memorable show you performed at?

Every show is special, it's hard to pick any particular one. If I had to choose, I would probably say my first ever full length theatre show.

2) What is one of your hobbies?

I fly aeroplanes.

3) Favorite city?

Amsterdam, of course!

4) We can wake you up in the middle of the night for...

An extreme emergency only! I'm a very deep sleeper and quite difficult to wake so please don't try.

5) Who inspires you as a magician?

There is no one particular person. Inspiration comes from many different places; it can be people, something you've seen, a sound, etc – inspiration is all around us, you just have to see it. I'm probably inspired more by comedians than other magicians though.

6) One magic item you cannot live without?

The Internet. The way that works is magic and I'd be lost without it.

7) What trick or routine are you working at the moment?

I've put several new pieces into the act over the last twelve months so they're still being worked up and I have a new piece around transferring

thoughts between two spectators that I'm working on at the moment.

8) Derren Brown or Dynamo?

Derren.

9) What country would you like to visit?

I would love to visit Canada. I've never been there and it looks so beautiful.

10) One piece of advice you give to somebody who wants to start a theater show.

Be prepared not to eat! While you're getting established and building up a client list there will be times when you have to choose between paying your bills or buying food. Oh, and enjoy it, it's the most wonderful job. I know that's two so let me add a third – break the rules, do what's right for you, not what others think you should do :-)

FRITZ WITH A Z





# AGENDA

March 1-2 - [NEMCON](#) (New England) Magicians' Conference.

March 2-3 - [Zauberkongress der WunderAkademie](#), Berlin

March 7 - [Amsterdam Magic Show](#), Boom Chicago Amsterdam

March 7-9 - [Winter Carnival of Magic](#) in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee.

March 11 [Amsterdam Magic Society, Lecture David Ben](#), Mascini, Amsterdam

March 14-17 - [Golden Cat](#), Gabrovo (Bulgaria)

March 15-17 - [Poe's Magic Conference](#) in Baltimore, MD

March 17 - 18 - [Magic Capital Close-Up Convention](#) in Colon, Michigan.

March 20 - [Double The Magic](#), Mascini, Amsterdam

March 21 - Workshop with Leif Olberius & Martin Hansson, Q-Factor, Amsterdam

April 11-13 - [The Gateway Close-Up Gathering](#) in Collinsville, Illinois (near St. Louis, MO).

April 18-20 - [WonderBash](#) in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

April 21-23 - [52 Friends Magic Convention](#) in Hamburg, Germany.

April 24-27 - [Obie's 4F](#) Invitation Only Convention (Fechter's Finger Flicking Frolic) in Buffalo, New York

April 28 - [MAWNY](#) (Magician's Alliance of Western New York): Batavia, NY





I went straight to bed after, I knew it would a long day ahead - I was right. It all began with cards, coffee and breakfast with my friends.



It was great way to start up early for breakfast, I was joined by Benedict Grunmunf, Daniel Prado, Daniel, Aljaz Son Peder; we all started sharing and practicing drills before 09:00 am

This was the highlight for me, hanging out with my friends. The two best lectures of the day were given by David Gerard and Luke Jermay.

One of the highlights was seeing Allan Ackerman again. His card magic is still superb along with his warm engaging personality.

The Convention was enjoyable simply for spending time with my friends and making new friends. We shared magic and mostly had great conversation about the subject. Another highlight was meeting Fredrich Roitzsch and Daniel Prado.



Fredrich has great book called Instructions for Miracles. His card magic is superb. Over all it was an enjoyable weekend with my friends. Luke Jermay's was guest of honour even though he had no idea - big surprise for him.

It all ended on a good note.

The Session 2024 has come and gone. As I reflect on this three day event, I am glad I went and I enjoyed spending time with my friends. To begin with, I missed the Friday Sessions of speakers due to my own professional commitments. I was performing Friday evening however, I got the train after my show straight to The Radisson Heathrow. I had Alan Muicey for company. The Friday Session featured lectures by Allan Ackerman and a gala show by David Gerard who I heard was outstanding.



It was after midnight when I arrived and as you can imagine, all the attendees were hard at it discussing card tricks. After checking into my room, I went down to say hi to a few friends. It was great seeing Allan Ackerman again.



MICHAEL VINCENT



# Out of sight out of my mind

**1% better every day**



Recently I enjoyed a book that gave me a new perspective on my philosophy towards life, and with that my philosophy towards magic. Many people I've met had difficulty practicing intricate sleight of hand, reading magic books, and making an act to show the public. But what they also all had in common is that at one time or another, they had asked me "How do you do it" or "Where do you find the time". Before I met magic I was deeply engaged in two things; video games and martial arts, karate specifically. What both of these things taught me was perseverance. In Karate we were always pushed to do that 1% better, to get to that point beyond what we thought we could do. You could get there because there was someone else in the room who knew what the human body was capable of, and all they had to do was give you a little extra push. Video games were the same in some respects since the video games I liked would be made in such a way that they were difficult. You would rarely get a level on the first go, sometimes it might even take 20 tries. However, having the knowledge that someone designed these games to be beaten and to be finished helped me to have this perseverance to keep going until I eventually beat it. But why is this important? Why does this perseverance matter? This perseverance is win or lose while looking at magic. People say that they don't have time, or rather, that they have minimal

time. Minimal time to do things. We expect that we need to take out at least an hour or an entire chunk of the day to get better at something, while the reality is that 10 minutes a day can get us to unexpected new heights. It can get us to unexpected new heights as long as we are focused and persistent. Recently I read a book called "Atomic Habits". This is a book by James Clear where he talks about habit forming. An important takeaway that he describes in the book is that the people who win tend to not have more luck or time, they just have better habits. Doing something consistently every day for the rest of your life will get you to a point where it pays off. The payoff point, however, might be invisible until it does. So for the outside world, it will look as if you just got lucky, but it is not luck; it's the result of multiple years of persistence. Obviously, while looking at this we need to take some things into consideration; we all know the saying "practice makes perfect", we are in the business of practice after all. However, does practicing the wrong way of doing it make you perfect? Or just really good at doing the thing wrong?

Exactly...

So "perfect practice makes perfect". Luckily for us, that just means that we have to follow the advice of the professor "Use your head". Think

about what you're doing and consciously make an effort to make it better. Are you working on a technique and it's not working out? Well, chances are there that you have not understood the technique correctly. Most techniques, as long as they are not knacky, depend on precise finger movements and placements. When you understand the technique correctly, it will be relatively easy to get a fast result, as when you understand it incorrectly it will take ages to get a mediocre result. But let us assume that you understand the technique correctly and that you went back to the book where you learned the routine to also learn the touches, not just the basic outline of the routine. Then what do you do? I like to always ask myself, how can I make this 1% better? Be that in terms of my technique, smoothness, cover, or the touches that I have on the routine itself, always asking yourself how to make it 1% better will get you very far. We have to keep in mind that making it 1% better every day is like compound interest. So getting 1% better each day for a year doesn't make you 365% (3.65) better, it actually makes you  $1.01365^{365} = 37.78$ , which is 3778%, roughly 37 times better than you were before. Realizing this means that if we just focus on getting 1% better, be that at a technique, routine, or move the interest that that will have will compound to an insane amount. The question is not how to make more time to do more things, even though we would like to do that. The question becomes how to work smarter and more consciously to make ourselves 1% better at magic each day. Later I'll talk more about this conscious practice and how to practice smarter, but for now, please let me know if you have any questions since I'd love to discuss this further.

**RICO WEELAND**

Recommended reading:

1: <https://jamesclear.com/continuous-improvement>

2: Atomic Habits by James Clear



## Ayala Jam Session

Friday, January 26th we had a jam session at The Butcher Social Club. Isaac Ayla from Mexico was our guest.

Isaac is a talented magician who passionately showcased his tricks. He excels in card magic, coin magic, and linking rings.

During the jam session, there were both Dutch and Spanish-speaking magicians present. Thanks to the Spanish-speaking magicians, Isaac felt right at home.

Throughout the jam, we shared various tricks and learned a lot from each other. From mini linking rings to a smoking Queen of Spades, all sorts of magic were on display.

**JARON LAMMERTINK**



# How Much Do People Like Magic?

We also wanted to determine whether the environment played a role in the enjoyment of magic, so we tested for both seeing a magician live and watching magic on television.

ON THE LEFT YOU SEE THE RESULTS, RANKING PEOPLE'S ENTHUSIASM FOR EACH TYPE OF ENTERTAINMENT

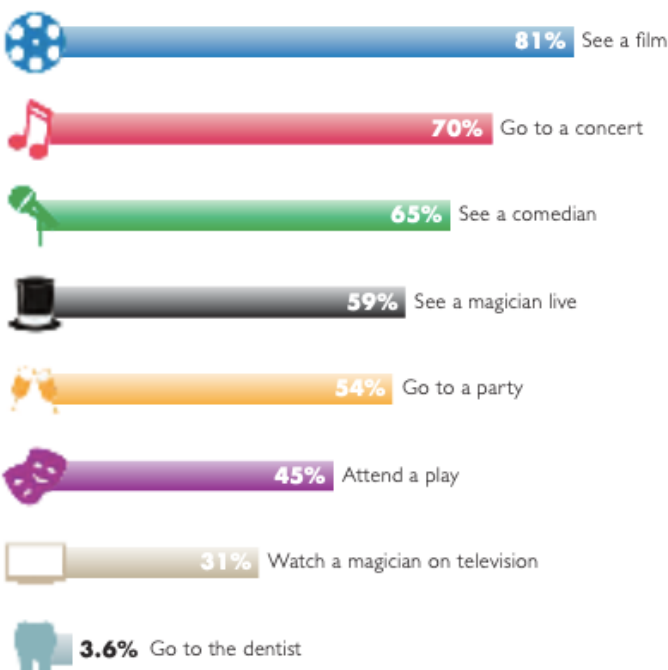
But wait, you're thinking, this doesn't take into account who is doing the magic. A great performance of magic can change someone's perceptions of magicians forever. That's true, but that's not what we're testing. Here, we are only interested in a person's preconceived notions of magic. Seeing a great magician can be much more enjoyable than a bad film or a lame party, but we're trying to get into the headspace of people before the show starts. You might be the best (or worst) magician on Earth, but that won't change how your audience feels about magic before they see your show. And how someone feels about magicians does affect how that person will enjoy your show. In other words, this data matters to all of us.

Right off the bat, we're confronted with the unwelcome fact that most people would much rather watch a film than see magic. Magic ranks just fourth on this list of preferences, and seventh if the magic is on

## What do Audience's really think?

### (Part two)

We started out by asking people to rank their interest in a range of entertainment. And much like studies that found that pizza is addictive or that people buy more food when it's cheaper (both real studies), we found exactly what we expected: people would rather see a movie, go to a concert, or enjoy a comedian than see a magician live.



television. On the bright side, people like magic more than they like parties. This means that people enjoying magic are just as antisocial as the people who are performing it.

I was also glad to see people would rather watch magic on TV than visit the dentist. Had we found the opposite result, I would have to quit this study, quit magic, and learn how to fill cavities. Thanks, percentages.

Many of us lament the difficulty of performing live when we're competing with over-the-top (read: stooged) online magic. But we can take comfort in the fact that by a significant margin, people would rather watch magic performed live than on a screen.

## Where Are People Seeing Magic?

If it's not live magic people are watching, where are people viewing their magic? Unsurprisingly, it's the Internet. Justin Flom, Lu Chen, and Rick Lax have garnered tens of millions of hits with viral magic tricks that get bounced around the world; even my grandma forwarded me the clip of Dan Zaleski doing magic for an orangutan. According to iTricks.com, this was the most viewed magician clip in 2015, with fifteen million views and counting. Many of us have performed for thousands or even hundreds of thousands of people, but you would have reached more humans if you uploaded a performance for just one ape.

### HOW DOES MAGIC RANK IN TERMS OF WATCHING CLIPS ON YOUTUBE?

First, we analyzed the kinds of videos that get the most views, and we determined that pranks, technological marvels (robots, car crashes, fast planes, etc.), and animal videos fared the best. So we asked whether people would rather watch a supermarket prank, a magic levitation, a record-setting fast car, or rare footage of a snow leopard.

We didn't ask them about porn, mostly because we knew it would win singlehandedly. (You decide whether or not the pun was intended.) These results are encouraging. Magic beats everything except the prank video, and it's a very close second. This does not mean that most people enjoy humor more than magic, but merely that most people think they would enjoy humor more than magic. More testing is required, and it's something I would very much like to explore.

ANALYSIS: MAGIC FARES WELL IN ONLINE VIEWING, BUT NOT AS WELL AS THE PROMISE OF SOMETHING FUNNY.

## What Do People Love (and Hate)?

We now come to the centerpiece of the study, the part that I was most curious about before the study and most surprised about afterward. What do you like best about magic shows? And the dreaded she's-just-not-that-into-you follow-up, What do you like least about magic shows?

This was the most challenging data to analyze because it wasn't a multiple-choice question; instead, it's an open response. We wanted each participant to speak freely and without limitation. We didn't want them to choose from a list of five options or emotions, but rather to let them unload their thoughts to us without constraint.

We wanted to know if most people associated positive or negative emotions with watching live magic. The result was overwhelmingly positive. Most people approach live magic with a positive mindset and mostly positive past experiences. So far, so good. Better still, when we asked people

what they like least about magic, the most common answer was simply, “Nothing.”

What people enjoy most about magic shows was a variety of the things we would expect: seventeen percent just wanted to be “amazed,” and fourteen percent similarly liked the mystery of magic best. Twelve percent liked not knowing how the effects were done, and ten percent liked trying to figure out how the effects were done. (There is a subtle but import-

ant distinction between enjoying not knowing and enjoying the thrill of “solving” a magic trick, which is the focus of Dr. Grimm’s current research.) Showmanship was what six percent enjoyed most, and six percent named “skill” as their favorite aspect.

But none of these important qualities was the most popular aspect of a magic show. Any idea what is?

Surprise! Twenty-five percent of people, in their own words, like the element of surprise best. People of all backgrounds, genders, and ages valued surprise more than they valued being amazed.

This revelation has caused me to reevaluate my magic. It made me reflect on the tricks I do in terms of where and how often I offer my audiences genuine surprise. The answer, for most of us, is not enough.

I predicted people would be drawn to danger or large props or comedy. I thought, to a lesser extent, people loved visual effects and the use of borrowed objects, but even when presented with these ideas, people gravitated more strongly toward surprise, or as many put it, “Not knowing what will happen next.”

The idea that audiences expect a surprise is paradoxical, since surprise is the one emotion that must, by definition, be unexpected. Much like viewers go to scary movies expecting to be shocked, we have found, conclusively, that a majority of people watching magic expect the unexpected. As

playwright William Goldman wrote, “You must surprise an audience in an expected way.”

How each person defines surprise is slightly different, of course. But people’s answers tend to support the idea that a surprise occurs when a plot twists unexpectedly. When you lift the cup, there is a live chick. When you whisk away the handkerchief, a bottle has appeared. You shuffle a pack of cards and then, without warning, throw it into the air — and the chosen card sticks to the ceiling.

With some classics, there is no surprise: think of the Linking Rings or Coins through Table. Amazing? Yes. Surprising? Not so much.

This result yields two findings. First, tricks that inherently lack surprise can generally be improved by adding something unexpected. Second — and perhaps most importantly — tricks that audiences have seen so many times that they are no longer surprising should be avoided. The Zombie Ball and Sawing a Lady in Half used to be surprising to the audiences that first witnessed them, but as these routines descend into cliché, they lose the element of surprise that our audiences crave so much.

The study didn’t test whether any effect is strong or weak, and I don’t think we should conclude that a magician should only perform tricks with surprise. But if your show consists of Torn & Restored Newspaper, the Zombie Ball, and Sawing a Lady in Half, you are depriving your audience of what they want most: something they didn’t see coming.

Some performers deal with this by turning these clichés on their head, finding ways to surprise us within the context of what we’ve come to expect. For example, in Penn & Teller’s version of Sawing a Lady in Half, they attempt to explain the method many already suspect, and end by inadvertently sawing through the woman’s “actual” midsection, ending with blood and guts scattered around the stage. The ending certainly comes as a surprise.

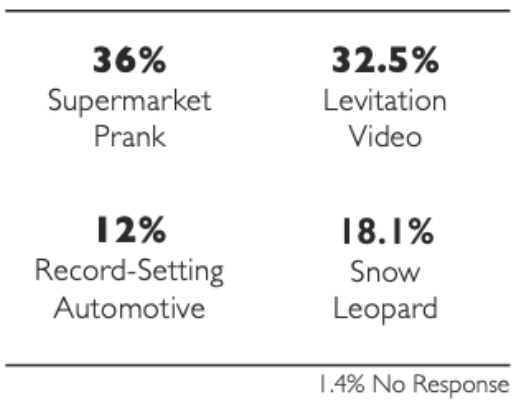
Now the bad news. What people dislike about magic shows is equally unexpected and almost

unanimous in our study. People dislike when magicians do the same tricks. They used phrases like “cliché,” “repetitive,” and “old tricks.”

I was convinced that what people would dislike about magic shows was the magician. I figured most people would find magicians unfunny and unlikeable (and some did), or that they would find most magic presentations dorky and outdated, even cheesy (you know who you are, fedora-and-suspenders guy). But given the opportunity, few people expressed these sorts of things. Thirty-four percent (which was the most popular response) were concerned about the repetitive nature of a magician’s material.

This casts a shadow over a sacred tenet of magic: “Do the classics.” “The classics are classics for a reason,” and “you can’t go

What Do People Love (and Hate) ?



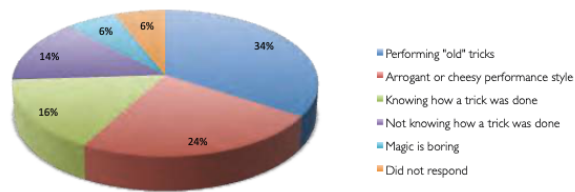
wrong with the classics” — as it turns out, maybe you can go wrong with the classics.

That doesn’t mean everyone on Earth hates the Linking Rings. There may be people who love Linking Rings and will seek out any performance of it. (And if you find that person attractive and you’re into that kind of thing, marry her. Or him.) There will always be exceptions, and you might even be the exception. The key here is to keep in mind that this data suggests what a majority feels about

various issues in magic, not how we think they should feel.

We can also make a tentative connection between what people like best and least about magic. Most people like surprise best and they dislike repetition most. By adding more surprises into our work, we automatically minimize what sixteen percent of people said they detest most about magic: knowing what happens next.

The undeniable truth revealed here is that most people dislike the idea of seeing magic effects they think they have already seen.



- 34 % Performing "old" tricks
- 23% Arrogant or cheesy performance style
- 16% Knowing how a trick was done
- 14% Not knowing how a trick was done
- 6% Magic is boring
- 6 % Did not respond

The data suggests that we should perform material unknown to our audiences, or find ways to frame classic material in a new way. “Be original” is an obvious point, but one we can, for the first time, back up with empirical data.

(To be continued)



TEXT: FRANS DE GROOT  
PHOTOS: MAGICPICS.CIE



“Hocus Pocus, le Festival de Magie de Nivelles revient le samedi 27 janvier pour une journée entière consacrée à l’art de la Magie... À nouveau, le Waux-Hall se transformera en véritable caverne d’Ali Baba pour les curieux, les passionnés, les magiciens en herbe ou professionnels. Du plus petit au plus grand, venez partager le plaisir de découvrir ou de redécouvrir cet art merveilleux”.

If you need help reading or understanding the above text, you will have a difficult day in Nivelles at the 14th Festival Hocus Pocus, a day well organized by Doug Spincer for the French-speaking magician.

The French-speaking language area is small in Europe, so if it is in French, such as books, DVDs, lectures, and galas, it attracts many French-speaking magicians to this event.



The dealers sold their tricks in the foyer of the theatre, and that was not only accessible to the insiders but also to the people of Nivelles who came to take a look. The large Saturday market was

in front of the theatre, and the public was happy to go (after shopping) to see which mysterious things were offered in their Cultural Center. Some dealers considered this and offered some cheap and simple tricks for bargain prices. The dealer that struck me the most and constantly demonstrated was [lecabinetdillusions.fr](http://lecabinetdillusions.fr), which have many original effects. His effect "Code" was a complete sell-out.

There were two lectures. The first was from Cyril Hubert, and he covered the Rubik's Cube and how to solve it. Initially, he said the algorithms and formulas were complex to explain, but he also had them on paper. The view of the table where he was performing was complicated. For me, everything was difficult to understand due to the language barrier. But he was skilled in what he was doing.



After lunch, the Lecture by David Stone, fortunately on stage, was due to follow. David Stone is a French actor, writer, lecturer, producer, and magician specializing in close-up and coin magic. I've seen him many times over the years, and his lectures haven't changed much, nor has he. He remains the young, charming magician that everyone loves. His forthcoming bottle of

champagne is one of the best. He also paid a lot of attention to that. And, of course, he patiently and with a lot of humor explained all his tricks that were later also for sale. There was a storm at his stand after the Lecture.

At the end of the afternoon, there was a Close-up Junior competition. What struck me was that two girls also participated, Lisa Fuzhen finished highest. It's a shame that the first prize was not awarded. The jury may have been right about that, but it is essential for juniors that the first prize (for Lisa) was awarded.



The lay audience also showed up in large numbers for the closing gala, a venue sold out to the last seat with many families with children. Although we were allowed into the hall half an hour later than planned, there was little grumbling, and people waited patiently to be allowed in. Presenter Anthony Pitsy came down from the top of the stage on a rope and immediately announced the first artist. As an organizer, Doug Spincer understood that many children were in the audience and,



therefore, put on a show with a child on stage. He does that excellently, and you can see the experience dripping from it.



Olivier Maricoux from Liège was very good with his small Magic Theater, in which a spectator from the audience acted as a magician. This act reminded me that I also saw Richard Ross do this.



Cyril Cartel had his own theatre group and presented a clownish act that did very well in this room.

In her own words, Giorda is the only female hypnotist in Europe. I'll call it pseudo-hypnosis; the audience appreciated it, people who could no longer remember their names and fell asleep on command.

Ms. Jeanna Magic, originally from Latvia but now living in Germany, has a beautiful manipulation act that you could also call a Tango act. She performs manipulations with candles, silks, and cards. It was a pity that the organization programmed two manipulation acts after each other.



Our Olivier Henning followed after Jeanna. The curtain opened, and a dark hole appeared without anything happening. Something went wrong, that was for sure. It later turned out to be a mistake by the stagehands. Olivier was not quite ready yet, and after that, the stagehands carried a close-up table onto the stage, which Olivier of course did not need. After a few more confusing events, a woman in the audience laughed and could not stop. There could be a better start for Olivier to perform his act. But when the curtain opened for the second time, Olivier was there in all his glory, flawless showing his manipulation act with cards. Without a trace of loss of concentration, the audience understood that something special was happening there and rewarded him with thunderous applause. Chapeau! Many spectators wanted to take a picture with him afterwards, which says it all. I'm proud he is a member of our society!



The final act brings us Klek Entos, a mysterious name that shows a wonderfully exciting horror-like act. An act known from America Got Talent. This is an act that I highly recommend to conference organizers. David

Stone hid behind this act and can be booked with his lecture. Do it, ladies and gentlemen! You won't be disappointed.



After this act, this day ended, and we had to go into the night. I hoped not to meet mister Entos in one of the dark alleys of Nivelles. Due to my poor knowledge of the French language (fortunately, I understand a lot), I missed a few things, but I had a fantastic day in Nivelles.

Thank you!"



**23|24**  
**25|26**  
**MAY 2024**

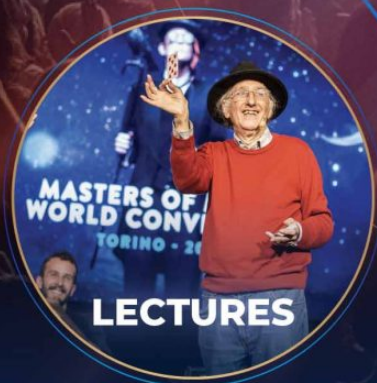
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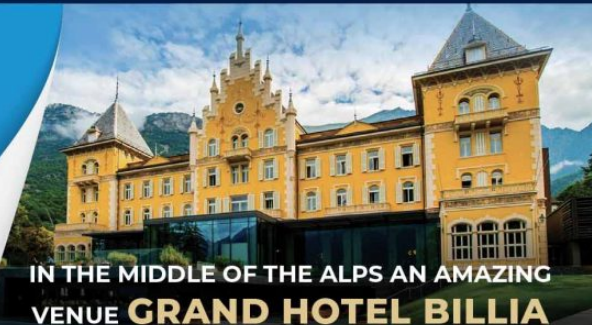


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