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**ISSUE 4** 

Francisco Mousinho lecturing at Mascini on March 31

## FRITZ WITH A Z

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2 10 QUESTIONS TO FRANCISCO MOUSINHO

#### 8) Ascanio or Tamariz?

Ascanio for the formula, Tamariz for everything else.

## ELIMINATING PIRACY

#### Andi Gladwin

If you asked every magic creator their biggest frustration right now, they will likely all give you the same answer: piracy.



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# WTF IMPROV YOUR STORIES OUR COMEDY

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#### FRITZ WITH A Z

Improvisational theatre. Often known as 'improvisation' or 'improv'. When you hear it, you might think of the TV show "Whose Line Is It Anyway?" where players receive suggestions from the audience, and with those suggestions, the players create a scene.

This magazine is a production of the Amsterdam Magic Society. If you like to contribute, send this to our editor & designer, Frans de Groot: <a href="mailto:amsterdammagicsociety@gmail.com">amsterdammagicsociety@gmail.com</a>



#### DEAR READER

Gracing the cover of this issue is Portuguese performer Francisco Mousinho, and we're thrilled to welcome him for a lecture on Monday, March 31st at Mascini. You can also catch him live at the Amsterdam Magic Show at Boom Chicago the following evening. I first met Francisco years ago while lecturing in Portugal, where I encountered incredible magicians showcasing diverse styles of magic. Experiencing magic from different cultures is truly enriching. Each country brings its unique influences, shaped by local traditions and the way magic is perceived in traditional media and by the public. Perhaps this diversity is what makes events like Blackpool so beloved — the chance to witness magic you might never see otherwise.

Speaking of Blackpool, in this issue, you'll find Marvin's write-up of his time there, alongside Jeffrey's recap of the first Just Another Magic Monday (JAMM), Andi Gladwin's thoughtful piece on piracy, and much more. Enjoy the read!

P.S. Remember Markus Tervo, our lecturer from last September? He recently appeared on Fool Us — watch his performance here to discover why the Finnish are considered the happiest people on Earth. The answer might surprise you!

**ENJOY READING** 





## 10 QUESTIONS Francisco Mousinho

#### 1) Most memorable show you performed at?

Funny enough... the first Cabaret & Burlesque show I hosted after Covid. Since anxiety follows me to the grave, being back on stage without flinching and through second guessing myself was a lesson to me.

#### 2) What is one of your hobbies?

I'm an avid fan of Magic: the Gathering. Wow... It feels so good to finally say this outloud.

#### 3) Favorite city?

My timeless favorite will always be in Cape Verde, called Tarrafal. Retiring there seems a possibility.

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

A breakthrough for a tangled up obstacle in a performance piece and sex.

Although regarding sex, who's waking me up really matters. A lot.

5) Who inspires you as a magician?

Harry Anderson & Mortenn Christiansen.

6) One magic move you cannot live without?

Palming would be the right choice.

7) What trick are you working at the moment?

A Ring on Rope Routine.

#### 8) Ascanio or Tamariz?

Ascanio for the formula, Tamariz for everything else.

9) What country would you like to visit?

Japan, eventually. For the culture and aesthetics.

10) One piece of advice you give to somebody who wants to study more theory about magic.

I would say to take care for impactful magic, as most magicians already do, but most importantly, special care for the quality of this impact.

This is achieved by seeing how most of the great performers handle an audience and how they relate to them.

And then observe how they care for the quality of impact of their magic in that symbiotic relationship, not only the impact of it.

Fritz with a Z

Register here for the lecture on March 31!



## Blackpool Magic Convention 2025 (72nd edition)

The Blackpool Magic Annual Convention, organized by the Blackpool Magicians Club, is one of the highlights of the magical calendar and is believed to be one of the main magical conventions in the world. The convention provides three days of live gala shows, performances, lectures, workshops, and a competition. The convention also serves as a hub for discovering the latest trends and innovations in the world of magic. Dealers and vendors from around the globe showcase new props, accessories, and magical tools. Every year, it attracts thousands of magic enthusiasts, dealers, and artists from all over the world. The convention is traditionally held at the Winter Gardens, a venue that accommodates the activities. One of the unique aspects of the convention is the diverse range of magical styles and techniques on display. This year, a competition was also held. Robin Deville secured the £30,000 prize in "The One" competition with his act, titled "Dr. Blue & Mr. Red" (as performed at FISM 2024). Attending the convention has not only been a great inspiration but has also provided me with new insights to improve my own magical skills. For example, mentalist Marc Paul taught a technique during his lecture that allows one to perform a classical mental effect easily and without the need for reading glasses: "You know that you you're getting old when you need glasses to read someone's mind!" The technique relates to a one-handed fold/unfold of a billet for a peek under cover of a writing pad. In addition to the scheduled activities, the informal meetings with fellow magicians contributed significantly to the overall experience. Exchanging ideas with other magicians has improved my perspective on magic even more and allowed me to think further about new concepts to integrate into my own magic.

The selected performances that impressed me the most were from Rick Thomas and Jack Rhodes. Illusionist Rick Thomas received a standing ovation with his full evening act "Mansion of Dreams," and Jack Rhodes also received a well-deserved standing ovation with

his innovative comedy act, using traditional techniques with modern staging (video wall). Furthermore, I attended lectures and performances from Alyx Hilshey (close-up), Ben Seidman (stage/close-up), Chris Dugdale (stage/close-up), David Parr (close-up), Eric Leclerc (comedy stage), Marc Paul (mentalism), Jonathan Goodwin (stunt/ escape), Cody Fisher (comedy stage), Michael Ammar (close-up), David Stone (close-up), Pete Turner (mind reading), Paul Martin (corporate), and Zak Mirz (stage). All were worthwhile to be present at, and many areas of the magical art were covered: from making a business to presentation, hosting, creating a show, traditional sleight of hand, (electronics) mentalism, stunt/escapes, comedy, stage, parlour, and close-up. Other (not attended) lectures and performances included ventriloquism, quick change, stage illusion, pickpocketing, flourishing, parlour, and family entertainment.

The most touching appearance, from my perspective, was from escape artist/ stuntman/daredevil Jonathan Goodwin. He entered the stage sitting in a wheelchair. It turned out that, due to a human mistake, he became paralyzed from the waist down in 2021 during rehearsals for American television. Despite his life-altering injury, he remained positive and published a book with explanations about his stunts. The book was available at his stand in the dealer hall. Another memorable session was the "Perfect ACAAN lecture (Any Card At Any Number)" lecture. David Berglas was mentioned several times during this lecture as he's considered to be the only magician in history who mastered the perfect version of this classical card effect. Interestingly enough, there was also a dealer who was selling the "Atomic deck" to accomplish a perfect ACAAN in about 90% of the cases.

Overall, Blackpool Magic Convention 2025, for me, was again a great gathering, providing not only incredible performances but also valuable human connections and learning experiences for life.





























































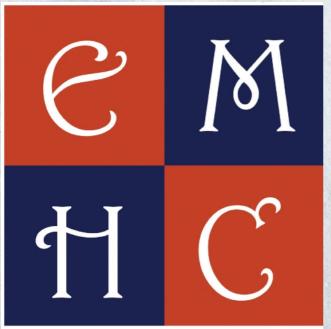












European Magic History Conference

#### IT'S CARNIVAL TIME!

The origins of Carnival date back to the Greco-Roman era during which, in the month of February, the rites linked to the god Dionysus (Bacchus for the Romans) were celebrated. The "Bacchanalia" or "Saturnalia" as they were known in ancient Rome, represented a moment of rebirth and regrowth, where chaos temporarily reigned, before the new order began again. For this reason, even today, in the historical celebrations of Carnival throughout Europe, grotesque, sometimes monstrous figures prevail, where the "magical" and sometimes "fairytale" world overlaps with the common one, the extraordinary prevails over the ordinary. Later, during the Christian era, these pagan rites transformed into a wild celebration where excesses were the norm as a prelude to the imminent Lent, the forty days of abstinence that preceded Easter, during which it was forbidden to celebrate, drink wine or eat meat, in memory of the period of Ascesis spent by Christ in the desert. And it is precisely from this reason that the name Carnevale was born, which according to the most widespread etymology coincides with the Latin "Carne Vale": goodbye meat.

During Carnival, fun fairs proliferated throughout Europe, where it was possible to

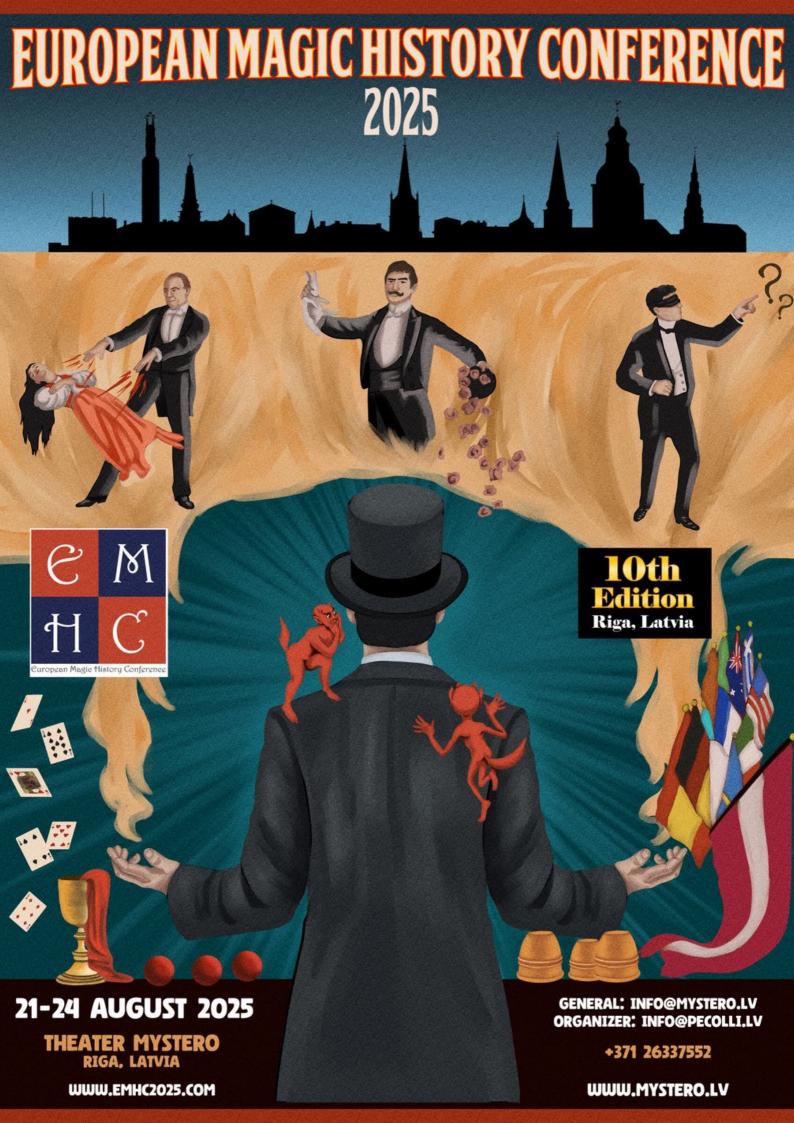
meet all kind of street performers and artists, including magicians and swindlers. In this context, the new conference just added to the EMHC program fits in: Fast and Loose - The Many Incarnations of a Scam.



Fast and Loose is a cheating game played at country fairs since the Middle Ages. The English term probably originated in the 16th century, but the game was known throughout Europe by different names: in Spain as "Juego de la Correguela", in France as "la chaîne Gitane" and in Italy as "Gherminella". The expression appeared in literature from the 14th to the 16th centuries. Shakespeare mentions Fast and Loose in 1595 in "King John" and, later, in "Love's Labour's Lost". In Boccaccio's Decameron, "Gherminella" was a generic term for "deception", and the game was already mentioned in Florentine gambling bans of 1324.

Salvatore Rapacciuolo, the current president of the "Bartolomeo Bosco Magic Club" of Turin, carried out in-depth historical researches on the origins and techniques of two very popular street games/scams: "the three bells" and the game of "Gherminella" ("Fast and Loose"), he will present his historical research on this second ancient fairground game, also illustrating the evolution of the various techniques used over the years.

An interesting and more in-depth article about literature of this game/scam can be found here: The Game of Gherminella
One more good reason to register! and if you haven't already, you can do so by following the link below:
European Magic History Convention





f you asked every magic creator their biggest frustration right now, they will likely all give you the same answer: piracy. Regardless of whether it's a trick, DVD, download, or gimmick, it will likely be available to download illegally within days of it being released. But what can be done about it? Most creators will tell you that it's an unstoppable problem and some will reluctantly tell you that it's a sad price of doing business in the digital era.

Andi Gladwin, however, disagrees. "Piracy is a big issue. It must be stopped, and not just because creators are losing out, but because those who purchase these pirated products are getting second-rate magic props — and that isn't good for anyone." The majority of piracy comes from China where historically copyright laws been a little more relaxed than in the Western world, and that makes communication between creator, copier, and consumer difficult, making the problem difficult to solve. And let's be frank: if Hollywood movie studios can't fix it, what good can one man from England do about it?



Well, last month Andi Gladwin was invited to give a keynote speech on piracy in magic for the Chinese Government ... and he didn't hold back. While most people may have politely explained the problem and hoped that they'd offer to do something about it, Andi presented a five-step business-focused plan that he believes they must act on to fix the issue.

These weren't just simple ideas, but instead fleshed-out business solutions that included how to grow the Chinese magic market.

He started by getting right to the heart of the problem; tackling it

in a way that we have not heard previously: "To understand how to stop piracy, we have to understand why the pirates do what they do. And for the most part, it's because they feel as though they are helping their customers by getting the latest magic quickly and inexpensively. Some pirates that I have talked to don't even understand that they are doing something wrong; to them, they are offering a service for their fellow magicians. It's a cultural problem. The fact that Westerners also use these services is a different problem — the counterfeiters are mainly interested in helping people from their own country get magic cheaply and quickly after release."

Andi gave us some examples such as his own 52 Memories book, which was translated into Chinese, re-illustrated and printed just weeks after the American release. "I know first hand how much work it takes to produce a book, and just how little profit there is in it. The person who pirated my book won't make a profit from it with the small price they are selling it at. It's clear that there are reasons beyond profit for doing what they do. We even tracked down one pirate who was quite wealthy — in his mind, he was a warrior for the people."

But how do we solve such a problem when the motivation is more than just financial? Andi's approach is a little left-field: get magic into Asia guicker and cheaper. He says: "I proposed that the government offer tax breaks on companies that import magic, including lowering the import duty. That sounds crazy, but countries like China are eager to improve their arts, as shown by the 798 Art District in Beijing, where the government dedicated an entire suburb for artists to thrive. But, despite its rich history there, magic is a relatively undeveloped skill in China and so I approached this point from a positive note — improve imports so that Chinese magicians can learn from more developed magic cultures. This will help them thrive in their own ways and ensure that they don't learn from second-rate ripoffs and translations."

This will only partially help, he explains.
"Western magic is typically too expensive for Chinese magicians, so it comes down to the content creators to make some sacrifices that will ultimately help everyone." Andi's company, Vanishing Inc. (which he co-founded with Joshua Jay), have set up Chinese operations where they release special Chinese editions of their magic. "We have both performed and lectured in China," Joshua Jay says, "And we are starting to understand the needs of Chinese magicians. They want to learn great magic, but it's just not financially possible when magic has to be imported from the USA."

That's why Vanishing Inc. is now releasing their magic in special Chinese versions. It helps the Chinese magicians, and it stops the counterfeiters in their tracks by beating them at their own game. Why wait to buy a second-rate ripoff, when the top-quality original is already available? This is the same approach taken by Adobe and other major companies.



"We're a trademark in China," Andi clarifies,
"And that is extremely important for us as it
means that the Chinese government can much
more easily protect our brand. From what I have
seen, the government are serious about fixing
piracy and despite what I have heard other
magicians say, they do have laws that are aimed
to combat it. Having a Chinese trademark
makes this easier." The majority of Chinese
people buy almost everything from a website
called TaoBao (including food, furniture,
clothes, and magic!) and so this makes it easier
to tackle: "With TaoBao, everything is in

one place. This makes it easier for consumers," Andi says, "But it also makes it a little harder for pirates. It's less like the game of Whack-a-Mole than it was closing down some of the Eastern-pirating websites that we have done."



The big question is what other content creators can do about it. Vanishing Inc. has a plan for that too. "My talk was the result of several years work with the Vanishing Inc. team. We have more team members in Asia than anywhere else in the world and they are working extremely hard on the legalities and logistics of making this happen. But this isn't really about us; it's about how we can make a lasting change for every magic producer in the world and I am confident that we can eventually help anyone wanting to protect their magic in Asia, and the rest of the world."

Will Andi's talk be enough? "Not at all," he says, "but this is just the first step. I have given the government an itemised approach, something to think about, and perhaps even act on. There are many intelligent, and honest magicians in China andI think they too will welcome a fix to this problem. This isn't an overnight fix, but instead an effort to improve magic in China, and to support our magic creators globally.

Every day, we have a team of people working to improve this problem and we are beginning to see tangible results. For me, that is unbelievably exciting and magic will be better because of it."

We'll report back in the Buzz on his progress as the story unfolds.

Andi Gladwin



On Monday, February 3, a special evening was organized in a small but cozy theatre in Gorinchem. A new concept, something that did not exist before. At least, there was something similar called "Magic Art Center." A place for magicians to meet once a month. Not necessarily as you would expect from a magic club. But just a place where anyone who loves magic or theater could go. A place founded by none other than our Dutch magician Richard Ross. And later was run by his wife, Veronique Ross. A place where magicians went to make beautiful memories. The memories are the only reason I know this place. I've only heard of it from magicians who gathered there and talked about it.

So unfortunately, I can't tell you much more about this place because I've never been there myself. But everything shows that this place is missed.

That's why JAMM was launched. Just Another Magic Monday! A place for magicians to come together. A place to jam, or watch the performances given by some of these magicians. The location is a nice cozy theatre in Gorinchem, which is an easily accessible location for most Dutch people.

Upon entering, it was immediately very pleasant. It was already nice and busy, and there were plenty of familiar faces. After talking with everyone, it was time to enter the hall. It was

first explained what exactly JAMM would entail. Shortly afterwards, the magicians' acts began. I won't name them all, but it was a very nice lineup with both young and old talent. After the show, it was time to have a drink and talk about the show. There was some magic here and there, and it was a lot of fun. As usual, I went home much too late, but it was definitely worth it!

JAMM is a well-organized event that takes place every first Monday of the month in the Peeriscoop Theatre, for a very small fee. So if you are ever in the area, be sure to stop by. I will definitely go again!

#### JEFFREY VAN VLIET



#### A card magic show like no other!

Three Magicians

Your Deck of Cards

🧒 Almost an Hour of Mind-Blowing Fun

The audience brings a deck of cards, chooses which deck will be used, and the magicians perform with whatever they're given — no tricks, just pure skill and magic!

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Café De Buurvrouw

March 20th @ 20:00



Improvisational theatre. Often known as 'improvisation' or 'improv'. When you hear it, you might think of the TV show "Whose Line Is It Anyway?" where players receive suggestions from the audience, and with those suggestions, the players create a scene. But what is improvexactly and how can it be used in your magic performances?

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, improvisation is "a performance that [is] not practiced or planned." When taking improv classes (which I highly recommend in doing), you learn to create something from nothing with suggestions from the audience and/or your fellow improv players. The name of Keith Johnstone will come up during those classes as he's the modern father of improv, mostly known for theatresports, a competitive form of improv. At the end of a improv course, together with your fellow improv players ,you perform in front of a live audience.

To the audience, an improv performance feels spontaneous, not scripted, and in the moment. Does that mean I improvise my magic as well? Only if I play Magic Sports, a magic version of improv created by Australian magician Tim Ellis. But normally I don't improvise the magic. Just as in improv, the techniques are rehearsed. It's what happens in between the magic where you can create real magic moments.

And this is where I think you can distinguish yourself from other magicians. When I perform my act at comedy shows, the focus is more on comedy than magic. As I feel I'm not as good a joke teller as the other comedians, therefore I do improv comedy during my set. When you

improvise with your audience, you create something from nothing. And what's created is something for that particular moment and cannot be replicated. It becomes unique and memorable. This is what I want my magic to be: a collective effort to create a memorable moment. The magic is important, but I think what surrounds the magic is meaningful.

Taking an improvisation course will teach you many techniques applicable to magic and in your everyday life. I feel it can help to find your character and to help find and/or create magic material that suits you. Here are five tips that are given by improv experts.

## "Enjoy things even when you're screwing up." - Keith Johnstone

Be not afraid to fail. What's the worst thing that can happen when a trick fails? Exactly. So just acknowledge the mistake, laugh about it, and move on. During one of my performances in Illusions Magic Bar I switched in the wrong deck for a multiple selection and revelation routine. I realised my mistake when I was about to reveal the selections. I acknowledged my mistake, I laughed about and so did the audience. And I moved on to go in a different routine. At the end of the act, I had the audience on my side and it was reflected in the donations I received. Embrace the failure and go onward.

### "The fun is always on the other side of a yes." - Martin de Maat

In improv you're taught always to say "Yes, and..." For example, if somebody during your Ambitious Card comments that you use duplicates, I would say "Yes, and the copy machine in this deck is state of the art." Always acknowledge what the other person says and expand on that line of thinking.

"If we treat each other as if we are geniuses, poets, and artists, we have a better chance of becoming that on stage." - Del Close

Make the spectator the star. In improv, it's your task to make your fellow improv player the star. Why? It makes your fellow improver look good and therefore it makes you look good. This is the same when doing magic. It's always best when you compliment the audience. Or implement moments in your magic routines where they do the magic. For example, you let the participant invisibly move your sponge ball to his/her hand, rather than you doing it.

"The thing about improvisation is that it's not about what you say. It's listening to what other people say. It's about what you hear." - Paul Merton

Listen and observe. During your routine, ask the audience questions. It's a great way to kill time, for example when somebody signs a card or when somebody walks towards the stage. Also, be aware of your surroundings. Is there music playing, is there a decor that catches your eye, etc. All that information you can inject immediately into your routine you are performing right there and then. An example is when I was performing in Slovenia and there was this big pillar in the room. Everybody saw it and I made a joke of me disappearing and appearing while I jumped back and forth behind the pillar. It got a huge laugh because I acknowledged what was in the room (quite literally) and it was made for that moment.

"With improv, it's a combination of listening and not trying to be funny." - Kristen Wiig

The former SNL-cast member and actress is

right: when performing you don't have to be funny. Of course, when I perform I've got a few stock lines and one-liners that fit my character. But most of the things I say are observations and together with the audience, I find the funny within those observations. Plus with the human interactions and the magic routine that is happening. Cliches and generalizations are fine to use. Keith Johnstone says that "Every time you go the direction the audience expects, they'll think you're original. People laugh with pleasure at the obvious."



Improv Show in Boom Chicago

I hope you've seen how improv can improve your magic. In your everyday life, improv will help thinking on your feet, live in the moment, and collaboration. Plus taking improv classes is relaxing and it takes your mind to a different place. Patricia Ryan Madson is right when she wrote: "The world of improv is a portal into mindfulness and magic."

#### **READING RECOMMENDATION:**

- <u>Keith Johnstone, Impro: Improvisation</u> and the Theatre (1987)
- <u>Patricia Ryan Madson, Improv Wisdom</u> (2005)

- <u>Viola Spolin, Improvisation for the Theater: A Handbook of Teaching and Directing Techniques (1999)</u>

FRITZ WITH AZ.





#### AGENDA

March 20 - <u>Your Cards, Our Magic Show</u> Café de Buurvrouw Amsterdam

March 27: Amsterdam Bar Magic Show Café De Buurvrouw Amsterdam

March 31 <u>Lecture Francisco Mousinho</u> Mascini Amsterdam

April 1 Amsterdam Magic Show, Boom Chicago Amsterdam

April 3-5 - The Gateway Close-Up Gathering in Collinsville, Illinois (near St. Louis, MO) USA

April 4 - 6 - Portland Magic Jam in Portland, Oregon USA

April 6 <u>Historie Van De Magie</u> in the House of Mysteries, Ghent Belgium

April 10-12 - <u>WonderBash</u> in Grand Rapids, Michigan. USU

April 14 <u>AMSociety Meeting</u>, Mascini Amsterdam

April 16 - <u>Double the Magic</u>, Mascini, Amsterdam

April 23-26 - Obie's 4F Invitation Only Convention (Fechter's Finger Flicking Frolic) in Buffalo, New York, USA

April 27 - MAWNY (Magician's Alliance of Western New York): Batavia, NY USA

May 5 - 7 - Collector's Expo in Las Vegas, Nevada (NOTE: SOLD OUT)

May 6 - Amsterdam Magic Show, Boom Chicago Amsterdam

May 12 - AMSociety Meeting, Mascini Amsterdam

May 16-18 - AbraCORNdabra in Des Moines, Iowa

May 31 - <u>Tampa Bay Festival of Magic</u> in Tampa, Florida.





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