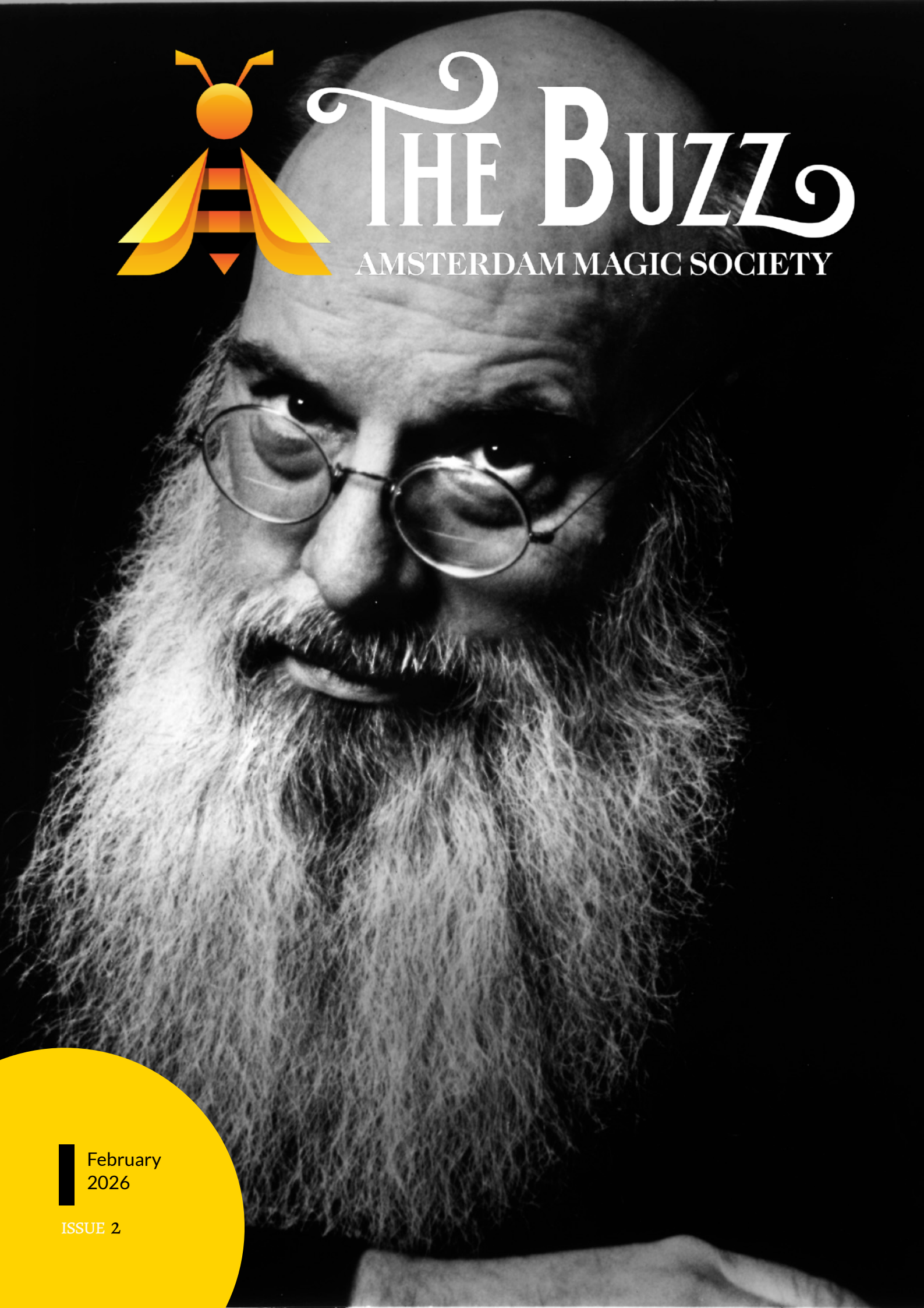




THE BUZZ

AMSTERDAM MAGIC SOCIETY



February
2026

ISSUE 2

FRITZ WITH A Z

1/

What is your favorite magic movie? Mine is *The Prestige*—perhaps because I’m a fan of Christopher Nolan and his fascination with structure, obsession, and misdirection.

3 p.



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2/ THE BUZZYS NOMINEES

It’s time to celebrate the creativity, insight, and magical achievements that defined our year. The Amsterdam Magic Society proudly presents The Buzzys — our annual awards honouring the standout contributions to *The Buzz* (this digital magic magazine) and the most inspiring Buzz Talks delivered by members.

8 p.

A BIG IDEA

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LARRY HASS

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12 p.

THE 10 GREATEST MOVIES ABOUT MAGIC

MERGAN

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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

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DEAR READER

What is your favorite magic movie? Mine is *The Prestige*—perhaps because I’m a fan of Christopher Nolan and his fascination with structure, obsession, and misdirection. Films about magic often remind us that what looks effortless on stage is built on discipline, repetition, and choice.

That idea has been on my mind as the new year begins. One of my New Year’s resolutions is to learn one new trick each month that I can confidently perform on stage. It’s a small but deliberate commitment to staying sharp—pushing myself to keep learning, refining, and questioning my own work.

That same spirit of practice and exchange runs through this issue. In these pages, Mergan revisits his article on the greatest magic films made before 2013, reflecting on how our art has been portrayed on screen. On the cover, we feature Eugene Burger. Thanks to Larry Hass, you’ll find a thoughtful look at Eugene’s life and lasting influence—reminding us that

magic is not just about methods, but about meaning. Practice, of course, rarely happens in isolation. Throughout January and February, we’ll be hosting our Open Sessions every Monday. These evenings are open to all: a place to meet fellow magicians, exchange ideas, try things out, and talk magic. The dates can be found in the calendar on our website, and everyone is welcome.

Finally, this issue marks the start of The Buzzys, as announced in our previous issue. You’ll find the nominees listed here. Voting is open to members only, who will receive a voting form that also includes a playlist of the Buzz Talks. The winners will be announced at our March meeting, with the full results published in the April issue of *The Buzz*. A sincere thank you to Evan for all the work he has done behind the scenes to make The Buzzys possible.

ENJOY THE ISSUE

Fritz with a Z



It's time to celebrate the creativity, insight, and magical achievements that defined our year. The Amsterdam Magic Society proudly presents The Buzzys — our annual awards honouring the standout contributions to The Buzz (our digital magic magazine) and the most inspiring Buzz Talks delivered by members.

This year's edition features five categories, each with five nominees. Nominees include both members and non-members who wrote for The Buzz, as well as Society members who presented remarkable Buzz Talks.

Each Society member can cast one vote per category, and once your vote is submitted, it cannot be changed.



Voting closes on January 31st, 2026 at 23:59.

This are the nominees for 2025

Best Buzz Talk

Pickpocketing | Peter

An interesting topic of how to use a watch steal in a magical way.

Easy Money | Fritz

A detailed and historical dive in a modern classic: paper to money.

Sticky Cards | Jose

An underused concept that opens up myriads of possibilities in card magic.



Best Buzz Talk on Magic History

Evolution of an Act | Willem

A personal journey that is useful for everybody.



Final Houdini Seance | Evan

A collaboration between several members about Houdini.



Slydini | Ron
About the life and career of Tony Slydini.

P.C. Sorcar | Soumya
About one of Indians greatest magicians ever lived.



Three Card Monte | John
An in-depth lesson on one of the oldest tricks (scams?) in history.

Coniglio | Fritz
About a Dutch war hero that was also a magician.

Ionina | Marjolein
About one of the most influential female magicians in the first half of the 20th century.

Best Buzz article (members)

[Click here to read all the articles that are nominated!](#)

Back to Basics | Rico (issue 2)
A good read on returning to the basics in magic can be beneficial.

Improve your Improv | Fritz (issue 4)
An interesting perspective on how to make your magic stand out.

The Name Game | Frans (issue 8)
A useful piece on how to remember names.
Penn & Teller | Evan (issue 11)
A fan letter written to an iconic duo.

Meditation, Silence & Peace | Michael Vincent
- (issue 12)

A personal piece about mental health and how to cope with it.

Best Buzz article of 2025 (non-members)

[Click here to read all the articles that are nominated!](#)

Eliminating Piracy | Andi Gladwin (issue 4)
The battle against piracy and how to cope with it from one of the bigger magic shops.

Mystify Magic Festival | Abby Segal (issue 5)
A personal review of a festival where woman magicians are taking the lead.

Magic & the Brain | Susana Martinez-Conde & Stephen L. Macknik (issue 6)
How magicians inspire neuroscientists in their research on how the brain works.

European Magic History Conference | Enrico Pecolli (issue 7)
A detailed history about the EHMC.

Nate Jackson - Justin Willman (issue 8)
A profile on one of the most prolific magic performers of this generation.

Best online performance

Danny Urbanus | Fool Us
https://youtu.be/ttOXLmhUi4?si=5mGh2R_jk84NBB9L

Solange Kardinaly | America's Got Talent
https://youtu.be/dkE_xNgwtLw?si=rXd_B5GT5G_Dd2EY

Zippo Guo | Holland's Got Talent
<https://youtu.be/ZJWvHT2fHtM?si=Kvlp6asVCuoPT5fY>

Manho Han | Britain's Got Talent
<https://youtu.be/8VyVaVCCAUM?si=Z6Vk-sBMOWIEdZl7>

Peter Vogel | De Bankzitters
https://youtu.be/_r-jh7SmqRw?si=W7uLtQK0ZeH7FZ6F



AGENDA

February 2 [JAMM](#) Gorinchem, Theater Peeriscoop

February 2 [AMSTERDAM MAGIC SOCIETY](#) – OPEN SESSIONS Mascini Amsterdam

February 6 [Amsterdam Magic Show](#) - Boom Chicago Amsterdam

February 5 -7 [MagicArt Fest](#) Buhusi, Romania

February 6 [Legatum Niek & Guy](#) - De Meervaart, Amsterdam

February 9 [Amsterdam Magic Society](#) Mascini Amsterdam

February 11-15 - [Flasoma](#) in Cali, Colombia

February 16 [AMSTERDAM MAGIC SOCIETY](#) – OPEN SESSIONS Mascini Amsterdam

February 19-22 - [Blackpool Convention](#) Blackpool, England.

February 23 [AMSTERDAM MAGIC SOCIETY](#) – OPEN SESSIONS Mascini Amsterdam

March 6-7 - [New England Magicians Conference](#) in Trumble, Connecticut at the Marriott Shelton

March 10 [Amsterdam Magic Show](#) - Boom Chicago Amsterdam

March 13-15 - [Portland Magic Jam](#) in Portland, Oregon at the Portland Airport Sheraton Inn.

March 13-14 - [Magic Capital Close-Up Convention](#) in Colon, Michigan.

March 13-14 - [San Marino International Magic Festival](#)





A Big Idea

Like any good philosopher, Eugene Burger draws powerful distinctions to help us become better magicians. For instance, his well-known distinctions between magic and tricks, patter and script, practice and rehearsal. But I believe his most important distinction for our success is that between being able to do a sleight and being able to do it deceptively.

Eugene underscores this distinction from his earliest writings to his final reflections. Because, for him, it's the brutal fact of sleight-of-hand magic. If the audience perceives anything fishy, much less sees the move, "then we have failed!" he would say. We have failed to create the experience of the impossible required for magic.

Much like the Emperor's clothes, once this gets said, it becomes obviously true. Who could deny it? Yet, most trick descriptions in magic books and magazines continue to describe the moves as though they existed in a vacuum,

without real people in different positions watching everything like a hawk. And how can we reconcile the obviousness of Eugene's distinction with the fact we witness so many performances during which we see or perceive the sleight-of-hand? (We do, don't we?)

Some of it must be that magicians don't want Eugene's distinction to be true. We don't want to have work so hard and thoughtfully about our sleights. We want to do a trick right now rather than take the months and often years required to make a sleight truly invisible. Self-deception about this is a powerful, seductive force—for all of us. Which is why I try to keep Eugene's distinction at the forefront of my mind at all times.

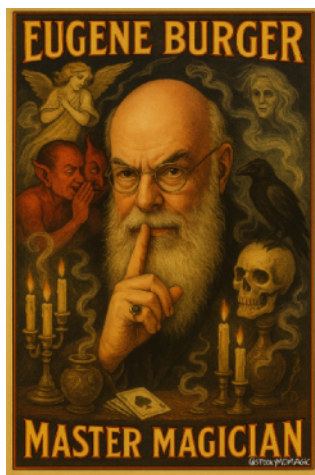
Another part of the challenge is that it's so difficult to assess how we're actually doing with a sleight. The very act of knowing we are

performing one makes it impossible to be “utterly deceived” by it, even in the mirror or when watching a video. Those tools help eliminate obvious problems, but they can’t help us “see” if our moves are unseeable.

How then can we meet the extremely high bar Eugene sets for our sleight-of-hand?

Interestingly, Eugene shares one answer in a story about his mid-teens, when he would ask Don Alan all these youthful questions about whether this or that would work. Over and over, Don Alan would simply say, “Watch their faces; their faces will tell you everything.”

I confess that the first few times I heard Eugene recount this story, it blew right past me. But one day, I woke up to the fact this wasn’t just a punchy story or a metaphor. It is one hundred percent literally true: their faces do tell us if our methods are deceptive. Because when we astonish people, their eyes are wide open, their jaw is slack, and they look dazed. They often babble or exclaim. If their faces are not doing any of that, then probably we have failed.



(Image by Spooky MD)

This is the hard truth about sleight-of-hand magic, and it’s a reminder to endlessly ask ourselves Eugene’s most pointed question in this area. That is: Right here, right now, with this trick or sleight, “Who’s fooling who?”

LARRY HASS



Zippo Guo in The Illusionists!

The global hit The Illusionists is coming to the Netherlands in 2026, starring Hans Klok. After overwhelming international success, the world's best-selling magic show, The Illusionists, from Cirque du Soleil Entertainment Group, is finally coming to the Netherlands. And it's starring none other than illusionist Hans Klok.

Audiences can prepare for a spectacular live theater show featuring seven of the world's best illusionists, full of breathtaking illusions, dangerous escapes, and unparalleled magic.

The Illusionists will be performed exclusively in select Dutch theaters starting in November 2026 and will then continue touring in Germany and other countries.

The show is known for its lightning-fast pace, spectacular stunts, and impressive cast. Each illusionist is an absolute master within their own discipline: from grand stage illusions and escapology to mind magic and comedic magic.

The Dutch cast of The Illusionists includes Niels Houtepen as the Mentalist, Aaron Crow as the Daredevil, Scott & Muriel as the Accidentalists, Zippo Guo as the Manipulator, Dann Stevens as the Magician, and Hans Klok as the fastest Illusionist in the world. The director's concept is by Frank Van Laecke.

The Illusionists is a collaboration between BrandConnection, SCALA Theater, JK Theater, and Senf, in partnership with Cirque du Soleil Entertainment Group.

The organization will announce the locations and dates in the Netherlands soon.

THE 10 GREATEST (and sometimes strange) MOVIES ABOUT MAGIC AND MAGICIANS (before 2013) (click on the pictures!)

There's a point in every movie about magic where someone makes the following statement: "Magic doesn't work on TV or in the movies because the camera can't be misdirected. It sits silently watching everything, not allowing the magician to use the tricks of the trade to successfully pull off their illusion." Of course, that's the rub with all stage productions. What works in front of a live audience, a group of beleaguered and gullible patrons, simply doesn't succeed once it's recorded and replayed. With such scrutiny comes knowledge one shouldn't possess. Sure, some of the allure is there, but for the most part, the sense of wonder is turned into a simple shoulder shrug.

Still, Hollywood has tried on many occasions to use the practice as a means of making their own motion picture enchantment. Sometimes, the profession is portrayed. In other instances, magic is made into something real and relatable, a gift given to one from some unknown source.

A perfect example of the former was the newly released hit from the Summer of 2013, *Now You See Me* and the newest release in 2025 (see the last Buzz). In fact, that film got me thinking about the 10 Greatest Movies about Magic and Magicians.

Of course, said compendium is not without a caveat. First up, let's get this out of the way right up front. Harry Potter deserves his own category and list. The boy wizard who turned magic and mysticism into a wondrous worldwide phenomenon (via author J. K. Rowling's classic novels) was featured in eight films. If we included them, they'd bump out several of the other titles we wanted to discuss here. So Harry gets his more than

honorable mention and we're done dealing with him. Similarly, we did push the boundaries a bit on what we would include, sans the hallowed Halls of Hogwarts. In a couple of cases, the magic element is a minor point in an otherwise obvious bit of storytelling. Still, without that facet, these films wouldn't be so interesting. So without further ado, here are my choices, beginning with one of the most bizarre examples of the sleight of hand subgenre:

#10 - *The Wizard of Gore* (1969)

Famed splatter master Herschell Gordon Lewis delved into the world of weird prestidigitation with this oddball effort



featuring a magician who could make his horror show tricks (involving death and vivisection) "real." In essence, Montag hypnotizes his targets, puts them through their gruesome, Grand Guignol paces, and then, with a snap of his fingers, the bloodletting truly begins. With a selection of stomach-churning stage sequences to keep audiences poised in front of their barf bags, and a fascinatingly effective turn by Ray Sager as Montag, this remains one of

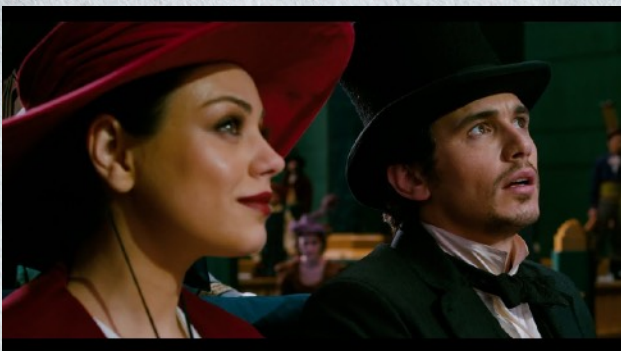
the exploitation icon's very best. The remake is merely average.

#9 – The Geisha Boy (1958)



That comedy genius, Jerry Lewis, plays the Great Wooley, a less-than successful magician entertaining the troops as part of a USO show. When he gets in trouble with the headliner, he ends up befriending a Japanese orphan and the duo spend the rest of the film trying to find a way to turn tragedy into comedy. As one of Lewis' lesser works, this one is more oriented around the maudlin than it is our main man or his manic magic act. Still, the storyline is so simple and the message so likable that it ends up a winner.

#8 – Oz the Great and Powerful (2013)



James Franco found box office gold as the title character in this Sam Raimi reimagining of the classic L. Frank Baum fairy tales. Gone are most of the recognizable characters from the Wizard we all know and love. In their place is another collection of wonderful entities as well as a welcome battle between two wannabe witches. Franco does get a chance to use his sleight of hand skills to save the day,

but the real magic here is in the universe created by Baum, Raimi, and the various visual effects artists working behind the scenes.

#7 – New York Stories: Oedipus Wrecks (1989)

Woody Allen's last legitimately funny film was a short subject as part of this Martin Scorsese/Francis Ford Coppola celebration of all things Big Apple. In his story, his nagging mother disappears – literally – while participating in a Coney Island magic show. The magician has no idea what happened... until, said nag is suddenly seen in the sky, commenting and critiquing everything Allen and his fiancée Mia Farrow do. There are several seminal scenes here, including ones toward the beginning with Mae Questel (as Mom) deriding her son and his various personal flaws. The magic show is a mere catalyst for some great comedy.



#6 – Bedknobs and Broomsticks (1971)

Riding high on the success of Mary Poppins, the House of Mouse decided to make another bit of British fantasy into a full blown live action musical. This time around, they focused on a group of war orphans, the weird old woman who reluctantly agrees to take them in, and her eventual unmasking as a witch in training. With the help of a has-been magician peddling spells via a correspondence school, the group goes on several wild adventures. Though dated now, the movie won an Academy Award for its amazing F/X work, mostly revolving around a

finale featuring reanimated suits of armor battling invading Nazis.

#5 – Now You See Me (2013)



A group of divergent performers – some professional magicians, others former street hustlers and con men – are gathered together by an unknown source and turned into The Four Horsemen. The goal? To use the powers of misdirection and prestidigitation to get revenge on those who wronged the world, mostly via financial force. Though some have complained that the onscreen thrills come from CG, not legitimate magic tricks, there is still an intriguing idea here – to wit, people trained in the art of deception using said skill to make corporate villains and those within the corrupt sphere of influence pay.

#4 – Hugo (2011)



There is a lot of magic in this movie, from the mechanical automaton that starts the search for its rightful owner to the moment we learn just who former stage performer

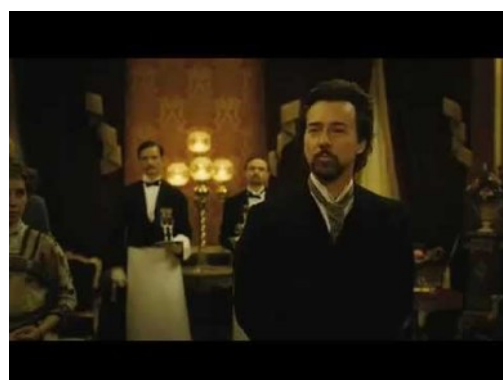
Georges Melies actually became. Indeed, director Martin Scorsese uses the latest in modern technology to tell a story steeped in the earliest elements of cinema. Even better, he shows just how Méliès used his training as a performer to put his amazing flights of visual fancy up on the big screen for all to see. While there is much more to the movie than this, the concept of magic and magicians is key to its success.

#3 – The Illusionist (2010)



The special thing about this film, outside of its classical animation approach and heartwarming storyline, is that it used the final script from famed French funnyman Jacques Tati as its source. Written as kind of an apology to his estranged daughter, it's the story of a failed performer who ends up in a small town where his limited skills are seen as special. There, he befriends a small girl who believes he is really magical. As she grows up, however, the realities of life begin to change her affections for the aging act. As melancholy as it is amazing.

#2 – The Illusionist (2006)



Released at the same time as Christopher Nolan's masterpiece of magic, this film somehow won the box office battle. Today, few remember it outside of those who still retain a special feeling for Edward Norton, Jessica Biel, and their tale of forbidden love and a theatrical performer desperate to get the woman he wants.

All that's standing in his way is an insane royal who will destroy him if he makes one move toward his intended. It's all very baroque and romantic, with lots of lavish production value and an obvious place for a bit of movie misdirection. You'll see the twist ending a mile away.

#1- The Prestige (2006)

Along with Inception, Memento, and Following, this is further proof that



Christopher Nolan is one of the best, if not the best director working today.

This story of competing magicians and the lengths they will go to in one-upping each other features fantastic performances, a whip-smart script, flawless direction, and a finale that will leave you gobsmacked over its multi-layered implications. How this lost out to The Illusionist as the best magic movie of that year is still a mystery.

MERGAN



LEGATUM is inspired by the legacy of their grand master and pays tribute to his groundbreaking art of magic. Through illusions, humor, and captivating storytelling, they search for a mysterious destination where they hope to look their mentor in the eye one last time. What makes this unconventional form of cabaret truly special is that not a single word is spoken. As the acts follow one another at a rapid pace, the audience is guided solely by visuals, subtle mime, and a touch of acrobatics. You simply have to experience it to understand how effortlessly Niek & Guy balance between reality and illusion. As newly crowned Dutch champions of magic, they also show why their acts have received international acclaim. They have even performed at the legendary Magic Castle in Hollywood. In LEGATUM, magic, musicality, and imagination come together in an unforgettable spectacle that keeps you guessing about what is real and what is not. LEGATUM is a celebration for anyone who loves to be surprised. (Language no problem)

February 6 in theatre "De Meervaart"
Amsterdam. Click voor tickets: <https://meervaart.nl/agenda/niek-guy-legatum>

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