

Society of American Magicians Al Baker Assembly #35



October, 2006

Message From the President

Dear Compeers,

I can't believe it has been a month already! Here we are officially in the fall season. For sports fans there are football games and baseball playoffs and for you, compeers, we are embarking on a season of magic!

This month we are featuring a lecture by Alan Sands, son of the late George Sands. Alan is a professional hypnotist and magician. His lecture will be on his late father's work as well as an introduction to stage hypnosis. November we have IBM Gold Cup winner John Born and in December we have escape and stunt artist Harley Newman. January will be our very own Cavalcade of Magic show.

We have received a great response for performers for Cavalcade in fact I believe this has been the best it has ever been for a recent assembly production. This is a double edged sword though. We have so many volunteering performers that we don't seem to have enough production crew. We need curtains, lighting, sound, video, stage management someone to handle food for the three days. We also need to get the word out so that we can have a good turn out. Remember this is a 3 day project (January 5th, 6th and 7th) and will require serious commitment. So I am calling on all

members to consider where they might best fit into this production. Please contact our secretary Derrin Berger with your availability. We have already had some that volunteered to perform communicate flexibility with regard to their roll in Cavalcade.

Our business meeting this month will focus on Cavalcade so please bring your ideas and suggestions. Here's looking forward to a great season of magic lectures and shows.

Magically yours,

Carlo DeBlasio
Master of Mystery
President – Al Baker Assembly 35

Next Meeting

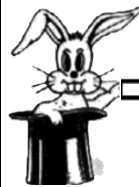
October 10, 2006

Lecture by **Alan Sands**

Location: Central Hudson – 245 South Road

Time: 7:30 PM

Host: Carlo Deblasio



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Upcoming Events

October 8th, 2006
Magic Funday
Holiday Inn Hazlet
2870 Highway 35
Hazlet, NJ 07730
<http://www.magicfunday.com>

October 11, 2006
Magic Palooza
Featuring Derrin Berger, Frank Monaco, Carlo Deblasio, & Special Guest John Shaw
Showtime: 8pm, bar opens at 7:30
Tickets: \$10 at the door
Location: Backstage Studio Productions
323 Wall St, Kingston, NY

Club Calendar

October

October 10, 2006
Lecture by **Alan Sands**
Location: Central Hudson – 245 South Road
Host: Carlo Deblasio

November

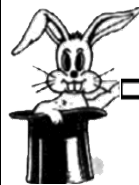
November 14, 2006
Lecture by **John Born**
Location: Central Hudson – 245 South Road
Host: Derrin Berger

December

December 12, 2006
Lecture by **Harley Newman**
Location: Central Hudson – 245 South Road
Host: Carlo Deblasio

January

January 5-7, 2006
S.A.M. #35 Presents:
Cavalcade of Magic at the Center for Performing Arts in Rhinebeck, NY



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Frankly Speaking...

by Frank Monaco

Sounds Good to Me



Here is some information that may be useful to you if you are looking at a Sound System for your act. I have done a lot of research on various types of Sound Systems, both traditional and not so traditional. Over the next several months, I will give our Secretary a different article on Sound Systems and related equipment. Hopefully this will help in some small way for your next sound system purchase.

The first thing you have to do is decide what you will use the system for. Now, I know that sounds really simple, but if you look at it very closely, there are several ways to utilize sound. First you may only need vocal reinforcement, using a traditional microphone. Second maybe you do a silent act and only need music or the occasional sound effect. Third you may need all of the above. I would say most of the performers today, would need both vocal reinforcement and music. That being said, the focus of this article will be "Traditional Sound Systems and Speakers".

The traditional system is going out and buying a standard Power Amp (PA) and speakers. Now these

can range anywhere from Radio Shack 35 Watt power amps to high end Peavey, Samson, Crown, Mackie etc., that are several hundred watts. When talking audio equipment in general, you get what you pay for. Traditional systems are good to have for various reasons. First, they are the most common around and can be found locally. This is important for two very good reasons. The first being that if you need a replacement part or repair it is very easy to find a local person to supply those services. Second, and this is VERY important, there is no replacement to actually hearing the system do what you are buying it to do. In other words, if at all possible ask the person you are buying the system from, if you can actually hear it live. Bring your music with you and play it on the system. This will give you a true sense of what the system will sound like during your show. If it is not possible for the system to be played live, ask the person what their return policy is. Most should be able to give you a specified time period in which you can return everything for a full refund. Make sure you are clear on the return policy BEFORE you buy the system.

OK, now the important thing..... which one should I get? Well once again there are varying opinions on which brand of sound systems are better. Most people however, agree that you do get what you pay for. So, if you decide to get a Radio Shack 35 watt PA and some really inexpensive



Mackie Model 406M 500 Watt PA

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speakers, don't expect them to blow the doors off at your next gig....ain't gonna happen!

If this is your first system, try to stay around 300 Watts or more for a PA. Now the reason I say this, is there is nothing more frustrating then buying a system and realizing that you bought something that does not have enough power for what you may need it to do. Many people forget, that if you are doing an outdoor show, the system will sound a lot less powerful because of the acoustics that exist outside.



Example of 15 inch
JBL speakers

Some good names to go with for a PA are Peavey, Samson, Yamaha, Crown, and Mackie. I have found that the local opinion on these types of PA systems is Mackie is preferred. Mackie is a good name brand, packs plenty of punch for the money and is carried by almost all sound retailers. Locally you can check out various sound systems at Alto Music in Wappinger Falls PHONE: 845-297-0011, Imperial Guitar and

Soundworks in Newburgh Phone: (845) 567-0111 (Highly Recommended), Abrams Music Store in Kingston (845) 679-6669.

On-line there are some very good resources as well including SamAsh.com and musiciansfriend.com.

You can go to all of these places and see the PA specs and prices. When looking at the specs make sure to

ask the Total Watts the system will output PLUS how many watts per channel (Meaning coming out of each speaker). I have found that some of those numbers can be rather deceiving at times. Also, don't be afraid to ask a lot of questions and tell them what you will be using the system for. This will help them determine what to best set you up with.

Next, we will look at Speakers to complete your system. Speakers are just as important as the actual PA itself. Let's face it, you could have a great PA, but if your speakers are not good, then everything sounds bad. First, you have to make sure your speakers are rated to handle the power your PA is putting out. If you have a 500 Watt PA let's say and your speakers are only rated to handle 300 Watts, you could "blow" the speakers by driving too much power through them. So, the first thing you have to do is make sure that your speakers can handle your PA. Any of the retailers or on-line people will be able to help you with that or answer your questions regarding that. You can also determine that yourself, by looking at the specs for the speakers themselves.

The second thing to do is pick a trusted brand name for your speakers. I would suggest staying with Mackie, JBL or Peavey. Of course, you could go high end and lightweight and go for something in the Bose line of speakers, but once again you get what you pay for. Bose are very good, but they can be much more delicate and expensive then the three I previously named. You have to remember several things about speakers, One, you will be carrying them in and out of the gig, so try not to get them too large,

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size doesn't always mean sound quality. Secondly, are the speakers rugged enough to stand up to you dragging them around to various shows, throwing them in and out of your car, van or SUV.

If you shop around both locally and on-line, you will notice that many places have Packages that combine both the PA and the speakers. Most of the packages may even include a Microphone and speaker stands.

By the way, a good quality speaker stand is essential in any PA total system. One that I have always found reliable, that Steve Johnson told me about are the "Ultimate Speaker stand" brand. They are lightweight and very sturdy.



Well that's it for now. If you have any questions or would just like some additional information send me an e-mail at Frank430@aol.com or call me at 845-229-9765.

Next Month....Non-traditional Sound Systems and info on Microphones.

Carlo's Consumer Corner

by Carlo Deblasio



Product Review:

Many of you may or may not know that I am a prolific consumer of magic. No, I don't eat it, but I do read watch and purchase a great deal of magic. So our secretary Derrin Berger has asked me to review a more recent purchase:

WOW! By Katsuya Masuda – price \$55

Video link:

http://www.creators-shop.com/creators-shop/movie/masudas_item/20WOW!.mov

Effect: A card is chosen and signed and returned to the deck. An apparently random card is placed into a transparent plastic holder and while in the holder the random card visually morphs into the selected signed card.

Visually, this is a stunning effect and one might be tempted just to get it because it looks cool, but this is not a complete trick, as I see it, it is a prop. One thing lacking is a reasonable explanation for sliding the card into the holder before it transforms. You do receive adequate instructions, double stick tape (for

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those unable to do a control and a double turnover/lift) and the clever prop. It is, however, left up to the individual performer to create an entertaining performance. In test performances my routine for this prop has received great spectator response and as a practical strolling effect is instantly reset.

Presentation: Minimal.

Skills required: None.

Skill recommended: Intermediate card handling.

Difficulty: Easy to moderate.

Reset: Instant.

Repeatable: Yes, but "random" card is always the same.

Berger with Everything

by Derrin Berger

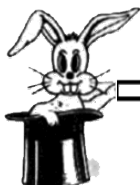


Here's my bit of randomness. Perhaps as the months progress I'll write a bit more, but about what I have no idea.

Hence, the title of the article should cover me for a while. I started asking a few people to contribute to the newsletter and started hearing the phrase, "you know, you could write something too" with enough persistence, so I'll take advantage of the offer to vent out frustrations, brainstorm new ideas, and offer my humble opinion. Maybe one day I'll compile them all and make a set of lecture notes with which to tour the world. Or maybe I'll just fill up some space here when I think the columns might be uneven. Either way... here I go.

I love when a layman puts a magician in their place. I'm not excluding myself from that, as it's happened over and over, but I do love when it happens. It's not by shouting out how a trick works, or having a better line as a heckler than you do as the performer. It's usually just as simple as one word: "why?"

Let's face it, we know everything. And if we don't, we at least know more than they do, right? I mean, they don't know that the coin is being palmed and they don't know that you can show two or three or



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four cards as one. Sounds like a good start, doesn't it? But it's funny that some layman just know exactly what to say to get under you skin, even though you do know everything. In my most recent case it was just the question: "why?"

I recently showed a trick to a layman who's seen enough magic by now to recognize a few trends amongst us conjurers. In this case it was just casually picking a coin up off the floor, putting it in my hand, blowing on my fist, and the coin vanished. Makes sense. But she said, "all of you guys blow on things to make them disappear... why?" Honestly, I don't know. I know at the time I said, "Magicians have magical spit, and sometimes a few little drops spray out and we use that." which seemed to be enough to move past the questioning and maintain my status as a sarcastic-know-it-all magician. But I was still a little bothered (obviously, since I'm writing this now).

Sure, a magical gesture is always in order, but maybe she's right. Are we running out? We're always blowing, snapping, clapping, or just waving a hand at something. It bothered me because I knew right away that there must be millions, billions, and zillions of different gestures that could've been used instead of blowing on my fist. Why didn't I think of at least one of them?

I'm quite certain the gesture itself wasn't the point, at least not to me. I'm quite happy with blowing, snapping, clapping, or just waving a hand at something, and for a enough reasons to keep doing them. The least of which is that if you choose to

make a coin vanish by crossing your feet, jumping $\frac{3}{4}$ around to the right, and quacking 2 times (which happens to be gesture #25,349,234 by the way), it'll be seen as inefficient and somewhat out of place for most of us. In any event, I think the point is that believe it or not, there are MANY things we do as magicians that get overlooked by ourselves, but not by the audience.

I think we're all aware that magicians are grouped together and many layman think we all do the same things the same way, whatever that image is. And I think we all know that there are things we can do to stand-out from the crowd in our own way. But are we doing it?

Personally, I think that question of why magicians blow on their fist to make a coin vanish can and should be seen as a sign of hope in a way. Specifically, that something so small CAN make a difference and CAN make you stand out. We tend to think that it's simply the words we use that makes the most difference. Maybe it does, but there's also a million, or billion, or zillion other things we can do that can also make a difference. It's the words, the music, the clothes, the props, the timing, etc..

I guess this is just a very, very long winded way of saying that there are so many ways to be ourselves, and so many things we can do to stand out, many of which we never even thought about. But all it would take is one layman to say, "All magicians make the card jump to the top of the deck, and almost never to the bottom... why?" and we're stuck fighting with the

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answer. We don't have to tell them the truth, but we can at least think about it.

Incidentally, I just got back from a family dinner where we had birthday cake for my grandmother. Guess what? She blew at the candle and the flame disappeared... I guess it really works.

SAM #35 Message Board

I would like to take this opportunity to remind everyone about the group and re-invite everyone to join. Feel free to post comments, questions, reviews, show information, or any other magic discussion you can think of.

The web address is:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SAM35/>

You may need to create a yahoo ID if you don't already have one, and you should be able to join the group once you reach that page. If you have any questions, please let me know.

Extras

Have a trick or show review? Or a magic joke or tip you've been busting to share? Or any other rambling of magic you'd like to have included in a newsletter? Send an email to:

sam35editor@yahoo.com

Classifieds - Have something to sell? Looking for something in particular? Send an email to sam35editor@yahoo.com to have it included in a magic classifieds section.

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Up to the minute guide of Magic and Magicians on TV
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A Comprehensive magic listing of Live magic shows around the world
www.livemagicguide.com

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