

Shell Game

A Monthly Newsletter for the London Magic Community
April 2018 Volume 13, Issue 8

March's meeting

This evening's theme was "Connections – Magic for Couples". And the first effect was a well known one – **Mark Hogan** presented a simple version of **Doc Eason's** "Anniversary Waltz", where two cards are signed by a couple and find later that the signature appeared on both cards. Peter Mennie performed a more advanced version, where the two signed cards are shown separately and then melded together! He also had a version he would perform for children (siblings) where one signed card melts through a handkerchief and shown also to have the other signature on the reverse!

Mike Fisher contacted the wife of the late great magician **Alexander Herrman**. A spectator selected a city where Herrmann may have passed away and Herrmann's wife (Adelaide) wrote the same city inside two wrapped blank slates! Mike then told us the story about **Alexander Herrman** (see below) for his lecture for *Eldon House* in October.

Tonight was **Serge Pereira's** evening to perform for entry into the club. And he was ready – with a great opening effect called *Hijacked* where four Jacks instantly turned into the four Aces! Next he showed his version of *Chicago Opener*, where a selected card is the only card of a different colour, and then changed it back to the original colour! And he ended with a classic routine of a borrowed ring and selected card ending up inside a wrapped card box inside a white bag inside a black velvet bag!

Next Meeting:

Date: Wednesday, April 11

Time: 7:30 PM

Topic: VIDEO NIGHT!

**Beal Secondary School
525 Dundas Street, London
T-253**

That was an impressive set – *welcome to the club, Serge!*

And **Kyle Robinson** showed off a couple of gimmicks he created: one which allows him to vanish a card, and one to manipulate hole punches in a card. Well done!

Many thanks for everyone who came out to share some great magic!

Mark Hogan

March's Meeting

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DATE: Wednesday, April 11

TIME: 7:30 PM

**PLACE: Beal Secondary School
525 Dundas Street, London
T-253**

TOPIC: VIDEO NIGHT!

Everyone's got their favourite magic DVD – maybe by their favourite magician, or maybe showing your favorite tricks. Well, it's time we all saw them, too!

Bring out a DVD of something or someone magical that you'd like everyone to see. Or perhaps a video that you'd downloaded to a thumb drive.

We will have a computer ready to play. It's an easy way for all of us to share and to see the very best at work.

We Want Your Reviews and Tricks!

Please send any original reviews, magic tricks or routines to:

magic_london@yahoo.ca

News Of Interest



Fun facts about Houdini

(WFTV.com)

He's the godfather of escapism and illusion, a magical mastermind whose tricks dazzle to this day. But how much do you know about the man in the handcuffs?

Houdini was born **Erik Weisz** on Mar. 24, 1874, in Budapest, Austria-Hungary. His family immigrated to the United States in July 1878, settled in Wisconsin, and changed the spelling of their last name to **Weiss**. Young Houdini's first name changed as well, from Erik to **Ehrich**.

The Weiss family eventually moved to New York City, where 9-year-old Ehrich took a job as a trapeze artist. He launched his professional magic career in 1891 and changed his name once again.

Magic wasn't Houdini's only talent. He founded his own film company, *The Film Development Corporation*, and starred in several productions.

He was also an accomplished aviator who made one of the first aerial flights in Australia. He even taught American soldiers how to escape sinking ships and get out of ropes or handcuffs in case they were captured by the enemy during World War I.

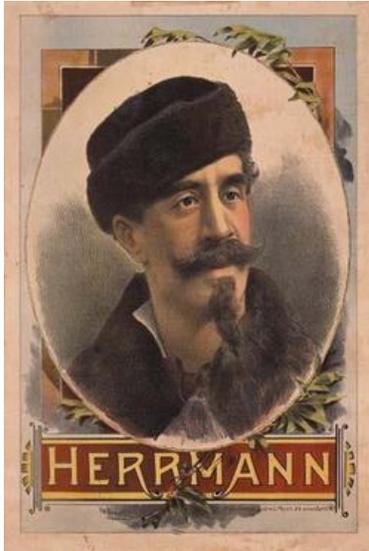
In 1893, he married **Wilhelmina "Bess" Rahner**, who would become his stage assistant.

Houdini got his big break in 1899, when he impressed manager **Martin Beck** with his ability to break out of handcuffs. Beck booked the Houdinis on the vaudeville circuit. They eventually took their escape show to Europe, where Houdini challenged local police in several countries to keep him restrained with shackles and locked in jail.

Beginning in 1907, Houdini's American productions got bigger and more dangerous. They included escaping from a locked milk can filled with water; releasing himself from a straitjacket while dangling by his feet from a rope above a city street; and the famous *Chinese Water Torture Cell*, which forced Houdini to hold his breath for more than three minutes while getting out of a glass and steel cabinet overflowing with water, all while suspended upside down.

One 1915 trick nearly killed Houdini. He was buried alive in a dirt pit, then started to panic as he desperately clawed his way out. No one could hear his cries for help. His hand eventually broke free, and he was pulled to safety — and passed out once he was back on the ground.

It was not magic that ultimately brought down Houdini, but a ruptured appendix. He died of peritonitis in a Detroit hospital on Oct. 31, 1926, at age 52.



Alexander Herrman (1844 - 1896)

(Mike Fisher)

With his curly handlebar mustache, goatee and tailcoat, **Alexander Herrmann** was the quintessential image of a magician. Alexander was famous for his humorous impromptu performances and his generosity towards the poor and underprivileged. He would often perform in prisons, schools and hospitals free of charge and was known to support a noble cause or help fellow performers out of financial difficulties. His contributions to the world of magic are many and include his adding of humor to the formal presentations of the time, starting the career of the first prominent female magician, and making larger magic and variety productions more commonplace.

Herrmann's magical career began one evening when he was 8 years old. His older brother **Compars**, who was a well known magician himself, arrived home while their parents were away and "kidnapped" Alexander. He then became his brother's assistant participating in a mind reading routine and becoming the floating child during Compar's levitation illusion. Although he enjoyed the work, Alexander was never happy just being the assistant.

At 10 years of age, after two years of constant searching his mother found him performing with his brother in Vienna and took him back home. After a bit of schooling and with his parents permission this time, he went back on tour with his brother for many years. Alexander Herrmann began his solo career performing in Spain as a teenager. He quickly became very successful in Spain and then Europe which caused some rivalry with his brother who still performed in many of the same towns. In 1871 Alexander began his very successful run of *1001 shows* at the *Egyptian Hall* in England. In 1874 he decided to travel to America to perform leaving Europe to his brother.

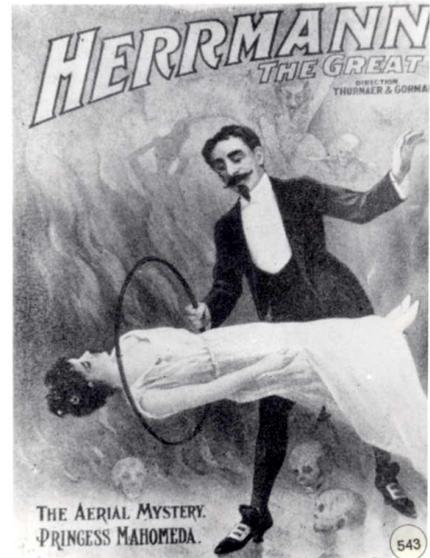
Alexander was a fun loving prankster who would perform impromptu tricks wherever he thought it would bring a laugh or help to publicize his shows. He loved to visit the local markets and "find" gold coins in purchased eggs. He would keep buying the eggs and pulling coins out of them until the salesperson

refused to sell anymore and he would walk away as the salesperson started smashing the rest of their eggs looking for more coins. To pay for the damages Herrmann would slip some money in the basket or secretly deposit money in the salesperson's pocket before walking away. Many performers of the time would create publicity for themselves by retelling the best stories inserting their own names into the tales. However Herrmann was such a constant prankster that it was said stories involving him were always sure to be true events. Whenever he needed a bit of publicity he would go into town and create it.

Alexander Herrmann was at first, very against the idea of working with assistants. He remembered his ambitions during his time as his brothers assistant and feared the idea of training a competitor. During the beginning of his career, he performed one man shows relying heavily on his incredible sleight of hand manipulations. Alexander gradually added castmembers to his show once in America. On a cruise ship, he met his wife **Adelaide Scarsez**. She was a dancer and performed tricks on a specialized bicycle called a Velocipede.

Adelaide was one of the first to join Herrmann's show allowing him to take breaks between acts as she performed. Eventually Herrmann would add other assistants, stage hands and variety artists to his program. This included **Trewley** the shadow graphist and Juggler, **George Leopold** and his wife with their human cannonball act, and Lois Fuller the Serpentine dancer. One of Herrmann's assistants was **William Robinson**, who also worked for the magician **Kellar** and eventually became the "oriental" conjurer **Chung Ling Soo**. Therefore Herrmann, as he feared had trained an assistant who became his competition, although they remained friends. William Robinson may have learned the secrets to the bullet catching trick from Alexander but was unfortunately killed during a performance of this effect.

Alexander Herrmann toured with his troupe all over North America including many visits to Canada between 1873 and 1883. His last Canadian performance was in Montreal in 1894. During this time his rivalry with the magician **Kellar** was at it's peak. Known as the "paper wars" each magician would rush to perform in the same town and be the first to put up their publicity posters. In Montreal, Kellar's men were accused of pasting over all of Herrman's posters, an accusation that they never denied. In 1885 shortly after a performance for **King Alfonso XII of Spain**, Alexander became known as Herrmann the Great. The king was very impressed with Herrmanns show and was tricked into naming him the official prestidigitator of Spain. Shortly after the performance at a banquet in Madrid a Spaniard called out "Let us drink to the incomparable Herrmann and let him forever be known as *HERRMANN THE GREAT!*"





Alexander had many homes, a yacht and a private rail car on which he died of a heart attack in 1896 on route to a performance in Pennsylvania. Unfortunately due to his generosity and some costly fires at his theaters he was much in debt at the time. This situation forced his widow Adelaide to continue on with the show to support herself and the cast. Adelaide at first hired her nephew **Leon** to perform however after approximately three years, due to personality conflicts they ended their partnership and Adelaide became a solo performer

Alexander Herrmann made magic a more light hearted entertainment and opened it up to a much larger audience. His inclusion of assistants, cast members and variety artists made larger magician led productions much more common. His impromptu performances as well as his generosity ensured that he was remembered by everyone with fondness. Alexander's inclusion of his wife Adelaide in his shows provided her with the training and confidence she needed to become the *first prominent female magician in North America*.

Resources:

Herrmann the Magician, by **H. J. Burlingame**

Adelaide Herrmann, Queen of Magic – Memoirs, compiled by **Margarette Steele**

The Magic Brothers, by **I.G. Edmonds**

A History of the Art of Magic, by **Alexander Herrmann**

The illustrated History of Magic, by **Milbourne Christopher**

MAWNY convention info

(mawny.org)

Here is the schedule for this year's **MAWNY convention** (*Magician's Alliance of Western New York*) being held this year on **Sunday, April 29** in **Batavia, New York**:

Formal registration - 9:00am

Auction - 10:15am-12:00pm - (be there early if you have items to auction) (NO BOOKS OR MAGAZINES)

Lunch and mingle with your fellow magicians - 12:00pm

Close - Up Performers – Start 1:30pm ish

Lecture - 3:00pm ish

Dinner buffet - 5:00pm

International Evening Show - 6:30pm (doors open at 6:10pm) (\$13 adults; \$10 12 and under)

Talent this year includes:

Lecturer:

Rocco

Close up:

In Ae
Alex Tsai
Jim Vines
Horret Wu
Robert Bengel
Ryan Bliss

Stage:

Rocco
Juliana Chen
Michael Joseph
Anson Lee
Algernon Ryan

MC:

Buddy Farnan

For more information or to register, go to:

<http://www.mawny.org>.

Missing magician honoured by Lance Burton

(magician.org)

The *Cave Hill Heritage Foundation* and world-famous Magician, **Lance Burton**, cordially invite the general public to a commemorative ceremony on Thursday, March 22, 2018, at 1:30 p.m., in *Cave Hill Cemetery* for **Thomas Tobin**.

The magic community is endeared to the illusionary craft of Tobin, who "disappeared" from the magic world in the 1880's to settle into Louisville. For 135 years, Tobin lie in an unmarked and unknown grave in Louisville's historic Cave Hill Cemetery. Until now.

A permanent memorial designed by Cave Hill Cemetery has been created to commemorate his short, but impactful life, and will be unveiled in a formal ceremony with an official **Broken Wand Ceremony** by the renowned **Lance Burton**, with reflections by **Jim Steinmeyer**. Louisville's own, **David Garrard**, will also take part in the ceremony.

Born in London in 1844, Tobin was a scientist, master illusionist, and architect. According to a recent biography on Tobin by **Jim Steinmeyer**, "It was Tobin's creations that established the famous cliché, 'It's all done with mirrors!'" His amazing ability to create illusions, including *The Sphinx* and *The Proteus Cabinet*, are still used today.

It is very fitting that Tobin is interred in Cave Hill, as Lance Burton reflects: "My mentor, Harry Collins, is buried at Cave Hill. Also **Colonel Sanders**, I performed at his 88th birthday party when I was a teenager." In referring to Tobin, he says, "Like thousands of magicians, I've benefited from his incredible work."

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Concept by: Steve Seguin

The Shell Game is a free newsletter sent to members of the London Magicians Guild and other people in the community interested in magic.

Opinions expressed do not reflect the views of the London Magicians Guild.

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