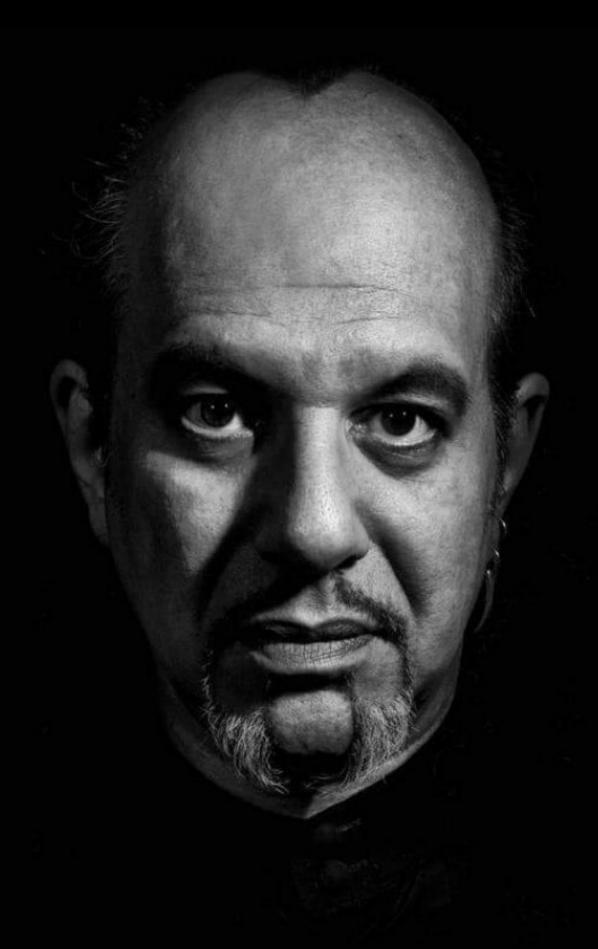


THE SUSSEX MAGIC CIRCLE

NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2022

Max Maven



1950 - 2022

The entire worldwide magic community - and I do mean 'entire' - is mourning the passing of Max Maven. Max may not have been a 'household name', he was a giant in the magic world, greatly admired for his tremendous knowledge of magic and its history, his creative ingenuity and performing talent as well as his massive contribution to the magic world and to mentalism (mind-reading magic) in particular.

One of the things we all loved about Max was the difference between his 'on stage' and 'real life' persona. On stage, Max intentionally came across as rather aloof and cerebral. This was all part of the act. However, in real life he was one of the kindest, friendliest and most approachable people you could ever meet. He was also, more often than not, delightfully funny. At conventions, he had time for everyone, from big-name stars to youngsters just starting out on their magical journey.

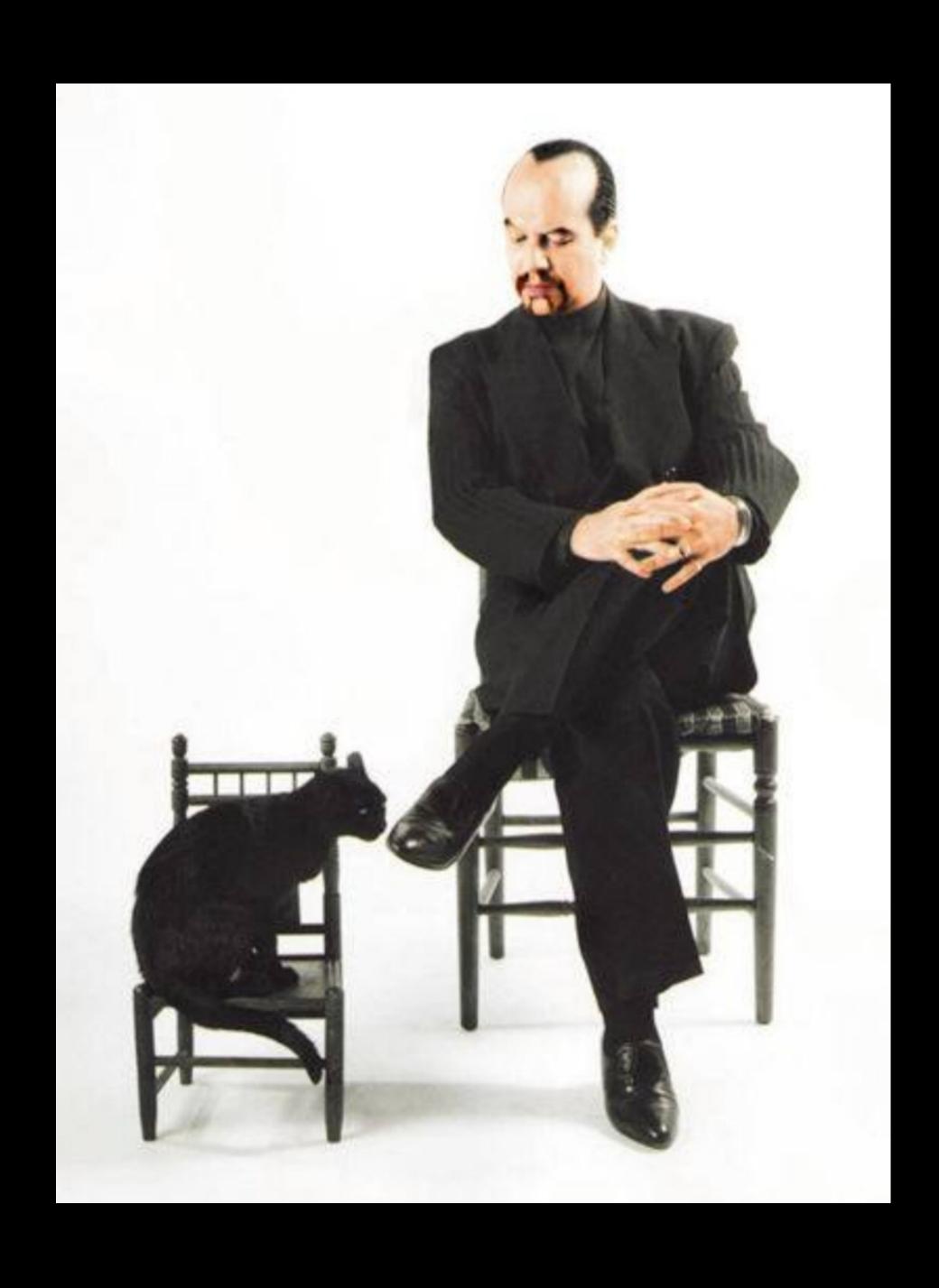
If you have ever seen anyone, anywhere, perform any kind of mind-reading or 'mentalism' act, whether it's Derren Brown or anyone else, rest assured that Max influenced that act and that performance. He was a prolific writer, inventor and teacher, and absolutely everyone in this field, amateur or pro, knows his work and has learned from it.

Some people become quite well known in their chosen field. Some attain preeminence. But only a few become a giant in whose shadow everyone else stands, a leader that everyone else respects and follows. Max Maven was at that level.

We mourn Max's passing but we also smile to think of his incredible life, all the wonderful things he achieved, all the audiences that he delighted and amazed, and how much fun we had hanging out with him at meet-ups and conventions. He will live on in terms of his scholarship, his many books and articles, his performances and the fact that his work had such a profound and lasting effect on the magic world.

Hey Max, we're crying but can you hear that...? We're standing and applauding too. This standing ovation is for you. And, in a sense, it will never end.

Credit to Ian Rowland.





THE SUSSEX MAGIC CIRCLE

INTERVIEW





This month's interview is with Matt Daniel-Baker, this guy has come into my life and has helped me out so much and become a good friend, he is always there to ask for help and advice and has given me lots of guidance as I've got more into stage performance.

He is such an all round great guy and I'm honoured how much time he has given meconsulting, creating music and writing parts for my comedy routines as well as the main part of my act for the semi finals of Sussex superstars. (which is the 15th December by the way) he has even been teaching Dave the Dinosaur mind reading!

I met up with him this month and asked him a few questions....



Hi Matt, please can you introduce yourself to those not familiar with you and your work?

My name is Matt Daniel-Baker and I'm a professional mind reader! That means I'm going to be getting inside some of your minds, manipulating your thoughts and influencing some of your decisions... (That's actually how I open my shows, so seemed fitting)

Who was your biggest inspiration and who still inspires you?

Growing up it was definitely Elvis Presley, Cary Grant, Charlie Chaplin, Ken Dodd, Jerry Lewis and Dudley Moore.

In terms of magic there was a kid at school called Neil Watkis who would do card tricks. He was a bit of a loner and would drink alcohol (we were around 14), we called him Neil Whiskey.

He always amazed me and looking back I think it was him who woke the magic up in me. I didn't get into magic until I was 23 when David Blaine hit the screens. He reminded me of the Neil Whiskey days and that was it... I was hooked. So David Blaine inspired me, then in time, Graham Jolley and Derren Brown. There was also a homeless man on a train once who made a hanky vanish. He blew my mind! That happened in between Whiskey and Blaine. Oh, and Robert Pound did a classic force on me the first time I ever visited a magic shop (Davenports) it impacted me greatly and became something I was determined to master. Which I have!

Most recently I was inspired by comedy magician Mike Hammer in Las Vegas. His show literally changed my mind on how my career would develop. It was one of the best one-man shows I've ever seen. It unlocked the beast in me.

How did you move from close-up to stage?

That happened gradually. I don't specifically remember the moment I decided I wanted to do stage work. It was probably someone asking me if I had a cabaret act. At the time there wasn't really anywhere to see a magician perform a cabaret set, so it always seemed like a mystery or a secret that everyone knew except me.

These days things like YouTube and online magic lectures are useful places to observe stage acts. I always encourage magicians to come and see my show in London - not because I'm any good but because it's a great opportunity to see what a stage/cabaret act looks like.

Can you give any advice for anyone wanting to transition from close up to stage?

I can definitely give advice. In fact, it's something I've been doing a lot of recently. I have a lot of magicians get in touch with me privately for help with their shows. So I've decided I'm going to produce a stage-work course and a one-2-one directing service. I have also starting giving lectures on how to design your act and also some brilliant tips on how to boost your show and elevate it with some simple moments. In the meantime for people, start offering 'something for everyone' at the end of a close-up gig. Just 10 minutes at the end. Keep it simple and keep working that 10 minutes. You'll soon feel the desire to push it to 15, 20 30 minutes.

I can say I have experienced this help and advice first hand and would recommend this course, and one - 2 - one directing service to anyone looking to boost their performance and show.

Where was your biggest gig?

I've been very lucky in that I've performed all over the world (over 30 countries). Many have been for very prestigious companies. The biggest show in terms of numbers was probably an Indian wedding, in India. They had built a small village for a wedding. I did a stage show and there was about 3,000 people watching. It was carnage!

Which celebrities have you performed for and gave the best reaction. (Name drop time)

Again, I've been fortunate in finding myself in impressive situations over the years. Some name drops include... Justin Timberlake, Jessica Biel, Piers Morgan, Bill Murray, Prince/King Charles, The Beckhams, Arsenal 1st team etc... The best reaction was a warm kiss from Joanna Lumley.

How was it performing on Penn & Teller Fool us - did you get to hang out with them?

It was a brilliant and bizarre experience. They look after you very well and being in Las Vegas for it was exhilarating. I performed on the show with Keelan Leyser, we had/have a double act called The Digital Illusionists. It's a digital act using loads of iPads and technology, They keep you away from Penn & Teller as they don't want to know who's performing for them. So they aren't influenced in any way. Although I suspect its so you don't pester them for selfies and show them your new oil and water moves... However, on the day of the show they sprung an unwanted surprise on us. We had rehearsed the routine using Alyson (the host) and everything was in place for that to happen. We were performing in the evening show so had all day to prepare. At 7am the producers called us and said we were no longer using Alyson but had to perform with ventriloquist Terry Fator and Winston the impersonating turtle. Terry won AGT a few years before and had his own show in Vegas. They wanted to promote it so put him as a guest on Penn & Teller. It felt like a disaster as

it had the potential to turn from a cool tech act into a ludicrous pantomime. They also told us he couldn't take part in the evening show so we had to do the afternoon show instead. The pressure was immense. But we made it work and it turned out to be the best opportunity we could have hoped for. Terry was very aware of not getting in our way and was open to some scripting that we came up with for him. He was great.

We had a brief chat with Penn & Teller after the show but we were whisked away to The Hard Rock Hotel to film some sequences for our pre-interview parts. It was extremely cool.





Who is your favourite magician/mentalist?

I think Derren Brown is the king of it all. He has something rare. I'm glad I've had the chance to explain to him the brilliance he possesses. ***
I'd like to point out that we will both have shows in the West-End at the same time. It's a 2 minute 10 second walk from stage door to stage door. I know because I timed it. Derren remains oblivious.

Have you ever had a NORMAL job?

Loads of them. Where do I start??? Probably being a waiter in a brothel.

Wait ...what? This is a job? ..oh that must have been awful!!

Do you do anything other than mindreading?

I spent years as a close-up magician and still include some of that in my walk around performances. I use a lot of card sleights using double blank cards for mind reading. It's very useful.



Three letters BGT?

I would encourage anyone to go on the show but be ready. Make sure you've thought it all through and know what you want out of it.

Don't go on there and hope for the best. Be ready. Be sure. And go for it!

Do you have any other talents/ Jobs/Businesses?

I've had quite a varied working life. Most of it has been in showbiz but with the occasional supporting job on the side. For example... I started life as a footballer, on Watford's books until I got released. Then went semipro for a while until I decided to be an actor. As an actor I enjoyed several years in plays, on tv, in feature films and also writing, producing and starring in my own film The Shouting Men.



This is well worth a watch by the way - very funny and watchable, Anything else?

I was in Star Wars (The Phantom Menace), I was a male stripper (in a play) and cowritten two sell-out theatre shows - The Billy Joel Songbook (still on tour) and a Tribute to Elvis Presley. I've written songs for other people and have a Christmas song - What A Day - that gets played on the radio every year. One little thing I like to mention is that I wrote one of the jokes that helped Lost Voice Guy win BGT and 250 grand:-)

Thats impressive, can you tell us a joke?

I'll tell you someone else's joke. As a young man I wrote to Ronnie Barker and asked him for some words of encouragement to keep in my wallet, for inspiration (as I ventured on the road of writing scripts, plays, books, films etc). He sent me back a signed photo and on the back he'd written - "Here's the first joke I ever wrote" - "A man finds a magic ring. He rubs it and makes a wish - "Make my wife twice as young, twice as beautiful and twice as sexy... (enter old, ugly, dishevelled woman) Man jumps for joy, "it worked!! It worked!!" I treasure it to this day.

Do you have any questions for me?

Yes, what do you think about me?

Yeah i think your alright... I prefer Keelan but he wasn't available today! I'm joking of course - I think you're a f**king legend and I'm glad you got in touch with me, without sounding cringy you have literally changed my life, I feel more confident in myself and its good to be noticed and be told that I'm good at what I'm doing, I was a bit apprehensive about bringing this comedy side out in me as I wasn't sure how people would take it or react - but you have made me realise how good I could be and encouraged me to push more and to get out there and just go for it, so I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for bringing out the best in me and for all the advice and support you give me, plus all the ideas - I am forever and truly grateful.

So on this note - What are you up to on the 3rd of March 2023?

Nothing at the moment, why's that?

Well myself and Jonny Ritchie are putting on our 2nd production, of No name show productions 'The variety show with no name' and wondered if you would like to take part so I can share the stage with you?

I'd be honoured.

WOW....Really - Thats amazing, Thank you so much!

please can you sign the dotted line.

X Matt Daniel-Baker

Well you heard it here 1st - Save the date and tickets are on sale now at an early bird price of just £12 - We also have 2 BGT semi finalists confirmed and 2 of our very own (all will be revealed)

Mars or Snickers?

Both - look at me!!

Blaine or Brown?

Without Blaine so many of us wouldn't exist.

Penn or Teller?

Teller - I think his skills are incredible.

Burton or Copperfield?

Hmmmm. Tough one. Neither really captured my attention but looking at the way they have aged I think Lance Burton looks more rugged - so I'll go with him.

Red backs or Blue back's?

For years REDS because of gimmicks. But now I use BLUE because I'm older and they seem more distinguished. Having said that my favourite cards are the burgundy DMC Elites. Now THOSE are playing cards!!!! (I requested the green DMC elites on the card to phone app by the way - you're welcome)

Early bird or night owl?

Is this a Cafe? If so, both!

Tea or coffee?

Tea in the morning - coffee on the motorway.

Staying in or going out?

I love staying home with my wife and kids and I also love going to work. I have found over the years that I struggle at parties etc because I'm so used to performing.

Without anything to hide behind I feel vulnerable. I stand in the corner holding a beer. Even when everyone else has gone home.

The question everyone wants to know the answer to, toilet roll, over or under?

No idea... I have people that do that for me.

My final thoughts - not that you asked - are that I would like to take this opportunity to shine the spotlight on you for a moment. I also like to think I have a good eye for talent and entertainment.

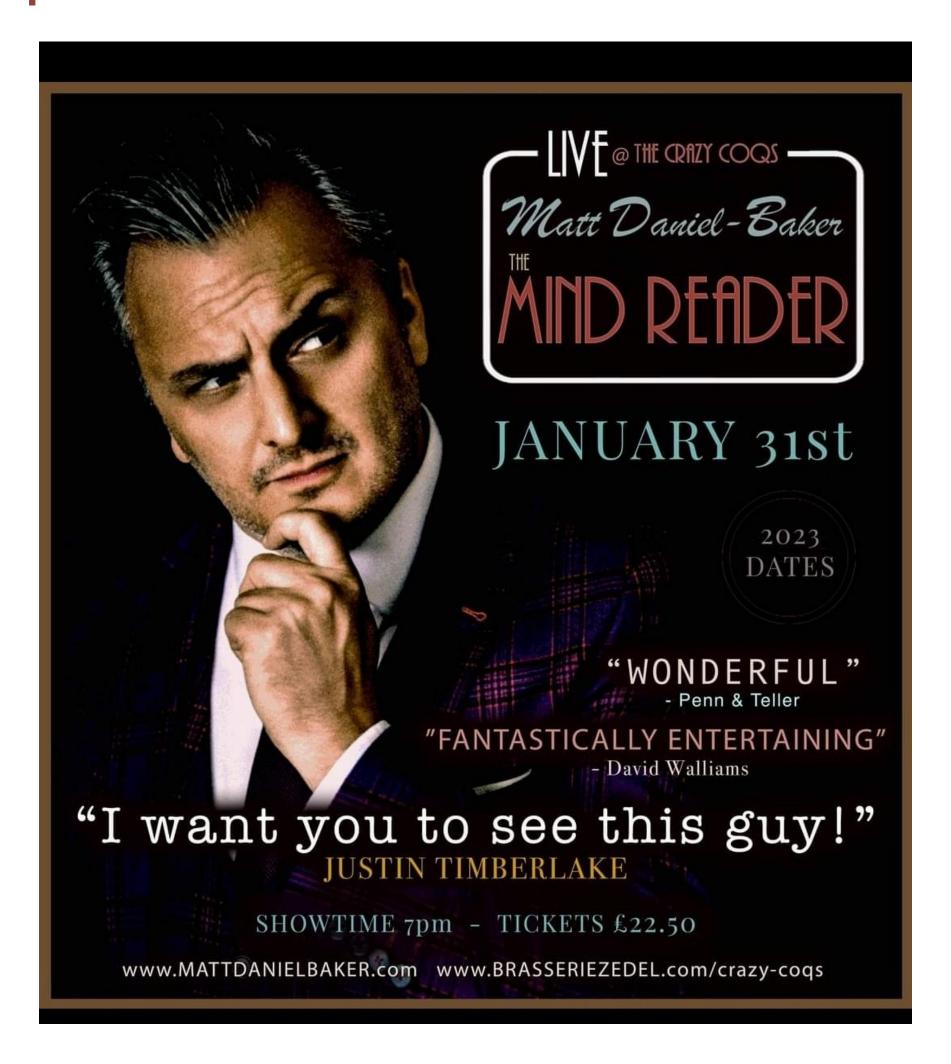
I watched one of your performances on Facebook and felt you had a very natural ability to be entertaining. A few months later I saw another video and was struck even more by your manner and natural timing and use of props and tricks. You have a fearless nature. I felt compelled to get in touch and tell you. I'm glad I did. We have good chats and I enjoy watching you take this magic game by the sponge balls and squeeze them hard. I'm looking forward to seeing your journey to glory.

I'm no-one important but I think people should be told when they are good. So I hope you don't mind me saying?

Anyway... my toilet paper needs changing... Phil??

Right away, Sir

Thank you so much Matt, we appreciate your time and I look forward to 3rd of March, if you can't wait till then to see Matt in action then go check out his 1 man show on JANUARY 31st @ The Crazy Coqs Theatre, Piccadilly Circus at 7pm.



If you would like to follow Matt:
@mattdanielbaker1
If you would like to contact Matt:
info@mattdanielbaker.com



THE SUSSEX MAGIC CIRCLE

ANNOUNCEMENTS



This is an absolute must see...
Our very own Des & Cherry.



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My therapist suggested I tell my wife about my addiction to magic by writing her a letter!

I just can't pick up the Penn & Teller!

During a recent vacation in
Las Vegas, a man went to see a
popular magic show. After one
especially amazing feat, a man
from the back of the theater
yelled, "How'd you do that?"
"I could tell you, sir", the
magician answered, "But then
I'd have to kill you." After a
short pause, the man yelled
back, "Ok, then... just tell my
wife!"...

Magician: I can make anything disappear
Tom: ***holding cup*** do it to my tea!
Magician: ***waves hand*** done!
om: ***holding cup*** it didn't work.

Rubber band night didn't go as planned, but it was still a great night and we was joined by 2 International magician's!





Some one else who has helped me improve my performance and given me ideas, this was a great lecture and covered:

Mind reading, coins, business, and a beaver- all in one lecture.

We started off the lecture with a brief history of friendship made over Magic from Simon. It is really amazing to see how much the art can bring people together and create relationships that span a lifetime.

After the introduction, Mark dived straight in by getting Andy to sign a business card that was placed inside his wallet... (remember this moment, we will get back to it later).

He then proceeded to talk about his introduction to magic through Simon, how he was shown a card trick that made him say "fuck off". This was his spark to start creating magic and start performing magic to make other people say, "fuck off". Mark asked Simon to teach him the three tricks, Simon said "no, unless you go and learn three tricks on your own" to Simons surprise, Mark did just that.

Mark then briefed us on his brief history of starting in magic. How he began performing in nightclubs in Portsmouth. He started the whole thing by negotiating with the barman saying he was there to do some card tricks and that was that, as he said, "the day I was made redundant was the day I became a professional magician". He learned a lot from performing in nightclubs that it was great for testing magic for getting good hits, but it was bad for learning patter.



After nightclubs, Mark then called up several TV studios and eventually landed a spot on the tv show, Tricks and tracks. After the show, he stopped for a while in Southampton performing magic in a local Bar, by the cruise port. This was where he made his own work and had a signature trick of card to lemon... with 18 or so lemons filled with cards. It was here where we learned how to make customers pay for drinks and keep them entertained. He learnt from Heba Haba Al, how to keep everybody engaged by getting them to constantly shuffle the cards, while is controlling the ball and tricks all at the same time, with a simple and overlooked trick, using a key card.

After the brief history, Mark started performing his first trick of the evening, the Queens nose. The effect was simple in having two people choose two cards, with a kicker ending. The whole plot formed around, rubbing the Queen's nose, as in the book and TV show of the 90s of the same name. The kicker ending was when the second card chosen appeared on the tail side of the coin, simple and effective. A great effect that hit a great variety of magic theory, include misdirection, transposition, transformation and goes

through the classic plot line of building and releasing tension.

After the Queens nose, he pulled out the most famous duck known to magicians. That is, of course a Dippy the duck. He explained that in his bar, dippy was placed high on the shelf, in a great focal point. That only after the punters started buying drinks, would Dippy come out. Mark explained that he liked the idea of taking kids magic and making it naughty. Plenty of lines used in the performance that I will not divulge as it is something that you simply need to watch. A lot of clever wordplay, adult script and full of innuendos that suits a lot of different audiences.

Following Dippy, came another animal, the most hilarious animal I've ever seen a Magic besides Dave the dinosaur, of course. The animal in question, Marks magic beaver. His performance with this trick was an education in scripting and taking something that is one thing and turning into another. Again, taking a kids trick and making it appeal to an adult audience with clever wording.

The plot was a card to impossible location- The beavers tail. Mark briefly explain that history came from Rocky raccoon that was something everybody was using at the same time, but he wanted to have something unique to himself. (I was crying with laughter).

After Mark put away his magic Beaver, another kids trick turned adult, making a wizard out of a guest- With a torn and restored hanky to wizards hat. I had the pleasure of being involved personally, and even though I could see behind the scenes and I knew the mechanics of the trick, It was still clean as a whistle. I could not see a single thing! A line he used, "If you don't know how to do something, don't fucking do it". Simple.

After the demonstrations of tricks he brought us back to the beginning of the lecture, referencing what Andy was thinking of before performing his mind map. (I told you to remember the wallet). This effect was absolutely bonkers, asking Andy to think of three random words unrelated to the word he wrote down earlier.

After this, he asked six different participants to think of a word relating to the three words chosen. So in total, he had nine random words on the board then made a connection through the words and then revealed the word that Andy wrote down at the beginning. I told you, bonkers. He went on to explain that he wanted to make the participants the magicians and involved, by basing the effect on 'cue the magic' by Angelo Carbons. He continued, it allowed for everybody to get involved in some form of way and that you really have to work to make something out of nothing and it is all on the fly, but still a great performance that allows you to lead the participants down the garden path to then go to the complete different direction at the end. This was all made achievable by marks brand new effect on the market, Blindz. A devilishly designed peek wallet. Yes another one. But its design is simple and minimalist and works so long as you have good lighting conditions.

In the second half of the evening, Mark revisited the history of his performing life. He he went from 'Tricks and tracks' to Portsmouth and even ended up on TV, in episode 111 of 150, in sky ones, 'Who do

you do', that featured the likes of Rob Brydon etc. After TV, Mark worked nightclubs and was potentially one of the only magicians working at the time. He talked about how, in the 90s, when the DJ called "a taxi", that was the cue for a show to begin in the nightclub, which was normal in the 90s.

Six or seven years passed, Mark said he missed the corporate window and clubs were changing. However, in his time at the clubs he learnt all the ins and outs. How the likes of the music forced drink sales, how changing the music change the crowd, which allows for a constant flow of the Bar. They even had celebs to come in and help with tricks.

Mark soon caught word of the 'Aspen bar magic' book, which as it says on the tin, it is a book all about Bar magic. After reading this book, mark personally reached out and wrote to Doc Eason . wrote a business plan as he had a history in magic planned the first magic bar in the U.K.

However, he sat on the idea for years, it wasn't until he was working at waxy
O'Connor's it was he sold a lot of red ball, which landed him at ski trip to Austria.

After one of the days skiing, at the good old apres ski, he ended up getting behind the bar, performing magic to earn pints. This was when he was noticed by this random man stood in the corner, the elusive Jeremy.

Jeremy approached and asked what he was doing, and what he wanted to do. Mark proclaimed that he wanted to open a Magic bar, that he had a business plan all worked out. Nothing more was said until he was invited to Manchester by Jeremy to look around at an empty unit. When he walked in, it was announced that the bar would be his, his own (and first) magic bar. He was asked, "will this work?". As it wasn't Jeremy's money, instead it was Richard Brandon's that was investing at the time. Mark was told that he was to quit his job, and that he will be the general manager of the venue which hosted 5000 in the nightclub and 80 in the bar.



Mark decided to open up as a Tom Mullica style magic bar- A long bar with a main performing area (on the bar), and on either side, bar people serving drinks. Assisted with a camera above to show everybody else that isn't close enough to see, projecting to screens around the bar. When he opened Pure Magic Bar, he had the likes of: Magic Sam and Matthew Wright. On one occasion he was told that Richard Branson, the owner of virgin was coming to see how the bar operated however he came in and walked straight out. Mark was told that he was allowed to run after him and show a trick, and Mark said no.

From this, he learned that it was all about making money, so if somebody was sat, watching a Magic, they must have a drink in their hand. After all the bar doesn't pay for itself and being sat there without a drink doesn't pay for the performers.

Now in order for Mark to afford The purchase of the bar he actually remortgaged his house. After finding a venue, he designed the bar on a CAD software, made an offer and the rest is history. The year after the market crashed leaving the world in a financial dip.



However, Mark stated that bars are great for everybody, always: if you're happy you have a drink, if you're sad- you have a drink, and if you're broke- do you have friends to pay for your drinks?

Once open, he made it a rule that if you are sat watching magic, you must have a drink in your hand. He also devised ways of having drinks in peoples hands and used bar bets to help up sales. It took 11 years for people to start calling in to say they wanted to pay to come and watch what's the magic used to be free people always had to have a drink. Where is now people pay to come and watch a theatre show. In the beginning people said a magic bar would never work. However, he stated that if you don't push yourself beyond the limits you won't grow, and you will never know, and now look at what he has created.

Marks Bar allows for performers to come and learn to harness their skills. Allowing performers to work on different skills, from openers, to stage presence, to crowd management. He literally has magicians asking to come to trial their tricks from all over the world. He has used his time as a mentor to many different magicians. He talked about, how people do you not care who you are they do not know who you are and he quoted the typical anecdote of, "oh we had a magician at our event". Marks response- "Was what was their name?". which shows that most people won't remember who you are. That instead they remember the moments the feelings, but never your name. He continued, You are there to do one job and that is to entertain. He learned that you do not need to be overly critical and technical to make it as a magician. That if you can perform a relatable 'move', such as show a card spring, how to fan a deck, or do you simply a one handed cut, you would win them over as this is something that lay-people have tried them self. He's use this time to help better magicians not only with

performance, but with business also.

Mark has had 4 bars one of which he opened, was an 'L' out of shape he didn't like the layout, so he decided to knock down the wall and create a theatre, making it his own. After a while Mark went back to Manchester, when he reopened Pure Magic as illusions he was told that they could close at any time, as virgin, was looking to settle the building, and after five years, he had three hours to get out short notice.

At the end, mark opened the floor to questions and answers:

He was asked;

How do you sell out?

-Keep it small, not telling people who you are, but instead sell feelings, sell emotions, tell them what they are going to experience. Don't undersell yourself. The more you charge, the better quality of people you will get in to fill the seats. On the back end of that, If you're charging a premium, the lights, the cameras, the performers everything needs to be of top quality.

Do you have regular rotating magicians and do you have regular/repeat customers?

-Not really on the customer side: some people come once a year. Some every three years. It is largely popular through trip advisor and is Bristols number one thing to do. As for magicians. We do have a couple of resident magicians as well as a few that rotate allowing for people to come and hone their craft.

How many does smoke and mirrors hold?

-38, however, once we had 52 people in there somehow.

What is next?

-I am really enjoying creating at the moment, as for the bars, at one point, I wanted a bigger premises, but I'm gonna leave that for someone else...

...So keep your eyes, open Sussex magic circle ;-)

Overall, this lecture was amazing.
Covering only a few tricks and the rest
was talking about business and
performing and opening bars. Truly
inspiring and top quality. A great wealth
of knowledge and teachings came from
this lecture. Thank you Mark!

What a nice beaver!

Compiled by Jonny Ritchie

Also a big thanks to Jonny for filming this lecture which will be available on the website by the weekend for those that missed it or want to re - watch.







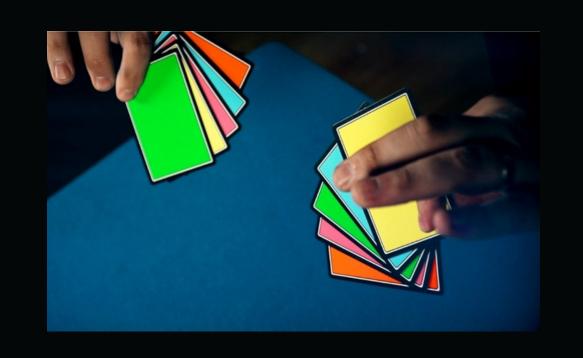
Go check out Roo's latest review on his YouTube channel Roo's Magic reviews, this month he reviews 'Colour sync' by David Johnathan.

As we know, If Roo has reviewed it - then it means it's good and it's a workable effect.

It's a mix and mingle version of a classic match up routine using colour cards. This effect solves a few issues with most match up routine e.g a table is needed and the final match reveal ends a bit weak. This is Perfect for close up and table performances.

Be sure to Subscribe to keep up with all latest reviews and check out recent ones too.







THE SUSSEX MAGIC CIRCLE

8TH DECEMBER



Sussex Magic Circle Christmas Quiz!!!

It's literally what it sounds like!

Come along to the Hassocks for fun, a bit of magic (if you bring it!) and some festive quiziness!

Plus Mince pies

SEVENTY YEARS OF THE SUSSEX MAGIC CIRCLE

DINNER & CABARET SATURDAY MARCH 18 2023 THE HASSOCKS HOTEL

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter. Big thanks to everyone who contributed.

Get in touch to have something featured, ideas or contributions.



