

URBANGATEWAYS

THE MAGIC OF THE SPELLBINDER

WALTER KING JR.



ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

Having captivated audiences from Las Vegas to the Caribbean Islands, The Spellbinder delivers a theatrical performance designed to stimulate and intrigue audiences of all ages. He performs state-of-the-art magical effects choreographed to lively music. His stylish presentation includes levitation, the use of live doves, and illusions from around the world to provide a truly enriching experience of wonder and amazement.

MEET THE ARTIST

Walter King, Jr. is one of Chicago's premier illusionists and has entertained with people like Jennifer Hudson, Sindbad, Levar Burton and Bill Cosby. He has performed in every kind of venue from industrial shows to professional ball games. King discovered an interest and talent for magic at a very young age but never seriously considered it until his college years. By then he had developed strong theatre and dance skills in which he has received numerous awards, such as the Illinois Arts Fellowship Award and the Joseph Jefferson for "Best Performance."

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Nobody knows what the first magic trick was. However, nearly 4,500 years ago, scribes recorded one of the first descriptions of a magic trick. It can be found in a papyrus dating from the reign of the Egyptian monarch King Cheops, builder of the Great Pyramid at Giza (c. 2600 B.C.). The description tells of a magician called Dedi, and King Cheops requested a command performance after hearing of Dedi's amazing powers. Dedi's first trick in front of the king and his court was to cut the heads off of a goose and an ox, then he magically brought the animals back to life with their heads restored. Introducing what was later termed the macabre effect, Dedi initiated a theme that was popular for many magicians to come.

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION *continued*

Magic was not always intended to entertain. The priests, shamans and magicians of antiquity had two major areas of concern: controlling the weather and controlling disease. These ancient magicians developed rites and rituals that appeared to cause the desired effects, and used their rites to instill followers with confidence in their magical powers.

In current times we now recognize magic as a form of entertainment. From the times of Harry Houdini and Ching Ling Foo to David Copperfield and the Spellbinder, magic has taught lessons and entertained countless audiences all around the world.

RESOURCES

BBC Series History of Magic (learn about the progression of magic, from mindreading to large scale magic tricks) <https://goo.gl/STqaqc>

YouTube Video: Learn a basic card trick with this tutorial video <https://goo.gl/xWxQt2>

Famous Magicians (biographies, photos, famous tricks) <https://goo.gl/P5xw6m>



David Copperfield

(b. 1956-present)

Made the Statue of Liberty disappear.



Harry Blackstone

(b. 1934-d.1997)

Credited with inventing the “saw a person in half” illusion



Harry Houdini

(b. 1874-d. 1926)

Famous escape artist, created many illusions still used today.

Chicago Guide for Teaching and Learning in Arts: Scope and Sequence

Theatre Making

Skill Development (*IL 25A, 26A, 26B; Nat’l 1, 2, 4*)

- Develop focus and concentration while participating in dramatic activities.
- Enter into a make believe (pretend) situation as if it were real.

Terms and Tools (*IL 25A, 26A, 27A*)

- Identify the primary tools of the actor (body, voice, and mind).
- Identify story elements, including plot, character, setting, conflict, and message.
- Recognize story sequence (beginning, middle, end).

Interpretation & Evaluation
(*IL 27A; Nat’l 7*)

- Express reactions to live theater.
- Develop appropriate reactions at given moments in a classroom sharing or theatrical performance (listen, laugh, applaud).

Making Connections

Personal Connections (*Nat’l 8*)

- Experience live or recorded performances.

VOCABULARY

PRODUCTION / VANISHES

Objects, animals and people are made to appear and/or disappear.

RESTORATIONS

An object or person is damaged or destroyed, then restored to its original state.

PENETRATION

A solid object passes through another solid object without damage to either object.

INVULNERABILITY

An object is made to appear indestructible.

TRANSPORTATION / TRANSPOSITION

An object changes position or place magically.

TRANSFORMATION

An object is altered from one size, shape, or color to another.

LEVITATION

A person or an object defies the laws of gravity and floats in the air without the visible means of support.

PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES

1. Have a classroom debate about how one might become a magician/illusionist. What skills are needed, how does someone train to become an illusionist?
2. Have students work to research famous magicians/illusionists. Ask them to research the magician's early life, career, illusions they were famous for, fun pieces of trivia, etc. If time allows, have students present their reports to the class.

POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES

1. Have students draw a picture of their favorite illusion or moment from the performance.
2. Free-write: Ask students to write about how they think The Spellbinder did one of the illusions seen in the performance.
3. Have students practice card tricks! Use the site listed under resources to learn basic card tricks. Encourage students to practice at home and show their new skills to family and friends!