

## Magic At The Beach 2011

The Second Annual Magic At The Beach Convention was held January 20 - 22, 2011 in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina at the Ocean Dunes Resort & Conference Center. Most of the 200 registrants arrived Thursday afternoon and settled in for the weekend. Upon arrival they received their limited edition premium Swag Bag full of magical material and for those who donated \$10 or more to Rachel Colombini's cause they also received a free DVD. We raised \$625 for Rachel and Aldo. As everyone took some time to see what gifts they had received in their Swag Bags the Dealer's Room was preparing to open at 4:00PM. All registrants were then treated to an awesome Welcome Reception that evening at 6:00PM in the Main Ballroom.

The theme for the reception was the Seaside Sideshow and the room was decorated to suit the theme with banners, music and lighting to set the mood. A buffet was served which included heavy hors d'oeuvres, stuffed twice baked potatoes and a huge roast of beef hand carved by the chef.

Towards the end of the meal a gong sounded and the music changed as magician John Tudor and the troupe Delirium Tribal took center stage and performed the most beautiful sword basket routine I've ever witnessed and many guests told me that they agreed. 'Awesome' and 'Wonderful' were a few of the superlatives used by guests to describe it. Congratulations to John and the entire dance troupe for a moving performance. After the routine was complete John remained at the center stage as he announced, "And now the moment you've all been waiting for ... dessert !!", as the music again changed, spotlights were ballyhooed and the dining room staff entered with trays and trays of cakes and pies for our guests to choose from.

As guests finished their dessert their attention was directed to the main stage where our featured act, Coney Island Chris, offered up his humorous lampoon of the Sideshow. Chris presented a very funny act with an unexpected, thrilling finale involving a bed of nails and a sledge hammer. This act must be seen to be fully appreciated and everyone gave him a well deserved ovation.

After the reception the Dealer's Room was open again and everyone took the time to view who had brought what. Our dealers included Losander, Bob Little, Kozmo, Chastain Criswell, Madhatter, Hughes Magic, Ron Conley, John Brooks, Fred's Books, Chris Smith, Shoot Ogawa and Joe Mogar. There were round top tables in the room, too, that allowed impromptu sessions to

occur. Shoot Ogawa and Chris Capehart held court at one of the tables until late in the night while Obie O'Brien and many others watched them in wonder.

After a full night of food, drink and magic we all got up early for the first lecture of the weekend presented by Chris Capehart. Chris continues to be a convention favorite for a reason - he has strong material to teach and a wealth of performing wisdom to share. Christian & Katalina were the next presenters and although they may not be very well known amongst convention attendees I know that all in attendance enjoyed everything they showed us. It was interesting to hear their stories about how they met and how they put together their mentalism routines.

After our lunch break Charlie Frye showed us some of things that makes what he does so special. Charlie is a gentleman and a professional and all of our guests had a fun learning experience with him. Our Close-up Contest was at 3:00PM and after all the contestants had presented the judges choose Joe Jesse as the First Place winner and Ron Conley received the Second Place award. Both Joe and Ron are out of Myrtle Beach, SC. Our three judges came from different backgrounds; the public, the theatre and the magic community. Representing the public as well as our beneficiary the Children's Museum of South Carolina we had Mr. Jackie Thompson. We also welcomed as a judge the Artistic Director of the Theatre Of The Republic, Mr. Tim McGhee. Our third judge representing the magic community with integrity and experience, Mr. Obie O'Brien. Thank you to all of our judges for providing their services for both of our contests.

At 4:30PM our next lecture of the day was presented by Topas. Topas began by explaining that he wasn't going to be teaching many tricks nor did he have much to sell but he did have a lot to say. One seasoned conventioneer came to me immediately afterwards and told me, "Hands down the best magic lecture I've ever seen."

At 6:00PM the "Pizza Party with the Stars" was held for all the Junior Magicians. While eating pizza Topas, Charlie and Sherry Frye, Levent and Shoot Ogawa sat with the guests and shared their wisdom of magic for the next hour or so. It was very kind of all of them to give more of their time to encourage the young magicians.

Our in-house Cabaret' Show went on at 8:00PM and featured Christian and Katalina, Brandon Wagster, Chris Capehart, Nathan Kranzo, Levent, and

Topas. The Dealer's Room reopened after the show and at 10:00PM Levent presented the last lecture of the day. It proved to be an incredible ending to an incredible day.

Saturday morning at 9:00AM we had our Close-up Show scheduled. Tech for the acts ran a little long so doors to the main room opened about 10 minutes late. The audience however were not to be disappointed because Charlie Frye, Nathan Kranzo, Christian, Topas, Jay Sankey, and Shoot Ogawa brought it all together for terrific way to start our final day. After the show Nathan Kranzo had his turn at the lecture spot and was entertaining as well as educational.

The Stage Contests were held at 1:00PM and all contestants presented well. After the judges conferred and the points were tallied Joe Jesse won the First Place award and Steve Owens won the Second Place award. Steve came out of Torrance, CA and Joe is from Myrtle Beach, SC. Congratulations to Joe Jesse for winning both competitions this year, well done.

We had two more lecturers present before dinner. Jay Sankey from Toronto, Canada and Shoot Ogawa from Tokyo, Japan were both great choices to wrap up our lecture series. Both gentlemen had strong material to present and nice merchandise for purchase. Prior to Shoot's lecture we had the drawing for our raffle prize which was a table full of magic valued at over \$400 donated by Trickmaster. The Close-up, Stage and Parlor magic effects were won by Bill Ragsdale out of Salisbury, NC .

The Gala Show, "Champions Of Magic", was a benefit for the Children's Museum of South Carolina and was produced at the Gilmore Auditorium, home of the Carolina Opry. The curtain went up at 7:30PM and the public came out and enjoyed our show and supported the cause. Chris Capehart was our Master of Ceremonies and Brandon Wagster & Hannah opened with their illusion act. Christian & Katalina did their mentalism and Charlie Frye & Company closed the first act with Charlie's juggling routine which is flawless. Charlie and his wife, Sherry, opened the second half of the show with their awesome magic routine using cards, linking hoops, floating bowling ball and more. Chris Capehart took a turn entertaining the crowd prior to introducing Levent. Levent was very funny and had a great routine. Topas closed the show performing the act that has won him international acclaim and awards. Big thanks to Matt McCoy who served as Stage Manager for all of our shows. He did an incredibly professional job.

After the show everyone arrived back at the resort where a Farewell Party was hosted offering drinks, assorted chips and sliced vegetables for dipping and a wing bar. Guests took the opportunity to get in that last chance for photos and autographs from the invited performers for their show programs and posters.

It was another great weekend and yet none if it would have been possible without Dave Tanner of Broadway Magic and Roman LePree of Trickmaster's vision and support. As Co-Chairmen for this convention Dave and Roman work hard towards ensuring all the details are taken care of. They are assisted by Michelle Householder who is the Marketing Manager and Corporate Liaison, Mike Heidtman is the Director and Event Coordinator and Matt McCoy served as Talent Liaison and Stage Manager. We also had a great support staff of volunteers including Joe Jesse, Jeff Miller, and Melena LePree doing photo and video production, William McClean as Chief of Security and Assistant to the Chairmen, Renzi Norris as Technical Theater Assistant, John Tudor who was Backstage Hand for the Gala Show, Greg Holt for providing pre-show balloons for the Sideshow. Merl Hamen and Mike Heidtman were both on-screen performers for our in-house instructional DVD. Special thanks also goes to Glen Yost for exhibiting a collection of his original water color art work featuring famous magical performers.

As I sit here and type this the driver has arrived to pickup Topas' cases to ship back to Germany, folks are posting kind words and photos on the internet and everyone seems to agree that Magic At The Beach 2011 was a great weekend and a super success. Makes all the hard work very worthwhile - Thanks to all of you who came and made this event so special.

Mike Heidtman  
Tuesday, January 25, 2011  
Myrtle Beach, SC