

FOR PROGRESSIVE MAGICIANS

# HOW TO ROUTINE MAGIC

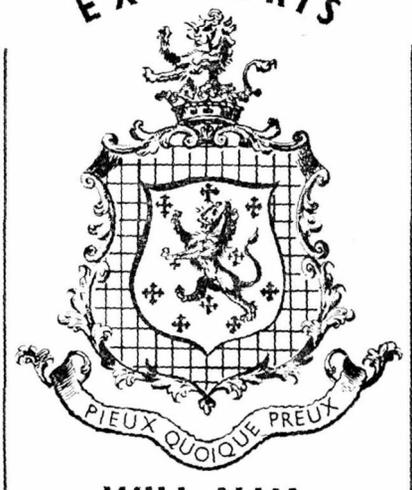


BY

**— REX —**  
THE -ACE- MAGICIAN •  
♠

Complete instructions for making individual  
magic acts with 100 per cent. audience appeal.

EX LIBRIS



**WILL ALMA**  
M.I.M.C. (LONDON)

# "How To Routine Magic"

by

REX, THE ACE MAGICIAN

Member of the Society of Indian Magicians and the Independent Magical performers of Sydney (Founder Member, International Alliance of Magicians).

Copyright

The haphazard presentation of tricks is today as modern as a silent picture. If the magician desires engagements, and repeat engagements, he must be as up-to-the-minute as television. Which means, he must routine his magic.

Suitable routines that fit the performer's requirements, capabilities, and individuality are not to be purchased ready-made. A glance at any magical dealer's catalogue will reveal that routines offered for sale comprise a negligible percentage of goods advertised.

Stealing the routine of some successful performer will not skyrocket the copyist to the dizzy heights of success. The magician should build his own act, embodying the tricks most suited to himself, and more important still, those effects which best meet his demands.

The aim of this publication is to show the basic way in which magic can be routined. Concrete examples will demonstrate to the reader how the author's system operates.

A routine is a regular course of action. Routined magic is a rounded-off act in which

the action flows as evenly as a river, not like a bumpy roller coaster. Its CONSECUTIVE CONJURING. The routine is built step by step. Each step has to be thoroughly considered to see that the utmost in entertainment is being obtained.

To do this, a number of principles are followed. As many as possible are applied to each step.

### PRINCIPLES.

1. The performer must not try to exceed his limitations. His completed act is limited by:-
    - (a) angles of visibility encountered,
    - (b) opportunity to set up apparatus under cover,
    - (c) advantages of stage, without which certain tricks cannot be performed, such as those depending on trap doors, wings, etc.,
    - (d) apparatus available,
    - (e) time at disposal for practice,
    - (f) running time allowed for act,
    - (g) knowledge of tricks,
    - (h) money available for expenditure,
    - (i) mode of conveyance. Heavy baggage means extra expense; extra expense means less profits,
    - (j) assistance available,
    - (k) adaptability of personality to tricks,
    - (l) types of audiences encountered,
    - (m) background at place of performance.
- For instance, varicolored backgrounds can make manipulative objects invisible at a short distance,
- (n) other individual difficulties.

2. The entertainment value of the act as a whole is the supreme consideration. Always give the audience what they want even if you don't like it yourself. Long Tack Sam told the author he didn't like his famous production of bowls of gold fish--but his audience did.

3. The routine should build up to a climax. One step should lead to a more entertaining one. Often, however, emphasis can be given to a trick by preceeding it with a weaker one; tension can be relieved by a laugh. Motorists have a trick to increase the pull of a car ascending a hill to the climax of its journey when the accelerator is full down. They momentarily lift their foot from the throttle. The performer too can relax these principles of routine if it will add pep to the completed act and carry him swiftly to his climax.

4. Make the routine as simple to follow as possible so that the memory of the audience will not be taxed. That audience doesn't want mental work, it wants entertainment.

5. Avoid monotony and don't labor points, or the audience will be bored and become impatient.

6. Don't let embellishments smother the theme of the routine. Avoid diversions as far as possible, keeping to the chain of essential details.

7. In speciality acts, keep all objects in harmony. A Chinese would look out of place doing Indian magic. In other words, retain the atmosphere.

8. Never allow the audience to anticipate the next effect.

9. The concluding trick must be as breathtaking, impressive, and/or surprising as possible. It is the last impression the performer makes on the audience. It must be the best. There must be no anti-climax. As the trick ends so must the routine...no handing back of borrowed articles or dismissing of volunteer assistants. But a quickfiring doubling-up mystery is permissible provided it is good enough to double the applause. For an example see the climax of the author's "The Wicked Uncle".

10. The opening of the act must command the audience. It must sit up and take notice immediately. This can be accomplished by a snap or unexpected quick piece of magic that wakes up the audience, or by suspense, which means making the audience wonder what is about to happen. Be careful, however, that suspense does not become a boring delay.

11. Because a trick is old, or well worn, there is no need for the magician to despise it. Tricks loose, to some extent, their individuality in a routine. Moreover, in an average audience there will be found some who will judge the magician by the tricks they themselves know or can perform, others who will judge by the tricks repeated which they had seen performed by Professor So-and-so 20 years ago come pancake day, and still others who will judge the magician by the presentation of something new. All, however, will judge the act on its sheer entertainment.

12. The more commonplace the articles used by a magician, the less trickery the audience suspect, and consequently, the greater the resultant mystery. Try and adapt common objects in lieu of unnatural articles that are encountered in the realm of magic. Take the time-worn egg-bag for example. Now I ask you, does it look natural? On the other hand, if the bag were made from small flour bags, the egg-bag becomes a commonplace article to every woman who possesses a kitchen to cook in. In one of the American magical magazines I read a suggestion that instead of using the tea caddy apparatus for changing, use a similarly faked thermos flask casing. I saw a magician using a changing bag. He had the sense to call it a fishing net. He didn't go far enough. He should have explained that he was Scotch and had the mesh so small that even the tiniest tiddlers could not escape. Actually this magician should not have used the changing bag at all. All he wanted to do was to switch some slips--six in all--and such an unnatural looking piece of apparatus, despite the excuse, was out of place for the half second it was used. The felt hat switch would have been far superior and more natural.

This same principle applies in another way. If a performer carried on a lemon for the note-in-lemon trick it would be unnatural as the average person does not carry a lemon around with him. Therefore it would be more reasonable to produce the lemon, or else explain its presence in some logical way. On the other hand a newspaper is a common object to carry. It is also natural to take a fountain pen or a handkerchief from the pocket and so they need

not be produced or their presence explained.

And while on the subject of explaining. Never let your explanations of natural objects infer that there can be any trickery whatsoever connected with them. As one authority said: "I never say 'Here is an unprepared glass' for the audience is not supposed to know that glasses ever are prepared".

13. Fortunate indeed is the magician who can make an entertaining routine in which the angles of visibility do not count. He has no need to worry whether his show will be in the middle of a dance floor or whether he will have the secrecy afforded by a stage.

It is advisable for the magician to inquire beforehand when a date is booked as to the performing conditions that will be encountered. It is often advisable to carry a simple alternate routine without angles to worry about that can be substituted in cases of emergency.

At all events, even if a few persons can see more than they should, there is no need for the performer to worry. He should play to the majority. A side view may give the working away to a few but as those spectators do not generally see the effect, they are really worse off. Furthermore, the average layman soon forgets. The moves seen mean little to him.

Don't think, however, that the author is condoning exposing. During his two years and a half editorship of "The Imp", a monthly magazine he founded for the Independent Magical Performers of Sydney, he waged editorial war on

all forms of exposure.

14. Patter is a difficult subject. It serves two purposes for the magician; namely, to heighten the mystery of magic, and/or to, in itself, entertain. To do the latter, it must be humorous or witty. There are men who make a living writing patter for actors and their services can be utilized by magicians, also, there are patter books for magicians on the market.

If the performer decides to build his own patter he will find little difficulty in the first type. It is merely a running commentary of what the performer is, or appears, to be doing, emphasising how free from deception (?) are his actions, etc.

The second type can be culled from joke sections in papers, patter books, etc.. I believe it was Mrs. Shakespeare's little boy Willie who remarked that a pun was the most feeble form of wit. In spite of that, they do raise a laugh. Still, never overdo a good thing.

15. If the performer is going to the expense and trouble of employing an assistant he may as well make a good job of it. Sales statistics show that out of every 101 photographs of men and women sold, 100 are of women. The preferable sex to use is obvious.

So when employing a girl she should be the prettiest and most shapely the performer can procure. She should be dressed within the bounds of decency but at the same time her

assets should be shown to advantage.

As stated before, there is always the danger of overdoing things. If the girl is too attractive the audience may prefer to watch her rather than the performer.

On the other hand a man can be used as a comic foil. But again let me repeat, he should not be allowed to steal the show. The assistant --no matter what sex--should be smaller in stature than the magician, otherwise the performer would seem in the eyes of the audience to be a shrimp, which, to say the least, is detracting.

When using an assistant get your money's worth from her (or him). Use her/him to the utmost. Always remember that tricks requiring the seen or unseen aid of an assistant are, in the main, far superior from a magical point of view. Consequently the major portion of the routine should be constructed of tricks from that category.

Again, don't just let the assistant walk on like so many magicians do--unless she/he is already standing on the stage when the curtain rises to give atmosphere, or to remove the performer's cloak, or for some other reason. There is nothing magical in walking on to the stage. Produce your assistant (or let him/her produce you). There are a number of simple portable illusions that would suit most conditions. According to catalogue description the Arabian Tent Illusion by Grant appears to be such an illusion, requiring "no traps, fake drops, mirrors, etc." but it has certain

limitations. More bulky is the Doll's House Illusion. It, however, is self contained and has no angles of visibility to worry about.

Don't produce the assistant immediately. Wait until he/she is needed--at the conclusion of a trick when it is necessary to have apparatus cleared away. Included in the production of the assistant can be objects required for the following portion of the routine.

In other words, conserve time and actions. Nowadays it is quick tempo that is required of performers--we hear about the pace that kills--that is the age we are living in. Condense your show and give CONCENTRATED ENTERTAINMENT.

If calling for a volunteer assistant, make the most of the opportunity. Get as many laughs as possible without offending or embarrassing your helper. Horace Mann says: "avoid witticisms at the expense of others". Grant's "100 Tips and Gags" gives a number of stunts to use with assistants.

16. The magician best equipped to routine is not the one with a liberal supply of apparatus, but rather one who knows of the most tricks. In the author's opinion money is better spent on magical literature than on tricks for which the performer at the time of purchase has no definite use.

All the magician needs to know at the outset of building a routine is the effect of tricks. Dealers' tricks are generally apparatus tricks and their advertisements and catalogues always

describe the effects. In magical publications, on the other hand, one finds tricks and tips, sleight-of-hand, patter, etc., which is often unsaleable from the dealer's commercial point of view.

So go to it now. Get all the dealers' catalogues you can, subscribe to all magical magazines that give worthwhile material, get in magical books, old and new, which seem to deal with the type of magic the routine will require or the audiences are likely to demand. Read the reviews of magical literature in the magical monthlies as a guide to buying. Then read and index the contents of your references. Ever been inside a barrister's chambers? His walls are lined with law books--his references. He might never use, or even look at some, but they are there just in case the occasion may arise when some valuable information may be gleaned from them.

When the time comes for the actual purchase of a trick -- perhaps one described in a catalogue -- any dealer of good standing will inform the inquirer whether the trick is suitable for his requirements if a letter is sent stating the conditions that will be encountered in presenting it. Out of fairness to the dealer a stamped and self-addressed envelope should be enclosed with the inquiry.

17. The speed of performance varies with the audience and type of tricks. A trick must be performed just slow enough for the audience to follow and to be able to realize what is apparently happening. If too slow, it will bore; if too quick, it will slip by and the

effect will be lost. Consequently the brighter the mentality of the audience, the quicker can be the presentation.

Although applause and laughs may slow a show never stop either. In concert and theatre scenes on the films one quite frequently sees a performer hold up his hand to quieten the audience; on the stage, never. Always let the audience give full vent to their delight. Never pull them up or the next time they want to laugh or clap they will feel somewhat restricted.

18. In the last section the author mentioned that the speed of the presentation was governed by the mentality of the audience. That brings us to the various types of audiences encountered. The two main classifications are juveniles and adults. By dividing the sexes we get four groups, namely, boys, girls, men, and women. By dividing each classification into the younger and older sections, we have eight groups. That is, boys from about four years to nine and girls in the same age, next the critical age of advancing school children of both sexes, then the youths and maids, and finally more sombre adults from 25 or 35 onwards.

Using the main division of children and adults, it is obvious that tricks suitable to and understandable by the former would not be fully appreciated by the latter. People prefer to see magic utilising things with which they are familiar. To give an example. I was recently doing a show for the local Red Cross,

The audience was mainly composed of women. Among my tricks was the Cut and Restored Rope. To increase the women's interest I referred to the rope as a clothes line. But to one man in the audience, the feat was not merely amazing, it was a super miracle. Now why was this man so impressed? Because he was familiar with rope-- he owned a rope factory.

And so, when considering the type of audience the performer must bear in mind its interests. Women like color, children like toys, men like salty patter. You might do the Multiplying Billiard Balls. The bright red appeals to the feminine hearts; men are naturally interested. Before an audience of farmers the interest would be heightened by referring to the balls as cherries. For golfers a set of Multiplying Golf Balls should be substituted; for housewives or poultry farmers, Multiplying Eggs.

#### OTHER OPINIONS.

Dante, one of the world's foremost illusionists, offered the following advice when he was entertained by the Independent Magical Performers of Sydney:-

1. Don't turn your back on your audience-- you loose contact with them.
2. It is easy enough to become perfect in tricks through practice but the salesman of the article is more important.
3. First learn the article, then learn how to sell it.

4. A successful magician must grow up with his art--he must have foundation.

5. Magic must be sold to the public in the way of publicity, then it must be sold in the theatre.

6. Don't care what the other person does, try to be original.

7. Take it slow, take it easy.

8. Don't get top heavy by trying to do everything at once.

9. Never make magic a nuisance.

.....

Helmrich, official instructor to the IMPS, gives the following points for performers:-

1. Never lose your temper.

2. Control your audience. Don't let it control you.

3. Face and address your audience, not the footlights.

4. Don't keep your audience waiting.

5. Get your props as far forward on the stage as possible.

6. Avoid all unnecessary movement. Be decided in everything you do.

## 7. Be natural.

.....

"Magic can only progress, and will progress, if only conjurers will set out to entertain the audience and not conjure for conjurers" wrote Wilford Hutchinson in the "Conjurers Chronicle", and no magician should neglect that advice.

.....

The magician himself will compile further principles. He should then take each principle and set it out in question form so that when building a routine he can easily test each step by asking himself the question to see if the principle is being complied with. For instance, one question he would ask after deciding to, say, "eat" half a dozen razor blades, would be: "Is this within my limitations?" and then: "Can I do this entirely surrounded by the audience? If not, how far on the side can they be seated?" A question from subsection "n" of principle "l" would be: "Is my mouth formed so that I can hold and conceal blades in it?". In the author's case, blades held against the inside of the cheek show at the corner of the mouth when it is opened.

And now, at last, the reader comes to the actual building of routines--the creation of consecutive conjuring.

### TYPES OF ROUTINES.

The author divides routines into four types but actually there is no definite line of

demarkation, one type blending into another. Generally an act embodies features from all types.

Type one has been named the "Single Link Routine". It consists of linking individual tricks by a few words, a humorous action, repetition of some trick, or some other device.

Type two is the "Natural Routine". One trick flows into another by using the product of the first in the second, and so on.

Type three is the "Speciality Routine" where the performer uses one type of objects only.

Type four is the "Story Routine" where magic becomes secondary and is used to illustrate a story. "The Wicked Uncle" is an example of this type yet the magic side of it combines features of types two and three.

#### 1. Single Link Routine:

It can be likened to the links of a chain, made up of alternate large and small links. Each large link represents a trick. The object is to provide the smaller links to join the large links together. Sometimes it is possible for two small coinciding links to join two large ones.

The magician who does not deliberately set out to routine his act usually unconsciously adopts this type in its elementary form. The performer who does one trick, picks up other apparatus and does another trick, and so on, generally says before each new trick: "For my next trick, etc.". Now actually those words

provide the link between the two tricks, and so a very crude form of routine is evolved.

Now to apply the principles in question form. Is the performer getting the most out of the link? Can it be made more entertaining?

To entertain, patter has but one device. That is to make the audience laugh. On the other hand, magic can appeal to the eye by the color of the objects used, it can mystify, amuse, surprise, etc. Its entertaining devices are many. The author will touch this aspect later.

So, the only way to improve "for my next trick, etc." is to make it amuse. If the word "swindle" is substituted for "trick" the link becomes "for my next swindle". This frank confession does amuse the audience.

It is obvious that if repeated, however, the link would fail to raise a laugh. Its use is limited to once only in a routine. To link other tricks some different patter link would therefore be necessary. On the other hand, the performer could cover the "break" between one trick and another by an interlude such as pulling a rubber banana with a zipper on it from his pocket, zipping it open and taking a bite from a real peeled banana inside, zipping it closed again and returning it to the pocket before doing the next trick. When that trick was finished, the gag would be repeated, and so on. Another such gag is to have a number of various colored handkerchiefs in the front breast pocket, folded in the same manner as cigarette papers in a packet. After a trick, the top one is pulled out, the brow mopped, and

the silk is placed in another pocket. The next time the same actions are carried out, but the handkerchief is of a different color.

Again, a trick could be repeated instead of a gag. Having finished one trick the performer could steal a ball or lemon from a holder under the coat, go to perform his next trick and suddenly find he was holding a ball, or lemon. This would then be dropped into the vest pocket which had been faked so that the bottom of it extended in the form of a tube down to the holder. Thus the ball would be returned to the holder for reproduction in a similar manner before the following trick. Or, after each trick had been completed the magician could pick up a Lota Bowl and empty its contents into a basin or pail.

A Lota Bowl is an opaque jar generally made of metal, built on the same principle as the "unspillable" ink wells in which a false inside reaches almost to the bottom. When turned upside down the only liquid in them that can flow out is that on the inside of the false lining, the other portion of the liquid being trapped between the lining and outside.

Actually the first time the liquid is poured out there is no mystery. It is only on the repetition that the magic is apparent. To some, the first link may seem weak, but in fact, it entertains by suspense. The audience asks itself: "Why did he do that?". Suspense, carefully handled, always enhances magic.

Running concurrently with a magic link there can also be a patter link. By this means the

entertainment value of the link (really two links) is heightened. This principle is obvious. The more the coinciding links, the greater the entertainment--provided that the multiplicity does not cause one link to blurr the crispness of the other coinciding links. Remember "too many cooks spoil the broth". If one link is strong enough to give 100 per cent entertainment then the addition of even one other link may be superfluous and may be a detraction.

If the superimposed patter link refers to the object used, there is less likelihood of the patter blurring the clearness of the trick or gag worked. Yet the patter need not relate to the trick, moreso when it is not necessary, or not desired, that the audience follow the performer's movements--the latter being a case of misdirection.

For instance, during the torn and restored newspaper trick, if the continual tearing were not relieved by the spoken word, it would tend to become monotonous. Of course, there are magicians with enough pantomimic ability to do this trick 100 per cent entertainingly without speaking but that is the exceptional case rather than the rule.

Only a casual glance is necessary by the audience during the tearing to observe that the paper is being actually torn and the performer can add proof at the end of the tearing by showing a few separate torn pieces. So, the magician can patter about past dilemmas, the time he went to the zoo, recite, or read (?) some item of an entertaining nature from the

paper he is tearing.

To return to the point--a patter link to coincide with the Lota Bowl link. As the water is poured out the performer could remark: "Been soup. (pause) Don't know what you'd call it now".

This patter gag also could not be repeated or it would fall flat. The next time the performer could make another joke about the water: "I wonder what this tastes like". Or he could refer to the bowl itself. There is the time-worn standby: "This vase belonged to that famous Chinese magician, Hung One. His brother was hung too".

At all events, in locating patter lines, books on jokes, patter, tips, and gags are invaluable. Make a habit of everytime you see a joke that might be adaptable to your magic, cut it out and file it away. When you see a good idea in a magical magazine, mark it with a pencil, and if desired, index it.

Patter should be crisp and clear. If the diction of the performer is not able to be understood, he should either take elocution lessons or not speak at all. Silent acts can be most effective (though more difficult to "put over") whereas bad speaking can ruin an otherwise perfect routine. Slow speaking adds to the clearness of diction. Pronunciation should be correct--a dictionary will set the performer right -- and in addition it should not be slovenly. A dropped aspirate or slurred ending is bad. It is surprising how many say "genelmn" for "gentlemen".

Local references always raise a laugh when they apply to well known places, persons, or goods. A few preliminary inquiries before his show commences will enable the magician to alter localized patter.

Types of audiences govern patter to some extent. Broad references would not be suitable for Sunday school picnics, but salty remarks are appreciated at smokos and stag parties. Moderation should be the keynote always. A performer who goes over the bounds of decency is treading on slippery ground. While roars of laughter may greet him at the time, some may be offended. Others, meditating afterwards, may think less of such a performer than they did at the time. Future engagements may be endangered.

Contravocial, religious, political, and other such subjects should not be referred to. Even "ma-in-law" jokes are a dubious addition to the patter of any magician performing before a mixed audience--most mothers become mothers-in-law.

In writing down patter, the performer would do well to mark breaks for the correct diction as in "The Wicked Uncle".

To get back to routining. One trick may be linked to another by taking an object or product of the preceeding trick, and using it in the next trick. This brings the reader to the type two routine.

## 2. Natural Routine:

This routine can be likened to water overflowing from one vessel to another beneath it,

which in turn overflows to one beneath it, and so on. One trick naturally flows into the other. In forming the routine it is easier to work backwards.

The performer selects his final trick, which must be the absolute climax of the routine--as outstanding, breathtaking, and mystifying as possible. For a simple example, we will analyse a routine presented by Harry Job of the Five Demons.

The routine concludes with the multiplying billiard balls. To commence this trick, one ball is needed. This initial ball can be produced by sleight-of-hand but if this were done, there would be no preceding routine. A glance through a dealer's catalogue will reveal a trick in which a handkerchief changes to a billiard ball. That settles the question of the initial ball but what about the handkerchief? One could be obtained, according to catalogues, from a miniature tambourine, cone of paper, at the tip of a wand, from a ghost tube or similar apparatus, or plucked from the air with the aid of a flesh colored fake. A handkerchief can also be produced by pure sleight-of-hand. Mr. Job, however, takes one from a matchbox. This matchbox appears in his hand in place of a playing card. Thus his routine commences with a card which changes to a matchbox from which is taken a handkerchief which turns into a billiard ball which multiplies to two, then three, then four. Notice the natural flow?

The articles used in the foregoing routine are of a mixed nature. The performer may desire to work with only one type of article. He then

enters type three routine.

### 3. Speciality Routine:

There is little difference between the formation of this type of routine and the preceding type. Actually, a pure routine of this type is rare. Extraneous objects are nearly always necessary to carry out some tricks.

Of course the performer may decide to make his speciality manipulation. The objects are then varied but at the same time confined in size--usually cards, balls, eggs, coins, thimbles, cigarettes, and such like. By manipulating one type of article only, say cigarettes, the performer would have a pure speciality routine.

Mysticus, one of the Three Wise Men, had a "glass act", in which the tricks featured were of glass or concerned glass. His effects included the spirit dial, glass penetration, glass through hat, etc. Other magicians have watch acts, card acts, rope acts, mental acts, silk acts, candle acts, and so on. Mr. Cecil E. Cook, of the Knights of Magic, has a speciality routine with giant cards. Although it comprises of only three tricks, with patter, it runs for 12 minutes. The only apparatus consists of a number of giant cards, and a giant card stand. A flap in each compartment of the stand conceals cards necessary to carry out the three effects.

Mr. Cook opens with the four ace trick, using the faked card method. Of course the flap is responsible for the four aces appearing in the selected compartment of the card stand. The

trick over, the cards are gathered up and five cards dealt into each compartment. Behind each set of cards stage money is placed, but when the cards are revealed, it is found the Mr. Cook holds the royal routine flush and that the money has left the other compartments and travelled to be found behind his cards. Finally a version of "Find the lady" is presented.

And now the reader will be shown the fundamental way of building a "silk act", step by step. The example will only go as far as drafting a rough outline.

What is a showy, effective, suitable finishing trick? After consulting the catalogues and other references we find that "Blendo" can fulfil the need. In this trick three silks knotted together change into one large silk or flag.

To commence the trick therefore, the performer must have three silks, one of which is prepared. What can be done with these silks? The prepared one obviously needs careful handling so for the moment we will place it aside. That leaves two silks. Naturally the most magical thing to do is to produce them. At this stage references are again consulted and all possible silk tricks, and tricks adaptable to silks, are located and mentally noted.

The performer could produce the first silk from the bend of the elbow, and the second by pulling it through the vest buttonhole under cover of the first. Both are old methods but it should be remembered that in a routined act it is the effect as a whole that matters, not individual tricks.

Again, the silks could be produced from between two plates but if so it means that a non-silk article is introduced. Still, extraneous articles add variety and prevent monotony. If the presence of the plates can be dispensed with with a briefness that will not obscure the silk theme, so much the better. But how come the plates?

If held in a "Toppit Vanisher", which is a pocket between the performer's vest and coat, the plates can be produced under cover of a foulard. What of the foulard? We can vanish a silk by means of a paper cone made from a double sheet of paper. Reverse the procedure and we can produce the silk foulard, but at the same time we introduce a piece of paper.

It so happens that there is a way of producing a silk from under a plate by loading from a pocket in a sheet of newspaper. So by first making a double sheet of newspaper with a silk foulard between the sheets, and then pasting on the double sheet a pocket from which the silk to be produced from under the plate is concealed, the newspaper serves a dual purpose. The performer at this stage is faced with the introduction of the piece of newspaper and what to do with the foulard once the plates are produced.

By careful adjustments of size, the silk produced from the paper cone could be just large enough to give sufficient cover for the production of a small plate, and at the same time be small enough for "Blendo". That consequently leaves only one silk to be produced from under the plate. The only

apparatus unaccounted for is the newspaper.

It is perfectly natural for a person to carry a newspaper and so there is no need to produce it. The plates not being in harmony with silks, should be disposed of as soon as possible. They could be merely laid aside or replaced in the suitcase if the performer were working from one. Some ideas don't work out in practice. For instance, the magician might consider using plates made of edible material and getting rid of them by eating them. To find some substance from which the plates could be made would be the difficulty which would veto the idea.

There still remains the prepared silk to be obtained. The difficulty with this silk is to stop the load behind it from swinging into view. By letting the silk fold around the load as it does naturally when held still, and then holding the fold in place with a pin, the silk forms a pocket with the load inside. In this state, the silk can be handled with freedom. The performer could merely take this silk from his inside coat pocket, remarking: "They say that two are company (showing the two produced silks) but I like a crowd". Or, by having the first two silks red and white and the faked one blue, the performer could say: "Where there is red and white there must be blue" --with apt music then coming in.

At this stage, the magician has drafted out a rough idea of a routine. Here it is:-

Performer enters with a sheet of newspaper which he quickly forms into a cone and extracts

from it a red silk. Laying the paper down on a chair he throws the silk along his arm and reaching underneath it brings forth two small plates which are shown on both sides and laid on the sheet of newspaper. The silk is then hung over the arm at the elbow and the plates lifted and placed together. When separated, a white silk is seen between them. The plates are laid aside and the silks held up to full view of the audience. Remarking that where there is the red and white there must be the blue, the performer removes the blue silk from his pocket. The three silks are tied together and immediately transform into the national flag. So much for the theory.

The routine should now be tried out for theory sometimes breaks down in practice. In addition, the performer gets an approximation of the running time. If a longer running time is desired effects which do not interrupt the natural flow of the routine are added. In this instance there are numerous little passes with silks--dissolving knots, dancing silk, serpent silk, etc.--which could be interposed when one or both silks were produced.

The performer should never hesitate to build up, pull down, and then rebuild his routine in an attempt to get a more entertaining act. In the end the routine might be entirely different from the first one roughed out. It might be months before finality is reached. Ideas of improvements can come at all times--in bed, in a bath, in a train, anywhere, anytime--and they should all be jotted down so that they will not be forgotten.

Once the general idea has been decided on, the final details have to be hammered out. If the routine is self explanatory and easy to follow, the performer might decide to dispense with patter. Otherwise, the performer then sets out to build his talking part--serious, humorous, or a combination of both.

In general, serious patter drives home the mystery, while humorous patter gives the audience something to laugh about, as well as think about. The question the magician has to decide is for which type of patter certain sections of his routine are best suited. In some cases humorous patter might swamp the mystery. On the other hand serious patter might so heighten a trick as to bring it to the zenith of entertainment by mystery alone.

Apply the patter rules and tests set out. In some cases the patter may be more important than the tricks. Under these circumstances the performer is dealing with type four routine.

#### 4. Story Routine:

Briefly, the performer builds a story which he illustrates with magic. This is not simple. The main idea of a story can usually be gained by taking some trick and personifying the articles. The rules of drama are followed. Books on the subject can be obtained from local libraries or bookstores. At the same time, on the magic side, the performer should not lose sight of the rules on routining.

Certain tricks are more adaptable to this style of routining than others. Illusions, in which assistants are used, lend themselves

especially well to this form. With one illusion cabinet Kellar built an act "That Watchman, the Sailor, and the Monkey". Carter provided a contrast in the presentation of his straight-out vanish of five girls "The Disappearing Flappers" and the short act he built up in the hanging illusion "Cheating the Gallows". Dante worked a substitution illusion with plenty of pantomimic acting in a barber's shop setting.

Of a simpler nature, there is the "Twentieth Century Silks", around which a number of stories have been built, including the author's "The Wicked Uncle".

In personifying the articles, the allusion is heightened if the article is, to use a word coined by the author, "Lifed". This means the article is given a "living explanation". For instance, in "The Wicked Uncle" an egg is introduced as the villain of the act and is "lifed" by calling it a "bad egg", it being common to call real villains "bad eggs" while at the same time the article itself was an egg. Later when the egg changes to a yellow silk, the silk is "lifed" by referring to the villain as "a yellow-livered cur".

Below is set out a brief example of putting the "Linking Rings" into a Story Routine. "Life" words have been underlined.

Step.	Action.	Patter.
1.	Show eight rings to be separate (?).	"A little domestic tragedy with eight players--all members of the <u>Chromium Dramatic Circle</u> ."

Step.	Action.	Patter.
2.	Hand out first ring for examination.	"This is Circe, a <u>single</u> miss. A <u>solid</u> girl, but handle her carefully.
3.	Take key ring.	"She fell for a man with a heart o f <u>steel</u> .
4.	Take back f i r s t ring and c l a s h against key ring.	"His words of love <u>rang</u> true.
5.	Link rings.	"They were <u>united</u> at a church.
6.	Take double set and "join".	"Circe's sister Oval somewhat jealous at being beaten to the altar was quickly <u>hitched</u> to her boy friend.
7.	Hand out double set for examination.	"Undoubtedly t h e parson knew his job. A firm marriage knot.
8.	Take single and key rings and add free single ring.	"When Circe added to her family <u>circle</u> . O v a l refused to speak to her.
9.	Take the triple set and link.	"Oval was not content with her husband alone and also <u>added</u> to her family.

Step.	Action.	Patter.
10.	Take back double set and link in cross formation.	"This made C i r c e <u>cross.</u>
11.	Form rings in to shape of swing.	"Years later the two children met on a park <u>swing.</u>
12.	Link all rings on to Key ring.	"And brought about a family <u>reunion.</u> "

### FINAL REMARKS.

Once the routines are completed there comes the final polishing and finishing off. Diversions and gags might be added to raise a laugh, to relieve the tension, or to prevent monotony. Positions of the tables and the articles are studied to get the greatest facility in handling. The magician's ~~movements~~ are reduced to a minimum. His dramatic action is evolved.

Music is a necessity in a silent act. In other acts it adds continuity between patter breaks. Notice how it is used in the talkies when there is a lengthy break in dialogue.

An introductory piece before the magician appears can convey to the audience just what to expect. It can create atmosphere. Music in a minor key sounds well. If the performer uses the same introductory piece it takes the form of a theme tune such as one hears at the opening of "Popeye" cartoons and Laurel and Hardy comedies.

As a trick works to a climax so can the musical accompaniment. Many of the modern songs can have a few bars taken to fill in at appropriate times. It doesn't matter if the tunes are old provided they are well known. For example, "Smoke gets in your eyes" has been used by cigarette manipulators. Nuts would call for "Here we go gathering nuts in May". For drink tricks there is a choice of "Drink to me only with thine eyes", "Another little drink wouldn't do us any harm" and the "Stein Song". Professionals should watch copyright and performing rights.

Naturally the tempo of the music must be suited to the act. Waltz music is more acceptable to manipulative work. A musician could arrange a musical score to fit the performer's routine.

The most suitable style in which to set out a routine is that used above for the "Linking Rings". More columns could be added to cover assistant's action and patter, music, and stage directions. The routine is easily compiled in this fashion by writing out the different columns complete and then cutting them into steps and finally pasting them into a book under correct headings.

Rules are made to be broken. Don't be frightened to ignore the rules now and then. They might not always be practicable.

The performer is an artist designing a routine to his own style. A finished routine, like a picture, needs light and shade for emphasis. Gags and diversions can add light and

shade.

Try the completed act out before an audience after adequate rehearsal, and have someone there to notice audience reaction. On those notes, delete flops and build up the good points.

Keep in touch with stage developments. Go to vaudeville, visit the talkies. Notice the styles of presentation. Read reviews of acts, especially in the trade publications. When the author wrote the manuscript of this book, fancy costumes for performers were being replaced by the "top hat, white tie, and tails" vogue.

Adapt your act to suit the times. During depressions or disasters, when food is scarce, forget tricks with rice, eggs, and other edibles. When patriotism is at the front, bring out your national flags, etc. They will arouse more enthusiasm than the greatest illusions.

Shop windows of large departmental stores give ideas on staging shows. Notice the tricks used to centre attraction on certain articles. Observe the layout, display, draping of curtains, and positions of spotlights.

The author trusts that these simple ideas which proved of so much assistance to himself in building routines will be of even greater assistance to magicians the world over. Go to work now, brother magicians, build your greatest acts, then set to work to sell them and yourself to the public.

The State Library of Victoria  
"ALMA CONJURING COLLECTION" *Henry Rex Hauptmann*



THE  
ACCLAIMED  
BY THE  
CRITICS  
OF BOOK BUYING

Read what reviewers said about "The Wicked Uncle," a sophisticated conjuring act that will make you a hit at any entertainment.



**GENII:** "Australian Magic Books are relatively rare and when they are as good as 'The Wicked Uncle' they are doubly welcome . . . beginners will welcome the routine, the lady magician finds use for it, and the advanced student admires the way the effect has been built to feature proportions."

**TOPS:** "Contents good . . . workable routine . . . novel patter . . . new twist to the climax."

**MAGICIAN MONTHLY:** "Story should hold kiddies' audiences, while apparatus can be purchased or made for a few pence . . . no patter adjustment would be necessary for the man who loves 'story magic'."

**SPHINX:** "Material is simple and will interest an audience and should be very helpful to those hunting for an act easy to learn."

**INDIAN MAGICIAN:** "Readers will find the difference between knowing a few tricks and making their combination for an act."

**MAGIC WAND:** "Excellent silk act . . . whole presentation is pleasing if brief magical turn . . . easy to present."

**LINKING RING:** "Can be worked anywhere and is so explained that a non-magician could perform it . . . There are plenty who could use it."

They all can't be wrong. If your dealer is unable to supply send a dollar note or 4/6 money order to the author, Rex, the Ace Magician, Box 3805T, G.P.O., Sydney, N.S.W., Australia, for an autographed copy.