

Genii

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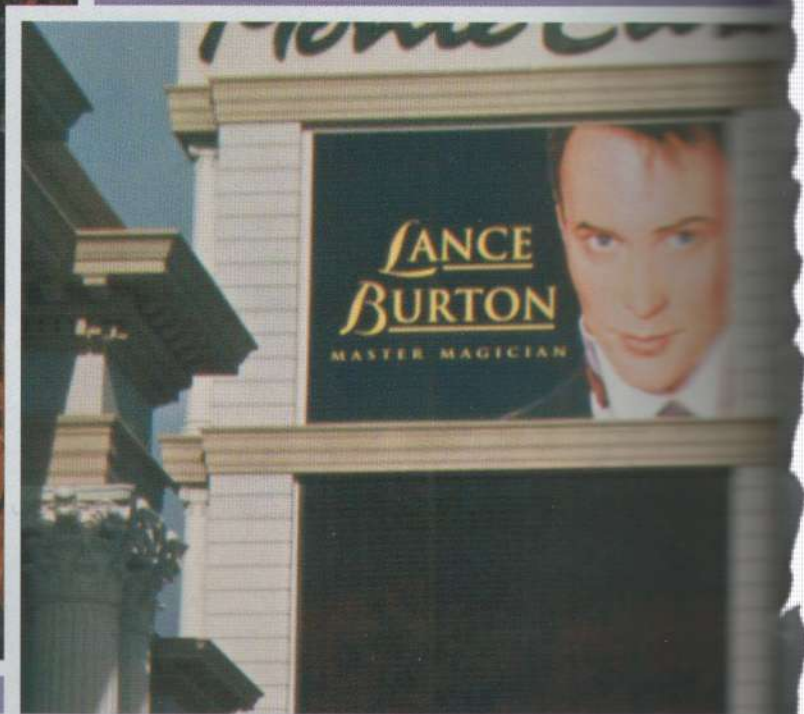
March 2, 2001

\$4.50

Lance Burton's Young Magicians Showcase

on Fox Family Channel





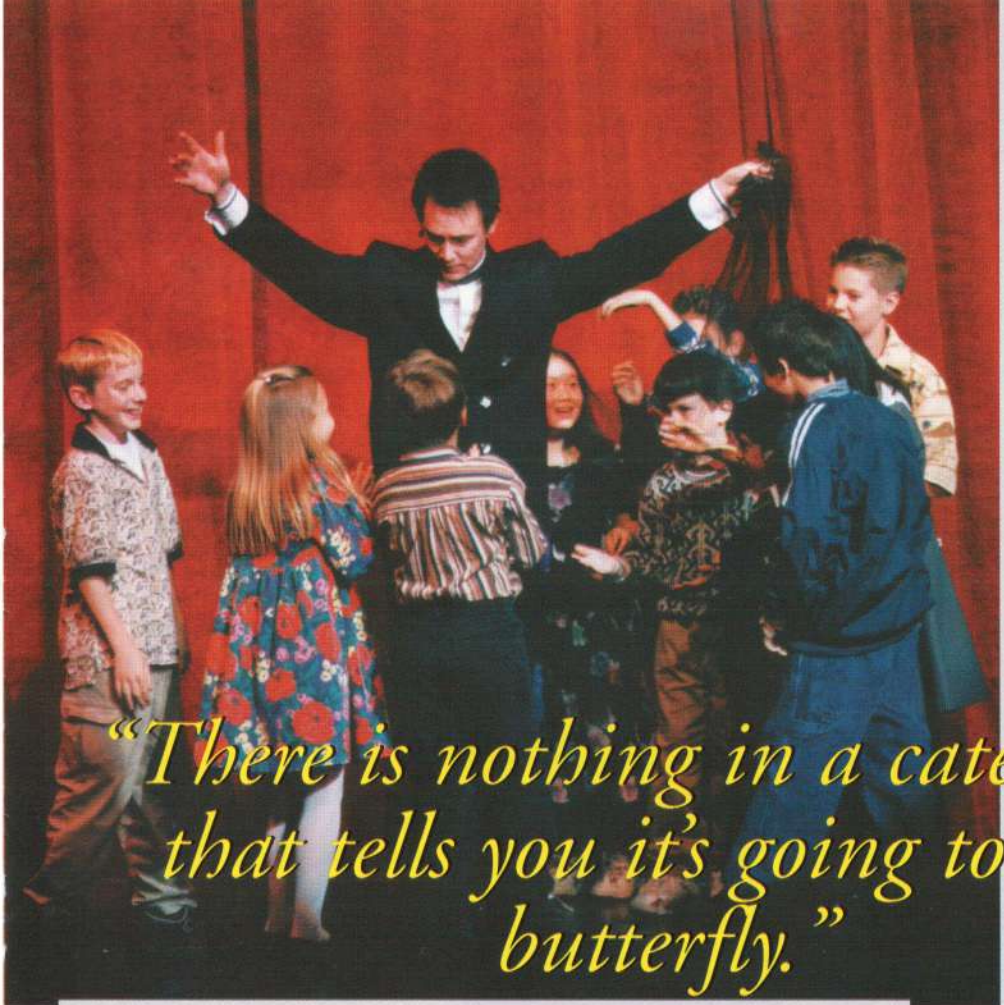
Lance Burton's Young Magicians Showcase

**The Taping of a
Television
Special Featuring
15 Talented
Young Magicians**

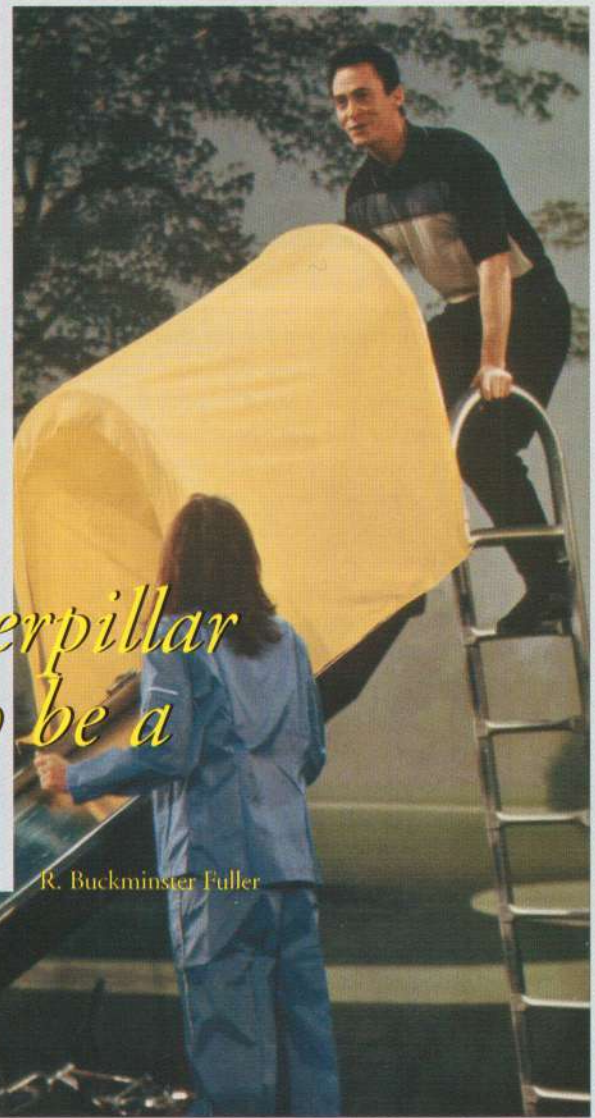
by Melanie A. Cissone



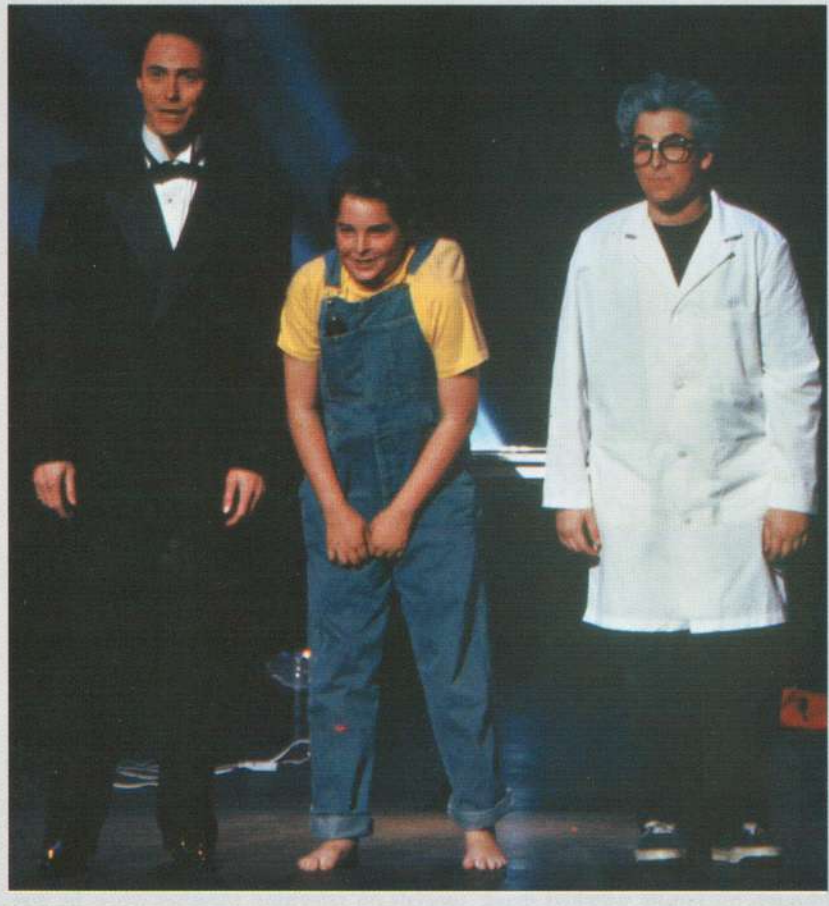
Top: Lance with Jason Reberski; Right: Josh Jay performing street magic



“There is nothing in a caterpillar that tells you it’s going to be a butterfly.”



R. Buckminster Fuller



Top Right: Lance about to “slide” back in time on the TV special;
 Above: Lance, Brandon Rosen, and Devin Rosen (left to right)

Behind Lance Burton’s soft and charming southern drawl is a sharp-witted, intelligent, and nostalgic man who has done more to support young magicians than any other entertainer in recent history. Outside his headline show at the Monte Carlo Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, Lance is best known among young magicians for his television specials and his participation in the annual World Magic Seminar. Competing in alternating years, young stage and close-up magicians vie for the coveted Lance Burton Top Teenage Talent Award that carries a \$500 cash prize. In his own television specials, Lance has featured teen magicians Danny Cole, Joel Brooks, and Dylan Ace. This March, as executive producer of *Young Magicians Showcase*, the first-of-its-kind television special, Lance will introduce Fox Family Channel viewers to 15 young magicians from all over the U.S. and one from England. It is a generous endeavor that elevates Lance Burton’s support of these and other rising stars to new levels.

Lance Burton Talks About the Young Magicians Showcase

Approximately a month after taping *Young Magicians Showcase*, executive producer and YMS star Lance Burton discussed his thoughts about how the idea for his television special developed.

Genii: How and when did you come up with the idea for Young Magicians Showcase?

Lance: I started thinking about it maybe two to three years ago. It was after my second special when Danny Cole appeared as a guest star. His appearance as a young magician was so well received that I thought it would be neat to have a special with all young magicians. On my third special I had Joel Brooks. They are both from the Magic Castle Junior Program. I had a lot of young magicians ask me how to submit an audition tape to get on my specials. Then I put the word out in magic magazines and on my Website.

Genii: Why do you think this is a good idea for a television special?

Lance: Having young magicians on my specials as guest stars was always popular. Seeing young people doing something positive, especially magic, is good for magic. When you turn on the news today all you see is bad news about young people and teens.

Genii: How many audition tapes did you receive?

Lance: There were over 200 tapes. I watched every one of them myself. It was a long process. I made notes, kept track of the different acts. I wanted to have a well-balanced show with close-up and stage, serious and comedic, small and big (i.e., illusions)—a little bit of everything.

Genii: What were the selection criteria for choosing young magicians to appear in the special?

Lance: I was looking for something that would look good on television. Some magic may be great live but it doesn't

The New Kid on the Block Meets the Voice of Experience

Eight-year-old Zac Salyer remembers the day he received his invitation letter to appear on the Young Magicians Showcase. Just home from school, Zac saw his mom thumbing through the mail and noticed an envelope addressed to him from Lance Burton. When she started to open it, he asserted some entertainer status and asked, "What are you doing with my mail?" While she was reading the letter to Zac, he fell to the ground and admitted, "I started crying."

In his interpretation of "Squared Circle," Zac was using a stuffed toy rabbit. But, to his delight on the first rehearsal day for Young Magicians Showcase (YMS)

Zac received a live loaner rabbit from Lance. Nicknamed "Little Lance," Zac kept the cotton-tail in his hotel room during production week in Las Vegas. When he had to return the rabbit after the shoot, it was a sad goodbye.

A third-grade student at Olympia Elementary School in Universal City, Texas, a suburb of San Antonio, Zac got his start in magic when his mom and dad saw the Lance Burton show on a trip to Las Vegas and bought Zac, who was four at the time, a magic kit. Steve Salyer, Zac's father, said laughing, "The rest is history."

Zac is preparing for his fourth annual school talent show where he always surprises the young audience with new magical elements. Last summer, Zac was hired to perform at a conference for doctors sponsored by a pharmaceutical representative firm. After the

show, some doctors asked Zac about his tricks. Overheard by his mom Sallie, Zac repeated a bit he picked up from his friend and YMS creative consultant, Gary Darwin, "If I tell you I'll have to kill you." Sallie's motherly glance in Zac's direction modified the bit to "I mean ... hurt you very badly."

Lance's impromptu introduction of Zac for the show got Zac's father thinking, "He's probably going to be coined the 'Amazing Zac' until further notice."

Zac may have been the youngest magician in YMS but Jay Mattioli, a sophomore at Kutztown University in Pennsylvania, was the senior member of the cast. Jay, who is 19 now, says people

always comment about his youthful look. He says, "I look like a little kid and I take advantage of that. I've overheard people say, 'Oh look, he's so good and so young. They don't know I'm 19.'"

Jay claims that there wasn't anything specific that got him started in magic although his family watched magic specials on television together when he was growing up. At 10, Jay's interest really grew after his first trip to a magic store.





Jay Mattioli

One trick lead to the next and soon Jay was on to doves. For YMS, Jay performs a traditional dove routine, which he learned on his own, mainly from watching Tony Clark videos.

Magic performances help pay for college tuition and room and board in the dorms where he lives. He said, "To practice, I had to sneak the doves into my dorm room during the first semester. My friends who knew about my covert operation, secretly referred to them as fish."

Jay's magic has come full circle from what audiences will see on television. His new act revolves around a desktop computer and other high-tech gadgets. Jay took first place in the adult stage competition at the IBM National Convention in Buffalo last summer and first place at the International Battle of Magicians in Canton, Ohio. There he had the opportunity to open with Norm Neilsen. Regarding his ever-changing act and success at competitions he says, "My top priority is to make the act fresh. I want my magic act to be recognized as Jay Mattioli's act, not as a generic dove act. I am working on making my character more defined."

Jay is majoring in communications design with a minor in theater arts. He says, "On Young Magicians Showcase, I want people to see that even though we're magicians, we're still kids. I hope to convey the message on stage that I'm young and having fun. I think it is very important."

Jay produces and stars in family-style variety shows at the Shawnee Inn in Pennsylvania's Pocono Mountains and also gets booked for corporate functions and birthday parties. He believes that every good magician should be spontaneous and diverse. His self-prescribed advice, "I gotta sell my show with whatever's in my pocket."

A Supportive Youth Program

Some three thousand miles away from Pennsylvania there really is a Beverly Hills High School and Ashford Kneitel, who turns 16 on March 22nd, is a sophomore there. He's one of only three close-up magicians featured in YMS. Ashford explains, "I love to take out a close-up mat and have people start coming up to my table and watch me perform card tricks."

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translate to the small screen. I was looking for acts that had a big impact within two to three minutes. There were plenty of acts that were good but ran too long. As it was, almost all the kids on the show ended up shortening their acts. Television wants everything short—they're afraid that people will change the channel.

Genii: How did you like working with the young magicians?

Lance: It refreshed my perspective on magic and my show. They (the kids) were all really, really excited. They were so excited it was infectious. It made me think, "Oh yeah this is why I got into magic."

Genii: What magicians did you admire when you were young and did you or do you have any mentors in magic/entertainment?

Lance: My first mentor was Harry Collins. He was a very fine magician from Louisville. He was the first magician I ever saw. I learned a lot about Harry Collins. He worked for the Frito Lay Company and did a lot of trade shows. He could perform in a stage show, do close-up, and entertain in a hospitality suite. He was a great all-around magician. Then I started going to magic conventions. At conventions I saw people like Harry Blackstone, Jr., Neil Foster, and Johnny Thompson. I also saw Mark Wilson on TV. I had always heard about Channing Pollack and when I was 21 I got to see a tape of his act.

It's always good to find someone with experience that you can talk to about magic. It was good for me to have a friend in magic. When I was growing up, Mac King was one of my closest friends. He is also from Louisville, Kentucky. We've known each other since we were 14 years old. We did a lot of shows together.

Genii: In your opinion, what makes a magician good?

Lance: I don't know. He or she has to have a good act.

Genii: What does it feel like to be a star?

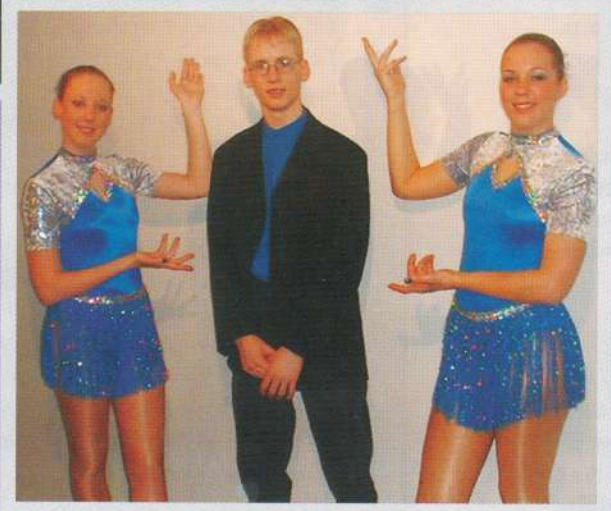
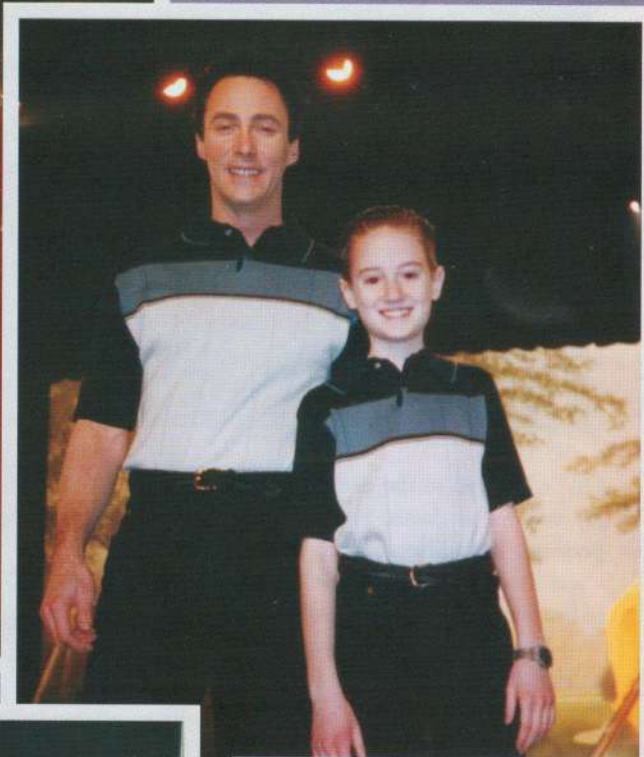
Lance: I don't know.

Genii: Does it change your life?

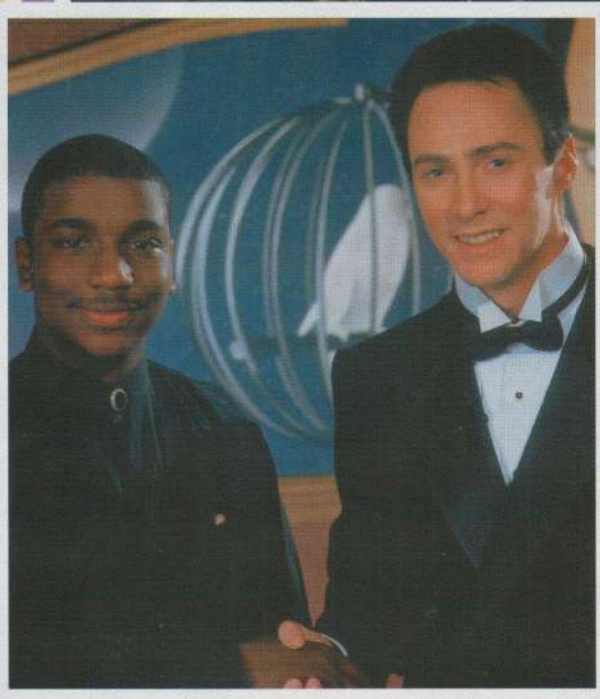
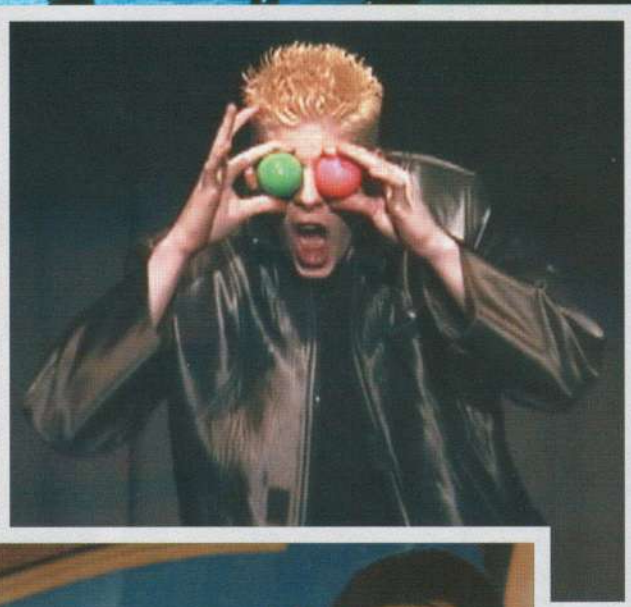
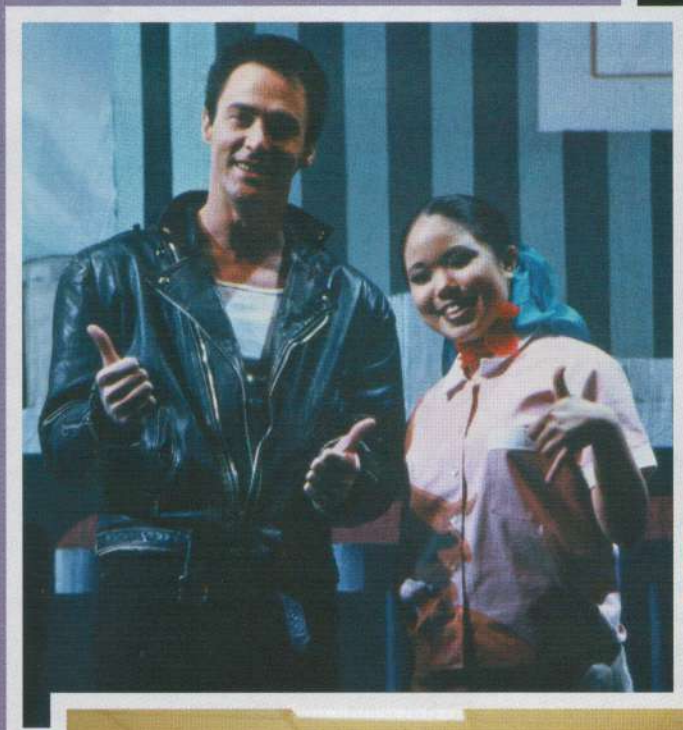
Lance: I don't think so. I think I'm the same person. I still love McDonald's. I still love to do magic. Everybody's usually real nice. I don't go out that much.

Genii: What advice can you offer young people who are interested in pursuing careers in magic or entertainment?

Continued on page 28



Top Left: Lance, Dexter, and Spencer Horsman; Middle Left: Curtis Adams (with assistants); Bottom Left: Andi Gladwin (with assistants); Top Right: Lance and Jason Reberski; Bottom Right: Magique Dominique



Top Left: Lance and Kristi Toguchi; Bottom Left: Brandon Rosen, Johnny Thompson, and Devin Rosen; Top Right: Zac Salyer with Lance; Middle Right: Ashley Springer; Bottom Right: Eric Redman and Lance

Lance: When Mac King and I were first starting out we got a summer job at a place called Tombstone Junction, a little theme park. It only had one ride. There was a little stage. We did three shows a day. I think our acts really started to come together doing three shows a day, seven days a week. Everything, all the technical aspects of the magic, became second nature. It was a great experience to break my act in and something I encourage magicians to find—a venue where they can perform over and over again. Close-up magicians can work in restaurants. It's harder for a stage magician to find one place to do his act over and over again. But if you can land a job like we had that summer, you can spend more time editing and working on the presentation of the act because you will have the magic down pat.

Genii: How important to your career was winning FISM (world championship of magic)? After you won, what happened? Did your career take off from that point? Did it take time? What was the chronology? If a young magician went out today and won FISM, what impact do you think it would have on his or her career in magic or possibly other forms of entertainment (television, film, legitimate theater)?

Lance: That's hard to say. At the time, I was already in the Folies Berger Show at the Tropicana Hotel in Las Vegas. I took a week off from the show to go to FISM. I competed in the category of manipulation and won the Grand Prix. It did open some doors. I went to Japan a year or so later. It is hard to predict. You could certainly get booked into magic conventions. Whether that translates into work in the "real world" is hard to say.

The good thing about competing in general is that it gives you a deadline. All of us have ideas but we never get around to putting them in our acts. The tendency is to procrastinate. Competitions give you the motivation to work harder on the act.

Genii: Is there anything about being a magician/entertainer that you don't like?

Lance: No. I think I like all of it.

Genii: What are the parts of the business of being magician/entertainer that you love?

Lance: I love performing, doing the shows. I love developing new material, writing it, and creating it.



Ashford Kneitel performing close-up

Until lately, Ashford has been concentrating on competitions. With a glowing recommendation from magician and television personality Bob Dorian, Ashford was the youngest competitor last summer in Portugal in the close-up division at F.I.S.M., the world championships of magic. He said, "The best part was performing for an audience of 500 or more people. There was standing room only and I was very nervous. But all the nervousness went away when I got up there. It was also fun seeing the differences between how foreigners perform their magic compared to Americans." As a member of the junior program at the "Castle," Ashford has appeared regularly in the Close-up Gallery and is frequently recommended when they get calls for corporate events or private parties.

Ashford is definite about wanting to be an entertainer. About future competitions and conventions he says, "I really want to do more magic outside of the magic world."

Currently, Ashford is working on a manuscript that he expects to publish before this summer. He has also designed his own playing cards and likes to collect autographs and decks of cards from around the world. Ashford has an unusual hobby that involves the study of card games in gambling. He is well versed in how to spot a cheater and, at one time, Ashford thought about a career in casino surveillance.

Another member of the Magic Castle Junior Program appearing in YMS is Joel Ward of Encinitas, California. Like Lance Burton and many other magicians, Joel was at a magic show when he was seven and was chosen to help with the Linking Rings. His interest evolved from learning magic on his own from books and videos to taking lessons from Loren Christopher Michaels. "Loren encourages me to develop my own ideas. We both expand on them to a greater level. Then, he helps me figure out the magic," says Joel.

Like so many of his fellow magicians on the show, Joel's act has changed a lot. It is longer and he has added new magical elements to it. He still performs his signature lost balloon routine and a dove color change where he places a blue dove into a mini dove bath, washes it with "Dove" soap, and it



Joel Ward

comes out white. Last February, Joel walked away with first place in the junior stage competition at Magi-Fest in Columbus, Ohio and, as the 1999 defending champion of the junior stage competition at the SAM National Convention, Joel left Milwaukee last summer with the Incentive Award. As of this writing, Joel plans to compete at World Magic Seminar.

Joel often performs walk-around and stand-up magic at corporate events and private parties. One of the most valuable experiences he's had was performing in Future Stars of Magic at the Magic Castle. Junior members audition for the show and perform their act approximately 25 times in one week. "Performing so often was a great opportunity to focus on every bit of my act," he said. Joel would love to replicate the experience. "YMS and Future Stars have made me think that I want to take my magic to a new level. I want to stay focused on my stage magic by making it more theatrical."

Joel is a senior at La Costa Canyon High School. He is applying to colleges but he says, "I am thinking about community college for now so that I can work, make some money, build some illusions, and see what happens."

Mentor Power

Devin Rosen, who turns 18 on March 23rd, shares virtually the same thoughts about Loren Christopher Michaels as Joel. Devin explained their interaction, "I was already working with Loren on developing a routine when he suggested I look for some music to inspire me. He has a tremendous music collection. Loren asked me what I liked most in school and I told him math and science." Devin continued, "What can I say, I guess I'm a nerd. That's where part of my routine came from. Then, with-



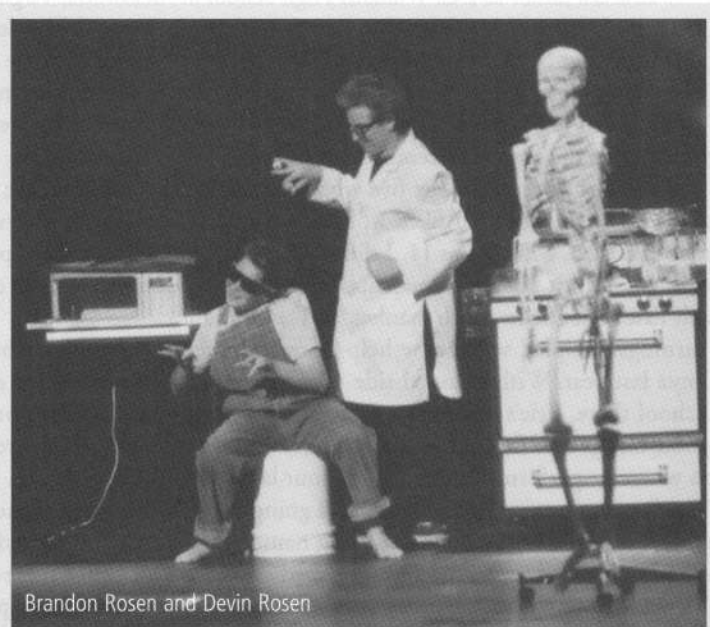
Genii: What other advice can you offer?

Lance: It is a good exercise to write. Usually when I write I'll draw pictures also. Sometimes I'll write in script form. On my television specials I actually write every word that is spoken. Since they are collaborative efforts, the others involved in the production have to know what is going on. For YMS I only wrote the running order, the profiles of the young magicians, and where the commercials would be. During the rehearsal week I wrote more introductory material as I got to know the kids and see their acts.

Genii: How important was studying acting in college to your success?

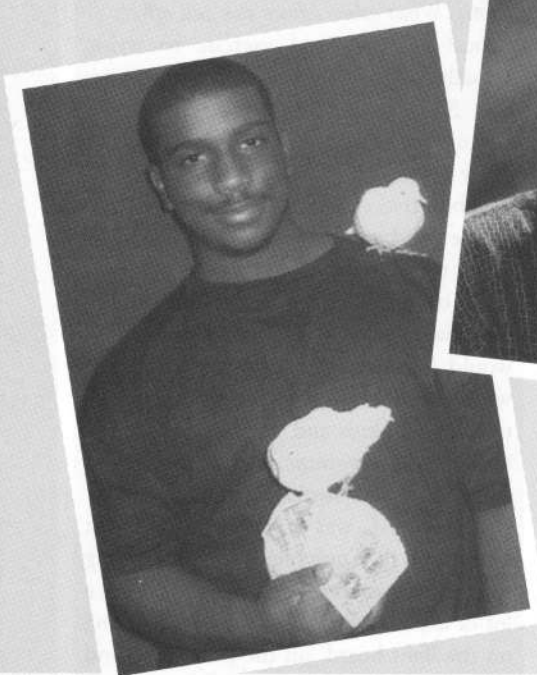
Lance: I was a theater major at University of Louisville. Studying acting was very important—indispensable. I got a lot of experience acting in shows, working on the light board, on the prop crew, and all sorts of jobs. I swept the stage. I got to see a lot of theater, a lot of shows. There were some kids I went to school with who were unbelievable actors—of the Laurence Olivier and Robert DeNiro caliber. I would never put myself in the same league as them, but studying acting was definitely a benefit. Now my goal is not to act, just to get out there and be myself.

All these kids on this show were just way beyond where I was at their ages. I was five when I got started in magic. I was the volunteer from the audience during "Miser's Dream." I never saw a magic show before that but from that moment on I knew I wanted to be a part of it.



Brandon Rosen and Devin Rosen





out telling me what I was about to hear, Loren played 'Weird Science' by Oingo Boingo." "Weird Science" became Devin's signature music in the mad scientist stage act he performs in YMS with his 15-year-old brother, Brandon, as his assistant.

Devin continues, "Loren is an amazing teacher and mentor. He taught me how to think instead of just how to do magic. He urged me to create ideas and concepts. All the ideas for my act are my own. He just guided me along in how to think creatively and to be resourceful. He also taught me how to build my own props and to work with pyrotechnics."

As a senior at Dana Hills High School, Devin devoted most of last year to academics, the resident high school theater academy, and college applications. Along with several of the University of California campuses, Devin also applied to Harvey Mudd College, one of the top-ranked science and math schools in the country. Devin would like to combine his strong interest in the computer sciences with theater studies.

Since Devin is now in a transitional period he has stopped taking bookings. He is considering different ideas and making plans to put together a new eight-minute routine or even a full-length show. He's been thinking about graduation night parties as a potentially good market. "These school sponsored alcohol-free parties usually offer an evening of entertainment and other activities," he explains.

Devin's active involvement both backstage and in leading roles at Southern Orange County School of the Arts (SOCSA), his high school's drama academy, has inspired him to develop more "presentational" magic routines. With some story ideas, plans to add more illusions, and some musical selections in mind he adds, "The one thing that drives me nuts is when magicians don't present magic like theater. I think there should be a coherent story behind it. A routine should be self-explanatory and the audience should be emotionally involved."

Having a mentor has meant a lot to 16-year-old close-up magician Eric Redman. Rockville, Maryland close-up magician, Scotty Scafidi, considers himself a close friend of Eric's. But Eric says, "I call him a mentor. Scotty has given me much more than a big box of magic books when I was getting started. Whenever I have a question about magic or a problem with a trick, he always knows how to fix it."

Eric is a junior at T.C. Williams High School in Alexandria, Virginia. He says, "The principal loves that I am pursuing my dream. I like close-up magic. But being in Las Vegas and seeing different magic acts gave me ideas about putting together a stage act." Eric has since added dove steals and vanishes and he also levitates objects. He worked nearly every weekend at private parties during the December and January holiday season.

Eric got his start in magic at age five when his dad bought him a magic kit for Christmas. He remembers, "I liked it. I did some classroom talent shows in second grade and then, when I was 11, I did my first birthday party and got paid for it." All in good spirit, like many parents of blossoming performers, Eric's dad calls himself Eric's chauffeur, coach, banker, and accountant.

His earnings, coupled with some help from his parents, paid for a school trip to Kenya last year. With planned side trips to an AIDS center and an elementary school there, Eric's teacher suggested he take some magic to perform. It was a good thing, too. Eric refused the money he was offered on the streets of London where he performed during a 12-hour layover en route to Africa. He figured, "I'm leaving in a few hours, what am I going to do with British money." What he didn't expect was the honor of being named a "Warrior" by the elders of a Massi Marah village after performing card routines and other close-up magic. They called him "ahzo." Eric explains, "It's the word that describes a person on the border of magician and witch doctor. To be named 'Warrior' usual-



Top Right: Devin Rosen revealed;
Top Left: Eric Redman; Center: Eric performing close-up;
Bottom: Ashley Springer

ly involves killing a lion.” Eric is now saving to go to Australia and to attend Jeff McBride’s Master Classes.

Eric has his sight set on Carnegie Mellon for college. At this conservatory acting program, Eric says, “I want to work on my stage presence. I want my magic to be an experience, not just a magic show.”

Gumballs and Soda Pop

During the off hours throughout the production week in Las Vegas, several teen magicians could be found hanging out with each other. Among them were Ashley Springer, 18, of New York City and Kristi Toguchi, also 18, from Aiea, Hawaii. Together with Joel Ward, they went to see another young Las Vegas magician, Darren Romeo, in his own show, *The Voice of Magic*, at the Flamingo Hilton.

Ashley, a freshman in the acting program at Tisch School of the Arts at New York University, experienced the benefits of having a professional production crew on loan from the Lance Burton Show. Not only did Lance’s crew fit one of Ashley’s props directly into the floor of the stage, Lance also provided a special backdrop with a street scene that really enhanced Ashley’s highly acclaimed award-winning hip-hop gumball manipulation act.

Ashley, who plans a career in entertainment, keeps his magic fresh and his look and sounds unique. He says, “Lots of young magicians have very classical acts, which I admire, but I try to break away from traditional magic. I hope the look of my act, the music I use, and the way I do the magic itself are a real departure from what most audiences are used to seeing.”

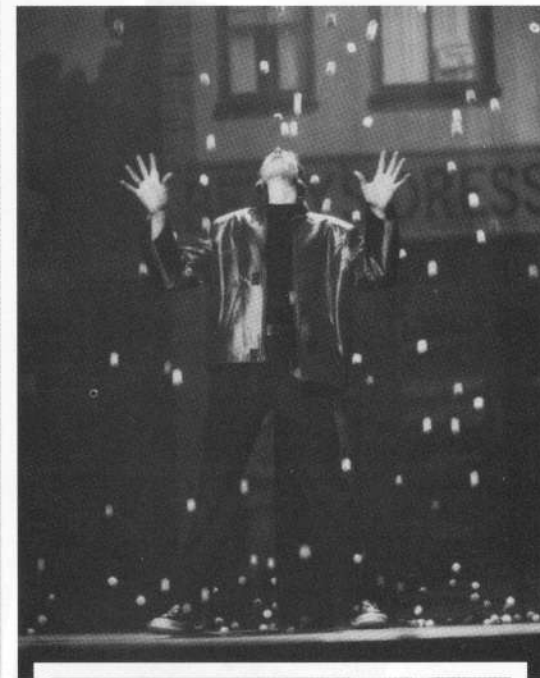
No stranger to television, Ashley played the hands behind the card manipulations of Jason Alexander’s (George Costanza of *Seinfeld* fame) magician character in an episode of *Remember WENN*, an American Movie Classics television series. Ashley was also the subject of a documentary for the Japanese television show *New Yorkers*, produced by NHK.

Ashley is two-time champion of both the IBM and SAM Junior Stage Competitions (1995 and 1998) and the recipient of the 1999 Lance Burton Top Teenage Talent Award. He has performed at anti-drug rallies, scouting events, and leading magic conventions in the U.S. and Japan. Last summer, at Joanie Spina’s invitation, Ashley was a guest star in *Magical Voyage*, Joanie’s full-length headline show at the Marriot Crystal Palace Casino in Nassau, Bahamas. Joanie, formerly David Copperfield’s artistic director for many years, currently serves as artistic consultant to the highly acclaimed *Carnival of Wonders* show starring Mark Kalin, Jinger, and Jeff Hobbson in Reno, Nevada.

With a strong interest in learning Japanese, Ashley landed a Youth For Understanding/Mitsui Corp. Scholarship two years ago to spend a summer living with a Japanese family. Last summer he returned to Japan and hopes to go back again this summer.

Kristi Toguchi had an opportunity to work closely with “Burton’s Babes,” the dancers who usually assist Lance on stage. With a soda shop scene in the background, dancers Joelle and Connie, dressed in swing skirts and flanking Kristi’s centerpiece juke box, tap in time to the music of “Rock Around the Clock.” Kristi’s fifties-styled sock hop act includes, among other effects, a Dancing Cane disguised as a giant sipping straw. YMS was a tremendous experience for Kristi who moved to New York from Hawaii last fall specifically to pursue the dance curriculum at Fordham University’s Alvin Ailey American Dance Center.

Normally, Kristi finishes her act with her bomber jacket-clad “boyfriend” beckoning her from stage left. Instead, director Morris Abraham and Lance agreed it might be fun if Lance rode a motorcycle on stage and Kristi could hop on the back. Excited about the whole idea but unbeknownst to Kristi, the motorcycle hadn’t arrived for the rehearsal. At Lance’s cue to cruise onstage on the shiny Harley Davidson, he appeared instead peddling a child’s tricycle sporting a leather jacket and shades. Everyone in the theater broke up laughing and shouted for



Top: Ashley Springer; Center and Bottom: Kristi Toguchi



Top: Magique Dominique;
Center: Dominique at the Oops Circus;
Bottom: Winston Helling with assistant Gina

Kristi to hop on the handlebars. During a long rehearsal day, it was a moment that brought much needed levity.

In an individualized major combining theater production, communications, and media management, Kristi has successfully made the transition from high school senior to focused college freshman. Last summer she served as a judge at the SAM Junior Stage competition in Milwaukee. She also went to Portugal to attend her first F.I.S.M. With her performance and competition experiences she has been gathering ideas and is developing plans to launch a full-length production in a couple of years. She says, "I want to create an act like Lance's that I can do for a long time. Combining elements of my current routine with new ideas, I want to use music and dance as the motivation for my magic."

The Miami Sound of Magic

Eleven-year-old Dominique Martinez, a sixth-grader from Miami, Florida, was the only other girl to appear in YMS. Magique Dominique, as she is known, got her start in magic through her participation in Cinderella Scholarship Pageants. While other pageant contestants sing or dance, Dominique dazzles the judges with a combination of theatrical music, magic, and dance.

Dominique's mother, Lourdes, stresses, "The Cinderella organization is not like other pageant organizations. Girls wear simple, regular clothes and little to no makeup and they participate in a range of academic and extra-curricular activities outside of pageants."

Dominique, or Nikkey as she sometimes likes to be called, attends South Miami Middle School for the Performing Arts where she is in the drama magnet program. Magic saved the day when she auditioned for the school. Nerves must have gotten the better of Nikkey when she forgot the lines from a monologue out of *Diary of Anne Frank*. Remembering that Dominique was a magician, the panelists asked her to do some magic. Since she wasn't prepared, she successfully made do with a piece of crumpled paper for her sponge ball routine. Suffice it to say, Dominique doesn't mind the extra hours of theater and music in the curriculum; she loves to sing and dance. She says, "When I was little, I'd practice opera by making up my own songs."

As an asthmatic, Dominique has been actively involved in the campaign to educate and support asthmatics. With Jackie Joyner Kersee, Dominique went to Capitol Hill last year where she made her inhaler disappear to demonstrate that an asthmatic can control asthma. At the Miami Children's Museum, the magic show is the centerpiece of the Oops Circus, a travelling exhibit that teaches children that making mistakes is an important component of learning and growing. Dominique was videotaped for the circus exhibit teaching three tricks, performing, and practicing. This footage was combined with a computer program to create an interactive, touch screen exhibit.

Dominique's solo stage act is filled with colorful productions of flowers, feather boas, a dove, and a crown and lots of graceful, lively movement.

Telling the Story with Magic

From New Orleans are 16-year-old Winston Helling and his assistant Gina. Winston performs an elegant illusion in YMS called "Artist's Dream." From its artistic form as a painting of a beautiful woman on an easel, Winston conjures the real thing in the form of Gina.

Winston says, "I want to be able to tell stories with what I do, to reach the audience on an emotional level." Recently, he's drawn on the professionalism of Bob Fitch, a Broadway actor, dancer, choreographer and a magician in his own right. Bob also coaches Ashley Springer. Winston asserts that Bob had a big influence on his performance of Artist's Dream. "I'd heard the idea of a dancing paintbrush before. But it became tangible when Bob said to try it," Winston said. "Bob helped me get into character, he talked to us about staging, how and where to move, and about the use of space on the stage," he explained.

Winston has a built-in audience of five brothers and sisters at home. Their ages range from 18 months to 19-years-old. "They all think this is really cool," he says.

After a mishap leading into the 1999 SAM Junior Stage Competition Winston nearly dropped out. Instead, after some necessary alterations to his illusion, he went on to win it along with the Silver Award of Merit. Winston also performs and competes in close-up. Last year, he won the Lance Burton Top Teenage Talent Award for close-up. With a new stage routine, called the "Janitor Act," he won the Originality Award at the SAM National Convention in Milwaukee and the Genii Award for his close-up. At last year's IBM convention, he placed second in the Junior Stage Competition with "Artist's Dream" and took first place in Junior Close-up. Winston is currently preparing to do it all again this year at the World Magic Seminar and the IBM and SAM National Conventions.

"I love learning, but I couldn't be happier than when I'm doing magic. If I could, I'd do magic for the rest of my life," Winston says. He continued, "With my experience on YMS and seeing other Las Vegas shows for the first time, I understood what it takes to put together a full-length show—all the hard work and the caliber of talent." Winston is now developing five or six new stage routines. He says, "I would love to have a full-length touring show." Winston is a junior at Country Day School in Metarie. Gina, his assistant, wants to be an actress. She is also in eleventh grade at Ecole Clasique in Metarie.

Parlor Magic and Grand Illusions

Somewhere between close-up and stage magic lies a style of magic rarely performed by youngsters: parlor magic. This is not unusual for 17-year-old Andrew Gladwin, or Andi as he prefers, of Newent, England; he pretty much does it all.

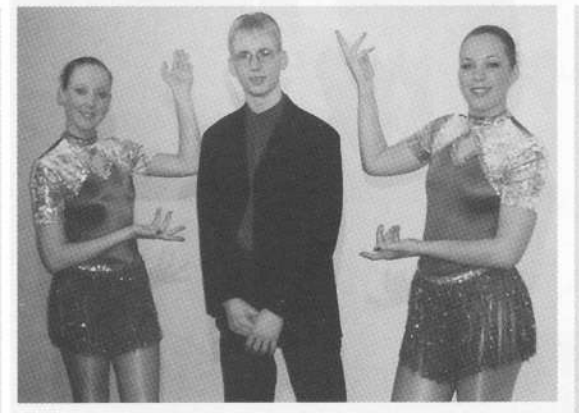
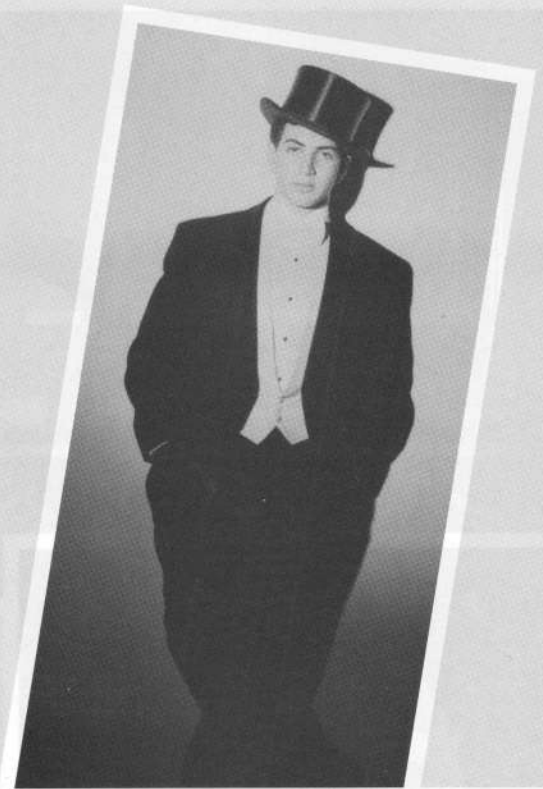
Soon Andi will become a full member of England's Magic Circle. Meantime, he is a member of its Youth Initiative and a first place award recipient for close-up magic in the Magic Circle's Young Magician of the Year Contest. He performs close-up, stage (or cabaret magic, as it is referred to in England), and parlor magic, which is a combination of patter, manipulations, and card tricks geared for more intimate audiences. He is so familiar with the different magic styles that Andi is two-time recipient of the World's Fair Newspaper-sponsored Literacy Award for the how-to articles and essays he's written on performing different kinds of magic. A former columnist for the now defunct *MAG 1* magic magazine, fans can read Andi's advice column and close-up tips at "Magic Show," an on-line magic magazine at www.allmagic.com. Andi writes about magic that's strong yet simple to do.

In Las Vegas with his parents and older brother, Andi learned a lot on his first trip to the United States. He says, "YMS was a great experience. Not only have I learned about television production but I also gathered new ideas for my act. These ideas came from Fielding West and John Thompson, who taught me a lot about presentation and patter. They gave me advice that only full-time professionals can." Mr. West was on set as a creative consultant to YMS and to shoot his own television special, *Hocus Pocus It's Fielding West*, and Mr. Thompson, otherwise known as The Great Tomsoni, was also a YMS creative consultant.

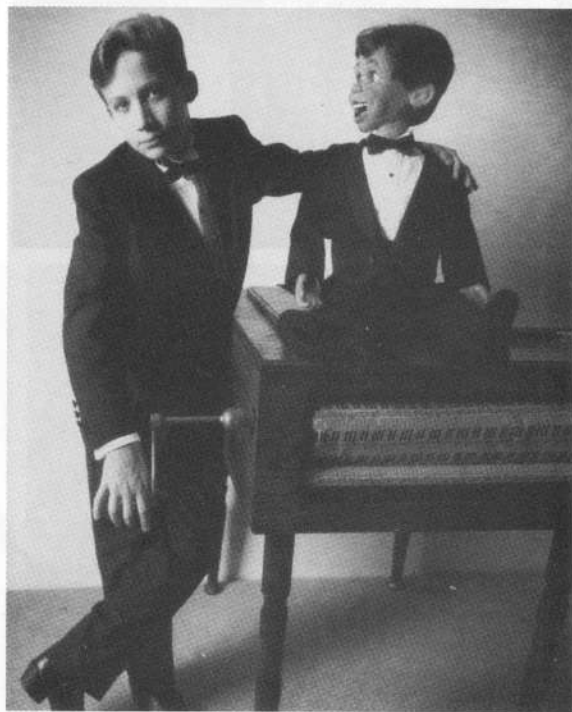
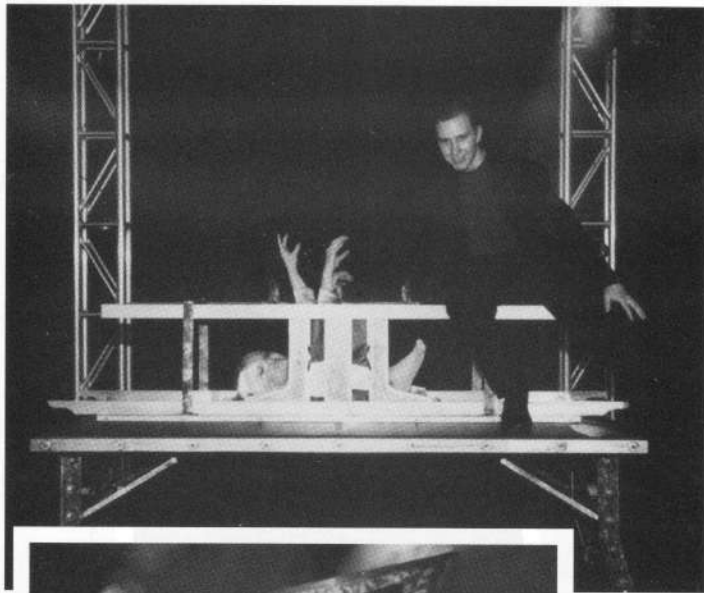
Andi's magic career began when he was 10. He watches magicians, mainly illusionists, on television and in person as often as he can, always looking for inspiration. This motivates him to turn plans into reality. Only a year ago he was considering using assistants in a new illusion act.

Andi will be filming another television show due to air in the U.K. in May. He'll be performing part of his illusion act before a studio audience. Also appearing on this show is the famous English pop group, Steps. Andi's current challenge is to develop a manipulation act using billiard balls and doves.

Currently residing with his family in West England, approximately four hours by car from London, Andi plans to attend university in the south of England to study computer science.



Top: Winston Helling;
Center: Andi Gladwin performing close-up;
Bottom: Andi with assistants



Of the 15 young magicians showcased in YMS, there is only one who performs big illusions. This is no surprise considering how costly it can be to buy or have an illusion built. From Carson City, Nevada, Curtis Adams, 18, and his 17-year-old sister, Julie, perform "Squeeze Box." From an almost futuristic triangular-shaped portal, both Curtis and Julie magically burst from the form. Later in the routine, well ... see the special.

Curtis and fellow magician partner of four years, Eli Kerr, have formed a company called M.E.C.A. Productions, which provides full service theatrical rentals. Curtis and Eli also design illusions and props for themselves and other magicians. Along with their sisters, they produce and star in shows at Indian casinos in Nevada and California. Having recently returned from Italy, Switzerland, France, and England, they plan to kick off their U.S. tour in March.

Curtis actually started out as a close-up magician. At six, he saw his first magic show in the Los Angeles area where his family used to live. Eli's grandmother, on the other hand, was a next-door neighbor of established illusion builder, Bill Smith. When he was six, Eli's grandmother used to send him tricks that Smith gave her.

Curtis reflects on his experience taping a television special, "It was awesome. I think it's great of Lance Burton to show off young magicians' talent. I think it will further our careers." Curtis and his sister are a senior and junior, respectively, at Carson City High School.

Out of the Box and Onto the Street

An interesting compliment to the spectrum of magic is ventriloquism. After a series of mishaps in Las Vegas, including a bout with a stomach flu while taping, 15-year-old Spencer Horsman and his animated counterpart, Dexter, rallied to tape their segment of YMS. YMS is one of several national television shows where Spencer has appeared. He says, "I've been on David Letterman, Jerry Springer (before the fights), the Statler Brothers Show, and Destination Stardom, which is the new Star Search. I was also featured on Talk Soup when Dexter was lost in the mail for three weeks after having been sent to California for routine repairs. The host of Talk Soup posted regular Dexter sightings." Spencer has also made a name among the financial media; he recently entertained partygoers on Steve Forbes' yacht and was listed 34th on the CNNfn segment about the top 100 young entrepreneurs in America.

Spencer was born to entertain. His dad owns and operates Ken-zo's Yogi Magic Mart and performs children's magic with his wife Bernie in Baltimore where they live. Spencer's parents met when they were both clowns in the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus in the late 1970s. Spencer's mom continues to do some stunt work for films.

It was no wonder that Spencer took the redheaded puppet a friend gave him for his eighth birthday and started chatting with it. After viewing the renowned Dr. Paul Winchell in his video "Learn Ventriloquism for Fun and Profit" and spending six months practicing, Spencer got his first dummy, which he aptly named Dexter for his right-handed orientation. Spencer is now using his third dummy, also named Dexter. Incidentally, it was only eight months after receiving Dexter no.1 that Spencer appeared on the David Letterman show. And, when he was eight he took second place at the 1994 International Ventriloquist Competition in Fort Mitchell, Kentucky.

On the challenges of ventriloquism, Spencer says, "Being unique is the toughest thing. That's why I like including original magic routines in my act." Both Spencer and Dexter perform magic; effectively Spencer does all his magic single-handed while he controls Dexter with the other. In Vaudeville style, filled with madcap jokes and routines, Dexter vanishes into an oversized music box that

Top: Curtis Adams;
Center: Curtis with assistant and sister Julie;
Bottom: Spencer Horsman with Dexter

goes haywire. Spencer says, "No matter what I do later in life, I want to stick with ventriloquism, magic, or both."

A sophomore at the Park School, Spencer is interested in forensic pathology and virology. Last summer he worked as an intern for the Secret Service in Washington D.C. where he saw first-hand how investigations are conducted and evidence is collected. He hopes one day to work for the Centers for Disease Control or an independent lab.

While the rest of the cast of YMS was performing in the warmth and comfort of the Lance Burton Theater, Joshua Jay was out on the famed Las Vegas strip drumming up a crowd to watch his talented close-up magic. "This is not my usual setting. I was on the street performing for real people," he said. "I started out with a group of six onlookers and, with the cameras around me, it turned into a crowd of about 150. I performed only original close-up tricks that I invented," he continued.

Last year, instead of heading straight for college, Josh was on tour performing and lecturing throughout the U.S. and parts of Europe. Nineteen-year-old Josh is remarkably passionate about magic. He invents and sells original tricks, writes, publishes and sells his lecture notes, and released his first book last year, *Joshua Jay's Magic Atlas*. Most notable about Josh is that he graduated from high school in the top five of this class a year early so that he could spend time on the road lecturing and performing.

"Joshua received only As in school," says his father Jeffrey. On reflection of the 28 days of school he missed in his sophomore year and the 30 missed days in his junior year due to magic, Jeffrey recalls what the supportive principal of Glen Oak High School had to say to Joshua, "School is getting in your way."

Josh says, "It's what I love to do. I get to travel around, to meet people. It's exciting. I love all aspects of magic: the performing, the lectures, the theatrical part of it, and the writing. I always take some time to do sightseeing in the cities I'm visiting." Josh, from Canton, Ohio, is now a freshman at Ohio State University where he is majoring in International Business. It should be no surprise that he doesn't let college get in the way of magic either. While still maintaining good grades, Josh managed to perform in Buenos Aires and Rio De Janeiro during the fall semester, among other places stateside.

Josh has performed in 16 countries and nearly all 50 states. He is the recipient of the 1998 Lance Burton Most Promising Youth Award and has appeared three times at the invitation-only Fechter's Finger Flicking Frolic. He's performed for Michael Jackson, Carrot Top, and other celebrities. The second book he's written, Troy Hoosier's *Destroyers*, will be released later this year.

While other cast members of YMS received phone calls and letters from Lance Burton notifying them of their participation, Josh found out about it from Lance personally. Josh remembers, "On a layover at the Atlanta airport I saw Lance walking toward a gate. I stopped him and introduced myself. Never in a million years would I have expected him to remember me. But, he knew exactly who I was and recalled the whole act I submitted on tape. What a crazy experience."

Mini Me

In advance of the YMS taping, Lance Burton called 14-year-old Jason Reberski to say, "I've saved the best part for you, the opening and closing of the show."

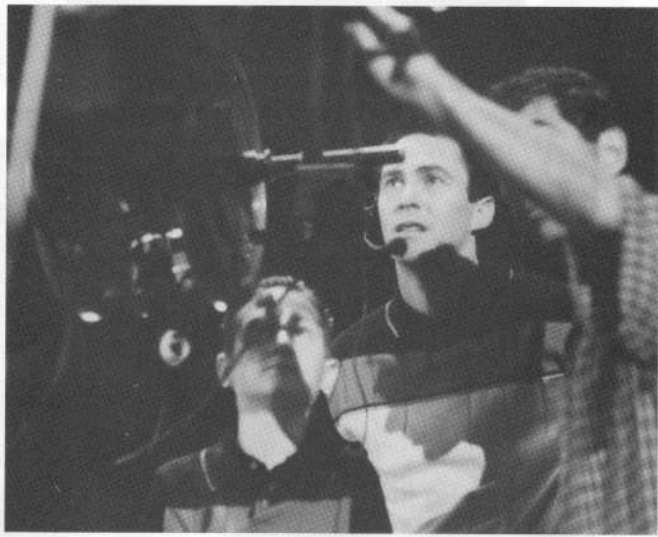
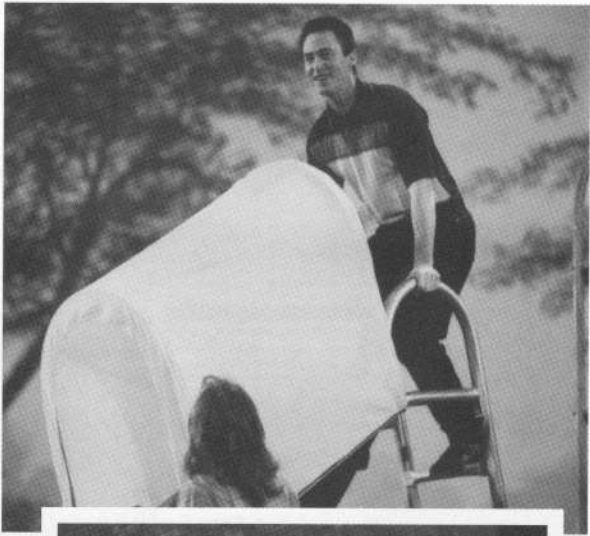
Jason, an eighth grade student in a suburban Chicago middle school, usually performs with doves, cards, fire, and does other manipulations. In the Young Magicians Showcase though, Jason plays the role of a young Lance Burton. He also does an abbreviated version of his Lance Burton inspired dove act.

At 5, Jason got hooked on magic when his father made a card vanish. He started haunting local magic shops, watching magic television shows and, when he saw Lance Burton in a special, decided that he would perform with doves.

Jason is so enthusiastic and motivated about magic that, for two years in a row, he and a fellow young female magician produced and starred in their own



Top: Spencer and Dexter;
Center: Joshua Jay in front of the Monte Carlo;
Bottom: Josh, Lance, and an amazed spectator



Top and Center: Lance goes in the top,
Jason Reberski comes out the bottom;
Bottom: Lance and Jason reviewing the shot;
Right: Behind the scenes—Kristi Toguchi and Joel Ward

hour and half show, “Jason & Jeannette’s Magic Spectacular.” They rented a theater, developed their individual magic performance routines, publicized the event, and sold tickets for two shows. The theater, which holds some 440 people, had a near sell-out crowd for each show.

Jason is in the planning and drawing stage of a brand new, top secret illusion and manipulation act. Last year, with his “Magicians Performing Nightly” restaurant scene act, Jason took second place in the Junior Stage Competition at Abbott’s. He also appeared at the Houdini Convention in Appleton, Wisconsin. With the entire act relating to a restaurant setting and all the magic having a purpose, Jason steals doves and manipulates coins, balls, and cards. But don’t be surprised if you see Jason’s face in your favorite toy store before you see him at a convention. Jason’s mug graces “Marshall Brodien’s Cape, Hat, and Wand Tricks” magic set which retails at several national chains.

Outside of magic, Jason has a keen interest in stage lighting. He says confidently, “I always stun a crew in technical rehearsals when I tell them about the lighting I want for my act. They can’t believe I know about washes and intelligent lighting.” Jason loves performing magic and he sees himself making a living by combining both his love of magic and his interest in stage lighting.

A Sensational Cast

The cast of *Young Magicians Showcase* is truly amazing. It’s impossible to ignore their intelligence, creativity, motivation, and hard work. These characteristics are consistent in each young magician and can only be markers that lead an observer to think they really are emergent “butterflies.”

In late January, two of the YMS performers placed in the Junior Stage Competition at the World Magic Seminar held in Las Vegas. The contest is sponsored by Lance Burton and he presented the awards at the convention. Jay Mattioli took second place and Winston Helling, Jr. took third place. There were 17 junior contestants. In addition, Joel Ward also competed.

To view *Young Magicians Showcase*, check your local listings for Fox Family Channel’s Magic Week this month.

Young Magicians Showcase is a Lance Burton Production. Executive Producers: Lance Burton, Jim Steinmeyer, and Greg Sills; Director: Morris Abraham; Creative Consultants: Gary Darwin, Johnny Thompson, and Fielding West.

