

MAGIC *and its forms*



Since the art of magic has been practiced from the days of the Pharoahs & the darbars of Maharajas, modern performers have a marvelous & spectacular tradition on which to draw. But while each new era has seen inspired inventions and developing technology that added fresh possibilities to the magicians's repertoire, many tricks are still based on ancient principles.

Consequently, lasers, electromagnets and other modern apparatus now complement these older techniques, enabling contemporary magicians to produce dazzling effects.

While it has often been claimed that some of the greatest performers carried their secret methods to the grave, and their tricks remained unexplained, this was rarely the case. Most techniques are understood by fellow magicians. What distinguishes the great professional from the amateur is skill and showmanship.



When an accomplished illusionist made an elephant vanish or made a painting come to life, audience really did gasp in wonder. Such effects are beyond the scope of most magicians, requiring tremendous expertise and split second timing as well as elaborate and expensive equipment. Only those willing to devote all their time and resources to a career in magic can hope to master

such sophisticated illusions. Yet the amateur or novice can still achieve startling effects, whether production ribbons from a hat or making a lady in a basket vanish. Always remember, though, that there is no substitute for individual flair – or for years of practice – and that grasping the basics of the performer's art is the first step towards understanding the exciting world of professional magic.

A scintillating display of Magic, whether witnessed from the comfort of the theatre or seen on television, rarely makes the spectator think about the history of magic.

Following are the forms of Magic that we have been seeing since the evolution of Magic & still being used widely by performers all over the world, in updated and modern style. All the Magic performances, even today revolves around these concepts only;

Magical illusions



In magical terms, an illusion is any trick or effect involving a human being, most notably an appearance, vanish or transformation. The term has been extended to include large animals and sizeable objects as well, while many unique effects, such as levitation, where a girl is floated in mid air or a spook cabinet, in which ghostly phenomenon occur, also fall into this category. Formerly such efforts were called stage illusions, but today some are presented in night clubs and outdoor shows or under almost any circumstances, hence magical illusions is a better way to define them.

Disappearing



They are many tricks & illusions in which objects, animals and human beings mysteriously disappear, only to reappear some moments later, like in the picture below, where the head of the girl assistant sitting on a stool, has vanished but will appear back in the next moment of the Magician's act.

Audience are amazed when water is poured into a glass tumbler; now shown empty; is filled with water again after some time, Indian magicians performs this all the time naming it as 'Water of India' that never ends and keeps on flowing & flowing, this bowl is then covered with a silk handkerchief and suddenly disappears; Or a large bowl of water, standing on a thin tray, seems to vanish into thin air.

Audience is fascinated when a white rabbit, the magician's symbol, is placed in a box on a table which is covered with a



large cloth. After a clap of his hand, the magician dismantles the box, which is empty. The audience thinks they have outsmarted the conjurer, believing the rabbit to be hidden within the table. With a smile, the magician removed the cloth, revealing a skeleton frame incapable of concealing anything.

Two masters in this field of magic were P.C Sorcar and Gogia Pasha, who demonstrate what dramatic effects can be achieved with the application of ingenuity to the basic principles used for the simplest tricks. Making large objects vanish is invariably more impressive than vanishing smaller items. When making a person disappear, the magician is confronted with a number of difficulties, due to the size and weight and the problem of compressing the human frame into a small space. Despite these handicaps, magicians have created some startling mysteries.



Appearing

As the name suggests, when a person or an object appears out of thin air, inside a box or at a place / mark, it is termed as appearing. This can happen / presented in numerous ways, with the help of a cover or just directly under a puff of smoke; can happen on the hand of the magician or a spot near him, depending on the size and volume of the object / person appearing. Appearing is the most popular visual illusion performed worldwide, on stage & off stage.

This appearing technique has been used in many events / occasions worldwide with or without the magician himself performing. In the above picture reference, the appearance magic is used a Fashion Show in Milan wherein the Fashion designer showcasing his designer outfits on the ramp and he appears a model wearing his collections. Adding smoke to the finale appearance completed the effect.

In this instance, a professional magician must have given the training along with his props to the Fashion designer.



Levitation & Flying



The act of rising and floating, or making someone rise or float, in the air without any physical support is termed as Levitation. This can be an object or any living person or animal.

Levitation is a prime effect of all magician's worldwide, we have been hearing about levitation since ages in fairy tales & stories. The Flying carpet is the most common levitation we have been hearing since decades.



A magician may choose to levitate a currency note, credit card, playing card, a candle, a table, a chair or any other object as per his magic routine. They even levitate their assistants and sometimes themselves.

There is also a scientific side of Levitation, which is the magnetic fields, an object can be levitated through magnetic fields as well. This is done by using very strong magnetic fields to magnetize materials and then hold them in mid-air.

The most common levitation you see in India is the one performed by almost all street magicians wherein the assistant is asked to lie down on the floor & magician covers the assistant's body with a long cloth, this cloth has a round cut at one side through which the assistant beneath takes out his head.



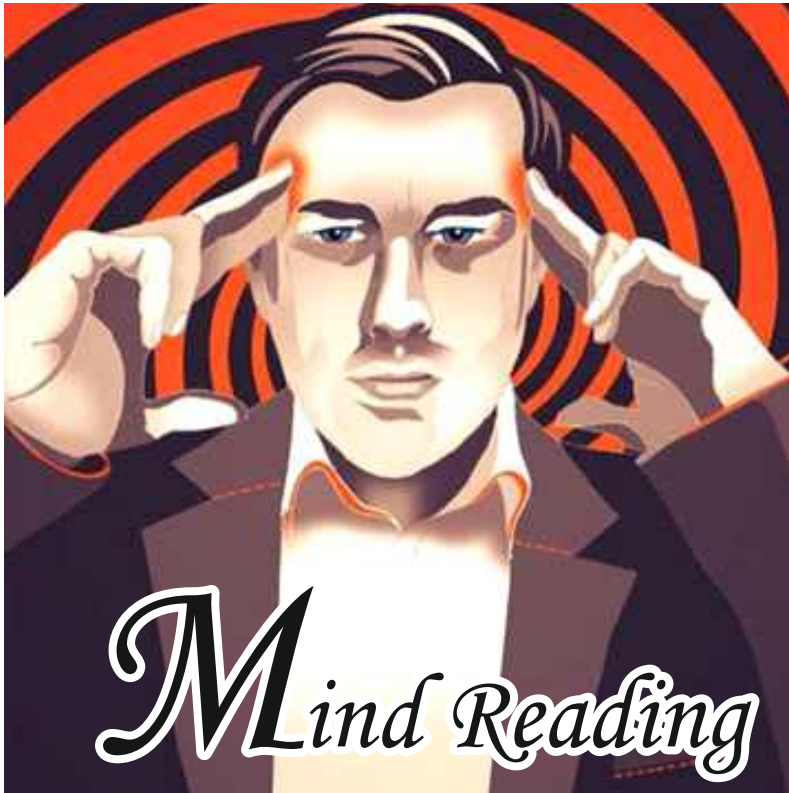
The audience can see the rest of the body being covered fully in cloth. The magician then makes a magical gesture & the assistant while in a lying posture starts to levitate, with the cloth covering his body from all sides. He rises from the floor for about 4 feet & then rests back down. The magician then removes the cloth, assistant stands & takes the applause.



Teleportation

This is a technique used by magicians to travel / appear from one place to another in a flash of a second. Remember, it is presented such way wherein it appears as if the magicians has vanished from place A and has appeared in next moment at Place B. That is why it is called Magic !!

This sequence has been used by many Hollywood and Bollywood movies from time to time, a popular scene depicting teleportation was seen in the Hollywood movie 'Now you see me' (above right picture) where a person from the audience is invited on stage & the performers makes him wear a head gear that has a button it. As soon as the button is pressed, the audience member teleported from the stage of Las Vegas to someplace in Paris, in a flash.



This type of Magic is unique because it depends on the effect created on the audience rather than the object used. Instead of making things vanish and re appear, or cutting them up and restoring them, you use them in special tests whereby you presumably read people's minds.

This type of magic has become so popular that some performers prefer to call themselves 'Mentalists' rather than Magicians, as if they really were endowed with some supernatural powers.



People are curious about subjects which seem to be beyond the limits of natural laws. Topics such as hypnotism, mind reading and Levitation have been discussed, criticized and have, for many years, been regarded as controversial. Hypnotism, which a few centuries ago was steeped in mysticism, has become almost respectable now that it has been accepted by some medical authorities. Levitations are generally regarded as part of an illusionist's act, but mind reading is still thought of, by many people, as something apart from a feat of conjuring. It remains a mysterious force which they cannot fully understand. Yet there is nothing supernatural about these apparently other worldly powers – just a great deal of skill and ingenuity. Because so little is known about the powers of the mind, and so much remains to be explored, psychics can claim that it is possible to bend metal objects by the power of thought or duplicate a drawing contained in a sealed envelope.

Fire & Smoke



These are the effects that are not termed as Magic but they enhance the magic or the illusion in a great way; making them visually more powerful & impactful, adds wowness to the finale, compliments each other as if made for each other. Again, as mentioned before, use of Fire & smoke in magic is done after extreme practice and knowledge of using them: and should be practiced or attempted without proper supervision. The attraction can turn fatal, if precautions are not undertaken properly.

Cutting & Sawing Assistants



It's the most classic version of Magic in the world. These acts were widely used as it brings excitement & thrill to the stage and keeps the audience gel to their seats. Impaling a Girl assistant on swords or sawing her in half looks dangerous on stage; And it collects maximum applause when the Girl stands unharmed again after the act is over.

These acts are thoroughly practiced by the magicians before they attempt it on stage in front of the crowd, as the magician and the assistant both needs to be sure of their actions at a certain point of time, else an accident may occur. These acts looks fascinating but they should never be attempted anywhere without proper guidance and knowledge.

Many unfortunate moments and accidents have occurred in the field of magic while attempting stunts / similar acts on stage. We have a separate chapter in this book talking about it.



Card Magic



Tricks with cards form a branch of magic entirely their own. In fact there some magicians who specialize in card tricks and nothing else, due to the wide range of opportunities offered by that field. This applies to everyone to some degree, because from the moment you start doing card tricks, you naturally acquire a manipulative ability. The mere act of cutting and shuffling a pack of cards, then dealing it, demands skill of a sort. Card Magic are often seen today in great deal, in most of the events where a performer is moving between the crowd; interacting from group to group, table to table; engaging the crowd with his skills.

Money Magic



Tricks with coins & currency notes dates back almost to the beginning of magic and they are as popular as ever today. Since coins are always handy & can be borrowed from the spectator as well for some impromptu magic. And the best part is, everyone enjoys magic with money. I am sure you too will, if I offer to double your money. This magic forms an instant connection with the audience as everyone has this in their pockets & if something magical happens with a currency note in audience's wallet, this goes down as a great memory for everyone.

Rope Magic



Here is a highly popular branch of modern wizardry that has grown by leaps and bounds – The Rope Magic.

Originally, rope magic was confined chiefly to ‘Trick Knots’ that puzzled spectators but not actually mystifies them. A new era arrived with the ‘cut & restored rope’ which soon became popular with stage magicians, although for a long time it was the only rope trick on the programs everywhere. Various versions were soon devised, to keep on deceiving the audience. This led to improvements that were baffling even to magicians who depended on the old time routines and that rule still prevails today.

You must have seen this act where a magician cuts a rope in half, or he may cut it into several pieces, before restoring it. Short ropes can be tied together with knots that disappear, leaving one long rope. Stretching short ropes to various lengths is another specialty, and knots can be made to come and go in amazing fashion. Though every rope has an end, there seems to be no end to rope tricks.

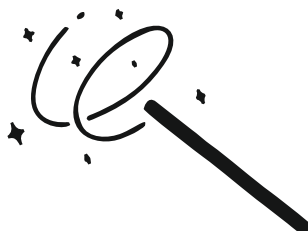


Silk & Handkerchief Magic

Tricks with handkerchief form quite a large category of magic and perhaps the most unusual. While it is possible to put card tricks, coin tricks and even stage illusions in categories of their own, it is often difficult to classify a handkerchief trick exactly.

Besides openly playing a major role in certain tricks, a handkerchief often serves as an important adjunct in other effects where its purpose is totally unsuspected. Houdini used huge handkerchief's throughout his knot – tying routines that were a feature of his big show. Magicians uses the silk and handkerchiefs to appear many out of it or even animals & birds. So, it's a very vital prop in the magicians bag of tricks

Improptu Magic



Well, this is more of a technique than a prop used by magicians. The art of doing Magic anytime, anywhere with anything is termed as Impromptu Magic. These are termed as 'Ice – Breakers' because when people seem cold or aloof, particularly at a party where very few know one another,

No matter what level of magic one performs, he has to have a set of impromptu magic in his / her repertoire because once a stranger knows you as a performer, they will ask you to show something than n there, even with the closest of friends and relatives, a magician is never spared at any time; he may be asked to show an act at any point of time so impromptu magic is the savior for him and a delight for the audience as well.

These acts can be with any pocket objects – cards, coins, piece of paper, pen, hair clip, rubber band, glass, water bottle, anything; but trust me when I say, objects are mere deceptive objects, the real skill and magic is happening in the hands of the performer.

Technological Magic on Gadgets – Phone / I Pad / LED Screen



The I Pad Magic / DIGITAL Magic are one of the most popular forms of illusion that's taken the worldwide Entertainment Industry to a new level.

Presentations are going Digital,

Product Launches are looking more creative & brief, Singers / Dancers / illusionists & other artists have included various technologies in their acts.

Few Magicians have introduced a new magical blend of technology and digitization which is the I PAD MAGIC.

Some performers prefer & perform on the Magic apps that are available on the Internet whereas some prefer to create their own app. Disadvantage of using the available app on Internet is monotony among the performers. Same act can be seen performing by many performers, as compared to a new customized app wherein the magician creates his own app, with his own idea & presentation so that makes it exclusive and new to be seen.



Even digital Magic has now many variants, it started with the Tablet / I Pad magic, but now has opened its horizons widely among Phones, TVs, Projectors & even LED Screens. Some magicians have even experimented with the hologram presentation in their shows.

These digital illusions are extensively being used today in Corporate Product launches, theme presentations, Brand activations etc. during events all over India & abroad.

From hand Gadgets to big Cars, every company is adapting the digital format to present their product to the world. Digital Magic is a vital part of growing digitization and it is definitely here to stay

Magic Stunts

Fire Escape

By Stuntman *Shiv Kumar* (India)



Magician Standing in AIR with just one hand holding the pole



Magi. Rahul Kharbanda



Magi. Sumit Kharbanda

Magician Sitting in Air (Invisible Chair) without any support

Accidents in MAGIC

While many unfortunate incidents has happened in the world of Magic, this has been the most recent one that happened in West Bengal

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When iaadugar can't dodge the bullet

Like Mandrake, desi magicians bereft of tech, expert back-up are risking lives

Atul Sehgal/statesgroup.com

Chanchal Lahiri, aka Mandrake, got the headlines in death that eluded him when he was on stage. "If I return, it will be magic. If I don't, it will be tragedy," he had said when he was being lowered into the Hooghly river in Kolkata, bound in steel chains, to perform a Harry Houdini style underwater escape stunt last weekend. The trick went horribly wrong for the 41-year-old magician whose body was fished out after a chaotic rescue operation that was beamed throughout the day on TV channels.

The incident in many ways has put the spotlight on India's magicians, who are struggling to re-visit interest in their art form in the face of onslaught from multiple media, and the "extra something" they have to do to ensure that they show remains, well, magical. Many of them are bereft of technology that a David Copperfield has access to or the back up of experts that a Criss Angel gets, and stare death each time they attempt to hang upside down over spikes, or escape from burning barrels. Still, they persist.

Ask magicians who revel in deadly tricks on what makes them tick, and they say they count on



MOOLAH MATTERS, THEM & US

	IN INDIA (PER EVENT)
David Copperfield	\$61 mn
Criss Angel	\$36 mn
Normal Street	₹11-₹9L
Rajesh Kumar	₹50K-₹4L
Ravi Khambada	₹50K-₹1.2L
Devendra Brown	\$13.5 mn
Demetri Brown	\$8 mn

Sources: Forbes. All earnings estimates are from June 1, 2012. Exchange rate: 2013

Ravi Khambada

four "P"s - passion, planning, preparation and precaution - to deliver the perfect performance. And a heavy dose of luck. Veteran Kolkata magician Prince Sitl says that Mandrake's death probably happened because he was "wearing too heavy shoes which distracted his movements of going against the tide and freeing himself from the chains."

It recalls his own brush with death while performing the 'Bullet Catching' act - in which the magician catches a bullet fired at him with his teeth. "When I thought of doing the trick back in the early 1970s, the only method that was known to magicians was the one used by American magician Chung Ling Soo - who died while performing this trick at London in 1918. I needed to improve on that and make it safer."

Using ingeniously developed methods, Sitl says he went through six years of trial and error before he came up with his own template for Bullet Catching, referred to as the 'curved trick' for its propensity to go wrong. "I've done more than 1,000 performances since then and each time it was equally deadly," Sitl says. In 2006, during a

show, the act went out of control and Sitl was critically injured when the bullet hit the protective shoes should he was wearing. Call it the rush of adrenaline, or the desire to do something different that motivates these Houdinis. Take Mumbai-based Rajesh Kumar for instance. A magician's career was the last thing on the mind of this 35-year-old, who was

could do what Angel had done - escape from a small cement box sitting up above New York's Times Square before it crashed to the ground. In an attempt to reinvent Angel's original 'Escape', Kumar had himself handcuffed, put inside a box with an RDX explosive with 30 seconds to get out before it exploded. "I stepped out and bang, the bomb took off," he recalls. So did his career as a magician.

Rajesh, now a popular name, has tried it all. He's hung upside down over spikes, and swallowed needles - where the slightest slip could be fatal. "I can't tell which is the most dangerous of them all. The RDX escape box is as risky as 30 needles going into your throat," says the 35-year-old. "There's a psychological side to it as well. As Nimra Kumar-Sarang, a third-generation illusionist who has performed her escapes from a wooden box set on fire, puts it, "People love to see the most in which a magician's life is at risk."

That perhaps explains why 47-year-old Kanan Singh - who calls himself a "psychological illusionist" and routinely surprises Bollywood celebrities with his brand of intuitive tricks of penetrating people's minds - has been able to resist death-defying acts. "I put the big guns on stage. Someone from the audience walks up, takes a bullet and loads one of



PERFORMING ARTS: A street magician in Chennai (above); the famous P.C. Sorcar (below, left); Amazing David in Kolkata



SOME ALL-TIME DEATH-DEFYING ACTS

➤ American performer David Blaine is known for his public imprisonments. He spent three days entombed inside six tonnes of ice, lived in a tank of water in New York and was suspended in a glass box over the Thames for more than a month.

➤ English magician Steven Frayne, better known by his stage name Dynamo, walked on water across the Thames, swallowed jewellery and pulled it out of his tummy.

➤ Another British illusionist Derren Brown is also known for his daredevil acts. He gassed which barrel contained a bullet in a Russian roulette stunt.

➤ Gopinath Mukhad from Thiruvananthapuram replaced Houdini's feat of unhooking around half a dozen locks on a chain that was tied to him and emerging unscathed from a burning pyre in which he was placed, in less than 60 seconds.

➤ Rajesh Kumar from Mumbai specialises in unhooking his handcuffs and escaping from a box full of RDX explosives 30 seconds before the RDX goes off.

the guns. I'm supposed to shoot four or five point-blank at my forehead, hopefully the blank ones," he says.

And how do these illusionists prepare for their show? "Practice, practice, and more practice," says

had, one of them who has successfully replicated Houdini's feat of unhooking a chain with half a dozen locks and escaping from a burning pyre, says that he makes his mind "go totally blank" when he does the escape act. "It takes con-

very few do it. Mandrake had performed the Houdini act successfully earlier, but didn't have the same luck this time. He might not have been able to protect the flow of the Hooghly river or the transparency of his waters. Adequately need to be taken into account."

Legendary magician P.C. Sorcar Junior, though says that despite all the challenges - many magicians have to import expensive equipment from abroad and funds are hard to come by - the future is bright for the country's conjurers. "Why do you think about a David Blaine or a Franz Harary? I have found many magicians who are better than what the world is doing. Our home-grown boys and girls can do it."

(Inputs by Ruchika Uniyal in Delhi, Monna Das in Mumbai, Ravi Khanna in Kolkata, Shuchi Chatterjee in Kochi and Shuchi Jha in Bhopal)

Those of the new generation who should be taking over are reduced to performing at birthday parties for Rs 2,000 an hour

S K NGAM | 72-year-old Bhopal-based magician

Sarang. "It's the only way you can minimise risks and overcome fear." Before a show, Kumar claims to spend at least 24 hours on set perfecting an act and sometimes 80 to 100 hours during the making of a show. "Some can take up to a year to perfect," he adds.

More than any other preparation, says Kanan's leading magician, Gopinath Mukhad, success in any death-defying trick is all about controlling the mind. Mukhad

timeous practice to make your mind go blank. It took me almost two years of practice to achieve this."

But not every magician feels that death-defying acts are necessary. Delhi-based magician Ravi Khambada says, "There has been an undue focus on performing dangerous stunts lately in an attempt to gain quick popularity. There is so much more to magic that can be explored, especially with the help of technological advances, but



➤ BULLET CATCHING: Kolkata's Prince Sitl is famous for his 'Bullet Catching' act in which he catches a bullet fired from a rifle with his teeth, but the nearly died once

ये घटना बंगाल के चंचल लाहिरी उर्फ जादूगर मेंट्रेक के साथ घटी। यह सुनापुर बंगाल के रहने वाले थे। हमेशा कुछ न कुछ नया करने की धुन सवार रहती थी। देहातों में टिकट शो किया करते थे। मेंट्रेक ने हावड़ा ब्रिज के नजदीक वाटर स्केप ट्रिक परफॉर्म की और इसके लिए उसने 2 जलयान (ओपन शिप) वाटर वेसेल श्री हायर किये थे। एक पर वो अपनी टीम के साथ खुद दाहूसे पर दर्शक थे।

जंजीरों से बंधने के बाद जब वो गंगा में कूदा, तो कुछ सेकेंड के बाद वो एक बार तो दिखाई दिया लेकिन फिर बाहर नहीं आया। कोलकता के सभी अखबारों में मुख्य खबर ये ही थी। तमाम चैनलों ने इस खबर को खास बनाया था।

