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ASM INFORMATION

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Meetings

The ASM meets on the second Monday of each month (February to December inclusive) at the Swiss Club, 89 Flinders Lane, Melbourne.

Magic Makers

Magic Makers is the official newsletter of the Australian Society of Magicians Incorporated (ASM) and is published 11 times a year (combined January / February issue).

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Hi and welcome to the June issue of Magic Makers.

I must say I enjoyed this issue of Magic Makers more than any other in the last couple of years! The reason is purely selfish of course - I didn't have to write any of it!

This month we have some fantastic articles by David Jones and Ian Woods, each different and each really entertaining. David starts off the issue with his review of the 32nd Annual FFFF convention. For those of you who are unfamiliar with this convention, it is rated as the top close-up convention in the world. What you mightn't know is that only one hundred magicians worldwide are invited each year and if you go along you must perform if asked. Can you imagine standing up and performing for the worlds top 100 close-up magicians? I have a panic attack just thinking about it! David (along with several other ASM members) has attended FFFF for many years. It just reminds you of the wealth of talent we have in the club. David's article is a great read as it gives you the true low-down on what occurs at this convention. I also have to thank David for writing the Meeting Notes for this month.

Our second guest contributor this month is Ian Woods, with his fantastic review of the Card College series. I join Ian in highly recommending this series to every magician. Ian's review will give you all you need to make an informed purchasing decision, whether you choose to purchase just one volume or all four. Ian's review will be broken up over two issues; this month contains the introduction and review of Volume 1.

Please, take a leaf out of Ian and David's book and send me an article. As you can see, there is a wide variety of magic related material you can write about. Better yet, the more articles we get, the more diverse Magic Makers will become and the more you will enjoy reading it, so write, now!

See you around the club – Nick Morton



Highlights from the 32nd Annual Fechter's Finger Flicking Frolic

Aficionados of close-up conjuring recognize FFFF to be the best close-up magic convention bar none. Started 32 years ago by Eddie Fechter in his own Forks Hotel in Buffalo, New York, the convention is now organized by Obie O'Brien and held every April at the Holiday Inn in Batavia, about 40 minutes by car from Buffalo. The "weekend" traditionally begins with a Wednesday evening lecture. In the past two years both Barry Govan and Tim and Sue-Anne Ellis have given these opening night lectures. This year the honour went to Alfredo Marchese. He basically presented some well thought out improvements to some standard effects. The Kenton Knepper thought of card in wallet was considerably improved by clever presentation so that only four "outs" were required. The Danson Diary trick was also given an improved presentation, which made the whole effect much stronger. A "thought of" card in egg was an interesting concept using a card index containing 52 rolled up cards and a mechanical wand to load the card into the egg. Not exactly a table-hopping trick! He did fool a lot of people with a version of the rising cards using four selected cards. The first three rose out of the deck using a standard Devano deck. The pack was then placed in a wine glass and all of the cards, except one then flew out of the glass. The remaining card was of course the 4th selected card. The simple explanation – a deck switch and a thread running through the pack, attached to a remotely controlled reel (or a reel with a built-in time switch, can't remember which). The complicated explanation – how to thread the cards!

The FFFF format is very simple; lectures and/or workshops or teach-ins, and formal shows. The Thursday morning lecturer was Jupiter, from Hungry. He was perhaps a little out of place at this very close-up event as he did a lot of cabaret style magic. Card scaling, bouquet productions and jumbo card tricks for example, although he did have some interesting ideas for productions and manipulation using the new latex covered sponge eggs.

Thursday afternoon was the Roger Klause teach-in. Roger had lined up about a dozen people to each teach just one trick. Roger himself demonstrated the Jennings T&T (turn and take) bottom deal. Paul Cummins taught one of the card tricks from his recent lecture notes. Thomas Frapps taught a very nice version of the card in the card case. Marc de Souza had an interesting new presentation for the \$100 bill switch, and Karl Norman, Bob Farmer, Howie Schwarzman, Ali Bongo, and even Obie himself all had interesting wrinkles on standard effects.

Also on Thursday was both the "Old Timers Show", i.e. anyone who had attended at least 10 FFFF conventions and hadn't performed recently, as well as the first "formal" close-up show. Each of these shows contained around 12 performers and I don't have space to mention each and everyone, but a few stand out. Ace Greenberg (who provided the financial backing for Kaufman and Greenberg) performed the best handling of the \$11 trick that I have ever seen. Camille Gaston from Paris did some very nice card work, and Justin Style from New York gave the most laid-back presentation of the Stan, Kate and Edith trick that anyone will ever see, complete with 12 piece backing vocals!

Thursday night was the Max Maven lecture. It was certainly very interesting, but also a bit of a disappointment. Not really as good as the lecture he gave here in Melbourne some years ago. He taught 5 effects in around 2&1/2 hours and managed to completely mess up one of them. Unfortunately the effects were rather top-heavy on method for the achieved outcome. I heard more than one person say, "Why not just classic force the card and reveal it however you like!" Max did redeem himself on the Saturday night show however and performed a series of incredibly strong and straightforward effects which left everyone in no doubt as to his incredible skills. This was obviously his commercial material used in his regular paid shows.



Friday started with the Torn and Restored Workshop organized by Meir Yedid. Meir taught the first effect, a fairly standard torn and restored card using a duplicate card but employing a nice display of the 4 torn pieces between the fingers. Next John Mause taught the Leipzig version of the torn and restored cigarette paper. John Bannon then performed his version of the same effect "Shriek of the Mutilated" from his book Impossibilia. Robert K. Miller then taught the Ray Kosby version of the torn and restored ticket, and Ali Bongo tore a tissue paper twice, and restored it 3 times! Bob Swadling also performed a version of the torn and restored card using one of the gimmicked folding cards which he so expertly makes. Ray Cody performed an excellent version of the burnt and restored turban. Marc de Souza demonstrated the U F Grant impromptu torn and restored newspaper, and then Gene Anderson closed the show with his own version of this famous effect.

Friday afternoon started with the Mike Gallo lecture. This was excellent. Mike is one of the best coin workers around and he taught some excellent effects. He also performed a few good card tricks, and then closed with his own version of the Ramsay cylinder and coins effect.

Friday night was the 2nd formal show and the first performer was Bobby Bengal. He performed a beautiful Sleeve Aces routine, an Okito box routine, and finished with the Kennedy effect Translocation, all performed very smoothly. Next was Ali Bongo with 3 standard effects; Equally Unequal, Sucker Colour Change Silk and repeat Torn and Restored Newspaper, but all performed with a little twist which fooled us all completely. I don't want to mention all the performers, but I HAVE to mention Bebel, a French performer I'd not seen before. He does INCREDIBLE card work. So smooth, so different, so visual. No drawn out long routines, there was something unexpected happening every few seconds. Sheer magic. I hope to see a lot more of this incredible performer. Magic Christian did well with torn and restored paper and a very funny Knife through Coat routine, which I'm sure you'll see in Sydney. Boris Wild closed the show with his new Mind Scanner effect and his beautiful Pure Telepathy routine, which is also available on one of his new tapes from Houdini Magic.

Saturday had both the Henry Evans lecture and the Paul Cummins lecture, separated by lunch. These were both EXCELLENT lectures. Henry won 1st prize in cards at FISM in 2000 and much of the prize-winning act was explained in his lecture. Interestingly, many of the effects are obtained by the use of clever gaffs rather than complicated sleights, and Henry had many of the gaffs for sale. Also available were some expertly made gaffed Chinese coins. These were so expertly made that 4 of them would nest together and look like one coin, but when un-nested they all appeared to have exactly the same thickness. Henry also had some highly visual silk effects using a combination of a pull and the Sanada gimmick. Paul Cummins also performs exceedingly strong card magic and taught a lot of his routines in the available one-hour slot. Both Paul and Henry were very obliging and were happy to explain the fine details to anyone throughout the course of the convention.

Following these two great lectures we had the Saturday afternoon show with another 12 performers, and to close the convention – the Saturday night show. First performer was Max Maven, already mentioned. He was followed by Boris Wild performing his FISM award winning Kiss act, and he was followed by David Stone, making a hilarious entrance with the aid of his "French nurse"! David does an incredible cigarette and lighter routine in which both the cigarette and lighter repeatedly disappear and re-appear. He finished with a one-coin routine, which ended in the production of a bottle of wine and BOTH his shoes! Oscar Munoz is a very talented Mexican magician who performed a beautiful 3-ring routine and an excellent billiard ball routine, both employing some very funny understated comedy for those in the know. Once again I can't list everybody, but Rocco performed and seemed to produce everything but the kitchen sink from his coat sleeves!



Jamy Ian Swiss did some sophisticated coin and card routines, and Steve Bargetze was hilarious as usual. Bob Swadling performed a variety of visually stunning effects, Henry Evens performed the cutting tens trick from his FISM act, and Steve Beam closed the show with some hilarious comedy. Henry Evans was voted the MVP (most valued participant – last year this honour went to Tim and Sue-Anne Ellis), and Obie announced that next year's Guest of Honour would be Meir Yedid. So ended the 32nd Annual FFFF, except for the usual swapping of moves and tricks in the lobby until the early hours of Sunday morning.

Following FFFF I spent a couple of days in Los Angeles and of course visited the Magic Castle. The early performer in the Close-Up room was Jeff Ezell, a local lad who runs the Mind Over Magic shop in Burbank. He performed a good card set and then finished with a novel McDonalds Ace routine – instead of the 4 aces assembling in the 4th packet they were all found face up in the face down deck. Then the deck was spread face up and all the cards were blank. Didn't spot it coming at all! Jeff also had a great new vanish for one of the aces – wish I could remember it!

The 2nd performer in the Close-Up room was Allan Hayden. I'd heard lots of good things about Allan over the years but had never seen him perform. Unfortunately I think he was having a bit of an "off night" the night I saw him. He gave a very "laid back" performance, a little too off hand for my liking. But he certainly had some originality in his effects, including a very "dangerous" plate spinning routine, and he had his audience of predominantly teenage girls in stitches with his antics.

B J Hickman was the early performer in the Parlour. I had only ever seen him before on his three videotapes and thought of him purely as a children's magician, but he certainly held the attention of the adult audience that evening with some amusing presentations. His opening "introduction" is certainly very cute and immediately enabled him to establish a good rapport with the audience. The late performer was Boris Wild, and he was undoubtedly the strongest performer that evening. He started with a couple of very strong card routines (both on his video tapes by the way) coupled with some very amusing patter based on his French character. He then closed with his FISM award winning Kiss act. The Castle management has told Boris that he is welcome back anytime he likes and it's no wonder. He charms the audience with his mischievous French character, while fooling them badly with his original and very strong card magic.

I should mention by the way that normally you have to be 21 years old to be admitted to the Magic Castle. On this particular night however it was obviously a "kids" night and there were quite a few teenagers in the various audiences. And not just in the audience! I witnessed a show by one young kid in one of the smaller rooms, which has tables available for impromptu performances. He did some very funny card material, a flawless performance of the Vernon Cups and Balls, and finished with the complete Tabary rope routine. His performance was excellent, very polished, and I was very impressed. I was even more impressed when I spoke with him afterwards to congratulate him and found out that he was only 15 years old! I just can't imagine how good he is going to be in another 15 years time!

Probably about as good as Boris Wild! I had the good fortune to spend some time with Boris later that evening, and also the following day in LA. Boris is well known for his FISM win at Dresden in 1997, but he mentioned to me that the first time he had entered FISM was back in 1988 at Den Hague. He was only 14 years old at the time, and he performed his act in English! Hell. Most of us are still nervous performing in front of 20 fellow magicians at the local magic club. Imagine performing in front of 2000 magicians, in a strange country, in a strange language, performing your own original material, at the age of 14!



The next evening I had dinner at a local Mexican restaurant with old mates Jeffrey Cowan and Bob Kohler. Bob is producing some Troy Hooser DVDs around September and these should be great. Keep an eye out for them. Bob also showed Jeffrey and myself a few new wrinkles on his Ultimate Three Fly routine. Bob is definitely one of the BEST close-up guys around and hopefully we'll see him here in Australia soon.

If you don't already subscribe to MAGIC magazine I suggest you take out a subscription pronto! Joshua Jay is doing an excellent job as editor of the "talk about tricks" section and is providing us with some extremely strong effects on a monthly basis. Check out L laser Open Prediction in the April issue. Josh was performing this for everyone at FFFF and it looks incredibly good in his hands. Josh also revealed some very interesting news about his MAGIC column at FFFF. The July issue of MAGIC is going to contain a gaffed Bicycle playing card, specially printed by the US Playing Card company, which will allow you to perform some incredibly strong and visual card magic with minimal effort. Josh has already devised around a couple of dozen effects using this gimmicked card and will be explaining about a dozen of them in the July issue. The gimmick is actually Josh's idea and everyone was asking him why he didn't just market the gaff himself. His reply was that he wants his column in MAGIC to be as strong as he can possibly make it, so he convinced the magazine to pay for the printing of around 15,000 gaffed cards and distribute them free in the July issue. It's a very generous gesture on his part. So when your July issue arrives don't do the usual thing and just briefly flip through the trick descriptions, get your red backed Bicycle deck out, add the gaff, and learn some incredible routines!

David Jones

Editor's Prize Competition

Don't forget we are running a competition this year for the best contribution to Magic Makers. You can send in a trick, product review, story, letter, article, anything you like relating to magic.

The prize is \$50 and will be presented next December in time for some Christmas Magic Shopping.

Good Luck to everyone!

Membership Dues for 2002

ASM fees are due and payable on 1st January 2002.

Metropolitan	\$50
Non-metropolitan	\$25
Junior	\$25
Magic Makers Only	\$12

Please refer to accompanying invoice in last month's Magic Makers.



Magic Menu - Regular Meetings for 2002

Note: Regular meeting time is 8.00 pm at the Swiss Club.
 "Video Show" starts prior to the meeting at 7.30pm with a different video every month. Come and watch or bring along a video for the other members to view.

<p>Monday 10th June 2002</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">MEETING CANCELLED</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Due to the Sydney Convention. See YOU there?? To find out more Go to http://www.come.to/sydneymagic or http://www.mrtricks.com.au/events.html</p>
<p>Monday 8th July 2002</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">MAGIC IN THE AIR</p> <p>Be treated to a night of top class entertainment as Barry Govan and Chris Shing entertain us. As you are no doubt aware, Barry is one of Australia's top close-up magicians and Chris is a new arrival who's skill with coins is already gaining a reputation. A great lecture night, which is not to be missed.</p>
<p>Monday 12th August 2002</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">NEVILLE FINNEY PRESENTS</p> <p>Member Neville Finney has kindly agreed to give a mini-lecture in August. Those of you who have seen Neville perform know the high standard of his work. Don't miss this opportunity to learn from one of the ASM's most respected members.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">"OVERSEAS MYSTERY GUEST"</p> <p>And now for something completely different... a performance from a mystery overseas guest. Stay tuned to Magic Makers for more details to follow.</p>
<p>COMING September October November</p>	<p>Keith Lawrence, ASM member and well respected Agency owner. "The Agents Point of View".</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ted Heath on "Entertainment"</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Charles Gauci on "Mentalism"</p>

Interesting magic coverage in The Sunday Age dated 21 April 2002. There was the opinion article relating to the pros and cons of the future of the historical Sandridge Rail Bridge. Three local writers authored the piece or pieces. Of most interest to us magically was the article by well-known artistic personality Mirka Mora. Under the heading **Heritage and Houdini** she wrote about Houdini and his connection with the Sandridge Rail Bridge:

"I also see Houdini, the great magician, jumping from the bridge in chains and coming up free on February 17, 1910, out of the Yarra. It was a lunch hour and 20,000 people watched, reason enough to keep the bridge (to quote my son William). The story of Houdini I found in Magical Nights at the Theatre by Charles Waller (1854-1948). There is a photograph of our very own bridge with Houdini about to jump, and all the people looking dazzled, amazed.

No escaping it, magic is everywhere! – **Ian Woods**



ASM Meeting Review - Monday 8th April 2002

I arrived at 7:30 and put a Steve Bedwell tape in the VCR. A few folks ended up watching quite a bit of it. You might like (please!) to point out that this is a new feature of the meetings. Anyone can bring along a new tape (as long as it's PAL format) and share it with the rest of us between 7:30 and 8:15.

Ted Heath ran the Meeting in Charles' absence and several visitors were in attendance.

Adam Lawrence gave a good talk on "Pitching Magic". He brought along the display he uses at all the markets he attends, as well as samples of his products (some of which were later purchased by enthusiastic buyers). He explained that "Trash and Treasure" markets were a waste of time because most people were not prepared to spend much money. He pointed out that it was hard work. On your feet for typically 7 hours per day, and you are talking for the whole time. It's a big strain on the voice, and he had to learn special techniques so as not to lose his voice by the end of the day.



He also said the "takings" varied considerably from day to day, sometimes as low as \$50, sometimes as high as \$1500. He discussed the various costs involved, and how to save money making all the magic effects. He used to make them all himself, now he has some manufactured for him in lots of several thousands. Examples were the printing of gaffed cards (Queen's Slipper, as well as the Chinese Compass and the "What's Next" card. He also mentioned how he used the "excess" cards from making up Svengali decks to make other packet card effects. He has a wide range of prices, from \$3/\$4 effects to \$12 effects, as well as "packages" in the \$20, \$35 and \$50 price range.

Next Peter Cook gave a fascinating account of how he has custom made many props for his own use. He started by explaining that he was trained as an electrician, has a background in electronics, and also has skills in leatherworking and jewellery making. Just about all of his props are encased in beautiful hand made wooden boxes, leather bags, pouches or wallets, which adds a certain "touch of class" to the prop. Peter also has a way out sense of humour and this is also reflected in some of his props. His custom made "ferret holder" brought the house down while Peter himself managed to retain a completely deadpan expression. The most magnificent prop by far was his own version of "Sword through Neck". The stocks, which go around the neck, were custom made and much more "solid looking" than the bought versions, and the sword itself looked "exactly" like a real sword. Although Peter doesn't take orders, Graham Etherington was seen at the end of the evening waving an open cheque book in front of Peter and almost begging him to make a second "Sword though Neck" for his own use!

Harmony consisted of only one performer, Graham Etherington, who performed a torn and restored sheet music effect to accompanying music. More magic was performed in little huddles after the meeting was officially closed.

David Jones



Roberto Giobbi's Card College (Part 1)

Following is a review of the Card College books published by Hermetic Press. Copies are readily available from local magic dealers. The review is really a 'review of reviews' and whilst I provide my own commentary on aspects of the books I have liberally sourced reviews conducted by well-respected magic writers such as Jamy Ian Swiss and Michael Close. Extracts from their reviews are sprinkled throughout this 'review'. I have also fully documented the primary sources of information in the footnotes for those readers that would like to read further about these excellent books.

The English edition of Swiss born and domiciled Roberto Bendetto Giovanni Archangelo da Giobbi's¹ Card College series was fully published in 2000.² (Richard Vollmer has humorously suggested that this name was shortened to Roberto Giobbi to save on ink and paper). The card conjuring course was originally published in German as *Grosse Kartenschule* in 1992/1994. This is the most encyclopedic coverage of card technique since the publication of Jean Hugard and Frederick Braue's *The Royal Road to Card Magic* and *Expert Card Magic*.³ Before reviewing the contents of these texts let us look at the parties, whose efforts have resulted in this excellent addition to magical publishing, being the author, illustrator, translator and publisher. Each of these has played a necessary and important role in the development of the texts.⁴

The original publisher of the series was Magic Communication Roberto Giobbi. Apart from German (and now English) versions the course has also been translated into French and Spanish.⁵ A Japanese edition was in preparation in 2000. Hermetic Press Inc. of Seattle, Washington is the publisher of the English version, which is the subject of this review. Hermetic is owned by Stephen Minch a well respected book publisher and author.⁶ The Hermetic Press has released some very imaginative magic books including the recently released and highly acclaimed *Concertos for Pasteboards*.⁷

My view is that Hermetic Press is today probably the pre-eminent publisher of magic books.⁸

The author of the series, as already mentioned, is Roberto Giobbi. Mr. Giobbi is considered to be one of the finest card magicians performing professionally in Europe. In 1988 and 1991 he received recognition from the FISM⁹ for excellence in card magic. In 1990 he was awarded the Grand Prix, being the highest award of the Swiss International Congress of Magicians. He is one of an elite group of magicians that are members of the Magic School of Madrid. The German Magic Circle also awarded him Author of the Year in 1988 for the numerous magic books that he had written (this was before the publication of the College series)¹⁰. A DVD of Roberto Giobbi's performance in Britain has recently been released and has been well received.¹¹

Barbara Giobbi-Ebnother, spouse of the author, illustrated the Card College course. Ms. Giobbi-Ebnother is an excellent artist who has that rare capacity to clearly focus on correctly detailing, exact finger and hand positions for the card sleight being described. In the introduction to the first volume, Roberto Giobbi commented on the illustrations:

"I have chosen line drawings to illustrate all techniques and effects. These are generally better suited than a photograph for visually communicating the essentials and details of deck and hand positions – or even a sequence of events. The camera gives equal weight to everything within its field of vision, whereas, for technical description, not everything is equally important. Line drawings emphasize the important things and omit everything else. This gives the reader a better insight into the essentials of a technique or sequence."

To reiterate, these are well-illustrated texts and the illustrator obviously has a feel for what is essential for the users of these manuals. I made similar comments in my review of *The Turnstile Pass*¹² - good magic illustrators are few and far between. Thankfully, Ms. Giobbi-Ebnother has completed some most commendable work.

The person who ably carried out the translation of the course from German to English was Richard Hatch¹³. The material being technical descriptions requires language precision, and this would not have been easy and the results are certainly noteworthy. Mr. Hatch has an excellent record in translating German magic texts into English because of his previous translations of the writings of Johann Hofzinsler.

We have looked at the creators of this worthy 4-volume project of approximately 1150 pages of quality material and we will now look at the course volume by volume.¹⁴ Following, I will not limit this review to my own comments but will draw on the output of professional reviewers such as Michael Close and Jamy Ian Swiss.



Volume 1¹⁵

This volume is dedicated to the members of the Magic School of Madrid (Escuela Magica de Madrid), in particular to Arturo de Ascanio, Camillo Vasquez, Jose Carroll and Juan Tamariz. The latter provides a brief but interesting foreword in his unique and often humorous style. Mr. Tamariz describes the card magic program:

“In an exquisite and entertaining manner, we are granted an insight into the technical secrets of card magic. Step by step we experience the complete beauty of our art and take delight in the infinite ingenuity selflessly lavished on it by many authors and creators. We learn in the greatest detail, the most wondrous way to enter the kingdom of card magic.”

Following is a brief introduction by Roberto Giobbi then an essay on the Art of Performing Magic with Cards. The latter is also really the introduction, providing details on how to get the best from the course, means of learning from the book/s, detailing the terminology to be used, and theoretical concepts. This is followed by an overview of the history of playing cards. Useful information is provided in the section headed 'Instruments and Tools' – care of the hands, cards to use and the close-up pad. Emphasis is placed on the fact that the course is both for beginners and as a retraining course for the experienced magician. Similarly, Card College can be used in a disciplined manner, chapter by chapter approach or alternatively as a reference source to a wide range of sleights that may be referred to (but not detailed) in books on card effects. Accordingly, the reader can take a sequenced approach or dip into the text when and where required.

After the brief introductory section the balance of the book covers a range of sleights including fundamental techniques, The Overhand Shuffle, False Cuts, Card Controls, Force Techniques, Riffle Shuffles, Double Lift, Key Card, Hindu Shuffle, Flourishes, Finger Counting, Top Change, the Glide and number of other sleights.¹⁶

The critique of Volume 1 by Jamy Ian Swiss¹⁷ noted:

“The questions that come most obviously to mind when considering a work of this nature concern its overall organization; the clarity of description and illustration; the choice of techniques; and the selection of tricks ... one of the most remarkable elements in the author's catalog of successes in this carefully systematized volume is the clarity and succinctness of his descriptions. The author consistently achieves a precision that is at times wondrous, as he boils his text down to the most essential and efficient of choices. Similarly, the choice and style of illustrations, by Barbara Giobbi-Ebnother, serves the author's purpose in like manner.”

However, Mr. Swiss has strong reservations about the inclusion of an inferior double lift. He also believed that the Classic Force documented is bit premature by its inclusion in Volume 1, which essentially covers basics for beginners. Similarly, he suggests that readers should skip learning the finger counting detailed at pages 202-202 of the book. He views the card effects covered in the book as more than acceptable. Mr. Swiss concludes by stating that Card College ‘... is an impressive, invaluable achievement, and I am quite eager to see the succeeding volumes in the series.’

Mike Close and Mac King¹⁸ in their review state: “Beginners who have found the “Royal Road” to be a bit bumpy should find the Giobbi course to be more user friendly. The instructions for the sleights ...are accompanied by hundreds of illustrations and are followed by a series of “Check Points” which serve to reemphasize variant handlings. The material is effectively organized from a pedagogical standpoint; each new item builds on skills acquired in earlier chapters.” They further state “Don't assume that just because you are not a beginner there will be nothing of interest for you in this book. One of Mr. Giobbi's goals was to gather and collate the most up to date information possible. I discovered techniques and stratagems in this book which were new to me (Michael Close) and which I have immediately added to my arsenal.” Final comments from Messrs. Close and King – “Enthusiastic thumbs up.”

Overall, Volume 1 is a good start in setting the standard previously set by the Hugard and Braue publications, particularly the Royal Road to Card Magic. Card magic has changed significantly since the release of the Royal Road and Expert Card Magic and the Card College series brings it up to date.

Ian Woods



¹ Richard Vollmer in the introduction to Volume 4 reveals this mouthful of a name. Understandably, Mr. Giobbi commonly uses the short but sweet Roberto Giobbi!

² Year of publication of the four volumes was as follows: Volume 1 – 1995, Volume 2 – 1996, Volume 3 – 1998 and Volume 4 in 2000.

³ It is interesting to note that Faber and Faber, a general publisher released these publications. In these days of magicians complaining about the exposure of magic secrets here we have probably for their time the most technical card magic books that were readily available to non-magicians in general bookstores.

⁴ In addition to those mentioned Roberto Giobbi also received assistance from the following magicians in developing the course – Bernard Billis, Juan Tamariz, Richard Vollmer, Bill Kalush, Milt Kort, Jon Racherbaumer, Randy Wakeman, David Michael Evans and Max Maven.

⁵ To digress it is interesting to note the changes occurring with 'schools of magic' over time. The early French and German (especially Johann Hofzinger) originators of card magic in the nineteenth century, then the American (Dai Vernon, S W Erdnase and a numerous others) school for most of the twentieth century. During the nineteen seventies there was the Spanish School that included Arturo de Ascanio, Jose Carroll and Juan Tamariz. Roberto Giobbi throughout his course acknowledges his debt to these creators and in particular Volume 3 is dedicated to those great masters of card magic.

⁶ Stephen Minch has authored numerous books and these include the following well-respected texts:

The Vernon Chronicles Volumes 1 to 3 (The Lost Inner Secrets, More Lost Inner Secrets and Further Lost Inner Secrets) all published by L&L Publishing – Lake Tahoe in 1987, 1988 and 1989. Daryl's Ambitious Omnibus – 1987.

⁸ Having dabbled on and off in magic since the early 1960s I can recall the spiral bound mimeographed publications on magic with their typos and poor quality production and formatting. I consider that Richard Kaufman (originally Kaufman and Greenberg and subsequently Kaufman and Company) together with L&L Publishing pioneered modern magic book publishing issuing high quality texts. Unfortunately, the quality over time whilst still good has fallen-off somewhat. The books that I have seen issued by Hermetic Press are of extremely high standard. The College series is printed on quality non-reflective paper and are hard bound with dust jackets.

⁹ In 1988 Roberto Giobbi was placed second in the FISM Cards competition having competed against two members of the Spanish School (Carroll and de la Torre). In 1991 Giobbi was once again placed second in the Cards competition facing Lennart Green and Helge Thun (a member of the Flicking Fingers). Refer Genii April 1997 pp. 56-59.

¹⁰ Prior to becoming a professional magician Roberto Giobbi was a professional writer and translator, skills that have placed him in good stead in the development of the Card College course dealing with sleight of hand using cards.

¹¹ Michael Close - Marketplace in Magic (January 2002) pp. 28-29 reviewed *Roberto Giobbi Taped Live!* which L&L Publishing have released. Close advises, "...if you're interested in learning how magic really works, you will enjoy *Roberto Giobbi Taped Live!* It is a master class in high level magic thinking."

¹² ASM Magic Makers – May 2002 The Turnstile Pass (Creator ASM member Ian Baxter)

¹³ Richard Hatch apart from being a writer and translator is also the part owner of H&R Books, which is a retail bookseller.

¹⁴ Just for the sake of the record details of the hardbound texts are as follows:

Volume 1 Pages 1-250 (plus 14 pages of introductory material)

Volume 2 Pages 251-494 (plus 9 pages of introductory material)

Volume 3 Pages 495- 790 (plus 14 pages of introductory material)

Volume 4 Pages 791-1091 (plus 13 pages of introductory material)

Overall there are in excess of 1200 illustrations

¹⁵ The series being reviewed is the First Edition. It is my understanding that a further revised edition has been issued I am not aware of what the specific changes are.

¹⁶ We have merely summarised the matters covered in Volumes 1 to 4. To otherwise would expand this essay to many more pages. The cumulative index contained in Volume 4 runs for 13 pages.

¹⁷ Jamy Ian Swiss – Light From the Lamp in Genii (March 1995) pp. 445-446.

¹⁸ Mike Close and Mac King – Product Reviews in Magic (May 1995) pp. 63-65.

