

June is busting out all over and this month we invited Peter Samelson to lecture. He accepted our invitation and I'm sure glad he did. As his website says, "Peter Samelson insists he doesn't do magic... he only helps people see it."

"He is an illusionist/entertainer/philosopher, blending simplicity and sophistication as he provokes thought and inspires wonder."

Peter published a book in 1984 entitled Theatrical Close-up. This book is currently out of print but there is talk about re-printing it later on this year and, if I may editorialize, it would be worth your investment. He performed a number of items from the book, some updated for new millennium technology.

Peter started off with Mimetic Slo-Mo Coin which is a beautiful one coin item that really has to be seen to be really appreciated. He followed that with his ring and rope routine that has alternate endings – one being Ring Flite and the other being Ring in Box. This lead to a brief discussion on three types of justification - logical, physical and emotional. In other words, during a routine, we may have to justify certain actions to the audience and these three methods are a means to an end.

This discussion was followed by a performance of New York Transpo which is Peter's take on the Chicago Opener plot. This routine originally appeared in his book but has been updated to include state of the art technology. Peter explained that, as a result of rampant exposure on the Internet, we have to re-think our material or give it a new and different spin in order to keep it fresh for our audiences. Next was his entertaining version of Wild Card that he calls The Invasion of the Body Snatchers. Peter concluded with the Phoenix which is a burnt and restored paper napkin effect. He also included an alternate presentation based on the old cigarette ashes in the hand trick. This was a perfect example of re-thinking the old standards. He also included adaptations to make this effect conducive to strolling magic situations.

It is extremely apparent that Peter Samelson is one of magic's brightest thinkers. His movements are choreographed and his patter is scripted making for an extremely tight performance. If anyone out there ever attends a Peter Samelson lecture or for that matter, a performance, and I sure hope that you do, and you don't learn anything, it's your own fault.

Bill Krupskas, O.M.