

Steve Dela

Some Like it Hot!



Having just launched his own stage show in London & Brighton, two-times IBM Close Up Magic Champion Steve Dela has had another excellent year, and he has received eighteen magic awards in his career to date. But, of course, magic isn't just about winning trophies – his classy performances have seen him further enhance his reputation in the corporate world, and, as they say in the world of football; “He’s on fire at the moment!” magicseen tries to interview him without getting burnt!

You've won several magic championships - any more ambitions in this area?

I certainly do. When I was about 11 years old I heard of Young Magician of The Year and told myself I must win it...and I did. I have said the same thing about FISM. OK, so, 2012 might be somewhat ambitious because I don't think I have the right mindset yet but it's certainly an award I want to add to my trophy cabinet.

What's the most annoying thing you come across as a close-up performer?

This has to be when I open a pack of cards and someone says “Yeah I have seen this one!” My reply is always... I am not even sure what I am going to do yet”

Is YouTube good for the art of magic?

No it really isn't. Often when I get difficult spectators at a table, someone will inevitably say they can go online and learn it all on YouTube and well, yes they can to an extent. It's tragic. What would be great is if there was a dedicated magic channel that pushed all the others out by simply being the best

place to go and watch magic on the net, performed by real working professionals. Not bedroom hobbyists with no real performance experience.

Most amazing thing I ever saw was?

Mike Michael's Robot act when we worked together in Paris...Oh My God! It has to be the best 10 minutes I have ever seen in the cabaret world and I had the pleasure of seeing it about 5 times and getting to know Mike very well. His act got a standing ovation and screams from the audience. I got goose bumps watching him and have never seen an audience look so shocked watching a magic act. It is genius!

Hardest thing I've had to master is:

Probably audience management and approaching a group of people - but now I'm very good at this and adapt for each situation or performance context. This is something you can see on the Work section of my new DVD 'Steve Dela's Work and Play' (shameless plug I know). Apart from that, move wise, probably the second deal which I believe, apart from the

double lift is the most useful move in card magic.

How to win over a sceptical table:

The best way is by doing strong visual magic... this is where impressive sleight of hand and sexy flourishes come into play. All the clichés will help too - ensuring the table like you before they like the magic; but in the real world people can tell if you're good or a bit shit within seconds. By performing striking visual undeniable magic, the audience are quicker to learn that you might be worth watching. There is no point in 3 minute story telling tricks or rhyming patter... it doesn't cut it in the real world.

Best advice I've been given is:

“Have a great act and a better business card”. If there are 200 people at a gig I make sure 200 leave with a way of contacting my management. And that's the 2nd piece of advice I use...my good friend Fay Presto told me to have a barrier between myself and the end client. I talk about the magic, they talk about the business. Having a good middle

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man has made my life so much easier. All I now have to do is turn up and focus on giving the best performance I can. I know I'm not a great marketer so don't see any point in pretending to be.

Ever doubted your own ability?

I have only ever doubted it once and this wasn't so much my ability but my worth. It was a private gig where I was booked by someone that had seen me before and they effectively said name your price. I did a 45 minute show and 2 hours of close up and charged so much that I made myself nervous. I was 19 at the time and this seemed a wonderful thing to do up until the event where I had butterflies in the car all the way down. It all turned out OK in the end and I have been hired since by the same client.

Favourite comedy performer - magic or otherwise, and why?

I really can't pin point one. My top faves are: Noel Britten, Ian Keeble, Fay Presto, Adam Bloom and John Archer. They all know how great comedy works. I like to think I'm naturally funny in real life but have never been able to get this into my performing enough to call myself a comedy magician...it's not me. I could practice but I know my expertise are in manip and close up. These performers all have timing, stage presence, good control and originality.

The Magic Circle: is it keeping up with the times?

I think it is now yes. It's still getting developed and modernised but keeping up with the times. Most notably I was recently voted onto Council, and am the youngest ever member to achieve this - I think that's a great step forward. There are lots of changes that still need to happen and

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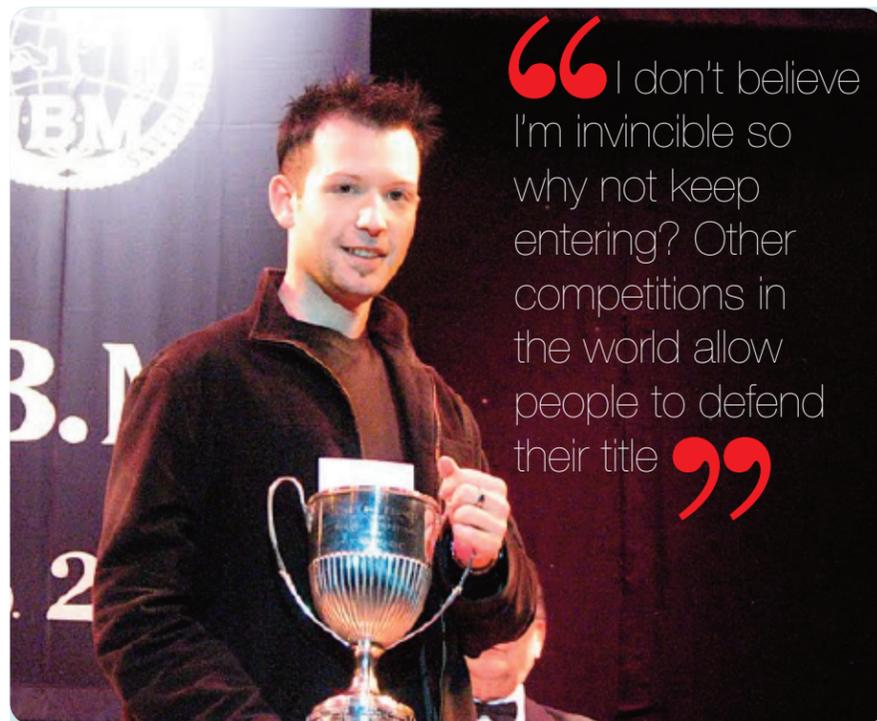
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I have my own vision on how all this can be achieved. But it's really not that simple and change doesn't happen overnight. I would like to see greater benefits for its members and increase the public awareness of The Circle as a marque of excellence - and I am fighting for this. However, it will take more than a year, so lets hope I stay on for the long run.

Best venue played?

Definitely the TV5 cabaret stage in Paris for the TV show 'Le Plus Grand Cabaret du Monde'. It was a scary experience, four days in Paris, but the best of my life. I got a great fee, my flights

and meals paid, a personal translator and a chauffer to take me back and forth to the Hilton. We did a tech run for the cameras, then a filmed performance for 'editing in' if things went wrong on the live take. The worst part was filming in front of a live audience that had been in the studio for 5 hours! As if I wasn't nervous enough I was told by Patrick Sebastian (the presenter and producer) that in 40 years of the show's history I was the only young magician they had found from Britain good enough to invite. Since then my friend James More has been on and also did a fantastic job.



“I don't believe I'm invincible so why not keep entering? Other competitions in the world allow people to defend their title”

My worst magic nightmare is:

Turning up to a gig and not having a thing on me...and this happened once. I was in a rush and forgot to pack my tricks. I just got a pack of cards from a local shop and did the whole gig off them. I am sure this has happened to other magicians but you really only do that once!

The killer effect which always slays them is:

It's got to be a routine of mine that combines card to sealed envelope in wallet and ring flight to car keys (an odd combination but it works). There is a problem, though, even with a build up to get lots of applause this is genuinely a shocker that leaves people not sure how to react. It sounds clichéd but it really can leave people speechless – which isn't great when the booker is walking past! But I know from the bookings this effect generates that it's not worth changing.

Best thing that happened in 2009?

I won the IBM Close Up Competition for a second time. I have plans to win a third time but was getting some bad vibes from other contestants for entering again having previously won. I don't believe I'm invincible so why not keep entering? Other competitions in the world allow people to defend their title. It might not be the next IBM

but I would love to be the only person to ever win three times.

Performer who most surprised you in the last year?

Edward Hilsom. The UK's 18 year old dove worker. I know Ed through the YMC and he's come on so quickly. I just love watching his act. He's years ahead of his age and keeps getting better. Ed is one to look out for in the future.

Are magicians getting harder to please?

Nope. I think any decent magician or full timer are quite easily pleased. It's only the newbies or hobbyists with business cards that are the ones needing to see bigger and better magic. I'm always happy to see a nice confident presentation of a classic effect. I'm lucky enough to be a FFFF magician and when hanging out in New York with the best close up guys in the world you see all that pretence and one up man ship go completely out the window. You would think the best guys would be harder to please - but they're not.

Most bizarre moment:

Being made to dress up as superstar magician Hyashi for a joke at the IBM Fringe Shows. It was supposed to be a spoof prediction where I was wearing his samurai gear with a cloth over my head. Then a magician from the convention was chosen - it was me, but obviously the

prediction looked like Hyashi. I then took the cloth off and Hyashi ran on stage and chased me off in just a towel. It was very funny but definitely my most bizarre moment.

Stage magic: what's the future?

I think the future is VERY bright, but only if we make it so. I was desperate to perform more stage magic so thanks to my Manager and Producer, Stephen Baker, I now have my own monthly stage show in both London and Brighton called 'Steve Dela's Fantasmagoria'. I have to constantly come up with new material considering I'm now doing at least two stage shows a month for a loyal paying audience. It's a full two hour show fronted by myself and supported by 3 other magical acts, with one headliner. The launch last month went really well and was headlined by John Archer. Coming up we have, Richard Pinner, Noel Britten, Ian Keable and Romany. If you love a good magic show you really can't miss this.

Dream line-up for a magic extravaganza:

Tim Gabrielson, Richard Pinner, Colin Rose, Duncan Trillo, Mac King, Jeff Hobson, Lance Burton and Mike Michaels.

My current big project is:

I have three at the moment. One is, of course, 'Fantasmagoria'. The second is working on several acts for FISM - including an original illusion I have created and designed...here's hoping. The third thing is slightly more entrepreneurial. It's the biggest single project I've ever been involved in and is nothing to do with magic. I can't say too much more, but watch this space.

Tell us three things about yourself that we probably won't know...

1. I am a left handed card magician despite being right handed at everything else. This is because I'm self taught from learning magic off TV. This has caused me to learn in a mirror image.
2. I have an horrifically irrational fear of a certain item of food. I can't even mention the food because it makes me feel sick and if I do I'm worried I will be tormented at conventions.
3. My full name is 'Steve Gee Richard Jay Dela' - which I legally changed when I was 18 years old. **ms**

www.stevedela.com