

Stand-Up Mentalism With Playing Cards by Mark Strivings - Buch

For those of you who perform full mentalism programs, think for a minute about the venues that you work the most. Now, mind you I'm not talking about close up guys who do magic and mentalism in strolling or table hopping venues, or even necessarily magicians who do the occasional mentalism piece in their magic shows. Although what we are discussing here might very well be of intense interest to you if you fall into that last category.

I'm talking primarily about full mentalism shows, with an audience seated before you in some fashion. There will be some who perform in large theaters for hundreds if not thousands of people at a time. But I would guess that those performances are in the minority in this discussion. Certainly I've done those shows, but they are by no means the norm for me. I would guess the same for you.

The vast majority of my mentalism shows happen for groups of anywhere from 30-100 people and as such would qualify as parlor shows. My educated guess is that the majority of mentalism programs are performed under similar circumstances.

In my general mentalism programs I have what I think of as 'slots' in my show. By this I mean that there are portions of my show that serve specific functions in the overall performance. We all have these, and the most obvious examples are the 'opener' and the 'closer'.

We all have material that we use in these spots in our shows that serve specific functions.

Obviously the opener is designed to grab attention and start the journey that the show will take. The closer is obviously the grand finale. The killer piece that everyone leaves the performance talking about.

In my show I have a couple of 'slots' that I think of as the 'card' slots, meaning, a good piece of mentalism using playing cards goes well in that spot in the show.

I make it a point to have extra material with me at all times while I am on stage. There are several good reasons for this. For starters you never know when

something might go wrong and you need to 'fill' with a piece other than what you had planned. You might have to suddenly add some extra time to your performance. You might get to the show and find that the conditions for some of your material are just not workable. All of these and many more are entirely possible. I even had one instance many years ago where I was using a volunteer from the audience who was going to have to follow some directions with her eyes closed. Only one problem, she was deaf! I had no way of knowing. Thank goodness I had alternate material on stage with me.

With that thought in mind, I have 'options' for almost all of the various slots in my show. These are pieces that, while different from each other, fulfill similar requirements that I have at certain points in the show. Nowhere is this more true than in the 'cards' slot of the program.

Have you ever done a show and then while you are in the car on the way home thought to yourself that perhaps a different piece other than what you did might have worked better in that particular show? I know I have. Many times.

By having options I can literally make the call right on the spot as to what I feel would be the best option for that particular audience in that particular show.

And this what this book is all about.

When pressed to find playing card material for the majority of stand up situations, most performers immediately flash to the classic Tossed Out Deck, and rightly so. There's a reason why it's a classic. But once you get past that the list dwindles swiftly. There's a ton of playing card material of a mentalism nature for the close up performer, but once things move to a larger stage the available options drop dramatically.

That's where this brand new tome from Mark Strivings comes in.

Over the years I have amassed a decent amount of material that works beautifully in these parlor conditions. Some of it is my own take on some classic plots and others are a bit more off the beaten path. In any event, all of it is something that I can have ready to go in my case, pull it out and do it. And having the luxury of the immediate availability of a variety of material of this type, ready to go on a moment's notice, takes a lot of the worry out of a great many performance situations.

For me, the 'cards' slot of the show is far enough into the performance that I have a good feel for the audience, how they respond and what the overall mood is. Armed with this information I can make the call on the spot for whatever material I think will play best for that particular program. It's a wonderfully commercial way to work.

Yes, it involves carrying a bit more 'stuff' around, but in the end it is completely worth it. The peace of mind and overall flexibility is worth its weight in solid gold to me.

In this collection there are over 15 items covering various plots and effects, all using playing cards as their primary, if not only prop. All of these effects can be set in advance and ready to go straight out of the case and all are ridiculously simple to do.

There are effects that involve people participating in the audience, others have volunteers on stage.

Just some of the miracles included are:

2 1/2 Star Miracle - possibly the strongest handling of Koran's Five-Star Miracle ever. This would even fool Koran!

A Perfect Match - an incredibly simple prediction effect that plays great as part of a larger scenario or as a separate effect.

A Work Of Art - A killer and incredibly easy design duplication using art cards.

The Ultimate Invisible Brainwave - potentially the strongest handling of the classic Brain Wave premise ever created. If you were to witness a performance of this it would absolutely fool you, guaranteed. If you could do this for real, this is what it would look like.

Chain Of Thought - Another handling of the classic Brain Wave premise that introduces that is incredibly commercial, and an absolute cooler. "That's beautiful!" - Dean Dill after witnessing a performance of Chain Of Thought

Challenge Name-A-Card - a wonderfully simple and commercial handling of the

classic 'Premonition' plot wherein there are no extra cards in the pockets. It's a worker!

Crimped Coincidence - a fun and easy 'needle in the haystack' presentation with a free selection and a bag full of folded playing cards. It's a fooler!

Many Tekel Deck - a remarkable take on the classic mene tekel deck that allows you to not only openly display the deck but work with up to four cards simultaneously. If you know the mene tekel deck you know how impressive this is!

Open & Shut - a Strivings classic! A card is openly predicted, a number between 1 and 52 is named (no limitations of any sort), the cards are counted and there is the predicted card. Incredibly clean!

Par-Optic Plus - a take on the classic 'Par Optic Vision' from Annemann. Squeaky clean. Do it with a blindfold or without. Incredibly strong, yet so simple.

Psychic Influence - FIVE different handlings. Easily the single most unique effect in the book. This prediction simply doesn't seem possible and can use a borrowed deck which the performer never touches. Absolute incredible. And virtually self-working.

And more.

ALL of these effects are incredibly easy to perform. There is work to be done ahead of time on practically all of them, but the actual performance is easy as can be.

- No sleight of hand
- Simple to do
- Easy reset
- Everything is preset in advance. Simply take the deck out and do the trick.

Plus more!

Also included are two essays. One deals with my views on using playing cards in mentalism (apparently I'm ok with it), but also lays out some thoughts that never

get discussed when this is beaten to death every time it comes up online. Also discussed is how my position applies specifically to parlor work.

The second essay goes into detail on my philosophy when it comes to routining a show. Some of this has been touched on above, but here we really get down to it.

There is also a short section on a couple of very simple sleights that are absolutely not necessary to perform any of these effects, but do make very nice 'convincers' on a couple of them. Keep in mind, NONE of these effects require any sleight of hand unless you want to add these very simple sleights that can add a solid layer of deception to your performance.

The book itself weighs in at nearly 100 pages, perfect bound in card covers.

There's nothing else quite like this in the literature of mentalism, and it belongs on every mentalist's bookshelf.