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# FOREWORD

I must begin by saying that this book surprised me. A collection of tricks and illusions for kidshow and family entertainers sounded wonderful. But, it was written by J C Sum; a man who is hailed far and wide as a "Modern Illusionist." He is not really known for comedy or children's entertainment. I fully expected to see ideas forged from polished chrome and Formica.

The first trick featured an ordinary gift box, a teddy bear and a routine that made sense. I knew he got it.

I first encountered J C in the summer of 2008 when he approached me about a project. Immediately I knew that this man was a creative magical thinker, a savvy businessman, a polished showman and an experienced performer. Through the material offered in this book, you will see all four of those qualities displayed.

From a business standpoint, the effects outlined are very cost effective. None should cost a king's ransom to build. They seem easy to store and simple enough to transport. That's good for your bottom line.

As a showman, many of these items could be spotlighted as features to upsell a birthday party or school show. One in particular conjures up images of photo-ops that fit perfectly with the worldwide "wizarding" craze. Nothing like a memorable illusion that promotes YOU.

From a performer's view, most are very easy to stage. Of course, there are one or two with difficult (but manageable) angles. In a wide assortment like this, that's to be expected. For most situations, from a living room to a small stage venue, you'll find them to be effective, baffling and workable. Solid ideas from one who's actually been in the trenches and KNOWS what works.

Creatively, it has been some time since I've read a collection of illusions that weren't just old ideas with a new paint job. J C's fresh ideas will come at you from the side. Where standard effects are used, he offers surprising innovations and unexpected combinations that raise them to a whole new level.

I was also pleased to see that unless a specific routine is required by the design or operation of the prop, J C gives only guidelines and leaves the actual patter to your imagination. The materials contained here are flexible enough to allow you to integrate your own creative touches and make them truly "yours."

As an illusion designer, builder and performer, are there things I might have designed differently? Of course! However, these are NOT just concepts and pipe dreams. These are fully-formed, well thought out effects that could easily be put

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to work as-is... OR, they could be the starting point for your own unique piece of magic.

I look forward to trying my hand at a few of the items in this book. After reading it, I'm sure you will, too.

Dan Wolfe  
Smoky Mountain Magic  
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# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Based in Singapore, J C Sum is one of the top professional illusionists in Asia and is a world-class designer of original illusions and mega illusions. As an international performer, J C has staged over 3000 shows across Asia Pacific as well as in the Middle East, France and the US.

Along with his partner, 'Magic Babe' Ning, they are acknowledged as "Singapore's celebrity magic duo" (Channel News Asia). The Straits Times regards them as "Asia's most famous illusionists". Magicseen Magazine recognizes them as "truly one of the world's leading illusion acts".

J C & Ning are well known for their innovative illusions such as teleporting and vanishing people & cars over great distances as well as setting a world magic record and successfully predicting the national 4D lottery. From 2008 - 2009, they starred in "Ultimate Magic", Singapore's first daily magic attraction that ran for 13 months. In 2011, they also starred in their own one-hour 3D TV magic special.

In 2009, J C was awarded a Merlin Award for "Most Original Illusionist of the Year" by the International Magicians Society. He is also a recipient of a 'Master of Magic' award from the International Festival of Magic (Bangladesh) and the winner of two International Brotherhood of Magicians (U.S.A) 'Linking Ring' magic awards.

J C is widely regarded as one of the most prolific illusion designers in the world. He has designed over 75 original illusions for his shows and special events throughout Asia. He has written 3 books on modern illusion designs & presentations for the magic community and the books have been sold in over 35 countries. J C & Ning also released a groundbreaking DVD set, "Behind the Illusions", that was a best seller and received high positive reviews worldwide.

Besides magic, J C enjoys reading, watching movies, playing pool, cooking and customizing "Transformers" toys.

For more info, visit: [www.jcsum.com](http://www.jcsum.com)

Read his blog at: [www.backstagebusiness.wordpress.com](http://www.backstagebusiness.wordpress.com)

# INTRODUCTION

Like most magicians, I started my commercial career performing kids shows for birthday parties, schools, family days, carnivals and malls. Typically, many shows were generally also family shows because of the nature of the events, venues and activities.

As I moved into stage magic, I developed routines with excellent standards such as the Sliding Die Box, Change Bag, Drawer Box, Dove Pan, Square Circle and Mirror Box. A few years later, I added the sword basket illusion to my family shows as well with good success. That prop was the Modern Sword Basket design built by Thom Rubino, under his then-company, Illusions by Your Design.

Although I currently do not perform primarily for kids and family audiences, I'm constantly designing or modernizing stage props and illusions for performers who do. Recently, we reworked Jim Steinmeyer's "Modern Art" and "Lady in Puzzle" for a working family entertainer.

So, I do understand the needs of kids & family entertainers and the desire to introduce modern large-scale effects for those special shows. Too often, kids magicians are viewed as magicians who do not perform sophisticated or impressive material.

One reason is because there are a limited number of fabricated illusions and large stage props on the market that ideally fit today's working kids & family performers' needs. From effect, to aesthetic design and the important criteria of packing flat and light, the demands are specific and challenging to meet perfectly.

Many of the most popular kids stage effects and illusions have been around for years. Some classics include the "Sliding Die Box", Bill Paul's "Fraidy Cat Rabbit", Milbourne Christopher's "Forgetful Freddy", Harry Leat's "Run Rabbit Run" and The Great Norman's "Hippity Hop Rabbits". U.F. Grant created many illusions and stage props that are still used by kids & family performers today. These include, "Arm Chopper", "Super X Levitation", "Flying Carpet", "Temple Screens Production" and "Strat-o-sphere". Some of his booklets are available as ebooks from Lybrary.com and MAK Magic is still producing several of his props.

As of this writing, there are still a number of good options currently available. Owens Magic Supreme created and manufactures many different props and stage effects that are well suited for the kids & family performer but not inexpensive. Jim Sommers is considered a master at designing illusions that pack flat and has pack-flat versions of many classic illusions.

In more recent times, Creative Magic (who have since chosen to close the business) manufactured a number of illusions and large-scale effects using "pop-up fabric" props that pack extremely small and lightweight. Dan Wolfe of Smoky

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Mountain Magic also designs and builds a lot of modern stage props and illusions for kids & family magicians. His props are refreshing in look and the workmanship of his props is of very high quality. He is also the only authorized U.S. builder for Gunter Puchinger's popular "Mini-Kub Zag", licensed through Chalet Magic. You will also find the occasional item from magic producers from time to time that work well for kids stage shows.

There has not been any book in recent years that has been devoted to illusions for kids & family magicians. Most illusion books, including my own, focus on professional large-scale effects for performances in a showroom, theatre or corporate event setting.

Over the last few decades, there have been a limited number of good books that I feel are excellent references but you will need to spend a bit of time and effort to update the plots, presentations and designs of the props/ illusions.

Many of Paul Osbourne's illusions, especially those described in the Illusion Systems series Vol 1 & 2 and The Black Book, were designed for kids & family audiences. However, while themed to that audience, they were created for theme park shows so the props were not designed to pack down or flat for easy transport. Wally Reid wrote an underrated book entitled "Magic On Stage" that has many stage props and illusions that are ideal for the kids & family magician.

David Ginn's "Professional Magic for Children" was considered a must-read text and contains many kids routines with larger stage props. He also has a vast collection of books written specially for this market. Chris Carey's "Find the Stuff that's You" (Vol 1 & 2) has solid stage props, routines & illusions peppered throughout the book. Kyle Peron has a great ebook on working with the Chair Suspension illusion for birthday parties and family stage shows.

However, the general lack of practical illusion material for the modern kids & family magician was the impetus to write this book.

While many existing illusions can be adapted for kids and family performances, all the illusions in this book were specifically created and themed for the kids & family performer. The plots, designs and methods are current and will appeal to today's generation. In addition, the designs are not difficult to construct, are relatively inexpensive and most importantly, pack down small or flat for easy transport. And, if you need professional help in fabricating any of the illusions, contact Dan Wolfe!

I hope this book will also serve as an introduction to kids magicians looking to add more advanced illusion methods to stage props and large scale effects for kids and family shows. For the experienced illusionist, I'm hopefully that you will find inexpensive solutions and ideas that you can easily add to your show.

Use these illusions and redefine the image of a kids show magician!

J C Sum  
July 2011