



THE MAGIC OF THE SPELLBINDER

Art Form: Theatre/Magic

Style: Illusion

Culture: African-American

Technical Needs

- ❑ Clean performance area
- ❑ One Microphone
- ❑ One table

Meet the Artist

Walter King, Jr. is one of Chicago's premier illusionists and has entertained with people like Jennifer Hudson, Sindbad, Levar Burton and Bill Cosby. He has performed in every kind of venue from industrial shows to professional ball games. King discovered an interest and talent for magic at a very young age but never seriously considered it until his college years. By then he had developed strong theatre and dance skills in which he has received numerous awards, such as the Illinois Arts Fellowship Award and the Joseph Jefferson for "Best Performance."

About the Performance

As the music begins and the curtains part, the Spellbinder opens with an explosive display of illusion and special effects. Objects float in mid-air, solid elements appear and disappear and colorful silks are transformed into candy treats and live birds.

The master illusionist, college graduate and product of the Chicago Public School System, shares with the students his personal experience on peer pressure, self respect and the importance of education. A special feature during this rap session is Spellbinder's animated, hip-hop character named "T.C." (Too Cool).

One of the highlights of King's program is when he draws a typical student on a marker board and suddenly before everyone's eyes, the drawing comes to life and carries on a hilarious conversation that reinforces a positive message about peer-pressure and the importance of education. This show is guaranteed to be a rap session and performance that provides an enriching experience that the students and teachers will long remember.

Contextual Information

Nobody knows what the first magic trick was. However, nearly 4,500 years ago, scribes recorded one of the first descriptions of a magic trick. It can be found in a papyrus dating from the reign of the Egyptian monarch King Cheops, builder of the Great Pyramid at Giza (c. 2600 B.C.). The description tells of a magician called Dedi, and King Cheops requested a command performance after hearing of Dedi's amazing powers. Dedi's first trick in front of the king and his court was to cut the heads off of a goose and an ox, then he magically brought the animals back to life with their heads restored. Introducing what was later termed the macabre effect, Dedi initiated a theme that was popular for many magicians to come.

Magic was not always intended to entertain. The priests, shamans and magicians of antiquity had two major areas of concern: controlling the weather and controlling disease. These ancient magicians developed rites and rituals that appeared to cause the desired effects, and used their rites to instill followers with confidence in their magical powers.

In current times we now recognize magic as a form of entertainment. From the times of Harry Houdini and Ching Ling Foo to David Copperfield and the Spellbinder, magic has taught lessons and entertained countless audiences all around the world.

Vocabulary

Production/vanishes: objects, animals and people are made to appear and/or disappear

Restorations: an object or person is damaged or destroyed, then restored to its original state

Penetration: a solid object passes through another solid object without damage to either object

Invulnerability: an object is made to appear indestructible

Transportation and transposition: an object changes position or place magically

Transformation: an object is altered from one size, shape, or color to another

Levitation: a person or an object defies the laws of gravity and floats in the air without the visible means of support.

Animation: related to levitation, an inanimate object is made to move