

OCTOBER 2018 • \$6.50

Genii

THE CONJURORS' MAGAZINE



CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF LE DOUBLE FOND

Genii

THE CONJURORS' MAGAZINE

VOLUME 81 NUMBER 10 OCTOBER 2018

EDITOR

Richard Kaufman

ART DIRECTOR

Elizabeth Kaufman

ADVERTISING & OFFICE MANAGERS

Margret Daham
Donna Lucas

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Dustin Stinett

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Kari Hendler
Taylor Wong

COLUMNISTS

John Bannon
David Britland
Mike Caveney
Alexander de Cova
Jason Andrew Davidson
John Gaughan
John Guastafarro
Hannibal
Kainoa Harbottle
Todd Karr
David Kaye
Martin Lewis
Roberto Mansilla
Jonathan Neal
Jonathan Pendragon
Jeff Prace
Jon Racherbaumer
Jim Steinmeyer

REVIEWERS

David Britland
Shiv Duggal
Tom Frame
Kainoa Harbottle
Brad Henderson
John Lovick
Ryan Matney
Nathan Coe Marsh
David Oliver
Danny Orleans
David Regal
Joe M. Turner

CONSIGLIERE

R.A. Farmer

PUBLISHER

Pitchford Entertainment, Media
and Magic

Cover Photograph
by Maurizio Pighizzini
and Bertrand Vacarisas
Cover Illustration
by Elizabeth Kaufman

Mr. Kaufman's Portrait by Kari Hendler

LIFETIME SUBSCRIBERS AND SUPPORTERS

Alexander L. Young • Bill McFadden
Michel Andenmatten • Mike Vance
Walton Magic, John Walton
Josh Mandel • David Mitchell
Karl Miller • Deano Ewtushik
Tim Jackson • Ray Kosby • James Martin
Randy Sinnott • Winton Gibbons
Jay Patel • Jaac Mandrake • Jim Weyand
Richard Forster • Joe Gallant
Perry Vincent • Thomas L. Newman
Ross Hironaka • Mark Dombroff
Diamond Jim Tyler • Dr. Theophilus E. Green
Gary Dismukes • Chris Wilson
Al D'Alonso • Charles A. Rodriguez
Dr. Joe Vitale • Thomas Resciniti
Eric Leclerc • Rick Hebert • Alan Wong
Jim Neff • Kenneth Sodaro
Andrew Pinard • Michael Jaffe
Karen Ivers • Robert Somerdin
Seuss Hawkeye Metivier
Jeff & Mary Mielke
Stephen B. Smith • Joseph Cassidy
Weuler Elias Moura • Jimmy L. Rhodes Jr.
Kenneth G. Mutzabaugh
Mr. Eerie • Dan Sheen • Philip Peh Andreas
Krall • Kimikazu Matsumoto
Rex Liu • Yukishige Yanagawa
Herve Lesteur, Creations Magiques
Francisco Laguna • Kenneth Chmielewski
Marios Sokratous • Jeffrey Cowan
David Williams • Kenneth Mackay
Chris Murphy • Ben Mueller
Bruno Depay • Andres Reynoso
Ricardo T. Rosenkranz, M.D.
Gary Kosnitzky • Mark Goldstein
Pierre Emmanuel Chaut • Benoit Louppe
Jimmy Vee • Bernhard Schmitz
Yuki Hirohata • Lindley Brenza
James M. Croop • Ben Smood
Frederick Bally • Gabriel Garber
R.W. Kelley • Dr. Michael A. Stelzer
Dr. Bruce Averbook
22 Anonymous

63

PHOTO BY KARI HENDLER

22

PHOTO BY ROBERT SEBREE

Genii: The Conjurers' Magazine

Volume 81, Number 10 • ISSN 0016-6855 USPS 216-060

Printed in the U.S.A. Genii is published monthly. Subscription rates, 1 year \$58;

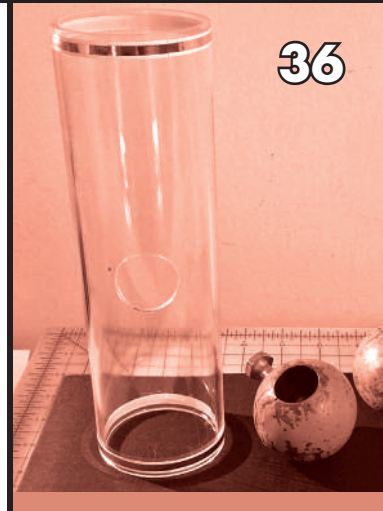
2 years \$112; 3 years \$158; Digital ONLY: 1 year \$35, 2 years \$55, 3 years \$85. Copyright © 2018, Pitchford Entertainment, Media and Magic. The Genii Corporation, 4200 Wisconsin Ave., NW, PMB 106-384, Washington, D.C. 20016. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage or retrieval system, except as may be expressly permitted in writing by the copyright owner. Periodical postage paid at Washington, D.C. and additional entry offices. Please allow 4 to 6 weeks for service to start. No refunds will be given on subscriptions once placed.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Genii: The Conjurers' Magazine —Attn: Circulation Dept., 4200 Wisconsin Ave., NW, Suite 106-384, Washington, D.C. 20016.

Phone: 301-652-5800. Fax: 301-652-8035
EMAIL: GENII@GENIIMAGAZINE.COM

WWW.GENIIMAGAZINE.COM
GENII OFFICE 301-652-5800

36



FEATURES

- 70 30 Years of Le Double Fond**
Boris Wild Interviews
Alexandra and Dominique Duvivier
- 63 MAGIC Live! 2018**
By David Kaye and Dustin Stinett



70



COLUMNS

- 10 Genii Speaks** by Richard Kaufman
- 12 The Eye** by Todd Karr
- 16 Now Performing**
- 17 In Memoriam: David Linsell** by Julie Eng
- 20 On the Slant** by Jon Racherbaumer
- 22 The Chamber of Secrets**
The Miraculous Glass Casket by John Gaughan
- 26 Conjuring** Advanced Teleportation by Jim Steinmeyer
- 28 Left-Handed** Gum Ball Recall by Jeff Prace
- 32 The Expert at the Kids' Table**
Science of Audience Management 101 by David Kaye
- 34 Cardopolis** Offworld by David Britland
- 36 Secrets Within Secrets** Carson, McCartney, and Hay
- 44 Artifices** Hero: Where One Card Gives Its Life for Another
by Roberto Mansilla
- 48 Magicana** by John Guastaferro
- 48 Mystery Wand by David Kuraya and John Guastaferro
- 51 You Only Live Thrice by FLIP
- 54 Time Will Tell by John Guastaferro
- 58 The Academy of Magical Arts in Genii**
- 58 Knights at The Magic Castle by Jason Andrew Davidson
- 61 The Magic Castle Performance Schedule

12



LIGHT FROM THE LAMP

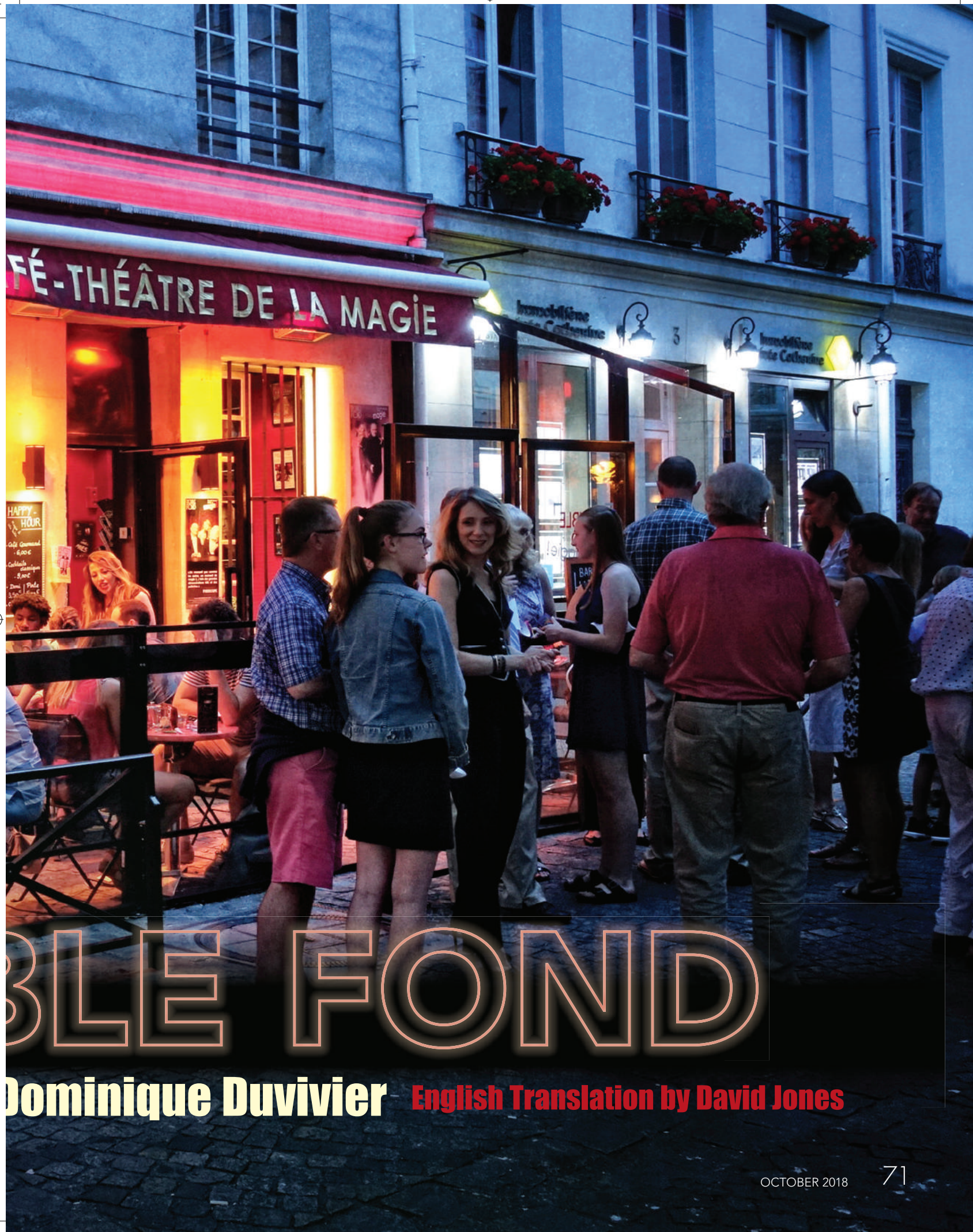
- 84 Books Reviewed by John Lovick**
- 84 *Handcrafted Card Magic, Volume 3* by Denis Behr
- 85 *A New Angle* by Ryan Plunkett and Michael Feldman
- 87 Videos Reviewed by Joe M. Turner**
- 87 *Boris Wild's Sensations* by Boris Wild
- 88 *Conscious Magic Episode 4* by Andrew Gerard and Ran Pink
- 89 *Conscious Magic Episode 5* by Andrew Gerard and Ran Pink
- 89 Tricks Reviewed by David Oliver**
- 89 Amazebox Black by Mark Shortland
- 90 LightPaint by Mathieu Bich
- 91 Omni Case by Laurent Villiger
- 91 Pocket Collector by Jordan Victoria
- 91 Banshees Throwing Cards Created by Murphy's Magic
- 93 Subscription Information/Advertisers Index**

LE DOUBLE FOND LE CAFÉ



30 YEARS OF LE DOUB

Boris Wild Interviews Alexandra and Do



BLE FOND

Dominique Duvivier English Translation by David Jones

OCTOBER 2018

71



**Le Double Fond
is celebrating 30 years
of providing magic
to lay audiences
in an elegant
and unique setting
in the heart of Paris.**

**It is a magic theater,
café, bar, and serves light
food and snacks.**

**At the heart of the
business is Dominique
Duvivier and his daughter
Alexandra, who own and
run Le Double Fond as
well as perform regularly.**

PHOTO BY ANDREW LYNDON/KEGGS

BORIS WILD: How was this crazy idea to create a theater-café for magic in Paris at the end of the 1980s born? Was it easy to find a place that matched what you had in mind?

DOMINIQUE DUVIVIER: In fact, it wasn't too difficult to find. I put my friends on the case: about 10 people began looking with me to find a place in Paris that could fulfill all the functions that I was dreaming about.

BORIS: Did you have specific requirements in mind, or did you just look for a place that felt right? Because, well, there's a certain atmosphere here and you get the feeling that it wouldn't have worked anywhere else, although it's hard to say exactly why.

DOMINIQUE: Yes, that's true ... we had to visit three or four cellars like this before finding this particular one.

BORIS: So you already had the idea of a cellar in mind?

DOMINIQUE: Yes, well, let's say a theater. That was the priority. Honestly, I wasn't necessarily thinking about either a bar or a restaurant, which is what we finally ended up with. I wanted a place 100 percent dedicated to magic and that didn't exist anywhere in Europe at the time, as you know. One of my friends said to me: "I just saw something on the Place du Marché Sainte-Catherine, not very far away." So I popped over there the same day and there it was: love at first sight. It was exactly what we



needed. At that time it was a Caribbean nightclub whose owner, who was very nice, was in rather a hurry to sell because his business wasn't going well. He sold the commercial license and the premises for the current equivalent of 200-300,000 euros. It was a godsend! It was just a matter of finding the money.

BORIS: There is that, obviously.

DOMINIQUE: Yes, and it wasn't just a small detail as I didn't have any money at all. So I went to see my personal banker and told him about my project.

BORIS: How did he react?

DOMINIQUE: Well, I'll make it simple: I made an appoint-

ment to ask for a loan. He welcomed me quite warmly:

"So, you have a project, tell me about it!"

"I'd like to open a place dedicated to magic and I saw a location that I like very much."

The guy immediately seemed less enthusiastic. He typed "magic" into his computer (which was quite rudimentary at the time) and, while showing me his screen, he said:

"Look, there's nothing coming up! If you had said 'deli,' then there's a lot of stuff, but there's nothing under 'magic,' I'm afraid I can't do anything for you."

So there it was, in five minutes my hopes had been dashed. But, as I had nothing to lose and I was a bit annoyed, I said, "Can I show you a trick anyway?"

Banker: "Oh, okay, if you must ... whatever you like."

So I did a trick for him that lasted 40 seconds and then the guy exclaimed:

"But that's great! Could you explain your project to me again?"

"I'd like to create a place dedicated to magic, people would come and see some magic while having a drink, and then they would go downstairs to watch a show."

"You said 'have a drink?' So you want to open a bar? Well that's certainly possible."

And, believe it or not, he lent me the money, all because the word "bar" came up in his computer. So, obviously, it was necessary to mortgage my house and we lived quite frugally for several years to be able to repay the debt. But today Le Double Fond is worth almost 10 times its purchase price. That's crazy.

In fact, I think that the moment I saw the guy was going to reject my credit application I was no longer just "someone seeking a loan," but became a magician with a wacky project who hadn't been taken seriously. At that moment I didn't even want to give him my sales pitch. I just wanted to "sell the magic." To show him that magic is serious and, as a result, he took me seriously and we did business.

BORIS: And so what was this trick that took 40 seconds?



Dominique performing in the cellar of Le Double Fond

DOMINIQUE: It was the spongeballs, the way that I've always performed them, with just one effect. I have two balls, I let him choose the one he wants: "This is the one you want, you take it, you don't want this one, then it's mine." I ask him if he felt anything, the guy says no, I show him my empty hands, he opens his and he has both balls ... and he goes crazy.

BORIS: Yes, of course, we can say what we want, but it's one of the strongest effects, it gives spectators one of the most magical sensations that they can have.

DOMINIQUE: And you know, what's crazy is that the spongeballs is the trick that I've probably done the most in my life, table hopping thousands of times, then on many occasions like that, impromptu. So I may have performed it 40,000 times in my life and never once, *never* once, has someone said to me, "I've seen this trick before." And now my daughter is carrying on this tradition and it's the same for her. Yet everyone does this trick, so it proves the huge impact that it has.

BORIS: And so what were you looking for in this place, were you planning to focus on close-up magic?

DOMINIQUE: My initial idea has always been to promote close-up magic as an art in its own right. I was fed up with just doing table hopping and with those private parties where the format at that time was always the same: table magic followed by a "real" show of stage magic, which always had the spotlight.

Even though we were very well paid (in those years, there was no competition like we have today and table magic was a "luxury" product), I was fed up with being taken for a nobody with his two or three little tricks. I'd had enough of being the warm-up act, I wanted to express myself as an artist, as the stage magician did. I really felt that I had something to say, but I wasn't able to show it, so I started talking about my project, but no one was crazy enough to believe it. I said to myself: never mind, I'll give it a shot on my own!

In the beginning I didn't have any particular capacity in mind for the room: it turned out that Le Double Fond was able to accommodate 50 people, but if I'd found a room with 90 seats it would have been just as good.

There was still the problem of visibility: everyone had to be able to see well, even at the back. So, in principle, the only possible solution was to install bleachers, which I didn't fancy because I wanted the room to remain flexible. So I went to look for individual seats of different heights, to create an effect like having bleachers. But that was going to be hard work because they just didn't exist. Besides, it's funny, because I remember that Gaëtan Bloom, who was around quite a lot at the beginning of this Double Fond adventure, didn't have any faith in the feasibility of this idea:

"Hold on a minute, graduated seating isn't possible!"

"It is. I'll find a seat manufacturer who will make them for me."

"But the seats have a specific height for a reason; it's not arbitrary."

"You'll see, I'll find a way."

And there you are, 30 years on, we have renewed the seating several times, but we've always kept the same principle of four different heights and it's great, because we can do what we want, even completely emptying the room for dancing, for example.

BORIS: It's true that it's ideal, because bleachers always pose a big problem when it comes to storage.

Speaking of close-up magic, at that time it wasn't as widespread and as popular as it is today. So your venture was potentially risky because it was necessary to attract a new public who had nothing to compare it with in France, or even in Europe. So one asks the question: was it difficult to attract spectators to an unknown place at that time or, on the contrary, did the novelty of the place mean that Le Double Fond became popular quickly?

DOMINIQUE: In fact, I bought the place in May 1988 and we opened the next month on June 1. We put on a lick of paint and that was it. Since we were in the middle of the summer season we immediately had lots of people on the terrace [the outside seating], because on the Place du Marché Sainte-Catherine, from April to September, the terraces are always naturally crowded. Even though the shows downstairs didn't fill up much, we had turnover and that was the main thing we needed to get started. But when winter came, the terrace began to empty and we thought, "Hey, there aren't many people here!" And then no one came at all. The Marais district is very fashionable and busy now at all times of the year, but at the time, as soon as the weather began to turn a bit chilly, it was totally deserted. What's more, when we launched, we didn't know much about this type of business and we sold our drinks almost at a loss. In short, we found ourselves hard up very quickly. So by mid-October we were wondering if we had made a mistake and we were already contemplating selling. Fortunately we made the decision to let things unfold as much as possible. But we had a lot of years of hardship, not to mention many difficulties. We were constantly paying out for all manner of things, even though the business never had any money. We had to constantly inject our own money, pay very little if at all, and get additional loans I think it took five years to make at least a small amount of profit, and 15 years to breathe a bit more easily.

BORIS: And since it was the beginning, I imagine that there were a lot of promotional costs to make the place known.

DOMINIQUE: Well, in fact no. It was only after a decade that we were able to start to invest a little in promoting the place. It was only through word of mouth that we got started.

ALEXANDRA: (joining the conversation): Anyway, we really only began promoting the place when Adeline Galland became a member of our team in the 2000s, and she is doing a great job!

DOMINIQUE: Yes, Adeline really takes care of the media and our promotions in the broad sense

and, thanks to her, we have also diversified our activities to professional training, corporate shows, and so on. All of this meant that business was booming. That said, there are still times when it's difficult to fill the room. We still haven't found the miracle recipe.

ALEXANDRA: Yes, sometimes we could fill the room three times in the same evening and then sometimes it's hard ...

DOMINIQUE: Yes, sometimes things work out well and sometimes not, without anyone knowing why.

BORIS: I know that you can never rest on your laurels. In any case, we can say that today The Double Fond, 30 years after its opening, is working, particularly because you've diversified.

DOMINIQUE: Yes, exactly, our corporate shows and our professional magic training have maximized our strengths and increased our profitability, which has been key to our development. Today we manage four activities: Le Double Fond Theater, the Mayette Magic Shop (founded in 1808, it is the oldest in the world), Le Double Fond training organization, and Le Double Fond Production Agency for shows outside The Double Fond.

BORIS: What have you kept, and what have you tried to change, over the last 30 years?

DOMINIQUE: I can say that right from the beginning I had a strong feeling that we shouldn't just promote individual artists, but create synergies by creating duets or trios and so on. For example, I very quickly created a show with Gaëtan Bloom, Jean-Jacques Sanvert, and myself, another one with Jean-Jacques and me, Gaëtan and me, and also Jean-Jacques and Quoc Tien Tran, and in the 2000s the duo with my daughter of course. In short, I always favored a team spirit and, 30 years later, we've found that's what the public really prefers: to feel the strength of Le Double Fond team, the family spirit in the team.

ALEXANDRA: The concept of Le Double Fond isn't just the magic that we offer at the bar and in the show, it's also a bit like "the magic of being together," at least we try. Because we like to welcome our customers as if they are family, as if we were welcoming them to our home. Often, in Paris especially, people aren't

Le Double Fond terrace when it opened in 1988





PHOTO BY ALAIN KERNEVEZ

necessarily pleasant. The welcome always leaves something to be desired. In our case, we don't have to pretend. We're happy, it's our place, it's our life, and nothing is more important than to welcome customers as friends.

BORIS: That's what I've noticed and what I see in general: when people come to Paris to see magic, they say that the waiters aren't so great, but that they feel very welcome at The Double Fond.

ALEXANDRA: I am happy to hear that. Remember that one of the special features of Le Double Fond is that the waiters are magicians who come to your table to do magic, even when you only order a coke or a coffee.

DOMINIQUE: It's a very important principle.

BORIS: That's what makes customers want to discover more magic by going downstairs to see a show.

DOMINIQUE: That's it! Some take years to get down to the cellar where the theater is, but that doesn't stop them from getting there eventually. And when they do come, we are confident enough to say that they will come back.

ALEXANDRA: We have a lot of loyal customers, even those who don't miss any of our shows (we produce almost 10 new shows a year) and we also have customers who only come back 10 years later, because they have never forgotten the special atmosphere of The Double Fond. It's funny, because with our 30 years of experience now, we have incredible family stories like, "We came to Le Double Fond not long after being married, we've come back with our children when they were young,

and now we've come back with the whole family, grandchildren included!"

BORIS: By the way, where does the name Double Fond come from? Is there something we don't know?

DOMINIQUE: People often say that I'm a catalyst because I really like working, not just as a double act, but also as part of a team. Even today we have a team meeting every day, four or five people to take stock, move forward, and think. Obviously the principle was the same at the very beginning of The Double Fond. So when we were looking for a name, we all got together to throw some ideas around. Bloom was there and, among other possibilities, he came up with "Double Fond" and I immediately said, "That's it!" It meant something to me, because everyone knows the expression without really knowing what it means, so it's intriguing and it makes you want to know more. In addition, the term described the place well, with the upstairs and downstairs corresponding to its visible and hidden sides.

[The literal translation of "double fond" in English is "double bottom." More colloquially it means "false bottom," the sort that you might find in a magician's prop or a smuggler's suitcase. Also, the term can be used in French with regard to a person; someone who is a bit "double fond" is not quite what they appear to be.]

BORIS: There are about 10 of you who keep Le Double Fond running, both in the spotlight and backstage. With whom, and how, did the team evolve over 30 years?

ALEXANDRA: In the beginning the shows were only performed by Gaëtan Bloom, Jean-Jacques Sanvert, and especially Papa. They played *every* night during that period and sometimes did several shows per night.

DOMINIQUE: Yes, I was working like crazy. It was a very creative time, very rich, where I really learned my job as a “close-up artist on stage,” if I can say it like that, which of course is very different to the work of a close-up performer going from table to table. Holding the same audience for an hour bears little relation to spending five minutes in front of a few people. So I tested lots of new things all the time and, little by little, I started to feel comfortable by trying more elaborate, complex, and consistent things. I haven’t stopped writing new shows since then; I must have created more than 40 shows during the past 30 years.

At the same time, we already had Philippe de Perthuis, Quoc Tien Tran, Jean-Pierre Crispin, and Alexandra, of course, starting to perform shows (all four are still there 30 years later). But they weren’t doing a show downstairs at that stage. They took care of the “klipoup” upstairs, at the bar, and corporate shows outside The Double Fond. “Klipoup” is the term I came up with to designate close-up magic at the bar, which consisted of doing quick tricks, just like that “klip! ... poup!” But after a few years, I realized that if I continued to perform almost all of the shows downstairs then none of them would get a chance to perform there. So I stopped doing everything myself and they had to give it a go. That’s how, little by little, a versatile and stable team was created.

ALEXANDRA: Yes, and Daddy has always pushed everyone to come up with new shows, because, since Le Double Fond is open all year long, you have to come up with new ideas so that the public will come back and realize that things are constantly changing.

DOMINIQUE: The real reason behind that is because I’ve always been afraid of things becoming routine in shows. When I was in my 20s I went to see many friends performing in cabarets and I saw the danger of the repetitive side of the job. I said to myself that must never happen to me. Everyone ended up having this fault, of not even hearing the words that they were saying, the habit having been instilled into them so strongly

they were just going through the motions. So my priority has always been to stay fresh, regardless of the field. Take risks to push yourself to be better and stay in the present moment all the time.

BORIS: The good thing is, as it’s *your* place, you have the freedom to change the shows. I think it’s true to say that Le Double Fond wouldn’t be as it is today unless, behind the scenes, you had this freedom.

ALEXANDRA: Yes, but freedom can be both an asset and a weakness. Because we could have this freedom and end up doing nothing. True freedom requires an iron discipline.

BORIS: Yes, exactly, you can be autonomous but have trouble doing something. And since we’re talking about Le Double Fond team, tell us something about Alexandra and The Double Fond, how did she develop as a member of the team and how was your double act created?

DOMINIQUE: Alexandra started working with me professionally when we bought the business at the Mayette Magic Shop on November 25, 1991, when she was in her final year of high school. She suddenly realized that she wanted to be part of the adventure of launching the shop with us. So she wasn’t even at the end of her year and then, bingo: she was deep into magic!



Le Double Fond 2018 team

ALEXANDRA: Yes, but at the magic level, the realization happened before that, in 1988 when Dad took me to FISM in Holland. He performed in a theater with 700 seats, doing his Cups and Balls routine. My mother translated it into English, and at the end the audience gave him a standing ovation. It left a strong impression on me. What also influenced me was that all through my childhood I saw that even if my father was literally working all the time. At any time of the day or night, I saw him working in his office, and he was having fun. There was no border between work, play, and life. This, for a kid, was an eye opener. It's amazing to realize that you can work *and* have fun. All this must have been on my mind for a while because after FISM, I was 15 years old, and I said to myself: "That's what I want to do." In addition, at FISM, I saw some crazy stuff: Ricky Jay, Jeff McBride, and Rudy Coby having a boomerang contest in the lobby. And then there was a female magician: Lisa Menna. In the close-up gala she did costume changes and used a lot of feminine accessories in her magic. I identified with her completely: she was beautiful, but didn't play on her charm. We felt that she was smart, brilliant, and that's what I loved about her. Because being a female magician/assistant who was *only* beautiful didn't do much for me. I didn't want to play that role.

So that was the real starting point. On returning to Paris, I asked Daddy to teach me magic and he gave me his book *Cartomagie 2000* with the idea of "Get on with it, work at it and we'll see." I had trouble, because, frankly, at first I didn't understand anything. But I got hooked and then he decided to help me. After a while, he let me learn the ropes at Le Double

Fond with "klipoups" on the terrace, at the same time as I was doing my studies. And then in 1991, the purchase of the Mayette shop was the crossroad. In any case, life is made of choices, and the real challenge in life is to learn to live with the choices you make. So there I made a choice, much to my mother's chagrin, because she would have liked me to finish my high school degree, but I threw myself completely into magic. I learned my trade by selling in the shop and I did a lot of table hopping at Le Double Fond and then at special events. And one day Dad said to me: "I do my shows all alone downstairs, wouldn't you like to do a spot in my show?" The sneaky devil.

DOMINIQUE: At the time, I have to say, she was extremely shy. Paralyzed just by the thought of going on stage.

ALEXANDRA: Yes, so quite obviously I told him *no*. No, no, and no.

DOMINIQUE: And so I said to her, "Don't worry! I'll start the show by myself and when the audience is warmed up, then you can come on. If there's a problem I'll intervene. Also, after your spot, I'll just carry on with the rest of the show, no problem!" In short, I reassured her and so she started. I sensed such potential in her that I was ready to roll out the red carpet to convince her even though in general I don't have a conciliatory nature.

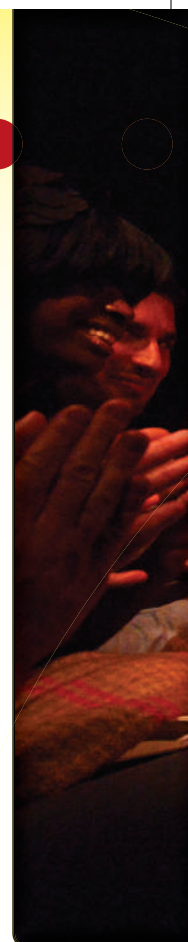
ALEXANDRA: Indeed not at all! You're more likely to tell the truth to someone directly to their face when sometimes it's best just to say nothing. It has earned you a lot of enemies.

DOMINIQUE: That's true, but I've mellowed over the years, but I was rather blunt in those days. Anyway, thanks to my stratagem, Alexandra was willing to step out on the stage and, despite the fear and the stage fright, she caught the bug.

ALEXANDRA: Yes indeed! That said, I spent the first few years stuck in the bathroom before the shows ... until the day I got fed up. I said to Daddy, "I'm sick of it!" And I realized that I had to get a better grip on myself or change jobs. It's funny because Juan Tamariz talks about this a bit and Dad also experienced it, the moment when you make the decision to stop being so terrified, to not let yourself be overwhelmed by your stage fright. You make the choice to not let the situation get the better of you anymore.

DOMINIQUE: And that's it, that's how Alexandra did a trick in my

Alexandra's debut at Le Double Fond





show, then two, then three, until in 1998, we went on a lecture tour around Europe together (Alexandra translated into English for me). And, in the train—on lecture tours, you're *always* in the train—I said to her: "Couldn't we think about doing a show together?" As you can imagine, there was a big silence.

ALEXANDRA: I obviously told him, *no!*

DOMINIQUE: But I insisted. And we started talking about my Cups and Balls routine, and that got her interested. And, the crazy thing is, she's very observant and she had seen me do the routine many times, and she knew immediately how to do it herself. Alexandra is very talented and she's the only one who doesn't know it ... She doesn't trust herself, her lack of belief in herself is quite inexplicable. That's always been the big problem and it's only starting to change a bit now, just a bit. So, we started working on a routine where we would perform the Cups and Ball together, as a duo, and it came together almost immediately. It's far from obvious that it would work, though, because, when two people work together, the balance is always very hard to find: there's always someone who either dominates or is a little behind.

ALEXANDRA: In 1999 we did our first double act together and then, in 2001, Dad said to me: "Now I think you're ready to do a one-woman show." And again, I obviously told him, *no!*

DOMINIQUE: But she ended up by jumping into it. She performed *Alone* in 2001, then *Between You and Me* in 2006, and *Manufacturing Secrets* in 2016. And guess what, during the party for the premier

of this show, the French singer Michel Polnareff himself was in the room and, at the end, he gave her a standing ovation. What an incredible moment for me. He told me, "She made me cry, I shed a tear, what your daughter does is great." And he's not an easy guy to please.

BORIS: That must have been quite something for you; that's a very nice story with Polnareff. And since we are talking about shows, can you talk a little bit about the different shows that have been created at Le Double Fond over the last 30 years and which ones, in your opinion, have left their mark on the history of Le Double Fond and have contributed to the fact that today it has become a must for magic lovers.





PHOTO BY JEAN-FRANÇOIS DRÉAN



DOMINIQUE: It's hard to say, because we've created more than 80 shows over 30 years. But I'm thinking, for example, of my series of solo shows on stage, *Intimiste*, which have been a huge success. For about 10 years, from 2001 to 2011, I put out one a year. It's been a great adventure, a continuous challenge.

ALEXANDRA: And I think of all the shows that we put on to celebrate the anniversary of Le Double Fond each year: with Yann Frisch, Norbert Ferré, Michael Weber, Eric Antoine,

Bruno Podalydes, Viktor Vincent ... what a pleasure! We had a great time with David Stone and we really loved working as a triple act with him because he likes to work, work, work, just like us. He is a perfectionist and he's just as crazy as we are.

BORIS: When international magicians come to Paris they often ask me about good magic locations in the city, and I always tell them about The Double Fond, and they already know about it. It's true that it's one of the very few places dedicated to magic.



Vito Lupo, Dominique, Gaëtan Bloom



Bloom, Jeff McBride, Dominique



McBride, Dominique, Otto Wessely



Gary Kurtz, Dominique



Dominique, Ton Onosaka, Bloom



Dominique, Lisa Menna, Bloom



Finn Jon, Dominique



Kevin James, Dominique, Rudy Coby



Eugene Burger, Dominique



Majeux, Bloom, Richard Ross, Dominique



With David Stone

What do you think is the recipe for The Double Fond's success? And how do you explain the fact that there are no others?

DOMINIQUE: It's true that it's quite amazing that no one else has given it a go. While, on the other hand, when it comes to magic shops, a lot of people have tried.

ALEXANDRA: But it's a *lot* of work, it takes a *very* solid team and a lot of self-sacrifice. Of course we are here 30 years later, but that is not the only thing we do. We are always working. It's

not a problem because, once again, it's a choice. There are no days off, no rest. We are always on duty.

DOMINIQUE: As I told you earlier, we almost gave up several times, but we held out. We wanted to continue if only because we have ideal working conditions here as artists. Conditions are perfect for allowing us to evolve and to develop. It's a real laboratory. And it's always been a great showcase that has made word of mouth really work for us.

ALEXANDRA: We shouldn't forget that before the internet, being seen "live" was about the only way to get yourself known.

BORIS: Yes, it's good to hear that, Le Double Fond must remain a place for experimentation and innovation. Hat's off to you, because after 30 years you could have fallen into a cozy routine, whereas in fact you continue to create new shows without stopping. But you can only continue innovating like this because you also keep the business running.

By the way, I skipped a question: of the hundreds of magicians around the world who have come here to work, did some of them have more impact on you than others?

DOMINIQUE: We have invited more than 150 magicians from all over the world over the last 30 years. We were very impressed by Michael Weber, who is so brilliant, as well as being a good friend. In 1995 I brought Larry Jennings and Derek Dingle over for my convention Mayette Days in



Alexandra, Norbert Ferré, unknown, Dominique, Yann Frisch



Dominique, Max Maven



Alexandra, Juan Tamariz, Boris Wild, Bloom, Dominique



Dominique, Michael Weber



Dominique, Larry Jennings



Dominique, Sébastien Clergue



Georges Proust, Michael Weber, Dominique, Claude Rix



Ali Bongo, Marc Paul, Dominique, Jean Merlin, David Berglas



Pavel, Dominique



PHOTO BY JEAN-FRANÇOIS DREAN

Celebrating the 30th Anniversary of Double Fond

Paris. Bob Kohler, Derek DelGaudio, Wayne Houchin, Dani DaOrtiz, Eugene Burger, Ali Bongo, Gary Kurtz, Tommy Wonder ... great moments of magic! Now, we invite fewer magicians because the local magicians have changed their habits and they come out less frequently to see live lectures. They have much easier access to information on the internet. Everything is just a click away, at least that's how they feel.

BORIS: But it's good that you have diversified your activities, run the business successfully and profitably.

ALEXANDRA: Yes, we have always tried to reinvent ourselves and not just to increase profit. In fact it's mainly to remain mentally active, to not rest on our laurels. It's a way of life. What's fascinating about magic is that it gives people the ability to imagine whatever they like, that's the power of this art; it can bring so many different things to people.

BORIS: Yes, magic is like an escape. And it's something that unites people.

ALEXANDRA: It's crazy how many customers become friends after meeting at The Double Fond.

DOMINIQUE: We even have clients who get married and come

back with their children. These are beautiful stories. And every year we also have a few guys who incorporate magic into their marriage proposal: they propose to their sweetheart in the middle of a show, it's great! The last time it happened all the girls in the room were crying and were overcome with emotion. Everyone was applauding. It was a very special moment ... magical!

ALEXANDRA: We are lucky because there are many customers who come here to share the highlights of their lives with us: they celebrate their 40th birthdays, or their children's 18th birthdays etc., and they choose us to share a privileged moment together. It's pure happiness.

BORIS: Exactly! You experience it every week, but for them it's a unique moment.

ALEXANDRA: And these are often new customers, which is great: they trust us even though they have never been here before.

DOMINIQUE: They've heard about us and that's enough for them. It's still very rewarding for us.

ALEXANDRA: It's a huge pleasure for us. We feel so privileged in this job. One of the most beautiful compli-



Dominique, Gaëtan Bloom, Alexandra



Alexandra, Boris Wild, Dominique

ments we have ever received at Le Double Fond is, "Everyone should watch your show to improve their mental health."

BORIS: That's a good sign; it means there's a lot going on. And so what's the latest news from The Double Fond? What's happening, especially in 2018, to celebrate the last three decades of your life at the Place du Marché Sainte-Catherine?

DOMINIQUE: Well, it's going to be a kind of jubilee year. We've put on 11 new shows and organized 10 evenings with 30 artists and guest stars from the world of magic, entertainment, and cinema. For example: Eric Antoine, Viktor Vincent, David Stone, Bruno and Denis Podalydès, Zabou Breitman, Gaëtan Bloom, Norbert Ferré, you Boris, Laurent Beretta, Olivier Lejeune, Bruno Solo ... the list will grow in the coming weeks.

BORIS: I have one last question: how do you and

Alexandra see the future of Le Double Fond in the next 30 years? Are there any projects or goals? You are visionaries and I imagine that the innovations you have made won't just stop in 2018.

DOMINIQUE: The future of Le Double Fond is my daughter, of course, that's obvious. Besides, I hope that God will be generous enough to allow me to continue living for a while longer, so that I can continue to innovate, to think, and to move forward, because I still have a lot to give. Every day I work on new things that I record on video so that they can be included, sooner or later, either into a show or other things. I want my ideas to survive, so I'm making sure that everything goes to Alexandra.

ALEXANDRA: And then we have plenty of projects in development so that Le Double Fond continues to grow. •

LE DOUBLE FOND

Le Café-théâtre de la magie • 1, place du marché Sainte-Catherine • 75004 PARIS • Tel : +33 (0) 1 42 71 40 20 • www.doublefond.com

