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FRENCH MAGICIAN MAKING MAGIC'S 'BOYS' CLUB' DISAPPEAR



French magician Alexandra Duvivier stands next to the talking rabbit, who invited attendees to ask questions about magic at Place D'Youville.

Despite having a very famous magician father, Alexandra Duvivier came to the magic world only in her teens. She grew up seeing her dad surrounded by other magicians, but she felt something was missing – women! Her dad showed her the greats like illusionist David Copperfield and pantomime magician Vito Lupo. However, something clicked when Duvivier saw a performance by American magician Lisa Menna. “Wow, you can be a woman doing close-up magic, without being a magician’s assistant! OK, where do I sign?” asked a convinced Duvivier. “You need to identify with someone, to start.”

It’s “tough” to be a woman in magic and it’s very much still a “boys’ club” in 2024, the fluently bilingual French magician told the QCT. Duvivier said she believes she has a double challenge – as one of the very few women in her discipline and as the daughter of Dominique Duvivier – but has made it internationally, performing on American TV series like Masters of Illusion for

many years. Although it isn’t always easy to be surrounded by men, the optimist said it taught her to work harder than others to perfect tricks using cards, money, elastics, tape and other everyday objects.

Duvivier compared the underrepresentation of women in the magic industry to politics.

“Now in politics, things are moving and changing. So it will be the same in magic: the more we are talking about women in magic, the more we will see women in magic, the more women will come and join us.” Alexandra Duvivier was the only woman to have her own show at the Festival de Magie de Québec, which held its 13th edition from Sept. 19-22. Local magician Emmanuel Savoie has performed “family magic” in every edition since 2011. Savoie said the festival has featured other female performers in the past, but it’s “quite rare.” After attending Duvivier’s Saturday performance, he told the QCT that her style is similar to his, using stand-up comedy and magic.

“It’s very good magic with manipulation, lots of punch, timing, jokes and interaction,” often pulling people up on stage, he observed. He also saw Duvivier perform when festival co-founders Renée-Claude Auclair and Pierre Hamon booked her for the FISM magic championship in Quebec City in 2022, and at Le Double Fond, the magic-specific theatre that her father founded in Paris in 1988, where the dad/daughter duo still perform every Friday night. Savoie said Duvivier and Topas, the German magician who hosted this year’s Grand Spectacle (mostly in English), are among his favourites.

The show at Le Diamant featured only two magicians, visual shadow artist Philippe Beau (also from France) and the very entertaining comedic magician Topas. Savoie said he believes it was one of the

best he has seen. Duvivier and Savoie said even fellow magicians don’t understand every trick. “I love being fooled!” said Duvivier, who is anything but “blasé” despite 35 years in the magic business. Savoie said neither he nor his friend, a fellow magician, could figure out Topas’ “Hawaiian Wonder” trick, where an orange became a pile of peels before the audience’s eyes and the glass under a paper tube filled with squeezed orange juice. “We create miracles,” said Duvivier, with a twinkle in her eye, some rubber bands around her wrist and some tricks up her sleeve.