

PUBLIC AUCTION #009

RARE POSTERS

CONJURING, CIRCUS, AND ALLIED ARTS

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INTRODUCTION

Magic is the oldest of the theatrical arts. Its earliest origins were in Shamanism and the priesthood. By the time of ancient Egypt, clever conjurors were using many of the same tricks performed by magicians today to convince the masses of their supernatural power. In the thousands of years since its earliest recorded beginnings, magic moved from the temples of ancient times to the street corners and fairs of the Middle Ages, then into taverns and drawing rooms and, finally, onto the stage and television.

When the art of conjuring split from its religious and supposedly supernatural origins and became a form of entertainment designed to amuse a public which has always had a deep need to be mystified, there grew a need for posters to advertise it. Like all theatrical posters, their purpose has been to bring the paying public to the show. But more than any other form of theatrical advertisement, the purpose of the magic poster has been to evoke a sense of wonder and to suggest to the public (often in highly exaggerated terms) the miracles they will behold if they will only pay the price of admission.

The golden age of the magic poster as a specialized form of theatrical advertising was the fifty years from about 1875 to 1925. This period, the heyday of fine theatrical lithography, coincided happily with the period of the great stage magic shows of Kellar, Houdini, Thurston, Carter, and others. Many of these performers used an abundance of beautifully printed lithographs to advertise their shows.

Can one, after looking at this selection of magic posters – and the many more examined but not offered here – arrive at some conclusions or generalizations regarding their style and theme? This is always a difficult task, but it is tempting to try. In terms of design, there would seem to be two kinds of posters, or possibly two approaches to the posters seen in this diverse collection. The first might be said to be suggestive and the second would be called explicit.

In the first category we would include those that are essentially portrait posters, and it can be noted that almost all of the major magicians had one or more portrait posters. Usually these showed the head of the magician and, from Kellar (who originated the convention) onward, the magician

was frequently shown with diminutive red devils or imps perched on his shoulder or whispering (presumably arcane secrets) in his ear. Some of these portraits include a background which suggests that the person pictured is a magician or the portrait itself is stylized in such a manner as to suggest that the person is a mystery worker or, at the very least, an exotic personality. Notable in this regard are the portrait lithographs of Chung Ling Soo, Alexander, and Cater. Also in this category are some posters which only vaguely suggest an illusion being performed, such as the poster for *The Great Rameses*. In short, these posters adhere to one of the principal rules of all magic books: Never tell an audience in advance what is going to happen. (Presumably if you do, they will know what to look for and ruin your illusion).

The second category of magic posters consists of explicit posters and it is ironic, not only in light of the aforementioned dictum, that many of the posters of the great magicians should be so graphically detailed. To show an entire illusion – often the full sequence, from the girl stepping on to a pyre and being burned and yet reappearing, or being shackled and coming loose, or being cut in half and coming back whole – would seem as wrong as a poster advertising a mystery play to show the murder and then the butler who did it. Shouldn't these posters – as those in the first category – suggest the mystery rather than so vividly portray it? Granted that the mystery of the “how” remains, isn't the magician giving away the whole show by telling us “what” we are going to see?

That these magicians and their posters are out to scare us is a natural enough conclusion. Witness, for instance, the poster for Houdini's Water Torture Cell act: It's not enough to show Houdini drowning – a fanged, evil-looking



monster is holding the lid to be sure he never comes out alive! But what is not so obvious, perhaps, is that we love to be frightened and, beyond that, that we love to be fooled. Although knowing that the magician or his lovely assistant will survive all kinds of torture and barbarous acts, we still want to witness these superhuman deeds. Is this an example of asking—and paying—for punishment? We will leave the theorizing to others, but if these posters prove anything, they demonstrate man's flirtation with and attraction to the basest of human acts. The fact that it's all done in the name of good fun and entertainment (and that one can see the corollary of this in recent posters for "disaster films" in which we witness the "Hindenburg" crash, the "Towering Inferno" or the sinking "Titanic") only slightly reduces the frightening conclusions to be drawn from that fact and these posters. A further interesting speculation might be to ask whether knowing in advance the outcome of the illusion we are about to witness in a theatre is not of some assistance to the magician: Does the audience "will" the outcome because it has already "witnessed" it?

If generalizations can thus be made about style, then we can also speak of similarities of themes. While almost all the magicians depicted on the posters in this catalog performed magical effects both small and large, the feats most commonly advertised were the most spectacular ones in the act for that particular season. These features were usually "stage illusions," a term in magician's parlance which refers to those tricks in which people, large animals (lions, tigers, elephants, etc.) and large objects (pianos, automobiles, etc.) appear, disappear, float in the air and perform other seemingly impossible acts.

When analyzed, there are only a limited number of basic magical effects (as few as six or as many as nineteen, depending on the breakdown of individual categories). Actually less than ten fundamental effects encompass most of the tricks magicians do. Things appear and disappear. They change from place to place and are transformed from one thing to another. They are destroyed and restored and sometimes they are penetrated as when one solid apparently passes through another. Often something is made to defy gravity and even float, without apparent support, in mid-air. There are other effects such as the transference of thought and the various manifestations of so-called "mind reading" but for the purposes of this brief discussion, the effects enumerated here will cover most of the amazing illusions depicted on magicians' posters. Whether a magician vanishes a coin or a thimble or whether he vanishes an elephant or a grand piano, it is still a vanish. Whether he makes a playing card or a beautiful lady float in the air, it is still a levitation. The methods and the presentation may differ widely (most of the great stage magicians presented the same effects dressed in different settings and different plots) but, fundamentally, since prehistoric times, magicians have been up to the same old tricks.

Literary critic Edmund Wilson has pointed out that many of the tricks which have lasted longest and become fixed in the popular imagination are remnants of fertility rites and other atavistic remembrances of death and resurrection that exist in all folklores and religions. Just as the death of the sun each evening and its rebirth each morning was a source of wonder to ancient man, so was the cycle of the seasons and equally wondrous example of death and rebirth. Wilson states that even a magician such as Houdini, who devoted his career to escaping from things, is theatrically acting out the myths of Adonis and Attis and all the rest of the corn gods who are buried and rise again. If this be the case, it should come as no surprise that a majority of the illusions from the great years of theatrical magic seem to be based on this theme. It is also reasonable that this theme of the miracle of dismemberment and restoration appears on many magic posters. An example which comes immediately to mind is *Sawing a Woman in Two* (and, of course, subsequently restoring her), probably the most famous stage illusion of all time. But during the same period, magicians' comely assistants were regularly being cremated, crushed, stretched, impaled, and shot from cannons each evening—and at matinees on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

The ancestor of all these gruesome stage illusions is the trick of apparent decapitation, an effect which is advertised in many magic posters such as the example of Servais LeRoy's in this collection. That this illusion should occupy such a central place in the history of magic and magical advertising is not surprising. Its history dates from a time when decapitation was a fact of everyday life, performed not for entertainment by a magician, but in earnest at the whim of a pharaoh, sultan, king, or high priest. We first learn of decapitation feats being performed by magicians in accounts of performances almost four thousand years before Christ. One of these performances, fully described in hieroglyphics on a temple wall, was given for the Pharaoh Cheops, builder of the Great Pyramid. By the mid-16th century, human decapitation was a popular illusion of several magicians of the day and Reginald Scot in *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584), the first book in the English language to deal with conjuring, describes and explains "the decollation of John Baptist" as performed by a showman named Kingsfield at a booth at England's Bartholomew Fair. Decapitation tricks were part of the repertoire of American Indian magicians before the coming of the white man and later were part of the repertoire of conjurers in the American colonies.

The last illusion produced by Howard Thurston, shortly before his death, was a version of the decapitation. One of the most spectacular and realistic decapitation feats was performed by American illusionist Will Rock, during the 1930's and 1940's. In a French revolution scene (to the music of *La Marseillaise*, of course), Rock was locked into a giant guillotine and, upon the blade falling, his head was actually seen to drop into the basket. Later, Rock reappeared as the

hooded executioner who pulled the lever releasing the blade. It is interesting that this same illusion was later adopted by Alice Cooper, to the delight of his vociferous fans.

Not totally unrelated to the death and resurrection theme is that of the materialization of spirits, and posters in this collection of Barrington, Dante and others, ask the compelling questions, "Do the Spirits Return?" Another illusion whose atavistic roots probably go back almost as far is that of levitation; the beautiful lady who floats in spaces as hoops are passed over her suspended body is a recurring motif in the posters of almost all the great magicians.

Some magical posters were designed to lure the spectator into the theatre to see a feat of which he had always heard. One which recurs in the advertising of many stage magicians is the legendary Indian (or Hindu) Rope Trick. The Rope Trick is, indeed a legend. The magician throws a rope into the air where it remains suspended and a boy climbs the rope only to disappear. Many performers produced stage versions, all a far cry from the original accounts dating from antiquity in which the trick was allegedly performed in the open air instead of on a stage.

It is certainly true that many of the feats which magicians featured most prominently in their advertising were not among the strongest or most baffling they did. Many of these illusions were created precisely because they lent themselves to ballyhoo. The Indian Rope Trick, as well as the Vanishing Automobile (Thurston), the Vanishing Horse or Camel (Blackstone), or the Vanishing Elephant (Houdini, Carter, Nicola, Kassner), were illusions of this sort and in actual performance, were far less effective than many of those less prominently advertised.

But to complain that some of the effects performed on stage did not quite live up to the miracles so flamboyantly portrayed on the posters is, perhaps, to miss the point. The posters, today so fascinating as a type of vanishing folk art, originally had only one purpose – to draw people into the theatre. Once there, it was the magician's job to entertain and mystify them with a complete show of conjuring. The great magicians did not disappoint.

– Charles and Regina Reynolds

This essay was adapted from *100 Years of Magic Posters* (Darien House, 1976) and is used by permission.



1

1. Alexander (Claude Alexander Conlin). **Alexander. The Crystal Seer.** [Bombay, Av Yaga], ca. 1920. Three-color lithographed panel (14 ¼ x 41 ½”) poster bearing a striking portrait of Alexander’s turbaned visage surrounded by skulls, and hovering over a crystal ball. Some over-coloring and restoration. Good condition. Linen backed.

300/500

Alexander was, perhaps, the most successful professional theatrical mind reader of his generation. He made millions of dollars performing on the grandest vaudeville stages – nearly \$240,000 in 1924 alone – and retired at age 47 to a sprawling estate in the Pacific Northwest. According to Alexander’s biographer, David Charvet, “Claude Alexander Conlin admitted to killing four men, was married seven times, occasionally to more than one woman at a time, spent time in jails and prisons around the United States, and counted some of the greatest magicians of his time as his close friends.” In 1944, Alexander sold his entire show – props, posters, costumes, and all – to Robert Nelson of Columbus, Ohio, who ran a successful business supplying mentalists and mind readers. For decades, Alexander posters, including those offered here, filtered out into the magic community and beyond, from Nelson’s store rooms.



2

2. Alexander (Claude Alexander Conlin). **Alexander The Man Who Knows.** [Bombay, Av Yaga], ca. 1920. Two-color window card (14 x 22”) bearing an offset portrait of Alexander’s turban-clad head surrounded by text. Some wear and minor chips to extremities; good condition. Scarce.

250/350

3. Alexander (Claude Alexander Conlin). **Alexander the Man Who Knows.** [Bombay, Av Yaga], ca. 1920. Striking one-sheet (28 x 40") color lithograph poster depicting Alexander's turbaned head on a red field. Wear and chipping; fair condition. Unmounted.

100/200



3



4

4. Alexander (Claude Alexander Conlin). **Ask Alexander.** [Bombay, Av Yaga], ca. 1920. One-sheet (27 x 41") color lithograph depicting a bust portrait of Alexander, the turban on his head incorporated into a striking question mark design. Wear and chipping, with some over-coloring and crude repairs; poor condition. Unmounted.

150/250



5

5. Andress, Charles. **Andress and his Novelty Gift Shows.** Cincinnati, Strobridge Litho. Co., ca. 1910. Panel (9 ½ x 41 ½”) color lithographed poster depicting a handsome portrait of “uncle” Charley Andress in white tie and tails on a yellow field. Chips and folds with some restoration, including reconstruction of text; fair condition. Scarce. Linen backed.

700/900

“Uncle” Charley Andress was not only a successful conjurer, but an accomplished circus impresario. He left home as a boy of nine with an itinerant magician named Captain Thomas, and in 1872, “organized his first circus-type show which he called the Andress Carnival of Novelties and Trained Animal Show,” according to magic historian David Price, Jr. Andress’s list of accomplishments in the circus world was long. He ran his own shows successfully for years, invented the stake-driving machine, and was later employed by Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey. In 1916, he gave up circus life and returned to magic, featuring, among other tricks, the Bullet Catch. He retired to Great Bend, Kansas, where he lived on 1,200 acres of land. At the age of 78 in 1930, Andress married Virginia Pritchard, age 27, and one year later, the couple welcomed their first child into the world.



6

6. Balabrega (John N. Miller). **Balabrega.** New York, The Metropolitan Printing Co., ca. 1880. One-sheet (29 ½ x 40”) color lithograph depicting a central portrait of “The Swedish Wonder” surrounded by vignettes of his performance. The latter show Balabrega performing the Decapitation illusion, card tricks, and exhibiting trained canaries. Some restoration to margins generally not affecting image. Linen backed. Good condition. Scarce.

800/1,200

Balabrega began his career before the footlights as a boy of 11, and later developed a mind reading act with his wife, Emily Linden. His life was tragically cut short in Pernambuco, Brazil when a gas footlight exploded and killed him. He was 49 years old.



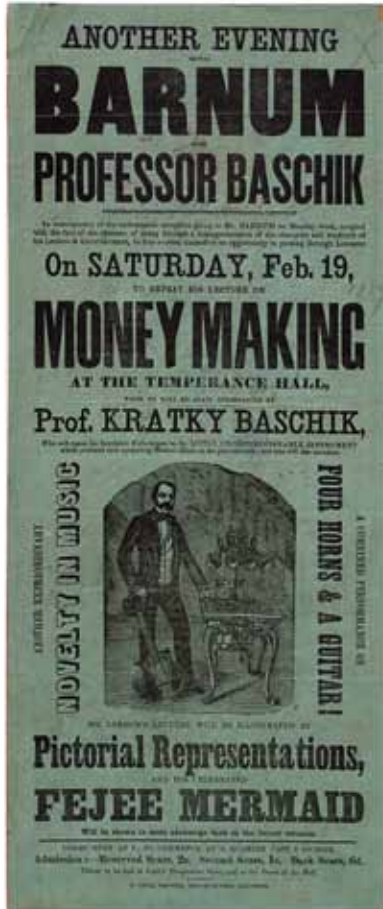
7

7. Bamberg, Theo. **Thurston Presents Theo Bamberg Europe's Great Shadowist.** Cincinnati, Strobridge Litho. Co., ca. 1908. Half sheet (20 x 30 1/2") color lithograph depicting a full-length portrait of Theo Bamberg (Okito) and the hand shadows he performed as a specialty act on the Thurston show. Minor restoration to border not affecting image, otherwise very good condition. Linen backed. Scarce. SIGNED AND INSCRIBED BY OKITO.

8,000/10,000

At the time this lithograph was printed, Bamberg – better known to magicians as Okito – was featured as a guest artist on the Thurston show, performing his hand shadows as an interlude in the full-

evening entertainment. Though remembered today as an inventive magician and peerless craftsman of magic apparatus, Bamberg's first showbusiness successes were as a shadowgraphist. As a boy in his native Holland, Bamberg performed his hand shadow act for the nation's royal family. In 1908, after Thurston purchased the show of Harry Kellar, Bamberg was added to the program not only to lengthen the performance, but to also serve as a technical advisor to Thurston. He would later return to vaudeville and European variety theatres as Okito the magician, topping the bills and earning enviable salaries. He died in Chicago in 1963.



8

8. [Barnum] **Another Evening with Barnum and Prof. Kratky Baschik.** Leicester, T. Cook, ca. 1853. Pictorial letterpress broadside (7 ½ x 17 ¾") advertising the joint appearance of Anton Kratky Baschik and P.T. Barnum. Baschik is slated to perform on a "Little Undistinguishable Instrument," and Barnum will present a lecture as well as his famous Feejee Mermaid. Minor chips and wear and mounted to brown kraft paper (easily removed), but overall good condition. Rare.

1,200/1,500

Kratky Baschick, born in 1821, was trained as a musician by his brother, with whom he toured Germany for a number of years. In the 1850s, Kratky Baschik learned magic, and in 1858, he was engaged to appear before Queen Victoria at Windsor Castle. Later in his career, after touring with Barnum and on his own, Kratky Baschik built a theatre in Vienna. Anton Kratky Baschik died in 1889. The last performance in his theatre was given in 1911.



9

9. Barrington, Frederick. **Frederick Barrington The Magician.** Newport, Donaldson Litho., ca. 1900. Half-sheet (19 ¾ x 30") color lithographed stock poster depicting a striking image of a magician seated and bound in front of a spirit cabinet; overprinted for Frederick Barrington. Chips and closed tears at extremities with some paper loss; fair condition. Scarce. Linen backed.

500/600



10

10. Blackstone, Harry (Harry Boughton). **World's Super Magician. Blackstone.** Chicago, Globe Poster Corp., ca. 1947. Three-color window card (14 x 22") bearing a bust portrait of Blackstone intermingled with bright shapes and text, including the common Blackstone line, "Company of 30 mostly gorgeous girls." With pastedown for Memorial Auditorium, Louisville, KY. Fair condition.

100/200



11

11. Brush, Edwin. **Brush the Great. Magician. Entertainer. Illusionist.** Chicago, Goes Litho., ca. 1920. One-sheet (27 ¾ x 42") color lithographed poster depicting a full-length portrait of Brush, magic wand in hand, standing in front of a Moorish skyline. Chips to borders, light over-coloring and restoration to image, but overall good condition. Linen backed.

700/900

Brush was one of the most popular Chautauqua and Lyceum entertainers of the 20th century. His initial interest in magic was sparked while employed as sales manager for Ed E. Strauss & Co., a clothing manufacturing concern based in Chicago. Brush used pocket tricks to help boost sales, and found the practice exceedingly successful. He later turned to magic full time, and built an impressive full-evening show of small magic and illusions perfectly suited to Lyceum courses and Chautauqs. He was the first magician to appear under canvas on a Chautauqua circuit.



12

12. Brush, Edwin. **Brush the Mystic**. [China], ca. 1922. Half-sheet (20 x 28") one-color poster, red ink on brown paper, bearing a portrait of Brush surrounded by Asian characters. Mounted to stiff paper; fair condition.

50/100



13

13. Cardini (Richard Valentine Pitchford). **Cardini. A Deft Manipulator**. Kenton, Scioto Sign Co., ca. 1928. Two-color offset window card (14 x 22") bearing a ½ length offset portrait of Cardini, "The Suave Deceiver" at its center. Minor toning and wear at extremities not affecting image; good condition.

200/300

Cardini was, arguably, the most successful – and consequently the most imitated – magician of his generation. His silent manipulative act, perfect in form, technique and content, was so well-liked and pitch perfect that it kept him booked in theatres, nightclubs, hotel ballrooms, on cruise ships, and virtually every important venue for a career that spanned decades. Despite a historically significant career, because Cardini was a feature performer and not an illusionist or theatre-filler like Blackstone, Thurston or Houdini, no full-color lithographs advertising his appearances were produced. He was the star of variety performances and topped cabaret bills; consequently, posters of any sort advertising his appearances are scarce.



14

14. Cardini (Richard Valentine Pitchford). **Cardini Sheperds Bush Empire playbill**. London, James Upton, 1933. Colorful music hall playbill (16 x 22") on which Cardini "The Suave Deceiver" is featured, along with jugglers, acrobats, singers, and Claude Dampier "The Professional Idiot." Tears to margins with some restoration; fair condition. **Linen backed.**

200/300



15



16

15. Carter, Charles. **The Priestess of Delphi.** Cleveland, Otis Litho Co., ca. 1926. Three-sheet (40 x 80") color lithographed poster bearing a striking image of the mind reading "priestess" (Evelyn Maxwell) featured in Carter's world tours. Linen backed. Some chips to border and light wear, but overall good condition. Linen backed.

1,200/1,800

Charles Joseph Carter was a lawyer, editor, boy wizard, and businessman. He began his career in entertainment as a solo performer on a medicine show, and evolved into a globetrotting illusionist with tons of baggage, equipment and assistants at his disposal. Decades of touring the world brought him great wealth, and the spectacular theatrical advertising produced by the Otis Lithograph Company of Cleveland helped draw hundreds of thousands of theatre patrons to his shows. In 1933, these posters decorated the marquee of Carter's Temple of Mystery, a midway attraction at the Chicago World's Fair.

16. Carter, Charles. **The World's Weirdest Wonderful Wizard.** Cleveland, Otis Litho Co., ca. 1926. Three-sheet (40 x 80") color lithographed poster depicting a portrait of a turbaned Carter looking over a globe of the earth and surrounded by devils. Some restoration and over-coloring in upper third. Good condition. Linen backed.

1,000/1,500



17

17. Chang, Li (Juan Forn). **Li-Chang El Demonio Amarillo**. N.p., ca. 1946. Quarter-sheet (12 3/4 x 21 1/2") color poster bearing a bust portrait of Li Chang overlooking a Chinese gong. Mounted to board, otherwise very good condition.

75/150



18

18. Chung Ling Soo (William Ellsworth Robinson). **Chung Ling Soo**. Ashton Under Lyne, Horrocks & Co., ca. 1915. Half-sheet (20 x 30") color lithograph depicting a full-length portrait of Soo in Chinese garb, a Chinese skyline and sunset behind him. Minor chipping to margins, otherwise very good condition. Linen backed.

1,500/2,500

Robinson is best known today for his tragic death. He perished on stage, in full view of a paying audience at the Wood Green Empire in London on March 23, 1918, during a performance of the Bullet Catch trick. He was born in New York in 1861, and worked for Kellar and Herrmann as chief assistant and illusion inventor (and sometimes as a performer), before striking out on his own. After a few false starts, he scored great success as Chung Ling Soo, touring British music halls and Australia with a stage-filling spectacle.

19. Chung Ling Soo (William Ellsworth Robinson). **Chung Ling Soo Hits the Bull's Eye of Public Opinion Every Time**. Birmingham, James Upton, ca. 1913. Half-sheet (20 x 30") color lithograph depicting a full-length portrait of Soo dressed as an archer, aiming a bow and arrow at a distant target. Very good condition. Linen backed.

1,500/2,500



19



20



21

20. Chung Ling Soo. **The Chung Ling Soo Mysteries.** London, J. Weiner Ltd., ca. 1918. Half-sheet (20 x 30") color lithograph bearing a bust portrait of Soo in the center of a peacock feather, on a striped pastel background. Linen backed, good condition.

3,500/4,000

After Soo's death, his wife Olive "Dot" Robinson produced a show starring a magician who performed under the stage name "Li Sing Foo." The production was entitled Chung Ling Soo Mysteries. The venture was unsuccessful and short-lived, but occasionally posters such as this one – originally printed for Soo's use and later overprinted for the Mysteries show – surface in the marketplace.

21. Chung Ling Soo. **Suee Seen and Chung Ling Soo Marvelous Chinese Conjurer.** London and Birmingham, James Upton, ca. 1909. Half-sheet (20 x 29 3/4") color lithograph showing Suee Seen, Chung Ling Soo's wife and chief assistant, standing next to a large Chinese vase that bears a portrait of the magician at its center. Linen backed, good condition.

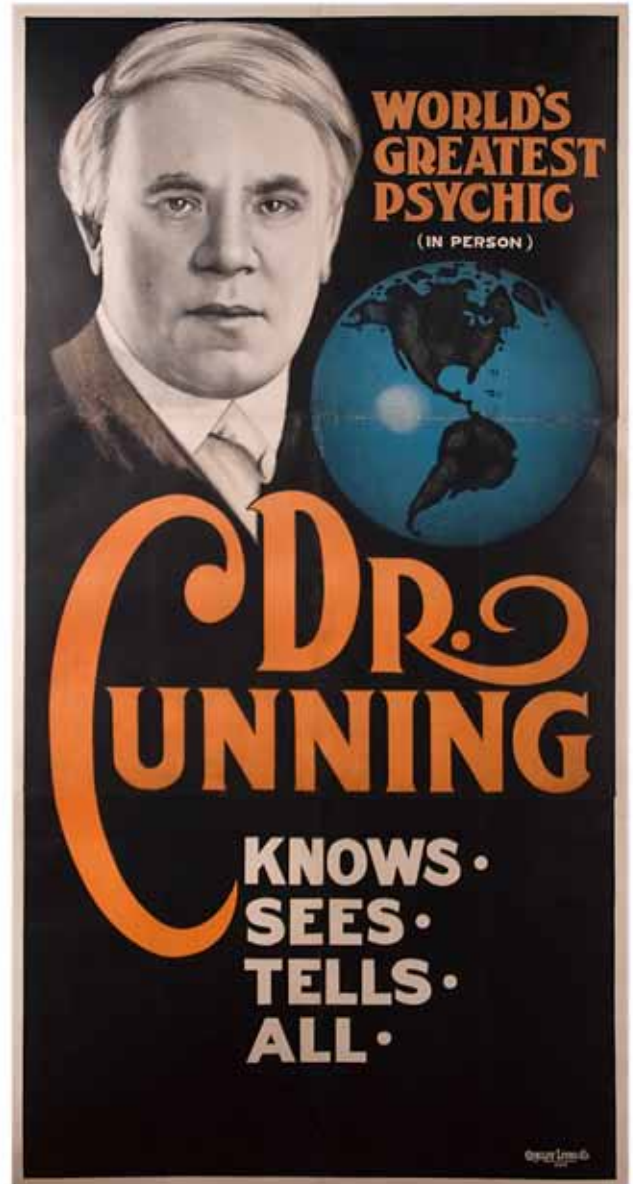
2,500/3,500



22

22. Chung Ling Soo. **Chung Ling Soo. Chinese Conjurer.** Ashton Under Lyne, Horrocks & Co., ca. 1910. Half-sheet (19 ½ x 29") lithograph in blue and white, with Chinese characters, and bearing a full-length offset portrait of Soo at its center. Linen backed, good condition.

2,000/2,500



23

23. Cunning. **The World's Greatest Psychic (In Person). Dr. Cunning. Knows. Sees. Tells. All.** Kansas City, Quigley Litho., ca. 1915. Three-sheet (41 x 79") color lithograph bearing a large portrait of Cuning on a black background. Restoration and over-coloring at folds, with minor paper replacement. Fair condition. Linen backed.

500/700

"Dr." Cuning may have been Robert Cunningham, a one-time handcuff king and escape artist, and rival of Houdini's. After achieving some success and modest fame as a jail breaker, Cuning changed the direction of his career and became the right hand man of Alexander, "The Man Who Knows," from whom he learned the business of theatrical mind reading. His billing in this uncommon poster is similar to Alexander's in many ways.



24

24. Dante (Harry August Jansen). **Magic Revue. Dante. Sim Sala Bim.** London, ca. 1946. Six-sheet (80 x 81") monochrome billboard poster depicting Dante's famous Spirit Cabinet (Cabinet de la Mort) routine. Devils, goblins and ghosts emanate from the cabinet. Good condition, linen backed.

1,200/1,500

Dante used black-and-white lithographs to advertise his post-war appearance in the United Kingdom in an effort to have the posters be seen through the thick "pea soup" fog that regularly blanketed the country.



25

25. Dante (Harry August Jansen). **Thurston Presents Danté Europe's Magician.** Cleveland, Otis Litho., ca. 1922. Half-sheet (20 x 27") color lithograph bust portrait of Dante with devils on his shoulders. Small portraits of Kellar and Thurston grace the upper corners of the image. Some fold lines apparent, but overall good condition. Linen backed. Uncommon.

1,500/2,000

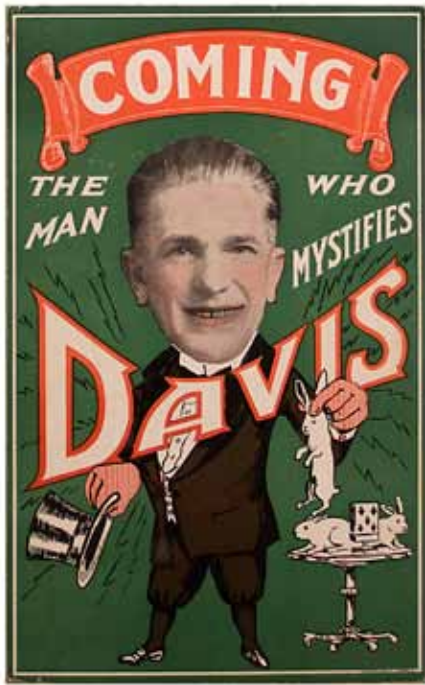
Danish-born Harry Jansen grew up in Chicago, where his interest in magic flourished. In addition to becoming a vaudeville performer, he operated a magic shop with partner I.F. Halton. The business, Halton & Jansen, later took on a third partner, the Belgian wizard Servois LeRoy. The trio sold novelties, pocket tricks, parlor magic effects, and made a specialty of building custom stage illusions. This proved to be good training for Jansen, who went on to manage the workshops of Howard Thurston, for whom he helped developed many a reputation-making illusion. It was Thurston who re-christened Jansen with the stage name Dante and sent him on tour in 1922. Despite a shaky start, Dante's world tour was a great success. When Dante returned to America and played Broadway with his Sim-Sala-Bim revue in 1940, Thurston had been gone for nearly four years. Dante's show was hailed by the public and press alike as an artistic triumph.

26. Darrow, Stuart. **Mr. and Mrs. Stuart Darrow. Funny Shadows.** Newport, Donaldson Litho, n.d. Half-sheet (22 x 29") two-color silk-screened poster depicting the Darrows and the shadowgraph figures presented in their show. Likely a later printing of this early poster. Good condition. Unmounted.

50/100



26



27



28

27. Davis, Richard. **Coming. The Man Who Mystifies. Davis.** Kenton, The Scioto Sign Co., ca. 1929. Four-color window card (14 x 22") depicting a charming caricature of Davis the magician, and oversized photograph of his head overprinted onto a cartoon body. Light wear at extremities; good condition.

40/80

Davis was based in New Hampshire and a well liked Lyceum and Chautauqua performer. McDonald Birch cited Davis as one of his early inspirations.

28. Downs, T. Nelson. **T. Nelson Downs. A Sensational Act.** Kenton Ohio, The Scioto Sign Company, ca. 1928. Two-color window card (14 x 22"). Depicts classic image/portrait of Downs. Good condition.

150/250

29. Fak-Hongs, The. **Two Fak-Hongs magic posters.** Valencia, Litho Mirabet, ca. 1930. Both being quarter sheet (17 x 25") color lithographs advertising Chang and The Fak Hongs, "United Magicians." One heralds the illusion "The Buddha" and the other depicts a devil and various objects and is overprinted for the company's "Japanesse Revue." Good condition, linen backed.

100/200



29 (one of two)



30

30. Fu-Manchu (David Bamberg). **Fu-Manchú**. N.p., n.d. (ca. 1930). One-sheet (28 x 39 1/4") color lithographed poster bearing a striking and artistic bust portrait of Fu-Manchu, his hands reaching toward the viewer of the image, with bats in the background. Folio folds prominent, but overall good condition. Linen backed. Rare.

2,000/3,000

David Bamberg was the last magician in the Bamberg dynasty. His father, Okito, taught him the craft, as well as the art of hand shadows. Born in England, Bamberg was raised in New York, and on the road, where he sometimes participated in his father's shows. He adopted the name Fu Manchu in Buenos Aires in 1929, and scored his greatest theatrical successes in Latin America. He was perhaps best known in Mexico, where he starred in six feature films. In Argentina, he broke box office records with his full-evening illusion show. David Bamberg retired to Argentina where he spent his final years teaching magic, and operating a magic shop that bore his name, the Centro Magico Fu Manchu. He died in 1974. The design of this poster was used – significantly modified – to advertise one of his Mexican movies, El Espectro de la Novia.



31

31. Fu Manchu (David Bamberg). **Fu-Manchú**. N.p., n.d. (ca. 1940). Quarter sheet (14 x 19 1/2") color poster depicting a caricature of Fu Manchu, a duck at his feet and rabbit in his hand. Signed by the artist, "Si Di," a famous South American newspaper caricaturist of the era. Pinholes at corners, otherwise good condition. Unmounted.

400/500



32



33

32. George, Grover. **George the Supreme Master of Magic.** Cleveland, Otis Litho. Co., ca. 1926. Half-sheet (20 x 26 1/2") color lithograph depicting a scene from George's "Triumphant American Tour" including a large statue of Buddha, ducks, owls, and Asian assistants. Chips to two corners, otherwise good condition. Unmounted.

200/300

33. George, Grover. **Triumphant American Tour. George. The Supreme Master of Magic.** Cleveland, Otis Litho. Co., ca. 1926. One-sheet (26 3/4 x 40 1/2") color lithograph depicting a striking full length portrait of George, playing cards shooting from his outstretched hand, while Geishas and demons look on. Linen backed, very good condition.

500/600

George's "Triumphant American Tour" never took place, and consequently, his posters were never used. Originally from Zanesville Ohio, George was best known in South America, where he regularly toured with his illusion show.



34

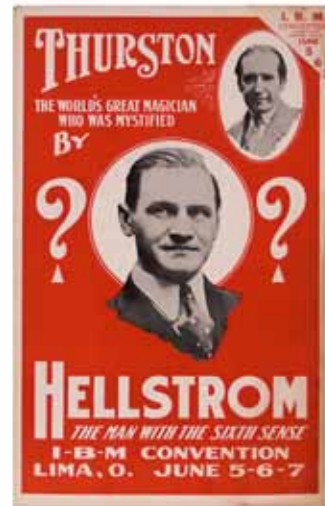
34. Goldston, Will (Wolf Goldstein). **Carl Devo**. London, Weiners, ca. 1895. Half-sheet (19 ½ x 30") color lithograph depicting a full-length portrait of Devo clad in an all-white tuxedo, with spirit-like manifestations surrounding him. Wear and closed tears at margins, and with some over-coloring; still good condition. Linen backed. Scarce.

800/1,000

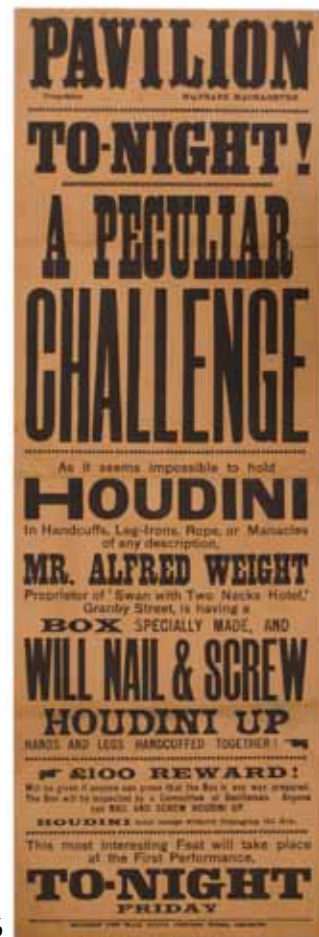
35. Hellstrom, Axel. **Hellstrom. The Man with the Sixth Sense**. Kenton, Scioto Sign Co., ca. 1928. Two-color offset window card (14 x 22") bearing a portrait of Hellstrom the mind reader and a portrait of Howard Thurston who was reportedly mystified by Hellstrom's "powers." Light toning in margins, but overall good condition.

50/100

Hellstrom perfected the art of muscle reading (the ability to determine a subject's thoughts based on interpretations of subtle involuntary responses to speech and other stimuli) to such a degree that the technique was later renamed, and is now commonly known as, Hellstromism.



35



36

36. Houdini, Harry. **A Peculiar Challenge**. Leicester, Wilson's New Walk Colour Printing Works, ca. 1915. Broadside panel (10 x 30") describing an escape challenge made to Houdini in which the great magician was challenged to escape from a regulation packing case. Paper browned and some restoration to text. Linen backed.

1,500/2,000



37

HOUDINI TRIUMPHANT

37. Houdini, Harry. **Ehrenklärung! Im Namen des König's Wilhelm II. Kaiser v. Deutchland.** Leipzig, Atelier, 1902. One-sheet (43 x 31 1/4") color lithograph depicting Houdini, striking a dramatic pose as he demonstrates his escape abilities before a panel of German judges. Houdini. Printed signature of the artist, J. Zier, incorporated into the design. Expert restoration and over-coloring, but overall very good condition. Linen backed. ONE OF FIVE EXAMPLES KNOWN OF THIS CLASSIC IMAGE.

15,000/20,000

The English text in the lower right of the poster explains the scene succinctly: "The imperial police of Cologne slanderously libeled HARRY HOUDINI, stating his advertised tricks were swindles! HOUDINI answered them by suing for "An Honorary Public Apology." The police lost the case in the three highest Courts, as they were unable to fetter or chain HOUDINI in an unescapable manner. He was even successful in opening a special lock that they had constructed which after it had once been locked could not be opened! ... Having lost the case in all three trials the police were ultimately compelled to publicly advertise "An Honorary Apology" and pay all costs of the trials. By Command of Kaiser Wilhelm II. Emperor of Germany."



38

[38. Hypnotism] **Stock Hypnosis/Mind Reading Poster signed "Escher"**. Augsburg, Graph. Kunstanstalt, ca. 1920. Half-sheet (27 ¼ x 35 ¼") color lithographed poster depicting a mind reader or hypnotist in mid-performance and in the background a gigantic Buddha-type statue. Printed signature of the artist, "Escher," incorporated into the design. Minor chips in borders, otherwise good condition. Linen backed.

150/200

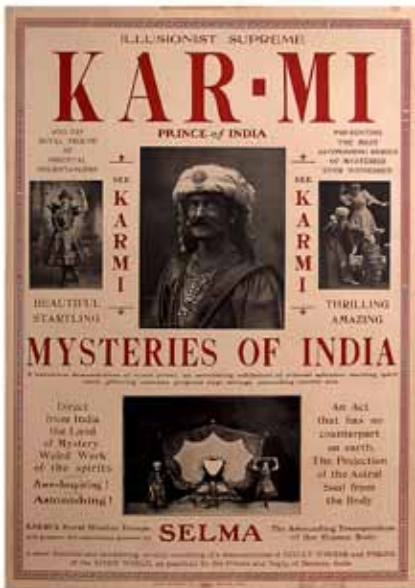


39

39. Jansen, Harry. **The Great Jansen. America's Greatest Transformist**. Milwaukee, American Show Print, ca. 1915. Half-sheet (21 x 28 ¼") color lithograph depicting Jansen's performance of what is today known as the Modern Cabinet illusion, but at the time was called The Three Graces. Closed marginal tears and some browning to extremities, but overall good condition. Uncommon. Linen backed.

2,000/3,000

Harry Jansen assumed the stage name Dante in 1922.



40



41



42



43

40. Kar-Mi (Joseph Hallworth). **Illusionist Supreme. Kar-Mi Prince of Magic.** Buck Printing Co., Boston, ca. 1915. Half-sheet (20 x 28") three-color offset poster bearing five photographs of Kar-Mi and his troupe, including a full-stage photograph of his feat entitled "Selma." Minor wear and toning in margins, otherwise good condition. Linen backed.

150/250

41. Kar-Mi (Joseph Hallworth). **Kar-Mi Swallows a Loaded Gun Barrel.** St. Louis, National Printing & Engraving, 1914. One-sheet (41 1/2 x 28") color lithographed poster depicting the "Indian" magician and juggler Kar-Mi shooting a cracker from a boy's head with a shot fired from the barrel of a gun in the performer's throat (!). Linen backed. Very good condition.

400/500

42. Kassner, Alois. **Kassner. Der Grösste Zauberer Aller Zeiten.** (Kassner The Greatest Wizard of all Time). Hamburg, Adolph Friedlander, 1929. Half-sheet (18 3/4 x 28") color lithographed bust portrait of this famous German illusionist. Folio folds prominent, some wear to margins, but overall good condition. Linen backed.

300/500

Alois Kassner (1887-1970) was the leading German illusionist between the two world wars. Friedlaender supplied him with most of his lithographs during this period. After the Second World War he resumed his career, but never achieved his earlier success or equaled the advertising that made him the "Thurston" of Germany.

43. Keene. **Keene.** Cleveland, Morgan Litho., ca. 1920. Small color lithographed window card (9 1/2 x 14") bearing a portrait of Keene with a fairy floating above his head. Framed and glazed; not examined out of frame, but shows some wear. Fair condition.

150/250



44

44. Kellar, Harry (Heinrich Keller). **Kellar**. New York, Strobridge Litho. Co., ca. 1897. One-sheet (29 ½ x 39 ½") color lithographed poster depicting a dark scene with bats, a centipede, Kellar's levitation, and Kellar reading from a book while demons look over his shoulders. Minor restoration to margins, but overall good condition. Linen backed.

6,000/7,000

Kellar was born in Erie, Pennsylvania on July 11, 1849, and worked steadily on every rung of the show business ladder before climbing to its pinnacle in 1896. It was in that year, with the death of Alexander Herrmann, that Kellar became the most popular magician in America.

After he retired from the stage in 1908, the Society of American Magicians named Kellar the organization's first Dean. In his golden years, Kellar lived in a comfortable home in Los Angeles, spending his time tinkering with magic, and fishing off the coast of Catalina Island. He died on March 10, 1922. Kellar's posters, most of which were printed by the Strobridge Lithograph Company, set the standard for magicians. He was the first conjurer to incorporate the motif of a devil on his shoulder into a poster design, and carried the theme into most of the advertising he used throughout his career, including the example offered here.



45

45. LeRoy, Servais (Jean Henri Servais LeRoy). **Leroy Talma Bosco. The Great Decapitation Mystery.** Hamburg, Adolph Friedlander, 1914. Half-sheet (16 ¾ x 25 ½") color lithograph bearing a full-length portrait of LeRoy, who holds a platter aloft in one hand. On the platter rests Bosco's head. Lacks borders, and some minor restoration. Linen backed.

500/750

Belgian-born LeRoy is regarded as one of the most inventive and artistic magicians of his generation. He invented, among other stage illusions, the Asrah levitation, a classic feat still performed by modern conjurers. LeRoy performed with his wife, Mercedes Talma (Mary Ford) and the comedian Bosco, as The Comedians de Mephisto Co., as advertised in this lithograph. Bosco was played by no less than nine different actors and magicians. According to LeRoy's biographers, Mike Caveney and William Rauscher, "Harry Houdini praised him, Howard Thurston feared him and Harry Kellar called him the most finished artist he had ever seen."



46

46. Lester. **The Great Lester and Company. Featuring Ghost Séance.** N.p., n.d. (ca. 1950). Three-color window card (14 x 22") advertising the spook show and illusion show of The Great Lester with ghosts and skeletons. Shows some wear, but overall good condition.

40/80



47

47. Lightner, Joseph. **Lightner the Wizard**. Newport, Donaldson Litho., ca. 1920. Half-sheet (20 x 30") color lithographed stock poster showing a tuxedo-clad magician producing doves; overprinted for Lightner the Wizard. Restoration to margins. Overall good condition. Linen backed.

300/400

*Lightner was a printer, opera house manager and magician, but gave up his career in entertainment to become a politician. He served as mayor of Odessa, Missouri – his adopted hometown – for ten consecutive terms, and was also a Missouri state senator. While active in politics, he also remained active in magic, but from behind the scenes, where he assumed the editorship of *The Seven Circles*, a periodical of the International Magic Circle, and also as part-owner and board member of *The Sphinx*.*



48

48. Lightner, Joseph. **Lightner the Wizard**. Newport, Donaldson Litho., ca. 1920. Half-sheet (20 x 30") color lithographed stock poster bearing a full-length image of a tuxedo-clad magician and two vignettes from his performance. A sneering devil looks on. Overprinted for Lightner the Wizard. Restoration and significant wear at margins. Linen backed.

300/400



49

49. Lightner, Joseph. **Lightner the Wizard and Company.** Newport, Donaldson Litho., ca. 1920. Half-sheet (20 x 30") color lithographed stock poster showing a tuxedo-clad magician producing a rabbit from a hat; overprinted for Lightner the Wizard. Chipping and closed tears in margins not affecting image. Overall good condition. Linen backed.

300/400

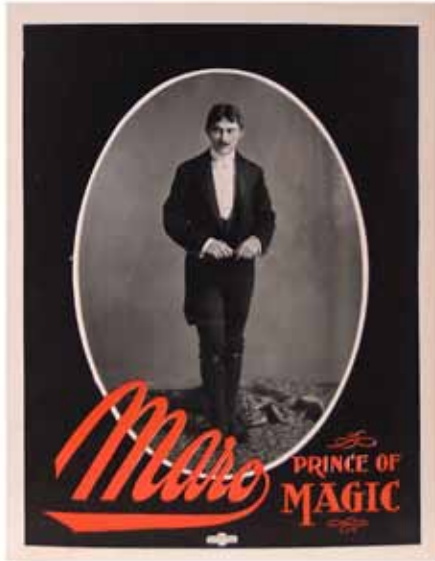


50

50. Lyle, Cecil. **Cecil Lyle The Magical Milliner.** London and Belfast, David Allen & Sons, ca. 1930. Half-sheet (20 x 30") one-color lithograph depicting a large bust portrait of The Magical Milliner (and inventor of the paper hat trick) modeled after a photograph by Claude Harris. Some discoloration and toning; fold lines apparent. Fair condition. Linen backed.

150/300

Lyle toured England with a gigantic illusion show that featured many classic feats, among them routines and illusions developed by Arnold DeBierre and David Devant. And though Lyle's Cavalcade of Mystery show was known as a stage-filling spectacle, it was his intimate feat with sheets of tissue paper – two pieces were torn, then restored in the form of a paper hat – that made his reputation and gave him the moniker of "The Magical Milliner."



51



53



52

51. Maro (Walter Truman Best). **Maro Prince of Magic**. Chicago, Thayer & Jackson Stationery Co., ca. 1906. Two-color offset window card (14 ¼ x 18 ½") bearing a full-length portrait of Maro, magic wand in hand. Good condition.

100/150

Maro was one of the most refined and accomplished Lyceum magicians America had ever known. Few magicians realize, however, that he was first and foremost a talented musician. As a boy, Maro taught himself to play the guitar. He eventually settled in Kansas City and there worked as a music teacher. But on witnessing an impromptu performance of magic, the "hook" was set and Walter Truman Best began his transformation into Edwin Maro, Prince of Magic. He developed a fast friendship with Dr. A.M. Wilson, who became one of his first tutors in magic. In 1890, Maro moved to Chicago where he opened a banjo and mandolin school. Soon enough, however, he became affiliated with the Lyceum bureaus headquartered in Chicago. As both magician and musician he became a featured attraction on Lyceum courses for the next 18 years, until his unexpected death from typhoid fever in 1908.

52. Maro (Walter Truman Best). **Maro Prince of Magic. Flags of the World**. Chicago, Goes Litho., ca. 1905. Horizontal color lithographed window card (37 ¼ x 13 ¼") bearing a striking portrait of the famous Lyceum magician performing the Flags of the World and Meteoric Ribbons tricks. Two corners clipped; fair condition.

75/150

53. Neff, Bill. **Group of three Neff the Magician window cards**. Including one bearing a striking three-color silk-screened portrait of Neff in front of a spider web, another being a small and early (ca. 1930) stock card advertising Neff, and the third being a text-only horizontal card. Sizes vary. Condition generally fair.

50/150



54

54. Newmann, C.A. **Newmann The Great Making his Famous Blindfold Drive**. St. Louis [?], Riverside Printing, ca. 1890. Half-sheet (27 x 20 1/4") color lithograph depicting Newman, blindfolded, driving a horse-drawn carriage down a city street. Minor restoration at extremities. Good condition. Linen backed.

750/1,000



55

55. Newmann, C.A. **Soirees Fantastiques de Newmann The Great**. St. Paul, Standard Litho., ca. 1920. Half-sheet (20 x 28") three-color portrait of Newmann, with a devil perched on his shoulder, whispering in his ear. Some inexpert over-coloring at fold lines and borders; linen backed, good condition.

100/150



56

56. Nicola (William Mozart Nicol). **Nicola. Escape challenges.** St. Paul, Standard Litho, ca. 1920. Gigantic color lithographed billboard (81 x 108") poster bearing a striking central portrait of Nicola, bound from head to toes in handcuffs and shackles, this being surrounded by vignettes of Nicola's various publicity stunts and escapes, including a bridge jump, escape from a packing crate, milk can, escape from railroad tracks, and more. Many of the poses are strikingly similar to those that appear on Houdini posters. Cloth backed and folded contemporarily; poor condition and in need of restoration, but image intact. ONE OF ONLY THREE EXAMPLES OF THIS POSTER KNOWN.

2,500/3,500

This poster came from Monmouth, Illinois, home of the Nicol family. Though it likely passed through the hands of Jack and Leola LaWain, who traded in used and collectible magic for years, the possibility also exists that the poster was used or owned by Nicola himself.



57

57. Nicola (William Mozart Nicol). **Nicola. World's Master Magician.** N.p., Wright & Jacques ca. 1921. Large colorful panel (19 x 40") poster bearing a striking image of a devil looking over a banner bearing Nicola's name. Very good condition. Linen backed.

300/500

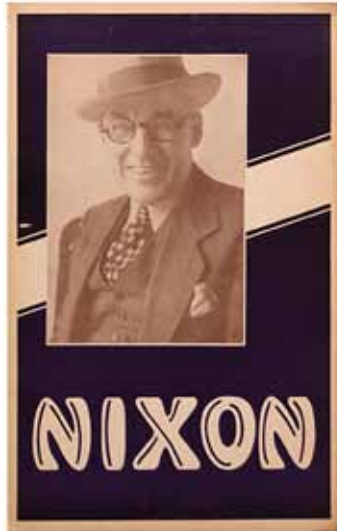


58

58. Nicoli (John Nicol). **Nicoli The Great.** Chicago, National Printing & Engraving, ca. 1905. Half-sheet (28 x 20") horizontal lithographed poster depicting Nicoli and his stage set, including tables, many fine pieces of Victorian-era magic apparatus, and an American flag. Some restoration to margins and central fold. Uncommon. Linen backed.

1,000/1,200

Nicoli was the father of Nicola and Von Arx (William and Charles Nicol). This poster appears to be a stock image onto which Nicoli's name has been printed, however, no other examples of this image bearing any name other than Nicoli are known to exist.



59

59. Nixon, William J. **Nixon**. Kenton, Scioto Sign Co., ca. 1930. Two-color offset window cards (14 x 22") bearing a smiling portrait of the enigmatic man best known as performer of "Where Do The Ducks Go?" Likely printed for a Nixon appearance at an early I.B.M. convention in Ohio. Good condition.

40/80



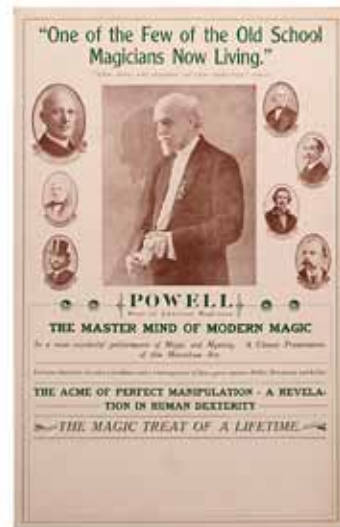
60

60. Ph de Noran. **Ph de Noran and Datura**. Brussels, Affiches Marci, ca. 1920. One-sheet (26 x 40") color lithographed poster displaying scenes from the performance of this European magician, including a levitation, billiard ball manipulation, and other stage-filling illusions. Very good condition. Linen backed.

300/500

61. Powell, Frederick Eugene. **Powell. The Master Mind of Modern Magic**. N.p., n.d. (ca. 1930). Two-color offset window card (14 x 22") bearing a large central portrait of Powell, Dean of American Magicians, surrounded by smaller portraits of Buatier de Kolta, Kellar, Heller, Anderson, Herrmann, Robert-Houdin and Blitz. Corners bumped, otherwise good condition.

50/100



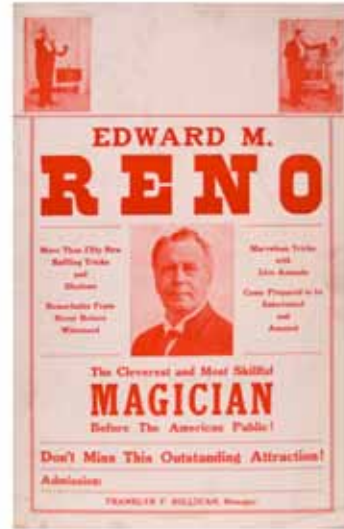
61



62

62. Rameses (Albert Marchinski). **The Great Rameses. The Eastern Mystic.** London, David Allen & Sons, ca. 1915. Half-sheet (19 3/4 x 28 1/2") color lithograph showing Rameses leading a throng of followers through the desert, the pyramids and Sphinx in the background, and Rameses trained goose in the foreground. Margins browned, but overall good condition. Rare. Linen backed.

2,500/3,500



63



63

63. Reno, Ed (Edward Munn Burdick). **Group of three Ed Reno window cards.** Including one small card printed in three colors, an oversized three-color card (poor condition), and a photographically-illustrated card in red and white. Ca. 1940. Sizes and condition varies.

40/80

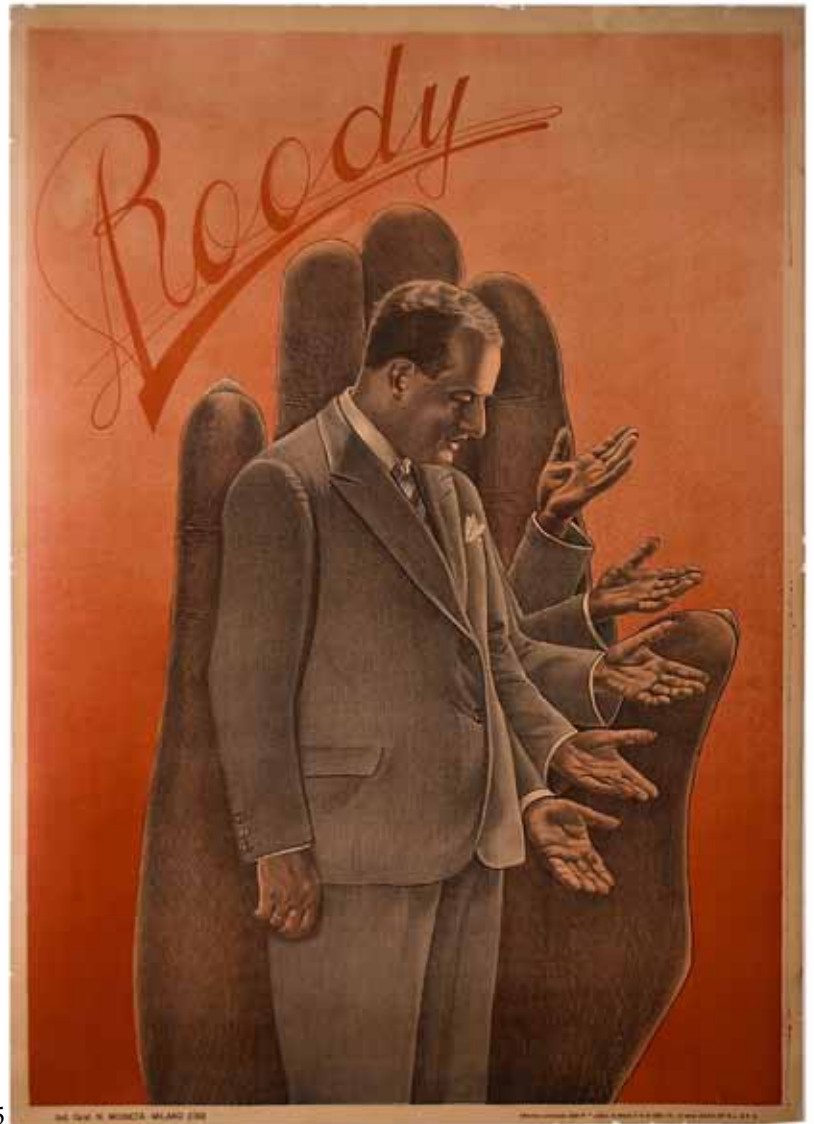
According to John Mulholland, "Reno was a self-taught magician and often most unorthodox in his methods. Though they were different they were excellent and he regularly amazed the magicians who came to see his shows as he always confounded the public. He had a kindly, genial manner and a constant good humor. Whereas he took his magic seriously and saw that his magic always was mystifying, he was never serious in manner of performance. He knew that the public wants to be entertained and invariably he entertained them. For a major part of his life he used a wand during his performances as, when he began, the wand was the symbol of the profession. However, even with using the wand he got in his soft good humor with the line, quoted by several generations of his admirers, "It's all in the Stick.'" (The Sphinx, May 1949).



64

64. Rock, Will (William George Rakauskas). **Are Ghosts Real? Thurston Mysteries Presented by Will Rock.** N.p., n.d. (c. 1939). One-sheet (28 x 40") color lithographed poster. Skeleton, cat and ghost in striking combination of blue, green and red. Used to promote Will Rock's 1940s-era tour of the "Thurston's Mysteries" show comprised of illusions and tricks made famous by Howard Thurston and his brother Harry. Linen backed. Very good condition.

350/550



65

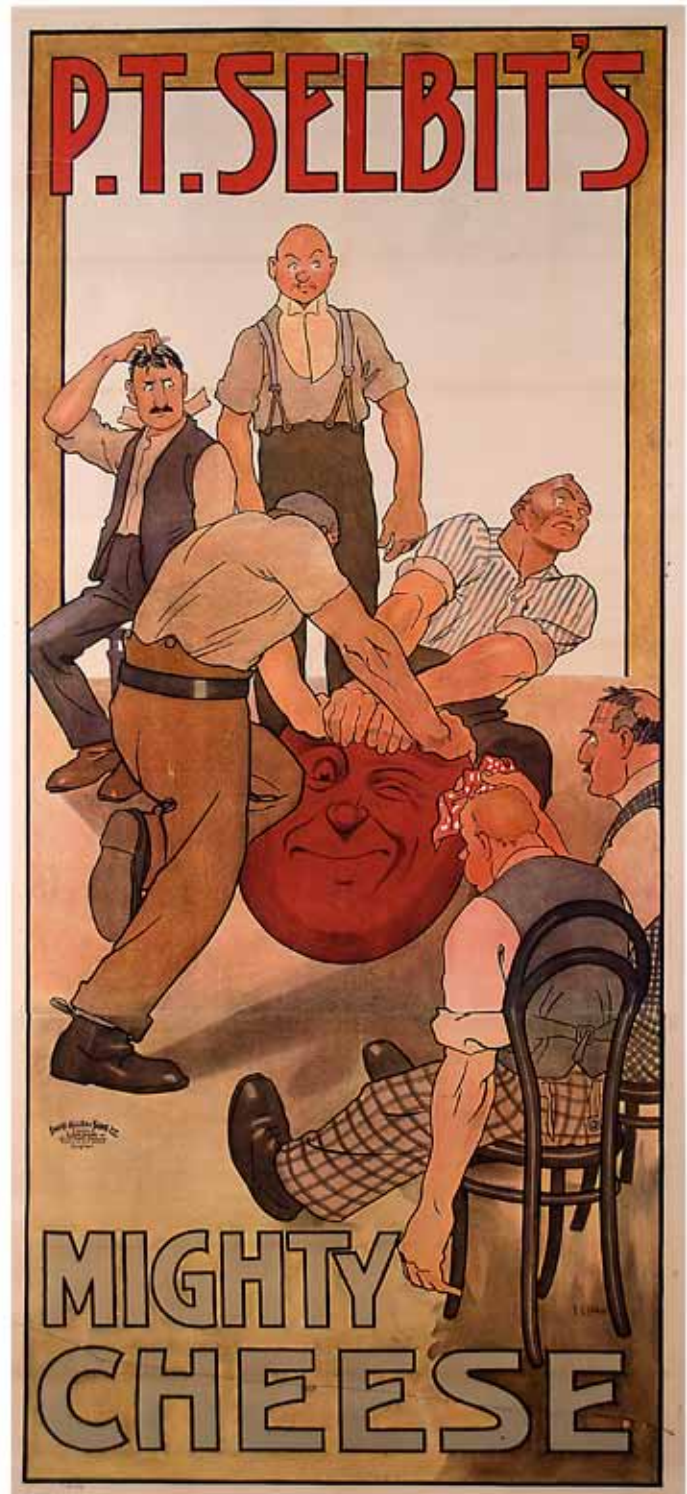
65. **Roody. Roody.** Milan, N. Moneta, ca. 1930. Large one-sheet (39 ¼ x 55 ½") color lithograph of the great Italian magician simulating the effect of time-lapse photography by replicating Roody's hand in various positions on the poster. Chips in the margins as typically encountered, otherwise good condition. Linen backed.

800/1,200

66. Selbit, P.T. (Percy Thomas Tibbles). **P.T. Selbit's Mighty Cheese.** London, David Allen & Sons, ca. 1920. Three-sheet (40 x 87") color lithograph depicting a comic scene sketched by artist T.E. Stephens in which a group of audience volunteers do battle with Selbit's giant wheel of "wrestling" cheese. Very good condition. Linen backed.

700/900

The "cheese" was in fact a metal object approximately 22" in diameter, painted to represent a gigantic wheel of cheese. The cheese would be rolled onto the stage and could be stopped at any point. Then several spectators were invited to the platform and told to try as hard as they could to knock the "wrestling cheese" over. No matter how hard the volunteers tried to lay the cheese down, they failed, yet the performer was able to do so by pushing it over with only one finger. For a finale, the cheese was placed into a leather harness attached to a rope. The volunteers were then invited to lift the cheese a few feet off of the stage with the rope, which had been strung over a pulley. In this position, at the magician's command the cheese exerted tremendous force and pulled back against the men, descending toward the stage of its own accord and sending the volunteers skyward, holding on to the rope for dear life.

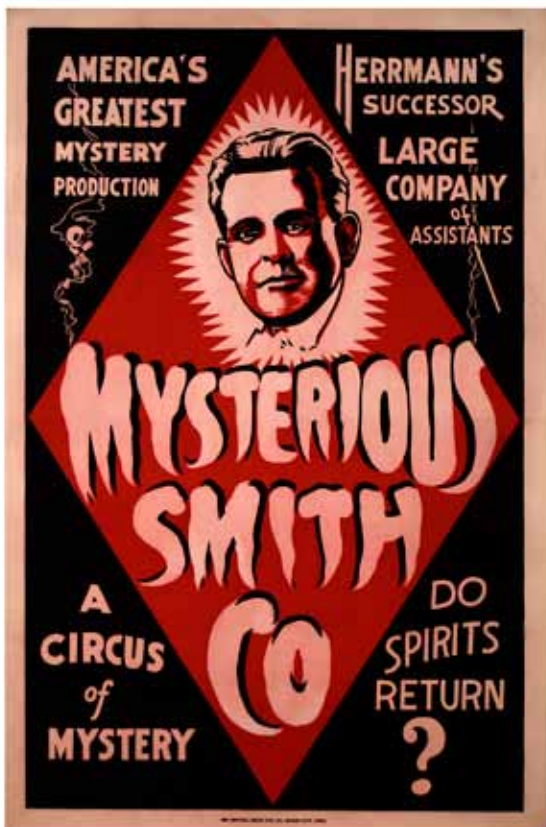




67

67. Shade, George. **Shade the Wonder Worker**. N.p., n.d. (ca. 1930). Half-sheet (20 ½ x 28") color lithographed bust portrait of Shade the magician of Shamokin, Pennsylvania, with an owl perched on his shoulder where most other posters would place a devil, and another owl in the distance. Very good condition. Linen backed.

400/600



68

68. Smith, Alfred. **Mysterious Smith Co.** Mason City, Central Show Printing Co., ca. 1930. One-sheet (28 ¼ x 42 ½") three-color poster in red, black and white bearing an illustrated portrait of Smith and proclaiming him "Herrmann's Successor." Good condition, linen backed.

100/150

Smith toured small and medium-sized American towns and generally performed in each stop on his tour for one week at a time, changing his program completely during the run. He featured a coffin escape on the final night's performance, to bring customers back to the theatre who'd seen the show earlier in the week. Another outstanding feature of the Smith show was his wife's turn as Madame Olga, the mind reader. Seated on an elaborate throne at center stage, Olga answered questions on the minds of audience members.



69

69. Solanis. **Solanis Le Magicien Moderne**. N.p., Royer Nancy, ca. 1945. Half sheet (20 x 28") color poster depicting flags of the WWII allied powers, flowers, birds and playing cards erupting from a magician's top hat, with the magician's name floating above the scene. Printed signature of the artist, George Condé, incorporated into the design. Framed and glazed, and not examined out of frame.

400/500

70. [Spook Shows] **Group of four Spook Show window cards**. Including examples for Bob Nelson and His Ghost Friends, Chas. A. Nicol, Aladdin's Ghost Show, and a Weird Ghost Show. American, ca. 1950s. Condition varies, but generally fair.

100/200



70



70



70



71

71. [Stock Poster] **El Verdadero Diablo stock poster.** Cincinnati and New York, Russell-Morgan Print Co., ca. 1907. One-sheet (27 ¾ x 41") color lithograph bearing a striking tableau of classic conjuring icons, among them a grinning devil, a white rabbit, a handsome magician in white tie and tails, flowers, playing cards, and more. One of the most impressive and visually arresting stock magic posters extant. Significant wear chipping and tears in margins, but image sound and attractive. Fair condition. Linen backed.

700/900

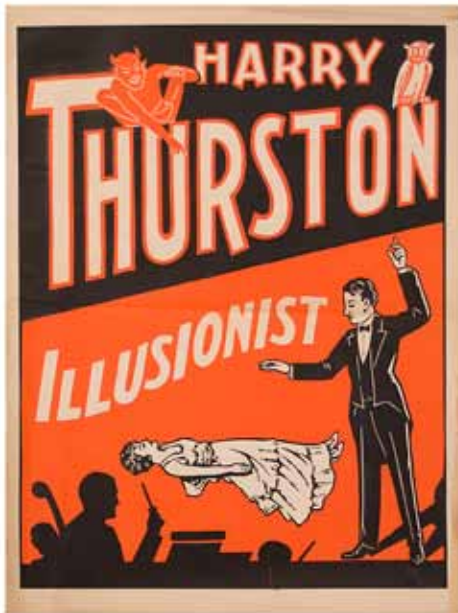
This poster was most likely used to advertise the 1907 South American tour of American magician Will B. Wood.



72

72. [Stock Poster] **Levitation stock poster.** Donaldson Litho., ca. 1917. Half-sheet (20 x 28") color lithographed poster depicting a magician levitating his assistant, while imps look on. Overprinted with the name "Gylleck." Chips and tears primarily in margins, one corner clipped; fair condition. Unmounted.

100/200



74



73



74

73. Tarbell, Harlan. **Coming in Person! Tarbell.** Chicago, Globe Poster Corp., ca. 1945. Three-color offset window card (14 x 22") bearing two images of Tarbell. In one he performs Eyeless Vision, and in the other the Hindu Rope Mystery. Good condition.

40/80

Tarbell is today best known as a writer, illustrator and teacher of magic, but during his lifetime, made a comfortable living performing for civic groups, colleges and other private organizations. This window card is overprinted for Tarbell's appearance at the Chicago Opera House, one of the few public theater shows he ever gave.

74. Thurston, Harry. **Two Harry Thurston magic posters.** One being a stock poster depicting a performance of the Spirit Cabinet, the other a two-color poster depicting a performance of the levitation. Both posters being half-sheet (20 x 28"), unmounted and in fair condition.

100/200



75

75. Thurston, Howard. **All Out of a Hat.** Cleveland, Otis Lithograph Co., ca. 1926. One-sheet (40 x 27") color lithographed poster depicting Thurston's production of umbrellas, assistants and other objects from a giant top hat. This production number was used to open Thurston's show in later years. Minor surface wear and unobtrusive tears to margins, but overall good condition. With original snipe (not mounted) for Thurston's appearance at the Chicago Theatre; tattered but intact. Linen backed.

1,200/1,500

Howard Thurston was America's most popular magician from approximately 1908, when he purchased Kellar's show, until his death

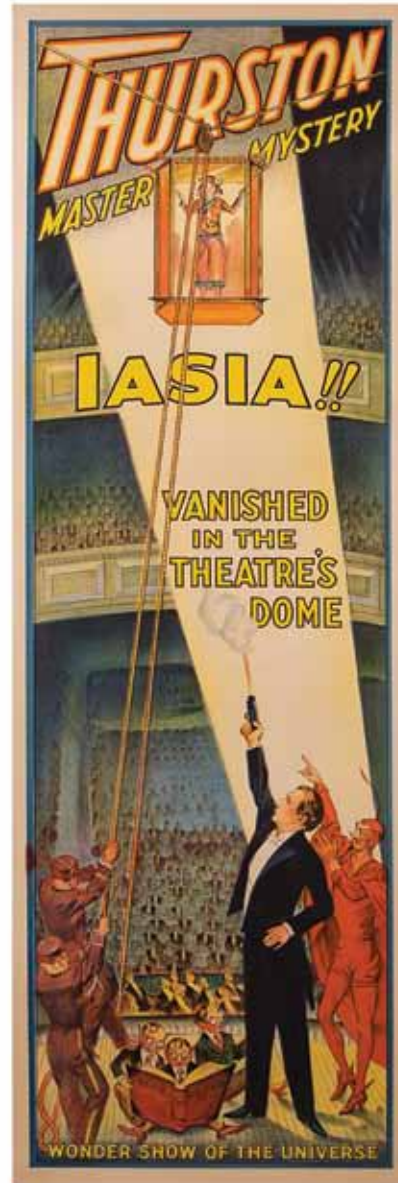
in 1936. Born in Columbus Ohio, it took years of touring the honkytonks of the old west, playing third-rate vaudeville shows, saloons, and rural opera houses before he finally hit the big time at the dawn of the twentieth century with an act that featured card manipulation, a showy version of the Rising Cards, and the production of a live duck from a spectator's coat. He later toured the world with a larger show that incorporated illusions, and after assuming Kellar's "mantle" of magic, built up the largest road show of illusions in America. His annual tours were billed as "A National Necessity," and they lived up to that title, breaking box office records and making Thurston famous. His lithographs were primarily produced primarily by two companies, first Strobridge of New York and later Otis of Cleveland.



76

76. Thurston, Howard. "Beauty" Thurston's Arabian Steed. **Vanishing in Mid Air.** Cleveland, Otis Litho Co., ca. 1924. One-sheet (26 ¾ x 40 ½") color lithograph bearing a cartoonish full-length portrait of Thurston and the white horse, Beauty, that vanished from the stage in Thurston's show, night after night. Significant wear and over-coloring. Linen backed. Uncommon.

3,400/3,800



77

77. Thurston, Howard. **Iasia!! Vanished in the Theatre's Dome.** Cleveland, Otis Litho Co., ca. 1926. Panel (13 ½ x 41") color lithograph depicting Thurston's performance of the Iasia illusion, in which a female assistant in a curtain-covered cabinet, vanished from within it when hoisted high above the audience. Linen backed, good condition.

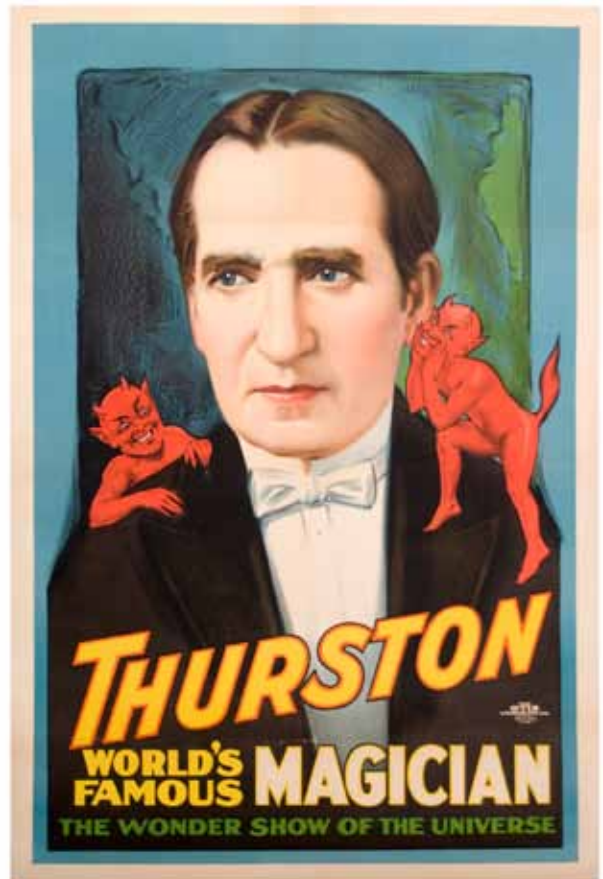
1,700/2,000



78

78. Thurston, Howard. **Howard Thurston**. Cincinnati, Strobridge Litho Co., 1907. Three-sheet (40 x 84") color lithograph depicting a striking bust portrait of a young Thurston in coat and tie. Issued to promote the joint tour of Kellar and Thurston during the 1907/08 theatrical season at the end of which Thurston assumed Kellar's mantle of magic. Minor wear at folds. Linen backed, good condition.

6,000/8,000



79

79. Thurston, Howard. **Thurston World's Famous Magician**. Cleveland, Otis Litho Co., ca. 1926. One-sheet (27 x 40") color lithograph depicting the iconic portrait of Thurston with two devils perched on his shoulders, whispering in his ears. Some toning to Thurston's forehead, otherwise good condition. Linen backed.

700/900



82

80. Thurston, Howard. **One of Thurston's Astounding Mysteries.** Cleveland, Otis Lithograph Company, ca. 1926. Color lithograph window card (14 x 22") depicting scenes from Thurston's performance of his levitation illusion. Extremities worn and one corner clipped, but not affecting image; fair condition.

150/300

81. Thurston, Howard. **Thurston. World's Famous Magician.** Cleveland, Otis Lithograph Company, ca. 1926. Color lithograph window card (14 x 22") bearing a portrait of Thurston withimps perched on his shoulders. Extremities worn, but not affecting image; fair condition.

150/300

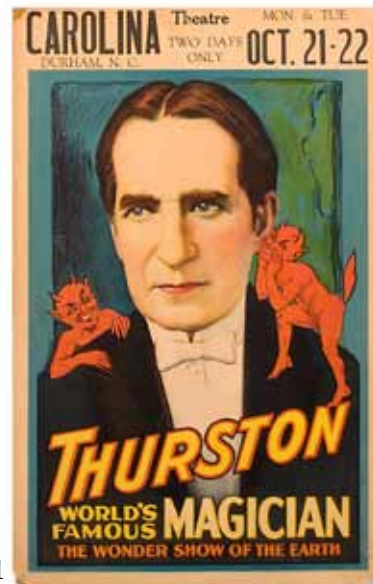
Both of these Thurston window cards were printed for a performance that never took place. Before Thurston could appear in North Carolina at fulfill these engagements he suffered a stroke from which he would never recover. The window cards were later distributed to the magic community by well-known magician Wallace Lee.

82. Virgil (Virgil Mulkey). **See The Great Virgil! Mystery of the Jungle!** Mason City, Central Show Printing Co., ca. 1949. One-sheet (42 1/4 x 28") three-color poster depicting scenes from Virgil's show, and including witches, devils, and a levitation. Some wear to extremities. Linen backed.

40/80



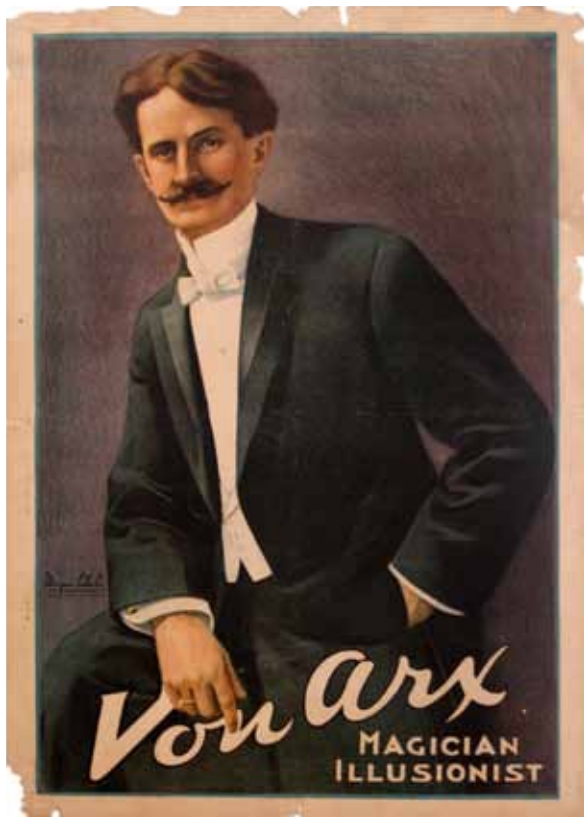
80



81



83



85

83. Virgil (Virgil Mulkey). **Group of three Great Virgil posters.** Including full-color and three-color posters, the largest measuring 27 x 40". Some wear at folio folds, but generally good condition.

100/150

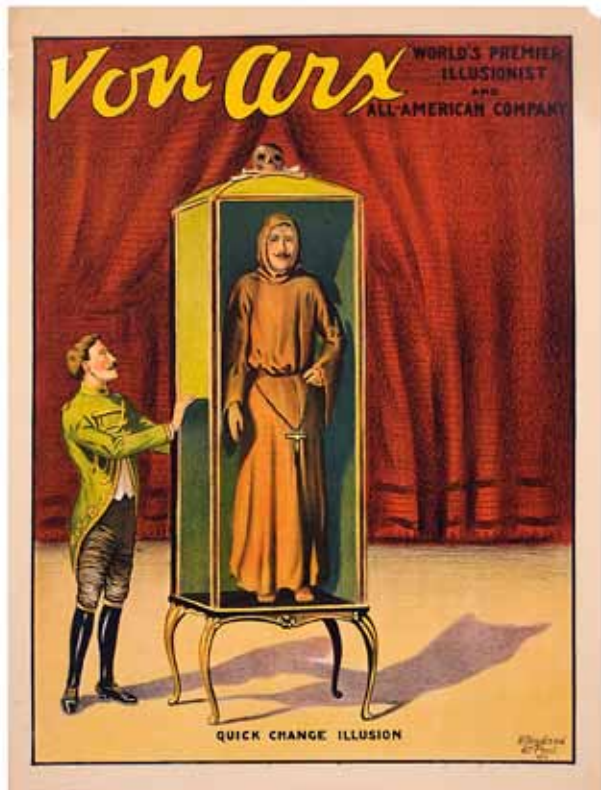
84. Chasan the Great (Charles A. Nicol). **Group of four Chasan The Great posters.** Including three window cards, some with photos of Nicol, and one broadside advertising Chasan's expose of spirit mediums. Condition varies, but generally good.

50/150

Chasan was the stage name of Charles A. Nicol, known as "Al" to his friends. Nicol was the brother of The Great Nicola, and the son of Nicoli the Great (John Nicol). After retiring from the road and settling in his hometown of Monmouth, Illinois, Nicol gave up performing under the name of Von Arx, and instead worked both under his given name, and as Chasan the Great.

85. Von Arx (Charles A. Nicol). **Von Arx. Magician. Illusionist.** Cleveland, Morgan Litho Co., ca. 1920. Half-sheet (20 x 28") color lithograph 1/2 length portrait of Von Arx in white tie and tails. Folio folds and significant chipping to margins not affecting image. Linen backed.

500/700



86

86. Von Arx (Charles A. Nicol). **Von Arx. Quick Change Illusion.** St. Paul, Standard Litho., ca. 1920. Half-sheet (20 x 28") color lithograph showing Von Arx dressed in a monk's cowl and standing in an oblong cabinet on curved legs. Very good condition. Linen backed.

700/900



84



84

87. Von Arx (Charles A. Nicol). **Von Arx. The Throne of Mystery.** St. Paul, Standard Litho., ca. 1920. Half-sheet (20 x 28") color lithograph showing Von Arx conjuring a toe-haired damsel from a boiling cauldron while a witch looks on. Good condition. Linen backed.

700/900



87



88

88. Von Arx (Charles A. Nicol). **Von Arx. The Witch's Cauldron.** St. Paul, Standard Litho., ca. 1920. Half-sheet (20 x 28") color lithograph showing Von Arx conjuring a woman from a magnificent throne, with demons in the foreground. Very good condition. Linen backed.

700/900



89

89. Wood, Will. **Wood's Great Sensation Edna**. Newport, Donaldson Litho Co., ca. 1900. One-sheet (27 3/4 x 41 1/2") color lithographed poster depicting a fiery scene from Wood's show replete with a devil, lightning, the magician dressed in tails, and a gorgeous girl. Some wear and chips in margins not affecting image. Linen backed. Good condition. Scarce.

3,500/4,500

Edna was a levitation illusion invented by Wood, which he patented in 1889. Kellar and Alexander Herrmann featured the effect, but only Kellar paid Wood for the rights to use it. In 1908, while touring Mexico, Wood and his daughter Bertha perished when the tugboat they were riding sank off the coast of the Yucatan. Though the tugboat's crew survived and Wood's props and trunks eventually washed ashore (along with many of his lithographs), the \$14,000 in cash he had been carrying was never recovered, prompting an investigation into his death. According to magic historian David Price, Jr., "Edna Wood was informed by the American consul that a member of the crew told the awful story of Wood begging the crew not to leave him and Bertha to drown. At the end, he begged only for his daughter's life, but his plea was not heeded by the crew members intent on saving their own skins."



90

90. Wandas, The. **The Wanda's. Goddess of Mystery.** Paris, Louis Galice, ca. 1912. One-sheet (30 ½ x 47") color lithograph depicting one of the Wandas sisters (or possibly their mother) conjuring another from a brazier full of flames. Demons look on. Linen backed, good condition.

1,800/2,000

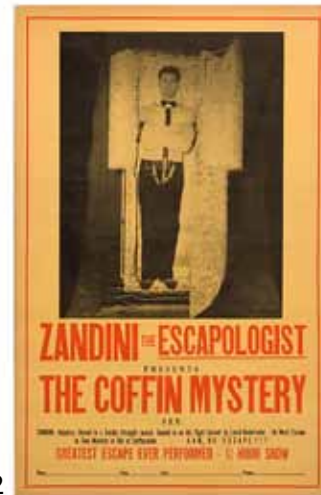
91. Yettmah, Cyril. **Yettmah. England's Greatest Magician.** Kenton, Scioto Sign Co., ca. 1928. Two-color offset window card (14 x 22") in green and white bearing a portrait of Yettmah and hailing his appearance at an early I.B.M. convention. Wear to margins, overall good condition.

40/80

Yettmah is today remembered more as a designer of illusions than a performer. He created one of the illusions used in the opening of the Thurston show, Birds from the Air, and many other mysteries.



91



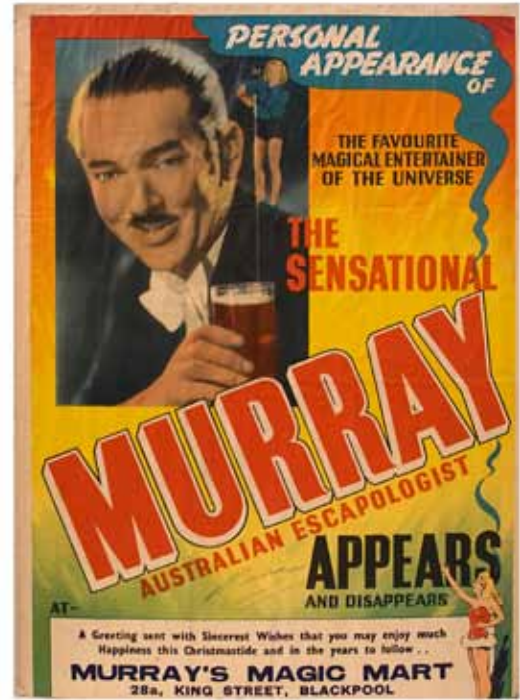
92

92. Zandini. **Zandini the Escapologist Presents The Coffin Mystery.** N.p., n.d. (ca. 1950). Two-color offset window card (14 x 22") heralding Zandini's performance of a coffin escape, and featuring a large photo of the magician bound in a straightjacket and reposing in a coffin. Good condition.

40/80



93



94



93



93



94

93. [German Posters] **Group of 16 German magic posters.** Including letterpress broadsides and full-color posters advertising performances of Kassner, Punx, Maldino, Bosco, Bellini, Wittus Witt (including exhibitions of his collection of magic sets), the Zauber Zauber magic revue show, and more. 1920s - 80s. Sizes vary. Condition varies, but generally good. SHOULD BE SEEN.

150/250

94. [Miscellaneous] **Group of four vintage magic posters.** Including posters advertising Murray the escapologist (SIGNED BY MURRAY); Cheong, a Chinese magician; The Floyds; and Homar (a stock poster). Sizes and condition varies, but generally fair; two posters mounted to board. SHOULD BE SEEN.

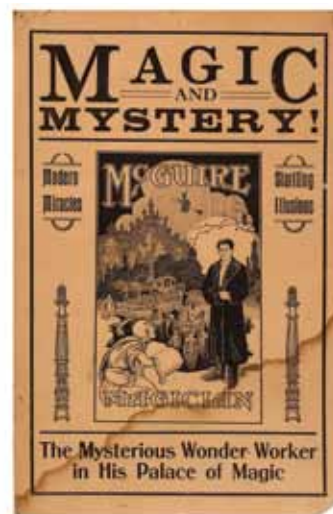
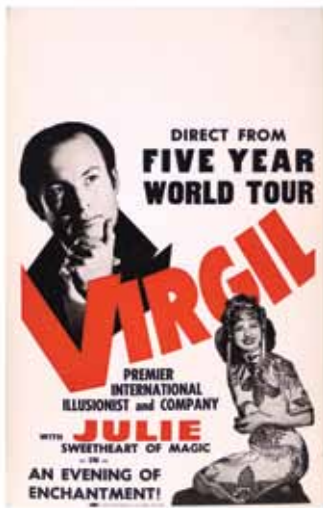
150/200

95. [Miscellaneous] **Group of eight vintage magic posters.** Including a one-color poster advertising Harry Blackstone, Sr., as well as one-, half-, and quarter-sheet images for Sorcar, Rosini (stock poster), Danar the Magi, Monk Watson (SIGNED AND INSCRIBED), and Virgil and Julie. Condition varies, but generally fair. SHOULD BE SEEN.

100/200

96. [Miscellaneous] **Group of eight vintage magic posters.** Including color and monochrome posters advertising appearances by Virgil and Julie, Grover George, Reveen, Wallace the Magician, Bill Baker, and others. Condition varies, but generally fair. SHOULD BE SEEN.

100/200



97

97. [Window Cards] Group of 10 window cards advertising 20th century American magicians. V.p., v.d. Most in two or three colors and measuring 14 x 22". Among the performers represented are Jack Gwynne (three different), Al Caroselli, Ed Reno, Willard the Wizard, Laurant, Virgil and McGuire (one time "manager" for Max Malini). Most measure 14 x 22". Condition varies, but generally fair. SHOULD BE SEEN.

100/200

98. [Window Cards] Group of 15 window cards advertising 20th century American magicians. V.p., v.d. (primarily 1950s). Most in two or three colors and measuring 14 x 22". Among the performers represented on these cards are Jack Gwynne, Ed Reno, Tommy Windsor, Vernon Lux (presenting the illusion Noma), Dorny, David Copperfield, Ken Griffin, and others. Most measure 14 x 22". Condition varies, but generally fair.

SHOULD BE SEEN.

100/200



99

VINTAGE CIRCUS POSTERS

99. Al G. Barnes Superb Spectacle. Erie, Erie Litho. Co., ca 1939. Aladdin and the Parade of Gold. One-sheet (41 x 27") color offset poster showing performers and animals from the Barnes circus spectacle with an Asian theme. Fair condition, linen backed.

50/150



101

101. Cole Brothers Circus. Erie, Erie Litho Co., ca. 1940. One-sheet (41 x 28") color offset poster depicting the Cole Bros. circus train and the many performers and animals on the show exiting the train. One corner clipped, and with date banner pasted down. Unmounted.

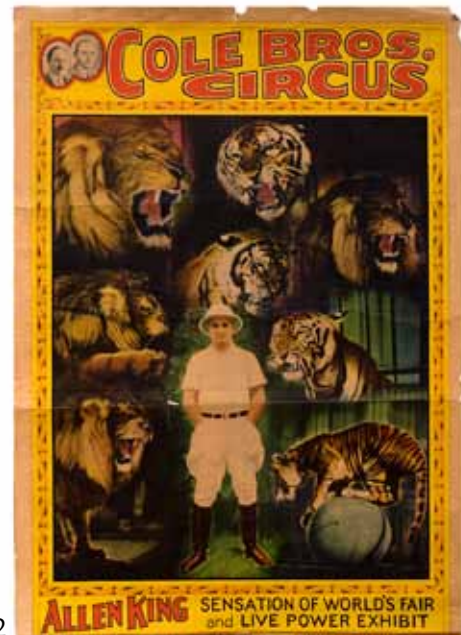
75/150



100

100. Al G. Barnes Wild Animal Circus. A Truly Big Show. Erie, Erie Litho., ca. 1940. One-sheet (28 x 40") color offset poster showing a tiger perched on the back of an elephant. Poor condition, linen backed.

50/100



102

102. Cole Bros. Circus with Allen King. N.p., n.d., (ca. 1937). One-sheet (28 x 40") color offset poster depicting the wild animal tamer Allen King, and many of the big cats he trained. Date banner states "With Clyde Beatty." Chipped, worn, trimmed and torn; fair condition. Linen backed.

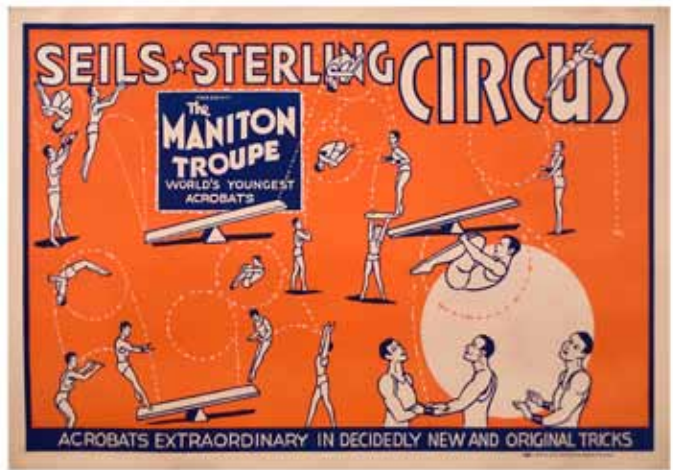
75/150



103

103. **Downie Bros. 3 Ring Circus.** Erie, Erie Litho., ca. 1940. One-sheet (20 x 28") color offset poster showing many of the wild animals that toured with the Downie Bros. show, including lions, tigers, and bears. One corner missing, otherwise good condition. **Linen backed.**

75/150



105

105. **Seils Sterling Circus Presents the Maniton Troupe World's Youngest Acrobats.** Mason City, Central Show Printing Co., ca. 1935. Horizontal one-sheet (42 x 28") three-color poster showing the acrobatic feats of this troupe of youngsters. Minor restoration to lower margin, otherwise very good condition. **Linen backed.**

100/200



104

104. **Walter L. Main 3 Ring Trained Wild Animal Shows.** Milwaukee, Riverside Printing Co., ca. 1910. One-sheet (42 x 28") color lithograph poster depicting a female tiger tamer in a large cage, among six big cats. Poor condition. **Linen backed.**

75/150



106

106. **Parker & Watts Circus. The Show with the Big Street Parade.** Chicago, Temple Litho., ca. 1940. One-sheet (28 x 40") color offset poster depicting an equestrian act. Creased and worn; fair condition. **Linen backed.**

50/150



107

107. **Prairie Bill and his Congress of Rough Riders of the World.** Erie, Erie Litho., ca. 1939. One-sheet (40 x 28") color offset poster showing Prairie Bill on horseback, performing as part of a Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey circus. Fair condition, linen backed.

75/150



109

109. **Ringling Bros and Barnum & Bailey Circus.** Chicago, Central Printing and Illinois Litho., ca. 1935. One-sheet (42 x 28") color lithograph bearing a striking central portrait of a clown. Some surface wear; fair condition. Linen backed.

50/150



108

108. **Nat Reiss Shows.** Chicago, Riverside Printing, ca. 1937. One-sheet (27 x 41") color lithographed poster depicting a circus/carnival clown in full blackface makeup and costume, carrying a banjo. Linen backed, good condition.

100/150



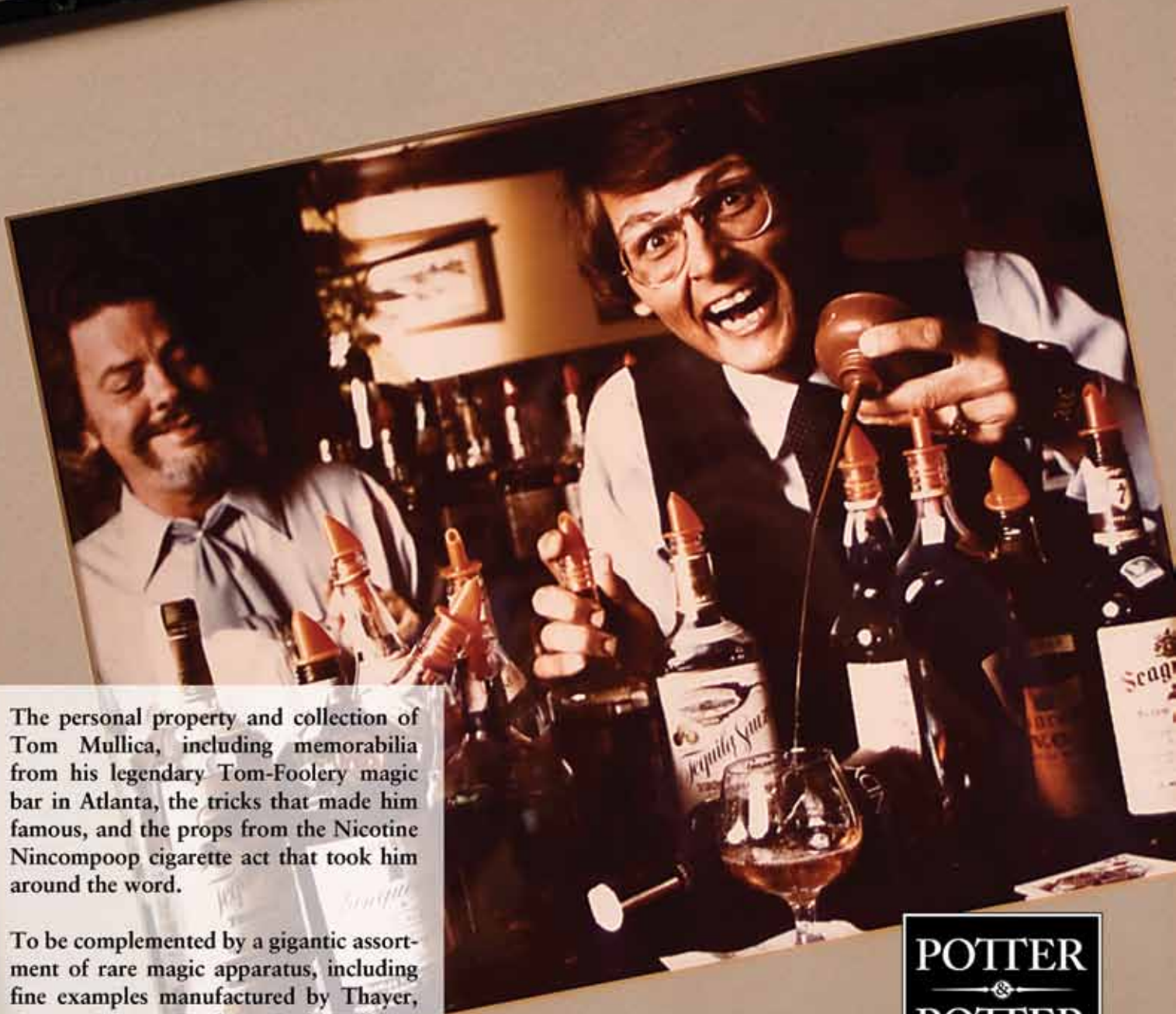
110

110. **Ward, Erma. Sells Floto Circus. Erma Ward Aerial Gymnaste Supreme.** N.p., n.d. (ca. 1915). One-sheet (28 x 40") color lithographed poster showing the "World's Wonder Girl" acrobat hanging above the center circus ring upside down, by one hand. Crudely linen backed; fair condition.

150/250

At Auction
May 22nd 2011

Tom-Foolery



The personal property and collection of Tom Mullica, including memorabilia from his legendary Tom-Foolery magic bar in Atlanta, the tricks that made him famous, and the props from the Nicotine Nincompoop cigarette act that took him around the world.

To be complemented by a gigantic assortment of rare magic apparatus, including fine examples manufactured by Thayer, Owen, Mervy Taylor, Carl Williams Custom Magic, John Gaughan, and many, many more.

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Lot Number	Description	U.S. Dollar Limit (Exclusive of Buyer's Premium)

For absentee bids, indicate your limit for each lot, excluding the Buyers' Premium. Your bids will be executed at the lowest prices allowed by reserves and other bids. If more than one bid of the same value is received, the first bid received will take precedence.	I authorize Potter & Potter Auctions to bid on my behalf up to the amount(s) stated above. I agree that all purchases are subject to the "Terms & Condition of Sale" as stated in the sale catalogue and that I will pay for these lots on receipt of invoice.
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Min Value	Max Value	Increment
\$0.00	\$29.00	\$5.00
\$30.00	\$99.00	\$10.00
\$100.00	\$499.00	\$25.00
\$500.00	\$999.00	\$50.00
\$1000.00	\$1,999.00	\$100.00
\$2,000.00	\$5,999.00	\$200.00
\$6,000.00	\$9,999.00	\$500.00
\$10,000.00	\$19,999.00	\$1,000.00
\$20,000.00	\$49,999.00	\$2,000.00
\$50,000.00	and above	10% of current bid

Note: the auctioneer may modify the increments at any time.

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Potter & Potter wishes to thank Ms. Bettie Christensen, widow of Douglas Christensen, for entrusting her husband's collection to Potter & Potter; and to Regina Reynolds, Charles Greene III, Richard Hatch, Sei Petersen, Vince Newkirk, Martin Pacheco, David Meyer, Lee Levin, Robert Cline, Tad Ware, George Daily, and Tim Felix for their assistance in the preparation of this catalog.

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Potter & Potter Auctions, Inc.
(Illinois Lic. # 444.000388)
3729 N. Ravenswood Ave.
-Suite 116-
Chicago, IL 60613

Phone: (773) 472-1442
Fax: (773) 260-1462

info@potterauctions.com
www.potterauctions.com

Sami Fajuri, Managing Auctioneer
Lic. #441.001540

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