

Contents:

• <i>On Your Marks, Get Set...</i>	17-26
• <i>Mains Buzzer Opener</i>	27-32
• <i>Hickory Dickory Dock</i>	33-40
• <i>The YES - NO Book!</i>	41-46
• <i>Topsy Turvy Traffic Lights</i>	47-52
• <i>When Santa Calls...</i>	53-58
• <i>Kidz Kardz Across</i>	59-66
• <i>Pro Epic</i>	67-76
• <i>Three Little Pigs</i>	77-84
• <i>Pass the Test!</i>	85-90
• <i>Ant the Ant</i>	91-98
• <i>Find the Bunny</i>	99-106
• <i>Funny Talk</i>	107-112
• <i>Moving Spider on Back</i>	113-118
• <i>Henry's Biscuit Steal</i>	119-124
• <i>Lie Detector Junior</i>	125-134
• <i>Cover the Spot</i>	135-142
• <i>Rat Trap</i>	143-150

Continued:

Contents continued

• <i>The Great Escape</i>	151-156
• <i>Magic Mouth Mike</i>	157-160
• <i>You - You Camera</i>	161-163
• <i>Dove from Silk</i>	164-166
• <i>Breakaway Wand Handling</i>	167-168
• <i>Using Foamex</i>	169-170
• <i>Ear Popping!</i>	171-172
• <i>Jumping Stick</i>	173-174
• <i>Break Your Finger</i>	175-176
• <i>Two in Hand - One in Pocket</i>	177-178
• <i>Bank Nite Sox</i>	181-183
• <i>Silk in Purse</i>	185-187
• <i>Mindreader</i>	188-191
• <i>Tilting Sign</i>	192-195
• <i>Ropey Knot</i>	196-199
• <i>Splish Splash Monte</i>	200-203
• <i>How to Choose Magic Tricks</i>	204
• <i>Some Final Thoughts</i>	205-208
• <i>Index</i>	209-211

Children's magic can be a tricky business, in more than just the literal sense. For performers, finding new material that is tried, tested and practical can be a difficult and expensive task, often resulting in a whole heap of disappointment and a cupboard full of unused props. If you have ever experienced this frustration, this book is for you!

Like many in the industry, I became acquainted with John Breeds' work via his seminal first book: '*How to Create Kids' Magic and Triple Your Income*'. It was a real game changer and nothing less than a blueprint for success in children's entertainment. Here was a working pro passing on the lessons learned from 35 years 'on the front lines' working for real audiences and dealing with the pitfalls and problems we all encounter on a daily basis.

In this eagerly awaited sequel, John shifts focus to original routines, gags and bits of business for your show. For professional children's entertainers, this is an absolute gold mine. No pipe dreams here, just practical, workable material from John's massive performing repertoire, with a liberal helping of advice and amusing anecdotes thrown in for good measure!



Those who love to make their own magic props will be thrilled at what's on offer. It's fair to say that in a few cases there is 'some assembly required', but fear not! With the help of John's step-by-step instructions and easy to follow illustrations, even those lacking in DIY skills should have no problem putting any of these routines together. You will also learn new skills and techniques along the way that will open up fresh possibilities and help you customise and create your own magic!

I suppose it is customary at this point in the foreword to single out one particular routine that is 'worth the price of the book', but on this occasion I am truly spoilt for choice. For younger audiences, 'Hickory Dickory Dock' is all the fun of Run Rabbit Run and Farmyard Frolics rolled into one logical and hilarious new routine. At the other end of the spectrum, Pro Epic is a clever re-think of a classic prop that will play equally well with both children and adults.

The fact is, any one of more than 30 different tricks, gags, stunts, gizmos and routines in these pages more than justifies its modest price tag. So sit back, put your feet up and dig in. Then get out there and knock 'em dead.

John Kimmons

John Kimmons

In 2008, Kimmo became the first ever children's entertainer to win the prestigious KEN DODD AWARD for comedy at the Blackpool Opera House.

If you have ever visited CADBURY WORLD, the chances are you have seen his show already - he has been performing there for nearly 10 years!

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You have to be careful while going through John Breeds' LOTZ of MAGIC for KIDZ. I mean, there you'll be, happily reading another clever and hilarious bit of routining for another brilliant and easy-to-build kid show prop when John will sneak in some of the most practical advice on kid show performance I've ever read. Take the following gem tucked quietly away in "The Great Escape," John's fresh take on the Ropes through Body magic plot: *"Actually, I do not call up [the third onstage helper] until near the end, as it's not good theatre to have someone up front during the period when they are not taking part in the action."*

Similarly, in the "Mains Buzzer Opener" sequence, he hides this clever piece of advice: *"This sequence of combined mime, prop gag and bits of business involving individuals watching adds up to a powerful attention-getter. It also shows you getting on with what you've been booked to do – entertain – rather than plaintively and increasingly desperately shouting at the top of your voice for quiet."*

Both routines are great. Both methods are diabolical. Two statements I can make for every entry in these pages. But it's the little, seemingly insignificant thoughts that I encourage you, the reader, to



pay close attention to as you peruse what follows. While mere sentences tucked meekly away in the prose, they hold in them a lifetime's worth of children's entertainment experience. John Breeds clearly knows his stuff, and he's packed this book full of ingenious pieces of advice, all there for you to discover in this inspirational scavenger hunt.

I can tell John knows his stuff when examining every ounce of entertainment he extracts from each prop in a given effect. I urge you to not let a single one of these routines pass by without careful consideration of how he mines each moment for maximum laughs and reactions from young audiences. Look at this instance in his "Hickory Dickory Dock" routine: *"At this moment you are bent over the Cheese Cupboard, when you cause Hickory to bob up and down, and hit you on the nose."*

The mouse cutout could simply pop into view, receiving joyous Look, Don't See cries from the children, but John takes it further, adding an even bigger laugh with the hit-on-the-nose bit. Once again ... the routine is great. The method is diabolical. I'll even add that the DIY aspect is meticulously described and actually achievable. But amidst all this inspiration, don't overlook the countless bits of business and verbal playfulness he adds to every prop; let those instances inspire your own routines and performances as well.

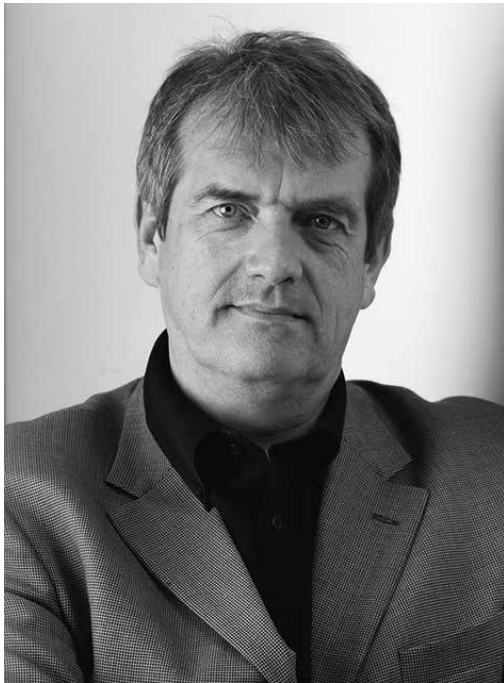
I know you'll be thrilled with the magic, comedy, and information in LOTZ of MAGIC for KIDZ. You're about to take a trip into one of the greatest minds in the kid show magic business!

Christopher T. Magician

Christopher T. Magician (Christopher W. Barnes) is the author of *Beyond Look, Don't See, Just for Fun*, and *Be More Funny* as well as the star of *Live from the Living Room*.

Having performed magic for fifteen years in and around New York City, he now resides and performs in Southern California.

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Bob Gill

Bob Gill has earned his living performing and writing comedy, as well as magic, both stand-up and close-up for over 50 years.

As a bibliophile he wrote the prize-winning bibliography of magic literature *Magic As A Performing Art* in 1976, the same year he won the coveted IBM Zina Bennett Trophy and was called to join The Magic Circle as an Associate Member of The Inner Magic Circle with Silver Star.

John Breeds is a name that will be familiar to few outside the cognoscenti of children's magicians; those working performers who know a good thing when they see it and have benefitted from John's output both in print and through his own range of unique dealer items. For nearly a decade he built a reputation as a true one-man band, one of that tiny bunch of magic dealers who differentiated themselves by only selling their own products that they felt they could stand by: routines and apparatus that John developed, manufactured, performed, wrote up and finessed himself.

He could only do this because for over 30 years he built a solid business as a professional entertainer of children: not just a kids' magician, but someone who made it their business to bring delight, mystery, fun and laughter to British children of all ages. In the process he never lost his sheer love of the sound of children's laughter, and of good magic. It says a lot about John that his first book, *How To Create Kids' Magic And Triple Your Income*, produced in 2009 and quickly

becoming a reference book on the business side of kids' entertainment, closed with the reflection that "...tripling your income..." was not so much about monetary wealth as the personal plenitude gained from being the source of joy for thousands of children.

Inevitably this generosity of spirit extended into his performance. From the minute his show started his brand of silliness, clowning, interaction and strong magic got the audience laughing – and we're talking belly laughs, not just loud shouting. John had a rare gift as a performer: a deep understanding of what makes children tick, and above all what makes them laugh. Coupled with an abiding respect for his audiences.

His cornucopia of lines, sight gags, prop gags and scripting always positioned him firmly as the butt of the joke; the kids who came up to help the funny magic man were never made to feel embarrassed or the target of derision. It would hurt him to witness a performer use hack material and make fun of the audience.

So imagine his sorrow that this comprises such a large proportion of those who set out to earn money from making kids shout and scream and, worse, be the 'suckers' in the mindless churning of end-to-end 'yah, shucks, boo' that still today passes for children's entertainment, and which has conspired to build such a derisory reputation

for this side of magic. John unilaterally declared war on such a situation, and determined from the get-go that from the first contact the public had with him – in contacting him about a booking, to his exhaustive preparation and attention to detail, to his personal grooming and demeanour, to the moment he first walked into the venue – was with a Professional.

I have to confess myself to be hugely biased, as someone can only be who has counted himself a close friend of John's for nigh-on 40 years, but hand-on-heart I never saw a better entertainer of children than John Breeds when in full flood. Such is the testament to his craft, that through a combination of vast stage time and his forensic attention to detail he had eradicated the weaknesses from his shows that so bedevil many working entertainers of children.

What John has given you here is priceless: the working routines that wrought this phenomenon. Most books of kids' material are highly derivative, whether in their presentations or the effects themselves; Mad Scientist Breeds gives you original performance pieces whose methodology is original too.

His engineering background, his lifetime of magical reading and his predisposition to explore every possible avenue of methods and technology – invariably looking outside the narrow confines of the magic world – bring a healthy originality to the means of achieving his effects and apparatus.

This is John's material because he not only developed it, but he built it too; manufacturing his props lent him a deep insight into how they worked, the potential flaws, how they could be improved, to end up with material – both in the props and the presentation of the routine – trouble free. So you can adopt (and, if you're smart, adapt) this material safe in the knowledge that it works in the hurly-burly of day-to-day performance.

In endorsing John's work in this way, one does so with a slightly heavy heart, for three reasons; he never had his show filmed for posterity; and he has never seen fit to lecture the material for the magic world. Until such time as this changes (but don't hold your breath) this book and its predecessor will have to suffice. Luckily for us, his clarity of explanations and liberal use of self-penned illustrations bring these routines alive and make everything crystal clear.

The third reason is the most important, and perhaps our biggest loss. John has retired from performing, so no longer will his unique stage persona delight this or the coming generation of children. But I hope John can console himself with the rich legacy he has built as a performer, originator, manufacturer suffused with a deep and abiding love of good magic. Like that legacy, this is a book to be proud of, just as I am proud to have been associated with it in a small way.