

Casanova Concept

by Steve Haynes

Reviewed by Peter Duffie

When you develop an idea or principle, you need to be very careful how you present it to the magic world, especially when it comes to claiming originality and giving it a name. If you present it as a new concept, you had better be sure that you are not reinventing the wheel. The makers of this DVD have stuck their necks out with the following statement:

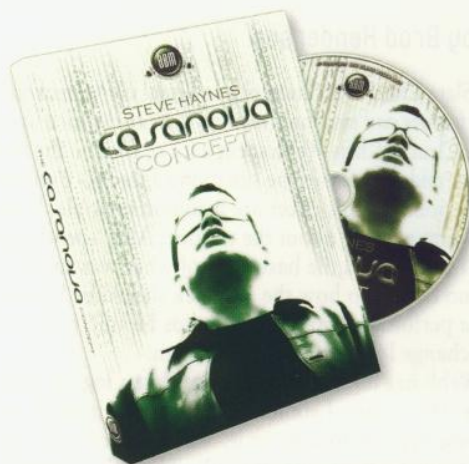
“Steve Haynes has tweaked and developed this closely guarded secret for 17 YEARS! Now, it can be yours! The ‘Casanova Concept’ is an easy to apply principle that will allow you to perform bona-fide miracles with both playing cards and business cards. It’s simple and straightforward, requires the minimum of sleight of hand and will go straight into your repertoire. This is NOT a trick; it’s a principle that can be applied to hundreds of routines.”

Ouch! On a text page at the end of the DVD, the main credit given as a source of inspiration is El Numero by Syd Bergson, as featured on Richard Osterlind’s *Easy to Master Mental Miracles*. Steve Haynes goes on to say, “Everything else I can find (that shows a signed card which in reality is elsewhere), uses fake signatures on duplicate cards. These are shown to the rest of the audience after the real signature is shown to the spectator and switched for the fake.”

An early relative to this concept is Peter Kane’s Sentimental Swiss Signature Trick, that can be found in *A Further Card Session* [1976], in which initials placed on two court cards change places. The gimmicking of the cards is more elaborate, but the principle is there. And Sadowitz Transpo, which appeared in the *Crimp* # 54 [2002], uses the same principle as Casanova Concept, but with ESP cards: A spectator signs his name on a circle card and the performer signs his name on a square. Then the signatures transpose. Sadowitz cites Hamman’s Fantabulous as the source of his inspiration.

As I said, one needs to proceed with extreme caution when claiming a new principle in magic.

Crediting aside, Haynes has developed powerful routines, as exemplified by his “signature piece” (pardon the pun), The Casanova Closer. In this application of the principle, a spectator selects two cards and signs them both. One is placed in his wallet or pocket, the other is lost in the deck. Almost immediately, the performer opens his wallet to reveal the signed selection, which was apparently lost in the deck. Offering to repeat the trick, the magician re-opens his wallet (which was empty only moments ago) and slowly withdraws a face-down card. At this point, the spectator starts to wonder how you got the signed selection back into your wallet. However, it is not *that* selection, it’s the other signed card, the one that was placed in the spectator’s wallet or pocket at the start. When he looks in his pocket, he finds the first signed card! Both cards are genuinely signed by the spectator and you never



touch the spectator’s wallet. A Mullica wallet or similar device is required, but you end clean.

The routines on this DVD will not be for everyone because of the preparation required. This is not a once-prepared-always-ready setup, because there is a degree of preparation each time you intend to perform any of the effects, with the exception of Stroller Controller (see below). Also, there is a restriction on where the spectator can place his signature in all of the effects. Check out the demo at the Big Blind Media website and you will see what I am referring to.

The DVD teaches four other applications:

In Stroller Controller, a freely selected card is signed front and back, then lost in the deck. You cleanly reach into your pocket and withdraw the card, showing that you apparently had it there before he even signed it. This resets easily and can be used repeatedly in strolling situations, but you will need to prepare an entire deck in advance.

Thru & Through is a signed card through glass-top table or glass door (you need to be able to place both hands on either side of the glass) with a face-up and signed selection.

In an effect called Rip Trip, a signed business card is torn and restored. This looks a bit fiddly and is the weakest effect on the DVD.

Finally, in Homing On Easy Street, a signed card vanishes from the deck and appears in the performer’s pocket, then the effect is repeated. This is not as good as Francis Carlyle’s ungaffed original Homing Card [*Stars of Magic*], considering the rather restrictive-looking way you show the card when you first bring it out of your pocket.

The effects are all well presented by Dave Forrest and explained in detail by Dave and Owen Packard. Steve Haynes appears throughout the video but, oddly, only as a cardboard cutout. The Casanova Closer is definitely the killer routine on this DVD, and the others will certainly give you additional food for thought.

Casanova Concept DVD by Steve Haynes. £17 (\$30) postpaid. Available from Big Blind Media, www.bigblindmedia.com or from magic dealers. Dealers contact Murphy’s Magic Supplies, www.murphysmagic.com.