

Magicscen - November '08



Methods in Magic - Live in the UK

Joshua Jay

Available from:
www.bigblindmedia.com

Price: £22.99

For some time now Joshua Jay has been the resident columnist for Magic Magazine's Talk About Tricks column, and so he spends much of his time talking about and showcasing other performers' routines. However, Joshua is a young man of considerable personal talent too, and this

excellent new DVD from Big Blind Media is a perfect introduction to both Joshua the man and to Joshua the creative thinker. The first big 'plus' about this DVD is that it does not conform to your bog standard format of 'performer sits behind a card table and drones on endlessly and self-indulgently about card tricks'. Instead the BBM team have made a really interesting and engaging DVD which has skilfully combined documentary style filming with quasi-interview footage and in-studio explanations. The documentary element comes about because the film crew went with Joshua on part of his recent extensive UK tour. Using footage shot of his lecture at four different magic clubs, BBM have cleverly edited the action so that the viewer sees Joshua performing to different groups in different settings. Intriguingly, they have managed to cut the film so that

you get to see one trick performed all the way through but split seemingly between several venues. At first I felt this was just a gimmick, but actually it's very refreshing as Joshua is wearing different clothes, working a different room and to different people at various stages during the performance of the one trick - it's very entertaining! There are other documentary style segments too, such as Joshua answering questions to his own camera while sitting in what looks like an airport, and also replying to unheard questions in conversational and often humorous style while perched on a large red sofa! It all helps to prevent any kind of boredom when watching it and I thought it all worked really well.

So apart from the obvious artistic success of the DVD, what of the magic itself? Well, the lecture that the DVD is based on revolves around methodology, as Joshua explains how he devises his routines and then performs and explains effects in order to illustrate his points. The magic ranges from good to exceptional. I Dream Of Mindreading is a cleverly disguised dressing for a method which enables the performer to reveal a card that a spectator has merely thought of. Heightened Senses is a good example of lateral thinking in which the magician apparently predicts the exact height of a spectator chosen at random from the audience; ACAAPN (Any Card At Any Page Number) is for me the pick of the entire DVD as it is a wonderfully constructed effect in which a freely selected card vanishes from a pack and ends up inserted in a book at a page number genuinely freely selected by a spectator; the Discrete Displacement is a killer card move that has loads of applications and is straightforward to do. Three Coin Vanish is a convincing in the hands complete vanish of three coins which will not break your knuckles. Back In Time is a nice dressing for a Triumph routine. There are also two dealer

dem items shown and explained - Split Decision and Vegas Visit. This was the only disappointing element of the DVD as neither effect could be realistically attempted without purchasing the necessary gimmicks from Joshua and while this might be acceptable when watching the lecture in person where you could get the props if necessary from him there and then, having them on the DVD was, in my opinion, out of place.

Joshua performs and explains lucidly and in a very engaging style. He comes across as being hugely likeable and unlike so many of his American counterparts, he doesn't display elements of an inflated ego nor is his style brash or aggressive. In fact, in many ways his gentle, humorous approach was rather 'English', and I am sure he would have been much appreciated everywhere he went on his UK tour. Some of the explanations on the DVD are lifted directly from the live lecture footage, at other times

it is shot in studio - again I found the variety very enjoyable. Having watched a lot of DVDs for **magicscen** reviews, I have to say that this was one of the most entertaining and instructive I have seen. BBM should be congratulated on using their editing and creative skills in a more measured way than they have at times done in the past so that the format of the DVD does not at any stage detract from its content. Joshua is an engaging personality who has great ideas and who puts them across in a coherent and charming manner. I would be surprised if anyone who bought this DVD didn't get a huge amount to take away after watching it. **MI**

WHAT'S HOT: seeing a skilled performer talk lucidly and with knowledge about some strong magic

WHAT'S NOT: we didn't need the 'dealer dem' tricks

STAR RATING: ★★★★★