

Masterful magic duo enchants

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As soon as you get your hands on a ticket to Sarlot and Eyed's "Carnival of Illusion," you know that when you "step right up," you're in for an excellent experience. It isn't the calligraphy or the reputation that entices you so; rather it is the thickness of the paper used to admit and invite that tells you the quality of this dynamic duo.

Roland Sarlot and Susan Eyed are nationally touring illusionists who have performed cross-country from the Adirondacks to the Hollywood Magic Castle; from huge "rock star" stages and world-class resorts to small settings, like that of their current intimate Victorian parlor at the Doubletree Hotel. They perform around 150 shows per year and were recently recipients of the Jack Gwynne Award for Excellence in Magic. Their unique show incorporates their adaptation of ancient traditional magic from around the world as both expressive and healing art forms through riddles, humor, dance, handmade props and the most stunning and clever illusions, most of which are set to international music of eras past.

The acts get more astounding as the night goes on. Rings are used in an intricate dance and linked together. Some playing cards are impaled on swords. If you are lucky enough to be picked to participate in an illusion, you and another audience member will each sit on ten cards and three of those cards will be transported from yours to the other person's pile. Money travels around the world only to end up on the inside of a grapefruit an audience member has been holding.

"We watch you as you watch us," Eyed said. "Seeing people change is the best part of being an illusionist."

Some of the illusions are quite dangerous, and one, in particular, took Sarlot seven years to develop.

"Learning magic is like learning a musical instrument," Sarlot said. "It's really, really, really hard." It is clearly not for the faint of heart. Though they have humorous acts and perilous performances, their most beautiful piece is undoubtedly their last when, out of one piece of tissue paper, emerge hundreds of multicolored tissue paper butterflies set in graceful motion by Sarlot and Eyed's red Japanese fans.

Being able to watch Sarlot and Eyed perform is a wonder. They are truly artists of their craft who execute flawless illusions and extol the virtues of devotion to their craft and respect to ancient international magical traditions.



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