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Carnival of Illusion returns September 17 to the Doubletree Hotel at Reid Park in Tucson

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Carnival of Illusion, featuring nationally renowned illusionists Roland Sarlot and Susan Eyed, returns to Tucson this fall on September 17, 2010 at the **Doubletree Hotel at Reid Park**. This marvelously hip, Victorian inspired theater show played to wildly appreciative audiences at 62 sold-out performances last year at the **Doubletree**.

Roland Sarlot left a career in astronomical research to return to his first love, performing magic. Susan Eyed received a degree in International Studies and has traveled the world as a Middle Eastern dancer. In 2002, Sarlot and Eyed teamed up to create *Dance of Illusion*, a stage show combining the ancient arts of magic and dance and based on their international travels. Ms. Eyed is one of the few female magicians in the world. In 2009, she and Sarlot created *Carnival of Illusion*.

Carnival of Illusion, September 17, 2010 at the Doubletree Hotel at Reid Park, Tucson
Photo: Courtesy of Sarlot & Eyed

Carnival of Illusion transports audiences back to a time, when magic flourished as an art and was practiced in the salons and parlours of the wealthy. Roland Sarlot and Susan Eyed have created a brand of magic that combines

wonder and mystery, humor and secrets to a select audience of thirty-five guests. The show incorporates everything from unique twists on classic illusions to stories, music, dance and costumes one doesn't usually think of in a magic show. Their magical vignettes take place around the world, at a café in Paris with a mind-reading couple, a royal palace in ancient Japan and other places and times that excitingly ignite and inspire their audience's imagination.

Sarlot and Eyed are coming up on their 1000th show together. **The Examiner** spent some time chatting with the couple as they prepare to celebrate this latest accomplishment and their new season at Tucson's **Doubletree Resort**.

Q: What is Carnival of Illusion?

Susan: *Carnival of Illusion* is an evening of magic, mystery and secrets. It's an intimate parlor show limited to just thirty-five guests. It is reminiscent of the Vaudeville and Victorian eras with a modern, hip twist. It's for all audiences 8 to 108! We have updated our illusions so that they are fun and speak of the present but do not lose their old world feel.

Q: Did the movie *The Illusionist* have any influence on you as performers?

Roland: What an interesting question! Actually, we both loved the movie but it didn't have any influence on our magic. We had been doing our illusions long before the movie was released. This show has been evolving since at least 2002.

Susan: When we started we were doing a large stage show. We were playing Performing Arts Centers and Casinos, larger theaters. It was always in the back of our minds that we wanted to create something that was small and intimate.

Roland: It was the other extreme to how we perform now.

Q: Why do you limit your audience to only thirty-five members?

Roland: The reason is because of the intimacy. At the end of every show people say how wonderful it is to be so close to the magic. Happily, we are no longer on a huge Vegas-type stage where you need binoculars to see everything.

Susan: People tell me that our show is so cool because it is so intimate. They are so thrilled to have the magic happening right in front of their eyes. They have seen illusions on TV and now, they tell me, they can see, first hand, that there are no camera tricks, no smoke or mirrors. What they see is happening in the here and now.

Roland: That magic number is really thirty-five. It is just how close everyone can be. We can look into their eyes and they can look into our eyes. It's a blast for us and a blast for them.

Susan: The strength of this show is everyone having a good seat

Q: So no matter where you play, the show is strictly limited to only thirty-five people?

Susan: People love to see good performances close up and we love to see their faces light up with the power of magic.

Roland: Prior to last year we were primarily working cross country in large theaters, big corporate events and for casinos on seventy-two foot rock-star stages. We wanted to create an intimate magical experience.

Susan: In 2004 Roland devised a parlour show for **Miraval**, one of the nations top resorts. His performances were greeted with so much success that we based our show on his experience.

Q: What other cities or resorts do you play in?

Roland: We have done several test markets for the show to see who we were hitting as our target audience. We found out that it was pretty much everyone. We sold out the show everywhere from high end resorts to downtown venues. The show appeals to a wide range of audiences.

Q: Do you think you would like to bring it to one of the Phoenix resorts?

Roland: We would love that.

Susan: I think that would be fabulous. We always keep our options open.

Q: What is your favorite illusion?

Susan: Actually we like them all or else they wouldn't be in the show.

Roland: They all speak to us. They are a part of us. All of them are our own original pieces. We use a lot of the classics of magic with our own personal twist.

Susan: The most important thing is that the audience is entertained. We have something for everyone: There's a fun mind reading piece, a trippy razor blade swallowing one, a skillful sword piercing one, and a nostalgic butterfly releasing piece just to name a few. We have crafted the show and the effects to appeal to a wide audience range.

Q: Can you share any funny stage mishaps?

Roland: The guy who wrote the original Macintosh "bible" came to our show. At intermission he was telling everyone how the first piece in our show was done with a "*audience plant*." Then he was reminded by the other audience members that it was *his* number that had been chosen by us. That blew his theory!

Susan: Yes, there he was right there in the front row. His name was Arthur Naiman.

Roland: He lives in Tucson, a very nice guy. He spent the intermission trying to figure out how we did our illusions.

Susan: It was really funny. I think it was our first piece and he got stuck trying to figure it out for the rest of the show.

Roland: There was one incident where a gentleman gave us a \$100 bill for a piece and wouldn't take it back after the effect was over because he enjoyed the trick so much. It was like a game of hot potato! No matter how much we insisted, he wouldn't accept it back.

Q: In LA, isn't there a famous club or museum devoted to magic?

Susan: Yes, it the world famous elite club for magicians. No one is allowed to attend or perform there unless he or she has been invited. It called the **Hollywood Magic Castle**. We had a funny incident while performing there. We have an illusion that takes place in France. Roland and I just get into this French experience complete with the requisite accents. The

illusion has this great ending. One night we energized the audience so much, building to the finish, and then suddenly realized we didn't have the felt marker to finish the piece.

Roland: I asked the audience to join in several choruses of *Frère Jacques*. Susan ran off stage to find the felt marker and I remained singing the song and dancing the Can Can until she returned with what we needed to finish the illusion.

Helinda Lizarraga, General Manager of the Doubletree, is excited about the imminent return of Sarlot and Eyed. She has been quoted as saying, **“We are thrilled to have *Carnival of Illusion* back exclusively at the Doubletree. This show has been a hit with locals and tourists alike and is not to be missed.”**

Tickets for *Carnival of Illusion* are available at www.carnivalofillusion.com or (520) 615-5299. *Carnival of Illusion* will play September 17 through May 2011. Show times are every Friday and Saturday at the **Doubletree Hotel**, Tucson at Reid Park.