

# Stage Mom

By Lynn Trimble

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## Truly magical

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My one brief encounter with magic was a trip with an amateur magician friend to the exclusive members-only Magic Castle in Hollywood many decades ago. Television fare featuring illusionists and magicians has never been my thing, so I can't

claim to have many tricks up my sleeve on this topic.



Performers Susan Eyed & Roland Sarlot (Photo by Fotosmith USA)

I did, however, enjoy a lovely conversation recently with half of a magician/illusionist duo whose "Carnival of Illusion" show is starting a run of weekend performances at the Doubletree Hotel Tucson at Reid Park this month.

The duo of Roland Sarlot and Susan Eyed, who've performed more than 1,000 shows together, promises a "hip Victorian-inspired magic parlour show" perfect for ages 8 to 108. (If I make it to 108, I'll deserve my own magic show.)

They describe the show — an homage of sorts to parlour magic once performed in the homes of the rich and famous — as a mix of mystery, magic and "oooh la la."

I don't know that a lot of children come out of the womb with a burning desire to make magic happen — at least not in the strictest sense of the word (that original escape trick seems plenty impressive).

So I asked Sarlot how he came to make magic his mission.

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LYNN TRIMBLE

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### ABOUT THIS BLOG

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Lynn Trimble, the mother of three children, is an arts enthusiast who writes and blogs for *Raising Arizona Kids* magazine. She also has her own freelance writing/editing business called The Poised Pen.

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Turns out both Sarlot and Eyed are self-taught in the magic department. Sarlot was a science researcher (astronomy, physics and such) at the University of Arizona in Tucson. Eyed was into business and real estate.



One day they did a show together for a friend's party — and the gig grew from there. "I loved magic as a kid," recalls Sarlot. His self-professed training ground was "the road of hard knocks."

Sarlot recalls doing more than 1,000 one-on-one magic shows for pediatric patients at University Medical Center in Tucson — and says he's also enjoyed performing for patients at Tucson Medical Center, Maricopa County Hospital and Phoenix Children's Hospital.



Sarlot & Eyed of "Carnival of Illusion"

"You never know which kid will be touched by the magic," muses Sarlot. "We feel a great responsibility to the next generation."

"Magic," says Sarlot, "is one of the oldest art forms there is."

Sarlot notes that magic — which was wrapped up for centuries in science, medicine and religion — has always been around. "It speaks to us," he says, "as something primal."

He's also an advocate for literacy and other arts, including music, dance and theater — noting that most artists harken back to transformative childhood experiences in the arts. "Many performers were touched as kids by music and theater," reflects Sarlot.

"I love theater," says Sarlot. "Theater can transform. It makes you travel, you can be somebody else — like a good book." Part of the magic in any performance, he muses, is the recognition by both performer and audience member that they're experiencing moments together that will never happen in quite that same way again.

So how can kids interested in magic learn more about the craft, and ways to create their own magic?

Reading is the key, shares Sarlot. There are plenty of books on magic at school and local libraries. Which one you pick isn't all that critical. Just make sure it's geared for your child's age and reading level — and run with it.



Sarlot & Eyed work their magic  
(Photo by Tom Willett)

Reading about magic won't cost you anything, observes Sarlot. And "you can interpret magic any way you want to."

I asked Sarlot about his own role models — all magicians from the past rather than contemporaries. Chief among them are "Fu Manchu" and "Richiardi Jr." (both stage names) as well as Canadian magician Doug Henning, popular in mainstream magic of the '70s and '80s.



Feel the Sarlot & Eyed vibe via this Artstuff poster

Sarlot says that although the entertainment aspect of magic is "dressed up in glitz," magic is like music in that "there's something much deeper there."

"All humans have magic," says Sarlot. "We all do magic. It's just human."

—Lynn

**Note:** The "Carnival of Illusion" runs Fridays and Saturdays at the Doubletree through May 31, 2011. Guests (please no children under 8) are encouraged to dress in "the spirit of the parlour" a la vaudeville, Moulin Rouge and the silent screen. Shows are intimate with just 35 patrons each, and a dinner option is available for an additional charge. [Click here](#) for ticket information.