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CALLBACK

Entertainment News

Ciao for Now
Connie Boyd

In 2004 I began working on a special project for a new ship, the Costa Magica, for Costa Cruise Lines.

In keeping with the "Costa Magica" assigned name Costa Cruise Line Entertainment Director, Gary Glading, and Artistic Director, Karen Langford, were looking to produce a full-scale production show that incorporated Magic Moments throughout. The concept for the show "Magic Moments" was conceived.

One of the many challenges was creating a magic themed show involving singers, dancers and technicians that was "user-friendly" in a space conscious, potentially moving theater (on-board a ship)

The state of the art theater easily supported any sophisticated magic effects chosen; the "trick" was to select illusions that were spellbinding with large production value and yet as "self-contained" and safe as possible.

The other area of concern was conflict with other professional magic shows that may be engaged in the cruise itinerary in the future. An effort was made to select illusions and routines with production value that were obscure or large so that the standard magic show engaged on a cruise ship wouldn't be affected.

(On a personal note, I can safely say the magic presented in the "Magic Moments" show doesn't conflict with any of routines presented in my full evening magic productions.)

The choreographers, Wendy and Carl White, along with the costume designer Tony Wright were super to work with. The magic added another series of complications in a completely new, challenging format.

All the illusions were purchased in the US specifically designed for the unique aspects of the show and shipped to Italy for rehearsals. Advanced Entertainment installed and designed the pyrotechnics used in the production.

I discovered teaching magic, as choreography with counts seemed to work better than breaking down the technical magic aspects. Fortunately the original cast of 12 dancers, two lead singers and two singer/dancers were a delight to work with.

The standard restrictions commonly found in production shows of elaborate costuming, wigs, and head dresses combined with exciting choreography, staging and technical effects are difficult at best. The Magic Moments show added yet another element as the cast was actually executing fully costumed, choreographed magic. For example, the lead male singer levitates the featured dancer after singing "Black Magic Woman" in a Voodoo production number.

Costa Cruise lines has a very diverse audience. Shows must have appeal to numerous nationalities, cultures, tastes and languages. The Costa Magica's inauguration was October 31st, 2004 and Halloween seemed an appropriate date to launch the Magic Moments production of storybook characters in elaborate costumes presenting magic and illusion. Happily I report, the show has proven to be very successful and continues to delight audiences.

Last week, I returned from the Costa Magica where I taught and rehearsed the magic with the new cast of dancers and singers on-board.

I am continually amazed at the co-operation and enthusiastic response I receive from everyone. Executing magic and illusions well can be tedious, uncomfortable and difficult at best, however, this new cast exceeded my expectations and I am truly looking forward to new "Magic Moments" for the future.