

A little dissection, anyone?

The kid showman of York is always on

By AGNES KRUCHIO

Wherever he goes, things appear and disappear; objects and sometimes people float about; cigarettes in ashtrays burst into spectacular flames. He is not My Favourite Martian, but a kid busily putting himself through history at York, whose twenty-four-hour-a-day 'hobby' just happens to be magic.

His name is Steve Schwartz, and along with cohort Guy Zarafa, he is planning a spectacular two-hour Halloween magic-and-rock show at Earl Haig Secondary School. When I first met him, I told him that magic "bored" me. Now I'm not so sure.

Steve is a showman. Like a kid taking pleasure in surprising adults, he is forever on the go, endlessly producing cards, rabbits and pigeons from hats, from pockets or out of thin air. He can't ever even pay a waitress without pulling the coins from behind her ear. There are restaurants in Toronto, he says, where he and Guy are already part of the unof-

ficial entertainment. He gets a kick out of people's reactions.

"The other day Guy and I were practicing out in a field. There he was floating in the air, and all of a sudden three Hell's Angels on motorcycles came roaring by and they practically fell off their bikes, they stopped so suddenly," says Steve.

"All sorts of people are impressed by magic," adds Guy, who is Steve's quieter half. "There probably isn't a person who at some time or other didn't want to learn how to do a trick, or didn't fail to be amazed about how some little trick was done."

Unlike Steve, with whom magic is a twenty-four hour obsession, Guy is more concerned that people understand magic and its significance, and will only do tricks when asked.

Guy says that today, more than ever, people seem to find themselves through magic. "In a society where everything is pre-planned and computerized, and where personality becomes

blurred, to do something that requires as much skill as does magic, is in a curious way to assert one's individuality," he explains. "And besides, people still want to leave some things unknown and a little mysterious."

Some of the tricks Steve and Guy do are, well, amazing. Steve can sit and do card-tricks for hours on end. He has some 400 card tricks up his sleeve, with which he can and does entertain anyone from the Central Square crowd to sick kids and oldsters in hospitals, and casino and military-type audiences in nightclubs.

He also does illusions, as the larger stage-tricks are called. Levitation of a volunteer from the audience is one. He also dissects a girl into three parts in one act and into six parts in another; he does a split-second sex change and, for a grand finale, he makes a girl disappear and then reappear as a real, live tiger.

Since their skill so far exceeds their ages (Steve and Guy are 19



Steve Schwartz and Guy Zarafa — no strings attached

and 16 respectively), it is not surprising to find that both of them have been in the business for a long time already.

As for the levitation act — how do they do it? Steve isn't telling, and neither is Guy. But seeing, as they say, is believing. I'm waiting.

As the campus turns



'Formal gentleness' from Burma

By RISHA GOTLIBOWICZ

More than a delightful diversion, the dance of Burma invites interest, curiosity and warmth. Never before seen in North America, the Burmese National Theatre appeared on the Burton stage last Wednesday — the first presentation in this year's Performing Arts Series.

The Theatre features the unique instruments of Burma combined with highly stylized, marionette-like body movements which take years to master.

With seven dancers and seven musicians performing before the eyes of another culture, the Theatre showed a slim portion of the main body of its art.

The show opened with a semi-circle of dancers squatting on the floor, each dancer taking a turn to

exhibit movements involving the head, hands, feet, and shoulders. These dancers are precise, controlled, exciting and completely professional. The music was rhythmic and clanging, and accompanied precisely the mimed dancing.

What followed was Dance of the Nat Votress, which is a ritual appeal to the spirits for a successful performance.

Much of our fascination focuses on the beautiful props. Costumes

are colorful and gleaming, as they would have been before the royal courts of latter-day Burma. Masks are resplendent; faces are alive and spontaneous; musicians are enclosed by a gold and red gazebo-like structure.

We can only be outsiders. I, for one, was left feeling strangely dissatisfied, but nevertheless enchanted with this centuries-old theatre. We are not used to this kind of formal gentleness rattling with genius and beauty.

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