



Anthony Darkstone Brook In Conversation With Jason Andrews

Over the last months of 2009, Nick Lewin and I wrote several words praising the skill & performances of a young Magician in his early 20's. That Magician's name is Jason Andrews. Channing Pollock, Joanie Spina, Jeff McBride, Johnny Thompson and a whole Host of other top names in our business also rate Jason extremely highly.

Ordinarily when reference is made to a "young" Magician it can sometimes be interpreted as a mite patronizing but I make the point in this instance to convey the exceptional and outstanding talent that Jason possesses ; he has the smoothness of performance and skill that usually only comes from decades of performing experience. His Stage presence is mesmerizing and without a doubt a gift from the Gods of Theater. Jason has taken that gift and honed it into outstanding skill.

I lecture, consult & instruct on the Performance & Presentation of Magic. I have had the honor and privilege to be a judge at Magic contests alongside such names as Kendrick "Ice" McDonald, Rod Chow and Jon Racherbaumer. I therefore, do not lavish praise lightly. However, when it is earned and truly merited I do not hold back either; hence my praise of Jason Andrews. I have seen him perform over the last couple years and more recently at The Harmon Theatre in Vegas. Anyone who has been there will know that it is an "in" place and not on the tourist maps. The audiences there are 98% made up of experienced Performers (mostly those working in Vegas). Whoever performs there needs a lot more than sheer courage!!! Christian Doleshall, EJ my Manager and I were there on the Monday night that Jason was on the bill. Jason got a standing ovation. Enough stated. Anything more, in my intro will be superfluous.

<http://www.jasonandrewsmagic.com/>



ADB: Hello Jason. Thanks for taking time to hang out and converse a while. It was great spending time with you recently in Vegas and hanging out with other mutual Magical friends.

JA: Hi Tony. It is always a great pleasure and my thanks to you for featuring me in your series, I'm truly honored. Yes, it was fun seeing you again and getting to spend quality time with you, and all our other Magical friends in Vegas. We did indeed have some great meals and see some great shows. Every time we are able to get together it is truly a privilege.

ADB: Thanks Jason. Too bad we had to leave. However, our last night in Vegas was a blast at The Amazing Jonathan's party.

JA: Yes it was and it is great that we had fun with Joanie Spina, Jeff McBride, Christian Doleshall, EJ, Penny, Nick & Susan Lewin and the huge list of celebs.

ADB : It sure was. I've been to some great parties in my time but the guest list at this one , the nubile ladies dancing, fire –eating and the haunted house...well, only in Vegas!!! Well, on the subject of Vegas. This is where you live. You were raised here, Right?

JA: Yes Tony. I was born in Indiana in 1986. My family followed my grandma to Las Vegas in 1989, 3 days before my 3rd birthday. My Mom raised me and my older brother on her own. She worked long hours even most holidays and my brother took care of me when Mom was at work.

ADB: You got a very special present one birthday that literally changed your life. Tell us about that.....

JA: Yes. You mean my jump-start into Magic. Mom took me to see Lance Burton for my 12th birthday. I was a Las Vegas kid and as most kids do, always liked Magic. After watching Lance's show, I really said to myself that is what I want to do, real magic. My Mom bought me a magic set that very night. I began practicing that same night and practiced over and over for the next 2 years. I then had my first close-up show for family and friends.

ADB: Another major highlight was via your High School English teacher, Ms Connell. Share some of that with us

JA: In 2001, my freshman year of high school, I attended the Las Vegas Academy of International Studies, Performing and Visual Arts High School of Las Vegas. I know, it is such a mouthful, but happily otherwise known as LVA. LVA is a magnet school and you pick a specific area to study, in depth, every school day. I was deeply in love with Magic and was still convinced that's what I wanted to do. I decided to get to know as much about it as possible and so I decided to major in technical theatre. This covered all the aspects of lighting design, audio engineering, stage management, costuming, set carpentry and everything else in-between and attached!

During my freshman year, the world famous BOOMERS magic club was having shows on Friday nights; anyone that wanted to perform could come out, get on stage, and show what they had. I invited all of my teachers from LVA to come and watch me perform. Two of my teachers showed up to support me. Fortunately, one of them was my English teacher, Ms. Connell.

At that time I had just heard about Tannens magic camp and I mentioned that night, after the show to the table, that I was really keen to attend. The following week, Ms. Connell explained to me that her family owned a billboard company and they sponsored one youth per year to do something they love. A community donation. She explained that they wanted to sponsor me in attending Tannens magic camp that summer! I was astounded.

My Mom worked out all of the details and I attended the camp in the summer of 2001. At that time I had my first tuxedo, billiard balls, Norm Nielsen cards and a zombie. I brought my props with me, and with the help of the counselors and a dear friend, to this day, Scott Hitchcock, I won first place in the stage competition. This was my first award, and I think in a way that "sealed the deal" for me wanting to be a professional magician.

ADB: Ah yes! The legendary BOOMERS. I first went there back in 2003 when my son and I opened for Steve Dacri at The Orleans. We had a great night there in the back room and a wonderful time with Gary Darwin and especially two mutual friends of ours, Frank Zak and Ariann Black. I bring this up because both Frank and Ariann have played major roles in your life.

JA: Yes Boomers is a great place. I know it holds special memories for you as well. This time, when you were last here in Vegas, I got to be there too and attend your lecture, and let me say, Tony, it was FANTASTIC, I really learned some great effects, so thanks to you! Ariann, as you know was opening for The Amazing Jonathan and could not make it but Frank Zak, Lupe Nielsen, Steve Dacri were there and several other good mutual friends of ours as well. That was a fun night.

ADB: Yes it was. Well, now that you brought it up it was great having you there because thanks to you, Frank Zak, & Christian Doleshall the set-up was just great. The lecture tables, cameras and lights were all set up and running smoothlywell, I bring up lighting because I know that you, lights and Magic are all interwoven.....share some of that and the beginnings

JA: Well, working the lights feeds the habit and keeps me off the streets between gigs & pays for promo packs too!!!! He! He! He! Seriously, that is also another love of mine and over the years I have been hired to handle lighting for several shows and projects. I think I bring an aspect to it that goes beyond being a good lighting Director /Technician. I can bring all my knowledge and experience as a Performer to the aspect of lighting.

Speaking of our mutual friends Frank Zak and Ariann Black, back in 2002 I was hired for the Arian Black show "Secrets" at the Fitzgeralds to be the swing technician, running lights and sound, for Scott Hitchcock! It's, as you know Tony, really a very small world.

In 2004, after I graduated from High school I was hired by Coast casinos as a lighting technician. I've had many opportunities working with this company. I was the house magician for 2 shows that appeared in the Coast showrooms, Forever Plaid and Marty Allen. There was also an added bonus, I've had the opportunity to watch and learn from seasoned entertainers and their crews. Speaking of seasoned Entertainers, Frank as you already know is an excellent & Experienced Magician and also a great photographer. He has taken some amazing shots of me that anyone can see on his site and mine.

ADB: Yes. Frank is really brilliant. I think it is to do with what you were talking about earlier. The fact that he is also a performer helps him look thru the lens not only as a photographer but also as an experienced performer. Speaking of mutual friends take us on a brief journey after 2002 and your links with another mutual pal of ours

JA: Sure. Over the next few years, working as a lighting tech, I worked on my magic and took advice from a lot of the local guys and in 2003, I met Steve Daly who was appearing in the Showgirls of Magic show. For the next 5 years Steve would share his advice and experiences and mentor me and my magic. In 2007, Steve invited me to join his summer tour as a special guest. We toured the country for 6 months playing night clubs, comedy clubs, and doing magic lectures all over the U.S. We attended 8 magic conventions and I won 11 national magic awards.

In 2008, Steve invited me back for his 4 month summer tour and we performed at 2 magic conventions, comedy clubs, night clubs, and continued to lecture. It was an experience that changed the course of my life forever. It was truly an enlightening experience to the true world of being on stage!

After returning to Las Vegas in October 2008, I took a 3 month break from magic, to re-evaluate where I wanted to take my magic, the things in life that were important to me, and I came back to magic with fresh eyes. I think when you step away from something that you enjoy, you love it even more when you come back. And that has certainly been true for me.

In May 2009, I heard of a local variety television show that was incorporating local Las Vegas entertainers who would appear on Univision. I cold called and offered my services. After three

months of leaving messages and being passed from person to person, I finally spoke to the man in charge and in September of 2009, I shot the special for Univision.

Sharing the spotlight with me on the show was a magician I had heard of numerous times in the past but never actually met him, Nick Lewin. Since the filming Nick and his gracious wife Susan, have given me a lot of great advice and have offered to help me with my goals as an entertainer.

I honestly believe everything happens for a reason. If I had not been as persistent as I was about getting on the variety show, I would not have met Nick. Recently he asked me to join him in performing at The Magic Castle in Hollywood in 2010. Performing at The Castle has been a goal of mine for the last 3 years and on Christmas day I received a call from Jack Goldfinger saying that I was booked for 2010. What a Christmas present.

Another person that has made a huge impression on my magic, and my life, is a local magician Les McKinney. Les has been a very fine professional magician his entire life and has helped me, beyond imagination, with my illusions, presentation and entertaining.

The list of people that have made an impression on my life and with my magic is numerous. Les McKinney, Nick and Susan Lewin, Earl Cheney, Rob & Carol Allen, Ariann Black, Tony Brook, Lance Burton, Jeff McBride, Steve Daly, Doc Green, Gary Darwin, Ray Anderson, Ronn Lucas, Scott Hitchcock, Joanie Spina, Joey Vasquez, John Tudor, Frank Zak, Christian Doleshall, just to name a few.

ADB: Thanks for including me in your list. Truly appreciated. I also have to tell you that you are bringing back some great memories for me. I vividly recall being taken to see 'Showgirls of Magic' in the same year you met Steve. Ariann and Frank took us. After the show they introduced my family and I to Steve, Antonio Hoyos and the rest of the cast. We had fun hanging out and over the next few days Steve entertained us Royally and even took us to meet great Vegas illusion builders. And of course, we got to eat too!

Those who know Steve will know he likes his dining!!!! I've been on the bill at The SAM and TAOM with him over the last few years and more recently hung out with him in Vegas. I'm not going to chat more on this becauseit's a secret ...but several of the above mentioned names are also part of this In Conversation Series Anyway, changing the subject , when we were in Vegas last , you kindly picked me & EJ up at the airport and indeed drove us around to a few places; I want to talk about your License Plate: ON IN 5. Cool PR. Share the story

JA: Ha! Ha! Ha! I love this subject Tony. The ON IN 5 license plates are what we call, in the U.S., vanity plates. When a vehicle is registered you can pay extra to have your plates say something specific. They are EXTREMELY common in Las Vegas but rarely seen in the rest of the country. I think people in Las Vegas like the attention they attract, I know I do!

ON IN 5, I also recently discovered, is a golfing term as well! I got the saying from my days at LVA. Backstage, as you know, whether on a movie set or production show, the Stage Manager always gives "time calls" to let the cast know how much time is left before the curtain goes up. You know, the half hour call, 20 minutes, 15 minutes, 10 and 5 minutes. ON IN 5 - The 5 minute call is truly when everyone, including myself, leaps into action setting props last minute, touching up make-up, making sure your fly is zipped up, and making sure all of your loads are secure in their clips! On In 5, for me is truly what SHOW BUSINESS is, "the hurry up and wait", the panic, the buzz, the high, the rush, just before the gratification. So every time I look at my license plates or receive a compliment on them, it reminds me of one of the million things I LOVE about showbusiness.

ADB: I know exactly what you mean. That last call is truly a buzz. Really cool that you have those plates. Subtle, but everyone still knows it's your car! Let's chat about your forthcoming Magic Castle gig. As you know, Christian Doleshall, EJ and I took a quick trip to The Castle to have dinner with Gay Blackstone. Wonderful place. I must also sing the praises of The Castle Hotel. As most of us know, Jack Goldfinger has taken over from Max Maven and you told us earlier that he invited you to perform there later this year. Without revealing too much, can you

share with us in very general terms what you are likely to be performing? ...and by the way ! also when ? love to come over and catch your show.

JA: It would be great to see you again Tony, and make some more magical memories! I will be doing about 15 minutes in The Palace of Mystery. I'm extending my "Classic Act" a few more minutes, adding in some more classics of magic that are rarely seen today and adding in some more critters. I can't say when I will be appearing there only because I haven't been given an exact date but the Gods are saying in spring time.

ADB: Cool! Keep us posted on that. Give us a heads-up nearer the time. I know you are a very quiet and modest person but it needs saying that you have quite deservedly been presented with several awards attesting to your skill as a Magical Entertainer. You won another in November. Share the story on that.....

JA: Well Tony , as you referred to in your lecture there is the Show and there is the business and so I am constantly seeking for ways to promote myself as an Entertainer. I recently took part in Boyd Gaming's National Talent Competition and in November, I was presented my latest award. The 2009 Entertainer of the Year from the Boyd Gaming Corporation. My 20th award in total. I performed my new 70's Act. All my previous awards were for my Classic Act.

ADB: Congratulations. That is truly quite an accolade. I have to state that you are a prime example for Performers. The key to success is hard work and persistence. Not only do you hone your Magical skills and study our Art, you also work hard to promote yourself in making the business work for you. You have done so much already, what are your plans for the next few years?

JA: Thank you, Tony. Next few years...well, I'm currently working on traveling, that is really the heart of all of my goals, traveling. After touring in 2007 and 2008, I realized that is what I want to do.

I want to travel as often as possible. Touring or aboard ships. Another of my goals is to perform in Europe and Asia. I am constantly working on new material/illusions. My motto is "Being lucky is being ready when the opportunity presents itself".

ADB: I totally agree with that. There is much wisdom in your philosophy. Thank you Jason. Great having you as guest. It is good to know that the future of Magic is assured and safe in the hands of Performers such as yourself. My sincere good wishes for a dazzling career.

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