

### ***Harvey Nerzof's On-line Magic Reviews (ebook)***

Harvey Nerzof

Harvey Nerzof (2007)

Reviewed by Patty English for Reader Views (6/07)

Harvey Nerzof has spent over 20 years collecting the materials for this informative and entertaining eBook of reviews for magic, illusions, and psychological tricks. He has put his articles and opinions together in a well-organized fashion, showing the greatest number of magic tricks and illusions that I have ever seen in one place. In fact, there are many that I have never heard about or seen before. Mr. Nerzof is especially effective in using humor throughout his reviews and explaining how humor is useful in magic acts, as both entertainment and mental distraction for the audience from the mechanics of the tricks, resulting in greater success for the overall illusions.

The magic tricks and trivia featured in this collection are categorized into seven sections that include Excellent, Very Good, Good, Average, Below Average, Weak, and Junk. Among the examined materials, the author mentions both standard and unique illusions and a variety of magic props, books, videos, DVDs, and CDs about magic and learning to perform tricks. Humorously, some of the reviews in the final Junk category are simply the best in the book, because of their humor. These particular comments are delightful, with ratings such as "Rubbish. Litter. Trash for the masses. 0. A la poubelle. Electrifying crap." Each successive "Junk" designation had me laughing louder than the one before, until I had to stop reading and take a break. If this book needs anything additional, it would be only some hilarious cartoon illustrations to accompany the ratings.

The Excellent category contains only five offerings and these include the body of magic of the prominent Tom Mullica, who now performs regularly in Branson. It concludes with four others: smoking cessation hypnosis, mind reading, "wonder words" that will control anybody, and psychological tricks. All of these are very interesting types of mentalism and the materials show some of how they actually work. The Very Good category contains 18 installments; with some fun illusions that include "Floating Bill, Hynoheat and the Tom Foolery DVD" with more on Tom Mullica (who currently does a tribute show of Red Skelton characters).

Good materials include 25 illusions and tricks, while Average takes up 21 acts such as paper flowers and handkerchief gags. Below Average reviews 10 items. Weak holds a list of 19 nearly lame items like "The riddle of Chung Ling Soo, Chinese conjuror." As it turns out, this is a mediocre book about Asian tricks and does not offer any explanations at all. My favorite category, Junk, offers 15 pieces of "Rubbish, litter, and trash for the masses." It's all so bad that it's good fun.

In Junk, there are missing coins that stay missing, videos on levitation that doesn't quite happen, and a useless piece of metal sold as the sword "Excalibur." This section is hilarious and should have its own room in Harry Houdini's Martinka & Co. Museum of Magic in New Jersey.

Harvey Nerzof continues to review additional magic and mentalist items and places his reviews on his website in a newsletter update to "Harvey Nerzof's On-line Magic Reviews." Anyone interested in the variety and history of magic expression would be interested in this book and the accompanying website. Older elementary, middle, and high school kids will love it.