Kravis on Broadway



Do you ever wish magic was more like Marvel? Then you'll love The Illusionists: Live from Broadway, a showcase of some of the best magicians on Earth. Each performer works under a moniker that expresses his specific skill set, such as The Deductionist or The Trickster. Combined, they produce one of the most thrilling theatrical experiences on tour today. Why You Should See It: Magic done right is, well, just plain awesome.

DYING TO KNOW MORE?

PBI RECENTLY SAT DOWN WITH KEVIN JAMES, BETTER KNOWN AS THE INVENTOR, TO DISCUSS THE ART OF THE ILLUSION.

The King and I

This musical by Rodgers & Hammerstein is probably best remembered for its 1956 film adaptation. The King and I follows British teacher Anna Leonowens, who travels to Bangkok to tutor the king's children and wives. Set against the backdrop of 1860s Siam, it depicts the relationship that develops between Anna and the king during a time of social and political unrest. Biggest Hit: "Getting to Know You" is the earworm that keeps on giving. Why You Should See It: This production honors the essence of the classic mid-century musical, featuring dance numbers inspired by Jerome Robbins' original choreography.



PBI: How would you describe your approach to magic and your general style?

James: I like to develop things that elicit an emotional reaction. It doesn't matter what the emotion is, I just want people to feel it and to experience something. Some of my pieces are intimate and beautiful and simple, and then other things are shocking and visually arresting. Others talk about nostalgic topics that make you remember childhood. There's a whole spectrum of feelings throughout the show.

What's your favorite trick from one of your fellow Illusionists?

It's funny but it's not so much the trick. The best-kept secret in magic is that the secrets don't matter. I get to stand backstage and watch these guys—who are all at the top of their game—play and tweak minuscule details every night. Jeff Hobson, who is The Trickster, does a trick with a bag and an egg. It's a classic vaudeville trick but nobody's doing it these days, and Hobson is the best in the world at it. I get to watch him play with different pauses between the lines where he'll switch jokes in and out or he'll try a different expression; it's all those millions of little decisions that make the routine really entertaining, funny, and important. It's not that I admire the trick so much, [but] I admire the artistic interpretation of it.

Do you enjoy clueing people into the secrets, or would you prefer not to ever do that?

I don't think it's important for everybody to know the secret. The best audience is too busy laughing to worry about it. It's all a personal journey. I talk about my impression of snow as a child and how magical it was, and if you were a kid in a snowy area it immediately sends you back to sledding with your grandparents. I hope they're

too busy enjoying themselves to really worry about how it works.