

Boulder Fringe fosters the art of magic
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Magician Gregg Tobo performs August 17-24 at the Boulder International Fringe Festival

Provided by: Bob Brown

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The 2007 Boulder International Fringe Festival is adding a touch of magic to their line-up this year as Lafayette magician **Gregg Tobo** brings his show, *A Magician's Tour*, to the stage. The six performances, running August 17 - 24, represent the culmination of 5 years of meticulous work. For Tobo, however, the show is more than just eye-popping magic.

"Magic is important because it gives us hope; it inspires us to dream," says the 40-year-old magician-actor-director as he busies himself backstage before a show. "Magic reminds us that anything is possible, and that our dreams are always within reach. It's an antidote to cynicism and despair...my job, as a magician, is to rekindle lost dreams."

Judging by the critical acclaim he has received, Tobo has succeeded and then some.

"It has been gratifying to see how well people respond to the show," says Tobo, who has honed the material through countless hours of performance. "The message seems to resonate well with people."

"I've always had strong beliefs about the importance of magic. But it took a lot of work - trial and error, really - before I was able to express these feelings in the form of a show...The response has been extremely positive."

Tobo's show, a 55-minute small stage act, features magic in the style of the wandering magicians from 15th Century Europe, but the real message is about restoring a sense of wonder and hope in the face life's everyday trials.

"The magic is fun, but this is not a 'how-does-he-do-it?' show. It's about seeing the world through the eyes of a magician, and how this can enrich our lives," says Tobo. "I believe in the power of magic to change lives."

Tobo's devotion to magic began as a child. At an early age he began mastering sleight of hand with coins and cards. At the age of 16 he began apprenticing with his mentor **Mike Shannon** of the Top Hat Magic Shop. "Mike was a true teacher. He taught me the most difficult lessons in magic. The hard work and dedication required to do the impossible. How to invent solutions where others see none."

But it was while studying theatre at the University of Colorado that Tobo began to connect with the real art of magic. "Theatre helped me to find my voice, to say something worthwhile. By studying theatre, I learned not just how to entertain an audience, but how to inspire them."

In 2001, after his mentor died, Tobo began working on his new act that would gradually come together over a period of several years. "People often think that I just sit down and write an entire performance in one sitting, but for me the work is gradual. I'll test one piece out in front of an audience, and if it plays well, I might write a follow-on piece, or I might let it sit and incubate for a few months before I rewrite it and try it out again.

"Magic is an ancient art that's rich in tradition," he adds. "Most people only know about our contemporary magicians (**Criss Angel, Penn & Teller, David Blaine**), but I wanted to tell a different story, to tell people about the roots of this great art form...My show is really a tribute to all the great magicians that pioneered the way."

Asked about his favorite trick, Tobo replies, "The Cups & Balls is one of the oldest tricks in magic. If you look at how magicians were depicted in paintings from 15th Century, they invariably show the magician performing the Cups & Balls. And to this day, magicians still hold it as the standard by which the skill of a magician is measured...Also it was the last trick that my mentor, Mike, taught me to perform before he died, and so for me, it represents a responsibility to carry on Mike's legacy."

A Magician's Tour

Boulder International Fringe Festival

August 17 - 24, 2007

Tickets: \$12/\$10

exhibitrek THE GALLERY

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