

Review *In Order to Amaze*, Magicseen July 2016 (Mark Leveridge)

„Everything about this book exudes quality. The classy looking hardbacked binding, the arty yet clear layout, the beautiful shiny art paper it's printed on, the pin sharp colour photos used throughout, and the nice touch of an attached ribbon book mark. All of this encourages you to think that you have made a good purchase, and this is before you've even started to consider the contents themselves!

I will own up right from the outset and tell you that I am a big fan of Pit Hartling and his work. From the very first time that I saw him perform at one of my British Close Up Magic Symposium conventions, I have been a huge admirer of his clarity of thinking and his wonderful, quirky, witty presentational style. He is one of the few magicians who genuinely succeeds in entertaining me with cards rather than sending me to sleep with them, and this book is a brilliant example of Pit at his very best.

If you don't know what the subject matter of this 250 page book is, the clue is actually in the clever title. This is a collection of routines and ideas for the memorised deck. Pit favours the Juan Tamariz set up, but he does reassure readers that other stacks, such as the Simon Aronson one of instance, will work equally well with virtually all the effects explained.

So, the first pre-requisite, if you want to immediately start to benefit from this book's contents, is for you to have a good working knowledge of a memorised deck. If you don't, then I would suggest either that you get that skill first, or that when you read the routines in this book, you will immediately be inspired to learn one anyway, just so that you can enjoy performing Pit's great routines.

OK, you also need to realise that this is not a book for beginners, because apart from being totally au fait with the memorised deck, you also need to be equally proficient with a range of other card moves such as the spread cull, the full deck false shuffle, the estimated cut and more. The moves Pit uses though are not the Dan and Dave knuckle busting ones, but err on the side of the understated and subtle. It is this fact which helps to make Pit's tricks so disarmingly effective.

The actual routines (there are over 20 of them) are all universally excellent. There's no padding, no filler, just solid material. Much of it is perfectly suitable for commercial work (I like the fact that he usually gives you exact details of how you can restore the stack in front of the spectators with his 'returning home' feature) and all of the effects are explained not only from a technical stand point, but also from a presentational one.

I just love Pit's understated sense of humour and his ability to turn even the most potentially boring card 'experiment' into a funny, engaging, lay-people-pleasing piece of entertainment. And the great news is, the presentations do not overly rely on Pit's performing character, but are easily transferable to most other entertainers.

Did I mention that too much card magic sends me to sleep? Yeah, I thought so. Well, you would think that 250 pages of memorised deck effects would be more effective than a whole jar of sleeping tablets, but nothing could be further from the truth. Pit's writing

style is funny, to the point and, praise be, very well crafted. Here is someone who can actually write and explain things in an interesting and lucid way, another somewhat rare skill it appears these days.

This is, simply put, a wonderful book on every level. It is totally worth the money and for anyone who is good with the memorised deck it will instantly yield rewards. Pit is a modest and unassuming guy, but secretly he's a bit of a genius. This book shows the depth and intelligence of his magic and anyone who is prepared to work on their card skills will get so much of value from this book. Oh for goodness sake, just go and buy it!"