

When anyone thinks of a magician, they conjure up a series of images: a tall man in tails pulling rabbits out of a hat; a debonair David Copperfield romancing a volunteer from the audience, or Bozo the Birthday Clown making children laugh by pulling coins out of his ear. All these magicians share a common trait: they are men.

For reasons even magicians cannot explain, the art of conjuring from Merlin to Henning has been male dominated; perhaps because many magicians get into the hobby at an early age, and young boys are known to be bigger show-offs than young girls.

In Las Vegas, young Melinda Saxe grew up in a show business family. While other children were in playgrounds, Melinda was backstage in Vegas' premier showrooms. And one day she saw a magician. Here was someone who could wave his hands and make dreams come true. The next morning, she announced to her family that when she grew up, she would be an illusionist. Her family's reaction was swift: "No one will come to see a lady magician."

Following years of dance training, and a position in the Siegfried and Roy magic show, Melinda branched out on her own, eventually opening as a headliner with her own magic and illusion revue. A few weeks ago, she celebrated nine consecutive years as a headliner in Las Vegas, a record unmatched by any other performer in the history of the "Entertainment Capital of the World".

To the age old art of the professional deceiver, Melinda brings dance and glamour and beauty. Along with the best of them, she causes her male assistants to levitate, saws assistants in half and produces white birds out of thin air. She has mastered the difficult aspects of sleight of hand and large scale illusions, and last fall, was selected to be one of a handful of magicians on the NBC hit two hour television special, "The World's Greatest Magic". In 1995 Melinda was inducted into the Magic and Movie Hall of Fame and named Magician of the Year.

FIRST LADY of MAGIC



CRASHING the SEX BARRIER

"I wouldn't be telling the truth if I said it was easy," confides Melinda. "There were many doors closed to me when they found out the magician was a woman. Even in the magic community, it took years before people took me seriously. But I had encouragement; my audiences. Month after month, year after

year, they kept filling my showrooms, and I kept working on the magic, improving it, refining it. Today, I can boast that the best creative minds in the field are part of my team, and we have new illusions being built that will rival anything in the history of magic. But what I am most proud of is the fact that today, more and more women are entering the magic field, and I think I had something to do with that."

As to the future, Melinda has signed a five year contract with a public company, Universal Marketing & Entertainment, Inc., (symbol: UMEI). We hear rumors of a planned television special, a world tour and a major deal with a toy manufacturer. And all of this because of a young girl who was determined to prove that people would come and see a lady magician. ✪

Melinda