

# entertainment

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THE INTERNATIONAL LIVE ENTERTAINMENT & AMUSEMENT INDUSTRY NEWSWEEKLY

## North American 'Tour Set For Magician Melinda

By James Zoltak

After performing in Las Vegas for more than a decade, Melinda the First Lady of Magic is due to hit the road with a 58-date tour of 54 cities in the U.S. and Canada.

The tour starts Nov. 7 at the Monroe (La.) Civic Center after tech rehearsals there Nov. 2-6; it is booked through Jan. 28, when it plays the Topeka (Kan.) Arts Center.

Additional bookings are still being added to the back end of the tour, said Steve Zadrack, executive producer of the show and Melinda's personal manager. Zadrack will act as the tour's associate producer, with Martini & Co.

"The booking is handled by Tour de Force International out of New York [which also booked David Copperfield, Doug Henning and Harry Blackstone]," he said.

Tickets will cost \$18-\$31. The show will play mostly theaters and performing arts centers; venues range in size from the 1,600-seat Marshall (Texas) Civic Center to the 18,000-seat Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, Uniondale, N.Y.

### THE SHOW

The show is about one hour and 40 minutes long, Zadrack said. It stars Melinda the First Lady of Magic, who has performed in Las Vegas at the Sands, the Sahara, the MGM Marina (precursor to the MGM Grand), Bourbon Street, the Landmark and the Lady Luck. The tour co-stars Brett Daniels, whose own show closed recently in Atlantic City, N.J. The show also features magicians Mac King and Greg Frewin.

"When the tour wraps up, Melinda is rolling off on her own, self-produced tour," Zadrack said. "It will be booked by Premier Artists Services, out of Coral Springs, Fla."

Zadrack said investors have invested millions in the tour in the last year and a half. The show will cost at least \$2 million to produce.

"We've hired away some of the best talent in entertainment and magic, some of the best writers, some of the best TV people, the best magic consultants and builders. We've created original magic, brand-new illusions and magic that is just unbelievable and with it have created a brand-new,

television-oriented touring show."

Zadrack said for the last year and a half, Melinda has been shooting "The World's Greatest Magic II," which is to air the day before Thanksgiving on NBC. The original "World's Greatest Magic" was the highest-rated special of the year for NBC, he said.

"It's a two-hour special in which Melinda will be introducing for the first time her mega-illusion called the 'Drill of Death,' billed as an escape-turned-nightmare," Zadrack said. "It's one of those big-bucks illusions that's taken between \$100,000 and \$200,000 to produce."

The stunt features a 22-foot-long, 15-foot-high drill with an eight-foot-long bit that threatens to put a sizable hole in the bound Melinda's chest. The illusion was built by David Mendoza, who "built 80 percent of Copperfield's illusions and all of the magic for EFX, starring Michael Crawford, at the MGM Grand," Zadrack said.

"We've had to combine some of the best magic brains. The drill itself was in the development and building process for over a year and it's being followed up by another mega-illusion where we make a Lamborghini vanish at 100 miles per hour."

Melinda is also doing a lot of publicity work. She has already appeared on 'America's Talking' on CNN and on NBC's 'Today Show.' "Hopefully the appearances on TV will have a positive effect on the tour. Presales are doing very well already."

Zadrack said Milton Bradley's Magic Works will be presenting sponsor for the tour.

General management of the tour is being handled by New York-based Martini & Co., Zadrack said.

The show travels in three semi-trailer trucks and three tour buses. Load-in and load-out each take five hours. Roughly 25 cast and crew members will travel with the show.

Merchandise sales will be done by Sony Signatures. Janco Trucking and Custom Coach West will move the cast, crew and equipment. Sound is being done by Stage Tech Inc. Lighting is by Production Arts Lighting Inc. and Bash Lighting. Scenic Technologies is providing fiber optics and Edge & Bratton Scenery & Display is doing scenery. □