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Elephant Room

reviewed by [Richard Hinojosa](#)



Do you believe in magic? Or are you someone like me who snorts and thinks "yeah sure it's just a trick, it was in his hand the whole time"? Well it won't matter what you believe in or how cynical you are because *Elephant Room* is certain to entertain you. It's all in the presentation and the three magicians who dwell in the Elephant Room are masters of presentation.

The magicians are Dennis Diamond, who is dressed in various sparkly, embroidered jackets like a Vegas lounge singer; Louie Magic, who wears a flaming eight ball shirt and has a giant black curly hairdo and matching mustache; and Daryl Hannah, who has a western style complete a fringed suede jacket and western drawl. Together this motley bunch of odd characters create a show that is more delusion than illusion. They make sure we know that they are the greatest magicians in the world and for this one night they will share some of their magic with us. They begin with the human shell game in which a single egg seemingly disappears and reappears in their hands in a blink of the eye only to be cooked in a pan by an unseen flame. After that they break down into one of many scenes of chaos in which all of the magicians are frantically working at once and yet somehow they accentuate each other. The tricks are real but this is not just a magic show. It is much more. It's theater, it's comedy, it's magic, it's all three rolled into one.

One of my favorite moments comes when Diamond, who is a mentalist, puts his colleagues to sleep with a wave of his hand and then takes a late night call from the Dalai Lama. In a hushed voice he has sexy banter with the monk on the other side of the world only to later magically recreate his image using glue and Kool-aid powder. There's a story that meanders through the show but that is not the focus. They tell us, for example, about how Louie Magic learned magic from a pedophile in a toy store and about a dream that reveals how Hannah lost his wife and child, but the real focus is presenting the next sight gag or bit of sleight-of hand. There are several bits in which they pull folks out of the audience to participate and no one is seated in a safe spot because they walk right over the seats to get



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to them. It's all good fun and nobody gets hurt—not even the girl they saw in half with a jigsaw.

The creators of the show are Geoff Sobelle (Diamond), Trey Lyford (Hannah) and Steve Cuiffo (Magic). Sobelle and Lyford are the co-artistic directors of rainpan 43 who have created brilliant works of theatre such as *All Wear Bowlers*. They love to tweak postmodern form and play visual tricks on their audiences. They are always inventive and fresh. They collaborated with Cuiffo on this production to create an incredibly entertaining piece of theatre filled with misdirection and outrageous characters to which their commitment is unwavering. Their dialogue is crisp and often bizarre and relies, to some extent, on improvisation which helps to keep things in the present and makes it that much more hilarious. Their director, Paul Lazar, works a wonderful pace with peaks and valleys and moments of controlled chaos in which he underscores individual acts at just the right time. Technically the show is flawless. The sound, courtesy of designer Nick Kourtides, moves on and off stage creating a cool effect, and the set, designed by Mimi Lien, seemingly floats three feet above the floor and has secret entrances.

Elephant Room is a spectacular show. The magic tricks are silly but presented with such conviction that it makes you *want* to be awed. They know it's all for camp value and they have fun with it. I guarantee you'll have fun too.

<http://www.nytheatre.com/Show/Review/elep14293>