

fantasy

It's possible that what happened in the EMU Ballroom Tuesday night, where the magician Irv Weiner appeared, was all a put-on. It's possible. But it wasn't. Too many people left the performance with their mouths hanging open in utter disbelief for it to be a hoax. Disbelief of what happened, not the manner in which it happened. There was no doubt as the credibility of the performance. Anyone who entered the room with their noses turned up in skepticism left the place a bit differently. They were convinced, for they witnessed the age-old adage, "The hand is quicker than the eye," coming to life. And right before their very eyes.

Weiner, better known as "Mr. Fingers," has been around the magic circuit for quite a while, and it is certainly evident. It's evident not only in the way he performs his tricks but also in the way he talks to his audience, using it as part of his act. He psyches them out—"Notice how my little finger is extended. Watch it carefully...it doesn't mean a thing"—because he knows they're all there with one thing in mind. To find out how it's done. But Weiner won't oblige. That's not the way magic works.

He is a wizard of sorts, and it's that wizardry that has made him the true star that he is. He doesn't need world recognition or a black tux and top hat. All he needs are his hands, his fingers and his mind. These things plus the ability to work with the onlooker's mind enable him to perform his wizardry, which is certainly not of the ordinary "pull a rabbit out of the hat" caliber. Weiner's tricks deal with the mind as well as the eye. The eye is exploited when he sticks a hatpin through his arm and actually draws blood and when he manages to get a steel ring around each of his arms with his thumbs securely taped. The mind is exploited when you believe what you saw. Everyone in the audience saw it but no one saw it all. That's what he relies on to carry him through the evening. And it did. Weiner had heads shaking in amazement throughout the entire show. What people once held as puerile fantasies were now happening right in front of them.

Weiner attributes much of his knowledge to one of the greatest magicians who ever lived, Harry Houdini. This is the man who now

has anyone who has ever waved his or her hand over a deck of cards doing variations on his theme, and Weiner, admittedly, is no exception. At one point in the evening, using part of Houdini's act as his format, he opened a can that had been sent to a person present in the audience. The can was sent from Weiner on Oct. 5 and in it he had written on a piece of paper a number of events that he predicted would happen within the next month. A few of his predictions were Agnew's resignation (he missed the exact date by a mere two days), the Middle East conflict and Nixon's surrendering of the Watergate tapes.

Whatever it was, magic or mind-bending, it was amazing, and that is what Weiner tried to get across to his audience. "Magic is a great act. It's too bad we don't see it as much anymore," he said.

According to Weiner, what he did Tuesday night was an act. To the people who witnessed it, it was more of an experience. An act is sawing someone in half in order to deceive the eyes. Having your mind toyed with is more than that. It's an experience, and it's for real.

Dick Baltus

Harlan Ellison packed in a full house Monday night at the EMU ballroom. Speaking informally, his was the first event of the week-long symposium on Fantasy. A prolific writer who has achieved numerous distinctions in the writing field, his many stories, novels, movies and television scripts provide a notable track record.

Ellison took the mike and carried the audience over small technical adjustments, through a monologue, and into his most recent short story creation. It was a solid three and a half hours of entertainment.

His opening was foiled, but not destroyed, by technical difficulties—he couldn't find an electrical outlet to play his opening music. We finally did get to hear it, unfortunately. Some good old 1950's rock packed neatly away on cassette recorder. As stage hands carried out the last of his long-standing request for a podium, Ellison

launched into his rap.

Speaking off the cuff, he hit me as being more of a comedian than a writer. With a stand-up style that was in keeping with the tradition of Lenny Bruce, he brought waves of laughter from the audience. He ranged from social commentary laced with humor to ethnic jokes, nonetheless funny.

He recounted his past trials and tribulations on previous lecture tours. Reported on how 618 square miles of timber are sacrificed yearly to package McDonald's hamburgers. Revealed how the mindless bureaucrats ran the television industry. Related some jokes. Rehearsed a short critique on literature professors destroying the structure of a poem to get at the single meaning of a word while simultaneously fielding questions from the crowd, keeping them in stitches. All of this within a loose structured, free-flowing style of expression.

Ellison then moved into the reading of his latest creative effort, a short story entitled "The Cat Man." Termed the ultimate science fiction sex story, he commenced to weave a spellbound tale from the future. It was about a father who was a cop, a mother with a tendency

in concert

Pablo Cruise plays the Cascade Club

Pablo Cruise, a band made up of ex-members of Stoneground and It's A Beautiful Day, performed at the Cascade Club last Sunday evening for a small but responsive audience. Pablo Cruise played music which was probably original but sounded like standard rock you've already heard. The group consisted of a drummer, a bass player, a guitarist, and a man on keyboards. The versatility of the band wasn't much, and another guitar player would have helped the sound very much.

Although the music which was being played wasn't that inspiring, the crowd which attended danced throughout most of the night and the band played till about 12:30, with one half-hour break.

There were no names given for the members of Pablo Cruise so I can't really say which members of Stoneground and It's A Beautiful Day were in this new combination, but I don't think any of these performers were the main ingredients behind the two earlier bands.

The sound system was all right while it was working—a few minor technical problems slowed up the beginning of the concert. It seems the sound systems around Eugene just never work right for a whole concert.

Getting back to the music, Pablo Cruise played several slow numbers which gave the impression that they would like to make it big

to nag and a son whose sophisticated talents for thievery were beyond reproach.

The thief steals three small tubes of a priceless substance, then meets with a powerful woman of political influence and exchanges the substance for the ultimate act of sexual perversion of the time, a love-making bout with a highly complex sophisticated computer.

Freezing the audience to their chairs with tonal inflections and colorful imagery, he weaved his tale into the minds of his listeners. It would be an understatement to say the story was simply good.

After the reading, Ellison fielded more questions from the crowd with his customary obnoxious wit. He explained his attempts at offending people as an effort to defang those words which strike sensitive chords. His performance on stage was as polished as it was loose. Using an earthy language of four-letter words with class, he reached the listeners on ground level.

As he closed with his cassette recorder, I left with the sounds of "Bop-Bop-a-rang-a-lang-Bop" filling my ears and the humor of his rhetoric in my soul. It was an evening well spent.

Jack Kinnunen

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Time Magazine November 27, 1972 page 81

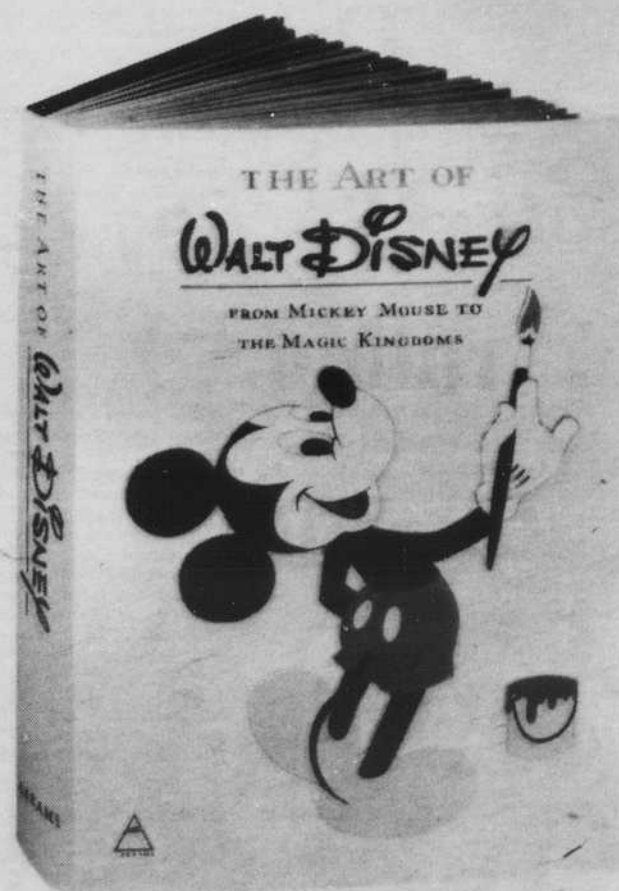
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763 illus., 351 in color, 12 full-color fold-outs
458 pages

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Admission: \$1 or Film Society membership