

CARLOS ADRIANO

Make 'em laugh! Make 'em laugh!

By Martin Kaplan

The house lights dim and the stage lights come up full. The stage curtain is closed. A backstage voice announces the next performer. “Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome our next performer who hails from Rosario, Argentina, Carlos Adriano.” At first nothing happens. Then the audience notices movement at the base of the curtain. The movement travels from left to right and back to center. A pair of brightly colored sneakers comes into view. A suitcase is pushed through the bottom of the curtain, followed by the performer who makes his way on stage crawling under the curtain. Carlos straightens up to his full height and brushes himself off. While doing so the curtain rises on its own and as Carlos follows the progress of the curtain his face displays a multiplicity of emotions and the audience bursts into both laughter and applause. In the space of two minutes Carlos has established his magic persona for the audience and they instinctively know that they are in for a fun ride.

Carlos D López Adriano made his debut on September 22, 1976, in Rosario, Argentina. His father taught at university and his mother was a housewife. His childhood was normal, uneventful and, up until age eleven, he had never expressed or shown an interest either in stage performance or magic. It was at age eleven

when, out of the blue and no clear understanding why, he told his father that he wanted to learn how to do magic. As fate would have it, that very week his father caught up with a former colleague whom he had not seen in years. His colleague was no longer teaching. He had become a magician and coincidentally he had a friend who had a magic school. Soon thereafter, Carlos and his friend Adrián, who was also interested in magic, began their journey together.

Magical resources were few and far between in the Rosario of the early nineties. The Internet did not exist; the local public library only had a handful of books dealing with magic and Buenos Aires, the true magic hub of Argentina was some three hundred kilometers away. The good news is that there was a local magic club, *La Peña Mágica Rosarina*; the bad news was that one had to be eighteen in order to join. Since Carlos was and is very resourceful, he and Adrián, found a work-around.

The club opened its doors at 9:00 p.m. and its library was available for the thirty minutes prior to the meeting. After a half hour of study, Carlos and Adrián would retreat to the nearby bar where the magicians would gather after their meeting. The bar became Carlos’ second school and he



Carlos Adriano. PHOTO BY MAD MARTIN.

got to know the locals and the locals got to know him. It was the perfect strategy and, as a result, Carlos, at age fourteen, became the youngest member ever of the *Peña Mágica*. Several years later he would become its secretary.

Carlos began performing at age fourteen and, like many of us, it was at a neighbor's birthday party. As he grew more experienced, in addition to performing at traditional venues such as birthday parties and first communions, he began to reach bigger audiences in theater-like settings. It was after one of these performances that he was interviewed by a local radio personality who then invited him to appear on his show the following week. In the course of that program the host asked him if he could do an effect that involved the listen-

ers. Carlos said that he was not prepared to do so, but if the host would invite him back the following week he would come back ready to perform an effect over the radio. Carlos returned the following week and every other week for more than a year. To appreciate the difficulty of coming up with fifty plus effects that could only be done verbally, imagine your having to do so with limited resources to find such effects. Most of the effects came from Carlos' creative mind.

As a result of his appearances, Carlos had more than enough material for his first book, *La magia invisible (Invisible Magic)*, which he self published in 1996.



Carlos Adriano connects with his audience through magic, facial expressions, and physical comedy.

If you check the bibliography at the end of Juan Tamariz's book, *Verbal Magic*, you will see the book mentioned. Tamariz writes on page 147, "Verbal magic ...is an unusual type of conjuring, for which only a short bibliography is possible. (Notable exceptions are the books on this subject by Fisher, Wade, Maven, Steinmeyer and López Adriano...)"

The book was his introduction to the magicians of Buenos Aires and, as a result, his performance opportunities grew substantially. He took advantage of every opportunity to expand his knowledge of the technical and performance aspects of working on stage, as well as improving his abilities as a clown, a mime and an improvisational actor. If that were not enough, with the backing of one of Buenos Aires's magic shop owners, Carlos opened the *Casa Mágica* in Rosario.

The magic store did well and performance opportunities continued to present themselves. The future looked very rosy,

until the Argentinean economy collapsed in 2001. As a result, the magic shop closed and all professional engagements were cancelled. Magic, as a profession, was no longer a viable source of income.

Opportunities in Argentina were few and far between. It seemed that the only option was to start all over, but where and doing what? Carlos decided that he needed to move and since his father had immigrated to Argentina from Spain, that meant that Carlos was a Spanish citizen and would have no problem working in Spain the moment he arrived. And so, with five hundred dollars in his pocket and two suitcases, one filled with clothes and the other with magic he moved to Spain in June of 2002. Landing in Madrid, he discovered that, since it was summertime, there was little or no work for magicians. However, seaside towns brimming with tourists might be the perfect solution.

And so, almost out of funds, Carlos headed for Benidorm and arrived with

enough money for a night in a hotel. His plan was to do street magic the following day to earn enough for a meal or two and another night in the hotel. However, it was not to be.

Carlos headed out for the boardwalk looking for a space where he could do his street magic. He sat down to rest for a moment, leaving his two suitcases at his feet, and noticed a fellow street performer working a small crowd. Suddenly a police car drove up and when the two policemen exited the car, they confiscated the magician's props, as well as the funds he had collected. One of the policemen spied Carlos and approached him. His message was short, but sweet. If Carlos tried to do street magic, without a permit, he would suffer the same fate.

Out of funds and out of work, Carlos is forced to live on the streets for a week. How much worse could things get? Towards the end of that week, while sitting on a bench, two boys who were handing out flyers for *Aqualandia*, a water park in Benidorm, approached him. Carlos asked

who had hired them and they pointed out a nearby house and, as fate would have it, the young woman who had hired the boys was making her way down the front steps. Carlos approached her and explained his situation. She asked him to stop by *Aqualandia* the next day and she would introduce him to her bosses.

Carlos was hired, but not as a magician. He was, in essence a maintenance man, cleaning toilets, sweeping up messes and going wherever his services were needed. However, he now had a source of income and he could once again satisfy his basic needs for food and shelter.

In the course of his initial interview Carlos had made it known that he was a magician and, if the opportunity presented itself, he would love to have the chance to perform. A week into his job he was approached by the Assistant Manager and told that she would like him to do table magic at the park's biggest restaurant the next day.

A new day dawned and dressed appropriately, with his close-up case at the ready, he was about to approach the first table. However, the general manager stopped him in his tracks and asked him what he thought he was doing. Carlos explained that he was in the restaurant at the assistant manager's request. The GM nodded non-committedly and Carlos approached his first table, coins at the ready. Carlos finished his first effect and looked for the GM, but he had disappeared. At the end of lunchtime Carlos learned that he had a new job. He would be the magician for not only *Aqualandia*, but also its neighboring sister park.

In the months that followed Carlos performed in just about every venue, including the street because he was now street legal. With three months of performing under his belt and with the summer season drawing to a close, Carlos decided to head back to Madrid to see what awaited him there.

As the new kid in town he had to be satisfied with whatever came his way. That



Carlos Adriano in one of his earlier promotional photos.



Street performance at the Zamora International Days of Magic. PHOTO BY SILVINO MARTIN

meant birthday parties, lots and lots of birthday parties. In addition to working, Carlos continued his studies of theater, mime and clowning. As luck would have it, the good kind this time, a booker happened to be present at one of his birthday party performances. Having seen what he could do and impressed by his unique approach to kids' magic, he hired him for an upcoming festival.

Carlos' improving fortunes were not limited to his performing life. Soon after arriving in Madrid, he met Verónica and the two have been together for some sixteen years now. As he soon discovered, Verónica was from Argentina and, not only that, but from a small town that was some sixty kilometers away from Rosario.

As a result of his performance at the festival, Carlos had been discovered. and, as a result, his bookings increased and he now had invitations to perform at larger venues, as well as the conventions and magic weekends that abound in all of Spain. With his newfound success, Carlos committed himself to reflecting on what were the key

elements in his performances that allowed him to connect with his audience so that, above all, they were entertained and had a good time.

That period of reflection led to the publication in 2011 of his second book, *Magos, niños y otros misterios (Magic, Children, and Other Mysteries)*. The book was a resounding success both at home and abroad. Its publication led to invitations to appear throughout Spain and Portugal, and Italy. Invitations from South America soon followed.

In 2016 his third book, *Bajo el sombrero (Under My Hat)* was published. In addition to a number of effects, it contained the essence of Carlos' performance philosophy in the form of 32 golden rules. They appeared in his column in the March 2018 edition of *The Linking Ring*.

Carlos, like all successful magicians, spends a goodly amount of his time on the road. In addition, since he is one of several magicians on a given bill, his spot is limited to twenty to thirty minutes. Those two facts of life have motivated Carlos to



Carlos' most recent publicity photo shot by Mad Martin.

come up with a one-man show that can be presented at a theater in Madrid. In 2018 *Superflipado* was launched. It is performed on Saturdays and Sundays at the *Teatro Luchana*.

What does the future hold for Carlos? He will continue to perform at a variety of conventions and festivals, while working on perfecting and expanding *Superflipado*. Carlos is hopeful that he will soon have the opportunity to bring his magic and his ideas to The United States and perhaps to China. This will allow him to share his concept of magic for children that, in many respects, is quite unique. How so?

Carlos says that he does not do magic for children. He does magic *with* children. That being the case, the focus is more on the game being played with the child volunteer. The magic is part of the game, but it is not the end all and be all of the game. Play is the language that is common to all children and that is what helps the children relate to you and to trust you.

When you watch Carlos perform you immediately notice how quickly he connects with his audiences. How does he manage to do that? It is sort of a mystery that is best explained by Juan Tamariz in his book, *The Magic Rainbow*. Search out the chapter entitled "The Seven Magic Veils" that begins on page 357 where you will discover that, of the seven magic veils, presentation is the least important. According to Carlos, the ability to improvise and be spontaneous is an ability that the good kids' magician should possess.

Many magicians who work for children want to be in control and want as few interruptions as possible between the beginning, middle and end of an effect. However, if allowance is made for the unexpected, and even welcomed, then the resulting enjoyment experienced by the audience can be even greater than the impact of the magic by itself.

Since arriving in Spain in 2002 Carlos has made his living exclusively through any and all aspects of magic. He does what he loves and he loves what he does. Would that we could all say the same.

I think its time to yield the floor to Carlos so that he can share with you some additional thoughts and observations:

I love to study and research magic. In 2006 I published a booklet called *Put in Your Hands! Put in Your Feet!* It dealt with the multiple uses of a change bag. Soon thereafter I began to give lectures and, ever since the



Carlos Adriano performing at the JaJeJiJoJu Festival at the Teatro Circo de Murcia.

advanced degree program in magic began at the Real Centro Universitario María Cristina de el Escorial, I have taught all the classes devoted to children's magic.

I have never been a big believer in magic competitions. When it comes to art, one does not compete. Having said that, I have participated in several competitions and have been awarded prizes in Argentina, Spain and Italy. My first competition was in 1995 at the National Convention of Magicians and Illusionists where I won a prize for par-

lour magic. In 2008 I won the prize for children's magic at the convention in Almussafes, Spain.

That same year I competed in the Spanish National Convention in the children's magic category. However, I was unpleasantly surprised when I discovered, as the curtains parted, that there was not even one child in the audience. The audience and the judges were all adults. I was the only contestant who said to the judges that, without children present, it would be impossible to do magic for children. I could perform for adults, however that was not the category in which I was entered. My only recourse was to do an about-face and leave the stage, leaving the judges a bit perplexed, to say the least. Would a panel of judges allow someone to perform in the category of stage illusions if there were no stage illusions in a given act? Would a jury tell a card magician that he could compete only if he didn't use cards? Just as you cannot do card magic without cards and you cannot



Carlos with his lovely wife, Veronica.



Having fun on stage: Carlos breaks up a young spectator.

perform a manipulations act without material to manipulate, you cannot do kids' magic without kids both on stage and in the audience.

I honestly thought that after that experience I would never compete again, but in 2017 I was invited to participate in the Masters of Magic World Street Magic Championship in Italy. What was interesting about that competition is that it was held in the streets with the lay public as your audience. That way you could show your skill in real world conditions, which was a plus for me. I ended up winning third prize.

I have always felt fortunate that I knew from an early age that I was destined to spend my life "on the wicked stage" and I have always given all my energy to make that happen, even though there have been many obstacles along the way. I have never permitted myself to be deflected from my course and that fills my heart with joy. I am not famous, nor am I a millionaire, but I earn my living from my art and I am

happy doing what I do and, for me, that is priceless.

I am honored to appear on the cover of this most prestigious publication.

Martin Kaplan is no stranger to the pages of The Linking Ring. In addition to his cover article on Dean Dill, he has written accounts of Spanish Week at The Magic Castle, Italian Week at The Magic Castle and a number of events and conventions that have taken place in Spain. He has translated for Dani DaOrtiz when Dani had a monthly column for Genii. In addition to working with Páginas Libros de Magia, he has been involved in a number of translation projects including all four volumes of the Ascanio project and Juan Tamariz's The Magic Way. His latest project involved working with both Rafael Benatar and Stephen Minch on Tamariz's The Magic Rainbow. Martin currently resides in Valencia, Spain with his wife, Susan.