



EUROPEAN MAGIC HISTORY CONFERENCE



20 YEARS EMHC
2005 – 2025

Wittus Witt





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2005 – 2025

Compiled by
Wittus Witt



Hamburg 2025



IMPRINT

This compilation is based on reports that have been regularly published in the magazine *Magische Welt*.

The series began with a two-part article by Peter Schuster and Wittus Witt covering the first edition of the conference, which took place in Paris in 2005 (issues 3 and 4/2005). Two years later, Mirko Ferrantini reported on the Berlin conference (issue 5/2007). The third gathering, held in Vienna in 2009, was documented by Stefan Alexander Rautenberg in issue 5/2009. The fourth EMHC, held in London in 2011, was covered by Wittus Witt in issue 5/2011.

The fifth conference, hosted in Hamburg in 2013, was reported by Roman Ertl in issue 5/2013. The sixth edition, which returned to Paris in 2015, was covered by Marco Pusterla (issue 6/2015). The following two conferences – in Turin (2017) and Vienna (2019) – were each reported on by Véronique Faber and appeared in issues 5/2017 and 5/2019 respectively. The most recent edition of the EMHC took place in Ghent in 2023 and was documented by Kobe Van Herwegen in issue 5/2023.

PHOTO CREDITS:

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COVER PHOTO

from left to right: François Voignier, Pascal Friaut, Georges Naudet, Florence Goyer, Pierre Albanese und Jacques Voignier

The summary was compiled by Wittus Witt on the occasion of the 10th European Magic History Conference in Riga.

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”
RESEARCHING
PRESERVING
NARRATING –
THE SIGNIFI-
CANCE OF THE
EUROPEAN
MAGIC HISTORY
CONFERENCE
(EMHC)
”

Since 2005, a special community has gathered at regular intervals: historians, collectors, magicians, archivists, librarians, curators, and passionate enthusiasts meet every two years at the European Magic History Conference (EMHC) to explore and convey the history of magic. What began as an initiative by a group of French magicians has evolved over the past two decades into an international forum of high scholarly reputation.

The first EMHC was held from June 10 to 12, 2005, in Paris. Key organizers included Jacques Voignier, Pierre Albanèse, Pascal Friaut, Florence Goyer, and George Naudet¹. Their commitment laid the foundation for a European movement that continues to this day, dedicated to the systematic cultural and historical research of magic.

Since its inception, EMHC has steadily expanded both its geographical reach and its thematic scope.

CONFERENCES HAVE TAKEN PLACE:

in Berlin (2007),
Vienna (2009, 2019),
London (2011),
Hamburg (2013),
Paris (2015),
Turin (2017),
Ghent (2023),
and most recently in Riga, (2025)

A clear focus has emerged: EMHC positions itself not as a stage for performance, but as a forum for academic exchange. Presentations span media history, iconographic analysis, and biographical research into forgotten magicians and stage legends.

Example topics demonstrate the breadth of the conference: research on automata associated with Robert-Houdin, the history of levitation in spiritualism, new insights into Buatier de Kolta, cultural analysis of card cheating in the 18th century, or iconographic interpretations of Hieronymus Bosch's 'The Conjurer'¹³. Figures such as Ionia, Kalanag, Chefalo, Fredo Marvelli, and Orson Welles have been examined from new perspectives.

The conference thrives not only on its content but also on its spirit: exchange, mutual respect between academic and practical magic, and openness to international perspectives. It brings together renowned families like the Davenports, scholars such as William Kalush and Mike Caveney, collectors like Fergus Roy, and emerging voices like Kobe Van Herwegen. EMHC is a place of vibrant knowledge transfer.

The conference's impact extends beyond its own walls. The journal *Magische Welt* has provided extensive cove-



rage of almost every EMHC event. Many presentations have sparked further research, publications, and exhibitions.

EMHC significantly contributes to preserving the cultural memory of magic. By bringing forgotten performers to light, uncovering new sources, and spotlighting historical collections, it makes a lasting impact on cultural history.

Many events have taken place in symbolic locations — such as the mirror hall of the Museum of Arts and Crafts in Hamburg or the very theatre in Paris where Pinetti performed in 1783. Magic history is not only discussed but also made spatially and sensorially accessible.

The European Magic History Conference is now more than just a gathering of specialists. It has become an institution that helps lift magic out of the shadows of museums and clichés, revealing it as a living cultural heritage with rich history, international connections, and surprising contemporary relevance.

Top

Museum Robert-Houdin, Blois

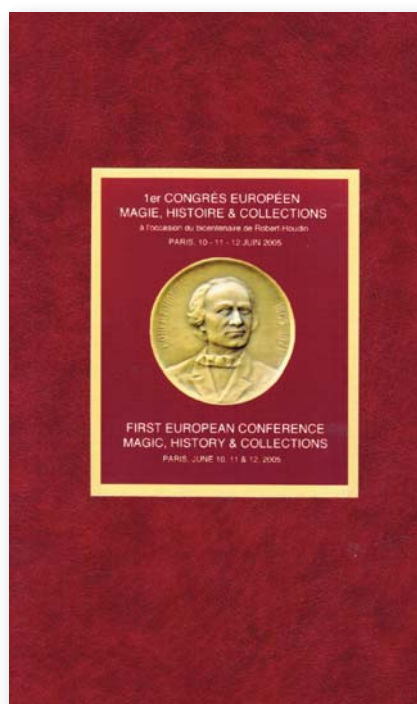
” A CULTURAL CHRONOLOGY OF THE EMHC PROGRAMMES ”

Since its founding in 2005, the European Magic History Conference (EMHC) has established itself as a key meeting point for historians, collectors, magicians, and enthusiasts of magic history. Taking place every two years in various European cities, the conference is dedicated to the scholarly exploration, documentation, and discussion of historical topics related to the art of magic. It was initiated by a group of French enthusiasts, including Jacques Voignier, Pierre Albanèse, P. Firaut, F. Goyer, George Naudet, and Q. F. Voignier.

The cities themselves – Paris, Berlin, Vienna, London, Hamburg, Turin, and Ghent – serve as backdrops for intellectual exchange and magical discovery.

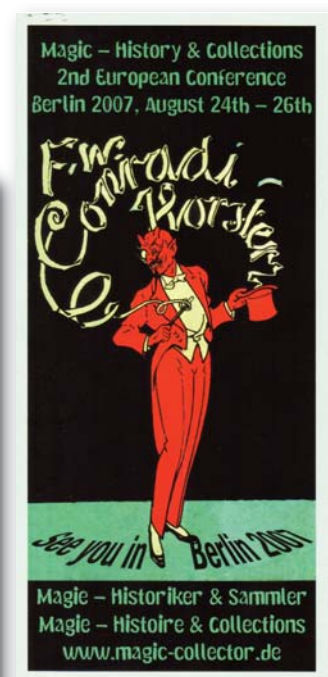
Although European magic historians have been meeting regularly since 2005, it is important to recognize that such gatherings actually date back to 1976, when historian meetings were already being held with international guests. The idea for these earlier events came from British scholar and amateur magician Edwin Dawes, Peter Warlock, and Peter Lane organized the “Collectors’ Day” in London, which continued until 2022.

At nearly every conference, beautifully designed program booklets and publications have been produced.



Paris

2005, 30 x 21 cm, 34 p.



Berlin

2007, 21 x 9,5 cm, 6 p.



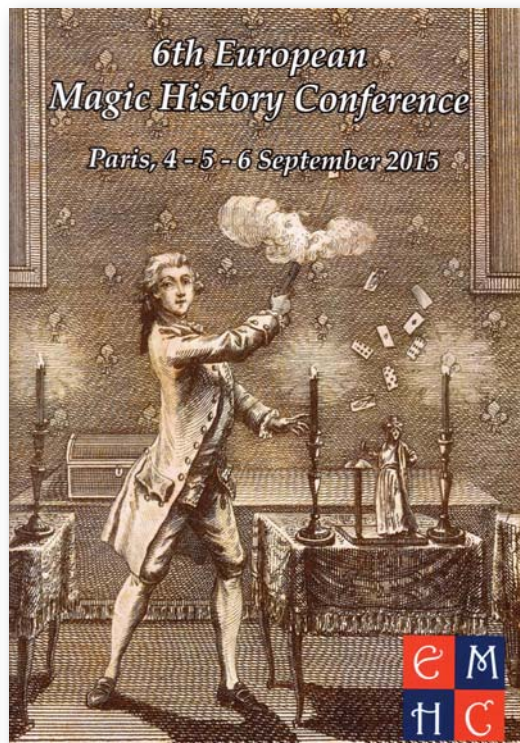
Hamburg

2013, 21 x 28 cm, 70 p.

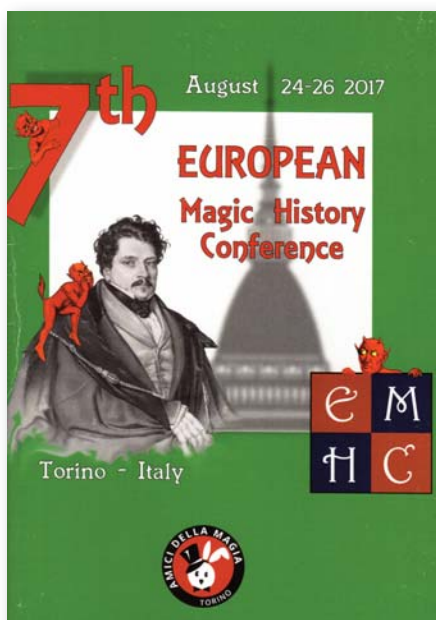


Vienna
2009, 21 x 15 cm, 24 p.

London
2011, 21 x 15 cm, 28 p.



Paris
2015, 29,7 x 21 cm, 92 p.



Torino
2017, 21 x 15 cm, 36 p.

Vienna
2019, 21 x 15 cm, 28 p.



Ghent
2023, 21 x 15 cm, 64 p.

P

10–12 June 2005
Paris Premiere

To mark the 200th birthday of Jean Eugène Robert-Houdin, the French collectors' club *Club des Magiciens Collectionneurs* invited around 100 participants to the first European Congress on Magic History, Collecting, and Magic in Paris. The idea was born during the FISM Congress in The Hague, but was conceptually inspired by the long-running "Collectors' Days" in England. The event was professionally organised by Jacques Voignier and his team.

Paris is not only a center of the arts and philosophy, but also the birthplace of modern magic, thanks to figures like Jean-Eugène Robert-Houdin and Benita Anguinet. Many of the 19th century's most important theatres and salons with magical stages were located here.

The diverse programme featured eight well-researched lectures, visits to three museums (including the Académie de Magie and the Musée des Arts et Métiers), a small exhibition of historical magic sets, an auction, two magic shows, sev-

eral film screenings, and communal dinners. A high-quality, book-style programme booklet accompanied the event.

Lecture topics included rare medieval tricks, historical automata, the "Laterna Magica", cardsharps, early magic literature, and 19th-century visual representations of sleight-of-hand performers. A particular highlight was John Gaughan's presentation on the restoration of the famous automaton "Antonio Diavolo".

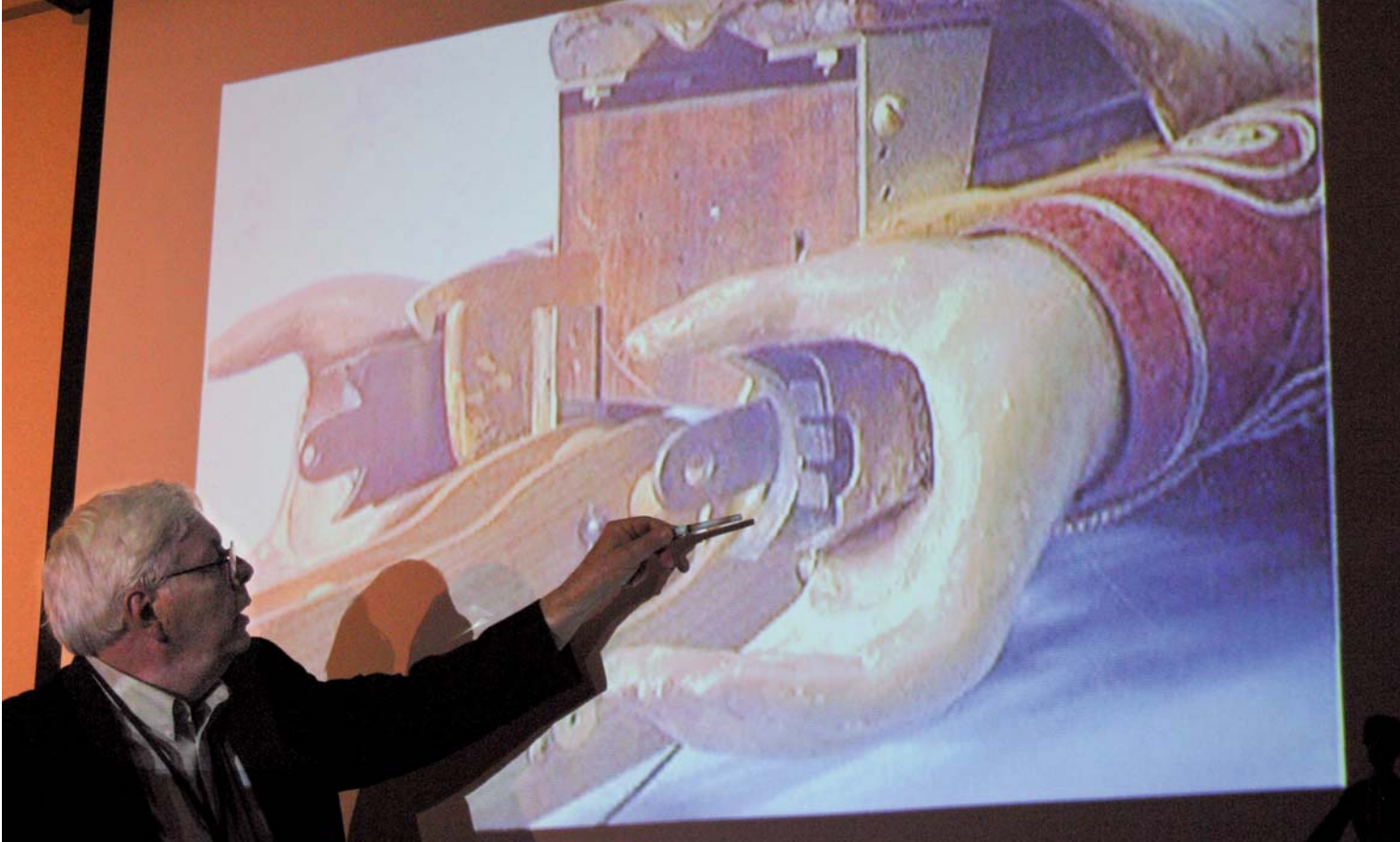
One evening took place aboard the theatre boat „Mé-tamorphosis“ by Jan Madd on the Seine, where magic was presented in a maritime atmosphere on a floating restaurant stage. Film screenings on magic in cinema, mechanical figures, and historical illustrations provided further entertainment – even on the return journey from Blois.

The congress stood out for its relaxed, harmonious atmosphere and impeccable organisation. The idea of hosting the next congress in Berlin in 2007 was met with great enthusiasm.



Left
Registration takes place at the FFAP clubhouse

Bottom
John Gaughan explains the intricate mechanics of the automaton







Top

The audience is eager to see what comes next
Standing on the right: Peter Schuster
(1934–2018)

Top left

Rare exhibits adorn the performance table

Left

Jan Madd welcomes the guests aboard his
theatre boat Métamorphosis

B

24–26 August 2007
Berlin Beyond

The recent magic collectors' congress in Berlin marked a significant moment in the European study of conjuring history. Following the inaugural event in Paris two years prior, the Berlin meeting impressed with its professional organization, strong academic presence, and rich program of lectures, exhibitions, and performances.

Set in close proximity to cultural landmarks such as the Gemäldegalerie, the Egyptian Museum, and the Wintergarten Varieté, the congress offered both content and context. The opening session—delivered in three languages—set the tone for an inclusive, international atmosphere. A filmic review of the Paris congress underscored the event's continuity and high standards.

Over the following days, a series of lectures demonstrated exceptional scholarly dedication. A key focus was Conradi Horster, explored through talks by his grandson Dr. Waldemar Horster, Volker Huber, and Kay Talmi, the latter providing attendees with detailed materials including a CD of rare footage. Presentations ranged from historical apparatus reconstructions by Rüdiger Deutsch to in-depth studies of



18th- and 19th-century card effects (Jacques Voignier), and a compelling analysis of Hanussen by Dr. Kugel.

Particularly noteworthy was Dr. Peter Rawert's lecture on Enlightenment-era magic, praised for its eloquence and meticulous research. Other highlights included Magic Christian on Hofzinger's circle, Bill Palmer's overview of his extensive cups-and-balls collection, and Wittus Witt's illustrated lecture on Werry's creations.

Beyond the lectures, the congress featured a variety show and intimate close-up performances. Its compact geography—venues all within walking distance—enhanced the experience. The event concluded with a visit to the original Westcar Papyrus in the Egyptian Museum, guided by Dr. Steffen Taut, and an optional post-congress excursion to Dresden.

This congress demonstrated that the field of magic collecting and historical research is not only intellectually vibrant but also collaborative and generously resourced. The event combined rigorous scholarship with a spirit of exchange, setting a new standard for future gatherings.



Top
Rüdiger Deutsch (1941–2015)

Bottom
Berlin audience, front from left: Birgit Bartl-Engelhardt, Betty Davenport, J. Voignier, Peter Schröder, Ronald Wohl; far right Waldemar Horster and Dieter Michel-Argola

Left
Peter Schuster welcomes



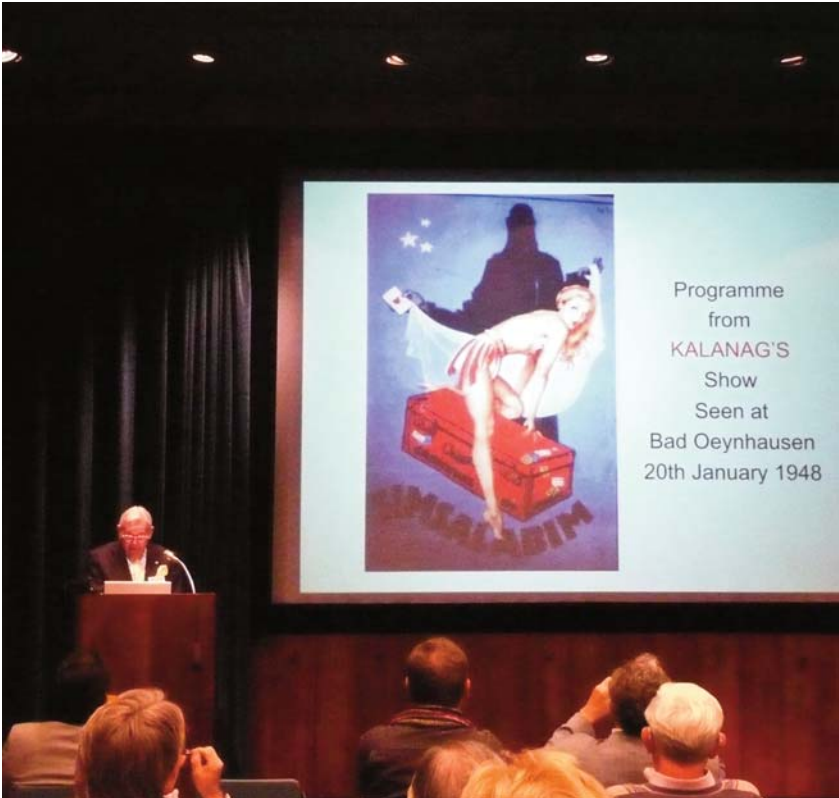
3–6 September 2009
Vienna Voices

In early September 2009, Vienna became a stage not for illusions, but for echoes—echoes of magicians past, of vanished wonders, of stories waiting in silence. Under the vaulted ceilings of the Natural History Museum, the 3rd European Congress on Magic History and Collections brought together around a hundred kindred spirits from across the continent. Here, the focus shifted from spectacle to substance: not the mechanics of magic, but its roots, its meaning, and the figures who shaped its path. Through lectures, excursions, and quiet conversations, Vienna lent its voice to a larger, timeless dialogue—one that bridges the artistry of yesterday with the curiosity of today.

Organized by Magic Christian and the Magic Club of Vienna, the congress unfolded in some of the city's most inspiring venues. Lectures took place in the grand halls of the

Natural History Museum, while accompanying excursions led guests to the Piatnik playing card factory, the Museum of Ethnology, the picture archive of the Austrian National Library, the Belvedere Palace, and the historic gravesites of renowned magicians. A formal reception at Vienna City Hall and a convivial evening at the traditional Zwölf Apostelkeller provided fitting moments of camaraderie.

The guest of honor was Ilse Püller, granddaughter of Ottokar Fischer. The congress offered a unique synthesis of the past, present, and future of the art of magic and reflected Magic Christian's ambition to elevate magic as a culturally significant art form. Following Paris (2005) and Berlin (2007), Vienna proved to be a worthy venue in this distinguished series. London is scheduled to host the next congress in 2011.



Left
Paul Freeman with his lecture
“Names to Conjure with”

Bottom
Magic Christian welcomes everybody





1–4 September 2011
London Legacy

The 4th European Magic History Conference took place in London in 2011 and was organised with great dedication and meticulous precision by Fergus Roy. The venue was the historic building of “The Magic Circle”, which—with its museum, library, and theatres—offered an ideal setting for the roughly 100 participants.

The scholarly programme featured 19 lectures on historical topics related to magic. Highlights included presentations on the female magician Iona (Charles Green), Karl Fulves as the most prolific magic author (Matt Field), the his-

tory of the “Lota Vase” (Bill Spooner), newly discovered images relating to the history of the cut-and-restored effect and ring tricks (Stéfane Laurens), and a lively talk by Volker Huber and Rüdiger Deutsch on billiard ball stands. Some criticism was raised regarding the lack of depth in a few lectures and the absence of time for discussion.

SOCIAL EVENTS

Fergus Roy hosted two delightful evening receptions—one at the historic “Savage Club” featuring a performance by Roy Davenport, and another at a luxury hotel near Covent Garden.

MAGICAL HIGHLIGHTS

A specially curated gala at “The Magic Circle” and an evening at the “Charing Cross Theatre” offered live magic performances, with Richard McDougall and Romany standing out in particular. Paul Daniels’ act, however, received mixed reviews, as did the inconsistent quality of some of the shows.

The grand finale was a visit to the “Hackney Empire”, a historic theatre where many renowned magicians once performed. Paul Kieve led the programme and presented, among other things, original payment records from Kalanag and Robert Harbin.

The conference demonstrated that the field of international magic history is thriving—encouragingly, with notable participation from young French magicians. The next gathering is planned for 2013 in Hamburg.



Top

Fergus extends a warm welcome to all those present

Bottom

Gathering at the Magic Circle



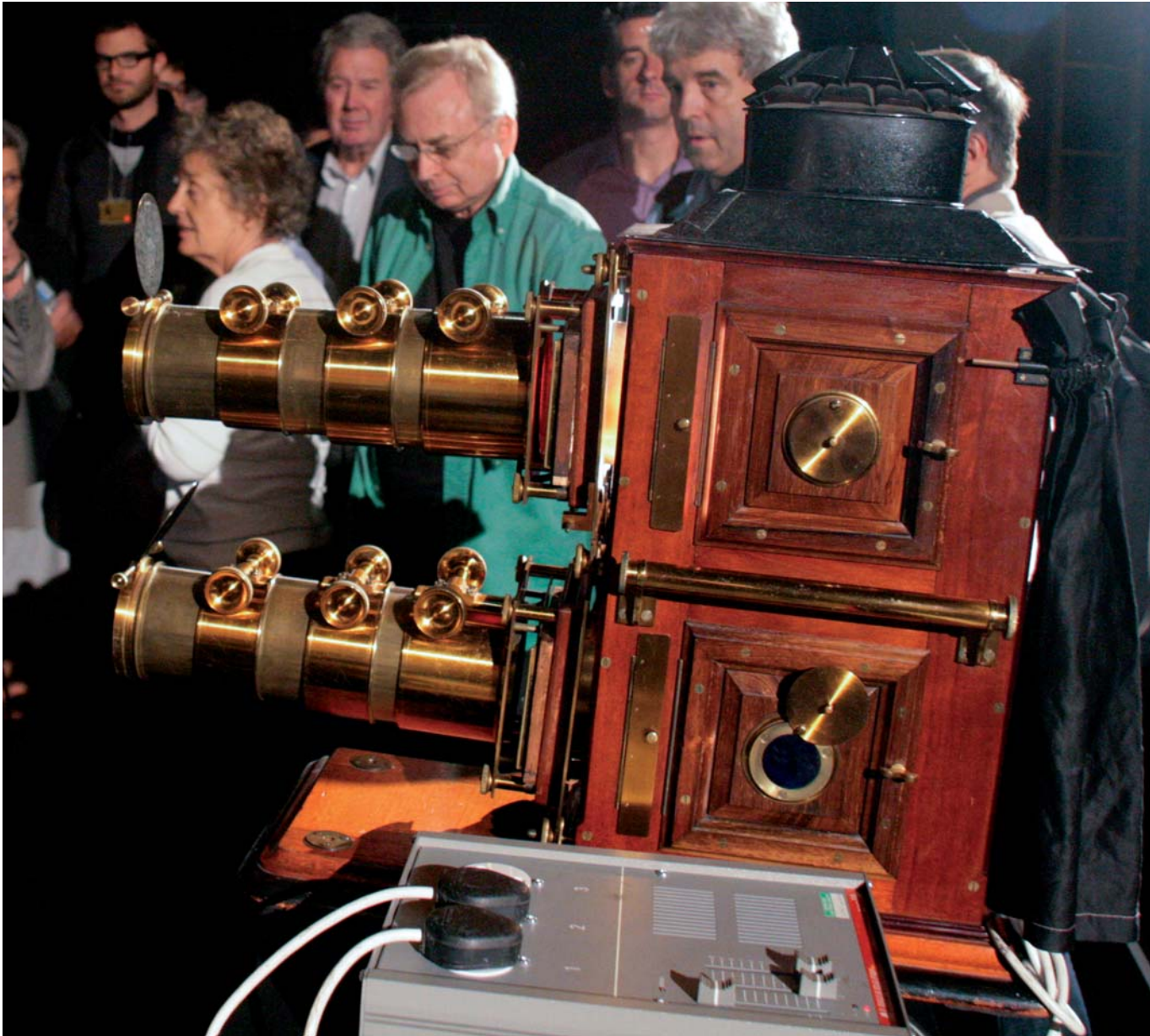


Top left
Cheerful bus ride ...

Bottom left ... to the Empire Theatre

Right Kovari with Paul Kieve

Bottom Rare projection device at the Empire Theatre





28–31 August 2013
Hamburg Heritage

The Gateway to the World—and to the Art of Magic. In the 19th century, Hamburg emerged as a central hub for the trade of illusionist apparatus, bolstered by companies such as Bartl and Willmann. The city's historic harbor and warehouse district, the Speicherstadt, still reflect the atmosphere of this golden era.

From August 28 to 31, 2013, Hamburg hosted the 5th European Magic History and Collectors Conference (EMHC), setting new standards in both content and organization. Held in the grand Mirror Hall of the Museum of Arts and Crafts, the event was curated by Wittus Witt, who also introduced the EMHC logo that has since become the visual hallmark of the series.

The conference offered 22 richly illustrated presentations, covering a broad spectrum of topics—from iconic magi-

cal objects and mechanical devices to early imagery, biographical insights, and archival discoveries. The intersection of magic with neuroscience, stagecraft, and design was also explored, revealing the diverse dimensions of magic's material and cultural history.

Highlights included William Kalush's exploration of Houdini's legacy in Germany and Denis Behr's reflections on preserving magical literature in the digital age. For the first time, an honorary guest was named: Edwin A. Dawes, a towering figure in magic history.

Each participant received a curated gift bag featuring a program book, DVD, playing cards, historical reprints, and an English-language biography of Fredo Marvelli. Complementary events—such as exhibitions, city tours, a visit to the Hansa-Theater, Galerie-W, and the "Hamburg Magic Nights"—rounded out a rich and memorable program.



Top

The lectures took place in the beautiful Mirror Hall

Left

In the foyer outside, there were opportunities to buy and sell collectible items



Top left
The reception held a bag full of surprises for each participant

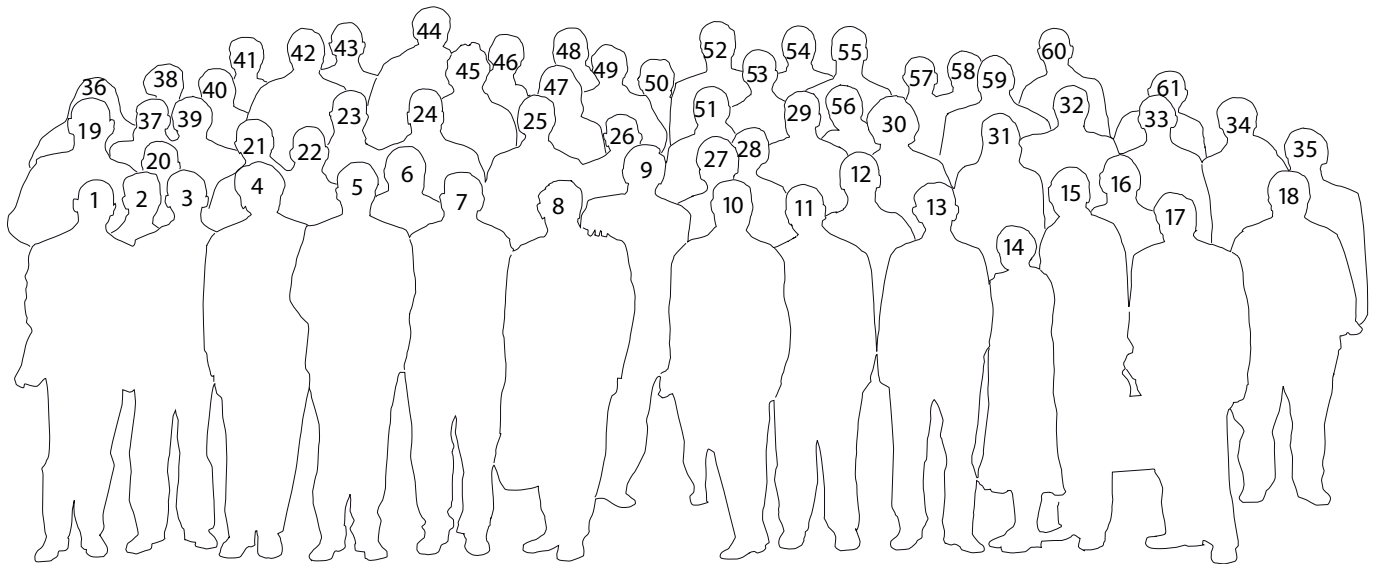
Bottom left
Wittus Witt introduces Bill Spooner

Top right
The honorary guest of the 5th EMHC:
Dr. Edwin A. Dawes

Center right
Birgit Bartl-Engelhardt, granddaughter of the famous Rosa Bartl.

Right
Historian Ann Goulden (Davenport)





In front of the entrance to the Museum of Arts and Crafts, the following have gathered

- 1.** Pietro Micheli, **2.** Peter Busch, **3.** Dr. Richard Forster, **4.** Dr. Edwin Dawes, **5.** Thomas Gundlach,
- 6.** Klaus-Dieter Hansen, **7.** Elmar Riedlinger, **8.** Kurt Freitag, **9.** Magic Christian, **10.** Wittus Witt,
- 11.** Volker Huber, **12.** Jonathan Allen, **13.** James Cuthbert, **14.** Anne Davenport, **15.** John Davenport,
- 16.** Dr. Jacques Voignier, **17.** Harp Korsen, **18.** Peter Schuster, **19.** Marko Habermann,
- 20.** James Smith, **21.** Marco Pusterla, **22.** Stefan Wöbke, **23.** Markus Kompa, **24.** Kai Stupperich,
- 25.** Dr. Christian Theiss, **26.** Paul Freeman, **27.** Dr. Helmut Schwarz, **28.** Juliane Posner, **29.** Leopold Polacek,
- 30.** Holger Steigerwald, **31.** Christina Nyman, **32.** Martin Saunders, **33.** Dr. Bill Spooner,
- 34.** François Bost, **35.** George Naudet, **36.** Lorri Kentner, **37.** Betty Davenport, **38.** Christina Huber,
- 39.** Fergus Roy, **40.** Birgit Bartl-Engelhardt, **41.** Dr. Steffen Schönstedt, **42.** Manfred Klaghofer,
- 43.** Dr. Peter Rawert, **44.** Reiner Walter, **45.** Hanno Rhomberg, **46.** Thomas Fraps,
- 47.** Gabi Rhomberg, **48.** Robert Kentner, **49.** Ronald Wohl, **50.** Pierre Mayer, **51.** Peter Benninghaus,
- 52.** Bill Kalush, **53.** Thomas Stauss, **54.** Jon Marshall, **55.** Denis Behr, **56.** Rüdiger Deutsch,
- 57.** Reiner Hahn, **58.** John Gaughan, **59.** Jan Janson, **60.** Per Eklund, **61.** François Voignier





A highlight of the 5th EMHC was a visit to Galerie-W, founded by Wittus Witt in 2012. At the time of the conference, the gallery was presenting a special exhibition featuring works by the German magician and graphic artist Walter Wenige. A custom-designed poster was created to promote the show. EMHC guests were transported in two groups at different times using chartered buses.

PPP

4–6 September 2015
Pursuit, Paris, Prestige

Ten years after the inaugural EMHC, the conference returned in 2015 to Paris—a city steeped in magical history and tradition—under the direction of Jacques Voignier. The venue was the splendid Théâtre of the Conservatoire National Supérieur d'Art Dramatique, located on the very grounds where Pinetti once performed for the court of Louis XVI.

The conference opened with Fergus Roy's presentation on Will Goldston, followed by talks on Del Ray (Bill Spooner), Sieur Comus/Pietro Micheli, historical card techniques (Bill Kalush), and the phenomenon of negative publicity in magic (Marco Pusterla). Magic Christian delved into the controversial postwar activities of Kalanag in Austria.

A true highlight was the private viewing of Bosch's painting "The Conjurer", which is rarely displayed to the public. Additional historical treasures from Parisian libraries were shared, including rare photographs of Bénita Anguinet and her magic theatre in the Bois de Boulogne.

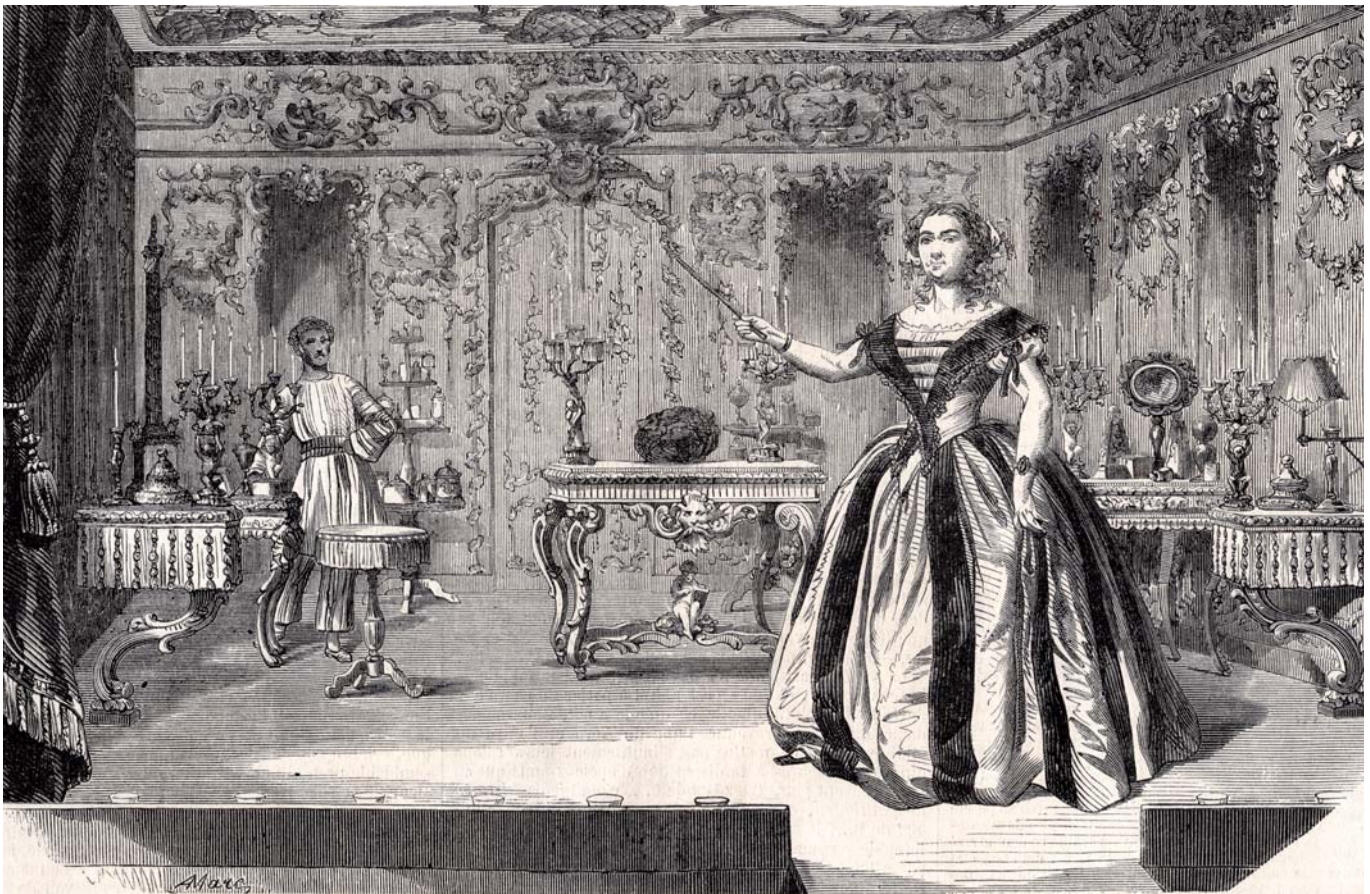
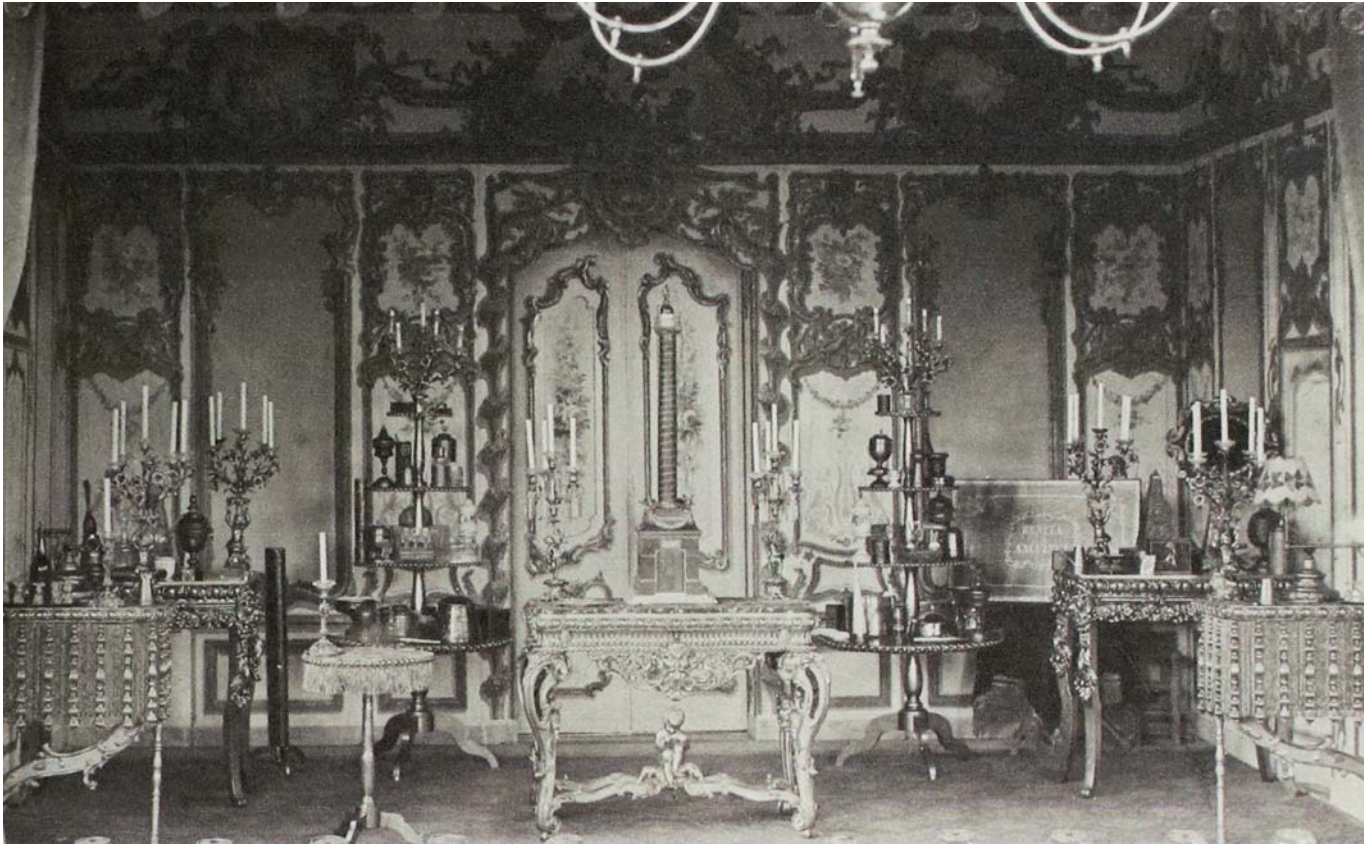
At the Musée de la Magie, Jacques and François Voignier, together with Gaëtan Bloom, showcased selected collector's items. Bloom emphasized the value of historical research as a counterbalance to the competition-driven world of modern magic.

The second day featured lectures on fairy spectacles during the reign of Louis XIV (Fanch Guillemin), the life and legacy of Buatier de Kolta (Frédéric Tabet), ethical reflections on the intersection of science and magic (Leslie Villi-aume), and the examination of spiritistic levitations (Philippe Saint-Laurent).

Further presentations explored Louis Apollinaire Comte (Jacques Voignier), Pinetti (François Bost), the magic scene during World War I (Michael Colley), the Théâtre Robert-Houdin (Pascal Friaut), and the world of French fairground theatre (François Voignier).

An emotional high point was the gala evening featuring performances by Gaëtan Bloom and Jean-Jacques Sanvert, as well as a cine-concert of Méliès films accompanied live by his great-grandson, Lawrence Lehérissey. Anne-Marie Quévrain, great-granddaughter of Méliès, was also in attendance.

A special treat was the visit to the Musée des Arts Forains, including a whirlwind ride on the antique carousel and privileged access to rarely seen archives—an experience even denied to Woody Allen during the filming of "Midnight in Paris".



Top: The photograph by the Bisson brothers showing Bénita's stage space at the Théâtre du Pré-Catelan in 1856.

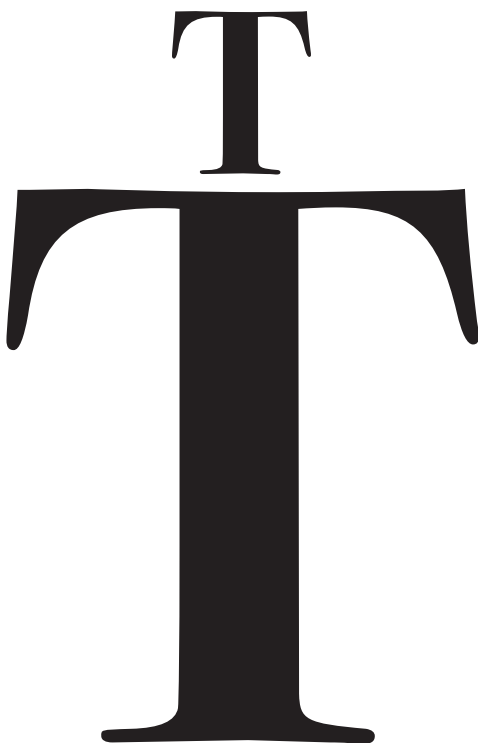
Bottom: Magic Theatre of Mlle Anginet at the Pré-Catelan





Top left
 Marco Pusterla admires the fmaBosh-
 Painting

Left and right
 Impressions from the
 Musée de la Magie



24–26 August 2017

Turin Treasures

The 7th European Magic History Conference, held in Turin, attracted nearly 100 attendees. It was one of the most engaging editions to date. Marco Pusterla, a native of Turin, curated a well-researched and balanced programme that covered a wide range of historical topics. The local magic club *Circolo Amici della Magia di Torino*, who also hosted the event in their clubhouse, ensured a seamless and hospitable experience.

A touch of glamour was added by special guests including the legendary Silvan, interviewed on stage about his early career and connection to Orson Welles, and Arturo Brachetti, who gave an insightful talk on the history of quick-change performance, which he helped elevate to a theatrical art form.

Over two days, scholars and performers delivered lectures on topics ranging from biographies of lesser-known magicians to the cultural role of magic across time and geo-

graphy. Subjects included Fredo Marvelli, Valentin Graziadei, and Emil Kio, as well as themes such as cheating devices, ancient deception, early magic literature, and the roots of iconic illusions.

Evening events included a close-up gala and a final stage performance, showcasing Italian artistry and theatricality. The programme was enriched by a visit to the Museo Nazionale del Cinema and a day trip to the Museo della Magia in Cherasco.

This edition also paid quiet tribute to two late Turinese figures—Vanni Bossi and Gianni Pasqua—both respected magicians and historians who had long supported EMHC events.

The Turin conference exemplified EMHC's ambition to be a truly European gathering with strong local ties. It struck an impressive balance between academic quality and cultural context, and introduced many new faces to the community.



Left
Marco Pusterla opens the 7th edition of EMHCC

Center
Silvan and Gabriele Gentil

Bottom
Interlude with a delightful buffet









24–26 August 2019
Vienna, Viewpoints, Variations

T

he European Magic History Conference in Vienna offered a compelling programme focused on the cultural significance of collecting and historical research in the field of magic. Far beyond hobbyism, collecting was presented as a vital method of preserving knowledge and uncovering forgotten narratives—sometimes even through chance discoveries, such as the recent reappearance of a long-lost 19th-century magician's portrait in pristine condition.

Lectures spanned topics ranging from art and literature to sociology and criminology, showing how magic intersects with many disciplines. Highlights included discussions of early illusion techniques, portrayals of magicians in fiction, and the analysis of historical performances, such as decapitation illusions and colonial magic myths.

Several contributions emphasized the importance of preserving personal collections—be they books, posters, props, or pins—as sources of insight into both performance history and cultural trends. A forthcoming bibliography of

German-language magic literature and a family chronicle of a historic magic dealership illustrated how deep research and documentation enrich our understanding of the art.

The question of sustainability in collecting was a major theme in the closing panel: What happens to collections when their owners pass away? Without clear documentation or institutional commitment, much knowledge may be lost. Digital archiving and shared curatorship were discussed as possible paths forward.

The social programme included atmospheric dinners and magic shows in historic Viennese venues, as well as a memorable reception in the City Hall, where even the council chamber briefly transformed into a close-up stage.

Vienna's EMHC edition balanced scholarly depth with cultural richness, while also opening up conversations about inclusion, tradition, and the future of preserving magic's material and immaterial heritage.



Top
Christian Theiss and Volker Huber (1941–2022) present the bibliography of German-language magic literature

Left
Magic Christian shows a unique painting of Hozinser which was lost for many years

Bottom
Formal Reception at Vienna City Hall





Smiling faces at the 9th EMHC in Vienna in front of the historic Hotel Stefanie.





24–27 August 2023
Ghent Gems

Following the 2019 event in Vienna, the next meeting was originally scheduled for 2021 in London. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was cancelled, and after a four-year pause, the conference returned—this time in Belgium.

Over the course of four days, the sold-out event (with 120 registered participants) was held at seven different venues across Ghent. The central location was Hotel Monasterium, a former monastery where all lectures were delivered in the historic Saint-Aubertinus Church. In addition, registration, the evening quiz, and the closing reception were hosted at the House of Mysteries, a roofed mirror palace in the city centre dedicated primarily to magic.

A special exhibition ran throughout the conference, with Fregoli as its central theme. Jack Cooper, who owns the largest collection related to the quick-change artist, made many rare and never-before-seen items available for display.

The magic quiz held on Friday evening was also a highlight. Teams from different countries competed to test

their knowledge of magic history. The American team, featuring John Gaughan, Charles Greene III, Steve Beam, Mike Caveney, and Jim Hagy, ultimately took first place.

Other social events included a ceremonial reception at Ghent City Hall, a barbecue in the courtyard of the Folklore Museum Huis Van Alijn, a dinner, and a scenic canal cruise through the city.

Attendees were treated to an array of performances: a unique “*Laterna Magica*” show by Ditmar Bollaert and Els Prevenier on the first evening, and a grand gala show at the Minard Theatre on the final night. For this occasion, the organizers collaborated with “*Mystery Lab*”, a non-profit dedicated to exploring the intersection of science and magic, and with the universities of Antwerp and Ghent. Their joint research into 19th-century magic history at the Minard Theatre led to the creation of the remarkable book **Magical Minard**, which was offered to all conference attendees at a symbolic price of 5 euros.

A total of 20 lectures formed the backbone of the conference program.







Paul Kieve (far right) surprises the audience with a performance by a descendant of Servais LeRoy: Abigail Carré

R

21–24 August 2025
Riga Revelations

F

or the 10th event in Riga, the following speakers were scheduled:

Anne Goulden: The Davenport Brothers and J. N. Maskelyne

Aurelio Paviato: The Asti Manuscript and demonstration of innovation contained on it

Dace Pezzoli: Tales of a Latvian travelling magician: San Martino de Kastrozza

Enrico Pezzoli: Research in Soap Bubbles & Magic from Vaudeville

Flip Hallema: Six generations of Bamberg magicians: from Eliaser to Fu Manchu

Jan Isenbart: Magic in Advertising and Advertising's Magic

Lolita Lipinska: Magicians in the Riga Circus from opening in 1888 till 1950

Lucia Raggetti: Natural Science of Magic in the Arabo-Islamic Middle age

Maciej Puławski: Pseudo-magical rituals and cures in Italian Renaissance comedies

Marco Baschetti & Marianna Marchini: Tricks & Secrets of Arabic Mediaeval Egg Magic

Mike Caveney: Dante in Hollywood

Pauliina Räsänen: Female magicians in the Northern Europe in 1880–1890's

Salvatore Rapacciuolo: Fast and Loose – The Many Incarnations of a Scam

Sara Fani & Marianna Marchini: Magic on the Tip of the Pen. Inks for Special Effects

Walter Maffe: Magic & Movies – A short story of a long relationship

Wittus Witt: History of the EMHC



Left
Dace und Enrico Pezzoli (right)

Bottom
View into the theatre



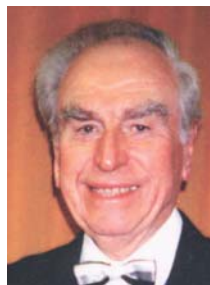
”
EACH EMHC
IS MORE THAN
JUST A
CONFERENCE;
IT IS A LIVING
ARCHIVE OF
EUROPE’S
MAGICAL
HERITAGE.
”

Over the years, the European Magic History Conference (EMHC) has become a vital forum for the study and appreciation of magic’s cultural legacy.

It unites scholarship, collecting, and international friendship—contributing significantly to the recognition of magic as a serious historical and artistic discipline.

Through passionate research, shared discoveries, and memorable lectures, these gatherings illuminate the art of conjuring not merely as entertainment, but as an enduring thread in Europe’s cultural fabric. Whether in Paris or Ghent, Vienna or London, the EMHC ensures that the wonders of the past continue to inspire the present.

**FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES WHOSE PRESENCE,
PRESENTATIONS, AND CONTRIBUTIONS ARE MISSED
AT OUR GATHERINGS**



Dr. Edwin A. Dawes
6 July 1925 –
3 March 2023



Dr. Jaques Voignier
9 Nov. 1936 –
12 June 2022



Paul Freeman
24 Nov. 1926 –
20 October 2018



Gianni Pasqua / Roxy
27 July 1946 –
23 July 2011



Rüdiger Deutsch
28 March 1941 –
19. May 2015



Volker Huber
4 Febr. 1941 –
1 December 2022

A RESPECTFUL BOW TO ALL THE SPEAKERS

Below is a complete list of all speakers at the European Magic History Conference (EMHC), sorted alphabetically by name and then chronologically by year. The list has been compiled to the best of my knowledge and based on my personal records.

If anyone has been inadvertently omitted, I sincerely ask for your understanding—it was not intentional. In any case, the list reflects the rich diversity of interests and topics that were addressed during the conferences.

Since the list is relatively concise, I chose not to sort the names alphabetically by surname, but rather to present them in the way people commonly address each other within the community.

May this list also serve as a helpful overview of the topics covered—both as a starting point for further research and as a means to avoid possible duplication of subjects in the future.

- Aldo Ghiurmino (2017): The Origins of FISM
 Andreas Ban (2009): Goethes Magic Box
 Anne Davenport (2013): Maskelyne & Cooke – The early years
 Anne Goulden (2017): Maskelyne
 Anne Goulden (2019): Lewis Davenport travels Europe
- Bernhard Schmitz (2019): Ex-Libris
 Bill Palmer (2007): Cups and Balls
 Bill Spooner (2011): Inexhaustible vessels
 Bill Spooner (2013): A Study of Conjuring Wands
 Bill Spooner (2015): The best magic effects of Del Ray
 Birgit Bartl-Engelhardt (2013): Bartl and the British Connection
 Brigitte Felderer (2009): Decaptions
- Charles Greene (2011): Who was Ionia?
 Charles Greene (2023): Ionia
 Christian Theiss (2019): Bibliographies on Magic Books
- Daniel Rhod (2005): Cardsharpening in France
 Daniel Rhod (2011): Cardsharpening in France
 David Paton-Williams (2009): Katterfelto: Prince of Puff
 Denis Behr (2013): Archiving Miracles
- Edwin Dawes (2013): The Eighteenth Century Bestseller
 Enrico Pezzoli (2023): Magic Theatre and Museum Mystero
- Fanch Guillemain (2015): White magic and theatrical 'féeries' under Louis XIV
 Fergus Roy (2013): The Birth of a Magic Kingdom
 Fergus Roy (2015): Will Goldston, The Man and the Legend
 Fergus Roy (2023): Murray
 Flip Hallema (2011): Gastro Magic
 Flip Hallema (2013): International prize-winning magicians from Holland
 Flip Hallema (2017): Iconography of the Trickster
 Flip Hallema (2019): Off with his head
 Frank Debouck (2005): Antoine de Saint-Exupéry – Inventor and magician
 François Bost (2011): New revelations about G. Pinetti
 François Bost (2015): Giuseppe Pinetti in Paris
 François Bost (2019): New Revelations on Robert-Houdin
 François Bost (2023): J.-E. Robert-Houdin
 François Voignier (2015): The Golden Age of fairground theatres (1880–1914)
 Frederic Tabet (2023): Magicians a. Photography
 Frédéric Tabet (2015): Buatier de Kolta, the first Illusionist?
- G. D. Lötsch (2009): Magic and Science
 George Naudet (2005): The Conjurer in the 19th Century Imagery
 George Naudet (2023): Robert-Houdins unknown Posters
 Gianfranco Preverino (2015): Gambling techniques in 18th Century
 Gianfranco Preverino (2017): Gambling Techniques in the 19th Century
- H. Holzhey (2009): Magic Lantern
 Hanno Rhomberg (2019): Joseph Fröhlich
- Helmut Schwarz (2013): Magic Toys – C. Baudenbacher of Nuremberg
 Hr. Augustat (2009): The Hermann Collection
- Ian Keable (2019): Charles Dickens
 Ian Keable (2023): Cups a. Balls and Shell Game
- Jack Cooper (2023): Leopold Fregolio
 Jacques Voignier (2005): False Automata for Magical and Theatrical Purposes
 Jacques Voignier (2011): Magic Dealers in France prior Robert-Houdin
 Jacques Voignier (2013): Old French Magic Pamphlets
 Jacques Voignier (2015): The Comte's Theatre and the Theatre of young pupils (1788–1859)
 Jacques Voignier (2017): Charles de Vere
 James Hagy (2019): Fair Tricks
 James Hagy (2023): Magicians in Cleveland
 James Smith (2017): English Conjuring Books of the 18th Century
 Jan Isenbart (2019): Magician at War
 John & Anne Davenport (2011): The Maskelynes
 John Gaughan (2005): History of Robert-Houdin's Trapeze Automaton „Diavolo“
 Jonathan Allan (2009): Magic a. Contemporary Art
- Kay Talmi (2007): Turn your library into PDFs
 Kenneth Trombly (2011): Collecting the 'H's'
 Kobe van Herwegen (2023): J. Lambert Pickman
- Leslie Villiaume (2015): Conjuring and spectaclisation of science during the 19th Century
 Lo Nigro (2017): Robert-Houdin clock
- Magic Christian (2009): The Great Com. Hermann
 Magic Christian (2009): Hofzinsler
 Magic Christian (2013): Magic company Klingl
 Magic Christian (2015): Kalanag and his position in the nazi-time specially related to Austria
 Magic Christian (2017): Valentino Graziadei: King of Cards
 Marco Pusterla (2015): Worst magician in History
 Marco Pusterla (2019): Music-Hally Yours
 Matthew Field (2011): Karl Fulves
 Max Edelbacher (2019): Swindlers and Cheaters in Vienna
 Michael Colley (2013): The Young Magicians – The History of a Competition
 Mike Caveney (2023): A Century of the Sawing a Woman in Half Illusion
- Olivier Cave (2017): History of Gaffed Gambling Devices
- Pascal Friaut (2015): The stage illusions of George Meliès at the Theatre Robert-Houdin
 Paul Anthony (2017): Supreme Magic
 Paul Freeman (2007): Adalbert Frikell – His life at times in England
 Paul Freeman (2009): Names to conjure with
 Paul Freeman (2013): The Iconic Magician's Assistant
 Paul Freeman (2017): Chevalier Ernest Thorn
 Paul Kieve (2011): Legendary Magicians at the Hackney Empire
 Paul Kieve (2023): Servais Le Roy
 Peter Busch (2013): Walter Wenger – Illustrator, Designer, and Magician
 Peter Lane (2011): Professor Anderson
 Peter Rawert (2007): Magic in the Age of Enlightenment
- Peter Rawert (2013): The Spirits that I Called
 Peter Rawert (2019): Conjuring Books and Provenance Research
 Pierre Albanese (2005): The Funfair Parade – Magic Lantern Show
 Pierre Taillefer (2009): New texts from East and West before 1584
 Pierre Taillefer (2011): Conjuring Arts in the Islam Middle Ages
 Pierre Taillefer (2023): Magicians and Photography
 Pietro Micheli (2013): New revelations on the 18th century conjurer Tomaso Palatino
 Pietro Micheli (2015): Nicolas Philippe Ledru alias Camus
 Pietro Micheli (2017): They Lived By Tricks
- Rafael (2023): Ali Bongo
 Raffaele De Ritis (2017): Kio
 Reinhard Müller (2019): The mystery Court Call
 Riccardo Rampini (2017): Hieronymus Scottus
 Ron Bertolla (2019): Ioni – From Google to the eighth wonder of the world
 Roxy (2005): Rare Tricks of Magic performed in Middle Ages
 Rüdiger Deutsch (2007): Reproductions of Horster Apparatus
 Rüdiger Deutsch (2013): The Invisible Help
- Stefan Alexander Rautenberg (2009) Hofzinsler: The Word
 Steffen Taut (2007): Papyrus Westcar–Magic, Tricks, and Show Business
 Steffen Taut (2013): A Sensational Find: Trick Sword of the late 1st / 2nd Century AD
 Steffen Taut (2017): Deception and Tricks in Ancient Religion and Belief Systems
 Steffen Taut (2019): News about Bosch's Juggler
 Steffen Taut (2023): Westcar Papyrus
 Stéfane Laurrens (2011): New Magic Paintings from the 14th to 20th Century
- Thomas Fraps (2013): The Science of Magic – 100 Years and None the Wiser
- Valeria E. Russo (2017): Orson Welles
 Vanessa Toulmin (2011): Edwardian Film a. Magic
 Volker Huber (2005): Emile and the development of the Learned Swan
 Volker Huber (2007): Horster the Author
 Volker Huber & R. Deutsch (2011): The Billard Ball Stand
 Volker Huber (2013): Magic Automaton
 Véronique Faber (2007): The great Alex Weyer
- Waldemar Horster (2007): Conradi Horster
 William Kalush (2009): From old magic books
 William Kalush (2013): Harry Houdini in Germany
 William Kalush (2015): Early Card Magic
 Wittus Witt (2011): Magic Periodicals
 Wittus Witt (2017): Fredo Marvell
 Wittus Witt (2019): Magic Pins

A BIG THANK YOU

And last but not least, a heartfelt thank you to all the organizers of the EMHC events. They undertake this work not for commercial gain, but out of a genuine love for the art of magic. Isn't that a wonderful thing?

EUROPEAN MAGIC HISTORY CONFERENCE

2025



European Magic History Conference

**10th
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Riga, Latvia

21-24 AUGUST 2025

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