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Film Clips

By Derek Zemrak



Timothy James Photo provided

Lamorinda On May 20 at the Rheem Theatre, get ready for a night of unbelievable sleight of hand, hilarious audience interaction, and a grand finale that will amaze you! It's fun for the whole family when illusionist Timothy James takes center stage accompanied by pianist Patti Leidecker.

I had the opportunity to interview him this week.

Derek Zemrak: When did you start doing magic?

Timothy James: I can't think of a time when I wasn't doing magic. I grew up in a neighborhood where there weren't any other kids my age. I also struggled with asthma and allergies, so going outside wasn't always an option. I had to keep myself busy with other things and magic tricks seemed to stick. I read every magic book the library had to offer. I still have a few of them.

By the time I was in high school, I realized I was good enough that people would actually pay me to do magic. I was the first person in my small circle of friends to have a job. A job that quickly turned into a career.

DZ: What can the Rheem attendees expect to see on May 20?

TJ: Hard to say without giving away the surprise, but you can expect a lot of audience interaction, comedy and magic. I have a lot of surprises for everyone, including people who have seen my act before. It's going to be a fun night.

DZ: Is the show on May 20 at the Rheem Theatre appropriate for kids?

TJ: Yes. I always lean toward a family-friendly show. It comes down to the audience. If it's mostly families, I'll do a family show. If it's mostly adults, I'll do something with a bit of an edge. I have a lot of material to draw from, so I can customize the show to suit the crowd. Whatever I think is appropriate for the audience.

DZ: You are an amazing illusionist. What is the difference between an illusionist and a magician?

TJ: About \$10,000 a show.

The title is more of a personal preference. When people think of a magician, the first thought is often a guy in a top hat with a rabbit. That's not me. When I call myself an illusionist, people know what it means, but they aren't entirely certain what to expect. It makes them curious.

DZ: You have had the opportunity to perform all over the country. Please tell the Lamorinda Weekly readers about your most memorable show.

TJ: I was working at the Magic Castle in Hollywood, on the main stage, "The Palace of Mystery." I was booked for the week. Three shows a night, and having a blast. In the act I was doing, I needed one volunteer to come on stage to participate. Picking people on the fly is difficult. You want someone who looks like they're having fun...but not too much fun. With the spotlights in my eyes, I could only make out one figure near the front of the audience, a woman who looked like she was enjoying herself. I invited her up. Up the stairs she came.

The audience at this point was laughing, and I wasn't sure why. There was some applause for the volunteer, that's not unusual, but the laughter told me that something was up. As she approached the center of the stage, I immediately recognized her as Geena Davis. Yes! Oscar winner Geena Davis. And I had just watched "The Long Kiss Goodnight" a few days earlier.

There was no time to be star struck, I went on with the act, saying the next line the way I always say it: "And your name is?"

Laughter.

"Geena."

"Nice to meet you, Geena." And I continued with the act. She was a great participant. She could have easily played things up and the act could have gone off the rails, but she was there to see magic and have fun. She was great!

Don't miss this amazing unique event for the entire family at the Rheem Theatre at 7 p.m. Saturday, May 20. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$10 for 18 and under. Tickets can be purchased at the Rheem Theatre box-office or online at www.lamorindatheatres.com

You will be amazed at the talent of Timothy James!

The show is sponsored by the Moraga Community Foundation a philanthropic organization that works with the community

to build a vibrant future for Moraga. The

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[back](#)

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