

"adrenaline" RUSH

Curtis Adams Knows That Magic Rocks

By Megan Riggs

To call Curtis Adams high-energy would not do him justice. To call his show, "Adrenaline: Magic That Rocks," at the Plaza just a magic show, would only add insult to injury. Every night at the downtown hotel-casino the young magician puts on a rockin' extravaganza with big illusions, loud music, comic capers and Adams' fun-filled, infectious personality that spreads throughout the audience.

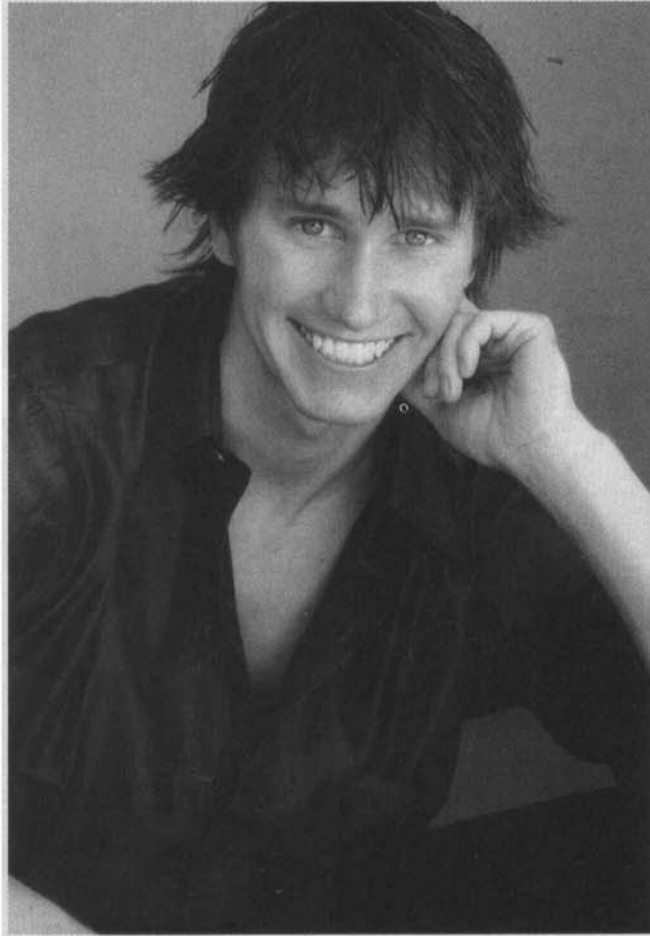
When he was 7 years old, Adams developed an interest in magic when he first saw David Copperfield. But his passion for entertaining, he told *What's On*, began at the tender age of 5 when Adams micmicked the moves of MTV artists such as Janet Jackson. During the annual holiday boat parade in Adams' hometown of Long Beach, Calif., the young boy began dancing on the dock à la Jackson, causing the passenger-filled deep sea fishing boats touring the harbor to stop and watch. At the end of Adams' performance, he would hear a huge round of applause.

"That was my first experience with entertainment," he said, adding that when he saw Copperfield receive thunderous applause, "I remembered the feeling I got when I was 5 and thought, 'Wow, I want to do that.' I was bit by the magic bug. I got a magic kit the next day and the rest is history."

Once Adams had discovered his life's passion, he began doing close-up magic, working at birthday parties and performing strolling magic in restaurants. He wanted to move onto larger illusions. His big break came at 17 on the TV program "Lance Burton's Young Magician's Showcase." Adams was handpicked by the Monte Carlo magician from a pool of young magicians who had responded to ads in newspapers around the country.

"He picked a handful of different ages, and they all did something different—close-up magic, comedy...I represented the greatest young illusionist," Adams said. "Through that, I bonded with him. He's done a lot for magic. He's an amazing man."

Burton told *What's On* that Adams is "a fine magician....I wish him luck with his new show and hope that being one of the many young magicians was an inspiration to make it this far in his magic career."



Adams spends the majority of his time at work, where he puts his own spin on the art of magic.

"I want to be different—go where a magician hasn't gone before. It's been done a certain way for a long time," he said.

Adams explained that some of that difference is simply by changing the way a magician walks and talks on stage. Or by combining his love of rock music with his love of magic.

"The ones who survive are the ones who continue to change...like Madonna and Aerosmith. They find a way to reinvent themselves whereas we reinvent magic," Adams explained.

"Adrenaline" gives the "typical magic show" a rock concert feel.

"We've got everything from romance to rowdiness," Adams said. "I take a sledgehammer to a sports car. The whole audience gets rowdy with me. That usually happens at concerts but not at magic shows."

He also plays chicken with the audience. During one trick he has an audience member hold a cherry bomb in his hand and Adams lights it and places his hand atop the volunteer's.

"I've had macho guys say, 'I'm not doing this,' and chicken out," he said. "Then, there's a surprise ending. It puts the audience in a different position."

For Adams, bonding with the audience is vital.

"The interaction is my favorite part—getting on the same level with them and inviting them into your world," he said.

Adams describes the show as a mixture of comedy, dance and audience participation.

"I want to make it cool to go to a magic show," he said.

And how will magic become cool?

"I think it's updating what magic is, how it's perceived and how it's performed," Adams said. "What I would like to do is up the bar. For the next guy who comes along, it will take twice as much to get there." ❑

SHOW TIME: 7 p.m., Tue.-Sun. (dark Mon.)

SHOWROOM: Plaza Showroom

SHOW PRICE: \$25, 702-386-2444