

Magic at the NAC

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hen I was a kid, my cousin Mike always had one of those magic trick kits, and we used to put on magic and music shows for my Granny and Granda. We'd stand on a "stage" by the fireplace mantle, I'd sing and Michael would do a trick or two. I loved those performances, and the enthusiastic response of my clapping grandparents.

I thought of those days a few times at last night's [Mysterioso](#) show at the National Arts Centre. These old-style posters hanging over the stage set the perfect mood for the night — old school magic, excellent music and a few fun twists.



As I mentioned, we were lucky to receive a complimentary pair of tickets for the show, which conveniently happened to fall on the 15th anniversary of the night Beloved and I met. It was a great way to celebrate, and for a few hours it was nice to get out and be the 'us' that used to go to wonderful places like the NAC regularly, before the kids kept us home!

There were different types of illusionists featured through the evening. Illusionist [Joseph Gabriel](#) worked old-skool magic with a dozen doves, a series of illusions made even more impressive when we found out later that Gabriel's own doves weren't allowed to cross the border, so he had to work with borrowed local birds! "Les" and his daughter "Dazzle" put a funny spin (you'd recognize the pun if you'd seen the show!) on the lady-in-the-box disappearing act with their comedic magic act. But the act that dropped jaws throughout the theatre was the quick-change duo of [David and Dania](#). You might have seen them on America's Got Talent a couple of years ago.

Beloved couldn't stop talking about the incredible singing voice of Christina Bianco and her charming musical impressions. He said the real magic was how such a tiny little toy piano of a girl had pipes like a church organ! The core of the night's entertainment, though, was this: Maestro Jack Everly and the NAC Orchestra.



As if that weren't enough of a treat, the small group of bloggers that had been invited to the show were then treated to a special after-show audience with magician Joseph Gabriel and Maestro Everly. They chatted easily with us, and provided a little inside information on what it's like to mount a production like *Mysterioso*. For example, it took nearly five months to do a reverse transcription of the music for the show: the magicians usually work from carefully timed and coordinated prerecorded tapes, and it took months to recreate those into an orchestral score. And even though there were two full rehearsals for the orchestra yesterday, the musicians only saw the actual magic acts as they were unfolding live on the stage. How cool is that? Mr Everly said it's a testament to the orchestra's professionalism that they could continue to play with the magic show unfolding for the first time in front of them!

Someone asked Joseph Gabriel what launched him down a career path as an illusionist, and he said it was a book he read in the library when he was nine years old. As mom to a curious-minded 8 year old, this made me smile. As a matter of fact, magic kits have always been a favourite gift of mine to give to boys of that age, largely inspired by those long-ago magic shows Mike and I used to perform.

And I haven't even told you about all the fun bloggy peeps who were there: [Suze](#) and [Katharine](#) and [Andrea](#) and [Lana](#) and [Julie](#)... and apparently [Anna](#) and [Shannon](#) were there, too!

It was a terrific night in a thousand fun little ways. Special thanks to the NAC for putting on a great show, and for making a special night out for local bloggers. When I asked Jack Everly if he liked playing on the stage at the NAC, he enthused about the wonderful acoustics, and we agreed how lucky we are to have this treasure in Ottawa. The NAC truly is a local treasure — have you been lately?