

SUNDAY, JULY 30, 2006

Who is Hambujer?

No not Hamburgler or Hamburger or Humbugger, as my spell check suggests.

Bart Whaley's Who's Who in magic lists one magician by the name, Hambujer.

Hambujer

(Denmark [sic]: 1848-1924) Pro sleight-of-hand. Played Dublin (1859) & Boston (1860)

Of course, if we do the math, born in 1848, played Dublin in 1859; he would have been age eleven and twelve in Boston. This is not unheard of, but unusual. What makes things more unusual is a second (?) Hambujer in New York, Chicago, and Detroit. Not that is unusual that a magician would use another's name or is it the same person and the birth date was recorded wrong. Here is the knot.

(The *New York Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and an unnamed Milwaukee paper are referenced and partially quoted.)

April 1862, New York—Mons. Hambujer and a Madam Hambujer play a benefit at the end of their run. (Married at thirteen?)

July 1862, Chicago—*Hambujer, the wonderful East Indian Magician, commences a series of his entertainments this Monday evening at Bryan Hall. The Detroit Advertiser says of him: "This celebrated magician, who is generally admitted to have no superior, opened last evening in Fireman's Hall. The audience was large, and the dexterous operator received rounds of applause. Hambujer's illusions defy all detection, while they are performed with such rapidity that the audience is kept in a continual furore of excitement. We have never seen his superior as a "prestidigitatuer," and very few, if any, equals has he on this continent. His exhibition of Indian magnetism is decidedly interesting, and the influence, which he exercises upon the subjects, is truly marvelous. Mr. Hambujer has exhibited in all the principal cities of the Union, and carries with him the unanimous approval of the press and people as a talented wizard."*

July 14, 1862—*Hambujer, who has been engaged during the past week in performing his wonderful sleight of hand tricks at Bryan Hall, is now arranging for the performance of two feats which have never before been performed in this country, and which appear almost*

incredible, smacking more of Arabian Nights supernaturalism than latter day realities. Hitherto, Hambujer's feats have been those often witnessed here, excepting that, they are done in this instance without the usual appurtenances of the magician's repertoire. These new feats are restoring the dead to life and suspending a boy in the air by a single hair of his head from a floating ball.

The first feat is well known in India. It consists of placing a boy in a basket, thrusting a sword through the basket and drawing out again covered with blood. The boy's body is examined by physicians and then returned to the basket. A pistol is discharged into the basket; the boy vanishes, and re-appears alive and well.

The ball feat consists in suspending a boy by a single hair to a rubber ball filled with a chemical mixture by which he floats gracefully in the air at the Professor's bidding.

It is reported a day later that Hambujer learned these tricks while serving in the military in India, of which we can assume that he was a European performing "Indian" mysteries. The Tribune also reported that his two big draws previously described did not live up to expectations.

The next city Hambujer visited was Milwaukee, WI, but after that, any other current searches have not picked up his trail.

Is he a past master or a pretender with great promo?

If you know any more about him, please write.