

***Ex Libris* by Joaquin Ayala, Ph.D.**

Hello folks and welcome to the Ex Libris article for February, 2017! This month has been a month of making many new connections, connections with people, events, ideas, memories and more. This led me to think of a classic of magic and my personal favorite magic effect, the link to my interest in the art of magic. Yes, the Chinese Linking Rings. This month I will focus on a book and a pamphlet. The book is called ***The Real Secrets of the Chinese Linking Rings*** by **Pete Biro** and the pamphlet is called ***Lord and Master of the Rings*** by **Jim Cellini**.

When Pete wrote his book it was quite literally the work of a lifetime of study, learning and performance, and a book of this particular type on the linking rings was long overdue. The book starts off by talking about the known origins of the effect, amply illustrated by many of the earliest known depictions of it being performed.

The book goes on to include *many* of the now-standard classic as well as some novel routines for the linking rings. Examples of each include the ***Okito Ring Routine***, the ***Symphony of the Rings*** by **Dai Vernon**, the ***Al Koran Three Ring Routine***, the ***George Blake Perverse Ring Routine*** and modern interpretations of the plot, including the ***Comedy Linking Toilet Seats*** (yes, toilet seats!). Besides the many routines that are detail with full descriptions, visual aids and diagrams, there are many different techniques you will learn that are necessary for performing this classic effect.

There are many hints, tips, gags, tricks and ideas for using with the rings, as well as sections that cover the ***Linking Ropes***, ***Linking "Things"*** (like balloons, keys, etc.), the ***Linking Finger Rings*** and even a story about the ***Linking Coat Hangers***. It includes the Odin book reprinted in full, which includes not only his famous routine but also his equally famous count used to display the rings. There is a section of conversations with luminaries such as **Paul Daniels**, **Leven** and **Robert Harbin** about the rings, the methodologies, the ring size variations and much more. Also included is an excellent (but by no means complete) list of references and resources on/for the linking rings from the venerable **Etienne Lorenceau**.

As magicians we often talk about simplifying our magic to make it more "pure". There are as many ways to do this as there are magic effects and they all differ depending on the props, the performer, the genre, etc. With his ***Lord and Master of the Rings***, **Jim Cellini** did exactly that with the linking rings by using *just two*. Many people would argue that it is *too simple*, that no matter how well you hide the method, people would guess at one and they would be correct.

That aside, the Cellini routine is one of the most beautiful ring routines you will ever watch and it is most certainly (at the very least) a great exercise in thinking outside the box, especially where simplifying your magic is concerned. Moreover, this booklet is presented (and was

intended) not as a complete routine, but rather a series of different ways to visually link and unlink a pair of rings, many of them silent in nature. It is up to you to choose the ones that you like and put them into your own sequence, whether that is a two ring routine or a part of an 8-ring routine.

A DVD was released by Kozmo Magic back in the early 2000s titled ***The Lord and Master of The Rings***. Cellini performed a routine with just two rings and went on to explain the various moves and techniques seen in the booklet. It is a thing of pure beauty to watch and you can see a performance of this on YouTube, or you can find the DVD at www.kozmomagic.com.

That is all for this month folks and until next time, keep the magic alive!

-JMA