

SEEING STARS

By POLLY VAN RAALTE Photos by Polly Van Raalte

Unlimited Five Towns talent



Eric Wilzig

Magic up his sleeve.

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By ANDREW COHEN

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performances.

Wilzig, a 15-year-old freshman at the Hebrew Academy of Five Towns and Rockaway High School, has assembled quite a following from his magician craft, performing over 100 shows at camps, schools, synagogues and other venues. The high school freshman has also entertained older audiences with shows at the Woodmere Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center, the Atria of Kew Gardens, Queens and performances on the Royal Caribbean cruise ship along with private parties.

Wilzig specializes in animal magic and has eight pets at home - including two rabbits, three birds, two hamsters and a fish - that he

whiz at big-stage illusions and escapes. He recreates famed early 20th century magician Harry Houdini's tricks like the Melt-Thru Ring Illusion, the straitjacket escape and the Diamond Steel-Plated Box of Death. Wilzig said the most satisfaction he gets out of performing magic tricks is seeing his attentive audience having fun and being entertained.

While he focuses per-
c, he also watches his
crowd closely to make sure they're having
fun. "I want them all to have a good time,"
he said.

Wilzig is always looking for new audiences to entertain and encourages people interested to check out his website www.extrememagicoferic.com.

Being only a freshman in high school, it's too early for Wilzig to determine if magic is a career worth pursuing, but he wants to continue practicing and learning the craft.

As for the dreams of becoming a major magic act on the

Nassau

HERALD



Mental Stealth: The Extreme Magic Of Eric Wilzig

BY ROCHELLE MARUCH MILLER

Hide your thoughts when Eric Wilzig takes center stage! Eric's high-energy personality as a performer, along with a diverse mix of never-before-seen-or-performed large stage illusions, daring heart-racing escapes, and mind-blowing stunts, make his award-winning show, The Extreme Magic of Eric Wilzig, a truly unique experience.

In this exclusive interview with the STT, Eric, a recent graduate of HAFTR High, discusses growing up in the Five Towns; his unique award-winning magic show; meeting and working alongside legends—some of whom he is already being compared to; the universal language of magic; performing for chesed, business, and living your dream.

RM: Tell us about yourself, Eric.

EW: First and foremost, I love being a magician and entertainer. While I enjoy playing sports and going out with friends, much of my free time is devoted to practicing and honing my skills as a magician. I attend magic conventions whenever I can and I belong to several magic soc-

and the legend I've studied meticulously is Houdini (whose real name is Erich Weiss—same first name and initials as mine!) and have performed many of his daring stunts and illusions in my live show. The fact that I have learned from so many different professionals in this field

agers and so much more.

RM: How do you utilize your talent for the greater good?

EW: What makes me want to do magic is the fact that I can entertain people and put a smile on everyone's face (along with a perplexed look!). When I

gion your audience is, or even what language they speak, magic is something that they still understand and are fascinated and amazed by.

RM: When did you first perform in front of an audience?

EW: When I was only 10 years old, I

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Continued on Page 94

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he presents a medley of illusions, escapes, stunts, and visual effects.

[illegible]

Having performed at places like the Tropicana Casino and Resort as well as Caesars Atlantic City in New Jersey, Wilzig is only doing what has come naturally to him since he was 5 years old.

The Heir to Houdini

The Heir to Houdini

Sophomore Eric Wildgust got his start in magic at the age of 5 while lying in a hospital bed recuperating from a nearly fatal bout of pneumonia. To cheer him up, his father brought him a coin magic kit. Wildgust was hooked. "To this day," he says, "I still have that coin trick."

...he says, "I still have that coin trick." While was hooked on magic and illusion from his hero, Harry Houdini, Wilgus performed since

energy show billed as "The Extreme Magic of Eric." While handcuffed,

The Heir to Houdini

"extreme" brand of magic

"modern, unique twist on cutting a lady in half." He swallows some blades. And he catches a paint ball traveling at 200 miles per hour in his mouth.

"A lot of magic," says Wildg, who is majoring in marketing and finance at Rutgers Business School-Newark and New Brunswick, "comes from the inspiration of what others do—not copying it but taking an idea and making it my own."

By age 15, Wilzig had appeared on television's *American Got Talent* and has since performed at the Center in Manhattan, in a talent show on the New York City 100 show.

"modern, unique twist
on cutting a lady in
half."

CARD SHARE: *Sophomore Eric Wofford, the young man behind "The Estrogen Magic of Eric," which has garnered appearances in Atlantic City, has been up in his old tricks since he was 5.*

school in Atlantic City at the Times Square Art Center in Manhattan, in New York and New Jersey. Although he is studying business in Las Vegas, he has since performed 300 shows.

Making magic cool again

Eric Wilzig's extreme illusions wows audiences

By JEFF BESSEN

From being fascinated with live magic shows at the age of 5 to having the same initials as one of the most famous illusionists of all time, Woodmere native Eric Wilzig has pulled off one of life's neat tricks: doing what he loves.

With his "Extreme Magic of Eric" show, Wilzig, 18, currently a freshman at Rutgers University has created what he calls "an extraordinarily different type of magic show for both kids and adults."

Wilzig, a graduate of the Hebrew Academy of the Five Towns and Rockaway, has performed more than 200 shows at camps, schools and hotels, television and even in Times Square, since he began performing for audiences about six years ago.

Aboard a cruise, Wilzig, then 13, won the top prize after competing against many adults in a talent show. "At this young age I

It takes what Wilzig called "years" to create a routine and months for him to perfect it. And though he uses female assistant for many of his shows he loves the most dangerous illusions are the ones he likes best.

Three of his favorites include the award winning "Diamond-plated Steel Box of Escape ... of Death," an original trick of

is shot from a paintball gun fired by a random volunteer and swallowing six sharp razor blades and spitting them out tied onto a thread. Another Houdini-like trick, but he used needles.

"From the time I started performing on stage my goal was to make magic cool again," Wilzig said. "To take away people's perception of magicians being old men in tuxedos pulling down from a scroll."

His performance at Long Ridge Camp in Stamford, Conn., had everyone for days talking about and trying to figure out how Wilzig did what he did, said Geoff Alawinger, the camp's director.



Courtesy Eric Wilzig

WOODMERE NATIVE ERIC WILZIG has created an award winning magic trick and unique niche as a teenage extreme

his skills surpass

his age

performers many times

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"From the time I started performing on stage my goal was to make magic cool again."

ERIC WILZIG
Extreme Illusionist

performers many times his age

"an

extraordinarily different type of magic show for both kids and adults."

Thriving in the challenge of creating unique illusions and designing props that other magicians don't have to want keeps Wilzig energized, along with the extreme tricks he chooses to perform.

the son of a Manhattan-based Tannen's, a shop catering to magicians. E.W. were also the initials of Harry Houdini, whose real name was Erich Weiss.

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E.W. were also

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

He's Got Talent

He's Got Talent

Coming off a distinguished and an extremely successful summer tour, the award winning "Extreme Magic of Eric" show is ready for an all new

recently performed live for NBC's TV hit "America's Got Talent," receiving rave reviews by the celebrity

judges and host Nick Cannon who said, "Eric, that was amazing! How did you do that?"

15,000 people. He was also awarded the 2009 Senior Stage Magician of the Year by the prestigious Tannen's Magic Organization. The best was left for last as this celebrated illusionist concluded his summer outings with a live, sold out performance at a Manhattan theater in Times Square.

You can witness Eric's amazing show yourself on Thursday, Oct. 8, at 6:45 p.m. at the

Courtesy Extreme Magic of Eric

"From the time I started performing on stage my goal was to make magic cool again."

ERIC WILZIG
Extreme Illusionist

THE DAILY TARGUM

SERVING THE RUTGERS COMMUNITY SINCE 1925



Today: Sunny

BOUNCE-BACK ARTISTS

The Rutgers wrestling team set a school record with its 21st consecutive win, bouncing back from last week's loss.

a diverse mix of stage illusions.

show magical talent at NY performance

—PERSON OF THE WEEK—

BY AMY ROWE
ASSOCIATE NEWS EDITOR

University student and magician Eric Wilzig trades business by day and performs illusions by night.

The 18-year-old Rutgers Business School first-year student handles promotional materials and the marketing end of his brother's magic show, "Extreme Magic of Eric," while also demonstrating a diverse mix of stage illusions.

"My high-energy personality as a performer, along with a diverse mix of never-before-seen or performed large stage illusions, daring escapes and mind-blowing stunts, makes my award-winning show a truly unique experience," Wilzig said.



ERIC WILZIG



A state court ruled that the Board of Governors did not violate the First Amendment at a 2002 meeting in Winants Hall on the College Avenue campus.

NOW YOU SEE HIM ...

At SULAM-U's Five Towns Got Talent fundraiser at the Sephardic Temple on March 9, illusionist Eric Wilzig prepared for a trick with the help of his assistant Lizzy. The event raised \$25,000. Wilzig was the second runner-up. *More photos, page 17.*

Deborah Ben-Zion/Peris

award-winning show a truly unique experience

"The Diamondhead show has been a huge success. 'Heavenly' is one of Wilzig's favorites from his repertoire," Harry Hunkler said.

"I'm handicapped and stayed inside a small steel box, locked and strapped by volunteers, [and] I attempt to escape from [it] in full view of the entire audience," he said.

The act won Wilzig the title of "State Magic Champion."

Eric Wilzig's Magic, he said, is a blend of his father's magic and his own.

THE DAILY TARGUM

TALENT: Wilzig earns State Magic title

"I actually risk my life for the audience's entertainment."

TALENT: Wilzig earns State Magic Champion title

featured at several University events including some hosted by Rutgers Hillel and the Latino Student Council,

Wilzig is attempting an escape reminiscent of Houdini's Chinese water-torture cell

"This engaging, energetic and mystifying performance really wowed the crowd," his skills surprised many times his a youthful crowd and staff.

Wilzig's dream of true this Friday, a headline in his own words.

"I've performed in Vegas before, but my dream is to have a show in Las Vegas like the one I did in Las Vegas."

For this upcoming summer, Wilzig is attempting an escape reminiscent of Houdini's Chinese water-torture cell.

Wilzig's father and brother are also magicians.

"I love Rutgers so far," he said. "I go to the Business School, and I love the Business School."

He said, "I love Rutgers so far," he said. "I go to the Business School, and I love the Business School."

Newsday

THE LONG ISLAND NEWSPAPER



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RY DANIEL RUIRREFO

ERIC WILZIG

22, Woodmere

GIG A magician and illusionist

HIS STORY

When he was 5, Wilzig got a magic kit and was

entranced. He attended

Tannen's Magic Camp

in Manhattan when he was 12 and learned tricks of the trade from David Copperfield and Criss Angel. In his teens, Wilzig began mounting his own show and has since performed at Times Square Arts Center, Resorts Hotel-Casino in Atlantic City, and he just wrapped a summer tour on the East Coast college circuit. His signature trick — being handcuffed and escaping from a locked steel box — was inspired by his idol, Harry Houdini. He also has a degree in finance and marketing from Rutgers University. "You can have the greatest show in the world, but it's

