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EDITOR: MICHAEL LAU 403-235-7399 DELIVERY INQUIRIES: 403-291-0657

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Young magician astonishes audiences

JENNIFER McDOUGALL
FOR NEIGHBOURS

His favourite card is the Ace of Hearts: ace for perfection, hearts for love.

Matthew Antolin loves this form of performing arts, connecting to people in this way, and as his stage name, "Acetrife" implies, he strives for perfection.

It's been an exciting three years for the Mount Royal University student as his career as a close-up magician has skyrocketed.

Antolin has learned to create effects faster than veterans twice his age and the talent is paying off.

Already, Antolin books corporate events regularly and has even performed for Flames Captain Jarome Iginla.

Inspired by American

illusionist and endurance artist David Blaine, Antolin's performance is not a stage show; rather, he connects with an individual or a small group of people and uses everyday objects such as coins, rings, forks, and cards to create mysterious results.

"Everyone's reaction is different... some are skeptical, others think it's a spiritual thing."

Antolin doesn't subscribe to the belief that magicians have spiritual powers, he says magic is one part psychology, one part sleight of hand, and one part misdirection. The most important part of magic and mentalism for him is inspiring astonishment among his audience members.



Colleen De Neve, Calgary Herald

Calgary illusionist Matthew Antolin performs for diners at Halo restaurant.

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MAGIC: 'Thriving'

"Magic is what the audience perceives, rather than what I do," says Matthew.

"It's not about fooling someone, it's about building a relationship with another person and showing them that sometimes the impossible is possible."

Matthew is an open minded young man who recognizes that he has learned "a little bit from everything" he has done.

Playing piano for 10 years helped develop smooth finger movements necessary for sleight of hand effects, achieving his second degree black belt taught him discipline and to respect his elders.

"I want to perform magic for the rest of my life... I believe in using talents and everyday objects to get a smile."

Matthew is willing to put in the time to perfect his art. In addition to his marketing studies, Matthew practices in front of impromptu audiences at least an hour a day and performs up to eight hours a week.

His favourite age group to perform for are people his own age, those in their early twenties, for

private events.

He regularly performs at Halo Restaurant in south Calgary.

Please see his website for upcoming performances <http://www.acetrife.com/>.

Yeats Wong, co-ordinator of the Calgary Junior Magic Club, attributes the recent increase in popularity of magic to "TV magicians like Criss Angel and YouTube clips of street magic circulating on the Internet."

"(Young people) also get inspired by their exposure to Calgary's thriving live magic culture, from street magicians at Eau Claire Market to the live performances at local venues."

He says, "The sense of empowerment in being able to accomplish the impossible is something that no other hobby can offer."

But for Antolin, magic is more than a hobby. He says, "You don't get into it, it gets into you."

The club welcomes young people between eight and sixteen and meets the second Saturday of every month. <http://www.calgary-magic.com/junior.html>