

## Trio of UNL students makes unique magic



Clint Runge, left, Mark Wilkening and Kris Drent, members of Illusionaires Magic, use a bit of humor and a lot of trickery in their act.

By Paula Lavigne  
Senior Reporter

With a sleight of the hand and a blink of the eye, the Illusionaires Magic trio mixes comedy, trickery and entertainment to make the realms of reality disappear.

University of Nebraska-Lincoln students Kris Drent, Clint Runge and Mark Wilkening — along with Tim, their invisible mascot — constitute this illusionary group.

The trio performs at proms, at restaurants and for almost any other group requesting a magical performance.

With childhood experiences of magic kits, magic shows, magical heritage or television programs, each magician has had his own entry to the world of illusion.

Drent, a sophomore computer science major, started when he was only 7 years old.

"My Grandpa got me started. He showed me a few things and I was wowed," Drent said.

Runge, a freshman architecture major, was given his first magic kit in the first grade. Unlike other kids' magic kits, which ended up under their beds covered with dust within one month, Runge stayed with his.

"My dad showed me this trick, and I was sold," he said. "It was the whole principle of something impossible becoming possible. I wanted to know how it was done, and I wanted to do it myself."

Wilkening, a sophomore English major, has the Fonz ("Happy Days") and Samantha ("Bewitched") to thank.

"I watched a lot of TV when I was growing up," he said. "They had the Fonz in 'Happy Days,' and he'd walk into the room and could snap the lights on and off.

"Nobody knows the Fonz was a magician. He was even better than Samantha — she was just a witch," he said.

Runge started by performing shows for his elementary school classes. Family reunions were the first outlet for Drent's talents.

"I whipped up a 30-minute routine, to anything from small coin slides to bigger illusions," Drent said.

"We perform for any event. We can manipulate our performances from a large-scale show to a close-up show," Runge said.

What makes the trio unique is the wide variety of background and specialties of each player.

Runge specializes in large-stage shows, such

as a performance he gave at a magic convention in New Orleans. Close-up "sleight-of-hand" manipulation is Drent's forte. Juggling anything from torches to bowling balls keeps Wilkening busy.

And Tim? Well, Tim just kind of floats around.

Through their experiences, the three said they taught one another their specialties.

They learn some techniques by watching other magicians, they said. And although they admire the talents of famous magicians such as David Copperfield, they don't want to become like them.

"He's got a style that we wouldn't want to mimic," Drent said. "We've got a definitely different style, a little more upbeat in our own way."

The trio's performances include disappearances, levitations, sleight-of-hand tricks and bizarre feats of manipulating objects.

The process involves a lot of brainstorming, continual learning, individuality and humor, Drent said.

He said the group tried to incorporate skits and comedy sketches into its routines.

"We do like to integrate a lot of comedy, because we're there to entertain and not make people look like fools," he said.

The entertainment factor is a vital part of the illusion, Wilkening said.

"Magic is a novelty. It's an entertainment that's different than other forms of entertainment," he said.

"If you asked us why we do magic instead of singing or dancing, we do it because of that novelty, that uniqueness," Wilkening said.

But do the illusionists really believe in magic?

"There is no such thing as supernatural mortal power," Wilkening said. "Reality has its own kind of magic, though. It's like the way you felt when you asked the girl you had a crush on for a year to the prom, and she said yes."

Drent said he would like people to believe in the magicians' art.

"Obviously, it's done by trickery. We never tell anyone it's done by magic or witchcraft or anything," he said. "I don't think anyone could get up on stage and make someone levitate with their own power."

Runge said there was, however, some credibility to creating the impossible.

"There are a lot of crazy things out there that don't have answers. There are things out there that the human mind could not possibly comprehend," he said.

## Sequel lacks charm of original



Photo illustration by Jeff Haller/DN

Anna Chlumsky (left), Jamie Lee Curtis and Dan Aykroyd star in "My Girl 2."

### "My Girl 2"



By Marissa Jorgenson  
Staff Reporter

If it's not broke, don't fix it, and for God's sake, don't make a sequel. "My Girl 2," Columbia Pictures' latest disappointment, brings none of the charm or banter that its predecessor, "My Girl," did.

The film, directed by Howard Zieff, picks up in the spring of 1974 and zooms in on young Vada Sultenfuss (Anna Chlumsky), whose adolescent life is a typical tangle of boyfriends, breasts and attempts at self-discovery.

Her home life is also in a state of semiupheaval as she struggles to cope with her father Harry's (Dan Aykroyd) new marriage to the kind and vivacious Shelly (Jamie Lee Curtis) and the impending arrival of a baby. And to top it all off, Vada is still haunted by that bizarre bee tragedy that stole her best friend.

But the fun really begins when the budding Vada decides to write about her dead mother, Maggie, for a school assignment, and she embarks on a quest for truth and roots to the City of Angels. A cute idea, but from the start there's this annoying hit-and-miss quality that permeates the entire movie. Her earnest search for revelation is so upfront and hand-fed it bores the audience to tears. Sadder still are the film's relentless endeavors at humor, which fail every time.

Nonetheless, it's another Hollywood case of learning the hard way to leave well enough alone.

## Week's video releases offer variety of entertaining themes



It's a mishmash week at the video store, but despite the requisite mindless movie, it would be hard to go completely wrong with any of these rentals.

"Man Without a Face" Mel Gibson makes a movie where he is more than just a pretty face. Too bad it takes makeup and a poor script to make him that way. Gibson is under heavy prosthetics in this movie. He plays a disfigured military man whose passion and penchant for Shakespeare make him the role model for a needy young boy. Trouble is in the works for him though, as the prejudiced townspeople misinterpret his relationship with the boy. Some good acting saves the rather tedious and predictable script.

"The Program" A football sto-

ry gone awry. The original screen version featured a stupid stunt in which football players tested their mettle by lying in the street in front of oncoming traffic. Stupid children followed suit, and some real-life tragedies occurred. The film company has since revised the film, creating an edited video version.

"Son-in-Law" Pauly Shore is the most insipid would-be stand-up to arrive to semistardom in some time. He's cloying, annoying and entirely unoriginal. Big surprise that this movie displays the same traits, as Pauly stars as a Midwest family's worst nightmare. Whew, can't wait to get this one.

"Strictly Ballroom" This tribute to ballroom dancing was all the rage at the art houses last year. Paul Mercurio and Tara Morica are star-crossed lovers whose love affair is played out on the dance floor. Their triumph together and the journey that takes them there are captivating and well worth watching.

— Anne Steyer



Ten years ago this week:

MOVIES  
"Pink Floyd's The Wall" and never before seen footage of The Three Stooges.

NEW ALBUMS

Eurythmics, "Touch."  
Cyndi Lauper, "She's So Unusual."  
Adam Ant, "Strip."

Twenty Years Ago this week:

-Willie Dixon and Freddie King in concert Feb. 19th at Pershing Auditorium.  
-"The Exorcist" starts Wednesday at State Theater.