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Plenty of aces up his sleeve



What a card: Illusionist James Galea

illusion I Hate Rabbits

Sydney Theatre, Hickson Rd, Walsh Bay;
tonight, tomorrow and Saturday 8pm,
\$35-\$50, 9250 1777, 132 849,
ticketek.com.au

JAMES Galea believes the preparation for a show isn't about the props that an illusionist brings to the stage but the knowledge and skill he brings to bear on ordinary objects.

"It's like a doctor or a lawyer or anything — their preparation comes from their study," says the illusionist.

Galea has spent years studying how to perfect his craft and says the magic bug bit hard when he was at school.

"I stopped doing any schoolwork. I had a deck of cards in my hand and I practised on the bus going to school every day. I practised stealing teachers' watches," he says.

He spent some time studying acting and music, but his parents weren't keen on either.

"My fallback plan was to become a magician," he says. Not that his parents liked that idea much either, and his first lessons in magic came from a less than reputable source.

"The guy was a professional card shark. I didn't know that at the time. He took me under his wing and when I thought I was learning magic I was really learning some expert card techniques."

Galea likes to be open about what he does being nothing more than trickery, with the sleight-of-hand filmed and displayed to the audience on large screens and stresses that he never "pretends it's real magic".

What does annoy Galea is people who pretend they are doing something mystical and try to fool an audience into thinking they can talk to the dead or read minds.

"I think tricks are just as impressive if you confess they are just tricks."

Troy Lennon