

# HE SORCERER



“In law, as in magic, you’re always looking for the loophole”

## DAVID BEN

For David Ben’s two kids, having a magician for a dad is no fun at all. A schoolyard taunt – “my dad will cut you in half and never put you back together again” – elicited a phone call home. And Dad mostly performs for adults – not for kids at all.

Since leaving tax law, Ben has become one of the world’s greatest sleight-of-hand artists. He is definitely among the best educated, with a BA (1983 UC), a law degree (University of Western Ontario) and a Master of Laws from the London School of Economics. “I never took courses that put me on any career track,” says Ben, 40. “At U of T, I studied film and that helped me understand not how a magic trick works but why it works, which depends on cultural context and imagery. In law, as in magic, you’re always looking for the loophole, the equivocation. Designing a tax transaction is like designing a magic trick – you know the end result and shuffle the elements until you achieve it.”

Ben hauled his intellect out of the hat for his recent magic shows, *The Conjuror* and *The Conjuror’s Suite*. They featured heavily researched and technically demanding performances of Victorian and turn-of-the-century magic, such as Okito’s floating ball and Houdini’s needle mystery. The productions have been a hit over the past five years, showing at the Shaw Festival, the Royal Ontario Museum and the Charlottetown Festival.

Currently, Ben is writing two new shows and two books, pitching a magic exhibition in London and finessing a new balancing act. “It’s my goal to be the greatest sleight-of-hand performer who has a balance of career, family and economic stability – that’s the trick.”

– Margaret Webb

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