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A magic act that needs no rabbits

By Bill Kent

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When he made his Atlantic City debut in a revue show at age 22, mime magician Jeff McBride earned a reputation for delivering a tour de force magic show that, as an opening act, was almost impossible to follow.

Where other magicians left their audiences bemused or at least satisfied at stylishly executed kid stuff, McBride left audiences stunned and out of breath. Long after the smoke cleared (and there is a good deal of smoke and fire in his act), audiences were still wondering if they saw what they did on a casino stage.

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Only McBride can hold an audience breathless by suspending two small, fluttering pieces of paper in space. There's no trick to this -- McBride merely waves an Oriental hand fan beneath them, and air pressure does the work.

ATLANTIC CITY



Mime-magician Jeff McBride plays the Showboat Hotel & Casino through Nov. 28.

He makes no attempt to hide or disguise the fan. By imagination -- and not by magic -- the papers become butterflies.

What makes this, his impressive card tricks and the charming set-piece with bowls that magically fill with raindrops so captivating is McBride's skill at appealing to our childlike sense of wonder....

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