

Meeting Alex McAleer, is not at all what I expect. There is no long black cloak, no wand, no rabbit, and no, he wasn't even schooled at Hogwarts – although apparently everyone asks. Too square for the magic circle, his contemporary and cutting edge combination of magic, psychology, misdirection and showmanship will leave you anxious, paranoid and utterly entertained.



We meet in the sanctuary of Cafe Nero so I can find out a bit more about this 'psychomagic' that he dabbles in. As soon as we sit, I fire a torrent of questions: what, why and how is it done? Is it a gift, or merely trickery we can all learn at home? My background knowledge is limited to Derren Brown's TV exploits, and I'm curious to know more.

I discover that psychomagic, in short, is basically people-watching – but to a much deeper extent. From talking to Alex, I learn that upon entering a room of people he is able to collate a library of individuals to read from, to discover information that to the average human eye is well concealed.



And it's this kind of information that Alex wants to bring out and use to entertain and electrify an audience, whether it's an intimate encounter with a group at a party or a live stage show that he has prepared, organised and promoted.

I ask more about his stage act and Alex tells me

how he enjoys the control over the larger audience. In a 90-minute performance he is able to make eyes bulge and jaws drop by exposing the fine details of a person's life, such as their first kiss or the type of car they own. Oh, and he can also read minds – think of a letter or number and somehow he'll come up with it.



From our brief meeting Alex is able to draw the same picture as I have on the back of a concealed business card and also tell that I have a scar on my left knee, even though I am wearing trousers. This leaves me craving more – I want Alex to tell me everything he knows about everyone, including myself. So, I decide to share him and I invite him down to meet the ever so sceptical IPI team to perform a mini-show for us.

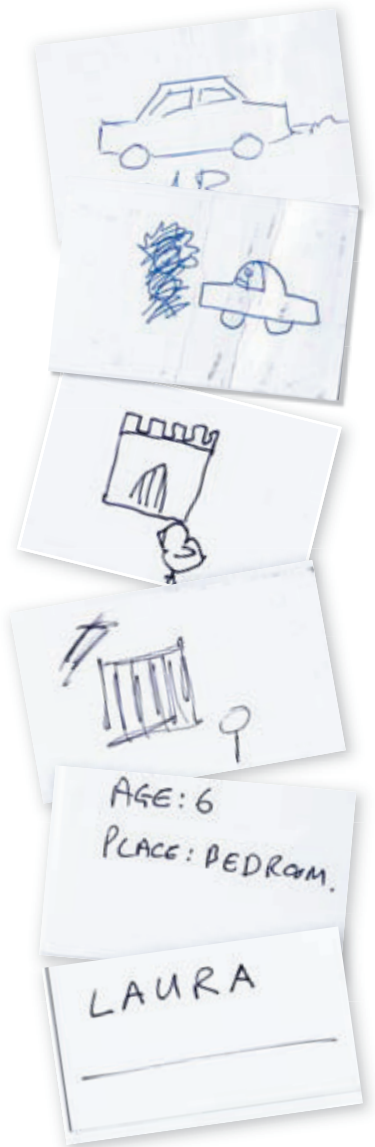
Following Alex's arrival, our usually non-enchanted office more closely resembles an X-Factor audition room hosting a large panel of judges with an appetite for being impressed.



Alex is a confident performer and completely at ease with his audience. His calm and witty stage presence helps him dig out snippets of our personal information – his ability to reveal the name of our editor's first kiss leaves us stunned. He can seemingly also control our bodies, leaving one designer unable to lift his arm after being told to think back to a time when he felt really tired.

A few card tricks later (Sample trick: "Is this your card?" Answer: "Yes") we decide to put Alex to the test with his drawing duplication trick. This time, instead of the relatively simple car I had sketched before, I draw a duck. In a castle.

With such a random choice of illustration, this is indeed a



challenge. However, Alex gives it his best shot and manages to distinguish the relevant shapes with clarity. Quite impressive.

As this newly discovered psycho-magician waves a mystical hand goodbye, we're all left feeling fascinated and, quite frankly, a little bit scared. But Alex is a wonder to watch and is sure to leave countless audiences bewildered and enthralled in equal measure armed only with his mind. And not a balloon animal in sight.

www.psychomagic.co.uk

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