

## Review *In Order to Amaze* MAGIC magazine, May 2016 (Jared Kopf)

Pit Hartling is one of the best card magicians on the planet. His first book, *Card Fictions*, contains a mere seven items but each bears the stamp of having been created by a talented, thoughtful artist.

Thirteen years after its publication, the book is now considered a neo-classic text of card magic. Hartling's second and latest book contains three times as many entries, all twenty-one of which use a memorized deck. It's not as stunning as his first collection, but it is definitely a work that bears the Hartling stamp.

The first section focuses on stack-independent effects. Whether your memory burns with the ringing tones of *Mnemonic* or the crazy images of Nikola or Aronson, you will be able to perform ten of Hartling's wonderful creations.

The best of these is "The Core". While it has been available previously in print and on video, the author's analysis of this brilliant effect gives us a glimpse into how deeply Hartling will think just to bring a magical dream to reality. Based on Al Koran's Headline Countdown (a prediction effect with torn pieces of newspaper), "The Core"'s mathematical method will make sleight of hand seem easy in comparison. It is, however, one of the rare examples of an effect in which the beauty of the method is matched by the power of its presentation.

"Sherlock", if mastered, will allow you to have a spectator shuffle your stack twice and yet get the pack back in order under the guise of an effective "impossible location".

Hartling even adds a few presentational touches to the heckneyed weighing-the-cards plot, which turns the trick into a charming routine with a solid beginning, an eyebrow-raising middle and a stunning prediction for the end.

Some of the effects in this section will destroy the order of the cards during performance. However, in each case, Hartling offers some approaches to restore the cards to stack sequence. Not all of these procedures are easy. The performer must not only think on his feet, he must also run the mechanical algorithms while continuing to entertain an audience. Hartling can do this with whimsy, and his lucid descriptions make it seem like anyone can achieve the required level of proficiency and confidence.

The "Quartet" section contains seven items that require a new level of memorization, but the task is no more difficult than memorizing the stack in the first place. If you are a fan of producing fours of a kind, this is the section to explore. What is more important, the analysis here will make the reader think about the memorized stack in different ways and see relationships where they didn't appear before. Best of all, as in the previous section, Hartling references both the Tamariz and Aronson stacks, which are the two stacks the reader is most likely to be familiar with.

The stack-dependent section explains four tricks that use Tamariz's *Mnemonic*. Each of these unlocks some pattern hidden inside the Maestro's brilliant creation simply by moving a few of the cards around. In "Poker Night at the Improv", for

example, after removing and exchanging a few cards and then giving the deck a number of anti-faros, the performer is set for a sort of story-deck trick in which he produces progressively strong Poker hands, then finally reveals the spectator's selection and a royal flush kicker. How Hartling discovered the procedure to set up the strack at all, let alone right in front of the spectators, is a mystery to me. „Poker Night at the Improv“ shows Harting at his most Tamarizian.

Hartling's second book is a fantastic achievement. It is bound just as tastefully as his first book, complete with glossy pages, exquisite photographs, impeccable design, and bound silk bookmark. It does fall under the mighty shadow of Tamariz magnum opus *Mnemonic*, but it belongs right next to it on the bookshelf.