

Julian Bond's “Troupe Vanish”

Effect: A group of seven girls vanish from a platform surrounded by audience members and immediately reappear at the back of the theatre.

What the audience sees: A raised platform sits in the center of the stage. On the platform is a thin box frame with a rolled-up curtain. The audience can see underneath, above and all around the platform. Several randomly selected audience members are led up to the stage and form a line behind the platform, acting as witnesses to the illusion from the rear. The girls, one at a time, take their position on the platform. The curtain is lowered. The magician calls to the girls, “Are you ready?” The girls respond with a collective “Yes!” and tap the curtain from the inside. Immediately, the curtain is pulled away – the girls have all vanished. The magician directs the audience attention to the rear of the theatre, where the girls are assembled, ready to accept applause.

1. Effect
1. What the audience sees
2. Notes about the illusion
3. So how does this crazy trick work?!!!
4. Performance venue
5. Platform
6. Frame and curtain
8. Tying up the curtain
8. Other ways to rig a curtain
9. The “secret prop”
10. The routine
12. Anyone have a spare dance troupe?
13. Volunteer assistants
14. The rehearsal
16. Yes folks – the witnesses are truly random!
18. Sightlines
19. Pacing and timing
21. Patter
21. Music
23. Lights and mist
23. An unfriendly stage
24. One other little detail
25. Vanishing seven audience members
27. Impromptu vanish (3 girls)
30. Concluding thoughts

Notes about the illusion

I designed this illusion as a finale to a show I performed where I shared the stage with a seven-member dance troupe. I wanted to conclude with an illusion that involved them, and this seemed to be the perfect choice. Through this manuscript I will describe, in detail, every aspect of this illusion: the building, the working, performance notes...and also a number of variations that can be adapted to performing spaces, budget and other factors. The descriptions and methods outlined are based on the way I performed it at the first performance. I have worked on a variety of adaptations since then, and those I will also share as this document progresses.

For those of you who have not yet purchased this manuscript and are reading this overview, I understand how frustrating it is to purchase illusion plans with the expectation that you will be performing it at an upcoming show, only to discover when you read through the instructions that you need a hydraulic crane, a \$7000 lighting rig and thirty assistants, none of which were mentioned in the pre-purchase description. Well, fear not! This illusion can be assembled for around \$70 and operated with as few as three assistants. When I performed this, I had the luxury of five guys to help me plus two female friends who had appeared in other illusions. However – none of them knew the workings of this illusion before the rehearsal and they all learned it from scratch in 20 minutes (and that included the dance troupe, too)! This manuscript will tell you how to teach untrained people to help you run the illusion. There are no mechanical devices involved. You will need to build one “secret prop” which will cost you less than \$20. The platform and curtain are replaceable with cheaper alternatives, all of which are described.

I am aiming this eBook at both beginners and professionals. It is, first and foremost, an instruction manual for staging and performing a trick. However, I have included many ideas and observations that came to me while I was designing, rehearsing and performing the illusion, from which I hope you can benefit and even build upon.

The only requirement is that you are comfortable appearing on stage. This is a very user-friendly illusion, but a very powerful one if performed correctly. You can watch a video of it at www.julianbondmusic.com. I will refer to this clip from time to time. For those of you who have the full manuscript – read on...