

# Iowa opportunity lures Master Magician from retirement for show

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The Culture Buzz, Recipient of Iowa Governor's Arts Award for Collaboration & Partnership in the Arts

Lance Burton. Mention his name, and images of jaw-dropping illusion, a master of his craft and memorable performances flood one's mind. In 2010, Burton walked away at the peak of his career, having presented 15,000 shows to countless millions of avid fans. The Lance Burton Theatre, a multi-million dollar performing hall built specifically for him in the prestigious Monte Carlo Resort & Casino, vibrated with ovations from 13-plus years of 5000 shows. Lance Burton, praised as "the most brilliant magician of this century (Dai Vernon, Patriarch of Magic), had retired.

A series of events beginning years ago would eventually lead to a two-performance return to the stage this weekend as Burton presents, "Lance Burton & Friends," at one of



the Heartland's most honored venues, the Civic Center of Des Moines (Des Moines Performing Arts).

## The making of a Master Magician

From humble beginnings in his heart of America Kentucky home, Burton first experienced magic before age five. His early fascination with magic fueled his rise to one of the best magicians of modern times. As a boy, he attended a Christmas party, where magician Harry Collins was the featured entertainment. Burton was hooked, and Collins would become his mentor. A neighbor encouraged his calling, giving the young Burton "Magic Made Easy." He quickly mastered the ten tricks in that book.



after his 20th birthday. He became the inaugural winner of the "Gold Medal for Excellence" from the International Brotherhood of Magicians. This preceded his next major break.

## The Iowa connection

With the recognition from the International Brotherhood of Magicians, Burton moved to Southern California. He connected with Bill and Milt Larsen, two show business legends from a family of magicians. They helped realize their father's dream of a performance haven – a nightclub for magicians – the



unparalleled Magic Castle. The Larsens also helped their young prodigy connect with one of Iowa's famous sons, Johnny Carson. That first appearance on Carson's Tonight Show in October of 1981 produced a flood of offers as Burton's performance captured Carson's and the nation's attention. Burton returned to Carson's show nine more very memorable times.

Burton's first visit to Iowa happened in 2016 with the premiere of his comedy feature, "Billy Topit: Master Magician," at the Wild Rose Film Festival. This film was the realization of a dream which his retirement allowed him to fulfill. He quickly bonded with Iowa during an extended stay during the film festival, including a fundraiser screener of his film to support the Animal Rescue League of Iowa. Burton continues to parlay his talents and success into fundraisers for the Shriner's Hospital and animal rescue groups.

This was one more cornerstone that led to Burton's unparalleled 31-year career and an unprecedented run of over 15,000 shows.



**Conjuring a return to the stage**  
"Lance Burton & Friends" will be performing two shows Nov 25 & 26 at the Civic Center stage of Des Moines Performing Arts. This will be Lance's first magic show following his 2010 retirement, and Iowa will host this momentous event.

"It's quite an honor for Lance to choose Iowa for his first magic performance out of retirement," said Keith West. "Everyone has been hoping that Lance would return to the stage, and Des Moines gets that honor."

"I knew I would probably return to my love of magic and performance," Burton offered. "I also knew that I wanted to do it with people I've known and worked with over the years. This blend of performers will give this a true family show appeal. Magic, juggling, comedy, illusion – I want everyone to leave with special memories from this show."

Burton's fellow performers include Fielding West (comedy magician), Michael Goudeau (juggler), and Keith West (illusionist). Each has exceptional performing credits, and Master Magician Burton's finesse in producing appealing shows will keep audiences enthralled.

**Iowa ready to receive the return of Lance Burton** Des Moines Performing Arts' Civic Center stage is a defining venue for such an historic show. Many National Tours have started in this venue, and it continues as one of the top ticket-selling venues in the world. This show will be a cornucopia of illusion, magic, juggling, comedy, audience participation and more. With a magician of Lance Burton's reputation anchoring a stellar roster of gifted performers, "Lance Burton & Friends" promises to be another truly – ahem – "magical" evening for everyone.



# LANCE BURTON MASTER MAGICIAN & FRIENDS