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JON STETSON

America's Master Mentalist

He Knows What You Are Thinking...
No. Really, HE DOES!

SPECIAL SPEAKER-TAINMENT ISSUE

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America's Master Mentalist

He Knows What You Are Thinking...
No. Really, HE DOES!

As one of America's premier mentalists serving the corporate, college, performing arts and casino markets, Jon has built his career and reputation on a unique ability to be diverse and adapt to nearly any client's needs.

He has performed for heads of state, including two presidents and The King Of Sweden, Donald Trump, The New England Patriots and numerous television networks including CBS, A&E and PBS.

Over half of Jon's dates are not

his standard theater show, much of the work he does revolves around speaking, teaching others to trust their instincts, build solid relationships and motivate themselves toward their goals. If there were someone you'd like to hire as a speaker and hope them to be entertaining, a guy like Jon whose chops are built on holding a crowd purely on talent and charisma, would be a great place to start.

Who Is Jon Stetson?

"I am a mentalist at heart, but there is also a great deal of sit-

uational comedy in what I do. I like to shift gears in my programs, quite frankly. If I am working a campus date of some type, I am playing things totally different from when I am on the speaker's platform or entertaining for a performing arts or casino audience."

As far as where Jon's expertise lies, about 80% of his schedule revolves around the corporate market. "That's both performing and speaking. It is very appropriate this issue focuses on Speaker-tainment, because half of the time I am



Story by Ian Kirby

being booked as a speaker, but what really gets the best results and reactions are done by entertaining. Not only can the client deliver a message, but they can show added value in the purchase of an entertainment event. It is an important asset to the organization on multiple levels."

Why Jon Stetson?

Jon understands that in corporate and association meetings especially, the underlying intent of that meeting is generally not just to entertain the audience; there is a deeper overall motivation. The question becomes whether one's selection in entertainment facilitates that goal, doesn't add anything at all to it or worse yet, detracts or draws attention away from the objective. "Every industry is different and every event is different. I try to become a real member of the team. First of all, it makes it a lot easier for me to understand by assimilating myself into their corporate culture. As a result, I have received an incredible education. I have learned about things I never would have dreamed I'd know about. It is because I want to get involved. You get to know the people, places and ideas involved. There are no surprises, I know exactly what they expect of me and it gives everyone a great comfort level. Isn't that what we are all looking for?"

The Stetson Experience

Jon's signature program is "The Stetson Experience" and has been his bread and butter for many years. Clearly, this highlights his focus on an experiential event, not merely just eye or mind candy. "I think I was experiential before many other people, but of course Jimi Hendrix had 20 years on me so I'm not going to claim any originality on that part (laughs)."

The Stetson Experience can be described as intelligent, interactive fun. "I have several hours worth of material, which allows me to tailor and customize a program for any type of event or size audience. I have performed for intimate groups of a dozen, all the way up to large scale presentations for audiences of 10,000 or more."

Jon has performed this signature entertainment piece all over the world and in a variety of venues. Because he requires minimum production, he can go just about anywhere. "Let's face it, we spend a great deal of our time in hotel ballrooms. I like to make it as easy for the client as possible. I need to be

seen and I need to be heard, but it doesn't require a whole heck of a lot more than that. The show is totally adaptable."

K.I.S.S. (Keep It Simple, Stupid)

Jon's show is light on props. He isn't generally doing the large scale or visually flashy mentalism that requires many cumbersome objects. He tends to keep things more on the cerebral side, thought-reading and prediction style effects that boggle the mind more than the eye. But, just as with anything else, Jon is totally adaptable and there is no hard and fast rule beyond delivering what the client wants. "It depends on the audience. Often if I am working for a crowd not native to English, I will do some more of the visual things. But I personally enjoy performing

more cerebral effects. We are dealing with people's thoughts and ideas. I think people are more interested in the inner workings of other people than they are in cutery bending (laughs). When I need to create something more visual I can easily play to that angle, but my favorite kind of medium is the thoughts in people's minds. Then I can work in an arena; they are actively involved. It isn't just 'Hey, watch this display of my abilities,' it is an actual invitation to be their own variable in the formula. People's minds, thoughts and imaginations are as big as the room and as big as the audience. As much as the show is taking place on stage it is taking place in their minds, because I am all about total audience engagement."



As a mentalist and speaker, Jon is careful to avoid the pitfalls of convoluted many performers in both professions seem to fall in. "I usually find simplicity is best. I believe in elegance in performance. Plot lines should be easy to follow, I don't believe in convoluted routines. I want to take them from point A to B. I have a saying 'Heartshare plus mindshare equals productivity-share.' The heartshare is when someone walks out on stage and there is something about that person that interests or intrigues the audience...elegant, well-tailored and spoken with a strong presence. People sit up and take notice. Some of that accompanies the introduction and pedigree, but then capturing the mindshare is about communicating to a receptive audience. You see someone with this commanding presence and you want to hear what they have to say."

Know How He Knows?

Jon does this by exposing the fact that at one time or another, each one of us has thought about what it would be like to perceive or have an influence on the thoughts of others. "Spend a little time with me and not only are you going to see these things are possible, but I will show you how this is done! I always say 'If you give me a little bit of your time, I guarantee I will give you an experience you will not forget for the rest of your life.' I mean that (laughs) and I work very hard to make that happen."

Once Jon has captured the heartshare (attention) and mindshare (engaged interest), the productivity-share comes right along with it. "This is what I want to get out of the evening. What I essentially am looking for is for everyone in that room to feel good, have a great time and lots of laughs and be my evangelists. I want them to say 'Wow, I saw Jon Stetson and it may be hard to describe but boy, was it great.' When you take people's money, they can make it back, but when you take their time, you are taking a chunk of their life. I want my client's investment of time to watch my programs or take part in an event to be considered time well spent. They can walk away feeling good and with some new knowledge." Audiences who have seen Jon's show leave the room opened up to a world of new possibilities.

Putting It All Together

There are a lot of performers who try to bring their mentalism acts into the corporate and special events arenas unsus-

cessfully, and even fewer who can host the kind of program intended to motivate or deliver a specified message to the event. Jon excels in this area and perhaps the best proof of that is in a long and successful track record. "There is no substitute for experience. If people look and see where I have been and speak to the people that I have worked for, they will have proof of the results of what I do."

"What makes my show different? Well, I am third generation in this sort of work – in show business. I had an upbringing that was a little bit different than most people and this is my life. I think being a mentalist is a 24-hour-a-day job. I live in what I call the 'superconscious...' meaning I always take in everything around me. From the

moment I get up to the moment I go to sleep, I am a mentalist. I am not adding this to my repertoire. I am not a magician crossing over; this is what I do. In my life, show, speaking programs, in every way I live as a mentalist. When it comes to training others to have increased insight, powers of observation, motivation, cooperation and determination, I have a great understanding of how to do so."

The Stetson Experience is available for corporations, theaters, casinos, colleges, festivals and much more.

BOOK IT! For more information on bringing Jon Stetson to your event, contact Bill at Concept Artists at (212) 343-0856.

