

Photo by Karl-Heinz Ziethen

## MICHAEL MOSCHEN - A NOVELTY JUGGLER

by Karl-Heinz Ziethen

Michael Moschen, now 23 years old, has attracted the attention of some of the finest jugglers in America. His juggling style is completely different from other jugglers. He makes juggling look like something that's natural to him. His style is suave and terribly elegant; so his brilliant act is all about focus. Michael Moschen shows you right away that he doesn't watch the three little balls he's dealing with - that he can smile at you or wipe his nose or dance or look the other way without breaking his smooth rhythms. When he does look at the balls, he makes you pick out a particular pattern - emphasizing the parallel path of two of the balls, while the third odd-man-outs by leaping over them.

One of his specialties is fire juggling with three torches. His torch swinging act is spectacular and dangerous, unique in this art. Michael recently completed the filming of the fire-juggling scene in Milos Forman's production of *Hair* with Twyla Tharp, and has appeared as a solo juggler with the Louis Folco Dance Company. His television appearances included the Mike Douglas Show and BBS Special. His three ball juggling won a first prize at the International Jugglers' Association Championship, held in Youngstown, Ohio, 1975. He was also the featured juggler and torchswinger in the second season of the Big Apple Circus in New York.

When juggler Michael Moschen walks into the center of the ring, you forget that circuses are supposed to be dazzling spectacles, special in America. Instead, you are immediately drawn in by the unassuming figure in dark clothes (black jersey and old-fashioned black pleated trousers), curly hair, and a boy-next-door smile. He makes you feel not like a part of a motley obstreperous crowd, but like a specially invited friend. Michael Moschen looked always relaxed and charming as he plays all sorts of tricks: rolling one small ball over his back while subtly shifting to juggling two balls with one hand and holding the third one still in the other hand, then changing back to three balls moving between two hands as soon as we had caught on to his cheating; or lying down on his back and standing up again while balancing a little ball on his forehead. He juggles the small balls as cordially as if he were mixing cocktails. Then he does a very sincere fake cough and you wonder what this guy is up to.



So it's very interesting to hear what Michael Moschen says about himself and his act:

"I never watch other acts; the style for my ball acts I got from comic books."

...I didn't know how to open my act. I didn't want to start with a big trick. I like to start with nothing and build from there.

...I want people to see me and me see them, and have the juggling between us.

...I cough, and then I look up and start making eye contact all around the ring, to find out who's there and why and what they're thinking. To get myself comfortable."

The Big Apple Circus is the perfect place for Michael Moschen. The tent is comparatively small and that means the audience is sitting close enough to get to know each character and to catch the details of his act. It's a European style circus, in which the performers are serious about developing personal style and rapport with the audience. It avoids the commercialism of the mammoth three-ring American circuses. He is right as he says: "I don't like American circuses. They're not personal. The performers do the routines they've been taught and there's no love of what they do. I'm not interested in tricks. I don't use a trick unless it fits into the act. I can juggle five balls, but I won't do it in my act because it's still just a trick. I want my act to be a whole unit, a story."

cont. on p. 5

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Donna,

On Thursday, November 16, 1978, I was inspired to celebrate a world record set by Sri Chinmoy - artist, author, and poet. He completed 16,031 paintings in 24 hours, in 1975. And I wanted to juggle that amount of balls in one hour, in his honor.

So, I got together five friends, complete with stop watches and calculators. After organizing a system with split times every sixty seconds, I began juggling as fast as I could with three balls. By the fifty-eighth minute my goal was reached and at sixty minutes I had completed 16,606 throws. Of course I did drop a few times, and they really turned out to be disadvantages because each second you nearly throw five balls, so any drops work against you when you are trying for numbers. Anyway, it was a delightful experience and I'm happy to share it with you.

Also, a friend of mine in New York, Ashrita the Magician, celebrated another record set by Sri Chinmoy. Ashrita juggled three balls for ten hours and thirty-eight minutes, for a grand total of 100,000 throws, with only 27 drops. He did this in honor of Sri Chinmoy's completion of his one hundred thousandth painting.

If anyone knows of any other three ball records, I'd be interested to hear about them!

Very truly yours,  
 Gregory DiGiovine  
 P.O. Box 690  
 San Francisco, CA 94101

CHANGE OF ADDRESS PROCEDURE, MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS, BACK ISSUES

Mary Wilkins Wisser, IJA Secretary, is the lady to notify if you have moved, or would like a membership application or an old newsletter issue (if available). Mary's address is 839 Lenz Drive, Anaheim, Ca. 92805.

Dear Donna DiMeo:

I am a new member of the IJA. I joined and received the attached letter [Ed. note: this refers to the welcoming letter sent to all new members.] on October 30, 1978. All of my friends who are IJA-ers received a newsletter, which I did not, after this. I assumed you were as slow at putting names on the mailing list as everyone says you are at putting out newsletters, and thought nothing of it. I then received a call for dues and a 1978 Roster. This said I owe one U.S. dollar and no newsletters will be sent until I paid. I then tried to call you but never found you in. I found this appalling that I could pay seven U.S. dollars and not receive anything and then be asked to pay more money to get newsletters. A few days later my anger increased when my friends, who according to the call for dues owed a full year's dues, received the January/February newsletter I did not. I will not pay the one U.S. dollar and I want you to correct this deplorable situation immediately. Where I once thought highly of the IJA I am now beginning to think it is nothing more than a Mafia-like organization that extorts money from innocent people.

Kelly Gregoriatis  
 c/o Eastern European Jugglers Exchange  
 1330 Oak Lane  
 Philadelphia, PA 26

Ed. Note: All newsletters sent to K. Gregoriatis were returned to me marked "Addressee Unknown".

IJA Newsletter:

I received your lovely newsletter.

I am so happy that the IJA has grown so big.

Dr. Crosby and I were around when the IJA started and we have seen it grow.

Dr. Crosby passed away in Sept. 1975, not long after we attended the IJA convention. It was good to see so much progress and your beautiful newsletter confirms this progress.

Good luck and long live IJA. I hope that IJA-ers will entertain many audiences to come.

As ever,

Mrs. Wm. H. Crosby  
 1019 Laurel Ave.  
 Sanford, FL 32771

P.S. Wish I could attend convention but when one has lived 88 years one does not like to travel alone.

CONVENTION WORKSHOPS - if you would like to offer a workshop at the 1979 convention, contact me as soon as possible and outline the skill you want to share. Also, if there is a skill you would like to capture, I'll try to arrange an appropriate workshop. My address is:

Dave Finnigan  
 Education Director  
 23004 107th Place W.  
 Edmonds, WA 98020

CLOWN ROUTINES I HAVE KNOWN  
or: A Hot Act is a Tough One to Follow

All of us, at one time or another, may consider adding an element of danger to our acts, and we jugglers generally turn to the element of fire. Torch juggling is flashy, exciting, and dangerous if one doesn't know what one is doing. I would like to relate to you a funny story about fire juggling that reads like the plot of a Laurel and Hardy routine. It is a true story. The names have been changed to preserve the personal dignity of the persons involved, and also to keep the lawyers off my back.

Once upon a time, three happy jugglers - I'll call them Moe, Larry, and Curly - put together a thirty minute routine that covered juggling every conceivable object in every conceivable combination in numbers, formations, pairs, and solo. The routine, best dubbed ANYTHING GOES, was very energetic and also very entertaining, and one of the later climaxes involved Curly taking one club away from Moe and tossing in a torch. Their procedures for lighting off the torch had Curly dip the torch head into a Tang jar partially filled with Coleman fuel, then a flick of a Bic burst the torch into a beautiful inferno. Well, after much practice on a large stage, Moe, Larry, and Curly decided that they were ready to be discovered, and booked themselves into the Hackensack Nursing Home for the world premier of the ANYTHING GOES REVUE. I was invited along as MC and critic for their performance. We found the Hackensack Regency Nursing Home by the directions Moe had gotten over Alexander Graham Bell's wonderful invention mere hours before, and were informed by an authority we found in the parking lot that it was really the Hackensack Nursing home - no one ever used Regency except the street signs. Moe convinced the receptionist, a lovely young woman Larry, Curly, and I gazed peacefully at for whole seconds, that the jugglers were expected.

"All right," she said, "but there isn't anyone from Recreation here today." Not surprising, really - it was a Sunday, and who would recreate on a day of rest? "You can use the Green Room, I guess."

The Green Room was a lovely shade of yellow, and Moe, Larry, and Curly soon had their stereo tape deck, chairs, and assorted props set exactly as their routine required. The audience, nearly forty or so senior citizens and family/friends visiting them wheeled, walked, or hobbled in, and I stepped before them to do my MC thing.

"Ladies and gentlemen, and other assorted mixed company here present," I said. "It gives me great pleasure to present for your cultural edification and general amusement the antics of three very good friends of mine - Moe, Larry, and Curly, the starring clown [yes, they performed in August clown makeup with tramp clothes] of the Circus Farce-us in their incomparable ANYTHING GOES REVUE!" Polite applause accompanied me as I sat down to enjoy the show.

Everything went exactly as rehearsed - even better, at times - until the torch was pulled from its appointed box. Looking back, there probably should have been a drum roll

or something like that: Curly dipped the head and flicked the Bic with no hassles, but the Green Room was smaller than their familiar stage so everything was closer to center than before - including the uncovered Tang jar of Coleman fuel (note the foreshadowing here). The music cue arrived, and Curly clawed out the club effortlessly and threw the torch into Moe's cascade, underspinning and tossing high.

The torch arched neatly up and bounced off Moe's surprised face. Fortunately, his makeup was not flammable and the torch fell over his shoulder - which would have been the end of the story except for the fact that the torch flames fell perfectly across the top of the Tang jar and ignited the fumes. Curly thought fact - 'Well, we blow the torch out after we're done with it, so I'll just blow this little fire out' - and blew the flames down into the jar. The fuel therein caught fire with a puff of flames that blew back up into Curly's face, surprising Curly to such an extent that he moved quickly backward and kicked the jar over onto the terrazo floor, breaking the jar and spilling the combustibles. Meanwhile, the audience watched with heightened interest: they had never seen such an exciting clown act in their lives. I fidgeted expectantly, because I had faith in my friends, and the band played on. Moe decided to stamp out the raging inferno (it was still only fuel burning; I shudder to think what might have happened if the playing area had been carpeted) and leaped into it wholeheartedly. All he managed to do was excite the fuel some more. As he came out of the campfire, one could not help noticing that something was a little different about him.

"Moe!" shouted Curly. "Your shoes are on fire!"

I knew something was different. Larry continued to run in his little circle as he had since the jar fell over, shouting, "Get a fire extinguisher!" As Moe stamped his foot-fire out, I decided the time for assistance had arrived. I figured we out to cover the damned fire with a blanket, or a coat, or ... a coat! Of course! I began to take my own coat off as I approached the continuing scene of clown versus fire, but I was rather fond of my coat and spied Moe's coat on a nearby chair. I threw it over the patch of burning fuel just as Larry dashed across the Green Room to a fire extinguisher, charged back with acrobatic dexterity, (he nearly cleared a potted plant with one of his leaps) and soaked the coat with water. The audience applauded politely, and I said, "The act is getting hot now." They loved it. I resumed my seat, and the act continued, though the finale of three-man feed, lines and triangles had a few more drops than rehearsal and previous practice shows had had. I guess the guys were a little flustered for one reason or another.

After many explanations, apologies, and funny (forced, of course) little jokes, it was discovered that we were at the wrong nursing home. Our heroes exit to a setting sun, a little wiser, and a little singed, and very lucky.

The end of the story could have been tragic, had not good fortune been on the side of these jugglers. They couldn't have done anything else wrong with the torch - except maybe used high octane gas for fuel. (I personally use fire outside only in large clear spaces.) A metal can should have been used to dip the torch heads in the fuel, and it should be covered before lighting the torches up. As an added precaution, the fuel should be far removed from the juggling area. Better safe than sorry, right? cont. on p. 6



# CALENDAR

**NEW YORK CITY:** Every Friday a free juggling workshop is held from 12 noon to 2 p.m. in the basement at 74 Rector Place, behind Trinity Church, at Broadway and Rector Streets. John Grimaldi is workshop leader.

**BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA:** On the last Saturday of every month, area jugglers meet in McArthur Park. For more info call Lheith at (213) 434-6325.

**MAINE:** The Maine Jugglers' Association meets in the Memorial Union Lobby at the University of Maine at Orano every Monday afternoon. Tentative plans call for a Circus Arts Festival this spring to get a group organized to travel to Amherst. Anyone interested in participating in any way (teaching, performing, or learning) please write: Doug Hall, president MJA, 336 Gannett, UMO, Orano, ME 04469.

**MASSACHUSETTS:** The Pioneer Valley Jugglers' Association meets Wednesday nights at 7:30 in the basement of the University of Massachusetts Campus Center. Call Holly Greeley at (413) 549-1067.

**TAMPA, FLORIDA:** A juggling class is held at the University of South Florida campus every Thursday, from 6-7 p.m. in PSY 109. Ed Kosco is coordinator. He can be reached at 501 116th Ave. N Apt. 8, St. Petersburg, FL 33702.

**LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA:** The Jugglers' Forum and Workshop meets every Monday night, from 7:30 till 9:30 at the Variety Arts Center, 940 South Figueroa Street, Los Angeles, CA 90015. The workshop is run by Gene Jones, better known as Geno.

**DURHAM, NEW HAMPSHIRE:** The university of New Hampshire Juggling Club meets Wednesdays at 7:30 in the Memorial Union Building on campus. Call David Levesque at (603) 431-1835 or write to UNH Juggling Club, Student Activities Office, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH 03824.

**ATLANTA, GEORGIA:** The AJA will meet on Saturdays at 4 p.m. next to the children's playscape at Piedmont Park. Every Thursday, from 6:30 - 8 p.m., classes will be held at Moreland School on Euclid Ave.

**BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS:** Area jugglers meet from 1-4 p.m. or later on Sundays, in front of the MIT Student center in Cambridge. In case of inclement weather, the meeting will be in room 491 of the Student Center. Meetings of the MIT Juggling Club are held on Thursdays, 8-11 p.m., in the same location. For info call Dave LeDoux at (617) 468-3214.

**ST LOUIS, MISSOURI:** The St. Louis Juggling Club meets every Thursday at 7:30 p.m., at Desmet High School, 233 North Ballas. Call Dick Vogt (314) 567-3500 or Tom Thale (314) 227-5457.

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## 1979 IJA CHAMPIONSHIPS

### Introduction

These are new possibilities, and I would hope we are all open to change.

I am encouraging entrants to rise to a rehearsed performance level of showing juggling for this competition. You should be going for a tight, 6 minute routine. Use of music, costume, stage set-up, etc. are definite options to consider.

Also, if you feel that this sort of competition is not your type of thing - fine. We're setting up a performance space which can be used throughout the entire convention to showcase your material. But the competition is for set, worked-on presentations.

### New Rules and Regulations

#### Events

Numbers Juggling: 1) 5 clubs 2) 7 balls, rings, clubs  
4 trials for longest time

Junior Division: 3 minute routine. Must not have been juggling for more than 3 years.

Senior Division: 6 minute routine. Open to anyone.

Team Division: 6 minute routine. Open to 2 or more people.

In Numbers juggling, objects must be doing a continuous cascade pattern in the air - no multiplex, no floor work. Time will stop when one object hits the ground.

5 clubs: must enter with a qualifying time of 15 seconds or more. You will be placed in a running order with shortest qualifying times competing first. The four trials will be run in order: first contestant A, then B, etc., then the second trial begins.

#### Junior, Senior and Team:

Props for these events are limitless. For example, you can use balls, clubs, bean bags, canes, hoops, devil sticks, cups & saucers, ball & parasol, diablo, hats, plate spinning, cigar boxes, rope spinning, bottle & plate, ping pong balls, fire torches, club swinging, etc. If you can throw it, spin it, catch it, kick it, balance it, eat it - use it!

Use any type of juggling or manipulation (toss juggling, multiplex, foot juggling) or any type of auxiliary equipment (unicycles, wires, people, rolling globes, rollerkates) - it doesn't matter as long as what you do fits into your routine.

You may be verbal or silent. Use music, live or taped. Have your own music worked out in advance. We will try to have a cassette system on hand.

You are strongly encouraged to have a costume, transitions worked out, etc. to aid in overall visual effect of the juggling act.

The General Rules and Judging and Scoring will be printed in the May newsletter. You may contact me until June 20 at the following address:

Fred "Garbo" Garver  
Clown in Residence  
Baxter State School For the Deaf  
P.O.Box 799  
Portland, Maine 04104  
(207) 781-3165

Michael Moschen cont.

It's true. Michael Moschen is easy-going, moves beautifully, and although his is not a comedy act, his reserve of clownishness highlights certain moments: one by one, several balls, each looking like an egg in the nest of his hair, roll off his head; Michael staggers forward to catch each one. It is not a trick. It contains a trick. It is an expert integration of movement, rhythm, character, and virtuosity.

Still, he wants me to know, he is a juggler first and a performer second. In truth, he thinks very much like a performer. He knows what he is doing each second. His approach is through movement and space. He likes to watch movement and find logical progression in it. Michael Moschen has a quiet trick as he finishes his three ball act. He blows on a ball and it rolls along the "v" made by two fingers and hangs just underneath, gently defying gravity. He likes that little blowing bit not as a gimmick, but as a quiet finish to his act. "It's an illusion, something a little strange. A little nothing."

## CALENDAR

continued.....

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON: Various activities are held in the Seattle area, including scheduled events at the Seattle Center. Please call the Jugglers' Hotline at (206) 778-3737 for details.

#### NEW YORK JUGGLE-IN

The Columbia Jugglers' Association is sponsoring its second annual mini-convention on the Columbia University campus at 10 o'clock on Saturday, the 28th of April. Refreshments will be served, and we may even get the TV cameras out there like last year!

The C.U. campus is at 116th St. and Broadway, right on a local stop of the 7th Ave. IRT subway. When you come out of the subway, pass through the large gate (you can't miss it) and then turn right after walking about 100 yards, where jugglers should be in evidence. In case of rain, come on Sunday, April 29. For further information, Call Dave Thomson at (212) 663-5425.

Fires involving flammable liquids should not be fought with water - CO2 or dry chemical extinguishers, or foam, are highly recommended. If nothing else is available, smother the fire with a coat or blanket. And DON'T juggle fire in a nursing home (most states have special ordinances prohibiting open flames other than cigarettes in nursing homes and hospitals). I hope the escapades of the CIRCUS FARCE-US serves as a lesson for any of us who crave the adventure of fire juggling - THINK BEFORE ACTING.

SQUE

### 32nd ANNUAL IJA CONVENTION

The IJA will hold its annual convention at Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts. The convention will run for five days: Tuesday, July 17, through Sunday, July 22, 1979. Convention chairpersons are Eric Roberts and John Robertson, 149 Larch Road, Cambridge, MA 02138.

## ADS

GEMINI JUGGLERS PROPS: new! white, one piece molded unbreakable polypropylene OCTAGONAL club. \$7 each. European clubs: plain, \$5; with rubber tips, \$6; decorated (any combination of gold, silver, red, black, copper, or blue) \$10. Lacrosse balls: orange or white, \$1.25 each. Write for catalog. Make checks payable to Rob Leith. Please add 10 percent to order for shipping and handling. Gemini Jugglers, 15 Pier Lane, Roseland, NJ 07068 (201) 347-0270.

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### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

This may seem like an odd request, but I was hoping your organization could possibly provide me with some information.

I have been looking for a special type of juggling ball that is heat sensitive, and changes colors according to varying degrees of warmth. However, I have not had any luck finding these. I have been told they do exist ... but where? Would you know of any place where I could obtain these?

Any information you could provide me with would be greatly appreciated since I would love to get them for a very special juggler. Thanks very much for any help you can give me!

Sincerely,  
Christine Honig  
c/o University Santa Clara  
Credit and Collection Office  
Santa Clara, CA 95053

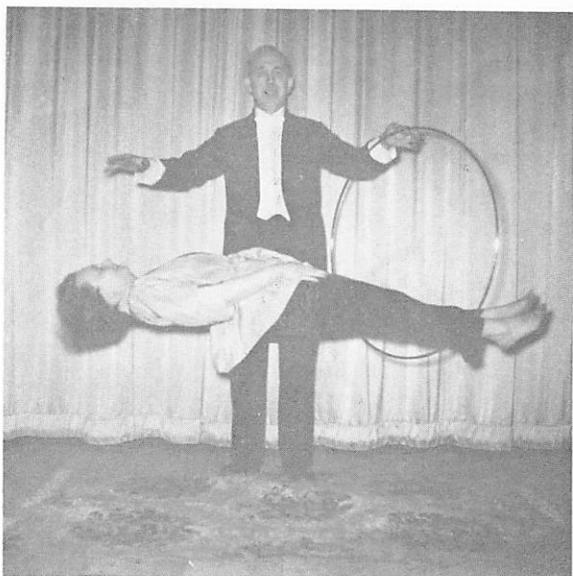
Dear Donna,

... Would you mention in the coming newsletters that there is a lone juggler in the Far East looking for anyone passing through to pass a few!?! I have yet to meet a juggler here since I arrived exactly one year ago today. I have been spreading the joy of juggling to many but I've yet to pass clubs or hoops. I am a former member of the PVJA in Massachusetts. The Loco-Motion Circus are my mentors and I would love to hear from any friends or foes I've left behind. (Hashim - where are you?)

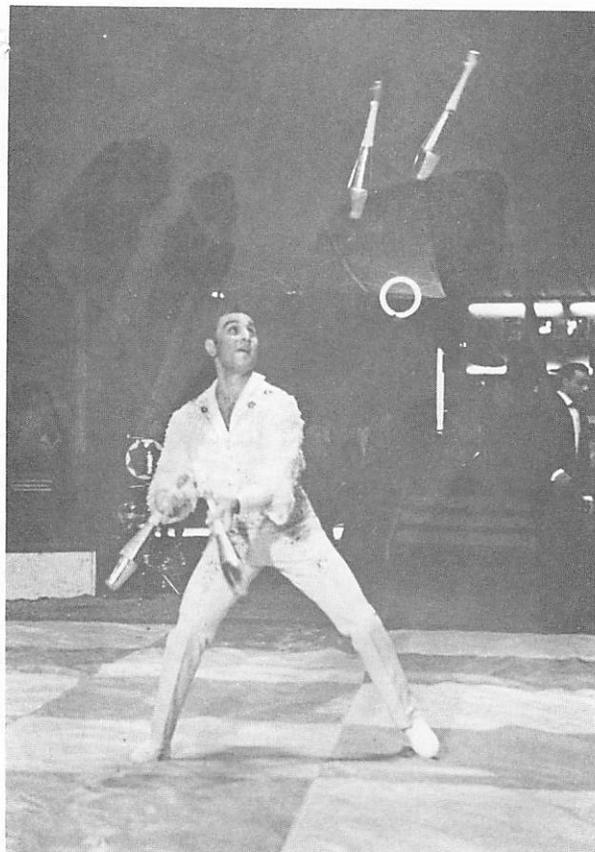
Best regards to all -  
Willy Fallon  
Foster Parents Plan  
P.O. Box 2736  
Manila, Philippines

### NOTICE TO PROPMAKERS

The IJA is compiling a list of propmakers, which will be sent out to new members. If you would like to be included in this flyer please send your name, address, a short description of your equipment, and other pertinent information to Donna DiMeo, IJA Newsletter Editor 40E Village Green, Budd Lake, NJ 07828. (201) 347-0283



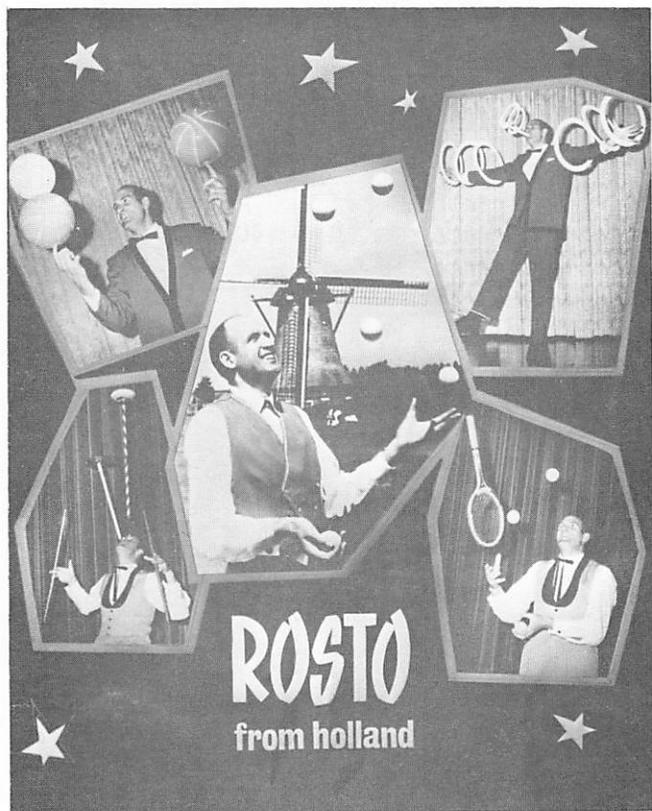
**Harold Black 1961**



**Eduardo Raspini 1963**

**Photos courtesy of  
Buzz Buzby**

**1967**



**1953**





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