

THE CHARACTERS OF THE CASTLE

by Harry Evry

The year is 1910. You have been invited to a gala celebration in Hollywoodland at the home of the most magnificent wizard. Your host, an eccentric, world-renowned magician has invited you and a group of the most elite, magical, brilliant, powerful and often quite amusing practitioners of the magical arts to join him for dinner and an evening of fun, mystery and imagination.

You enter through a secret door and beyond it find a labyrinth full of the most amazing sites and the most remarkable people. Imagine, if you will, deep in the most creative and romantic recesses of your mind, the amazing adventure awaits you there in every room and around every corner.

That is the promise of The Magic Castle. That is the challenge that Milt Larsen and William Larsen Jr. have offered and extended to each of us who make The Magic Castle our clubhouse, our show place and our magical home away from home. We, every one of us, are the players, the characters and the actors on this unique stage, bringing to life not just one amazing adventure, but an evolving ever-changing array of magical moments and fantastic adventures for each other and the constant parade of guests we invite nightly to join us.

Whether we call ourselves members, performers, employees, magicians, knights, volunteers or honored guests, we are all charged every night with the opportunity, the privilege and the sacred mission to imagine, improvise and play our part. We have the power and the duty to help craft, define and bring more spark and new life to these magical adventures.

We have the freedom to participate and enjoy the nightly adventure ourselves, but with that freedom we should accept our own share of responsibility to enrich and enhance that magical journey for ourselves, our guests and for each other.

Imagine yourself, again, back in 1910, in this remarkable, mysterious, magical house, high on the Hollywoodland skyline. Now imagine yourself not as the newly invited neophyte simply exploring and taking it all in, but as one of those remarkable, fascinating personalities, that powerful conjurer, fascinating celebrity, mysterious sorcerer, crafty inventor or brilliant mage.

As Harry Anderson said so eloquently when he spoke on the afternoon of his birthday in the Palace of Mystery this fall, "It is not necessary that you make yourself into a character. Just know that whether you plan it or not, you will be seen as a character. So isn't it far better for all of us to think about how we want to be seen and remembered?"

The Castle is a magical place. It has been bringing fantasies to life now every night for 50 years. There are many in the Castle today who are striving to continue to make it physically, creatively, organizationally and technically all the more magical and amazing but, like any home, it is the occupants, the family members that make it truly unique.



As we begin our 50th year, let us stop and pay tribute to all those amazing characters, those people who night after night have helped make the Castle the most magical experience in the world. From Castle legends like Milt and William Larsen Jr., Dai Vernon and Mark Wilson to the contagious smile of Jack Goldfinger, the humble, quiet brilliance of Howard Hamburg, the dark powerful presence of Max Maven, the odd, uneasy quirkiness of Rob Zabrecky, and the sweet gentle chuckle of El Ropo himself. All are certainly characters of the most wonderful, fascinating and memorable kind.

We could fill the next 20 pages and still not pay homage to even a small sampling of the amazing men and women

whose characters have graced and in many ways defined The Magic Castle. I hope, throughout this 50th year, we will all have the chance to look back and salute the Don Lawtons, John Shrumms, Jay Oses, Cary Grants, Yale Gracees, Orson Welles, Johnny Carsons and so many, many more who have left and continue to leave their magical stamp on the Castle.

Yet, as we look back at the amazing characters of our first 50 years, let us all take this chance to examine our own unique character, our own equally powerful role that only we can play.

Let us each for ourselves, define how today, here in the Castle's 50th year of magical dreams, we can make our own character, our own captivating role, the most magical, memorable, enchanting and delightful addition to this unique, ever-growing, ever-evolving marvel of experiential entertainment and interactive theater, we lovingly call The Magic Castle.

Harry is a producer, technical director, designer, programmer, author, editor, fx supervisor, composer, magician and imagineer. He currently serves as a member of the Innovation Committee, The Media Committee and 50th Anniversary Committee. He has had the privilege of contributing to many very well-known brands, shows, parks and attractions but is proudest of his contributions here at our world-famous Magic Castle.