



ZELDA THE PSYCHIC CHICKEN

OUTERBRIDGE

I first met Zelda in 1995. At the time I had already performed with doves, rabbits and a duck by the name of Elliot, and I was looking for a feathered friend who enjoyed traveling, was low-maintenance, and possessed some kind of psychic abilities. My previous experience with a duck who drank heavily and was very high-maintenance encouraged me to look at other types of birds. I had worked with doves for years, and to me a chicken was just a large dove. I held auditions at local chicken farms and when I met Zelda it was love at first sight. Her bubbly, flirtatious persona and striking buff-colored feathers were irresistible, and I offered her a contract on the spot. I also discovered that Zelda's

parents lived with Celine Dione, which explained Zelda's charismatic flair for show business.

As I got to know Zelda I discovered that she could communicate by laying eggs. In fact if a person were to think of a particular color, Zelda could lay a colored egg that matched. I decided to put this amazing phenomenon into the show as soon as possible. I would place Zelda in an isolation chamber with two rollers on the front. A spectator would choose a color at random and then Zelda would lay a coloured egg and feed it through the rollers. As a result a large flat egg would emerge through the rollers and the color would match.



TED AND MARION OUTERBRIDGE

Ted Outerbridge has been hailed by critics as “the most successful professional magician in Canada” and “a champion of magic.” Performing professionally since 1982, Ted Outerbridge has been featured in theatres from coast to coast and on both sides of the Atlantic, where he set box office records with his tours *Illusions*, *Magician Extraordinaire*, *Magical Moments in Time*, and *The Time Capsule Tour*.

Marion Outerbridge joined the Ted Outerbridge *Magician Extraordinaire* show as a dancer and lead assistant in 1999. Marion quickly became an integral part of the show, and became Ted’s partner, on and off the stage. In 2006, Marion and Ted celebrated the ultimate magical moment in time when they were married in Düsseldorf, Germany. The chemistry between Marion and Ted onstage is phenomenal, and it’s clear that they are having the time of their lives.

Ted and Marion invite you to contact them to discuss a project, or if you find yourself in the Montreal area get in touch with them to arrange an appointment.

Unfortunately Zelda had a tendency to forget to let go of the egg and she too would often be flattened by the rollers. The “pressed chicken” situation was not a big deal, however, as I always traveled with a bicycle pump, and Marion or I would pump her back up when necessary.

After a few years of performing with Zelda she confessed that she felt unsatisfied and she wanted a bigger

role in the show. Zelda had recently watched *Chicken Run*, a movie involving a scene with a chicken cannon, and Zelda was anxious to try a similar death-defying stunt. My first reaction, of course, was concern for Zelda’s safety, but she eventually managed to convince me that it would be safe. I spent weeks in my workshop and eventually emerged with a gorgeous chicken cannon. Zelda was placed into the chicken cannon and a large explosion of feathers burst out of the cannon, and Zelda would then reappear in a cage on the other side

of the stage. This new illusion was a huge hit and Zelda became the highlight of our show. We always meet with our audiences after our performances but Zelda became the main attraction. Her autographed 8x10s outsold ours 10-to-1. When we asked spectators what they most enjoyed in our show, the answer was always Zelda! After several years of touring with Zelda, Marion and I had to admit that we were no longer the stars of our show; we had been upstaged by a chicken and it was Zelda our audiences wanted to see. Reluctantly we adapted to this situation and got used to theatres giving Zelda the star dressing room while we were relegated to the chorus dressing room. Our technical rider specified "Fresh broccoli or carrot or whole kernel canned corn for Zelda the Psychic Chicken" and this was never overlooked. Our lunch may have been forgotten, but never Zelda's.

Traveling with Zelda presented a few problems. Zelda was in an intimate relationship with another hen and she insisted on traveling with her companion at all times. We did not want the media or the public to get word of this situation, so we had to be very discreet. Hotels are also concerned that a chicken might trash a room, so a security deposit is usually required when checking in. We managed to get around these issues by concealing Zelda's large dog kennel cage in a hockey bag. As we tour during hockey season, a hockey bag was never questioned.

We pampered Zelda with fresh vegetables and fruit on a daily basis and Zelda, who was an early riser, never hesitated to remind us of our obligations. Marion loved to offer Zelda treats before performances, and Zelda was particularly fond of grapes, but after a "special" experience involving a very large wet mess onstage, I convinced Marion that it was better to reward Zelda after the show, not before. When staying in hotels, Zelda would take over the bathtub when she was not answering her fan mail. We lined it with plastic and then spread a layer of fresh woodchips on the bottom. In theatres, we set up a fenced area around Zelda's cage so she could stretch her wings without being bothered by admiring fans.

I have spent much time and energy sending out press releases and promoting our performances, but nothing prepared me for the media frenzy which revolved around Zelda in April 1999. We were in Fredericton, New Brunswick to give a pre-game performance



Crying Fowl

The Fredericton Canadiens have ruffled the feathers of a magician for making light of the loss of his chicken

By KATHY KAUFIELD

FREDERICTON – Zelda, touted as the only chicken in the world to be shot from a cannon, is dead.

And the young chicken died right here in the capital city as a result of an unfortunate accident at a Fredericton Canadiens hockey game.

The bizarre incident has left a magician infuriated and some fans amused. But worst of all, says Zelda's owner, are the "sick" jokes about his star chicken's untimely demise.

It all began Sunday afternoon during the pre-game show before the final regular-season home game of the American Hockey League Canadiens, who are leaving Fredericton at the end of this season.

Quebec magician Ted Outerbridge wowed fans by performing several illusions, including a crowd-pleasing trick which makes it appear as if a chicken is shot from a cannon.

After finishing her appearance, Zelda was placed inside a prop and safely stowed backstage.

Not knowing that Zelda was



Karen Ruet/Special to the Telegraph Journal

Magician Ted Outerbridge, with the new Zelda, is upset his loss was taken so lightly.

inside the prop, a stagehand hired by the Canadiens stacked several pieces of equipment on top of the chicken

and then left. Crushed under the weight of the equipment, Zelda
See FOWL, A12

for the American Hockey League's Fredericton Canadiens team. During the performance Zelda's body double was placed in the chicken cannon and was apparently blasted across the stage, and Zelda appeared in a cage as usual. Zelda's body double remained inside the chicken cannon prop which was moved backstage. Later during the performance, a local stage hand stacked some props on top on Zelda's body double, which smothered her. Following the performance we discovered that Zelda's companion and body double was dead. We were devastated!

The following morning I received a call from the local newspaper, the Daily Gleaner. Apparently they had received a press release from the

Fredericton Canadians stating that I "was all choked up over my chicken" and that chicken wings would be on special at the rink. The death of Zelda's body double was blamed on two men nicknamed "Chicken Lips" and "Feathers". I explained that I thought the press release was in very poor taste as the chicken had been our pet. The next day Zelda made the front page of the Daily Gleaner. The following day Zelda made the front page of the provincial newspaper, The New Brunswick Telegraph Journal with the headline "Crying Fowl", while radio phone in shows focussed on the situation. On day three Zelda made the front page of the National Post, a national newspaper, with a story titled Fredericton Team Needs Chicken Sensitivity Training with the sub-headline

"We don't have the flag at half mast". Finally on day four Zelda received a call inviting us to appear on Late Show with David Letterman! Unfortunately we were unable to make the Letterman appearance due to our tour schedule.

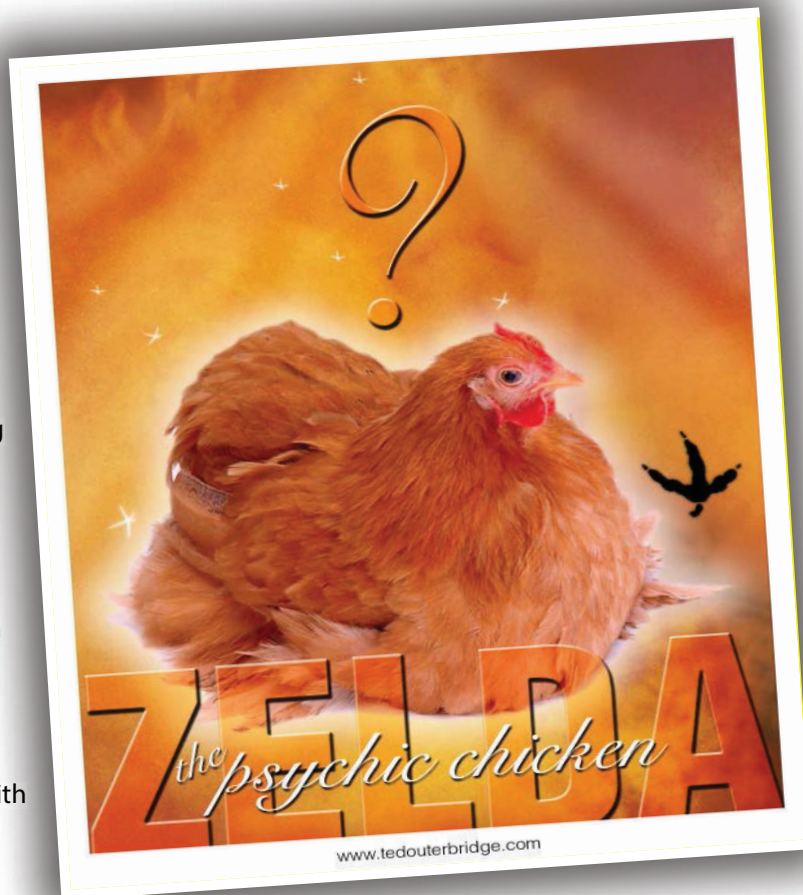
Zelda retired from show business in 2010 and spent most of her retirement in our garden, but she always slept indoors in her chicken condo. Thanks to the brilliant and talented Steve Spill, Zelda's successor was found in a mind-reading goose by the name of Greta. Greta's first performances with us were in 2011 at the prestigious Bermuda Festival of the Performing Arts. "Talk about pressure," Greta honked. "I thought my goose was cooked! I was the successor to Zelda the Psychic

Chicken so I had some impressive feathers to fill." Greta has since adapted to our grueling tour schedule and she is enjoying her role in the show, while we are adjusting to traveling in V-formation.

Greta the Psychic Goose is no spring chicken when it comes to show business. She has an impressive track record including network television and Las Vegas appearances. The press has hailed her performances as "cagey, soaring and flighty." When she is not migrating to the next theatre, Greta enjoys nesting by the fireplace with a glass of Goslings Rum or a Grey Goose Martini, and reading such classics as Birds of America, Goosebumps and Mother Goose, or taking a gander at the latest Ryan Gosling film. "He's one honker of a man!" Greta cackles.

Greta has a gaggle of Facebook fans from as far away as Goose Lake, Oregon and Gander, Newfoundland. She enjoys staying in touch with them all on her Greta the Psychic Goose Facebook page and YouTube channel.

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