

Alumni and Friends

Alumni Spotlight - Mike D'Urzo (BA '07)

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Mike D'Urzo (BA '07) graduated from LA&PS and is an international award winning magician and mentalist. He performs hundreds of shows annually for some of the largest corporations, theatres and television networks across North America. Mike was the winner of the 2014 Canadian Entertainer of the Year at the Canadian Event Industry Awards and a seven-time Performer of the Year presented by Festivals and Events Ontario. We talked briefly about his experience at York and what impact his time here had on his career.

Q: Can you tell us a little bit about why you chose to attend York and study within the Specialized Communications Program?

A: I've always been interested in the entertainment industry and I knew that the Communications Studies Department would give me insight into both the business world and the media landscape. I had already been performing as a magician leading up to coming to York, and I wanted to round out my knowledge about the business side of things so that I could take my career to the next level.



Q: How did the communications program impact your work?

A: York gave me a solid foundation from which I've been able to build my profile and business to where I am today. Gaining experience in managing administrative duties and client relations isn't directly related to the performative aspects of being a professional magician, but they are integral parts of running a successful touring production company and managing a creative business.

During my final year in the Specialized Comms Program, I was able to participate in an amazing internship with Sony Pictures working on publicity events and promotions for the film industry. During TIFF I was given the opportunity to perform magic and assist in the production of several A-list events. Being a part of that atmosphere and connecting with stars like Will Ferrell, Robin Williams, Dustin Hoffman and Sean Penn was an impactful experience for me.

Q: Is there an accomplishment that stands out in your memory as a truly unique and special?

A: Throughout my time at York University I was one of the leaders of the York U Magic Club. While participating and networking through that group I was introduced to an agent that managed a large number of English schools in China.

He hired me to perform live magic at his schools and in public centres, and I did... to roughly half a million people over 2 months! Magic was the universal language that captured the audience's imaginations and brought life to the campaign. That incredible feeling of performing on such a grand scale will stay with me forever.

Q: Have you kept in contact with York much since graduation?

A: Throughout the years I've been happy to connect with the York community. I was recently a guest Alumni Judge at the Expression Fest Talent Competition hosted by Students For York. I was honored to perform at the Glendon 50th Anniversary Party, and I have hosted groups of Alumni at my live shows in past. I think staying connected to York as an alumnus is important because it allows me to network and learn from others. I feel a strong tie with the University and it has been a large part of my professional development and my life. It's helped to form me into the person that I am today.

Q: If you could give advice to yourself 15 years ago, what would it be?

A: Stay true to yourself and pursue the passions that inspire you and feel right. I've often said that if I can make a living doing magic shows, then really, anyone can make a living doing anything! Dedication, passion and determination are essential when striving to reach your goals.

Learn more about Mike by visiting www.megamagic.ca [<http://www.megamagic.ca>].

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