

Illusionist keeps audience guessing

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – It was hard to applaud when all I wanted to do was figure out what just happened.

I never figured it out.

Joseph Gabriel, the 2009 Best Stage Magician, dazzled a nearly full house Saturday on opening night of his nine-day stint at MontBleu.



Joseph Gabriel
is at MontBleu
through Jan.
3.

Birds are something this illusionist is known for. They kept appearing and disappearing without any rhyme or reason.

Why they don't just fly off is a mystery unto itself.

Audience participation is a huge part of the night. Don't sit up front if you are shy.

Ashley, who lives on the South Shore and isn't fond of birds, was selected to hold a box. She looked "nothing" in it. Before she knew it a bird flew from the container she was holding.

She told her tablemates she didn't feel any movement in the box, nor did the weight of it change.

Hmmm.

Head scratching was a big part of the evening as Gabriel and the women he works with, including his wife, Katalin, kept pulling off one illusion after another.

People seemed to be cut in half and stuffed in boxes. Just when Gabriel walked into a box he came out under a drape of sorts. How he got from Point A to Point B is still a mystery.

One woman ended up in the audience " even though the audience thought she was in a box on stage.

Gabriel brought a guy from the Bay Area on stage who was supposed to mimic his every move and voice command. The guy did OK right until the end. Gabriel was able to turn shredded paper into a hat for the guest. The participant could only place pieces of paper on Gabriel's head.

Juggler Bryson Lang added to the show with his ability to bounce, toss and spin various size balls.

This is one of those shows where sitting close is a good idea. Gabriel isn't Siegfried + Roy of Las Vegas and white tiger fame, but he is good. The price for the 90-minute show is worth it. Plus, it would make for a good family outing.

Things to know:

• Joseph Gabriel will be at MontBleu in Stateline through Jan. 3

• Adult tickets \$29.95, \$12.95 for those 17 and younger

• www.tickemaster.com, 800.648.3353

• Show starts at 8pm, doors open at 7:30pm