

THANK YOU ALLAKAZAM TEAM

By Mark Wilson

As I think back to what happened during the production of *The Magic Land of Allakazam*, I realize what an extremely lucky guy I was, because of the incredible people who made up of our production group, and how essential it was that we all worked together on every trick in every show. We were really a team, and even more importantly, I now know, actually more of a “magical family.” Each person on the show understood that “Everybody does everything and anything that needs to happen” In order to perform the first magic series on network televi-

sion, you need a number of vital elements every week. One of the most important, you must have a beautiful girl assistant. No, what I actually had was a costar. I was incredibly fortunate to have the lovely Nani Darnell. If I had auditioned hundreds, or even thousands of girls, I could not have found any one as perfect as the beautiful Nani Darnell. She played, (and was divided into), many parts (pun intended), or appeared in some way in a different, baffling illusion every week.

But that was just the start. Nani

was also in charge of all the costumes for the entire case and any cloth Magic props we required, such as banners, foulards, trick handkerchiefs, etc., (including any costume required for Basil the Baffling Bunny).

We always rehearsed late on Friday nights — usually until at least 1:00 AM. Even though we would shoot the show on Saturday, Nani would get up early and fix my eggs and bacon breakfast, before we went to the studio. Now that’s dedication!

Another very talented person,

who appeared on every *Allakazam* show as Rebo the Clown, was Bev Bergeron. I find now that I appreciate Rebo’s ability more and more with every year that passes.

There was not enough time or money to produce a different 30 minutes of magic every week, but, as I have mentioned before, we did it anyway. There were a number of reasons we could accomplish this, and one of the primary ones was Bev Bergeron. Bev’s vast magical background, shown through to me, (but not to the viewers), on every show. He was constantly devising funny things for Rebo to do. Making my magic better, Bev was capable of cleverly sneaking anything I needed to me on-camera, using his inherent ability for misdirection, which dis-

tracted those watching at home and in the studio audience as well.

Bev was also an important member of our creative group. By

finding elusive acquisitions, or special knowledge requirements, all depending on what we needed immediately for this Saturday or were planning to use again on an upcoming show. But Bev was always there, constantly contributing his thoughts and ideas. Yes, Bev Bergeron was a vital factor in the continuing success of the *Allakazam* shows.

It becomes more obvious to me, we could not have had a better or more Ingenious prop builder than Johnny Gaughan, who is now generally recognized as the finest builder of magic in the world. But this was not always so.

When Johnny first went to work for us back in Dallas, Texas, he was 14 years old and much too young to drive. So, Nani would pick him up when he was leaving high school



CONGRATULATIONS!
IT WAS AN EXCITING
BUSINESS TO MAKE
THE ILLUSIONS
FOR ALLAKAZAM.
HARD TO BELIEVE
SO MUCH TIME
HAS GONE BY.
IT WAS GREAT FUN!
MARK AND NANI...
KEEP IT UP!
JOHN DANIEL



To learn to convincingly vanish a coin, we first study the “for real.” We observe how our hands would look if we could really do it by magic, and then, using sleights, try to approximate this as closely as possible.

Mark & Nani: Your ground-breaking shows are the “for real.” They are the gold standard which the rest of us try to reach if we could do it as magically as you. Thank you for setting the bar so high back then, for now, and for many generations to come.

– Michael Brandwein

