

13.

The lens (13) had a diaphragm so that the light could be reduced while the lantern was near the screen and turned full up when furthest away (EE). A coloured glass screen could be inserted at (V) for special effects or to superimpose another picture – a sort of dissolving view effect which we are going to discuss another time. To insert different focal length lenses, the whole system could be removed and replaced with another one. For example, Robertson used microscope projection, so that a small insect could be very much enlarged and appear like some incredible monster on the screen!



**PHANTASMAGORIA**  
THIS and every EVENING,  
AT THE  
LYCEUM, STRAND.

14.

In the winter of 1801 the Phantasmagoria came to London. They were introduced by the conjurer Paul de Philipsthal (that wasn't his real name!) at the Lyceum theatre in the Strand. This illustration is from his play-bill (14). The show was so popular that similar phantasmagoria sprang up all over London and the provinces, even Madame Tussaud had a travelling phantasmagoria and waxwork show. Together with Philipsthal they appeared in Ireland and the Isle of Man. All this required a good deal of capital and complex stage management: you had to hire a small theatre and set up your projection equipment, your sound-effects, get the publicity material printed, and produce your performances on time every time. In other words, these were proper stage performances.

These professionals took over from the poverty-stricken itinerant showmen who, with a lantern on their back, had travelled all over Europe and England during the previous century. Pictures of ghosts and devils were their bread-and-butter subjects and a man with a hurdy-gurdy provided the musical accompaniment. At least a show was good for a meal and a few coins. These so-called Galantie shows became a permanent fixture of London life at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, specially around Christmas time.

I want to end this lecture by showing you some of the slides which these showmen might have used, in fact, these are so old that they may have once belonged to one of them. May I just mention that they are all hand-painted using varnish colours. To my mind, they have always been the essence of British folk-art of that time and I hope that, like me, you enjoy their glorious colours and their primitive directness and humour.

The next lecture will deal with the development of the lantern from about 1820, moving slides, the first mass-produced slides, and dissolving views.

**BOOK REVIEWS**

We present two views of Richard Balzer's recent book – one broadly *for* and the other decidedly *against*. This he appears to have published himself – and illustrated with photographs of items from his own collection – although, curiously, neither of these things is confirmed by the book itself.

Richard Balzer

**OPTICAL AMUSEMENTS**

**Magic Lanterns and Other Transforming Images**  
**A catalog of popular entertainments**

[Boston, MA?]: [Author?], c.1987. 280x216mm, 81 pages

**BOOK REVIEW : ONE**

**A GOOD PICTURE REFERENCE**

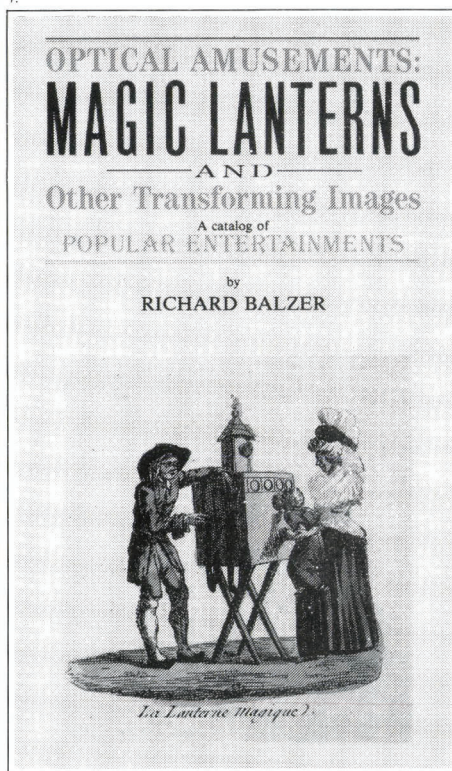
R. G. MORRIS

This is a book catalogue to support the exhibition held at the Museum of Our National Heritage, Boston, USA, which was part of the Magic Lantern Society of the United States of America and Canada's Convention of June 1987. Richard Balzer is the current Chairman of the Society and has published this illustrated catalogue which shows a major part of his own private collection. In itself it is an interesting record of one man's collection and is a good picture reference book for collectors, giving many examples of American pre-cinema collectables that are not readily available in Great Britain and Europe. The quality of the colour is excellent, but some black and white illustrations are not up to the same standard. The book is in three main sections, the first forty pages are mainly illustrations of magic lanterns, accessories, slides and ephemera. The next section has nearly twenty pages illustrating many facets of Peepshows, Panoramas, and Dioramas. The last section of the book – titled 'Optical Illusions and Persistence of Vision' contains numerous illustrations of Thaum-

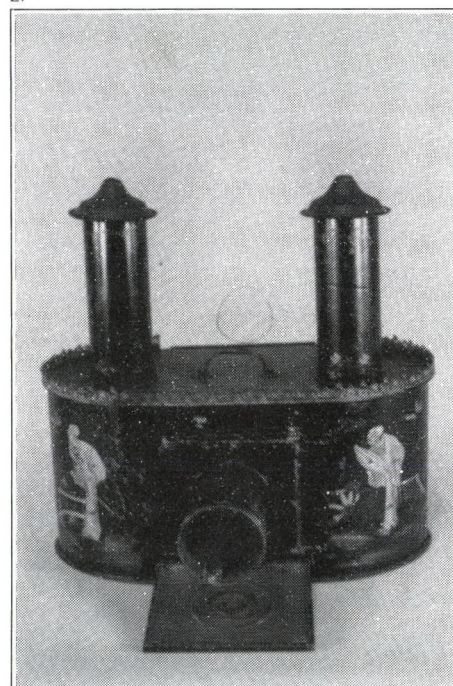
tropes, Phenakistoscopes, the Ludoscope (an American phenomenon) and others, finishing with 'flick-books'.

The inevitable mistitling of some plates is understandable, despite rigid checks and proof reading, it happens to all of us. The text, although sparse, supports the basic concepts of the illustrations and exhibition. The book includes a chronology of each section and a short general bibliography. The chronology of pre-cinema development and invention is a good quick reference list and ideal for the beginner, although a certain amount of *investing* takes place. Some inventors did invest in their own inventions but perhaps it is Dick's thinking every time he buys a new piece for this grand collection! The short bibliography is by no means new, but it does give another anagram for author C. W. Marec. Despite these minor criticisms this is an excellent addition to the library of every collector and researcher of magic lanterns and optical toys, although a paperback, there were some hardback copies available.

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LAMPATORAMA LANTERNA MAGICA — Frankreich, Delagrave, Paris, 1882, hand-painted chinoiserie design, 11" high.