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THIRTEEN's *American Masters* Series Launches 29th Season with its First Profile of a Magician

Ricky Jay: Deceptive Practice *premieres nationwide
Friday, January 23 on PBS*

*Preview video and connect with more than 200 cultural icons at
pbs.org/americanmasters*

For the first time, THIRTEEN's [American Masters](http://pbs.org/americanmasters) series profiles a magician: the inimitable Ricky Jay, considered one of the world's greatest conjurers, capable of creating a profound sense of wonder and disbelief in even the most jaded of audiences. He is also a best-selling author, historian, actor and a leading collector of antiquarian books and artifacts.

Launching the series' 29th season, ***American Masters — Ricky Jay: Deceptive Practice*** premieres nationwide Friday, January 23, 9-10 p.m. on PBS (check local listings) and journeys into the mysterious world of sleight-of-hand and the small circle of eccentrics who are its perpetual devotees. Told largely in Jay's own distinctive voice, the documentary traces the story of his achievement, beginning at age 4 as apprentice to his grandfather Max Katz, an accomplished amateur magician, and features rare footage of some of the most influential magicians of the 20th century: Cardini, Slydini, Al Flosso, Dai Vernon and Charles Miller.

Narrated by Dick Cavett, ***American Masters — Ricky Jay: Deceptive Practice*** weaves together new interviews with Jay, his friends and collaborators, including writer/director David Mamet, and rare performance footage from his one-man shows and classic TV appearances, among them a hilarious turn with Steve Martin on Dinah Shore's 1970s

program. Filmmakers Molly Bernstein (editor, *American Masters — Jerome Robbins: Something to Dance About*) and Alan Edelstein (Oscar-nominated producer, *The Wizard of Strings*) explore the arduous demands of the magician’s craft, the use of language and storytelling central to the art, and this ancient tradition’s future.

“All the arts are forms of magic, and the wonderment, mystery and pure joy of seeing a master like Ricky Jay perform is a thrill like no other,” says Michael Kantor, executive producer of *American Masters*. “This intimate film makes you marvel at his genius and allows you to peek behind the curtain at many of the greatest magicians of the last century.”

“I am truly honored to be included in this iconic series, and grateful to be able to introduce viewers to the great sleight-of-hand artists who were my mentors and my inspiration,” says Ricky Jay.

Launched in 1986 by series creator Susan Lacy, *American Masters* has earned 28 Emmy Awards — including 10 for Outstanding Non-Fiction Series since 1999 and five for Outstanding Non-Fiction Special — 12 Peabodys, an Oscar, three Grammys, two Producers Guild Awards and many other honors. Now beginning its 29th season on PBS, the series is a production of [THIRTEEN PRODUCTIONS LLC](#) for [WNET](#).

To take *American Masters* beyond the television broadcast and further explore the themes, stories and personalities of masters past and present, the companion website (<http://pbs.org/americanmasters>) offers streaming video of select films, interviews, photos, outtakes, essays and other resources. *American Masters* is also seen on the WORLD channel.

American Masters — Ricky Jay: Deceptive Practice is a production of Hopscotch Films. Molly Bernstein is producer, director and editor. Alan Edelstein is producer and co-director. Alicia Sams and Philip Dolin are producers. Cathy Greenwold and Terry Gross are executive producers. Edward Marritz, Joey Forsythe and Ben Wolf are cinematographers with original music by Olivier and Clare Manchon. Michael Kantor is executive producer for *American Masters*.

American Masters is made possible by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Rosalind P. Walter, Rhoda Herrick, The Blanche & Irving Laurie Foundation, Vital Projects Fund, Jack Rudin, The André and Elizabeth Kertész Foundation, Michael & Helen Schaffer Foundation and public television viewers.

About WNET

As New York’s flagship public media provider and the parent company of [THIRTEEN](#) and [WLIW21](#) and operator of [NJTV](#), WNET brings quality arts, education and public affairs programming to more than 5 million viewers each week. WNET produces and presents such acclaimed PBS series as [Nature](#), [Great Performances](#), [American Masters](#), [PBS NewsHour Weekend](#), [Charlie Rose](#) and a range of documentaries, children’s programs, and local news and cultural offerings available on air and online. Pioneers in educational programming, WNET has created such groundbreaking series as [Get the Math](#), [Oh Noah!](#) and [Cyberchase](#) and provides tools for educators that bring compelling content to life in the classroom and at home. WNET highlights the tri-state’s unique culture and diverse communities through [NYC-ARTS](#), [Reel 13](#), [NJTV News with Mary Alice Williams](#) and [MetroFocus](#), the multi-platform news magazine focusing on the New York region. WNET is also a leader in connecting with viewers on emerging platforms, including the [THIRTEEN Explore App](#) where users can stream PBS content for free.

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