

houses, and the Grand Theatre has seats that shake in sync with the onstage action.

The statistics are very impressive, as are the onstage special effects that are created by all that super technology. But there is one element the computers can't add: Heart. That's where David Cassidy comes in. Even though the popular TV star, recording artist and Broadway actor is dwarfed by the spectacular scenery in certain parts of the show, all that machinery can't dwarf his ability to bring it all together and make it mean something by injecting the human element.

Despite all the computers, the real theme of "EFX" is one man's battle to reacquire his lost ability to dream, to use his imagination and to achieve new success.

"When I first saw the show [with the previous cast], I was blown away by the visuals," Cassidy said. "It is indeed a technical masterpiece, but I thought I could give it something different to contrast with all those larger-than-life elements — a humorous, human quality."

As the show begins, Cassidy isn't onstage, but in the audience, where he is a showroom busboy who is pining for his lost love. She has left him because, alas, he has lost his power of imagination and is just no fun to be with anymore. He befriends four powerful masters of the universe who bring him onstage and decide to help him regain his ability to dream and, thus, regain the love of his sweetheart.

This amazing quartet, the Master of Magic, the Master of Spirits, the Master of Time and the Master of Laughter, turn the job of restoring Cassidy's power of imagination into a contest.

First, the Master of Magic, played by David Marchain, sends David's skeptical busboy character to Camelot, where he becomes King Arthur and meets Merlin the Magician and the evil Morgana. A spectacular battle of fire-breathing dragons follows and Cassidy must summon the strength to extract the sword Excalibur from the stone and slay one of the beasts.

Next, the Master of Laughter, played by Stewart Daylida, turns Cassidy into famed circus showman P.T. Barnum, who created "The Greatest Show on Earth" more than a century ago. As his imagination returns and begins to grow,

Cassidy's incarnation of Barnum decides to go beyond the ordinary circus and dreams up the "Intergalactic Circus of Wonders." He succeeds by returning to the stage aboard an awesome spacecraft that would win the approval of the most dedicated *Star Wars* and *Star Trek* fans. The ensuing space age circus show, featuring a group of trapeze artists known as "The Flying Kaganovich Troupe," would have won the approval of the real Barnum and even Ed Sullivan.

When the Master of Spirits, played by Kevin Koebl, gets his turn with Cassidy, he turns him into legendary escape artist Harry Houdini and allows him to return to his beloved wife, Bess, via a seance. This sequence also includes a brief but well-executed retrospective of some of Houdini's most famous escapes.

With his powers of imagination almost completely restored, Cassidy's character gets word that his true love is being held captive by a futuristic and barbaric tribe of Morlocks who live in a huge underground cave. How does he get from Las Vegas to the future? The Master of Time, played by Paul May, turns him into time traveler H.G. Wells and furnishes him with an exact replica of the time machine from the classic Rob Taylor movie.

The time machine "flight" becomes a great 3-D viewing experience with a variety of imaginative effects coming off the stage directly at the audience. Of course, the underground cave scene and the battle that follows as the busboy rescues his true love and finds happiness is another triumph of special effects.

This unique show is presented Tuesdays through Saturdays at 7:30 and 10:30 p.m. Tickets are \$45 and \$63.45 plus tax. For tickets or more information, call the MGM Grand Hotel at 702-891-7777. 

