

Hypnotist looks to get 'everyone involved' in Alexandria performance

Mesmerizing Comedy

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Are you getting sleepy?

If so, comedy hypnotist The Incredible Boris could use your help when performs at 7 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 25, at the Best Western Inn and Suites Conference Center on MacArthur Drive.

Actually, it would be more accurate to say members of the audience will be performing, Boris Cherniak said. He'll just be giving them directions.

Yet, his show carries more than just laughs with it, he said. Cherniak describes himself as a "motivational hypnotist," though he does not necessarily cure anyone of bad habits nor is he prone to giving big speeches.

Cherniak's performances consist of setting up scenarios using his subjects that have negative tones and then helping those hypnotized to turn it around into something positive -- humorously, of course.

"There's so much negativity coming at us from all ends every day that you start to believe it," said Cherniak, a self-described "eternal optimist."

The optimism he demonstrates on stage is the same he lives his life by, Cherniak said.

The Toronto-based comedian ironically was skeptical about the possibilities of hypnosis when he started reading about it at the age of 15.

Cherniak said he was going through Morey Bernstein's "The Search for Bridey Murphy" -- the story of a woman who while under hypnosis retells events that occurred before her lifetime -- when he first became intrigued with the science and art of hypnosis.

Cherniak read everything he could find on the subject. Through the years, he honed his craft using willing friends and family members and eventually played his first show at age 17.

"I wasn't old enough to buy a drink where I was performing," Cherniak said

He obtained a degree in psychology in addition to a degree in computers -- which shares some parallel principles with hypnosis, Cherniak said.

"It's about giving logical commands," Cherniak said.

Now, more than 30 years later, Cherniak travels the world performing in front of thousands of people at a time during one of his more than 300 shows per year at comedy clubs, on television shows and for corporate events. He even has hypnotized people over the radio. After all, few hypnotists actually swing watches in front of their subjects' eyes.

However, the size of a venue like the one in which he'll perform in Alexandria allows for a different kind of show, Cherniak said.

"I like to play the smaller venues. They're more intimate," Cherniak said. "I can get everyone involved." Tickets to the show are \$25 and are available at Best Western and KLAX-TV Channel 31.



Boris "The Incredible Boris" Cherniak will perform at 7 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 25, at the Best Western Inn and Conference Center on MacArthur Drive in Alexandria. (Courtesy photo)

KNOW TO GO

What: Performance by comedy hypnotist The Incredible Boris

When: 7 p.m. Oct. 25

Where: Best Western Inn and Suites Conference Center, Alexandria

Cost: \$25