

Hypnotist show at Toronto CNE includes a marriage proposal

Darren Chow, 33, wanted it to be really special when he proposed to Christine Kou. So he enlisted the help of a hypnotist performing at the CNE.

By: [Jessica McDiarmid](#) News reporter, Published on Sat Aug 17 2013

It was an elaborate engagement, six weeks in the making.

Darren Chow wanted it to be special, really special, when he popped the question to Christine Kou, his girlfriend of six years.

“She’s waited this long, I didn’t want to do something that was mediocre,” said Chow, 33. “I wanted to do something that would really make her feel special.”

Coming to the Canadian National Exhibition is a yearly tradition for the Burlington couple. They often go see a hypnotist show there.



JESSICA MCDIARMID / TORONTO STAR

Darren Chow, 33, pretended to be hypnotized on stage at the CNE on Saturday before popping the question to his long-time girlfriend Christine Kou, 31. The audience swooned as Kou said 'yes.'

So Chow sent an email to Boris Cherniak, a hypnotist and comedian who performs as the Incredible Boris, asking for some help.

Cherniak replied within the hour.

“I’m all about making special moments and something like this will be remembered forever,” said Cherniak. “Not just for them, but everybody here.

“I wanted to be a part of it.”

Chow and Cherniak came up with a plan that went off without a hitch Saturday afternoon on the Variety Stage at the Exhibition Place grounds.

Cherniak was nearly finished his show, complete with the vacant-eyed volunteers performing Conga dances, “padding” down the Little Colorado River and lounging on a California beach, in front of hundreds of laughing CNE-goers.

Just in case anyone wasn’t convinced of the power of hypnosis, Cherniak told the crowd, he was going to do it once more.

He called for a volunteer from the audience and chose Chow, telling him to bring along his girlfriend.

Within seconds of taking to the stage, Chow appeared to be in a deep trance, head tilted back, eyes closed, as a collective “Wow” rippled over the audience.

Cherniak peppered Kou with questions about why they aren’t married and then ordered the “hypnotized” Chow to propose, only he wouldn’t be able to pronounce the words.

Head lolling, Chow eventually stuttered out a “will.”

Cherniak then pulled out some signs to “help” him, propping up four large placards against the slumbering volunteers still on stage. Someone in the crowd murmured, “Beautiful.”

The signs read, “Christine, will you marry me?”

She gasped as Chow broke into a wide smile and sank to one knee, ring held out in front of him.

And then she said, “Yes.”

The couple met through Lavalife. Chow had just enough credits left to “meet” one more person and then he was going to give up. The person he contacted was Kou, who was only partaking in online dating to support a friend.

When she sent him her picture, he thought it had to be a fake.

But it wasn’t. They’ve been together ever since.

On Saturday after lots of hugs, laughing and a few tears with a half-dozen friends who’d come to help Chow execute his plan, Kou, 31, said she was still shaking.

She said it was when the signs came out — which Chow, a designer, spent days filling with photo collages of the couple in the background — that she realized something was going on.

“I was like, what just happened? Is this real?” said Kou. “I knew he was going to be doing something special but I didn’t think it would be the CNE.

“My left hand is heavy now,” said Kou. “Exactly how I want it.”



Hypnotist Boris Cherniak was happy to help out as Darren Chow, 33, right, pretended to be hypnotized on stage at the CNE before asking long-time girlfriend Christine Kou, 31, to marry him.