

Local hypnotist nominated for Entertainer of the Year Award

The Incredible Boris got his start in hypnotism as a student at Newtonbrook by Lana Hall



Cherniak is nominated for the 2011 Entertainer of the Year Award

REPORT CARD

STUDENT 'The Incredible Boris' Cherniak
GRADUATED Newtonbrook High School, 1983
BEST SUBJECT Music
WORST SUBJECT English
CURRENT JOB Hypnotist

Boris Cherniak was in trouble. He was approaching customs in a Dubai airport, holding two global leadership awards given to him by Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan after performing several magic shows in the country.

The awards themselves were large and awkwardly shaped, twisted and sharp, too big to even fit in his suitcase.

The customs officers wouldn't let him take them on board. They could be used as weapons, they explained. They asked him where he'd gotten them.

"Sheikh Nahyan gave them to me," Cherniak told them.

The guards let him through.

For Cherniak, a hypnotist and comedian whose shows have him criss-crossing the globe, there are more stories where that one came from.

Currently, he is a finalist for a 2011 Entertainer of the Year Award.

Cherniak got his start as a student at Newtonbrook High

School when he stumbled across a copy of *The Search for Bridey Murphy*, a controversial book about hypnotic regression.

He continued reading about hypnotism while studying computer science at Seneca and

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tried out his newfound skills on friends and at parties.

"The computer thing was so I had something to fall back on, in case the magic didn't work out," he says. "But I guess I didn't need it."

In nearly 30 years, Cherniak

has travelled from Japan to Dubai to Amsterdam with his "comedy hypnotism" show, and he has performed in front of Sarah Ferguson, Jane Fonda and other big names.

Cherniak's tricks often feature him immersing his volunteers in extravagant delusions.

He once convinced someone they were a contestant on *American Idol*, but he's also been featured on the TV show *Maury*, to hypnotize people out of phobias.

About his recent nomination in an events industry competition, he says, "The fact that it's international is marvellous. I do spend a lot of time travelling."

In a year, he estimates he performs between 200 and 300 shows.

"I'm a working stiff," he says. "But there's nothing I love more in the world than my work."