

Amazing Kreskin Plays Garde and Z

Even now, he knows what you're thinking. No, it's not Santa Claus. He only knows if you've been naughty or nice. He can't read your mind.



But the Amazing Kreskin can, and he's been wowing audiences with his mind-reading abilities for more than 50 years. On January 14th, he'll be bringing his unique talents and astonishing show to the Zeiterion in New Bedford and the following evening, Jan 15, he performs at the Garde Arts Center in New London.

Born in New Jersey, Kreskin began performing at the age of 12. Speaking with him by phone recently, he told me he's done more than 200 appearances around the world this year alone. At the end of last March, he found out that he'd traveled, over the course of his career, three million miles by air.

One of the reasons for his longevity, Kreskin says, is that he's not competing with anyone else.

"For example, magicians are competing with other magicians. Nobody else is doing what I do."

His unique talents have provided him with a distinctive niche, which he has filled to the delight of audiences of all ages.

For those who don't know of Kreskin, he has been called a "hypnotist" and a "mentalist" or "thought reader." In his long career, he has appeared on "The Tonight Show" with Jonny Carson, "Late Night" with David Letterman, and "Late Night" with Jimmy Fallon, among many others. He had his own show, which ran in Canada during the first half of the '70s, and has appeared on Regis Philbin's shows 104 times.

Along with his incredible longevity, Kreskin has become part of the cultural lexicon. His name often appears in movies and television shows, including recent episodes of the shows "Fringe" and "NCIS." In 2008, John Malkovich played Kreskin on film, in a movie called The Great Buck Howard. According to Kreskin, Malkovich watched hundreds of hours of video to prepare for the role. Kreskin says, "Every

scene of a performance in that movie, I could tell you exactly which city that took place in.”

While there have, over the years, been audience members who were skeptical of his powers, Kreskin says there are fewer non-believers these days.

“I don’t experience as much skepticism anymore,” he says. “People just don’t seem as skeptical.”

He attributes that, in part, to the fact that nobody has ever been able to demonstrate or prove that his performance is fake. Eventually, he says, people just stopped looking for evidence that he was conning them and let themselves believe and enjoy the show.

Whether they are skeptical or not, Kreskin says his show appeals to people because it presents them with the unexplained, a mystery. He likens it to the current popularity of fantasy and science-fiction in novels and movies.

“It takes people away from the frustrations of life and reality,” he says. “It shows them other possibilities, the possibilities of another dimension of the mind.”

Providing that kind of escape and intrigue for his audiences goes hand-in-hand with another very important show element: audience interaction and participation. Every audience, and every performance, is different and takes on its own personality. Kreskin calls the experience “an adventure,” saying, “People don’t come to see the show. They come because they are part of the show.”