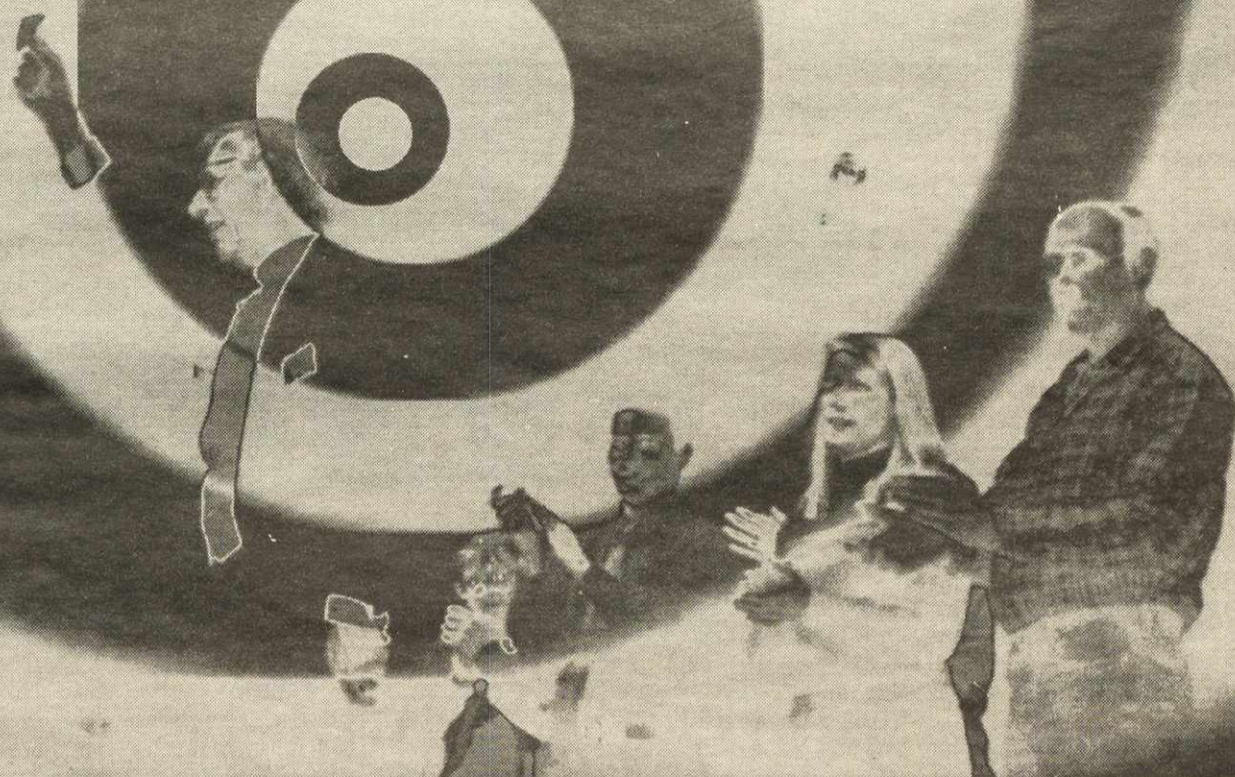


Master of the Mind



BY PETER WOODS

Arriving in our very own Rebecca Cohn Theatre last Tuesday was the "world's foremost mentalist," The Amazing Kreskin. As part of a six date Maritime tour, the entertainer dazzled the audience with incredible feats of the mind and a rare combination of wit and showmanship.

The show began with a variety of basic magic tricks and two and a half hours later showed no sign of slowing as Kreskin revealed an incredible ability to guess audience member's phone numbers, birth dates, names of friends and relatives, not to mention a hilarious demonstration of hypnotism.

Kreskin has become known around the world for his uncanny ability to read the thoughts of audience members through a variety of routines that go way beyond run of the mill magic tricks. Despite an overt presence of skepticism at the Halifax show (one audience member was reamed from the stage by Kreskin for suggesting a press photographer was supplying him with direction), Kreskin's not afraid to put his money where his mouth is.

A regular highlight of Kreskin's routine is to have his cheque for the night hidden by audience volunteers anywhere in the theatre. He then has to find it or forfeit it. Despite performing this trick thousands of times and having the cheque stashed in a few extraordinary places — once inside a turkey, this night down the cast an audience member had on his leg — Kreskin has only failed the challenge nine times.

In a conversation after the show Kreskin explained how he first noticed this ability in himself.

"In third grade our teacher did not let us go out and play because it was raining outside so we played a game called 'hot and cold.' I was disappointed that the teacher didn't pick me so I went to my grandparents house and told my brother 'Joey hide a penny.' But I forgot to tell him to say if I was getting hot or cold.

"I walked into my uncle's room, climbed on an old chair,

reached behind the curtain rod and pulled out the penny. My grandparent's must have thought this guy's got the evil eye. They didn't know what to think."

Soon after discovering his telepathic abilities, Kreskin began to perform publicly. By grade's nine and ten he was putting on concerts at his high school and was billed as "The World's Youngest Hypnotist."

"Forget the facts, the imagination is more important."
— Albert Einstein

His career has since spanned five decades, produced numerous television series as well as eight books.

To Kreskin's credit, he seems to deliberately distance his shows from the smoke and mirror cheesiness that has become modern magic thanks to performers like David Copperfield.

Kreskin doesn't rely on a magic wand and flashy sets to propel his stage show — he doesn't need to. He's obviously a man who has accumulated an impressive amount of knowledge about the human mind and how it works.

What makes Kreskin's show even more intriguing is his belief that everyone has the ability to send and receive thoughts telepathically, although as he has said "I've just harnessed it."

Kreskin's latest stunt can be found on his website (amazingkreskin.com) and involves him turning his power of perception on himself. Hidden throughout the website are 13 clues that when pieced together reveal the date of his death.

"Yes! Isn't that wild!" Kreskin responded when asked about the site. "I'm going to be around for a long time. Believe me, it's way off. I don't look at the hereafter with any morbidity because I believe in and my religion is based on life continuing. Don't look for anything in the near future, it's way out there. But yes, the clues are there."

While Kreskin believes he's going to be performing for a long

time, the world received some sad news on the day of the show; the great Canadian magician Doug Henning had passed away.

Henning and Kreskin had written to each other since Henning was attending university. Kreskin was naturally saddened by the news of his passing.

"To give him credit, he kept his spirituality because whether we believe in his faith or not, Transcendental Meditation became a part of his life. He believed in the spirituality of life. And at the same time when he left the field and became part of the Transcendental Meditation movement he kind of forgot his beginnings — magic.

"But I'll tell you something very sad. In the last nine months he wanted to come back. But his spirituality, I'm sure he's benefiting from it now more than ever. Very

fine man."

At the beginning of the night, I'd have to admit that I was attending the show for the same reason many of the other audience members were — I wanted to see how he does it. I was skeptical.

By the end of my conversa-

tion with Kreskin I no longer cared if his tricks were of the mind or hand. I'll leave it up to the man himself to say it best.

"For those who believe, no explanation is necessary. For those who do not, no explanation is possible."



Nova Scotia Public Interest Research Group special general meeting

Tuesday March 14, 2000
6:30pm
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Everyone Welcome!

for information contact nspirg@494-6662
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