

## Hypnotist Visits Choate; Students Fall Under Spell



The News - By Gaby Coseteng '14, News Reporter

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Last Saturday night, dozens of students convened at the Gelb Auditorium for the Hypnosis and Beyond program with Dr. Steve Taubman.

Dr. Taubman is a motivational speaker and performer, combining the disciplines of hypnosis, mindreading and magic. He is the president of the Inner Selling Institute and the bestselling author of the book *UnHypnosis: How to Wake Up, Start Over and Create the Life You're Meant to Live*. He performs at corporate outings, universities and high schools all over the country, discussing self-empowerment and motivation through comedy.

Taubman began the show by going through a selection process to determine which members of the audience would be the most susceptible to hypnosis. After choosing twelve students to go on stage, he proceeded to lull them to sleep and place them into various mental situations.

In one such situation Dr. Taubman took the students on a trip to the "movie theater." The students onstage were told that they were watching the funniest movie they had ever seen, at which they should all laugh hysterically. As the genre changed to tragedy, to horror, to a romance and so on, their expressions and reactions changed just as quickly.

Taubman then set "trigger words" for his hypnosis subjects. For example, participant Russell Bogue '12 was convinced that he was Tarzan and had to search for bugs in people's ears. Bogue later said, "I remember bits and pieces of it, especially parts that were really loud. I vaguely remember jumping around like Tarzan for some portion of it."

Other portions of the show included having participants mentally travel to a beach and dive into the audience to "speak" with audience members' shoes.

The show closed with an "MTV Sexy Dance Competition" in which students onstage were convinced that they had just been declared "MTV's Best Dancers" and were showing off their best moves to an audience of fans. "I'm absolutely mortified and can't believe that we just did that," said participant Taryn Samet '14 after the program.

"I feel tired and really thirsty. I didn't realize that I had been up there for so long. It was like I was in a dream," said participant Lucia Madero '15 following the performance.

"It was either they were extraordinary actors, or genuinely hypnotized," said audience member Lucy Robison '14

"It was interesting from an entertainment perspective," said Director of the John Joseph Activities Center Mr. Yanelli, "and also when people discover how their brains work, like what parts of our brain we typically use and accessing other parts of our brains that we don't normally use."

Dr. Taubman said that he "had a pleasure working with the Choate students" and "hopes to come back again to do another show".

"This was the best show that Choate has had for the term," said Anji Chandiram '14. Although other hypnotists have performed at the school, this was Dr. Taubman's first time appearance at Choate. "It should be interesting for students to see a different approach from last year's hypnotist," said Ms. Yanelli prior to the show.

Dr. Taubman, the only hypnotist to visit Choate this year, had been scheduled to perform since August. The performance was located in the Gelb Auditorium, as opposed to larger campus venues, because, according to Mr. Yanelli, "We wanted a more intimate setting, where the audience would be immersed and could interact in the performance." Tickets were five dollars.