

NEWS

TORONTO

McGill student thinks of what could have been with *Wizard of Oz*

Mike Cohen

CORRESPONDENT

The North American premiere of Andrew Lloyd Webber's new stage adaptation of *The Wizard of Oz* (www.wizardofthemusical.com), now playing at Toronto's Ed Mirvish Theatre, could have had a Jewish Dorothy.

Danielle Wade, 20, captured the title of Canada's Top Dorothy in CBC TV's *Over The Rainbow* reality series last fall after enduring a gruelling eight

weeks and 16 episodes for the show.

One Jewish Montrealer who cracked the Top 100 was Bialik High School graduate Miranda Tuwaig.

"I did end up watching the show and I really liked it," she said. "The winner, Danielle, was the girl I thought should win. She has a great personality and a powerful voice. I'm very happy with the outcome."

Tuwaig recalls how after she got her ticket to Oz last June she travelled to Toronto for



Miranda Tuwaig displays her ticket to Oz during the auditions (Photo: Mike Cohen)

three days.

"The first night Mirvish productions sent all of the girls to see *War Horse* the play," she said. "The next day though we got down to business. We had vocal coaching by a renowned voice teacher, Jeannie Wyse, and then each of us performed songs we were given to practise for call backs in front of the panel of judges. Overall it was a great experience. All of the girls chosen for call backs were very talented. In the end the 20 picked got to meet Andrew Lloyd Weber and go to Dorothy Farm."

Tuwaig hopes to see the show in person. But these days she is busy studying at McGill University, where she intends to apply to medical school.

There may be no need to rush and buy tickets. Mirvish Entertainment officials note that the musical is scheduled

for an extended run, with plans to eventually tour in the United States. At a recent Sunday matinee, the audience was full of families with young children, many of the little girls dressed as Dorothy.

Developed from the ever-popular MGM screenplay, this new production contains all the songs from the Oscar-winning movie score, all the favourite characters and iconic moments, plus a few surprises along the way, including new songs by Tim Rice and Lloyd Webber.

The show runs from Tuesday to Saturday at 7:30 p.m., and Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday at 1:30 p.m. at the Ed Mirvish Theatre, 244 Victoria St. Tickets range from \$35 to \$130. For more information call Ticketking: (416) 872-1212 or 1-800-461-333 or visit www.mirvish.com.

Subway scammer: 'The fact he was Israeli made a really big impact'

SCAMMER cont. from page 1.

pay you back.' Then he would provide them with a fake name and address back home in Israel. It seems like the common amount was usually between \$300 and \$400."

The man would break the ice by asking for directions and explaining that he was from Israel. A positive response from the woman opened the way for conversation about his life back home and hers in Toronto. He wrote his name and contact information down and gave it to each woman to back up his offers of help and hospitality either the next time they visited or when they made aliyah.

In all three cases, the women allowed the man to accompany them to a bank machine so they could withdraw the amount he said he needed.

"The fact that he was Israeli made a really big impact. As soon as you hear Israel, it's like, okay, where should I send the cheque," said Meredith Halpern. "We talked about familiar places and people from Israel who we would know... He seemed very sweet, very talkative, wanted to tell me his whole life story."

Early in their discussion, Halpern said, he said his parents had been killed in the war, which she assumed meant the Holocaust.

Chaya (Carol) Taub said she still can't grasp why he was able to manipulate her so easily.

"To be honest, I don't understand how it happened, I can't explain," said Taub. "The only thing I can think of is the conversation was barely about money. So money wasn't the focus; you don't feel this guy is tugging at your wallet."

After establishing a rapport, he told Taub "maybe it's a blessing that G-d put you here on the subway; maybe you can help me" and launched into his tale of woe.

Sarah believed the man's story, too.

"He's an Israeli; I didn't think that he'd lie to me," said Sarah. "We went to the bank; I pulled some money out of the machine. I asked him how much money he needed, he told me and I gave it to him. Then he had the chutzpah to say, well, the taxi, I'll need so much more."

Halpern added, "There was a real camaraderie between the mitzvah issue, helping someone in need, and helping someone who you have a bond with. You go to Israel and you don't feel like a stranger; it's familiar. So I wanted him to feel like he wasn't a stranger here."

As soon as she realized she'd been duped, Sarah called the TTC and the police, to let them know the encounter should have been captured by TTC video cameras.

Israel Aharonovitz, 63, was arrested last week and charged with four counts of fraud under \$5,000.

"He's here illegally," said Turnbull. "We had a picture of him from TTC surveillance so we went on the subway [Wednesday] morning and, sure enough, caught him doing it."

Reports of the subway scammer in Toronto go back to December 2011, Turnbull said.

However, this isn't the first time that Aharonovitz has been connected with the same type of scam, police said.

According to police reports, Aharonovitz stood trial twice in 2008 and was convicted both times of defrauding people on the subway system in England. He was sentenced to 12 months and 18 months which were to be served concurrently.

The London *Jewish Chronicle* nicknamed Aharonovitz the "Tube shekel scammer."

At press time, Aharonovitz was in custody pending a bail hearing.

Police are encouraging anyone who encountered the subway scammer to call them at (416) 808-1370. Turnbull said he also wants to hear from anyone who has made a report about the man in the past but has not heard back from police.

GoYid.com
SEARCH

The Worldwide Jewish Business Network

New search-engine for businesses around the world that are owned and operated by people of the Jewish faith. 1-888-333-8756

Enter JEWISH BUSINESSES in Google's search engine. GoYid.com currently shows up #1 in the search results!



Kathleen Wynne, MPP

Don Valley West

Happy New Year!

You are invited to the Don Valley West
All Politicians Town Hall

Thursday, February 7, 2013, 7pm to 9pm

Toronto Botanical Garden, Garden Hall

777 Lawrence Avenue East Toronto, ON M3C 1P2

416-425-6777 | www.kathleenwynne.onmpp.ca

