

Psychology professor moonlights as cartoonist

by S.-J. Desjardins, University Relations Office

Did you hear the one about the McGill psych professor...: McGill's Daniel Levitin, the FCAR Strategic Assistant Professor of Psychology, also happens to be the co-author of the internationally syndicated Bizarro comic strip, and a standup comedian, and...



Daniel Levitin (photo: A. Dobrowolskyj)

Daniel Levitin has packed many careers into one lifetime. He's produced albums for legends like Stevie Wonder. He's been a stand-up comedian. He's a respected scientist at McGill University. Now, the psychology professor moonlights as co-writer for the internationally syndicated newspaper comic strip, Bizarro.

Bizarro is featured in over 200 daily newspapers worldwide, including The Montreal Gazette, The Los Angeles Times and The Moscow News. Launched by Chronicle Features in 1985, the comic strip is translated into several languages including French, Spanish and Swedish.

As a stand-up comedian in California, Levitin opened shows for Robin Williams and Dana Carvey. He is a past winner of the National Lampoon Stand-Up Comedy Competition. As a comic writer, his material was performed on The Tonight Show with Jay Leno and The Arsenio Hall Show.

At McGill, Levitin is the FCAR Strategic Assistant Professor of Psychology as well as the Bell Chair in the Psychology of Electronic communication, and holds associate appointments in the Department of Music Theory and the McGill School of the Environment. Levitin researches complex auditory patterns and pattern processing in expert and non-expert populations. He has authored articles for leading peer-reviewed journals. MIT Press just published a Levitin-edited anthology, Foundations of Cognitive Psychology: Core Readings.

Before joining academia, Levitin worked as a record company executive and record producer, working with artists as diverse as Stevie Wonder, kd lang, Steely Dan and Eric Clapton. He has consulted on audio sound source separation for the U.S. Navy, and on technical and marketing issues for every major record label. Levitin taught at Stanford University for several years in the departments of computer science, psychology, anthropology, computer music and history of science.

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