

STUDENT LIFE

Behrend Jazz Ensemble features a variety of students

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Located in a cluttered room down a stuffy hallway is a room full of musicians that are rarely seen but frequently heard. Inside, a handful of Behrend students huddle around the conductor who cues each and every move. The sound of the players warming up is rough on the ears, with the trumpets playing one note and the drummer finding his rhythm. But just as the conductor, music professor Dr. Gary Viebranz, raises his hand, everyone is set to explore the complexities of jazz.

Every Tuesday and Thursday, students from all across Behrend's curriculum gather to play different selections from the jazz archives. Rohan Romanna, drummer and percussionist, is a Business Management major. Jason Nowacinski, bassist, is a History and Anthropology major. Mike

Sperdute, trumpeter, is studying Math Education. However, when the students gather in the music room, they transform into jazz musicians. Each and every one has the same purpose. "Because I love music," said Romanna, "I get to express myself in ways that words cannot." The Behrend jazz ensemble expands farther than the walls of the

classroom. In September, the group played Parents and Family Day on campus. They also have a performance scheduled for December in Bruno's.

During the class period, the students study the music of many past jazz musicians such as John "Dizzy" Gillespie and Horace Silver. Simultaneously, they pay tribute to and express the genius of these influential musicians. One of the numbers the ensemble plays is "Lil' Darlin'" by Neal Hefti. Every component of the song is practiced down to the very last note. Each member joins together to be in sync with the rest of the group. From the opening brushes on the drums to the trumpet solo by Sperdute, each aspect is meticulously organized and practiced until it fits. Sperdute, who is in his second year with the ensemble, has been playing the trumpet since he was in fourth grade.

Although the class is only one credit, he says it's still worth to stay involved. "It gives me a chance to keep playing my horn," he said. "It's good to keep active." Viebranz has been involved with the ensemble for nine years. He says that the students make teaching the class easy because of their motivation to perform. "I think the best part is that the people there want to play," he said. "To be in it for the sake of playing music is the purest form of motivation."

Aside from conducting the band, Viebranz also joins in on the music. During one practice, he aided the musicians by joining in on trumpet. He leads the numbers by accompanying with the piano.

The ensemble plays a variety of songs from Latin music to heavy swing. They even throw in some contemporary off-the-wall numbers. "We like to mix it up and keep a wide variety," Viebranz said.

Last year, during the ensemble's sessions, they played theme songs from such popular hits as *Chicago*, *The Incredibles* and *Family Guy*. This year, in December, the jazz ensemble will showcase the numbers that they have prepared during their twice-a-week sessions.

Whether the students are there for the credit, the friends or the experience, everyone there is a musician. Each member comprises an ensemble of different majors coming together for the ultimate form of artistic expression. Nowacinski enjoys being a part of the ensemble. The part he enjoys most is, "just being a part of it," he said. "I'm here to expand my musicianship. It's interesting to watch it develop and grow."



Chris LaFuria/THE BEHREND BEACON
 This is Dr. Viebranz's 9th year as a professor at Behrend.



Chris LaFuria/THE BEHREND BEACON
 Students of the jazz ensemble during rehearsal.

"Top Five TV Neighbors"

By Andy McLachlan

5. Mr. Dink - "Doug"
4. Paul Pfeiffer - "The Wonder Years"
3. Wilson - "Home Improvement"
2. Ned Flanders - "The Simpsons"
1. Cosmo Kramer - "Seinfeld"

Who was your favorite Mighty Duck??

- A. Fulton Reed
- B. Jesse Hall
- C. Charlie Conway
- D. Dave Karp
- E. Lester Averman
- F. Connie Moreau
- G. Adam Banks

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"Top Five Things that Spielberg had something to do with"

By Ryan P. Gallagher

5. *Transformers*
4. *Catch Me If You Can*
3. *Indiana Jones*
2. *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?*
1. *Back to the Future*

A Quick Look:

inside new films..

By
 Ryan P. Gallagher

30 Days of Night

Director: David Slade

The latest vampire thriller attacks theaters today with Josh Hartnett and Melissa George starring as husband/wife in a small Alaskan town. In this lonely village, the sun habitually disappears for one month each year, however, this isn't your typical sundown. Blood-thirsty vampires are prowling about and Hartnett and George are the only hope for survival.

This may not be your normal horror-thriller flick, however, the vampires make it deathly intriguing. While the film stands out uniquely with its creepy, nightmarish trailers, the portrayal of vampires is always a difficult job. The success of this film is going to be dependant upon that aspect, in addition to fine acting. All too often we see terrible acting in horror flicks which brings the overall quality of the film to a minimum. If the horror genre is your pickle and chips then check it out. If not, you're on your own.

Release date: Today

American Gangster

Director: Ridley Scott

The mafia is dominating the big screen once again as Ridley Scott delivers his newest crime/drama with more organized crime and drug trafficking than Scorsese himself would know what to do with. The plot is fairly simple, featuring Frank Lucas (Denzel Washington) as a driver working his way to the head of the inner city's organized crime, where he eventually finds himself trafficking drugs through the coffins of American soldiers who were victims of the Vietnam War. Russel Crowe plays his counterpart- a typical street cop trying to bring the entire ring down.

The film's plot does not play a crucial role to this latest *Goodfellas*-type movie, but what will hopefully set this piece of work apart from every other mafia flick is Scott's remarkable directing skills. In addition to the potentially breathtaking cinematography that his films are known for, this film will stand out among others in a way that can only be portrayed by Scott.

Release date: Nov. 2, 2007