

# STUDENT LIFE

## Robots bring music to Bruno's Café

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This last Wednesday, as part of the ongoing Rhythm of Life series at Bruno's, the patrons were treated to a playing of the DVD Animusic 2: a series of elaborate and coordinated mixes of melodic modern techno, rock, and classical tunes digitized into full mechanical motion. Released in 2005 and shown quite regularly on PBS, each of the eight segments showcase a song being performed in striking ways by various robot creations, from electric pulses streaming into powdered crystals to rubber balls precisely timed to bounce on strings and drums to laser lights being directed from stone to stone, all to create music.

The show starts off with "Starship Groove," a

techno-rock song being performed by a band of automatons in the depths of space. Two of the members of the robotic group strike plates on their chests to perform one of the core components of the main beat while two others strike their inorganic limbs on the rotating percussion setup in the back. Above them, another robot plays a warped keyboard made of long golden bars, curving upwards.

The next piece, "Pogo Sticks" shows what appears to be a set of bots with the aesthetic of guitar necks rolling along on thin platforms while performing another techno-rock tune. As the group comes upon various stages and tunnels, other "sticks" join them, adding instruments to the piece.

The fourth piece entitled "Pipe Dream 2" is the most impressive of the eight. Unlike the other sections, where

tal image of this, imagine a train of rectangles from a xylophone running past a fixed point and then try to combine that with a series of endless rubber balls bouncing off each one of them, one at a time in quick order, to produce a song. The visual of such a



Robotic music at it's finest. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



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Just one of many shots of the equipment that goes into the music composed by Animusic.

robotic arms are mostly responsible for the instruments, rubber balls launched from pipes strike the cords and melodies from the strings and cymbals. Essentially every note and sound is due to a ball striking an object. What is the most interesting part of the piece is the xylophone track. To get a good men-

thing is pretty brilliant and it can be fascinating to watch.

The other five pieces consist of one massive stringed instrument playing an entire song by itself, a cathedral of brasses and organs, a set of fiber-optic crystals pulsing to generate music, an entire sphere of drums being played by sets of arms surrounding it, and an ancient temple rising and falling with lasers aligning and disconnecting, all digitized in artistic CG effects.

This show can be as visually appealing as it is to listen to. The digital representations of the music is incredibly impressive; every tone and note can be pinpointed to an individual strike if you wish to find it. This combination of catchy melodies and just plain cool visuals is something that makes it unique and, assuming one likes the songs themselves, seems worth a purchase. At the event, cards were distributed, both informing about the Animusic website (expectedly, [www.animusic.com](http://www.animusic.com)) and offering \$2 off the \$19.95 purchase price for the DVD. Next time when channel-surfing, if you stop by PBS and find robots playing music, consider this an invitation to a look and listen.



## Power outage? Make the best of it with friends

By Ryan P. Gallagher  
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Paper football by the dim light of a setting sun. Candles to light the pong match. Follow this up by an hour of Christmas caroling with a power outage buzz, and we're partying like it is truly the 18th century. These are all events that helped to bring entertainment to a day where darkness paralyzed a thriving campus and the inhabitants of the University Gate Apartments. The day was Monday, Dec. 3.

After students came to the realization of there being no possible way to complete their daily tasks due to a power failure, much of the student body decided to take the day off and "relax". Near my apartment, students decided to take their relaxing to the next level, where we all learned that a party without power is the best kind of party.

Our social skills were at the top of our game because we had no electronic interference, and no one went anywhere without a trusty candle. Students completely blocked out the stress of school that frustrated them only hours before. This was truly a miracle for our campus, and hell, we were taking advantage of it.

After an intense game of paper football was delayed on account of darkness, my roommate and I wandered to a social get-together that was taking place across the hall. Familiar faces crowded the room, where laughter and candle-lit grins brought a warm feel to the atmosphere. This was college. College in the dark.

After a few rounds of "holiday cheer" it was time to carol. Yes, it was below freezing, we had no heat or fireplace for after-

wards, and we couldn't find our coats, but carols had to be sung- this much we knew. What a shame to our listeners that the only tunes we knew were "Jingle Bells" followed naturally by "Feliz Navidad".

But the holiday spirit prevailed, and we received cookies and mostly pleasant reactions. This was the first time any of us in the group had caroled in years, and we had no regrets. As we caroled the hallways, ignoring the frigid weather, it was evident

that we were not the only ones enjoying our day off- everyone was spending the day with friends.

It's nice to see that when the power ceases, the people rise. Our electronics no longer control us, and we are free to do anything we want- things that do not occur to us in everyday society. When the power resumed, so did zombie-nation. The television became the center of attention, the laptops sucked our brains back onto the

screen, and we no longer blindly urinated around the toilet. I guess that last one's not so bad. Anyways, it's funny how we need electricity to essentially do everything, but when it's taken away, our minds grow stronger and we find unique ways to have fun. It is the biggest blast from the past I have ever experienced, and lets us all get a feel for how culture was 100 years ago.

So please, let the winds blow, and let them blow hard, because I want another power failure. I want to live like they did 100 years ago- but only for another day.

## Top 12 Jewish Actors Born in the 1980s (In the spirit of Hanukkah)

By Chris LaFuria

12. Zac Efron
11. Jake Gyllenhaal
10. Mila Kunis
9. Daniel Radcliffe
8. Marla Sokoloff
7. Rachel Bilson
6. Michelle Trachtenberg
5. Scarlett Johansson
4. Seth Rogen
3. Shia LaBeouf
2. Natalie Portman
1. Jason Schwartzman

## Alternative dance event leaves students tired, but happy

By Brittany Sexton  
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Wouldn't it be fun to dance around and not have anyone know who you are? Kind of escape from yourself and try something new? On Saturday, Dec. 1, 2007, Behrend held a Masquerade Ball in McGarvey Commons.

The dance started at 7 p.m. and ended at 10 p.m. It was a decent turnout considering it was kind of a formal event. Some students dressed up in nice dresses and suits and others went in their everyday clothing. The concept of the ball was that at the door you receive a mask, and you must put it on.

"Honestly a lot of students probably don't try these dry events on campus because they think it will not be as fun as some 'crackin' party off campus."

"It was quite comical to watch the people dance, and stumble because of the dance floor. I mean I'm glad no one got hurt but at the same time it was pretty funny watching it fall apart."

- Elton Armady

But I had a ton of fun. I even got to meet a few new people," said Krista Jones. Jones is a very involved student and attends the events that Behrend puts on and every time she has fun. Jones wore a red satin dress, formally fitted, her hair in curls and a smile on her face, as did other students. Most of the students enjoyed the music thanks to Molly Thomas's father. He has DJ'd for Penn State Behrend many times before.

The decorations for the ball were festive as well. There were streamers, balloons and masks. Most of the decorations were blue and white including the balloons. There were different kinds of masks that varied in color: silver, black and the mixture of the two. Someone brought snow-flake sugar cookies, along with punch and water.

Besides the streamers and masks there was also a rented dance floor. Throughout the night the dance floor kept falling apart into pieces and had to be put together. "It was quite comical to watch the people dance, and stumble because of the dance floor. I mean I'm glad no one got hurt but at the same time it was pretty funny watching it fall apart," said Elton Armady, another very involved student here at Behrend. McGarvey Commons is not only a place to hold dances but also has had other events in the past such as Date Auctions and game tournaments.

Behrend brings a lot of fun to the student body by having events such as Masquerade Balls, and other fun dances like this in the past. These events are safe and fun. It is definitely a great way to spend a night out if you don't want to leave campus.

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