

# ARTS

## Dail named as Penn State Behrend's new director

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With the passing of last semester, we said goodbye to professor and director, Dr. David Jortner. Students – especially you actors – meet your new director and professor, Ms. Chrystyna Dail. Dail received her BA in Theatre Arts from Pennsylvania State University in 1998. Afterward, she received her MA in Theatre History and Criticism from the University of Maryland, where she also taught for several years after finishing her education.

Living “outside the D.C. area,” as she puts it, for the past ten years, she’s come back to a job that encompasses something she’s been in love with for the majority of her life — theatre.

“After seeing a group called the Children’s Theatre Ensemble it made me realize [theatre] was something I’d pursue.” Thus she attended University Park to obtain her BA in Theatre Arts. “I had an amazing professor [that] shifted my view on theatre. It’s fine to understand the technical aspects, but you also need to understand the history.”

Indeed her interests include researching Ukrainian theatre history along with women and witchcraft in American stage performances. Dail has presented papers at various conferences and has published an article

through Performing Arts Resources on documenting lighting design. Among the accomplishments on her impressive resume is her archiving of the Peggy Clark collection for the Library of Congress. Currently she is writing her dissertation, also for the University of Maryland.

Simply icing on the cake, Dail has her equity card. For those who aren’t sure what that is, it’s a license that basically brands someone as a “professional actor”. And Dail certainly has such experience under her belt as well, performing in such shows as *The Bourgeois*

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**-Chrystyna Dail  
Director and professor**

*Gentleman and My Fair Lady* in the Texas Shakespeare Festival. Aside from acting, Dail has obvious experience in both directing and choreography. “I grew up dancing,” she explained.

“As I slowly felt my brains leaking out of my ears,” she joked as she remarks on her decision to come to Behrend. “This position is perfect,” she said, “because it combines both teaching and directing, which I


love.” One aspect of her plans for the year as she teaches two introduction classes (Intro to Acting and Intro to Theatre) include introducing her students to diverse cultures.

“I’m interested in having students understand how culture intersects with history: you can learn a lot about any culture by reading their plays.”

“Acting is both: academic and creative. [Students] learn more about themselves and the art form.” As she commented about the students this semester, she advises that when students walk through her doors they lose any sense of “ego” they might have. Everyone is a first timer and, as she states about acting, “you’re never done learning.” An actor is always trying to better his or herself. “Theatre is the most easily adaptable art form for all types of people. It can reach across all boundaries [be they] racial, ethnic, whatever. Everyone can tell a story.”

For those students interested in performing or working as a stage-hand this in this semester’s production, look for the upcoming auditions sometime around the third week of September. This fall’s performance, *The Dispute* is a satirical comedy that takes a look at love and infidelity and the “battle of the sexes”.

Write for the ARTS page of  
*The Behrend Beacon*  
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## Abi Cook, Charis euphonizes Smith Chapel in last tour as group



Marcus Yeagley/THE BEHREND BEACON

Abi Cook and the Charis band. From left to right: Jamie “Mangoldeningers”, Abi Cook, Brian “Gramps” Vance, Charles “Oliver” Twist. Not pictured is drummer Derosa “Diva” Richardson.

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their faith led them to do live shows.

The band, originally from Dayton, Ohio, traveled six hours by car to Behrend to give the concert. In the recent future, Cook will start a solo tour apart from Charis.

The group released an EP in August of 2006, *Was It Not I?*, followed up by the full album, *Weightless*, in 2007. They have a website at <http://enjoycharis.com>.

In gray pinstriped pants and sandals, Abi Cook and the Charis band played their blend of jazz, blues, gospel, and rock to a group of Behrend students and the Erie community at the Smith Chapel this past Thursday.

Cook played a set of 14 songs, blending multiple genres of low-key, rhythmic melodies with her band, Charis (pronounced CARE-us). The group, now broken up, consisted of one female and four men - Cook on keyboard and providing vocals and the men on three guitars and drums.

The chapel treated the concert-goers to free food, sandwiches and chips, before Charis went on. Prior to starting, Cook greeted and talked with members of the audience. Around twenty people made up the group of listeners.

Though there was a kind welcome, the concert had a rough start as it was scheduled to start at 7:00 p.m. but did not do so until 7:30 p.m. Students and other listeners had to sit through more than fifteen minutes of sound testing. However, once the concert was on its way, there were no serious interruptions.

Among the songs played was a popular song of theirs, “Weightless”, and covers of “It’s Just The Two of Us” by Grover Washington and “Music” by Leela James.

Charis, which started as a ministry project, was created by Abi Cook and Crystal Yexley, who was absent for family reasons. The two did not originally intend to travel and perform, but simply wished to record a CD. But, according to Cook,

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**Philosophy  
for Thought**

**“Last words  
are for fools  
who haven't  
said enough.”**

**— Karl Marx**