

Enter stage left: So long standards, hello fun

"I believe you need a balance," says new director

by Timothy Jones
The Collegian

If you saw a student leading another student around the room by his fingertips, you might think it's a psychology class, but this is one of the many devices that Kathleen Campbell uses in her theater class to take away her students' inhibitions.

Kathleen Campbell is the new theater director at Behrend. She is originally from Dallas, Texas. She has an Undergraduate and Masters in theater and she taught Undergraduate at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia.

Campbell left George Mason because the program was headed in directions that she did not want to go. It was putting more emphasis on new plays and student internships, and she was not interested in doing that. She likes Shakespearean plays and a mix of both old and new plays.

She came to Behrend to explore theater as a Liberal Art because she believes more students are served by the Liberal Arts. She wants to work with students who are out to have fun with theater.

Concerning the students, Campbell wants to give them the opportunity to act and still have a life. "It is easy to love theater and get too involved. You skip class and do not do your homework. You do not have a chance to get out or see your parents. I structure the work so it does not dominate your life, and it gives you time to do other things. I believe you need a balance."

Outside of the campus, Campbell is currently working on a book about Shakespearean Productions. She likes to fish and cook chili. She was a part of a team that cooked chili in various cook-offs. Her personality is relaxed and she has clear standards about what she expects from others. She does not mind making people uncomfortable, just ask her theater class.

Danny Burger, a student in her



Craig Breter/The Collegian

Taking her cue: By forcing students to abandon their inhibitions, new theater director Kathleen Campbell puts the "liberal" back into liberal arts education.

class says "At the beginning, you are afraid of what people might think, but after you do some of her exercises, it becomes the opposite and helps build trust and makes you comfortable."

Campbell believes that if she does not make her students uncomfortable, she is not doing her job. "Once you have done something, you can do it and feel comfortable. You feel ok."

She got her start in theater in the 9th and 10th grades. Her mother convinced her to take a speech communications class. The teacher she had was

wonderful and got her involved in competitions. The following year she took theater classes and became hooked. She likes theater because it is hard and it challenges her. It makes you stop and think about what you are doing.

Her plans for the Behrend theater involve staging *Baby with the Bathwater*, a play by Christopher Durang. It is a comedy about modern parenting. A young couple have a baby and have no idea what to do with it. The performance dates are November 1-3, 8-10, 15-17.

No musician is an Island

Hitchcock gets a little help from his friends

by Brad Kane
The Collegian

Let's take a trip back to the '80s. At that time, the alternative music scene was going noticeably pop with the Top 40 debuts of bands like U2, R.E.M and The Cure. But, at the same juncture, ex-Soft Boy and purveyor of a somewhat seminal solo career, Robyn Hitchcock revealed his opus to the world. *Globe of Frogs* established Hitchcock as one of progressive music's most acclaimed talents.

Now, fast forward to 1991: Hitchcock appears to have tightened his already firm hold atop the alternative charts as his new album, *Perspex Island*, looks like one of the year's top records.

Backed by his two member group The Egyptians (bassist Andy Metcalfe and drummer Morris Windsor), Hitchcock strums his way through a jangling dream of an album. The approach Hitchcock takes on *Island* is somewhat reminiscent of *Frogs*.

Hitchcock overdoses on 12 string and rhythm guitar-laced tracks that are pure gems to listen to. But *Island* differs from 1989's *Queen Elvis* which emphasized Metcalfe's delicate, dreamy bass lines. Some of the style seen on *Elvis* has spilled out onto *Island*. Although it's only a few drops, the resulting mix proves quite refreshing.

As Hitchcock has evolved over the years, different styles have influenced his music, as will happen to almost any artist.

On *Island* the inspiration comes partly from R.E.M. Guitarist Peter Buck and vocalist Michael Stipe both perform on the album. Buck, who appeared briefly on *Queen Elvis*, is present on eight of the record's 11 tracks, and Stipe lays down backing vocals on the album's finest song, "She Doesn't Exist."

"Exist," as hinted from the title, is a reading on lost love. Its slow melodic bass and slight background strumming are accentuated by Hitchcock's

perfectly off-center vocals and the backing strength of Stipe.

Unlike the conjured images and neo-fantasy lyrics of *Queen Elvis*, Hitchcock incorporates more lyrics dealing with emotion on *Island*. Despite the obvious tendency toward a poppish feel, which usually seems to coincide with lyrics concerning emotion, Hitchcock carries it all off like the accomplished musician that he is.

"So You Think You're In Love," the album's first single, comments on love with a twist-- "So you think you're in love / But you want to be straight about it"--a twist worthy of a society scared by commitment and other assorted pitfalls of love.

These same pessimistic sentiments are echoed on "Earthly Paradise," an ironic title for the world Hitchcock describes in the song. It's the "love" between man and planet that's dealt with here. Environmental Hitchcock, perhaps?

But not all is gloomy here. Both "Birds in Perspex" and "Ultra Unbelievable Love" are celebrations of the joy love can bring. It can be tinged with pointed melancholy in the former, and can be unabashedly glorious as in the latter.

Then there's Hitchcock's tendency to idle away singing about seemingly nothing at all such as on "Vegetation and Dimes" and "Lysander." The former sounds like it's been culled from the *Elvis* recording sessions: "What are we waiting for / A big grim reaper with a long black limousine / Call his toll-free number / 1-800-reaper, ask for Dean."

Is it Hitchcock's best? The possibility is indeed high. For long time Hitchcock fans, *Perspex Island* will not only please once more but will enhance the enjoyment of listening to Hitchcock's twisted lyrics and lush rhythms. For prospective Hitchcock fans, there's no better time than the present to start listening.

"I can not tell a lie. I read *The Collegian* every week."



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Coming Next Week:

Use Your Illusion I & II, the latest recording onslaught by Guns 'N Roses, goes up against those two *Collegian* guys who keep trying to get the editor to let his hair grow and get his ear pierced. Was it worth the wait?



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