

CYAN MAGENTA YELLOW BLACK  
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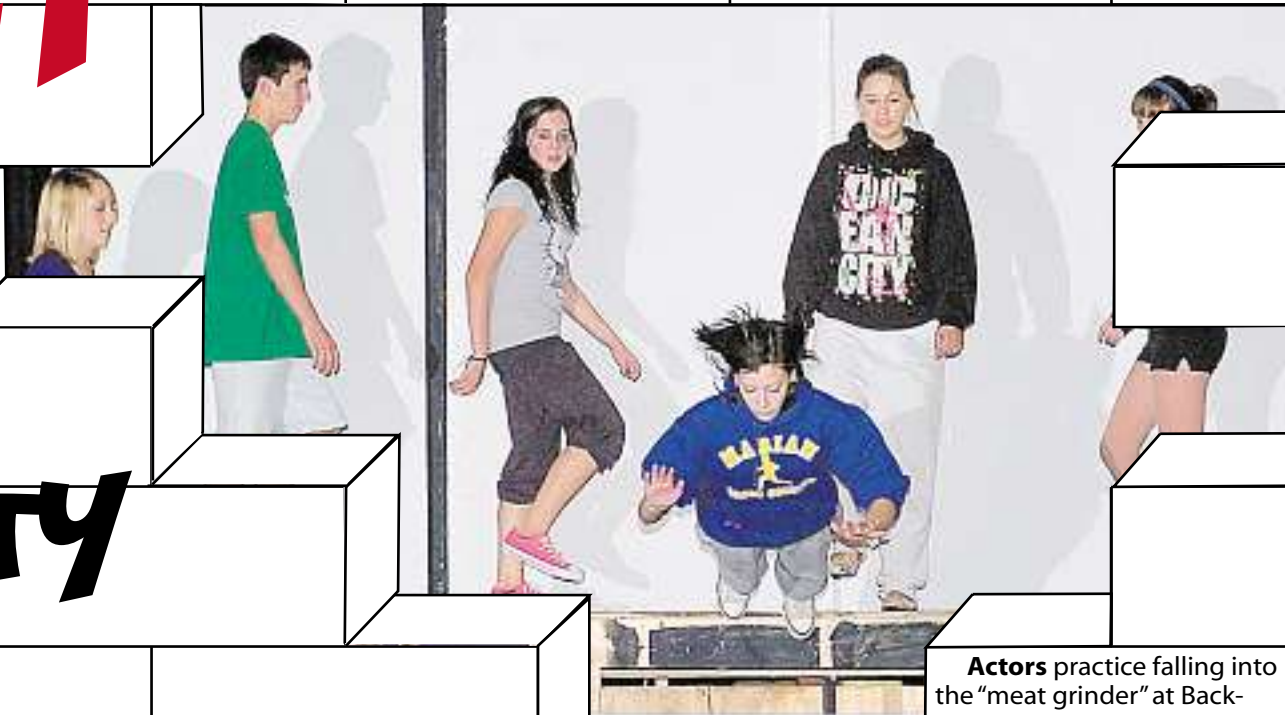
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SECTION D

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COMMUNITY  
THEATERS



Actors practice falling into the "meat grinder" at Backstage Productions during a practice of Pink Floyd's "The Wall."



BLAINE FALKENA/Staff Photographer  
Joelle Witner, center, goes over the choreography as Bryan Colombo tests out a fall mat by diving off a platform in the background Wednesday evening at Backstage Productions.

## Rock operas, concept albums and more color theatrical performances across the area

By MYLES ETHAN LASCITY  
Staff Writer

For theater aficionados, one local production won't be just another brick in the wall.

Hazleton-based theatrical group, Backstage Production Ensemble, is bringing Pink Floyd's "The Wall" to Hazleton.

"It's the first one of its kind," Backstage Production Ensemble's Artistic Director Joelle Witner said.

"The Wall" is a concept album put together by Pink Floyd and originally released in late 1979. It topped the Billboard charts for 15 weeks in 1980. It was written by the band's bassist, Roger Waters, and revolves around a main character named Pink. Waters then turned the album into a screenplay and it was subsequently released as a film in 1982.

Both the album and the film chronicle the life of a rock star named Pink, who builds a metaphorical wall

around himself in order to protect himself from the outside world.

"There are versions of Pink Floyd's 'The Wall' live where Roger Waters does little vignettes from the movie," Witner said, "but he has never taken it to the stage where the character plays their role throughout the whole show and they sing the parts of the song that's meant for them."

Having little script to work with proved challenging for Witner and her husband, Steve, who is co-directing the show.

"Typically when we do a show, we're given: 'Here's how you produce it; here's how you put it on,'" Joelle said. "This was all on us."

According to Joelle, more than half of the movie had to be reworked.

"Our focus was to make people feel for him (Pink)," Steve said, "to hopefully be in his shoes ... to get how a good guy goes bad."

See THEATER, D5