

It's pirating time, savvy?

Pirate Fest! 2's eclectic blend returns to New Brookland with local, national bands

Monique Cumin
FOR THE GAMECOCK

One of Columbia's most requested concerts is back for a second year. Pirate Fest! 2 promises to be an event for anyone interested in indie rock, hardcore, metalcore, emo and ska should not miss.

Organizer Sean Rayford promises "the local bands that play in this club are the best local bands in Columbia." The bands at Pirate Fest!, Saturday at New Brookland Tavern, are no exception to this statement.

Rayford said the inspiration behind Pirate Fest! is Krazy Fest, a music festival put on by Initial Records that took place in Louisville, Ky., for six years.

Krazy Fest is what Rayford calls "the best weekend of my

life."

Both events are about uniting the music community for a good time, Rayford said. Pirate Fest! started as a fundraiser to help Rayford, a freelance writer, get a new laptop after his was stolen on a trip to New York last year. The event is named Pirate Fest! because pirates are often stereotyped as thieves.

Doors open at 2 p.m. Performances will begin shortly after with Motion Picture Demise. The last band, KOUFAX, will take the stage around 11:20 p.m. Sets tentatively range from 20 to 30 minutes. Many of the bands have been touring the Southeast and United States for the past few months to promote their music.

The bands were chosen

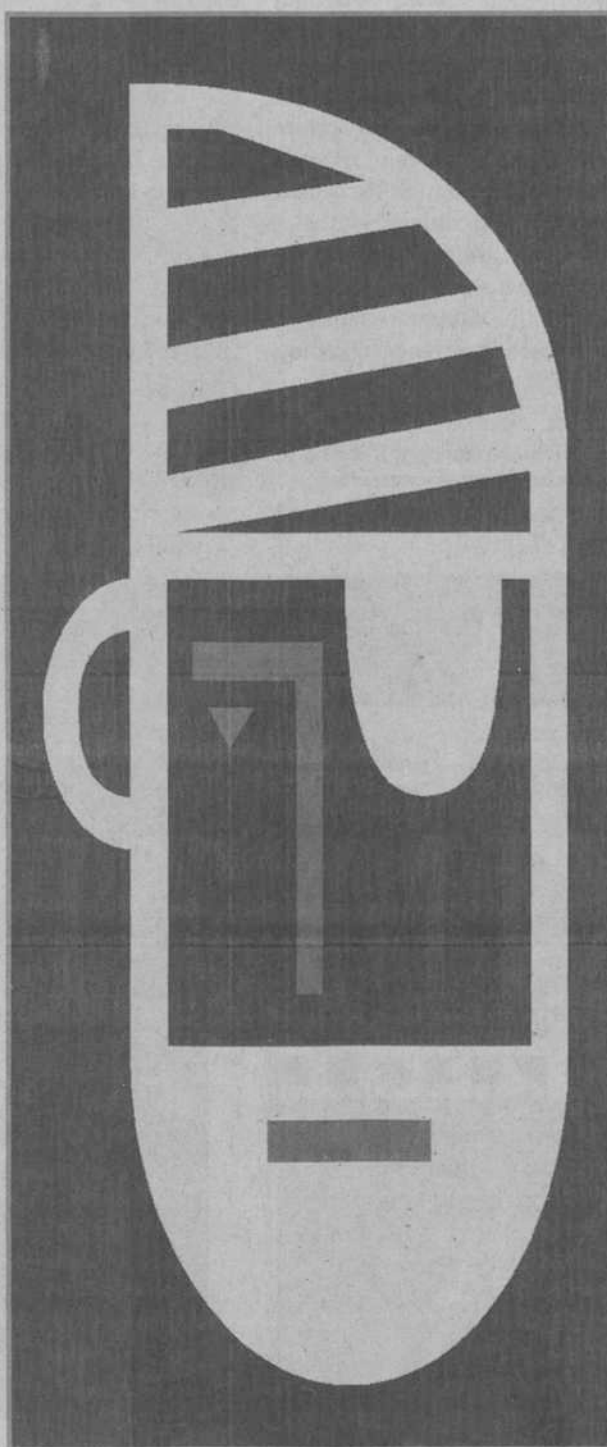


Photo special to THE GAMECOCK

Then Came the Dawn will perform at Pirate Fest! on Saturday.

because they either were Rayford's friends or he heard them play at New Brookland Tavern and asked them if they would be interested in playing. Performances will, for a few bands, be endings while for others chances at a new beginning.

Saturday night's performance will be the last stop on

KOUFAX's 2005 month-long Hard Times tour, which began Aug. 4, 2005, in Denver. Their music has been praised by music critics for such publications as Spin, Teen People and Philadelphia Weekly.

Formed during winter 2002

PIRATE ● 6

TO FOUNDER, A FINAL SHOW AFTER 4 YEARS OF WINGING IT

USC graduate Ben Compton to trade improv troupe Toast for AmeriCorps

Alexis Arnone
THE MIX EDITOR

USC's Scriptless Productions improv troupe, Toast, says farewell tonight to its last founding member, as Ben Compton, a recent USC graduate with a degree in English, leaves the ensemble.

"I kind of regret leaving now," Compton said. "We're poised to do a lot of great shows this semester, but I think that things have been set in motion that will sustain us for many years to come."

Compton will be joining AmeriCorps for 10 months, followed by joining fellow alumni in a professional extension of Toast in Chicago.

Toast has been around for six seasons, and Compton has been a director of the group, along with fellow alums Andrew DeWitt and Grant McFadden, for the past four years. They took Toast from anonymity into selling out shows around Columbia.

Toast will continue this season under the direction of George Pate, a third-year English student.

The ensemble performed at Columbia bars and theaters this summer. Finally back on its home turf of USC, the group is getting pumped for its show tonight and its new season.

Toast holds a close connection to local Trustus Theatre's Armed Chair production company. Armed Chair is comprised of USC students, recent graduates and Nate Herring, a fourth-year psychology student at Wheaton College in Massachusetts. Herring comes down for performances during his winter and summer breaks.

The groups have worked together for the past two years, bringing Columbia an array of events from Caged Improv Matches to classes for local high schools and even performing at the Vista's

"Rock the Vote" event this past election season.

Events for this year, with Toast and Armed Chair collaborating in a new series, "Loaded Late Nights," are promised by Compton to be a "late-night series that would make the Roman gods of old wet themselves with excitement."

In 2003, Toast performed a series of sketches and short-form improv shows titled, "Toast and Jam," the inspiration for which came from sci-fi movies and characters they were familiar with. For the 2005 season, the group came out with "Tea Pot Dome," a long-form improv style, according to a news release.

"We have a self-imposed mandate that says we have to create a new type of show every season," Pate said in the release.

Compton said he's excited about his last show.

"The show is going to be great. Everyone should come out, if for no other reason than to just stare at me one more time. I wasn't actually going to do this show, but I thought it would be nice. Plus, I'm the type of person who just wants attention."

Thinking of joining in on the world of improv? Toast will be holding auditions at 7 p.m. Wednesday in the Booker T. Washington auditorium, located off Wheat Street across from the Blatt P.E. Center.

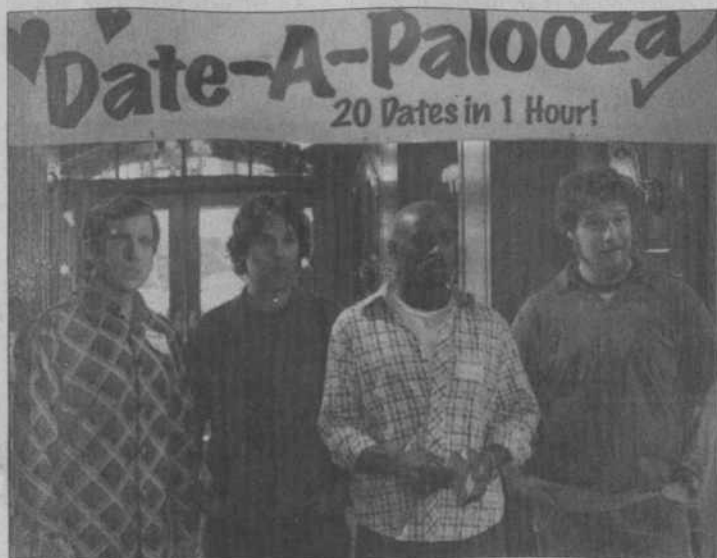
"We want everyone to come out," Compton said. "Most people don't know they're capable of doing something so intimidating, but they might be surprised."

Tonight's show will be held at 8 p.m. in Benson Theatre on South Bull St. Doors open at 7:45 p.m. Tickets are \$2 at the door.

Comments on this story? E-mail gamecockfeatures@gum.sc.edu

MOVIE REVIEW

'Virgin' scores with meaningful message, not misogyny



"The 40-year-old Virgin"
Steve Carrell
★★★★ out of ☆☆☆☆

Leslie Dennis
FOR THE GAMECOCK

After a summer of mostly disappointing movies, "The 40-Year-Old Virgin" comes at the

tail end of the season and triumphs as one of the best comedies (tied with "The Wedding Crashers") of the year. Comedy has become a tricky genre in modern film because of the impulse to go with either

an overload of crude bathroom humor or the popular-yet-standard romantic comedy. However, "Virgin" effectively blends sexual humor and emotional sensitivity.

Steve Carrell (a "Daily Show" alumnus and now star of NBC's "The Office") plays 40-year-old virgin Andy Stitzer who works at an electronics store, collects action figures and rides a bike. One night, David (Paul Rudd), Jay (Romany Malco) and Cal (Seth Rogen), who work with Andy but have never really gotten to know him, need an extra player for their poker game and ask Andy to join them.

While having a conversation about sex during the game, the guys realize Andy is a virgin and decide to do something about his problem. Each guy gives Andy his own type of sexual advice, whether it is to sow as many of his seeds as possible, hook up with a drunk girl or

sleep with someone he doesn't like because his first time won't be good any way.

Despite his friends' relentless prodding, Andy asserts he doesn't want to take advantage of any woman and that he will have sex when he is ready.

In Andy's quest, he encounters a variety of women, including a drunk girl who keeps a breathalyzer in her car, a bookstore employee whose sexual interests overpower most guys' and an overzealous boss who hints at her willingness to bed Andy.

But one day at work Andy meets Trish (Catherine Keener), a woman who sells items on eBay and has three children and one grandchild, and he manages to inadvertently get her number. Eventually Andy and Trish begin dating and, to Andy's relief, forgo a physical relationship to get to know each other.

Although the movie centers

on Andy, the supporting characters are well-defined and drawn out with quirks and problems. Jay seems to be a commitment-phobe and cannot shake his two-timing ways. David continues to obsess over an old girlfriend who broke up with him two years ago. Cal goes through life living from one moment to the next.

The friendship between Andy, Cal, David and Jay develops with such ease that the men act as if they had been friends since childhood. As much as "Virgin" is about Andy's attempt to lose his virginity, the friendship between these guys also plays a vital role in the story and enhances the film by adding the right amount of emotion without becoming overly sentimental.

"Virgin" could have easily fallen into the rut of crude humor about sexual behaviors

and depravity, but instead mixes humor with a multi-faceted story of maturity, friendship and love. Even Andy could have fallen prey to the cliché of a naïve virgin who is simply the butt of jokes.

But Carrell perfectly plays Andy with the right combination of innocence and intelligence that allows the viewer to relate to Andy. Rudd gives the strongest supporting performance by balancing his character's desperation with a touch of humanity and humor that makes David's likeable. Once again, Rudd proves his abilities as not only a comedic sidekick, but a well-rounded actor.

With an amazing cast and an original story, "Virgin" is a smart film that sidesteps clichés and confirms that good comedy still exists.

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