

SHIRTS EXPRESS SUNNY, WITTY SAYINGS

Kristen Truesdale
FOR THE GAMECOCK

Even though Pedro never ran for president, everyone still bought the T-shirt.

While the red letters "Vote for Pedro" might have faded by now, his name continues to appear on billboards, with new slogans, all over the country. The latest Pedro craze: "Hillary/Pedro 2008."

From the mall to the local thrift store, graphic T-shirts abound. They keep coming, with millions of different designs, and college students keep buying. USC students are no exception.

It might be a fad, but it is a fad that talks. While students do not have much to say about their T-shirts, the T-shirts seem to be saying a lot about the students.

Laura Bausum, a transfer marine science student from Danville, Ky., favors her John Deere style tee labeled "Good Girl Gone Bad."

"I can't wear it in my hometown, though," she said, "because all the people know me and they would take it way too seriously."

Still, Laura likes the shirt because it describes her.

"And it fits really well, too," she adds.

Comfort is a plus for college students, but so is being fashionable. Some students say graphic tees allow both, and although they are a trend, they can still be unique.

Sackwear.com, a new T-shirt site based in Albuquerque, N.M., has taken that idea seriously. Having already sold almost 1,600 shirts in its first month, the company's designs are meant to draw attention without stupid or blatantly inappropriate.

"We just wanted to use our creativity to put some shirts out there that gave a little more of a 'wink' when you see them," Sam Maclay, designer, said in a news release.

The motto for Sack: "Shirts for People."

Owners Maclay and Tim McGrath said it is meant to reflect the growing trend of consumers searching for original ways to express themselves through fashion.

"The well-crafted, yet somewhat inappropriate potty joke has a place in pop culture," McGrath said. "We're just putting them on shirts, not to shock people, just to make them laugh. But also maybe to shock people."

For a small price, consumers can buy humor, wisdom and coolness.

"I think it's sick," said Micah Towery, a third-year literature student at Binghamton University in New York. "People think they are being different by wearing them (graphic tees), but everybody is wearing them. The problem with fashion is that it makes ugly people look OK."

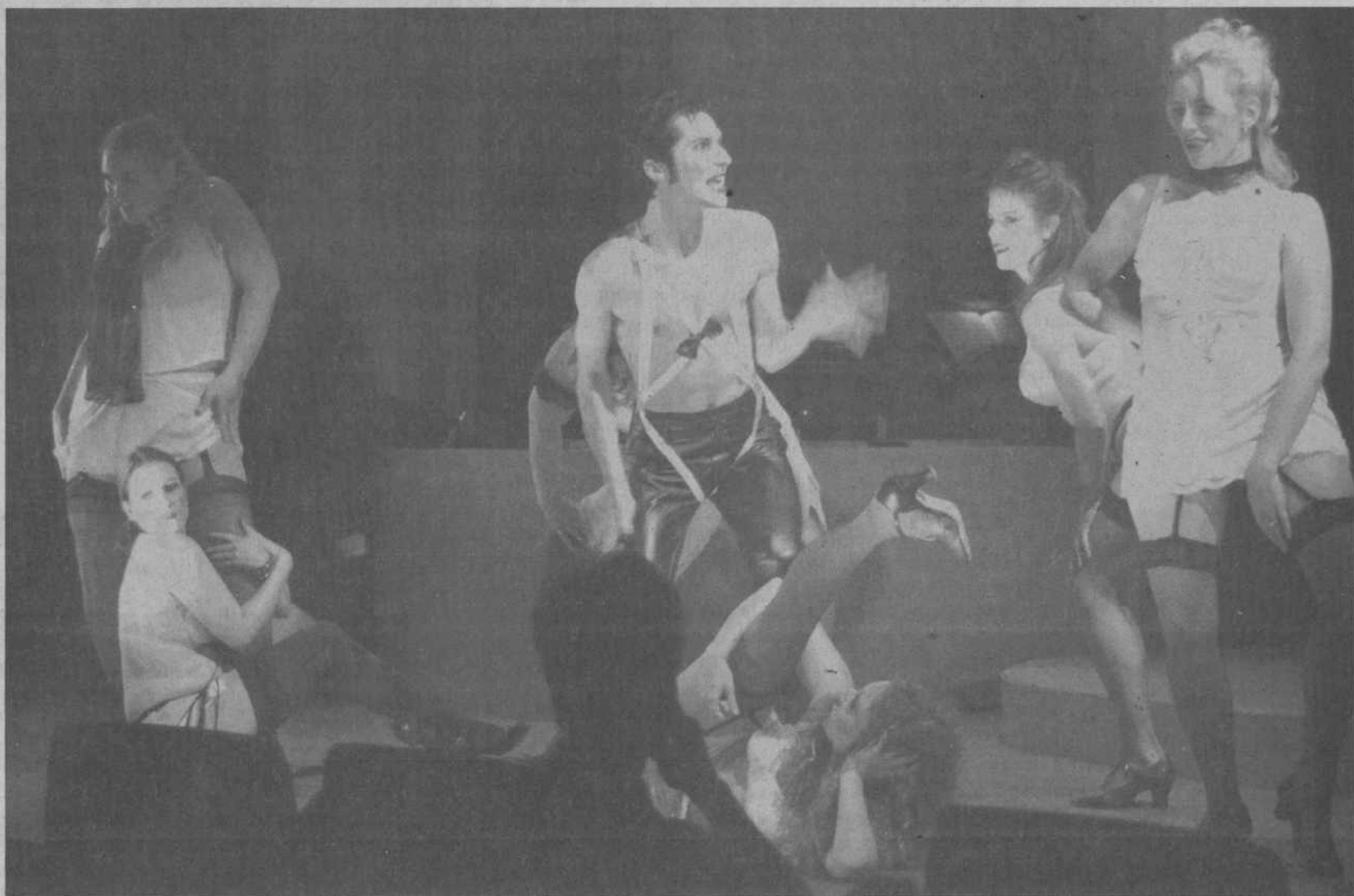
Garrett Curry, USC campus minister for The Shack, views part of the trend as an identity issue.

"I think it's very similar as the psychology behind tattoos," he said, "except T-shirts are cheaper and won't be stuck on you 'til the day you die."

Though T-shirts can reveal a lot about the consumer, Curry said he feels they can also be a way for a person to plagiarize from a company.

"Throw \$20 on the table for a shirt and now you're a rock star, a Christian, an activist, a trend-setter, the person in the catalogue or someone who actually has a sense of humor. Like all trends, graphic tees will get old. And ironically, you'll start seeing name brand graphic tees in thrift stores, which inspired the whole thing to begin with."

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Special to THE GAMECOCK

Trustus Theatre stages a production of 'Cabaret,' a dark, sexy musical set in Berlin during the coming of the Third Reich. Performances run through Oct. 1.

A leg up for the Cabaret

Local theater comes of age with adult themed show targeted at college crowd



Gabrielle Sinclair
FOR THE GAMECOCK

Trustus Theatre turns 21 this year, and is opening its coming-of-age season with Fred Ebb's "Cabaret," a dark, sexy musical set in 1930s Berlin about decadence, money and the rise of the Third Reich.

"There is a lot of groping, it's very interactive, it's very spontaneous," said Jonathan Whitton, who's playing the Emcee at the creepy Kit Kat Club, where the play is set. "Audiences that come see it will not see the same show night after night."

The play is not exactly happy-go-lucky, said Jim Thigpen, the play's director. Thigpen founded Trustus, the state's only professional theater, in 1985 with his wife, Kay.

"It's not a musical like feel-good boy-meets-girl, go home, get married, be happy," he said.

"It was in a world that was pretty scary with the Nazis taking over. And there was Berlin was a hotbed of sin city, a Sodom and Gommorah of the time."

Thigpen said he has wanted to do the show for years, and the ingredients

finally came together with the right performers and artistic director. Whitton, who said he grew up at Trustus, was going to play a Nazi youth in a past attempt to put on the show.

He said the play can be seen as a reflection of current political climate.

"It's going to leave audience unsettled, but at the same time I think they're going to have a really good time while they're here."

Trustus is reaching out to college-age students in a number of ways this season. With IPWIC (I pay what I can), the first Sunday of all shows but musicals have a minimum ticket price of \$1.

For "Cabaret," students can arrive 15 minutes before the show times for "rush tickets," which are half the ticket price with a student ID.

"It's a great way to save some bucks and have money left over for a beer," Thigpen said.

Thigpen said many college students often feel alienated from live theater.

"In general there are students who aren't rolling in dough, but they're assigned to see plays, and though they have USC as their base, it's fun to get

away, and if they're of legal age they can come and see the show, get a drink at the bar and have a good time," he said.

Armed Chair is manning the late-night portion of Trustus this season, set for the second Friday of every show. The first Armed Chair "Loaded Late Night" will present Toast, USC's student improv troupe, unofficially sponsored by Cartoon Network's Adult Swim, at 11:15 p.m. Sept. 23 as part of Armed Chair Productions new Loaded Late Nights. Loaded Late Nights are going to be the third Friday of every show.

Patrick Kelly, fifth-year theater student and artistic director of Armed Chair, said Loaded Late Nights will provide a different form of entertainment for people out on their Friday nights.

Trustus is a warm, laid-back theater with comfy chairs, free popcorn, a bar and is known for doing cutting-edge theater catering to young people.

"We're coming of age, we're finally 21. Still, in this part of the country, live theater, what should I do on a Saturday night People don't think

about going to a theater. That's something you have to do, dress up, be an adult. It's nice to be 21 and still have a young heart. The reason we've been around this year are younger people."

Performances will be held on Sept. 10, 14-18, 21-25, 28-30 and Oct. 1. Shows will start Wednesdays and Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m., and Sundays at 3 p.m.

For more information or to make a reservation, call the box office Tuesday through Saturday at 254-9732.

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

If you're going

WHAT: Cabaret
WHERE: Trustus Theatre, 520 Lady St.
WHEN: 8 p.m. tonight
HOW MUCH: \$22.50, half price for college students with valid ID 15 minutes before show