It's hot, it's loud, it's nuts, it's Music Midtown 2001

By Alan Back

Drinks flat Coke for fun

Being on semesters has an advantage or two over the quarter system, especially when it comes to the 8th Annual Music Midtown Festival. Instead of giving up a weekend of valuable study time to join the party, you can wrap up all your final and celebrate by blowing out your eardrums in style.

This year’s hours are: May 4, 6 p.m. to midnight; May 5, noon to midnight; and May 6, noon to 10 p.m. SciTrek and the Atlanta Civic Center lie at the heart of the 35-acre site, which reaches from Piedmont Avenue to Central Park Place and from Ralph McGill Boulevard to Pine Street. Renaissance Park and Central Park are also included.

Over 130 bands from all over the world will perform on a total of 11 stages during the weekend music festival.

For updates and more information, call the Music Midtown line at (770) MIDTOWN-(643-8696) or visit http://www.musicmidtown.com.

The Spirit of ’76 is alive and well Down Under With The Living End

By Andrew Pilsch

Down Under with The Living End

The Australians of The Living End, the creators of the highest-selling single of the year with “Prisoner of Society” (It’s a dish for the skip track button, if not for the entire album. The Spirit of ’76 is alive and well Down Under With The Living End

A ‘Dozen’ reasons Cross this!

Come find out why this artful brass band from New Orleans is gaining a following. Page 25

Cross this!

If your last test of verbal ability was the SAT, check out “Onward and Crossword.” Page 27
As much as I depend on email, it still bugs me that I have to field at least one of those annoying chain letters every week.Quite frankly, it infuriates me that each week, someone informs me that the quality of my life will greatly diminish if I don’t forward it to at least 293 people before sunset. So, I thought that I’d take this opportunity to share with you my chain Two Bits to hopefully bring you a little luck (unless you’re just really unlucky, or one of Earth’s twelve most prolific fatalists.)

By reading this Two Bits, you are already luckier than you were before. For example, once you finish reading this, there are pretty low odds that you’ll die today by being hit by a bus. Of course, just as a precautionary measure, I recommend running like hell when you see a wayward Stinger coming toward you. I would hate to have my record as a prophet discounted by telling you that you won’t die of being hit by a bus today. A screw up like that could land the Two Bits Man on the front page of the Technique, and guess what? She didn’t get hit by a bus. In fact, she didn’t get hit by a bus during the remainder of 1806 or 1807. Talk about luck! If it weren’t for this Two Bits, she might have died years earlier, not getting to experience the extraordinary death that she had, choking on a ham sandwich!

Still reading? Good! I bet you’ve already decreased your chances of being hit by a bus today by 0.07%, unless of course you were standing in the middle of the street while you were reading, but that’s not Two Bits’s problem, now is it? By now, I bet you’re thinking, gee, I’m one lucky dude, but how can I get even luckier? That’s an easy one. Just pass the luck along. By sharing this paper with others amazing things can happen. Just check this out!

Share it with 1-5 other people, and you prevent 1-5 papers from getting wasted.

Share it with 6-20 other people, and you prevent 6-20 papers from getting wasted.

Talk about astonishing results. Other chains make unfounded claims about how you will have better luck by passing the letter on to more people, but only the chain Two Bits guarantees results. In fact, we are so sure that you’ll save 293 papers if you share with 293 people that we will refund you the full cover price of the Nique. That’s right. We’re willing to pay you nothing if my prediction is wrong. Whereas other chain letters offer you no guarantees, you have my word that if I’m wrong, I’ll give you absolutely nothing!

So there you have it. You are now a luckier crowd because you have read (and hopefully shared) the time honored chain Two Bits. Until next week, I am the Two Bits Man, and I can levitate objects with my mind.
Dirty Dozen Brass Band takes it to (and from) the streets

By Alan Back

The words “brass band” usually evoke images of a group of people marching down the street in tight formation, playing marches exactly as they were written by John Philip Sousa or the like. If you’re in New Orleans, though, things get turned on their head a bit; what else do you expect from the town that invented Mardi Gras?

The Dirty Dozen Brass Band doesn’t use uniforms or worry about staying in step when in front of a crowd. What they do concentrate on is creating a sound that appeals to fans of old and new jazz alike—something that makes people want to dance rather than march.

In the mid-1970s, the Big Easy hadn’t had a brass band music that hadn’t been changed for nearly 100 years. Said, “We were playing the tradition—coming up,” Lewis noted. “Some of the guys wanted to play rhythm and blues or bebop. Most of them wanted to play the kind of music they didn’t have the opportunity to do in other bands. But if we had our own, we could do whatever we wanted.”

What he and his partners settled on was a blend of old-style brass band rhythms and more modern elements of jazz and pop. They were “not trying to change anything, just having fun, you know!” Experimenting. Then all of a sudden, people said, “Hey, y’all sound different, you’ve changed the music”—brass band music that hadn’t been changed for nearly 100 years. We said, “Really? And people started hiring us!”

Three of the founding members (Lewis, Harris, Towns) are still on the road with the band today. Davis also stays active, though not as much as in the past. Terence Higgins (drums), Frederick Sanders (keyboards), Sandy Williams (trombone), and Julius McKee (sousaphone) round out the lineup.

Nearly 25 years of gigging have carried the Dirty Dozen all over the world and dropped them into nearly every kind of venue you can think of. Street parades? They started out doing those. Arenas? They’ve hit a few with the likes of the Black Crowes and Widespread Panic. Festivals? You name it, they’ve probably done it. Two weeks from now, they’ll roll up to Music Midtown once again (their first appearance was in 1996).

Royal audiences? That, too. Some eight years ago, the band found itself playing for the king of Thailand as part of a goodwill tour of eastern Asia. Then in 1999, they hit Beijing for one of China’s first open-air pop concerts ever. Lewis reminisced on the experience: “Man, it was a trip. What I enjoyed so much about that was, we got on the bus and people were still dancing. People walking out on the street, and they’re dancing! Because they’d never had that before.”

Then again, the group has had plenty of experience at getting listeners out of their seats. In the 1980s, they put in a six-year weekly residency at New Orleans’ Glass House, cooking up red beans and rice to go along with the music. The combination attracted a few unexpected customers, including Fats Domino, the Manhattan Transfer, and trumpet masters Dizzy Gillespie and Miles Davis.

“Get all these folks in there; we said, ‘Wait a minute, what’s happening?’” Lewis chuckled. “Being around these people, doing our stuff, we’d try to be as creative as possible. People started calling us up for different projects.”

One of those projects, the stint on the road with Widespread, turned into a collaboration with them on their albums ’Til the Medicine Takes and Another Joyous Occasion. “The Dirty Dozen and Widespread Pan- ic just clicked,” Lewis noted. “The chemistry between us—it’s really hip, I must say, and I’ve been in this business 45 years.” What makes it possible for such different groups to work together, in his view, is the universal nature of music—something that crosses over genres and classifications.

“Once you learn how to play, you’re not limited to one kind of music. Like the guys in Widespread: if they decided they wanted to be a jazz band, they could do that. They could make a crossover. Or if we decide to play country or whatever, because we’re musicians. Some guys prefer to play a certain kind of mu- sic; some boys want to play jazz or
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One thing that bothered me, a lot, about this album was the Living End's inclusion of a "live" version of their smash (in Australia) hit, "Prisoner of Society." If the case hadn't said that the song was recorded live, I would have wondered why the band had chosen to re-release that single again. There is no crowd noise and only small differences from the studio version. It's an extremely lame attempt to sell record, and undercut the nature of the record.

Shifting gears can cause a backlash, though, as the Dirty Dozen found out after the release of Ears to the Wall in 1996. That album traded in much of their rawness and ebullience in favor of slicker production and an easy-listening mood, and it caught the fans and critics by surprise. For their most recent disc, 1999's Buck Jump, they returned to what they knew best and enlisted solid production help in the form of John Medeski, keyboard man for Medeski Martin & Wood.

Lewis made no bones about his opinion of Medeski. "The guy can play, and he's got a lot of imagination." (He played backup keys during the recording sessions.) "One thing I liked about what he did was, he let the tape recorder roll," referring to the fact that most of the album's nine tracks were done in one take each. The end result of that on-the-fly work ethic is a set of tunes that nicely capture the loose vibe prevalent in New Orleans music since the birth of jazz. A prime example is the 12-minute jam "Old School," which spins through bits of the genre's entire history without becoming repetitive or tiring. Other surprises bubble up from time to time, including Lewis' switch from reeds to flute for "Pet the Kat."

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The Dirty Dozen Brass Band will be performing at Music Midtown on May 4. See related story, page 23, for details on the festival. Visit the group online at http://www.rosebudus.com/dozen/index.html.

after like 50 papers, sarah is giving up the title of entertainment goddess in favor of graduating, she loves you all; visit her in california next year.