

Diverse cultural offerings highlight weekend

Melissa Milios
Pick of the Week
The Tannahill Weavers
The ArtsCenter, Sept. 14

In a town bursting with indie-rock upstarts and coffee-bar acoustic acts, music with centuries-deep roots is almost as rare as musicians over age 30.

Some polished traditional Celtic music may be just the diversion your ears are yearning for. Scotland's Tannahill Weavers have been touring the world over for more than 15 years, and with nine albums under their belts, this Saturday finds the internationally acclaimed five-piece group in the booming metropolis of Carrboro.

Often said to personify Celtic music, the Tannahills are known for their unique and masterful musicianship as well as their energetic showmanship. With veteran Tannahill Les Wilson and founding members Roy Gullane and Phil Smillie, today's Tannahills are five of Scotland's top multi-instrumentalists, including bagpipe maestro Iain MacInnes and fiddler John Martin.

Harmonious ballads, traditional melodies and fiery jigs promise to season the group's performance Saturday. And with song titles such as "Are Ye Sleeping Maggie," "The Deil's Awa' Wi' th' Exciseman" and "John MacKenzie's Fancy," the Tannahills have an incredible breadth of material to choose from

and a sound that appeals to both the folk enthusiast and the anti-mainstream listener.

Aziz Huq
Pick of the Week
9th Annual Bull Durham Blues Fest
Durham Athletic Park, Sept. 13-14

This weekend's Bull Durham Blues Festival raises money for St. Joseph's Historic Foundation—a nonprofit group that promotes understanding of the African-American experience—and will bring together a constellation of locally and internationally renowned stars.

Although billed as a "blues festival," the program includes a wide range of musical styles and artists.

Friday, concertgoers will experience the zippy jalapeño pep of Lil' Brian & his Zydeco Travelers. A Zydeco group from Texas, the Travelers have spiced up their repertoire with some new tricks lifted from hip-hop and blues. Renowned blues harmonica player James Cotton will also appear. A pupil of Sonny Boy Williamson, Cotton has toured with Muddy Waters.

Saturday another legendary harmonica player will perform—Junior Wells. Wells has squealed and moaned throughout the better part of blues history. Denise LaSalle, who has a reputation for a fiery live show, will open for Wells.



For those who prefer a downhome twang, the festival offers John Cephas and Phil Wiggins.

However, the highlight of the entire event will come Friday evening with the touchdown of interstellar luminary and all-around bad-ass Maceo Parker.

Parker promises a funkified finale to an impressive selection of music.

Lily Thayer
Pick of the Week
"Cymbeline"
Paul Green Theatre, through Oct. 6

With the constant production and reproduction of classics like "Hamlet," and "Twelfth Night," it's easy to forget Shakespeare wrote 35 other plays, like "Cymbeline," which opened yesterday. The surrealized realms of Wales, Britain

and Rome are the scene of the PlayMakers Repertory Company production of this rarely-performed tragic-comedy.

The story of King Cymbeline and his lovely daughter Imogen, "Cymbeline" is directed by PRC veteran director Tazewell Thompson ("From the Mississippi Delta"). Thompson has crafted his production to capitalize on the play's fairy tale themes. Some of its themes from Italian romantic literature and fairy tales include mistaken identity, magic potions, a wager made concerning the heroine's fidelity and reunions between separated families and estranged lovers.

Other elements of "Cymbeline" lend to its classical appeal. An evil stepmother and a callow villain, for instance, figure prominently. There are twists, however, including a banished nobleman who's been hanging out in a Welsh cave for 20 years, and a character who's had his head lopped off and is found beside another whose head is very much intact.

The story is energetic and the conclusion happy, and advance word on the production featuring Christina Rouser as Imogen and Cleve Lamison as Cymbeline, is that it's an aesthetically vigorous one. The costumes transcend several historical periods and the sets alternately evoke medieval and Elizabethan England, rural Wales and ancient Rome. All of these elements pulled together should make for an entertaining and rare Shakespeare experience.

New Orleans inspires new album from old favorites

The city of New Orleans has always had a rich tradition of music. Dixieland brass bands have become a staple in this city of jazz: They dance and play their way down the street in parades, weddings and even funerals.

Ears to the Wall is the newest recording by one of the most famous of these bands, The Dirty Dozen.

The Dozen (formerly known as The Dirty Dozen Brass Band, although there are only eight musicians in the band) has been going strong for 20 years and has released seven albums. Known for their fine musicianship, the band fuses all kinds of styles, including funk, bebop, swing, "second-line" street rhythms and traditional dixieland.

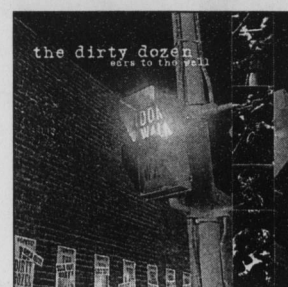
Call them the Daring Dozen, because they have released some very innovative tracks during the last two decades, including a suite employing religious elements and themes called "The Lost Souls (Of Southern Louisiana)" and a whole album of works by the late composer Jelly Roll Morton.

On this new album, however, The Dozen takes a very different turn. Their music is more laid-back than on previous albums but keeps the jazz edge, adding elements like '70s Parliament funk lines and New Age keyboard sounds. Only one song, "L'Ascenseur," is reminiscent of their old sound. The two remakes, "Blackbird Special" and "My Feet Can't Fail Me Now," sound very different from their previous incarnations.

The band has added to its normal instrumentation also. Along with two trumpets, two saxophones, a trombone and a sousaphone—all very normal in the usual marching dixieland bands—they now utilize keyboards, guitar, drumset, congas and djembes. (The old rhythm section was the sousaphone, snare drum and bass drum.)

All of the musicians are top-notch performers, but two are definitely outstanding.

Roger Lewis, the baritone and soprano saxophonist, is one of the oldest mem-



bers of the group and one of the finest soloists I have ever heard in any medium. His ideas are infinitely creative and he is a master of both saxophones. To turn the baritone saxophone into a wonderfully musical instrument is a large task, but Lewis does it better than anybody.

Along the same lines, dixieland sousaphone is also a very hard style to master. To make the instrument sound like an electric bass, play running bass lines and funk figures and—along the way—make it sound good takes a Herculean effort, but Julius McKee makes it sound easy. The Dozen has recorded with three tuba players, but McKee is definitely the most versatile; along with sousaphone, he plays acoustic and electric bass, but he is such a great player that they all sound like the same instrument.

The band's new style keeps with its innovative motif, but the members have left the fusion of styles that put them on the map. Gone are the uptempo street rhythms, "second-line" dances and crazy instrumental tracks like "Voodoo." Their new, laid-back feel works, but their playing is not as daring as on previous albums. Live and on stage, they are still intensely into the music, but this intensity is not in the majority of tracks on *Ears to the Wall*.

There are also not enough solos on the album especially from McKee on sousaphone and Terence Higgins on drums. The soloists that are on the album are kicking, especially Lewis and tenor saxophonist Kevin Harris.

All is not bad, however, and this album is a keeper for those who are into jazz, funk and dixieland.

Australia's Dirty Three brings lyricism to post-rock era

Imagine driving down an outdated, deserted state road in Northwestern Virginia sometime late in summer or early autumn. The hills level off at their peaks, and your heart beats once in your throat at the crest of each. Now imagine driving like that while listening to The Dirty Three and you will have been tempted to the edge of paradise.

With a violin like the Shenandoah and

a drumbeat like Route 10, Australia's Dirty Three come as close to Barber's "Adagio" as any rock band ever will. The classical instrumentation and Pinteresque pauses highlight a soar-

CLAIRE JARVIS

Album Review
"The Dirty Three"
Horse Stories
Touch and Go
A-

ing, twanging violin as it meanders along your mind's Blue Ridge Parkway.

That said, *Horse Stories* has a more produced sound and a cleaner mix than either of the band's two previous records. Purer? Perhaps. The folksy elements of *Dirty Three* and *Sad and Dangerous* are continued in whirling songs like "I Remember a Time When Once You Loved Me." "1,000 Miles" still retains a stilted ambivalence; the drowned vocals on "Horses" fall in a chanting call across, not with, the music; the ever-so-slight temperature changes in "I Knew It Would Come to This" become a long, echoing ode to despair; and "Hope" crescendos

with a melancholy rush of violin that becomes a countryish ballad and stands as one of the most cohesive pieces the band has produced to date.

Horse Stories is a more coherent statement than either of the two previous albums. In some places, however, it needs their roughness. The healthy agitation developed in the more frenzied pieces lacks originalchutzpah, and they devolve into a predilection for pretension. Still, *The Dirty Three* takes its place in the post-rock annals as one of the most productive—and hopefully most enduring—bands of the '90s. *The Dirty Three* play the Cat's Cradle Sept. 15, with Lud.

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