Despite setbacks, Buku festival triumphs

By Caleb Beck
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On March 9, Buku opened its gates for the weekend to 17,500 attendees - 3,000 more than in previous years. This spike in festivalgoers was met by a complete redesign of the grounds that moved the main stage to a larger location, added a new stage and VIP viewing areas, and generally kept crowds from sloping to a halt from stage to stage. The festival sold out completely Saturday evening.

Dean Gura, artist coordinator and craft vendor from Gainesville, Florida, has been attending Buku since 2015 and said that the festival stayed intimate in spite of the expansion.

“I love the setup there. How close they fit everything together makes for an interactive experience and tight-knit community. It’s one of my favorite city festivals for its unique crowd energy,” Gura said.

Sonically, the festival hosted a range of genres and performances often just a stage over from one another. A Day to Remember’s pop-punk anthems were front and center, Green Velvet’s house tunes slinked darkly by the Mississippi River and Flatbush Zombies’ hip-hop packed audiences not long after.

This year was met with a few artist cancellations. Famous Dex, Ski Mask the Slump God and Lil Uzi Vert didn’t show up for their time slots. Migos arrived late and played a condensed set.

In a message displayed on the Power Plant stage after Lil Uzi Vert’s cancellation, Buku’s public relations representative stated portions of the popular rapper’s pre-paid fees would be donated to Upbeat Academy Foundation, a local music education program for impoverished youth.

Jaimie Villar, a music industry senior and marketing intern for Buku, found the cancellations disappointing but said they were handled with grace.

“It was pretty rude on their end to cancel day-of-show with no warning, and I felt bad for the people that had come just to see them. I felt that the artists that subbed in, like Gryf-fin for Lil Uzi Vert, made the best of the situation,” Villar said.

Favorite performances from attendees quoted after the festival closed included Bonobo, Isaiah Rashad and A Day to Remember on Friday, March 9, 2018. Buku opened to 17,500 attendees and featured a complete redesign of the festival space at Mardi Gras World. ANGELO IMBRAGUGLIO / The Maroon.

Local brewery supports community, crawfish and environment

By Kaylie Saidin
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Weekly crawfish boils at a local brewery are promoting both the New Orleans community and Southeastern Louisiana coastal restoration.

On Thursday, March 8, Urban South Brewery threw a crawfish boil sponsored by the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana complete with live music. The event was one of the brewery’s weekly boils where hot crawfish and fixings are served from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. every Thursday.

Known for their local brews such as Holy Roller and Cabana Boy, Urban South Brewery hosts community-driven events in their 8,000-square-foot taproom on Tchoupitoulas Street.

For the event, Urban South Brewery partnered with the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana to support coastal restoration efforts. The coalition promotes oyster shell recycling. After shucking an oyster, the shell is saved and placed back in the oyster beds, encouraging more oyster growth.

All of Urban South Brewery’s crawfish are boiled on-site each week by the taproom manager, Evan Tronell. Tronell runs his own crawfish boiling service, Gulf Coast Crawfish Company.

“They’re ideas is that if you increase the amount of oyster beds, you’ll increase the amount of shoreline, and you’re going to stop the loss of shoreline here in Louisiana. They’re raising awesome awareness. If we can take these shells and put them back into the Gulf instead of a landfill, it’ll really help propagate the oyster beds,” Tronell said.

This week, Urban South paired up with the environmental organization in their community event.

“The weekly crawfish boil here has grown and grown. Tonight we did a donation – 50 cents per tray as a direct donation to the CRCL (Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana), and $1 per pint as a donation too. I couldn’t tell you an exact number, but we probably raised $600, $700 for the organization to help them with what they do,” Tronell said.

Abby Perkins, a Loyola graduate, works in public relations at Urban South Brewery. Perkins described the event as a “shelebration.”

“The most exciting part about working in craft beer is that it becomes a community hub. A lot of what we’re doing at Urban South isn’t just a bar to go to and have a drink, it’s a place to bring your family, come with friends. It’s a really good community space locally,” Perkins said.

Urban South Brewery is celebrating their second anniversary as a brewery at the end of the month on March 31.

Alex Flores, an employee, described the brewery’s dedication to their customers and to New Orleans.

“Even batch to batch, we tweak and change our beers. Without the customer, we don’t have anybody. I think that’s what New Orleans is anyway: the sounding board of dis-logic I guess, where nothing really makes sense but it’s all really harmonious. If it’s not right, it’s not going to happen, but people seem to love it and we’re making a lot of good beer. But only because people keep telling us what we’re doing well and what we could be doing better,” Flores said.

UPCOMING EVENTS
3rd Friday Crawfish On The Quad (3/16)
Description: The Department of Student Involvement is hosting a crawfish boil this afternoon from 3p.m. to 6p.m. There will be snoballs and live music.
Price: 45 platters of crawfish
Location: Peace Quad

2018 St. Patrick’s Day Parade (3/17)
Description: This annual parade party will take place this Saturday at 3:30 p.m. in the Irish Channel. St. There is a mass open to the public at Mary’s Assumption Church prior to the parade.
Price: Free
Location: Irish Channel