

For immediate release

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WINNER 2001 TONY® AWARD FOR "BEST THEATRICAL EVENT"

## 2012 NORTH AMERICA

Since taking the world by storm with triumphant successes in London, on Broadway, across North America and Japan *Blast!*, winner of the 2001 Tony® Award for "Best Special Theatrical Event" and the 2001 Emmy Award for "Best Choreography," will play Kalamazoo's Miller Auditorium for one night only on Thursday, Feb. 23 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are on sale now at <http://www.millerauditorium.com> and via phone at (269) 387-2300.

Astounding audiences around the globe repeatedly since the Emmy® winning PBS performance and the Tony® winning Broadway performances, *Blast!* is back. Showgoers quickly become fans who return to enjoy and celebrate *Blast!* over and over again. Along with this ever-growing core following, *Blast!* attracts to its performances newer and newer generations of devotees every time it takes the stage. An event for all ages, *Blast!* also defies language barriers by performing crowd thrilling instrumental material, making it the perfect touring production.

*Blast!*, a celebration of movement and music, almost defies description -- and it has left critics everywhere surprised and delighted. Howard Kissel of the *New York Daily News* says: "What a cast, what a '*Blast!*' An exhilarating evening." Bruce McCabe of the *Boston Globe* says, "*Blast!* doesn't falter while bridging the categories of classical, blues, jazz, rock n roll, and techno-pop music. *Blast!* stands, blows, pounds, marches, and whirls with panache. It sent the full house into repeated bursts of cheering and applause [with] the thrill of seeing sheer virtuosity in a different kind of art form. *Blast!* is entertainment of a high order." And Kevin Nance of *The Tennessean* raves, "I was helpless in the path of this visual and aural juggernaut, which far outdoes [*STOMP* and *Riverdance*] with youthful energy and cocky panache. ...I had an absolutely marvelous time."

Born on athletic fields across the nation, *Blast!* is a novel art form evolved from the showmanship of outdoor pageantry. A unique experience, *Blast!* explodes the genre with the artistry of the theatre. *Blast!* is musical spectacle; it is music in motion. Described by Richard Christiansen of the, *Chicago Tribune*, "'*Blast!*' And a truer word was never spoken. A terrific good time ... explosive entertainment. It is indeed a blast."

***Blast!*** evolved from the drum corps Star of Indiana, which was founded in 1984 in Bloomington, Indiana, by businessman Bill Cook to benefit young people in music education. The Artistic Director James Mason, is a lifelong veteran of drum and bugle corps and other musical activities. In its initial year, Star of Indiana became the first corps ever to place among the top ten corps at the prestigious Drum Corps International World Championships. Star of Indiana improved each year until it became the World Champion in 1991. Competing against other organizations from the United States, Japan, Canada and Europe, Star's performances revolutionized the world of drum corps, bringing an ever more sophisticated sense of musicianship, exciting showmanship, and dynamic choreography to this wonderful genre. In 1993, Mr. Mason began shaping the evolution of Star of Indiana from a competitive drum corps into a theatrical show which brings the power, passion and precision of outdoor pageantry to the stage in a musical performance now known as ***Blast!***

***Blast!*** on tour consists of 35 members, drawn from the world of outdoor pageantry all across North America. There are over 40 world titles held by ***Blast!*** cast members who comprise three performing sections – the brass, percussion and visual ensembles. The brass instruments are pitched in the standard multi-keys. The percussion section includes drums, mallet instruments and electronic keyboards. The visual element enhances the show by spinning and tossing unusual implements along with the traditional sabers and colorful flags in perfectly synchronized, ballet-like drill.

The physical and musical demands of the production require that the performers be highly trained athletes who are also world-class musicians. Months of intense training prepare the cast. Rehearsing through heat, cold, dust and rain, they produce thrilling performances where athleticism, musical talent, kaleidoscopic movement, and showmanship merge into an art form that is both compelling and entertaining, or in the words of Richard Quzounian of *The Toronto Star*, "Get your tickets now! ***Blast!*** is nothing short of breathtaking; a free-wheeling fusion of then and now, [it] dazzles the eye, thrills the ear and stirs the spirit. A sure-fire hit."

***Blast!*** is part of the Lake Michigan Mailers Spotlight Series and is welcomed by Meijer. Tickets are available by calling (269) 387-2300 or (800) 228-9858, online at [www.millerauditorium.com](http://www.millerauditorium.com) or by visiting the Miller Auditorium Ticket Office. Groups of 20 or more can call (269) 387-2312 for special discounts.

**At a Glance:**

**What:** ***Blast!***  
**When:** Thursday, Feb. 23 at 7:30p.m.  
**Where:** Miller Auditorium on the campus of Western Michigan University.  
**How Much:** Tickets range from \$20-\$40 and are available now.  
Visit the Miller Auditorium Ticket Office, call (269) 387-2300 or (800) 228-9858 or visit [www.millerauditorium.com](http://www.millerauditorium.com).  
Group discounts available at (269) 387-2312.

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The official ***Blast!*** cast recording is available on RCA Victor.  
For further information on ***Blast!*** and the 2012 North American tour, visit

[www.blasttheshow.com](http://www.blasttheshow.com)