

# 'Blast' is an explosion of sight and sound

Percussion show is a step beyond drum-and-bugle

By SANDRA OKAMOTO Staff Writer

"Blast" is not your father's drum-and-bugle corps. The show is based on the old-time marching band concept, but it's gone way beyond that, says David Cox, one of 10 percussionists in the show.

Cox, 24, an Atlanta native, will be back on home territory when the company performs at the Fox Theatre starting Tuesday.

"It's based on the drum-and-bugle corps," he said. "We have horns, percussion, flag work, dancers. It's a non-stop action show, but we're taking it one step further."

"It's an exciting array of sound and color." "It's really hard to describe the show," Christopher "Kit" Chatham said. "It's symphonic literature. Just, basically the show spectrum of music."

"And unlike most shows, we involve the audience. The audience is not just sitting there watching the show for two or three hours. We go out in the audience."

Chatham, 24, also an Atlanta native and a former percussionist for the John Scott Ryan Band, said unlike other shows where drummers are stationary he and the others end up moving around the stage.

"I do a drum solo where I come out and I actually have a drum harness on," Chatham said. And that's when friends and family will get to see an unfamiliar sight — Chatham dancing on stage.

Chatham celebrates his 25th



"Blast" is a lively stage show that features 10 percussionists, two of them natives of Atlanta.

### BLAST! FACTS

- The cast members range in age from 18-31, with 23.9 as the average age.
- The average "Blast!" cast member was 9-years-old when he first began learning a performing art.
- Out of the 55 cast members, all but one has been a member of a drum and bugle corps.
- Three cast members are two-time world champions at Drum Corps International.
- One cast member joined his first drum-and-bugle corps when he was 5.

### IF YOU GO

**What:** "Blast!" is based on the traditional drum-and-bugle corps concept, but goes beyond that.

**When:** 8 p.m. Tuesday through Feb. 15, 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. Feb. 15, 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Feb. 17

**Where:** Fox Theatre, 650 Peachtree St. N.E., Atlanta

**Tickets:** \$22-\$50-\$45

**Information:** (404) 249-6400

Beth even have known each other for years. While they attended different high schools, they ended up as roommates at the University of Georgia. Chatham graduated last spring, but Cox has a few more semesters to go.

"I took time off from college to do this," Cox said. "I probably do this a long time, but I probably go back to Georgia forever."

after this."

Cox's parents own a bed-and-breakfast in Cave Spring, Ga., and that's where all of his percussion instruments are stored. "All my stuff is in a carriage house," he said.

Besides learning the music and choreography for the show, the cast also had to take acting lessons.

"You wouldn't think you'd have to act since there's not a line in this show," Cox said. "That 25 percent of our day was spent in acting classes."

That was the most difficult part of the rehearsals for Cox. "That was challenging stuff," he said. "I had never done that stuff before, but lo and behold, I'm in acting classes."

Chatham loves performing. "This is what I've always wanted to do," he said. "Like when I used to play with John Evans, all I wanted to do was perform."

I would love to keep doing this forever."

birthday at home. "It's going to be awesome," he said. "I know I have 30 or 40 people coming to my opening night. That's just family. I have a bunch of friends coming, too. It's cool to have them see the project, what this show's evolved to."

Cox will have the same number of family and friends coming toward the end of the week, he said.

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