

# Big brass bam-boom

'Blast!' offers theatrical take on energy, pageantry of a marching band

By James D. Watts Jr.  
and Christopher Clark

Are you ever in a hurry to "blast" from this town to the next? This big brass band of a show which presents a theatrical take on the energy and pageantry of a marching band opens its show with a dose of theatricality, two operators in the rear corners of the concert hall.

As it is no surprise that "Blast!" packs an undeniably explosive wallop of their own form.

Like its obvious that the 32 members of the band appear to have what would only be described as a "blast" on stage. They play and dance and twirl and twirl and back and forth with an exuberance that had the crowd in the Chapman Music Hall at Tabor's musical night performance cheering along and cheering for much of the evening.

And the very other kind of "blast" — it is an obvious thing to see as creating a line to create that total on stage effect, as that of that musical on stage, as that musical and that that night — was obvious.

The "Blast!" will bring to be any thing they are proud. At the show



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democratizing dancing that could mean it's not just a single mare and two sticks, followed by figures work over his state to see them two, then three drumsticks, and ending with most a dark drummers whacking away at a special array of drums lowered from the ceiling.

Not everything worked, however. When "Blast!" steps to showcase what it calls its "visual assembly," the energy drains away. (One reason is that the choreography for these segments rarely runs above the level of the sort of "interpretive dance" usually seen on TV award shows.)

Another reason is that the music is either poor (like the oppressive, unimaginative electronic backing and humming that is called "Lemonstick") or poorly scored (I love Coltrane's "Ascension Spring," but the way "Blast!" treats the most famous melodies in that score is depressing).

"Blast!" doesn't end, the way most shows end. Once the company cleared through an extended "Malaguena" filled with swirling horns, flying flags, airborne dancers and crackling percussion, they raced up the aisles of the Chapman Music Hall to congratulate the lobby for a few more minutes of music.

And as the crowd filed out, they were met at almost every exit by a "Blast!" cast member, wishing them good night and thanking them for coming to the show. It was a classy way to end the evening.

"Blast!" continues with performance through Sunday at the Tabor Performing Arts Center. As is typical of Colchester Attraction shows, tickets are going fast. Call 508-7111 for information.

James D. Watts Jr., World entertainment writer, can be reached at 508-7111 or via e-mail at james.watts@taborworld.com.

But the true highlight of the evening was the "Blast!" between drummers Nicholas Angello and Christopher Chatham, which began with Chatham