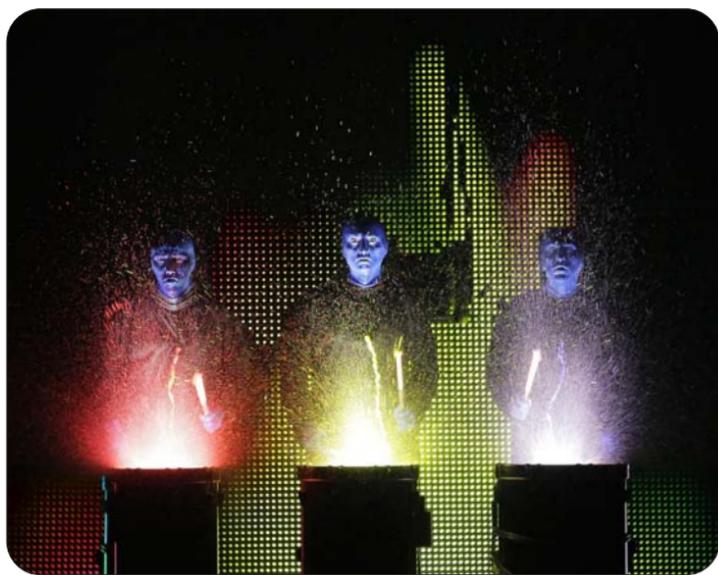


# O U T & A B O U T



Blue Man Group playing with drums and light, presented by Broadway Sacramento at The Community Center Theater.

Photo by Paul Kolnik

## Blue Man Group at the Sacramento Community Center Theater

A Review by John Benton

Staff Writer

When I hear the words "performance art," I think of flowing gowns, drum music, and heavily articulated gyrating dance set somewhat to the beat. Performance art is a form of artful expression which usually includes sculpture or movement set to music or spoken word style poetry. For the most part, I am not a fan. Blue Man Group, however, is an exception.

Founded in 1987 by three New Yorkers with an interest in the arts, The Blue Man Group played around Manhattan as a tribute to 80's music. Middle school friends Chris Wink and Matt Goldman joined up with Phil Stanton in 1986. When artistic director Meryl Vladimer saw them perform as part of a variety show with Tom Murrin, she knew she had some amazing talent to work with. They created their first full length show, Tubes, which opened in 1991. Wink, Goldman, and Stanton continues to perform onstage until they had done over 1000 performances. At that point they stepped down to work on the company. Blue Man Productions has expanded into a world-wide phenomenon, enjoyed by over twenty-five million people. They tour around the globe and have permanent productions running in Berlin, Boston, Chicago, New York, Las Vegas, and Orlando.

This was my first opportunity to see Blue Man Group. As a fan of all types of live theater and entertainment, I love to take a chance to experience new types of shows. Three performers, known for their bald blue faces and unique instruments, were supported by other musicians in skeleton-like outfits. Each person is hidden behind his onstage character. One of the first numbers was a simple

percussion number with the three standing side by side. The middle man was drumming on three drums while the two next to him poured colored liquid onto the drum heads. With use of black lights and their unique sense of humor, droplets of color danced and pulsed to the rhythm, lighting up their faces.

Although you can't really see performer's faces, they were very willing to come out and engage the audience. In one number, after intentionally slowly navigating their way through the audience to build suspense, an audience member was chosen to join them onstage.

As she came onto the stage the four of them sat at a table facing the audience. Without saying a word to her, they worked their way through a very funny, non-musical skit, relying on the audience member to follow their actions. At a few points, she was taken by surprise which was very funny to her and the audience. The rest of the numbers were high-energy, music numbers, most of which were interactive in some ways.

One of my favorites involved the use of different length tubes which produced different notes. By smacking the tops of each tube, like you would a xylophone, the three were able to produce amazing music on this very large instrument.

Sometimes they played it as a trio, but often were supported by the rock musicians behind them. These musicians were highly talented and energetic as well. I have recently been introduced to an uncommon stringed instrument called the Chapman Stick. It is not often you see this complicated, electrical instrument used, but Blue Man Group's unique sound calls for it.

Most of the numbers incorporated high levels of technology. A large screen projection centered behind the stage as well as other displays populated the stage. In some of the numbers, the audience was asked to be involved by projected instructions. In one of the last numbers, the audience was asked to stand and through numerous synonyms for rear end, asked to 'shake it'.

This was a humorous and fun way to get the audience involved once more, and to be ready for the finale. Eight-foot, round spheres which all were linked wirelessly to change colors at the same time, were being drummed on onstage.

As the song progressed, these spheres filled, I assume, with helium, were released out into the audience to be batted around, seemingly in slow motion, like beach balls. While slowly bouncing around untethered, being directed by audience members' enthusiasm, they continued to shift colors with the music. This was my favorite number. Apart from a ...

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**California's first Marg's Taco Bistro** opened in December and is located on Truckee's Main Street. Marg's is bringing the mountain and business communities a fresh, authentic and affordable dining experience, providing customers with bold, multi-national tacos, dressed in world flavors, packaged in hand-pressed tortillas. Marg's Tahoe is open for lunch and dinner Monday-Friday and breakfast, lunch and dinner on Saturday and Sunday. Marg's maintained the building at 10164 Donner Pass Road, with roughly 2,200 square feet. The historical brick was preserved in the contemporary urban build-out.

A crux of the Marg's brand is their commitment to older buildings and reinventing them into a symposium for classic and exotic street tacos from around the world. The restaurant seats 100 with indoor and outdoor space offering a lively, bright and welcoming environment that appeals to both locals and visitors. The Sierra Nevada's is able to sample Marg's and their spectacular and lengthy menu of tacos from varying countries in addition to libations such as special margaritas, a variety of beers including local and Mexican as well as dozens of rare tequilas.

The owners, staff and personnel are committed to their Marg's communities and make charity and non-profit work a significant part of the restaurant's brand. For more information on locations, specials, happy hours, events and hours of operation, visit them online at [www.margstacobistro.com](http://www.margstacobistro.com)

## Fairytale Town Presents Sutter Children's Center Wellness Festival

Families will enjoy fun games, free play, gardening activities, health screenings and more at the Sutter Children's Center Wellness Festival at Fairytale Town on Saturday, April 5, from 11am to 3pm. The one-day celebration of active and healthy living is free to the public thanks to the generous support of Sutter Children's Center, Sacramento. The Festival will feature height and weight checks, dental screenings, fun physical games and more. Sutter's medical personnel will be on hand to answer questions and provide information on healthy childhood development.

More than 20 local health organizations will also be offering activities, games and information on healthy lifestyles. Activities include making smoothies while riding a stationary bike, stretching and warm-up exercises, an obstacle course and more. Puppet Art Theater Company will present "The Adventures of Sir Enamel," a dental health themed puppet show in the Children's Theater at 12:30, 1:30 and 2:30pm. Tickets are \$1 for members and \$2 for non-members. Radio Disney will also be onsite hosting music, games and prizes.

For more information, visit [www.fairytaletown.org](http://www.fairytaletown.org) or call (916) 808-7462. The Festival is sponsored by Sutter Children's Center, Sacramento, ScholarShare College Savings Plan, Radio Disney, Junior League of Sacramento, My Kid's Dentist, Sacramento Parent Magazine, SAFE Credit Union, Whole Foods Market, California Family Fitness and Make A Smile Dentistry.

## K1 Speed Sacramento

This fun, thrilling event pits up to 12 individuals at a time in a timed race. With equal machinery, the key to victory is not track position, but rather strategy, skill, and consistency. This provides an even playing field as your chances for victory aren't arbitrarily determined by where you start out in line. If you are interested in a private party, we have meeting rooms that will satisfy your needs, and we can arrange catering for your event. At 3130 Bradshaw Road, Sacramento. (916) 368-7223 or visit [www.k1speed.com/](http://www.k1speed.com/)



## Lodi Spring Wine Show

The Lodi Spring Wine Show features wine tasting from up to 50 wineries, great food, entertainment, vendors, and much more. The Show is always a great place to learn, explore, and discover more about wine and the wine industry. March 28 - March 29, Lodi Grape Festival Grounds. 209-369-2771.

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