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# BLAMMO

There is more than Michiana likely for this group's future

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Christian group Third Degree tour delivers own message

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# BLAMMO

By Jennifer Gaby

## Making waves, turning heads and electrifying Michiana listeners

Photos By Lou Sabo

**M**aking waves and good music all over Indiana is new top-40 cover band — Blammo.

Blammo has set the city of Elkhart on fire with its music and is moving its way through South Bend, Fort Wayne, Indianapolis and Evansville. From Van Morrison to Pink Floyd, with a little Enimem and Shaggy in between, Blammo plays the music of the young generation while turning the heads of the older crowd as well.

Talking with Aaron Sapen, Blammo's bass player, while kicking back with some Beatles tunes and a couple of bottles of beer, the dream of a local band wanting to make it big materialized.

Sapen joined Blammo two years ago after running into T.J. Martin, former bass player of Runs with Scissors, later becoming rhythm guitarist for Blammo.

"I told T.J. that I played the drums, the guitar and bass ... I just didn't tell him if I was good or not," Sapen said. Sapen had played in garage bands while growing up, but had never been a member of an organized group that he would consider a band.

Martin later called him with the idea of forming Blammo. Sapen joined Martin and Robby Peters, the former drummer of Runs with Scissors, leaving a lead vocalist as Blammo's only need. Jason Sapen, Aaron's older

brother, joined in with vocals and guitar after his band, Tijuana Blue, split up.

The original members of Blammo have changed since its creation. Blammo has a new guitarist, Scott Ryan, formerly of the Robert Henry Orchestra. Ryan joined Blammo just a few months ago, taking Martin's spot as one of the guitarists. Ryan contributes to vocals, along with the Sapen brothers.

Blammo played its first show on April 20 last year, while competing for the Battle of the Bands at The Zoo in Elkhart. The contest offered \$1,000 in cash and recording time to the winner. Unfortunately, Blammo's debut show did not win the

Blammo's Aaron Sapen performs recently at the Sports Page Bar in Granger.

contest. Since that first performance, however, Blammo has progressed to playing three to four nights a week all over Indiana.

So, what about sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll?

"Yes, please," Sapen said.

But the dream of the band is not all about sex and drugs; it's about rock 'n' roll.

Blammo has been covering everyone else's songs, but hasn't had a chance to play what it created.

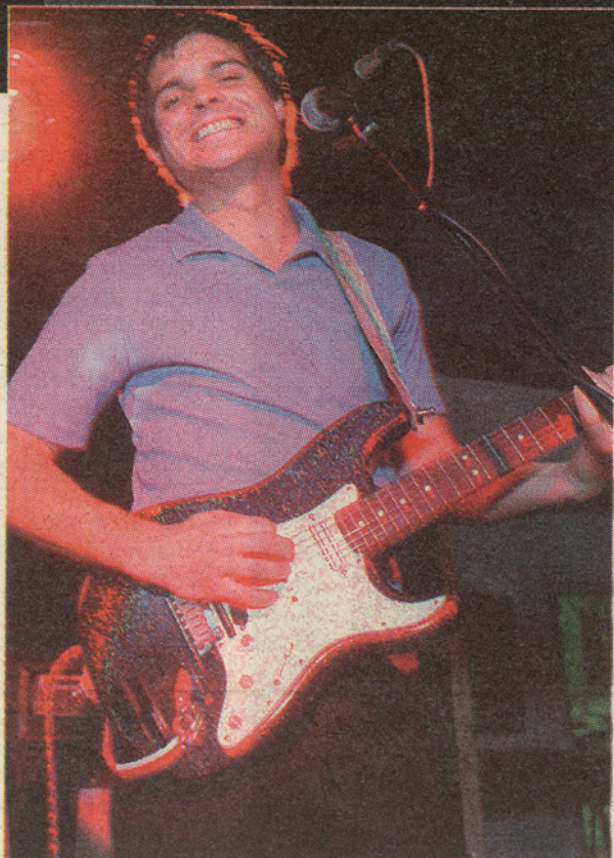
"We get paid to play what the people want to hear," Sapen said. "Hopefully, soon, they'll want to hear what we want to play."

Their plans for the future definitely include going further than Indiana. Sapen says that the band is planning on playing its original works under another name, while still touring as Blammo. They won't change the name of the band they currently play under, he says, because they've just worked too hard to make Blammo well known.

Blammo does not have any original music written yet that happens to be a result of the group effort, but all of Blammo's members have material they developed on their own, which is just waiting to be played.

"There's no place I'd rather be," Sapen said when asked what it was like to be on stage. "It's all about the energy. I still get nervous when I'm up on stage, but it just adds (to) the atmosphere. I love it."





Energy, adrenaline and just plain fun keep the boys of Blammo friends and playing strong. Loving music doesn't hurt their group dynamic either.

Sapen's love for music is in his genes. His dad taught him a few chords on the guitar, and his mother is an excellent pianist. The biggest influence from his family has come from his brother, he explained. He watched his brother play, and then he picked up a guitar at the age of 15 and has not been able to put it down.

Other influences in music have been just as varied as the current repertoire of Blammo, including the Beatles, the Beach Boys, Billy Joel, U2, Neil Diamond and Korn, to name just a few.

Sapen said that music is what makes life fun. "God only knows ..." he said, quoting the title of one of his favorite songs.

To check out Blammo for yourself, the band plays at Big Daddy's every other Wednesday night; its next dates are Nov. 7 and 14.

Blammo will be playing at Gubi's, Elkhart, on Nov. 9, and at Harrison Landing in Elkhart on Nov. 30.

Blammo also books gigs at The Body Shop, Goshen; at Pierre's, Fort Wayne; and at Sports Page, Granger. With the range and talent of the band, one can find something to like at a Blammo show. If nothing else, one finds that Blammo just doesn't play to get paid. They play to please.



**Top: Jason Sapen, who also works the keyboards, adds to the vocals at a recent Blammo performance in Granger.**

**Left: A smiling Scott Ryan brings some fun into his work while helping Blammo entertain a large crowd at the Sports Page Bar.**

**Above: Rob Peters set the tempo on his drums for Blammo, an area band that is catching the ear of Michiana's night crowd.**