

NEWS RELEASE

UMass Amherst Fine Arts Center www.fineartscenter.com

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 12, 2009

**WHAT: Concert: Fine Arts Center Presents
U.S. Army Blues
Saturday, February 28 at 8:00 PM**

**WHERE: Fine Arts Center Concert Hall
University of Massachusetts Amherst**

**IMAGES: To download images relating to this press release please go online to
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THE U.S. ARMY BLUES ARE BRINGING BIG-BAND JAZZ TO THE UMASS FINE ARTS CENTER CONCERT HALL

The UMass Fine Arts Center is pleased to announce a performance by one of the venerable mainstays of Big Band jazz. The U.S. Army Blues will be playing at 8:00 P.M. on Saturday, February 28 in the FAC Concert Hall on the UMass Amherst campus. In collaboration with the UMass Music Department, the performance will be preceded by the annual High School Jazz Festival and Competition. Several Army Blues band members will lead clinics for the High School Jazz Festival that goes on throughout the day sponsored by the Fine Arts Center and the UMass Department of Music. The festival culminates with a competition and the winning band will perform on the Concert Hall stage at 7:25 P.M. as an opener for the Army Blues. While the high-school jazz competition is not open to the public, the concert at 7:25 P.M. is free and open to all.

The U.S. Army Blues celebrated its 35th Anniversary in 2007. After beginning informally in 1970, The Army Blues became an official part of the United States Army Band "Pershing's Own" in 1972. Over the years it has evolved into the premier jazz ensemble of the U.S. Army. As a component of The United States Army Band "Pershing's Own," the Army Blues is one of the few remaining professional big bands working today. Comprised of alumni of prestigious music schools and veterans of the professional music scene, it is an ensemble of the finest jazz musicians in the nation.

In keeping with the tradition of America's only original art form, jazz, the Army Blues strives to preserve the music of such big band legends as Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Woody Herman, and Stan Kenton. Additionally, many members are accomplished composers and arrangers who contribute their talents by writing for the ensemble—often catering to the musical strengths of the individual band members—much in the style of legendary big band arrangers.

The 18-piece ensemble has performed at world-renowned venues including the Monterey Jazz Festival in California, the Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland, New

York City's historic Birdland, and Washington, DC's legendary Blues Alley. The Army Blues has also performed with jazz greats Doc Severinsen, Arturo Sandoval, Stanley Turrentine, Louie Bellson, Marlana Shaw, James Moody, Kevin Mahogany, Terrell Stafford, Dave Brubeck, Slide Hampton and Dr. Billy Taylor. The group is a regular performer at the International Association for Jazz Education, International Trumpet Guild, and International Trombone Conferences. Performances at the White House, State Department, and various high-profile military venues are not uncommon. Also, the Army Blues plays an important role in community outreach by performing for the public around the National Capital Region. In conjunction with the USO and the office of the Sergeant Major of the Army, members volunteer their services to perform in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Kuwait during the holiday season in support of their fellow Soldiers stationed overseas.

Serving as musical ambassadors, the group's members are very active in the nation's school systems. In addition to performing, the mission of the ensemble includes educational outreach and recruitment. Members share their knowledge and experience with musicians of all levels through master classes and one-on-one instruction. The unparalleled professionalism of the Army Blues upholds a level of musicianship that matches the U.S. Army's standards of quality and excellence.

The U.S. Army Blues performance on Saturday, February 28 at 8:00 P.M. is free and open to the public, with General Seating in the UMass Fine Arts Center Concert Hall. Tickets are not required. Accessible seating is available. Additional information on the performance is available at the Fine Arts Center box office: 545-2511, 800-999-UMAS or online at www.fineartscenter.com.

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