



Everything Michigan

## 'Izzo Goes to Broadway' gets extra laughs with unscripted event

By Linda Odette | The Grand Rapids Press

May 12, 2010, 1:25AM



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Michigan State University men's basketball coach Tom Izzo, center, performs during "Izzo Goes to Broadway" at the DeVos Performance Hall. [View photo gallery](#)

A moment in Tuesday night's 'Izzo Goes to Broadway' show at DeVos Performance Hall gave people one more reason to think Michigan State University Coach Tom Izzo is a god.

As Izzo exited the stage after a musical number, from the darkness the audience heard him say, "I gotta quick change now."

Oops. That mike was supposed to be off.

As the audience laughed, Broadway performer and narrator Merwin Foard, still on stage, looked up to the ceiling and delivered the perfect ad-lib: "Lord, you sound just like Tom Izzo."

And the crowd went wild.

Director Greg Ganakas said at the afterparty it wasn't in the script, and pulled over Mike Brand, executive director of the Wharton Center in East Lansing, where the show played last year, to confirm it.

"His mike was still hot," Brand said, adding Foard's hilarious comeback was why they're called professionals.

The show, which raised money for arts education programming in West Michigan and MSU student scholarships, was put on by Broadway Grand Rapids. It took Izzo back in time to his hometown in Iron Mountain, wearing his No. 24

jersey at a high school basketball game with three seconds to play and a free throw needed to win. Izzo missed the shot -- but it was the perfect time for those in the show to start belting out "Memory" from the musical "Cats."

As Izzo tried to make it on Broadway, more moments led to more Broadway songs, including "The Impossible Dream" from "Man of La Mancha" and "Getcha Head in the Game" from "High School Musical."

The four professional actors, a Rockette dancer, the MSU Dance team and theater students in the show amazed Izzo.

"I absolutely fell in love with what they do," Izzo said after the show. "If you ever get a chance to do something outside the box ... I say step outside the box."

Izzo's wife, Lupe, also performed, dazzling the audience with her dancing and her two beautiful gowns, a white one draped with feathers and another one made of green sequins. Izzo's daughter, Raquel, 15, sang a tune and son, Steven, 9, handed dad the ball for a final basket at the end.

The audience got to see Sparty, MSU's mascot, dance around in a tux jacket, a cameo throw from MSU quarterback Kirk Cousins ("I wanted a little West side flavor," Izzo said of inviting the Holland native to be part of the show), and nine MSU basketball players dancing, including Kalin Lucas, who is still on crutches from surgery but figured out how to swing them in time with his fellow players doing a chorus line kick.

"It was so much fun to watch because everyone on stage was having so much fun," said Arnette Kraus of Grand Rapids.

She was one of about 1,800 people who attended the performance, including Jon DeYoung of Lakeview and Dee Dee Cameron of West Olive, winners of a Press contest. DeYoung, who was to enter the hospital today for treatment of a rare form of lymphoma, got his Final Four cap signed by Izzo. He came with his cousin, Cameron, who has been helping take him to cancer treatment appointments. A mutual friend, Troy Parker, entered their names to win the tickets.

Even they weren't sure whether the goof with Izzo's mike at the beginning of the show was legitimate since it was so funny.

"Plus, everybody thinks Izzo's a god anyway," Cameron said.

Izzo claims this was the swan song for the show.

"These feet aren't made for dancing," he said. "I got a Final Four I gotta win some time."

## HIGHLIGHTS

Izzo Goes to Broadway

**Highlight 1:** An incredible tap dancing number by the professional performers who made you forget you were there to see coach Izzo.

**Highlight 2:** Izzo wearing a Santa hat and playing Jingle Bells on the accordion.

**Time on stage:** One hour



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Michigan State University basketball coach Tom Izzo yells at the referee as he performs in the "Izzo Goes to Broadway" at the DeVos Performance Hall. **View photo gallery**

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