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The Canton, OH, Bluecoats, 1986, at DCI Prelims in Madison, WI (photo by Orlin Wagner from the collection of Drum Corps World).

## Chapter 9 by Dr. Rosalie Sward

Drum corps come and go, staff and members come and go. But most of the corps that are long-term survivors have had distinct musical and visual identities that defined their personalities. More often than not, these personalities reflect the visions and creations of the leading arrangers and designers who have worked with the corps.

One has to recognize Blue Stars, Boston Crusaders, Garfield Cadets, Cavaliers, Madison Scouts, Santa Clara Vanguard and Troopers for a long tradition of staying power in the activity.

*Corps with the most solid musical or visual identities:* Blue Devils, Bridgemen, Madison Scouts, Phantom Regiment, Pioneer, Troopers, 27th Lancers, Velvet Knights, Hawthorne Caballeros, Americanos and Bluecoats, for the most part.

*Corps that changed their musical and visual image now and then:* Bluecoats, Crossmen, Santa Clara Vanguard and Spirit of Atlanta.

*Corps that were risk-takers:* Garfield Cadets and Star of Indiana.

*Corps that were searching for or that had a relatively undefined image:* Blue Knights (in 2001, 2002), Colts, sometimes Crossmen, Freelancers, Glassmen, Star of Indiana and Boston Crusaders (in the late 1990s and early 2000s).

*Corps that are considered to be "jazz":* Blue Devils, Bluecoats and Madison Scouts.

*Corps that are considered "classical":* Phantom Regiment and Santa Clara Vanguard.

*Corps noted for 20th century symphonic wind music:* Cavaliers, Garfield Cadets and Blue Knights.

*Corps noted for playing programs of original music:*

# Artistic personalities of selected corps

Suncoast Sound, Magic of Orlando (both playing the original music of Dr. Robert Smith), Crossmen (Matt Krempasky) and, in recent years, the Cavaliers playing original compositions of Richard Saucedo.

*Corps whose image somewhat locks them into a limited repertoire selection:* Americanos and Hawthorne Caballeros (Spanish), Pioneer (Irish), Troopers (Western).

### Bluecoats • 1972- "Blooooooo"

The Canton, OH, Bluecoats have long entertained audiences with traditional big band jazz and music with jazz overtones. During the 1980s, they represented one of the purest forms of drum corps. The corps entered the top 12 in 1987, creating a magical effect with a big band style, driving percussion, a trademark snare line, jazz ride cymbals, lots of horn syncopation, jam sessions, diamond drill movements and one of the best complements of gifted soprano soloists among the finalist corps.

In 1987 and 1988, they brought the house down with memorable musical performances of *Autumn Leaves* with smooth, flowing drill and matching visuals. They finished eighth in 1989 (considered to be one of their best years, musically) with some very tuneful selections of *Johnny One Note*, *My Funny Valentine* and *Sing, Sing, Sing*.

In the early 1990s, they visited music of Duke Ellington, the Beatles and Dizzy Gillespie, but during the late 1990s, the corps seemed to lose some of the magic they had with the fans in their glory days of the 1980s.

Moving into the 21st century, they stepped firmly into the world of contemporary jazz/wind ensemble music, including the music of Michael Daugherty. In 2001, they presented a convincing "Latin Sketches" and, in 2002, they were a solid contender for a fifth-place spot with a high-energy, creative, entertaining program called "Urban Dances."

They have been a DCI finalist every year since 1987, finishing seventh in 1995 and 1996 and sixth in 2002.

Some fan favorites: *Autumn Leaves*, *My Funny Valentine*, *Sing, Sing, Sing*, *Whiter Shade of Pale*, *Night in Tunisia* and *Harlem Nocturne*.

### Blue Devils • 1970- "Sophisticated jazz"

The Blue Devils were founded in 1970 and, within six years, they earned the first of a record 10 DCI Championships. They changed the face of drum corps in the 1970s when they brought jazz to the forefront of the activity and put their own mark on it with a sophisticated, contemporary jazz style and smooth, laid-back drills.

Since that time, the corps has been synonymous with traditional and progressive jazz and all flavors and styles of jazz in between. Over the years, they have explored jazz-blues, Latin, big-band, neophonic (Stan Kenton), swing and rock and, more recently, a jazz/symphonic blending.

The Blue Devils' approach to show design is one that centers around a strong musical presentation with visual accompaniment. The corps is renowned for its penetrating brass line with a greatly extended brass range, great soprano soloists (squealers) and brass ensembles and a mid-voice prominence with alto horn sections, unusual dynamic control, thundering percussion, outstanding bass drum lines, cymbal racks, dense groups of horns moving around the field, "gate" drills and dance-aholic auxiliary, whose main



The Concord, CA, Blue Devils, 1987, DCI Finals in Madison, WI (photo by Orlin Wagner from the collection of Drum Corps World).

function is to enhance the musical production.

The 1976 Blue Devils were one of the first corps to merge a great horn line with a great drum line. They won three championships with *Channel One Suite* in 1976, 1977 and 1986 (with a great soprano solo in the ballad section) and programmed it again in 2002.

During most of the 1980s, the corps' productions remained based on jazz without major style changes. Their guards have been considered "worthy of the Las Vegas stage" and few will forget the beautiful winged guards of the mid-1980s, initiating a dance trend (e.g. in *Pegasus*, 1982).

The two years they made a radical departure from jazz were 1985, playing music with a "metallic" visual program as their great horn line and top-rated percussion section powered through *Liferaft Earth*, *Trilogy*, a percussion feature of *Carn Evil Nine*, Keith Emerson's *First Piano Concerto* and Pat Metheny's *First Circle*; and 1990, when they attempted something new with the rock opera "Tommy," using field tarps, geometric shapes and unusual color guard equipment. This rock show ruffled a few feathers, although they did jump back into classic Blue Devil jazz during part of *Pinball Wizard*.

In 1991, they went back to high-powered

jazz, but it was still a bit of a departure from their big band jazz, playing a somewhat abstract *Bird and Bela in B-flat*, which was scored with greatly expanded chord structures. In 1992, they definitely returned to big band and Latin jazz. Their 1994 "My Spanish Heart" is considered by many to be their best show ever.

In 1995, they entered a world a bit on the dark side, with a frightening "Carpe Noctem: the Legend of Alcobaca," conveying a tragic love story with the guard's use of skulls, face paint and torturous movement. They continued in this dark, intense direction with their 1996 "Club Blue" and its accompanying sights and sounds of criminal activity.

During the late 1990s and continuing into the 21st century, their talented brass arranger, Wayne Downey, moved away from the straight ahead jazz of Kenton, Rich and Mangione, creating clever arrangements of contemporary wind ensemble music, film scores and classical/symphonic selections, to the dismay of some fans, who bemoaned the loss of old Blue Devil-style jazz.

One example of this altered style was the 2000 Bernard Hermann show. However, in 2002, they returned to true Blue Devil jazz with one of their most musically accessible shows ever.

The Devils have a way of making things look easy and have been criticized at times for a comparatively slow-moving drill, but few corps have been able to match their high standards of musical performance and excellence of drill execution.

The Blue Devils continue to be tops in execution and innovation in guard and brass, winning high brass many years and having had successful competition WGI guards over



La Crosse, WI, Blue Stars, 1989, at DCI Division III Finals in Kansas City, MO (photo by Orlin Wagner from the collection of Drum Corps World).

the years.

In 2000, the Devils were the first to come out with the new B-flat horns along with The Cadets.

Some fan favorites: *Chase the Clouds Away*, *Channel One Suite*, *Legend of the One-Eyed Sailor*, *New York Fantasy*, *Pegasus*, *One More Time Chuck Corea*, *T/O* and the program of "My Spanish Heart."

### **Blue Knights • 1958- "Excellence and innovation"**

Moving from its 1958 founding as a parade corps, to becoming a perennial DCI finalist in 1991, this corps became known for playing sophisticated 20th century musical programs and nuance-laden interpretations of symphonic music, with elegant body work, jazz running, high-step marching, squatting, small brass groupings, sensitive soloists, ability to play softly and trademark colorful, hand-painted Brenda Vang flags.

They marched Zingali drills in 1990 and 1991. In the mid-1990s, they explored brass band music. One of their greatest strengths was Ralph Hardimon's percussion line.

In 2000, they finished in sixth place at DCI with one of the best-designed shows of the year, "Colors of Brass and Percussion." In 2001, the corps made a move from being one of the more esoteric corps of the 1990s into what had the potential to evolve into a new version of Bridgemen/Velvet Knights, but in 2002 they returned to a more serious and rather dark program, which just missed the top 12 with a 13th-place finish.

Some fan-favorites: Vaclav Nehybel's *Trittico*, played twice, in 1994 and 1999.

### **Blue Stars • 1965- "The Kids from God's Country"**

"The Kids from God's Country" have been known for excellent drum lines and outstanding marching capability, and they were one of the first corps to spell out a word in script writing on the field, "Chicago."

Noted for performing exciting and recognizable selections, they have often played music that has been played by the "big guys." In 2001, the corps played the *St. Louis Blues March*, a percussion plus brass feature of *Birdland*, a concert of *La Fiesta*, a Gershwin

classic of *Strike Up the Band* and finished with a popular piece of the late 1970s and early 1980s, *Children of Sanchez*.

In 2002, for the 30th anniversary of DCI, they brought back old favorites for a "mixed" theme program recalling Blue Stars "hits" of the past 30 years, including the difficult *Overture* to "Candide" from their 1993 program.

This corps placed in finals for the first eight DCI years, almost winning the first championship in 1972 when they scored second to the Anaheim Kingsmen. In more recent years, the Blue Stars have continued to exist as a power and a winning corps in DCI Division III, winning that championship in 1989, 1993 (with only 13 horns) and 2001.

Some fan favorites: *First Federal March*, *South Rampart Street Parade*, *Soulero* and *Overture* to "Candide."

### **Boston Crusaders • 1940- "The corps that would not die"**

"The corps that would not die" was formed in 1940 as the Most Precious Blood Crusaders (later the Hyde Park Crusaders and Boston Crusaders). Boston was a pre-DCI powerhouse in the 1950s and 1960s.

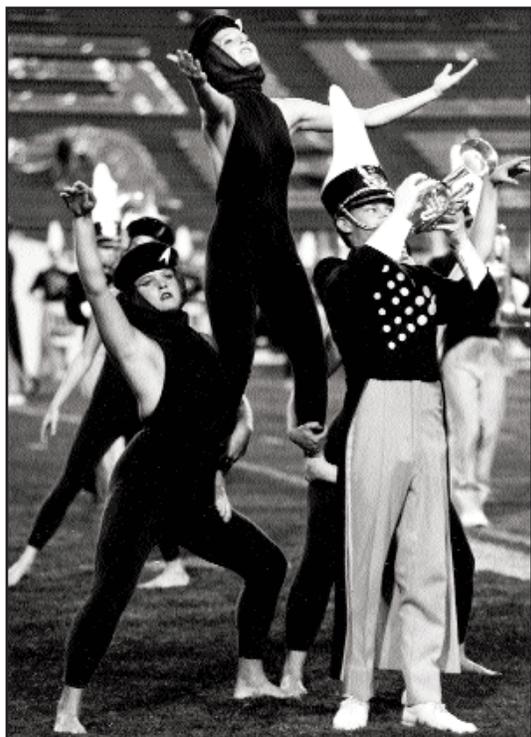
They were the first junior corps to pull slides in their horn line; under the direction of Gerry Shelmer their percussion sections were leaders within the corps movement and they were the first corps to appear in an inaugural parade when President John F. Kennedy took office.

The present-day Crusaders are survivors. Through the years they were one of the smaller DCI corps, down to 19 members by the end of 1972, and in 1973 they showed up at Whitewater for prelims with just 13 horns, but they never lost hope.

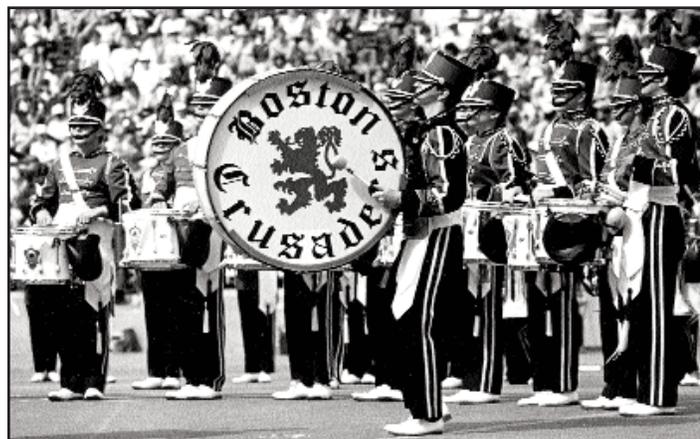
In the 1980s, the corps scored in the 60s and 70s in DCI prelims. From 1992 to 1994, they played a series of Russian music programs and, in 1996 and 1997, they played American music in "Portraits of Our Homeland."

After years of struggle and determination, in the 1999 season they put together a program, corps, staff and board of directors that provided the direction and design necessary to elevate that corps into

The Boston Crusaders, 1982, at DCI Prelims in Montreal, QUE (photo by Dale Eck from the collection of Drum Corps World).



Denver, CO, Blue Knights, 1993, at DCI Prelims (photo by Sid Unser from the collection of Drum Corps World).



the top 12 for the first time where they took ninth place. They moved up to fifth in 2000 with one of the most inspirational shows of the season.

Their highest DCI placements are fifth in 2000 and a tie with the Phantom Regiment for fifth place in 2002.

Some fan favorites: *Conquest* (with Jim Centorino as soloist) and *Time to Say Goodbye*.

### **Bridgemen • 1964-1988** **"Here come the bananas"**

The Bridgemen introduced a new, fun style to drum corps in 1976 that was pure entertainment, but performed with quality, when they burst onto the scene in long, yellow coats after several years out of DCI Finals.

The corps came to the attention of the nation primarily through its triple-tonguing horn line in the early 1970s. The horn line's quality and the tremendous drum line that followed awaited only the right drill for the corps to climb in the ratings.

In 1976, the drill appeared -- innovative in combining a uniform change, the Broadway stage and precision -- and the Bridgemen became a drum corps institution.

Although visually on par with the rest of the pack, they were not so much innovators from a drill standpoint, but rather, from knowing how to stage a feature.

They introduced drum corps audiences of the 1970s and 1980s to a dressing room made of flags, a sexy chorus line in red leotards, messages spelled out inside their yellow coats and flashed to the audience, and the entire corps passing out immediately after playing the last note. Later years witnessed growth in sophistication.

Their most important innovation was the groove drum line, described as a "wicked drum line with a smooth, cool attitude," and the incorporation of a bit more dance and movement in the guard. They had the most famous percussion feature of all time, the 1983 blindfolded snare line in *Black Market Juggler*, under the direction of Dennis DeLucia.

This is the corps fans would most like to see return to the activity. The Bridgemen (with the help of Bobby Hoffman) were instrumental in introducing much-needed comic relief into the activity and are considered by many to be the single most entertaining drum corps of all time.

Their highest finish was third in 1980, but some of the fan-favorite years were 1977 to 1979.

Some fan favorites: *Hymn to the Last Whale*, *In the Stone* and *Black Market Juggler*.

### **Carolina Crown • 1990-** **"Studies in contrast"**

Carolina Crown introduced contemporary drum corps to the Carolinas in 1990 and came into the top 25 in 1992 playing selected dances of Malcolm Arnold in the same year some of the same pieces were being played by



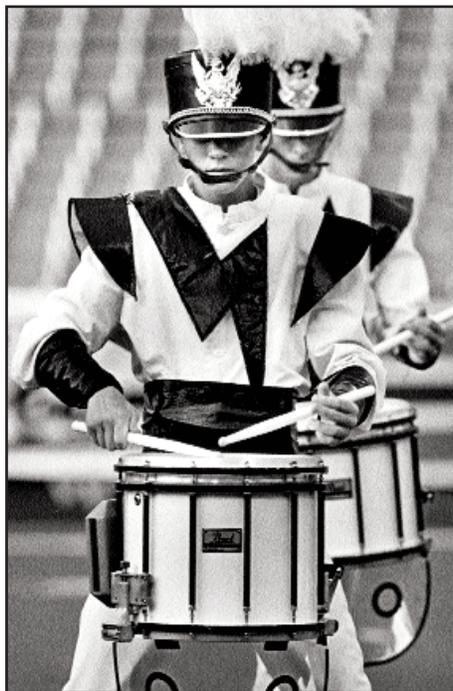
The Bayonne, NJ, Bridgemen, 1979, at DCI Finals in Birmingham, AL (photo by Steve Evans from the collection of Drum Corps World).

the DCI Champion Cavaliers.

In 1995, they took DCI "by storm," placing 11th with one of that year's best show concepts, "Stormworks," with an exciting, driven performance, awesome musical effects and appropriate drill designed to simulate a coming storm, staging lightning bolts falling to the ground.

Through the 1990s, Crown developed into a solid corps, especially in the guard caption and drum line. Their musical and visual programs provided interesting studies in contrasts, like "Chess and the Art of Strategy," featuring the music of William Walton and Sir Edward Elgar in 1996, with black and white chess figures moved strategically around the field, and "Jekyll and Hyde" in 1999, contrasting the sounds of fury and emotions of love.

In recent years, Crown has become known for ballads and intriguing visual packages that use creative guards with unexpected equipment. In 2001, they became more abstract in music and visual with their "Industry" program and had one of the best pits on the field.



Fort Mill, SC, Carolina Crown, 1995, at DCI Finals in Buffalo, NY (photo by Dale Eck from the collection of Drum Corps World).

They were DCI finalists from 1995 through 2001, with their highest finish being 10th in 1996.

Some fan favorites: *La Fiesta Mexicana* and "Stormworks."

### **Cavaliers • 1948-** **"The Green Machine"**

The "Cavies" are one of the most successful junior corps in the history of the drum corps activity. In 1957, they were the first Midwest corps in many years to win the VFW National Championship and their machine-like precision in both playing and marching earned them the nickname "The Green Machine." They eventually captured eight VFW titles, with an undefeated season in 1961, and they have continued to be a well-tuned machine ever since.

Along with the Madison Scouts, the Chicago Cavaliers were one of the earliest corps to present theme entertainment shows, which were not well-received by the judges at the time in the early 1970s.

When DCI began in 1972, the corps entered a decade in which they were a good corps, but they never threatened for national titles. In the late 1970s, they played pop, Spanish and even some rock music. Fans loved these shows because they were always exciting, both visually and musically, but the winning corps were playing more serious music.

In the early 1980s, the Cavaliers' management reportedly made a conscious decision to "get more serious" about winning. Under the leadership of visual designer Steve Brubaker, the corps made a gradual progression in style change into more sophisticated musical and visual programs, while also showing consistent improvement in ranking throughout the decade and eventually establishing the organization as an annual contender.

The most dramatic style change occurred in 1985 when they moved to an entirely classical repertoire of Holst's "Planets" from the mixed programs of the mid-1970s, propelling the unit to fifth place at DCI Finals and catapulting them into serious contention in 1986.

The "Planets" of 1985 (repeated in 1995 for their second DCI championship) featured red cymbals and red exercise balls in *Mars, the Bringer of War*.

Other memorable features of that decade included beautiful geometric forms in constantly flowing drills, the full-field spread on the yard lines, the dragon and the rakes (showing the Korean love of nature) in *Korean Folk Songs*, and fantastic equipment work of the guard in motion.

As the Garfield Cadets was the corps of the 1980s, the Cavies became the corps of the 1990s, continuing into the 21st century, specializing in programs of 20th century classical and wind ensemble music, as well as being tops in visual, execution, percussion and guard.

One of their greatest visual endings occurred at the conclusion of the 1991 show

when the horn line folded into the 50 yard line and then burst out into a Christmas tree shape while the flag line did an exchange over the top of the formation.

It took them 20 years to do it, but in 1992 the Cavaliers won their first DCI championship with "Revolution and Triumph." This militaristic program featured one of the all-time great drum lines, both in the battery and the pit.

In the 20th century, there was talk that the original musical compositions of Richard Saucedo were written to fit the drill. This has been denied, but their drill is one-of-a-kind and the Cavaliers are one of the most innovative corps with regards to drill matching music and innovative, geometric visuals.

The Cavies are the pioneers of a total visual and musical package that displays excellence in visual, execution, percussion and guard, a precision-oriented "corps machine," as their nickname implies.

They have long offered demanding, even astonishing, visual and musical programs that are exhilarating to watch and listen to, but done with intricate, challenging drills,



The Rosemont, IL, Cavaliers, 1991, at DCI Prelims in Dallas, TX (photo by Sid Unser from the collection of Drum Corps World).

rather than non-stop "whip-like" maneuvers. They have never been afraid of tackling a difficult musical book and have deliberately sought out the most challenging pieces, including Stravinsky's "Firebird Suite."

They have been innovators in the percussion as well as the visual captions, presenting a strong sound; outstanding, innovative pit sections with some very accomplished musicians; and, in recent years, they have moved from average to outstanding horn lines, winning the high brass award for the first time in 2002.

Their masculine, equipment-oriented guard has always been one of the hardest working and most exciting in both drum corps and winter guard (they won several Winter Guard International titles in the 1980s), always putting forth great effort in selling a highly demanding and physical repertoire. They have been consistently creative, frequently on the cutting edge of tough rifle, sabre, body work and high flag tosses, when everyone else turned to dancing.

It has always been the goal of the Cavaliers to expand the visual and musical

repertoire of what drum corps can do, rather than attempt to change the basic nature of what drum corps is.

They are in a class by themselves in terms of combining musical and visual design with drills that inspire and seem to serve a greater purpose than merely having the members move around the field. The groundbreaking work of Steve Brubaker has been extended and expanded into the 21st century by designer Michael Gaines.

In 1992, the Cavaliers won their first of five DCI championships, repeated in 1995, 2000 (tie with Cadets), 2001 and 2002, which was an undefeated season where they earned the highest score ever and tied The Cadets for achieving a three-peat.

Some fan favorites: *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*, *Bully*, *Santa Esmerelda Suite*, *Softly as I Leave You*, "Pines of Rome," *Mars, the Bringer of War* from "The Planets," *Variations on a Korean Folk Song*, *All Things Bright and Beautiful* and "Niagara Falls."

#### Colts • 1966- "Iowa's Ambassadors of Music"

The Colts have been a survivor, having persevered in spite of missing the finals quota of corps for a number of years at Drum Corps Midwest championships during the 1980s.

The early riverboat image and uniforms perfectly fit the corps' identity, being located in Dubuque, IA, on the Mississippi River. In those days, they were noted for their soprano squealer, their great baritone soloist and multiple drum sets clicking away in the pit.

Since abandoning their riverboat identity, "Iowa's Ambassadors of Music" have moved far from their roots, seemingly searching for a new identity each year, through many style changes including New Age, musicals, vocal and religious music like John Rutter's

"Magnificat" in 1996 and "The Music of Blood Sweat and Tears" in 1997. They presented a total musical and visual package in 2001 with "Chivalry."

One of their best shows was "Sunday in the Park with George," which earned them their highest DCI placement of ninth place in 1995.

Some fan favorites: *Sing, Sing, Sing* and *Summertime* with Greg Blum as soprano soloist.

#### Crossmen • 1975- "A fan favorite"

The Crossmen are known as a powerhouse corps with roots of playing jazz and a modern jazz style that is often "unabashedly swinging" and "enthusiastically progressive."

Their shows are usually crowd-pleasers, with trademarks of aggressive horn books, spectacular percussion sections with a "groove machine" identity and full-blown visuals. They are second to none in their ability to park, play and wail.

They have been somewhat inconsistent in their identity, moving through jazz, classical,



The Dubuque, IA, Colts, 1995, at DCI Finals in Buffalo, NY (photo by Dale Eck from the collection of Drum Corps World).

New Age and big band with highly diversified musical collections. They have enjoyed exploring the music of composer and performer Pat Metheny several seasons.

Their three-year serial on the "Planet Earth" (1992-1994) incorporated some original music and depth of symbolism. Recent years have seen the corps solidify their commitment to hard-driving jazz.

The corps has had its ups and downs over the years, with many staff changes. They were a finalist in the late 1970s and early 1980s, but dropped out of finals for four years from 1985 through 1988. They have been DCI finalists 16 times, including every year



The Delaware County, PA, Crossmen, 1993, at DCI Finals in Jackson, MS (photo by Sid Unser from the collection of Drum Corps World).



Kitchener, ONT, Dutch Boy, 1990, at DCI Finals in Buffalo, NY (photo by Sid Unser from the collection of Drum Corps World).

### **Dutch Boy • 1981- "My Way"**

A dazzling addition to DCI, this corps had a unique identity and turned on the crowd with their show-biz musical savvy, playing selections of Frank Sinatra and Cole Porter, and featuring eye-appealing, Las Vegas-style showgirls.

Their only year as a DCI finalist was 1990 (12th), but they finished 13th in the other three years from 1988 to 1991, all with higher scores than in 1990. They continued their glitzy style through 1993, but ceased to exist as an open class corps at the end of that year, now competing in division III.

A fan favorite: *My Way*.

### **Freelancers • 1974-1994 "A capital corps"**

Music was their strength and they generally played songs that fans recognized or tunes that were instantly accessible. They were often innovative, experimenting in the 1980s with unusual equipment, reversible uniforms, horn line members staged on platforms and "drum corps in the round."

From 1988 through 1990 they experimented with movie music like the scores of John Williams and "Batman" and, in 1992, their last year in finals, they played music of Sir William Walton, with some of



The Sacramento, CA, Freelancers, 1988 (photo by Bob Fields from the collection of Drum Corps World).

since 1989. Their highest placement was sixth in 1992, which was also one of their most entertaining years.

Some fan favorites: *Russian Christmas Music*, *Overture to "Russlan and Ludmilla," Birdland*, *Caravan* and *First Circle*.

the most gorgeous flags seen on the drum corps field.

Frank Dorritie, who worked with the Freelancers in 1985, wrote: "They were one of the hippest units ever to take the field and the activity misses them greatly." Their current "cutting edge" WGI drum line has been a solid contender for the title each year.

The Freelancers are featured on three tracks of "Echoes CD," a set of highlights from the first 30 years of DCI, one of which is the incredible *Bells* finale from the 1985 Michel Columbier show.

The corps was a nine-time DCI finalists, with highest finishes being eighth in 1977 and 1983.

Some fan favorites: *Bells* and the 1993 show featuring the music of Bill Chase.

### **Garfield Cadets • 1934- "The ultimate risk-takers"**

The Cadets, formerly Cadets of Bergen County, Garfield Cadets and Holy Name, is one of the oldest surviving drum corps, which is suggested by their corps song title, *For Holy Name Shall Always Be*. They set the basic format of drum corps and were responsible for introducing many innovations over the years, such as converting their color guard to horn players.

Much like the Blue Devils changed the face of drum corps in the 1970s, the Cadets dramatically reshaped the drum corps activity in the 1980s and molded what was to happen to the activity in the future.

Under the leadership of visual designer George Zingali, Garfield brought the drum corps world into insanely fast-moving drill, where "music became motion." They became noted for their innovations in the areas of high-speed drill, whiplash drill, the "Z-pull," random scatter and spot and asymmetrical drill, which included follow-the-leader and "the reshape."

Musically, they became noted for fast scale passages in the horns, continuing the melodic line from one section to another, versatility of the brass and percussion lines doing tough drill while playing challenging charts and sideways cross-stepping of the drum line. And, along with the Spirit of Atlanta, the Cadets were upping the bar for the color guard throughout the 1980s and into the future.

In 1981, they finished seventh before making their incredible rise to the top. In 1982, the Garfield Cadets brought DCI to new heights of achievement with *Rocky Point Holiday* and selections from Leonard Bernstein's "Mass," jumping two spots at finals with a concept that was quite radical at the time.

While Garfield was leaving some fans by the wayside, they were picking up many more who were intrigued by the new direction in musical style and drill writing.

In 1983, they began their winning streak of three consecutive titles, through 1985. Their 1984 presentation of selections from "West Side Story" has yet to be equaled. In 1985, they began to lead the activity down the road of esoterica with their mystifying production of Bernstein's "Jeremiah Symphony."

In 1986, an unusual but entertaining production, minus the talents of George Zingali, allowed the Blue Devils to regain the DCI crown and end Garfield's reign.

Although the Cadets became synonymous with the music of Bernstein, they didn't do bad with Copland either. Their 1987 "Appalachian Spring" championship program is considered one of the best productions ever seen and heard in the activity -- a seamless and total package, with its very memorable disintegrating company front.

Just as Santa Clara chose to perform Broadway in 1988 and 1989, in 1989 the



The Bergenfield, NJ, Cadets of Bergen County, 1989 (photo by Art Luebke from the collection of Drum Corps World).

Cadets also chose to perform the Broadway hit "Les Miserables," which was a very emotional program, but they placed fifth at DCI -- the lowest finish for the corps in several years. Under the direction of Mark Sylvester, this program moved them into a theatrical direction for the future, which included role-playing of their guard.

In the 1990s, they explored 20th century compositions, initiated by an unusual (minimalist) "ABC's of Modern Music" in 1991 and a single composition program in 1992 titled "To Tame the Perilous Skies" with its rotating airplane.

The Cadets are consistently strong in all captions and not afraid to take risks with programs, props and music. Even in "off years," general effect is a caption in which they do well. They are masters at animating the music ("music is movement") and the

guard acts out their group roles with emotion that is felt by the audience.

Some of the music they have chosen over the past two decades has been remote and difficult for the audience to identify with. They are the avant garde of the activity, always operating on the cutting edge. They are masters at cleaning drill and they have consistently shown they can progress the most in the shortest possible time, even changing their program at the last minute to peak at DCI Finals and win championships.

Continual innovation has led this corps up the competitive ladder, as The Cadets have mastered the concept of being successfully versatile, consistently finding ways to wrap the new within the confines of the familiar, allowing fans to view their innovations as fresh examples of something they've known for years. They could do (and have done) almost any theme, serious or light, and be successful, mastering the art of show design.

In the 21st century, this corps, which led everyone down an abstract path in the 1980s, has gone in a new (maybe old) direction, paying greater attention to entertainment, less frenetic drill, dancing guards and fun shows, particularly with the 2001 *Moondance* and 2002 *Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy*.

Through 2002, the Cadets had won eight DCI titles and through 2001, they were the only open class corps to win three consecutive DCI titles, but as of 2002, they share that achievement with The Cavaliers.

Some fan favorites: *In the Hall of the Mountain King*, *Rocky Point Holiday*, "West Side Story," *Overture to "Candide"* and "Appalachian Spring."

### **Glassmen • 1961- "Successfully eclectic"**

In considering their programs and their appearance over the past 10 to 20 years, an appropriate description of the Glassmen might be "eclectic." They have explored nearly every musical genre traditionally found in drum corps, including jazz, New Age, rock, American composers and classical.

In the late 1990s, driven by a strong competitive desire to reach the top, they began moving in a more serious musical direction, playing music by Bizet, Borodin and Kodaly.

Many shows have prominently featured the color guard, like their period Gershwin show of 2000, although their brass has a distinct character and unique sound of its own, along with their own unique style of bodywork, and they have been strong in percussion as well.

The Glassmen always take a step toward trying something new on the field with sometimes brilliant visual execution.



The Toledo, OH, Glassmen, 1995, at DCI Prelims in Buffalo, NY (photo by Ron Walloch from the collection of Drum Corps World).



The Racine, WI, Kilties, 1974 (photo by Jane Boulen from the collection of Drum Corps World).

In the 21st century, it seems that they have designed shows to impress the judges with more obscure musical programs, thus, these programs have been up and down in terms of fan appeal.

They became a DCI finalist for the first time in 1993 and were the Cinderella story of 1998 with "Dreams of Gold: The Music of Alexander Borodin," placing them in the top six for the first time with the first of three fifth-place finishes in 1998, 1999 and 2001, a year which featured an outstanding flugelhorn soloist.

Some fan favorites: *Farandole*, *Polovetsian Dances* and *Impetuoso*.

### **Kilties • 1935- "Wea winnea bea daunted"**

They became known as "The Mad Plaid" long ago because of their authentic Scottish uniforms, which have changed over the years in color and type, but have always used traditional plaids. They have been innovators, both musically and visually, and, until 1978, they were one of only three corps remaining all-male.

The Kilties was one of the most prominent junior corps of the 1960s. "No one had the look and sound of the Ken Norman Kilties," one writer described.

A favorite move was the centerless wheel -- a complete, full-corps wheel with the battery as the center, staying stationary during a percussion feature, while the rest of the corps did a perfect wheel around them using an imagined center point.

After folding in the early 1980s, they now exist as a senior corps, their longevity supporting their motto: "We will not be defeated."

A fan favorite: *Auld Lang Syne*.

### **Madison Scouts 1938- "Masters of entertainment"**

Madison has long been known for their flamboyant style, both in music and marching, "in your face drum corps" and a "killer instinct." During the late 1940s and 1950s and continuing to the present, Madison was usually the favorite

of the crowd as they have always performed a very showy, yet precise program full of surprises for fans.

In the days when everyone carried one pair of cymbals, they carried at least four pair, twirling in sequential patterns. They were responsible for flipping bugles and head-choppers, double-time and behind-the-back catches, and marching with dance steps as they went.

They were undefeated in horns for 46 consecutive shows throughout 1974 and 1975, and the 1975 season was an undefeated year for the corps, making them the first non-Western corps to win DCI. In addition to their renowned musicians, Madison was known in the early years for a very exciting color guard, both in summer and winter competitions.

The Madison Scouts and The Cavaliers are the only remaining all-male corps and, along with the Chicago Cavaliers, Madison was one of the first to feature "theme" entertainment.



The Madison, WI, Madison Scouts, 1985, at DCI Finals in Madison, WI (photo by Orlin Wagner from the collection of Drum Corps World).

Each year the Madison Scouts take "higher, faster and louder" to a new dimension with a style of playing unique in DCI -- a big, high, brassy sound and ear-splitting soloists. Exhausting to watch, they exude great energy, seeming to be in perpetual motion (with a few park and blows).

The Scouts are renowned for their loud Spanish jazz; exchange of drum parts; high-step marching; rotating company fronts; rippling player-by-player turn-arounds; long, slow company fronts; and a dancing guard. And who could forget their barstools?

Madison is one of the few corps left that is playing for the fans and not just for the judges. There is no symbolism or hidden messages. The Scouts continue to be the corps that entertains before the judging even begins, with their impressive entrance and fleur-de-lis drill.

As a reward for their crowd-appealing, fan-friendly shows, the Scouts won the coveted "Spirit of Disney" award four years.

Madison's shows can be appreciated on many levels. Every trademark Madison effect imaginable is used to create a truly powerful experience, a "killer Madison" instinct that

sends the crowd into a frenzy. They weave a seamless web of excitement from the thrilling opening fanfare to the heart-pounding closer. When they come at you with their wall of sound, high leg lift, picture poses, non-stop energy and Malagueña-style climax, the impact is devastating.

In a number of years they have used one of the selections in their program to show off a variety of jazz musical styles including progressive jazz, rock, folk, boogie and fusion or all of the above like "Harlem Suite" (1986) and *Slaughter on 10th Avenue* (1989).

They are also preservers of tradition in the activity, often revisiting their roots with tunes and visuals from the past. In their 1999 production of the rock opera "Jesus Christ Superstar," the entire *King Herod's Song* was a trip down memory lane with one retro element after another, including humorous musical and drill parodies of old-fashioned maneuvers like squad turns and columns; a playful, jazzy Dixieland combo; some high mark-times; spinning drill behind high rifle tosses and drill collapsing into a massive rotating line; a towering, exposed rifle toss; and a restatement of the title theme while the corps formed a cross, then a star.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the Scouts' color guard, under the instruction of Sal Salas and later Mike Turner, was outstanding, with great execution. However, in recent years, the Madison guard has been a weak spot and in 2002 the corps dropped out of the top 12 for the first time.

Madison has won the DCI championship two times, in 1975 and 1988. Their 1988 DCI championship performance brought the crowd to a frenzy in *Malagueña* and their 1995 Spanish bullfighter program, considered to be one of the most intense and entertaining ever, a perfect marriage of musical and visual tension, brought the house down.

Some fan favorites: *Black is the Color of My True Love's Hair*, *God Bless the Child*, *MacArthur Park*, *Ballet in Brass*, *Slaughter on 10th Avenue*, *Malagueña*, *Through the Eyes of Love*, *Memory* from "Cats" with a great re-entry, *Rhapsody in Blue* with the piano formation, *Concerto for Guitar and Orchestra* and *Malaga*.

### **Magic • 1989- "Original programs"**

Magic of Orlando came on the field in 1990 with virtually the same corps and staff that made finals in 1989 with Suncoast Sound. They played a variety of music that included jazz-like material, movie music, classical pieces, wind ensemble music and



Magic of Orlando, 1990, at DCI Prelims in Buffalo, NY (photo by Dale Eck from the collection of Drum Corps World).

original music, largely written and arranged by Robert Smith of Suncoast Sound fame.

During their first two years, they played classical selections from "Fantasia" and then they made their defining mark with their two "Cirque du Magique" shows (which included music from *Cirque du Soleil*) and the "Danse Animale" show.

Their visual programs were always colorful, different, innovative and fun to watch, especially with the second "Cirque" year and the fan-friendly

"Saint and Sinner" show of 1997.

Their first appearance as a DCI finalist was in 1994 and their highest finish was eighth place in 1996 with a serious program, "Twelve Seconds to the Moon," an original concert band piece by Dr. Robert Smith.

After 1999, the corps continued as Micro Magic. In 2002, Magic of Orlando returned to the field with a new image and a new, experienced staff, including Wayne Downey as brass arranger, and won the DCI Division II championships and finished 11th in division I with a fan-accessible program, "Desert Winds," based on the movie score of "The Wind and the Lion."

### **Phantom Regiment • 1956- "Originators of symphonic pageantry"**

Phantom Regiment was formed from the St. Thomas High School Crusaders and in their earliest years they were best known for their precision color guards, namely the legendary Phantomettes.

The Phantom Regiment drum corps has



Rockford, IL, Phantom Regiment, 1991, at DCI Prelims in Dallas, TX (photo by Ron Walloch from the collection of Drum Corps World).

long been renowned as the "originator of all-classical programming." The corps has proven that classical music and drum corps can be melded into an inspiring art form. As such, they have created an appreciation for "long-hair" music within all generations, while also being one of the most entertaining and talented corps ever to hit the field.

Phantom had some outstanding corps in the late 1970s, finishing with some heart-breaking second places in 1977, 1978 and 1979. In 1977 and 1978, they used pitched drums with their *Flight of the Bumblebee*.

In the early 1980s, the corps was brash and beautiful, with a deep and haunting bass. They set the stage for theatrical pageantry with "Spartacus" in 1981 and 1982, in which they used a veritable "opera house" full of equipment and passed out explanatory program notes. Phantom was one of the first corps to use 60-plus horns, creating a powerful brass orchestra, and they are consistently noted for outstanding horn lines.

At one time or another, the corps has presented nearly all of the basic classical repertoire, sometimes choosing darker scores, such as "Symphonie Fantastique," "Romeo and Juliet," and music of Shostakovich. After their 10th-place finish in 1986, they cried out for a style change and the Regiment came back in 1987 with the most strikingly beautiful visual transformation of all time, orchestrated by Michael Cesario. Pure white uniforms matched the production of Tchaikovsky's "Swan Lake" and "Nutcracker" ballets.

In 1988, the Regiment won the color guard award for their group portrayal of "Juliet," even though they were staged as a backdrop to the corps for a substantial portion of the show. Many feel that their 1989 "From the New World to a New Age" and 1996's "The Defiant Heart" are two of the best all-time drum corps shows.

Throughout history, Jim Wren's arrangements have stayed true to the original composers and have presented the perfect marriage of power and emotion. One fan said, "Phantom Regiment is the truly musical corps in the activity. They actually face forward when they play soft."

Wren's scoring has showcased bold brass lines with technically precise soprano and French horn or mellophone lines and traditionally strong, deep low brass sonority with emphasis on baritones and contras.

Their visual history is closely tied to the designs of John Brazale. The visual traditions of Phantom include a militaristic image; the Rockford file; long, slow company fronts; blocks and diagonal pass-throughs.

Other highlights of Phantom's shows have included the "wedge" (the spectacular moving wedge in 1993), the "iceberg" drill, "crab-stepping," the sequential twirling of flags and sabres, large (14-member) contra lines and flashy tenor lines, and some of the most beautifully played, lyrical yet dramatic ballads in the activity.

Through the years, Phantom has made minor alterations to both music and

uniform, yet have always maintained their reserved and stoic image, once in a while showing a bit of humor like in their 1990 Saint Saens program where they had fun with contra-elephants). In 1991, Phantom did "opera at its best," with a very sexy guard presentation in *Bacchanale*, and in 2000, all selections were from early 20th century.

Phantom has stayed as true to its image as any corps and for many years it relied on local and alumni staff. It remains one of only a few corps to have an all-female guard, with consistently great execution and spectacular flag colors. The Regiment was one of the last top 12 corps to still play G-bugles, through the 2002 season. The corps was often accused of peaking too early.



The Santa Clara, CA, Vanguard, 1982 (photo by Art Luebke from the collection of Drum Corps World).

After many hair-splitting, heartbreaking second-place finishes over the years (1977, 1978, 1979 and 1989), Phantom had to settle for a tie with the Blue Devils even in the year they finally won, 1996.

Some fan favorites: *Poet and Peasant Overture*, *Night on Bald Mountain*, *Pilgrim's Chorus* from "Tannhauser," "Spartacus," *Elsa's Procession to the Cathedral*, "Songs from the Winter Palace" ("Nutcracker" and "Swan Lake" ballets), *Fire of Eternal Glory*, *Claire de Lune*, Dvorak's "New World Symphony" and *Introduction to Shostakovich's "Fourth Ballet Suite."*



The Milwaukee, WI, Pioneer, 1993 (photo by Sid Unser from the collection of Drum Corps World).

### **Pioneer • 1961- "The wearing of the green"**

This corps has a commitment to playing Irish music, making it difficult to come up with substantial musical material that fits the bill year after year. Their 1997 "Riverdance" program was a good choice and "Oliver" was a good compromise for 2002.

The corps won the DCI A-60 championship in

1991, the division II championship in 1994 and 1995, and has been a DCI open class semifinalist since 1994.

A fan favorite: *Gary Owen March*.

### **Santa Clara Vanguard • 1967- "Tradition and innovation"**

At their first major appearance in the 1969 World Open, they placed ninth and stunned everyone with their horn sound and a drill that came out of the corner rather than from the starting line. That show, and the North American Nationals in 1970 -- where they won and defeated corps that had probably never heard of them -- previewed the future performance of Santa Clara and consequently, they became the most successful and

consistently excellent drum corps of the 1970s. Their drum line won 56 consecutive shows in 1973 and 1974.

The Vanguard has been one of the leading innovators in drum corps, being the only one to have appeared in every DCI finals since 1972. They took what was evolving to new levels, cleaning every detail until perfect.

The 1970-1974 Vanguard is considered to be the first "modern" drum corps and, in 1980, Pete Emmons and Santa Clara brought drum corps into the world of modern, asymmetrical drill, taking the world by surprise. Under the direction of Fred Sanford, their drum line was a model for other drum corps.

While being extremely entertaining and innovative, Santa Clara is also a great preserver of tradition. Their creative color guard won its greatest fame from introducing the world to the "bottle dance," which has become one of two most famous moves in drum corps, along with Trooper's "sunburst."

Over the years, Santa Clara has been considered the "corps with class," an image that was created early-on by their founder/director and long-time music arranger, Gail Royer. They have long been renowned for bringing unexpected and captivating music to the field with excellent musicianship.

The corps won three DCI championships playing *Young Person's Guide to Drum Corps* in 1973, 1974 and 1981 and they are forever associated with "Fiddler on the Roof," due to their presentations of selections from this musical in the early 1970s (1970-1973, 1975, revised in 1992) and their revisiting of the "bottle dance" every so often.

The music of Aaron Copland provided a solid foundation throughout the 1980s before moving on to the stunning Russian pageants and a brilliant adaptation of "Phantom of the Opera" in 1988 and 1989.

During the 1980s, every Vanguard show had something innovative and surprising. They changed costumes while going

through a tunnel, used large moving props, disappearing maidens, a disappearing Phantom, then a disappearing corps.

In recent years, they have been noted for more contemporary programs, with excellent low brass (euphoniums) and outstanding baritone soloists. They also brought "rap" to drum corps in 2001.

Other things for which this corps is famous include an exquisite sound, colorful cymbal lines, state-of-the-art visual programs with flowing drills and terrific designs by Myron Rosander, diagonal spreads on the field, a contra line with military mystique, a solid percussion program and their "electric wheelchair," one of the most difficult of drum cadences.

Intensity, subtlety and emotion are characteristics closely identified with Santa Clara, with programs culminating in an immense display of visual and musical emotion that has become the signature moment of the corps. But they have been noted for quiet endings as well.

Santa Clara has won six DCI championships, the most recent a tie with the Blue Devils in 1999, for their solid musical and visual program, "Inventions for a New Millennium," one of the most intense finals performances ever seen and heard, with music of *The Canyon* and a superb and unique drill design by Rosander that unraveled from the front right corner, ebbing and flowing across the field, leaving the viewer/listener "out of breath."

Some fan favorites: *Bottle Dance* from "Fiddler on the Roof," *Fanfare and Allegro*, "Appalachian Spring," *Festive Overture*, *Great Gate of Kiev*, *Lezhinka*, selections from "Phantom of the Opera" and *The Canyon*.

### **Sky Ryders • 1960-1993 "Somewhere Over the Rainbow"**

The Sky Ryders were known for excellent horn lines with a warm low brass sound. As a result of their "theatrical" productions of the 1980s, initiated by Tommy Keenum, including "The Wizard of Oz," "West Side Story" (with elegant pairs work) and "The Sound of Music," the Sky Ryders became one



The Hutchinson, KS, Sky Ryders, 1988, at DCI Finals in Kansas City, MO (photo by Orin Wagner from the collection of Drum Corps World).

of the most beloved corps of all time, with a complete musical/visual package.

In 1989, they moved to a more serious classical repertoire with less success, then returned to a theatrical show in 1991 ("Camelot"), their last year in DCI Finals.

Their highest DCI finish was ninth place in 1986, the second year of their "Wizard of Oz" program.

Some fan favorites: *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*, *Home on the Range*, "The Wizard of Oz" and excerpts from "West Side Story."

### **Spirit (formerly Spirit of Atlanta) 1977-**

#### **"The southern belle"**

Formerly Spirit of Atlanta, this corps literally jumped onto the drum corps scene in



The Atlanta, GA, Spirit of Atlanta, July 2, 1995, at Clifton, NJ (photo by Dale Eck from the collection of Drum Corps World).

1977. In 1978, the corps sky-rocketed to sixth place at DCI Finals and, in 1979 and 1980, earned impressive fourth-place finishes. Early on, they were the one and only original Southern corps and the only corps to shake concrete with their trademark "wall of sound" in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

No serious drum corps fan will ever forget the 1979 and 1980 horn lines that played the wonderful arrangements of the late Jim Ott, and their outstanding soprano soloists in the mid-1980s.

In the 1980s, they were raising the bar for color guards, with beautiful and emotional presentations. They had a well-rounded guard, excelling in all three equipment areas, with particularly effective rifle lines. They won high guard in 1985 and 1987 under the direction of Sal Salas, who came on board in 1983, and Scott Chandler, who joined in 1984 and initiated male/female dancing pairs, while also incorporating real dance, props (like sail flags) and uniforms as visual enhancements to their routines and clean flag work.

Spirit of Atlanta was a corps that was best when they were "being themselves." Audience and judge response was greatest when Spirit played southern-flavored music, backed by jazz interpretations. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, they made an attempt to depart from their Southern image with productions of "Petrouchka" and "Interstellar Suite" with a less than spectacular reception, dropping out of finals in 1989.

Although many of the participants in the Spirit of Atlanta corps came from Jacksonville

State University in Alabama, they became officially sponsored by that institution in 2001, representing the sophisticated version of that school's marching band.

In 2002, the corps again became a DCI finalist, finishing 11th.

Some fan favorites: *Let It Be Me*, *Georgia on My Mind*, *Sweet Georgia Brown*, *Old Man River*, *We Are the Reason*, *Blues in the Night* and "Porgy and Bess."

### **Star of Indiana • 1985-1993 "When You Wish Upon a Star"**

Star came on strong in 1985, making finals the first year with their Disney show that presented the first of many excellent musical arrangements. They made amazing progress each succeeding year from a design and execution standpoint and simultaneously continued to improve their scoring and placement each season, from their initial 10th-place finish, until they won the title in 1991 at Dallas, TX.

From the very beginning, there was a great deal of resentment against Star from other corps, largely due to their riches.

But some drum corps members also resented the "invasion of the marching band" image into drum corps, since Star's initial membership was built on the

thriving marching band activity in Indiana. They felt Star was generic, lacking in sophistication, tradition and emotion -- "flash without substance." In their second year, they hired a "name" staff, largely from Garfield, including George Zingali and Jim Prime.

This chameleon corps was always redefining itself, seemingly searching for their identity, like 1985: Disney; 1986: "Starwars"; 1987: circus; 1988: Gershwin's "Porgy and Bess"; 1989: British; 1990: biblical; 1991: Roman; 1992: patriotic; and 1993: minimalist/contemporary music. Each program was carried out with the highest level of excellence and perhaps "not having a style" or "a changing style" was their identity. They certainly had phenomenal success with this pattern.

Truckloads of props materialized in their second and third season presentations of "Star Wars" and "The Greatest Show on Earth," respectively, before a more serious performance of "Porgy and Bess" in 1988, with a greatly reduced drum line. A majestic British style arrived in 1989 and, although it was projected to last five years, it existed for only one year.

In 1990, Star stretched audience expectations by playing "Belshazzar's Feast,"

a show filled with musical and visual splendor and a drill that demanded running around the field with abandon, proving that Star could do it all -- be innovative, awe-inspiring and technically difficult.

In 1991, they won the championship with "Roman Images," a true Roman pageant using music of Ottorino Respighi, with Zingali's "cross into cross" at the end of the show being one of the most brilliant drill moves in drum corps history. In 1992, they were able to reach the fans with a patriotic show and brilliant visual panels.

But in 1993, they presented a very abstract show using music of Bartok and Barber, with visuals built on the concept of a scalene triangle, which was "too far out there" for the average fan who did not take kindly to this show. Star proved that minimalism can work on a field and produced a crowd-pleasing show that didn't always please the crowd.

After the unpleasant season in 1993, Star left DCI to form "Brass Theatre," touring with Canadian Brass. Later, the production became a highly successful Broadway show called "BLAST!" in which they



Bloomington, IN, Star of Indiana, 1991, at DCI Prelims in Dallas, TX (photo by Orlin Wagner from the collection of Drum Corps World).

presented many drum corps musical and visual favorites on the stage and for which they won a Tony Award created especially for their new genre. Their drum corps reputation increased greatly after they left.

They pushed the limits of creativity in the activity, but within the rules, and when they rose to the top of the activity, they didn't try to change DCI, but changed, removing themselves from competition and following their new "star."

Star had superb musical arrangements played by brilliant horn lines with supremely outstanding mellophone sections, interesting pits; excellent body movement; glitzy uniforms; and amazing drill, the culmination of which was Zingali's "star to star,"

Star finished third at DCI in 1990 and 1992, second in 1993 and won DCI in 1991.

A fan favorite: *When You Wish Upon a Star*.

### **Suncoast Sound • 1979-1995 "Original music, symbolic messages and a great horn line"**

One of the finest corps of the 1980s, especially from a musical perspective, Suncoast Sound had one of the consistently finest horn lines of the decade. They frequently sported an original repertoire and were never considered traditional, often presenting shows with symbolic messages.



The Pinnel Park, FL, Suncoast Sound, 1987, at DCI Finals in Madison, WI (photo by Orlin Wagner from the collection of Drum Corps World).

In 1983, Suncoast placed in DCI Finals for the first time, with a closer featuring sign language. Their 1984 "No More War" show with a Vietnam wall was one of the most theatrical and emotional in drum corps history. In 1985 and 1989, *Simple Song at Sunrise* was a very hummable tune, with memorable visuals of flying seagulls and a moving seagull form on the field. Their 1986 "Adventures in Time" may have been their best show with their best horn line.

In 1987, there was another theatrical show, "My Fair Lady-Our Way," and in 1988 they presented one of the most controversial shows of all time, the "Symphonic Dances for the Contemporary Child."

In 1989, their final season of open class competition, they placed in the top 12 for the seventh consecutive year, playing a new and improved version of the first totally original drum corps composition, Dr. Robert Smith's "Florida Suite," which the corps had debuted in 1985. This was a quality corps and a great loss to the activity.

They placed sixth in 1983 and 1985 and reached their highest place in 1986, fifth.

Some fan favorites: *The Greatest Love of All* and "Florida Suite."

### Troopers • 1957- "America's Corps"

The Troopers first appeared in the Midwest in 1962 and presented their "sunburst," which became one of the most loved and respected maneuvers ever performed by any drum corps. Over the years, the corps had varying success in drums and bugles, but they were leaders with their color guard. Almost every new equipment handling idea of the early years had its components founded in the Trooper's guard. They also started the overwhelming trend to throw equipment at, over, to and/or around each other in the early 1960s.

The Troopers set the standard for marching and maneuvering, leading the way toward more cleanly executed shows, while

also being one of the most entertaining corps of the 1960s, 1970s and beyond.

They were the first corps not to come off the traditional starting line. They came out of the corner of the field and built from there. They were first corps to put curved lines on the field (the circle), tour long distances and have women in sections other than the color guard.

Over the years, this Jim Jones-founded corps has represented the best in drum corps. Through both up and down years, the Troopers have remained a huge crowd favorite and have always been thought of as a most exemplary group of young people. Their commitment to playing music with a western theme enhances their tradition, but also limits them to some degree. Their highest DCI finish was second place in 1973.

Some fan favorites: *Ghost Riders in the Sky*, *Hang 'em High*, *Battle Hymn*, *How the West Was Won* and *Red Pony*.



The Casper, WY, Troopers, 1974 (photo by Jane Boulen from the collection of Drum Corps World).

### 27th Lancers 1967-1986 "Color guard supreme"

The 27th Lancers always performed an excellent musical show, but their highest caption was normally general effect. Their beautifully conceived programs were of an unusual level of difficulty and typically 27th was a "slow starting" corps for that reason.

As the earliest benefactors of the extraordinary design talents of George Zingali, the

27th Lancers were visual innovators, pushing the envelope of -- and previewing the future of -- visual design under Zingali and Ralph Pace in the 1970s, with collapsible boxes and fronts or arcs which came out of nowhere. They were the first corps from the East to finish in the top three at DCI and their guard has been cited as one of the best ever.

The level of ingenuity in creating the color guard show was a delight to the fans, but the superior and energetic performance of the guard members also exhausted the viewer. Among the innovations introduced were double flags, horizontal rifle spins and a modern dance concept within the weapons line. This was a real "show corps," in the truest Eastern tradition.

The equipment work was fast and furious;



most of the songs in their hey-day ended at a much faster pace than a lot of their peers. There was an

The Revere, MA, 27th Lancers, 1977 (photo by Art Luebke from the collection of Drum Corps World).

"in-your-face" type of ending to every song that "went on forever." Their cadence was not slow by any means.

Having taken second place at DCI in 1980, the year they performed in the opening ceremony of the Lake Placid Winter Olympics, 27th is considered by many to be the best corps never to have won the DCI championship. The departure of the 27th Lancers after 1986 was a sad one for the activity. No one played *Danny Boy* like 2-7!

Some fan favorites: *Danny Boy*, *Crown Imperial*, *Can Can*, "English Folk Song Suite" and *On the 20th Century*.

### Velvet Knights • 1964-1996 "Clown princes of drum corps"

The Velvet Knights were the rightful "heirs" of the Bridgemen, largely because of the Bobby Hoffman link. They were often the crowd favorite at any performance, usually because of the laid-back humor they exuded.

Underlying the superficial humor was a very talented drum corps, balancing silliness and seriousness effectively and showing just how much fun could be had on the drum corps field.

Fans will never forget the red tennis shoes, the "Jaws" theme



The Santa Ana, CA, Velvet Knights, 1992 (photo by Sid Unser from the collection of Drum Corps World).

that warned of the shark, the Energizer Bunny, Godzilla, the opera diva (who was devoured by the shark), the "sex cymbals" and the "Magical Mystery Tours" (there were four).

This corps was an eight-time DCI finalist with their highest finish being a tie for seventh place with Star of Indiana in 1987. Their last year of competition was 1996.

A fan favorite: The "Magical Mystery Tours."



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From 1984-1993, she wrote for Drum Corps World and was best known for her analytical articles about each season's top-12 programs, titled "What to listen for in drum corps this summer."

Although Sward did not march in a drum corps, her son and daughter marched in the Mt. Prospect Imperials, the Geneseo Knights and Phantom Regiment.

She is a music director in Skokie, IL, where her orchestra has won first place at state contests for the past 11 years.

She and her husband, John, live in Evanston, IL.