
by Hans Kloppert

The competitive drum and bugle corps activity in Europe was introduced on the continent by the Dutch. The Netherlands has always had a rich amateur music culture. Today the country still has a large number of marching bands, showbands, ensembles, community bands, percussion units and baton teams, most of which are members of the KNFM (Royal Dutch Federation for Amateur Music Groups).

The introduction of drum corps was exactly the addition the country had been waiting for to complete the existing vivid amateur music activity. The first official Drum Corps Holland Championships were held in 1981 in the town of Bunschoten. Odilo from Hilversum was crowned the first DCH champion. The real introduction of the drum corps phenomenon goes back into history a lot further, however.

The oldest Dutch corps by far is Jubal from Dordrecht. Originally founded as a drum and fife corps in April of 1911, the corps is still active today. Jubal and many units in the Netherlands found their origins in the CJMV, the Dutch equivalent of the YMCA. Most of the corps of today started out as drum and fife corps.

Following Jubal's example, many groups throughout the country were formed in the years that followed. Among these were Juliana from Amersfoort, formed in 1926; Excelsior from Rotterdam (1928); De Pijpers from Vlaardingen (1929); Excelsior from Goes (1930); Jong Jubal from Dordrecht (1932);

Juliana from Middelburg (1933); De Apeldoornse Pijpers from Apeldoorn (1933); Beatrix from Hilversum (1946); Kunst en Genoegen from Leiden (1949); and DVS from Katwijk (1953).

About half of these eventually adopted the drum corps style. In the 1950s, the so-called "National Fife Days" were organized. At some of these well-run events more than 1,000 musicians gathered to perform. Also the field

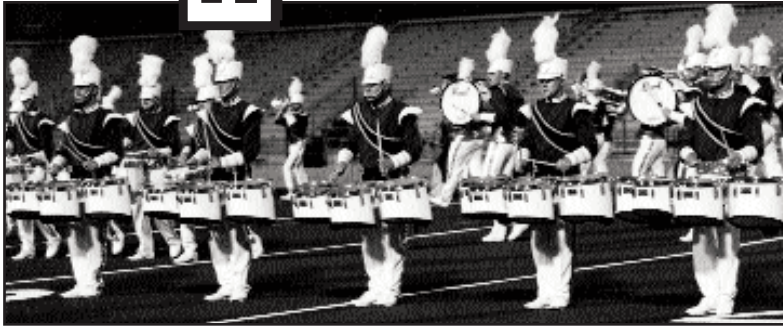
EUROPE



Avant Courir, the Netherlands, 1985 (photo by Mike Shayes from the collection of Drum Corps World).

show aspect was gradually introduced.

When Wim Schouten, a member of Jubal, and his wife, Willy, left their country to immigrate to Akron, PA, in the 1950s, they didn't take much time to discover the American drum corps scene and attended several American Legion national and state competitions. Wim was incredibly impressed with the level the drum (fife) and bugle corps



Beatrix, the Netherlands, July 28, 2000, at Murfreesboro, TN, during their U.S. tour (photo by Ron Walloch from the collection of Drum Corps World).

activity in the United States had already reached, especially by the corps that soon became his favorite, the Hawthorne Caballeros.

Photographs he took at contests and notes he made were sent back to the Netherlands to inform Jubal on the possible new adventure they might consider conquering. The G-bugle was a totally unknown instrument in Europe and Wim Schouten contacted Donald E. Getzen in 1960 to buy a complete set for Jubal.

The fifes, which had been a Jubal trademark for 50 years, were partially replaced by bugles; horns and baritones in the key of G. Jubal became the first drum (fife) and bugle corps outside the United States and Canada to use this type of brass instrument and it was introduced to the European crowds and amateur music scene.

Reactions were diverse, but drum corps was born in Europe.

Among the drum and fife corps, field shows evolved in the 1960s. Influences from the United States were inevitable. Drill forms were still rather traditional. When the first Super-8 films and recordings arrived in Europe, some units copied them. It took until the mid-1970s for more units to adopt the drum corps style. Most, however, still played B-flat brass instruments.

Field percussion underwent the

appropriate changes. Multiple toms and tuned bass drums were introduced, adding a sound that had been previously unknown in Europe. Visits by American high school bands to Europe were also a great influence on the Dutch marching (band) activity.

One of the other leading trendsetters of the drum corps activity in Europe is definitely Beatrix. The corps also originated as a drum and fife corps and adapted to field shows early. Changing its name several times from Beatrix Drum and Fife Corps to Beatrix Drumfanfare, Beatrix Band and later Beatrix Drum and Bugle Corps shows what progress the unit has gone through over five decades.

When Beatrix started entering band competitions in the 1970s after having added valved instruments to their brass section, they were more successful than most other units had ever been. They won the national title at the Wereld Muziek Concours (World Music Championships) in Kerkrade in 1974. That same year Beatrix started an international exchange with the Edmonton All-Girl Corps from Canada. Taking a unit from Europe to the United States back then was an almost unprecedented occasion.

After Jan Meijer and Jaap van Waveren, the pioneers of Beatrix, spent a summer with different Drum Corps International corps, Beatrix made a trip to Birmingham, AL, in 1979 to perform at the DCI Championships. The impact this trip had was so strong that there was no doubt in changing the unit into a drum and bugle corps, even though their type of show already had all the ingredients.



Jubal, the Netherlands, July 26, 2002, during their U.S. tour (photo by David Rice from the collection of Drum Corps World).

The first drum corps contest in Europe was held on Dutch grounds, creating the birth of both national and international competition in Europe. The Anglo-Dutch contest was held in Eemnes in May 1979. The good relationships some Dutch units had with corps and bands from England resulted in the strong beginning of a series of annual contests well before both DCH and Drum Corps United Kingdom were formed. The Anglo-Dutch contest continued until 1983.

Juliana won the first Anglo-Dutch contest.



Borsolino, Belgium, 1989 (photo by Hans Kloppert from the collection of Drum Corps World).

Since the judges were mainly Jubal and Beatrix instructors, these two corps performed in exhibition.

Drum Corps Holland

The need for a national organization that ran contests became stronger. Anton de Graaf, organizer of the first Anglo-Dutch contest, was one of the co-founders of Drum Corps Holland, which first started in 1980, almost parallel to the founding of DCUK.

The first DCH Championships were held a year later. Surprisingly, both leading pioneers for this activity, Jubal and Beatrix, did not compete. A total of five open class corps and two cadet class corps were present. Unfortunately, none of these seven corps is still active today.

Champions Odilo from Hilversum stopped competing after the 1985 season. Wesopa from Weesp folded in 1984. Excelsior from Baarn and In Aethere Musica from Eemnes merged in 1984, but are now only active in the winter guard circuit. For scores of all DCH Championships, refer to pages 273-274 in "A History of Drum & Bugle Corps," volume 1.

An immediate growth in competition was seen in 1982 when Jubal, Beatrix and Oranje



West Coast Sound, the Netherlands, 1998 (photo by Edward Scholten from the collection of Drum Corps World).

from Huizen joined. Jubal took the open class title at the championships in Hilversum. Today, Oranje is also only active as a winter guard called The Pride. They only competed as a drum and bugle corps for three seasons.

The Boston Crusaders toured Europe in 1982 and presented part of their show at two contests in the Netherlands, but were far from ready that early in the summer.

In 1983, DIO from Dordrecht entered DCH competition. The group was Europe's only active all-girl corps in competition. In 1957, the corps found its origin in a gymnastics club carrying the same name. DIO was one of the first to add a color guard.

After having competed in the first Anglo-Dutch contest in 1979, the corps took some time before returning to the field.

DIO competed in DCH for four years and then left. Today the corps is still active, but is no



Wölper Löwen, Germany, 1985 (photo by R.W. Harris from the collection of Drum Corps World).

longer an all-girl unit.

Oranje Nassau from Vlissingen and Bato from Haarlem joined DCH in 1983. Bato was especially known for the fact that they learned two different shows. Beside their competitive performance, they also had a traditional Dutch show, complete with folklore costumes, cheese carriers, tulips and everything else foreigners think Holland is all about.

The next three seasons were DCH's best as far as the number of corps in competition is concerned. Sixteen corps performed at the championships. One of the new corps in the 1984 season was De Pijpers from Vlaardingien. They only performed one season under that name and later chose the more accessible name Avalance.

Two corps from the same hometown of Vlissingen entered competition as well: Juliana and Blue Spirit. It is no surprise that there was a strong competition between these two units. Excelsior from Goes also joined DCH at about the same time.

The most legendary addition to the competition field ever was Avant Courir, a merger between Excelsior and In Aethere Musica. They managed to put a large corps on the field with an innovative, challenging and highly entertaining program. Avant Courir was able to work its way up to third place in its debut season. Unfortunately, the corps folded after the 1992 season.

Johan Friso, the feeder corps for Juliana took top honors in cadet class. Five contests were held before all corps came together in Dordrecht at the championships, which Beatrix won.

Even though the 1985 season had the same record number of 16 corps in the competition, it was the feeder corps division that saw the biggest growth. The

championships that year had the largest DCH crowd ever. The top six in open class finals placed in the exact same order as in 1984.

Jong Jubal took the

feeder corps class title.

The first drum and bugle corps from Belgium, Borsalino from the town of Auvelais, showed its talents at some of the regional DCH contests that season. The corps was crowned the first DCBelgium champion at the end of the decade. Borsalino was the pioneer of the corps activity in Belgium.

In 1985, German corps started their own organization, Drum Corps Deutschland. In Belgium, drum corps fans slowly started thinking of building a national organization.

The competition season in the Netherlands has always run from the second week of May through the last weekend of September. This might sound long compared the DCA or DCI seasons, but the biggest difference is that the season in the Netherlands is split in two.

All Dutch corps usually have their first public performance on the queen's birthday, April 30, which is a national holiday in the country. Then the contests run through the end of June when the activity takes an almost two-month summer break. This is because most Dutch families go on summer vacation to sunny beach resorts abroad.

In this period, corps would be too incomplete and therefore the entire activity lies still until the end of August. In September, DCH usually organized two contests before championships, traditionally held on the last Saturday of the month.

The weather has affected the DCH season just about every year. Fall often starts early in the Netherlands. September has always been a risky period. At many championships the corps have had to perform in the rain. In 1986, championships were even postponed to the second weekend of October.

Both Oranje and Odilo struggled with membership and decided to join forces and come back as the merger Alliance, which unfortunately was a one-season project. New to the activity was Blue Wave from IJmuiden, a promising unit that would come a long way in competition. In their opening season, they placed ninth, but soon worked their way up to much higher placements.

A crown on their 75th anniversary was the title Jubal gained at championships. Also, their feeder corps, Jong Jubal, won in their class.

The 1987 season was straightforward, with few changes. Don Bosco from Rijswijk was the new corps in the activity. They placed 10th (last) in open class, but greatly improved to fourth place the following year. Blue Wave also worked their way up the ladder.

No drum corps fan in Europe will ever forget the 1988 season. Not only was the competition strong and growing in popularity, but Beatrix, returning from a three-week tour to DCI, was the absolute strongest corps on the field at championships and took top honors.

In June an international contest was held in The Hague with the Madison Scouts as special guests. They were touring Europe for

Starriders, Germany, 1994 (photo by Edward Scholten from the collection of Drum Corps World).



two weeks. The Scouts received a warm welcome and were overwhelmed with compliments from Dutch corps members and crowds. Their stunning performance is still a subject of conversation among the Dutch corps today.

The only new corps in competition was Premier from Krommenie. They took a two-year recess right after their first season in competition. They are still active today, but as a percussion corps with color guard.

Blue Spirit from Vlissingen decided to take a year off and the Sojobo corps from Antwerp, Belgium, debuted at the international contest.



Interest in the DCH activity from drum corps fans in other countries of Europe had grown immensely over the last few years. At the championships, more and more fans from Belgium, Germany and even France drove to Holland to cheer for their favorite corps. One of the highlights of the 1989



(Top to bottom) Con Fuoco, the Netherlands, 1993 (photo by Edward Scholten from the collection of Drum Corps World); Avalance, the Netherlands, 1985 (photo by R.W. Harris from the collection of Drum Corps World); Blue Wave, the Netherlands, 1989 (photo by Hans Kloppert from the collection of Drum Corps World).

season was the change of the championships venue to the city of Nijmegen to better serve numerous German fans. The championships returned to the Goffert Stadium in Nijmegen for another few years in the early 1990s.

The 1980s saw a coming and going of corps in competition. Corps folded or merged, competed only one or two seasons and then withdrew or chose other directions. It was especially the lower placed corps that disappeared. Rust Roest from Zierikzee was welcomed in 1989, but only competed for three seasons. The total number of participating units had dropped back to 12.

Influences from the DCI and DCA activity were noticeable in the Dutch corps scene. Repertoires of various units contained some of the most popular tunes played by top DCI

corps in the past.

The first Dutch members marched with DCI and DCA corps in the 1980s and shared their experiences with their own corps upon returning. Just about all DCH corps played brass instruments in the key of G by then. Three-valve instruments had been accepted in the Netherlands well before this rule was changed in the United States and England.

Since their entry in the Dutch competition, Beatrix and Jubal both distinguished themselves from any of the other competitors. The two corps were close rivals, always battling for first place. Every year the gap between second place and the rest of the field was immense. A spread of 12 to 14 full points was common.

It was only Blue Wave that was able to close the gap in the 1990s. This talented unit was run by a staff that was always up for another challenge.

Belgium and Germany started showing more interest in DCH. It was decided that foreign corps could not only enter the regional contests, but also the DCH Championships. Sojobo was the first corps

to profit from this rule change and took fifth place at finals in 1990. Unfortunately, this was a one-year-only experience for them.

Sponsorship started playing a major role for Don Bosco. They found a fast food company to support them. As a result, they

changed their name into -- believe it or not -- McDonald's Drum and Bugle Corps. The corps folded after the 1991 season.

Avalance had to leave the activity due to lack of members. Beatrix put another title to their name and Jong Jubal topped cadet class.

The number of corps in the DCH circuit remained at about 12 for the next few years. In 1991, a novice class was added

for drum corps-oriented bands that wanted to have a chance at the competition element. One of the units was Vermaat from Haarlem. This class would be changed into class A the next season. Open class welcomed back Blue Spirit.

The 1992 season was the beginning of continuous international participation at the DCH Championships. Throughout the last few seasons, various corps from Belgium and Germany traveled to the Netherlands for regional shows.

Since Drum Corps Deutschland was unable to hold a finals in 1991, the defending DCD champion Starriders from Bad-Munder decided to officially enter DCH and competed in class A in 1992. They placed second behind Blue Spirit. Jubal took first place in

open class.

Here's That Rainy Day would have made an appropriate DCH anthem. Any outdoor event in the country would have been and probably was cancelled. On September 25, 1993, the DCH Championships, however, did not let the weather spoil the fun. The heaviest rainfall, storms and strongest wind ever at championships had to be tolerated by the corps.

Units were literally marching in the mud by the time the evening program started. Quite a few members slipped and glided across the muddy grass.

New corps included Joint Adventure from Amsterdam and Con Fuoco from Leiden, which surprisingly placed third in class A, upsetting Belgian competitor Freeliners (formerly Sojobo), who did not accept their score and left the organization. They folded the following year.

Performing a standstill concert is what some corps experienced at 1994 finals. Due to the extreme weather, stadium officials decided not every corps could march on the field that evening. This definitely was a big disappointment for many. Starriders proved to be making a lot of progress, topping class A. Since the number of open class corps had gone down to a mere handful, DCH decided to give the top corps from class A the opportunity to compete in open class finals.

Reckendrees from Haarlem entered class A competition. The biggest surprise of the event was Blue Wave placing second, upsetting Beatrix, which had to settle for third. It's a pity that was Wave's last season.

The centrally located city of Utrecht, which probably has the best stadium facilities DCH has ever used, was the site of the 1995 championships. The hard work the Starriders put into their production paid off. They placed third in their first season.

A new addition to the circuit was West Coast Sound from Haarlem. DCH has had quite a few different corps from Haarlem. In fact, there were a lot of familiar faces whenever a new corps appeared. Beatrix was the first corps to take all captions at finals.

The competition got a stronger international flavor in 1996, when three German corps chose to cross the border and compete in DCH. Starriders had already become a well-known face. Schlossgarde from Frankfurt came out a few times, but never took part in the championships.

Their colleague, Wölper Löwen from Neustadt, joined them on their Dutch adventure with success. As more corps-oriented bands wanted to get a taste of the competition, another class was added to the list: corps style. New contenders were Jong Holland from Zwijndrecht and Turnlust from Den Helder. Surprisingly, Juliana stepped down from open class to the corps-style class after having competed in open class for the previous 12 years.

In open class, the battle for first place seemed to have been decided in favor of Jubal, which won all season. Then

unexpectedly and under loud dissatisfaction of the crowd, the title was awarded to Beatrix.

A week after championships, Jubal announced its retirement from DCH competition. The corps would still keep its membership, but no longer wished to compete. Numerous talks between the DCH management and Jubal board had no effect. As of that season, Jubal went its own way and opted for a full commercial season with performances throughout the country and far across the borders.

As of the 1997 season, there would be no doubt about where the open class trophy went after finals. Beatrix won every single show. More bands had a try-out performance in corps-style class, which grew in popularity. Showcorps Gorkum only performed during the 1997 season. Blue and White Stars from Nijverdal joined the corps-style class and stayed with the organization for three years.

There were and still are showbands and marching bands in the country that closely follow the DCI activity and adopt the drum corps style to their programs and shows. Most of them, however, lack the appropriate staff members and are far behind in technique.

Clinics over the years, given by many American clinicians, have been of great help to the activity in Europe. Just about every year there are clinics for members, staff and management.

Blue Devils have shown and offered continuous support for the European activity. Numerous clinic sessions have been held over the last two decades and Blue Devils have played an important role in these. They brought their winter guard in 1988 and part of their corps in 1992 after they performed at the Carnival in Nice, France. Blue Devils again traveled to Europe in 2000 and are scheduled to return in 2004 and 2005.

DCH ran a winter guard circuit parallel to the corps season from 1981 through 1995 when the circuit operated under the name Color Guard Nederland, which became an independent organization in 1997.

Toward the end of the 20th century, there wasn't much progress. The number of corps basically stayed intact. Excelsior was back, but Blue Spirit saw their membership decrease and ended with the 1998 season. Cadet class had never counted more than four corps, but these young kids, usually coached by marching members of their senior corps, showed incredible talent. They are the future of the activity. Johan Friso took its fourth consecutive cadet class title. There has never been an age limit in DCH open class.

Drum Corps Holland was entering its last season before the KNFM Federation adopted the activity. DCH had had a short but interesting history. It managed to build a strong team of volunteers, but was sometimes let down by the lack of assistance of participating corps. The organization had gained a lot of respect from other national and international music organizations and

helped set a standard for the new show-oriented marching units.

Only the Starriders kept traveling to DCH from Germany. All other German units withdrew from the activity before the 1999 season started. Plans were made to have a revival of the Drum Corps Deutschland organization, but under a different name.

Juliana and Starriders were close rivals more than ever before. Only tenths of points



(Top to bottom) In Aethere Musica, the Netherlands, 1984 (photo by R.W. de Graaf from the collection of Drum Corps World); Joint Adventure, the Netherlands, 1998 (photo by Edward Scholten from the collection of Drum Corps World); Fidele Vogelsanger, Germany, 1986 (photo from the collection of Drum Corps World).

kept them apart.

For the first time, corps from France joined the Dutch corps in competition, including Blue Lions, a marching percussion/color guard unit, and St. Fulgent, a drum and bugle corps that stunned Dutch crowds with its rich bugle sound. Hardly anybody knew of their existence in France.

Since the early 1980s, fans from France have regularly attended the DCH Championships, individually or with complete bus excursions. France doesn't have a very strong amateur music culture.

When DCH was taken over by the KNFM and turned into a section "show" at the organization's regional contests, quite a few units withdrew, but also other new units joined. As small as the country is -- only a

little over 41,000 square kilometers with 16 million inhabitants -- the Netherlands has more than 2,500 amateur music groups. The most prominent are bands and corps.

Beatrix, Juliana and Starriders continued their contribution to this new competition structure and were the only open class corps left. As far as the scoring and ranking, things didn't change much. The KNFM took over all aspects DCH had worked on, including contest rules and the judging manual. Things were not the same, however.

Other classes were added to the championship event, later named the "National Championships Show." One of the reasons quite clearly was the fact that the competition field had become small after the departure of quite a few units.

The major highlight of the 2000 season was a three-week tour the Blue Devils took through the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium and France. In Germany, the Blue Devils performed in exhibition at the "German Open" in Hameln. In the Netherlands, an exhibition show was organized in Breda with seven of the top Dutch corps and bands.

Several hundreds bands and corps members attended clinics the Blue Devils conducted. The corps performed in Northern France, spent time sightseeing in Paris and performed on the island of La Flotte.

Bands that in previous years had already competed in the regular KNFM circuit, but were well ahead of most of their competitors regarding the field-show concept now gained more credit in the new combined events.

Tambourijnen from Eindhoven, Federatieband from The Hague and Vaarbroek from Eindhoven were welcome additions to the competition field. In 2001, Tambourijnen topped the corps-style class. Empire Statesmen from Rochester, NY, represented the United States at the World Music Championships in Kerkrade that year also.

The 2002 season wasn't any different from the previous year. Some of the regional contests were unfortunately canceled after too many corps that originally signed up withdrew. The championships, however, were another fantastic day with diverse styles. A parade division was a highly unusual addition to the event.

The KNFM is mainly focused on the band activity and twirling sections. The future of the drum corps section in their organization is unclear, unstable and not promising.

Other projects

Drum and bugle corps in the Netherlands don't just compete. In fact, the commercial performances are extremely important for raising money for the corps. Corps perform at exhibition shows throughout the country and most corps have an extended traveling program through Europe.

It's not unusual for corps such as Beatrix and Jubal to cross numerous borders every season and perform in countries like Switzerland, Germany, England, Norway, Italy and France, to name a few. Both corps have toured in the United States as well.

Drum corps in Europe is a weekend activity. Since there are no age limits, many members have regular jobs.

Beatrix has gained a contract to perform at all the home matches of the Dutch national soccer team and regularly performs in concert at gala company parties.

Jubal has discovered the theater and, together with their feeder corps and big band, produced a two-hour production on the occasion of their 90th anniversary in 2001. A new theater show is scheduled for 2003.

The corps is also featured in the German movie/short film "Karlchen's Parade," which premiered at the Berlin World Film Festival in March 2003 and now travels the world at major international film festivals.

One of the most challenging projects ever held in the Netherlands related to the corps scene is the Biggest All-Dutch Drum and Bugle Corps. This group was formed for one performance only at the World Games for the Disabled in Assen in 1990 and consisted of members brought together from all the drum and bugle corps in the country, plus a large number of band members.

The 278-piece corps consisted of one drum major, 80 color guard, 39 sopranos, 27 mellophones/French horns, 34 baritones, 10 contras, 19 snares, 11 tenors, seven bass drums and visual cymbal line of 50. The repertoire included *Sing, Sing, Sing* and a medley of typical Dutch folk songs arranged in corps style. For drill, the corps formed the logo for the games and included a sailboat on waves and a windmill.

Germany

Two other countries on the continent have had competitions for drum corps. In Germany, Drum Corps Deutschland was formed in December 1983. Founding corps were Schlossgarde, Fidele Vogelsanger, Schaumburger Herolde, Wölper Löwen, Showcorps Birstein and Starriders.

Contrary to the situation in the Netherlands, where many of the original DCH corps have folded, all of the founding members of DCD are still active today, despite the fact that some of them had several inactive seasons in the 1990s.

The opening contest of the corps activity in Germany took place in Gevelsberg. During the first two years of existence, only regional shows were held and DCD spent a lot of time building its structure and creating its own contest rules and judging manual. DCD profited from the expertise that already existed in the Netherlands.

The first DCD Championships were held in Fulda in 1985. Fidele Vogelsanger made history by putting the first title to their name. The organization grew rapidly. Corps such as Golden Lions, Stadthaegen Cowboys,

Blue Diamonds and Red Barons acquired DCD membership.

Schlossgarde from Höchstler/Frankfurt progressed most of all German corps in the mid-1980s and won the championships in 1986 and 1987. The corps was one of the largest units Germany had in those days.

Mismanagement by the first DCD board caused a total reorganization in 1987, when a completely new set of directors was appointed. Therefore, the start of the 1988 season did not come without problems that

originated the year before. New DCD Chairman Jürgen Kunsemüller created a true metamorphosis within the DCD structure and helped the 1988 season be a more than successful one after all. Fidele Vogelsanger took the title that year.

Taking matters seriously were the Starriders from Bad Munder. They built their unit into a real drum and



(Top to bottom) Juliana, the Netherlands, 1994 (photo by Hans Kloppert from the collection of Drum Corps World); Premiere, the Netherlands, 1998 (photo by Edward Scholten from the collection of Drum Corps World); Sojobo, Belgium, 1990 (photo by Hans Kloppert from the collection of Drum Corps World).

bugle corps and their efforts paid off when they won the DCD Finals in 1989 and 1990. Other corps disappeared from the scene that year, causing problems. Even former champion

Fidele Vogelsanger had to quit after they lost about 80 percent of their members. Only five corps were able to complete the 1990 DCD season. A major clinic weekend held in Fulda brought 600 participants together, however.

The DCD management and board of directors made the unfortunate decision that there would be no 1991 competitive season and the year would be used to reorganize and create a new appropriate judging manual and, most importantly, form an extra division which would make it easier for new units to take the step into the corps scene.

All contests were co-hosted by the local corps. Championships in 1992 were scheduled to be hosted by the Blue Diamonds. Only two weeks before the event, the corps announced it was unable to host finals, which were cancelled as a result.

Financially, DCD was struggling at the time and to everyone's regret the DCD organization stopped its activities at the

conclusion of the 1992 season. Starriders, Wölper Löwen and Höchter Schlossgarde had already entered the DCH competition.

Since "drum corps never dies," the corps continued their own activities and performed at various events in Germany and abroad. Starriders took a challenge in 1999 and organized another contest in Germany after a seven-year absence: the "German Open" in Hameln. A large crowd turned out and gave hope for the German corps scene. Ideas were shared about restarting a national drum corps organization.

Most corps in competition at the "German Open" were German corps and Dutch corps helped the events to become even more successful. In 2000, the Blue Devils performed in exhibition at the "German Open" during their European tour.

As expected, the German corps got together in the discussion of a rebirth of the competitive season. In 2002, the new Drum Corps Germany organization was a fact. Three contests were scheduled this first season. Big plans for the future will help the German activity grow back to the strong field it once had.

Belgium

The corps scene in Belgium has the shortest history in Europe. Even though today there are still a large number of serious drum corps diehards in the country, Belgium hasn't had any competition since 1990.

The first corps influences from the

Netherlands arrived in Belgium in the early 1980s. The country is divided into two parts: the Flemish-speaking part and the French-speaking part.

Borsalino Drum and Bugle Corps from the French-speaking Auvelais was the first unit to adopt the corps style, instruments and repertoire. The corps originated as a

showband in 1975, but quickly made the change, led by drum corps pioneer Thierry Plume. Plume's positions with Borsalino included snare drummer, percussion arranger and instructor, drill designer, drum major and corps director.

On the other side of the country, several members of Showband WIK worked hard to promote the corps activity as well. National organizations for amateur music were hardly interested and didn't know what to expect. François Deschacht was the initiator of forming the Korpsen Foundation, aimed at the promotion of drum corps in Belgium, and published *Korpsen Magazine*.

Showband Sojobo from Antwerp had also slowly introduced the corps style. It took until 1987 before the first meeting was held between Korpsen Foundation, Borsalino and Sojobo, and Drum Corps Belgium soon became a fact.

The first DCB Championships took place

in 1988 in Auvelais. When the international field of competitors arrived, they were surprised to see the championships were to be held on the marketplace in front of the town church. Borsalino became the first DCB Champions. Jubal took top honors in the total ranking.

In 1989, championships were held in an Antwerp soccer stadium. Again a large field of competitors represented Germany, England and the Netherlands. Belgium still only had two corps. This time Sojobo swept enough captions to take the title.

Unfortunately, loss of membership also struck Borsalino, which had to go inactive and returned several years later as a non-competitive corps. Sojobo switched their name to Freeliners and joined DCH for another few years.

A marching percussion unit was pretty much the only corps-related unit that made its appearance a number of years later in Belgium: the Coastliners from Oostende, run by Johan Delacauw. They even took their unit to the United States in 1992 to march in the DCI anniversary parade in Madison.

Different countries

Up until 2003, the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium are the only countries on the continent where drum corps has really had a name. The United Kingdom has had by far the most extensive competition in Europe, to which a separate chapter has been dedicated.

In countries like France, Switzerland and Sweden, units have wanted to adopt the corps style, but haven't come a long way. There has never been a competition field for drum and bugle corps in those countries. Most bands and units competed in other national circuits. Some of them were marching percussion only; others were corps-oriented bands.

Officially, France had a Drum Corps France organization, formed in 1997, with five member corps/bands. Competition has never really come off. The Blue Lions and St. Fulgent once competed in the Dutch circuit. Showband Edelweiss from Tours had an exchange program with the Belgian Borsalino corps and learned a lot.

Today, marching bands have a real corps look and full marching percussion. If only they had a horn line and guard. Most units in France that tend to the corps style are percussion-only, in some cases with a color guard such as Evolutionkorps from Hem.

The only unit in Switzerland that has had anything to do with the corps activity is Swiss Pioneer, run by former Jubal member Herman Colijn. It's another percussion-only unit that tries to attend as many corps events as it can on the continent, but unfortunately only as supporters.

In Sweden, the corps activity is led by Strangnas drum corps, which had a successful tour to the United States in 2001 and competed in division III. Another marching percussion and color guard/drum corps, Göteborg, performed at two Drum Corps Europe indoor events in 2002.

Italy has its Millennium Marching Band.



Schlossgarde, Germany, 1992 (photo by Edward Scholten from the collection of Drum Corps World).

Their name says enough. They're a band, but with true corps resemblance. It would be great if they joined international competition.

Drum Corps Europe

It was time for a change on the continent. Since many units were losing more members than recruiting new ones, most decided to stop competing among the larger units or were even unable to field a decent size corps. This decrease among the Dutch corps was one of the occasions that led to the formation of the new Drum Corps Europe organization in 2000.

Several former members of Blue Spirit started a new challenge and created an organization for indoor drum corps. Two seasons of indoor competitions were held with regional shows in the Netherlands and Belgium. Indoor competition, with performances on a much smaller arena than a football field, was an extremely successful formula for the smaller groups. The sound of the small horn lines projected better and was not affected by strong winds.

DCE did not attract large crowds, which was nothing new compared to most regional DCH shows in the old days. The corps, however, were enthused and performed with pride. At this point, it didn't matter much to them that they didn't have as many members as they used to have.

Even though the competition field consisted of primarily Dutch units, interest from foreign countries has gradually grown and the first units from Belgium signed up. A typically European attitude is that one first wants to see how things go before participating in a new venture.

Göteborg corps from Sweden even came all the way to the Netherlands for a five-minute show. Drum Corps Europe proved to provide exactly what had been expected: a vivid, well-structured competition.

By popular demand from some participating DCE corps and other units that wished to join the circuit that felt their shows would project better outdoors, DCE decided to move the activity outdoors. This was warmly welcomed by a number of corps that were dissatisfied with the KNFM situation.

The 2003 season has three contests on the agenda, including the championships in late September. Nearly 20 corps and bands have already signed up to participate, in five different divisions. Apart from all the entries from the Netherlands, foreign corps will represent Germany and England. DCE also has an independent French division, which will host its first title event in 2003.

DCE is looking to have a promising future. Assistance from DCI and

sponsorships from Evans, Innovative Percussion and main sponsor Dynasty will help the organization put drum and bugle corps back on the map in Europe where it belongs -- in CAPITALS.



Blue Spirit, the Netherlands, 1998 (photo by Edward Scholten from the collection of Drum Corps World).



Hans Kloppert was born in Dubbeldam, the Netherlands, in 1964 and joined Jubal Drum and Bugle Corps at the age of 11. He played soprano in their feeder corps, Jong Jubal, from 1975-1981 and has marched in the Jubal senior corps since 1982. He served as the corps' drum major from 1995-1999 and has been part of the brass staff since 1987. From 1983-1985 Kloppert also marched in the corps' winter guard.

On an international level, he has marched with the Rhode Island Matadors, Reading Buccaneers and Empire Statesmen and taught and consulted with Borsalino and Sojobo/Freeliners, the only two drum and bugle corps in Belgium, for several seasons in the late 1980s. He served as brass caption head for the DIO all-girl corps from Dordrecht from 1986-1995, brass instructor with Jong Jubal from 1982-1990 and was on staff with the Biggest All-Dutch Drum and Bugle Corps in 1990 on the occasion of the World Games for the Disabled.

His passion for the activity has appeared in his writing and photography for various publications. He has been on the Drum Corps World staff since 1984, covering the European scene. In Europe, he has written and photographs for the Dutch Off the Line magazine and Belgian Korpsen magazine. He was publisher of Music in Motion magazine in the Netherlands in the 1990s, published several DCHolland yearbooks and co-published Drum Corps Nieuws.

In 2000, Kloppert helped the Blue Devils coordinate part of their European tour and his two biggest corps projects were organizing and coordinating Jubal's three-week USA tour in 2002 and the corps' 90th anniversary theater show in 2001.

Kloppert teaches English and French. He and his wife, Nanda, live in Dordrecht. They met in drum corps. She was a member of the Jubal color guard and also served as the corps' guard captain and caption head.

Drum corps is in the family. Hans' brother, Marcel, is a snare drummer, his father is a driver for the corps and his mother is on the uniform committee. Nanda's father used to march contra with Jubal and is now a brass instructor. Her sister plays soprano with Jubal.