

SCV magic spellbinding in Mission Viejo

by Bob Yeager

July 7, 1989—Mission Viejo, California. . . Santa Clara Vanguard continued dominating the West Coast drum corps scene by easily taking the first annual *Mission Viejo Classic*. The exciting part of the competition was the race for second place between the Velvet Knights and the Sacramento Freelancers. Only 1.5 points separated these two traditional California rivals, and the Freelancers are working hard to close that gap.

The Vanguard's show is becoming even more magical to watch with each passing week. Some minor changes in drill did not come off as well as planned, but the show is still fascinating. They are definitely headed for greatness this year. Final score was 82.60.

The Velvet Knights, from Anaheim, are going through rough times. They made changes to the second half of their show which was not working well. It is an improvement, but they are going to find out that changing the drill is only part of their problem. The drum line is definitely hot this year and will probably score in the top five at K.C. Final score was a 70.50.

The Freelancers are doing a typical "Freelancer" show. It can use more visual support, but the audience still goes crazy over it. Whatever the Freelancers are doing, they are headed in the right direction, and a possible return to the coveted top 12. Final score was 69.00.

Even though the Blue Knights drill is a little cluttered at the beginning, George Zingali has helped tremendously in the visual caption. Strong overall performance by horns and drums is noticeable, and the ending color guard flags are a bright and colorful nice touch. Final score 62.50.

The Sunset Regiment, from Tucson, AZ, has an excellent color guard! The drill design for the corps may be a little overwritten for the talent level of the group, but they handle it well. Final score, 54.90.

With only 22 horns and 16 drums, the Blue Devils B really gave a spirited performance. The horn line marches well and has great soloists. Their improvement over the past few weeks is quite noticeable. Score, 57.90.

Heat is on between VK and Freelancers

by Bob Yeager

July 8, 1989—Santa Ana, California . . . It's no surprise that the Santa Clara Vanguard has won another show, and so it was tonight, as they took all captions and the first-place award. The friendly rivalry between the Velvet Knights and the Freelancers is heating up, as they came within 0.3 of each other; and the Blue Knights, from Denver, CO, finished their California Tour with their highest score yet this year.

The Vanguard seems to be having difficulty getting the drum line to march well. Tonight was a slight improvement over last night, but there's still work to be done. It's hard to write about the corps as a whole, because the only thing that comes to mind is: WOW! What more can I say? They have a show that just won't quit, and it's getting better every day. Score, 83.70.

The Velvet Knights are handling adversity well. Several marching instructors have quit; one was "bumped" out, and they've added Greg Clarke and Dave Weinberg to the staff. On top of that, they've made massive drill changes in the second half of their show, and you know what? It's working! The VK image is slowly working its way back onto the field, and it's about time! The drum line continues to "carry" the corps, as it pushes itself to greatness. Final score, 70.10.

The Sacramento Freelancers are leaving no doubt that they are back, and back in a big way. Sixty-eight horns powered through a nicely written book of John Williams' music, and the crowd loves it! It seems the judges are finally seeing the light, too. Final score was 69.80, just a breath behind VK.

The Blue Knights should consider this year's California tour a BIG success. They not only established themselves as a top-level drum corps, but they picked up a great horn instructor in Jay Long, former VK instructor. Jay should be able to help the Blue Knights a great deal this summer. Score, 63.80.

Sunset Regiment continues to portray *Les Miserables* in an entertaining and exciting way. The horn line is strong, they march exceptionally well, and the color guard does have moments of greatness. Final score, 52.80.

Blue Devils B was the lone corps in division II. This corps is getting better with each show and has nice solo work throughout. Final score, 57.90.