

# NorCal show promises exciting year

by Sue Johnson

June 10, 1989--Pleasanton, CA . . . Hale and hardy California drum corps fans braved high winds and low (at least for June in California!) temperatures to view the first northern California field show of the 1989 season. The evaluation show can be billed only as a preview, since most exit drills are still in completion stages. Judging was with tapes only; no tabulations or scores were given.

The crowd was happy to see Freelancers from Sacramento, CA, at the evaluation show. Their attendance rounds out the list of northern California corps. In continuing with John Williams' music, they have kept last year's popular *ET* opener with the corps spread over the entire field. The guard has added bright, flashy red underskirts to their uniforms. An ambitious summer schedule for Freelancers includes all the regional DCI shows as well as Kansas City. A big "welcome home" to Charlie Anderson, Freelancers' new director, who has returned to California after working with Star of Indiana last year.

The crowd "seshched" each other . . .

## SCV, Vanguard Cadets win at Riverside, CA

by Christine T. Hoeffner

Riverside, California--June 24, 1989 . . . The Riverside Community College Marching Tigers Band provided a dazzling introduction to tonight's competition. They expertly performed several classic numbers from Chuck Mangione, Chick Corea and Rob McConnell that have been popular in Blue Devils shows. This band has a well-deserved reputation that has earned it an invitation to the 101st Tournament of Roses Parade (the first community college band ever invited in the history of the parade) and an invitation to be the lead unit in the 58th annual Hollywood Christmas parade.

Santa Clara Vanguard (65H/38P/24CG) took top honors, including high percussion, high marching and high GE, scoring 77.20. Their *Phantom of the Opera* show is significantly different in focus and field visuals, moving away from their opera and story-telling orientation of the past to a more "traditional" style and design. It remains to be seen what developments may take place as the season progresses. Watch for unbelievably wild xylophone and marimba solos, and drills that challenge the health, safety and stamina of the field judges. (Several field judges were seen frantically calling their life insurance agents after tonight's show.) The closing sequence rates a 10 on the chills and goosebump index while softly, and ever so gently, bringing you to the finish.

The Blue Devils (60H/32P/30CG) received second place and the high brass award. The BDs have an uncharacteristically silent opening that slowly builds to a revised version of their 1981 selection of *You Gotta Try*. There is plenty of exposure in this show, from brave solos and duets in *If We Were In Love*, to a percussion soprano solo (and contras doubling as cymbals) in *Allegre*, to a tightly arranged harmonic quartet in the closer of *Johnny One Note*. The uniform change to black pants with a white stripe adds visual contrast. Final score: 76.50.

After the Velvet Knights (57H/33P/25A) warmed up with a football game, they got down to the business of partying, first in Rio at Carnival, then in Tunisia. The mood of this year's VK repertoire more closely resembles a hot pepper, followed by various hot spices. The corps is newly attired in white waist-

length jackets and white traditional "VK" hats. Listen for full, hot Latin sounds in *Yo Mambo*, watch out for large bananas, enormous feather arrangements, human heads on 10-foot poles, and plenty of day-glow colors. Once again VK puts the "DRUM" in drum corps with spectacular and new percussion solos blended skillfully into the theme of the show. Third with a 66.50.

The Freelancers (69H/28P/24CG) placed fourth, showing their growing competitive strength and a more complex show. They perform music by John Williams, displaying an intimidating size as they opened spanned from sideline to sideline for 50 yards. A

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single soprano opens with strains from *Adventures on Earth (E.T.)*. This piece, and the soft to full building pattern, repeats throughout the show and into the closing. Watch for rapid pass-through drills and a more confident appearance.

In division 2, SCV Cadets (27H/26P/14CG) took top honors with a 54.60, performing a challenging repertoire including *Mutiny on the Bounty*, *Hopak* (with good baritone exposure) and *Scenes from the Louvre*. They also received high percussion and high GE. The "Santa Clara" sound, footwork and discipline is well developed in this group.

The Mandarins (18H/17P/10CG) took high brass and high marching awards, with a second-place score of 52.00. This year's repertoire is gold plated, opening with a beautiful brief passage from *First Circle* (also performed by the 1985 Blue Devils) moving to *Dream of the Sirens* and *In Her Family/Minuano* before closing with *First Circle*. The music is jazz-oriented and driving, complemented beautifully by their field drill.

In third place with a 51.10, the Blue Devils B (22H/15P/12A) presented a thoroughly entertaining show. With a much larger and more mature horn section, Blue Devils B has a superb sound in their opener of *Sun Cats*, complete with yellow sunburst flags. Their show includes *Night Flight*, *Wacky Dust* and *Bustling*. Even with 20 percent of their 1988 members in the A corps, they have improved with an excellent balance among horns, percussion and auxiliary.