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by Kevin Gamin

In 1962, at a show in Marion, OH, a recently formed drum and bugle corps from the Toledo, OH, area known as the Maumee Suns came in last place. Who could have known at that time that over the next 40 years, this group would become one of the top drum and bugle corps in the activity?

The history of the corps that would be known as the Glassmen actually started in 1961. The Maumee Demons, a senior corps based in the Toledo suburb, wanted to create a positive outlet for the

# Glassmen

however, they moved up to open class status, currently known as division I.

A high point for the Glassmen was achieved in 1983. By placing 25th at the DCI World Championships in Miami, FL, the Glassmen were awarded DCI member status for the first time.

Over the next couple of years, though, the corps could not maintain its

placement and, by

1986, the possibility of the corps going inactive again appeared to be high.

Instead, the next 10 years

12th and final position for DCI Finals. One tenth of a point at both quarter and semifinals separated the corps from that spot.

The Glassmen broke through the finals



Glassmen, 1986 (photo by Art Luebke from the collection of Drum Corps World).



Glassmen, June 30, 1985, at Windsor, ONT (photo by Roger C. Ellis from the collection of Drum Corps World).

children of the members, as well as the youth of the Toledo area.

The Suns were formed, starting off as a parade corps, performing locally and in northwestern Ohio.

In 1967, after moving up to competitive status under Ohio American Legion, the corps' name was changed to the Glass City Optimists, reflecting the status of Toledo as "The Glass Capital of the World." The corps grew in membership and began winning regional championships.

The corps changed its name again in 1971, this time to the Glassmen.

During the early- and mid-1970s, the Glassmen competed in Drum Corps International's A class, what is today known as division II.

In 1975, at the DCI World Championships in Philadelphia, PA, the corps qualified for class A finals. Unfortunately, the Glassmen would then go inactive for the next three seasons.

When the Glassmen returned in 1979,



Glassmen, 1992 (photo by Orlin Wagner from the collection of Drum Corps World).

would see the corps rise to even greater levels of achievement.

With the naming of Dan Acheson as the corps director in 1986, the Glassmen started a streak of 10 consecutive seasons of

improvement in placement at the DCI World Championships.

In 1988, with just 49 members, the corps returned to the DCI top 25. In 1991, the Glassmen placed 17th and earned semifinalist honors.

The next season, 1992, saw the Glassmen competing heavily for the

barrier in 1993, placing 11th at the DCI World Championships in Jackson, MS.

The corps continued to improve over the next couple of years. In 1994, the Glassmen went to Marion, OH, site of the U.S. Open

Glassmen, August 1990, at the DCI Championships in Buffalo, NY (photo by Orlin Wagner from the collection of Drum Corps World).





Championships, winning its first title before moving on and placing 10th at DCI in Boston, MA.

In 1995, the corps reached the eighth spot in Buffalo, NY. Hopes were high that the corps could build off the success of 1995 and catapult itself into the coveted top six of DCI.

The streak came to an end in 1996. Acheson accepted a new role as DCI's executive director and, while many of the staff and members from 1995 returned, the Glassmen once again found themselves fighting for 12th place. The struggle was lost and the Glassmen were on the outside looking in from the 13th place spot again.

The 1997 season saw a new era begin for the Glassmen. Brian Hickman was hired as the director. Michael Cesario, a New York show designer and consultant to many DCI champions, including Phantom Regiment and the Garfield Cadets, was brought on as program consultant.

The corps purchased new uniforms and began the process of rebuilding after 1996. The process paid off, with the corps returning to eighth place and scoring a 90.0 at the DCI Championships in Orlando, FL. It was the first time the corps ever scored in the 90s.

In 1998, the corps did what few corps have been able to do in the DCI era: break into the top five. Performing one of its most popular shows with both fans and judges, the Glassmen placed fifth at the DCI World Championships in Orlando, FL.

The corps repeated the feat in 1999 at Madison, WI. What made 1999 more special

was the return of the live telecast of the top five. By placing fifth that year, the Glassmen earned the privilege of leading off the broadcast.

The Glassmen slipped back to eighth place in 2000, but quickly rebounded and returned to the top five in 2001, again leading off the DCI telecast on PBS.

The 2001 season also saw the Glassmen showcase Kevin Creasey, an incredible flugel horn soloist. Audiences throughout the country were talking about Creasey's wonderful tone and ability, and the Internet was abuzz with fan accounts

corps will be performing a show titled "The Elements" and looks to return once again to the top five. A modified uniform design along with fresh faces joining the design team is also part of the corps' plan to take the activity to a new level and give the members of the Glassmen "an experience of a lifetime."



Glassmen, July 22, 1995, at Massillon, OH (photo by Dan Scafidi from the collection of Drum Corps World).



Glassmen, 2002 (photo by Dan Scafidi from the collection of Drum Corps World).



Glassmen, July 24, 1999, in Toledo, OH (photo by Dale Eck from the collection of Drum Corps World).

of his performances.

Unfortunately, the Internet was also abuzz with accusations that the Glassmen were a boring corps due to their program choices over the course of several years.

The corps responded in 2002 in a way that was good-natured, fun and even profitable. If you were at a show the Glassmen performed at in 2002, you may have noticed the "Boring" line of T-shirts on display at their souvenir booth.

With the return of Kevin Creasey on flugelhorn, the Glassmen continued to define themselves as a unique and sophisticated drum corps.

In 2003, the Glassmen continue creating and refining that definition. After placing eighth in 2002, the



*Kevin Gamin is a third generation drum corps member from Richfield, OH. He attended his first show, the 1977 U.S. Open, at age three. Since then, he has performed with Glassmen (1992-1996) and Empire Statesmen (2000-present).*

*He volunteers for the Glassmen during the winter and spring rehearsals as well as during the competitive touring season.*

*When he is not marching, watching, listening to, writing about or talking about drum corps, Gamin is a technical support representative for Connection, a venture partnership of Ford, Daimler-Chrysler, General Motors and Bell+Howell/ProQuest.*

*He is engaged to be married to Rachel Martin at the end of 2003.*

*He is an avid Cleveland Indians fan.*