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by Christina "MAV"  
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with a wealth of oral/written history  
culled from alumni & boosters

Tradition. Innovation. Class.

Santa Clara Vanguard embodies them all, with even their name defining a legacy of brilliance that resonates throughout the drum corps community 35 years after inception.

Statistically, the corps sweeps honors like an epic. They have won six Drum Corps International titles (1973, 1974, 1978, 1981, 1989 and 1999), the Spirit of Disney Award (2001), an American Legion Championship (1970), a VFW Championship (1971), two California Color Guard Circuit Championships (1968, 1978), nine DCI percussion titles (1973, 1974, 1975, 1978, 1979, 1988, 1989, 1991 and 1998), countless I&E caption awards and literally hundreds of other competitions.

SCV has the distinction of being the only organization to maintain its membership on the board of directors of DCI since the organization's inception in 1972 by making finals every year. They are the first organization in DCI history to have two drum and bugle corps in the top 25 (1993) and the top 17 of DCI (2000).

During its first 25 years, SCV had a record of finishing in the top three 94.12 percent of the time. In 1987, they won 24 straight contests. From 1985 through 1989, they only finished as low as third place one time out of 151 contests. In 1987, they were the only corps in history to win three captions at the world championship yet not win the title. At the 1971 VFW Nationals, they were the only national champion that did not win a single caption.

While impressive statistics create a body of excellence, it is the journey that means so much to the performers and audience.

### Pre-history -- The Sparks

The year was 1950 and a young girl in Northern California wanted to take baton lessons, but lacked financial resources. With a little ingenuity, she set a legacy in motion.

Pat Mancini gathered a quarter from three friends (75 cents happened to be the cost of a lesson) with the promise to teach them what she learned. Years and nearly 100 "friends" later, Mancini had a full drum and bell corps together -- the Sparks from Sunnyvale, CA.

The bell corps soon transformed into a bugle corps, but became a bit too much for the young lady who had, in the interim,

# Santa Clara Vanguard



The 1967 Santa Clara Vanguard (photo from the collection of Drum Corps World).

married and started a family. By 1967, some in the organization wanted to return to a bell corps.

At a parents meeting on March 6, 1967, citing differences of opinion in artistic direction of the Sparks, the majority of parents voted to disband the bugle corps and return to a drum and bell corps with majorettes. Having learned of a proposed reversal, several members waited anxiously outside for the outcome. After the meeting, the adults took them aside and explained what happened. Asked if they wanted to keep going on bugles, the kids gave a resounding "yes!" and a new corps was born.

Later that evening, the booster club met for the first time to elect officers. Music instructor and American Legion judge Gail Royer, initially hired by the Sparks, became the director for the new corps.

Mike Munoz remembers meeting friends for what he thought was a Sparks' rehearsal. What he found were guys on a porch ripping out threads spelling *Sparks* on their jackets. "What are you doing?" he queried. When told the group was splitting, he joined the corps.

Following that first practice, everyone discussed name possibilities and narrowed the choice to three: Cardinals, Spartans and Vanguard. One of the name distinctions was to not pluralize Vanguard, affirming the concept of one front, one entity. Additionally, insisting on inclusion of the city name, Santa Clara, gave further distinction.

Since that revolutionary day, the Santa Clara Vanguard celebrates its birthday every March with a spaghetti dinner and an introduction to the season's show.

### 1967

*Big Country*, theme from "The Cardinal," *Man of La Mancha*, *Born Free*, "Burke's Law" theme, *Almost There*

One week after its birth, the new corps marched and won its first parade, beating the Pinole Princemen and others in San Francisco's St. Patrick's Day Parade. Munoz remembers wearing a temporary uniform of black pants and white shirts in rainy, freezing weather. "It was so cold," he said, "we poured hot coffee on our hands to warm up."

That first season the group was relatively small. New uniforms were green satin

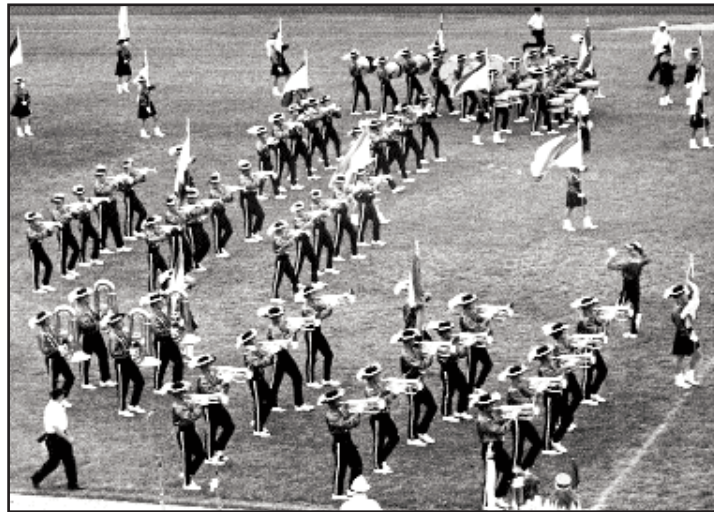
blouses with a red stripe, black shoes, hats with the side turned up and pants from JCPenney. The color guard wore black cotton pleated skirts and white majorette boots.

Some equipment was purchased from the Sparks for \$300 during the disbandment negotiations. Money was borrowed to buy the horns. Voluntary pledges were also solicited from parents with dues at 50 cents per week. The Stockton Commodores loaned drums and there were offers to help from others. From humble beginnings came great progress.

The big trip that year was to Southern California to compete in the Anaheim Kingsmen's second annual "Festival of Music." The corps placed fourth, losing to the Lynwood Diplomats by 0.15.

Several brass arrangements from the first years came from the pen of Truman Crawford, arranger for the Chicago Royal Airs and director of the U.S. Marine Corps Drum & Bugle Corps. Other early contributors to the brass book included Don Angelica, Keith Markey and Jack Meehan. Royer started arranging a little, until finally taking over all brass orchestration from 1970 to 1980.

Just before the final performance at the



Santa Clara Vanguard, 1971, at the World Open (photo by Moe Knox from the collection of Drum Corps World).

California State Open on September 20, Royer honored Vanguard's first age-outs with the original "Green Feather Ceremony" at Santa Clara's Townsend Field. The ceremony has continued every year to this day after the final run-through on DCI Championship day.

September also marked the debut of the SCV newsletter, "The Vanguardian" (originally called "The Flock"). Starting as a two-page mimeographed circular featuring articles by

marching members, its continuous multi-page publication now carries photos, coverage of all SCV programs and, in addition to mailed hard-copies, finds distribution through e-mail and the SCV Web site.

### 1968

*Procession of the Nobles*, theme from "The Big Country," *Step to the Rear, You are My Soul and Inspiration, Going Out of My Head, By the Time I Get to Phoenix*

In 1968, SCV engaged on its first Midwest tour to be evaluated against more experienced corps in preparation for VFW Nationals the following year. While they did not place high at any of the competitions, they successfully got exposure on the national scene. Brought on board to write and teach percussion and drill, respectively, were Fred Sanford and Pete Emmons, formerly with Anaheim Kingsmen and Troopers, who began to help mold the Vanguard image.

On the local front, the Vanguard color guard beat the Anaheim Kingsmen on March 16 to win their first California Color Guard Circuit Championship. A week later, the corps won its first standstill. The first public performance of *Procession of the Nobles* occurred afterward with the U.S. Air Force Academy Drum & Bugle Corps as the audience. The corps also won its first field show August 3 on the Anaheim Kingsmen's own turf. In October, the corps won its first of many California State Open Championships.

On June 8 at San Jose State's Spartan Stadium, the corps hosted its first home show, "Pacific Procession." The name derived from the new opener, *Procession of the Nobles*. With the country still mourning the loss of Sen. Robert Kennedy a few days before, the audience was small, but over the years the show grew to be one of the premier competitions in the country thanks in part to the efforts of Gloria and John Flores.

*Procession of the Nobles* presented the corps with two major challenges. No one had ever really played an entire piece in odd-time while marching. Odd meters and tempos were reserved mostly for the concert portion of the show. Once conquered, this meter challenge could be found in many future reps.

### 1969

*Procession of the Nobles, Chester Overture, Mas Que Nada* (substituted for *Turkey Lurkey Time*, in the show until staff realized it was overtime), *You Make Me So Very Happy, By the Time I Get to Phoenix*

The 1969 season marked the second year SCV traveled outside of California and the first year the corps went all the way to the East Coast. The Vanguard finally made it onto a Fleetwood record by placing ninth at the World Open Finals. At VFW Nationals in Philadelphia, they missed finals by 0.15, losing to the Argonne Rebels.

In a sobering moment, it was on the way east that members of the corps who were 18 and over learned what Military Draft Lottery number was drawn for their birthdays.

Following VFW, the corps traveled to Washington, D.C., where they played a

standstill on the steps of the Capitol, and to New York City for "cultural enrichment" before making the long bus trip home. On the home stretch, a breakdown resulted in the corps doing exhibitions in North Platte, NE, and Elko, NV.



Santa Clara Vanguard, 1975, at DCI in Philadelphia, PA (photo by Jane Boulen from the collection of Drum Corps World).

### 1970 -- American Legion Champion

*Festive Overture, Procession of the Nobles, Chester Overture, Miracle of Miracles, Tradition/Matchmaker, If I Were a Rich Man, Bridge Over Troubled Waters*

This was the year SCV "arrived" as a national contender. The season started with the American Legion State Championships in Sacramento on June 27. The corps not only won its first championship, but also achieved first-ever wins over both the Anaheim Kingsmen and the Velvet Knights.

Early the next morning, the corps left on its third tour outside of California. Six nights later in Racine, WI, they set the world of drum corps on fire! Crowd reaction to SCV as they exploded onto the field from the upper corner to the end of the show reached a peak with the stadium announcer shouting,

"Wonderful show!  
Wonderful show!"

SCV finished just two points behind the legendary Casper Troopers. Royer summed it up best to the corps' staff on the sidelines, saying, "We've finally made it!"

By the next weekend at the North American Championship, Santa Clara had defeated everyone in the country. To leave the field after such giants as the Troopers was a defining moment in the corps' history.

Due to limited finances, SCV was unable to travel to Miami to compete for the VFW National Championships that August. Instead, they car pooled to Portland, OR, and defeated old California rivals Kingsmen and Velvet Knights to win both the American Legion National Color Guard and Drum and Bugle Corps Championships.

This was the first year SCV performed their trademark music from "Fiddler on the



Santa Clara Vanguard, 1978, at the DCI Championships in Denver, CO (photo by Jane Boulen from the collection of Drum Corps World).

Roof." For the closer, Royer originally wanted to play *Leaving on a Jet Plane*. However, Don Angelica talked him into doing *Bridge Over Troubled Waters*. Hardly troubling, the corps was on its way.

### 1971 -- VFW Champion, 89.95

*Overture to the Globe Playhouse* from "Henry V," *Chester Overture, Miracle of Miracles, Tradition/Matchmaker, If I Were a Rich Man, Greensleeves*

By 1971, there were 45 horns, 19 drums, 24 flags, eight rifles and an American flag party. The talented staff grew with the addition of Scott Pierson, Wayne Downey, Dan Smith and Mike Moxley.

Nationally, it was the year of the Midwest/West Combine and the East Coast United Organization of Eastern Corps. SCV traveled to the East Coast once again, but this time they faced a series of tough losses -- known to insiders as "The Boston Massacre."

VFW Nationals, the equivalent to today's DCI Championships and the biggest contest in the nation, were held at the Cotton Bowl in Dallas, TX. Capping a 54-day, 17-state tour, which included the World Open, CYO Nationals and the Danny Thomas Invitational, Vanguard won VFW with a score of 89.95 yet didn't take a single caption.

The first major change in the uniforms was made this year as the brass and percussion switched to white shoes.

### 1972 -- third place, 87.35

*Fanfare and Allegro, Now Thank We All Our God, Overture to the Globe Playhouse* from "Henry V," *Wedding Celebration and Bottle Dance, If I Were a Rich Man, Chava Ballet, Fiddler on the Roof*

Despite being considered a favorite to win the first DCI Championship in Whitewater, WI, Vanguard ended up third, behind the

Anaheim Kingsmen and Blue Stars. It would be the last show in which a corps would be required to do color presentation.

Musically, *Now Thank Thee All Our God* reflected Royer's background as an accomplished

organist. It also included the first rendition of Fred Sanford's drum solo, *The Clock*, and was the first year Santa Clara and the Madison Scouts joined forces to play *You'll Never Walk Alone*.

SCV also took on a fresh look with completely new uniforms -- red tunics, dark green pants/skirts, dark green Aussie hats with curled white feathers and a star over the heart, the only ornamentation on the entire uniform.

### 1973 -- DCI Champion, 88.65

*Fanfare and Allegro, Young Person's Guide to Drum Corps, Wedding Celebration and Bottle Dance, Tradition, Chava Ballet*

The 1973 season was one of intense



Santa Clara Vanguard, 1983, at DCI Midwest in Whitewater, WI (photo by Art Luebke from the collection of Drum Corps World).

competition. The only corps to beat Santa Clara that year was the Troopers -- once. After two days of DCI Prelims, 14,000 fans in Warhawk Stadium sat in tense silence waiting for scores. "And in second place, with a score of 86.15 . . . the Troopers." The stands erupted into such a deafening roar, the announcer's voice could barely be heard. "And in first place, with a score of 88.65, the new DCI champions, the Santa Clara Vanguard!" The corps had won 27 contests that year, including the big one. The drum line went undefeated, something they repeated for two consecutive years.

**1974 - DCI Champion, 89.5**

*Die Gotterdammerung, Young Person's Guide to Drum Corps, Candide, Send in the Clowns, Bottle Dance*

In 1974, the corps distinguished itself with the first incorporation of dance by a drum corps in the Bottle Dance. Dance guru Stanley Knaub was added to the staff.

DCI was held at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY, with Madison, Kingsmen and the Vanguard as top contenders. Since SCV had placed first in 1973, they had the option of performing last.

They decided to go on before the other two top contenders to get full appreciation of the show from the fans and judges. It proved to be the right decision. They finished No. 1, taking high marching and drums and tying Madison for general effect.

Perhaps what gave the season its greatest distinction was a simple tune that went on to become SCV's signature, *Send in the Clowns*.

It's interesting to note that immediately after the championships, the newly won 1974 DCI championship flag went missing for 28 years! Miraculously, it reappeared at the 2002 SCV corps banquet.

Santa Clara Vanguard, 1987, at DCI Midwest in Whitewater, WI (photo by Art Luebke from the collection of Drum Corps World).



**1975 -- second, 91.0**

*Entrance of the Emperor and His Court, Dance of the Buffoons, To Life, If I Were a Rich Man, Sabbath Prayer, Chava Ballet*

The 1975 corps gave an inspired performance that earned a perfect score of 30 in GE and a high percussion score of 19.4, yet still placed them second behind Madison.

**1976 -- third, 89.5**

*Harry Janus Suite, "Appalachian Spring," Black Orchid, Send in the Clowns*

The 1976 season saw a forward moving, revolving circle in the drill, a

unique move that was another first for the Vanguard. After this season, the Vanguard and Blue Stars were the only two corps to make DCI finals every year.

**1977 -- third, 89.85**

*Overture to a New Era, "Appalachian Spring," "Make Our Garden Grow"*

In 1977, Vanguard and most major corps went to two-valve horns. "Miss Amana"

debuted during the 1977 season and was the envy of all. For a corps that in its first few years had eaten in fast-food restaurants and humble breakfasts of corn flakes in a Dixie cup, this complete kitchen-on-wheels was a luxury.

**1978 -- DCI Champion, 91.55**

*Overture to a New Era, Dance of Welcome, Lezghinka, Hopak, If You Believe, Bottle Dance*

In 1978, the corps performed various parts of the "Gayne Ballet" by Khachaturian. There were 34 girls in the guard that year using a maypole, hoops instead of rifles and performing the popular Bottle Dance. Although taking second or third most of the year, the corps peaked and won DCI with a top score in marching and a 29.8 in GE.

Ralph Hardimon and Rob Carson were added to the drum staff. Carson, a long-time member, joined the 10-man snare line one last time and won his second I&E snare title in his age-out year. The drum portion of *Lezghinka* is still considered a classic with its complex score.

The closer, *If You Believe* from the musical "The Wiz," was later adopted by both the SCV Cadet corps and A-corps color guard as their signature tune.

**1979 -- third, 90.7**

*Verdi's "Requiem," Adagio, Lezghinka, Hopak, If You Believe, Bottle Dance*

In 1979, more than 300 potential members came out for auditions, even though there were few openings in the corps. The real strength was in a massive drum line, including 13 snares, which had

only three openings. The line took high percussion at DCI Finals.

A topic of conversation among spectators and judges that year was the "twirling bedposts" the color guard used. When someone remarked that they *looked* like bedposts, Royer replied, "They *are!*" He had picked them up in a hardware store.

**1980 -- seventh, 85.6**

*Fanfare -- Symphony No. 4 in F Minor, Procession of the Nobles, Stone Ground Seven, "Evita" medley, Jupiter*

By 1980, most corps executed field drills of circles, triangles, diamonds, arcs, X's and serpentine files. Only occasionally and cautiously would asymmetrical patterns be attempted. That year, however, Santa Clara's entire drill was filled with asymmetrical forms. Once again, the Vanguard led drum corps to its new future. Though the drill was called "extremely innovative," the activity wasn't quite ready. Consequently, for the first time in DCI history, Vanguard placed below third.

DCI released its first "State-of-the-Art"

album, professionally recorded in concert at the Concord Pavilion show on July 1 and featuring Santa Clara Vanguard and Blue Devils.

**1981 -- DCI Champion, 94.1**

*Northridge, Young Person's Guide to Drum Corps, Slava, Don't Cry for Me Argentina*

The 1981 season was the first that Velco was used for tear-off fronts for the horn line and timpani were moved into the pit. It was another championship year, although many television audiences around the country may have thought Madison captured the title

since only the Midwest Championships were shown on PBS. The telecast of the actual DCI Finals was blocked by Canadian restrictions.

**1982 -- second, 93.55**

*Movement IV of "Symphony No. 3" by Giannini, Capriccio Espagnole, Slava, Shaker Melody from "Appalachian Spring," Bottle Dance*

In 1982, the corps was mentioned in an American Airlines in-flight magazine article. The corps won DCI Canada and DCI North, back-to-back in one weekend.

In a surprise move, the Bottle Dance was incorporated into the closer on championship night. Unfortunately, due to massive crowd noise and a misinterpretation of the drum major's Aussie toss, each side of the brass line started and finished one bar apart. But to those in the stadium, it didn't matter -- the move was a welcome sight.

**1983 -- third, 92.75**

*Movement IV of "Symphony No. 3" by Giannini, On the Town, selections from "Appalachian Spring," Dream Sequence from "The Red Pony"*

There were many firsts this summer. It was the first time a corps ended its show on a quiet note. It was the farthest south Vanguard had ever been, performing at Florida's EPCOT Center. The first time a front ensemble was allowed and, in a dramatic change for color guard, it was the first time the guard dropped the more militaristic regalia like boots in favor of a more feminine look, with long skirts and parasols.

Finally, it was the first year women were allowed in the musical instrument sections of the corps. That year, three women made the front ensemble: Carol Everett, Kimela Hilleary and Peggy Watson. While those three women only marched that one year, it opened the doors to future members.

Surprisingly, SCV won prelims, yet saw it slip away by DCI Finals.

### 1984 -- third, 97.4

*Fanfare and Allegro, On The Town,*  
selections from "The Tender Land"

In 1984, four women performed in the horn line for the first time. There was also a first woman in the battery (Gigi Cuthbert, snare, 1984-1985).

The show had another quiet ending, the members wore white pants for the first time and, for the first time in nine years the corps won its own show, "Pacific Procession," and took high brass at DCI Finals.

SCV was supposed to be part of the Olympics in Los Angeles that year. Current Director Rick Valenzuela remembers, "In 1984 we were scheduled to fly to Los Angeles, but we were told by Royer at Memorial Day camp that we weren't going because they got a different closing act -- Lionel Richie -- and we didn't fit into the schedule. He was quite upset and crying when he told us."

It probably wasn't the consolation he was looking for, but Royer was inducted into the DCI Hall of Fame that year, while Vanguard was honored as "Junior Corps of the Decade" for the 1970s.

### 1985 -- second, 97.2

*Festive Overture, Grover Corners* from "Our Town,"  
"Tender Land Suite,"

*Finale* from "The Red Pony"

The 1985 season will best be remembered as "The Year of the Pants." A kaleidoscope drill from the pen of Dave Owens featured a change of pants that defied the time boundaries with its velocity.

Two groups of horn players marched into a collapsible tunnel in *green* pants and emerged almost immediately in *white* pants, all the while playing *Festive Overture*.

### 1986 -- second, 97.0

*Festive Overture,*  
*Pictures at an*  
*Exhibition*

Vanguard changed their show direction in 1986. The total theatrical



Santa Clara Vanguard, 1989, at DCI Midwest in Whitewater, WI (photo by Art Luebke from the collection of Drum Corps World).

production included staging, sets, costumes and acting. It also included characters like a wizard who gave the corps "magic" through levitation.

### 1987 -- second 97.8

*Russian Christmas Music, Dance of the Tumblers,*  
*Lezhinka, Hut of Baba Yaga,*  
*Great Gate of Kiev*

With the dawn of three-valve bugles, Vanguard moved forward by building on the Russian theme show.

Maidens appeared from an empty box and men appeared in the guard -- another first! Vanguard broke a score of 90 in mid-July before the second tour. By finals, the horn and percussion sections were three-tenths and five-tenths away from perfection. After an undefeated season, it was a heartbreak that Vanguard placed second by a tenth.

However, in the I&E competition, brass staffer Chris Nalls remembers, "We won mixed ensemble in 1987 playing the music of PDQ Bach -- getting two perfect 100s from the brass judges."

### 1988 -- second, 96.9

"Phantom of the Opera"  
*Music of the Night, Angel of Music,*  
*Phantom of the Opera, Masquerade,*  
*Wishing You Were Somehow Here Again,*  
*Track Down the Murderer*

Returning to Broadway interpretations and carrying the theme show to new heights, Vanguard narrowly missed first place. It was the first time in the corps' history the guard had an all-male rifle line.

The finale featured another piece of magic with the Phantom vanishing from his throne while the corps disappeared from the field under a "cloak of darkness."

While Vanguard won second by two-tenths of a point, they took high GE and watched their old friends, the Madison Scouts, place first.

### 1989 -- DCI champion, 98.8

"Phantom of the Opera"  
*Angel of Music, Phantom of the Opera,*  
*Masquerade, Wishing*

*You Were Somehow*  
*Here Again, Track*  
*Down the Murderer,*  
*Don Juan*  
*Triumphant,*  
*Music of the Night*

A new high score of 98.8 was a by product of this championship

Santa Clara Vanguard founder/director, Gail Royer, conducts *Send in the Clowns* after the corps won the 1989 DCI Championships in Kansas City, MO (photo by Steve Rodriggs from the collection of Drum Corps World).



show, which featured a finely tuned return of "Phantom of the Opera." The guard also returned to all-female.

The season was not without controversy when it was discovered that two members had falsified documents in order to march. Just days before finals with the aged-out members dropped, DCI and the board of directors agreed the corps was not at fault and Vanguard was able to continue into championship week, albeit with holes in their lines.

The win broke a four-year second-place streak, which made receiving the championship flag an emotional cap to the night, as well as the entire decade's awe-inspiring record of excellence.

### 1990 -- sixth, 94.0

"Carmen"  
*Prelude and March, Intermezzo,*  
*Toreador Song, Changing of the Guard,*  
*Allegro Moderato* (drum solo), *La Habanera,*  
*Gypsy Dance*

The 1990s saw some struggle to stay in the customary top three, but shows and performers always stayed true to the Vanguard name.

The corps performed themes from Bizet's "Carmen." The production was a fundamental one, with no props, masks, uniform changes or disappearances, yet was filled with the usual Santa Clara passion.

Percussionist Scott Johnson and future director Rick Valenzuela joined the staff.



Santa Clara Vanguard, 1993, at the DCI Championships in Jackson, MS (photo by Sid Unser from the collection of Drum Corps World).

### 1991 -- fourth, 94.4

"Miss Saigon"  
*Overture, What's This I Find?, Sun and Moon,*  
*Morning of the Dragon, Wedding Ceremony,*  
*The Fall of Saigon*

Continuing a thematic show with emotional storytelling, the corps placed fourth. For the first time, musicians wore white, militaristic tunics.

Most talked about was the percussive stereophonic interpretation battle sounds, including tenor-induced helicopters. For the members' efforts with a drum book written by Johnson and Lee Rudnicki, the corps won high percussion.

### 1992 -- seventh, 91.8

"Fiddler On The Roof"  
*Tradition, Sabbath Prayer, To Life,*  
*Tevye's Dream, Wedding Celebration and Bottle Dance,*  
*Anatevka*

The 1992 season welcomed the Vanguard's 25th anniversary and was saddened by Royer's

retirement. Vanguard performed selections from "Fiddler on the Roof," fulfilling Royer's promise of doing a full interpretation of the beloved show, complete with Bottle Dance, in addition to making several special anniversary stops in Iowa and Wisconsin.

Jack and John Meehan were added to the brass staff.

### 1993 -- seventh, 90.4

"A Walton Trilogy"

Music from *Johannesburg Festival Overture*, *Richard III*, "Henry V"

Len Kruszecki became the corps' second director during its 26th season and embraced a new style of symphonic music.

Nearly every bit of the look was changed that year -- the music differentiated from anything the corps had attempted, while the guard wore flowing yellow gowns and brandished swords.

Sadly, just as the season started, Royer, a visionary and legend who guided the corps to prominence, passed away.

### 1994 -- fourth, 92.3

"The Red Poppy"

*Hymn to Red October*, *Triumphal Dance of the Coolies*, *Chinese Dances*, *Phoenix*, *Russian Sailor's Dance*, *The Great Gate of Kiev*

In 1994, Vanguard returned to the storytelling style that brought them success throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s. Pulling music from a familiar Russian pallet, Vanguard wove a story of a love across



Santa Clara Vanguard, 1994 (photo by Ron Walloch from the collection of Drum Corps World).

nations, of a Chinese dancer and Russian captain.

For the finale, a silent company front followed the ever-familiar chords of *The Great Gate of Kiev* as the color guard instantly changed from Russian Cossacks into lovely Chinese ladies. Called a "visual feast" by the liner notes of the 1994 CDs, this truly was "a ballet on the football field."

Future percussion caption heads Murray Gussek and Jim Casella were added to the staff and Ed Teleky added Legos to the front ensemble.

### 1995 -- sixth, 91.9

"Not the Nutcracker"

*The Clock Breaks*, *War of the Nuts*, *Romance and Seduction*, *Celebration*, *The Journey Home through the Pine Forest*

The 1995 Santa Clara Vanguard continued its fascination with Russian composers by using a variation of Tchiakovsky's ballet titled "Not the Nutcracker," a visual and

audio interpretation of the classic Russian fairytale.

It was the year of the pit, with an array of items including a spinning wheel, "Blue-Man Group"-inspired black tubes and percussion racks around the field that provided stereo effects.

### 1996 -- fourth, 92.3

"La Mer"

Selections from "La Mer," *Oceans* and *The Skyboat*

No props or magic, but pure SCV. It was a new year, with a new director, a largely new staff and even new uniforms. Everything about the 1996 Santa Clara corps was new except for one thing: the tradition of excellence and innovation that identify the corps' very essence. Vanguard entered its 29th year under only its third director, former Vanguard Cadet director and SCV alumnus J.W. Koester.

Departing from the storytelling style, Vanguard delved into the realm of British brass bands and French Impressionism with the music of *Oceans* and "La Mer."

Based on the motion and power of the ocean, Santa Clara presented a show full of oceanic imagery, including the color guard donning flowing, ocean-blue dresses.

Many elements returned, including a "V" end formation, a quiet space for crowd participation ("Vanguard!") and, most important, the return of *Send in the Clowns* after a three-year absence.

### 1997 -- third, 96.9

"Fog City Sketches"

*A Lonely Street*, *The City's Edge*, *City Dreams*, *A Day in the Park*, *The Anxiety Within*, *The Golden Gate*, *The Epilogue*

After eight years, Vanguard began a surge back to the top, landing in third. Additionally, a persistent and ambitious guard alternate, David Garcia, eventually marched as a lone male guard member since 1988. The following year, the guard became fully integrated.

The show presented a hint of comedy with *A Day in the Park*, complete with a barking dog, flying bass drums and even

Charlie's Angels wannabes. Based on impressions and abstractions that reflect the moods and essence of the city of San Francisco, the show was augmented by the brilliant designs of Myron Rosander. While Rosander had been with the corps for years, he hit his stride that season and the corps was blessed to see it carry over to the future.

Percussion caption head Casella remembers the highlight of the season being the performance at Charlotte, NC. "The corps played their hearts out and captured the audience with their emotional performance," he said. As a result, it was the first time a one-tenth spread separated SCV, Blue Devils and The Cadets.

### 1998 -- second, 97.9

"Copland: The Modernist"

*Grohg*, *Hear Ye! Hear Ye!*, *Down a Country Lane*, *Dance Panels*, *Con brio*, Movement 5

The 1998 season saw a second-place finish and a high drum award at DCI Finals. The



Santa Clara Vanguard, 1996, at DCI Midwest in Whitewater, WI (photo by Steve Rodriggs from the collection of Drum Corps World).

program consisted of selections from Aaron Copland's "modernist" works.

During the pre-season, Vanguard performed on the streets of San Francisco with the national touring company of "The Phantom of the Opera"

### 1999 -- DCI champion, 98.4

"Inventions for a New Millennium"

*The Canyon*, "Symphony No. 2,"

"Symphony No. 1," *Blue Shades*

It was a season of joys and sorrows.

Veteran bass drum member Art Velarde was killed tragically in an auto accident the day before Memorial Day weekend camp and his brother, Ray, was severely burned. The loss cast a pall over much of the season, but in one of the more emotional buildups, the corps climbed from underdog in prelims to tie for first place with rival Blue Devils.

In the snare line and still healing, Ray marched his age-out finals with his Vanguard family. I&E snare winner Ercan Erhan -- like the entire corps that night -- dedicated his "Showcase" performance to Art. The crowd's enthusiastic chants of "S-C-V!" echoed in the stadium, making it a special night on many levels.

That year Vanguard presented an innovative body of work comprised of three of America's unique 20th century composers: Philip Glass, Frank Ticheli and Samuel Barber.

### 2000 -- fourth, 94.7

"Age of Reverence"

*Prayers of Kierkegaard (Prayer No. 4)*,

Bartok's *String Quartet No. 4*, Movement 5,

*Piano Concerto No. 1*, Movement 3 by Bela Bartok,

Barber's *Adagio for Strings*, *Stained Glass*

In October, without providing specific reasons, the SCV board of directors did not renew Koester's contract. Like the termination of Dr. Kruszecki's tenure, it was a painful episode in the corps' history.

Consequently, Vanguard entered its 33rd year under a fourth director, SCV alumnus Rick Valenzuela.

Though the corps came in fourth, *Adagio for Strings* was cited by many as the best ballad of the season, poignant for both members and audience.

### 2001 -- fourth, 95.35

"New Era Metropolis"

*Alarm*, *Short Ride on a Fast Machine*,

*Jug Blues and Fat Pickin'*, *Variants on a Medieval Tune*, *New Era Dance*

The corps placed fourth, but won the coveted Spirit of Disney Award based in part on their "rapping" vocalizations of "New Era"

at the end -- a first for the corps and wildly fun for the audience.

### 2002 -- fourth, 95.65

"Sound, Shape and Color"  
*Trivandrum*, Hanson's *Symphony No. 2*,  
Movement 2, Copland's *Concerto for  
Organ and Orchestra*

Santa Clara Vanguard drew upon a long tradition of innovation to present a visual and musical interpretation for this show. Each production explored evolving geometric shapes and a musically related palette of colors. Triangles turned to circles, circles to diamonds -- a demanding drill with equally challenging music.

For the third year, Vanguard came in fourth. While the placement doesn't yet rival the four years of second-place finishes (1985-1988), it was countered by the announcement that Rick Valenzuela was voted DCI Corps Director of the Year.

### Santa Clara Vanguard Cadets

Started in 1971 as the "B" corps, the Vanguard Cadets have an equally amazing history. With members aged 12-18 years, it is the primary training group for membership in the A-corps. As a result, it's no surprise that in most years, one-third of the A-corps membership started in SCV Cadets. Since 1995, the corps has been directed by alumnus George Brown who was voted DCI Division II Director of the Year in 2000.

The corps began field competitions in 1973 and has been a DCI Division II finalist every year it has appeared at DCI Championships (1991, 1993, 1998, 2000 and 2002).

In 1978, the "B" guard won both the California Guard Circuit and Western Regional Color Guard championships. In 2000, the corps won DCI Division II Championships. SCV Cadets have also competed in the DCI Division I Quarterfinals in 1993 and the DCI Division I Semifinals in 2000.

### Vanguard Alumni

The Santa Clara Vanguard Alumni Association was formed in March 1991 through the efforts of SCV alumni headed by George Brown, Sue Johnson and Dan Vannatta. In addition to sponsoring social events, the association is dedicated to supporting the goals and objectives of the Vanguard organization.

Vanguard Alumni Corps was first formed in 1997 to celebrate SCV's 30th anniversary and is one of the few alumni corps to march a pure line -- every performer is a former member. In 1998, the alumni corps was established as a new permanent corps in the Vanguard organization to offer alumni performance opportunities in parades and standstills.

In 2002, the Vanguard Alumni Corps successfully put together a special 35th anniversary show and performed in exhibition at DCI Finals in Madison, WI. In 2003, the SCV Alumni color guard began performing in exhibition at winter guard contests.

### I&E

Since the beginning of DCI's Individual and Ensemble competitions, Vanguard performers have not only won dozens of captions, but also have been innovators. Out of necessity, DCI created both the bass and cymbal ensemble captions in 1990 after the SCV lines competed for years in the percussion ensemble category. They then dominated these fields, winning an unprecedented number of titles.

While members have won solo categories, Vanguard members excel in ensembles as noted by their wins in percussion (13-plus), mixed, cymbals and bass drum.

In 1971, Rob Carson, was the youngest (14) to ever win a national snare contest. He also took DCI snare honors in 1973 and 1978.

In a gender-bending year, Maria Petrini, one of the first female brass players, tied with fellow SCV member Marty Rhees in 1985 for the French horn title and Martha Leeson became the first female timpanist to win I&E.

Former mellophone Chris Macias remembers: "If memory serves right, Jerome Austin was the soprano winner in 1987. The story goes that



(Above) 1998 (photo by Alan Winslow); (left) 2002 (photo by Karen Sunmark, both from the collection of Drum Corps World).



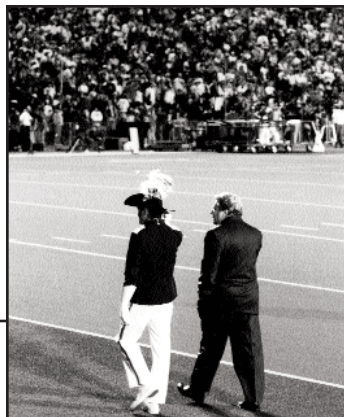
as he was playing his piece and a draft blew his sheet music

off the stand. Instead of freaking out, he simply held the note using a technique called circular breathing, calmly reached down and picked up his music while still holding the note, then started from where he left off. I believe Jerome ended up studying trumpet at Julliard -- no surprise there."

### Community

In addition to the three corps, Santa Clara Vanguard sponsors several community groups including the Vanguard Dance Company, Children's Adventures in Movement (4-12- year-olds) and a percussion class. The organization has also created a partnership

Santa Clara Vanguard Director Gail Royer and the corps' drum major at DCI Finals in 1992. Royer retired after the season (photo by Sid Unser from the collection of Drum Corps World).



with Starting Arts in local schools.

As part of the corps' commitment to community, Vanguard has annually presented Cultural Concerts since 1971 in the spring.

### Boosters

The Santa Clara Vanguard Booster Club is the heart of the Vanguard organization, providing the majority of operating funds and equipment for the corps. They operate a full-service bingo game four times a week.

The volunteers that work in the Booster Club help make costumes and props, prepare the uniforms for each season, promote and organize events, cook, clean and, overall, keep the corps running.

Additionally, with help from long-time booster Bud Romo, they maintain the vehicle fleet, which at one time included a souvie trailer created in the shape of a bass drum.

### 2003 and the future

"Pathways"

As this article is written, the 2003 season is underway. Awaiting all three Vanguard corps is the unprecedented honor to march in the 2004 Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena, CA.

It was calculated more than 2,500 performers have worn the SCV uniform and through it all -- the joy of performance, tragic loss and sheer determination -- Vanguard has remained stoically proud: a star of excellence on the chest, a feather of tradition in the Aussie and the heart of a vanguard, always cutting-edge innovators.

Some source material was used from the 25th anniversary yearbook.

Christina "MAV" Mavroudis owes her corps immersion to Mr. Lockwood, director of Granada Hills Marching Band, who, in the summer of 1978, told all band members to go home and watch DCI.

Mavroudis marched with Los Angeles All-City Marching Band, Royal Cavaliers Youth Band and a first tour with Blue Devils. She is a charter member -- and currently performs with -- San Francisco Renegades senior corps.

Her writings and photographs have appeared in Drum Corps News, World of Pageantry/Pageantry Press, Drum Corps World (since 1989), Spirited Monthly, the Vanguardian, DCI Year in Review and DCI Highlights. She has been a theater columnist, comic book scriptwriter and creator/editor for science-fiction newsletters.

Theatrically, Mavroudis has been everything from customer to producer in everything from middle schools to off-Broadway and Broadway productions.

A survivor of both the 1989 earthquake and 9-11, Mavroudis has held unique positions with Paramount Studios ("Star Trek: TNG"), Sony Playstation, Dodger Theatrical, American Museum of Natural History and currently Stanford University.

She dedicates 2003 to her daughter, Emily, and her family. She can be reached at [corpswriter@earthlink.net](mailto:corpswriter@earthlink.net), or visit her online at [www.mavroudis.homestead.com](http://www.mavroudis.homestead.com).