

Phantom's streak stopped SCV takes its third DCI Canada title

by Thomas and Ruth Beecher

July 29, 1989—Hamilton, Ontario . . . The Santa Clara Vanguard won the DCI Canada title by a 1.4 margin over the Phantom Regiment, in what DCI bills as the *Canada Edition of the Summer Music Games*. The Vanguard win was the second in two nights over the previously unbeaten Phantom, taking five of six subcaptions in prelims and evening finals to cement their third title in Hamilton.

The music of Andrew Lloyd Weber's *Phantom of the Opera* has been slightly rearranged for '89 both musically and visually, as their harried and hurried drill moves from high point to high point, with return of the black backdrops and parachute-like cover which engulfs the corps in the powerful then soothing *Music of the Night*. Vanguard displayed the three C's (clean, crisp, clear—right, Rosalie?) through their entire performance, winning with a score of 91.60.

The Phantom Regiment placed second with a score of 90.20 closing the gap from prelims by four-tenths of a point closer to tonight's winner. Phantom's sometime literal, sometimes interpretive treatment of Dvorak's *New World Symphony* is an excellent vehicle for them and fits well with their style. Their guard was the best tonight in both style and execution. Phantom overtook Vanguard in GE brass in prelims and won the visual performance caption in finals.

Taking third in all captions except percussion and brass performance (second) were the Madison Scouts placing third with an 87.40. The opener of *Make His Praise Glorious* was up to tempo and really rocked. *Slaughter on Tenth Avenue* is back for another generation to enjoy. The arrangement has been lengthened and includes the percussion feature of *Three Blind Mice*. *Slaughter* contains the elements which thrilled fans in the '70s, showcasing the

Scouts' crowd-pleasing power.

Bouyed by a strong percussion section, Velvet Knights took fourth with a 83.50. While placing third in both GE and percussion performance, the Velvet Knights increased their total score by two and a half points over prelims.

Much of the outlandish sight gags are missing, but the zaniness remains as VK opens with a Latin theme in *Yo Mambo* and the guard shows us Mardi Gras, Rio de Janeiro style. *Tunisia*, a takeoff on Dizzy Gillespie's *A Night in Tunisia*, features jazz favorites wrapped around and through *Sing, Sing, Sing*. Keep an eye on the pit gang, for the spirit of nuttiness remains the soul of this corps.

The Freelancers of Sacramento, CA, were fifth with 81.70. The music of John Williams is featured with the opening selection from the movie *ET* and *Empire of the Sun* with a closing reprise of *ET*. Freelancers headed Velvet Knights in three captions (GE, visual, brass and visual performance); but a 3.0 lag in total percussion leaves them chasing VK. All this aside, it looks like a return trip to top 12 for the Freelancers.

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The Spirit of Atlanta took sixth with 77.60, a 1.8 drop from prelims. They were the only corps to drop in score tonight. *Interstellar Suite* is the venue of Spirit, and while tonight's performance seemed to have improved over prelims, the actual scores in all captions were down from this afternoon.

The Crossmen of West Chester, PA, were seventh and only two-tenths behind Spirit. An opener of *Wind Machine* lifts the corps into the *Waltz*, a carryover tune from '88. This year's guard is bigger, enhancing the visuals even more than last year. *How High the Moon* features the 20-yard wide silk which covers the horn line as they reappear with their red capes to form a Maltese Cross enclosing a 'C' formed by the guard. Crossmen scored a 77.40 and are really pushing for a top-12 spot.

Appearances can be deceiving, and the RED HOT looking Dutch Boy belies their cool performance. The all-Cole Porter musical score of *Begin the Beguine* and *Night and Day* features a guard that not only looks good, it executes well, showing grace and uniformity. Percussion scores are down at present, and they scored a 75.10 to take eighth place.

The Ventures from Kitchener, ONT, were the only corps to move up a position from prelims, taking ninth with a 60.50. *Whatever Lola Wants* features the guard dancing with lifesize "Bobby Blowup" dolls and showing them Lola means business. Hilarious and well done!

The defending 1988 DCI class A titlist L'Insolite is an open-class competitor this year with brass being their strong point. Their show is a combination of jazz (*A Train*, *Blues in the Night*), closing with a Quebec favorite *Comme Au Premier Jour* translating to *Like the First Day* which is also the corps theme song. Tenth place with a score of 60.30.

The opening exhibition was given by Kitchener's third corps, the Kiwanis Cavaliers, and a closing exhibition was presented by Hutchinson Sky Ryders, who could not make the (scheduled) prelims due to transportation problems.

DCI experimented this evening with

format changes which met with mixed reactions from those verbally polled. The judges' split scores were flashed on the scoreboard as each corps exited the field. The reactions fell evenly into three categories: Like it, Dislike it and "I don't care, this is my first show."

The other change was in the retreat. The corps' placement and score were announced as each corps paraded the crowd. This also met with mixed reactions as some fans liked the fact that it sped up the closing ceremonies, while others missed the beauty, pageantry and suspense of a full retreat. The lack of suspense was also the primary objection to the judges' split scores. Modification and innovation are a necessary part of life, but the jury is still out on these moves.