

FOREWORD

by Myron Rosander

Jeremy Van Wert's book, *Not For the Faint of Heart*, in my opinion, offers a rare glimpse into the world of Drum Corps International and specifically that of the Santa Clara Vanguard during the year's of 1996 through 1998. It shares with the reader the emotion, joy, pain and brutality that is often unseen in an enigmatic world that many are unfamiliar with.

My name is Myron Rosander and I spent 26 years with the Vanguard as a performer, instructor and designer including those that Mr. Van Wert wrote about. I'm honored to write this forward for Jeremy and can state the accounts are factual and the events are true to form.

2 WE CURRENTLY LIVE IN A WORLD WHERE TERRORISM AND UNCERTAINTY is now common place. Nonetheless, thousands of young people engage in many activities that are ALL that is good in this lifetime; a lasting tribute that inspires beyond measure and gives hope to all that follow. No matter your politics, we all agree that it is our young people that defend our country. In our own community of Drum Corps, we perform and rehearse with a similar level of dedication. The stakes are considerably lower without question, but the intensity must surely be within range. For Drum Corps was born from the same militaristic roots we see from our valiant armed forces. Discipline, courage and integrity are a given in this activity. They must be, or the value and very fabric of Drum Corps would cease to exist.

During my years as an instructor with the Vanguard, I was just about the meanest Son-of-a-Bitch around. I used to have a motto in the mid 1990s, "Wake up, grab the biggest stick you can find before rehearsal, and start swinging. Bash some skulls until the kids understood what performance and integrity was all about." Of course, this is simply a metaphor, yet the language and lessons were indeed harsh at times as you will see. Nonetheless, I always believed in my message. It was always

about the integrity in life...in every aspect. I was not going to allow even one member to not understand this ideal. Jeremy didn't always take to my ideas, but he always tried to understand them.

Am I proud of those moments and approach? Not at all. It was just my way during the 1990s, but I believed in my message and always made it very clear what was important. Our sense of evolution at that point though, was somewhat desperate. The Corps struggled to find itself between the period of Gail Royer and JW Koester. During those years many of us were really beginning to lose our faith. It was difficult to watch the wheels come off an organization that we all held so dear to us. Regardless of the chaos surrounding me, it was my mission to maintain a sense of "belief" at all costs. Why? Because Gail Royer, the Father of the Santa Clara Vanguard, asked me to do so in the hospital prior to his death on June 17th, 1993. I held up my end of the bargain primarily because it was my passion, but more importantly because Gail Royer asked me to. He made me swear to it! I followed up on that request more than most could ever know. During that period, we toiled away for several years with some unbelievable Corps members who were relentless about their commitment to SCV. They paved our way to the future!

After some difficult but important growing pains came JW Koester as Director to the rescue in 1996. He brought such a sense of positive energy that no one could deny. He was such a breath of fresh air. His very presence renewed everyone's spirit almost single handily.

This era produced, in my opinion, two of the greatest performances in Santa Clara's history. The first of these performances occurred in August of 1997 in Charlotte, North Carolina. This performance redefined the nature of the Vanguard's modern identity. The second of these legendary moments occurred at Championship finals in 2000 which I believe to be perhaps the most artistic rendition the Corps had ever offered on our stage.

Performances of this caliber beckoned to the days of Gail Royer. When speaking of such greatness I could never leave out the performance of Phantom of the Opera in Kansas City, MO in 1988. Another of these modern miracles was, oddly enough, prelims in the heat of the day in Allentown, Pennsylvania in 1987. Even Gail Royer looked at me after the Allentown performance as if to say, "Did you just see and hear what I did?" All of the above were legendary in terms of emotion and

performance quality. If you'll notice, none of the aforementioned shows ever won a Championship title. It just didn't matter to me...that's how "moved" I was.

As I've discovered in life, Championships or Championship performances are nothing more than a "byproduct" of our own beliefs. Sometimes you're rewarded from the outside...sometimes not. But it does not change the inherent heart, emotion and artistry that actually exists during any given season. As we all know, the love and passion with any experience in life are most decidedly not interchangeable with tangible rewards. Yet, its impressions are timeless and are certainly a common bond and thread that exists now, and most likely, beyond.

In Jeremy's book, he shares with us the very same ideals, triumphs and struggles that many of us experienced while growing up in this activity; yet, in his own unique and personal way. It begins with the process of understanding immaturity, then stretches itself to the details of evolution, and even losing the best of friends. This personal account covers an extensive range of experiences and emotions that will speak to all from an honest perspective. It was a massive undertaking on his part but one that is for "the ages." As Mr. Van Wert implies, we all love and cherish our lives on this planet, but sometimes, even our finest moments are, "NOT FOR THE FAINT OF HEART."

With that said, and in my own opinion, Drum Corps doesn't necessarily build character, it REVEALS character, and to me, nothing is more important. If we truly embrace it, it allows us to see within ourselves. Jeremy's depiction covers that point in dramatic fashion. His account offers an intelligent, raw and unvarnished story of growth, maturation and more importantly conveys the message...that we all truly make a difference in this lifetime!

All the love,

Myron Rosander

What lies behind us and what lies before us,
are tiny matters, compared to what lies within us.

Ralph Waldo Emerson