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On The Field From Denver, Colorado...The Blue Knights!: One Member's Experience Of The 1994 Summer National Tour



Synopsis

On the field from Denver, Colorado! is one man's view of the inside world of competitive junior drum corps. Whether you've marched 50 years ago, this past year or just yearned to be standing on the field, Gregory M. Kuzma's personal tale will give you a new appreciation for this musical art form.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

GM has constructed a compelling description of life inside the cultural microcosm that is competitive drum and bugle corps. This is a fascinating read for both experienced drum corps "nuts" and those uninitiated to the world of pageantry arts. GM's chronicle of his experiences as a member of the World Class DCI (Drum Corps International) touring corps, the Blue Knights of Denver, CO has something to hold the interest of everyone as he masterfully tells the story of the behind the scenes experiences of himself and his fellow musician athletes as the long, grueling competitive touring season unfolds. From his retelling of anecdotal incidents along the way, to the descriptions of rehearsals in pursuit of perfection, to the recount of competition successes and failures, to the familial bonding of the corps members as they live, work, laugh, and cry together in the course of a months long winter/spring rehearsal season and several weeks of summer competitive touring, covering thousands of miles and dozens of cities across North America leading up to the DCI World Championship in August this book is a "page turner"! These "kids" (aged 14-21) work harder and longer than you can imagine, rehearsing up to 14 hours a day under the blazing sun to learn and perfect an 11-13 minute musical and visual presentation that is then performed every night in competition against 5-10 other touring corps before wildly cheering crowds in football stadiums in a

different city every night.

As a former member of the Blue Knights drum and bugle corps (1987-1989), I have a fond place in my heart for the drum corps activity in general, and the Blue Knights in particular. When my wife gave me this book for Christmas, I was enthralled by the idea of an insider's account of a summer on the road with the corps, and I read the book from cover to cover within 24 hours. In retrospect, my expectations may have been too high. Gregory Kuzma's book did bring back a lot of old memories, many good, some bad, of the three years I spent marching with the Blue Knights, but I found its "raw" diary format to be tedious and difficult to read at times. That said, the same dodgy grammar and liberal use of drum corps vernacular (e.g., the word "suck" being used in every imaginable form and context) help give this account a certain authenticity that made me feel like I was 19 all over again, standing in the hot sun on a dusty practice field somewhere near the Wonder Bread factory in north Denver. I particularly enjoyed Kuzma's descriptions of Blue Knights staff members and instructors, many of whom I knew personally. He does an effective job of capturing the agony and grit of 12-hour rehearsals (where tempers often flare), the persistent sleep deprivation, and the frustration of realizing that not everyone in the corps shares the same level of maturity, or commitment to excellence and achievement. In the end, in spite of everything, the 1994 Blue Knights pull together and wow the crowds and judges, earning themselves a deserved spot among Drum Corps International's prestigious Top 12 finalists. This book will definitely appeal to young drum corps members and enthusiasts who don't mind wading through grammatical rough spots, and a good deal of corps jargon.

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