

THE OPTIMISTS SMALL CORPS

...by Dave Watt

For the past two months, the attention of drum corps fans in Canada has been focused on a new phase in Canadian Corps ---The Optimists Small Corps. This compact unit, consisting of 19 of the older and more experienced members of the present Canadian Champion Optimists formed together to create a minute replica of their parent Corps.

The idea of Small Corps was taken from the mid-west, where Small Corps are very common-place, although none of our members had actually seen one of these small corps in action. In Drum Corps periodicals the mid-west small corps were very often mentioned in half-time shows, and even in contests, and it was from this vague beginning that Robin Weatherstone brought together the nucleus of the Optimist Small Corps.

Into this Small Corps are incorporated many of the ideas that Corps members would like to do, but which

are, unfortunately, either out of place in our own show, or already done by other well-known Corps. An ardent Drum Corps fan will notice that much of our music is taken directly from the select U.S. Corps. This is intended.



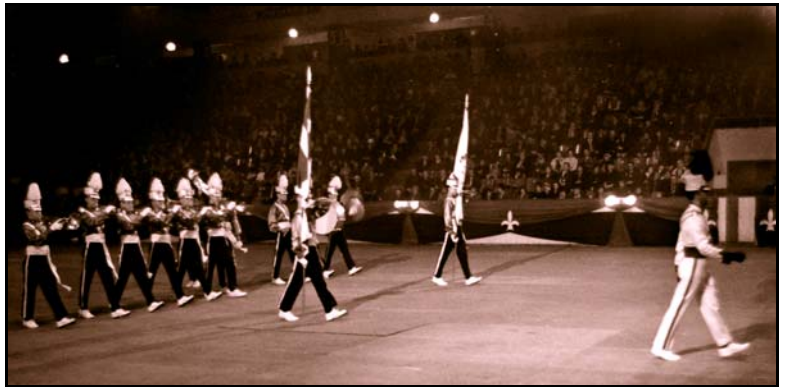
The small corps is not at present a competing unit, and if it is to remain a demonstration unit, it should contain the best possible ingredients, which is precisely what it contains at the present time.

The Small Corps has not had, for any long period of time, a permanent instructor in any capacity which is why it should be looked upon as an even greater accomplishment since a large part of the music, drill, and drumming is played by ear. The Small Corps is comprised of: nine horns --- four soprano, two french horns, and three bass horns. There are three in the drum line: one snare, one rudimental bass, and one cymbals. The six guard members constitute: two rifles, one national flag, and three secondary flags.

The music that is included in the repertoire of the small corps is a mixture of the favorite numbers of our own show, and the most popular numbers of other corps. Our Off-The-Line Fanfare is "Ben-Hur" followed by "Vanished Army", both made famous by The Blessed

Sacrament Corps exquisite horn line. An original fanfare leads into "The March of The Charioteers," one of the numbers from the Optimists 1963 repertoire. Then a tribute to St. Vincent's Cadets is their never-to-be-forgotten "Land of the Pharaohs" brings the Small Corps into concert.

The concert of "I'm in the Mood for Love" is one of the hold-overs of the '62 field show of the Optimists. A brief, but familiar fanfare to Garfield Cadets, is "Exodus", our out of concert piece and into another holdover from the '62 Optimist Show---"Tabu". The



colour presentation is perhaps one of the most famous of all marches, remembered best in the repertoire of Blessed Sacrament--“National Emblem.” After a stirring rudimental bass solo the corps heads towards the finish line playing the fanfare, number used so effectively by the Optimists in '62 “The Party's Over”. Our final fanfare, on the finish line is a new number for '63 “Barabbas”, a fitting ending to a show that must be considered unique, if not for its quality, then for the inventiveness of the people who put it together.



The members of the Small Corps include: Glen Durish, Drum Major; Karl Bossert, Joe Gianna, Terry McKolskey and Doug Yarker, soprano; Ross Cation, Howie Davies on French Horn; Al LaVigne, Dave Watt and Robin Weatherstone on Bass Horn, Bill Grigg on cymbals, Ron Kaiser on rudimental Bass and Vic Krukliis on snare. Chuck Clutterbuck and Andy Henderson are on rifle, Dick Ward carries the National Colours and Gene Chepswick, Bill Hannah and Mike Thys are on secondary colours. (from Green Capsule Comments, Vol 3, Number 2, March-April 1963)

