

Hannum selected for DCI Hall of Fame

by [Sarah R. Buchholz](#), *Chronicle* staff

It is often said that some people march to the beat of a different drummer. In Thom Hannum's case, a lot of people have marched to his beat.

Hannum, associate director of the Minuteman Marching Band, will be honored by the Drum Corps International (DCI) in January when it inducts him into its Hall of Fame. He was recognized for his more than 20 years of contributions to the drum corps world at the DCI World Championship Aug. 11 in Buffalo.

Hannum is joining an elite group. The Hall of Fame will include 60 people once he and two others are inducted this winter.

"Thom Hannum was chosen because of his influence in percussion arranging," said Lea Ann Stockton of DCI Publications and Promotions. "His influence can be seen in the fuller integration of the percussion section into the visual ensemble, split-part writing, antiphonal writing and staging percussion score, increased attention to marching cymbals, the use of timbres in the battery, and the use of colors through auxiliary instruments in the front ensemble and the battery.

"Thom also helped develop the free-floating snare drums, lighter instruments, sonically designed marching toms and bass drums."

"Few individuals leave a mark upon their chosen career that will be seen and heard for many years to follow," reads an advertisement for Pearl Drums in the Aug. 3 issue of *Drum Corps World*. "Thom has changed the world of Marching Percussion forever... and we are honored with our association." Hannum has been on Pearl's Educational Board for more than a decade.

"It made me reflect on various people who've been instrumental in my career, percussion-wise," said Hannum of the recognition. "As I see it, I had the good fortune of working with students and teachers and percussion manufacturers, and I think my being honored is the result of all that.

"They actually had a roast for me in Buffalo [during the DCI championships]. Three of the percussion manufacturers - Evans Drumheads, Pearl Drums, and Zildjian Cymbals - chipped in on a dinner and an open bar, and they got to stand up and roast me. For them to think that was something worthwhile to do absolutely is flattering. I don't think anything has been done like that before in the drum corps area."

Hannum is no stranger to the championship. Five times he helped corps win the coveted first place: three consecutive years (1983-85) as a member of the percussion staff of the Garfield Cadets, of Bergenfield, N.J.; again with the Cadets in 1987, when they received the only perfect drum score in a DCI championship; and once as a consultant to the percussion staff of Star of Indiana (of Bloomington) in 1991. Twice his corps have received the highest score for the drums portion of a DCI final competition.



Thom Hannum during a Minuteman Marching Band practice session. (Stan Sherer photo)

When Star of Indiana grew into first "Brass Theatre," an indoor version of a drum corps show, and then into "Blast!," the Tony Award-winning Broadway show, Hannum was there during each stage of development, and he continues to be involved with the show.

Hannum has been a part of the drum corps world since he was 10 years old, when he joined a neighborhood corps in the suburbs of Philadelphia for three years. At 13, he upgraded to another Pennsylvania corps, which eventually merged with two others to become the Crossmen, a highly successful corps today. Hannum was with the group when it burst onto the national scene, making the finals his last two years and finishing ninth his final year.

After he "aged out," when he became too old to march with the Crossmen, the organization hired him to teach the next generation as a percussion instructor while he was still in college. He graduated from West Chester State College in 1980 with a degree in music education, and continued to work with the Crossmen for a total of four years.

After college and between summers with the Crossmen, Hannum took on his position at UMass, where he earned a master's degree in Music Education during his first four years. He has continued to work with drum corps ever since.

In addition to working for the Crossmen, Cadets, and Star, Hannum has offered clinics and workshops across the country at events like the Percussive Arts Society International Convention and Bands of America. He has his own Mobile Percussion Seminar and has co-written a book, with Crossmen alumnus Bob Morrison, called Championship Concepts for Marching Percussion. He also wrote a student workbook to accompany the text.

Hannum said he has been surprised by all the attention his Hall of Fame award has generated.

"Different manufacturers took out two full-page ads and a half-page ad [in the Aug. 3 edition of Drum Corps World, where Hannum was featured in a story about his career]" he said. "I didn't know this was happening. I got treated well beyond what I expected."

The Evans Drumheads ad in that issue called Hannum "one of the nation's foremost percussion clinicians."

"They also gave me a bunch of mementos: an engraved decanter from Pearl, signed cymbals from Armand Zildjian, the patriarch of the family, and framed glossy copies of the ads," he said.

"The guys from Blast! FedExed me a signed poster and a card. It makes it all worthwhile."