

UMass marching band performs in Canada

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Issue date: 11/27/02

The University of Massachusetts Minuteman Band was the featured musical entertainment at the Canadian Football League East Division Championship for the Montreal Alouettes at Olympic Stadium in Montreal, Quebec on Nov. 17.

The 300-member band performed a show consisting of a selection of songs from the movie *Gladiator* as well as a medley of songs by Madonna. The Minuteman Marching Band received a standing ovation from a cheering crowd of almost 60,000 fans.

Under the leadership of Director George N. Parks, Assistant Director

Thomas P. Hannum, and Associate Director Michael J. Klesch, the band performed a halftime show for 57,125 screaming fans. This was the second Minuteman band performance in Montreal. The band performed there previously in 1998, also at an Alouettes football game.

For Parks, the crowd's reaction was very pleasing. "The crowd let out a cheer that shocked me," he said. "I turned around to look at the field, because I was sure that the home team had just entered the stadium... certainly the crowd couldn't be cheering for a marching band. But I didn't see any team!"

Band members were equally astonished with the reaction from the crowd.

"We didn't expect the crowd to get so excited, but they loved us! They were so into us," said Richardson Morataya, a national exchange student and flute player. "To see the crowd's reaction, I can't explain it really. It was a breathless experience."

When reflecting on their 1998 performance UMass graduates and band alumni Andrea DeGross and Debra Coleman had fond memories. "It was a challenging performance, with the bigger field and all...performing for a crowd of that size was very rewarding."

"You guys were sensational! Your precision was incredible," Dave Stubbs, a reporter for *The Montreal Gazette*, said in a recent letter to Parks. "And my kudos to your soloist in MacArthur Park."

The trumpet soloist, senior Donald Clough, is considered one of the best trumpet players on the UMass campus.

The band was led on the field by Drum Majors, Evan Doyle, Michelle

Rahaim, Jonathan Korhonen, and Kristy Stofey. Dubbed as "The Power and Class of New England," the Minuteman Marching Band has become the largest band in New England history

and has reached many accomplishments including being selected to receive the 1998 Louis C. Sudler Trophy. The Sudler Trophy is awarded each year to recognize one collegiate marching band which demonstrates outstanding ability, utilizes innovative marching techniques and contributes to the American way of life. Other recipients of the trophy include the Michigan, Michigan State, Illinois and UCLA bands. In addition to being known as a "Sudler band," the band has also performed in the 1981 and 2001 Presidential Inaugural Parades and frequently performs in exhibition at high school marching band competitions.

Last year, the Minuteman Band performed at the Bands of America Grand National Championships in the RCA Dome in Indianapolis, Ind. The band's performance received a standing ovation from some 35,000 spectators. Over the course of the season the band has traveled to The Big E in Springfield, Mass., Allentown, Penn. for the intercollegiate Marching Band Festival, the opening ceremonies for the Basketball Hall of Fame in

Springfield, Mass., the Topsfield Fair, Fitchburg High School, and MICCA, a high school band competition held in Framingham, Mass.

"Being in the band is an excellent experience," Morataya said. "Coming from the West Coast it gives me the opportunity to travel, to see new places and to experience something new. I've also made some close friends. We become very close, in a way it's like we are a big family."

The band practices for an hour and twenty minutes Monday through Friday, and for three hours on Saturday mornings.