

Cavaliers perform in South Central LA

text and photos by Jim Claytor, Drum Corps World staff (thelasportsnetwork@gmail.com)

June 26, 2019 -- Los Angeles, CA . . . The Cavaliers had a street performance that, when I was told where it was, I just said, "Yeah right." "South Central LA!" This area has been pigeonholed for years as the not-so-safe area because of the LA riots, Rodney King and much more that keeps this vibrant community of Los Angeles on the negative side of the news and social media.

Well things change and so do communities. I was given a three-hour window to get down to South Central LA and cover this story by my publisher, Steve Vickers, and was given detailed information by my close friends Major Stewart and especially Nate Lewis, Executive Director of Vessel Drum and Bugle Corps based in Murrieta, CA.

While driving down there from North Hollywood, crazy thoughts were going through my mind, but at the same time all I could think of was, "A World Class DCI-winning drum corps performing in South Central LA.



This I gotta See!

Even though it was rush hour, I pushed through our ridiculous traffic and made it with a half hour to spare. Yes, it took me two hours to go 15 miles, but I made it. The police gave me priority parking and there they were, the Rosemount Cavaliers World Class drum corps in the hood, and I was immediately being introduced to Corps Director Dr. Michael Vaughn and Corps President Monte Mast.



With streets blocked off and people starting to gather with excitement, President Mast stated that this was a first for them to be in South LA, but because of the relationship with former Cavalier Fernando Pullum, they thought it would be a great

thing for the community and to possibly forge a new relationship.

This event was sponsored by the Fernando Pullum Community Arts Center in Lamert Park, CA. Executive Director Fernando Pullum is originally from Chicago's west side and he pulled out all the stops to welcome the Cavies to LA. He is a world class celebrity here in Hollywood and is actually a former member and trumpet

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player with the drum corps.

Over the years, Fernando has been recognized by Oprah Winfrey, The John Lennon Foundation, President Gerald Ford, U.K.'s Prince Charles, he has performed and recorded with John Legend, Stevie Wonder, Ella Fitzgerald, Jackson Browne, Etta James, Alicia Keys, Pharrel, Crosby Stills Nash and dozens more, all the while being one of the originators of City Sound Drum and Bugle Corps with then director, Nathaniel Lewis.

This event started out with the Fernando Pullum premiere student jazz band that was

absolutely phenomenal and actually sounded more like major studio musicians instead of students, just brilliant! As people gathered from the community, most had no idea what to expect and kept saying what school is this marching band from. After explaining to a lot of them that this was a drum corps not a marching band, they still didn't know the difference until the warm-up.

Once they heard this incredible horn line preparing, they all totally freaked out, started screaming and people started literally running through the streets to hear them. The performance was unforgettable! Powerful! And something extremely positive while uplifting for this community.

With all of the racial issues here in the United States, this was something where with drum corps, you saw every race interacting as family, hugging, exchanging numbers and doing what we need more of . . . DIALOGUE! This was an absolutely beautiful event, leaving many wiping their eyes and alumni in tears while feeling so proud about what they left this next generation of drum corps members! ■ ■ ■



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