

Performers teach about bugs' benefits

■ 'Insect Songs' creators dress up as creepy crawlies to croon for the kiddies

By Brian Anderson
TIMES STAFF WRITER

SAN RAMON — Sandi Hunt and Stevie Morgan didn't join the big summer concert tours this year.

Nor has the Danville couple sold out an appearance.

But to kids and even some adults in the area, Hunt and Morgan are as good as TV's Barney and the stars Kelly Clarkson and Britney Spears, all rolled into one.

Hunt, 40, and Morgan, 50, make a living writing and singing children's songs about bugs. Through such greats as "Sandra the Spider, Green Grasshopper," and "Battling Beetles," they have spread the word about the little creatures.

"We keep things really simple so (kids) can relax and enjoy the music," said Hunt, a native of Vallejo. "And we put a few educational tips in there so they think as well."

The longtime songwriters got the idea several years ago from a friend. They had written rock and R&B lyrics and music, but had never steered into kids music, they said.

"We thought that was a good idea," said Morgan, who was born and raised in Wales. "We come up with a little story and then we do a little research on the insect itself. We consider its habits and what it actually does around the garden and then somehow we come up with the words."

They studied up on cockroaches, moths, wasps and ants

THE BUZZ ON BUG SONGS

Information about and song samples from "Insect Songs" can be found on <http://www.insectsongs.com>. Tower Records in Dublin and Concord also stock the compact disc.

and spent time taking notes in their garden. In 2001 came the release of their first album, a 16-song collection they named "Insect Songs."

On Saturday, they shared some of their ditties with about 100 kids and parents at Crow Canyon Gardens in San Ramon. Dressed in bumble bee suits outfitted with wings, they sang through their musical repertoire with the help of some young volunteers.

"It's so very important to protect the lives of our insect friends," Hunt told the eager crowd before leading them in a round of the "Greedy Wasp."

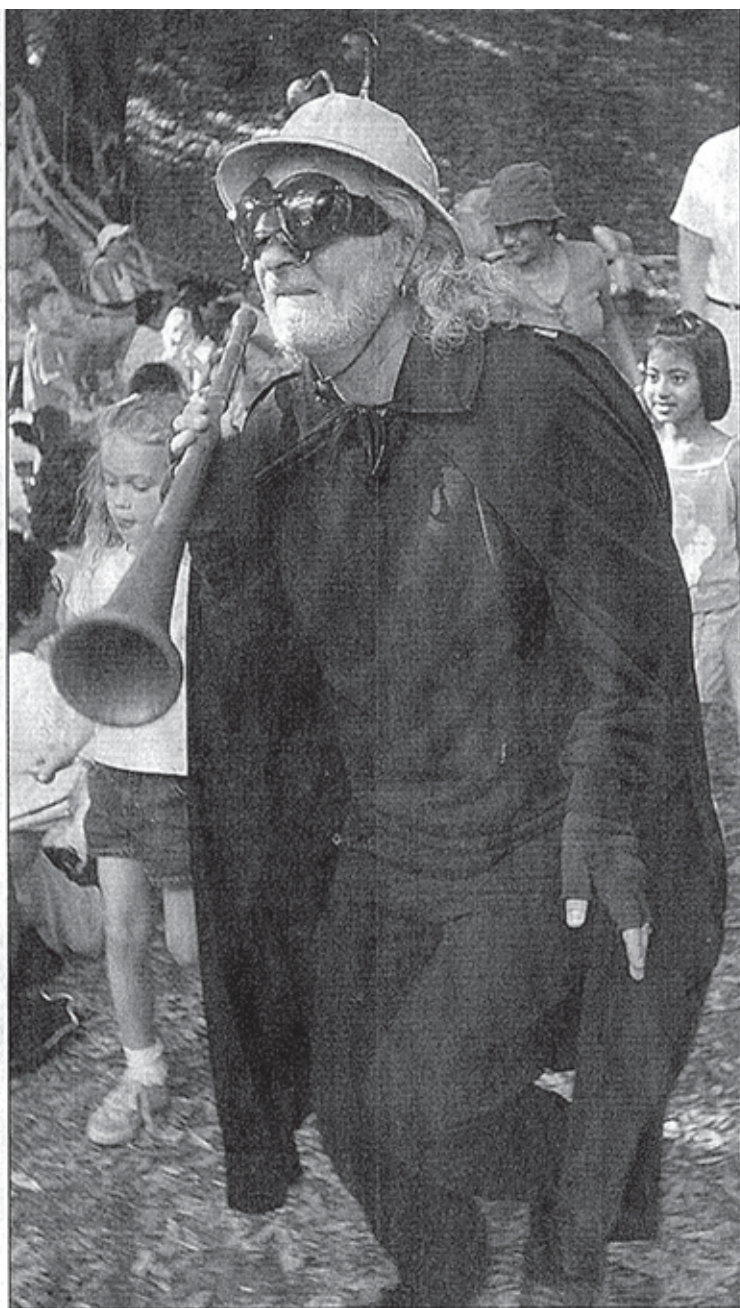
With their sing-song tone, Hunt and Morgan kept the kids entertained.

While the album hasn't gone gold, it has seen some success.

"We are actually making a living at the moment," Morgan said in a Friday interview. "We seem to have hit a niche here. We are very happy with where we progressed."

About 2,000 copies of the compact discs are in circulation, more than 900 of which were actually paid for. The remaining CDs were given away in gift packs at the Ronald McDonald house, Hunt said.

What's more, Morgan added,



SUSAN TRIPP POLLARD/TIMES

STEVIE MORGAN, dressed as an ant, leads a group of children in search of food during an "Insect Songs" performance at Crow Canyon Gardens in San Ramon on Saturday.

1,000 more albums are on order. They are working on another album, on sea life.

"I always have had the love of writing songs and so has Sandi," Morgan said. "Let's hope we con-

tinue the success with the second one."

Reach Brian Anderson at 925-847-2184 or banderson2@cc-times.com.