



Ron Stinson performs with winning brass band

Ron Stinson played a part in an upset in the Scottish brass band competition.

A group of cheeky Americans won the 2009 Scottish Open Brass Band Championship Nov. 28, 2009, in Perth, giving the United Kingdom and the rest of the world notice that North American brass bands are more than mere upstarts, they are here to play.

Ron Stinson, professor, instrumental music at JCCC, plays cornet with the Fountain City Brass Band, the first non-U.K. brass band to win the Scottish Open in more than 50 years, and the first U.S. team ever to win.

The Kansas City-based band played an 18-minute concert piece, *Dreams*, by Bertrand Moren, beating out 16 other bands to win first place. The Fountain City Brass Band with its 35 members has been together seven years, according to Stinson. Competitors in the U.K. have histories dating back 150 years.

Traditional brass bands are percussion and brass instruments with cornets instead of trumpets, tenor horns instead of French horns, euphoniums, baritones, bass trombones, flugelhorns and tubas; no woodwinds or strings. Music ranges from show tunes to jazz to complex concert pieces.

The Fountain City Brass Band was invited to the 2009 Scottish Open having won big in the U.S. as 2007, 2008 and 2009 North American Brass Band Champions and 2007, 2008 and 2009 U.S. Open Brass Band Champions.

"I don't think the Scottish Open was expecting music of this caliber from the United States," Stinson said.

Then on Dec. 25, 2009, the Fountain City Brass Band got another accolade for Best Contest Performance 2009 for their *Dreams* performance from 4BarsRest, which rates and ranks brass bands worldwide. 4BarsRest credits Fountain City with a "can-do American approach."

Brass bands originated with lower-class working groups like coal miners, and it remains, by definition, that members are volunteers. According to Stinson, the Fountain City Brass Band is composed of a mix of college instructors and students.

Stinson received his bachelor of music education degree from Wichita State University. After a tour of duty in the U.S. Air Force as solo cornet and lead trumpet of the former NORAD (North American Air Defense Command) Band, he attended Yale University where he received a master of music degree. After playing the trumpet for 18 years on Broadway, Stinson came to JCCC, where he teaches and conducts three ensembles – the Concert Band, Midnight Blues Vocal Jazz Choir and Midnight Express Jazz Ensemble.

The Fountain City Brass Band is an outlet for Stinson's performing. The band rehearses once a week, usually at MidAmerica Nazarene University's Bell Cultural Events Center, where they are artists-in-residence. The band has a concert series of six Saturday evening performances August-June at the Bell Center.

Visit FCBB.net for a complete schedule. Listen for more of the Fountain City Brass Band when *Over the Rainbow*, a CD the group recorded in Scotland, is released. 