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OUACHITA
BAPTIST UNIVERSITY



NEWS

For immediate release

Beth Crisler wins 2017 Shambarger Competition for Singers at Ouachita

By Kacy Spears

February 28, 2017

For more information, contact OBU's news bureau at newsbureau@obu.edu or (870) 245-5208

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. – Beth Crisler, a soprano and senior vocal performance major from Bella Vista, Ark., won first place in Ouachita Baptist University's recent Mary Shambarger Competition for Singers. She was one of five students were recognized for their performances in the annual competition.

Crisler earned first place and \$500 for her performance of Gian-Carlo Menotti's "To this we've come" from *The Consul*. Crisler is a student of John Alec Briggs and has been working with him from the start of the fall semester on this piece.

"Before [the performance], I felt confident. I've sung this aria so often recently, so my usual nerves were an afterthought," Crisler said. "During the performance, I really tried to let myself be the character. All of my actions and the way I sang were a result of allowing myself to not be myself, if that makes sense." Crisler was assisted on piano by Phyllis Walker, OBU staff accompanist.

The Shambarger Competition is an opportunity for Ouachita students studying vocal music to expand their repertoire and gain experience auditioning in a professional setting. The event was founded by Mary Shambarger, Ouachita professor emerita of music, who served on Ouachita's music faculty for 32 years. She continues to be involved in the competition as a judge. Competition repertoire rotates each year among arias from opera and oratorio, art songs and musical theatre. This year's competition featured arias.

Second place and \$300 was awarded to Jessie Brunson, a soprano and sophomore vocal performance major from Rockwall, Texas, for her performance of Douglas Moore's "The Silver Aria" from *The Ballad of Baby Doe*. She is a student of Dr. Jon Secrest and was assisted on piano by Susan Monroe, OBU staff accompanist.

"Before my performance, I was very confident in the work I have done, but adrenaline was definitely present. I was bouncing off the walls," Brunson said. "But as I walked on stage, I threw the nervousness behind me and really enjoyed myself."

Third place and \$200 was awarded to Will Stotts, a tenor and junior musical theatre major from Jonesboro, Ark., for his performance of André Previn's "I'm Not a Boy" from *A Streetcar Named Desire*. He is a student of Jon Secrest and was assisted on piano by Phyllis Walker.

Fourth place and \$100 was awarded to Esther Atkinson, a mezzo-soprano and junior music major from Rogers, Ark., for her performance of Vincenzo Bellini's "Se Romeo t'uccise un figlio" from *I Capuleti e I Montecchi*. Atkinson is a student of David Stanley and was assisted on piano by Phyllis Walker.

Honorable mention and \$50 was awarded to Elizabeth Schutter, a soprano and sophomore music education major from Garland Texas, for her performance of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's "Le nozze di

Figaro" from *Porgi amor*. Schutter is a student of John Alec Briggs and was assisted on piano by Kristen La Madrid, OBU staff accompanist.

Judges for this year's competition included Mary Shambarger; Dr. Charles Wright, former dean of Ouachita's School of Fine Arts; and OBU alumnus Stephen Anthony Ray, a former national finalist and two-time semi-finalist in the Metropolitan Opera Council auditions.

For more information, contact Dr. Jon Secrest, professor of music and coordinator of Ouachita's vocal studies program, at secrestj@obu.edu or (870) 245-5134.

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