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Ouachita students earn nine finalist honors in state NATS competition

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By Madison Cresswell



Seven Ouachita Baptist University music students earned nine finalist honors at the 2020 National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) competition. Over 170 students from colleges throughout Arkansas competed for a place in the final round of auditions, which were held at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, Ark., earlier this semester. Of those competing, 25 Ouachita students earned finalist or semifinalist honors.

The competition is judged by member teachers of the Arkansas Chapter of NATS. They evaluate the technical proficiency, interpretive skill and overall artistry of each singer and provide written critiques and feedback. Following the preliminary round, students advance through a semi-final round and then, depending on their scores, a final round. Finalists are awarded first through fifth place or receive an honorable mention.

“Our students who participate in state and regional NATS conferences most always achieve a higher level of singing than their counterparts,” said Dr. Jon Secrest, Addie Mae Maddox Professor of Music and coordinator of Ouachita’s vocal studies program. “They are exposed to many different singers during this event by attending recitals, master classes and observation of the final round of competition. These elements of the experience teach them so much about what to do, and what not to do, in their own performances.

“Ouachita continues to enjoy a strong representation of singers in the finals each year and affirms the work ethic of our students, as well as the investment of time and talent put forth by our faculty,” Secrest added.

NATS auditions provide students with an opportunity to receive professional critiques, audition experience and cash awards.

“The judges and other students have taught me a lot about the art of singing and performing, and it’s inspired me to see how hard students work for what they love,” said Chaney Campbell, a freshman musical theatre major from Rogers, Ark. Campbell was named a finalist and earned second place in the lower college music theatre women division.

“This competition is an opportunity to perform and share what I love to do with others,” said Kinsey Potts, a sophomore musical theatre from Wylie, Texas. Potts was named a finalist and earned third place in the lower college music theatre women division. “I was very proud of myself for it being my first time to make all the way to finals.”

The following are finalists from Ouachita, listed in order of hometown:

Allen, Texas – Logan Dooley, a junior musical theatre student of Dr. Jon Secrest, earned third place in the junior men division and fourth place in the upper college music theatre men division.

Arlington, Texas – Bonnie Gentry, a senior musical theatre student of Dr. Jon Secrest, earned third place in the upper college music theatre women division.

Rogers, Ark. – Chaney Campbell, a freshman musical theatre student of Dr. Glenda Secrest, earned second place in the lower college music theatre women division.

Siloam Springs, Ark. – Payton Hickman, a sophomore musical theatre student of Dr. Jon Secrest, earned second place in the sophomore men division and was a semifinalist in the lower college music theatre men division.

Waxahachie, Texas – Sammy Campione, a sophomore musical theatre student of Dr. Jon Secrest, earned second place in the lower college music theatre men division.

Wylie, Texas – Clay Mobley, a senior music industry student of Dr. Jon Secrest, earned first place in the senior men division and second place in the upper college music theatre men division. Kinsey Potts, a sophomore musical theatre student of Dr. Jon Secrest, earned third place in the lower college music theatre women division.

Other Ouachita students named semifinalists, in order of hometown, include:

Alexander, Ark. – Hannah Adair, a junior musical theatre student of Dr. Margaret Garrett, was a semifinalist in the upper college music theatre women division.

Benton, Ark. – Briana Penn, a junior music and choral education student of Dr. Margaret Garrett, was a semifinalist in the junior women division.

Cabot, Ark. – Elizabeth Ring, a junior musical theatre student of Dr. Margaret Garrett, was a semifinalist in the junior women division.

Caraway, Ark. – Karlee Sanders, a sophomore choral music education student of John Alec Briggs, was a semifinalist in the sophomore women division.

Cleveland, Texas – Hannah Gothard, a sophomore musical theatre student of Dr. Jon Secrest, was a semifinalist in the sophomore women and lower college music theatre women divisions.

Conway, Ark. – Abby Shourd, a junior choral music education student of Dr. Margaret Garrett, was a semifinalist in the junior women division and upper college music theatre women divisions.

Fort Smith, Ark. – Eryn Riley, a freshman choral music education student of Dr. Natilan Crutcher, was a semifinalist in the freshman women division.

Greenwood, Ark. – Alex Marrin, a senior musical theatre student of Dr. Glenda Secrest, was a semifinalist in the upper college music theatre men division.

Little Rock, Ark. – Mallory Cain, a sophomore musical theatre student of Dr. Margaret Garrett, was a semifinalist in the lower college music theatre women division.

Plano, Texas – Paige Price, a junior musical theatre student of Dr. Jon Secrest, was a semifinalist in the upper college music theatre women division.

Prattsville, Ark. – Anna Holiman, a freshman music and choral education student of Dr. Jon Secrest, was a semifinalist in the freshman women division.

Rose Hill, Kan. – Carlin Campbell, a junior musical theatre student of Dr. Margaret Garrett, was a semifinalist in the upper college music theatre men division.

San Pedro Sula, Honduras – Keren Fernandez, a sophomore music student of Dr. Jon Secrest, was a semifinalist in the sophomore women division.

Sheridan, Ark. – Madeline Martin, a junior musical theatre and communications & media/multimedia journalism student of Dr. Jon Secrest, was a semifinalist in the upper college music theatre women division.

Texarkana, Ark. – Makenna Schaeffer, a sophomore musical theatre student of Dr. Margaret Garret, was a semifinalist in the lower college music theatre women division.

White Hall, Ark. – Clara Taylor, a sophomore choral music education student of Dr. Margaret Garrett, was a semifinalist in the sophomore women division.

Wichita, Kan. – Hailey Smith, a junior musical theatre student of John Alec Briggs, was a semifinalist in the lower college music theatre women division.

Ouachita's collaborative pianists for the competition included Kristen La Madrid, Susan Monroe and Phyllis Walker.

For more information, contact Dr. Jon Secrest at secrestj@obu.edu or (870) 245-5134.

Lead photo: Ouachita NATS finalists pose with their instructors following the state competition held in Fayetteville, Ark., earlier this semester.