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For immediate release

Ouachita students earn honors during regional NATS competition

By Julia Shands

November 22, 2021

For more information, contact OBU's news bureau at newsbureau@obu.edu or 870-245-5206

ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—Three Ouachita Baptist University students earned honors during the National Associate of Teachers of Singing (NATS) Southern Region Conference held Nov. 12-13 at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg.

Erin Bagley, a junior musical theatre major from White Oak, Texas, earned second place in upper college musical theatre, treble division; Kieran Malmer, a freshman music education major from Little Elm, Texas, won first place in classical first year, treble division; and Veronica West, a sophomore music education major from Benton, Ark., was a semifinalist in the classical second year, treble division and the lower college musical theatre division, treble division.

The NATS conference gives students the opportunity to participate in master classes and lecture recitals and to audition in front of voice teachers to receive feedback and a chance to win monetary prizes. There were 185 students competing in the 2021 regional conference.

Semifinalists are chosen through multiple auditions, beginning with a preliminary round.

“This year, the preliminary round was held virtually as a measure to prevent the spread of COVID-19,” said Dr. Margaret Garrett, professor of music at Ouachita. “Each student participating had to submit the

correct number of videos of them performing individual songs for their category. The preliminary round is adjudicated by three judges who give the students encouraging and constructive comments, and a score from zero to 100.”

She added that students must receive either two scores of 90 or a total score of 270 to proceed to the semifinal round. When they reach the finals, they’re evaluated by seven judges in each category. West advanced to the semifinals in the classical division by singing “O del mio dolce ardor” from *Paride ed Elena* by Christoph Willibald von Gluck, and for musical theatre by singing “A Cock-Eyed Optimist” from *South Pacific* by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein.

In the finals, Malmer won for a performance of “Poor Wand’ring One” from W.S. Gilbert & Arthur Sullivan’s comic opera *The Pirates of Penzance*.

Bagley earned second place in the finals with her performance of “Maybe I Like it This Way” from *The Wild Party*, a musical by Andrew Lippa.

For more information, contact Dr. Margaret Garrett at garrettm@obu.edu or (870) 245-5274.

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