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Four Ouachita students named finalists in regional NATS competition

By Chelsea Whelpley

December 01, 2014

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

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. -- Four Ouachita Baptist University students were named finalists at the 39th annual Southern Region National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) conference held recently at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg.

More than 450 students from universities and private studios in Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi participated in the competition. At the conference, students auditioned in classical or music theatre divisions and had the opportunity to attend recitals, master classes and professional workshops and presentations.

"Our vocal students in the performing arts are encouraged to take advantage of any audition and competition available to them," said Dr. Jon Secrest, coordinator of OBU's vocal studies program and professor of music. "Auditions such as this one impact the students' development and preparedness for a future of performances.

"I am most proud of the students' desire to improve and their recognition of the value of this experience," added Secrest.

Additionally, Dr. Margaret Garrett, Dr. Glenda Secrest, Dr. Jon Secrest and David Stanley, with collaborative pianist Susan Monroe, performed as part of the member artist recital. Dr. Glenda Secrest and John Alec Briggs taught a master class for non-semifinalists. These presentations were two of only four master classes, two lecture recitals and five paper presentations made by member instructors.

The following Ouachita students were NATS finalists, in order of hometown:

Bonnerdale, Ark. – Victoria Clark, a senior choral music education student of Robin Williams, placed third in the junior women division. Clark was also a semifinalist in the upper music theatre division.

Crossett, Ark. – Seth Russell, a junior vocal performance student of Dr. Jon Secrest, earned fourth place in the junior men division. Russell was also a semifinalist in the upper music theatre division.

Frisco, Texas – Alexis Morgan, a sophomore choral music education student of Dr. Glenda Secrest, placed fourth in the lower music theatre division. Morgan was also a semifinalist in the sophomore women division.

Rogers, Ark. – Esther Atkinson, a freshman musical theatre student of David Stanley, earned first place in the freshman woman division. Atkinson was also a semifinalist in the lower music theatre division.

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

Bella Vista, Ark. – Beth Crisler, a sophomore vocal performance student of Suzetta Glenn, was a semifinalist in the sophomore women division.

Fort Worth, Texas – Jillian Turner, a senior vocal performance student of Dr. Glenda Secrest, was a semifinalist in the senior women division.

Grand Prairie, Texas – Todd McNeel, a senior mass communications student of David Stanley, was a semifinalist in the senior men and upper music theatre divisions.

Jonesboro, Ark. – Will Stotts, a freshman musical theatre student of Dr. Jon Secrest, was a semifinalist in the lower music theatre division.

Little Rock, Ark. – Eli Ash, a freshman musical theatre student of Dr. Jon Secrest, was a semifinalist in the lower music theatre division.

Plumerville, Ark. – Breanna Bucko, a junior choral music education student of Dr. Jon Secrest, was a semifinalist in the senior women division.

Pueblo West, Colo. – Erin Cheshire, a senior choral music education student of Robin Williams, was a semifinalist in the junior women division.

Roland, Ark. – Michael Pere, a freshman musical theatre student of Dr. Jon Secrest, was a semifinalist in the lower music theatre division.

Rowlett, Texas – Kayla Kreger, junior choral music education student of Tom Bolton, was a semifinalist in the junior women division.

Russellville, Ark. – Hannah Hines, a freshman musical theatre student of Dr. Margaret Garrett, was a semifinalist in the freshman women and lower music theatre divisions.

Texarkana, Texas – Tara Clem, a senior musical theatre student of Jon Secrest, was a semifinalist in the upper music theatre division.

The students were assisted by collaborative pianists Susan Monroe and Phyllis Walker.

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