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Caitlin Secrest wins Ouachita's 16th annual Shambarger Competition



By Bethany Peevy

March 06, 2014

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

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. -- Caitlin Secrest, a senior vocal performance major from Arkadelphia, Ark., was awarded first place in Ouachita Baptist University's 16th annual Mary Shambarger Competition for Singers on Feb. 25.

"I am just so proud of everybody who participated," Secrest said. "It really is an honor to be named the first place winner out of so many people who worked so hard. Every single person gave a personal best performance."

Secrest was awarded \$500 for her first place performance of the aria "O luce di quest' anima" by Gaetano Donizetti. She was accompanied by OBU staff accompanist Phyllis Walker.

"It's an aria that I have always found really exciting and fun to perform, and it's always gotten me jazzed about performing it," she said. "It was a great fit for me, and I am just honored to get to sing music that has such a reputation."

"This win is really dedicated to three very important people in my life," Secrest added. "To my parents/voice teachers who have given up so much of their lives to make all of these things possible for me and to further my education. I couldn't have ever done it without them. Also to Mrs. Phyllis Walker, my accompanist. She is the most supportive and talented collaborator I could have ever asked for."

Secrest is taught by both Dr. Glenda Secrest, professor of music, and Dr. Jon Secrest, professor of music and chair of the applied music department.

"I am so proud of Caitlin and her accomplishments," Dr. Glenda Secrest said. "I have been truly blessed with an incredible student and daughter. I thank God for the wonderful opportunity to work with her."



Second place went to Molly Salmon, a junior music and psychology major from Henderson, Texas. She was awarded \$300. She performed "Oh! quante volte" by Vincenzo Bellini and was accompanied by OBU staff accompanist Kristen La Madrid. Her voice teacher is Mr. David Stanley, OBU instructor of music.

"I felt incredibly encouraged when I heard my name called for second place," Salmon said. "I would not have been able to do as well as I did without prayer and the help of my voice teacher, David Stanley. I am extremely grateful for his influence and expertise."

"Molly gave a stunning performance that was really committed to the text and the music and was just absolutely amazing that day," said Stanley.

Third place and a \$200 award went to Meredith Martin, a senior music education major from Garland, Texas. She performed "Chacun le sait, chacun le dit" by Gaetano Donizetti and was accompanied by OBU staff accompanist Phyllis Walker. Her voice teacher is Dr. Margaret Garrett, OBU assistant professor of music.

"I am really proud of Meredith for doing so well," said Garrett. "She has worked very hard. I am also proud of all my students who performed. Every year they raise the bar and really bring their best."

Fourth place and \$100 went to Joshua Wayne, a senior music education major from Nixa, Mo. He performed "Pierot's Tanzlied" by Erich Korngold and was accompanied by Phyllis Walker. His voice teacher is Dr. Jon Secrest.

An honorable mention and \$50 went to Joel Rogier, a senior vocal performance major from Glen Carbon, Ill. He performed "Di Cupido impiego i vanni" by G. F. Handel and was accompanied by Phyllis Walker. His voice teacher is Dr. Jon Secrest.

The Shambarger Competition was established in 1999 in honor of Ouachita Professor Emerita of Music Mary Shambarger. This year, Shambarger attended the competition as a judge.

“Since the inception of the Shambarger Competition, I think this was probably the best one because there was so much talent,” Shambarger said. “It was very hard to come to a decision of who was a first place winner because we had so many good singers. The level of performance reflects what good teaching has gone on in the school of music.”

Twenty-two students participated in this year’s competition, performing arias from opera and oratorio. In addition to Shambarger, judges included: Dr. Charles Fuller, former director of Ouachita Singers and former dean of Ouachita’s School of Fine Arts, and Stephen Anthony Ray, a 2008 alumnus and former winner of the Shambarger Competition. Students were accompanied by the following OBU staff accompanists: Glenda Aldridge, John Briggs, Kristen La Madrid, Susan Monroe and Phyllis Walker.

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