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Ouachita News Bureau

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Photo 1 Shambarger's sister, Marjorie Halbert (third from left), and daughter, Susan Goss (third from right), are pictured with winners of 2023 Mary Shambarger Competition for Singers: (from left) Kyleigh Stevens, Kieran Malmer, Brandon Holloway, Erin Bagley, and Isabella Owen. Photo by Natilan Crutcher.

For immediate release

Isabella Owen wins 25th Shambarger Competition at Ouachita

By Kelsey Bester

March 13, 2023

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

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. — Isabella Owen, a senior music major from Jonesboro, Ark., won the 25th Annual Mary Shambarger Competition for Singers held Tuesday, Feb. 21, in McBeth Recital Hall at Ouachita Baptist University. Hosted by the Division of Music in Ouachita's School of Fine Arts, the competition is named for the late Mary Shambarger, professor emerita of music at Ouachita. Shambarger served on the music faculty for 32 years, teaching voice and directing student choral groups until her retirement in 1998.

Owen won first place and a \$750 award for her performance of "Quando m'en vo (Musetta's Waltz)" from *La bohème* by Giacomo Puccini. She was joined on piano by Dr. Ian Aipperspach, lecturer in music.

"I feel so honored to have performed and placed in the competition," she said. "After learning all about Mary Shambarger last night, it means even more to me. I'm glad that Ouachita continues to carry on her legacy."

Owen's principal applied instructor is Dr. Natilan Crutcher, visiting assistant professor of music.

"Bella has been working diligently for almost four years to learn and grow as much as she can as a musician and performer," Crutcher noted. "It was such a blessing to see her showcase her growth and be rewarded for it."

Erin Bagley, a senior musical theatre major from White Oak, Texas, won second place and a \$500 prize, singing "Food for Thought" from *Magdalena: A Musical Adventure* by Heitor Villa-Lobos. Brandon Holloway, a sophomore vocal performance major from Little Rock, Ark., won third place and a prize of \$300, singing "Where'er You Walk" from George Frideric Handel's *Semele*. Kieran Malmer, a sophomore choral music education major from Little Elm, Texas, won fourth place and a \$200 prize, singing "Durch Zärtlichkeit und Schmeicheln" from *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

Kyleigh Stevens, a senior vocal performance major from Hot Springs, Ark., earned a \$100 prize and an honorable mention for her performance of "Una donna a quindici anni" from Mozart's *Così fan tutte*.

Holloway and Stevens are also students of Crutcher; Bagley and Malmer are students of Dr. Margaret Garrett, professor of music at Ouachita. Collaborative pianist Kristen La Madrid joined Bagley, Malmer and Stevens, while Holloway was joined by collaborative pianist Susan Monroe.

The competition features arias from operas and oratorios this year, as part of a three-year rotation of styles. Judges for this year's competition included Diane Kesling, an Ohio State graduate and professor of voice at the University of Arkansas in Little Rock; David Thomas Stanley, professor at Texas A&M University at Commerce, where he teaches studio voice and directs the opera and music theatre ensemble; and Victoria Mantooth, a doctoral student at the University of Central Arkansas and a media director in Little Rock.

For more information about the Mary Shambarger Aria Competition for Singers or Ouachita's [Division of Music](#), contact Dr. Margaret Garrett at garrettm@obu.edu or (870) 245-5271.