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Ouachita News Bureau

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Photo 1 Dr. Priscilla Navarro (center), adjudicator, is pictured with students who participated in the 2023 Virginia Queen Piano Competition. From left, Aaron Reed, Jenna Barnes, Andrew Pierce, Justin McDonald, Arcrel Lee, and Carly Hall. Photo by Mary Chung.

For immediate release

Pierce wins Ouachita's Virginia Queen Piano Competition, second year in a row

By Addie Woods

April 3, 2023

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

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. — Andrew Pierce, a sophomore music and biology double major from Benton, Ark., at Ouachita Baptist University, was awarded first place in the 2023 Virginia Queen Piano Competition. Held Friday, Feb. 3, in McBeth Recital Hall, the competition was hosted by the Division of Music in Ouachita's School of Fine Arts.

Following his first-place win in the 2022 competition, Pierce won a \$500 cash prize this year for his performance of Franz Liszt's "Liebestraum in A-flat Major, S. 541, No. 3" and "Virtuoso Etude No. 4," based on George Gershwin's "Embraceable You," arranged by Earl Wild. Pierce is a student of Dr. Mary Chung, associate professor of music at Ouachita.

"It is a wonderful time of celebrating each other's success and growth, showcasing all the hard work we put in behind the scenes and sharing our gifts with others," Pierce said. "I was honored to be chosen as this year's winner, and I am blessed to be surrounded by such great peers and mentors."

Aaron Reed, a freshman worship studies and political science double major from North Little Rock, Ark., received second place and was awarded a \$300 cash prize for his performance of Frederic Chopin's "Prelude in G minor, Op. 28, No. 22" and "Doctor Gradus ad Parnassum" from *Children's Corner* by Claude Debussy. Reed also is a student of Chung.

Arcrel Lee, a sophomore music major from Pine Bluff, Ark., won third place and a \$150 cash prize for her performance of Johannes Brahms' "Intermezzo in E Major, Op. 116, No. 6" and "O Polichinelo" from *A prole de bebe, No. 1* by Heitor Villa-Lobos. Lee is a student of Dr. Lei Cai, professor of music at Ouachita.

Dr. Priscila Navarro judged this year's competition. Navarro is a concert pianist who has judged piano competitions all over the world, including the Chopin International Competition for Latin American pianists and the Heida Hermans International Competition.

The Virginia Queen Piano Competition was established by the late Virginia Queen, professor emerita of music at Ouachita. Queen earned Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Music degrees at Ouachita in 1944 and a Master of Music degree from the American Conservatory of Music in Chicago. She served as a piano faculty member at Ouachita for 40 years.

"The competition was created to encourage piano students to grow in their musical study and to feature and celebrate students' musical talents and progress," Chung said. "It has been an absolute joy to walk along Andrew's musical journey at Ouachita. I am grateful to see the fruit of his hard work."

To learn more about the Virginia Queen Piano Competition, contact Dr. Mary Chung at chungm@obu.edu or at (870) 245-5132.