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Photo 1 Photo by Meghann Bledsoe

For immediate release

Barnes' composition performed at national music conference

By Abby Kemmer

February 22, 2024

For more information, contact Ouachita's Office of Communications & Marketing at comm-mark@obu.edu or (870) 245-5206.

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. — A composition by Ouachita Baptist University student Jenna Barnes was presented in October at the 66th College Music Society National Conference in Miami, Fla. Barnes is a senior music industry major from Sheridan, Ark.

Barnes submitted her original saxophone quartet titled, "Into the Fire," which she described as "daring" because she challenged herself in the process of creating it.

"I wrote a piece to try and push myself to use different musical techniques while still staying true to my traditional style," Barnes said. "It seems to have paid off."

Barnes is the first Ouachita student to have a composition selected for performance at a College Music Society National Conference. She is one of four students — and the only undergraduate — who



Photo 2 Jenna Barnes (center) with Close Quarters Saxophone Quartet members (from left) Collin Bankovic, A.J. Nguyen, Micah Cheng, and Matthew James. (Photo by Jodi Barnes)

had a composition selected for performance at the 2023 conference. Compositions were performed this year by the Close Quarters Saxophone Quartet, whose members are students at Florida State University.

“When I received a notice inviting music students to submit compositions for performance consideration at the national conference, I immediately contacted Jenna,” said Dr. Patrick Houlihan, Annie Mae Maddox Professor of Music at Ouachita. “I was thrilled when she learned her work had been accepted for a performance in Miami. This is a prestigious honor and is well-deserved.”

Barnes, who aspires to be a music theory professor one day, said she was grateful for this opportunity because she got to experience new ideas in the music world.

“Jenna is highly creative and constantly challenges herself to reach greater levels of musicianship,” Houlihan said. “Every composition lesson with her is a rewarding experience for me.”

Held annually, the College Music Society National Conference is one of the few that brings together all segments of music in higher education.

For more information about the conference or about Ouachita’s School of Performing Arts, contact Dr. Patrick Houlihan at houlihanp@obu.edu or (870) 245-5130.