

The MTSU School of Music

2018 Tom Naylor Memorial Solo Artist Competition

On March 18, the MTSU School of Music held the **2018 Tom Naylor Memorial Solo Artist Competition**, named in honor of former MTSU School of Music Director, Dr. Tom Naylor.

The event is open to current students in the MTSU School of Music studying voice, piano, woodwind, brass and percussion instruments. 37 students performed in the Preliminary Round competition and 10 students advanced to Final Round on March 18.

This year's guest adjudicators included MTSU School of Music Alumni **Mr. Randy Box**, Director of Brentwood High School Band in Brentwood, Tennessee; **Mrs. Alison Cowan**, Director of the Centennial High School Orchestra Program in Nashville; and **Mrs. Alexis Yatuzis-Derryberry**, Music Specialist at Lascassas (TN) Elementary.

The Finalists performed in Hinton Hall on March 18 for an enthusiastic audience. Following the concert, the performers and audience enjoyed a reception hosted by the MTSU Delta Omicron student chapter while the judges tabulated the results. Cash prizes were awarded to a First, Second and Third place; and an Audience Favorite Prize was awarded by the MTSU student chapter of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia.

Finalist Performers:

David Crosslin, guitar, Graduate Student, Music Performance, Tullahoma, Tennessee

Michaela Cundari, clarinet (First Prize), Graduate Student, Music Performance, Hendersonville, Tennessee

Amber Den Exter, cello, Graduate Student, Music Performance, Sydney, Australia

Jacob Farmer, flute, Senior, Music Performance and Music Industry, Memphis, Tennessee

Emily Harrison, soprano, Senior, Music Industry, Nashville, Tennessee

Eliot Hinson, piano, Sophomore, Instrumental Music Education, Hendersonville, Tennessee

Amelia Lufkin, soprano, Junior, Vocal Performance, Knoxville, Tennessee

Taylor Meyers, flute (Second Prize) Graduate Student, Music Performance, Springfield, Virginia,

Ben Rattavong, trumpet, Freshman, Music Performance, Cookeville, Tennessee

John Swartz, marimba (Third Prize, Audience Favorite), Junior, Music Industry, Bloomington-Normal, Illinois

Winners of the 2018 Tom Naylor Memorial Solo Artist Competition



Michaela Cundari, *First Prize*, is currently pursuing her M.M. in Clarinet Performance. She studies with Dr. Todd Waldecker and is a graduate teaching assistant for the clarinet studio. Michaela grew up in Hendersonville, Tennessee and attended Station Camp High School. She graduated summa cum laude from Tennessee Technological University in 2016 with a Bachelor of Music in Music Education. While at Tennessee Tech, Michaela won the 2016 Derryberry Concerto Competition; this gave her the opportunity to perform as a soloist with the Bryan Symphony Orchestra. Michaela has served as the clarinet section leader at Tennessee Tech University and Middle Tennessee State University. She teaches clarinet master classes and private lessons to students of various ages, from elementary to collegiate level. Michaela is a current member of the 572nd Air Force Band, the Air National Guard Band of the South.



Taylor Meyers, *Second Prize*, is from Springfield, Virginia, and earned her Bachelor of Music degree in Music Performance at West Virginia University with a talent-and-merit-based tuition waiver, studying with Nina Assimakopoulos. While at WVU, Taylor participated in the Pride of West Virginia marching band and performed in Wind Symphony and a woodwind quintet. She was a semifinalist in the school's 2015 Young Artist Concerto Competition. Taylor is studying flute performance under Dr. Deanna Little, pursuing the Master of Music degree in Music Performance. She is a graduate assistant with the flute studio, the Graduate Woodwind Trio, and a GTA for Intro to Music. Taylor is a member of the MTSU Wind Ensemble. Taylor's career goals are to build a private flute studio, stay active in the flute community by performing in local ensembles and recitals, and eventually teach at the university level. She has performed in

masterclasses for Nestor Torres, Kristen Holritz, Ai Goldsmith, Timothy Hagen, and Nancy Stagnitta, among others. When Taylor is not practicing or performing, she enjoys spending time with her dad's puppy Buddy, reading, binge-watching Netflix, going on Target runs, and cooking.



Originally from Bloomington-Normal, Illinois, **John Swartz**, *Third Prize* and *Audience Favorite*, is a graduate of Normal Community West High School. John is currently studying music industry with a minor in entrepreneurship at Middle Tennessee State University. Throughout his musical career, he has performed with the top MTSU Percussion Ensemble, the MTSU Wind Ensemble, and the MTSU Symphonic Band. Upon graduation, John wishes to work in musical instrument production/manufacturing, though he wants to keep his options open. When he isn't in the practice room preparing a piece, John can be found composing, playing computer games, or playing card games such as *Magic: The Gathering*.