

# Abundant Silence

## Andrew Vargas FCP Alumni Spotlight 2015



**Andrew Vargas\*** won a total of four First Prize awards in the 2015 Festival for Creative Pianists (a record for that year's festival):

- *Artist Pianist Award*
- *Best Performance of a Pre-Baroque, Baroque Work of Classical Period Work*
- *Best Performance of a Romantic Period Work*
- *Best Performance of an Impressionistic or Contemporary work (In Any Style)*

\*Pictured at right; Dr. Koji Attwood, 2015 judge, at left

Andrew Vargas engages audiences with his virtuosic and confident command of the piano. In addition to his accolades in the 2015 festival, he has achieved First Place in numerous competitions in Oklahoma and Colorado, including the Young Artist Piano Festival and Competition, Oklahoma Music Olympics sponsored by the Oklahoma Philharmonic, OMTA District and State Competition, and as semi-finalist in The Kuleshov International Piano Festival and Competition. Recently selected to participate in Piano Texas International Academy and Festival, he looks forward to learning from master teachers from around the world. In May 2016, Vargas placed first in The Bradshaw and Buono International Piano Competition and later had the honor to perform in Carnegie Hall.

Vargas has also had the privilege to perform in Petree Recital Hall (Oklahoma City University), Moss Performing Arts Center (Colorado Mesa University), Radke Hall (The University of Central Oklahoma), and Seretean Center For The Performing Arts (Oklahoma State University). In the past year, he has had master classes with Stephen Beus, Sergio Monteiro, and Lori Sims. The Oklahoman newspaper has featured his piano accomplishments twice and several articles have also appeared in Mustang Times and Mustang News. Vargas credits festival directors Dr. Houle and Mrs. Billberg for their genuine interest in helping him realize his potential in piano and for nurturing his creative gifts.

Utilizing his God-given creativity to compose fresh and adventurous piano music, his work has been recognized nationally. In 2016, his composition, *Phantasms*, was the National First Place Composition winner for the National Federation of Music Clubs (NFMC) and *Phantasms* was also a finalist in the ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Competition.

This past year Vargas has overcome life-threatening health challenges. Once recovered, playing the piano gave Andrew something to look forward to while in the hospital. He was also granted a wish from Make a Wish Foundation and decided to give his wish away by generously blessing his teacher with a brand new Steinway grand piano! Andrew enjoyed planning the wish with his Wish family and helped to organize a huge surprise reveal during one of his teacher's performance classes. It was a night to remember!

Originally from Florida, Andrew currently resides in the Oklahoma City area. Andrew serves his community by sharing his love for classical music and experiences great joy as he bestows his gift in senior centers, museums, student groups, churches and as a guest performer for non-profit organizations such as The Gaylord-Pickens Heritage Museum, Make a Wish Foundation, and Integris Hospital. When not pursuing his passion at the piano, Vargas reads biographies, skis backcountry trails, and enjoys learning about vintage cars.

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