

START SPREADING THE NEWS – make reservations TODAY -- for the 2018 concert season at Blackwood is outstanding! It opens with a young prodigy and closes with a silent masterpiece. “WOW” will be a word heard all the way through.

YOUNG SENSATION OPENS CONCERT SEASON

Blackwood is thrilled to introduce **JUSTIN LaVOIE**—a passionate young prodigy-- as the organist for this year’s Make-A-Wish Benefit concerts on **JULY 22nd**.

Highly recommended by Dave Wickerham and other prominent theatre organists, Justin is a sensation wherever he performs. Since the age of six, he has taken lessons in organ and piano from a number of accomplished instructors, including the acclaimed theatre organist Jelani Eddington, who has performed at Blackwood several times.

The American Theatre Organ Society awarded Justin scholarships to attend its summer camps from 2008-2012. ATOS named him Student of the Year in 2010 and, in 2013, declared him the Overall Winner of the organization’s annual Young Theatre Organists’ Competition. Since then, he has performed in numerous venues across the United States, recently on the Radio program PIPEDREAMS, and has been a featured artist at national conventions of ATOS and the Organ Historical Society.

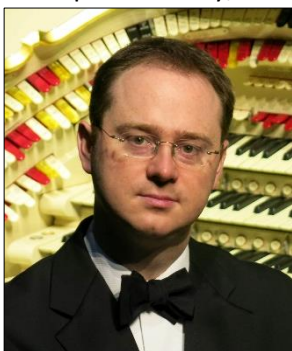


Justin’s concerts are creative and varied, with new ideas for keeping his audience pleasantly surprised. He loves the music of the Big Bands, Sinatra and Crosby, Jazz, and Rock, and he has his own renditions of tunes from the American Songbook (Gershwin, Cole Porter) and light classics. When not playing the organ, Justin is pursuing his interest in the restoration and maintenance of pipe organs, the focus of his study at the University of Oklahoma, where he is a senior.

July 22nd will be an afternoon of music you will love, for **Justin LaVoie** vows: “When I do concerts, especially for the public, I present as wide a variety of music as possible. No one should walk away feeling they haven’t heard something they like.” He’s young, congenial, and supremely talented . . . we won’t want his performance to end! As usual, there will be two MAKE-A-WISH concerts –2:00 pm and 4:30 pm -- with refreshments between.

GUESS WHO’S COMING TO DINNER??

Not Spencer Tracy, Katharine Hepburn or Sidney Poitier, as in the famous movie, but **RICHARD HILLS**, prestigious organist from the United Kingdom, who will be performing at the Scholarship Dinner Concert on **OCTOBER 14**. Look up Richard Hills on the Internet. Listen, and watch his rendition of “Tiger Rag.” Only one word can describe his fingering technique: **PHENOMENAL!**



RICHARD HILLS is widely acknowledged as one of the very few musicians to have mastered the divide between the classical and theatre organ worlds. We know several others, because the organists brought to Blackwood are among the most talented in the world.

Richard studied at Rochester Cathedral; then, with scholarships, he explored organ at Exeter College Oxford, Portsmouth Cathedral and Westminster Abbey. He now combines a freelance solo career with teaching, and is the Organist of St. Mary’s on Bourne Street, in central London, a church noted for its Anglo-Catholic Liturgy and fine musical tradition.

Hills’ career in the theatre organ world has been equally significant. He has received numerous awards, both in the UK and the United States, where he was named “Organist of the Year” in 2010 by the American Theatre Organ Society. Richard is a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists and is Musical Adviser to the UK’s Cinema Organ Society. His TV and Radio appearances include BBC Radio’s “Choral Evensong,” “Friday Night is Music Night,” and BBC Proms.

This is a catered dinner concert, starting at 2:00 pm. Only 60 seats are available; some already reserved, knowing **Hills** will be the guest performer.

MERRYMAKERS TRIO SHAKES THE CROWD



The hills will swell with music when the **Merrymakers Trio** bring their Traditional Jazz to Blackwood on **AUGUST 19th**. **RON BICKEL** at the piano – the well-known **TONY GALLO** on the saxophone/clarinet – and **GARY NOAH** at the drums—same group that last year had the audience jiggling in their seats to the well-known “rambles” and Big Band “swing.”

It was like a jam session-- that defined the jazz movement in Pittsburgh today. The genre is difficult to label, but it is widely accepted that “what differentiates jazz from the rest of the music is its improvisation, spontaneity, polyrhythms, group interactions and swing.” “It brings out the individuality of the performing jazz musician, like no other genre does.” Jelly Roll Morton took Jazz from ragtime to swing — “Traditional Jazz” — which includes the music of Louis Armstrong, the Big Bands, Count Basie, and Duke Ellington.

The Merrymakers Trio are all professionals. They have been performing together for 20 years. They know Jazz and instinctively communicate it as it was meant to be. **Ron Bickel**, leader of the Trio, has performed with many notable jazz artists: Mel Torme, the Skyliners, Billy Eckstine, the Glenn Miller and Jimmy Dorsey Bands, Little Anthony and the Imperials, Bobby Vinton, and more. He is a Professor of Jazz Piano at Duquesne School of Music, and has played at all of the big venues in Pittsburgh, plus radio, television, movies, and with the Trio at notable Jazz Festivals in Pennsylvania.

Tony Gallo has performed with the Pittsburgh Symphony and the Civic Light Opera Orchestras; and **Gary Noah** was former Band Director at Chartiers-Houston High School.

Can't wait to hear “Muskrat Ramble,” or whatever Jazz the Merrymakers choose to play. Hopefully, the day will be sunny; but, regardless, the music will equal that experienced by Ben Robertson and his two sisters on a cold, rainy day in New Orleans, when they attended a concert paying tribute to Louis Armstrong. Only thing missing will be the opportunity to follow the Band along Rampart and Basin Streets, waving umbrellas to “When the Saints Go Marching In.”

Everyone with even an ounce of music in their veins will love this concert—which will start PROMPTLY at 2:00 pm.



Ron Bickel, Gary Noah, and Tony Gallo

SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS DISPLAY TALENT AT RECITAL

Mark **JUNE 3** on your calendar **NOW** to attend the Recital by this year's Blackwood scholarship winners. The Recital is FREE, so come and bring a few friends. The program will include a variety of instruments; the talent of those performing is exceptional! Scholarships and grants this year total \$25,500. Scholarship awardees, performing at the Recital, are (in alphabetical order): **Colton Dietz** (trombone) from Norwin High School; **Ryan Fulton** (trumpet), Canon-McMillan High School; **Rachel Martin** (double bass), Mt. Lebanon High School; **Troy Rowlands** (tuba), Pine-Richlands High School; **Alice Statham** (harp), Bald Eagle Area High School; and **Savannah Wesolowski** (voice), CAPA. Additionally, grants have been given to **Sarah Hepfl** (violin), Butler Area High School; **Dominic Tomasello** (piano), Ellwood City High School; and **Nathanael Turner** (violin), Lincoln Park Performing Arts Charter School. Over the past 18 years, a TOTAL OF \$309,500 has been awarded to 90 high school seniors eager to pursue a career in the instrumental performing arts field.



**Colton
Dietz**



**Ryan
Fulton**



**Rachel
Martin**



**Troy
Rowlands**



**Alice
Statham**



**Savannah
Wesolowski**

WICKERHAM INTERPRETS CHAPLIN'S MASTERPIECE



CHARLIE CHAPLIN, widely regarded as “the greatest comic artist of the screen,” will be coming to Blackwood on **SEPTEMBER 16** as The Tramp in his silent masterpiece ***The Gold Rush***—to be accompanied by the inimitable **DAVE WICKERHAM**. ***The Gold Rush*** (1925) is one of the most memorable films of the silent era because of its epic setting and blend of rich comedy and well-earned pathos. Costing almost \$1 million, and 15 months, to produce, it became one of the highest-grossing films of that time, earning \$5 million in the U.S. box-office. As in all Chaplin films, the comic moments center on the Tramp’s attitude to the things happening to him rather than on the event itself; and this film contains some of Chaplin’s most famous sequences -- the Tramp eating his shoe and the “Dance of the Rolls.”

Charlie’s wistful little Tramp character is recognized by people who have never seen a Chaplin film, and in places where his films are never shown. No other comedian has matched his worldwide impact. Writers have suggested that Chaplin films with the Tramp contain “the most eloquent, richly comedic expressions of the human spirit in movie history.”

Chaplin developed a passion for music as a child and taught himself to play the piano, violin and cello. He considered the musical accompaniment of a film to be important; and with the advent of sound used music (composed by himself) for all of his films. Some of his scores made it big and received awards. “**Smile**,” for instance, scored for *Modern Times* (1936), was Chaplin’s favorite. Even today, it is recorded by many well-known vocalists.

Chaplin received many Academy awards and honors for his “versatility and genius in acting, writing, directing, and producing.” Six of his films, including *The Gold Rush*, are preserved in the National Film Registry, United States Library of Congress.

When *The Gold Rush* was released in 1925, Chaplin said: “***This is the picture that I want to be remembered by.***” On September 16th, at 2:00 pm, we have the opportunity to experience the blending of two geniuses—**Charlie Chaplin** and **Dave Wickerham**. No one could better accompany *The Gold Rush* than Dave Wickerham. Dave has the sensitivity needed for such a film, and his fingers will bring to the audience the pathos . . . the unspoken words. It will be a moment to be remembered forevermore! Only 100 seats.



VRSCAK WORKSHOP ENHANCES BLACKWOOD MISSION

BLACKWOOD ARTS will now be used as the designated name for BTOS, because it more clearly defines our mission and dreams for the future: to promote the appreciation and development of the visual and performing arts. In keeping with our mission, **BILL VRSCAK**, AWS will present a one-day watercolor workshop at Blackwood on **AUGUST 11**. Bill has been honored worldwide for his transparent watercolor paintings. He has taught workshops in some of the most famous venues; his work and writings have appeared in most artist magazines and books. Cost of the workshop is \$50, limited to 15 intermediate to advanced artists. For details, contact Ben (724-735-2813) or Ben@blackwoodmusic.org.



ALERT... ROAD CLOSURES GOING TO BLACKWOOD



There will be a major road closure this summer along Boyers Road that extends between the “Blinking Lights” at Forestville on Rt. 8 and Slippery Rock creek just past Black Road. There are three bridges along this road and they will all be closed from May 30th until September 30th. The recommended detour to Blackwood coming north on Route 8 is to continue north on Rt. 8 to Harrisville. Make a right turn on Rt. 58 (a Sheetz is on the corner) and continue 3.5 miles to Black Road. Turn right onto Black Road and drive 1.5 miles to Blackwood on the left. The house or Clock Tower are not visible from the road but there will be parking- direction signs at Clocktower Lane or Blackwood Lane entrances, depending on which parking area will be used. **Reference the map on the back page for enlarged detail.**

WICKERHAM ACCOMPANIES THE HUNCHBACK

DAVE WICKERHAM will return to Blackwood on **OCTOBER 21**, at 2:00 pm, for a Halloween Special, featuring the 1923 silent film *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, with **LON CHANEY** as Quasimodo, the spectacularly-deformed bell-ringer.

Based on the novel of the same name by Victor Hugo, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* is a melodramatic film, set within the confines of the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris in the 15th Century. It is a classic “monster horror story, more concerned with emotion and character than thrills and chills.” One sees the hurt and despair of someone so ugly and misshapen that he is shunned by all society; and startling scenes, especially near the end, are so powerful they are beyond words. Chaney’s characterization of Quasimodo is hideous, remarkably faithful to Hugo’s physical description. It required four or five hours each day to prepare; the movie took three months to film; and he was in pain for most of it; but it made Chaney a Hollywood star, later renowned as “the man of a thousand faces.”



Wickerham will make you feel the sorrow and pathos of the hunchback and the innocence and madness of other characters, as well as the passion of the mob. You may have viewed this film before, but you have never lived it unless it was accompanied by Dave. Warning: All Wickerham performances sell out quickly.

KUDOS . . . AND CONDOLENCES

Blackwood has many extremely talented friends, as recognized by the daily outpouring of natural gifts by our volunteers; and when one receives an award, we like to share their success with you.

Susan Kemenyffy, known by BTOS members for her artwork in the Music Room and upkeep of the Blackwood gardens, was honored as a Distinguished Daughter of Pennsylvania “for her achievements in American Ceramics, especially Raku, and her numerous international exhibits and lectures on art and gardening.” Susan received the award at the Governor’s Residence in Harrisburg, on October 4, 2017—her 76th birthday! In March, at the 52nd Annual Convention of the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts, held at the David Lawrence Center, Susan received the prestigious Regional Excellence Award [similar to an Academy Award] for her outstanding contribution to the field.

Bill Vrscak, our American Watercolor signature artist who, from the beginning has done much volunteer artwork for Blackwood and its outreach projects, won the \$1000 Morrison Family Memorial Award at the Adirondacks National Exhibition of American Watercolors in View, Old Forge, New York—and also the Vivian Chevellion Memorial Award at the 41st Annual Juried Exhibition of the Transparent Watercolor Society of America. One of his most significant honors, though, was being invited by Bratec Lis School to conduct a workshop for artists in Moscow.

Ben Robertson, co-owner of Blackwood, will be inducted into the South Hills High School Alumni Association Hall of Fame on April 28 for his “outstanding contributions to society.” Valedictorian of his High School class, Ben has a Ph.D. in Microbiology from the University of Pittsburgh, School of Medicine. After teaching for only a few years, he turned his interests to Art and later to Music and the development of Blackwood, which have enabled him to achieve this lifetime award. The current South Hills Alumni Association has been in existence for more than 55 years and has over 2,000 members, reportedly one of the largest and most active in the Nation.



It is with deep sorrow that we inform you of the deaths of **Dr. Arthur Richards and Jean Hickok**, both long-time friends of Blackwood, passionate advocates for their profession and active in many community social and humanitarian missions.

Their journey has ended, but the bond of friendship will remain with us as a treasure.



2018 MEMBERSHIP, PROGRAM, AND RESERVATIONS

In 1999, the Blackwood Theater Organ Society -- now Blackwood Arts -- was recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization and all contributions to it are tax deductible, as allowed by law. Blackwood Arts has annual concerts for Make-A-Wish to benefit children in areas north of Allegheny County, and a funded program that awards scholarships to high school seniors continuing their education towards a career in instrumental music performance. It is a volunteer organization, with no paid staff. If you are interested in membership, volunteering, or attending any of the events, please return the reservation form at the bottom of this page. The new WEBSITE IS: BLACKWOODARTS.ORG.

There are two levels of membership for 2018:

- (1) BASIC MEMBERSHIP OF \$20 PER HOUSEHOLD, WHICH IS FULLY TAX-DEDUCTIBLE.
 - (2) CONTRIBUTING MEMBERSHIP OF \$130 PER PERSON, WHICH INCLUDES A RESERVATION TO THE DINNER CONCERT AND A DONATION TO THE SCHOLARSHIP FUND. IT IS 50% TAX DEDUCTIBLE.
- [ANY DONATIONS ABOVE THESE AMOUNTS ARE WELCOME—ANY TIME]

PROGRAM FOR 2018: All concerts are on a SUNDAY, begin at 2:00 pm (unless noted), and include refreshments.

JUNE 3 – RECITAL BY SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS. Free concert, open to the public.

JULY 22 – MAKE-A-WISH CONCERT FEATURING JUSTIN LaVOIE, ORGANIST. Contributions, payable to “Make-A-Wish” will be received at each performance. Please note this is a benefit concert and all reservations should be guaranteed. Minimum donation, \$40 per person.

AUGUST 19 – RON BICKEL and the MERRYMAKERS JAZZ TRIO -- \$25 per person.

SEPTEMBER 16 – DAVE WICKERHAM/CLASSIC FILM “THE GOLD RUSH” STARRING CHARLIE CHAPLIN -- \$30 per person.

OCTOBER 14 – DINNER CONCERT with RICHARD HILLS, ORGANIST -- \$130 per person (Included in Contributing Membership.)

OCTOBER 21– DAVE WICKERHAM/CLASSIC FILM “THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME” -- \$30 per person.

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() BASIC MEMBERSHIP \$20 PER HOUSEHOLD \$ _____

() CONTRIBUTING MEMBERSHIP \$130 PER PERSON \$ _____

(Including dinner and RICHARD HILLS concert) Number attending _____

() MERRYMAKERS JAZZ TRIO \$25 PER PERSON \$ _____

() WICKERHAM/CHAPLIN FILM “THE GOLD RUSH” \$30 PER PERSON \$ _____

() WICKERHAM/CHANAY FILM “HUNCHBACK of NOTRE DAME” ... \$30 PER PERSON \$ _____

TOTAL PAYABLE TO “BLACKWOOD ARTS” ----- \$ _____

() RECITAL BY SCHOLARS (FREE).....Number Attending _____

() MAKE A WISH CONCERT.....Time _____ Number Attending _____

Checks, payable to “Make A Wish” will be received at the concert.

() VOLUNTEER: FOOD _____ OTHER/INFORMATION _____

NAME _____ E-MAIL _____

ADDRESS _____ PHONE _____

Note: Reservations will be confirmed by phone or email; no tickets will be issued

**MAIL TO: Blackwood Arts c/o CAROLE WOLFE, 2836 TREMONTE DR, ALLISON PARK, PA 15101
412-780-9709**

2018 CALENDAR

JUNE 3 – 2:00 pm

2018 Student Recital

JULY 22 – 2:00 and 4:30 pm

Make-A-Wish Concert
Justin LaVoie, Organist

AUGUST 19 – 2:00 pm

RON BICKEL and the
MERRYMAKERS JAZZ TRIO

SEPTEMBER 16 – 2:00 pm

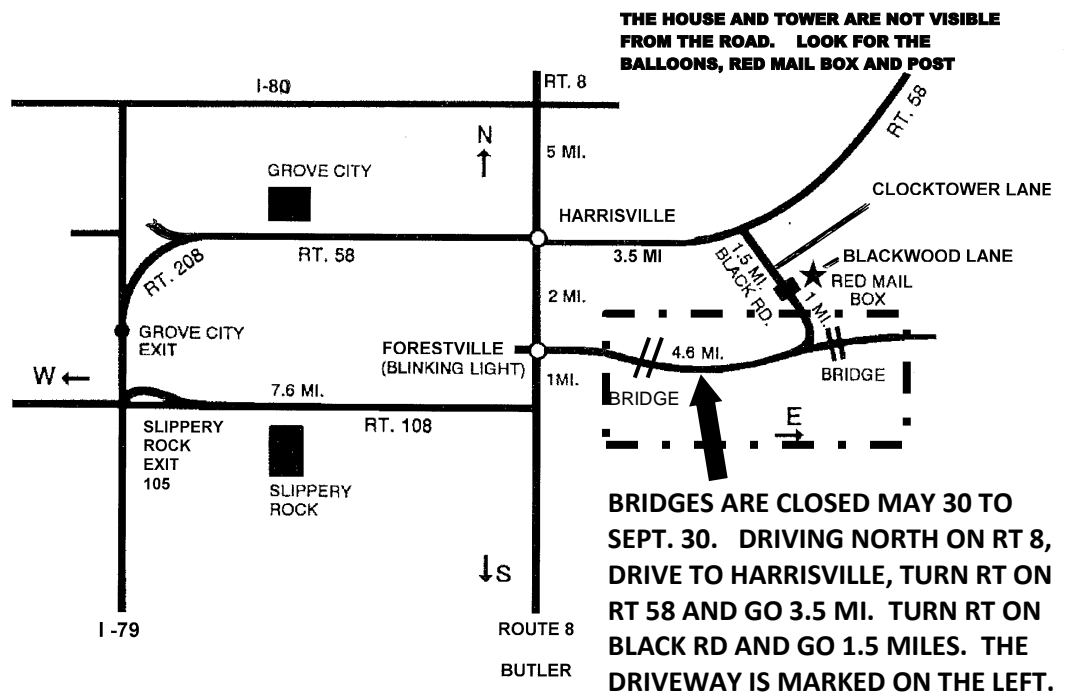
Silent Film "The Gold Rush"
Dave Wickerham, Organist

OCTOBER 14 – 2:00 pm

Scholarship Dinner Concert
Richard Hills, Organist

OCTOBER 21 – 2:00 pm

Silent Film "The Hunchback of
Notre Dame"
Dave Wickerham, Organist



BLACKWOOD – 118 Blackwood Lane, Harrisville, PA 16038
724 - 735 2813

ALERT... ROAD CLOSURES GOING TO BLACKWOOD
See above map for recommended detour

NEWSLETTER

118 Blackwood Lane ■ Harrisville, PA 16038

Blackwood Arts