



WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

**H**OLD-TIME**E**  
*piano playing*

CONTEST AND FESTIVAL



**MEMORIAL DAY  
WEEKEND  
MAY 21★24  
2026**

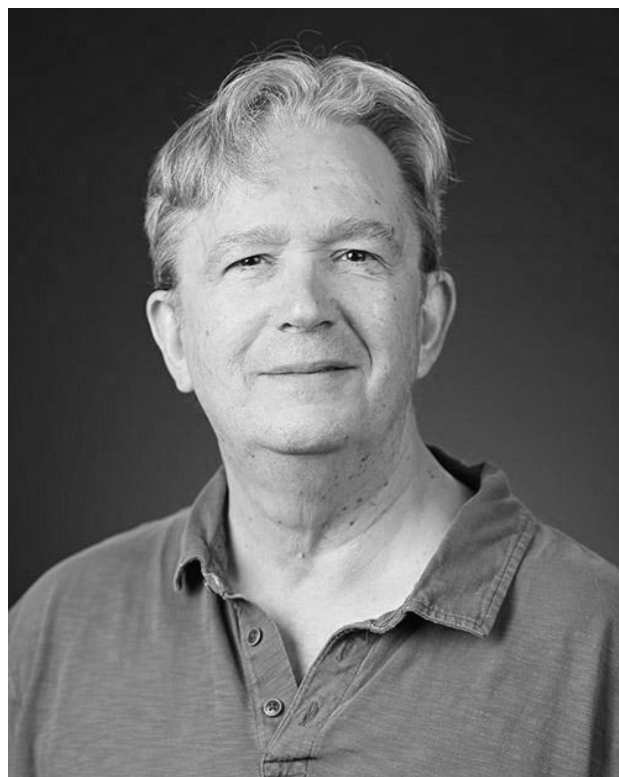
## FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Welcome to the 52nd edition of the Old-Time Piano Playing Contest! This event has undergone several venue moves during its long history before ending up here in Oxford and we are now celebrating our 10th anniversary in the SIP. If you would like to become a patron of this event, please speak with me during the weekend or contact me via the contest e-mail. There is also information in the program on how you may donate online. I hope you have a thoroughly enjoyable time while you are here. What makes this event unique is the element of friendly competition for pianists of all ages. The inclusion of a variety of musical genres such as ragtime, traditional jazz, novelty song, honky-tonk, boogie and blues allows for a wide variety of musical selections.

As we ponder the future of this event, we look forward to continuing the tradition of highlighting and preserving this uniquely American music from the early twentieth century. This year's guest artists include Jeff Barnhart along with two three-time former champions, Brian Holland and Julie McClarey. Total prize money for this year is \$6,400 plus trophies & medallions for those who place in each division.

Take in the hospitality and southern charm that abounds in our community. If you need anything, just ask! Please fill out one of our survey forms in the Nutt Auditorium foyer so we know what you liked and what improvements we might consider for the future. We would also like to know how you found out about our event so we can better focus our advertising in the future. We want you to have a relaxing and fun experience and we want you to come back.

All of our after-hours events will be held indoors each evening at The Old Henry located at 1002 East



Jackson Ave. on the Oxford Square. Originally a two-story hotel, The Old Henry is now a dueling piano bar, one of only two in the mid-south region. Full menu and bar service will be available each evening as well as some great music from our guest artists and competitors. Cover charge is \$15. Any catered event with live entertainment may be purchased as long as seats remain available. Grab some friends and come out for a relaxing and fun time!

Sit back and thoroughly enjoy some old-time piano playing from a group of diverse performers ... tell your friends about it ... and bring them back with you next year!

Ian Hominick,  
*Artistic Director*



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# HISTORY OF THE FESTIVAL

As a fundraiser on Memorial Day in 1975, the Monticello Railway Museum hosted the first of twelve World Championship Old-Time Piano Playing Contest editions that took place in that small town, located about halfway between Champaign and Decatur, Illinois. For eleven of those years, the contest took place on the rear platform of an old railroad caboose to the delight of hundreds of folks in lawn chairs, more in bleachers, and even some perched atop box cars to get a better view. The last year it took place in Monticello was the same day as “Hands Across America” and lots of folks suspected there’d be traffic problems and stayed away. Others were deterred by a chill breeze and cloudy skies with sprinkles of rain as the wind swept over the high school football field, pressed into service in anticipation of bigger crowds. Consequently, 1986 was the year we decided to take our event, which had expanded to two days with afterglow parties, inside.

By 1987, we were ensconced in the Holiday Inn on the west side of Decatur IL, and our stay there lasted until our move to Peoria in the late 1990s. We spent two years with the Four Points by Sheraton Hotel after a long stretch at the Hotel Pèrè Marquette, which closed for renovation. When the Four Points suddenly closed, the Peoria Convention and Visitor’s Bureau came to our rescue and we moved to the Embassy Suites for a few years.

Our first contestant showed up on a day in 1975 that was hot and sweaty and that would eventually be plagued by tornadoes nearby, forcing the contest into a baggage car with a back-up piano. Four contestants showed up but so did about 40 spectators. By year two, we were down to three contestants but had a much bigger audience and the third year, about 600 people came to watch, boosted by our champ’s appearance on the *Mike Douglas Show* in Cleveland, Ohio.

After reading about her in a newspaper story in Chicago which was picked up by the wire services, the show flew her there for an appearance that also had Bob Hope and Jethro Tull’s singer, Ian Anderson. She was thrilled, we were thrilled, and we wound up with a dozen contestants.



Joybelle Squibb, age 71, 1977



*Dorothy M. Herrold, Laporte, Indiana*

Our champ for the first two years was Joybelle Squibb, a golf-playing granny from Vandalia IL, but in 1977, Dorothy M. Herrold of LaPorte IN, a retired school teacher who got into playing full-time after her husband died, beat her. Herrold won three times in a row through 1979, our first of several three-time winners.

Through the years, the contest expanded from a one-afternoon affair where everybody picked up their lawn chair when the last tune was played and went to take a train ride. The first addition was a party afterward, the first one held at Shakey's Pizza Parlor in Champaign. Everybody spent the next five hours eating, drinking, and singing along with the piano players. Having the event at a hotel solved the problem of lodging for those coming in for both days and also gave us rooms for the afterparties with food service thrown in.

Since 2016, things changed with the contest and all of its events moved from Illinois to Mississippi. Instead of a hotel ballroom for our event, we use a concert hall that's part of the University of Mississippi Department of Music. We hope it was enough fun that you come back next year!

Ted Lemen, Founder



*Ted Lemen entertains from the platform of a caboose.*



*Contest organizers Judy Leschewski and Ted Lemen in the early days with champion Mimi Blais of Montreal*

# GUEST ARTISTS AND JUDGES



## TED LEMEN

Now in his 52nd year as contest emcee, Ted Lemen came from a family where music was paramount, including a father who sang in a barbershop quartet and chorus, a mom who played violin and aunts and uncles who comprised a family octet. Years of clarinet lessons aside, it was an

unused piano at home that got his attention, and he taught himself to play starting with just two fingers, singing along to hundreds of tunes from the 1890s through the Roaring 20s that he'd heard. While attending Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington IL, he founded the Monticello Railway Museum in 1966, revealing his second passion, trains. While still in school in 1967, he was hired by Shakey's Pizza Parlor after playing piano for 57 hours and 31 minutes in a piano marathon sponsored by the local Wurlitzer dealer.

As publicity director for the railway museum in 1975, he started the piano contest as a fundraiser, and after just a couple of years, hundreds of spectators brought their own lawn chairs to sit outdoors and listen to piano players compete from the platform of an old railroad car while steam trains chugged past. After welcoming more than 500 piano players from across the United States and other countries to the stage at several locations in Central Illinois, the contest wound up in Oxford MS in 2016, and Ted continues to be part of a dedicated group that promotes piano performance of Ragtime, honky-tonk and standard tunes for fame, trophies and cash prizes.

## BOBBY VAN DEUSEN

E. Robert van Deusen, AKA Mr. Piano, is celebrating his 50th year as a professional musician. A

Philadelphia native, he began his musical journey at age 7 by mimicking the family



player piano. Classically trained, his career started in Columbus, Ohio at the Top Steak House. He has toured extensively, and performed with many notables, Al Hirt, Pete Fountain, The Dukes Of Dixieland, The Rosie O'Grady's Dixieland Band, The Delta Queen Steamboat Company, American Hawaiian Cruises, Allied Concert Tours, and with his own 'Prime Time Trio'. Bobby is currently the staff pianist at Seagars Prime Steaks and Seafood at the Sandestin Hilton in Florida. Bobby is the first (and only) three-time Senior Division Champion with the World Championship Old Time Piano Contest. He's an instrument rated pilot, and enjoys making macrame leashes for the local Human Society. He lives in Pensacola.



## JEFF BARNHART

Jeff Barnhart is an internationally renowned pianist, vocalist, arranger, bandleader, recording artist, ASCAP composer, educator and entertainer. Jeff shares his mastery of the classic swing,

jazz, and ragtime repertoire of the early to mid-20th century with a versatility and vibrant energy that finds him constantly appearing as a soloist, band pianist, and with smaller groups—most notably Ivory&Gold® with his talented wife, flutist/vocalist Anne Barnhart—at parties, festivals, clubs, and cruises throughout the world. His unsurpassed knowledge of the history of America's early pop styles and its best current practitioners, combined

with his superior "people skills," has awarded him the position of Musical Director for several acclaimed annual events, including the Eagles & Ivories, the Monterey Jazz Bash by the Bay (as Co-Creative Consultant), and the Essex (CT) Winter Series Jazz Concert.

Jeff has played dual piano with such jazz luminaries as Ralph Sutton, Neville Dickie, Louis Mazetier, John

Sheridan, Brian Holland, and Carl Sonny Leyland. He has recorded over 120 full-length albums on, in addition to his own label, Jazz Alive Records, several celebrated labels including Arbors, GHB, Lake Records (UK) and Music Minus One. Reviewer Jack Rummel summed up the reason for Jeff's popularity, averring, "When it comes to talent, speed, versatility, creativity, mastery of multiple genres and just plain entertaining zaniness, Jeff Barnhart stands alone".

In addition to his active performance and recording schedule, Jeff is a dedicated and enthusiastic educator. His double BA's in Music and English, combined with his MA in Education, make Jeff a formidable and entertaining force in clinic, masterclass and inspirational speaking forums and as a lecturer (with his wife) for Road Scholar with programs called, "Ragtime, Tin Pan Alley, Jazz and the Blues." and "Silent Film Comedy: History, Music and Laughter" both taking place on the beautiful, historic Georgia State Park, Jekyll Island.



### **JULIE MCCLAREY-SMITH**

Julie McClarey-Smith is an awarding winning pianist with a style that lights up every venue in which she appears. She has appeared on National Television and performed in notable locations in Nashville, Chicago, Branson, and throughout the United States. She began lessons

at an early age and graduated Summa Cum Laude from Millikin University and continued piano studies at Elmhurst College and University of Illinois. Although Julie is classically trained, she is equally accomplished with many piano styles. She is the three-time, undefeated winner of the "World Championship Piano Playing Competition." In 2012, Julie had the honor of being a featured performer at the Showboat Branson Belle for three years. In 2014, she was not only a featured performer but also Music Director at the Showboat and performed at Silver Dollar City. She had the privilege

of performing at the Billy Graham Retreat Center in Asheville, North Carolina. Julie has also performed as a guest artist in multi-grand concerts in Kentucky and Illinois. Julie has been a guest performer three times in multi-grand concerts in Kentucky which led her to the idea of doing multi-grand concerts in Illinois. She was the Music Director/Performer for six multi-grand concerts in Illinois where the Salvation Army benefitted greatly from the donations raised at that concert.

Julie keeps busy after retiring recently from teaching by playing the grand piano at Von Maur and with volunteer work playing at hospitals, assisted living centers, and for various church and civic programs. Julie is blessed to be the proud wife of Ted Smith, the mother of three wonderful children and a son-in-law, and enjoys time with her energetic grandson, Matthew!



### **BRIAN HOLLAND**

Brian Holland is an internationally renowned pianist, composer, recording artist, and entertainer who has enjoyed a music career spanning more than four decades. From all over the U.S. to as far away as Rwanda, Africa, he has toured the world sharing

his love of all forms of early American music.

Brian has performed with some of the hottest jazz bands in the US – Sierra Stompers, Holland-Coots Jazz Quintet, Big B.A.D. Rhythm, Groovus, Swingin' West, and others – promoting his unique and creative styles of jazz, ragtime, stride, swing, boogie, and blues. His newest quartet, Brian Holland & The Ragabonds, just released their first album (CD & LP) on Rivermont Records.

Brian earned a Grammy nomination for his work with Bud Dresser on their 2006 album, "Ragtime-Goodtime-Jazz". This album, plus other releases, sheet music, and digital recordings, are available at [shanesmohawk.com](http://shanesmohawk.com)

Behind the scenes, Brian has helped organize several ragtime & jazz festivals. He served as the Artistic Director for the Scott Joplin Ragtime Festival from 2015-2020. And since 2018, he has been Co-Creative Consultant for the Monterey Jazz Bash by the Bay (Monterey, CA).



### PAUL ORSI

Paul Orsi, a ragtime pianist and composer, brings a unique high-energy style to America's first popular music. From a young age, Paul has performed professionally in many venues, including Shakey's Pizza Parlors, Clearman's Northwood's Inn, and most notably, a 10-year engagement

as the Disneyland Coke Corner pianist. A three-time winner of the World Championship Old-Time Piano Playing Contest, Paul has appeared in several California Ragtime Festivals: West Coast Ragtime Festival, The San Diego Jazz Festival, The Historic Sutter Creek Ragtime Festival and Ragfest in Orange County. He now resides with his wife, Sharon, in Surprise, Arizona.

Paul earned his Master's Degree in music composition from UC Riverside. His "street" education comes from personal interaction for over 40 years with many notable ragtime performers: Dick Zimmerman, Max Morath, "Eubie" Blake, Sally Stanford, Rod Miller, Judy Carmichael, Johnny Hodges, Jim Omohundro, Jim Hession, Frederick Hodges, Tom Brier, Stephanie Trick, Paulo Alderighi, and Adam Swanson to name a few. Paul attributes much of his stylistic flair to these exceptional musicians and honors their legacy through his playing.



*2025 Regular Division Finalists*



*2025 Junior Division Participants*



*Faye Ballard being interviewed on stage*

# 2025 PHOTOS



Jared Szabo, 2025 New Rag Contest winner



Michael Flores, piano, and Max Libertor, washboard, at the Old Henry After Hours party



John Beggs performing at The Old Henry



Paul Orsi and Guess, at the Old Henry After Hours party



Richard Dowling's Master Class with Lilianne Tao



Russell Wilson, 2025 Regular Division winner



Ian Homnick with the Hutchinsons at the Old Henry



Ricky Burkhead plays drums at the After-Hours Party



Alexander Hutchinson at The Old Henry



Parishioners at St. Peters

# 2026 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

## THURSDAY, MAY 21st

7:30 pm	Opening Preview Concert – The Old Henry
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## FRIDAY, MAY 22nd

10:30 am	Guided Trolley Tour of Oxford
12:00 pm	22/26 – UM Band Hall
2:00 pm	Presentation: Julie McClarey, guest artist – David H. Nutt Auditorium <i>Raggin' Up the Gospel Classics</i>
3:00pm	Concert: Bobby van Deusen, guest artist – David H. Nutt Auditorium <i>The Complete Rags of Arthur Marshall</i>
6:00pm	New Rag Contest – David H. Nutt Auditorium
8:00 pm	Tune-Ups Party – The Old Henry

## SATURDAY, MAY 23rd

8:00 am	Contestant Draw for Playing Order
9:00 am	Preliminary Round for Junior, Regular & Senior Divisions – David H. Nutt Auditorium
11:45 am	Silent Movie Box Lunch with Bobby van Deusen – UM Band Hall
1:00 pm	Regular & Senior Division Preliminary Round continues – David H. Nutt Auditorium
7:00 pm	After-Hours Party – The Old Henry

## SUNDAY, MAY 24th

9:00 am	Youth Master Class with Jeff Barnhart – David H. Nutt Auditorium
10:00 am	Service at First Presbyterian Church with music by Julie McClarey
1:00 pm	Semi-finals, Seniors Final & Finals – Nutt Auditorium
7:00 pm	Red, White & Blue Finale – The Old Henry <i>*Memorial Day Tribute – free admission for veterans</i>

**\*all-event & day passes do not include after-hours at The Old Henry – \$15 cover**

\*\* children age 12-and-under admitted free to non-catered events

2026 Contest T-Shirts, merchandise, and performer CD's available for sale in the hallway.



# 2026 FESTIVAL MERCHANDISE



Pick up an official Contest T-shirt (right) or an official contest cap, tote, mug, or pen (below) at the merchandise table located in the hallway outside Nutt Auditorium.

Concessions are available in the hallway outside Nutt Auditorium.  
*\*No food or drink permitted in Nutt Auditorium or in practice rooms*



# 2026 OFFICIAL CONTEST RULES

These are the Official Rules for the 2026 edition of the World Championship Old-time Piano Playing Contest and Festival. The “Piano Contest” rules below have been revised, so please read them carefully.

**Note: On Saturday, May 23, 2026, Senior and Regular Division contestants must draw for playing order at 8:00 a.m. in Rm. #153 of the Music Building.**

## PIANO CONTEST REGULAR DIVISION

**DATES:** The two-day competition to determine the World Champion Old-time Piano Player takes place over Saturday and Sunday of Memorial Day weekend each year. Although festival events begin on May 21, the actual contest dates are May 23-24, 2026.

**ELIGIBILITY:** Pianists ages 18-and-older are eligible to compete. Pianists of any age will be eligible to compete in the New Rag Contest. \*Three-time winners are no longer eligible to compete in this division.

**PRELIMINARY ROUND:** Contestants must compete in the Preliminary Eliminations (PE's) on Saturday in order to advance to the Semi-Finals and Finals that take place on Sunday afternoon. The PE's will begin at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday and continue until each contestant has been heard, with a lunch break scheduled about 11:30 a.m.

**SEMI-FINALS & FINALS:** Those advancing to the semi-finals will be announced on-stage at the conclusion of Saturday's Preliminary Round. An immediate drawing will take place to determine playing position for Sunday's Semi-final Round. The Semi-Finals will begin at 1:30 pm on Sunday with up to ten (10) Regular Division contestants advancing from Saturday's Preliminary Eliminations. The number of contestants selected for the Semi-Final round is at the discretion of the judges. The Semi-Finals will narrow the field of contestants to the final five (5), who will then compete immediately in the Finals to determine the winner and other finishing places.

## REPERTOIRE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Contestants need to prepare five (5) different selections written no later than 1939 (no medleys allowed), one of which must be a ballad or standard popular song, and not considered “Ragtime”. At no point may selections be repeated in subsequent rounds.

2. The music must be memorized. Two selections are played in the PE's, and each player who advances into the Semi-Finals on Sunday afternoon will play two more selections that meet contest requirements. The theme piece must be performed before the Finals round.

3. Contestants must provide the title, composer and year written for all selections to be played on their official entry blank.

4. Contestants may change their selections up until the entry deadline of May 1 when selections must be finalized and after which date no revisions to the play list may be made.

5. Contestants must submit a repertoire list that includes all of the selections they will play in the Preliminary, Semi-final and Final rounds not later than the registration deadline of May 1. No changes are permitted after that date. Contestants are not required to reveal repertoire for specific rounds, rather, each contestant may choose their repertoire from their "pool" list provided. Contestants advancing to the semi-finals must adhere to the theme requirement.

6. A contestant failing to provide their playlist by the deadline may re-enter with a late fee if space in the field permits.

7. No religious or patriotic selections are allowed, and vocal or instrumental accompaniment is prohibited.

8. On stage, contestants need provide only the title and composer of their selections prior to their playing although additional information may be requested by the contest MC during their on-stage interview.

9. For the purpose of the World Championship Old-time Piano Playing Contest, the following definition of “old-time” music will apply:

*The style of piano playing found primarily in public venues of performance between 1890 and 1939, particularly in bars and piano competitions, consisting of popular songs and instrumentals of that era, including ragtime, traditional jazz, novelty, stride, and boogie, but excluding advanced chord progressions more commonly found by 1940 or later in symphonic, modern jazz and be bop music forms. Selections may also include music idiomatic to solo piano performance and popular dance styles.*

**2026 THEME:** Contestants who advance to the Semi-finals on Sunday afternoon will play two (2) selections of their choice, one of which must be the theme piece (if not performed already). The



2026 theme is “Food or Drink,” requiring that players include one selection with either “food” or “drink” in the title (**see sample list of possible repertoire**). \*Note: Beginning in 2026, the “theme” selection also applies to Junior and Senior competitors.

**SCORING:** Point totals are cumulative. Point totals from the PE’s determine contestants for the Semi-Finals. Point totals from the Semi-Finals will be added to the point totals from the PE’s to determine the top five (5) players who then advance to the Finals, where point totals will again be combined.

**JUDGING CRITERIA:** Judges will award points in each round based on technique, style and interpretation, showmanship and costume. In the event of a tie in points for any place, that contestant with the higher point total in technique will prevail, with the order of other tie-breaking categories to be: style and interpretation, showmanship, and costume. The judges’ decision is final.

**TIME LIMIT:** For the PE’s and Semi-Finals, a total of eight (8) minutes playing time is allowed for each contestant’s performance for both tunes (not including time for audience applause, interview time with the emcee, etc.). Contestants exceeding the time limits will be penalized five (5) points for each fifteen (15) seconds or fraction thereof, of overtime. Six (6) minutes is allotted for those who make the Finals.

**COSTUME:** Costumes are required, and the judges will award or deduct points based on their old-time appearance in the PE’s, Semi-Finals and Finals.

**CHALLENGES:** Challenges to a contestant’s selection must be made within five (5) minutes after the playing of the selection has been completed. Other contestants, contest officials and judges may challenge selections for age or other reasons. In the event that a selection does not qualify after it is challenged, the person playing it will be disqualified.

**CONTESTANT DRAW:** Contestants in all Divisions will report to our “Green Room” on Saturday morning at 8:00 a.m. prior to the PE’s so lots can be drawn for the order of play, and contestants can receive any last-minute instructions. Contestants not in attendance at this time cannot participate in the contest. (Please note that contestants should bring their costume with them to this drawing for the order of play on Saturday morning as there will not be time to return to the hotel to get them before the first few contestants are scheduled to compete by 9 a.m. For this reason, a complimentary light breakfast we be available in the Green Room on Saturday

morning for contestants only. During the actual competitions, if a contestant is not on hand when their playing position is called, the contestant will be considered to have withdrawn from competition. Order of play for the Semi-Finals and Finals will be drawn on stage as soon as practical after completion of judging for that round. A ten-minute break will occur between the Semi-Final and Final rounds.

**ENTRY FEE:** Each entry form must be accompanied by a \$75 entry fee. A \$25 late fee will be added if not received by the May 1 deadline. This is not refundable unless the contest is canceled. No entry will be considered official until the appropriate fee is received.

**EXPENSES:** The World Championship Old-Time Piano Playing Contest and Festival is not responsible for the cost of travel, meals, lodging or other expenses incurred while competing.

**CONTESTANT TICKETS:** The contest will provide each contestant with one (1) complimentary all-event pass for their use plus one additional pass for a family member or guest. No complimentary passes are provided for catered events or excursions. Contestants should advise when entering the contest if another ticket is needed. After-hours events are complimentary for all contestants.

**DEADLINE:** The total number of contestants (all divisions) is limited to the first 30 paid entries, and each entry form shall list that contestant’s music selections, to be updated no later than May 1, the contest deadline. Entries will be accepted for up to twelve (12) Regular Division contestants; eight (8) Senior contestants and ten (10) Junior Division contestants. After the deadline, any remaining slots will be filled from the waiting list on a first-come basis without regard to division.

**ENTRY SUBMISSION:** The Regular Division Contest Coordinator, Paul Orsi, will answer any questions you may have concerning rules or repertoire at this address: [orsiragtime@gmail.com](mailto:orsiragtime@gmail.com). On-line entries will be instantly processed and will assure your registration. No entry will be considered official until the appropriate fee is received. Walk-on entries will be accepted on the Saturday of competition if the limit of 30 contestants (total of all divisions) has not been reached. A late fee of an additional \$50 shall apply to entries received after the deadline of May 1.

**2026 PRIZES:** The winner will receive \$2,000, a golden medallion, a permanent trophy and free lodging for the following year’s contest. Second place will



receive \$1,000 and a silver medallion. Third place will receive \$750 and a bronze medallion. Checks will be mailed to the winners within three weeks of the conclusion of the contest (winners must be sure to complete a W-9 form on site). *\*Three-time winners of any specific Contest are not eligible to enter that contest again.*

### **ADDITIONAL RULES:**

- By competing in the contest, participants agree to allow the use of their photographs and recorded performances to promote the event.
- Disputes arising from the competitions or judging will be resolved by the contest judges, who will make the final decision.
- By entering the competition, the contestant agrees to supply his/her social security number if necessary to comply with United States tax laws.
- Contestants must provide complete information on the contest application including home town media contacts. Each contestant should send 1 color high-resolution photograph (minimum 300 ppi) and a short one-paragraph biography for inclusion in the contest program to Ian Hominick at [oldtimepianocontest@olemiss.edu](mailto:oldtimepianocontest@olemiss.edu)
- The use of alcohol or other controlled substances prior to or during competitions may result in disqualification.

### **ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS FOR THE JUNIOR DIVISION**

*These are the Official Rules for the 2026 edition of the World Championship Old-time Piano Playing Contest and Festival. The "Piano Contest" rules below have been revised, so please read them carefully.*

*\*Note: On Saturday, May 23, 2026 all contestants must draw for playing order at 8:00 a.m. in Rm. #153 of the Music Building.*

*\*Note: Junior contestants should also read all of the Regular Division rules, as many apply to both divisions!*

**ELIGIBILITY:** Junior contestants are defined as those 18-years-of-age-or-under on the day of competition. Any contestant winning the Junior Division a total of three (3) times (not necessarily in consecutive years) may no longer compete in the Junior Division. However, the age requirement will be waived for them, and they may then compete in the Regular Division.

**FORMAT:** Up to ten (10) Junior Division contestants play on Saturday and the Junior Division champ will be announced at the close of the Preliminary Round at the end of the day. Each Junior Division contestant must prepare two (2) selections, one of which must have either "food" or "drink" in the title (**see sample list of possible repertoire**).

**2026 PRIZES:** The Junior Champion will be awarded

a prize of \$1,000 and a permanent trophy. A second-place prize of \$500 and third-place prize of \$250 will also be awarded. The Junior Division champion is traditionally invited to make a special appearance Sunday afternoon to play a tune on stage prior to the beginning of the Semi-final round.

**TIME LIMIT:** A total of eight (8) minutes playing time is allowed for each contestant's performance of both their tunes (not including time for audience applause, interview time with the emcee, etc.). The penalty for playing in excess of the time limit prescribed is five (5) points for each 30 seconds, or fraction thereof, of overtime.

**ENTRY FEE:** The entry fee for the Junior Division is \$50 with a penalty fee for late entry of \$25 if not received by the May 1 deadline. This entry fee is not refundable unless the contest is canceled. The Contest Coordinator, Paul Orsi, will answer any questions regarding rules or repertoire at this address: [orsiragtime@gmail.com](mailto:orsiragtime@gmail.com). No entry will be considered official until the appropriate fee is received.

**PARENTAL CONSENT:** Contestants in the Junior Division must have their entry confirmed by a parent. Note that parents are required to be present during the Contest and monitor the safety of their child at all times while on campus. The Contest does not provide chaperones for minors and the University is not responsible for the well-being of any contestant.

### **ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS FOR THE SENIOR DIVISION**

*These are the Official Rules for the 2026 edition of the World Championship Old-time Piano Playing Contest and Festival. The "Piano Contest" rules below have been revised, so please read them carefully.*

*\*Note: On Saturday, May 23, 2026 all contestants must draw for playing order at 8:00 a.m. in Rm. #153 of the Music Building.*

*\*Note: Senior contestants should also read all of the Regular Division rules, as many apply to both divisions! Senior contestants may NOT enter both the Regular Division AND senior Contest. Beginning in 2026, the "theme" selection also applies to Senior Division competitors.*

**ELIGIBILITY:** Senior contestants are defined as those 60-years-of-age or older on the day of competition. Any contestant winning the Senior Division a total of three (3) times (not necessarily in consecutive years) may no longer be declared champion in the Senior Division. However, the contestant may continue to perform in any other eligible contest.

*\*Contest rules continued p. 19*



# REGULAR DIVISION PRELIMINARY ELIMINATIONS SCORECARD

The order of play will be determined by drawing at 8:00 Saturday morning & will be posted for spectators. Fill in the order of play, sit back, and enjoy the competition. Rules and scoring categories used by the judges are described on pages 20-23.

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
#1: \_\_\_\_\_  
#2: \_\_\_\_\_  
Points: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
#1: \_\_\_\_\_  
#2: \_\_\_\_\_  
Points: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
#1: \_\_\_\_\_  
#2: \_\_\_\_\_  
Points: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
#1: \_\_\_\_\_  
#2: \_\_\_\_\_  
Points: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
#1: \_\_\_\_\_  
#2: \_\_\_\_\_  
Points: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
#1: \_\_\_\_\_  
#2: \_\_\_\_\_  
Points: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
#1: \_\_\_\_\_  
#2: \_\_\_\_\_  
Points: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
#1: \_\_\_\_\_  
#2: \_\_\_\_\_  
Points: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
#1: \_\_\_\_\_  
#2: \_\_\_\_\_  
Points: \_\_\_\_\_

11. Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
#1: \_\_\_\_\_  
#2: \_\_\_\_\_  
Points: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
#1: \_\_\_\_\_  
#2: \_\_\_\_\_  
Points: \_\_\_\_\_

12. Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
#1: \_\_\_\_\_  
#2: \_\_\_\_\_  
Points: \_\_\_\_\_

# REGULAR DIVISION SEMI-FINALS SCORECARD

1. Name: _____ #1: _____ #2: _____ Points: _____	6. Name: _____ #1: _____ #2: _____ Points: _____
2. Name: _____ #1: _____ #2: _____ Points: _____	7. Name: _____ #1: _____ #2: _____ Points: _____
3. Name: _____ #1: _____ #2: _____ Points: _____	8. Name: _____ #1: _____ #2: _____ Points: _____
4. Name: _____ #1: _____ #2: _____ Points: _____	9. Name: _____ #1: _____ #2: _____ Points: _____
5. Name: _____ #1: _____ #2: _____ Points: _____	10. Name: _____ #1: _____ #2: _____ Points: _____

## JUDGING GUIDELINES

### RATING SCALE:

- 5 = SUPERIOR
- 4 = EXCELLENT
- 3 = GOOD
- 2 = FAIR
- 1 = NEEDS ASSESSMENT

### 1. TECHNIQUE

- FINGER DEXTERITY
- NOTE ACCURACY
- PEDAL USE
- KEYBOARD COVERAGE
- DIFFICULTY
- MUSICAL VARIETY
- possible pts this category: 30

### 2. STYLE /INTERPRETATION

- TEMPO            RHYTHM
- ORIGINALITY    MUSICALITY
- ARTICULATION & PHRASING
- CONTRAST & DYNAMICS
- INTERPRETATION
- PREPARATION
- possible pts this category: 40

### 3. SHOWMANSHIP

- STAGE PRESENCE
- POISE & COMMAND
- AUDIENCE RAPPORT
- SALESMANSHIP
- MUSICAL PRODUCT
- APPLAUSE
- possible pts this category: 20

### 4. COSTUME

- AUTHENTIC or REPLICA  
(circle one)
- COSTUME
- MAKEUP/GROOMING
- possible pts this category: 10

# REGULAR DIVISION FINALS SCORECARD

1. Name: _____ #1: _____ #2: _____ Points: _____	4. Name: _____ #1: _____ #2: _____ Points: _____
2. Name: _____ #1: _____ #2: _____ Points: _____	5. Name: _____ #1: _____ #2: _____ Points: _____
3. Name: _____ #1: _____ #2: _____ Points: _____	



# JUNIOR DIVISION SCORECARD

1. Name: _____	4. Name: _____	7. Name: _____
#1: _____	#1: _____	#1: _____
#2: _____	#2: _____	#2: _____
points: _____	points: _____	points: _____
2. Name: _____	5. Name: _____	8. Name: _____
#1: _____	#1: _____	#1: _____
#2: _____	#2: _____	#2: _____
points: _____	points: _____	points: _____
3. Name: _____	6. Name: _____	9. Name: _____
#1: _____	#1: _____	#1: _____
#2: _____	#2: _____	#2: _____
points: _____	points: _____	points: _____

# NEW RAG SCORECARD

1. Name: _____	6. Name: _____
Tune: _____	Tune: _____
Points: _____	Points: _____
2. Name: _____	7. Name: _____
Tune: _____	Tune: _____
Points: _____	Points: _____
3. Name: _____	8. Name: _____
Tune: _____	Tune: _____
Points: _____	Points: _____
4. Name: _____	9. Name: _____
Tune: _____	Tune: _____
Points: _____	Points: _____
5. Name: _____	10. Name: _____
Tune: _____	Tune: _____
Points: _____	Points: _____

# SENIOR DIVISION SCORECARD

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_

#1: \_\_\_\_\_

#2: \_\_\_\_\_

Points: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Name: \_\_\_\_\_

#1: \_\_\_\_\_

#2: \_\_\_\_\_

Points: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name: \_\_\_\_\_

#1: \_\_\_\_\_

#2: \_\_\_\_\_

Points: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Name: \_\_\_\_\_

#1: \_\_\_\_\_

#2: \_\_\_\_\_

Points: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name: \_\_\_\_\_

#1: \_\_\_\_\_

#2: \_\_\_\_\_

Points: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Name: \_\_\_\_\_

#1: \_\_\_\_\_

#2: \_\_\_\_\_

Points: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Name: \_\_\_\_\_

#1: \_\_\_\_\_

#2: \_\_\_\_\_

Points: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Name: \_\_\_\_\_

#1: \_\_\_\_\_

#2: \_\_\_\_\_

Points: \_\_\_\_\_



**FORMAT:** A total of eight (8) Senior Division contestants may play two selections each on Saturday. Up to four (4) contestants may be chosen to advance to perform two selections each on Sunday's Semi-finals, after which the champion will be selected.

**REPERTOIRE:** Contestants need to prepare four (4) different selections written no later than 1939 (no medleys allowed), one of which must be a ballad or standard popular song, and not considered "ragtime." **Senior competitors must also include one selection that adheres to the 2026 theme "food or drink." (see sample list of possible works)** The music must be memorized. Two selections are played in the PE's, and each player who advances into the Semi-Finals on Sunday afternoon will play two more selections that meet contest requirements. Contestants are not required to reveal repertoire for specific rounds, rather, each contestant may choose their repertoire from their "pool" list provided. Contestants may play their selections in any order from their list within each round as long as selections are not repeated.

**2026 PRIZES:** The Senior Champion will be awarded a prize of \$300 and a permanent trophy. A second-place prize of \$200 and third-place prize of \$100 will also be awarded.

**TIME LIMIT:** A total of eight (8) minutes playing time is allowed for each contestant's performance of both their tunes (not including time for audience applause, interview time with the emcee, etc.). The penalty for playing in excess of the time limit prescribed is five (5) points for each 30 seconds, or fraction thereof, of overtime.

**ENTRY FEE:** The entry fee for the Senior Division is \$50 with a penalty fee for late entry past May 1 of \$25. This entry fee is not refundable unless the contest is canceled. The Contest Coordinator, Bobby van Deusen, will answer any questions regarding rules or repertoire at this address: [mpiano@cox.net](mailto:mpiano@cox.net). No entry will be considered official until the appropriate fee is received.

## **NEW RAG CONTEST**

**ELIGIBILITY:** Contestants of any age are eligible to compete.

**ENTRY FEE:** The entry fee is \$50 and is not refundable unless the contest is canceled.

**TIME LIMIT:** A five-minute time limit applies from a tune's start to finish.

**2026 PRIZE:** The prize for the New Rag Contest shall be \$300 and a trophy.

**PERFORMANCE:** A competitor may play a composition themselves or designate another piano player to do so for them beginning at 6:00 pm on Friday following a drawing for the order of play. All performances must be from memory (no printed scores permitted on stage). The competition will continue until all have been heard, with the single winner being announced by the judges following the close of the competition. Composers who are not in attendance must solicit a performer on their own. NOTE: \*Contest personnel are NOT available to play New Rags.

**SPECIFICATIONS:** To qualify, the composition entered must be an original Rag, with three or more themes, that has not been previously published, recorded for sale, or previously played in this contest. Composers are limited to **one** entry per year.

**STYLE:** The winner will be that player who best exemplifies the style of Ragtime music popular between 1895 and 1930. The winning piece will be filled with syncopation, have original and interesting progressions, and will follow a typical pattern regarding Ragtime format and key changes. The judges will consider rhythmic elements, musical variety, and the work's ability to clearly connect with the stylistic flavor and passion of the Ragtime era. The selection should adhere as close as possible to the authentic form, melody, rhythm and harmonic language of the ragtime era. Three to four sections are compulsory, each containing distinct contrasting themes. Composers are permitted creative latitude with regard to melody and harmony while, at the same time, adhering to the historic definition of a "rag."

**JUDGING:** The contest provides qualified judges familiar with the music and capable of judging the composer's success in writing Ragtime music. Each composition will be judged on originality, adherence to the prescribed formal structure and musicality. A written score of the music is not required by the judges. The judges' decision is final.

**ENTRY DEADLINE:** The New Rag Contest is strictly limited to a total of ten (10) competitors. Walk-on entries will be allowed provided there are fewer than 10 advance entries. The entry fee is \$50 with a penalty of \$25 if not received by the May 1 deadline. The entry fee is not refundable unless the contest is cancelled.

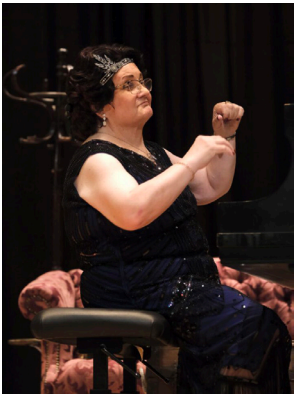
**ENTRY SUBMISSION:** The Contest Coordinator, Bobby van Deusen, will answer and questions regarding the rules at this address: [mpiano@cox.net](mailto:mpiano@cox.net). On-line entries will be instantly processed and assure registration. No entry will be considered official until the appropriate fee is received.

# CONTESTANT PROFILES



Atlanta-based pianist **Berk Balkan** began classical piano at an early age, continuing through high school where he also played clarinet and baritone in the marching band. After stepping away from music in college, he returned to the piano on his own terms - through ragtime. He has since learned over 15 pieces and composed

his own, Three Little Pigs Rag. When not playing piano, Berk works full-time as a Solution Manager at PowerPlan and enjoys basketball, golf, video games, and duets with his wife Maggie, a novice violinist.



**Faye Ballard** first became interested in ragtime after hearing a piano player named Les Cripe playing at a Shakey's Pizza Parlor in Decatur, IL. Les was kind enough to take her under his wing and helped teach her the first rag she learned, "Maple Leaf Rag" by Scott Joplin. Faye has been a part of the World Old-Time Piano

Playing Championship since age 10 either as a contestant or as Contest Coordinator. One of her best experiences was winning first place in the Senior Division of the contest in 2024. Faye is excited to be a part of this new festival and looks forward to meeting as many of you as possible and playing some great ragtime music for you.



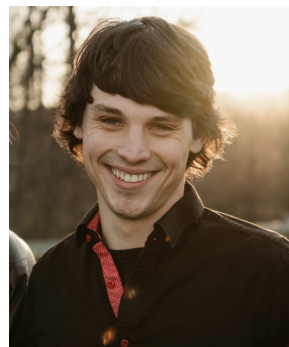
Hailing from Chicago, 'home of the Blues', great jazz, blues and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra gave **Tim Barton** an immersion in beautiful live music. Tim combines these influences in his compositions for multimedia, with a focus on piano and orchestra. He is

a true collaborator and uses "a voice through the piano" with melody, style and the creative process to elevate his many projects. Barton's music can be found on a myriad of shows, including Call

Me Kat (Fox), Younger and The Originals (the CW), Bored to Death on CSI, and various other programs on the BBC and HBO. He was an instructor at both Northwestern University and North Park College. A member of ASCAP, the Society of Composers and Lyricists and the Senior Division winner of the 2025 "World Championship Old Time Piano Playing Contest," Tim performs Fringe Festivals around the world, combining concert repertoire, jazz, blues and ragtime in his outstanding solo piano program "Rhapsody in Chicago Blues."



**John Beggs** was raised in Madison, Florida and has enjoyed music ever since he can remember. He started piano over ten years ago and has learned to play a wide variety of genres, but he specializes in Classical and Stride. John has just finished his first year at Belmont University in Nashville where he is working toward a classical piano performance degree. The World Championship Old-Time Piano Playing Contest has been a favorite yearly event for John since 2019, and he is happy and grateful to be returning once more.



Winner of the 2019 Teens Have Talent, **Mack Berry** is the keyboardist and front man for the Mack Berry Band. In 2025, he released his crowdfunded & Nashville recorded, debut EP "What Country Is," and first music video "Letters From War." He has opened for national country artists such as Jacob

Tolliver, Travis Denning, and Joe Nichols and performs incessantly along the East Coast. When he is not playing music he owns and operates his ice cream shop Debbie's Soft Serve.



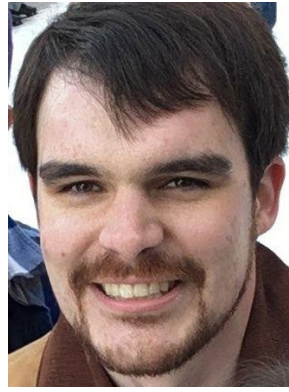
A former professional pianist, current professional software engineer, and relatively recent father of two, **David Cavalari** is delighted to have found the time to return to the contest this year! He worked for several years as the pianist at the Alaska Cabin Nite Dinner Theater outside Denali National Park, AK, and also spent a number of years as

an actor/musician in regional theater, performing all along the East Coast, as well as in Cripple Creek, CO. He has been attending the contest off and on since 2013, and is a two-time winner of the New Rag Contest.



**Michael Flores** is 20-years-old and has been playing piano since the young age of 5. He began his piano studies at Yamaha School of music which taught him traditional classical technique. Michael Flores discovered ragtime while attending the San Diego Jazz Festival where he met Paul Orsi. Paul offered lessons

and became his ragtime mentor where Michael began to learn the Scott Joplin repertoire as well as stride piano improvisation. Through Paul, Michael discovered the ragtime competition and decided to compete in 2023 landing 4th place in the youth division. Since then Michael has participated in many ragtime and early jazz festivals including the Sutter Creek Ragtime Festival and Teagarden Camp. While competing in the competition Michael was impressed by the beautiful campus of Ole Miss and decided to apply to the college during his senior year of high school, while visiting the college he met Dr. Hominick who was incredibly supportive of Michael's decision to go to Ole Miss and solidified his commitment to the college. Michael is finishing his sophomore year of study and is very active as a performer and arranger with The Mississippians Jazz Ensemble.



**Justin Hack** has played the piano since the age of seven. First exposed to ragtime via a performance of Maple Leaf Rag in 1999, he has maintained a fervent passion for the art form ever since. With two degrees from Arizona State University and plans to return to grad school next year, Justin is determined to become a professor of music

composition, having previously worked as a music teacher at the elementary, middle and high school levels. Justin loves to travel to ragtime events all over the country, at least, when he can afford it! This will be his second year competing in the World Championship Old Time Piano Playing Contest, and his first year competing as a performer in the Regular Division. He is currently a teacher in Glendale, Arizona.



**Alexander Hutchinson** is sixteen years old and is from North Carolina. He is homeschooled and will complete his junior year of high school in May 2026. His favorite activities are playing music, building projects, and outdoor activities. Alex began

studying piano in 2015, and has since performed in national and international venues, including a concerto with the St. Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra in Russia and a performance at the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles, California. He currently serves as the full-time pianist for Calvary Baptist Church in Hamlet, NC. During the summers, Alex continues his studies at festivals such as the Palmetto International Piano Festival in South Carolina and Interlochen's Summer Performing Arts Program in Michigan as a piano major. At the Czech Fine Arts Camp for Youth in the Czech Republic, he performed with the jazz band. In addition to his music studies, Alex is active in leadership and public speaking. He will be attending Tar Heel Boys State this summer and recently placed second in his district for the American Legion Oratorical Contest. This will also be his third summer attending NASA's Advanced Space Academy at the U.S. Space and Rocket

Center in Huntsville, Alabama. Alex currently studies piano with Dr. Annie Jeng at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.



**John Patrick Hutchinson, Jr.** is seventeen years old and is a native of Richmond County. He is homeschooled at Seelight Education Academy and is completing his senior year. His favorite activities are playing the piano, reading, and soccer. John Patrick began taking piano lessons in 2014. He has performed in Carnegie Hall in New

York City and at the Smithsonian Institution's National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C. Internationally, he has performed in St. Petersburg, Russia; Bonn, Germany; and Cologne, Germany. He has attended summer festivals for many years, including the Juilliard Performing Arts Camp, the Palmetto International Piano Festival, the Costa Rica Piano Festival, the Interlochen Arts Academy, and the Tanglewood Summer Music Festival. He is also a two-time winner of the World Championship Old Time Piano Playing Contest Junior Division. In addition to solo performances, John Patrick enjoys collaborating with other artists. He has accompanied competition choirs in his area and performed on piano with the Moore County Philharmonic. He is the full-time organist/pianist for First Methodist Church in Bennettsville, South Carolina. He studies with Dr. Annie Jeng at UNC-Greensboro and will be attending college at the Eastman School of Music to study piano performance in the fall.



**Max Libertor** was born and raised in the suburbs of Los Angeles, California. His ragtime journey began during the pandemic lockdown when his father showed him a YouTube video of Tom Brier sight-reading the Super Mario Brothers theme. Something clicked that years of childhood piano lessons had

never been able to unlock — and he hasn't looked back since. Almost entirely self-taught, Max dove deeper — into recordings, obscure sheet music, history, and the composers who shaped the music he was falling in love with. He

played for hours, and the music became part of him. His dedication has earned him recognition throughout the ragtime world. Max was named Ragtime Kid at the 2023 Scott Joplin Ragtime Festival and has since performed at the West Coast Ragtime Festival and the Sutter Creek Ragtime Festival. He is a two-time podium finisher at the Old-Time Piano Playing Contest and Festival and was most recently selected as a 2026 From the Top Fellow. Beyond performing, Max is also a composer, arranger, transcriber, and multi-instrumentalist. This fall he will begin his studies at Berklee College of Music for Jazz Composition.



**Mark Lutton** started playing the piano at age 6, and later earned a Bachelor of Music degree from Boston University. As a classical pianist, Mark plays with flutist Cassie White as the

Sterbrooke Ensemble. They have performed in many venues including Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall in New York City, and their recordings are available on Spotify and iTunes. As a ragtime pianist he has appeared in many competitions, concerts and festivals over the years. He was last seen at this contest in 1994 when he was awarded second prize. He has been practicing all this time, so watch out! His unique performance of "Lion Tamer Rag" is available on a piano roll in both 88-note and Duo-Art formats from Artcraft Music Rolls.



In addition to studying old time piano playing **Zach Mandernach** previously had a fulfilling career as a Music Director for theaters all over Long Island. But now as a new resident of Florida, his new adventure is teaching elementary music in Orlando. A lover of all kinds of "early music" he enjoys playing baroque and classical

music on the harpsichord and fortepiano; and absolutely loves playing old gospel and blues. Zach is looking forward to competing again and can't wait to hang out and celebrate old-time music. Good luck to everyone and have a great show!



Hailing from the United Kingdom, **Alex Nutt** graduated in 2022 from the University of Southampton studying Music with a specialization in piano performance. He has been playing piano for 17 years, but developed an interest in ragtime (and, in general, the "fusion" of jazz and classical music)

around 8 years ago. The highlight of his piano playing life would definitely be his final year recital at the Turner Sims Concert Hall, where he played works by Villa-Lobos, Schumann, Debussy and finished with the solo arrangement of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*.



**Anderson Pries** is a skilled ragtime and jazz pianist hailing from Homewood, IL. He is a 16-year-old rising junior at Homewood Flossmoor High School, a south suburb of Chicago. He has performed alongside many renowned musicians including Grammy-Award-Winning artists like alto

saxophonist Christopher McBride, tenor saxophonist Chip McNeill, tenor saxophonist Mickey Smith Jr, as well as ragtime stars Brian Holland, Paul Orsi, Dan Levinson, Andy Schumm, and the Chicago Cellar Boys. He has also performed in many major venues and festivals. Anderson is also the founder and director of the *Fox River Ragtime Festival* in South Elgin, IL, and is looking forward to a successful inaugural festival this year! He is currently the pianist for Homewood Flossmoor High School's varsity Viking Jazz Band and other featured groups. Outside of piano and music, he also is very active as a volunteer train conductor at the Fox River Trolley Museum in South Elgin, Illinois.



**Paul Stewart** has had a long-time interest in Piano Ragtime music. He has presented Ragtime concerts, workshops, lecture recitals and performances in a variety of venues throughout the United States and in Europe. He is an active performer for wedding receptions, retirement homes, and music clubs. In

2025, he presented a session on the Piano Music of George Gershwin for the World Championship Old-Time Piano-Playing Contest-Festival at The University of Mississippi. He is a frequent performer at the Scott Joplin Ragtime Festival in Sedalia, Missouri. His ragtime CD is titled "Rhythm and Rags." He is Music Professor Emeritus at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. His favorite mantra is, "*You don't stop playing the piano because you get old. You get old because you stop playing the piano.*"



**Jared Szabo**, from Southern California, began his music journey in 2021 after discovering "The Entertainer" on his electronic keyboard. Since then, he has quickly become an active figure in the ragtime community. In 2025, he won the New Rag Contest with "Gateway Rag" and earned second place in the

Junior Division of the Old-Time Piano Contest. He was honored to be selected as the 2025 *Ragtime Kid* by the Scott Joplin Foundation. Jared has performed at the Scott Joplin Ragtime Festival, the West Coast Ragtime Festival, the Sutter Creek Ragtime Festival, and the Old-Time Piano Contest. He serves on the 2026 Sutter Creek Festival planning committee and helps manage its website. He also performs at the Rose Leaf Ragtime Club and Varenita Senior Living. Beyond performing and composing, Jared posts ragtime on his MuseScore profile, collects antique music, and typesets music for composers. A major inspiration for him is Max Kortlander, a talented piano roll artist and composer.



At 17 years of age, **Brayden Whitehead** is a classically trained piano student from Corinth, Mississippi. Although inexperienced in piano performance, he has prepared for his first solo competition ever. Brayden is also a saxophonist in the Pride of AC marching band at Alcorn Central High School alongside his younger sister, Emmalynn.

# CONTESTANT REPERTOIRE

JUNIOR DIVISION			
ALEXANDER HUTCHINSON	Rattlesnake Rag	Ethwell Hanson	1917
	John Henry	Traditional	c. 1890
JOHN PATRICK HUTCHINSON	Alabama Jubilee	Cobb/Yellen	1915
	Red Pepper Rag	Henry Lodge	1910
MAX LIBERTOR	Yesterdays	Jerome Kern	1933
	Frog Legs Rag	James Scott	1906
ANDERSON PRIES	Swipesy Cake Walk	Joplin/Marshall	1900
	Peacherine Rag	Scott Joplin	1901
JARED SZABO	Spring Fever	Rube Bloom	1926
	Fig Leaf Rag	Scott Joplin	1908
BRAYDEN WHITEHEAD	Augustan Club Waltz	Scott Joplin	1901
	Sour Grapes	Will Morrison	1912

REGULAR DIVISION			
BERK BALKAN	Solace	Scott Joplin	1909
	Peacherine Rag	Scott Joplin	1901
	I've Been Working on the Railroad	Traditional	c. 1894
	The Easy Winners	Scott Joplin	1901
	Pineapple Rag	Scott Joplin	1908
TIM BARTON	Mr. Jelly Lord	Jelly Roll Morton	1925
	Bye-Bye Blackbird	Henderson Dixon	1926
	Jitterbug Waltz	Fats Waller	1936
	Toot Toot Tootsie Goodbye	Gus Kahn	1922
	Rhapsody in Blue	George Gershwin	1923
JOHN BEGGS	Past Time Rag No. 5	Artie Matthews	1918
	Honey Suckle Rose	Fats Waller	1928
	Don't Be That Way	Edgar Sampson	1934
	Ida! Sweet as Apple Cider	Eddie Munson	1903
	Patty Cake, Patty Cake	Waller/Johnson	1938
MACK BERRY	Cataract Rag	Robert Hampton	1914
	12 <sup>th</sup> Street Rag	Euday Bowman	1914
	Dizzy Fingers	ZeZ Confrey	1923
	Whipped Cream Rag	Percy Wenrich	1913
	Summertime	George Gershwin	1934
DAVID CAVALARI	Felix Rag	H. H. McSkimming	1910
	That's A Plenty	Lew Pollack	1914
	Stardust	Hoagy Carmichael	1927
	Clair de lune	Claude Debussy	1905
	Jelly Roll Blues	Jelly Roll Morton	1924
MICHAEL FLORES	Symphonic Rag	Carroll Dickerson	1928
	Finger Buster	Willie "The Lion" Smith	1934
	Yesterdays	Jerome Kern	1933
	The Silver Swan	Scott Joplin	1914
	Tea for Two	Vincent Youmans	1924

<b>JUSTIN HACK</b>	Frog Legs Rag	Scott Joplin	1906
	Ham And!	Arthur Marshall	1908
	Peacherine Rag	Scott Joplin	1901
	Pineapple Rag	Scott Joplin	1908
	Sonny Boy	Henderson, DeSylva & Brown	1928
<b>ZACH MANDERNACH</b>	Beer Garden Blues	Williams, Bishop & Raymond	1933
	I Got Rhythm	George Gershwin	1930
	Cryin' for the Carolines	Warren, Lewis & Young	1929
	Handful of Keys	Fats Waller	1929
	My Fate is in Your Hands	Kaufman	1929
<b>ALEX NUTT</b>	American Beauty Rag	Joseph Lamb	1913
	Prelude No. 1	George Gershwin	1926
	Fig Leaf Rag	Scott Joplin	1908
	I Got Rhythm	George Gershwin	1930
	Fizz Water	Eubie Blake	1914

#### SENIOR DIVISION

<b>FAYE BALLARD</b>	I Got Rhythm	George Gershwin	1930
	Jubilee Stomp	Duke Ellington	1928
	12 <sup>th</sup> Street Rag	Euday Bowman	1914
	Pork and Beans	Luckey Roberts	1913
<b>MARK LUTTON</b>	Too Much Mustard	Cecil Macklin	1911
	Hot Off the Griddle Cake Walk	James White	1915
	King Chanticleer	A. Seymour Brown	1910
	Lion Tamer Rag	Mark Janza	1913
<b>PAUL STEWART</b>	Swanee	George Gershwin	1919
	Pine Apple Rag	Scott Joplin	1908
	Kitten on the Keys	ZeZ Confrey	1921
	Souvenirs d'Andalousie	Louis Moreau Gottschalk	1851

#### NEW RAG CONTEST

David Cavalari	Bathtub Pickles
Justin Hack	Cherry Blossom Rag
Ted Lemen	The Combination Car Rag
Max Libertor	The Topsy Elephant
Jared Szabo	Jewel Box Rag



# CHAMPS THROUGH THE YEARS

(\* denotes retired 3-time champions)



## REGULAR DIVISION

Joybelle Squibb, 1975-76  
Dorothy M. Herrold, 1977-79\*  
Bruce Petsche, 1980  
Mark Haldorson, 1981-83\*  
Janet Kaizer, 1984-85  
Ron Trotta, 1986-88\*  
Julie McClarey, 1989, 1995-96  
Marty Mincer, 1990, 1993  
“Perfessor” Bill Edwards, 1991  
Paul Gronemeier, 1992  
Mimi Blais, 1994, 2000  
Brian Holland, 1997-99\*  
Dan Mouyard, 2001, 2003  
Adam Downey, 2002  
Adam Yarian, 2004-6\*  
Ethan Uslan, 2007, 2012, 2014\*  
Adam Swanson, 2008-10, 2015\*  
Martin Spitznagel, 2011  
Russell Wilson, 2013, 2025  
William McNally, 2016-17  
Jean-Baptiste Franc, 2018  
Paul Orsi, 2019, 2023-24\*  
Eve Elliot, 2022

## SENIOR DIVISION

John Remmers, 2018  
Bobby van Deusen, 2019, 2022-23\*  
Faye Ballard 2024  
Tim Barton 2025

## DUET CONTEST

Bill Edwards & Adam Swanson  
2015  
Adam Swanson & 4 Arrows  
2016  
Daniel Souvigny & Nathan Beasley  
2017  
Adam Swanson & Daniel Souvigny  
2018

## JUNIOR DIVISION

Neil Moe, 1985-87\*  
Dax Baumgartner, 1988-90\*  
Adam Downey, 1991-93\*  
Marty Sammon, 1994-95  
Dan Mouyard, 1996  
Noah Harmon, 1997  
Adam Yarian, 1998-2000\*  
Harrison Wade, 2001, 2005  
Will Best, 2002  
Adam Swanson, 2003-4, 2006\*  
Wesley Reznicek, 2007, 2009  
Cassidy Gephart, 2008  
Morgan Siever, 2010-11  
Isaac Smith, 2013  
Daniel Souvigny, 2012, 2014-15\*  
Nina Freeman, 2016  
Nathan Beasley, 2017  
Kelton Boblits, 2018-19  
John Beggs, 2022, 2024  
John Patrick Hutchinson, 2023, 2025

## NEW RAG CONTEST

Gale Foehner - 1997  
*Carondelet*  
Mimi Blais - 1998  
*The Turkey*  
Michael Stalcup - 1999  
*Short Mountain Falldown*  
Dan Mouyard - 2000  
*Mojo's Marbles*  
Bill Edwards - 2001-2, 2016  
*The Necromancer*  
*The Wiener Schnitzel*  
*Le Syncope du Papillon*  
David Feurzeig - 2003  
*Stride-Rite Rag*

Ted Lemen - 2004-5  
*The Last Rag Standing*  
*The Number 2 Rag*  
John Harmon - 2006  
*The Raspberry Rag*  
Martin Spitznagel - 2007, 2011, 2017  
*Red Elephant Rag*  
*The Smoky Rose*  
*Dreams of Irene*  
Bill McNally - 2008-9, 2012  
*Blue Donkey Rag*  
*Mocha Monkey Rag*  
*Fancy Flight*  
Jacob Adams - 2010, 2017-18  
*Procrastinaporag*  
*Quintessential Rag*  
*Split Personality Rag*  
Adam Swanson - 2013  
*Strater Shuffle*  
Vincent Matthew Johnson - 2014  
*“...And So Fourth”*  
David Cavalari - 2015, 2019  
*That 45 RPM Rag*  
*The Nickelodeon Rag*  
Sam Post - 2021  
*Lighthouse Rag*  
Warren Ertle - 2022  
*Yellow Hammer Rag*  
Paul Orsi, Tom Lakeland  
& Adam Swanson - 2023  
*Transatlantic Rag*  
Thomas Lakeland - 2024  
*The Ivory-Billed Woodpecker*  
Jared Szabo - 2025  
*Gateway Rag*





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*The Contest would like to thank the following individuals and groups for their contribution to this year's event.*

The University of Mississippi Department of Music  
The University of Mississippi Department of Theatre  
Visit Oxford  
The Old Henry  
Lane Music of Memphis

*PLUS all of the students and individuals from the community who have stepped forward to help make this event run smoothly.*



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
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Music



Thank you to the folks at **The Old Henry** for partnering with us as the official “after-hours” site for 2026!

Join us each evening for the after-hours at  
**1002 East Jackson Ave., Oxford, MS.**

# CONTEST PERSONNEL



TED LEMEN  
Founder and Emcee  
Bradley, IL



IAN HOMINICK  
Artistic Director &  
Site Coordinator  
Oxford, MS



BOBBY van DEUSEN  
New Rag & Senior Contest  
Coordinator  
Pensacola, FL



PAUL ORSI  
Junior & Regular Division  
Contest Coordinator  
Surprise, AZ



PORTIA DAVIS  
Judging Assistant  
Jackson, MS



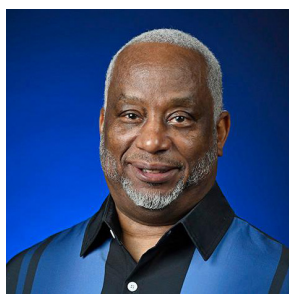
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Rockingham, NC



CHARLIE MILES  
A/V Technical Director  
Oxford, MS



JACOB SNELL  
Assistant A/V Technical  
Director  
Oxford, MS



RICKY BURKHEAD  
After-Hours Sound  
Director  
Oxford, MS



ANDREA DRUMMOND  
Publicity  
Oxford, MS



AMELIA WILLIAMS  
Logistical Assistant  
Oxford, MS



JEANNE LIPPINCOTT  
Sales  
Oxford, MS



MICHAEL FLORES  
Student Assistant  
San Juan Capistrano, CA



CAITLIN VICKERY  
Student Photographer  
Jackson, MS

*Thank you to all community volunteers who have stepped forward to assist with this year's event!*



## **In Memory ...**

The Contest was deeply saddened to learn of the passing of long-time Contest volunteer and performer Larry Wade. Larry's devotion to the event and his infectious love of music will be treasured by many.

# FOX RIVER RAGTIME FESTIVAL

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Sue Keller, Piano & Voice

Sammy G, Piano

Faye Ballard, Piano

Anderson Pries, Piano

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Ted Lemen, Piano & Voice



**Fox River Trolley Museum**

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Phone: (847) 380-6121

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