

Robert Goldblatt

Robert Goldblatt was an important benefactor to our town who owned and operated the Tarrytown Music Hall for over forty years. He made countless contributions to the community, from funding memorial statues to having free shows for children every Saturday during World War I. His philanthropic ways have enriched our town and left a profound impact.

**Commemorative Essay by Katie Miles, Sleepy Hollow
Sleepy Hollow High School, May 2015**

Robert Goldblatt

Our town is a puzzle, but not in the traditional enigmatic sense. It is a puzzle in the way that it is the collaboration of thousands who make it the place it is today. Each person is their own piece, individual by quality but intertwining with others to build the picture of our town. This beautiful image is characterized by aspects that are unique to Tarrytown-Sleepy Hollow. These pieces that color our towns' picture include the Lighthouse, Philipsburg Manor, the Old Dutch Church and, very importantly, the Tarrytown Music Hall. Built in 1885, the Music Hall is an essential part of our town that facilitates the union of arts and our community. It is an unequivocal fact that it would not be the place it is today without Robert Goldblatt's contribution and generosity.

In 1925, Robert Goldblatt bought the Tarrytown Music Hall after leasing it for a period of ten years. As a benefactor for the establishment he made many renovations that improved the theater for viewers. The floor was sloped for better viewing and permanent seats were put in. Most notable however, was the relocation of the entrance. The iconic "Broadway-esque" entry with sprawling white neon letters is now located directly on Main Street and is a symbol of our town that can be credited to Robert Goldblatt. His many heartfelt contributions surpass construction, for he also had hosted benefit events at the Music Hall for others that needed it. One instance was following the infantile paralysis epidemic. After the Music Hall's musical conductor's son fell ill to this disease, Goldblatt organized a benefit show for the child to raise money and awareness. Another example was his involvement in the community during World War I. At the Music Hall he offered "Free Shows" for children every Saturday morning. His contributions spanned close to forty years and left a profound mark on residents of the town then and residents of the town today.

Although the Music Hall is beautifully designed and has an astonishing facade, it is much more than that. Because it is still running today, it is able to educate and involve individuals in our town of all ages. It offers a variety of events that range from big-time bands to seasonal showings and its centrality to our town allows for easy access for the public. It opens up the youth of our town to culture, which is invaluable.

Being exposed to the Music Hall at such a young age has largely contributed to my interest in production and concerts, as it has for other young members of our town. Although I have unfortunately discovered my intense lack of aptitude for performing on stage, the Music Hall sparked my interest in behind the scenes production and frequent show-going. My family and I have been to countless Music Hall shows and, in addition, I have been to numerous shows on Broadway and concerts in New York City. One of the best shows I have been to was Ingrid Michaelson. I had the opportunity to see her twice, once at the Music Hall, once not. I can irrefutably say that the performance at the Music Hall was an immensely better experience. She performed very similar set lists, but the difference was the setting. The Music Hall presented a more intimate concert with a warm atmosphere, something I will always remember. Although not seemly obvious, I accredit these incredible experiences to Robert Goldblatt. His contribution to the Music Hall kept it running and allowed for an innumerable amount of memories like my own, which is a priceless gift.

Goldblatt wasn't honored for 'Man of the Year' for one philanthropic contribution, but for all his involvement in the activity of the town. He had been characterized by his extreme generosity and was even rated one of the community's most magnificent benefactors. An example that significantly portrays his kindness were the hundreds of loans that he made to the needy without even asking for collateral. Also, if you have ever walked by the lovely

Patriot's Park, you would notice the World War II memorial that is there because of his generosity. Most importantly, he did these acts of kindness purely out of the goodness of his heart, not because he was seeking attention. In fact, he avoided publicity, showing that he was not looking for fame or recognition for his thoughtful contributions. Only a small 6 percent of theaters in the United States were built before 1900, and our own Tarrytown Music Hall was one of them. However, this theater is more than just an historical establishment. With over a hundred years of memories embedded into its core, this is a place that encourages creativity, liberates passion and inspires unique experience. Robert Goldblatt is a man who made my experiences at the Music Hall possible, who immersed our town in culture, who was an incredible benefactor and, most importantly, a man who is an indispensable part of our town's puzzle, and without whom our town would not be the same.

Citations

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