



## 2020 OFFICIAL CONTEST RULES

These are the Official Rules for the 2020 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: All competitors – Junior, Senior and Regular Division – must draw for playing order at an 8:00 a.m. drawing on Saturday, May 23.

### 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, 2020.

**ELIGIBILITY:** Pianists ages 18 and older are eligible to compete. Pianists of any age will be eligible to compete in the New Rag and Duet Contests.

**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 who have advanced from Saturday’s Preliminary Eliminations. 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 different selections written no later than 1939 (no medleys allowed), two of which must be ballads or standard popular songs, 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, and must be prepared to document a composition’s age if challenged.

4. Contestants may change their selections up until the entry deadline of May 15 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 15. 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. Composer names must appear on each entry.
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.*

**2020 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). To celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of a woman's constitutional right to vote, this year's theme is "women composers", and one selection must be written by a woman composer. Note that the "theme" does not apply to Junior or 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.

**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 points based on their old-time appearance or authenticity in the PE's, Semi-Finals and Finals. Contestants will declare on the entry form whether their costumes are to be judged as authentic period dress (actual or replica) or theatrical performance-type, and they will be judged accordingly.

**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 will be available in the Green Room on Saturday morning for *contestants* for their convenience.)

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, respectively.

**ENTRY FEE:** Each entry form must be accompanied by a \$60 entry fee. This is not refundable unless the contest is canceled.

**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 ticket for their use plus one additional ticket for a family member or guest. No complimentary tickets are provided for catered events or excursions. Contestants should advise when entering the contest if another ticket is needed.

**DEADLINE:** The total number of contestants 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 15, the contest deadline. Entries will be accepted for up to fourteen (14) Regular Division contestants; six (6) 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 Contest Coordinator, Faye Ballard, will answer rule and contestant questions at this address: [eballard@illinois.edu](mailto:eballard@illinois.edu). On line entries will be instantly processed and will assure your registration. Mailed entries are subject to delays, and no entry will be considered official until the appropriate fee is received, with checks made out to the University of Mississippi – May Piano Contest. The address for mail-in entries is Old-Time Piano Contest, c/o Ian Hominick, University of Mississippi Dept. of Music, PO Box 1848, University, MS 38677-1848. Walk-on entries will be accepted on the Saturday of competition until the limit of 30 contestants has been reached or the drawing for order of play has begun, whichever comes first. A late fee of an additional \$50 shall apply to entries received after

the deadline of May 15, 2020.

**PRIZES:** The winner will receive \$1,500, 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. Fourth and fifth places will be awarded cash prizes of \$500 and \$300 respectively, and will also receive bronze medallions. Checks will be mailed to the winners within two weeks of the conclusion of the contest (winners must be sure to complete a W-9 form on site).

#### **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 1-2 color photographs (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**

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

**ELIGIBILITY:** Junior contestants are defined as those 17 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 day's competitions. Each Junior Division contestant must prepare two selections, but are not required to play mandatory standard tunes or comply with the "theme selection" as required in the Regular Division.

**PRIZES:** The Junior Champion is awarded a prize of \$500 and a permanent trophy. A second-place prize of \$300 and third-place prize of \$150 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 competitions.

**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 \$40 with a penalty fee for late entry \$25. This entry fee is not refundable unless the contest is canceled.

**PARENTAL CONSENT:** Contestants in the Junior Division must have their entry confirmed by a parent

or guardian by means of a separate email to the Contest Director at [oldtimepianocontest@olemiss.edu](mailto:oldtimepianocontest@olemiss.edu)

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

\* Note: Senior contestants should also read all of the rules above, as many apply to both divisions! Senior contestants may NOT enter both the Regular Division and senior Contest.

**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.

**FORMAT:** A total of six (6) Senior Division contestants may play two selections each on Saturday. Three (3) contestants may be chosen to advance to perform two selections each on Sunday's Semi-finals, after which the champion will be selected. Senior contestants are not required to play the "theme selection" as required in the Regular Division.

**REPERTOIRE:** Contestants need to prepare four different selections written no later than 1939 (no medleys allowed), two of which must be ballads or standard popular songs, and not considered "ragtime". 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.

**PRIZES:** The Senior Champion is 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 \$25. This entry fee is not refundable unless the contest is canceled.

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP



OLD-TIME  
*piano playing*  
CONTEST AND FESTIVAL

## NEW RAG CONTEST

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

**ENTRY FEE:** The entry fee is \$30 and is not refundable unless the contest is canceled.

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

**PRIZE:** The prize for the New Rag Contest shall be \$200 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. 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 and provide the printed score to the performer no later than one month in advance.

**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 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. New works should also contain familiar rhythmic features normally associated with ragtime such as syncopation and regularly accented accompaniment. 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, musicality and audience appeal. A written score of the music is not required by the judges.

**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.

**ENTRY SUBMISSION:** The Contest Coordinator, Faye Ballard, will answer rule and contestant questions at this address: [eballard@illinois.edu](mailto:eballard@illinois.edu). On line entries will be instantly processed and assure registration. Mailed entries are subject to delays, and no entry will be considered official until the appropriate fee is received, with checks made out to the University of Mississippi – May Piano Contest. The address for mail-in entries is Old-Time Piano Contest, c/o Ian Hominick, University of Mississippi Dept. of Music, PO Box 1848, University, MS 38677-1848.