

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP



OLD-TIME  
piano playing  
CONTEST AND FESTIVAL

## 2026 OFFICIAL CONTEST RULES

### 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: [mrpiano@cox.net](mailto:mrpiano@cox.net). On-line entries will be instantly processed and assure registration. No entry will be considered official until the appropriate fee is received.