WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

OLD-TIME piano playing

CONTEST AND FESTIVAL

2027 OFFICIAL CONTEST RULES

These are the Official Rules for the 2027 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 29, 2027, 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 27, the actual contest dates are May 29-30, 2027.

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.*

2027 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). In celebrating 100 years of American musical history, the 2027 theme selection will be a work that was published in 1927. *Note: 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. 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.

2027 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
- The use of alcohol or other controlled substances prior to or during competitions may result in disqualification.