

Competition To Remain Unchanged for 2025
by Toby Hanson, Competition Chair

Although we're now a good five years removed from the COVID-19 Pandemic of 2020, its effects have been felt far and wide, and LIAC was no stranger to those effects. The festival went online for a short period and was scaled back for an additional year but now we're fully back and doing well. The competition portion of the festival was looking somewhat bleak coming out of COVID but even the competition has become robust again. Because of that strong showing last year, all the categories are staying the same for this year. In addition, the Sunday morning "Competition Highlights Concert" is also remaining in place. This year should be very familiar and comfortable for those who attended in 2024.

Participation increased last year over the previous so we believe it's in our best interests to keep all the competition categories the same. Competitions are very useful for older students to have a goal to prepare for as well as the critical feedback from adjudicators which can be used to measure progress year-over-year. That's even more true for our juvenile competitors. With the lack of accordion recitals, having the **LIAC Competition** at the end of the academic year is even more important for them. The goal-setting and focus needed for successful participation is even more important for the youth. Along with that, the non-competitive categories have been increasing in popularity each year. **Artistry** gives players a chance to be adjudicated in a non-competitive way. The feedback from professional judges is incredibly useful for improving one's musical skills. The **Private Coaching** category is just as important, as it affords amateur players access to skilled professionals from across the country who are normally not available for such coaching. Many valuable skills have been picked up during those coaching sessions. Participants will want to sign up for their slots as early as possible to ensure they can get one as this has become one of the most in-demand parts of the festival.

Our main goal has not changed: to provide participants with opportunities to experience great accordion performance and to expand their knowledge and skill through competition and education. We hope everyone who attends will take advantage of what we work so hard to provide. It's our sincere hope that participants will engage in the pursuit of excellence in the accordion community so we can enrich the future musicians who will create tomorrow's world. Will you answer the call and meet us in LIAC this June? We sure hope so