

2026 Leavenworth International Accordion Celebration
Divisions and Requirements for Competition and Accordion Artistry

Competitive Categories – Open to both Professionals and Amateurs
No Age Restrictions

Category	Age	Category Code	Fee
Leavenworth Open	All	LV-O	\$35
Classical Open	All	CL-O	\$25
Accordion Duets Open	All	ADU-O	\$20 (per entrant)
Diatonic Open	All	DI-O	\$20
Bands Open	All	BA-O	\$15 (per band member)

Competitive Categories – Open to Amateurs Only

Category	Age	Category Code	Fee
Variety 1	19 +	V-1	\$20
Variety 2	14 - 18	V-2	\$20
Variety 3	13 & under	V-3	\$15
Amateur Accordion Duets	17 & under	ADU-A	\$15 (per entrant)
Amateur Classical	18 & under	CL-A	\$15

Non- Competitive Categories – Open to Amateurs Only

Category	Age	Category Code	Fee
Accordion Artistry	19 +	AA-1	\$20
Accordion Artistry	18 & under	AA-2	\$15

Private Coaching – Open to All Accordionists

Private Coaching	All Ages (non-competitive)	30 min.	\$25
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LIAC Rules & Requirements 2026

General Rules

1. Entry applications must be postmarked no later than June 8, 2026. The LIAC Committee reserves the right to accept late entries at its discretion. Late entries, if allowed, will play first in any category.
2. The contestant playing order is determined by a random drawing prior to beginning the competition.
3. For this competition, the term "PROFESSIONAL" is anyone who is currently active in a career playing the accordion; *i.e. listed in publications as a concert performer, promoting oneself as a professional, receiving money through contracts to perform, etc.* **Those considered Professional musicians may participate in the Leavenworth Open, Classical Open, Accordion Duets Open, Diatonic and Bands only.**
4. Duet categories (Duets Open and Amateur Duets) are for accordion duets. No other instruments are allowed in those categories. Any other combinations of instruments and/or vocalists may participate in the Bands Open category.
5. The LIAC Committee reserves the right to limit entries in any category. Categories with three (3) entries or fewer are subject to review and could be cancelled without notice. Prizes in categories with fewer than three (3) participants will be awarded in reverse order; *i.e.* Third Place prize in a category with one participant; Second and Third Place prizes in a category with two participants.
6. Digital/MIDI Accordions will be allowed in all categories. However, acoustic accordion settings must be used. Sequencing, other sounds, effects or other instruments are not allowed. Amplified accordions are not permitted in any division. Exception: a Bass accordion in the Band Category may be amplified. If further clarification is needed, contact the Competition Chairman.
7. Competitors must provide proof of age upon request by the LIAC Committee.
8. The adjudication process begins with the on-stage presence of the contestant and is concluded with the preparation of remarks and scores by the adjudicators. Adjudication for all categories will be based on the appropriateness of music, interpretation (appropriate style), tone projection and balance, stage presence and appearance, phrasing and articulation, dynamics and shading, technique and accuracy, tempos and rhythm, bellows technique and control and level of complexity.
9. Discussions with adjudicators about a contestant's performance must be delayed until after the day's competition is completed to avoid interference with the adjudication process. Good Sportsmanship is expected. This courtesy to the adjudicators is essential and a contestant may be disqualified by the LIAC Committee for violation of this procedure. Score sheets and adjudicators remarks are available to contestants at the end of the Celebration after the awards ceremony. The decision of the judges is final.
10. The contestants must present a pleasing appearance. Good grooming and dress is expected. Tank tops, T-shirts, shorts and jeans are unacceptable attire unless part of the ethnic costume dress.
11. Any camera and video pictures taken must not interfere with competitors, adjudicators and audience. No flash photography of contestants is allowed when active playing is occurring.
12. Only a Page Turner is allowed on stage to assist the competitor during the performance.
13. The decision of the LIAC Committee shall be final regarding all of the above rules, except for scoring, which shall be the responsibility of the adjudicators (judges).
14. Invitations for participants to perform in the Competition Highlights Concert on Sunday Morning will be by invitation of the adjudicators (judges). Competitors are not required to perform in the concert but may consider it a recognition of their hard work and effort in the competition.

Music Style Definitions

For the purpose of this competition, “**OLD TIME**” refers to the manner and style in which the selection was written or is being played, not to the selection’s age or ethnic origin. Old-time music is fittingly described as the style and tempo predominantly and successfully used for executing the **polka, schottische, and waltz** throughout a broad cross-section of North American and European communities during the past few centuries. For the purposes of this competition, the **march** may be included. All cultural styles are equally acceptable as long as the selection is played in the manner used by the culture of origin. Competitors must play two different old time music styles.

CLASSICAL describes the category of music **composed from 1600 – 1920 (Baroque – Romantic periods)** which follows the original form and intent of the composer; **repeats may be omitted** to fit the time requirement. The printed sheet music is provided to the judges. Classical music must be played in the Classical Open, Amateur Classical, and may be played in Accordion Artistry categories.

LIGHT CLASSICAL MUSIC is based on a classical piece or theme but is reinterpreted to have entertainment value; it does not have to follow the format of the original composition.

Competitive Categories

OPEN COMPETITIONS: Any player, professional or amateur, is eligible to play in any “Open” category. In the “Variety” and “Artistry” categories, only amateurs may play. If a person has won the same Open competition for two consecutive years, they must sit out one year before competing in that particular Open again.

When competing in more than one category, the music selected must be different for each category. Contestants may restart a selection within 15 measures of its start without penalty. If restarting, the full time limit is allowed as if no playing had yet taken place. Only one restart allowed with no penalty.

Competitors are not required to play for the entire time segment but must play the required music for each category.

Leavenworth Open

The Leavenworth Open requires the competitor to play three selections. The competitor will play 3 selections from genres such as jazz, popular, old time, accordion standards, ballads, and light classical. Classical music is not allowed. The 3 pieces must be from different music styles. If the competitor chooses to play more than one old time music selection for the category, the music must be selected from the remaining old time list as defined above.

Limits: 3 selections of different genres – max time: 12 minutes

Classical Open

Classical Music is played only in the classical categories – Open and Amateur and may be played in Accordion Artistry. **Light Classical** music may be played in the Leavenworth Open, Duet, Band, and Varieties divisions.

Limits: 1 or 2 selections – max time: 8 minutes

Accordion Duets Open

The **Accordion Duets** category requires one Old Time selection plus another piece from any other music genre. This class **must have 2 accordions**. Other combinations of instruments should enter the **Bands** category. Competitors may choose to play old time music exclusively; in that event a different style will be required for the 2nd piece. **Limits:** 2 selections – 1 must be Old-Time – max time: 8 minutes

Diatonic Open

Diatonic accordions of all types/styles are allowed but only “old-time” music selections permitted. This category is open to amateur and professional accordionists.

Limits: 2 selections – both must be Old-Time – max time: 8 minutes

Bands Open

The **Bands** category is an open division. This must be a group of two or more musicians with a predominant acoustic accordion lead. The lead accordion **may be amplified** but not electronic or virtual accordion and must lead at least 2/3 of the time. There are no age limits and professionals can participate. Support instruments will be judged on the quality of harmony with the lead instrument. Support instruments may be amplified to achieve a loudness level consistent with the lead accordion. Vocalists may be substituted for instruments.

Limits: 2 selections of different genres – max time: 10 minutes

Variety 1 - 3

The **Variety** categories are for **amateur players** only. The competitor will play 2 selections from any genre: old time, popular, jazz, light classical, ballad, accordion standards, Latin etc. Each selection must be different. (a waltz with a tango for instance). Classical music is not accepted in this

category. Should a player choose to play 2 old time selections, they must be of different styles as listed above.

Limits: 2 selections any style except Classical– max time: 8 minutes

Amateur Accordion Duets

The **Amateur Accordion Duets** category is for non-professional players **age 17** and under. As with the **Accordion Duets Open** category, one Old Time selection is required. The second selection can be from any style, including a second Old Time piece. If two Old Time pieces are chosen, they must be different dance styles, such as a polka and waltz or waltz and schottische. Only accordions are allowed in the **Amateur Duets** category; other combinations of instruments should compete in the **Bands** category.

Limits: 2 selections – 1 must be Old-Time – max time: 8 minutes

Amateur Classical 18 & under

See **Music Styles Definition – “Classical”**

Limits: 1 or 2 selections - max time: 8 minutes

Non-Competitive Categories

Accordion Artistry

Initiated in 2019, there will be an **Accordion Artistry** category for players 18 and under and for those 19 and older. This is a non-competitive category for **amateur players only**. The participant will perform on the Festhalle stage and will be adjudicated for the performance. Artistry performances may be solo, duet, or combo; a performer may be in more than one artistry performance (one as a soloist, another as a duet, for example). Duets and combos must have at least one accordion but may have other instruments/vocalists. **Participants may play in competitive categories as well as Artistry provided their performance in Artistry is not the same as their performance in a competitive category. (For example, a participant may not play the same piece(s) in both Competition and Artistry).**

Limits: 1 or 2 selections - max time: 8 minutes

Private Coaching

This category will have a panel of qualified accordionists reviewing the performance of and working with the participants. The purpose is to give the player an opportunity to have their playing evaluated in a constructive, non-competitive manner without the pressure of public performance. There are no monetary awards given but the accordionists reviewing the performance are available to answer questions in an interactive manner. This category combines the best elements of a competition, a master class, and a private lesson with none of the pressure or stress. Young players participating in this category qualify for the LIAC bursary.

All coaching will be done at the Grange.

Limits: 1 or 2 selections in any style, no longer than eight minutes total.