

Overview of Competition at LIAC In 2024
by Toby Hanson, Competition Chair

It's often said that, "The only constant in life is change." This year, for the 2024 Leavenworth International Accordion Celebration, the change is constancy. In past years we've made adjustments and changes in the competition to keep it relevant for the competitors. This year, we're keeping things the same as they were last year. We want to give everyone a chance to get used to how things are for at least another year before making any further changes. The categories will not change for 2024 and we're definitely keeping the Competition Highlights Concert on Sunday morning since it was very popular with all who attended.

The various competitive categories remain unchanged. We believe it is incredibly important to offer students the goal of competition to help them focus and sharpen their performance skills. Competition is a valuable tool for young accordionists for setting and achieving those goals. It's also an important way for them to gauge their progress against their peers. The non-competitive categories like **Artistry** and **Private Coaching** remain valuable ways for accordionists of all ages and skill levels to get professional feedback on their playing from educators and performers. **Artistry** categories allow accordionists the chance to perform on stage just like in competition and receive adjudication but without the competitive part of being ranked relative to fellow participants. **Private Coaching** allows accordionists the opportunity to sit down and have short private lessons with professional accordionists and educators like a master class. The **Private Coaching** category is one of the true gems of LIAC as it gives unprecedented access to professional-level coaching for amateur accordionists.

Our greatest goal at LIAC is to provide the participants with opportunities to experience great accordion performances and to expand their knowledge and skill through competition and education. We hope that everyone who attends will take advantage of what we provide. We wish to foster the pursuit of excellent in the accordion community so we can enrich the future musicians who will carry on our legacy and continue to build the accordion world. We look forward to seeing all of you in June! ur new Competition Highlights Concert on Sunday morning. We've heard your comments and know that many participants are busy playing at the Gazebo or taking workshops on Friday and Saturday and don't get to see the competitions. To ensure that all participants of LIAC get to hear the best performers in the competition we are starting a new concert on Sunday Morning at the Festhalle just before the Awards Ceremony. Those competitors who do especially well in the competition will be invited to perform their competition pieces in a brief recital on Sunday morning when everyone can enjoy the performances. This will be both an extra honor for those chosen to perform and an opportunity for participants to enjoy the performances who might have missed them during the competition.

It is the sincere hope of all of us on the LIAC Committee that the competition will be full of participants. The pursuit of accordion excellence is what keeps our accordion community at its best. We look forward to seeing all of you in Leavenworth in June and hearing the "Tranquillo Overture" ring out from the stage!