



2019 ORO VALLEY SPRING FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS

ACOUSTIC TRADITIONS BAND CONTEST

OVER \$700 IN CASH PRIZES!

APPLY BY FEBRUARY 28, 2019 AT [SAACA.ORG/SPRINGFESTIVAL](https://www.saaca.org/springfestival)



Southern Arizona Arts & Cultural Alliance and the Desert Bluegrass Association are pleased to announce the inaugural Acoustic Traditions Band Contest at the Spring Oro Valley Festival of the Arts in Oro Valley, AZ. In keeping with the diversity of the various styles of bluegrass and traditional acoustic music that are found in Southern Arizona, this band contest is not confined to a specific genre of acoustic music. Rather, it is an opportunity for a broad variety of acoustic bands to display their talents, musicianship and entertainment abilities to a wide audience. In two rounds of competition, bands will compete for \$700 in cash prizes and a paid performance opportunity at the Marana Bluegrass Festival the following year. Judges will be selected from Arizona professional music talent, Desert Bluegrass Association members, and SAACA staff and board members.

OVERVIEW

- The Acoustic Traditions Band Contest is open to any band of 3 – 7 members rooted in an acoustic tradition including, but not limited to, Bluegrass, Folk, Celtic, Mariachi, and Old-Time.
- There is a one-time \$30 entry fee to enter the contest that is non-refundable.
- There will be a two round judging process. All participants will receive constructive feedback from the judging panel and are invited to take free band photos at the March 30 festival with a professional photographer.
- After the first round (digital application review), up to 5 finalists will be selected to perform a 40 minute live set at the Oro Valley Festival of the Arts on Saturday March 30, 2019 from 11 AM – 4 PM with full stage production by a professional audio company.
- Cash prizes include \$400 to 1st place, \$200 to 2nd place, and \$100 to 3rd place. The winner of the contest will receive a paid performance slot at the 2020 Marana Bluegrass Festival hosted by the Desert Bluegrass Association.

TIMELINE

- Applications open January 30, 2019
- Applications close February 28, 2019
- Finalists notified March 8, 2019

APPLY ONLINE at <https://www.saaca.org/springfestival.html>

AWARDS

- First Prize \$400 + Paid Performance at Marana Bluegrass Festival 2020
- Second Prize \$200
- Third Prize \$100
- *All participating bands can take free band photos with SAACA hired photographer at Oro Valley Festival of the Arts on March 30*

CONTACT

Any questions should be directed to SAACA Arts Integration Manager - Matt Rolland, Matt@SAACA.org, 520-274-2758

CONTEST RULES

1. Registration

Entry in the Acoustic Traditions Band Contest is \$30.00 for each band. Entry fee is non-refundable (even for non-finalists) and helps cover the costs of providing judging feedback to all bands and prizes for the contest. Bands must enter with a digital application - paper submissions are not accepted - and are required to submit at least a band photo, biography, one audio recording, and one video recording. All bands entering must be willing to perform live on March 30, 2019 in Oro Valley at the Spring Festival of the Arts. Bands will all receive juried feedback from the judging panel on their submission, regardless of whether they are selected as a finalist for a live performance.

After the first round of digital submissions, up to five finalists from the band contest will be selected to perform live on the main stage at the Oro Valley Festival of the Arts on Saturday March 30, 2019. Attendance at the festival ranges from 5,000 – 10,000 throughout the course of the day. Finalists will perform a 40 minute show featuring a variety of their material, with full stage production provided by a professional sound company. The finals of the band contest are meant to showcase your performance abilities, band dynamics, and musical material. Winners of the band contest will be announced between 4 PM and 4:30 PM that afternoon on the main stage.

For all finalists, at least one representative of each band must report to the registration table behind the mainstage at 10:15 am on the morning of the Festival to review the rules, and ask any questions pertaining to judging. Finalists must be present and ready to perform at their scheduled time, or they will be disqualified.

There will not be a tie in the finalists showcase. Although all band members are encouraged to remain until the awards are announced at 4:30 PM, only one representative from the band is required to be present to accept the award. If no representative is present, the award goes to the next highest scoring participant.

Applications are available online at <https://www.saaca.org/springfestival.html>. Payment by check should be made payable to "SAACA" and mailed to:

SAACA

4500 North Oracle Road, Suite 421

Tucson, AZ 85705

2. Judging Criteria

Contestants in the Acoustic Traditions Band Contest will be judged on:

Preliminary Round (Digital Submission)

- **Musical performance in audio submissions (25%)** — How interesting and impressive is the musical performance? Is the music tastefully performed and arranged? Is it linked to an acoustic tradition? Is the band original and creative? Musically captivating?
- **Musical performance in video submissions (25%)** – Judges will consider performer presence; Originality; Confidence; and audio and video quality in video submission;
- **Entertainment value (25%)** – Is there variety in the musical repertoire? Creativity? How is audience engagement (if applicable)?
- **Band Development (25%)** – How developed is the band? Do they have good quality band promo photos available? Is the biography creative and well written? Do they have good quality video and audio available? Do they have a website or internet presence? How frequently do they perform in public? What is their level of performance readiness for a festival stage?

Finalist Round (Live Performance by Top Contestants)

- **Material Selection (25%)** — How dynamic is the set? Is there a good flow to the set and song selection? Are the songs of an impressive difficulty level, tastefully arranged, high in authenticity or originality? In general, you'll get more points for playing a simple tune well with a good entertainment value than a difficult tune poorly.
- **Stage Presence (25%)** — How is the band's audience rapport and entertainment value? Highest scores go to bands exhibiting comfort with the audience, expertise with and confidence in their musical performance, and fluidity in their set. Tips for good emceeing: (1) avoid dead time; (2) you don't have to talk between every song. Think of your set as a flow; (3) if you are going to talk, keep it tight and to the point; (4) be natural and genuine, not fake, treat the audience and the situation with respect; (5) treat the audience like a friend, not like a lecture audience.
- **General Instrumental Musicianship (20%)** — Here we are looking for good rhythm and timing; good intonation; expressiveness in your playing, solos, and arrangements; and overall instrumental blend.
- **Vocal Performance (20%)** — How is the intonation and overall vocal quality for both leads and harmony singing? *This portion is not-applicable for all-instrumental bands, with remaining portions re-weighted proportionally.*
- **Audience Response (10%)** – How strongly did the audience react to the band's overall performance?

3. Musical Styles, Material and Instrumentation

Each finalist band will play a 40 minute show which should include a variety of tempos, vocals, dynamics, and instrumental range. Bands can perform original material, but judges will consider original songs and non-original material (covers, traditional songs, etc) equally. We would rather hear great versions of a song performed well, regardless of who wrote it, than hear bands stretch to perform new material that is not ready for the mainstage. All-instrumental bands are permitted, with tune selection at their discretion, and variety encouraged. Each band should plan to limit their stage time to 50 minutes with set-up and breakdown.

Audience rapport and stage presence are judging factors, but bands should not feel compelled to talk simply for the sake of talking. Keep the flow of the set going and try build a connection with the audience naturally.

Any type of traditional-influenced acoustic music is allowed in this contest, including Bluegrass, Old-time, Celtic, Western, Folk, Americana, Newgrass, Mariachi, Swing, or other acoustic forms. While the contest is not restricted to any specific genre of music, contestants must perform with acoustic instruments. Pickups, contact mics, and DIs are permitted, but any set up time that extends beyond the 15 minute changeover allotted will cut into performer's set times. The only non-acoustic instrument that is permitted is an electric bass. Bands with keyboards should be prepared to perform on a regular piano (no effects). Minimal percussion instruments, such as a snare, shaker, light kit, or hand-held drums are allowed. Please email us if you have questions about instruments. To avoid delays with band setup, if bands use percussion, they are limited to two microphones on the percussion kit.

Accidents beyond the control of the contestant (such as power or weather issues) may result in a replay at the band's request and if the judges so merit. String breakages will not result in a replay and bands should plan accordingly. Songs, material, and dress must be of an appropriate nature suitable for family friendly entertainment.

4. Band Members

A band will consist of at least three, but no more than seven members. No band member may compete in more than one band. Band members may not be immediate family members of any of the judges. Any contestant appearing under the influence of alcohol or drugs will not be allowed on stage. Paid performers, members of the Oro Valley Festival of the Arts Organizing Committee, Festival directors, nor Desert Bluegrass Association board members may enter this contest.

5. Finality

Decisions by the judges will be final and not negotiable. Contestants may view their score sheets upon request by contacting the band contest coordinator, and judges are encouraged to provide comments to provide constructive feedback for band contestants.

6. Live Performance Photography and Video

All finalists give permission to have their performance photographed and filmed by the Southern Arizona Arts & Cultural Alliance for possible use in future promotional material. Signing of the registration form by contestant acknowledges acceptance of all rules and regulations of the Oro Valley Festival of the Arts and Acoustic Traditions Band Contest.