



The Bitter Jester® Foundation for the Arts presents:
The 14th Annual Bitter Jester® Music Festival!
All Musical Styles & Band Types/Sizes Encouraged to Apply
Preliminary Concerts in May & June
Winning Bands Compete for CASH & Prizes on July 4



Competition Structure: Bands with at least 50% of their musicians under the age of 21 are eligible to apply.

PRELIMINARY CONCERTS (“PCs”): Up to two dozen bands will compete summer Fridays (May 31, June 7, 14, & 21, 2019) at Port Clinton Square, 600 Central Ave, Highland Park, IL (max six (6) bands each week). **PCs start promptly at 7:00pm with arrival/setup at 6:00pm.** Judges will score each band and one (1) band will win each PC, advancing to the July 4 Semi-Finals.

WILD CARD BANDS (“WCBs”): After the final PC, WCBs will also be selected to advance to the July 4 Semi-Finals. The WCBs are chosen at the sole discretion of the Bitter Jester Foundation for the Arts (“BJFA”) based on a combination of Judges’ scores, audience appeal, attitude, sportsmanship, proven marketing ability & online engagement, and patent-pending magic. *Four (4) WCB’s have been named Grand Champion* in the past, so hang tight if you don’t win your PC! **WCBs are full competition bands and are eligible to win cash and prizes just like PC winners.**

JULY 4 SEMI-FINALS: The PC winners and WCBs proceed to the July 4 Semi-Finals, providing entertainment prior to the City of Highland Park’s annual fireworks celebration. Judges narrow the Semi-Finalist Bands down to two (2) Finalist Bands that proceed to the Final Competition that night.

JULY 4 FINALE CONCERT: The Judges retire and the two (2) Finalist Bands each perform *a single song not from their set*. The audience chooses the Grand Champion with cheers/applause.

PICKING THE GRAND CHAMPION: The final decision is determined based on a reading from the official [Bluegrass Restaurant](#) Decibel Meter. Use of air horns, etc. will result in disqualification.

Judging Criteria:

All bands are judged on a 60-point scale based on the following criteria, each worth 10 points.

- 1) **Overall Sound & Set List** (incl. transitions/care put into song selection & running order)
- 2) **Originality & Creativity** (be unique!)
- 3) **Vocals & Lyrics** (note: Judges have a system for evenly-scoring instrumental-only bands)
- 4) **Musicianship & Solos** (overall musicianship, individual solos)
- 5) **Rhythmic Precision/Tempo/Groove** (incl. how tight you play together & communicate)
- 6) **Stage Presence & Audience Appeal** (incl. showmanship, appearance, & attitude)

All things being equal, Judges often place more weight on *original material*. Bands performing *only* covers should focus on interpretation of the music, sound quality, audience appeal, and musicianship.

All Judges are appointed at the sole discretion of BJFA and all decisions of all Judges are final. Musicians are encouraged to speak with Judges after the Competitions.

Application Process, Deadlines, and Fees (Solo Artists may reduce all fees by \$10):

BJFA staff will review all Applications and notify all Entrants of their acceptance/rejection by late May. Not all Entrants are accepted. Two (2) music samples, a hi-res (300 dpi or higher) group photo, two (2) emergency contacts, and an Application Fee must accompany every Application. Returning Entrants are encouraged to submit new tunes and pics. Musicians are welcome to apply with more than one band but a separate Application & Application fee must accompany each submission. **There is a non-refundable Application Fee of \$40 (early deadline = 05/01/19) or Late Application Fee of \$50 (late deadline = 05/20/19) per band.** *Solo Artists may reduce all entry fees by \$10.*

***Awards And Prizes:**

PC winners and WCBs will be publicly recognized at the July 4 Event with a certificate stating their win. After the Grand Finale Concert, the Grand Champion, Runner-Up, and Honorable Mention bands will receive **\$450, \$250, and \$100 prizes** respectively. **Select Semi-Finalists will be chosen to perform at showcase concerts in Highland Park on 08/14/19 and Navy Pier on 09/02/19.** Cash prizes are generously provided by the City of Highland Park. Additional non-monetary prizes may be provided to Semi-Finalists on July 4, courtesy of various sponsors. MVP Awards (new instruments and other prizes) are also awarded to select individual musicians. Total amount and distribution of prizes is subject to change at BJFA’s discretion.

BAND AGREEMENT – PLEASE READ, SIGN, & RETURN WITH YOUR APPLICATION FEE

Bitter Jester Foundation for the Arts, Inc. (“BJFA”) Shall:

- Provide an outdoor performance venue with electricity and lights for all Concerts;
- Provide independent Judges for all Concerts – BJFA Staff do not act as Judges;
- Provide Emcees from the Emmy® winning [Comic Thread](#) (Best Group: *LA Comedy Fest*, Audience Choice: *Chicago Fringe Fest*) to host Concerts and introduce bands;
- Provide a professional audio crew, lighting, and sound system (including speakers, stage monitors, a sound board, and a complete mic package sufficient to handle two (2) bands set up at the same time) for all Preliminary Concerts;
- Provide a professional sound stage, audio crew, lighting, and sound system (including speakers, stage monitors, a sound board, and a complete mic package) for the Grand Finale Concert on July 4;
- Provide (to the best of their ability) audio recordings of Preliminary Concerts for \$15 each and the July 4 Concert for \$25; Photos/videos may also be available.
- Provide a professional Production Manager and Production Crew to coordinate the July 4 Grand Finale Concert sound checks, Semi-Finals, and the Final Concert;
- Facilitate the awarding and distribution of A) cash prizes totaling \$800 (courtesy of the City of Highland Park, IL) and B) additional non-monetary sponsor-provided prizes;
- Provide select promotion of all Concerts to Chicagoland communities as well as select physical promotional items (e.g. postcards, posters, etc.) for participants to use in their own promotional and marketing activities;
- Have the right to use any/all submitted and/or future Concert-related recorded images and audio for promotional purposes this year and in all future years, without exception.

Entering Musicians Acknowledge and Agree:

- That at least half of its group’s performers are under the age of twenty-one (21);
- To provide two (2) music samples + one (1) high-res (300 dpi or higher) group photo;
- To perform in Highland Park, IL on one (1) Friday night this summer;
- **To arrive no later than 6:00 pm on their Preliminary Concert night to set up** and agree to stay until *after* their Preliminary Concert’s winner is announced;
- **To hold July 4 open from 9:30 am until 10:00 pm** should they be selected to proceed to the Semi-Finals. Entrants understand that all musicians must be available to meet, sound-check, *and* perform on July 4 in Highland Park in order to participate in the Preliminary Concerts – please notify BJFA of potential conflicts ASAP;
- To allow the photography and audio/video recording/editing/distribution of all of their activities at any/all BJFA-related Events for all current and/or future uses/purposes;
- To actively promote and publicize their appearances at the “Bitter Jester Music Festival” online (linking to [our Facebook page](#) and [our Instagram account](#) whenever possible) as well as in person to their families, friends, and fans;
- To promote themselves widely on July 4 and at Navy Pier as well as to sell or give away CDs and/or other merchandise at any time during any of their performances or around Highland Park, IL in general;
- To dress and act in an appropriate manner at all times, remembering that judging is based on musical skill/performance ability *and* on professionalism/demeanor;
- To provide BJFA with, **emergency contact info**, each band member’s contact info, and other band-related information using the online Application;
- To pay a one-time non-refundable Application fee of \$40 or **late Application fee of \$50 (Solo Artists pay \$30 / \$40 respectively)** plus a small online processing fee.

Rules, Regulations, and Terms:

For the purposes of this Agreement, the terms “Band” and “band” and “Entrant” refer interchangeably to both groups comprised of multiple musicians and to individual solo artists. The term “Event” and “Events” refers to any BJFA produced, co-produced, and/or sponsored Concerts or other functions including the Bitter Jester Music Festival and its affiliated Showcase Concerts.

Each participating band will perform for twenty to twenty-five (20-25) minutes at their Preliminary Concert. Semi-Finalists and Wild Card Bands will each perform for exactly twenty (20) minutes at the July 4 Grand Finale. A BJFA Production Manager will assist with this on July 4.

Due to an extremely tight schedule on July 4, only one (1) drum kit will be used for the Semi-Final and Final Competitions. Bands must coordinate amongst themselves to determine which kit will be shared. We are sorry but no exceptions will be made. We encourage you to share this information with you band members and parents today.

All Entrants will be contacted after May 20 regarding the status of their Application. This Festival is extremely competitive and submitting an Application in no way guarantees participation. Lineups are typically announced in late May. Incomplete Applications (i.e. those without an Application fee or missing music samples or a hi-res photo or emergency contact info, etc.) cannot be processed and will be considered ineligible. Submission fees are non-refundable.

Submission of this Application grants BJFA the non-exclusive rights to use any/all submitted materials (including audio recordings and images) and materials recorded at BJFA Events for promotional and/or marketing purposes for this and all future BJFA-related Events/Activities.

As this is a City-sponsored Festival and all Concerts are free and open to the public, the content, lyrics, appearance, and behavior of all Entrants shall reflect the highest standards. BJFA and the City of Highland Park, IL reserve the absolute and final right to disqualify or remove any individuals from this competition for any reason at any time with no compensation.

All rules, regulations, prize amounts, and prize distributions are determined at the sole discretion of BJFA and all aspects of these Events are subject to change at any time without prior warning. **Please email** any and all comments, questions, or feedback you might have to Music@BitterJester.com or call 847.433.8663.

PARENTS: While your support and enthusiasm is very much welcome and encouraged, parents are not allowed backstage on July 4 – no exceptions. Just sit back, relax, and enjoy the show. You’ve earned it!

By signing the Online Application, Entrant signifies full understand of and agrees to abide by all aspects of the rules, regulations, and requirements for the Bitter Jester[®] Music Festival. Entrant hereby agrees to abide by everything included herein and also attests that Entrant has shared this information with fellow bandmates and parents and that those individuals, too, each understand and agree to abide by everything contained herein.

NOTE: Online Application signature *must* be from a person at least eighteen (18) years old. If no one in the band is eighteen, the band must authorize a parent/guardian to act as a Representative with the authority to sign and date the Agreement, attesting to everything stated above and in the Online Application.