

WVIHF - Singer of the Year

Competition Rules

1. Eligibility Requirements

1. Heritage Requirement

- Participants must be of Italian descent or adopted children that have a parent of Italian descent are eligible for competition.
- Participants must also be a native of West Virginia or have resided in West Virginia for at least 12 months prior to the competition.

1.2 Age Requirement

- All participants will compete in a unified category/division.
- Minimum and maximum age requirements will be ages 15 and up by the time of the competition.

1.3 Proof of Eligibility

- Upon request, contestants may be required to provide verification of heritage, age, and/or residency.
- Failure to provide requested documentation may result in disqualification without appeal.

1.4 Festival Affiliation

- Performers who have been under contract with the West Virginia Italian Heritage Festival (WVIHF) for monetary compensation within the current or previous festival seasons are not eligible to compete in the WVIHF Showcase Showdown.
- This restriction includes, but is not limited to, performers who have received payment for Main Stage, Second Stage, or any officially sponsored WVIHF performance.
- This policy is intended to maintain fairness and provide opportunities for emerging talent.
- WVIHF reserves the right to verify prior contractual agreements and determine eligibility at its sole discretion.

2. Song Selection Requirements

2.1 Song Selection

- Each contestant will perform **one (1)** song for the entire competition, including online video voting and the live performance.
- The song must be consistent in arrangement and key, unless correction is approved by WVIHF no later than two weeks before the live event.
- Contestants may select any genre or musical style.
- Song selection may be in Italian or English or a combination of both Italian and English.

2.2 Accompaniment Options

- Contestants may perform using one of the following accompaniment methods:
 - 1) Pre-recorded instrumental/karaoke tracks without background vocals;
 - Contestants must submit two (2) high-quality instrumental or karaoke tracks of their song.
 - Tracks must not contain background vocals or harmonies.
 - Tracks must be performance-ready and in an approved file format (e.g., MP3, WAV).

or

 - 2) Self-accompaniment, such as piano, keyboard, guitar, or similar single-instrument accompaniment performed live by the contestant.
 - Additional requirements:
 - Self-accompaniment must be performed solely by the contestant.
 - No additional musicians, background vocalists, or accompaniment performers are permitted.
 - Contestants choosing self-accompaniment must disclose all equipment needs at the time of application.

WVIHF reserves the right to limit or approve instruments based on stage logistics, sound requirements, and safety considerations.

2.3 Performance Media for Promotion

- Contestants may only use the **official WVIHF video recording** posted on the WVIHF Facebook page for promotional purposes.
- Personal recordings, alternate uploads, edited clips, or audio-overdubs are **prohibited**.

2.4 Live Performance Recordings

- All live performances will be recorded by WVIHF the evening of the LIVE performance.
- WVIHF reserves the right to trim videos so as to remove idle time but will **not be edited** for pitch, tuning, mixing, or enhancement.
- Only WVIHF recordings posted on the WVIHF Facebook page may be used for promotion.
- No other edited clips, personal recordings or overdubs are permitted during the online voting period.

2.5 Content Guidelines

All performances must comply with the following requirements:

- **Family-Friendly Content:**
Performances must be appropriate for audiences of all ages and may not include profanity, sexually suggestive language, violent themes, discriminatory language, or offensive gestures.
- **Appropriate Lyrics and Themes:**
Songs and spoken content must be free of explicit language, references to illegal activity, or subject matter deemed inappropriate by WVIHF.

WVIHF reserves the right to require content changes or to disqualify any performance that does not meet these standards.

2.6 Submission Deadline

- All performer applications and materials must be submitted by the posted deadline.
- Late entries will not be accepted.

2.7 Technical Needs

Performers must list **all equipment needs**, including backing track format, microphone preference, or instrumentation, during the application process. Equipment requests will be considered, but cannot be guaranteed.

3. Judging Criteria & Scoring (for Live Competition)

3.1 Scoring Rubric

Judges will score each category on a scale from 1–10 and will result in 50% of the FINAL score in determining the winner:

1. Talent & Vocal/Performance Skill
2. Stage Presence & Professionalism
3. Creativity & Originality
4. Audience Engagement

Each judge can award a maximum total of **40 points**.

3.2 Judge Qualifications

- Judges will be selected by WVIHF and may include professional entertainers, vocal coaches, educators, or festival representatives.
- Judges must not have immediate family, or close ongoing relationships with any contestant.
- Potential conflicts must be disclosed, possibly resulting in the reselection of a judge.

3.3 Finality of Scores

All judges' scores are **final** and may not be challenged or appealed.

3.4 Vote Weighting

Final rankings will combine judges' scores, online voting, and live audience votes as follows: Judges – 50%; Online Public Voting – 25%; Live Audience Voting – 25%.

4. Online Voting Procedures

4.1 Daily Free Voting

- Each individual may cast **one (1)** free vote per day.
- A valid email address is required.
- Voting resets at **12:00 AM (midnight) EST**.

4.2 Additional Paid Voting Options

Supporters may also purchase additional votes daily as defined below:

- 5 votes — \$10
- 15 votes — \$25
- 30 votes — \$50
- 75 votes — \$100

A valid email address is required and votes are added instantly once payment is confirmed.

4.3 Voting Integrity & Fraud Prevention

WVIHF's system will automatically monitor for:

- Duplicate or throwaway email accounts
- Automated/bot voting
- Multiple payments tied to fraudulent methods
- Unusual or suspicious voting spikes

Votes deemed fraudulent will be invalidated without notice.

Contestants involved in manipulation will be disqualified. All decisions are FINAL.

4.4 Refund Policy

- All vote purchases are **non-refundable**, unless in verified system failure cases that are reported within 48 hours.
- All other purchasing issues must be reported within **48 hours** of purchase.

4.5 Voting Window

All online voting dates will be posted on the WVIHF website.

Votes submitted outside this window will not be counted.

5. Competition Structure

5.1 Online Voting

- Online voting will contribute to—but not solely determine—the final ranking.
- Online voting will contribute to 25% of the FINAL score

5.2 Live Event

- Finalists will perform live during the WVIHF Singer of the Year competition.
- Each attending audience member will be given **one (1) live audience vote** the evening of the performance. The Live Audience vote will contribute to 25% of the final score.
- All judges' scores from the live performance
- (up to 40 points per judge) will be calculated at the end of the contest period. The Judges score will contribute to 50% of the final score and will be calculated at the end of the contest.

5.3 Performance Opportunities at WVIHF

- The **Grand Prize Winner** will receive a **30-45 minute performance** on the **WVIHF Main Stage**.
 - Main stage time will be set by the Entertainment/Production Committee.

6. Tie-Breaking Procedures

In the event of a tie, the following tiebreakers will be applied in order (based on judges' category scores):

1. Highest **Talent & Skill** score
2. If still tied, highest **Stage Presence** score
3. If still tied, the panel of judges will confer and determine a final winner

7. Conduct & Disqualification Policies

7.1 Contestant Conduct

Contestants must demonstrate respectful, positive, and professional behavior both online and at the live event.

7.2 Grounds for Disqualification

Reasons may include, but are not limited to:

- Fraudulent or manipulated voting
- Violation of submission or performance rules
- Sharing unauthorized or altered videos
- Harassment, misconduct, or inappropriate behavior
- Failure to follow instructions from WVIHF staff

WVIHF may remove or disqualify performers at any point in the competition for just cause.

8. Rights & Permissions

8.1 Media Release

By participating, contestants grant WVIHF the right to use:

- Names
- Photographs/Images
- Video/audio recordings
- Performance footage

for promotional, advertising, and festival-related purposes without compensation.

8.2 Ownership

Contestants retain personal ownership of their performance but grant WVIHF usage rights for the duration of the competition and for future promotional materials.

9. Final Provisions

- WVIHF reserves the right to modify, update, or clarify these rules at any time.
- Any changes will be posted on the official WVIHF website.
- Participation in the WVIHF Singer of the Year competition constitutes full acceptance of all rules and policies.

WVIHF – Singer of the Year Performer Agreement & Acknowledgment Form

This Performer Agreement (“Agreement”) is entered into between the undersigned contestant (“Performer”) and the **West Virginia Italian Heritage Festival (WVIHF)** in connection with participation in the **WVIHF Singer of the Year Competition**.

1. Acknowledgment of Rules

By signing this Agreement, the Performer acknowledges that they have **received, read, and fully understand** the official *WVIHF Singer of the Year Competition Rules* and agrees to comply with **all eligibility requirements, performance rules, judging criteria, voting procedures, conduct policies, and final provisions** as stated.

2. Eligibility Certification

The Performer certifies that:

- They meet the eligibility requirements regarding **heritage, age, and residency requirements** as stated in the official rules.
- They understand that **proof of eligibility** (heritage, age, and/or residency) may be requested at any time.
- They understand that failure to provide requested documentation may result in **disqualification without appeal**.

The Performer further certifies that:

- They **have not been under a paid performance contract with WVIHF** during the current or immediately preceding festival season for any Main Stage, Second Stage, or officially sponsored WVIHF performance.
- They understand that WVIHF reserves the right to verify prior contractual agreements and determine eligibility at its sole discretion.

3. Performance & Song Selection Agreement

The Performer agrees that:

- They will perform **one (1) song only** throughout the entire competition, including online voting and live performance.

- The song selection, arrangement, and key will remain consistent unless prior written approval is granted by WVIHF.
- Any accompaniment used will strictly comply with competition rules, including:
 - Pre-recorded instrumental/karaoke tracks **without background vocals**, or
 - **Self-accompaniment only**, performed solely by the Performer.
- No additional musicians, background vocalists, or performers are permitted.
- The performer is responsible for securing necessary performance or karaoke track rights for their selected song.

4. Content Standards

The Performer agrees that all performances will be:

- **Family-friendly**
- Free from profanity, explicit language, sexually suggestive themes, violent or discriminatory content, or offensive gestures.

The Performer understands that WVIHF reserves the right to require content changes or to disqualify performances that do not meet these standards.

5. Media, Recording & Promotion Acknowledgment

The Performer acknowledges and agrees that:

- All live performances will be recorded by WVIHF.
- Only **official WVIHF recordings** posted on the WVIHF Facebook page may be used for promotion or voting.
- Performers may share official WVIHF posts or links on social media for promotional purposes, but may not upload or distribute alternate recordings during the voting period.
- Personal recordings, edited clips, overdubs, or alternate uploads are strictly prohibited during the voting period.

6. Voting & Scoring Acceptance

The Performer acknowledges that:

- Final rankings are determined by **Judges' Scores (50%)**, **Online Voting (25%)**, and **Live Audience Voting (25%)**.
- Judges' scores are **final and not subject to appeal**.
- Any fraudulent voting activity may result in immediate disqualification.

7. Conduct & Disqualification

The Performer agrees to maintain professional, respectful conduct throughout the competition. The Performer understands that WVIHF may disqualify participants for violations at any stage of the competition, including after results are announced for the following, but not limited to:

- Rule violations
- Fraudulent voting
- Misconduct or harassment
- Failure to follow WVIHF staff instructions

8. Rights & Media Release

By signing this Agreement, the Performer grants WVIHF the right to use their:

- Name
- Likeness
- Photographs
- Video and audio recordings
- Performance footage

for promotional, advertising, and festival-related purposes **without compensation**, now and in the future.

The Performer retains ownership of their performance but grants WVIHF usage rights in perpetuity for promotional, archival, and advertising purposes in any media format, now known or later developed as outlined in the competition rules.

9. Final Acceptance

The Performer understands that:

- WVIHF reserves the right to modify or clarify competition rules.
- Participation in the competition constitutes **full and binding acceptance** of all rules and policies.

Performer Information

Performer Name (Print): _____

Stage Name (if applicable): _____

Date of Birth: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Signature

By signing below, I confirm that I have read, understand, and agree to abide by all rules and conditions of the WVIHF Singer of the Year Competition.

Performer Signature: _____

Date: _____