



# FIDDLE JUDGING CRITERIA

## 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Lorain County Fair Fiddle Contest

**Saturday, August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018**



**Traditional Fiddling / Authenticity** (15 points) – The ability to play danceable music in a manner appropriate to the category's style of music. Variation and ornamentation should emphasize the distinctive flavor of the tune, not detract from, or obscure it. The melody should remain easily recognizable. Consideration is given to the quality and appropriateness of the tunes selected and how well the selected tunes fit the category.

**Rhythm and Timing / Danceability** (25 points) – The ability to set and maintain a steady, danceable tempo & rhythm, with no unevenness, breaks in rhythm, pauses or dropped beats. Extra beats or measures are allowed, as are dotted notes or syncopation, if they are an appropriate part of the tune as traditionally played. Timing should be consistent without jerking, rushing, or dragging. Traditional fiddling is synonymous with dancing. The judges will listen for the unique feel/drive that makes a dance tune - a pleasant "lift" that makes dancers want to move. This shows the contestant's ability to move dancers around the floor, rather than display "hot licks".

**Clarity and Tone Quality / Intonation** (25 points) – Notes should be played clearly, on pitch, with good tone. Avoid running notes together in a fuzzy or indistinct manner. Good tone does not mean sounding like a classical violinist, but at the same time tone should not be too harsh. The judges will listen for the general command (skill, technique, execution) of the instrument.

**Expression / Creativity** (15 points) – The ability to move or 'connect' with the audience/judges. The music should be played with life, feeling and enthusiasm; not appear listless, nor drag. Flat, mechanical and unfeeling performances should be avoided, yet so should excessive 'showmanship'. Over-embellishment and flashiness is discouraged if it detracts from the original melody. This shows the contestant's ability to make the tune their own by putting some of their own style and personality into it (using phrasing, dynamics, ornaments and variation) in such a way that it is presented in a new and pleasing way, yet still maintains the tune's traditional feel.

**Difficulty and Mastery** (10 points) – Points will be awarded based on the judge's assessment of the tune's level of difficulty, and the contestant's proficiency. Scores will reflect a level of difficulty relative to the other contestants. A contestant is rewarded for making a more challenging choice as opposed to easy ... however; it must still be well played. A simple tune played well will score higher than a difficult tune played poorly.

**Overall Impression** (10 points) – The judge has discretion here to incorporate a personal view which might take into consideration other things not necessarily specified. (Not, however, how cute the kids are or how hard the old man is trying...)