

TEXAS FOLKLIFE'S BIG SQUEEZE ACCORDION CONTEST

2022 ENTRY RULES

About the Program

This is the 16th year for The Big Squeeze Accordion Contest and we are so excited to showcase young accordionists from across the region! The Big Squeeze is a statewide contest where youth accordion players showcase their performance abilities in FOUR main accordion genre categories: **Polka, Zydeco, Cajun, and Conjunto**. The Polka genre includes German, Czech, and Polish traditions. Zydeco will include Creole styles, and Conjunto will include Conjunto, Norteño and Tejano. Please contact Texas Folklife if you are unsure of which category your music fits.

NEW FOR 2022

This year, the auditions will remain partially virtual as we continue to stay safe through the Covid-19 pandemic, and applicants can send in video entries. The Conjunto Semi-Finals will be April 23 in Edinburg in person and the Finals will be May 14 in Austin in person. In addition to the contest auditions, Texas Folklife is excited to host a series of virtual community discussions this season. Attendance and participation in these conversations will help inform how we continue to support youth accordion heritage music. We will also circulate surveys to evaluate the community outreach elements of the Big Squeeze program. Please plan to fill out a brief survey as part of your participation. More information will follow.

Reminders for audition entries and performance in semi-finals & final:

Contestants can have **one** accompanist which is not provided by Texas Folklife. This accompanist cannot be drums or electric bass and the contestant cannot sing so as to focus on the accordion performance in the videotaped audition.

As always, The Big Squeeze Contest and Texas Folklife strive to represent the state's geographic and cultural diversity. Since 2007, over 350 young musicians from more than 40 Texas towns and cities have participated. Contestants represent communities across this great state, including the Rio Grande Valley, Houston, Gulf Coast, Greater Dallas Area, San Antonio, Lubbock, and more!

The Big Squeeze is supported by the members and board of Texas Folklife and Hohner, Inc.; and by grants from the Texas Commission on the Arts, the Cultural Arts Division of the City of Austin Economic Development Department, H-E-B, Texas Music Office, the City of Houston through the Miller Theatre Advisory Board, and Full Gallop. Additional support is provided by regional partners including zydecoevents.com, Texas Polka News, La Joya Independent School District, Los Fresnos Consolidated Independent School District, Roma Independent School District, Museum of South Texas History, Conjunto Heritage Taller, Bullock Texas State History Museum, and more!

More details on how to enter on the next page!

Big Squeeze Genre Categories (no minimum age)

Conjunto Category

- Conjunto Grand Prize, Ages 16 and under
- Anthony Ortiz, Jr. Conjunto Grand Prize, Ages 17-21

Zydeco Category

- Zydeco Grand Prize, Ages 25 and under

Cajun Category

- Cajun Grand Prize, Ages 25 and under

Polka Category

- Polka Grand Prize, Ages 25 and under

Big Squeeze Important Dates

- March 31, 2022- deadline to send in video entries
- April 23, 2022 - Conjunto Semi-Finals in Edinburg
- May 14, 2022 - Finals in Austin

Read the section below called “How To Enter The Big Squeeze 2022.”

Big Squeeze 2022 Prizes

- Category Finalist(s) win:
 - Promotional support and performance opportunities from Texas Folklife;
 - \$100 cash;
 - Other items to be announced.
- The Grand Prize Winners win:
 - A new Hohner accordion (valued over \$1,000);
 - Promotional support and performance opportunities from Texas Folklife;
 - Additional cash award;
 - Additional sponsorship opportunities & prizes to be announced.

All selections, contest outcomes and prizes are awarded at the discretion of Texas Folklife and Big Squeeze judges. This contest may be canceled at any time at the sole discretion of Texas Folklife.

How to Enter The Big Squeeze 2022

*****Accordionists can enter by submitting a video entry digitally, by e-mail or mail. It must show you performing two songs in the category you choose with no more than one accompanist*****

1. **Read this whole document.**
2. **Fill out the entry form.**
 - a. For the paper version, go to: texasfolklife.org/bigsqueeze2022. For an online version, go to:
3. **Prepare your video(s)**
 - a. Applicants can enter by performing two songs and submitting a video entry digitally, by mail or e-mail.
 - i. Emailing a video from your phone and a photo to bigsqueeze@texasfolklife.org
 - ii. Emailing a private YouTube Link with video and a photo to bigsqueeze@texasfolklife.org
 - iii. Emailing video files using Dropbox or WeTransfer.com to bigsqueeze@texasfolklife.org
 - iv. Mailing a USB Drive with video and photo to The Big Squeeze at: Texas Folklife c/o The Big Squeeze

Big Squeeze 2022 Judging & Rounds

- **Preliminaries:** All entrants submit their songs digitally. The four accordion genre categories: **Polka, Zydeco, Cajun, and Conjunto.**
 - After receiving submissions, a panel of esteemed musicians and music industry judges will use a numerical ranking system to select up to ten Conjunto semi-finalists and three finalists in the Cajun, Zydeco and Polka categories.
 - **Judging criteria will include: Technical Proficiency, Song Interpretation, and Stage Presence. Details and scoring weight of each judging criteria section:**
 - **Technical Proficiency: Accuracy, Execution, & Chops (40%)**
 - **Song Interpretation: Stylistic Choices, Innovation, & Originality (40%)**
 - **“Stage Presence”: Level of Comfort during Performance, Engagement, Poise (20%)**

- **Note:** we recognize that stage presence is difficult to portray on a video audition, but this contest still prioritizes skill level during judging and stage presence is given a lower weighted score.
- FOR CONJUNTO ONLY - Up to five (5) contestants from each of the two Conjunto age categories will be chosen to advance to the next round, the Conjunto Semi-Finals. The Conjunto Semi-Finalists will be announced on April 11, 2022.
- **Semi-Finals:** FOR CONJUNTO ONLY
Up to ten (10) Conjunto Semi-Finalists will be showcased on April 23, 2022. During this virtual event, up to three Finalists in each of the two age categories for the Conjunto category will be chosen. The 3 finalists for Cajun, Zydeco and Polka categories will also be announced at this time.
- **Finals:** Grand Prize Winners in each of the four accordion genre categories (**Polka, Zydeco, Cajun and Conjunto**) will be announced live on May 14, 2022 during the Finals event in Austin.
 - We may ask these Finalists to submit an additional video or perform live on May 14. Please stay tuned for more details on that.
 - The five (5) Grand Prize Winners may be asked to perform one of their songs live at Accordion Kings & Queens on at Houston's Miller Outdoor Theatre on June 4.

Big Squeeze Criteria For Entry

- Applicants must fit age requirements of applicable category as of May 14, 2022. Applicants that turn do not fit age requirements of applicable category on or before May 14, 2022 are not eligible.
- Entrants confirm that if under 18 and picked as a finalist, they are required to provide written permission from a parent or guardian.
- Applicants **MUST** currently be a resident of the State of Texas, or State of Louisiana for Cajun or Zydeco categories.
- Applicants **MUST** include a press-worthy photo with entry form to be considered.
- Applicants **MUST** submit a complete entry form to be considered.
- Applicants can enter by performing two songs where they will submit a video entry digitally, by mail or e-mail.
- If chosen for the contest, the two songs submitted with their application **MUST** be performed.
- If selected as a Conjunto Semi-Finalist, contestants **MUST** be available to participate in the live virtual Conjunto Semi-Finals on April 23, 2022.
- If selected as a Finalist, entrants **MUST** be available to participate in the live Finals on May 14, 2022 in Austin.
- Entrants agree to participate in video, audio, archival and social media documentation of the contest.
- Entrants grant Texas Folklife or its representatives the right to record and reproduce their performances and allow the use of their names and likenesses in promotion. Texas Folklife upholds all copyright laws, the contestants will not be held liable for any rights infringement.
- Entrants have read and understand the Big Squeeze Accordion Contest 2022 Official Rules.
- Entrants confirm that their contact information will be provided to Texas Folklife for future years of this program and for our Public Relations and Community Outreach efforts within the participating communities and their media outlets.
- Entrants authorize the verification of the information provided on this form.
- Entrants understand they can be disqualified at any time, at the sole discretion of Texas Folklife.
- Entrants understand that Texas Folklife will not practice, condone or permit any discrimination on the basis of sex, age, race, color, national origin, religion, physical handicap or disability, sexual orientation, marital status, veteran's status, political service or affiliation.
- Entrants understand that all selections, contest outcomes and prizes are awarded at the sole discretion of Texas Folklife.
- Entrants understand that this contest and its events may be canceled at any time.

Questions? Comments? Concerns? Send an email to bigsqueeze@texasfolklife.org.

The search is on for the next generation of accordion stars!