



COUNTRY LINE DANCE NOVELTY DANCE INTERNATIONAL
FOLK DANCE TRADITIONAL FREE-STYLE CLOGGING PRECISION
CLOGGING TRADITIONAL SMOOTH CLOGGING LINE CLOGGING DUO/DUETS
INSTRUMENTAL SOLO GROUP INSTRUMENTAL GROUP VOCALS SCHOOL VOCAL

North Carolina State Fair History

Bascom Lamar Lunsford and the Origins of the Folk Festival

Bascom Lamar Lunsford was born in Mars Hill, North Carolina, in 1882, surrounded by the rich traditions of Appalachian folk music. In 1928, he founded the Mountain Dance and Folk Festival, often recognized as the first event to be described as a "Folk Festival." His goal was to preserve and showcase the music and dance traditions of Southern Appalachia, celebrating the beauty and dignity of the region's culture.

The festival grew into the oldest gathering of its kind in the nation, highlighting the talents of artists from the Great Smoky and Blue Ridge Mountains. It played a key role in raising awareness of Southern Appalachian culture throughout the region, the nation, and even the world.

Lunsford's mission was to present the best Appalachian ballad singers, string bands, and square dance teams for both education and entertainment. The festival's music and dances reflect the diverse heritage of the region, including Scottish, English, Irish, Cherokee, and African influences.

In 1948, Lunsford helped establish the Folk Festival at the North Carolina State Fair, bringing these traditions to an even wider audience.

Gail Lyle, founder of the Little River Cloggers, continued this legacy. She danced with the Eno Valley Cloggers, who performed at the fair in 1977 and 1978. In 1995, Gail started her own team, and the Little River Cloggers have been a fixture at the state fair since 1996.

Expanding the Folk Festival

While the festival began as a celebration of Southern Appalachian heritage, it has grown over the years to embrace musical and dance traditions from around the world. Today, the festival highlights heritage music and dance categories representing diverse cultures, from Cajun and Zydeco to Irish step dance, Hispanic folk, and West African drumming.

To reflect evolving artistic expressions, the festival now also includes Novelty and Contemporary categories. These divisions celebrate innovative and creative performances, such as:

- Fusion genres blending folk with jazz, rock, blues, or electronic music
- Experimental dance styles and modern interpretations of traditional forms
- Comedic and theatrical performances featuring unique instruments or props

The North Carolina State Fair Folk Festival continues to honor its roots while welcoming new generations of artists and performers, creating a vibrant and inclusive celebration of music, dance, and culture.





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Important information and background

- Pre-registration is required. Registration deadline Sunday, September 15, 2024.
- NC Substitute W-9 forms are required for prize money to be awarded in Music categories only.
- Submit questions to: ncsfCompetitions@ncagr.gov
- The Folk Festival will be held near Heritage Circle on the west side of the fairgrounds in a large tent beside the white church, .
- Competition is open to residents of the United State of America.
- General Rules and Regulations of the Fair will govern this department.
- All performances have a maximum time limit of 8 minutes.
- Professional sound engineers on hand every day.
- **PARKING OPTIONS:** The Folk Festival tent is closest to Gate 7 on Youth Center Road. The Cardinal Lot has FREE transportation from your vehicle to the road across from Gate 7.
Gate C Parking on Trinity Road is available but you must request a parking pass in advance. Gate C free shuttle drops you off at the far side of the fair.
Vehicle access to the tent to unload is available before 9 am only. Request a permit in advance.

FOLK FESTIVAL HAS FOUR DIVISIONS:

HERITAGE DANCE

Clogging at the NC State Fair Folk Festival features live music and professional judging the first four day of the festival, showcasing Appalachian tradition with energy and precision.

The first four days highlight Heritage Dance, celebrating traditional styles from North Carolina and beyond, including Appalachian flatfooting, ballet, Bollywood, tango, Irish step, African and Indigenous dances, and global folk traditions. These non-judged performances focus on storytelling, technique, and cultural expression.





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NOVELTY & CONTEMPORARY DANCE

Novelty Dance showcases fun, creative, and unconventional routines, including trend-driven fads, theatrical performances, comedic interpretations, and unique movement styles. From classic dance crazes to imaginative new creations, this category embraces originality and entertainment.

Contemporary Dance is a dynamic and expressive category that fuses ballet, modern, jazz, and global influences. With an emphasis on fluidity, storytelling, and innovation, it allows dancers to push boundaries and explore new movement styles.

Bring your own music. Performance ONLY. Novelty & Contemporary Dance are not judged.

TRADITIONAL VOCAL AND INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

Traditional vocal and instrumental styles preserve cultural identity, storytelling, and artistic expression across generations, from Tuvan throat singing and Flamenco to West African griot storytelling and Native American powwow songs.

In North Carolina, Appalachian folk, bluegrass, gospel, and blues blend African, European, and Indigenous influences, using fiddles, banjos, and soulful harmonies to keep deep musical roots alive through folk singing, choral arrangements, and call-and-response patterns that connect the past with the present.

CONTEMPORARY & NOVELY VOCAL AND INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

The Contemporary and Novelty division showcases innovative and unconventional musical styles, blending modern influences with unique interpretations of traditional sounds.

Folk-jazz or electronic fusion, folk-inspired originals, novelty instrument acts, beatboxing or looping, folk song parodies, and blends with pop, rock, hip-hop, R&B, blues, jazz, acapella, or global music.

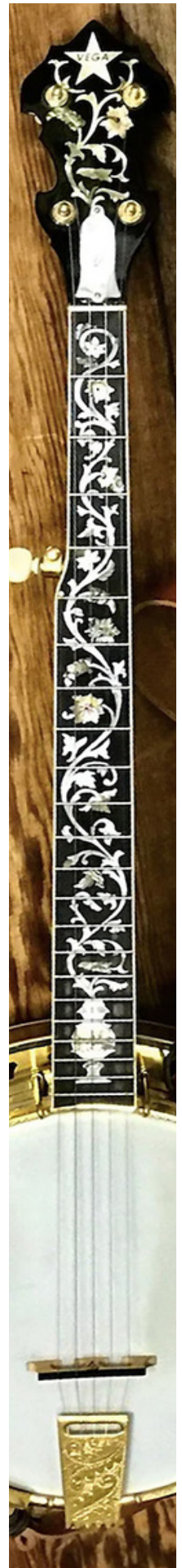
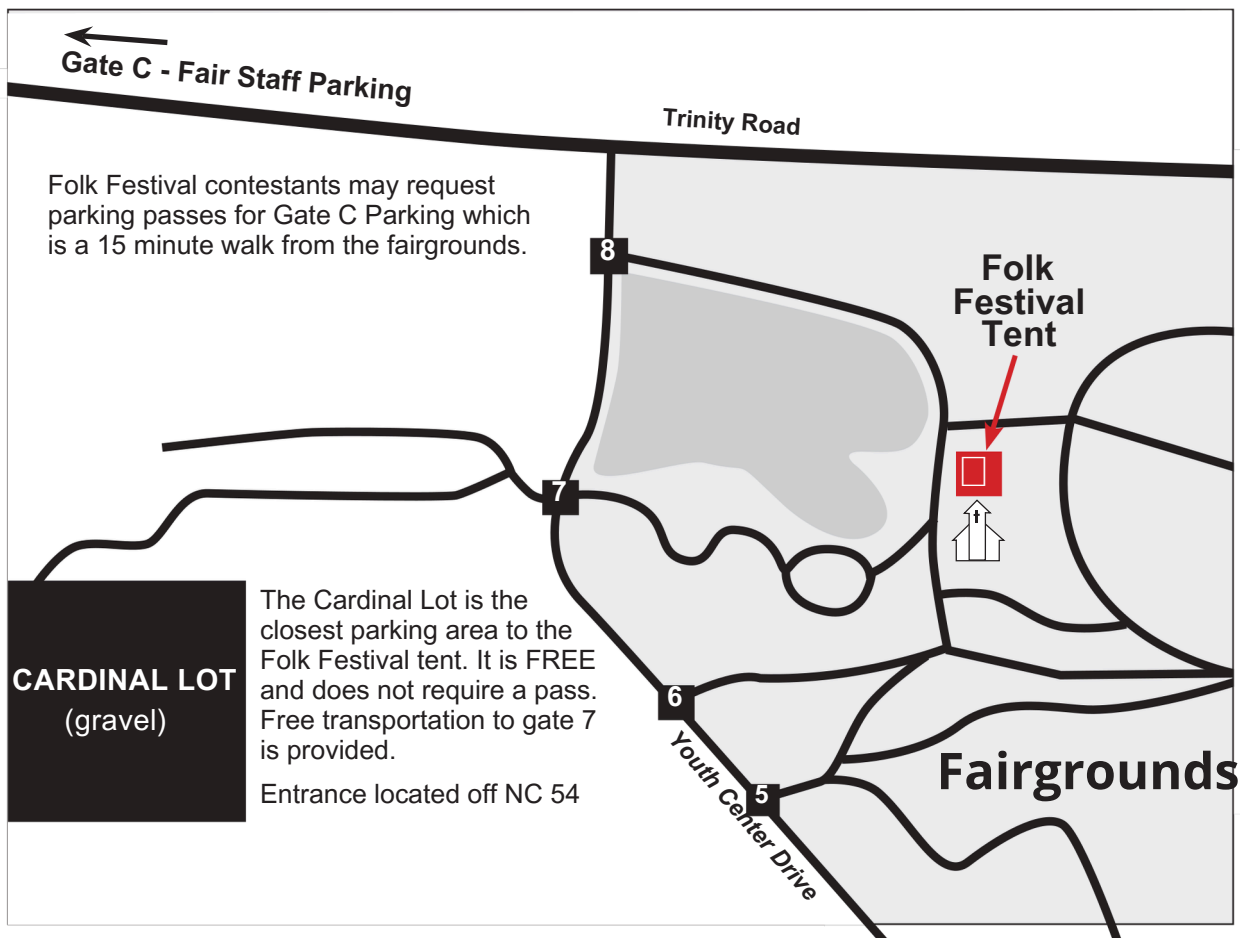
Performances are evaluated by professional judges who assess authenticity, technique, and artistic expression. Perform solo or with recorded backing music. Live music, backed by the house band, is available upon request for performances on the 17th through the 20th.



October 2025 Folk Festival Schedule

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				16 FAIR OPENS AT NOON No Folk Festival on this day.	17 LIVE BAND HERITAGE CLOGGING & MUSIC JUDGING	18 LIVE BAND HERITAGE CLOGGING & MUSIC JUDGING
19 LIVE BAND HERITAGE CLOGGING & MUSIC JUDGING	20 LIVE BAND HERITAGE CLOGGING & MUSIC JUDGING	21 NOV. & CONT. Not Judged MUSIC JUDGING	22 NOV. & CONT. Not Judged MUSIC JUDGING	23 NOV. & CONT. Not Judged MUSIC JUDGING	24 NOV. & CONT. Not Judged MUSIC JUDGING	25 NC STATE SHOWCASE OPEN STAGE
26 NC STATE SHOWCASE OPEN STAGE	<p><i>You can participate on any day from the 17th to the 26th in any category. The House Band and the Professional Clogging Judges are only available on the days listed above - the 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th.</i></p>					

WHERE TO PARK



Live Band and Professional Clogging Judges are ONLY available the 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th. Clogging performances outside of those dates will not be judged. Time slots are first come - first served. Register early to secure your place in the lineup.

HERITAGE DANCE

DIVISION 101 - TRADITIONAL FREE-STYLE CLOGGING

Four or more couples dancing as a team using traditional figures. Choose your Class from the list below using your groups average age. Maximum performance time 8 minutes.

DIVISION 102 - PRECISION CLOGGING

Four or more couples performing traditional figures as a team. Choose your Class using your groups average age. Maximum performance time 8 minutes.

DIVISION 103 - TRADITIONAL SMOOTH DANCE

Four or more couples dancing as a team performing traditional figures as a team. Choose your Class using your groups average age. Maximum performance time 8 minutes.

DIVISION 104 - MISCELLANEOUS CLOGGING ROUTINES

Anything that does not fall into other traditional clogging divisions. Choose your Class using your groups average age. Maximum performance time 8 minutes.

DIVISION 105 - CLOGGING LINE

Four or more people standing line or formation line, no facing in same line, no personal contact. Choose your Class using your groups average age. Maximum performance time 8 minutes.

DIVISION 106 - CLOGGING DUO/DUETS

Male/female couple, or 2 males, or 2 females dancing as partners – do not separate from partner. Join hands as much as possible. As a couple move into a 4-corner pattern. Bluegrass or country music is required. Choose your Class using your duos average age. Maximum performance time 8 minutes.

DIVISION 107 - INDIVIDUAL CLOGGING

Free-style.

Choose your Class from the list below.

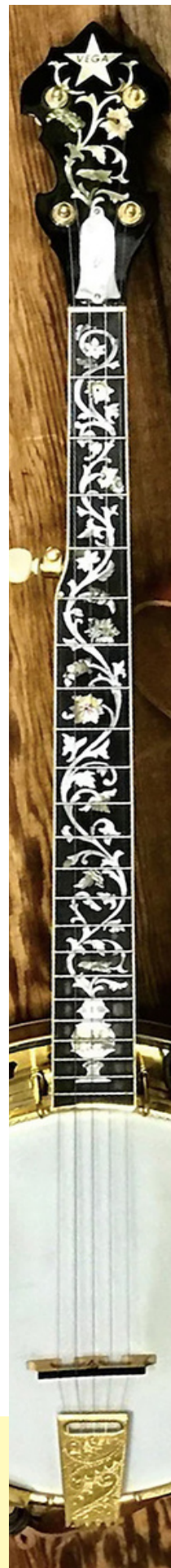
All Divisions use the same CLASSES:

YOUTH:

Class 1 – Ages 2-5 **Class 2** – Ages 6-8 **Class 3** – Ages 9-11 **Class 4** – Ages 12-17

ADULT:

Class 5 – Ages 18-30 **Class 6** – Ages 31-50 **Class 7** – 51 & Up



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HERITAGE DANCE (continued)

DIVISION 108 - GLOBAL FOLK DANCE

Includes traditional dances from cultures around the world, showcasing unique steps, rhythms, and styles. This division preserves and shares cultural heritage through performance.

Maximum performance time 8 minutes.

DIVISION 109 - JAZZ/TAP

Includes performances in jazz and tap dance styles. Dancers showcase rhythmic footwork, musicality, and movement in both traditional and modern routines.

Choose your Class using your groups average age.

Maximum performance time 8 minutes.

DIVISION 110 - BALLET

Includes classical and contemporary ballet performances, showcasing technique, grace, and artistic expression through movement.

Maximum performance time 8 minutes.

DIVISION 111 - INDIGENOUS

Features traditional dances from Indigenous cultures, showcasing authentic movements, rhythms, and storytelling passed down through generations.

Maximum performance time 8 minutes.

Choose your Class from the list below.

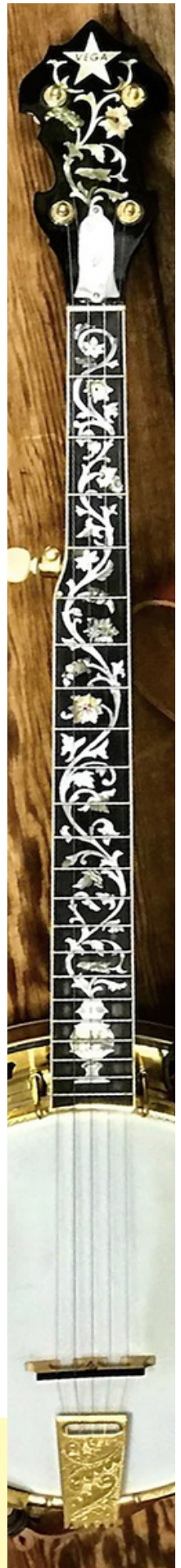
All Divisions use the same CLASSES:

YOUTH:

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ADULT:

Class 5 – Ages 18-30 **Class 6** – Ages 31-50 **Class 7** – 51 & Up



NOVELTY & CONTEMPORARY DANCE

Novelty & Contemporary Dance performances are not judged. Time slots are first come - first served. Register early to secure your place in the lineup.

DIVISION 112- COUNTRY LINE DANCE

No clogging. Features choreographed group dances performed in lines, set to country and western music, emphasizing rhythm, coordination, and footwork.

Choose your Class using your groups average age.

Maximum performance time 8 minutes.

DIVISION 113 - INTERPRATIVE DANCE

Focuses on expressive movement that conveys emotions, themes, or storytelling.

Performances may blend various dance styles to create unique, artistic interpretations.

Choose your Class using your groups average age.

Maximum performance time 8 minutes.

DIVISION 114 - ETHNIC

Showcases traditional dances from specific cultural backgrounds, highlighting unique movements, music, and storytelling.

Choose your Class using your groups average age.

Maximum performance time 8 minutes.

DIVISION 115 - NOVELTY

Features fun, quirky, and unconventional performances, including trend-based, theatrical, and comedic routines.

Choose your Class using your groups average age.

Maximum performance time 8 minutes.

DIVISION 116 - CONTEMPORARY

Blends elements of ballet, modern, and jazz dance, emphasizing fluid movement, creativity, and emotional expression.

Choose your Class using your groups average age.

Maximum performance time 8 minutes.

Choose your Class from the list below.

All Divisions use the same CLASSES:

YOUTH:

Class 1 – Ages 2-5 **Class 2** – Ages 6-8 **Class 3** – Ages 9-11 **Class 4** – Ages 12-17

ADULT:

Class 5 – Ages 18-30 **Class 6** – Ages 31-50 **Class 7** – 51 & Up



Live backing band is only available the 18th, 19th, 20th and 21st. Music acts can participate on any day of the Folk Festival competition. Time slots are first come - first served. Register early to secure your place in the lineup.

TRADITIONAL MUSIC

DIVISION 117 - INSTRUMENTAL SOLO

1st Place: \$75, 2nd Place: \$50, 3rd Place: \$40
Choose your Class using your groups average age.
Maximum performance time 8 minutes.

DIVISION 118 - GROUP INSTRUMENTAL

1st Place: \$100, 2nd Place: \$75, 3rd Place: \$50
Choose your Class using your groups average age.
Maximum performance time 8 minutes.

DIVISION 119 - VOCAL SOLO

1st Place: \$75, 2nd Place: \$50, 3rd Place: \$40
Choose your Class using your groups average age.
Maximum performance time 8 minutes.

DIVISION 120 - GROUP VOCALS (NON SCHOOL)

1st Place: \$100, 2nd Place: \$75, 3rd Place: \$50
Choose your Class using your groups average age.
Maximum performance time 8 minutes.

DIVISION 121 - SCHOOL VOCAL GROUP

1st Place: \$100, 2nd Place: \$75, 3rd Place: \$50
Choose your Class using your groups average age.
Maximum performance time 8 minutes.

NOVELTY & CONTEMPORY MUSIC

DIVISION 122 - INSTRUMENTAL SOLO

1st Place: \$75, 2nd Place: \$50, 3rd Place: \$40
Choose your Class using your groups average age.
Maximum performance time 8 minutes.

DIVISION 123 - GROUP INSTRUMENTAL

1st Place: \$100, 2nd Place: \$75, 3rd Place: \$50
Choose your Class using your groups average age.
Maximum performance time 8 minutes.

Choose your Class from the list below.

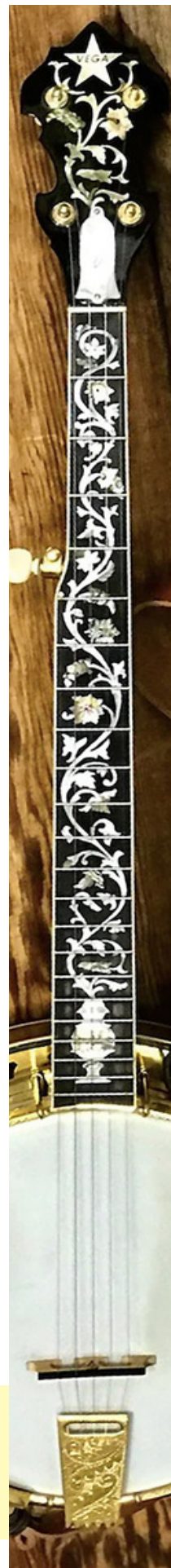
All Divisions use the same CLASSES:

YOUTH:

Class 1 – Ages 2-5 **Class 2** – Ages 6-8 **Class 3** – Ages 9-11 **Class 4** – Ages 12-17

ADULT:

Class 5 – Ages 18-30 **Class 6** – Ages 31-50 **Class 7** – 51 & Up



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NOVELTY & CONTEMPORARY MUSIC *(continued)*

DIVISION 124 - VOCAL SOLO

1st Place: \$75, 2nd Place: \$50, 3rd Place: \$40

Choose your Class using your groups average age.

Maximum performance time 8 minutes.

DIVISION 125 - GROUP VOCALS (NON SCHOOL)

1st Place: \$100, 2nd Place: \$75, 3rd Place: \$50

Choose your Class using your groups average age.

Maximum performance time 8 minutes.

DIVISION 126 - SCHOOL VOCAL GROUP

1st Place: \$100, 2nd Place: \$75, 3rd Place: \$50

Choose your Class using your groups average age.

Maximum performance time 8 minutes.

FOLK FESTIVAL PRIZES

First Place, Second Place and Third Place ribbons will be awarded to each winning participant.

Best of Show Ribbons will be awarded in Youth (Classes 1-4) and Adult (Classes 5-6) in the following Categories: Contemporary Dance, Heritage Dance, Instrumental Music and Vocal Music. The Annette Pulley Award, will be presented to an individual or group

for outstanding

talent, sportsmanship, audience appeal and continuing support of the Folk Festival.

The performance being appropriate, entertaining and an enhancement for our Folk Festival shows.

The Bascom Lamar Lunsford Award, given in memory of the founder of the Festival, will be awarded by the judges to the group or individual whose musical performance best exemplifies the historical and entertainment purposes of the Festival. The Curtis

Lee Award, will be presented to an individual for an outstanding instrumental performance. Musical selections should be characteristic of the NC State Fair Folk Festival tradition.

Choose your Class from the list below.

All Divisions use the same CLASSES:

YOUTH:

Class 1 – Ages 2-5 **Class 2** – Ages 6-8 **Class 3** – Ages 9-11 **Class 4** – Ages 12-17

ADULT:

Class 5 – Ages 18-30 **Class 6** – Ages 31-50 **Class 7** – 51 & Up

