

All submissions are assigned a number to ensure anonymity then divided equally among a panel of three judges consisting of professionally established and experienced songwriters. The judges score the songs in the areas of lyrics, melody, creativity/originality, and composition/structure. The songs are then redistributed amongst the panel so that each song is reviewed by more than one judge in the first round. Each judge selects the top two songs of their list, then those songs (maximum of 6) are again put to the entire panel for a final review. Two over-all winners will be selected from this final group.

Winners will be contacted by phone prior to June 1. Awards will be announced publicly on June 1 at the Back Forty Festival and winners perform their songs on stage in the songwriter's workshop hosted by James Keelaghan. This will be a paid performance. Winners will also be given an opportunity to develop their skills in workshops planned by Chautauqua Spirit and will be invited to return in September for a repeat performance at the Chautauqua Celebration.