

FUTURE OF FIGA SURVEY (Please Respond by July 5, 2010)



The Board of Directors of the Fretted Instrument Guild of America (FIGA) cordially invites you to participate in a brief survey. We encourage everyone to participate, by responding on-line at our website or using this form, as your opinions will guide the future direction of our organization and the sponsored activities supporting our membership. Your responses are confidential and will be reviewed by the Board of Directors, who will submit suggestions for improving FIGA to the general membership for approval. *This survey should take no more than 15 - 20 minutes of your time. Thank you in advance for your participation.*

FOUNDED IN 1957, OUR BY-LAWS STATE THAT THE FRETTED INSTRUMENT GUILD OF AMERICA'S MISSION IS:

TO PROMOTE, FOSTER, ENCOURAGE, AND STIMULATE INTEREST IN THE USE OF FRETTED INSTRUMENTS, THE MUSICAL EDUCATION OF FRETTED INSTRUMENT PLAYERS, ENTHUSIASTS, AND PERFORMERS THROUGH:

- **EDUCATIONAL MEETINGS, WORKSHOPS, AND CONCERTS FOR FRETTED INSTRUMENTS;**
- **ENCOURAGING THE COMPOSITION, PUBLICATION, AND DISSEMINATION OF MUSICAL MATERIAL TO ORGANIZATION MEMBERS;**
- **TO BUY, SELL, AND OWN ITEMS OF PROPERTY OR EQUIPMENT AND TO PERFORM ANY OTHER LAWFUL ACTS THAT AFFECT THE SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OR PURPOSE.**

1. Do you feel that this mission is appropriate to ensure that FIGA will remain a strong and vital champion of fretted music for years to come?

- Strongly agree
- Agree somewhat
- No opinion
- Disagree somewhat*
- Strongly disagree*

*Please describe what aspects should be changed _____

2. Are there any specific areas in FIGA's mission and focus that could be enhanced or improved upon to address membership needs, and to retain/recruit members to keep our organization vital and active for future generations? [More than one response may be provided]

- Educational meetings, workshops, and concerts for fretted instruments.
- Encourage the composition, publication, and dissemination of musical material to organization members.
- To buy, sell, and own items of property or equipment and to perform any other lawful acts that affect the specific objectives or purpose.
- Other (please specify) _____
- No changes are necessary.

3. FIGA's membership demographics and composition have evolved and changed since it's founding. [From a historical perspective, FIGA was established after accordions began to dominate a predecessor music organization. It was conceived as an organization to ensure that all fretted instruments would be represented and the interests of all members preserved. In earlier years, mandolinists reflected a majority of our membership, but 4-string banjoists are now in the majority.]

- a. Do you feel that FIGA still endeavors to embrace ALL types of fretted music and fretted musicians and enthusiasts?

- Strongly agree
- Agree somewhat
- No opinion
- Disagree somewhat
- Strongly disagree

b. Do you believe FIGA should, at this time, reconsider its mission and focus to reflect current membership and interests?

- Strongly agree
- Agree somewhat
- No opinion
- Disagree somewhat
- Strongly disagree

c. Should FIGA remain true to its ALL FRETTS roots and mission?

- Strongly agree
- Agree somewhat
- No opinion
- Disagree somewhat
- Strongly disagree

4. Are there any particular fretted musical instruments, musicians/enthusiasts, or special interest groups that FIGA should reach out to, either to recruit and reconnect with, in an effort to build membership and diversity? [*More than one response may be provided*]

- Mandolin, Mandolin Banjo, Mandola, and Mandobass Family
- Zither
- Lute
- Guitar (acoustic)
- Guitar (electric)
- 4-String Banjo (tenor, Irish tenor, plectrum, guitar tuning)
- 5-String Banjo (classic, stroke style, clawhammer, bluegrass/country)
- Ukulele and Banjo Ukulele
- Ethnic fretted instruments (*please specify*) _____
- Other (*please specify*) _____

5. What would you suggest that FIGA do to increase and build upon our existing membership ranks, to ensure that we remain as a strong and sustainable organization for fretted instruments and music throughout the world? [*More than one response may be provided*]

- Actively solicit new members with similar interests to the current membership, through increased advertising, recruitment drives, and member referrals
- Emphasize more contemporary interests and redefine focus to attract today's fretted musicians
- Double efforts to increase the youth movement in the organization through educational activities, grants and scholarships, and other special youth-focused programs
- Partner with other fretted music organizations (including competitors) that may be experiencing membership declines and/or are finding it difficult to recruit/retain members to sustain its activities
- Improve efforts to retain current members and/or maintain active membership status, including direct follow-up at missed renewal cycles
- Enhance or improve the quality and content of educational meetings, workshops, and concerts for fretted instruments
- Enhance or improve the quality and content of composition, publication, and dissemination of musical material to organization members
- Other suggestions (*please specify*) _____

6. As some of our fellow members have proposed, do you believe that it may be time for us to reconsider and change the name of our organization from “Fretted Instrument Guild of America” (more commonly referred to as “FIGA”)? [*Reasons range from: refreshing the image and appeal to reflect a revitalized focus for the organization; to help attract new and younger members with contemporary interests; and eliminating the negative stigma associated with other uses of “FIGA” on the internet.*]

- Strongly agree*
- Agree somewhat*
- No opinion
- Disagree somewhat
- Strongly disagree

*Please suggest a potential new name(s) for the organization _____

7. Please describe your level of involvement with FIGA and any member benefits that you utilize:

a. How long have you been a member of FIGA? (*please specify*) _____

b. Have you ever attended a FIGA Convention?

- Yes (How many times? _____)
- No

c. Have you, or anyone you know, received an educational grant from the FIGA Foundation?

- Yes
- No

d. Have you ever requested that sheet music or other archived resources be sent to you from the FIGA Library?

- Yes (How many times? _____)
- No

e. Have you used any of the music arrangements published in *All Frets* magazine?

- Yes
- No

f. Have you purchased anything from a vendor after seeing one of their advertisements in *All Frets* magazine?

- Yes
- No

g. Do you share your *All Frets* magazines with others?

- Yes (How many people? _____)
- No

h. Did you know that each time you sponsor a new member to join FIGA that you will receive a free two-month extension of your membership (*i.e., sponsoring six new members gets you one full-year of free membership*)?

- Yes
- No

i. Do you have a suggestion for an article or the name a person you would like to have written about in *All Frets* magazine? (*please specify*) _____

8. Conventions and associated events (e.g., the annual raffle) are among the chief fund raising activities for FIGA. In the last decade, overall attendance has been quite variable. In rare instances, attendance has fallen below expectations and required hotel minimum commitments, placing our organization at varying degrees of financial risk and liability.

a. How can FIGA enhance or improve the annual convention and associated events to ensure greater participation and involvement by our membership? *[More than one response may be provided]*

- Hold the convention during different months of the year (i.e., other than July or August)
- Enhance or improve the quality and content of concerts for fretted instruments
- Change number of concerts and timing during the convention
- Add outside venues for musical performance beyond the traditional concert format
- Enhance or improve the quality and content of educational workshops
- Enhance or improve the quality and content of membership business meetings
- Enhance or improve the convention locations and hosting accommodations
- Create more opportunities for tours and other outside (non-music related) activities that would encourage spouses, significant others, and families to attend with members
- Provide more value for the entertainment dollar spent attending convention activities
- Other *(please specify)* _____

b. What other key factors influence your decision to attend the annual convention and should be critically assessed by the FIGA Board of Directors, during their review of convention proposals, hotel contracts, and the final award to convention host sponsors? *[More than one response may be provided]*

- Overall convention location and facilities
- General tourism considerations in the area
- Hotel accommodations and other amenities (including on-site restaurants and access to nearby points-of-interest)
- Relative ease of travel and potential modes/costs of transportation to attend the convention
- Other *(please specify)* _____

9. Should the annual convention continue to be held on a rotating basis in different areas of the country (according to current By-Laws), rather than centrally where there is the largest concentration of our membership? *[At this time, approximately 2/3 of current members reside east of the Mississippi River, with more than half of our membership living within a 4-hour radius of Detroit, MI]*

- Strongly agree
- Agree somewhat
- No opinion
- Disagree somewhat
- Strongly disagree

10. Should FIGA continue to hold an annual convention that will have national/international appeal and attendance from broad geographic areas, or move to a more regional/local format (either alone or in combination with other existing fretted music events)?

- The current format of a single, annual convention meeting is fine and should remain unchanged
- If feasible, move toward a meeting structure with several smaller regional/local events hosted by FIGA members throughout the year
- Seek to partner with existing regional/local fretted music events, and host FIGA meetings/programs in combination with these events, both to attract new members and capitalize on the presence of FIGA members already attending
- Other suggestions *(please describe)* _____

11. Lastly, please offer any additional suggestions and ideas for enhancing or improving your experiences within FIGA, and briefly describe what you feel are the three most important steps that FIGA should take to ensure its vitality and future:

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

RETURN COMPLETED SURVEYS TO:

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