



INTERNATIONAL BLUEGRASS MUSIC ASSOCIATION

Published on *International Bluegrass Music Association* (<https://ibma.org>)

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The International Bluegrass Music Awards

The following categories, rules, criteria and election procedures for the IBMA Awards are provided as an information resource. In some cases, this information may be paraphrased or abbreviated from the original documents which govern the awards in any given year. Also, exact dates for balloting and deadlines for recommendations may change depending on how days fall within the actual calendar or of the awards presentations. IBMA makes complete information relative to any given year available to members upon request.

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Awards Voted By Full Body of Professional Members

Ballot Schedule

Ballot 1: April 18 - April 28

Ballot 2: June 15 - June 30

Ballot 3: August 1 - August 15

Selection Process

These awards are to honor people who are known as, and have achieved fame as, bluegrass music performers. - The twelve month eligibility period is from April 1st through March 31st the year prior to any given awards presentation. - Voting is limited to current professional members of IBMA at each stage in the election process. - Nominees are not required to be members of IBMA. - The election will be accomplished in three stages as follows: - Nominations: each current professional member of IBMA (at the time of the mailing date) may make as many as five nominations per category* and sub-category on the first ballot.

Second ballot: All eligible nominees receiving ten or more nominations* in the nomination stage will become candidates for awards and shall be placed on the second ballot. *(Song of the Year candidates will be all songs receiving ten nominations or more, or the top ten vote recipients, whichever number is greater). Each professional member may vote for no more or no less than five candidates in any category in which they choose to vote.

Final ballot: The top five vote getting candidates in each category of the second ballot stage will become final nominees. Each professional member of IBMA may vote for their number one choice in any category on this final ballot.

The results of each stage of the election will be tabulated by an independent accounting firm. Only the responsible employees of that accounting firm will know the results of the final tabulations until the winners are announced at the International Bluegrass Music Awards that year. The awards election procedures are established by the board of directors of IBMA. The IBMA awards committee determines eligibility (i.e. assuring that all nominations fall within the specified eligibility period, etc.) Current professional members of IBMA may vote for any or all categories appearing on the ballot. It is not necessary to vote in every category. The official ballot shall not be cut or altered in any manner and may not be duplicated for voting purposes. The accounting firm tabulating votes and the awards eligibility committee interpret every vote cast literally and members must be very specific in identifying exactly which candidate they are voting for. For example, please list the complete band name if voting for an entire band or an individual's name if voting only for one person from within a band.

IBMA Awards and Criteria

Voting members are asked to consider candidates and nominees based on the following criteria for which each award is intended. Information here also indicates who actually received the award

Entertainer of the Year

This award is for the performing act who displayed the greatest competence in all aspects of the entertainment field. Voters should give consideration to recorded and in-person performance, public acceptance, attitude, leadership, and over-all contributions to the bluegrass music image. The award recognizes the performing act.

Vocal Group of the Year

Award for a group who regularly performs together that has shown outstanding recorded and in-person performance in the area of vocal performance. It is not limited to groups which only perform vocally. The award recognizes the performing group.

Instrumental Group of the Year

Award for a group who regularly performs together that has shown outstanding recorded and in-person performance in the area of instrumental performance. It is not limited to groups which only perform instrumentals. The award recognizes the performing group.

Song of the Year

Award for any song, new or old, which was released or showed significant chart action within the eligibility period. Any song which has been nominated for this award in previous years is ineligible. The award recognizes the songwriter and artist.

Album of the Year

Award for an outstanding recorded performance by an artist or artists, first commercially released during the specified time period. The award recognizes the featured artist(s), producer, and label.

Gospel Recorded Performance of the Year

This award is for an outstanding gospel recorded performance (vocal or instrumental song) which was first commercially released or showed significant chart action during the eligibility period. Versions of recorded songs released on albums nominated for this award in prior years are ineligible. The award recognizes the featured artist, songwriter, producer and label.

Instrumental Recorded Performance of the Year

This award is for an outstanding instrumental recorded performance of a tune which was first commercially released or showed significant chart action during the eligibility period. The award recognizes the featured artist, songwriter, producer and label.

Emerging Artist of the Year

This award is for a group or individual, new to the national bluegrass scene, which has made considerable advances artistically and/or commercially during the eligibility period. The band or individual should be performing under its/his/her name on a regular basis and not have more than two previous finalist nominations for this award. The award recognizes the group or individual artist.

Recorded Event of the Year

This award is for a vocal or instrumental recorded performance of a song or tune, which was first released or showed significant chart action during the eligibility period, which represents a special collaboration between two or more artists (individuals or groups) who are known as

touring/recording artists under their own name in a featured role (not as backup singers or musicians). The artists should not have regularly recorded or performed together in the past and should be primarily known for their contributions and public performances separate from one another. Each separate act must receive special "featured" billing on the recording's label, song or tune on which they are featured and should be distinguished from backup singers and/or musicians. The award recognizes the featured artists, producer and label.

Male Vocalist of the Year

Award for the outstanding male vocalist based on recorded and in-person performance. The award recognizes the artist.

Female Vocalist of the Year

Award for the outstanding female vocalist based on recorded and in-person performance. The award recognizes the artist.

Instrumental Performers of the Year

These awards are for artists who, on recorded and/or in-person performance during the specified time period, have shown an extraordinary mastery of their instruments. Nominations and awards will be made in six (6) subcategories: banjo, bass, fiddle, Dobro, guitar and mandolin. The awards recognize the artist.

IBMA's Hall of Fame

IBMA's Hall of Fame, housed in The International Bluegrass Music Museum, is an institution devoted to the recognition of noteworthy individuals for their outstanding contributions to bluegrass music. Founded in 1991, the Hall of Fame is the bluegrass music industry's tribute to the pioneers of the music and the people who have made the music great. The election of Hall of Fame inductees takes place in two stages: nomination and election. The IBMA Board of Directors shall appoint a ten member nominating committee, consisting of industry leaders, to nominate a slate of ten to fifteen Hall of Fame candidates. From these names, an anonymous panel of electors shall cast ballots to narrow the nominees to five finalists. The electors shall number at least 50 (currently there are over 140) and are to be approved by the IBMA's full board, and must themselves have participated actively in bluegrass for at least ten years, and must merit respect and recognition for their accomplishments and/or knowledge in one or more aspects of the field. After the five finalists have been selected, a second ballot listing the names is sent out to the electors, who then vote to select the inductee(s) for that year. The balloting shall be conducted by an independent and reputable accounting firm. The name(s) of the Hall of Fame inductee(s) will be made public immediately following the final stage of balloting and the formal induction shall take place during the International Bluegrass Music Awards Show. IBMA shall induct at least one candidate into the Hall of Fame each year and may induct more upon prior majority authorization of the IBMA Board or in the event of a tie in voting in the final run-off. The name(s) of the Hall of Fame inductee(s) will be made

public immediately following the final stage of balloting and the formal induction shall take place during the International Bluegrass Music Awards Show. Candidates for the Hall of Fame are to be appraised by electors in accordance with the following criteria.

- **Basic Standard** - A candidate basically is to be judged on the degree of their contribution to the advancement of bluegrass music and the indelibility of that impact.
- **Individual/Group Candidacies** - Individual or group candidacies will be considered on a case by case basis. Group candidacies in some cases have merit because collective contributions may have significance beyond that of any individuals in the group. Only people or musical groups may be elected to the Hall of Fame. Companies, publications, radio stations, and other groups -- many of which significantly foster bluegrass music -- are not eligible for Hall of Fame recognition.
- **Scope of Activity** - Flexible authority is vested in the Electors in identifying the scope of a candidate's activity in bluegrass music. He/she/it may have excelled in a narrow, specific sphere such as songwriting, publishing, musician, recording artist, etc., or he/she/it may have been active in several areas. In any event, a candidate must have achieved definitive leadership in his/her/its own field. However, it is definitely not mandatory to honor the leaders of every activity related to bluegrass music. A candidate truly must compete with all candidates in all fields, as well as with all candidates in their own field. Exceptions shall be made in even numbered years to allow the consideration of individuals for their contributions in a non-performing role.
- **Span of Influence** - The time factor of a candidate's impact on bluegrass music is completely flexible. It may cover an uninterrupted span of many years or it may cover two or more distinct and separate time cycles. Conceivably, a candidate may earn Hall of Fame recognition by one transient act, momentary in time, providing the impact on bluegrass music is deemed significant enough. Longevity of involvement with bluegrass music, therefore, will not in itself warrant recognition in the Hall of Fame.
- **Influence on Others** - A most significant criterion in evaluating a candidate will be his/her/its inspirational effect on others...the degree to which his/her/its influence is multiplied through others to create an impact on bluegrass music far beyond his/her/its direct individual contribution.
- **Quantity vs. Quality** - A candidate's ability to expand the popularity of bluegrass music is a quantitative virtue. The professionalism of the activity is a qualitative one. Both qualitative and quantitative criteria are to be considered equally and separately important; conceivably, one may be present without the other.
- **Devotion to Others** - Furthering bluegrass music by selfless devotion to the interests of others may enhance the candidacy of an individual, but it is not essential to winning. The activities of a candidate may be completely self devoted and still be considered significant enough to warrant recognition.
- **Professional Conduct and Image** - A candidate is expected to have practiced the highest caliber of professional conduct in order to have enhanced his/her own public image and that of bluegrass music.
- **Personal Morals and Behavior** - The selection process is not a judgment of personal morals and behavior, providing the latter do not negatively affect the professional conduct of the candidate and the public image of bluegrass music.

The Distinguished Achievement Award

IBMA's Distinguished Achievement Award program exists to honor those in bluegrass music who have:

- proven to be forerunners in their particular field of endeavor, and/or
- fostered bluegrass music's image with developments that will broaden the music's recognition and accessibility.

Each year the Distinguished Achievement Awards committee will achieve the awards purpose by recognizing one individual from each of the following four categories except that it can recognize two in the "General" category (a total of five recipients):

Music- Artists, Composers, Side/Session Musicians.

Media - Journalists, Broadcasters (Radio or Television), Photographers, Historians/Folklorists, Publishers

Business - Promoters, Music Publishers, Agents, Recording Manufacturers and Distributors, Recording Engineers, Luthiers.

General - International Organizers, Association Leaders, Friends of the Music, Philanthropists, Arts Administrators, Teachers/Educators, and other Innovators.

These awards are extended to individuals for their contributions specific area and are especially appropriate when they provide acclaim for those not recognized by other IBMA Awards categories. Candidates for the Distinguished Achievement are judged on the degree to which they have contributed to or influenced bluegrass music in general or to a specific part of the industry. Their contributions should be unique given the relative period of time in which they were made and should embody the spirit of one who "pioneers" or opens new possibilities for the music. The selection committee is urged to consider significant recent influences on the music as well as historic ones. The selection committee is required to spread the recognition afforded by the Distinguished Achievement Award to the various fields of endeavor which have an impact on bluegrass music.

Special Awards

The following awards are determined by special procedures. Committees are enlisted to review recommendations, consider nominations in light of the criteria, and determine recipients.

Selection Process

The Selection Committee of five members is appointed by the IBMA board chairperson. The committee is made up of professional members with at least ten years' experience in bluegrass music who have a significant knowledge of the history of the music. The committee shall actively seek out potential honorees, and solicit candidates' names from the IBMA membership. From recommendations solicited and received, as well as recommendations from the selection committee itself, a list shall be compiled of potential candidates. The committee shall convene at an appropriate time to review all candidates (usually in June or July prior to the IBMA Awards presentations) and shall select by majority vote the recipients of the awards for any given year. Any IBMA member, fan or professional, may submit a nomination for Bluegrass Broadcaster of the Year, Bluegrass Print Media/Writer of the Year, Bluegrass Event (festival or concert production) of the Year, Best Graphic Design, Best Liner

Notes, and Bluegrass Songwriter of the Year. The final five nominees for each category of the Special Awards will be selected by special committees named by the executive committee of the IBMA board. The recipient of each award will be determined by the Panel of Electors.

Awards and Criteria

Bluegrass Broadcaster of the Year

This award recognizes outstanding service to bluegrass music in the field of broadcasting. The recipients must be judged by the committee for their:

- contributions to the field of endeavor
- professionalism - work in their community
- demonstrated ability to foster bluegrass music's image.

Because this is not a lifetime achievement award, longevity of service alone is not a factor.

Bluegrass Print/Media Person of the Year

This award recognizes outstanding service to bluegrass music in the field of print/media and/or journalism. The recipient must be judged by the committee for their:

- contributions to the field of endeavor
- professionalism
- work in their community
- demonstrated ability to foster bluegrass music's image.

?Print/Media? may include print journalism, online journalism, book authors, photographers, bloggers and other published works. The committee shall have final authority in determining whether the work of a recommended person or persons shall fall within the intent of the award.

Bluegrass Event of the Year

This award recognizes events (festivals, concerts, other live performance productions) for their outstanding accomplishment and service to bluegrass music in the field of event production. The event must have taken place during the current IBMA Award eligibility period. The recipients will be judged by the committee for their:

- overall contributions to the field of event production.
- professionalism and quality of presentation.
- work furthering bluegrass in their area of service.
- demonstrated ability to foster bluegrass music's image.

Longevity of an event (number of years produced) may be a contributing factor for receiving the award, but length of service alone is not an acceptable reason for recognizing an event. All candidates must be judged and compared equally for their contributions within the stated eligibility period. Nothing within these criteria prevents an event from winning the award more than once or in consecutive years.

Best Graphic Design

This award recognizes the graphic designer(s), artist and record label for a recording project. The album for which the artwork was designed must have been released during the current eligibility period for album projects. Re-issues and compilations released during the eligibility period may be considered for this award if they include new graphic designs. Candidates will be evaluated by the committee for their:

- quality and professionalism.
- contribution to the field of graphic design
- ability to foster bluegrass music's image

Best Liner Notes

This award recognizes the liner notes writer(s), artist and record label for a recording project. The album for which the liner notes were written must have been released during the current eligibility period for album projects. Re-issues and compilations released during the eligibility period may be considered for this award if they include newly written liner notes. Candidates will be evaluated by the committee for their:

- quality and professionalism.
- contribution to the field of writing
- ability to foster bluegrass music's image

Bluegrass Songwriter of the Year

This award will annually recognize a songwriter or song co-writers for outstanding contributions during the period of eligibility for IBMA Awards. Candidates will be evaluated by the committee for their:

- Originality.
- Contributions to the profession, art and craft of songwriting.
- Impact and influence on bluegrass songwriters, musicians and audiences
- Ability to advance bluegrass music

Candidates must be the original author(s) of the recorded work and not arrangers of previous work attributed to others or songs in the public domain.

Momentum Awards

The Momentum Awards focus on artists and business people who are in the early years of their careers in bluegrass music. The awards are split into two categories?performance awards and industry awards. Performance awards go to one band, one vocalist and three instrumentalists. Three Industry related Momentum Awards are given out each year as well, recognizing a Mentor, an Industry Achiever, and a Festival/Venue/Event.

Selection Process

Momentum Award winners will be selected by a multiple committee-driven process. The initial committee will compile lists of eligible candidates based on recommendations from the IBMA membership and an outreach process within the bluegrass community, and a second committee will decide on the recipients. Regional and local associations will be encouraged to identify serious emerging artists for consideration, but any IBMA member may suggest an artist or industry leader for consideration by by completing the online[Momentum Awards Submission](#) form

With the exception of the "Mentor" Award, anyone previously nominated for an IBMA Award may not be considered for a Momentum Award. Honorees will receive a newly designed trophy or memento, and their names will be included on the IBMA website with all other award recipients.

Awards and Criteria

Performance Awards

Five performance based awards will be given each year, recognizing one band, one vocalist, and three instrumentalists. These awards should be seen not only as recognizing the artistic talents of the musicians, but also taking into account the business side of their musicianship.

For purposes of the Momentum Awards, aMomentum Band is one in the early stage of their career (with a majority of the members having spent less than 5 years playing gigs that are paid, OR with a majority of the members less than 30 years old). The band should be one that has caught the eye of music industry professionals, but has not yet established a solid reputation among the fans. Bands must have released an EP or full length project within the eligibility period, and/or within the six months prior to the start of the eligibility period. Bands will be judged on the overall look and sound of their recorded projects, as well as their marketing, media, promo materials, music, performance, and stage presence (this award is as much a business award as an artistic award).

For purposes of the Momentum Awards, aMomentum Artist is someone who is in the early stage of their career (less than 5 years playing gigs that are paid, OR less than 30 years old), someone who has caught the eye of music industry professionals, but has not yet established a solid reputation as an artist among the fans. Momentum Artists should have been active on the bluegrass/acoustic music scene during the eligibility period.

Established artists that have formed new bands and new bands formed with more than one member of a previous winning Momentum Band award are not eligible for Momentum Band of the Year. Bands that have released three or more full length projects are not eligible for the Momentum Band of the Year Award.

Momentum Festival/Event/Venue

This award recognizes new festivals, events, and/or venues for their outstanding accomplishments and services to bluegrass music in the field of event production. The festival/event must not have been existence more than 5 years. Venues must show acoustic acts on a regular basis, and must not have been existence as an established acoustic music venue more than 3 years. The event must have taken place during the current IBMA Award eligibility period. The recipients will be judged by the committee for their:

- professionalism and quality of presentation
- work furthering bluegrass in their area of service
- demonstrated ability to foster bluegrass music's image

Momentum Industry Involvement Award

This award honors those in bluegrass music who have:

- proven to be forerunners in their particular field of endeavor, and/or
- fostered bluegrass music's image with developments that will broaden the music's recognition and accessibility.

Candidates for the Momentum Industry Involvement Award will be judged on the degree to which they have contributed to or influenced bluegrass music in general or to a specific part of the industry. Their contributions should be unique given the relative period of time in which they were made (less than 10 years, with particular attention to the gains they have made within the given eligibility period) and should embody the spirit of one who "pioneers" or opens new possibilities for the music. Eligible career paths include:

- Media - Journalists, Broadcasters (Radio or Television), Historians/Folklorists, Bloggers/Publishers
- Artisan - Photographers, Graphic Artists, Luthiers, Web Design, Recording Engineers, Live Sound Engineers, Producers
- Business - Promoters, Publicists, Music Publishers, Agents, Recording Manufacturers and Distributors
- General - International Organizers, Association Leaders, Arts Administrators, Teachers/Educators, and other Innovators.

Mentor Award

One award will be presented each year honoring a bluegrass professional who has made a significant impact on the lives and careers of newcomers to the bluegrass industry - musical and professional.

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