



INTERNATIONAL BLUEGRASS MUSIC ASSOCIATION

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By Taylor Coughlin

When I moved to Nashville from Colorado in September 2012, I couldn't wait to experience all the live music this city is beloved for. I went to Robert's Western World twice in three days, walked by the Ryman (okay, and maybe bowed down), and saw Loretta Lynn's 50th Opry Anniversary show within my first week. But when I finally made it to the Station Inn on a Sunday night to check out the open bluegrass jam, I knew it: I had found my place.

As I watched the pickers sitting around each other in a circle, I noticed how they interacted. The banjo player laughed with the bass player while the man in overalls on Dobro furrowed his brow and slid out a heart-melting solo. One fiddler showed another some fingering, and a woman confidently took over lead on vocals.

It was a perfect representation of what the bluegrass community represents; joyful, wickedly talented, generous people who love the music they play and genuinely want others to join in and love it, too. There are no exclusions, no unfriendly competition, and no one stealing the spotlight (for too long, anyway). Everyone thrives on others' success just as much as their own. I may be biased, but what other music industry can claim that?

In this issue of *IB*, we hear how an international artist was made successful in part from the support of other musicians here in the U.S. We also hear how Leadership Bluegrass teaches talented leaders in our musical community to go out and develop the success of the industry, and find that its future is in good hands. We talk about how to help IBMA grow in May during Membership Month, preview what to look forward to in Raleigh, hear about the latest music, and more.

When I accepted the position at IBMA, like a novice picker joining a jam, there was a place made in the circle right away. I am proud and excited to be part of this society connected by the music we all love. My goal at IBMA is to help propel the success of the bluegrass music industry as a whole by hearing your stories, telling your stories, and providing you opportunities to make even more of them. Because what's a good song if it doesn't tell a story, and what is bluegrass without a good song?

When I'm not writing and editing at the IBMA office, you can find me running on trails, catching live music, or enjoying Nashville culture with friends. I welcome all of your comments, suggestions (and flattery and complaints) at Taylor@IBMA.org ^[2] or (615)-256-3222. I look forward to hearing from you; don't be a stranger!

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