



Awards Handbook: Criteria and Process

2019

Recognizing outstanding achievement and pioneering effort in bluegrass music.

(Approved by the International Bluegrass Music Association Board of Directors: March 19, 2019)

INTERNATIONAL BLUEGRASS MUSIC ASSOCIATION: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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MISSION STATEMENT

The IBMA is the non-profit music association that connects, educates, and empowers bluegrass professionals and enthusiasts, honoring tradition and encouraging innovation in the bluegrass community worldwide.

OUR VALUES

Our values are the guiding principles for how we strive to conduct our affairs. They reflect what is important to us as an organization. They drive the behaviors we as members want to model in business and with the public.

Forward Thinking & Leadership provides us with an endless and outward looking vision and allows us to be proactive in finding the growth critical to our future.

Positive Working Relationships create goodwill and a spirit of cooperation. Participation is encouraged through personal communication and interaction in an organization that is accessible and responsive.

Professionalism is our mission and cornerstone of all things important to our industry. In daily practice we endeavor to be more resourceful, educated, creative, aware and dedicated in order to find health and success.

Integrity is a respected trait we work to earn through truthfulness, honesty, fairness and ethical conduct that fosters goodwill and more productive and humane relationships with one another.

Honoring Tradition is important, not only to our past, but to our future as we embrace the positive attributes and pride we have in our industry, musical and cultural heritage. Our traditions are the source of intense and powerful resources.

Diversity & Inclusion are essential to the well-being and continued growth of bluegrass music. We encourage, embrace, and celebrate the participation and involvement in bluegrass by people of all abilities, genders, orientations, identities, faiths, cultures, and backgrounds.

Education fosters a culture of learning at all levels.

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INTERNATIONAL BLUEGRASS MUSIC ASSOCIATION: MUSIC AWARDS

Music Awards are given annually by the International Bluegrass Music Association to the industry's most outstanding performing artists and industry professionals who have made significant contributions to bluegrass music during the eligibility period. These awards are decided on by the entire IBMA Professional Membership, which includes individual professional members, organizational members, college student members, youth members, and lifetime members. It is not required for nominees to be IBMA members.

Any current IBMA Professional Member from around the globe may submit nominations for the International Bluegrass Music Association Music Awards and participate in the balloting process. Self-nominations are encouraged and welcomed.

Eligibility Period

Activity from April 1 of the previous year through March 31 of the current year.

Balloting Process

The election process involves a first ballot requesting write-in nominations for all categories, a second ballot containing the twenty highest-voted candidates from the first ballot in each category, and a third ballot containing the top five nominees in each category.

All ballots are delivered to IBMA Professional Members electronically via email. Every vote will be collected, interpreted, and tabulated by external accounting firm Riney Hancock & Co., PSC of Owensboro, Kentucky. This firm provides the results of the voting process. Voting members are urged to be precise in identifying the candidate they are voting for and are encouraged to enter full and complete band names, individuals, albums and tracks, and to consult the relevant recorded project, record label site, or other reliable sources to ensure their votes will be interpreted correctly.

Target Dates

1. First Ballot: April 15-30
2. Second Ballot: June 15-30
3. Third Ballot: August 1-15

Award Presentations

Winners are announced and presented with awards at the annual International Bluegrass Music Association Awards Show. Recipients receive one official IBMA trophy for each category, except for “Song of the Year,” in which two trophies are given – one for the artist(s) and one for the songwriter(s). Additional trophies may be purchased through the IBMA Office.

Categories and Criteria

Entertainer of the Year

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

New Artist of the Year

This award recognizes new artists, whether branded as a group or individual, who have for the first time in their careers demonstrated professional, commercial, and artistic impact on bluegrass audiences worldwide. Artists who have reached the final ballot in this category more than twice within a three-year period will no longer be eligible for this award. The award recognizes the artist or performing group.

Vocal Group of the Year

This award recognizes a group, who regularly performs together, that has shown outstanding recorded and/or in-person vocal performance. It is not limited to groups who only perform vocally. The award recognizes the performing group.

Instrumental Group of the Year

This award recognizes a group, who regularly performs together, that has shown outstanding recorded and/or in-person instrumental performance. It is not limited to groups who only perform instrumentals. The award recognizes the performing group.

Male Vocalist of the Year

This award recognizes a male vocalist who has shown outstanding recorded and/or in-person vocal performance. The artist must be active professionally within the eligibility period. The award recognizes the artist.

Female Vocalist of the Year

This award recognizes a female vocalist who has shown outstanding recorded and/or in-person vocal performance. The artist must be active professionally within the eligibility period. The award recognizes the artist.

Instrumental Performers of the Year

These awards recognize artists who have shown extraordinary mastery of their instruments in recorded and/or in-person performances. Awards are given in six subcategories: banjo, bass, fiddle, guitar, mandolin, and resophonic guitar. The artists must be active professionally within the eligibility period. The awards recognize the artists.

Album of the Year

This award recognizes an album that was first commercially released or showed significant chart action within the eligibility period. The album must contain multiple recorded tracks and be greater than 20-minutes in duration. The award recognizes the featured artist(s), producer(s), and record label.

Song of the Year

This award recognizes a song that was first commercially released or showed significant chart action within the eligibility period. Any song that has reached the final ballot for this award in previous years is ineligible. The award recognizes the songwriter(s), featured artist(s), producer(s), and record label.

Instrumental Recording of the Year

This award recognizes an instrumental tune that was first commercially released or showed significant chart action during the eligibility period. Any tune that has reached the final ballot for this award in previous years is ineligible. The award recognizes the featured artist(s), songwriter(s), producer(s), and record label.

Gospel Recording of the Year

This award recognizes a gospel song or tune that was first commercially released or showed significant chart action during the eligibility period. Any gospel song that has reached the final ballot for this award in previous years is ineligible. The award recognizes the featured artist(s), songwriter(s), producer(s), and record label.

Collaborative Recording of the Year

This award recognizes a collaborative song or tune that was first released or showed significant chart action during the eligibility period. The recording must feature two or more artists who do not regularly record or perform together – the artists must be known primarily for their contributions and public performances separate from one another – and are distinguished from backup singers and/or musicians. The award recognizes the featured artists, producer(s), and record label.

INTERNATIONAL BLUEGRASS MUSIC ASSOCIATION: INDUSTRY AWARDS

Industry Awards are given annually by the International Bluegrass Music Association to industry professionals who are dedicated to furthering bluegrass music and its artists. Songwriters, broadcasters, writers, graphic designers, event promoters, and sound engineers who have been active during the eligibility period are invited to apply. It is not required for nominees to be IBMA members.

All submissions are reviewed by IBMA Executive Committee-appointed Industry Awards Nominating Committees for each category. The leading candidates are recommended to the IBMA Panel of Electors, whose vote determines the award recipients.

Eligibility Period

Activity from April 1 of the previous year through March 31 of the current year.

Application Process

Anyone from around the globe who wishes to submit a candidate for an Industry Award must complete the electronic application available at www.ibma.org. Self-submissions are encouraged and welcomed. The application submission period is May 1-31.

Industry Award Nominating Committees

Each of the Industry Awards Nominating Committees is comprised of four to six IBMA Professional Members, appointed by the IBMA Executive Committee, who are knowledgeable about the field and their respective award categories. Committee members serve one three-year term. At the discretion of the IBMA Board Chair, a member may participate on two consecutive terms before rotating off for at least one term. Committee members with conflicts of interest are recused from the nomination process. The identity of Committee members and their deliberations are to remain confidential.

Industry Award Nominating Committees are responsible to review all applications for eligibility and nominate five exemplary candidates for each award category based on published criteria. Nominating Committees may recommend candidates for consideration after the application period only if fewer than seven eligible applications are received for a particular category. Internal submissions must be accompanied by all required materials as published for that category.

IBMA Panel of Electors

The IBMA Panel of Electors is comprised of no fewer than 50 IBMA Professional Members, appointed by the IBMA Executive Committee, who are known to the industry as respected and accomplished participants in bluegrass music for at least ten years. Electors may include Nominating Committee members, IBMA Officers and Directors, and Board Members. Electors are expected to cast votes in all rounds of balloting annually to remain in good standing. Electors are responsible to review all Industry Award nominations and choose award recipients based on published criteria by majority vote. The identity of Electors and their votes are to remain confidential.

Target Dates

Application submission period: May 1-31

Nominating Committees finalized: Jun 30

Nominating Committees recommend top five candidates to Panel of Electors: Aug 30

Panel of Electors vote to decide award recipient: Sep 15

Award Presentations

Winners are announced and presented with awards at the annual International Bluegrass Music Association Business Conference. Recipients receive one official IBMA trophy for each category. Additional trophies may be purchased through the IBMA Office.

Categories and Criteria

Songwriter of the Year

This award recognizes a songwriter who has shown outstanding contributions to bluegrass music during the eligibility period. Candidates are considered for their own original work and not arrangements of previous work attributed to others or songs in the public domain. Songwriters will be judged by their originality, creativity, and ability to express ideas through song; public reach quantified through sales, broadcast, and chart activity; quality and/or quantity; and impact on bluegrass music with songs that resonate with artists and listeners.

Required Materials

- Candidate name
- Contact information
- List of songs recorded during the eligibility period
- List of chart action within the eligibility period

- Explanation of the songwriter's impact on bluegrass music during the eligibility period

Supplemental Material

- List of other qualifications
- Letters of recommendation (3 max)
- Website links (recordings, lyrics samples, charts, etc.)

Writer of the Year

This award recognizes a writer for print media and/or online publication who has shown outstanding contributions to bluegrass music. Candidates must have been active and their accomplishments evident within the eligibility period. Writers will be judged by their writing quality and command of language; ability to contextualize bluegrass music's past and present; quality and/or quantity; and success in educating and engaging the public about bluegrass music through the written word.

Required Materials

- Candidate name
- Contact information
- List of published works during the eligibility period
- Explanation of the writer's impact on bluegrass music during the eligibility period

Supplemental Material

- List of other qualifications
- Letters of recommendation (3 max)
- Website links (PDF, book scan samples, eBook links, etc.)

Broadcaster of the Year

This award recognizes a broadcaster (radio, television, podcasts, internet/web, and other forms) for their outstanding contributions and service to bluegrass music. Candidates must have been active and their accomplishments evident within the eligibility period. Broadcasters will be judged by their ability to communicate and connect with their audience; ability to present bluegrass music with a sense of contemporary and/or historical context; work to inform and engage their listeners, viewers, and/or subscribers; and overall professional, technical, and musical quality of programming.

Required Materials

- Candidate name
- Contact information including station information and associated networks
- Broadcast format (radio, television, podcast, etc.)

- Aircheck MP3 audio sample (3-10 minutes in length emphasizing candidate's personal broadcast style, voice, and presentation) from within the eligibility period
- Explanation of the broadcaster's impact on bluegrass music during the eligibility period

Supplemental Material

- List of other qualifications
- Letters of recommendation (3 max)
- Website links (station website, podcast site, etc.)

Graphic Designer of the Year

This award recognizes a graphic designer for outstanding work in the creation of physical and/or digital graphics (album artwork, promotional materials, logos, websites, social media, etc.). Candidates must have been active and their accomplishments evident within the eligibility period. Graphic designers will be judged by their technical design abilities; artistry and aesthetics; success in branding artists, organizations, physical and digital products, events, etc.; and presenting bluegrass music to the public through quality graphic design.

Required Materials

- Candidate name
- Contact information
- Graphic design samples via website links (minimum of 3 design samples) from within the eligibility period
- Explanation of the graphic designers' impact on bluegrass music during the eligibility period

Supplemental Material

- List of other qualifications
- Letters of recommendation (3 max)
- Website links (designer's website, portfolio, etc.)

Event of the Year

This award recognizes events (festivals, concerts, event series, or 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 and its accomplishments evident within the eligibility period. The event will be judged by its ability to further bluegrass music in its region or area of service; production quality in terms of presentation and organization; environment; and overall audience experience.

Required Materials

- Candidate name
- Contact information
- List event date(s), frequency of event series, and/or venue schedule
- List of bluegrass performers featured at event(s)/venue during the eligibility period
- Explanation of the event's impact on bluegrass music during the eligibility period

Supplemental Material

- List of other qualifications
- Letters of recommendation (3 max)
- Website links (schedule, brochures, posters, etc.)

Liner Notes of the Year

This award recognizes outstanding work in the creation of liner notes for recorded bluegrass album projects (CDs, vinyl, box sets, digital releases, etc.). Liner notes must accompany a project newly released during the eligibility period. The album itself may be comprised of either new or previously-released music (compilations, retrospective collections, etc.). Liner notes will be judged by their ability to enhance the message of the recorded work; overall writing quality and professionalism; and ability to educate the public about bluegrass music and its recording artists.

Required Materials

- Candidate name
- Contact information
- Electronic PDF version of the liner notes
- Explanation of the liner notes' impact on bluegrass music during the eligibility period

Supplemental Material

- List of other qualifications
- Letters of recommendation (3 max)
- Website links (reviews, electronic publication, etc.)

Sound Engineer of the Year

This award recognizes a sound engineer (recording engineer, mixing engineer, mastering engineer, or live sound engineer) for outstanding work and service to bluegrass music. Candidates must have been active on projects newly released or for live sound work performed during the eligibility period. Sound engineers will be judged by their technical expertise; sonic artistry and aesthetics; success in capturing and presenting recorded and/or live bluegrass

music; and ability to create the best possible representation of bluegrass music audio for the public.

Required Materials

- Candidate name
- Contact information
- List of recordings released (with record label info) or bluegrass events engineered during the eligibility period
- Explanation of the sound engineer's impact on bluegrass music during the eligibility period

Supplemental Material

- List of other qualifications
- Letters of recommendation (3 max)
- Website links (audio samples, video links, etc.)

INTERNATIONAL BLUEGRASS MUSIC ASSOCIATION: MOMENTUM AWARDS

Momentum Awards are given annually by the International Bluegrass Music Association to artists and industry professionals who are in the early years of their careers in bluegrass music. Bands, instrumentalists, vocalists, and industry professionals who are new to bluegrass and have been active during the eligibility period are invited to apply. An award is also presented to a mentor for his or her positive influence on new artists and industry professionals.

All submissions are reviewed by IBMA Executive Committee-appointed Momentum Awards Nominating Committees for each category. The leading candidates in each category are recommended to the IBMA Momentum Awards Selection Committee for decision by majority vote.

Eligibility Period

Activity from April 1 of the previous year through March 31 of the current year.

Application Process

Anyone from around the globe who wishes to submit a candidate for a Momentum Award must complete the electronic application available at www.ibma.org. Self-submissions are encouraged and welcomed. The application submission period is May 1-31.

Momentum Awards Nominating Committee

The Momentum Awards Nominating Committee is comprised of four to six IBMA Professional Members, appointed by the IBMA Executive Committee, who are knowledgeable about new artists and industry professionals in the field. Committee members serve one three-year term. At the discretion of the IBMA Board Chair, a member may participate on two consecutive terms before rotating off for at least one term. Committee members with conflicts of interest are recused from the nomination process. The identity of Committee members and their deliberations are to remain confidential.

The Momentum Award Nominating Committee is responsible to review all applications for eligibility and nominate five exemplary candidates for each award category based on published criteria. The Nominating Committee may recommend candidates for consideration after the application period only if fewer than seven eligible applications are received for a particular category. Internal submissions must be accompanied by all required materials as published for that category.

Momentum Awards Selection Committee

The Momentum Awards Selection Committee is comprised of four to six IBMA Professional Members, appointed by the IBMA Executive Committee, who are knowledgeable about new artists and industry professionals in the field. Committee members serve one three-year term. At the discretion of the IBMA Board Chair, a member may participate for two consecutive terms before rotating off for at least one term. Committee members with conflicts of interest are recused from the selection process. The Momentum Award Selection Committee is responsible to review all Momentum Award nominations and choose award recipients based on published criteria by majority vote. The identity of Committee members and their deliberations are to remain confidential.

Target Dates

Application submission period: May 1-31

Nominating Committee finalized: Jun 30

Nominating Committee recommends top five candidates to Selection Committee: Aug 15

Selection Committee votes to decide award recipient: Aug 30

Award Presentations

Winners are announced and presented with awards at the annual International Bluegrass Music Association Business Conference. Recipients receive one official IBMA trophy for each category. Additional trophies may be purchased through the IBMA Office.

Categories and Criteria

Momentum Band of the Year

This award recognizes performing bands that are new to bluegrass music and have shown, for the first time in their careers, outstanding musical and professional development during the eligibility period. Bands should be acknowledged for their success growing devout and energized regional fanbases, promoting and marketing their band, exhibiting strong performance skills, and/or demonstrating notable progress toward future recognition by national and worldwide bluegrass audiences. Any band that has reached the final ballot for any other IBMA Award, or in this Momentum category more than twice in previous years, will no longer be eligible for this award. Band members who have received IBMA Awards or nominations as individuals will not affect their band's eligibility for Momentum Band of the Year.

Required Materials

- Candidate name
- Band name and individual members
- Contact information
- Explanation of the band's progress and impact on bluegrass music during the eligibility period

Supplemental Material

- List of affiliations (record labels, agents, etc.)
- Letters of recommendation (3 max)
- Website links

Momentum Instrumentalist of the Year

This award recognizes two instrumentalists who have shown, for the first time in their careers, outstanding musical and professional development during the eligibility period. These instrumentalists should be acknowledged for capturing the attention of regional bluegrass audiences, for their growing reputation among more established bluegrass artists and industry professionals, and their demonstrated progress toward future recognition by national and worldwide bluegrass audiences. Any instrumentalist who has reached the final ballot for IBMA Instrumental Performer of the Year, or in this Momentum category more than twice in previous years, will no longer be eligible for this award.

Required Materials

- Candidate name
- Contact information
- Explanation of the instrumentalist's progress and impact on bluegrass music during the eligibility period

Supplemental Material

- List of affiliations (record labels, agents, etc.)
- Letters of recommendation (3 max)
- Website links

Momentum Vocalist of the Year

This award recognizes a vocalist who has shown, for the first time in his or her career, outstanding musical and professional development during the eligibility period. Vocalists should be acknowledged for capturing the attention of regional bluegrass audiences, for their growing reputation among more established bluegrass artists and industry professionals, and their demonstrated progress toward future recognition by national and worldwide bluegrass audiences. Any vocalist who has reached the final ballot for IBMA Male or Female Vocalist of

the Year, or in this Momentum category more than twice in previous years, will no longer be eligible for this award.

Required Materials

- Candidate name
- Contact information
- Explanation of the vocalist's progress and impact on bluegrass music during the eligibility period

Supplemental Material

- List of affiliations (record labels, agents, etc.)
- Letters of recommendation (3 max)
- Website links

Momentum Industry Involvement

This award recognizes industry professionals that are new to bluegrass music and have shown, for the first time in their careers, outstanding contributions to their particular field during the eligibility period. Broadly defined, roles in industry involvement may include journalists, broadcasters (radio, TV, podcasts, internet/web, and other forms), historians/folklorists, photographers, graphic designers, luthiers, music producers, sound engineers, event promoters, publicists, agents, international organizers, association leaders, arts administrators, teachers/educators, and other innovators. Candidates are considered on the degree to which they have contributed to bluegrass music in general, or to a specific part of the industry, whether regionally, nationally, or worldwide. Any candidate who has reached the final ballot in any other IBMA Award category, or in a Momentum category more than twice in previous years, will no longer be eligible for this award.

Required Materials

- Candidate name
- Contact information
- Explanation of the candidate's progress and impact on bluegrass music during the eligibility period

Supplemental Material

- List of affiliations (radio programs, schools, record labels, agencies, organizations, companies, community organizations, etc.)
- Letters of recommendation (3 max)
- Website links

Mentor of the Year

This award recognizes an individual who has made a significant impact on the lives and careers of new bluegrass artists and industry professionals. Not limited to bluegrass professionals, candidates may include community musicians, private music teachers, band leaders, bluegrass youth organization coordinators, music producers, luthiers, and anyone who has shown dedication to up and coming bluegrass artists and industry professionals. Past and current IBMA Award nominees and recipients may be eligible for Mentor of the Year, unless they have already received this award in the past.

Required Materials

- Candidate name
- Contact information
- Explanation of the mentor's impact on new bluegrass artists and industry professionals

Supplemental Material

- List of affiliations (bands, community organizations, festivals, schools, businesses, etc.)
- Letters of recommendation (3 max)
- Website links