

Awards Handbook: Criteria and Process

Recognizing outstanding achievement and pioneering effort in bluegrass music.

(Adopted by the International Bluegrass Music Association Board of Directors: March 12, 2026)

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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 & Inclusiveness are encouraged in the expression of bluegrass music. We embrace the participation and involvement in bluegrass by people from all cultures and backgrounds.

Education & Research help us understand that bluegrass music is part of a larger historical, social, and professional/commercial context. We are committed to preserving legacies of bluegrass while also cultivating and inspiring rising generations of tradition bearers and creators.

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IBMA 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. Official IBMA trophies will be given to the individuals recognized within each category. The number of trophies given will be: one for individual artists, up to six for performing groups or collaborative recording artists, one for producers, one for record labels, and up to three for songwriters. Additional trophies may be purchased through the IBMA Office.

Procedural Review

The Music Awards criteria and processes are the responsibility of the IBMA Board of Directors and may be changed outside of the annual nomination cycle by that board by majority vote. The Board of Directors may appoint a task force for periodic review of Music Awards criteria and processes for the purpose of making recommendations.

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 in-person and/or virtual performances, recordings, 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 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. Any album that has won in previous years is ineligible. 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, with lyrics and vocal performance, 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, including material that is considered faith-based, inspirational, sacred, spiritual, or searching, 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 should have been promoted as featuring two or more artists who do not regularly record or perform together. The artists should be known primarily for their contributions and public performances separate from one another and are distinguished from backup singers and/or session musicians. The award recognizes the featured artist(s), songwriter(s), producer(s), and record label.

Music Video of the Year
This award recognizes a music video that was first commercially released or received significant viewership within the eligibility period. The music video must be a short form performance of a single song, instrumental, or medley, and must be either a studio production or professionally captured live performance. Any music video 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), videographer(s), and record label.

IBMA 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-appointed 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 two hundred 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 may opt to skip categories with which they are less familiar. Award recipients will be chosen 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 votes 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.

Procedural Review

The Industry Awards criteria and processes are the responsibility of the IBMA Board of Directors and may be changed outside of the annual nomination cycle by that board by majority vote. The Board of Directors may appoint a task force for periodic review of Industry Awards criteria and processes for the purpose of making recommendations.

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.)

Bluegrass Event/Venue of the Year

This award recognizes events (festivals, concerts, event series, virtual events, 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. Content for virtual events must have premiered during the eligibility period, and the majority of content must be comprised of newly produced material. 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.)

Bluegrass 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.)

Photographer of the Year

This award recognizes a photographer for outstanding work and service to bluegrass music. Candidates must have been active and their accomplishments evident within the eligibility period. Photographers will be judged by their technical abilities; visual artistry and aesthetics; use of technology, ambient and artificial lighting, and sceneries or landscapes; quality and/or quantity; and success in presenting bluegrass music to the public through quality photography.

Required Materials

- Candidate name
- Contact information
- Photographic samples via website links (minimum of 6 photographs) from within the eligibility period
- Explanation of the photographer's impact on bluegrass music during the eligibility period

Supplemental Material

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

IBMA 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-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, except for Momentum Band of the Year, which may receive up to six trophies. Additional trophies may be purchased through the IBMA Office.

Procedural Review

The Momentum Awards criteria and processes are the responsibility of the IBMA Board of Directors and may be changed outside of the annual nomination cycle by that board by majority vote. The Board of Directors may appoint a task force for periodic review of Momentum Awards criteria and processes for the purpose of making recommendations.

Categories and Criteria

Momentum Band of the Year

This award recognizes performing bands that 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 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 Music or Industry Award category, 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 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

IBMA DISTINGUISHED ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

The IBMA Distinguished Achievement Awards program exists to honor those individuals and organizations in bluegrass music who have proven to be forerunners in their particular field of endeavor and have fostered bluegrass music's image with developments that will broaden the music's recognition and accessibility. The awards extended to individuals for their contributions shall fall into specific categories and are especially appropriate when they provide acclaim for those not recognized by other IBMA Award categories.

Categories and Criteria

Candidates for the Distinguished Achievement Awards should 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 and should embody the spirit of one who pioneers or opens new possibilities for the music. Recognition is especially appropriate where the award provides acclaim for those not recognized by other IBMA Award categories. The Selection Committee is also urged to consider significant recent influences on the music as well as historic ones.

Each year the Distinguished Achievement Awards Selection Committee will choose to recognize one individual within each of the following four categories. The Selection Committee may opt to choose two award recipients in the General category.

Music	performing artists, musical groups, songwriters, side/session musicians
Media	authors, journalists (print and/or electronic), broadcasters (radio, television, podcast, internet, etc.), photographers, videographers, graphic designers
Business	promoters, publicists, music publishers, booking agents, managers, record labels, producers, recording engineers, sound reinforcement, luthiers
General	international organizers, association leaders, historians, folklorists, friends of the music, philanthropists, arts administrators, educators (music teachers, instructional programs, workshops, camps, online

lessons, etc.) and other innovators and contributors.

Distinguished Achievement Awards Selection Committee

The Distinguished Achievement Awards Selection Committee is comprised of five IBMA Professional Members, appointed by the IBMA Executive Committee, who have at least ten year's experience in the field of bluegrass music and have demonstrated significant knowledge of the history of the music and industry. The IBMA Board Chairperson and/or IBMA Executive Director will serve as facilitator(s) and ex-officio non-voting member(s) of the Distinguished Achievement Awards Selection Committee.

Selection 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 process. Committee members are ineligible for Distinguished Achievement Awards consideration during their tenure. The identity of Committee members and their deliberations are to remain confidential.

Selection Process

The Selection Committee will seek potential honorees and solicit candidates' names from the IBMA membership. From recommendations solicited and received, the Committee shall compile a list of potential candidates, including recommendations from the Committee itself. The Committee shall convene at an appropriate time to review all candidates and shall select, by majority vote, at least one person in each of the categories to be recipients of the award.

Target Dates

Selection Committee finalized: Mar 31
Selection Committee votes to decide Distinguished Achievement Award recipients: Jul 15

Award Presentations

The names of the Distinguished Achievement Awards recipients will be made public by July 31. The Selection Committee shall be responsible for organizing presentations of the Distinguished Achievement Awards at the annual International Bluegrass Music Association Business Conference, including the recruitment of presenters appropriate to each recipient. Recipients receive a commemorative plaque (generally, up to six for performing bands). Additional plaques may be purchased through the IBMA Office.

Procedural Review

The Distinguished Achievement Awards criteria and processes are the responsibility of the IBMA Board of Directors and may be changed outside of the annual nomination cycle by that board by majority vote. The Board of Directors may appoint a task force for periodic review of Distinguished Achievement Awards criteria and processes for the purpose of making recommendations. In exceptional circumstances, and prior to the beginning of the nomination process, the IBMA Board of Directors may alter the process to induct additional candidates.

IBMA BLUEGRASS MUSIC HALL OF FAME

The IBMA Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame is an institution devoted to the recognition of noteworthy artists, performing groups, and industry leaders for their outstanding contributions to bluegrass music. Founded in 1991 in conjunction with the Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame & Museum in Owensboro, Kentucky, the Hall of Fame pays tribute to the pioneers of the music and the people who have made the music great. Induction into the Hall of Fame is the highest honor given by the IBMA.

Eligibility

Only people or performing groups are eligible for induction into the Hall of Fame. Companies, institutions, publications, radio stations, and other organizations – many of which significantly foster bluegrass music – are not eligible for Hall of Fame recognition. Eligible people and musical groups may include.

- Individuals such as performing artists, songwriters, music business executives, promoters, and broadcasters. It is permitted to include multiple individuals simultaneously under one induction when those individuals are part of an influential collaboration. Examples might include musical duos, songwriting partners, record label owners, or similar collaborations. Hall of Fame recognition is given to the individual(s).

- Performing groups that present exclusively as a “band,” without a named headlining personality. Hall of Fame recognition is given to the performing group as an entity, not to any of its individual members, and regardless of band configuration or time period.

Categories

Open Category

Two inductions are selected annually for the Hall of Fame Open Category. Eligible candidates may be living or deceased and may include performing artists, bands, and industry professionals.

Early Contributor Category

One induction is selected during odd-numbered years for the Hall of Fame Early Contributor Category. Eligible candidates may be living or deceased and should include performing artists, bands, and industry professionals who first came to prominence at least 50 years prior to the induction year.

Non-Performer Category

One induction is selected during even-numbered years for the Hall of Fame Non-Performer Category. Eligible candidates may be living or deceased and should include those whose primary contributions to bluegrass music are apart from performing.

Criteria

Candidates for the Hall of Fame shall be appraised by the Nominating Committee and Panel of Electors in accordance with the criteria below.

1. Basic Standard - Candidates should be judged according to their contribution to the advancement of bluegrass music and the indelibility of that impact.

2. Individuals Versus Performing Groups – Nomination of a performing band may take priority over its individual band members, unless the contributions of an individual band member to the greater whole of bluegrass music greatly overshadows the influence of the band. The Nominating Committee is encouraged to wait three years after a band induction before individual band members may be again eligible for the Hall of Fame. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Nominating Committee.

3. Scope of Activity - Candidates may have excelled in a specific sphere such as songwriting, publishing, performing, recording, or producing; or they may have been active in several areas. Regardless of their focus, candidates must have achieved definitive leadership in their field(s) and must compete with all candidates in all fields.

4. Span of Influence - The time factor of a candidate's impact on bluegrass music is completely flexible (except as provided for the Early Contributor Category). It may cover an uninterrupted span of many years or it may cover two or more distinct and separate time cycles. 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.

5. Influence on Others – Inspirational effect on others is a most significant criterion in evaluating candidates; the degree to which their influence is multiplied through others to create an impact on bluegrass music far beyond direct individual contribution.

Hall of Fame Nominating Committee

The Hall of Fame Nominating Committee is comprised of ten IBMA Professional Members, appointed by the IBMA Executive Committee, who are knowledgeable about the history of bluegrass music and the people who have shaped the art form. The IBMA Board Chairperson and/or IBMA Executive Director will serve as facilitator(s) and ex-officio non-voting member(s) of the Hall of Fame Nominating Committee.

Nominating 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. Committee members are ineligible for Hall of Fame consideration during their tenure. The identity of Committee members and their deliberations are to remain confidential.

The Nominating Committee should consider candidates known to the committee members as well as those suggested from sources including but not limited to public letters of recommendation forwarded from the Executive Director, review of candidates from previous years, and discourse from within the industry.

Hall of Fame Panel of Electors

The Hall of Fame Panel of Electors is comprised of no fewer than two hundred 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 Hall of Fame nominations and choose

recipients based on published criteria by majority vote. The identity of Electors and their votes are to remain confidential.

Nomination Process

The Hall of Fame Nominating Committee will deliberate and vote to nominate fifteen candidates for the Open Category and ten candidates for the rotating category, either Early Contributor or Non-Performer, that will appear on the annual election ballots for voting by the IBMA Panel of Electors. Nominees for this slate will be chosen by merit alone, irrespective of whether they are living or deceased, currently active or inactive, and irrespective of activity category. Deceased persons must have been dead one year prior to nomination. Nominations will be guided by the Hall of Fame Criteria.

Panel of Electors Balloting Process

A first ballot with fifteen candidates for the Open Category and ten candidates for the rotating category, either Early Contributor or Non-Performer, will be sent to the Panel of Electors, who then vote to narrow the candidate pool. Electors will be guided by Hall of Fame Criteria and brief objective biographies of each nominee. Every vote will be collected, interpreted, and tabulated by an independent and reputable accounting firm. In the event there is a tie for the fifth finalist for the Open Category, or a tie for the third finalist in the rotating category, either Early Contributor or Non-Performer, each of those tied candidates will be included in the second ballot.

A second ballot with five finalists for the Open Category and three finalists for the rotating category, either Early Contributor or Non-Performing, will be sent to the Panel of Electors, who then vote to select the inductees for that year. Every vote will be collected, interpreted, and tabulated by an independent and reputable accounting firm. There will be no runoff vote in the event of a tie. Any candidates who are tied for the winning vote within a category will be inducted into the Hall of Fame.

Target Dates

Nominating Committee finalized: Mar 31
Nominating Committee recommends candidates to Panel of Electors: Jun 1
Panel of Electors votes to decide Hall of Fame Inductee(s): Jul 15

Award Presentations

The names of the Hall of Fame inductees will be made public by July 31. A formal induction ceremony will take place at the IBMA Bluegrass Music Awards Show. Recipients receive a commemorative plaque (generally, up to six for performing bands). Additional plaques may be purchased through the IBMA Office. A permanent plaque will be displayed in the Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame & Museum.

Procedural Review

The Hall of Fame criteria and processes are the responsibility of the IBMA Board of Directors and may be changed outside of the annual nomination cycle by that board by majority vote. The Board of Directors may appoint a task force for periodic review of Hall of Fame criteria and processes for the purpose of making recommendations. In exceptional circumstances, and prior to the beginning of the nomination process, the IBMA Board of Directors may alter the process to induct additional candidates.