

# Bio

Since its formation over 36 years ago, the award-winning Lonesome River Band continues its reputation as one of the most respected names in Bluegrass music. Whether performing on the famous stage of the Grand Ole Opry or headlining major concert events & festivals, their loyal fans continue to support one of the most loved and most influential acts of our time.

Lonesome River Band's vocal and instrumental talents seamlessly come together as they perform their trademark sound that fans continue to embrace. The outstanding lead vocals and harmony by acclaimed singer-songwriter **Brandon Rickman** (guitar) and the 2017 IBMA Momentum Award Vocalist of the Year **Jesse Smathers** (mandolin) are pure magic and put over the top by the exceptional instrumentals of fiddle extraordinaire **Mike Hartgrove**, top-tier bassist **Barry Reed**; and five-time IBMA Banjo Player of the Year and Virginia Country Music Hall of Famer **Sammy Shelor**.

The stellar harmony vocals by Rickman and Smathers is certainly highlighted in the band's recent albums. In 2018, Lonesome River Band received an IBMA Album of the Year nomination for their self-produced ***Mayhayley's House*** on the Mountain Home Music Company label. They dedicated the album to Mayhayley Lancaster, a self-proclaimed "Oracle of the Ages" who handed out "readings" and personal predictions at her home in southwest Georgia's Heard County. The bluegrass tinkers of tradition also dedicated the album to its fans; and, to people who understand that traditions once lost are rarely recovered. The musicianship, song selection and vocals are stellar.

In 2017, Lonesome River Band performed at Jim McBride's induction into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame along with Alan Jackson, Luke Bryan, Earl Thomas Conley, James LeBlanc, Lee Ann Womack, Dustin Lynch, the Bundys, Craig Campbell, Hillary Lindsey, Clint Lagerberg and Steven Lee Olsen.

This award-winning band again built on their familiar sound while adding bold progressiveness to their March 19, 2016 Mountain Home Music Company album, ***Bridging the Tradition*** that made its debut at #2 on Billboard's Top 10 Bluegrass Album Chart. The album received a 2016 IBMA Award Nomination for Album of the Year along with "*Thunder & Lightning*" for Song of the Year, "*Rockin' of the Cradle*" for Gospel Recorded Performance of the Year, and Sammy Shelor for Banjo Performer of the Year. Lonesome River Band continues to evolve in the ever-changing landscape of Bluegrass and Acoustic Country music. With this album, the band once again delivered incredible, ground-breaking music that is rooted in the tradition it began decades ago.

Also in 2016, band members Sammy Shelor and Mike Hartgrove performed with actor Martin Short when Steve Martin was honored with the 43rd American Film Institute's Life Achievement Award – the highest honor for a career in film. The award was presented to Steve Martin during the gala tribute in Los Angeles, Calif. and aired on TBS. The star-studded event included: Tiny Fey, Amy Poehler, Maya Rudolph, Conan O'Brien, Dan Aykroyd, Jack Black, Kevin Nealon, Steve Carell, and many more.

Lonesome River Band's long career is obviously filled with numerous Awards and Recognitions including their 2012 International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA) Award for Instrumental Recorded Event of the Year for their song "Angeline the Baker" from their ***Chronology Volume One*** album. Sammy Shelor received his fifth win as the IBMA Banjo Performer of the Year in 2012. The group has also received other awards from IBMA including Album of the Year, along with many from SPBGMA including Bluegrass Band of Year, Vocal Group of the Year, Song of the Year and Shelor as a 3-time SPBGMA Banjo Player of the Year award winner.

[LonesomeRiverBand.com](http://LonesomeRiverBand.com)

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In 2011, Sammy Shelor received the 2nd Annual Steve Martin Prize for Excellence in Banjo and Bluegrass. Lonesome River Band members, Sammy Shelor, Brandon Rickman, Mike Hartgrove, Barry Reed, and Randy Jones with special guest Steve Martin performed on the Late Show with David Letterman. The guys also got to sit down with the late-night host where Martin presented the award check to Shelor in a humorous exchange!

Lonesome River Band has been one of the most popular and influential acts in bluegrass music since the release of their breakout album, *Carrying The Tradition*, back in 1991. As always, with Lonesome River Band, you can be assured their prominence as one of the most influential acts in bluegrass music is here to stay.

## MORE ON THE HISTORY OF THE LONESOME RIVER BAND

In 1991 with Lonesome River Band's breakout album, *Carrying The Tradition*, the line-up included current LRB band leader Sammy Shelor, as well as Dan Tyminski, Ronnie Bowman and Lonesome River Band founder, Tim Austin. They recorded a second project for Rebel Records, *Old Country Town*, before Tyminski accepted a gig with Alison Krauss & Union Station, and Austin decided to leave the road to focus on his recording studio, Doobie Shea.

During his years with LRB, Sammy Shelor has enjoyed performing with such stellar musicians as Kenny Smith, Don Rigsby, Ron Stewart, Rickie Simpkins and Mike Hartgrove (who returned in 2005) – each of whom had moved on to pursue other musical endeavors. With each personnel change, Shelor looked for new musicians who could not only fill a spot that had been left vacant, but also bring in an artist with talents of their own.

The year 2001 brought a lot of new changes with the addition of Brandon Rickman and Jeff Parker along with fiddler Mike Hartgrove who had just left *Illrd Tyme Out*, along with bassist Irl Hees. The band was rewarded rave reviews for *Window of Time*, the first recording with that band configuration. John Wade soon replaced Hees on bass, and the group then recorded *Head On Into Heartache*.

In 2005, Hartgrove left to join Doyle Lawson & Quicksilver, and Rickman chose to give up touring to spend more time focusing on songwriting, but more importantly much needed time with his family. With Jeff Parker's contributions on mandolin and tenor vocals, this took LRB into the next generation returning to the band's aggressive, four-piece sound that had brought them to prominence years earlier. Shelor brought on a strong picker and a distinctive singer, Barry Berrier on bass who had made a name singing lead and playing guitar with *The Lost & Found*. Shannon Slaughter then came on board after initially being hired to fill in during the search for a new guitar man.

In 2007, Hartgrove and Rickman returned to LRB joining Sammy Shelor, Andy Ball, and Mike Anglin. This band configuration recorded two albums for Rural Rhythm Records. *No Turning Back*, LRB's twelve career album, was released in 2008 and made its debut on *Billboard's* Top 10 Bluegrass Album Chart. The project included the hit "Them Blues," that garnered seven #1s on various national radio charts.

LRB thrilled the audience with an impressive and well received opening performance of the 2009 IBMA Awards Show at the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville, TN. IBMA members placed the band in numerous categories including receiving Nominations for: Instrumental Performance of the Year for "Struttin to

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Ferrum”; Gospel Performance of the Year for “Darkness Wept”; and Sammy Shelor nominated again for Banjo Performer of the Year.

In 2010, Rural Rhythm released *Still Learning* again with members Sammy Shelor, Brandon Rickman, Andy Ball, Mike Hartgrove, and Mike Anglin. The project resulted in two radio chart singles, “Record Time Machine” and “Jack Up the Jail.” The album garnered the band a nomination for IBMA Instrumental Recorded Performance of the Year for “Pretty Little Girl.”

The same year, LRB was part of another Rural Rhythm project, *The All-Star Jam – Live At Graves Mountain* that received significant attention from IBMA members: nomination for Album of the Year; nomination for Instrumental Recorded Performance of the Year (for Sammy Shelor, Brandon Rickman and Mike Hartgrove’s work on “Ground Speed”); and a nomination for Recorded Event of the Year for the song, “Graves Mountain Memories” (by the Rural Rhythm All-Stars that included Sammy Shelor and Mike Hartgrove).

Also in 2010, Barry Reed, on upright bass and harmony vocals, replacing Mike Anglin. Early 2011, Randy Jones joined the band on mandolin and lead & harmony vocals, replacing Andy Ball.

LRB was also part of other various artists’ projects on Rural Rhythm including: A Bill Monroe 100th Year Celebration – Live at Bean Blossom (2011) album that was produced by Sammy Shelor; the 2012 IBMA Recorded Event of the Year Award winning album *Life Goes On* (2012) by the Musicians Against Childhood Cancer benefiting St. Jude Children’s Hospital in Memphis, TN; and *God Didn’t Choose Side: Civil War True Stories About Real People* (2013) that made its debut at #6 on Billboard Bluegrass Album Chart; Various Artists.

In 2014, Mountain Home Music Company released ***Turn On A Dime*** that quickly made its debut on the Billboard Top 10 Bluegrass Album Chart. The album includes the #1 Bluegrass Unlimited and Bluegrass Today hit single “Her Love Won’t Turn On a Dime.” The second chart successful song, “Lila Mae”, was also released as the band’s first official concept music video.

In June 2015, Jesse Smathers on mandolin and lead & harmony vocals, joined LRB replacing Randy Jones who left the band to pursue a career outside the music business.

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