

**Summer Internship Report 2017**

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Hometown: New Orleans, Louisiana



***American Songwriter Magazine***  
**Nashville, Tennessee**

**Provide an overview of the organization/research project and a summary of your responsibilities, tasks, and/or projects.**

This summer I worked as an editorial intern for *American Songwriter*, a Nashville-based music publishing magazine with a focus on the “craft and business of songwriting”. As such, the magazine features news stories, interviews, album and track reviews, and lyric contests - among others- all pertaining to the art and practice of songwriting. Run by a small full-time staff alongside a host of freelance writers, photographers, and designers, *American Songwriter* maintains an active website and bi-monthly print edition which both cover all genres of music. As an editorial intern, I worked directly with the Editor-in-Chief Caine O’Rear and Assistant-Editor Brittney McKenna to copyedit proofs of the magazine, conduct and transcribe interviews, and write daily news stories for the website.

**During your internship, what did you accomplish or how did you make a difference? In what ways did you grow in your professional and technical skills?**

The conversation I had with a past Sewanee student and *American Songwriter* intern before this summer emphasized the hands-on editorial experience gained through working for the magazine, but I did not realize just how true that emphasis would be until I found myself writing an assigned news story on my first day. In the nine weeks that followed, I was given the incredible opportunity to publish more than 50 news pieces (<https://americansongwriter.com/author/remy-rendeiro/>), including three interviews, to the website, copyedit drafts of the magazine’s print edition, configure online journalism program WordPress, learn AP-style writing, and gain invaluable experience communicating with music-industry professionals.

**Describe a problem that you helped to solve at your internship. What skills or knowledge from your education at Sewanee helped you address the problem?**

Although there were few, if any, problems I encountered throughout the duration of the internship, the task of copy-editing unreleased copies of the magazine necessitated some language-based problem solving skills. Without the rigorous instruction of former Sewanee English professors and close-reading skills I gained in my research assistantship with Dr. Minkin, I would not have been able to suggest edits or changes with the confidence that I did.

**In what way were your teamwork skills strengthened?**

With the largely individual nature of the work and good rapport maintained between members of the staff, moments of teamwork-based effort were fortunately seldom challenging. By working in an environment wherein everyone generally functioned on their own schedule, though, I was able to develop greater sensitivity to the needs of each coworker's timetable and discover new ways of keeping contact. At one point I found myself needing to touch base with the editor-in-chief about the details of a song premiere and ask the assistant editor for her approval on a potential news story topic, both of whom were on a conference call with other magazine executives. By establishing email contact with both of them during the call, though, I was able to receive feedback on both of my questions without disturbing their call.

**How did your internship affect your career plans?**

The time I spent with *American Songwriter* this summer has been the single most influential force on my future career plans, for it marks the first experience in which I was able to apply my passion for writing in a new and stimulating context. The editorial internship offered me an introduction to the world of publication so illuminating and fulfilling that I fear any expectations I have for future publication work will almost necessarily fall short. *American Songwriter* assured me that writing is not always a solitary pursuit, and for that I am deeply grateful!

**In what ways did your internship cause you to encounter people of different backgrounds from your own? What steps did you take to communicate effectively with such persons? What did you learn from such persons' perspectives?**

Given my overwhelming inexperience with the Nashville music scene and the music industry in general, the people I encountered while working with *American Songwriter* were all inevitably of different backgrounds than my own. To establish successful communication with these individuals - I'm aware of the unfortunate cliché in this reflection - I found great guidance and truth in the idiom "do your homework": whether it was working with up-and-coming songwriters, established artists, or publicists, the more I knew about the other person and their career, the better our discussions turned out. This held especially true when conducting interviews, as knowledge of an artist's career, discography, and recent projects often allowed the conversation to move from the formality of a Q&A towards more organic, easy dialogue.

**Words of advice for future interns (housing, transportation, etc.)?**

Don't hesitate to reach out to the editors with questions - while they treat you with the respect of a seasoned magazine professional, they know that you're likely new to this field and are more than willing to discuss or clarify anything.

**Words of thanks to your internship funding donors:**

The value of this internship to my personal and professional development is beyond expression, and I am deeply grateful for the opportunity I had to work for a publication as stimulating and engaging as *American Songwriter*. From the first day in the office I felt like an integrated member of the AS community, and I am indebted to the magazine's talented staff for the time and guidance they

invested in my editorial growth. It was a privilege to witness publishing and editorial excellence at work in *American Songwriter*, and I am so thankful for the career direction I gained through the internship!