

When I was first told that I had been given the opportunity to intern for a music management company in Nashville this summer, I did not know what to expect, blinded by excitement. I had hoped that a position in music management would allow me to get a bird's eye view of the music industry as a whole, helping me to determine what parts were of the most interest to me, and if the industry was one that I would like to pursue long-term.

The environment in Hill Entertainment Group's office, well off of Music Row, was more like that of any casual office setting. The doors were always open and I got to know the head of the office, as well as the others, quite easily; Mr. Hill was a consistent presence, and seeing his efforts in the industry was enlightening.

Meanwhile, in-between my days working at Hill (Tuesdays and Thursdays), I worked at Red Light Management/KP Entertainment, on Music Row itself. The contrast between the two offices could not have been any more different. What people refer to as the "main" Red Light Management, home to Darius Rucker and Tim McGraw, along with others, is located several blocks from the Music Row location; we acted as an adjunct member of the business, supporting Luke Bryan, American Country Music's Entertainer of the Year. This office had all the grandeur that comes with Nashville country music stereotypes, all of the flashiness that the Hill office made a point of getting away from.

My best day happened to be when I had the largest responsibilities, helping to organize and set up the listening party and insider premiere of Luke Bryan's newest album, due out a month later. Getting to joke around with Luke, visit the studio and be one of the

first to hear his music was surreal. Similarly I enjoyed being invited to Luke's CMA voting/Double Platinum party in downtown Nashville. At this event, I got to see all the people who played a key role in his performance, from the label to the audio producers. Throughout the summer, I had the pleasure of meeting both up-and-coming musicians and established musicians, as well as those who helped play a role in getting them to their respective stages.

For me, this summer was one of career discovery. Through my experience, I have found that I like workplaces where I am offered an opportunity to see the effects of my own contributions on a consistent basis. I also discovered that I like to keep work significantly less casual than my home life, so I can stay sharp. I'm someone who always likes to be moving, providing insight and gaining knowledge. At Hill, I mainly wrote blog postings, answered the phone and ran errands; at Red Light, I contributed through event planning, data entry and by sorting fan mail.

Beyond anything, the most useful aspect of my experience has been contrasting the two companies that I came to work for, Hill Entertainment Group and Red Light Management/KP Entertainment. The first is a newly founded company by a well-known Nashville manager, while the second has so many brand-name artists that it's hard to grasp. The two companies were on completely opposite ends of the music management spectrum, not in value, but in approach.

Apart from work, I held another job on weekends, waiting tables a few blocks away from my house. This supplemented my internship stipend, relieving the financial pressures of living expenses, etc. Had I not worked in the music and restaurant industries

simultaneously, I would not have found out about the subculture of musicians who also wait tables. Around two-thirds of the waiters I worked with considered their main jobs to be in music or dance. That fact is so common that many restaurants offer 2-for-1 specials on drinks to waiters from other restaurants (founded on the idea that many of them are musicians). After living in Nashville for the summer, I was not surprised to learn of this culture, as Nashville was just as inviting to those working within it, as it was to those visiting.

I was fortunate enough to have a few friends nearby, from Sewanee and also from Massachusetts (my cousin, Ben), who I saw every few days. This was the first time that I had lived away from home, aside from dorm life in high school and college. I was surprised by how much I enjoyed living off campus and the independence this summer offered me. Having to cook for myself, buy groceries and go to the laundromat were a lot of fun. I found that Nashville is a great town to be a part of. Its culture is diverse and constantly thriving, with swing lessons on the weekends, free movies, concerts and lots of opportunities to explore. As an example, I took part in the town events by going to a museum one weekend to see the art deco car exhibit, something I wouldn't have imagined doing several months earlier.

Overall, while I have decided that the music industry might not be where I want to end up in the long run, I have made some friends, gained insight and learned to appreciate certain things in life. I am grateful for having been given the stipend to pursue such opportunities and I can promise that this summer will remain vividly in my memory for years to come.