

From Mandolin Tunes to the Big Stage

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by Shelby Berry

Music transcends all time, through generations.

But the ways young people listen to music today is vastly different from the ways we or our parents did. In a world of streaming and downloading music, one thing most young musicians from every generation relate to is that special memory when they fell in love with music.

Rachel Detrick remembers the moment she listened to folk music—when her dad played music by Americana band, Nickel Creek.

“The mandolin is really what interested me,” said Rachel. “Chris Thile’s rhythm really stood out to me, and his style of music is really what drew me to the mandolin. I’d honestly love to play like he does! He pulls in a bunch of different styles from different genres as part of his Americana music.”

Her dad took her to see Special Consensus after she started taking interest in Nickel Creek, “and I caught the bug.” Rachel was age 13, and from that moment she started putting down her bluegrass roots.

“When we went to see Special Consensus, their mandolin player was offering lessons, so I started playing right then,” said Rachel.

As Rachel grew with her music, she played solo, but in 2018, she joined some other musicians, which formed a group called

Kentucky Borderline. With this group, Rachel had her first real taste of on-stage performing.

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“Playing with Kentucky Borderline was my first time playing in front of a bunch of different crowds, playing with other musicians, and playing with a lot of microphones and sound equipment. I even made pretty great friends with the other members of the band,” said Rachel. “I’m currently doing solo music but playing with Kentucky Borderline was a great learning experience for me.”





Larry Smith, the president of Tomorrow's Bluegrass Stars, is the person who originally contacted Rachel about joining Kentucky Borderline as his granddaughter Ashlyn is in the band. This is how Rachel became involved in Tomorrow's Bluegrass Stars, an organization whose purpose is to provide guidance for young musicians and to foster an atmosphere where they perform as individuals and with each other. This community of support and understanding created by TBS founder John Colburn thrives today.

"The first gathering of TBS members I ever saw was IBMA in 2018. They had a kids' room for any TBS members that wanted to jam," said Rachel. "I had just become a member of Kentucky Borderline a few months earlier, so I was able to play together with other kids the same age from all over the United States." She added that by hearing from Larry Smith and becoming a part of TBS,



“I’ve been able to meet so many people and play on a real stage. I had never gotten to do that before. Being a part of Kentucky Borderline and getting involved with TBS has allowed me to get to know the bluegrass community.”

The year Rachel joined Kentucky Borderline, she experienced her most epic on-stage moment.

“In 2018, my parents ordered me a custom Hinde Custom Instrument for me. I had no idea. Special Consensus presented it to me on-stage at the Station Inn. They invited me on stage to play with them, and it became this really special moment that has stood out to me.”

Since then, 17-year-old Rachel focuses more on her sound. As a self-proclaimed perfectionist, she strives to produce clean, smooth music.

“The thing that continues to draw me to bluegrass music is not only how beautiful it is, but the community. Even being a younger musician, people are really inclusive and welcoming, bringing you in for jams and playing together.”

As Rachel moves forward, she said, she'd love to pick up playing some additional instruments, the guitar, or even the dobro. "I'd also love to eventually play with a group as a side-job one day."

Lastly, and maybe more importantly, Rachel hopes her music encourages and gives her fans a break from the real world.

<https://youtu.be/YzqzPHgm-Gg>

Keep up with Rachel on her Facebook page: "Rachel Detrick."