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Newlin Music Prize Announces 2026 Short List For Best Album From Richmond, Virginia

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Newlin MUSIC PRIZE

RICHMOND, VA (Feb. 16, 2026) - The Newlin Music Prize has revealed the 20 albums on its 2026 Short List in consideration for this year's award that celebrates excellence in music from Richmond, Virginia by awarding more than \$7,000 to local musicians.

Founded in 2022 and named after musical prodigy, Virginia Commonwealth University professor, and performer Dika Newlin (1923-2006), the Newlin Music Prize is awarded to the best full-length album from the Richmond, Virginia metropolitan area based solely on artistic merit, as decided by members of the local arts community and fans.

The winner will be announced on March 23, 2026, and the winning artist will receive a cash prize of \$2,500. Additionally, each of the remaining artists on the 2026 Short List will receive \$250 for their selection.

The albums that comprise the 2026 Newlin Music Prize Short List are:

- [Anna Leonard - *Paint It Blue*](#)
- [Belly Of The Heart - *Subatomic Angel*](#)
- [Brookhouse - *American Sounds*](#)
- [CJ The Profit - *Virginia Autumn*](#)
- [Flora & The Fauna - *I Wanna*](#)
- [Hotspit - *\(red wind\)*](#)
- [Human Worm - *human worm*](#)
- [IONNA - *IONNAVERSE*](#)
- [Laura Ann Singh - *Mean Reds*](#)
- [Mackenzie Roark And The Hotpants - *Ghost Of Rock And Roll*](#)
- [Madison Turner - *Curtsy When You Land*](#)
- [Palmyra - *Restless*](#)
- [Pyramid Mass - *Garqling Rot*](#)
- [Radio B - *The Internet Is Fake*](#)
- [Ronnie Luxe - *HERMIT*](#)
- [Shagg Carpet - *Hurting Other People*](#)

- [Shera Shi - *KNEEDY*](#)
- [Ty Sorrell x Profound79 - *Return To Forever: A Profound Discovery*](#)
- [Weekend Plans - *After Hours*](#)
- [Wrong Worshippers - *Get Skooled*](#)

"The 2026 Short List reflects another remarkable year of music from Richmond's music community," said Newlin president Doug Nunnally. "These 20 nominees represent the creative passion and technical wonder that continue to flourish across the city. With more than 200 albums put forward for consideration by our jury, the breadth of talent on display made this selection process exceptionally challenging in the award's fifth year. We hope this Short List honors the artists listed, and also encourages listeners to explore all of the extraordinary music emerging from the community."

The 2026 Short List was chosen from albums released by artists in the Richmond-Petersburg metropolitan area in 2025 that either contained at least five songs or exceeded 25 minutes in length. All albums released under these parameters were considered for the award. There was no formal submission process or entry fee required from local musicians, labels, or studios.

A jury of 175 Richmond-area musicians, artists, journalists, photographers, and activists nominated albums for this award. From there, an 11-member committee reviewed the nominations and determined the official Short List of 20 albums. Each member of the jury will now review the 20 records and submit a ranked ballot, which will be used to determine the winner.

There is also a public fan vote open from February 16 until March 19 at NewlinMusicPrize.com. The results of the fan vote will count as one ballot towards the final result.

Modeled after similar awards such as Canada's Polaris Music Prize and the United Kingdom's Mercury Prize, the goal of the Newlin Music Prize is to raise awareness of the diverse music scene in Richmond, Virginia and to encourage more great recordings in the future. Since beginning in 2022, the Newlin Music Prize has awarded over \$25,000 to Richmond-area musicians. Previous award winners are: Droom in 2025 for [The Pure Joy Of Jumping](#), Butcher Brown in 2024 for [Solar Music](#), Deau Eyes in 2023 for [Legacies](#), and McKinley Dixon in 2022 for [For My Mama And Anyone Who Look Like Her](#).

The Newlin Music Prize is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit designated as a public charity 509(a)(2). For more information on the organization and each nominated album, please visit NewlinMusicPrize.com.

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