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## Weekend Plans Wins 2026 Newlin Music Prize for Best Album from Richmond, Virginia

### CONTACT

[contact@newlinmusicprize.com](mailto:contact@newlinmusicprize.com)



**RICHMOND, VA (Mar. 23, 2026)** – Weekend Plans has won the 2026 Newlin Music Prize for their album *After Hours*.

The Newlin Music Prize is awarded to the best full-length album from the Richmond-Petersburg metropolitan area in the previous year based solely on artistic merit as decided by a jury of members from Richmond’s music community. By winning, Weekend Plans receives a \$2,500 prize.

Released on August 29, 2025, [After Hours](#) is a radiant blend of funk, hip-hop, jazz, and soul, carried by a rich array of slick grooves and infectious melodies. The album features members Chet Frierson, Wynton Davis, Jordan Mason, Nate Clark, Forrest Link, Justin Ott, Chris Sclafani, Logos The Poetic, and Kayen Wilborn, and was recorded at Elephant Ear Studios and Go West Recording Studio alongside producer Ryan Gary.

"We are honored to have been nominated alongside many of our musical peers, and even more humbled by winning this year's Newlin Music Prize," the band said in a prepared statement. "This album was six years in the making; it's dedicated to the ones who yearn to liberate their body through music. Thank you to our Richmond community and beyond for supporting our artistry over the past 10 years. This award further motivates us to keep pushing the musical envelope, and we're going to do just that."

Since forming in 2016, Weekend Plans have been turning heads with their high-voltage sound and flashy performances. In 2019, the band released their debut album, *State Of Nine*, followed by a string of singles that showcased their growth, culminating in their second album, *After Hours*. The band thrives on the individual skills of its members, many of whom regularly perform and collaborate with other popular acts in the Richmond area. Band members have also played key roles on previous records nominated for the Newlin Music Prize, most notably *Death, The Fool*, the solo album by Weekend Plans MC Logos The Poetic featuring bandmate Forrest Link, and more recently on Shera Shi's *KNEEDY*, a fellow nominee this year that also features Weekend Plans' Chris Sclafani. With *After Hours*, Weekend Plans harness their collective experience into a rich fanfare of musical artistry and creative vision.

This is the fifth year for the Newlin Music Prize, named after musical prodigy, VCU professor, and performer Dika Newlin (1923-2006). A jury of 175 Richmond-area musicians, journalists, artists, photographers, and activists nominated over 200 local albums released in the past year for this award. From there, an 11-member committee reviewed the nominations and selected 20 albums officially under consideration for the prize. While Weekend Plans receives \$2,500 for winning this award, the remaining 19 artists on the list will each receive \$250 to encourage future recordings.

The 2026 Newlin Music Prize Short List was:

- [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 - \*Gargling 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\*](#)

"As the award celebrates five years in existence, what stands out most is the way Richmond's music community continues to move without boundaries," said Newlin Music Prize president Doug Nunnally. "This year's nominees reflect a scene built on collaboration rather than category, where artists across genres consistently create alongside one another and push the culture forward. By recognizing and providing funds for every nominated artist, we hope to reinforce that shared foundation and ensure Richmond's spirit of creative exchange remains as vital as ever."

The Newlin Music Prize plans to announce a short list and award a winner in the first quarter of each subsequent year, and to partner with local organizations and charities to continue spreading awareness of local music in the Richmond-Petersburg metropolitan area.

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For media inquiries, please e-mail:  
[contact@newlinmusicprize.com](mailto:contact@newlinmusicprize.com)

