

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Drook Wins 2025 Newlin Music Prize for Best Album from Richmond, Virginia

CONTACT

contact@newlinmusicprize.com



RICHMOND, VA (Mar. 24, 2025) – Drook has won the 2025 Newlin Music Prize for their album *The Pure Joy Of Jumping*.

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 of Richmond’s music community. By winning, Drook receives a \$2,500 monetary reward.

Released on September 27, 2024, [The Pure Joy Of Jumping](#) is a vivid fusion of electronica and dream pop, full of frenetic rhythms and blissful melodies that mirror the pulse of modern life. Comprised of Matthew Shultz, Liza Grishaeva, and Tyler Smith, Drook embraces a fractured beauty within their music: manic and lavish, raw and refined, yet unified by a cathartic release of emotion. The album was co-produced by the band and producer Ben Green.

"We're truly grateful that *TPJOJ* has been recognized with this edition of the Newlin Prize," the band remarked in a prepared statement. "Richmond is our home and it means everything to us for this record to be acknowledged by the people of this city. Thanks to the committee and to everyone who participated in organizing this iteration of the Newlin Prize!"

Drook's origins trace back to 2019, when the group began self-releasing under the name She. Initially rooted in bedroom pop, early work gave way to bold experimentation. The band rebranded as Drook in 2022, a name taken from a 2018 solo EP from Grishaeva, and released *Life In Estates*, a lavish and celebrated record that earned a nomination for the 2023 Newlin Music Prize. The following year brought *Mr. Fisher's Dirty Club Mix*, an EP that marked a decisive pivot into electronic territory, with both sounds becoming united on *The Pure Joy Of Jumping*.

This is the fourth year for the Newlin Music Prize, named after musical prodigy, VCU professor, and performer Dika Newlin (1923-2006). A jury of 150 Richmond-area musicians, journalists, artists, photographers, and activists nominated over 200 local albums released in the past year for this award. From there, a 10-member committee reviewed the nominations and landed on 20 albums officially under consideration for the prize. While Drook receives \$2,500 for winning this award, each of the remaining 19 artists on the list will receive \$250 in the hopes of encouraging future recordings.

The 2025 Newlin Music Prize Short List was:

- [Alex J Dimas - *Alma Mia*](#)
- [Doll Baby - *Heirloom*](#)
- [Drook - *The Pure Joy Of Jumping*](#)
- [False Nectar - *Unlimited Things To Do Forever*](#)
- [Fight Cloud - *Ritual Disaster*](#)
- [Holy Roller - *Good Religion*](#)
- [Inter Arma - *New Heaven*](#)
- [King Kaiju - *Feature Film*](#)
- [Landon Elliott - *Aftermath*](#)
- [Nickelus F - *MMCHT*](#)
- [Night Idea - *Rocky Coast*](#)
- [Prabir Trio - *Long After The Empire*](#)
- [Prisoner - *Putrid | Obsolete*](#)
- [Reppa Ton x Agent-X - *Memento Mori: The Inevitability Of Death*](#)
- [Rine - *Intrusive Thoughts*](#)
- [Tennishu - *More To The Story*](#)
- [Tentative Decisions - *Public Access*](#)
- [Terror Cell - *All Quiet*](#)
- [The Wayward Leaves - *Thursdays At Six*](#)

- [Tyler Meacham - Sad Girl Summer](#)

“Now in its fourth year, this award highlights the growing need for community support more than ever,” said Newlin Music Prize president Doug Nunnally. “This year’s nominees reflect a strong mix of emerging voices and seasoned veterans, providing a snapshot of Richmond’s underground and DIY scenes. By recognizing and financially honoring not only the winner but every nominated artist, we hope to help these vital traditions thrive and endure, especially during times when their survival feels most crucial.”

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

For more information and updates, please visit NewlinMusicPrize.com.

###

