

For Immediate Release,  
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## COPLAND HOUSE NAMES CULTIVATE 2026 FELLOWS

SIX GIFTED COMPOSERS FROM 5 STATES SELECTED  
FOR ACCLAIMED CREATIVE INSTITUTE

Two Concerts to Feature World Premieres of Six New Works



Cortlandt Manor, NY, (February 17, 2026) – Copland House today announced the 2026 Fellows selected for its widely-acclaimed CULTIVATE emerging composers institute. These six gifted young creatives are (*clockwise from upper left*): **Arjan Singh Dogra**, 26 (Brooklyn, NY); **Keir GoGwilt**, 34 (New York, NY); **Alexa Rinn**, 35 (Chicago, IL); **Isaac Santos**, 25 (Princeton, NJ); **Akshaya Avril Tucker**, 33 (Los Angeles, CA), and **Benjamin Webster**, 28 (Plymouth, MA).

These outstanding composers were chosen from over 220 applicants from 36 states and 3 countries by this year’s jury, comprised of CULTIVATE Director **Derek Bermel** and former Residents or CULTIVATE Fellows **Christopher Cerrone**, **Henry Dorn**, **Shih-Hui Chen**, **Jeremy Gill**, **Juri Seo**, and **Stephen Andrew Taylor**. Bermel noted that, “as usual, the jurors and I were bowled over by the imagination and craft of this year’s CULTIVATE applicants. I’m looking forward to a week of stimulating conversations as we explore the creative process of composing, rehearsing, refining, and performing the brand new works of these outstanding young composers.”

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Since 2012, CULTIVATE has been an important destination for next-generation composers of all backgrounds and identities on the threshold of their professional careers. An intensive, weeklong, all-scholarship creative workshop and mentoring program, CULTIVATE 2026 will take place from June 1 through 9 at **Aaron Copland**'s National Historic Landmark home near New York City. Each year, Copland House commissions six Fellows to each create a new small-ensemble composition that serves as the focus of an eventful week of collective and individual daily rehearsals and workshops with Bermel and artists from the celebrated **Copland House Ensemble**, "one of the leading champions of contemporary music" (*Louisville Weekly*). Evening discussion sessions enhance the experience, as forward-looking arts leaders provide the Fellows with real-life perspectives on practical career matters and the artist's all-important role within the wider community.

CULTIVATE 2026 will conclude with two concerts by the Copland House Ensemble on its two mainstage series – on Sunday evening, June 7 at 3:00pm at its vast satellite venue at Copland House at Bluestone Farm in Brewster, NY, and on Tuesday evening, June 9 at 6:30pm at Elebash Recital Hall at The Graduate Center of the City University of New York. The program features the World Premieres of the six new works created for CULTIVATE, performed by clarinetist **Moran Katz**, violinist **Pala Garcia**, cellist **Alexis Pia Gerlach**, and pianist **Margaret Kampmeier**. The performances of all the new compositions will also be filmed at dedicated video sessions, and streamed on Copland House's YouTube Channel in its six-part virtual *CULTIVATED SPACES* series. In addition, all composers selected for CULTIVATE become eligible for future performance, recording, commissioning, and other career advancement opportunities.

Juror Henry Dorn, a 2023 Fellow, recalled CULTIVATE as "the best place in the world you can be," while 2025 Fellow **Geli Li** has spoken of "a meaningful, beautiful journey; more than just the opportunity to write a new piece and bring it to life with the incredible Copland House Ensemble, I was deeply inspired by these 10 days, which were so special."

Copland House gratefully acknowledges support for CULTIVATE from the Amphion Foundation, ArtsWestchester, ASCAP Foundation, BMI Foundation, Aaron Copland Fund for Music, Alice M. Ditson Fund, Friends of Copland House, David and Elzbieta Grove Foundation, Jandon Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, NewMusic USA, and New York State Council on the Arts.

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## **2026 CULTIVATE FELLOWS BIOS**

New York City-based composer-performer **Arjan Singh Dogra** creates art to understand and contextualize his relationship with time, nature, and his culture. His work invites audiences to reflect on their perception of time, and connection to the natural and unnatural environments surrounding them. He is particularly interested in exploring elements of lived experience (space, perspective, memory, temporal realms), and the places where these elements intersect, interplay, and contradict. He has worked with Sandbox Percussion, Jack Quartet, Thailand's TACETi Ensemble, American Composers Orchestra, and Mannes Orchestra, which awarded him with the Martinu Prize for his orchestral work *Live Salmon*. His music has been recognized by BMI, the Fromm Foundation, Society of New Music, and Society of Composers. A Doctoral candidate at Columbia University, he graduated from Berklee College and the Mannes College of Music at the New School. He grew up studying Hindustani Classical violin and music, which continue to play a key role in his musical practice.

**Keir GoGwilt** calls himself "a composer and violinist exploring historical and contemporary intersections of creative performance and compositional practices." His current projects include a *Treatise on Limited Freedoms*, a series of pieces and improvisation games he began in 2023, inspired by his research on 18th-century musical treatises, and by contemporary resonances and refractions of this historical knowledge in explorations of just (or pure) intonation; it was commissioned by the JACK Quartet, which performed parts of it

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at the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, Cal Performing Arts, and the 92nd Street Y. His *Zarabanda Variations*, exploring Baroque histories and futurisms of colonial Mexico/United States, was performed at the Clark Art Museum, Peabody Essex Museum, and Lincoln Center, and will be featured on a forthcoming album. He is currently working on a commission from the Barlow Endowment for the Bergamot Quartet and harpist Jacqueline Kerrod, featuring hardanger fiddles and celtic harp. He is also active as a violinist, and has soloed with Switzerland's Sinfonieorchester Basel, the Orchestra of St. Luke's, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, and Boston Modern Orchestra Project. He is a founding member of AMOC and a frequent soloist and guest with Ruckus Early Music.

The music of Chicago-based **Alexa Rinn** aims to access a visceral immediacy of perceptual experience and feeling. Her love of indie rock, shoegaze, and other heavy genres of popular music deeply informs her timbral and structural explorations, and she thinks about and lives inside the moments of change between sonorities. Her works have been performed and/or recorded by the Chicago Composers Orchestra, Omnibus and SONAR Ensembles, QuarteZo Maurice, Occasional Symphony, Symphony Number One, Duo Riso, and the Peabody Preparatory Wind Orchestra, as well as New Music on the Point, the Eugene O'Neill National Puppetry Conference, Highscore Festival, and Norfolk New Music Workshop. A graduate of Boston University's College of Fine Arts and the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University, she currently is a Lecturer in Music at Northwestern University and a member of the Adjunct Faculty in Music at Roosevelt University.

**Isaac Santos** is deeply inspired by nature, narrative, the visual arts, and everyday existence – which all permeate his music. His work hopes to communicate how he experiences the world, and serve as a medium to convey something both relatable and profound. His music has been recognized by the American Academy of Arts and Letters and performed at Minnesota's Lakes Area Music Festival, Imani Winds Chamber Music Festival in New York City, and elsewhere. A graduate of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, he is currently a Doctoral candidate at Princeton.

The music of Los Angeles-based composer, songwriter, and dancer **Akshaya Avril Tucker** explores themes of care and presence, investigating our relationship to self, community, the natural world, and the climate crisis. She trained as an Odissi (Classical East Indian) dancer from a young age, and her work often draws upon South Asian music and dance traditions, in collaboration with the experts of these styles, including vocalist Sali Oak and Leela Dance Collective. Last year, she was Composer-in-Residence at the Willamette Valley Chamber Music Festival and the WindSync Onstage-Offstage Chamber Music Festival, and her string quartet *Hollow Flame* is featured on Brooklyn Rider's latest album, *The Four Elements*. She has received commissions from Carnegie Hall, Brooklyn Rider, Piano Spheres, The Living Earth Show, Fry Street Quartet, Johnny Gandelsman, ChatterABQ, and Carpe Diem String Quartet, and her music has been performed by A Far Cry, members of the Orchestra of St. Luke's and the San Francisco Symphony, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Salastina, Tallā Rouge Duo, and others. She received an ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Award, and is an Instructor of Music Composition at Michigan's Interlochen Arts Camp.

**Benjamin Webster**'s music weaves together intense virtuosity, nuanced textural and timbral experimentation, and expressive clarity. His work draws equally from the past and present of the Western canon, reexamining its genres and modes of expression. His music has been performed by the Minnesota Orchestra, San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, Viridian Strings, Yale Philharmonia, and Lyrus Quartet; and heard at the Lake George Music Festival, Bowdoin Music Festival, Norfolk New Music Workshop, and others. He has received fellowships and awards from MacDowell, and the Ucross and ASCAP Foundations. He graduated from the University of Miami and University of Southern California, and is currently a Doctoral candidate at the Yale School of Music.

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## COPLAND HOUSE BIOS

CULTIVATE Director **Derek Bermel** has been commissioned by the Pittsburgh, National, Saint Louis, New Jersey, and Pacific Symphonies, Los Angeles and Westchester Philharmonics, New York Youth Symphony, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, WNYC Radio, Eighth Blackbird, Guarneri Quartet, Copland House Ensemble, Music from China ensemble, De Erepijs (Netherlands), Jazz Xchange (U.K.), Figura (Denmark), Koussevitzky and Fromm Foundations, and violinist Midori, among others. His many honors include two Grammy Award nominations, the Alpert Award in the Arts, Rome Prize, Guggenheim and Fulbright Fellowships, American Music Center's Trailblazer Award, and Academy Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters; and residencies at Yaddo, Tanglewood, Aspen, Banff, Bellagio, Copland House, Sacatar, and Civitella Ranieri. He has served as Artistic Director of the American Composers Orchestra at Carnegie Hall, Artist-in-Residence at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, and Composer-in-Residence of the Seattle Symphony and Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra.

**Copland House** has long welcomed and championed past and present musical dreamers, explorers, and game-changing innovators of all backgrounds and identities, who – like Aaron Copland – have changed the way we engage with the world. An award-winning creative center for American music and the arts based at Rock Hill, Copland's National Historic Landmark residence in New York's Lower Hudson Valley, and at its new satellite venue at nearby Bluestone Farm on the New York-Connecticut border, its programs resonate far beyond its walls, nationally and globally. Hailed by *The New York Times* for “all the richness of its offerings,” Copland House is the only composer's home in the U.S. devoted to nurturing America's vibrant cultural legacy through a broad range of programs that uniquely embrace the entire artistic process, from creation and development to study, performance, and presentation. Its activities are built upon three primary programmatic areas: multi-faceted composer support, live and recorded performances, and in-school and on-site educational and mentoring projects. Among its honors are the Yale Distinguished Music Educator Award, American Music Center's Letter of Distinction, *Westchester* magazine's “Best of the Decade” recognition and “Top 52 Reasons to Love Westchester,” and ArtsWestchester's Arts Organization of the Year Award; its Artistic and Executive Director Michael Boriskin was named one of *Musical America's* “Top 30 Professionals of the Year” (2023).

The internationally-acclaimed **Copland House Ensemble** offers “a spellbinding journey” (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*) across 150 years of America's vibrant musical landscape. Its programs link centuries and cultures within exhilarating human and historical narratives, championing classic and forgotten voices from the past, and today's established and rising composer. The Ensemble's “polished, communicative, and colorful playing” (*Opera News*) has been featured on *CBS Sunday Morning*, NPR (including *Tiny Desk Concerts*), and Euro-Radio. It has been engaged by Tanglewood, the Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall, Library of Congress, Smithsonian Institution, Universities of Chicago and Virginia, the Bard, Caramoor, Bowdoin, and Ecstatic Festivals, and many other leading North American venues. It also presents two mainstage concert series at Elebash Hall at The Graduate Center of the City University of New York and at Bluestone Farm. The Ensemble has recorded for Arabesque, Koch International, and Copland House Blend, and commissioned over 100 works. Launched in 1999, its Founding, Principal, and Guest Artists have been hailed as “excellent musicians in vital performances ... Copland would have been proud of all of them” (*Chicago Tribune*).

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