N E W S

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Elizabeth Dworkin, Dworkin & Company
(914) 244-3803, elizabeth@dworkincompany.com

2026 COPLAND HOUSE RESIDENCY AWARDS ANNOUNCED

Ten Composers from Eight States Selected for "One of the Best Things in the World"

Cortlandt Manor, NY, November 5, 2026 – The 2026 Copland House Residency Awards were announced today by the acclaimed creative center for American music and the arts based at **Aaron Copland**'s National Historic Landmark home and its satellite at Bluestone Farm in New York's Lower Hudson Valley.

The ten composers from eight states selected this year are (*clockwise, from top left*): **Nicholas Bentz**, 32 (Providence, RI), **T. Gregory Bloomfield**, 25 (Ann Arbor, MI), **Jonathan Cziner**, 35 (Dallas, TX), **Michael Dudley Jr.**, 32 (Brooklyn, NY), **Keith Fitch**, 60 (Cleveland Heights, OH), **Paul Novak**, 28 (Chicago, IL), **Celka Ojakangas**, 34 (Pasadena, CA), **Evis Sammoutis**, 47 (Rochester, NY), **Frances White**, 66 (Princeton, NJ), and **Carolyn Yarnell**, 64 (Sierraville, CA). Fitch is a returning Resident, and Bentz, Novak, and Ojagankas were Fellows of Copland House's CULTIVATE Emerging Composers Institute. They were chosen from 133 applicants from 29 states and three countries by this year's distinguished jury, which included **Anthony Brandt**, **Anthony Cheung**, **Penka Kouneva**, **Tamar Muskal**, **Alex Shapiro**, and **Robert Sirota**. Those selected composers will receive all-expenses-paid, three- to eight-week stays to live and work at Rock Hill, Copland's beloved longtime home, and will also become eligible for post-residency performance, recording, commissioning, and other career development opportunities and awards.

(continued)

"These composers range widely across genres, styles, idioms, and artistic goals, and come from diverse backgrounds," said Artistic and Executive Director **Michael Boriskin**. "But they're all fearless, free thinkers, whose works share impressive multifaceted mastery, deep engagement with the world around them, and a strong bond with their listeners. We can't wait to hear what they'll come up with when they get to Rock Hill!"

As two-time Resident **Laura Elise Schwendinger** wrote, "in any and all ways, as I realized at my last stay … the house is one of the best things in the world." Since its launch in 1998, after an inspiring grassroots movement of townspeople and local municipal officials triumphed in preserving the historic home from being sold, Copland House has championed and collaborated with musical explorers, dreamers, and game-changing innovators of all backgrounds and identities. The only composer's home in the U.S. devoted to celebrating America's rich musical legacy and championing its vibrant creative promise through a broad range of activities, Copland House programs uniquely embrace the entire artistic process, from creation and development to study, performance, and preservation. Its activities resonate far beyond its walls, and are built upon multi-faceted composer support, live and recorded performances (featuring its internationally-acclaimed Copland House Ensemble), and educational programs and mentoring programs. As *American Record Guide* noted, "Copland's personal qualities of generosity, gentleness, and a sense of measure continue to live on at Copland House."

Core support for Copland House's Residency Awards and other composer programs comes from the Amphion Foundation, ArtsWestchester, ASCAP Foundation, BMI Foundation, Aaron Copland Fund for Music, Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University, Friends of Copland House, David and Elzbieta Grove Foundation, Jandon Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, NewMusicUSA, and the New York State Council on the Arts.

For more information, visit www.coplandhouse.org or call (914) 788-4659. For media inquiries, contact Elizabeth Dworkin at Dworkin & Company, (914) 244-3803 or elizabeth@dworkincompany.com.

<>

2026 Copland House Residency Awards – Composer Bios

The work of composer, violinist, and multimedia artist **Nicholas Bentz** is drawn to remote fringes and recesses of experience, and seeks to render intimately personal spaces through an individual sense of storytelling and narrative. His music has been performed by the International Contemporary Ensemble, Ensemble Dal Niente, Sandbox Percussion, yMusic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Cabrillo Festival Orchestra, Charleston Symphony, and China's Suzhou and Chengdu Symphonies, and featured at Lincoln Center, Musikverein Wien, Wigmore Hall, Kennedy Center, and Shanghai's Modern Art Museum. His first opera, *Having Guests for Dinner*, was staged by the Hillman Opera, Hartford Opera Theater, New Opera West, One Ounce Opera, and the University of Central Washington. Recent projects include co-commissions from Ensemble Intercontemporain and Wigmore Hall, as well as a double concerto for DoSi Duo, commissioned by a consortium of Canadian orchestras. A South Carolina native, Brown University doctoral candidate, and 2021 Copland House CULTIVATE Emerging Composer Fellow, he has had fellowships and residencies at the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra and Atlantic Center for the Arts, among others.

T. Gregory Bloomfield's work connects music to our relationships with memory, childhood, love, and culture. Distorting time and obscuring melodies, his body of work creates hallucinogenic atmospheres that engulf the mind. He has collaborated with Opera Philadelphia, the New Jersey Symphony, American Composers Orchestra (ACO), Rhythm Method, Left Coast Chamber Ensemble, JACK and Kaia Quartets, and the TAK and Unheard-Of//Ensembles. His practice also dives across disciplines, working with choreographers Oscar Trujillo and Lauri Stallings through the Owen/Cox Dance Group and Glo Platform, respectively. His works have been performed at the DiMenna Center for Classical Music, Avaloch Farm Music Institute, Dublin International Chamber Music Festival, and other notable venues. An Edwin B. Garrigues Fellow at the Curtis Institute of Music and a Teaching Artist at Opera Philadelphia, he has been a JACK Studio Artist, and a participant in the Edward T. Cone Institute, ACO EarShot Readings, and Composers Conference (as a Fromm Foundation Fellow).

(continued)

Jonathan Cziner's eclectic musical voice transcends stylistic boundaries, blending colorful harmony, rich textures, and nostalgic lyricism in sound worlds that span the dark and mysterious to the vibrant and exuberant. His music has been performed by the Dallas, Milwaukee, and New Jersey Symphonies, Minnesota Orchestra, Naples Philharmonic, and Switzerland's St. Gallen Sinfonieorchester. He has received a Charles Ives Scholarship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the William Schuman Prize at the BMI Composer Awards, and has served as Composer-in-Residence with the Illinois Philharmonic, for which he composed his first symphony, *Celestial Symphony*. Artistic Director of Dallas's pioneering contemporary ensemble Voices of Change, he is also on the University of North Texas faculty, and leads the composition program at Connecticut's Charles Ives Music Festival. A graduate of New York University and The Juilliard School, his current projects include *Wood Music*, an evening-length chamber work that explores humanity's relationship with the natural world through a theatrical structure in which performers gradually exhaust their wooden instruments until the music itself disappears.

Multi-disciplinary writer, trumpeter, and photographer **Michael R. Dudley Jr.** has developed an artistic practice that engages with topics from Black American and Appalachian musical identities to the worldwide climate crisis. As a performer, they have appeared with such world-renowned artists and ensembles as the Maria Schneider Orchestra, Christian McBride Big Band, and Darcy James Argue's Secret Society, and recorded as a lead trumpet player on multiple GRAMMY®-winning recordings by the John Daversa and Brian Lynch big bands. As a composer, they have earned awards from ASCAP, the New York Youth Symphony, BMI, and Intnernational Society of Jazz Arrangers and Composers, and had orchestral collaborations with artists ranging from Blackstar saxophonist Donny McCaslin to the Orchestra of St. Luke's (through the DeGaetano Composition Institute). Their intended practice at Copland House involves the composing and development of a large-scale work created in response to the continued destruction of Appalachia's natural environments due to projects like data centers and coal mines; the piece serves as the basis of a forthcoming jazz orchestra album synthesizing musical influences from Scots-Irish Appalachian, Black American, and Indigenous musical traditions, to bring together people in service of the country's natural beauty and rich cultures.

The music of 2013 Copland House Resident **Keith Fitch** has been consistently noted for its eloquence, expressivity, dramatic sense of musical narrative, and sense of color and sonority. His works have been performed throughout the U. S., Europe, and Asia by the Philadelphia Orchestra, American Composers Orchestra, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble, and Da Capo Chamber Players, and have been featured on Azica Records and Naxos Digital. Among his many honors are the Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, Ellis-Beauregard Foundation Composer Award, Arts and Letters Award in Music and Walter Hinrichsen Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Fromm Music Foundation Commission, three Individual Excellence Awards from the Ohio Arts Council, and awards from ASCAP, the Indiana Arts Council, and National Endowment for the Arts. He is the longtime Composition Chair at the Cleveland Institute of Music, and previously taught at Indiana University, the Mannes College of Music, and Bard College.

The music of Chicago-based composer and flutist **Paul Novak** immerses listeners in shimmering and subtly crafted worlds full of color, motion, light, and magic. His recent projects engage with dreams and memory, queer identity, climate change and the natural world, and psychosomatic illness. The California Symphony's 2026-2029 Composer-in-Residence, he has upcoming premieres and performances by Alarm Will Sound, Ensemble Dal Niente, New York Youth Symphony, Cabrillo Festival, Balletcollective, Left Coast Ensemble, New York New Music Ensemble, 21st Century Consort, and the JACK, Nois, Balourdet, Friction, and Alinea Quartets. His other recent collaborators include the Orchestra of St. Luke's, Reno Philharmonic, Austin Symphony, Civic Orchestra of Chicago, Grossman and International Contemporary Ensembles, Quince, Decoda, Earplay, and the Attacca, Formosa, Varo, and Diotima Quartets. A 2021 Copland House CULTIVATE Emerging Composer Fellow, he has received Fromm, Barlow, and Underwood Commissions; awards from ASCAP, BMI, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and League of Composers; and fellowships from MacDowell and Millay Colonies, Aspen and Norfolk Festivals, and I-Park. He is the co-artistic director and flutist of Chicago-based ensemble Mycelium New Music, and a doctoral candidate at the University of Chicago.

(continued)

Drawing on her former experience as a violist in orchestras, new music ensembles, jazz bands, and rock groups, **Celka Ojakangas** explores hybridism and recontextualization, blurring genre boundaries to create an eclectic palette of textures and rhythms that foregrounds creativity and play. Her music has been commissioned and premiered by the Albany Symphony, Alarm Will Sound, Aspen Contemporary Ensemble, Hub New Music, and other ensembles and institutions. Her honors include the Goddard Lieberson Fellowship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the 2025 Aspen Music Festival Jacob Druckman Prize. Originally from southwest Missouri and now based in Los Angeles, she has a doctorate from the University of Southern California, and was one of Copland House's 2025 CULTIVATE Emerging Composer Fellows. She is a Visiting Professor at Occidental College and Glendale Community College, and serves on the faculty of the Los Angeles Philharmonic's Composer Fellowship Program.

Evis Sammoutis' music explores the relationship between timbre and harmony, combining organically extended instrumental and vocal techniques with more traditional forms of musical expression. His works have been performed in more than 45 countries at Tanglewood, MusicNOW, Gaudeamus, Music of Today, and the International Society for Contemporary Music, and by the London Symphony Orchestra, Ensemble Modern, Klangforum Wien, Neue Vocalsolisten, Arditti Quartet, and Les Percussions de Strasbourg. He has had commissions from the Venice Biennale, Barlow Endowment, Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation, Chamber Music America, New Music USA, and Germany's Internationaler Musikwettbewerb der ARD München, and is the recipient of more than 50 compositional honors, including England's Royal Philharmonic Society Award. His music has also been broadcast on BBC Radio, Radio France, the Southwest German Radio, and Italy's RAI, and his recording debut was released by KAIROS in 2025, with two additional albums scheduled for 2027.

Frances White writes instrumental, vocal, and electronic music that conveys intimacy and immediacy, with a tactile and expressive approach deriving from a belief in the transformative nature of sound. She studies the shakuhachi (Japanese bamboo flute), whose unique spiritual and sonic voice informs her work as a composer. A Guggenheim Fellow and Princeton graduate, she has had awards, grants, residencies, and commissions from the Fromm and Puffin Foundations, MAP, Ditson, and Copland Funds, New Jersey Symphony, Prix Ars Electronica, The Crossing Chamber Choir, Dale Warland Singers, Bang On A Can Festival, MacDowell Colony, New Music USA, Sparkplug Foundation, New Jersey State Council on the Arts, and Composing in the Wilderness. Her music can be heard on the Wergo, Centaur, Nonsequitur, Harmonia Mundi, Albany, Ravello, Mode, MSR Classics, and Bridge Records labels, and was featured on the soundtracks of three award-winning films by Gus Van Sant (*Elephant*, *Paranoid Park*, and *Milk*).

California-based composer, visual artist, and writer **Carolyn Yarnell**'s work transcends traditional boundaries, uniting music, painting, and multimedia into immersive artistic experiences, and exploring nature, spirituality, the cosmos, and the human spirit. She has received the Rome Prize, Guggenheim and Fulbright Fellowships, and dual Individual Artist Fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts (in music composition and oil painting); been honored by the American Academy of Arts and Letters (Charles Ives Scholarship); and held residencies at the MacDowell Colony, Yaddo, Tanglewood, Banff, Aspen, Headlands Center for the Arts, Montalvo Arts Center, and Djerassi Artists Program. A Yale and San Francisco Conservatory of Music graduate, she has written orchestral, chamber, choral, and solo compositions, as well as electronic and ambient soundscapes. Her music has been performed by leading ensembles and musicians across the U.S., Europe, and Asia, reflecting a reverence for classical traditions and a fearless embrace of contemporary experimentation. Among her many commissions and residencies, she was MusicAlive Composer-in-Residence with the Albany Symphony and conductor David Alan Miller. She was also a founding member of the Common Sense Composers' Collective, a bi-coastal group dedicated to creating and championing new music. As an accomplished visual artist and curator, she exhibits regularly in California and New York, and served as Exhibitions Director at the Orange County Center for Contemporary Art (California).

<>