



EMBARGO LIFTS TUESDAY, JULY 7, AT 5:00PM ET

CHAMBER MUSIC AMERICA'S 2026 AWARDS RECOGNIZE BOLD ARTISTS AND INNOVATIVE PROJECTS

Awardees will be honored at CMA's Awards Luncheon on Friday, August 21, during the 2026 National Conference in Chicago.

Camerata Pacifica
Ensemble of the Year

Andy Milne
Chimeric Reveries
for Isidore String Quartet with Andy Milne
Commission of the Year

Telegraph Quartet
Edge of the Storm
Album of the Year

Patricia Kristof Moy
Music at Kohl Mansion
Community Impact / Presenter of the Year

Bel Canto Duo
Taking Flight
Interdisciplinary Collaboration of the Year

Howard Mandel
Arts Advocate of the Year

July 7, 2026 (New York, NY) — Chamber Music America (CMA), the national network for small ensemble music professionals, has announced the recipients of its member-nominated annual awards. Established in 2024, the awards program celebrates artists, advocates, ensembles and organizations whose extraordinary contributions are enriching the chamber music field.

Distinctively rooted in the small ensemble music community itself, the awards invite nominations from CMA Members in all 50 states, recognizing those who are driving meaningful change, despite not always being reflected in major headlines or garnering mainstream accolades. As the program continues to grow, it has become an increasingly visible national platform for recognizing excellence in the categories of ensembles, commissions, recordings, community impact, collaboration, and advocacy.

Each recipient receives \$1,000 and will be honored at the Awards Luncheon on Friday, August 21, during [CMA's 2026 National Conference in Chicago](#).

“In the past year, we’ve seen daring ensembles, bold new works, and projects with deep impact felt well beyond the concert hall,” says Chamber Music America CEO Kevin Kwan Loucks. “It’s an honor to celebrate just some of the extraordinary achievements of the small ensemble music community, reflecting the diversity, breadth, and dynamism of chamber music. This cohort of recipients, including both artists and organizations, are expanding the boundary of chamber music and are a guiding light for the next generation of artists and leaders.”

These six awardees join [previously announced major awardees](#) **Takács Quartet** (*Richard J. Bogomolny National Service Award*), **Imani Winds** (*Michael Jaffee Visionary Award*), and **Poesis Quartet** (*Cleveland Quartet Award*), who will also be fêted during the Conference in Chicago.

ENSEMBLE OF THE YEAR

Camerata Pacifica

This award celebrates an ensemble or ensemble project that has demonstrated exceptional artistry, musicality, and groundbreaking impact on the chamber music landscape.

For more than three decades, Santa Barbara-based Camerata Pacifica has redefined how a chamber ensemble can operate. Led by Artistic Director Adrien Spence, Camerata Pacifica produces immersive concert experiences and is dedicated to commissioning new works. Its innovative programming reaches audiences around the world, while its groundbreaking collaboration with UCLA Health explores the intersection of music, health, and technology.

COMMISSION OF THE YEAR

Andy Milne

Chimeric Reveries

for Isidore String Quartet with Andy Milne, piano

This award recognizes exceptional compositional talent and serves as a catalyst for the advancement of small-ensemble composition as a vibrant and evolving art form.

With one foot in classical music and the other in jazz, Andy Milne's *Chimeric Reveries* was commissioned by the Banff International String Quartet Competition and premiered by the Isidore Quartet alongside the composer in September 2024. The striking piece will be performed by Milne and The Telegraph Quartet this fall. A CMA member since the early 2000s, Milne is one of only a handful of composers to receive CMA's prestigious *New Jazz Works* grant twice.

ALBUM OF THE YEAR

Telegraph Quartet

Edge of the Storm

This award honors the best recording of the calendar year.

Appearing on *The Boston Globe's* Best Albums of 2025, and praised by *The New York Times*, *The Strad*, and *San Francisco Classical Voice*, Telegraph Quartet's third album, *Edge of the Storm*, is the second installment of the ensemble's *20th Century Vantage Points* series. The recording examines the turbulent years during and after World War II through emotive performances of Grażyna Bacewicz's *String Quartet No. 4* (1951), Benjamin Britten's *String Quartet No. 1* (1941), and Mieczysław Weinberg's *String Quartet No. 6* (1946).

COMMUNITY IMPACT | PRESENTER OF THE YEAR

Patricia Kristof Moy & Music at Kohl Mansion

This award recognizes an individual or organization that has made a profound and lasting contribution to their community through the presentation of chamber music performances, educational outreach initiatives, collaborations with local musicians and organizations, or audience development programs.

For more than 40 years, California-based Music at Kohl Mansion (MAKM) has exemplified how a presenter can serve as both an artistic leader and a civic partner, placing community impact at the center of its mission. Through long-standing partnerships with public schools, libraries, and community organizations, MAKM reaches thousands annually, fostering meaningful connections between artists and audiences. Its commitment to inclusion, affordability, and fair artist compensation strengthens the local arts ecosystem and models ethical, artist-centered presenting, demonstrating the essential role chamber music can play in community life.

INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION OF THE YEAR

Bel Canto Duo

Taking Flight: The Eighth Wonder of the World

This award recognizes extraordinary endeavors that bridge the gap between music and other art forms, including dance, theater, visual arts, film, literature, and more.

Utilizing filmmaking, original music, and narrative storytelling, Bel Canto Duo's (Darci Gamerl, English horn, and David Downing, cello) *Taking Flight: The Eighth Wonder of the World* is a stunning portrait of the annual migration of Sandhill Cranes in the Great Plains. Directed by Darci Gamerl, the project applies principles of NeuroArts, an emerging interdisciplinary practice using contemplative music and environmental storytelling to reduce stress and support audience well-being. The work's live-scored

premiere was sponsored by the Crane Trust and Cathedral Arts Project, with support from the Nebraska Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts.

ARTS ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR

Howard Mandel

This award highlights exemplary leadership and a commitment to advancing the arts at the local, state, or national levels.

Journalist and Jazz Journalists Association co-founder Howard Mandel has demonstrated an unwavering dedication to the jazz arts through more than 30 years of visionary leadership. Under his leadership, the organization established a cross-disciplinary, international consortium of jazz journalists and established the JJA Awards, an annual honor for musicians, writers, and notable members of the jazz community. Since retiring from the organization in 2025, Mandel has continued work as a writer, including an expansive memoir project with saxophonist Oliver Lake.

CHAMBER MUSIC AMERICA

[Chamber Music America](#), the national network of ensemble music professionals, was founded in 1977 to develop, strengthen, and support the chamber music community. With a membership including musicians, ensembles, presenters, artists' managers, educators, music businesses, and advocates of ensemble music, CMA welcomes members representing a wide range of musical styles and traditions. In addition to its funding programs, which in 2026, distributed more than \$1.3 million, CMA provides its members with consulting services, access to instrument and other insurances, conferences, seminars, and its quarterly publication, *Chamber Music* magazine.