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JOSEPH GRAY



2026
PROGRAM
& GUIDE

PRESENTED BY JAZZ IN THE BERKSHIRES

World-class *Jazz* Returns to the Berkshires.

The Inaugural Williamstown Jazz Festival

THE WEEKEND

September 11–13, 2026

Friday opening night through Sunday finale

THE STAGES

Williamstown & Lenox

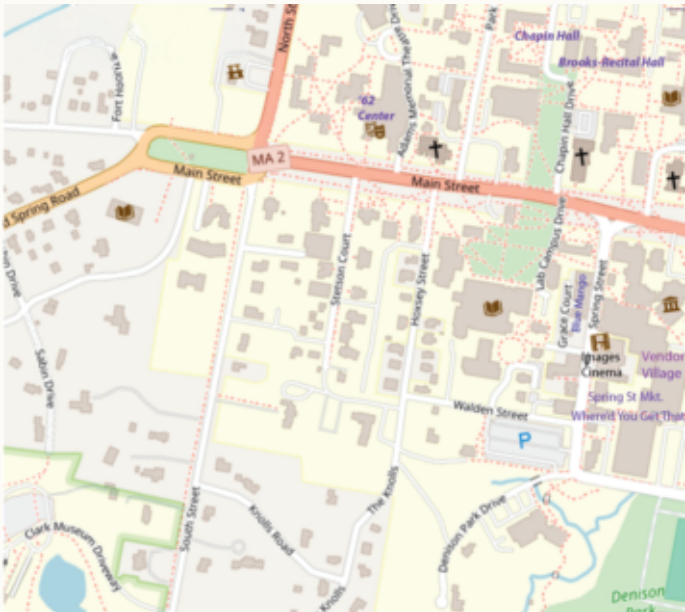
- '62 Center for Theatre & Dance
- Chapin Hall, Williams College
- Clark Art Institute
- Images Cinema
- Brooks-Rogers Recital Hall

FESTIVAL HOST & MC

Todd Barkan

2018 NEA Jazz Master

GETTING AROUND



ON THE BILL

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WILLIAMSTOWN JAZZ FESTIVAL

Welcome to the *Music*.

In the Berkshires, the mountains don't just echo — they sing.

Their timeless beauty has inspired artists, dreamers, and storytellers for generations. This weekend, they become the backdrop for another tradition: the joyful sound of jazz.

Welcome to the inaugural Williamstown Jazz Festival, where the charm of a small-town community meets the brilliance of world-renowned luminary artists. Here, every performance is more than a concert — it's a conversation between musicians and audiences, between history and innovation, and between neighbors and new friends.

Jazz has always been music that brings people together. It reminds us that the most beautiful moments often come through listening, responding, and creating something extraordinary together. That spirit lives here in the Berkshires, where hospitality

is genuine, creativity flourishes, and every visitor is welcomed like family.

We are deeply grateful to the exceptional artists whose talent inspires us, to our sponsors and community partners whose generosity makes this festival possible, to our dedicated volunteers, and to you — our audience — for believing in the power of live music to enrich our lives and strengthen our communities.

For these few magical days, Williamstown becomes a stage, our streets become gathering places, and the Berkshires become a symphony of music, laughter, and connection. So find your seat — or your dancing shoes. Applaud generously. Meet someone new. Create lasting memories.

The mountains are listening. The music is beginning.

SUPPORT THE MUSIC

Keep the music playing.

If you've enjoyed this festival, please understand it cost nearly **\$100,000 more than ticket revenue generated**. Help us close this gap by making a fully tax-deductible donation. Let's together make Jazz in the Berkshires an institution.

— *Daphne Bolden*
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



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FESTIVAL HOST & MC • 2018 NEA JAZZ MASTER

Todd Barkan

Todd Barkan is a legendary American jazz impresario, record producer, and club owner whose career spans over five decades. Raised in Columbus, Ohio, Barkan developed an intense passion for jazz, heavily inspired by his early musical mentor, the visionary multi-instrumentalist Rahsaan Roland Kirk. After studying at Oberlin College, where he began his career organizing concerts for legends like Miles Davis, Barkan relocated to San Francisco in 1967 to work as a professional pianist and immerse himself in the booming West Coast music scene.

He cemented his place in jazz history in 1972 when, at just 25, he purchased a small North Beach blues bar and transformed it into the original Keystone Korner. Over the next 11 years he turned the intimate venue into what many called the "Birdland of the '70s," booking nightly acts like Art Blakey and Dexter Gordon and using the club as a live recording

studio to produce dozens of historic albums.

Following the closure of the San Francisco club, Barkan expanded his impact across the industry as a sought-after independent record producer and director of programming for premier venues. He spent years managing the Boys Choir of Harlem and later collaborated with Wynton Marsalis to help launch and program Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola at New York's Jazz at Lincoln Center.

His lifelong devotion to archiving and presenting the music earned him the NEA Jazz Master fellowship in 2018 — a milestone that inspired him to return to his roots and resurrect the historic Keystone Korner in Baltimore, where he curates the nightly lineups, hosts weekly jam sessions, and champions his core life philosophy: *"Take care of the music, and the music will take care of you."*



FRIDAY OPENER • SEPT 11 • 5:00 PM • '62 CENTER

Brandee Younger

"No harpist thus far has been more capable of combining all of the modern harp traditions — from Salzedo, through Dorothy Ashby, through Alice Coltrane — with such strength, grace and commitment."

— THE NEW YORK TIMES

Brandee Younger is revolutionizing the harp's role in modern music. Over the past fifteen years, she has worked relentlessly to stretch boundaries and

limitations for harpists. In 2022, she made history by becoming the first Black woman to be nominated for a Grammy® Award for Best Instrumental Composition, and later received the 2024 NAACP Image Award for her album *Brand New Life*.

Ever-expanding as an artist, Younger has worked with cultural icons including Common, Lauryn Hill, John Legend, Pharoah Sanders, and Christian McBride. She is on the faculty at New York University, Steinhardt School, and The New School College of Performing Arts.



FRIDAY CLOSER • SEPT 11 • 7:00 PM • '62 CENTER

Ms. Lisa Fischer & Grand Baton

Legendary jazz and R&B vocalist **Ms. Lisa Fischer** and her powerhouse groundbreaking ensemble, Grand Baton, take the stage on the opening night of the inaugural Williamstown Jazz Festival. Fischer, who was a breakout star in the Oscar®-winning documentary *20 Feet from Stardom* (2013), is one of the most inventive contemporary jazz live performers working today. Her 1991 signature solo hit, "How Can I Ease the Pain," won the Grammy® Award for Best Female R&B Vocal Performance in 1992.

Over her career, Fischer has collaborated with an extraordinary roster of music royalty, most notably touring for 26 years as the primary female backing vocalist for The Rolling Stones and sharing the stage with rock and pop icons like Tina Turner, Sting, Bruce

Springsteen, and Nine Inch Nails. In the realm of R&B, she spent over two decades working closely with Luther Vandross and lent her powerhouse vocals to legendary artists like Aretha Franklin, Patti LaBelle, and Chaka Khan.

Today, Fischer continues to expand her footprint by collaborating with premier jazz and funk artists like Chris Botti, Bobby McFerrin, and Ranky Tanky, while fronting the world-rock band, Grand Baton, since 2014. Ms. Lisa Fischer & Grand Baton fuse psychedelic soul, progressive rock, and global rhythms into a sound that is groundbreaking and deeply human. Their genre-defying collaborations — drawing from African, Middle Eastern, and Caribbean influences — have ignited audiences worldwide.

SATURDAY • SEPT 12 • 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM • IMAGES CINEMA

Jazz Film Festival

Rhythm & Reels

FILMS SHOWN IN THIS ORDER, WITH SHORT BREAKS BETWEEN.



Unfinished Song

2026 • 1 HR 21 MIN • DIR. MARK FARRELL

A biographical documentary tracing singer Wanda Houston's journey through personal injury and prejudice to the edge of stardom. Executive produced by Michael Shocket with producers Liz Aspenlieder, Farrell, and Houston, it explores Houston's resilience as a jazz, gospel, and soul vocalist.

A Great Day in Harlem

1994 • 1 HR • DIR. JEAN BACH

The story behind Art Kane's famous 1958 photograph for *Esquire*, which gathered 57 legendary jazz musicians on a Harlem stoop — bringing the iconic snapshot to life with the camaraderie, humor, and history of that single August morning.

Jazz Infernal

2025 • 16 MIN • DIR. WILL NIAVA

A Canadian short following Koffi, a young Ivorian trumpeter who arrives in a freezing Montreal carrying his late father's musical legacy. Its international premiere was at Sundance, where it won the Short Film Jury Award: International Fiction.

Dr. Eddie Henderson: Uncommon Genius

2024 • 27 MIN • DIR. MICHELLE BAUER CARPENTER

A PBS short, produced by Mark Rabideau, chronicling the trumpeter's excellence across three disciplines — from a childhood lesson with Louis Armstrong to a pioneering career as a figure skater and twelve years as a physician.

The Modern Jazz Quartet: From Residency to Legacy

2018 • 1 HR 21 MIN • DIR. GEORGE SCHULLER

A documentary on the ensemble's impact at the School of Jazz at Music Inn, exploring their "Third Stream" fusion and their role elevating jazz to the concert hall during the 1957–1960 summer residencies.

Images Cinema is a historic, non-profit community movie theater located at 50 Spring Street in Williamstown. Operating for over a century, it features an inviting social lounge, and a mix of independent, foreign, and classic films.



SATURDAY EVENING • SEPT 12 • 6:00 PM • '62 CENTER

Steve Turre's All-Star Band

One of the world's preeminent jazz innovators, trombonist and seashellist, **Steve Turre** has consistently won both the Readers' and Critics' polls in *JazzTimes*, *DownBeat*, and *Jazziz*, and has been a member of the *Saturday Night Live* band since 1984. For the festival he leads an all-star band of first-call virtuosos, including saxophonist James Carter, Herlin Riley, Eric "ELEW" Lewis, and Corcoran Holt, drummer Herlin Riley, pianist ELEW, and bassist Corcoran Holt.

James Carter

"James Carter has cemented his reputation as one of the most adventurous, visionary young reed players on the cusp of this new millennium... Not as an outsider, but as one of the most exciting young virtuosos in contemporary music..."

— JAZZTIMES

Herlin Riley

Wynton Marsalis once introduced Herlin Riley to a live audience by calling him "a master of the New

Orleans drum cadence, tambourine, washboard, cowbell, and many other things that can be hit and grooved upon."

— ALL ABOUT JAZZ

Eric "ELEW" Lewis

"...a seriously gifted jazz pianist who has worked with Wynton Marsalis, Cassandra Wilson, and Elvin Jones ...a musician with subtle and strange improvisational ideas and sometimes great clobbering ones."

— THE NEW YORK TIMES

Corcoran Holt

Bassist, composer, arranger, and educator, Holt began playing djembe and West African percussion at the age of four with the Wose Dance Company. "Over the course of his career, he has collaborated with some of jazz's most respected artists, notably spending significant time alongside saxophonist Kenny Garrett."

— PARIS MOVE



Front row (seated), from left: Billy Hart, drums; Eddie Henderson, trumpet; Cecil McBee, bass; and George Cables, piano. Back row (standing), from left: David Weiss, trumpet and band founder; Donald Harrison, alto saxophone; and Azar Lawrence, tenor saxophone.

SATURDAY CLOSER • SEPT 12 • 8:00 PM • '62 CENTER

The Cookers

The Cookers canceled their two New Year's Eve performances at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in December 2025. Drummer Billy Hart confirmed to *The New York Times* that the decision was tied to the board's controversial addition of President Trump's name to the venue. Their statement: "Jazz was born from struggle and from a relentless insistence on freedom: freedom of thought, of expression, and of the full human voice. Some of us have been making this music for many decades, and that history still shapes us. We are not turning away from our audience, and do want to make sure that when we do return to the bandstand, the room is able to celebrate the full presence of the music and everyone in it."

Billy Hart

The D.C.-born drummer grew up sneaking listens to Miles Davis and Art Blakey, joined Herbie Hancock's Mwandishi band, and played on Miles's *On the Corner* — the rhythmic heartbeat and co-founder of The Cookers.

Eddie Henderson

Trumpeter, psychiatrist, and pioneering athlete. Mentored by Louis Armstrong and Miles Davis, he earned a medical degree from Howard and played with the Mwandishi band.

Cecil McBee

World-acclaimed bassist who has toured and recorded with Miles Davis, Pharoah Sanders, McCoy Tyner, Sonny Rollins, and Art Pepper. A 1989 Grammy® winner.

George Cables "Mr. Beautiful"

Classically trained New York pianist who became a mainstay of the California scene and Art Pepper's favorite pianist.

David Weiss

New York-born trumpeter, composer,

and arranger — the foundational arranger and manager for The Cookers.

Donald Harrison

Celebrated alto saxophonist, NEA Jazz Master, and Big Chief of the Congo Square Nation who pioneered "Nouveau Swing."

Azar Lawrence

Saxophonist and composer linking the Coltrane era to contemporary spiritual jazz, with three landmark albums alongside McCoy Tyner.



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SUNDAY • SEPT 13 • 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM • CLARK ART INSTITUTE AUDITORIUM

Regional Jazz Artists

The Sunday showcase at the Clark is the festival's commitment to education and regional talent — rising Berkshire players alongside the region's working musicians.

Berkshires Jazz Youth Ensembles. In collaboration with Berkshires Jazz, Pittsfield High School Band Director Ashley Paradis has arranged Pittsfield High School Band Director Ashley Paradis has arranged middle and high school jazz ensembles to perform. Ensembles of students from around the county will be highlighted, showcasing the amazing things they are able to do in the Berkshires. The groups will feature different instrumentation, vocalists, and more. In a short amount of time, these students put together a couple of charts to highlight their strengths and love of jazz music. As Band Director at Pittsfield High School, Paradis directs the Concert Band, Jazz Band, and Jazz Combos. And she teaches three elective courses: AP Music Theory, Introduction to Guitar, and Introduction to World Drumming. She is also an Education Representative with Berkshires Jazz and has

served as the Chairperson for the MMEA-Western District. She is incredibly passionate about creating worthwhile and memorable experiences for music students in Berkshire County and has worked with Berkshires Jazz to facilitate their clinic program in partnership with the University of Connecticut that began in the fall of 2025.

MCLA Jazz Band. The MCLA Jazz Band, under the direction of Bill Chapman, is made up of students from the Music, Industry & Production degree program and from across the campus.

Richard Stanmeyer & Company. Rounding out Sunday's performance is Richard Stanmeyer, a Boston-based trumpet player, composer, and arranger. He will bring together his all-star Berkshire quartet to perform original compositions and selections from the Great American Songbook inspired by the Miles Davis centennial. *The band:* Richard Stanmeyer, trumpet • Omar Valenzuela, piano & electric keyboard • Brandon Goulet, electric bass • Will Carroll, drums.

You *are our* Why

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Jim Holmes, Member



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SUNDAY • A CONVERSATION • SEPT 13 • 2:30 PM • BROOKS-ROGERS

The History of Jazz in the Berkshires

Author John Gennari and filmmaker George Schuller in conversation, moderated by festival host Todd Barkan.



John Gennari

AUTHOR • PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH, UVM

John Gennari, a University of Vermont professor of English and critical race and ethnic studies, is a cultural historian examining race, place, and American music. His first book, *Blowin' Hot and Cool: Jazz and Its Critics*, won the ASCAP Deems Taylor Award and remains a foundational text in jazz studies. In *The Jazz Barn: Music Inn, the Berkshires, and the Place of Jazz in American Life* (2025), the Lenox native focuses back home. This definitive history of the Music Inn and Lenox School of Jazz explores how a white New England town became a mid-century haven for Black musicians during McCarthyism. Featuring Clemens Kalischer's iconic photography, *The Jazz Barn* illuminates how this bucolic Berkshire venue incubated mainstream jazz and the avant-garde.



George Schuller

DRUMMER • COMPOSER • PRODUCER • ARCHIVIST

George Schuller (drummer, composer, arranger, producer, researcher, archivist) has released several albums as a leader, including *Listen Both Ways* and *JigSaw*. He leads groups like Circle Wide and appeared on Joe Lovano's *Rush Hour*. Schuller has recorded and produced CDs with numerous artists, including Lee Konitz, Ran Blake, Luciana Souza, and Gunther Schuller. Between 2013–18, the 1982 New England Conservatory graduate toured globally with the Lee Konitz Quartet. He has also performed alongside Dee Dee Bridgewater, Fred Hersch, and Dave Douglas, among many others. Additionally, Schuller co-produced the 2007 documentary *Music Inn* and produced the 2018 film *Modern Jazz Quartet: From Residency to Legacy*, both featured at major international festivals. *Modern Jazz Quartet* will be screened on Saturday at Images Cinema as part of the festival programming.

"The Lenox School of Jazz is my inspiration. The Berkshires has lacked a permanent home for jazz at the scale this region's history demands. This festival is how we put that right."

— DAPHNE BOLDEN, PH.D., FOUNDER



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SUNDAY AFTERNOON • SEPT 13 • 4:00 PM • CHAPIN HALL

Wanda Houston

Wanda Houston is a powerhouse vocalist, actress, and song-stylist whose extraordinary career spans continents, genres, and mediums. Originally from Chicago, she spent decades building a prominent bi-coastal and international career. She has performed with icons like Barbra Streisand, Patti Austin, Joe Cocker, Celine Dion, and Sam Harris, and toured globally with Motown royalty, including Mary Wells, Martha and the Vandellas, and The Platters.

Her theatrical credits include Broadway roles in *A Streetcar Named Desire* and Michael Jackson's acclaimed production of *Sisterella!* Now based in the Berkshires, Houston is celebrated as one of the re-

gion's premier musical forces. She anchors multiple ensembles as the lead vocalist for the jazz trio Heth, Bradley & Houston, the Wanda Houston Band, and Big & Bigger. She regularly collaborates on prestigious regional projects like the Vermont Jazz Center Big Band and the Eugene Uman-led Convergence Project, which beautifully fuses jazz, gospel, and Colombian rhythms.

Her remarkable life and artistic journey are the subject of the documentary film *Unfinished Song: The Power of a Voice*, directed by Mark Farrell. The award-winning film will be screened Saturday at Images Cinema.



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SUNDAY EVENING • SEPT 13 • 6:00 PM • CHAPIN HALL

Triangle Offense

Triangle Offense is a modern jazz trio featuring saxophonist **Kris Allen**, bassist **Matt Dwonszyk**, and drummer **Jonathan Barber**. This collaborative, chordless ensemble is composed of three New England bandleaders who share deep roots in the Hartford, Connecticut jazz scene. The members of the trio have developed a musical shorthand through more than a decade of writing, arranging, and performing together. Supported by a touring grant from the South Arts Jazz Road program, *Triangle Offense* utilizes its piano-less format to allow for open improvisation and sonic exploration. Their repertoire balances original compositions with new arrangements of jazz standards and contemporary classics.

Kris Allen

Sought-after saxophonist and the Lyell B. Clay Artist-in-Residence in Jazz at Williams College, having worked with Illinois Jacquet, Gerald Wilson, and Jimmy Greene.

Matt Dwonszyk

Bassist, composer, and educator from the Jackie McLean Institute; among the most in-demand bassists in New England, on faculty at Manchester and CCSU.

Jonathan Barber

Voted the #1 Up-and-Coming Drummer of 2018 by *Modern Drummer*; has toured with Pat Metheny, Erykah Badu, and Nicholas Payton.



SUNDAY CLOSER • SEPT 13 • 8:00 PM • CHAPIN HALL

Arturo Sandoval

Arturo Sandoval got his big break as a protégé of the legendary Dizzy Gillespie, and since then, he has become one of the world's most famous masters of the jazz trumpet and flugelhorn. He is much more than just a jazz player — Sandoval is also an incredible classical concert artist, an amazing pianist, and a talented composer who writes beautiful film scores and orchestral pieces.

Growing up in Cuba, he started playing classical trumpet at age twelve before discovering his passion for jazz, creating a unique sound that blends both worlds. His incredible talent has earned him some of the biggest awards in the music industry.

He is a ten-time Grammy® winner, a six-time Billboard Award winner, and an Emmy® winner for

writing the musical score to the HBO movie about his own life story.

In addition to all the musical trophies, Sandoval even received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Barack Obama for his impact on global culture and his inspiring journey to freedom.

To close out our inaugural festival, he is bringing the house down at full force! Sandoval will lead his nonet — nine top-tier musicians together standing peerless on stage for a high-energy performance. Get ready for a musical ride that moves fast from explosive, high-octane Afro-Cuban beats and quick rhythms of bebop to smooth, soulful ballads. Take a gander at to the facing page to meet the awesome artists in his band!

The Sandoval Nonet

Will Brahm's music blends Jeff Beck's melodic style with the lush harmonies of the Pat Metheny Group. Innovating the Stratocaster's palette, his trio approach creates an expansive experience, captured on *Distance to Empty*. He has toured worldwide with Sandoval since 2019.

Roberto Vizcaino is a Cuban percussionist blending modern styles with deep traditions. A 2023 Latin Grammy® winner, he has played global stages like the Hollywood Bowl. In addition to the Royal Quartet, Vizcaino tours worldwide as Sandoval's full-time percussionist.

Daniel Feldman is a three-time Latin Grammy®-nominated drummer from Mexico City. Renowned for hand percussion, he blends Afro-Cuban, Mediterranean, and Middle Eastern roots with jazz, funk, and world music. Feldman has backed Alejandro Sanz and joined Sandoval's band in 2022.

Mike Tucker is a Grammy®-nominated saxophonist known for dynamic performances. Having performed in over 30 countries, he appears on 40+ recordings. Tucker's versatility bridges genres, collaborating with jazz greats like Esperanza Spalding and George Duke.

Keith Fiala is an LA-based trumpeter, author, and clinician who toured with Maynard Ferguson. He currently travels worldwide as Sandoval's trumpet player and road manager. Additionally, Fiala authored *About Face* and has played lead trumpet with the Temple Jazz Orchestra.

Larry Bustamante is a New York-born baritone saxophonist known for his powerful sound. After earning performance awards at Brooklyn College, he broke into the New York music scene at age 18. Larry has studied under Hamiet Bluiett and performed alongside Aretha Franklin.

Max Gerl is a Dallas-born bassist and producer who graduated with honors from Berklee College of Music. Now a first-call bassist in Los Angeles, he has toured internationally at Ronnie Scott's and performed with Sandoval, Stanley Clarke, and Talib Kweli.

Lisandro Pidre is an Argentinian composer and pianist who studied at the López Buchardo conservatory and the Berklee-affiliated EMC. He expanded his training into film scoring under Hans Zimmer. Today, Pidre tours globally as the regular pianist for Sandoval's ensemble.



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THIS YEAR'S VENDORS

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African Authentics — Chelsea, MA.
Shona stone sculpture, wire sculpture, earrings, and Tonga baskets.

Breeke Inc. — Kearneysville, WV. Art clothing and accessories.

CIMATSI LLC — Cambridge, MA.
Organic cold-pressed cosmetic oils and handmade jewelry.

Dre's Global Kitchen — Pittsfield, MA. Afro-Caribbean fare.

Eve & Nico Gifts & Home Décor — Edgewater, NJ. Handmade decorative items.

Fatima's Silver Creations — Philadelphia, PA. Handcrafted fine sterling silver jewelry.

Galway Naturals Soap Co. — Galway, NY. Handmade natural soaps and lotions, beaded aromatherapy bottles, and greeting cards.

Hannah Daye & Company — Millbrook, NY. Artisan-crafted fine jewelry.

Kabuki Design Studio LLC — Watkins Glen, NY. Hand-crafted hats and accessories.

MremboNYC — East Orange, NJ. Handmade jewelry.

Nitjuan Designs — Roselle, NJ. Crys-tals and handmade jewelry.

Nohemm — New York, NY. Hand-made African cotton skirts, aprons, mitts, and decorative pillows.

Puzzled Antique — North Adams, MA. Laser engravings on wood & slate, 3D-printed fidgets, and jazz-themed totes, stickers, and magnets.

Remedies From Nature — Pikesville, MD. Herbal remedies, artisan soaps, personal-care products, and whipped butters.

Taan Siam — Bennington, VT. Thai fare.

Tomi Bentley — Hoosick Falls, NY. Handwoven bags, scarves, towels, and more.

Vision of Tibet — Highland, NY. Handmade crafts and clothing from the Himalayas.

EAT • DRINK • SHOP • STAY

Eat, Shop & Stay

A weekend guide to eating, drinking, shopping, and staying in Williamstown.

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