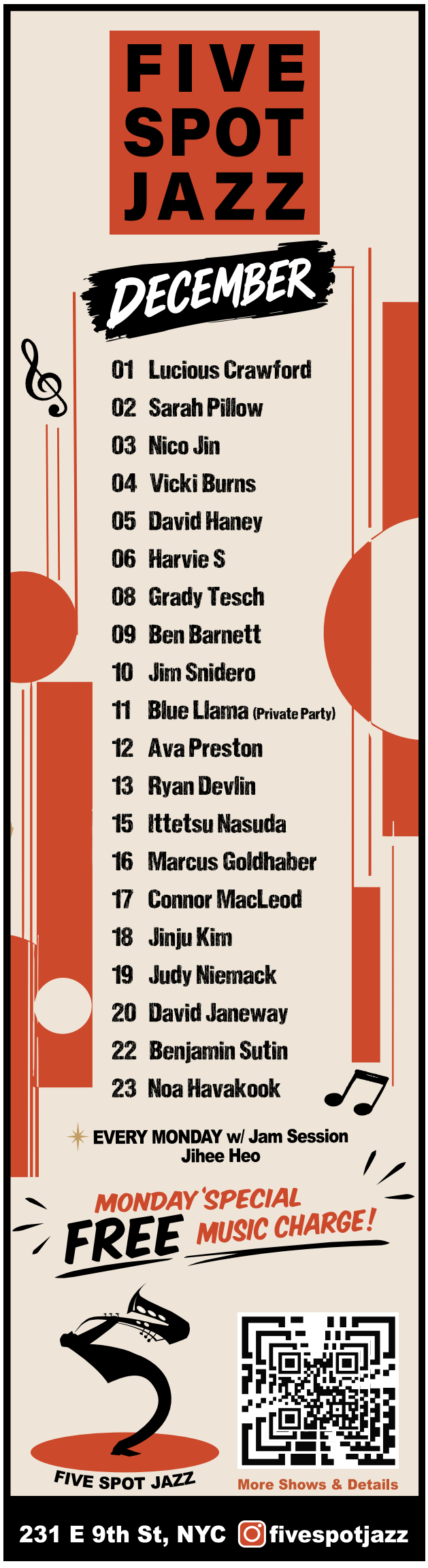



Enthalpy
Ka Baird/Chris Ryan Williams (Outside Time)
by Brad Cohan

Among top-flight players in experimental and improvised music, Ka Baird and Chris Ryan Williams occupy strata all their own. Delving into the chromatic and twitchy sonics that Baird coaxes from their voice, bass flute and electronics on 2019's *Respires,* and the immersive trumpet and synthesizers-driven vistas of Willams' 2025's *Odu: Vibration II,* offers a quick demonstration of their originality. Separately, they have galvanized the American avant garde landscape. Collaborations have also defined Baird and Williams' trajectory. The former has recorded with the improvising keyboardist Thollem McDonas and drummer Chris Corsano, the latter with saxophonist Patrick Shirioshi and trombonist Kalia Vandever. Given that both are omnipresent scene-drivers, navigating the same underground circuit, it was inevitable a Baird/Williams pairing would become reality.

Enthalpy is the fruit of that joint undertaking: a sonic funhouse in which the duo spontaneously sprays incandescent aural fragments and shards at the walls to see what sticks. It turns out it all does; the jumble and all they spew out somehow aligns into a vernacular that makes perfect sense. The pressure released by the flute and trumpet, when manipulated, creates a powerful, mysterious force. This mangled magic glows from the nine laboratory experiments found on the all-improvised recording; these rich and hectic sound structures are woozy and multilayered, feeling as if they can topple over at any moment but always manage to stay upright. Opening vignette "Spirit" and the following "Target Practice" embody such warped, fragile sensibilities as Baird feverishly grunts, chants and gasps for air as blown-out noises from their flute drift in and out like a car radio losing its signal. The dream-turned-nightmare, "Vapour Trails", features Williams first gently blowing fluttering, spectral lines from his trumpet before Baird swoops in with dizzying fits and starts, changing the piece's direction into a mood approaching the sinister.

Collaborations like these are sometimes one-offs. Let's hope Baird and Williams' paths cross again, because the sound-worlds they make are truly one of a kind.

For more info visit outsidetime.bandcamp.com. The album release concert is at Roulette Dec. 17. See Calendar.



Terra
Phil Haynes, Ben Monder, Peyton Pleninger (Corner Store Jazz)
by Mike Shanley

In March 2025, drummer Phil Haynes convened a performance at Bucknell University in Lewisburg, PA, with Ben Monder (guitar) and Peyton Pleninger (tenor). Though Haynes had performed with both of them separately, it was the first time Monder and Pleninger collaborated together. Their hour-long performance, on this recently-released document, features sonic peaks and valleys, going from ambient moments to more foreboding textures, with a standard stop along the way.

"Moonrise/Aurora/Starlit/Meteor" (three of the four tracks have titles that imply shifts in the playing) opens with Monder evoking a harp in the way he strikes his strings, while Haynes rummages through a percussive toolbox. Pleninger blends in with droning bells, but he waits nearly nine minutes in before strapping on his horn. At one point he vocalizes into his instrument, without playing simultaneously, and the sound gets abrasive quickly. But the trio's intuitive use of dynamic sways, and the way the sound comes together in the final section, keep the 19-minute track naturally flowing.

By "Vision Quest/Three Visitors", Haynes feels comfortable enough to sit out for the first few minutes and let the new friends get acquainted. Pleninger revels in raw overtones, which work better in tandem with his voice and the wall of sound Monder unleashes. The guitar/tenor rapport is solid by "Borealis/Showers/Dreams/Dawn", which opens with rippling guitar chords and long, bent tones. Then Monder hits some space junk and the moment darkens, elevated by Haynes' percussive contributions. As the performance appears to settle down and reach an end, Haynes takes more space to move around his kit. He's not necessarily in a rush, but he does play in a manner that cues and anticipates (as the title's fourth and final section implies) the dawn.

The trio does detour into the Hoagy Carmichael gem "Skylark", one of set's few pre-planned moments. Monder delicately picks the changes while Haynes begins just on cymbals before adding some delicate skin work. After barking through his horn earlier, Pleninger reveals a melodic sensitivity for this classic. Hearing the trio meet on common ground adds extra energy to the set, making up for earlier passages that may have wandered a bit.

For more info visit cornerstorejazz.com. Ben Monder is at Bar Bayeux Dec. 10. See Calendar.



The Sound in San Francisco: Live at Keystone Korner
Stan Getz (Resonance)
by Pierre Giroux

At one point in time, tenor saxophonist Stan Getz and guitarist-singer-composer João Gilberto, dubbed the "father of bossa nova," seemed almost inseparable, their names inextricably linked to the bossa nova explosion that swept through jazz in the early '60s. Their 1965 album, *Getz/Gilberto*, was the first jazz record to win the GRAMMY Award for Album of the Year. Twelve years after that music captured the world's imagination, the two masters met again at San Francisco's Keystone Korner in May 1976. *The Sound in San Francisco* brings those performances into focus, alongside the equally compelling music of the Getz quartet, featuring Joanne Brackeen (piano), Clint Houston (bass) and Billy Hart (drums). The deluxe 3-LP set, pressed on 180g vinyl (followed by a 2-CD set and digital download), brings together material previously released by Resonance as