

# WINDHAM HILL'S *Winter Solstice*

One night only!! Celebrate the winter solstice and its warm traditions with a concert of original and traditional acoustic music drawn from the multi-platinum selling *Winter Solstice* series as well as their many solo releases. Windham Hill founder and Grammy-winning guitarist, Will Ackerman; Grammy Award-nominated singer, fiddler, pianist, and songwriter Barbara Higbie; and the Grammy-nominated guitarist and composer Alex de Grassi come together with special guest Marin County musician Todd Boston to lead this joyous holiday concert.

The release of the "Winter Solstice" album is a tradition that Windham Hill follows every holiday season. The unique sounds and boundaries that Windham Hill has created through each album have received well-deserved recognition around the world.

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#### Tell us a little bit about the history of Windham Hill?

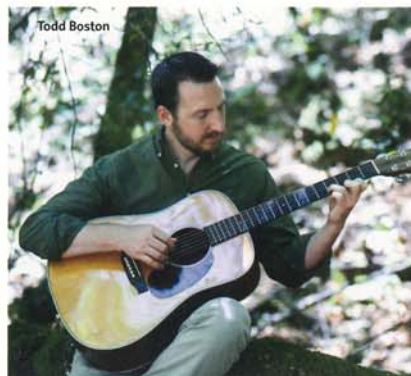
**Barbara:** Historically, I was the first female instrumentalist signed to Windham Hill when we were both in our infancy (I was 22). Will [Ackerman] was the Steve Jobs of music. Steve was a big fan of Windham Hill.

**Todd:** I view myself as a child of Windham Hill Records as I was exposed to the music from my friend's father when I was in High School. The music of Windham Hill immediately became a huge impact on my musical life. I listened to many albums from the perspective of a genuine fan and as a young musician exposed to new sounds.

#### What inspires you about the Winter Solstice?

**Barbara:** From ancient times, the Winter Solstice has been the most sacred time of year. I grew up both in small mid-western towns and in West Africa. In both places, I felt true magic during the holiday season. It seems to be universal. For me, music of the season makes it possible to reconnect with the best things in life: goodwill, peace, joy, and renewal.

**Todd:** The Winter Solstice tour is inspiring to play with a brilliant ensemble of musicians for great audiences.



Todd Boston



Barbara Higbie

#### What can our audience look forward to at the Winter Solstice concert?

**Barbara:** We are lucky to have so many fine performers on one show. We keep it moving between solo and group, traditional and original, intimate, and lively music. We honor all traditions and play gorgeous new arrangements of classic holiday tunes. It's a lot of fun and deeply moving as well. We honor all traditions and seem to appeal to all age groups. Cellist, Mia Pixley, is the newest addition to the show. She is a classical cellist from Austin, Texas and a joyful, beautiful presence on stage. Todd Boston is one of the most celebrated of the new generation of acoustic guitarists full of surprises. William Ackerman and Alex De Grassi are the two first cousins who originated the genre and are so truly inspiring to listen to. I'm the glue: a multi-instrumentalist and singer who loves to let rip on the fiddle. We have a lot of fun playing together!

**Todd:** The audience can look forward to an inspiring concert of solo and ensemble performances from the Windham Hill Artists. It is a dynamic concert with introspective relaxing music and uplifting inspiring music and exceptional musicianship you expect from Windham Hill.

#### Why is this such a special performance in Marin County?

**Barbara:** We are so honored to bring this concert to the Marin Center because Marin County was a major player in the creation of this entire genre of music. Many of the titles of our original tunes come from experiences in Marin. Tunes like "Inverness," "Hawk Circle," "Above the Fog," "Tideline," the list goes on and on. People who live in Marin understand the awe that nature inspires. That awe is the main inspiration for the musicians of Windham Hill. The type of nature one experiences in Marin is like nowhere else in the world.

**Todd:** For me personally, it is a special performance because I live in Marin County and have many friends and family that will attend.

#### Many of you are locally-based, can you tell us about your Bay Area experiences?

**Barbara:** I came here to go to Mills College and found home. I live across the Richmond Bridge in Albany and come to Marin a lot. Our 16-year-old daughter plays volleyball for Absolute, my best friend lives in San Anselmo, we rehearse at Todd's house in Lagunitas, there are so many great clubs and restaurants and, of course, the hiking!

As someone who has traveled nearly everywhere the last 40 years (I recently played in Antarctica, even), I am convinced beyond a shadow of a doubt that the Bay Area is the best

place in the world. Other places are wonderful, but we have an especially lucky combination. It's the mix of cultures, geography, open minds, food, nature, beauty. We are SO lucky to live here. Windham Hill music exploded out of Palo Alto at the exact same moment as the tech revolution. To me, this music expresses that same creativity, innovation and high quality. It is unique to the Bay Area. It all happened here, and we are so happy to be able to celebrate it together! I'm so excited to play at the Marin Center with this exceptional group of artists.

**Todd:** It is always the best to play for a hometown crowd, to feed off that energy and get to go home and sleep in my own bed!