

CREATING A DYNAMIC ‘FLOW’ IN A VIBRANT NEW AGE

Will Ackerman, Fiona Joy, Lawrence Blatt and Jeff Oster Take an Open Approach to Musical Discovery, Embracing Friendship While Building Organic Songs for their eponymous new release, FLOW.

Deep in the West River Valley in Southern Vermont, there’s a galvanizing new array of sounds emerging from Imaginary Road Studios, the longtime creative home base of legendary GRAMMY®-winning acoustic guitarist Will Ackerman and musical centerpiece of a 282-acre property in Windham County that’s become a hotbed of acoustic excellence over the past 25 years.

Forty years after Windham Hill became a catalyst for the global musical phenomenon, its bountiful legacy of best-selling solo works (George Winston, Liz Story, Alex DeGrassi, Michael Hedges) and Grammy-winning ensembles (Shadowfax) – extends into a truly new age with FLOW – a new four-piece ensemble comprised of Ackerman and three of today’s most acclaimed independent artists, Australian pianist Fiona Joy, acoustic guitarist Lawrence Blatt and flugelhorn master Jeff Oster. All in, FLOW (Fiona, Lawrence, Oster and Will) members have accumulated literally dozens of accolades, from Grammy Awards, to ZMRs, IMAs, IAMAs and a catalog of #1 albums in the genre.

Ackerman shared his thoughts on the process, saying “There was a moment in the process of making FLOW with Fiona, Lawrence and Jeff when I felt a hint of panic that my pieces were being altered and transformed into something very different from what I would have done with them on a Will Ackerman record. It was in the moment just after this thought that I realized that FLOW was actually working... that I was experiencing real synergy. The group had become a creative entity unto itself and four dear friends had gathered to create something beyond anything they could have created on their own. Experiments don't always work. This one worked!”

Formed out of mutual and collective long-term friendships and a history of working and playing together over the past eight years, FLOW is not only an unusual anagram of their names (Fiona, Lawrence, Oster, Will) but also reflects the foursome’s fresh international new age sound and the graceful atmospheric and rhythmic ease with which each of the 11 tracks streams into the next.

As officially announced, the concept of FLOW had its origins in 2015, when Blatt invited Fiona and Oster to join him at Imaginary Road to create an album inspired by the iconic Windham Hill sound and ensembles. Ackerman had already produced several of Fiona Joy's and Oster’s albums plus Blatt’s recordings *The Color of Sunshine*, *Emergence*, and *Latitudes and Longitudes* featuring Oster on horn; Blatt and Fiona met while recording a special project on Blue Coast Music.

Oster remembers that each of them brought two or three songs to the project to which they added their parts under the guidance of Ackerman’s longtime production partner at Imaginary Road, Tom Eaton. The group likens Eaton’s multi-faceted role in the success of the project as that of “The Fifth Beatle.”

Reflecting on FLOW’s debut project, Oster says, “If you look back into any time of human existence, this need for peaceful breathing and listening has always and will always be deeply important. It’s not only New Age music, it is EVERY AGE music!”

FLOW will be performing concert dates in support of the album’s release this fall, including their album release celebration at Carnegie Hall on October 6, 2017.