

Ben Wakeman's new CD release "I'm Just the Same as I Was" offers a tightly crafted collection of songs by a seasoned writer at the top of his game. This album, Wakeman's fifth to date, is a testament to his years of persistence and devoted pursuit of the elusive ingredients that make a great song. Raised in the mountains of North Carolina, his musical genome is readily traceable to the likes of James Taylor and David Wilcox, with some Jackson Browne and Suzanne Vega mixed in. Influences aside, Wakeman has carved his own initials into the singer-songwriter family tree with his sharp wit, powerful guitar and salt-honey voice.



What you notice right away about Wakeman's music is its unflinching sincerity and the comfortable way it takes you in. On the surface they are simple, listenable songs and in many cases even catchy but there is a lot moving underneath. After a second listen, you discover these wonderfully crafted vignettes that are as genuine as they are literary. The guitar is a constant, articulate and often driving presence in most of Wakeman's work. Whether it's the wall of guitars in the opening anthem *Unamerican* or the delicate finger-style playing on *You Can*, his love for the instrument is clear.

"I'm Just the Same as I Was has some great moments. Ben's music is full of unexpected turns, like that beautiful surprise bridge in the title track. This is a really fine album from a truly original songwriter."

- Pierce Pettis,
Songwriter, Compass Records

Ben Wakeman is an independent thinker, choosing to navigate his own way through the teeth of the music business. As part of the fertile Atlanta music scene for the last 15 years and a regular at the legendary venue, Eddie's Attic, he has performed, collaborated with and worked along side artists like Kristian Bush and Jennifer Nettles of Sugarland, John Mayer and Shawn Mullins watching as they rocketed into careers with impressive commercial success. Wakeman however, chose a different path. Being there every day to see his children grow up meant more to him than the pursuit of stardom and being on the road 200 days a year. A music degree did not offer much in the way of opportunity, so he taught himself programming and web design.

Wakeman always knew how to be an artist, but it was an entirely different challenge to be an artist living within the constraints of a work-a-day, devoted family man's lifestyle and responsibilities. Verses scrawled in the margins of computer manuals, iPhone song demos recorded in the morning commute, CD artwork designed during lunch breaks and set lists drafted at the breakfast table with a little one on his knee - Wakeman has never given up on his passion for music, but instead found a way to fuel it, drawing strength and inspiration from his wife and two sons.

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