

# Mp3 Benjamin Wagner - Almost Home



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Acoustic alt.pop. 10 MP3 Songs ROCK: Acoustic, FOLK: Folk Pop Details: No matter what is "in" at a given moment -- hair-metal, rap-metal, boy bands, dance music, whatever -- there will always be scattered men and women writing songs on guitars, pianos, or computers. They'll be writing songs that mean something to them -- regardless of what "demographic" it will appeal to -- and without a doubt, these songs will connect with an audience. It may just be to the couple of hundred people who show up to their gigs at local clubs. That's where Benjamin is now. And you have the chance to be one of those people who sees him now, before he jumps from playing for a few hundred to playing for a few thousand (or more). Apart from the obvious benefit of being able to say "I saw him back when ((a) he played small joints (b) he still had a day job -- can you believe it? (c) he wasn't yet a beloved icon to the singer-songwriter community... (d) he still... ah, well, you get the picture)," there's some other good reasons to catch him at his next gig at a cozy bar near you. Well, that is, if you're a fan of music and of the English language... our man Ben knows how to use each, and how to combine them to moving effect. And that's the reason to check out one of Ben's shows... today, at a hip watering hole, or a few years, or months (weeks?) down the road at a larger venue. Because, simply put, he writes great songs, and in performance -- whether Ben is playing with a stripped down rock ensemble, a big backing band, accompanied by a cellist or just with his own acoustic guitar -- the songs take on another dimension. So call out for "California," "Hollywood Arms," "Dear Elizabeth" or "Summer's Gone"... or for his covers of songs by the Pixies or Matthew Sweet. Or Phil Collins. Or John Denver. It's worth mentioning that he does these songs without a drop of irony. He doesn't care who wrote the songs, or who popularized them (or how annoying said artists were at the time of their respective ubiquity). It actually speaks volumes that he chooses covers based on what the songs say to him, not on what his choice of covers say to critics

and audiences about his "hip-factor" (or lack thereof). It shows a real commitment to songs, and a seeming blind spot to today's music industry. That's the kind of artist that music needs today, and that passion for the music is worth paying for, be it in a theater or in your favorite bar. - Brian Ives, February 2004

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