

# Singer-songwriter Beckett performs intimate concert at Lucy's Music Café

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Whether it's through a conversational concert or a personalized song, William Beckett wants to connect with fans.

Since going solo in 2011, the Barrington native and former singer for the now defunct band, The Academy Is, has released several albums and toured the world.

He'll perform at 8:30 p.m. Nov. 15 at Lucy's Music Cafe in an intimate concert on a revamped, small, black-box stage at the Raue Center for the Arts, 26 N. Williams St., Crystal Lake. The stage seats 150.

He'll play "for as long as I feel like playing, which is probably going to be pretty long," he said.

"I really haven't had an opportunity to do a show like this in quite some time," he said. "I've been on a bunch of tours where I have a limited amount of time on stage. I'm really excited to be able to just share a bunch of my new material as well as old songs.

"People can yell out songs they want to hear, and I can tell some stories about the songs and the writing process. It's almost like a 'VH1 Storytellers.' "

Beckett's most recent and first full-length solo album, "Genuine and Counterfeit," was released in August. The album's first single, "Compromising Me," landed in the top 20 of the iTunes music charts, leading all independently released tracks.

He also self-released a trilogy of EPs, "Walk The Talk," "Winds Will Change" and "What Will Be," as well as a "Pioneer Sessions," a collection of 12 acoustic versions of songs in 2012.

He said his music doesn't stray too far from his days with the rock band The Academy Is, which originated in Chicago in 2003 and released three studio albums. The band announced its break-up in 2011, after the members decided to go their separate ways.

"I feel like my new album is not necessarily a complete contrast from that," Beckett said. "For me, I feel like it's a bit more of a mature sound. It's a bit more of an introspective look at me and my relationships in life and how things have challenged me and ... that journey into being a solo artist.

"With everything changing around me through that time and somewhat of a lack of control, you need to sustain and nourish the relationships in your life," he said. "It's not always easy to find that balance between, you know, what's genuine and what's counterfeit."

Approached by numerous record labels after the band split, Beckett recently signed with independent label Equal Vision Records, which also represents the bands Say Anything and Saves the Day.

He's contributed to the work of other artists, singing on songs for Fall Out Boy, Gym Class Heroes, Cobra Starship and Cute Is What We Aim For. A songwriter, he has credits on songs for Hey Monday and Demi Lovato.

Along with the Nov. 15 performance, Beckett will be the special guest Nov. 24 and Dec. 2 at Rick Springfield's concerts at the City Winery in Chicago.

"The exclamation point to this year is going to be my fourth annual holiday show," he said.

That show takes place Dec. 28 at Reggies Rock Club in Chicago and also features Mark Rose, Mighty Fox and Valaska.

Though fans can expect more stripped-down performances coming up, Beckett has said future tours will expand into a full band.

He doesn't take anything for granted when it comes to the support of his fans, he said, both from his days with The Academy Is and today.

He recently joined Downwrite ([downwrite.com](http://downwrite.com)), a platform that enables songwriters to directly connect with fans. Basically, fans can hire artists to write and record an original song personalized specifically for them.

Beckett has written more than 10 songs since joining the site about three weeks ago. He's been given covers as well as various topics. A recent of his favorites was requested by two best friends graduating from college. They struggled with nervousness and "the facade that we all have on the outside of 'We have it all figured out.' "

"We all have that fear of the unknown," he said. "It's just cool as a songwriter to be able to do that ... one of a kind thing that is theirs to share and enjoy."