

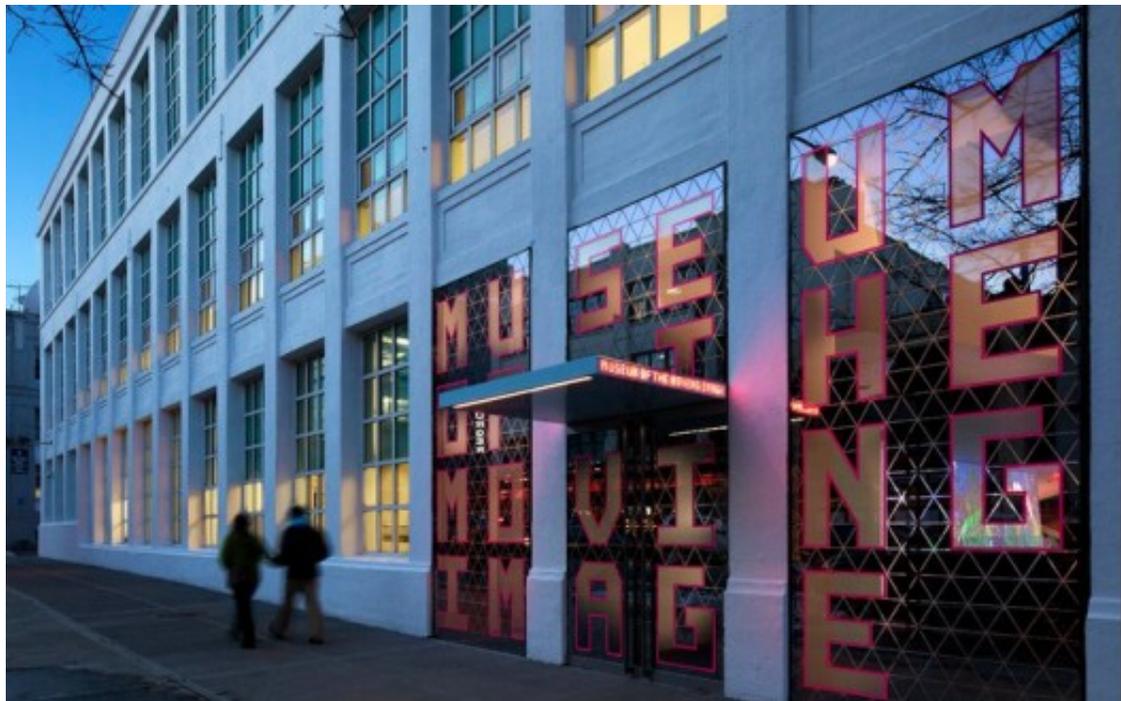
Luke LaLonde, Rhythmnals & a terror of Twitter By: Amy Chyan



Luke LaLonde has been a busy man. Between parsing through the Born Ruffians soon to be released third studio album, 'Birthmarks', and a modeling gig for H&Ms Spring catalogue, he also put out a solo record.

LaLonde released 'Rhythmnals', his debut solo album, at the end of October. The collection of ten songs is a mixture of electro-pop, R&B, and the desire to constantly be creating music.

A few weeks after Rhythmnals release, LaLonde and I set up an interview. He chooses New York's Museum of The Moving Image as the meeting place.



I catch sight of LaLonde browsing the gift shop upon arrival. Rather, I quickly scour the entrance and a headful of curls is flipping through some gift shop book. The museum dcor is minimal Ikea, sterile and feels like a pressurized air cabin.

I've already gotten my sticker, LaLonde tells me as he pulls at his black cardigan. Underneath his green jacket is a grey crewneck sweatshirt stamped with monarch butterfly prints. A few are in color, others just a black outline. Topmen, he says before sounding it off again in a British accent.

An alcove along the way, set up like a vintage arcade, minus the stale air, attracts a flurry of pre-millennial males. Each of them enthralled by nostalgia, concentrate on the video game at hand. Super Breakout, Donkey Kong, Ms. Pac-Man and the likes.

LaLonde is no different. He migrates towards the Donkey Kong arcade game, the first game his mother bought him. While waiting for a new level or a new life, he taps his foot to the game's music. I take the Frogger challenge, but don't do so hot.

We scamper along the museum displays, reading captions and marveling at special effect props, costumes and paraphernalia from 90s movies. The Mask and Mrs. Doubtfire strike resonance for both of us.

We wander separately, but come together like magnets when moving onto new, unseen exhibits. LaLonde is an active body, touching and trying all the activities in the museum. After exploring the King Tut movie palace, including a mummy tomb, he loops back to sneak a photo of the lime green mask a la **Jim Carrey** visage from The Mask. Somehow we felt like we would get in trouble for taking photos.

From over 20 songs recorded between 2010 and 2012, LaLonde selects 10 that represent a period of his life. The best, he boldly announces. 'Shove On' was the last song added and LaLonde is extremely proud and excited to show off the album. Let it be known, he also lights up when speaking about the new Ruffian record. So he doesn't hate being in a band, if you're thinking why a solo record.

Between working on two records and always making music, I ask how he knows when a record is done. You just have to know when to call it. I don't know if there's ever a perfect song to the person who made it, says LaLonde. Rhythmnals was finished when he ran out of money and time, two practical enemies to a perfectionist. It's just like a painting, he adds. When do you ever stop?

LaLonde's solo material often starts with a drum machine and beat building in the comfort of his home. Garage Band is his accomplice and ProTools is his producer's choice for refinement. Other times, he records song snippets onto his phone, which he demonstrates by pretending to sing a murmured tune into the device. It looks outrageous and highly suspicious.

We find a spot in the museum caf and settle in. He sips on his four fruit black tea. This is what I like and this is how I want to sound, he says. Sometimes you can't think of the audience. You need to think about yourself and what you want to make.

The Ruffians are heavily accessible and available on social media, to which LaLonde credits band mate **Mitch Derosier** for. Hes just a natural and loves interacting with fans. Its not calculated at all.

However, Twitter is LaLondes nightmare as s solo artist. Twitter is like being at a party and not wanting to talk to the people there, he explains. But social media is part of the game.

LaLonde played his first big solo show to Torontos Drake Underground crowd in December. That night, the crowd jostles around the warm venue air despite a slushy winter eve. The few young fans chain-smoking in line have already shoved their way to the front, demanding to hear 'Undone.

How about I play something not depressing, LaLonde asks fans yearning for a live taste of his solo venture. Lets bring the band up and play some loud shit.

Roger Millers 'Do-Wacka-Do' is LaLondes remedy to a melancholic show opener. And its loud alright. Long into the set, he finally feels comfortable enough to open his eyes and squint beyond the collection of fans.

LaLonde leaves no breath pause after bantering with the crowd and starts to wail in scale formation. The spectrum of throat croons becomes muddled on loop, signifying the beginning of 'Grand' off Rhthymnals.

There are some days when I think, why am I doing this, he confides. But other days I just love it. I love getting out there, hamming it up and performing at big venues.

The new Ruffians new album, Birthmark is out April 13, 2013. A slew of tour dates for North America have been announced just dont tweet LaLonde about them...

Images - Matthew Tammaro and Museum of The Moving Image