A local musician connects people through music

Raymnd's four-track EP is set to debut on Spotify and Apple Music on April 10

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(SUBMITTED PHOTO)

Raymnd.

From the legendary music scene at First Avenue in Minneapolis to the cozy embrace of a live performance at a local cafe, the Twin Cities boom with opportunities to uncover a diverse palette of musical sounds.

Excelsior resident Brody Witta — known professionally as Raymnd — first dabbled in songwriting and the electric guitar at age 6, but didn't play consistently until he was nearing his teenage years.

"I got really, really into the Beatles, and that was kind of the catalyst for my musical journey, and then I played [guitar] on and off throughout high school," Witta said. "I played sports, so I kind of felt like the music got buried a little bit in high school. But I was still writing on and off."

As a student at Minnetonka High School from 2016 to 2020, Witta's athletic and academic obligations consumed much of his free time. His busy schedule led to his passion for music taking a backseat.

However, things quickly shifted in 2020, when the coronavirus pandemic forced the world into lockdown. Witta used quarantine as an opportunity to learn the basics of music production and began honing his personal musical style.

He draws inspiration from the pop and funk roots of Minneapolis icon Prince and the modern, dreamy sounds of artists like Beach House and Mazzy Star. He also credits his father for exposing him to a diverse palette of music at an early age, including sounds from Pet Shop Boys, Tears for Fears and Prince.

Witta notes that his family friend, Tim Mahoney, was also very influential to him throughout the years. Mahoney is a Minneapolis-based musician who competed on Season 1 of NBC's "The Voice" in 2011.

In 2022, Witta began collaborating with local producer Jon Herchert to create his debut album, "RAYMND!," which was released in 2024. The 12-track project took about two years to complete, with Witta writing a handful of songs at a time and presenting them to Herchert to assist with the song selection process.

His latest project, a four-track EP titled "Nostalgia in the Form of a Depression," is set to debut on Spotify and Apple Music on April 10.

"That first album I did was very, very synth-oriented, which is why I'm doing this EP, which is kind of a totally different style of music," Witta says. "It's more folk, acoustic, singer-songwriter style and I wanted to put that on its own, separate thing."

In terms of his musical evolution over the years, Witta described his current sound as "more sophisticated" and "profound," with a focus on lyricism that will be featured on his upcoming EP.

Currently, Witta has performed sold-out shows at the 318 Cafe in Excelsior and Aster Cafe in the St. Anthony Main area of Minneapolis. When performing live, he hopes to cultivate an environment where audiences can feel a sense of peace and connectedness to one another.

"I think there's really no better way of connecting with another person than through music. I think it's really amazing how music is able to kind of do that," Witta said. "So I hope that I can just kind of cultivate an environment where people feel like they are at peace, they can heal from anything that's happening and just put music out there to help people do that."

Raymnd will be performing at Aster Cafe from 8:30 to 10:30 p.m. Friday, April 3. Tickets are $20. Visit raymnd.com for more information.

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