

Rocky Leon Tells All to 'Stop Whining'

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Rocky Leon and his ukulele

Rocky Leon is a one-man band, who — armed with only a ukulele, a kazoo and a loop station — fires up audiences with his positive energy. He will play two gigs in Moscow this week after his YouTube videos were spotted by Russian promoters.

Leon's mix of rock, reggae, hip-hop and ska, which can be heard on European streets as he often busks for money to survive, is linked with a definite philosophical stance. "I want to improve the world, on my own level. I want to make people happier through my music," Leon said. "I want people to feel good, this is my role."

Leon has an essay on his web site called "How to be Happy," and his most famous song — which could do with some listening in Russia — is called "Quit Your Whining," which he composed while skateboarding.

Other popular songs include covers of Lady Gaga's "Poker Face" with a kazoo intro and "Under the Sea" from the Disney film, "The Little Mermaid."

True to his word, there is not a whine in sight when Leon, his hair in dreadlocks and a straggly goatee on his chin, arrives sunny and friendly at midnight for an interview having just flown in from Vienna.

Born in San Francisco to an Austrian mother and a Brazilian father, Leon, 26, went on to high school and college in Austria where he began to think of his role in the world.

“I was exposed to philosophy as a kid and read [spiritual author] Eckhart Tolle when I was about 17. When I started thinking about what the biggest problem in this world consists of, I had to conclude it is fear.” “And fear,” he continues, “takes away your energy, in vain. I understood that worrying does not help.”

Leon originally wanted to be a kindergarten teacher in Austria, but he failed to get the job. He’s not complaining though. “It is important to have faith,” he said, “and everything will be the way it needs to be.”

Rocky Leon, brought by Wind People, plays Thursday at Vozdukh (8 p.m. 7 Nizhny Susalny Pereulok. Metro Kurskaya. Tel. 972-8712, www.vo3dux.ru) and Sunday at China Town Cafe (9 p.m. 23/12 Lubyansky Proyezd. Metro Lubyanka. Tel. 623-6163, www.chinatowncafe.ru).

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