

# LIVINGSTON

You know the scene in the movie where the hero recognizes his power?

Every once in a while, it plays out in real life. In the “simple American town” of Denton, TX, Livingston dusted off an old computer outfitted with Logic, taught himself how to produce, and honed his voice at just fourteen-years-old.

However, he really did more than that...

He spent the next two years building a conduit to connect by transmuting all of his feelings of loneliness, isolation, and inadequacy into songs. Those songs comprise the seventeen-year-old’s 2020 Elektra debut EP, *Lighthouse*.

“When I learned how to make music, I felt like I could finally do something I never had the ability to do, which is connect to others and cause them to feel something,” he confesses. “I was able to draw from experiences in my life and have them mean something to another person. For the first time, I understood the reasons I didn’t fit in. I found a way for kids who didn’t understand me to understand me.”

Before this fateful realization, Livingston admits he “lived through the worlds of movies and video games,” immersing himself in Halo, Far Cry, The Chronicles of Narnia, and Star Wars. The oldest of three siblings, he initially dabbled in music by playing trombone at school. Despite endless support from his parents, he didn’t fit in and was bullied. “It made me feel inadequate, but it led me to prove to myself that I could be more than what people expected of me.” At twelve-years-old, he started to express himself by taking his father’s camera and shooting wedding videos—even starting a little business.

A year later, he discovered Macklemore & Ryan Lewis, Jon Bellion, and Drake and identified a blank canvas in music.

“I got so deep into my favorite artists I thought it was possible to do this myself. Music was the cleanest slate. It was the perfect vessel to actually tell a story. My mom had Logic on her old computer, so I decided to give it a shot.”

One day when the family went out, he sang along to Kanye West’s “Ultralight Beam” at full volume and quietly sharpened his vocals. Around the same time, he fell in love for the first time, but it would be short-lived. Within six months, family challenges created a road block between them, and for months they could communicate only by making sentences in code on Spotify playlists.

“It ripped my heart out,” he sighs. “She was my only friend. It was a huge hit to have the person I confided in torn out of my life. We didn’t see each other for a year. From then on, it was bootcamp for songwriting. It showed me it was possible to transfer everything I felt to my songs.”

Throughout the year, he poured those emotions into music. Doing it all himself from writing and producing to engineering and recording out of his childhood bedroom, he devoted every waking minute to music. An early demo link made its way to Elektra in 2019, and he signed to the label. Putting the finishing touches what would become *Lighthouse*, he cemented a signature style.

“I like to think of it as orchestral cinematic pop,” he says. “As much as I love rap and pop, I love composers like Hans Zimmer and Randy Newman. I’m blending everything together.”

This blend rings out on the first single “Fairytale.” Between Pixar references, dreamy keys reverberate as he sings, “*Flik still saved the anthill even though I couldn’t see beyond the kids at school that hated me and my insecurity.*” Somber strings build towards a soulful crescendo and sweeping hook, “*I try to forget the fairytale lies, but it’s all I’ve known.*”

“It’s all about escapism,” he explains. “I invested so much in these heroes. Usually, when we see them, they’re incredible, fearless, and powerful. It’s an unhealthy standard though, because it’s not how life works. The song is about that.”

Elsewhere, “Home” sees him look outward at the expectations of a small town and push beyond them as his voice stretches to heavenly heights.

“During finals week in junior year, I was feeling a lot of pressure,” he says. “My passion took away from relationships and what the world expected of me. Where I’m from, you go get an MBA, manage a FedEx shipment center, and just stay in town. I couldn’t go to college for something I hated and become miserable. If I stayed home and pursued my passion, everyone would make fun of me and think I was a joke. It’s a conversation asking for some direction.”

Swells of strings skip alongside a glitchy beat on “Sandcastle.” Once again, his expansive delivery takes hold on the hook.

“It’s about having a wall between me and someone I love, feeling like there is nothing I can do to break through.” He goes on, “The person I love got swept away, and I was absolutely powerless, because I couldn’t do anything about it. It’s like a cry for help.”

In the end, *Lighthouse* sees Livingston’s superpower just start to shine.

“Music is the only way I’ve been able to effectively communicate what I’ve faced in life,” he leaves off. “I hope people in a similar place can relate to these songs. I’m a small-town kid who deals with the same everyday problems every other kid deals with. I want to talk about them though, so that’s what I’m doing.”

